The Influence of Gender and Parenting Style on Perceptions of Bullying and Upstanding Behavior

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Abstract
This study examined the interactive effect of gender and the parenting style under which an individual was raised on recognition of acts of physical and relational bullying and perceived severity of each type of bullying. To date, there have been no studies looking for complex relationships among these key variables. Furthermore, because there has been little research to date on factors influencing upstanding behavior, the act of intervening in a situation involving bullying, this study also investigated the influence of parenting style and gender on participants’ reported likelihood of upstanding behavior. A sample of 167 (22 males, 145 females) college students rated vignettes on the presence and severity of bullying and the likelihood that they would intervene in the situation. They also completed the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; 1991) to identify their parenting style. Females’ recognition ratings, severity ratings, and likelihood for upstanding ratings were significantly higher than the comparable ratings from males for the relational bullying vignettes. There were no significant differences on these ratings between parenting style groups and no interaction between gender and parenting style. No significant differences between gender groups, parenting style groups, and no interaction effects were found with regard to perceptions about physical bullying. The findings are discussed in light of their implications for bullying prevention and future research.

Keywords: gender, bullying, victimization, parenting style, upstander, bystander
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Past research has identified gender differences in perceptions of bullying and victimization (Griezel, 2012; Munro, 2001). Studies have shown that females identify both physical and relational harassment as bullying while men identify only physical abuse as bullying (Escartin, Salin, & Rodriguez-Carballeira, 2011; Frisen et al., 2007; Simpson & Cohen, 2004). In addition, females have been found to perceive situations involving victimization as more severe than men (Escartin et al., 2011; Frisen et al., 2007; Simpson & Cohen, 2004).

The style under which an individual was raised, referred to plainly as parenting style for the purposes of this study, has also been a key variable in prior research on bullying and victimization. However, research has only examined the influence of parenting style on children’s involvement in bullying and victimization (i.e., the likelihood a child will be bullied and/or bully others) and not looked at parenting as potentially influencing one’s perceptions about what constitutes bullying and the severity of bullying behavior (Curtner-Smith et al., 2006; Vieno, Gini, Santinello, & Mirandola, 2007; Low & Espelage, 2012). This is the first study of its kind to look at the influence of parenting style on perceptions about bullying and to take a complex look at potential interactive effects of gender and parenting style on perceptions of bullying. Prior research leads to the predictions tested in this study, including that there will be complex interrelationships between gender, parenting style, and perceptions of what constitutes bullying and perceptions about the severity of bullying.

In addition, there has been little research conducted to date on upstanding behavior. Upstanding behavior is action taken by another person to protect a victim being bullied (Dunn, 2010; Obermann, 2011). The research that has been conducted concentrated on the impact of the
decision not to intervene on the witness, instead of the victim, and on the contextual factors that make upstanding behavior more or less likely. Prior research has not examined the influence of the witness’ characteristics on likelihood of upstanding. This study addressed that gap by investigating the separate and interactive effects of gender and parenting style on an individual’s likelihood of engaging in upstanding behavior.

Identifying these complex interactions will benefit parents, children, teachers, and healthcare professionals, such as family therapists. Therapists may be able to develop parenting education programs and teachers may be able to develop bullying lessons that are more successful in reducing bullying and victimization. Furthermore, addressing the gaps in our understanding of who is more likely to be an upstander is equally helpful to school staff and mental health professionals. Upstanding, rather than being a bystander who may feel guilty afterward, is better for the victim, may be likely to reduce future bullying by the bully, and psychologically better for the individual standing up on behalf of the victim (Paull, Omari, & Standen, 2012). Identifying the impact of gender and parenting style, and the interactions among these factors, can help school and mental health professionals to identify students who are more likely to upstand and therefore serve as role models to their fellow students. Also, professionals can model the best parenting style in their interactions with students in the hope of motivating other students to upstand.

**Definitions of Bullying and Victimization**

Bullying is the most common form of peer violence and harassment (Dunn, 2010). Research has shown a rate of 2.4 incidents of bullying occurring in classrooms every hour and 4.5 occurrences happening on the playground daily (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000). This is a significant challenge for parents, schools, and the wider community to address (Frey,
Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009). It also poses an everyday challenge for those children being victimized. Individuals who are victimized in schools are also more likely to be victimized on the Internet; a form of bullying called cyberbullying (Katzer, Fetchenhauer, & Belschak, 2009). However, more common types of bullying are physical, sometimes referred to as overt bullying, and relational bullying.

Physical bullying involves acts of aggression such as kicking or punching, and relational bullying involves underhanded techniques such as social exclusion, gossiping, or verbal aggression (Curtner-Smith et al., 2006). Relational bullying is one of the least discussed types of victimization (Munro, 2001), being the least obvious or overt. Additionally, there must be multiple acts of social isolation or rejection to be categorized as this type of relational bullying. Unfortunately, relational bullying is also perceived as non-threatening and therefore perceived as not as important to deal with as physical bullying, even though it is just as detrimental to the victim as any other type of victimization (Kahn, Jones, & Wieland, 2012).

**Gender as Associated with Involvement in Bullying**

Previous research has identified factors that correlate with a child being bullied or being a bully. One finding is that boys and girls tend to both bully and help protect their same gender peers (Dijkstra et al., 2007). However, physical bullying and bullying in general are more common in males than females (Frison et al., 2007; Gini & Pozzoli, 2006; Gradinger, Strohmeier, & Spiel, 2009). Males also tend to be victims in all types of bullying in general.

There is also a relation between gender and what type of bullying technique, whether it is cyberbullying, relational bullying, or physical bullying, is likely to be used by the bully. Females tend to use relational bullying and males tend to use physical bullying, while cyberbullying is used generally by both genders (Curtner-Smith et al., 2006; Low & Espelage, 2012; Dijkstra et
al., 2012; Griezel et al., 2012). Males are also more likely to join in bullying or upstanding behavior following the lead of another influential male (Steinfeldt, Vaughan, LaFollette, & Steinfeldt, 2012).

Research has also suggested that the effects of being bullied differ for males and females (Lee & Troop-Gordon, 2011). Physical and relational bullying tend to result in conformity to the peer group for girls, but only physical bullying results in conformity for boys. For both males and females, social exclusion results in the adherence to social norms and a decrease in cross gender characteristics and traits.

**Gender as Associated with Perceptions about Bullying**

Gender has an influence on perceptions of what constitutes bullying and the perceived severity of bullying. Females rate bullying as higher in severity and consider emotional abuse and sexual harassment as forms of bullying. Men rate the same situations lower in severity and also tend to find bullying to be associated with a managerial purpose, such as hazing in fraternities (Escartin, Salin, & Rodriguez-Carballeira, 2011; Frisen et al., 2007; Simpson & Cohen, 2004).

One would predict that females would be more likely to recognize relational bullying compared to males. Females would be predicted to judge the severity of bullying higher than males and females would report less involvement in bullying compared to males. However, it is not clear from this research whether there are any factors that may mitigate these predictions. It is possible that the key factor of the style of parenting a child experiences in their home could be such a mitigating factor, in that the interaction between it and gender could increase, on these measures, the likelihood that males’ scores would land closer to the better scores of females,
overall, or the reverse, that females’ scores would fall closer to males’ lower or worse scores, overall.

**Parenting Style as Associated with Bullying**

Parenting style has been identified as a variable that could help predict whether a child becomes a bully or a victim. In fact, research shows that family therapy can be an extremely helpful tool in the prevention of and/or treatment for bullying (Powell & Ladd, 2010), supporting the notion that parenting style and family environment indeed has a significant effect on a child’s behaviors.

The four most recognized styles of parenting are authoritarian (demanding and unresponsive), authoritative (demanding and responsive), permissive (undemanding and responsive), and dismissive (undemanding and unresponsive) (Baumrind, 1971). Parents who utilized an authoritarian style of parenting in raising their children were the most likely to have both male and female offspring engaging in bullying and involved in victimization (Figula, Margitics, Pauwlik, & Szatmari, 2011). Neglectful or dismissive maternal styles of parenting and lack of adult supervision correlated with bullying in males but not females (Vieno et al., 2007; Powell & Ladd, 2010). Parents who were more violent and monitor their children less (authoritarian) have children who are more likely to participate in non-physical or relational bullying over cyberbullying (Low & Espelage, 2012). Additionally, parents who are low in empathy and are conflict oriented as well as demanding and anxious (authoritarian), are more likely to have children who use physical and relational bullying (Curtner-Smith et al., 2006; Katzer et al., 2009; Figula et al., 2011; Georgiou, 2008). The reason for these relations is not clear. It may be that the authoritative style of parenting creates a better attachment relationship between child and parent that in turn can create a positive relationship model for children to
apply in their own social lives (Bowlby, 1969). It also may be that children raised with an authoritarian style of parenting have low self-esteem and that this in turn can cause these children to become bullies (Frison, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007). Permissive styles of parenting tend to yield children who are victimized (Katzer et al., 2009; Georgiou, 2008). Parents who engage in dismissive styles of parenting are the most likely to have males who cyberbully (Dehue, Bolman, Vollink, & Poulwelse, 2012; Vieno et al., 2007). Furthermore, research has shown that children with parents who monitor them are less likely to engage in bullying of any kind and parents who have appropriate expectations for their children have children who are the least likely to bully, especially relationally (Low & Espelage, 2012; Curtner-Smith et al., 2006). Both child monitoring and setting appropriate expectations are characteristics of the authoritative style of parenting (Baumrind, 1971).

One would predict, therefore, that children raised by authoritative parents would be less likely to be engaged in bullying/victimization and rate bullying as more severe compared to children raised by parents using the other parenting styles. However, as with the effect of gender on these measures, we do not know if a factor such as gender mitigates the influence of parenting style.

**Bystanders/Upstanders as Associated with Bullying**

Witnessing bullying may be just as damaging as being the victim (Paull et al., 2012). Most incidents of bullying are witnessed by others but few of these bystanders take action. Some experts argue that bystanders fear becoming victimized by a bully themselves if they act and therefore choose not to be an upstander. In turn, this decision not to act in defense of the victim may cause further guilt and anxiety for the witness as well as the damaging effects the victim who is being bullied (Frey et al., 2009); seeing peers ignore bullying situations hurts the victim
as much as the bullying itself because of the psychological and social repercussions (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Paull et al., 2012; Obermann, 2011). However, not all bystanders are alike. Obermann (2011) identified four distinct types of bystanders. These include the outsiders (those who do not know bullying is occurring), defenders (upstanders who intervene), guilty bystanders (those who witness bullying but do nothing and feel remorse), and unconcerned bystanders (those who witness bullying but feel no responsibility or remorse for doing nothing). Obermann (2011) found that those who witness bullying incidents and are too fearful to help or try to intervene feel the most guilt and moral disengagement.

Past research has identified some of the contextual factors that influence the behavior of a bystander. One of these factors is known as the Bystander Effect (Fischer et al., 2011). The Bystander Effect is the research finding that there is a decreasing frequency of upstanding behavior in bystanders when other non-upstanders are present. It should be noted that this effect is weaker in situations that are dangerous for the victim and when the bully is present (Fischer et al., 2011; Karna, Voeten, Poskiparta, & Salmivalli, 2010). The Bystander Effect also works both ways; if bystanders act as upstanders and defend the victim, other bystanders will be more likely to do the same (Karna et al., 2010). Other researchers have suggested the Goal Framing Approach to aid in understanding bystander and upstander behavior. In this model, a bystander may have an ulterior motive, or goal, in mind which drives whether or not they choose to be an upstander or a bystander in a situation (Dijkstra, Lindenberg, & Veenstra, 2007).

While this research on upstanding/bystanding behavior has shed some light on the impact of witnessing bullying and doing nothing, and the influence of the context in which bullying is occurring (i.e., the Bystander Effect and Goal Framing theory), none of the research above addressed the likelihood of upstanding as a function of characteristics of the bullying witness.
Therefore, investigating the role of gender and parenting style on upstanding behavior, as this study uniquely does, will begin to address that gap.

The Present Study

Given the link established in prior research between gender and perceptions of bullying and the relationship between parenting style and involvement in bullying/victimization, this study examined the influence of parenting style on participants’ abilities to recognize bullying and their ratings of the severity of bullying, and the interactions of gender and parenting style on these perceptions of bullying. Furthermore, the relation between gender and parenting style and the likelihood of engaging in upstanding behavior was also explored.

Specifically, this study looked at how gender and parenting style relate to recognition of bullying or victimization in certain situations and/or to perceived severity of bullying behavior, as well as how they relate to whether or not a person perceives himself/herself as more likely to become a bullying bystander or an upstander. The hypotheses were as follows:

1a) Women raised by authoritative parents will label relational harassment as bullying most frequently, while men with authoritarian/permisive parents will label relational harassment as bullying least frequently.

1b) Individuals raised by authoritative parents will recognize physical harassment as bullying more accurately than those individuals raised by authoritarian/permisive parents.

2) Women raised by authoritative parents will give the highest severity ratings for both types of bullying, while men raised by authoritarian/permisive parents will give the lowest severity ratings for both types of bullying.
3a) Women raised by authoritative parents will be the most likely to be upstanders in a relational harassment situation, while men raised by authoritarian/permissive parents will be the least likely to upstand in a relational harassment situation.

3b) Men raised by authoritative parents will be the most likely to be upstanders in a physical bullying situation, while women raised by authoritarian/permissive parents will be the least likely to upstand in physical bullying situations.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were undergraduate psychology students from a medium-sized, private university in the Northeast. There were 167 participants in total. There were 22 males and 145 females whose ages ranged from 18 to 68, with a mean age of 20.26 (SD = 5.11). A majority of the participants were Caucasian (83.60%); 28.10% were freshmen, 33.50% were sophomore, 25.10% were juniors, and 12.60% were seniors. Participants were recruited from a convenience sample in an online undergraduate subject pool, SONA. Each participant received course credit for participation in this study.

Materials

The materials for this study included a demographic sheet, the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991), 16 vignettes involving bullying situations and questions about the situation in each vignette. The vignettes and questions were modified versions of those used in a previous study (Kahn, Jones, & Wieland, 2012).

Demographic Sheet. Participants were asked to complete a demographic survey which asked for the participant’s age, gender, year in college, major/minor, and ethnic background (see Appendix A for the demographic sheet).
**Bullying Vignettes.** The vignettes used in this study were modified versions of vignettes developed by Kahn, Jones, & Wieland (2012) for a study of teachers’ perceptions of bullying. The original vignettes were modified to be applicable to this study of students’ perceptions of bullying and described eight situations of varying degrees of victimization between females and males. Half of the vignettes described examples of physical bullying, such as, “Before class you saw Adam smack Johnny in the head” and the other half described examples of relational aggression, such as, “Sarah is a student in a suburban high school. Brittany is overheard maliciously teasing Sarah about the clothes she wears.” Kahn, Jones, and Wieland (2012) developed the vignettes based on what prior researchers had written about how to successfully make vignettes seem more realistic. They also had 100 education majors read the vignettes and provide feedback that led to more accurate scenarios.

Each vignette was replicated to involve both genders in each scenario as well, so a total of 16 vignettes were used in this study (see Appendix B for the vignettes used in this study). The dependent variables of recognition of bullying, perceived severity, and the likelihood of upstanding behavior were measured by asking participants to respond to the questions: “How much of this is bullying?”, “How severe is this situation?”, and “How likely is it that you would intervene on [Victim]’s behalf?”, respectively. These questions were used instead of the question from the original study which asked how the teacher participant would respond to the events in each vignette. Participants answered the three questions above using a five-point rating scale (1 meaning “Not at all” to 5 meaning “Extremely”).

**Parental Authority Questionnaire.** The Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991) was used in this study to measure participants’ parents’ style of parenting. Its purpose is to determine parenting style of both a mother and father as reported from the offspring’s
perspective. Baumrind (1971) originally posited four distinct types of parenting style, but this questionnaire focuses on three of them: authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive (the excluded parenting style being dismissive). The PAQ consists of 30 statements to which participants indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale (1 meaning “Strongly disagree” to 5 meaning “Strongly agree”). An example of these statements is “As I was growing up my parents did not allow me to question any decision they had made” (see Appendix C for the PAQ.).

The PAQ has been found to have good reliability and validity. Buri (1991) reported that data collected from a sample of college students yielded test-retest reliability coefficients for each subscale of the PAQ that ranged from .77 to .92 (.77 for Father’s Permissiveness, .85 for Father’s Authoritativness, .92 for Father’s Authoritarianism, .78 for Mother’s Authoritativness, .81 for Mother’s Permissiveness, .86 for Mother’s Authoritarianism). Furthermore, the PAQ scores showed good discriminate validity between the subscales, e.g., Mother’s Authoritarianism scores were significantly inversely related to Mother’s Permissiveness scores. Buri also tested the validity of the PAQ using the criterion-related validity technique. The results showed significant correlations as he predicted between the subscales and a measure of parental nurturance.

Design

This study used a between-subjects, 2 x 3 factorial design. The quasi-independent variables were gender (male or female) and parenting style (authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive). The dependent variables were ratings of bullying for both relational and for physical types, their perception of the severity of bullying of each type, and the likelihood that they would choose to act as an upstander and intervene in each type of bullying situation. A series of
ANOVAs were used to determine if there were main effects and/or interactions between gender and parenting style and each dependent variable. For Hypotheses 1a and 1b, recognition ratings of physical and relational bullying were used as the dependent variables. For Hypothesis 2, perceived severity ratings of physical and relational bullying situations were used as the dependent variables and for Hypotheses 3a and 3b, ratings of the likelihood of upstanding behavior for each type of bullying were used as the dependent variables.

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited from a web-based participant pool and signed up for the study by appointment. Between one and seven participants were able to sign up for each time slot. When they arrived at the appointed time, participants were given an informed consent statement to read. They read along while the researcher read it aloud. If the informed consent statement was signed, the participant was asked to place it in an envelope that was kept separate from the questionnaire materials in order to assure them of their anonymity in this study.

Once consent was obtained, study packets were distributed containing instructions, the demographic sheet, the bullying vignettes, and the PAQ. Each packet had instructions for how to complete the vignette questions, the demographic sheet, and the PAQ. Participants were asked to respond to each item to the best of their ability. Participants were instructed to put their completed packets in a second envelope to keep their study materials separate from their signed informed consent statements and further assure them of their anonymity.

Once all participants handed in their completed packets, a debriefing form was provided and participants were asked to read along as the researcher read the debriefing statement out loud. Participants were thanked and the purpose of the study was revealed. Debriefing included a list of the quasi-independent variables (gender and parenting style) as well as the dependent
variables of recognition of bullying, perceived severity, and likelihood of upstanding behavior. Participants were asked not to tell anyone else about the study’s hypotheses and purpose. They were given contact information to use if they had any further questions for the researchers and contact information for psychological services in case they felt uncomfortable after their participation in the study.

After all the data was collected, the PAQ scoring method was used to classify participants’ upbringing under the parental styles of authoritative, authoritarian, or permissive. Due to small sub-group sample sizes and because the study hypotheses did not have separate predictions for these sub-groups, participants identified as having permissive, authoritarian, or undifferentiated parenting styles were grouped together into a parenting style group called “Other.” Therefore two parenting groups were used for all data analyses: Authoritative and Other. There were 115 participants in the Authoritative group, representative of the healthiest parenting style utilized, and 52 in the Other group, representative of the more negative or unhealthy parenting styles utilized.

**Results**

Cronbach’s alphas were calculated to test the reliability of each of the rating scales used in the study (recognition of physical bullying, recognition of relational bullying, severity of physical bullying, severity of relational bullying, upstanding likelihood in a physical bullying situation, upstanding likelihood in a relational bullying situation). There were eight ratings given on each scale. All of the Cronbach’s alphas were above the minimum acceptable standard of .70. They ranged from .85 to .91. However, the rating scores for the severity of physical bullying in Vignette 14 had to be removed for the coefficient to reach an acceptable level. Therefore, that scale had seven ratings.
Cronbach’s alphas were also calculated to test the reliability of each of parenting style scales of the PAQ. For the permissive parenting scale, Cronbach’s alpha was .73. For the authoritarian parenting scale, Cronbach’s alpha was .83. For the authoritative parenting scale, Cronbach’s alpha was .81. All three reliability coefficients meet or exceed the accepted minimum level of .70.

A preliminary analysis of gender differences on the six rating scales was done using independent samples t-tests. To test the study’s hypotheses, a series of two-way factorial ANOVAs were used to test the main effects and any interaction effects of parenting style and gender for each dependent variable. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Preliminary Analysis for Gender Differences

Independent samples t-tests revealed significant differences between males’ and females’ mean ratings for recognition of relational bullying, severity of relational bullying, and likelihood of upstanding for relational bullying vignettes. In each case, females’ mean ratings were significantly higher than males’ mean ratings (t = 2.72, df = 165, p = .01; t = 2.45, df = 165, p = .02; t = 2.91, df = 165, p = .00; respectively). There were no gender differences found for the recognition, severity, or upstanding likelihood mean ratings for the physical bullying vignettes (t = 1.01, df = 165, p = .31; t = 1.19, df = 165, p = .24, t = .85, df = 165, p = .40; respectively).

Recognition of Physical Bullying

The ANOVA results indicated that no significant main effects were found for mean ratings of recognition of physical bullying for gender or for parenting style (Gender: F (1, 163) = .16, p = .69; Parenting Style: F (1, 163) = 2.27, p = .13). In addition, no interaction was found (F (1, 163) = 2.35, p = .13). The means and standard deviations for these ratings by gender and parenting style can be found in Table 1.
Recognition of Relational Bullying

The ANOVA results indicated that no significant main effects for gender or for parenting group were found for mean ratings of recognition of relational bullying and no interaction effect (Gender: $F(1, 163) = 1.86, p = .17$; Parenting: $F(1, 163) = .69, p = .41$; Interaction effect: $F(1, 163) = .55, p = .46$). The means and standard deviations for these ratings by gender and parenting style can be found in Table 2.

Severity Ratings for Physical Bullying

The ANOVA results indicated that no significant main effects for gender or for parenting group were found for mean severity ratings for physical bullying (Gender: $F(1, 163) = .04, p = .83$; Parenting: $F(1, 163) = 1.91, p = .17$). No significant interaction effect was found between gender and parenting style on mean severity ratings ($F(1, 163) = 2.18, p = .14$). The means and standard deviations for these ratings by gender and parenting style can be found in Table 3.

Severity Ratings for Relational Bullying

The ANOVA results indicated that no significant main effects for gender, parenting group or an interaction effect were found for mean severity ratings for relational bullying (Gender: $F(1, 163) = .258, p = .11$; Parenting: $F(1, 163) = .01, p = .92$; Interaction: $F(1, 163) = .04, p = .85$). The means and standard deviations for these ratings by gender and parenting style can be found in Table 4.

Upstander Likelihood Ratings for Physical Bullying

The ANOVA results indicated that no significant main effects for gender or for parenting group were found for upstander mean likelihood ratings for physical bullying (Gender: $F(1, 163) = .15, p = .70$; Parenting: $F(1, 163) = 1.53, p = .22$). No significant interaction effect was
found ($F(1, 163) = 1.99, p = .16$). The means and standard deviations for these ratings by gender and parenting style can be found in Table 5.

**Upstander Likelihood Ratings for Relational Bullying**

The ANOVA results indicated that no significant main effects for gender or for parenting group were found for mean upstander likelihood ratings for relational bullying (Gender: $F(1, 163) = 3.36, p = .07$; Parenting: $F(1, 163) = .01, p = .92$). No significant interaction effect was found ($F(1, 163) = .14, p = .71$). The means and standard deviations for these ratings by gender and parenting style can be found in Table 6.

**Discussion**

This study was performed to test several hypotheses. These hypotheses were: 1a) Women raised by authoritative parents would label relational harassment as bullying most frequently, while men with authoritarian/permissive parents would label relational harassment as bullying least frequently; 1b) Individuals raised by authoritative parents would recognize physical harassment as bullying more accurately than those individuals raised by authoritarian/permissive parents; 2) Women raised by authoritative parents would give the highest severity ratings for both types of bullying situations, while men raised by authoritarian/permissive parents would give the lowest severity ratings for both types of bullying situations; 3a) Women raised by authoritative parents would be the most likely to be upstanders in an relational harassment situation, while men raised by authoritarian/permissive parents would be the least likely to upstand in an relational harassment situation; and 3b) Men raised by authoritative parents would be the most likely to be upstanders in a physical bullying situation, while women raised by authoritarian/permissive parents would be the least likely to upstand in physical bullying situations. None of the hypotheses regarding interaction effects between
gender and parenting style were supported by the results of the study. In addition, there were no significant differences found between the gender groups or the parenting style groups on any of the three ratings for the physical bullying vignettes. However, there were significant differences found between the gender groups on all three ratings for the relational bullying vignettes with females’ mean ratings higher than males’ ratings for recognition of the bullying, severity of the bullying and likelihood of upstanding. No differences were found by parenting style group for these ratings.

Previous research has reported significant gender differences in the perceptions of what is bullying and perceptions of the severity of bullying. Females were reported to be more likely than males to identify examples of relational harassment as bullying (Escartin et al., 2011; Frisen et al., 2007; Simpson & Cohen, 2004). These results were replicated by the present study. Females gave significantly higher recognition ratings and severity ratings compared to males, but only for the relational bullying vignettes. No gender differences in these ratings regarding the physical bullying vignettes were found.

Although prior research studies have reported a link between parenting style and involvement in bullying (Curtner-Smith et al., 2006; Vieno, et al., 2007; Low & Espelage, 2012), there has been no research to date on parenting style and perceptions of bullying. This study was designed to fill that gap in our knowledge and to also investigate a possible interaction between gender and parenting style on perceptions of bullying. Overall, there were no significant differences found in this study between parenting style group on any of the recognition or severity rating scales and no interaction between gender and parenting style.

Last, this study was designed to increase knowledge about the factors that influence upstanding behavior (or intervening in a bullying situation on behalf of the victim). The factors
of gender and parenting style were chosen for this investigation based on previous research demonstrating a potential relationship to bullying/victimization. None of the hypotheses regarding gender differences, parenting style differences, or the interaction between gender and parenting style for upstanding in physical bullying scenarios were supported by the results. However, a gender difference was found with the females’ mean likelihood rating significantly higher than the males’ mean rating for upstanding likelihood for the relational bullying scenarios.

**Limitations**

This study had few participants falling into the authoritarian and permissive parenting style groups based on their PAQ scores, so all participants who were not in the authoritative group were put together into an “other” category. This seemed reasonable given the fact that the study’s hypotheses regarding parenting style influences on perceptions of bullying and upstanding likelihood made similar predictions for participants raised by parents using a permissive or authoritarian parenting style. Given prior research demonstrating negative outcomes from both of those styles of parenting, there was no rationale on which to base different predictions.

In fact, it has been suggested that being raised by parents who use these parenting styles leads to unhealthy attachment relationships between the child and parent and in turn, children use this unhealthy attachment relationship as a model for all interpersonal relationships in their lives (Bowlby, 1969). It could be that having a poor model for how to relate to others is the reason children raised by authoritarian or permissive parents are more involved in bullying as both the victim and as the bully. There is some research to support this theory. Insecurely attached children have “rejection sensitivity” and perceive relational aggression from peers even when it does not exist (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Rejection sensitivity may be the reason for the lack
of significant findings regarding differences in perceptions of bullying by parenting style. Those with non-authoritative parenting may have insecure attachments and hence, higher levels of rejection sensitivity which heightened their reactions to the bullying vignettes. It was predicted that participants raised with an authoritative parenting style would recognize bullying more accurately and perceive bullying as more severe compared to those raised by permissive or authoritarian parents. The lack of significant difference in the findings may be due to rejection sensitivity as a confounding variable.

The small number of males in the sample decreased statistical power. A sample size of 30 in each cell/group is typically desired to reach an acceptable level of statistical power. There were only 22 males overall with 19 in the Authoritative parenting style group and three in the Other parenting style group. This meant that tests of the hypotheses regarding interaction effects between parenting style and gender were likely to fail.

This study used a method that other researchers have used in past bullying research; that is, providing bullying vignettes or scenarios that participants are asked to read and react to. It is questionable how realistic the bullying vignettes used in this study were to this particular sample, even though the original researchers who created them tested them for realism with a group of 100 education majors. It is possible that the participants were less likely to call the vignette action bullying than they would if they witnessed it in person. It is also possible that the perceptions of severity might be lower overall when someone is reading about an event compared to actually witnessing the event. The ratings of the likelihood of upstanding on behalf of a victim in a bullying vignette must be understood as participants’ predictions about whether they would intervene in the situation. These ratings must be understood as what participants
think they would do and not necessarily an accurate depiction of what they would do in a real situation.

This study, though, looked at differences between groups of participants on these ratings, so even if they are lower than they might be from a real situation, all participants in the different groups read the scenarios. Reading, but not experiencing in, the scenario was consistent across all of the participants. Differences in bullying perceptions should still be found unless the lack of realism caused a floor effect in the ratings which would make finding significance unlikely.

There is no evidence of a floor effect in the data as the lowest mean rating out of all the recognition and severity mean ratings was 26.16 (the maximum possible was 40).

Future Research

In the future, researchers should repeat the study presented here after addressing the limitations discussed above. One way to improve this study would be to assure an equal distribution of participants across parenting style groups and a large sample of males and females falling into those parenting style groups. Pre-tests could be used to ensure sufficient numbers of participants in all the parenting style categories. Even after recruiting more male participants, the additional males continued to fall into the Authoritative parenting style group.

Being a college student is a sign of success. It is possible that there is a connection between parenting style and academic success which then would lead to fewer college students who were raised by authoritarian or permissive parents, as those raised with non-authoritative parenting would not achieve so highly. Research on this subject has shown that career success, in concordance with fathers’ parenting styles, has found that fathers who display aspects of authoritarian or permissive styles of parenting yield children who are too fearful of failing or doubtful in their abilities to succeed in a desired career path, as well as children who were not
equipped to handle the challenges that went along with it (Poulter, 2006). Those fathers exuding compassion and a clear sense of values, or those aspects most closely associated with an authoritative parenting style, yielded children who used these same observed characteristics as strengths in finding success in the workplace. Therefore, in the future, this study should be conducted in a non-college setting.

Given the previous discussion of how attachment style and rejection sensitivity may be related to perceptions of bullying, future studies may add these variables. Adding these variables could give a more complete picture of what shapes people’s perceptions of bullying and their involvement in bullying/victimization. Finally, future studies should examine upstanding behavior without using vignettes to maintain “realism” of the participants’ reactions. Using contrived bullying situations that participants could witness and react to would be one way to do this. This is a more complicated method and requires addressing ethical concerns as the bystanders would not be able to give informed consent prior to the study.

Conclusion

It is important to know more about the factors that lead to as well as guard against bullying and victimization. The effects of being bullied range from developing depression and anxiety disorders, to a tendency for violent behavior, and finally mental health instability that can result in suicide (Seager-Smith, 2012). More research can lead to good strategies for parents, teachers, and counselors to use to prevent victimization and stop bullying behavior. The results of this study point to the need for more education regarding aspects of relational bullying, particularly among males. This is supported by the significant differences found in the results of the independent samples t-tests over each dependent variable regarding this type of bullying.
Most incidents of bullying are witnessed by others but few of these bystanders take action and become upstanders. In turn this decision not to act in defense of the victim may cause guilt and anxiety for the witness as well as even more damaging effects on the victim who is being bullied (Frey et al., 2009). It is therefore also important to continue research on what causes someone to be an upstander. While the results of this study did not support all of the hypotheses, the study provides a methodology for research investigating the factors that influence upstanding behavior. The results of this study do suggest that there is an association between likelihood of upstanding and perceptions about bullying. Females rated the severity of relational bullying greater than their male counterparts and in turn, rated the likelihood that they would intervene on behalf of the victim greater than males.
References


THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER


Table 1

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Recognition of Physical Bullying Rating Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>29.27 (4.70)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>30.29 (4.36)</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>30.03 (4.43)</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender X Parenting Style</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Authoritative</td>
<td>28.68 (4.73)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Other</td>
<td>33.00 (2.65)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Authoritative</td>
<td>30.30 (4.35)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Other</td>
<td>30.27 (4.42)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Recognition of Relational Bullying Rating Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>29.86 (5.61)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Females</td>
<td>32.89 (4.73)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Male/Other</td>
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<td>Female/Authoritative</td>
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</table>

* * t = 2.72, df = 165, p = .01
Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Severity Rating Scale for Physical Bullying*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>28.00 (4.67)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>29.26 (4.59)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Style</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>28.99 (4.69)</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29.31 (4.45)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender X Parenting Style</td>
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<tr>
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<td>27.42 (4.49)</td>
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<td>Male/Other</td>
<td>31.67 (4.93)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Authoritative</td>
<td>29.30 (4.69)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Other</td>
<td>29.16 (4.44)</td>
<td>49</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Severity Rating Scale for Relational Bullying*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender*</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>26.22 (5.74)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>29.26 (5.35)</td>
<td>145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parenting Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>28.79 (5.56)</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender X Parenting Style</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Female/Authoritative</td>
<td>29.31 (5.45)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Other</td>
<td>29.14 (5.19)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*t = 2.45, df = 165, p = .02
Table 5

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Upstanding Likelihood Ratings in a Physical Bullying Situation*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>24.59 (7.53)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>25.92 (6.78)</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Style</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>25.68 (7.17)</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25.90 (6.21)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender X Parenting Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Authoritative</td>
<td>23.79 (7.63)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Other</td>
<td>29.67 (5.03)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Authoritative</td>
<td>26.05 (7.06)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Other</td>
<td>25.67 (6.25)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for the Upstanding Likelihood Ratings in a Relational Bullying Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean (SD)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>21.77 (7.80)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>26.30 (6.65)</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>25.70 (7.45)</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25.71 (5.78)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender X Parenting Style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Authoritative</td>
<td>21.63 (7.71)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male/Other</td>
<td>22.67 (10.12)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Authoritative</td>
<td>26.50 (7.17)</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female/Other</td>
<td>25.99 (5.53)</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $t = 2.91$, $df = 165$, $p = .00$
Appendix A

DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

Please do not write your name on this form. It will be stored separately from any other information that you complete in this study and will not be linked with your responses in any way. The information will allow us to provide an accurate description of the sample. For the following items, please select the ONE response that is most descriptive of you or fill in the blank as appropriate.

Gender:
__ Female
__ Male

Age: ______

Ethnicity:
__ Asian or Pacific Islander
__ Asian Indian
__ Black/African American (non-Hispanic)
__ Caucasian/White
__ Native American
__ Latino/Hispanic
__ Puerto Rican
__ More than one race/Other (specify): _____________________________

Major(s): __________________

Minor(s): __________________

Year in College:
__ First Year
__ Sophomore
__ Junior
__ Senior
__ Other
Appendix B

This survey has scenarios depicting situations happening in high school. Please read each scenario carefully. Then indicate your answers for each question below the scenario.

**Scenario #1**

Mark is a freshman in high school. His classmates Zach and James make up mean rumors about Mark to try to embarrass him.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) How much of this is bullying? _____
2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____
3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Mark’s behalf? _____

**Scenario #2**

You witnessed Briana pass Lindsey in the hallway, and Lindsey suddenly punched Briana in the stomach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) How much of this is bullying? _____
2) How severe is this situation? _____
3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Briana’s behalf? _____

**Scenario #3**

Before class you saw Adam smack Johnny in the head.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1) How much of this is bullying? _____
2) How severe is this situation? _____
3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Johnny’s behalf? _____

Scenario #4
Becky and Jackie are sophomores in high school and are neighborhood friends. You overhear Becky threaten Jackie that she can’t hang out with her unless Jackie does what Becky wants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____
2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____
3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Jackie’s behalf? _____

Scenario #5
Max is a freshman in high school and does not have many friends. Often times Jack and Kevin spread rumors about Max even though they are not true.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____
2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____
3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Max’s behalf? _____

Scenario #6
Today your student Jenny told you that Tina kicked her on purpose in gym class.

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Jenny’s behalf? _____

Scenario #7

After class Matt told you that Peter had just angrily shoved him into the lockers.

1) In your opinion, how much of this bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Matt’s behalf? _____

Scenario #8

Sarah is a student in a suburban high school. Brittany is overheard maliciously teasing Sarah about the clothes she wears.

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____
3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Sarah’s behalf? _____

Scenario #9

Marie is a freshman in high school. Her classmates Heidi and Julie make up mean rumors about Marie to try to embarrass her.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Marie’s behalf? _____

Scenario #10

You witnessed Brian pass Logan in the hallway, and Logan suddenly punched Brian in the stomach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Brian’s behalf? _____

Scenario #11

Before class you saw Ann smack Julie in the head.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td>Extremely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1) In your opinion, how much of this situation is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Julie’s behalf? _____

**Scenario #12**

Brandon and Jackson are sophomores in high school and are neighborhood friends. You overhear Brandon threaten Jackson that he can’t hang out with him unless Jackson does what Brandon wants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Jackson’s behalf? _____

**Scenario #13**

Mary is a freshman in high school and does not have many friends. Often times Jill and Katie spread rumors about Mary even though they are not true.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extremely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Mary’s behalf? _____

**Scenario #14**

Today your student Jason told you that Tim kicked him on purpose in gym class.
1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Jason’s behalf? _____

Scenario #15

After class Megan told you that Patty had just angrily shoved her into the lockers.

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Megan’s behalf? _____

Scenario #16

Steven is a student in a suburban high school. Brad is overheard maliciously teasing Steven about the clothes he wears.

1) In your opinion, how much of this is bullying? _____

2) How severe do you think this situation is? _____

3) How likely it is that you would intervene on Steven’s behalf? _____
Appendix C

**Parental Authority Questionnaire**

Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number of the 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your parents. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your parents during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don’t spend a lot of time on any one item. Be sure not to omit any items.

If your parents were separated or divorced before you reached age 12, think about the parent with whom you spent the most time when you answer the questions.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

____ 1. While I was growing up my parents felt that, in a well-run home, the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.
____ 2. Even if their children didn’t agree with them, my parents felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what they thought was right.
____ 3. Whenever my parents told me to do something as I was growing up, they expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.
____ 4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my parents discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.
____ 5. My parents have always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.
____ 6. My parents have always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.
____ 7. As I was growing up my parents did not allow me to question any decision they had made.
____ 8. As I was growing up my parents directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.
____ 9. My parents have always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.
____ 10. As I was growing up my parents did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behavior simply because someone in authority had established them.
____ 11. As I was growing up I knew what my parents expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my parents when I felt that they were unreasonable.
____ 12. My parents felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.
13. As I was growing up, my parents seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behavior.
14. Most of the time as I was growing up my parents did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.
15. As the children in my family were growing up, my parents consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.
16. As I was growing up my parents would get very upset if I tried to disagree with them.
17. My parents feel that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.
18. As I was growing up my parents let me know what behavior they expected of me, and if I didn’t meet those expectations, they punished me.
19. As I was growing up my parents allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from them.
20. As I was growing up my parents took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions but they would not decide something simply because the children wanted it.
21. My parents did not view themselves as responsible for directing and guiding my behavior as I was growing up.
22. My parents had clear standards of behavior for the children in our home as I was growing up, but they were willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.
23. My parents gave me direction for my behavior and activities as I was growing up and they expected me to follow their direction, but they were always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.
24. As I was growing up my parents allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and they generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.
25. My parents have always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don’t do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.
26. As I was growing up my parents often told me exactly what they wanted me to do and how they expected me to do it.
27. As I was growing up my parents gave me clear direction for my behaviors and activities, but they were also understanding when I disagreed with them.
28. As I was growing up my parents did not direct the behaviors, activities, and desires of the children in the family.
29. As I was growing up I knew what my parents expected of me in the family and they insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for their authority.
30. As I was growing up, if my parents made a decision in the family that hurt me, they were willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if they had made a mistake.