

The Association Between Past and Current Bullying Experiences and Differences in Perceptions
of Bullies of Different Age Groups

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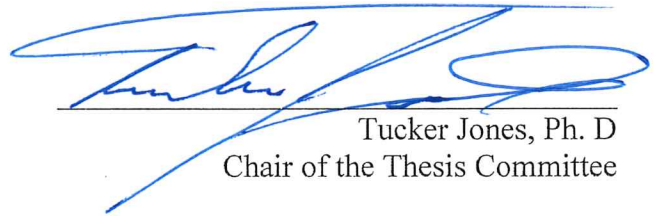
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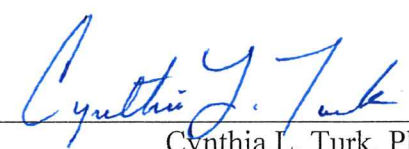
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Abstract

Despite previous and current efforts to minimize school bullying, bullying still exists in our grade schools (Eyuboglu et al., 2021). Previous research has also reported on the existence of bullying in college environments and has found that about 20-25% of university students experience traditional bullying (Lund & Ross, 2016). However, it is unclear exactly how attitudes toward bullying change from middle school to high school and college. The goals of the current study were twofold. The first goal was to assess past experiences with and current prevalence of being bullied among college students (Study 1). The second goal was to assess potential differences in attitudes and perceptions of bullies of different age groups (Study 2). Results from Study 1 suggested that early experiences of bullying are indicative of being a victim of bullying in college. Results from Study 2 indicated that perceptions of bullies in middle school, bullies in high school, and bullies in college were equally unfavorable in middle school, high school, and college.

The Association Between Past and Current Bullying Experiences and Differences in Perceptions of Bullies of Different Age Groups

Over the years, school systems have made numerous changes to curricula, security, administration, and standard rules in an attempt to reduce the prevalence of bullying. Despite making these changes, bullying behaviors and experiences in schools have remained consistent (Kennedy, 2019). It is undeniable that bullying has been a long-standing problem within schools all around the globe. Research on bullying has exponentially increased over the past few decades. In fact, researchers reviewed over 5,000 publications on PsycINFO involving the term “bully” from 2011-2017 (Volk et al., 2017).

According to Olweus, bullying can be defined as repeated exposure to “negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (1993, p. 9). There are four main types of bullying: physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, and cyberbullying (Kennedy, 2019). Physical bullying involves direct, physical acts of aggression towards a victim, such as kicking, hitting, slapping, etc. Verbal bullying involves bullying with spoken words, such as name-calling, taunting, or threatening. Relational bullying is a more indirect form of bullying and can be harder to recognize. It involves tormenting a victim via social avenues as opposed to physical contact. This form of bullying includes spreading rumors or gossiping about a victim, purposefully leaving a victim out of a social group/club and threatening to give a victim the “silent treatment” (Kennedy, 2019). In more recent years, bullying has infiltrated cyberspace, which has thus created this final form of bullying, known as cyberbullying. Victims of cyberbullying cannot escape this relatively new form of bullying due to technological advances and the omnipresence of social media. Cyberbullies can now spread hate and exploit their victims from anywhere, anytime (Wang et al., 2009). Despite previous and current efforts to

minimize school bullying, there is still a disturbingly high presence of bullies and victims in our schools (Eyuboglu et al., 2021; Modecki et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2009).

Prevalence of Bullying in the US and Gender Differences

Since cyberbullying has been on the rise, researchers have coined the term “traditional” bullying to encompass verbal bullying, physical bullying, and relational bullying in order to differentiate those forms from cyberbullying. Findings from Wang et al (2009) revealed that over half of US adolescent students have been exposed to at least one form of bullying at school (20.8% physically, 53.6% verbally, 51.4% relationally, 13.6% via cyberbullying), either by perpetration (i.e., being a bully) or victimization (i.e., being bullied). Furthermore, a meta-analysis of 80 studies involving adolescents concluded that 35% of participants were involved in traditional bullying (any bullying but cyberbullying) and 15% of participants were involved in cyberbullying (Modecki et al., 2014). A more current study involving middle schoolers and high schoolers concluded that there was a 33% prevalence rate of traditional bullying victimization and a 22.4% prevalence rate of traditional bullying perpetration (Eyuboglu et al., 2021). Additionally, this study indicated a 17% and 10.4% rate of cyberbullying victimization and perpetration, respectively (Eyuboglu et al., 2021).

Several studies have shown that boys typically engage more in bullying perpetration than girls (Cook et al., 2010; Craig et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2018). Moreover, boys have been found to be more likely to victimize both genders (Rodkin & Berger, 2008; Veenstra et al., 2007). While boys exhibit more bullying perpetration more often than girls, rates of female perpetration have been shown to rise in early adolescence (Smith et al., 2018). Previous research has suggested that boys typically engage more in verbal and physical bullying, and girls are more commonly involved in relational bullying (Smith et al., 2018). However, more recent research

has suggested otherwise. Analyses from Wang and colleagues revealed that boys were significantly associated with all types of traditional bullying (verbal, physical, and relational). Another study supported these findings. More specifically, an analysis conducted by Bradshaw and colleagues (2013) revealed that boys were likely to engage in all three types of traditional bullying (verbal, physical, and relational) while girls were most likely to engage in verbal and relational bullying.

Boys have also been shown to engage in cyberbullying more often than girls. A meta-analysis of 25 studies involving cyberbullying revealed that boys were significantly correlated ($r = 0.23, p < .05$) with cyberbullying perpetration (Guo, 2016, p. 439). This study also assessed rates of cyberbullying victimization and found that girls were significantly correlated with cyberbullying victimization ($r = 0.12, p < .05$). The finding that boys are typically more involved in cyberbullying perpetration than girls has since been replicated in other studies (Sun et al., 2016).

According to recent studies, girls seem to experience bullying victimization at a higher rate than boys (Kennedy, 2019; Pontes et al., 2018). A study from Pontes and Colleagues (2018) indicated that 25% of girls reported experiencing traditional bullying victimization, while 16% of boys reported experiencing traditional bullying victimization during the same school year. Research has also shown that boys are more likely to experience verbal and physical bullying victimization, while girls more commonly experience relational bullying victimization (Pontes et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2009). Whether subjected to physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, or cyberbullying, victims are likely to be susceptible to various adverse consequences.

Consequences of Bullying

Exposure to bullying has associations with several behavioral, emotional, and psychological consequences. Such outcomes of childhood victimization include social anxiety and social withdrawal (Coelho & Romao, 2018; Hawker & Boulton, 2000), agoraphobia (Copeland et al. 2013), general anxiety (Copeland et al., 2013; Hanish & Guerra, 2002; Hawker & Boulton, 2000), panic disorder (Copeland et al., 2013), depression (Copeland et al., 2013; Hanish & Guerra, 2002; Hawker & Boulton, 2000), suicidality (Copeland et al., 2013), loneliness and rejection (Hanish & Guerra, 2002; Hawker & Boulton, 2000), low self-esteem and dysphoria (Hawker & Boulton, 2000), and aggressive behaviors and delinquency (Hanish & Guerra, 2002). Furthermore, these unfavorable outcomes for victims and bully-victims (those who both bully and are bullied) have long-lasting effects. Symptoms of general and social anxiety, depression, suicidality, and panic disorder have persisted in childhood bully victims who are now as old as 26 years (Copeland et al., 2013). Given that several of these symptoms appear to be chronic, it is quite possible that an individual's personal victimization may also be chronic.

Previous studies have linked certain individual characteristics to chronic victimization. An observational study of boys' play groups suggested that early displays of non-assertive behavior were highly associated with chronic victimization (Shwartz et al., 1993). In these play groups, those who displayed submissive, non-assertive tendencies were identified as victims by the rest of the group by the first two observational sessions. Over the subsequent play sessions, these victims became targets for aggression more frequently over time (Shwartz et al., 1993). Furthermore, it has been found that internalizing problems (such as depression/anxiety symptoms, low self-esteem, fears, etc.) in victims can serve as both a cause and a consequence of peer victimization (Reijntjes et al., 2010). Increases in internalizing problems are associated with

high rates of victimization. However, these increases in internalizing problems also appear to increase one's vulnerability as a target for aggression and bullying. These corresponding influences suggest a perpetual cycle of chronic victimization over time (Hodges & Perry, 1999; Reijntjes et al., 2010). Results from these studies support Perry and colleagues' (1988) claim that "a stable propensity to be victimized is established by the time children reach middle school" (p. 812). It has been established that chronic victimization can be observed in middle and high school students, but less is known about how these experiences persist into college.

According to Beran and colleagues (2012), victimization in high school is likely to carry over into university. High school students who experienced cyberbullying were about three times more likely to experience it in college than high school students who did not. Similarly, high school students who experienced traditional bullying were about twice as likely to experience it in college. The most commonly reported psychological outcomes from this harassment included anger, sadness, anxiety, and embarrassment. Furthermore, it was common for victimized students to suffer academically as well. For example, many of these students endorsed experiencing poor concentration, low achievement, and absenteeism (Beran et al., 2012).

Previous research has also shown the existence of bullying in college environments. More specifically, a meta-analysis of 14 studies concluded an average of 20-25% of university students endorsed victimization of traditional bullying while in college (Lund & Ross, 2016). About 20% of students reported perpetration of traditional bullying in college. Additionally, about 10-15% of students reported cyberbullying victimization, and 5% reported cyberbullying perpetration. While the prevalence of bullying behaviors in university settings has been established, the methods and appearances of these bullying behaviors may shift as students grow older. It appears that the most common forms of college bullying are verbal attacks which

include unjustified criticism, belittling and humiliation regarding one's academic performance, and mocking personal qualities (Porhola et al., 2019).

Social Dominance and Perceptions of Bullies

Research indicates that bullies often utilize tactics to gain social power among their peers (Goodboy et al., 2016). Bullies themselves have reported using bullying tactics "to look cool" and "to feel powerful" (Farrington, 2009). This phenomenon can be explained by Social Dominance Theory, which focuses on the mechanisms by which societies maintain and perpetuate a hierarchy of group-based dominance. According to this theory, societies develop beliefs in the inequality and mistreatment of different social groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). In this context, bullies engage in bullying to create or perpetuate social hierarchies and maintain their elevated social status (Vaillancourt et al., 2003). Research shows that bullies have been successful in acquiring a high social status. In fact, bullies can often be perceived as popular by their peers, even if they are not well-liked (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005). Furthermore, social status among peers becomes increasingly important as children grow into adolescents, which may further promote bullying behaviors as a means of climbing the social ladder (Cillessen & Borch, 2006). The combination of these findings implies that as students grow older, social status becomes more crucial, and thus bullies and their tactics may be perceived by peers as more powerful and socially desirable.

There is a paucity of research on how people perceive bullies of different age groups. A longitudinal study with 133 sixth grade, 106 seventh grade, and 58 eighth grade students revealed a pattern regarding shared attitudes towards bullies and victims in middle school students (Swearer & Cary, 2003). Results from this longitudinal study found that middle school students' attitudes towards bullying became more favorable over time. Attitudes towards

bullying among sixth and seventh grade bully-victims remained fairly uniform, with victims reporting less favorable attitudes than bullies or no-status students. By the eighth grade, a significant difference was found among the victims and the bully-victims. At this point, bully-victims were endorsing more favorable attitudes towards bullying than victims. These results indicate that middle school students, especially those that both bully and are bullied, may become more favorable towards bullying by the end of middle school. It was theorized that this trend in increasing favorable attitudes towards bullies over time could have been because bullies have had more time to establish social dominance over their peers by the eighth grade (Swearer & Cary, 2003). As these bullies continue to use their tactics, their social status may rise via Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993), and their peers may view these bullies as popular and cool rather than mean and unpleasant.

Further research has found that while most college students do not approve of bullying behaviors, there is still a significant number of students in college who are supportive of bullying (Garland et al., 2016). For example, about 39% of respondents have reported that bullying is a natural part of life. Additionally, victim-blaming and minimizing the effects of bullying within this sample were most common among heterosexuals, males, and those who reported perpetration in the past. These results suggest there is a significant number of university students who are in favor of bullying and tend to blame the victim for what happens to them instead of blaming the bully for their behaviors. Further research is needed to explore deeper into the attitudes and perceptions of college-age bullies.

Overview of Current Study

The goals of the proposed study are twofold. The first goal will be to assess the past experiences with and current prevalence of bullying in a mid-size Midwestern University (Study

1). Based on previous research regarding chronic victimization (Hodges & Perry, 1999; Reijntjes et al., 2010; Schwartz et al., 1993), it was hypothesized that a significant percentage of college students perceiving current victimization will match their previous perceptions of being bullied in elementary, middle, or high school. While previous studies have evaluated the presence of bullying behaviors at the college level, the proposed study examined the association between one's perceived past status and perceived current status as a victim of bullying. These findings will extend upon prior research centered around the prevalence of bullying experiences in college (Beran et al., 2012; Lund & Ross, 2016; Porhola et al., 2019) and the tendency for childhood victims to continue being victimized in college (Beran et al., 2012; Hodges & Perry, 1999; Reijntjes et al., 2010; Schwartz et al., 1993) by offering more insight into the impact and persistence of chronic victimization.

The second goal of the proposed study was to assess potential differences in attitudes and perceptions of bullies of different age groups (Study 2). Based on the framework of Social Dominance theory as well as previous research that middle school students tend to be more supportive of bullies by eighth grade (Swearer & Cary, 2003), it was hypothesized that older bullies will be more positively regarded than younger bullies by the participants. There is little research investigating bullying at the university level, and there is even less that assesses how peoples' attitudes towards bullies may change over time. Study 2 will extend prior research regarding college bullies by focusing on how people perceive and feel about older-aged bullies. This study also aimed to replicate the trend found by Swearer and Cary (2003) in which older middle school bullies (8th grade) were better liked by their peers than were younger middle school bullies (6th/7th grade).

Standpoint Statement

I attended a very small private school from kindergarten to eighth grade. During my experience, I watched several students in my class endure relentless bullying until they eventually transferred to other schools. I was terrified of being next. I remember the stomach aches I would get every morning as soon as I entered the parking lot; I had not realized it was caused by my anxiety of being the next potential bully victim. I did not even know what anxiety was at the time. After eighth grade, I transitioned into high school carrying that same fear.

This fear has never gone away; this fear turned into what we all know as Social Anxiety Disorder. I believe my own social anxiety greatly stems from the bullying I witnessed at my childhood school. Even though a decade has passed since my days as a student there, I am still greatly affected by the memories of my experience. This is why my research interests involve assessing those who have experienced bullying or are currently experiencing bullying. I would like to understand why victims become victims and how other people perceive bullying.

Additionally, I am especially interested in bullying at the college level. Most bullying-focused research is centered around elementary/middle/and high school students. I'd like to see how bullying at the college level is similar to or different from bullying at a younger level.

Given this particular research area, one potential ethical issue is having participants recall details of their past traumatic experiences. Section 3.04 of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct requires that we avoid harm to all participants wherever foreseeable. To mitigate this ethical concern, I would utilize the Informed Consent. Before participants can begin the study, I would ensure that they are made aware of the content before consenting; I would also make it clear that participants can withdraw from the study at any point, if they choose.

Furthermore, with a controversial topic such as bullying, this study shall remain anonymous to avoid stigmatization.

Study 1

Method

Participants

Data was collected from 223 total participants in this study. Due to missing data, 7 participants were removed. Additionally, to assess the experiences of a traditional college student, 21 participants were removed due to being over 22 years of age. Participants were also asked to indicate they were taking their survey seriously with a simple *Yes* or *No* response option. Those who answered *No* would have been excluded from the final data analysis. However, all participants that met the former inclusion criteria answered *Yes*, and no additional participants were removed. Following data cleaning procedures, there were a total of 195 participants in the study. All participants were college students attending Washburn University. Participants' ages ranged from 18 - 22 years ($M = 18.73$, $SD = 1.10$). A total of 119 participants were white (61.3%), 18 participants were black (9.3%), 28 participants were Latinx (14.4%), 13 participants were Asian (6.7%), 3 participants were Native American (1.5%), and 13 participants were multiracial (6.7%). Additionally, 68 participants identified as male (34.9%), 122 participants identified as female (62.6%), 1 participant identified as transgender (0.5%), 2 participants identified as gender queer/gender non-conforming (1.0%), 1 participant identified as genderfluid (0.5%), and 1 participant chose not to disclose their gender (0.5%). Moreover, 157 participants were first year college students (80.5%), 28 participants were second year college students (14.4%), and 10 participants were third year college students (5.1%).

Table 1. Study 1 Demographic Characteristics

	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
18	116	59.5
19	42	21.5
20	20	10.3
21	8	4.1
22	9	4.6
Gender Identity		
Male	68	34.9
Female	122	62.6
Transgender	1	0.5
Genderqueer/gender non-conforming	2	1.0
Prefer not to say	1	0.5
Genderfluid	1	0.5
Race/Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	119	61.3
Black	18	9.3
Hispanic/Latino/a	28	14.4
Asian	13	6.7
Native American	3	1.5
Multiracial	13	6.7
Current Year in School		
First year	157	80.5
Second year	28	14.4
Third year	10	5.1
Annual Household Income		
Under \$20,000	16	8.3
\$20,000 - \$39,999	24	12.5

\$40,000 - \$59,999	32	16.7
\$60,000 - \$79,999	30	15.6
\$80,000 - \$99,999	17	8.9
\$100,000 - \$119,999	23	12.0
\$120,000 - \$139,999	15	7.8
\$140,000 or over	35	18.2

Materials

Demographics. Participants began with a brief demographic's questionnaire. They were all asked to provide information about their age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Additionally, participants in Study 1 were required to confirm whether they were students attending Washburn University. They were also requested to specify their current year in school. For those who were transfers from other universities, an additional question asked them to indicate which university they transferred from. These questions regarding the current school year and transfers from other universities were asked for the purpose of potential exploratory analyses. (See Appendix A for the complete demographics questionnaire.)

California Bullying Victimization Scale. Participants in Study 1 completed the California Bullying Victimization Scale (CBVS; Felix et al., 2011) to assess bullying behaviors at Washburn University. Internal reliability analyses for this scale resulted in Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .76$. The CBVS was an ideal scale for this study because the language used is easily applicable to older students in college. According to Felix et al., the CVBS has demonstrated respectable test-retest reliability ($\kappa = 0.71$). Concurrent validity analyses in comparison with the Bully Survey (Swearer, 2001) resulted in $\kappa = 0.34$ for fifth/sixth graders and $\kappa = 0.49$ for seventh/eighth graders (2011). It is theorized concurrent validity is lower than expected because

the Bully Survey begins with the definition of “bully”; the CVBS does not use the word “bully” at all in order to more accurately categorize potential victims of bullying. The CBVS includes a 9-item scale in which participants indicated how often they’ve experienced the following at school: been teased, had rumors spread about them, been left out on purpose, been hit or pushed, been threatened, been sexually harassed, had property damaged or stolen, or been harassed online by a fellow student. Participants indicated the frequency of these experiences using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from A (*Not in the past month*) to E (*Several times a week*). These responses were coded numerically, with A=1 and E = 5. Scores were added to determine participants’ status as a victim of bullying; higher scores indicate more frequent experiences of bullying victimization. (See Appendix B for the complete CBVS)

California Bullying Victimization Scale - Retrospective. In addition to assessing the prevalence of bullying behaviors at Washburn University, the association between those currently being bullied in college and those who have experienced bullying in the past was analyzed. Fortunately, a retrospective version of the CBVS was developed a few years after the original CBVS (Green et al., 2018). This retrospective version, the CBVS-R, is designed for adult respondents to report their experiences with bullying at their childhood schools. Internal reliability analyses for this scale resulted in Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .665$. The CBVS-R assesses all items included on the original CBVS. Participants were asked if they ever experienced the following at school; been teased, had rumors spread about them, been left out on purpose, been hit or pushed, been threatened, been sexually harassed, had property damaged or stolen, or been harassed online by a fellow student? Participants indicated their experiences with a simple *Yes* or *No*. All *Yes* answers from participants were coded as a “1” and added to determine participants’ status as a childhood victim of bullying. Higher scores indicate more experiences as a victim of

childhood bullying. *For all items answered Yes, participants indicated how often these events occurred at its worst by selecting A few times a year, About once a month, 2 or 3 times a month, About once a week, or Several times a week.* Participants were also asked which school setting they repeatedly experienced these events: *Elementary school, Middle school/Junior high, High school, or Since starting college.* Additionally, participants selected *A few times a year, About once a month, 2 or 3 times a month, About once a week, or Several times a week* to indicate how often these experiences occurred at its most recent. (See Appendix C for the complete CBVS-R)

Procedure

The institutional review board at Washburn University granted approval for this study. Following approval, psychology students at Washburn University enrolled to participate in order to receive class credit. Once enrolled, participants engaged in the study via an online Qualtrics survey at a centralized location at Washburn University. Initially, participants were presented with a recruitment message followed by an informed consent page detailing the study's purpose, which included providing demographic information and responding to surveys about their experiences with bullying as college students and in the past. Participants were informed that recalling past perceived bullying experiences might evoke distressing feelings and were given support resources would be available at the study's conclusion (see Appendices D and E). Upon providing consent, participants completed the brief demographics questionnaire mentioned earlier. Participants completed the California Bullying Victimization Scale (CBVS; Felix et al., 2011). Following completion of the CBVS, participants were then asked to complete the CBVS-R (Green et al., 2018). Upon submitting their responses, participants were debriefed, thanked, and provided with several mental health resources (see Appendix F). Data collection took place in October 2023.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary Analyses. After analyzing participants' responses to the CBVS, the most commonly reported bullying incident was being left out of a group or ignored on purpose in a mean or hurtful way ($M = 1.35, SD = .713$). Approximately 25.3% of respondents acknowledged experiencing being left out of a group or ignored at least once in the past month or more frequently. Among those who reported experiencing being left out of a group or ignored, 72.34% were female and 27.66% were male. Other frequently reported methods of bullying included being teased or called names in a mean or hurtful way ($M = 1.34, SD = .753$) and having sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to them in a mean or hurtful way ($M = 1.32, SD = .720$). Among those who reported being teased or called names, 55.81% were girls and 44.19% were boys. Among those who reported having sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to them, 82.05% were girls, and 17.95% were boys. Additionally, about 6.2% of participants acknowledged being hit, pushed, or physically hurt by another student at least once in the past month ($M = 1.09, SD = .377$). Among those who reported being hit, pushed, or physically hurt by another student, 75.00% were girls and 25.00% were boys. Roughly 4.6% of respondents acknowledged being teased, having rumors spread, or being threatened through the internet/text messaging by another student at their school at least once in the past month ($M = 1.08, SD = .410$). Among those who reported being teased, having rumors spread, or being threatened through the internet/text messaging by another student, 88.89% were girls, and 11.11% were boys. Although these frequencies represent specific differences in how boys and girls experience bullying, an independent samples t -test revealed that gender identity did not significantly affect overall responses to the CBVS, $t(188) = -.33, p = .74$. Males' overall perceived bullying

experiences ($M = 1.20$, $SD = .35$) did not differ from females' overall perceived bullying experiences ($M = 1.22$, $SD = .37$).

These results indicate that bullying behaviors were present at Washburn University at the time data was collected. These behaviors encompass verbal bullying, relational bullying, physical bullying, and cyberbullying. The most commonly reported types of bullying were relational and verbal in nature, while cyberbullying was the least reported. These findings suggest that all forms of bullying were recently experienced at Washburn University, although some were more perceived than others. Regarding gender differences, no significant differences were found between males and females and their overall bullying experiences. Nonetheless, males and females exhibited different frequencies of specific bullying experiences. For example, girls more frequently experienced all types of bullying victimization. Verbal bullying in the form of being teased or called names was the most commonly shared experience between girls and boys. Moreover, cyberbullying resulted in the highest discrepancy of reports between girls and boys, closely followed by experiencing sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made in a mean or hurtful way.

Primary Analyses. To test the hypothesis that early perceived experiences with bullying are associated with perceived victimization in college, a bivariate correlation analysis was conducted using the added scores from the CBVS and the CBVS-R. The results revealed an association between participants who were bullied in their childhoods ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.90$) and participants being bullied in college ($M = 1.21$, $SD = 0.35$). Using a Pearson r correlation, a weak yet significant positive correlation was found between childhood bully victims and bully victims in college ($r = .183$, $p < .011$).

To determine the extent to which perceived early experiences of being bullied are predictive of perceived victimization in college, a simple linear regression analysis was also conducted. A significant regression was found, $F(1, 193) = 6.66, p = .01$. The R^2 was .033, indicating that early experiences of bullying explained approximately 3.3% of the variance in being a victim of bullying in college. The regression equation was:

$$\text{CBVS score} = 1.12 + .03(\text{CBVS-R score})$$

That is, for each one item endorsed on the CBVS-R, the predicted items endorsed on the CBVS increased by approximately .03 items. Confidence intervals indicated that we can be 95% certain that the slope to predict being a victim of bullying in college and past experiences with bullying is between .008 and .056.

These findings support the hypothesis that participants' perceptions of being a victim of bullying in elementary/middle/high school is associated with their perceptions of being a victim of bullying as a college student. Furthermore, linear regression analyses suggest previous experiences with being bullied are predictive of being bullied in college. It is important to note that, although a significant correlation was observed, the mean scores for college students experiencing bullying victimization were relatively low, indicating a smaller percentage of students reported perceptions of bullying victimization. However, this percentage of students represents a significant population within the student body, and those currently experiencing bullying victimization have a history of being victimized during their childhoods.

Study 2

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were individuals who opted to participate via Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Respondents were compensated with a payment of \$3.00 for their participation. The payment of \$3.00 was decided in relation to the average minimum wage, assuming participation would take up to approximately 20 minutes. A total of 311 participants contributed data to this study. However, 7 participants were excluded due to missing data. Additionally, 35 participants were removed for completing the survey too quickly (under three and a half minutes), 38 participants were excluded for providing uniform responses (for example, several respondents provided identical responses to the open ended question, stating "he behave like a rugged"), 11 participants were removed for failing the attention check which was used to ensure respondents were present and engaged with the content of the study, and 6 participants were excluded for having ages 3 standard deviations above the mean age of 32.22 years. As a result, the final sample consisted of 214 participants.

For the remaining participants, the ages ranged from 18 to 58 years, with a mean age of 32.22 years ($SD = 6.81$). Regarding racial/ethnic composition, 204 participants identified as white (95.3%), 1 participant identified as Latinx (0.5%), 8 participants identified as Asian (3.7%), and 1 participant identified as Native American (0.5%). In terms of gender identity, 139 participants identified as male (65.0%), while 75 participants identified as female (35.0%). A total of 69 participants were assigned to the middle school condition, 80 to the high school condition, and 65 to the college condition.

Table 2. Study 2 Demographic Characteristics

	<i>n</i>	%
Age		
18-25	50	23.4
26-35	122	57.0
36-45	34	15.9
46-58	8	3.7
Gender Identity		
Male	139	65.0
Female	75	35.0
Race/Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	204	95.3
Hispanic/Latino/a	1	0.5
Asian	8	3.7
Native American	1	0.5
Annual Household Income		
Under \$20,000	4	1.9
\$20,000 - \$39,999	29	13.6
\$40,000 - \$59,999	71	33.2
\$60,000 - \$79,999	45	21.1
\$80,000 - \$99,999	38	17.8
\$100,000 - \$119,999	16	7.4
\$120,000 - \$139,999	5	2.3
\$140,000 or over	6	2.8

Materials

Demographics. Participants started with the same demographic's questionnaire used in Study 1 (See Appendix G).

Vignettes. Participants were instructed to read one of three vignettes, each depicting a character engaging in bullying behaviors. These vignettes were crafted by the researchers specifically for this study and were based on the content of the California Bullying Victimization Scale (CBVS), covering various types of bullying. In line with existing research indicating that boys are typically more involved in bullying perpetration than girls (Cook et al., 2010; Craig et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2018), the character portrayed in these vignettes was male. The vignettes were essentially identical, with the only difference being the setting in which the vignette takes place: middle school, high school, and college. This manipulation of the setting served as the only variation in the vignettes, as the age of the bully served as the predictor variable (please see Appendix H).

#1: Bobby is in middle school. Bobby is not nice to his peers. He teases and spreads rumors about his classmates. Sometimes he even threatens them and physically pushes them around. Additionally, Bobby makes sexual jokes and comments targeted at his female classmates. Bobby also steals from people, and he likes to make mean comments about other students on the internet.

#2 Bobby is in high school. Bobby is not nice to his peers. He teases and spreads rumors about his classmates. Sometimes he even threatens them and physically pushes them around. Additionally, Bobby makes sexual jokes and comments targeted at his female classmates. Bobby also steals from people, and he likes to make mean comments about other students on the internet.

#3 Bobby is in college. Bobby is not nice to his peers. He teases and spreads rumors about his classmates. Sometimes he even threatens them and physically pushes them around. Additionally, Bobby makes sexual jokes and comments targeted at his female classmates. Bobby

also steals from people, and he likes to make mean comments about other students on the internet.

The Bully Survey. This study incorporated a modified section from Swearer and Cary's Bully Survey (2003). The Bully Survey is a comprehensive tool that assesses experiences with bullying victimization, perpetration, witnessing, and attitudes towards bullying. Psychometric analyses have shown strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79 for physical bullying and 0.85 for verbal bullying (Swearer & Cary, 2003).

For this study, only section D from the Bully Survey was utilized, focusing on people's attitudes towards bullying. This section consists of a 14-item measure, but due to human error, the last item was inadvertently omitted, resulting in a 13-item measure. The questions were slightly adapted to fit the context of the vignettes. Participants rated their agreement with each item using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 - *Totally False* to 5 - *Totally True*. Higher scores indicated more pro-bullying attitudes.

An internal reliability analysis revealed a low Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .335$ for the 13-item survey. To address this, three items (items 4, 5, and 11) were removed, resulting in a new 10-item survey with improved internal consistency ($\alpha = .731$). Despite this adjustment, subsequent analyses showed no significant differences in results between the 13-item and 10-item surveys. Therefore, the final results were reported from the analysis using the 10-item survey due to its better internal consistency, providing increased confidence in the measured constructs (See Appendix I for the complete modified section of the Bully Survey).

California Bullying Victimization Scale - Retrospective. For the purposes of exploratory analyses, participants of this study also filled out the California Bullying

Victimization Scale-Retrospective (CBVS-R; Green et al., 2018). This is the same survey that was used in Study 1. The CBVS-R is designed for adult respondents to report their experiences with bullying at their childhood schools. Internal reliability analyses for this scale resulted in Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .887$.

Procedure

The institutional review board at Washburn University approved this study. Data was collected in November 2023. After obtaining approval, this study was published on Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk), where participants could voluntarily partake in this study. MTurk is a crowdsourcing website where businesses and researchers can hire online users to perform virtual tasks for a small payment in return. MTurk is run by Amazon, and anyone with a computer can create an account and complete virtual tasks of their choosing. Payment is decided by the businesses and researchers who publish their online tasks to be completed. Upon choosing to complete the surveys, participants were shown an informed consent page that stated they would be asked to provide demographic information, read a short passage, and answer a survey in response to that passage, and answer a survey regarding their past experiences with being bullied. Participants were warned they may experience distressing feelings from recalling past bullying experiences and that resources would be provided at the end of the study for support (please see Appendix J and K). After providing consent, participants were presented with a brief demographic's questionnaire. Participants were then randomized into one of three vignette groups: middle school bully, high school bully, or college bully. After reading their vignette, participants provided their responses to the modified 13-item bully survey, which asked about their perceptions of the bully they have just read about. Participants were then prompted to fill out the CBVS-R which assessed participants' past experiences with being bullied. Finally,

participants were debriefed and thanked as well as provided with several mental health resources (please see Appendix L). This survey took approximately 10 minutes and participants were compensated with \$3 for completing the study.

Results and Discussion

To test the hypothesis that participants' attitudes will be more favorable towards older bullies than younger bullies, a fixed effects one-way ANOVA with three groups was conducted. The independent variable for this analysis (categorical) was the age of the bully in each vignette. More specifically, the bully in condition 1 was in middle school, the bully in condition 2 was in high school, and the bully in condition 3 was in college. The dependent variable (quantitative) were the potential differences in how people responded after reading their conditioned vignettes.

Results from the ANOVA with the 10-item modified Bulley Survey ($\alpha = .731$) revealed that participants' overall attitudes towards bullies did not significantly differ between the age of the bully, $F(2, 211) = 0.73, p = .482$, with an effect size $\eta^2 = .007$. Scores in attitudes about the middle school bully ($M = 2.64, SD = 0.55$), high school bully ($M = 2.52, SD = 0.62$), and college bully ($M = 2.58, SD = 0.62$) were equally unfavorable. Despite trying to increase this study's internal reliability, changing the age of the bully still did not significantly affect participants' attitudes towards the bully.¹

An additional ANOVA analysis was run which included scores from the CBVS-R as a covariate. Although the scores from the CBVS-R turned out to be significant as a variable ($p < .001$), the effect of the CBVS-R scores with respect to different age groups was not significant. Results indicated that, even after controlling for previous experiences with being bullied, participants' overall attitudes towards bullies did not significantly change between age groups, F

(2, 212) = 1.54, $p = .22$, with an effect size $\eta^2 = .015$. Scores in attitudes about the middle school bully ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.70$), high school bully ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 0.65$), and college bully ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 0.72$) were still equally unfavorable.

Overall, the results reported here failed to support the hypothesis that older bullies will be more positively perceived than younger bullies. According to the results of this study, bullies of different age groups were not perceived differently from one another. A potential reason for the rejection of this hypothesis includes the effectiveness of antibullying campaigns across school campuses and social media. There is an increasing amount of antibullying content on social media as well as negative portrayals of bullies in movies and television. Moreover, meta-analyses have shown that the implementation of antibullying programs have been successful (Gaffney et al., 2019; Jimenez et al., 2016). Perhaps participants have become more aware of the consequences of bullying, and they do not support bullies of any age group.

Additionally, it is possible that perceptions from reading a vignette are very different from that of real-life experiences. Vignettes may fail to fully capture all elements of real experiences or convey all aspects of reality which can raise concerns about the validity of using vignettes (Hughes and Huby, 2004; Erfanian et al., 2020). For example, the vignettes did not describe any positive traits of the bully that could have been observed in real-life experiences. The vignettes only described bullying behaviors the vignette character engaged in, which were all negative traits. Furthermore, reading a vignette is very different from experiencing something first-hand. Participants did not meet Bobby themselves, nor did they experience the influence of Bobby's presence, or even the reactions of Bobby's peers. This detachment from the vignettes and its characters may cause participants to respond differently than if they recounted and reflected on their own experiences (Hughes and Huby, 2002; Erfanian et al., 2020). Furthermore,

participants were not given details regarding Bobby's social status. Taking into consideration Social Dominance theory, knowing the social status of Bobby among his peers could have further influenced participants' own perceptions of Bobby. For example, a study from Snyder and colleagues (2008) found that in a group of women who read different vignettes, they were more likely to choose a male partner with higher dominance traits described in their vignette. Results from this study indicate suggested traits of social dominance may have an effect on the way vignette characters are perceived by participants (Snyder et al., 2008).

General Discussion

The current investigation focused on analyzing the association between perceived past and current experiences of bullying (Study 1) as well as peoples' perceptions of bullies of various age groups (Study 2). Preliminary analyses for study 1 suggest a presence of all types of bullying behaviors at Washburn University, with relational and verbal bullying being the most commonly perceived bullying victimization experiences. Girls were shown to experience all types of bullying more frequently than boys. These results are congruent with previous research regarding gender differences of bullying victimization (Kennedy, 2019; Pontes et al., 2018). Results from Study 1 supported the hypothesis that perceived victimization in elementary/middle/high school is predictive of perceived victimization of bullying as a college student. A significant correlation was found between those with perceived past bullying experiences and those with perceived current bullying experiences. Results from this study were congruent with previous research regarding chronic victimization (Hodges & Perry, 1999; Reijntjes et al., 2010; Shwartz et al., 1993).

These results provide valuable insight into the perpetuation of bullying victimization. Knowing this information sheds more light on the long-term consequences of bullying and the

necessity of implementing bullying prevention programs when students are young. Previous research has supported the claim that beginning prevention at early stages of childhood can help reduce the frequency of bullying behaviors in schools (Repo & Sajaniemi, 2015; Saracho, 2016). In fact, such programs have been specifically designed for implementation as early as kindergarten. One such program created by Dr. Sherryll Kraizer, the Take a Stand Bullying Prevention Program, is designed for children from kindergarten through fifth grade. The Take a Stand Bullying Prevention Program has been administered all throughout the U.S. and it has shown success in reducing bullying experiences among young students (Coalition for Children). These early prevention strategies can provide many benefits, such as fostering empathy and respect for peers, and introducing positive behavioral norms. Early prevention programs can also be very educational for students, teachers, parents, and clinicians about the dynamics of bullying, its consequences, and helpful strategies for intervention. By addressing bullying early and consistently, prevention programs can contribute to long-term reductions in bullying behaviors, promoting safer and more inclusive school environments.

Results from Study 2 did not support the hypothesis that participants will indicate more positive attitudes towards older bullies than younger bullies. Participants appeared to have similar, unfavorable attitudes towards middle school bullies, high school bullies, and college bullies. These results do not fit within the framework of Social Dominance theory and bullying (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004; Cillessen & Rose, 2005; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993; Vaillancourt et al., 2003), nor did they replicate the trend found by Swearer & Cary (2003). Potential reasons for the rejection of this hypothesis include the efficacy of bullying prevention programs and anti-bullying campaigns (Gaffney et al., 2019; Jimenez et al., 2016; Repo & Sajaniemi, 2015; Saracho, 2016). Another possible reason for the rejection of this hypothesis was the discrepancy

between reading a vignette and having real-life experiences (Hughes & Huby, 2002; Hughes & Huby, 2004; Erfanian et al., 2020).

Despite the unexpected results, this study serves as a valuable contribution to the literature on bullying. A meta-analysis on the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs concluded that effect sizes were largest for older students, ages 11 and up (Ttofi & Farrington, 2012). The writers of this study called for more research investigating the intricacies and variations of bullying by age group. Moreover, a recent study examining bullying differences by age revealed as students grow older, typical bullying behaviors begin to change (Pichel et al., 2021). More specifically, younger students most often engaged in physical bullying, but over time, these bullying behaviors became more verbal and relational in nature. Results from this study suggest that adjusting strategies for targeting specific bullying behaviors for distinct age groups will have the most impact on bullying prevention (Pichel et al., 2021). Taken together, this previous research highlights the necessity for additional research regarding the variations in experiences and perceptions of bullying among different age groups. The current study was, to our knowledge, among the first to assess attitudes towards bullying as a function of the bully's age, which can inspire further exploration and curiosity for future researchers. The results from the current study can encourage future researchers to delve deeper into the factors that shape attitudes towards bullying. The information from the current study can also provide educators, clinicians, and the general public with a deeper understanding of the impact and influence of bullying across different age groups. This knowledge can inform the development of more targeted and effective prevention programs and interventions (Pichel et al., 2021) as well as build upon previous research focusing on bullying variations by age group (Pichel et al., 2021; Ttofi & Farrington, 2012).

Limitations and Future Directions

As with all research, the current study is limited. The use of online platforms like Amazon's Mechanical Turk raises concerns about data integrity, including the possibility of participants using automated scripts or bots to complete surveys. This could undermine the accuracy and validity of the collected data, as responses may not reflect genuine human perspectives. For example, the last item on the Bully Survey is an open-ended question that prompts participants to add any additional thoughts they have about the bully from their vignette. Several of these open-ended answers were identical, and they included phrases such as “Bobby is bad on the rumor college” and “He behave like a rugged”. While we cannot know for certain if these were real human responses or “bot” responses, it raises concerns. Knowing this, although Amazon's Mechanical Turk provides convenience and efficiency in data collection, the reliability of data obtained through this platform may be questionable. Future research should explore the extent to which responses obtained via Mechanical Turk accurately represent participants' attitudes and behaviors.

The low internal reliability of the modified survey used to assess attitudes towards bullying in Study 2 is an additional limitation. A low internal reliability score suggests that the survey items may not consistently measure the intended construct, which raises concerns about the validity and accuracy of the survey results. However, there are very limited options of instrumentation for assessing attitudes and perceptions towards bullies themselves. Future researchers should consider qualitative studies with semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow for open-ended questions, encouraging participants to recall past experiences and express their attitudes in their own words. This approach can uncover valuable qualitative data that may not be effectively captured through quantitative surveys alone.

Furthermore, this study only assessed for attitudes and perceptions of a male bully. While assessing these attitudes and perceptions towards a male bully has been informative, future research should involve assessing perceptions towards a female bully as well. Gender differences in bullying behaviors have been shown throughout decades of research (Guo, 2016; Kennedy, 2019; Smith et al., 2018). Analyzing attitudes towards a female bully and a male bully will offer additional insight into how gender may influence others' perceptions of their behaviors. Looking more closely into how gender may interact with others' attitudes and perceptions may also demonstrate gender differences in social dominance within peer groups and broader social contexts.

Conclusion

Moving forward, it is essential to maintain efforts to advance our understanding of the multifaceted dynamics of bullying as well as the underlying psychological, social, and environmental factors that perpetuate these behaviors. Furthermore, we must continue to assess the long-term repercussions of bullying across various life stages, including childhood, adolescence, and adulthood to grasp the full extent of its impact on individuals and their overall wellbeing. A more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of bullying will allow us to spread helpful and accurate information, design the most effective prevention/intervention strategies for specific age groups, and reduce the stigma around bullying and its effect on perpetrators, victims, and bystanders.

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Footnote

¹ After running the ANOVA analysis with the full 13-item modified Bully Survey ($\alpha = .335$), it was found that participants overall attitudes towards bullies did not significantly differ between the age of the bully, $F(2, 211) = 1.13, p = .324$, with an effect size $\eta^2 = .011$. Scores in attitudes about the middle school bully ($M = 2.73, SD = 0.35$), high school bully ($M = 2.65, SD = 0.42$), and college bully ($M = 2.73, SD = 0.37$) were still equally unfavorable. Changing the age of the bully did not significantly affect participants' attitudes towards the bully.

However, after assessing the differences between female perceptions and male perceptions, results suggested females trended towards a value of significance ($p = .087$, with an effect size $\eta^2 = .001$ for males and $.066$ for females). Females expressed slightly more favorable attitudes towards the middle school bully ($M = 2.71, SD = .40$) and the college bully ($M = 2.76, SD = .45$) than they did towards the high school bully ($M = 2.49, SD = .49$). These mean differences are not significant, but they are near significance. As these results were indicated using the full 13-item Bully Survey, they were not mentioned in the results section of this study, as the 10-item Bully Survey yielded higher power.

Appendix A
Demographics Questionnaire (Study 1)

I identify as

- Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Gender Queer/Gender non-conforming
 - I'd rather not say
 - Other (Please specify)
-

Please enter your age. _____

What is your race/ethnicity?

- White/Caucasian
 - Black
 - Hispanic/Latino/a
 - Asian
 - Native American
 - Pacific Islander
 - Middle Eastern
 - Multiracial
 - Other (Please specify)
-

What is your current year in school?

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year
- Fifth (or more) year

[If students indicate that they are in their second, third, fourth, or fifth year...]

- Have you been at Washburn University the entire time?
- Yes
- No

- [If the participant selects "No"] In the space provided below, please describe the institution(s) you attended before transferring to Washburn University.
-

What is your family's estimated annual household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$89,999
- \$90,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$109,999
- \$110,000 - \$119,999
- \$120,000 - \$129,999
- \$130,000 - \$139,999
- \$140,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

Appendix B

California Bullying Victimization Scale

The following are some things that can happen in school. Please answer how often each of these things have happened to you at Washburn University.

Not in the past month	Once in the past month	2 or 3 times in the past month	About once a week	Several times a week
A	B	C	D	E

How often have you...

- Been teased or called names in a mean or hurtful way?
- Had rumors or gossip spread in a mean or hurtful way behind your back?
- Been left out of a group or ignored on purpose in a mean or hurtful way?
- Been hit, pushed, or physically hurt in a mean or hurtful way?
- Been threatened in a mean or hurtful way?
- Had sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to me in a mean or hurtful way?
- Had your things stolen or damaged in a mean or hurtful way?
- Been teased, had rumors spread, or threatened through the internet (like on a social network site or e-mail) or text messaging in a mean or hurtful way by a student at your school?

I am taking this survey seriously

Yes

No

Appendix C

California Bullying Victimization Scale- Retrospective

These questions are about your entire childhood experience. For the purposes of this study, the subsequent “No” or “Yes” questions will be referred to as “STEM” questions in the following sections of this survey.

- | 1. Have you <u>EVER</u> had any of the following things happen to you at school, in a mean or hurtful way? | No | Yes |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 2. Been teased or called names in a mean or hurtful way? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Had rumors or gossip spread in a mean or hurtful way behind your back? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Been left out of a group or ignored on purpose in a mean or hurtful way? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Been hit, pushed, or physically hurt in a mean or hurtful way? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Been threatened in a mean or hurtful way? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Had sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to me in a mean or hurtful way? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Had your things stolen or damaged in a mean or hurtful way? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. Been teased, had rumors spread, or threatened through the internet (like on a social network site or e-mail) or text messaging in a mean or hurtful way by a student at your school? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

SKIP TO THE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH EACH OF THE ABOVE STEM QUESTIONS THAT IS ANSWERED “YES”. IF NONE ARE ANSWERED “YES”, SKIP TO NEXT SECTION

IF YES TO TEASING STEM QUESTION

1. **You mentioned that you were teased or called names in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when being teased or called names was at its worst, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT RUMOR SPREADING**)
 - About once a month (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT RUMOR SPREADING**)
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week
2. **During which of the following times in your life were you repeatedly teased or called names in a mean or hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
 - Elementary school
 - Middle school/Junior high
 - High school

- o Since starting college
- 3. **During the most recent time someone teased you or called you names, how often did it occur?**
 - o A few times a year
 - o About once a month
 - o 2 or 3 times a month
 - o About once a week
 - o Several times a week

IF YES TO RUMOR SPREADING STEM QUESTION

1. **You mentioned that someone spread rumors or gossiped about you behind your back in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when someone spreading rumors or gossiping behind your back was at its worst, how often did it occur?**
 - o A few times a year (SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT IGNORING)
 - o About once a month (SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT IGNORING)
 - o 2 or 3 times a month
 - o About once a week
 - o Several times a week
2. **During which of the following times in your life did someone repeatedly spread rumors about you or gossip behind your back in a mean or hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
 - o Elementary school
 - o Middle school/Junior high
 - o High school
 - o Since starting college
3. **During the most recent time someone spread rumors about you or gossiped behind your back, how often did it occur?**
 - o A few times a year
 - o About once a month
 - o 2 or 3 times a month
 - o About once a week
 - o Several times a week

IF YES TO IGNORING STEM QUESTION

1. **You mentioned that someone left you out of a group or ignored you on purpose in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when being left out of a group or ignored on purpose was at its worst, how often did it occur?**

- o A few times a year (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT HITTING**)
 - o About once a month (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT HITTING**)
 - o 2 or 3 times a month
 - o About once a week
 - o Several times a week
2. **During which of the following times in your life were you repeatedly left out of a group or ignored in a mean and hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
- o Elementary school
 - o Middle school/Junior high
 - o High school
 - o Since starting college
3. **During the most recent time someone left you out of a group or ignored you on purpose, how often did it occur?**
- o A few times a year
 - o About once a month
 - o 2 or 3 times a month
 - o About once a week
 - o Several times a week

IF YES TO HITTING STEM QUESTION

1. **You mentioned that someone hit, pushed, or physically hurt you in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when being hit, pushed, or physically hurt was at its worst, how often did it occur?**
- o A few times a year (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT THREATENING**)
 - o About once a month (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT THREATENING**)
 - o 2 or 3 times a month
 - o About once a week
 - o Several times a week
2. **During which of the following times in your life were you repeatedly hit, pushed, or physically hurt in a mean and hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
- o Elementary school
 - o Middle school/Junior high
 - o High school
 - o Since starting college
3. **During the most recent time someone hit, pushed, or physically hurt you, how often did it occur?**
- o A few times a year

- About once a month
- 2 or 3 times a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week

IF YES TO THREATENING STEM QUESTION

1. **You mentioned that someone threatened you in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when being threatened was at its worst, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT SEXUAL COMMENTS**)
 - About once a month (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT SEXUAL COMMENTS**)
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week

2. **During which of the following times in your life were you repeatedly threatened in a mean and hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
 - Elementary school
 - Middle school/Junior high
 - High school
 - Since starting college

3. **During the most recent time someone threatened you, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year
 - About once a month
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week

IF YES TO SEXUAL COMMENTS STEM QUESTIONS

1. **You mentioned that someone made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures about you in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when the sexual comments, jokes, or gestures was at its worst, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT STEALING**)
 - About once a month (**SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT STEALING**)
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week

2. **During which of the following times in your life did someone repeatedly make sexual comments, jokes, or gestures about you in a mean and hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
 - Elementary school
 - Middle school/Junior high
 - High school
 - Since starting college

3. **During the most recent time someone made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures about you, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year

 - About once a month
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week

IF YES TO STEALING STEM QUESTION

1. **You mentioned that someone stole or damaged your things in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when having your things stolen or damaged was at its worst, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year (SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT THE INTERNET)
 - About once a month (SKIP TO NEXT SECTION ABOUT THE INTERNET)
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week

2. **During which of the following times in your life did someone repeatedly steal or damage your things in a mean and hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
 - Elementary school
 - Middle school/Junior high
 - High school
 - Since starting college

3. **During the most recent time someone stole or damaged your things, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year
 - About once a month
 - 2 or 3 times a month

- About once a week
- Several times a week

IF YES TO INTERNET STEM QUESTION

1. **You mentioned that someone teased you, spread rumors about you, or threatened you through the Internet (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) or text messaging in a way that was mean and hurtful. During the time in your life when this was at its worst, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year (**SKIP TO THE LAST QUESTION**)
 - About once a month (**SKIP TO THE LAST QUESTION**)
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week

2. **During which of the following times in your life did you repeatedly experience teasing, having rumors spread about you, or being threatened through the Internet (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) or text messaging in a mean and hurtful way (check all that are true)?**
 - Elementary school
 - Middle school/Junior high
 - High school
 - Since starting college

3. **During the most recent time someone teased you, spread rumors about you, or threatened you through the Internet (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) or text messaging, how often did it occur?**
 - A few times a year
 - About once a month
 - 2 or 3 times a month
 - About once a week
 - Several times a week

4. **In which of the following ways did someone tease you, spread rumors about you, or threaten you (check all that apply)?**
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - Text messaging

- E-mail
- Other (describe _____)

Appendix D

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study you will receive class credit for your PY100 course.

Participation will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer a few questions about yourself, and you will then be asked to complete two short surveys. All responses will be anonymously submitted and we will not be asking for your name.

Please note that this study is intended only for those who are the age of 18 and older. If you are 17 years old or younger at this time, please exit the study now.

**This study will be inquiring about your personal experiences with bullying. If you are not comfortable with answering questions about this topic, please refrain from participating in this study. Resources will be available at the end of this study to provide support if you experience distress.

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form (Study 1)

PROJECT TITLE: Prevalence and Perceptions of College Bullying

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Grace Peterson, B.A.

CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: Grace Peterson.

grace.peterson@washburn.edu

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION: Marian Jamison, Ph.D., Chair,

Washburn University Institutional Review Board. irb@washburn.edu

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: This study was designed to assess the prevalence of bullying behaviors at Washburn University. Additionally, this study will assess the association between those who have previously been bullied and those who are currently being bullied.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: After providing us with your demographic information, you will complete a survey about your personal experiences with bullying as a college student at Washburn University. You will then be asked to complete a second survey about your personal experiences with bullying in the past.

LENGTH OF STUDY: This study will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

RISKS ANTICIPATED: You may experience distressing feelings while answering questions about your personal experiences with bullying. Resources will be provided at the end of the survey to assist in decreasing this potential discomfort.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: You will receive course credit for your participation in this study. It is also possible that the results from the current investigation will be used to facilitate professional development opportunities designed to enhance students' on-campus experiences.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses will be strictly anonymous and confidential, and will be used only by the researchers for approved research purposes. Further, your responses will be electronically stored and password protected.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may

withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation or penalty.

I verify that by clicking the button below, I am indicating that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described. By providing responses to this survey, I acknowledge that I have received this consent information. Please keep or print a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix F

Debriefing Statement (Study 1)

We understand bullying can be a sensitive subject and it may cause negative emotions. If your participation in this study has brought you discomforting feelings, here are some resources for help and support:

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

Call: 988

Text: 988

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

Call: 1-800-273-8255

Text: 741741

The Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ+):

Call: 1-866-488-7386

Text: "START" to 678678

Valeo Behavioral Health Care:

Call: 785-233-1730

Stormont Vail Behavioral Health Center:

Call: 785-270-4600

Washburn Counseling Services:

Call: 785-670-3100

Washburn Psychological Services Clinic:

Call: 785-670-1750

For additional information on bullying and prevention, please visit [Stop Bullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov) to learn more.

Thank you for participating in this study. It would not be possible to conduct research without the help of students like you.

There were no right or wrong answers to any of the items you responded to today; we were simply interested in your personal experiences and opinions. Only researchers involved in the study will have access to your responses, and your responses will be kept confidential.

If you would like to know more about this study, or have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, please feel free to contact me, Grace Peterson, at grace.peterson@washburn.edu.

Please do not disclose the research procedures and/or purpose of this study to anyone who might participate in the future, as this could affect the results of the study. We genuinely appreciate your cooperation and support of our research by keeping your knowledge about this study confidential. Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix G

Demographics Questionnaire (Study 2)

Note to IRB Committee members: This questionnaire is an adaptation of an online survey that will be administered via Qualtrics. All participants will respond by selecting (i.e., “clicking on”) their response to each item unless otherwise instructed

I identify as

- Male
 - Female
 - Transgender
 - Gender Queer/Gender non-conforming
 - I'd rather not say
 - Other (Please specify)
-

Please enter your age. _____

*Results from all blank entries and all entries under 18 will be omitted from data collection

What is your race/ethnicity?

- White/Caucasian
 - Black
 - Hispanic/Latino/a
 - Asian
 - Native American
 - Pacific Islander
 - Middle Eastern
 - Multiracial
 - Other (Please specify)
-

What is your family's estimated annual household income?

- Under \$20,000
- \$20,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$39,999
- \$40,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$59,999
- \$60,000 - \$69,999
- \$70,000 - \$79,999
- \$80,000 - \$89,999

- o \$90,000 - \$99,999
- o \$100,000 - \$109,999
- o \$110,000 - \$119,999
- o \$120,000 - \$129,999
- o \$130,000 - \$139,999
- o \$140,000 - \$149,999
- o \$150,000 or more

Appendix H

Vignettes (Study 2)

#1: Bobby is in middle school. Bobby is not nice to his peers. He teases and spreads rumors about his classmates. Sometimes he even threatens them and physically pushes them around. Additionally, Bobby makes sexual jokes and comments targeted at his female classmates. Bobby also steals from people, and he likes to make mean comments about other students on the internet.

#2 Bobby is in high school. Bobby is not nice to his peers. He teases and spreads rumors about his classmates. Sometimes he even threatens them and physically pushes them around. Additionally, Bobby makes sexual jokes and comments targeted at his female classmates. Bobby also steals from people, and he likes to make mean comments about other students on the internet.

#3 Bobby is in college. Bobby is not nice to his peers. He teases and spreads rumors about his classmates. Sometimes he even threatens them and physically pushes them around. Additionally, Bobby makes sexual jokes and comments targeted at his female classmates. Bobby also steals from people, and he likes to make mean comments about other students on the internet.

Appendix I
The Bully Survey

Using the following scale, please indicate the extent to which you agree with each sentence.

1	2	3	4	5
Totally False	Sort of False	Both True and False	Sort of True	Totally True

- Most people who get bullied by Bobby ask for it
- Bobby is a problem for his classmates
- Bobby is popular
- I don't like Bobby
- I am afraid of Bobby
- Bobby is good for wimpy kids
- Bobby hurts his classmates
- I would be friends with Bobby
- I can understand why Bobby would act this way
- I think Bobby should be punished
- Bobby doesn't mean to hurt anybody
- Bobby makes his classmates feel bad
- I feel sorry for Bobby's classmates

Please write any other thoughts you have about Bobby and his behavior

Appendix J

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research study. Upon completion of participation in this study, you will receive \$3.00 as compensation.

Participation will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You will be asked to answer a few questions about yourself. A brief passage will be presented for you to read, and you will then be asked to answer questions regarding this passage. Next, you will be guided to a second survey for you to complete. This second survey will be unrelated to the reading passage. Please note that all responses will be anonymously submitted and we will not be asking for your name.

Please note that this study is intended only for those who are the age of 18 and older. If you are 17 years old or younger at this time, please exit the study now.

**This study will be inquiring about your personal experiences with bullying. If you are not comfortable with answering questions about this topic, please refrain from participating in this study. Resources will be available at the end of this study to provide support if you experience distress.

Appendix K

Informed Consent Form (Study 2)

PROJECT TITLE: Prevalence and Perceptions of College Bullying

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Grace Peterson, B.A.

CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: Grace Peterson,
grace.peterson@washburn.edu

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION: Marian Jamison, Ph.D., Chair,
Washburn University Institutional Review Board. irb@washburn.edu

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: This study was designed to assess the difference in peoples' attitudes towards bullies of different age groups. Additionally, this study will assess participants past experiences with bullying.

PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED: After providing us with your demographic information, you will read a short passage and then complete a survey regarding the passage you have just read. You will then be asked to complete a second survey about your personal experiences with bullying in the past.

LENGTH OF STUDY: This study will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

RISKS ANTICIPATED: You may experience distressing feelings while answering questions about your personal experiences with bullying. Resources will be provided at the end of the survey to assist in decreasing this potential discomfort.

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: You will receive payment of \$3.00 as compensation for your participation in this study. It is also possible that the results from the current investigation will be used to facilitate professional development opportunities designed to enhance students' experiences in school.

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Your responses will be strictly anonymous and confidential, and will be used only by the researchers for approved research purposes. Further, your responses will be electronically stored and password protected.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation. However, I also understand that I will only be financially compensated for completing the current study.

I verify that by clicking the button below, I am indicating that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms

described. By providing responses to this survey, I acknowledge that I have received this consent information. Please keep or print a copy of this form for your records.

Appendix L

Debriefing Statement (Study 2)

We understand bullying can be a sensitive subject and it may cause negative emotions. If your participation in this study has brought you discomforting feelings, here are some resources for help and support:

National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

Call: 988

Text: 988

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

Call: 1-800-273-8255

Text: 741741

The Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ+):

Call: 1-866-488-7386

Text: "START" to 678678

For additional information on bullying and prevention, please visit [Stop Bullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov) to learn more.

Thank you for participating in this study. It would not be possible to conduct research without the help of students like you.

There were no right or wrong answers to any of the items you responded to today; we were simply interested in your personal experiences and opinions. Only researchers involved in the study will have access to your responses, and your responses will be kept confidential.

If you would like to know more about this study, or have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, please feel free to contact me, Grace Peterson, at grace.peterson@washburn.edu.

Please do not disclose the research procedures and/or purpose of this study to anyone who might participate in the future, as this could affect the results of the study. We genuinely appreciate your cooperation and support of our research by keeping your knowledge about this study confidential. Thank you for participating in this study.