

## Subjective Experience of Bulling Victims

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### Abstract

This research is direct to explore subjective experience of bullying victims. For investigation it was used in-depth interview technic.it was find out seven common coping mechanisms. Also it was investigated that victims of bullying experience traumatic experience for long period of time.

*Keywords:* bullying, subjective experience, victimology

### Subjective Experience of Bulling Victims

Bullying is a complicated theme in the society. Unfortunately, bullying is common among children in schools. The victims of bullying have negative memories during whole life. But there are some coping mechanisms which are helping to overcome negative experience in bullying victims' lives.

Bullying in schools is not a new phenomenon; it has been prevalent in schools for a long time, but has become a global concern in the last three decades due to several tragic events related to school shootings and suicides linked to bullying and victimization (Marr & Fields, 2000; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefhoghe, 2002; Ttofi, Farrington, & Baldry, 2008).

### Research Question

The purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions of bullying experienced and recalled from their school years and to explore students' understandings of how they coped with the experience, whether they were the victim, bully, or witness or had experienced more than one role in a given instance or over time. The research question that guided this study was "What does it mean to be a victim of bullying?"

### *Bullying*

### Definitions of Bullying

It is essential for understanding the phenomenon to conduct research in the field. Most definitions of bullying are based on survey research and to date there is no universal definition that has been accepted by all researchers (Ross, 2003). Mishna (2004), in her studies on understanding bullying, discusses the difficulties associated with defining bullying

behaviors. She argues, “Even when individuals may have a clear definition of bullying, other factors may impede their ability to be guided by their own definitions” (pp. 242-243). In her study, there were differences among teachers, parents, and children in describing what constitutes a bullying behavior (Mishna, 2004).

A commonly referenced definition of bullying posits that bullying is a chronic form of victimization involving unprovoked attempts to harm the other person (Olweus, 1993). Building on Olweus’ s initial definition of bullying, many researchers examining bullying behaviors acknowledged the following five features of bullying (Griffin & Gross, 2004; Roth, Coles, & Heimburg, 2002; Tritt & Duncan, 1997): (1) bullying consists of behavior that is directed towards a victim with the intention to harm or instill fear in the victim; (2) the behavior occurs without provocation from the victim; (3) the aggression occurs repeatedly over a period of time (4) the behavior occurs within the context of a social group; and (5) an imbalance of power exists between the aggressor and victim. Bullying can take the form of physical attacks (hitting, kicking, or shoving); direct verbal attacks (calling a student names, saying hurtful or unpleasant things); or relational aggression (purposely excluding a student, starting rumors).

The pioneering research on bullying was conducted by Dan Olweus and his colleagues Sweden and Norway during the 1970’s. Olweus began research on bullying after three school boys committed suicide in Norway as a result of persistent bullying. In the beginning, he defines bullying as behaviors intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual (Olweu 1972). Commenting on his definition, Olweus (2010) writes, “At the time of initiation of my research it was not possible or even desirable to set forth a very stringent definition of peer harassment or bullying” (p. 11). Since the formulation of this first definition, the means of bullying have evolved, and continual research has provided an inclusive definition of bullying that reflects current victimization and bullying patterns.

Whether it occurs through repeated attacks or a single incident, bullying is a willful and deliberate and systemic abuse of power through aggression against a targeted child and adolescent (Olweus, 1993,1999, 2010; Pepler & Craig, 2000; Smith & Sharp, 1994). A subset of aggression among school children, bullying can range in severity from acts of verbal aggression, such as name calling, spreading rumors, shunning, and threatening, to acts of physical violence on school playgrounds. Bullies acquire power over their victims physically, emotionally, and socially; thus bullying is most frequently defined as a set of intentional, generally unprovoked negative behaviors that are systematically repeated over time, and are targeted against a weaker child or group of children to cause physical and psychological harm to the victim (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Hazler, 1996; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Olweus, 1994, 1999, 2002; Pelligrini, 1998).

Although a single incident of serious harassment can be regarded as bullying under certain circumstances, “the term bullying most often refers to a series of negative actions that occur frequently over time” (Ross, 2003, p. 27). This characteristics, single versus repeated occurrence has been a hot point of dispute in bullying literature. Some researchers do not consider an act of aggression to be bullying unless it has been repeated a number of times to the same child (Farrington, 1993; Smith & Thompson, 1991). On the other hand, other investigators believe that a one-time serious attack can also be considered bullying if it creates terror for the victim. It is the anticipation of future attacks and feeling of shame that increases the severity of a single attack and makes it an act of bullying (Byrne, 1994; La Fontaine, 1991; Smith & Thompson, 1991). Concurring with this statement, Arora (1996) states, “One physical attack or threat to an individual who is powerless might make a person frightened, restricted or upset over a considerable length of time, both because of the emotional trauma following such an attack but also due to the fear of renewed attacks” (p. 319). Therefore, Rigby (2002) emphasizes that not considering a one-off incident as bullying

is wrong. Through repeated attacks the bully's dominance and power is established, and the consequent bully-victim pattern of behavior may continue for a long time (Olweus, 1993; Pelligrini, 2002).

Bullying behavior is first identified in elementary schools, peaks in the middle and junior years, and declines in frequency—though not necessarily in intensity— during the high school years (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1995; Pelligrini & Long, 2002; Pepler et al. 2006).

Majority researchers and practitioners in this field agree on the three main criteria for the classification of behavior as bullying. First, Olweus (2010) states that there must be intentional harmful behavior toward another child. Intentionality of the aggressive behavior is important as it establishes that the aggressive behavior was not an accident. Harmful behavior can range from physical attacks to mean faces, gestures, or excluding someone from a group. Second, the harmful behavior is repeated over time to the same child. Third, the relationship involves an imbalance of power between bully and victim; victims exposed to harmful behavior are typically unable to defend themselves mostly due to the power imbalance (as has been documented throughout bullying literature). Coloroso (2002) argues that a fourth criterion, terror, should be added to this list. She writes that threats of future systematic, unprovoked and organized aggression by bullies create terror in a victimized child's mind. Once bullies have created terror in the mind of a victim, they can act without fear of retaliation or recrimination because the victimized child has been rendered powerless (Coloroso, 2002; Mishna, Pepler, & Weiner, 2006). The terror aspect is very real in the mind of a victim, and usually leads to much emotional distress. In many cases victimized children refuse to go to school due to the terror of facing the bully in front of their peers. In such cases, "the terror stuck in the minds of the bullied child is not a means to an end, it is an end in itself" (Coloroso, 2002, p.14). Bullies choose their target strategically and count on

victims' feeling of helplessness and subsequent inability to fight back or report bullying to teachers or parents. Bullies also count on bystanders being supportive of their aggression or apathetic to bullying incidents.

### **Bullying and harassment**

Most researchers differentiate between harassment and bullying. Harassment refers to verbal abuse and often does not fulfill the three main bullying criteria. However, with the increase in cyberbullying, incidents of Internet harassment have increased. With the advance of technology, the Internet has become a preferred medium for harassment. Therefore, it is clear that an acceptable criterion for accepting Internet harassment as bullying should be established. (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007).

### **Framework of the Problem**

Most bullying episodes involving children occur within school contexts with most incidents reported on the playground, followed by hallways, restrooms, lunchrooms, classrooms, text-messaging, and the Internet (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008; Macklem, 2003; Olweus 1999; Ross, 2003). To understand bullying experiences and responses of children and their parents, it is essential to understand the contexts in which the incidents occur. There are many participants in school contexts and each contributes to the episodes of bullying. The social context and climate of an individual school can affect the extent of the bullying that occurs in that school (Astor, et al., 2002; Orpina & Horne, 2010; Porter, Plog, Jens, Garity, & Sager, 2010; Twemlow, et al., 2010). The social dynamics of the peer group always plays a major role. It can help to lessen the intensity of bullying or it can contribute to the severity of bullying. (Salmivalli, Karna, & Poskiparta, 2010 ). Teachers' attitudes toward bullying behaviours play an extremely important role in the severity and frequency of bullying in schools (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000).

### *Types of Bullying*

Although there are different ways and means of bullying, the goal of the bullies is always the same. Bullying involves people or group of people devaluing others to make them look superior. Bullies aim to establish their power and humiliate victims (Hazler, 1996).

According to current conceptualizations, bullying is defined as repeated and intentional harm doing, inflicted on another, in a relationship characterized by an imbalance of power. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the self-protective behaviors of victims of bullying. The focus will be on behaviors that can be considered protective and may further erode school safety and school climate. The behaviors considered here include fighting, avoiding specific locations in school, and truancy. This dissertation also attempts to determine the role, if any, that student perceptions of school guardianship play in the adoption of these protective behaviors. It is suggested that when students' perceive their schools to be ineffective guardians, they will be more likely to adopt self-protective measures against bullying victimization than rely on their schools to intervene. Measures of school guardianship include student perceptions of school rule enforcement and security. In addition, bullying can be typified in two ways: direct and indirect. Direct bullying involves open and physical attacks on the victim while indirect bullying can take the form of social isolation or exclusion from groups (Olweus 1993). It is the assertion of this dissertation that the type of bullying experienced by students will influence the types of behavior they exhibit.

Within these two broad categories, several types of bullying have been identified in the literature (Donahue, 2004; Ericson, 2001; Olweus, 1993), including verbal, physical, relational, and cyber bullying. Verbal bullying, a form of direct bullying, is one of the most common types used in schools. It includes taunting, name-calling, racial slurs, teasing, insulting, spreading rumors, and threatening.



### **Verbal bullying**

Verbal aggression as defined by Infante and Wigley (1986) is “attacking the self-concept of another person instead of, or in addition to, the person’s position on a topic of communication” (as cited in Meyer, Roberto, Boster, & Roberto, 2004, p. 452). Verbal attacks directly target the child’s character, competence, physical appearance, disability, or background (Infante & Wigley, 1986; Infante, 1995). Verbal assaults are easy to inflict, and can be whispered in the presence of adults and peers without detection. These are quick and painless for the bully but extremely harmful to the victim. Younger children who have not yet developed a strong sense of self are most vulnerable to verbal abuse. In most cases, the children will internalize the negative personal attributes of the verbal attacks. For example, being called stupid, fat, or ugly may lead children to self-blame for their victimization, leading to low self-esteem and perceived incompetence (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Ladd, 2001). In this way, verbal aggression serves a “unique function of transmitting a message to the victims about themselves . . . They may begin to believe what is said about them—whether it is true or not” (Kochenderfer- Ladd & Ladd, 2001, p. 43.).

For most children, repeated verbal bullying (name-calling, extortion, mocking, racist comments, and sexual harassment) are the most difficult to deal with because they are difficult to detect and usually ignored by adults and teachers. Children report that teachers and adult responses to their complaints vary widely; children are often advised by adults to ignore verbal aggression (Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995). Research reports that teachers’ responses to victims’ complaints about verbal bullying are guided by their own perception of bullying (Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005). Furthermore, research studies on the attitude of teachers, counsellors, and prospective teachers toward bullying demonstrate that they identify physical aggression and threats as bullying and deserving of intervention, while verbal threats and insults are considered less serious and therefore not perceived to require

strong responses (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000; Hazler, Miller, Carney, & Green, 2001).

Verbal aggression, if allowed to continue for too long, generally destroys children's self-confidence and motivation to attend school (Geiger & Fischer, 2006). Furthermore, Infante, Chandler, and Rudd (1989) report "verbal aggression can lead to physical aggression when children do not have skills to deal with social humiliation" (as cited in Meyer, Roberto, Boster, & Roberto, 2004, p. 453). Though girls and boys both use verbal bullying, Owens (1996) and Smith et al. (1999) found that girls use more verbal bullying, whereas boys use more physical bullying.

### **Physical bullying**

Physical bullying is the most common cause and most readily identifiable form of direct bullying. It also accounts for as much as one third of bullying incidents reported by children (Coloroso, 2005). Physical bullying is defined as unprovoked, negative, physical actions that have hostile intent, cause distress to victims, are repeated over time, and involve a power differential between bullies and their victims (Craig & Pepler, 2003; Olweus, 2010). Actions can include hitting, kicking, slapping, spitting, and inflicting physical harm to the person (Peterson & Ray, 2006). Physical bullying also includes damage to clothes and property such as the knapsacks or books of the victimized child.

In physical bullying, bullies tend to pick on students who appear to be weak and unlikely to fight back. In a large national survey study conducted in the U.S., Nansel, et al. (2001) found that boys reported experiencing more physical bullying than girls. In their Canadian survey study on the development trajectory of bullying for ages 10 to 17, Pepler et al. (2006) found similar results. They report, "the high and moderate bullying trajectory group included more boys than girls and the trajectory group for low involvement included

more girls than boys” (as cited in Underwood & Rosen, 2011, p. 14). Furthermore, a number of studies report that boys are involved in physical and direct aggression at a higher proportion than girls (Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006; Card, Stucky, Sawalani, Little, 2008). A recent study of school bullying among adolescents in the U.S., “indicates high prevalence rates of having bullied others or having been bullied at school at least once in the last two months: 20.8% physically, 53.6% verbally, 51.4% socially, or 13.6% electronically” (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009).

### **Relational bullying**

A third type of bullying, referred to as relational bullying is a more covert and indirect form that may be more difficult to detect as an observer. Relational aggression is a behavior that involves the manipulation of peer relationships and social exclusion. This manipulative behavior causes or threatens to cause damage to friendship and acceptance in peer groups (Crick et al., 1999). It is the “systematic diminishment of a bullied child’s sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding, or shunning” (Coloroso, 2005, p.17). Coloroso (2005) further adds, “Shunning, an act of omission, joined with rumor, an act of commission, is a forceful bullying tool. Both are unseen and hard to detect” (Coloroso, 2005, p. 17). Relational bullying is also referred to as social bullying because this form of bullying operates by manipulating the social relationships of a child. Bullies accomplish their goal through covert social manipulation, including gossiping, spreading rumours, or persuading someone to harm or exclude another peer from a particular activity or a group (Bjorkqvist, 1994; Crick and Nelson, 2002; Wang, Iannotti, Nansel, 2009). Relational bullying can be used to alienate and reject a peer or to damage friendships. Typical behaviors in relational bullying are eye-rolling, turning away from someone, or setting others up to look foolish.

Relational bullying could begin as early as at age three and continue through the adolescent years. Even a single instance of relational segregation can emotionally distress a child. Pairing shunning with the spreading of rumours can be a vicious means of bullying at the onset of adolescence, when all children have a strong desire to fit in with others. At this critical stage in teenagers' developing years, they are experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual changes. At this time adolescents are trying to figure out who they are, and there is a strong need to "fit in" and be accepted, particularly among same-age, same-sex peers. This contributes to adolescents' desire to look and dress like their peers (Crick et al. 2001).

Relational bullying is not as visible as a black eye or a bruise, but the emotional scars of this type of victimization can last for lifetime. In many cases, victims are not even aware of their exclusion from the peer group but gradually find out that "they are no longer accepted members of the group. No reason is given for their exclusion, so it is difficult for [them] to grapple with it and painful to accept it" (Ross, 2003, p. 75).

In a study conducted by Galen and Underwood (1997), boys reported that physical aggression is more harmful than social aggression, while girls rated physical and social aggression as equally harmful. The same study confirmed that as girls get older, social or relational aggression increases in severity for them as compared to boys (Galen & Underwood, 1997).

### **Bullies and Victims**

The literature on bullying categorizes two major characters in bullying episodes: bullies and victims. Each category has distinct characteristics that are common to all two categories. Bullies are also referred to as non-victimized aggressors (Schwartz, 2000).

### **The bullies**

Children who bully come from all facets of society. They can come from any socio-economic status, race, or religious background. Bullies are children who use unprovoked physical, relational, or verbal aggression against their peers. In general, researchers have found that bullies can be characterized as aggressive toward their teachers, siblings, parents, and others, as well; their aggressive attitude is stable across contexts such as home and school (Olweus, 1994). Many studies portray children who bully as having a positive attitude toward power and aggression, a strong desire to dominate, reduced empathy for others, and a tendency to be impulsive (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Macklem, 2003; Veenstra et al., 2005). Research studies report aggressive behaviour of children who bully as intentional and goal-directed. It is usually targeted against a weaker child who has no friends or will give the bully what they want (Macklem, 2003; Pelligrini & Long, 2002). Bullies' attitudes toward aggression help them to self-justify their bullying behaviour toward their peers (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999). They are unlikely to take responsibility for their actions, and often blame their victims for provoking them (Haynie et al. 2001; Schwartz, 2000). There are indications that children who bully do not perceive their behavior as severe or hurtful to victims and feel no remorse or empathy for their victims. In many cases, bullies say that victims "asked for it" (Ross, 2003, p. 50) and "it's Easy, it Works, and it makes me feel Good" (Sutton, Smith, & Sweetenham, 2001, p. 74).

Despite their aggressive attitude, bullies can be popular and well-liked leaders in the early grades. Some children are attracted to bullies because of their macho images, but the popularity of bully's decreases as children mature and move to higher grades (Ross, 2003, p. 48). However, bullies usually have a small number of like-minded aggressive peers who seem to admire and support them. Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, and Van Acker (2006) found that aggressive boys were considered "cool" within their own peer groups and used their

popularity to influence peers to bully others. Many children who themselves would not initiate aggressive behavior are happy to be part of a bully-led peer group and be involved in aggressive behavior. Bullies usually rely on their clique of supporters to continue their aggressive behavior. It is interesting to note that most of the time the supporters of the bullies act according to the wishes of the bullies and often against their own convictions (O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Salmivalli et al. 1996). The phenomenon of belonging to the popular, aggressive group also is particularly prevalent among girl bullies and their friends.

No evidence has been found in the research to support the popular notion that bullies are insecure, nervous, and suffer from low self-esteem (Smith et al., 1999). Most studies indicate bullies feel good about them and believe they are physically attractive. Being a bully is a part of their social status and they enjoy the rewards of bullying.

Most of the research published in the last several decade's documents that boys are more involved in bullying than girls (Alaskar & Brunner, 1999; Olweus, 1999). This conveys the message that there are more male bullies than female bullies. However, this view has been challenged as it can be argued that the way the aggression was defined led to an overrepresentation of boys as bullies. Studies on bullying in the past several decades have defined aggression only in terms of direct physical aggression and verbal attacks (Coie & Dodge 1998). It was also reported that since as a group, boys exhibit more aggression than girls, many studies on aggression excluded girls from their samples (Crick & Rose, 2000). Furthermore, Olweus (2010) argues if the "definitions and operationalization of aggression were broadened to include more indirect and subtle forms, this might well result in a different conclusion" (Olweus, 2010, p. 23). Recent research on this subject documents that girls are reported to be more involved in relational social bullying and cyberbullying while boys are more involved in physical and direct bullying (Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008;

Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). This could also account for underrepresentation of female bullies. Crick et al. (1999) cautiously suggest that there are no or minimal gender differences in aggression when both physical and relational bullying are considered (as cited in Olweus, 2010).

Although the majority of victims are submissive and passive when bullied, respond in an aggressive manner. Based on their frequently irritable, restless and hostile character, as reported by their teachers, Olweus (1978, 2001) describes them as provocative-victims whose aversive off-task behaviour (e.g., roaming around the classroom, not participating in the classroom activities) attracts attention of bullies and establishes them as persistent targets of bullying. Olweus (2001) further added that bully-victims may provoke bullies, but when victimized retaliate with aggression and hostility. Perry, Perry, and Kennedy (1992) view them as “ineffectual aggressors” because of their highly emotional nature. Bully-victims generally lose conflicts amid displays of anger, frustration, and poorly self-controlled emotional distress. They do not apply aggression in an organized or goal-oriented fashion, unlike bullies who use anger strategically to establish their leadership within a peer group. Bullies and bully-victims show similarities in that they have a high level of impulsivity in their character. Bullies are “effective aggressors” and are liked by other bullies, while “aggressive-victims” are usually not liked by their peers because of their reactive aggression.

Research findings document that bullies show high levels of aggression and low levels of prosocial behavior, self-control, self-esteem, and self-acceptance (Veenstra et al. 2005). These characteristics get them into a variety of problems with their peers. In a Canadian study, Marini, Dane, Bosacki, and YLC-CURA (2006) reported that bully displayed a wide range of maladjustments such as “anti-social acts, angry externalizing coping (e.g., angry outbursts, losing self-control, etc.), social anxiety,” and “internalizing

problems, relative lack of friendships, greater acceptance of deviance” (p. 552). With a range of deficits, bully display the worst characteristics of both bully and the victim groups and are therefore least liked by peers.

### *The victims*

Although any child can be a victim of bullying, certain characteristics can be associated with victims of bullying. Based on the vast amount of research, a consistent profile of victims has been documented in the literature. Victims are not a homogeneous group: Olweus (1993) describes two types of victims, passive victims and provocative victims or bully-victims (as described above). To be consistent with the literature, it will be used victims referring to passive victims as it has been used in the literature. The dominant view of victims as passive recipients of aggression uses a “language of effects” that categorizes them as helpless and unable to respond. This monolithic characterization of victims hides their responses—however small these may be—and describes them as passive recipients. Bullies do not pick their victims randomly; they select their target strategically. Bullies select only those children who will not retaliate when attacked by other students. Bullies anticipate that the victim’s usual reaction will be to cry or withdraw from the situation (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Typically, victims are described as more anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive, and quieter than other children (Haynie et al., 2001; Ma, 2001; Macklem, 2003; Olweus, 1993). They tend to be physically smaller, isolated, have fewer friends, and have a negative view about themselves (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Olweus, 1993; Slee, 1995).

Basing on his in-depth interview studies in Finland with parents of victimized boys, Olweus (1993) concluded that these boys were cautious and sensitive from an early age. These children lack communication skills and their shy, sensitive natures and physical weakness make it difficult for them to assert themselves with bullies. It is likely that these



characteristics make them an easy target for bullying and contributes to their victimization. Olweus (1993) paints a very bleak picture of this type of victims; he says, “behaviour and attitude of passive victims is a signal that they are insecure and worthless individuals who will not retaliate if they are attacked or insulted . . . they often look upon themselves as failures and feel . . . ashamed, and unattractive” (p. 33). In his later studies, Olweus (2001) states that he does not “blame the victims” for their victimization, emphasizing that they are dealing with an aggressive and uncontrolled environment created by their classmates (as cited in Macklem, 2003, p. 64). Furthermore, repeated bullying, harassment, and frequent physical attacks by peers contribute to increased anxiety, insecurity, self-doubt, and poor self-concept in victims.

Poor self-concept contributes to poor peer relations and it may further lead to more victimization over time. Thus, victims with low self-esteem often have self-defeating thoughts about themselves, leading to more victimization. By the time these children reach middle school, their identity as victims is well established (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001).

### *Consequences of Bullying*

Bullying has also been shown to have negative consequences for the victims. Victimization in school is linked to absenteeism, low academic achievement, anxiety, low self-esteem, likelihood of health problems (e.g., fainting, hyperventilation, headaches, sleep problems, and stomach aches), and social withdrawal (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). Victims of bullying are often reluctant to go to school. In a study of 128 persistent school absentees in South Wales, 14.8% absentees gave bullying as a reason for not coming to school while 18.8% gave bullying as a reason for continued absence (Reid, 1989, 2005). Researchers report that peer victimization among kindergarten children is significantly and uniquely associated with maladjustment and school avoidance.

Many victims live in constant fear for their safety and cannot function to their full potential. They often suffer serious physical and psychological problems such as depression, social maladjustment, and social anxiety (Katiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen, & Rimpela, 2000; Olweus, 1995; Rigby, 2003). Victims often suffer in silence, fearful of new episodes of bullying and ridicule by their peers. In the most severe cases, victims have taken their own lives (Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Olweus, 1993).

Researchers also have found that not all targets of bullying develop such problems in adulthood (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Jantzer et al., 2006; Newman et al., 2005; Olweus, 1993; Schafer et al., 2004). Despite the mounting evidence that school-aged bullying may have implications for psychosocial functioning during the college years (Dempsey & Storch, 2008; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Jantzer et al., 2006; Newman et al., 2005; Olweus, 1993; Schafer et al., 2004; Tritt & Duncan, 1997) there is limited information in the college counseling literature for understanding why some college students who were targets in elementary through high school may experience problems while others do not.

The significance of research on bullying problems in schools cannot be overemphasized. As stated earlier in this chapter, the consequences of bullying on children, schools, and learning environment are quite serious. Research has shown that peer abuse in any form of bullying physical, verbal, relational, or cyberbullying—adversely affects the psychological and physical well-being of children (Rigby, 2002). The existing literature on this subject is extensive and includes practically all aspects of bullying, from understanding the phenomenon of bullying to prevention programs to stop bullying in schools. The subjective experiences of bullied children and their responses to deal with this problem have been minimally researched. In recent years there have been some quantitative studies on this topic but investigation from a qualitative perspective needs more attention.

### **Literature review**

The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant literature on school bullying. The majority of the scholarly literature on bullying does not treat bullying as a solitary topic; rather, bullying is commonly tied to the topic of violence. While these subjects are broad in scope and are not mutually exclusive, they will, in some cases, be addressed simultaneously. When the terms “bullying” and “violence” are addressed together in the literature review, it is because scholarly authors have spoken of these topics as being very closely related. In reviewing the literature on the experiences and responses of victims, researcher begins with a dominant view of prevalent quantitative studies in the literature on victims and their families. This provides a broader view of the research studies available on bullying. It was followed by the description of the qualitative studies that are more closely related to this research topic. Furthermore, researcher focuses on the studies that discuss coping strategies of the victims. The rationale for this progression also confirms what is currently available and what needs more attention from the researchers.

There is evidence of a connection that exists between school bullying and violence (Howell, 1997), as in the cases of several school shootings in which perpetrators had been identified as being victims of bullying (Aronson, 2000). There is a prevalent assumption in the literature that the experience of being a victim of bullying sometimes seems to lead to violent acts as a form of retaliation (Howell; Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 2005).

The review of literature will begin with a discussion of possible theoretical explanations of school bullying. Following these theoretical explanations, the review will focus on three major components of the topic under consideration: (a) the prevalence of school bullying, (b) explanations for incidents of school bullying, and (c) the prevention of school bullying.

#### *Theoretical Perspectives on School Bullying*

Theories provide us with an account of the world around us. If school bullying hinders its victims' education, explanations are needed to understand this phenomenon. Most of the theories that directly address school bullying tie bullying and violence together, thus, these topics have been explored together from a theoretical perspective.

The literature on school violence and bullying currently provides very limited theoretical explanations of these phenomena. For this reason, attention will be given to theories of delinquency. Both school bullying and school violence are considered delinquent acts; thus, it is logical that theories of delinquency can be utilized in exploring these phenomena from a theoretical perspective. Clearly, because of the fact that theories must be borrowed from the field of juvenile delinquency, as increased attention is given to bullying and school violence there is a need in the future for the development of theories that describe these phenomena and all the intricacies within them. In this review, the following theories will be explored: (a) functionalism, (b) biological theories, (c) social learning theory, (d) social disorganization theory, and (e) anomie.

### *Functionalism*

Functionalism is a logical choice for examining school bullying, and it sheds light on students' perceptions of incidents of bullying in schools. Merton (1968), in his discussion of functionalism, noted that the social activities in which we engage and the cultural items we possess have a reason or function for the social system/society, these activities/items fulfill a sociological function, and these activities/items are indispensable

While it could be argued that school violence and bullying fulfill psychological functions, such as support in the development of coping skills for the victims and perhaps even skills in persuasion for bullies, these are not sociological functions, which are the focus of functionalism. That is, the means by which these (the development of coping skills for

victims and persuasion skills for bullies) are achieved are not functional for the social or cultural system. School violence and bullying are a drain on financial resources of society and impinge on the development of the kind of unity that is required in the building of a sense of community. Further, school violence and bullying are dispensable.

Although they provide a means by which some are able to achieve status at the expense of others, it is through coercion. The power achieved through coercion is limited in scope and duration, so activities (such as bullying) that help one achieve this power are dispensable; other means prove more useful in obtaining power in our society.

Functionalism offers an explanation as to why phenomena occur in our society, in that the given phenomena have a purpose that is of value to society. Since bullying and school violence offer no redeeming social value, functionalism is not particularly useful as an explanation, but it may be useful as a gauge of disorganization and uncertainty.

### *Biological Theories*

Biological theories have also been used to explain bullying. Kauffman (2001) notes in his discussion of conduct disorders that "genetic and other biological factors apparently contribute to the most severe cases of conduct disorder," but that the identification of a biological basis in milder cases is less clear, and environment/context does contribute to the problem (p. 346). Two of the biological theories are somatotype theory and inheritance theory. There has been research suggesting that body types, or somatotypes, can be correlated with one's character and behavior (Shoemaker, 2000).

The specific assumption is that "the overall body shape, in consideration of the relative development of the various parts of the body in comparison with each other," is correlated with character and behaviors that relate to delinquency (Shoemaker, 2000, p. 22). This explanation is more specific than the inheritance theory, which posits that delinquency is

inherited and makes the general assumption that behavior is determined by factors present at birth, with these factors being transmitted biologically, from the parents. Shoemaker (2000) pointed to research that demonstrates some relationship between genetics and both criminal activity and antisocial behavior, but he noted that researchers have not yet found the specific “biological explanation of just what is being inherited to produce crime or delinquency” (p. 33). While it may be possible to explain some specific behaviors from a biological perspective, it is difficult to do so with bullying, especially given the fact that those who bully may only engage in this one kind of questionable activity and their bullying may not be defined as delinquent behavior.

Biological theories, such as somatotype and inheritance, suggest a genetic element to delinquency, but because bullying can be a limited occurrence, and can be perpetuated by different types of individuals, this explanation falls flat.

#### *Social Learning Theory*

Social learning theory is founded on the assumption that there are three primary influences that control behavior: the environment, the behavior, and cognitive/affective characteristics of the individual (Kauffman, 2001). “Whether or not a person exhibits aggressive behavior depends on the reciprocal effects of these three factors and the individual’s social history” (p. 347). Social learning theory proposes that “aggression is learned through the direct consequences of aggressive and non-aggressive acts and through observation of aggression and its consequences” (p. 347). This theory suggests that children learn specific aggressive responses from the observation of others who model the behavior. When children see high status individuals engaging in aggressive acts (particularly when there are apparent rewards for the behavior), children are more likely to engage in similar behaviors. Children are also likely to engage in an aggressive behavior if they do not see their models receiving negative consequences for the victimization of others.

While social learning theory can add greatly to understanding aggression, it does not adequately address some of the more complex issues of school violence and bullying.

First, if children see that a peer does not receive negative consequences as the result of bullying, based on social learning theory, it might be expected that more students would bully those weaker than themselves. In other words, if a witness sees a student bullying another and there are no consequences, that witness would then be likely to turn to bullying. Some children bully and some do not, but that difference may be partially explained by the fact that maybe some children see more bullying modeled without consequences than others.

Secondly, social learning is reliant on the notion that the actions of others must serve as models of aggressive behaviors; that is, modeling of the aggressive behavior needs to exist in order for the behaviors to occur. While one does need to learn how to be aggressive and how to bully, it is possible that a variety of other conditions can contribute a great deal to an individual's likelihood of bullying others. For instance, children may see aggression being modeled by their parents and therefore see it as a way of handling certain problems with other people. It has been shown that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is utilized and where they are taught to strike back physically when dealing with a problem (Banks, 1997). Further, there is no research that supports the notion that the modeling of aggression by other individuals and the acting out of aggression in children are reliably linked - for instance, there have been many suggestions that exposure to television violence and violent games may be linked to violence in children (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004). While viewing this kind of material can be considered a form of modeling, it is clear that many children view aggression on television and in games, but these children do not become violent themselves (Blumberg, Bierwirth, & Schwartz, 2008).

Additionally, there is research to support the notion that those who are the victims of bullying can also be the aggressors (Druck & Kaplowitz, 2005; Simmons, 2002), which is supported

by the modeling component of social learning theory. However, those who are the victims of bullying are in the position of not only seeing any rewards that the bully reaps, but also experiencing the pain of being the victim. Having the experience of being a victim would be expected to provide victims with understandings of what the victim feels, which might create in the potential perpetrator a desire not to cause this kind of pain in others by bullying. Finally, social learning theory does not account for acts of bullying that are the more common occurrences, such as pushing or teasing. It also does not give as much weight to the societal influences as it does the individual influences, and to address bullying, attention should be given to the environment as well as the individual.

#### *Social Disorganization Theory*

While social learning theory looks at three influences that effect behavior (the environment, the behavior, and the cognitive/affective features), social disorganization and anomie theories also look at these influences with greater focus on the environmental, or social, aspect of delinquency. The major assumption of social disorganization theory is that a breakdown in institutional, community-based controls of society gives rise to delinquency (Shoemaker, 2000). The individuals in a society that is in a state of disorganization and who find themselves in disarray, are not personally disoriented, but they are responding to the disorganization of the environment (p. 78).

While these individuals may live in harmony with their environment under normal conditions, when there is drastic change in the system, they are thrown into disorganization because they do not know how to interpret the new shape of their society.

#### *Anomie*

Social disorganization theory is broad, while anomie usually refers “to larger, societal conditions” (Shoemaker, 2000, p. 91). Anomie “refers to inconsistencies between social



conditions and individual opportunities for growth, fulfillment, and productivity within a society” (p. 92). For example, anomie could be understood as existing when people find themselves at a disadvantage in relation to acceptable and legitimate economic activities, and choose to respond by engaging in illegitimate, delinquent, or criminal activities. An example of this could be when a child wants the same kind of expensive shoes as worn by peers, but their parents cannot afford the shoes, so the child decides that the only way to have the shoes is by stealing them.

The relationship between the lack of regulation and bullying and school violence is found in schools when there is a lack of clarity regarding rules, which can lead to an increase in school violence (Morrison & Skiba, 2001). Studies have also shown that, in many cases, students who are antisocial attend schools in deteriorated and crowded school buildings (Kauffman, 2001), and they may respond to the disorganization of the environment.

The theory of anomie as an explanation of delinquency, school violence, and bullying allows one to look beyond the student and to the system (i.e. society or the school). As noted above, students may perceive their school as disorganized, which could suggest that they are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior such as bullying, when: (a) school rules lack clarity or are erratically enforced, (b) when students diagnosed with antisocial disorder are placed in schools that are dilapidated and overcrowded, (c) when students do not receive tests and papers that are graded in a timely manner, and (d) when course requirements are unclear and teacher expectations are inconsistent, unclear, or questionable. Disorganization in society could also lead to delinquent or deviant behavior. Economic activity outside the norm, natural disasters, and unstable political systems, to name a few, can create a sense of disorganization that produces a feeling of normlessness, anomie.

In summary, several theories provide insight regarding the phenomena of school violence and bullying. Functionalism falls short in providing an explanation of school violence and

bullying because neither of these phenomena has a value, or function, for society that cannot be achieved another way. Biological theories may offer an understanding of extreme cases of criminal activity, but they do not assist in explaining the bullying that many students engage in during their school years. Plus, the studies that have been conducted using biological explanations have only used public records as a means of identifying criminal activity, and since bullying is not as easy to measure, report, and recognize, it is difficult to find support in the research for this theory as it relates to offenses other than the type serious enough to warrant public documentation.

Social learning theory comes closer to explaining school violence and bullying, except that it misses the mark by not giving more credence to the environment in which the delinquent behavior takes place. Disorganization and anomie provide sound theory to explain school violence and bullying. When the society ceases to make available acceptable means of reaching a socially approved goal and when the society lacks regulation through rules and resources, people will respond through unacceptable means, such as violence and bullying.

### *Prevalence*

It has been noted that, “for all types of communities, the vast majority of violence involving school-age youngsters occurs outside school settings and during the hours when they are not in school” (Shafii & Shafii, 2001, p. 28). Bonilla (2000) asserted that “there has not been a dramatic, overall increase in school-based violence in recent years” (p. 157). Others note that there is a general decline in youth violent crime (Shafii & Shafii). The Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (2003) reports that “between 1995 and 2001, the percentage of students who reported being victims of crime at school decreased from 10 percent to 6 percent.” While it may be true that there has not been a “dramatic increase in school based violence” (Bonilla, p. 157) and that most violence “involving school age youngsters occurs outside school settings,” (Shafii & Shafii, p. 28) it is in the school setting

where we must concern ourselves, where we as educators have the greatest impact, and where others' educational opportunities are at risk.

Other studies (Nanjiani, 2000) have asserted that hate crimes have been reported in schools and the "incidences of multiple victim homicide have steadily increased over the years in schools" (p. 77). The Digest of Education Statistics (2003) shows an increase in the number of high school students who reported feeling too unsafe to attend school at a given time. In 1997, 4% of students felt too unsafe to go to school, in 1999 the number went up to 5.2%, and in 2001 6.6% of students felt too unsafe to go to school. The number of high school students threatened or injured with a weapon on school property increased from 7.4% in 1997 to 8.9% in 2001. Violent crimes (rape, robbery, assault) are experienced by young people between the ages of 12 and 19 at two times the rate of the general population (Valois & McKewon, 1998). Violent crimes happen both on school grounds and off. Coghlan (2000) stated that "21% of public high schools and 19% of all public middle schools reported at least one serious violent crime to the police or other law enforcement representatives during the 1996-1997 school year" (p. 84).

Aronson, in *Nobody Left to Hate: Teaching Compassion After Columbine* (2000), noted that while there has been an overall decrease in the number of homicides committed at schools (mostly in dangerous areas that have installed metal detectors, guards, and cameras), there has been an increase in the number of multiple victim homicides in and around schools (pp. 4-5). And while the reality of the current situation may not be as bleak as it could be, the fact of the matter is, no matter the increase or lack thereof, violence in schools should be dealt with so as to improve the quality of education for all students. While it can be argued that there is not a substantial, if any, increase in violence in schools (Bonilla, 2000; Shafii & Shafii, 2001), there are many who would disagree, and who believe that there is an increase in school violence and bullying (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Holt & Espelage,

2007; Nanjiani, 2000; Valois & McKewon, 1998). No matter what the magnitude of violence, victimization, and bullying that occurs in our schools, it is an abomination to ignore any violence in our learning institutions.

It has been reported that a substantial number of high school students are involved in violent and aggressive behavior (Perren & Hornung, 2005; Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane, 2001), yet when the actual behaviors of students are compared, we find that students are more likely to be disciplined for more mundane behavior problems.

Morrison & Skiba (2001) noted that principals at the elementary and secondary levels deal most frequently with less violent and even non-violent behaviors such tardiness (40%), absenteeism (25%), and physical conflicts between students (21%). This is in opposition to the incidents that many perceive as greater and more critical, and have thus become the focus of debates over school safety. The infrequent infractions within school systems include: drug use (9%), gangs (5%), possession of weapons (2%), and physical abuse of teachers (2%) (Morrison & Skiba). Students tend to be suspended more for physical fights and aggressions and less for the more serious offenses such as drugs, weapons, vandalism, and assaults on teachers.

The researchers above (Morrison & Skiba; Perren & Hornung; Valois et al.) examined violence, defined as actions where law enforcement was called in; however, there have been few studies on the day-to-day violence of bullying. Research is needed that addresses all forms of violence, even that which some may see as a less serious form and that may not get reported as often as offenses reported to law enforcement. So, while the offenses that are dealt with on a more daily basis consist of the less sinister crimes, or rule violations, it is the more violent crimes, or the crimes that resemble street crimes, that gain the attention of the press, members of concerned communities, and politicians.

The comparison can be carried even further, in that absenteeism and tardiness resemble white collar crimes in that they get less play in the media, yet still have a negative impact on young peoples' education, while those crimes resembling street crimes find their way across the front pages of newspapers, as top stories on the nightly news, and on the floors of our legislative houses.

As was noted earlier, between 80% and 90% of adolescents and preadolescents will face some form of bullying in their life (Oliver, Young, & LaSalle, 1994). There is evidence that bullying is a considerable problem in secondary schools (Salmon, James, & Smith, 1998). In the United Kingdom, 10% of students reported that they have been bullied "sometimes or more often" and 4% claimed to be bullied "at least once a week" (p. 1). In addition to more traditional forms of bullying, which include physical and verbal bullying, relational bullying has also become an issue as many students attempt to negatively impact another student's social standing through "humiliation and/or manipulation of relationships" (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). Direct and indirect bullying includes electronic bullying, which is defined as instances in which students use some form of electronic device to "taunt, insult, threaten, harass, and/or intimidate a peer" (p. 3).

The findings of the studies noted above show that while there is little increase in school violence and young people are more likely to be the victims of violence outside of school, there has been an increase in multiple-victim homicides in schools. There is also an undercurrent of violence and bullying that may not warrant coverage by the sensationalizing media but that does deserve the attention of educators who wish to create an environment conducive to learning for all students. The weakness of these studies may well be their attempt to portray violence that occurs in our schools as on opposite ends of a continuum where one side denotes a decline in violence and the other points to the tragedies that have occurred in recent years. Again, these studies seem to overlook or downplay the daily

violence, bullying, that occurs in our schools. Regardless, we must amend our thinking and not justify nor accept any type, form, or level of violence and we must not only wish to examine and eliminate the harshest and deadly forms of violence but any type of violence that occurs in our schools. In order to attempt to lift this burden of school violence and bullying that is placed on schools, parents, communities, and mainly students, investigations of explanations for the trend of violence and bullying are needed.

### *Explanations*

The presence of violence and bullying in schools and its frequency is of much concern for parents, students, and educators, as well as communities. As the clamor over school violence intensifies, several possible explanations are given for the violent episodes that have occurred in recent years. Possible causes that have been suggested include violence on TV, child abuse, domestic violence, family breakups, poverty, poor emotional and cognitive development, latchkey homes, child's history of previous violence, school crowding, large schools, teacher isolation, unfair rules, and drug use (Edwards, 2001). While each of these possible explanations warrant attention in their own right, focus will be given to general categories that will encompass most, if not all, of these possibilities.

School culture can be a major factor in any form of school violence, as was suggested by Aronson in *Nobody Left to Hate: Teaching Compassion After Columbine* (2000). Other factors include (a) the presence of conduct disorder, (b) depression, anxiety, and life satisfaction, (c) the role of parents, (d) previous exposure to violence, (e) location and "undefined spaces," and (f) weapon carrying.

### *School Culture*

After the tragedy that took place at Columbine, many tried to piece together what happened. Aronson (2000) stated, "It is reasonably clear that a major root cause of the recent school

shootings is a school atmosphere that ignores, or implicitly condones, the taunting, rejection, and verbal abuse to which a great many students are subjected” (p. 70). As was noted earlier, it has been suggested that in order to understand aggression and violence as they relate to children, one needs to understand the child’s eco-system (family, peer-group, and school) (Arllen, Gable, & Hendrickson, 1994). It has been stated that one of the strongest predictors of the use of violence is exposure to violence and victimization (Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane, 2001). Bullies and victims are not hard to find in any school; therefore, victimization can also be found.

When Aronson (2000) interviewed students at Columbine, he found evidence that suggested that the students who terrorized the school were victims of bullying, which lends credence to the assertion above, that exposure to victimization can be a predictor of violence. Aronson noted that it had been suggested, much to the dismay of the administrators, faculty, and students of the school, that Columbine’s administration showed favoritism towards athletes “who dominated the school, that bullying and taunting were more prevalent at Columbine than at other schools, and that the administrators tolerated it” (p. 71). When surviving students were interviewed after the tapes made by the shooters were shown, the students tried to defend themselves, but ironically they seemed to back up the assertion. One student who was interviewed said:

Columbine is a good clean place except for those rejects. Most kids don’t want them there. They were into witchcraft. They were into voodoo. Sure we teased them. But what do you expect with kids who come to school with weird hairdos and horns on their hats? It’s not just jocks; the whole school’s disgusted with them. They’re a bunch of homos, grabbing each other’s private parts. If you want to get rid of someone, usually you tease’em. So the whole school would call them homos. (p.71-72)

Aronson's work demonstrated how school violence can come about because of, or even be synonymous with, bullying. Bullying can lead to school violence, and it is for this reason that the two terms are interwoven within this review of literature. Aronson could have gone a step further and asked about bullying after the Columbine shootings, and whether or not students who felt bullied then could relate to the shooters' feelings and the shooters' desire to seek revenge. This gap in the research seems common. Little, if any, research has been conducted that focuses on current students and their perspectives.

Bullying and victimization of students for being different, whether based on factual information or rumors, is the cause of many students' anxieties about school. Edwards (2001), suggested that organizational elements of schools that may contribute to violent behavior include: (a) when schools are impersonal, (b) when school officials ignore misconduct, and (c) when students feel alienated. Impersonal schools and school officials ignoring misconduct can be fertile grounds leading students to feeling alienated and disconnected. Some of these "alienated" young people have been defined as "designated victims" (Greene, 1994). In her article, *America's Designated Victims: Our Creative Young*, Bette Greene (1994) defined a "designated victim" as "a boy, usually slender, usually thoughtful, who would prefer creating beauty to crushing bones" (p. 3). She noted that creative young people are tormented everywhere, from elementary schools to college and in every city, state, and town in this nation. It has been shown that the way in which schools deal with discipline problems can impact the quantity and types of problems at a given school. Characteristics such as high rates of academic failure; lack of clearly defined rules, expectations, and consequences; punitive disciplinary practices; and failure to consider individual differences contribute to the antisocial behavior that occurs in schools (Morrison & Skiba, 2001). Students, as most adults, need clearly defined rules, and they need to know the consequences of breaking those rules. Without rules or regulations, there exists the potential



for anomie. Schools also need to respect individual differences, not just as they pertain to discipline issues, but also as they pertain to the individual in every aspect of their education.

Alienation can be reduced within strong, inclusive communities (Nanjiani, 2000, p. 78) where individual differences are respected, if not embraced. When gay and lesbian high school students are the victims of hate crimes and other crimes at a greater frequency than the general student population (McFarland & Dupuis, 2001), we must acknowledge that something needs to be done in order to protect these students, and others who are singled out as different and unique.

While attention within the literature tends to be given to race, gender, and sexual preference, little attention has been given to other factors that may cause the singling out of individuals to be bullied. These other factors can include weight, cleanliness, location of home, family's status, unique qualities in appearance, or other aspects of one's character or physical appearance that a bully can focus on and attack. Further research could address the various attributes that may lead to bullying and victimization. But while characteristics of the individual victim can play a role in incidents of bullying, characteristics of others and the environment are very important.

### *Quantitative studies of experiences of victims*

The quantitative literature on victims of bullying focuses predominantly on discourses of victimhood and overlooks victims' active responses, as the following quotation highlights:

*They were older than me, they took a dislike to me . . . they would take my cardigan and kick it around as a football, and they would kick me out . . . one boy pulled my hair so hard that some came out, he dropped it in front of me . . . I was shoved in the garbage can . . . I was pushed off the climbing frame . . . I had a concussion . . . I remember feeling alone—no one would help me—I dreaded going to school. I am*

*quite insecure even now . . . I won't believe that people like me. (Smith & Sharp, 1994, p. 1)*

Nevertheless some statements in current literature, such as the one above, are given by the victims, none of these statements describe the seriousness of the act, or the physical, social, and psychological harm inflicted on victims.

Most studies do not explicitly depict a fine-grained view of victims' experiences; those stories surface only when bullying incidents are extremely serious and reach a critical stage (Unnever & Cornell, 2004).

Research on victims' experiences of bullying can be divided into two major categories. The first mainly discusses the ways victims were bullied, while the second discusses the effects of victimization on them. These studies rely on a strong cross-section of methodology, including longitudinal studies, surveys, and experimental studies. Researching different forms of bullying behavior, Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel (2009) conducted a large-scale study of school adolescents, obtaining data from the Health Behaviour in School-Children (2005) survey. This was a nationally representative sample of 7,182 adolescents in Grades 6 to 10. The revised Olweus Bully/Victims Questionnaire was used to measure physical, verbal, relational and cyberbullying. Multinomial logistic regression was performed to analyze data. The researchers' findings indicate that victims' experiences of bullying included physical aggression (for example, hitting, pushing, and kicking), verbal cruelty (name-calling, or repeated, hurtful teasing), relational bullying (social exclusion, spreading rumors), and cyberbullying (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009). This study provided good insight into the varieties of bullying practices that victims face, but it did not elaborate on victims' personal experiences of bullying.

Numerous studies have reported the negative experiences of children who have been victims of bullying in school (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000; and Peligrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999). In their book, *The Nature of School Bullying*, Smith et al. (1999) presented a global picture of bullying by including studies on the effects of victimization from twenty countries. To keep standards consistent, each study used similar survey methods and investigated the same questions. The researchers reported that continuous or severe bullying affects the psychological and physical health of victims. The reported effects included physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, and sleeplessness, emotional symptoms such as depression, sadness, stress, and poor concentration in academic studies. In many cases, adolescents refused to go to school. The researchers added that victimization leads to self-blame, loss of self-esteem and problems in interpersonal relationships. Their findings have been confirmed by many studies that investigated victimization and its effects on adolescents. A discussion of these studies will follow. In a five-year longitudinal study of 133 Grade 6 students, ages 11 to 13, Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, and Mickelson (2001) investigated depression and anxiety experienced by the victims of bullying, which they measured using the Multidimensional Anxiety Scale and the Children Depression Inventory. Multivariate analysis and exploratory discriminant function analysis was used for data analysis. Supporting the results of previous studies, Craig (1998) and Slee (1995) found that the victimized children are likely to feel lonely, unhappy, unattractive, anxious, depressed, and worthless. An anxious nature makes victims an easily identifiable target for bullying. They feel marginalized and traumatized and, in some cases, reward the bully with increased self-esteem and improved social status (Schwartz, Proctor, & Chien, 2001). In an earlier cross-sectional studies, Egan and Perry (1998) and Graham and Juvonen (1998) reported that victims' low self-worth is self-perpetuating: it leads to further

victimization which in turn results in further reducing their self-esteem, leading to more bullying.

Graham and Juvonen's work on the effects of bullying was particularly useful for conducting this research, in that it provides insight into victims' experiences of self-worth and self-blame. Graham and Juvonen (1998, 2001) and Juvonen, Nishina and Graham (2000, 2001) have conducted several studies of the self-blame phenomenon and how it affects victims. Graham and Juvonen's first study (1998) was conducted on 418 Grade 6 and Grade 7 students. Victims were identified by peer nominations. In addition, they used the Attributional Questionnaire, Self-Worth Scale, Social Anxiety Scale, and Self-Perceived Victim Status to collect data. Factor analysis and multiple regressions were used to analyze data. The goal of this study was to learn whether identified victims possessed characterological self-blame. Results indicated that students who perceived themselves as victims were vulnerable to adjustment difficulties such as loneliness, social anxiety and low self-worth. Graham and Juvonen (1998) report, "Children who view themselves as socially incompetent behave in ways that promote abuse by others (the antecedent of low self-worth) and they feel worse about themselves as victimization escalates over the school year (the consequence function)" (p. 596). This cyclical process of victimization and low self-esteem continues into later years.

Research has found that victims' feelings of self-worth are also related to social adjustment problems. Hawker and Boulton (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of cross-sectional studies of victimization and social adjustment, which included all cross-sectional studies on victimization and social maladjustment published between 1978 and the end of June 1997. The study documented that children who are depressed due to stressful events, such as bullying, hold negative thoughts about themselves, the world, and the future. In another related experimental study of 123 children, ages 6 to 13 years, Marciano and Kazdin (1994)

confirmed that loss of self-esteem at school-age and negative thoughts about the future that characterizes hopelessness will persist into adulthood, leading to poor social adjustment.

Hawker and Boulton (2000) further reported “self-reported depressed mood, loneliness, anxiety, and social and global self-esteem as predictors of contemporaneous peer victimization among school children aged between 8 and 12 years” (p. 452). However, it is not clear from the Hawker and Boulton study (2000) if peer victimization is a cause or consequence of psychological maladjustment. Some researchers postulated victimization as an agent of future adjustment problems (Hanish & Guerra, 2000). Hanish and Guerra (2002) conducted a longitudinal experimental study on a large sample of 2,064 elementary school children in an urban neighborhood. They investigated whether aggression and withdrawal behaviors predict concurrent and subsequent victimization and whether these predictive relations are mediated or moderated by rejection. They gathered data twice: at Time 1 when the children were in Grades 1, 2 and 4, and at Time 2, when children were in Grades 3, 4 and 6. The second set of data was collected only from 1,469 children. The rest of the participants could not be located. Their results suggested that aggression is related to current victimization and contributed significantly to victimization two years later. That study contributed to the information on aggression and predictive victimization but did not shed light on the question of which came first: aggression or adjustment problems.

Reinjtjes, Kamphuis, Prinzei, and Telch (2010), in their meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies, investigated whether psychological problems are antecedents or consequences of victimization by reviewing eighteen longitudinal studies. Their findings indicate that there is a significant association between victimization and psychological problems. The extent of victimization can determine the effects of bullying and, as a result, the effects of bullying can be cumulative and lead to further victimization. Although their results appear inconclusive on the main question they investigated, their results confirm that

the problem of effects of bullying and victimization could be reciprocal. The authors concluded, “these reciprocal influences suggest a vicious cycle that contributes to the high stability of peer victimization” (p. 244).

A research study by Hoof, Raaijmakers, Van Beck, Hale III, and Aleva (2008) added another dimension to experiences of victimization. This study presented a multi-mediation model on the relationships of bullying, victimization, identity, and family characteristics to adolescent depressive systems in 194 high school students. At the time of this study, the issue of victimization and its relationship to identity had not yet been investigated. Their sample consisted of 194 high school students, 12 to 18 years of age. Structural equation analysis was used for data analysis. The researchers presented three models that investigated the relationships between the four variables mentioned above. The second model, which is most relevant to my research, investigated personal identity’s mediating function between peer victimization and depressive symptoms.

Various scales were used to measure bullying behavior and peer victimization. The Actor Scales (the bullies and victim scales) were used to measure bullying and victimization. The Children’s Depression Inventory was used to measure depression in the participants. Finally, the researchers used the Special Continuity of Identity Questionnaire to measure personal identity. Questions were context-specific. The adolescents were asked to describe their identity in school, family, and leisure time contexts. Each context-specific identity was measured with 20 items and evaluated on a seven-point scale. The writers studied four dimensions of identity: competence, inhibition, feeling, and interpersonal behavior.

Their results indicated, “Adolescents who are victimized by peers have more trouble integrating their school, home, and leisure time identities into one coherent profile. This, in turn, makes them vulnerable for developing depressive symptoms” (Hoof, Raaijmakers, Van Beck, Hale III, & Aleva, (2008, p. 779). The study provided a new opportunity to study

victims' identities in different contexts, but poses some questions. The results demonstrated a mediating function of identity for the relations between peer victimization and depression symptoms. Since the model included other factors such as family characteristics, the effect of identity was considered only partial. More research is needed to explore the issue of personal identity and victimization in schools.

Quantitative literature primarily portrays victims as recipients of unprovoked aggression and mainly describes them in terms of their inability to defend themselves (Gottheil & Dubow, 2001). In their survey study of 180 elementary and middle school children, Gottheil and Dubow (2001) reported that victims are perceived as helpless and lacking in confidence. In contrast, Besag (1989) and Tattum and Herbert (1993) in their earlier case studies of school children in the UK concluded that victims' negative attitudes towards aggression have been perceived as an inability to stand up to the bully's aggression. Much of the quantitative literature on bullying and victimization presents a one-dimensional and simplistic picture of the victims.

Most research published on victimization takes the form of group summaries of the effects of bullying on victims and their characteristics. Much of this research is in the form of survey results that report high correlation between victimization and negative self-evaluation and low correlation between victimization and positive self-evaluation (Geffner, Loring, & Young, 2001; Hazler, Carney, Green, Powell, & Jolly, 1997).

Empirical studies of victims that use the questionnaire survey method are primarily concerned with negative emotional effects of victimization (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004). However, some research studies have also documented positive coping responses (Hunter, Mora-Mecham, & Ortega, 2004; Kanetsuna, Smith, & Morita, 2006; Kristensen & Smith, 2003). A few studies have examined behavioral or self-protective

responses to bullying (Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Skinner, 2002; Tannebaum, Varjas, Meyers, & Parris, 2011).

In a large sample survey study, Salmivalli, Karhunen, and Lagerspetz (1996) recruited 573 pupils (286 girls and 287 boys) from 11 Finnish schools as participants for a study on coping behaviors of bullying victims. Sixty-seven pupils (33 girls, 34 boys) were identified as victims of bullying. These pupils were already participating in a larger scale study on bullying in schools in Finland. The data were collected in the form of a questionnaire, which the participants were asked to complete during school hours. Children were provided with a definition of bullying, and were asked first to nominate victims bullied by others, second to evaluate victims' behaviors in response to bullying situations, and third to identify if these responses made others to stop or continue bullying. The participants identified three coping responses used most often by victims: counter-aggression, helplessness, and nonchalance. Counter-aggression included fighting back and speaking up to the bully. Helplessness included crying, doing nothing, reporting the bully to an adult, and missing school. Nonchalance meant remaining calm and ignoring the bully.

Their results showed significant and interesting findings, suggesting that first, "submission was not the only possible response to bullying" (Salmivalli et al., 1996, p. 108). Victims quite typically responded in a nonchalant manner or tried to look as if they didn't care about bullying. It is not necessarily true that they did not care or were not hurt, but they did not want to show their true feelings. Although the researchers did not report how they arrived at this conclusion, Salmivalli et al. (1996) added that victims suffer greatly when they are attacked by peers, even when they respond to the bully's aggression with nonchalant or counter-aggressive coping responses. Second, the finding showed that defending oneself, or even counter-attacking was not out of the question as a response. Counter-aggressive responses were surprisingly common for boys. On the basis of these results, the researchers



concluded that when bullies attack they do not always expect submission from their victims. They also confirmed that bullies did expect some kind of response such as “a powerless counter attack” or “crying.” According to this research, a crying victim was not as rewarding for bullies as “one who could be provoked to ineffective, ridiculous counters aggression . . . that gave a good show to the whole peer group” (Salmivalli et al., 1996, p. 108). Smith, Shu, and Madsen (2001) confirmed the same coping strategies used by the victims. They report that continued bullying is likely where “children fail to cope satisfactorily and that leads to a reinforcing cycle of poor coping, low self-esteem, lack of protective friendships, and vulnerability of more bullying” (p. 332). They surveyed 2,308 children from 19 schools across England. The sample consisted of 984 boys and 891 girls, ages 10 to 14. Questionnaires were used to collect data on coping strategies of victims. These coping responses were predefined and children were asked to check responses they had used to cope with bullying.

Findings showed that coping strategies included ignoring the bullies, telling them to stop, asking an adult for help, fighting back, crying, asking friends for help, or running away. The researchers cross-examined these findings with the age and sex of the children. Since this study researches the question of coping responses, the findings are useful information for this research study.

In another quantitative survey study, Kochenderfer-Ladd and Pelletier (2008) examined teachers' views and management strategies in relation to bullying and coping responses used by their students. Researchers used a multilevel design to test a model where teachers' attitude or beliefs about bullying influences their decision about whether or not to intervene in bullying and victimization episodes. It was hypothesized that teachers' attitude would influence the ways victims cope with bullying and also the frequency with which they report victimization. Data were collected on 34 teachers from 2nd and 4th grade, and 363 ethnically

diverse students. The mean age of these students was 9 years and 2 months. The Student Social Behavior Questionnaire, Classroom Management Policies Questionnaire, and Self-report Coping Scale were used to gather data. Exploratory factor analysis combined with other statistical measures was used to analyze the data. Their findings reported that students' coping strategies include seeking support from an adult, distancing themselves from the bullies, passive coping, problem-solving, and also, in a few cases, revenge-seeking. These findings also suggest that teachers' perceptions and views about peer victimization influence how they manage bullying. Their attitudes also affect how children cope with bullying when those teachers are involved.

Gamliel, Daughtry, and Imbra (2003) in their mixed-method investigation of coping responses used interviews and Coping Strategy Card Tasks. Their sample size consisted of 6 adolescents' ages 10 to 13. Their findings confirm that coping responses such as avoidance, humor, fighting back, calm confrontation, and making friends with bullies were used most often by victims. Researcher will discuss this study in detail in the section on qualitative studies of victims' responses because the writers suggest that it is a qualitative study.

Kanetsuna, Smith, and Morita (2006) conducted a study about coping responses to bullying among school children. This study was a cross-national comparison of secondary school students' opinions about coping strategies, bystander intervention, and attitudes towards school-based interventions. Researcher would describe this study as a mixed-method study because the researchers used one-to-one structured interviews to collect data, but used statistical procedures for analysis. The sample consisted of 61 Japanese students and 60 English students, aged 12 to 15 years, in six secondary schools. Kanetsuna, Smith, and Morita (2006) reported that the students' recommended coping strategies varied according to the type of bullying. Seeking help was the most recommended coping strategy in both countries. In their earlier bi-national study of 13 to 14 year-olds in England and Japan,

Kanetsuna and Smith (2002) reported that the most recommended responses to physical bullying were: “tell someone you trust,” “fight back,” and “ask friends for help.” For verbal bullying, students recommended responses such as “do the same things to the bullies” and “ignore it.” For social bullying, students suggested that victims “make new friends” (cited in Kanetsuna, Smith, & Morita, 2006, p. 572). This study was limited to one school and the authors recommended that it should be replicated with other schools in different locations.

In their most recent study, Kanetsuna, Smith, and Morita (2006) reported that the coping strategies most recommended by children were “seeking help when victimized,” “taking direct action against bullies,” “avoidance,” “passive behaviour,” “ignoring,” “reflecting on yourself,” “trying to make new friends,” and “denying it” (p. 575). Kanetsuna, Smith, and Morita’s (2006) study provided significant insights for my study.

### *Qualitative studies of experiences and responses of victims*

As the discussion in the previous section shows, the research in this area is primarily quantitative and provides a group perspective of the experiences and responses of victims. In this section, researcher will present qualitative studies conducted on the experiences and responses of victims. Although these studies are undertaken from the victims’ perspectives, the emphasis is on victimhood and effects of bullying. These studies do not focus on the active responses of the bullied children. Researcher has grouped qualitative studies of experiences with those of victims’ responses because of the paucity of qualitative studies on both topics.

After reviewing the selected qualitative studies on bullying from the perspectives of victimized children, three themes emerged. First, victims, parents, and teachers find it difficult to identify bullying behavior. Second, there is an emphasis on strategies for alleviating bullying. Finally, the studies focus on victims’ reactions to verbal aggression.

Although the following two studies do not directly focus on victims' experiences and responses, they do discuss the contexts of responses and experiences.

Mishna (2004) conducted a pilot study of bullying from multiple perspectives using qualitative methods. She investigated bullying from the perspective of victimized children, their parents, and educators. A survey titled, "My Life in School Checklist," was administered to 61 Grade 4 and Grade 5 children to evaluate bullying in schools (Arora, 1994). Following this step, the researcher completed individual semi-structured interviews with selected children, a parent of each child, the children's teachers, and the principals. The participating children identified themselves as victims. Children were recruited on the assumption that they could reflect on their experiences of bullying. The findings revealed that defining bullying behavior, and deciding whether an incident is perceived as bullying, could be complex. Often teachers, children, and parents did not agree on what constitutes a bullying behavior. This lack of congruity made responding to bullying situations difficult for all involved parties.

Mishna (2004) in her study also confirmed that children do not report bullying incidents because reported victimization is underestimated and not given serious consideration by teachers. Research reports that 25 percent of teachers thought that ignoring the problem might help (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Children were adamant that telling adults made things worse for them. This finding is consistent with similar findings in the literature (Gamliel, Hoover, Daughtry, & Imbra, 2003; Geiger & Fischer, 2006).

Another qualitative study by Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, and Wiener (2005) examined teachers' understandings of bullying in their classrooms. This study was conducted in four urban public schools. Their sample of four urban schools was located in different neighborhoods. These neighbourhoods, "differed in such factors as income, family composition, and percentage of recent immigrants" (cited in Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, &

Wiener, 2005, p. 721). A “Safe School Questionnaire” (Pepler, Connolly, & Craig, 1993, as cited in Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005) was administered to grades four and five in four public schools to identify students who reported being bullied in school. This was followed by individual interviews with the teachers. The study identified the factors that influenced teachers’ identification of and responses to bullying incidents involving children who self-identified as victims.

Their research findings reported that each teacher understands of bullying was different, and was guided by individual experiences and perceptions of what constitutes bullying. Teachers who had personal experiences of bullying when they were children were more sensitive and aware of bullying incidents. At the same time, the element of subjectivity in defining bullying led to differences in how teachers characterized and responded to bullying incidents (Craig, Henderson, & Murphy, 2000). When teachers do not take children’s complaints seriously, it hurts students emotionally and, as a result, many incidents are never reported. In their study, Clarke and Kiselica (1997) reported, “When school adults ignore, trivialize, or tolerate bullying incidents the victims internalize the implied message that the adults have discounted their worth as individuals, and they carry this message forward into adulthood” (p. 316).

Research studies conducted by Mishna (2004) and Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, and Wiener (2005) add significant knowledge to teachers and parents’ understanding of bullying. The studies also explain why children do not report and respond to bullying incidents. My research involves an inquiry into children’s responses to bullying. Children’s likelihood to report victimization incidents is most influenced by teachers and parents’ understanding of bullying. Therefore, it is important to know how teachers respond to victim’s complaints. These studies also provide context information for responses by children, and therefore provide significant information for this research.

The third theme, coping strategies of children, investigated by Gamliel, Hoover, Daughtry, and Imbra (2003), directly relates to my study. I mentioned this research in a previous section as a mixed-method study, but the researchers consider their work to be a qualitative investigation. They selected six students, ages 10 to 13, enrolled in Grades 5 to 7, and interviewed them to determine their individual perceptions of whether they had suffered due to bullying, and to what degree. The interview protocol was based on an existing bullying prevention survey developed by Hoover and Oliver (1996). At the end of each session, students were given a card-sorting task, which consisted of nine different coping alternatives listed on index cards. Students were asked to rate strategies they would use if they were bullied. The strategies were rated from one to nine. The authors reported that several themes emerged from this study. The preferred coping strategies included: avoidance or ignoring the bully, rational or calm confrontation, verbal retaliation and cathartic expression. This confirms that “talking through” the problem, displacement, humor, fighting back, and making friends with the bullies were the strategies most often used by the victims. Although the study contributes significant insights into the responses of the victims, it also raises some questions. The coping strategy card technique forces participants to choose responses provided by the researcher. Although these cards were designed after initial research in this field, this technique does not fully capture children’s perspectives and the personal choices they would have made under the circumstances.

For final discussion there is research by Geiger and Fischer (2006). They interviewed 145 Grade 6 students to investigate the responses of children when they were verbally and emotionally abused by their peers. In addition, they investigated teachers’ responses to aggressive behavior in their classrooms. This study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews for data collection.

This research concluded that verbal abuse was a daily occurrence in the classroom. Some students were more vulnerable to verbal aggression than others because of their physical characteristics. There were gender differences in the ways children responded to verbal aggression. Girls considered verbal aggression as an immature act by boys and did not want to lower themselves to the level of boys who acted immaturity (Geiger & Fischer, 2006). Verbal aggression often led to physical aggression. This study confirmed the findings of Mishna (2004) and Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, and Wiener, (2005) studies about teachers' responses to verbal aggression in their classrooms. Usually, teachers showed lack of concern, were unfair, and provided no constructive solution to the situation. Mishna (2004) provided some reasons for the lack of concern from teachers. The Geiger and Fischer study raises some questions. In this investigation, aggression is never described as bullying. Verbal attack is an aggressive act, but there are certain characteristics of this form of abuse that must occur before it can be classified as bullying. The researchers explain that seriousness of the verbal attack will depend on how it is interpreted. Anderson and Bushman (2002) argue that the escalation from verbal to physical attack is "a multistage process that involves cognitive, affective, and physiological components" (p. 353).

The researchers confirm that verbal attacks that target permanent disability and inherent personal characteristics "will cause humiliation, pain, and frustration and prime aggression related feelings, anger, and loss of control" (p. 353, as cited in Geiger & Fischer, 2006). Bowles and Lesperance, (2004) conducted a phenomenological study of adolescent victims of bullying, noting a real lack of qualitative research on bullying. In this study, they explore what it means to be bullied for those who endure it. They used a phenomenological approach to gather information from three adolescent participants. Participants were recruited from Grade 6, 7, and 8 after being identified by school counsellors or nurses as having been bullied within the past year. The researchers interviewed each participant on four

separate occasions. The researchers' central questions were "What is the experience of being bullied like for adolescent students?" and "What are the meanings that seventh and eighth grade adolescents ascribe to the experiences of being bullied" (p. 96)? The data obtained through interviews were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) method of phenomenological interpretation. Researchers reported two major themes that emerged from their analysis: the importance of connections and ways of dealing with bullying.

### ***Research Methodology***

#### *Research Methodology and Methods*

In this chapter researcher will describe the research methodology, rationale for using this research methodology, and the research methods. The research method is a map to data collection which will include instruments for data collection such as sampling, a demographic questionnaire, and the interview protocol.

#### *Research Methodology*

Research methodology provides conceptual instruments which, when used appropriately, will answer the research questions (Polkinghorne, 1983). Methods of empirical research in sociology usually divided into qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative methods may be characterized as a "formal" and "mass". Under the formalization in this case refers to the degree of orientation of the fixation technique strictly defined set of variables analyzed and their quantitative measurement. A characteristic feature of formalized methodological tools is that they studied variables are set in advance by the developer. Changing this set of variables in the study, i.e., the "fine tuning" tools are impossible. High degree of formalization of quantitative methods combined with their focus on the massive collection of the same type of primary data and their statistical processing. Among formalized quantitative methods of



sociological research include: statistics, questionnaires with closed questions, structured observation, and content analysis.

In contrast, quantitative, qualitative (non-formalized) methods are not focused on a massive collection of data and to achieve a deeper understanding of social phenomena under study.

Lack of formalization makes it impossible to reach a mass of surveyed objects, bringing the number of units of the survey is often reduced to a minimum. Waiver of comprehensiveness compensated "depth" research, i.e. a detailed study of social phenomena in its entirety and direct relationship with other phenomena. Among the non-formalized methods include: included unstructured observation, individual in-depth interview and focus groups, the so-called "traditional" text analysis, the study of personal documents (curriculum vitae , letters , etc.).

### **Main types of interviews**

The description typology interview techniques begin with an overview of domestic methodical literature, then move on to the foreign. For domestic sources published prior to the 90s, characteristic shared by all kinds of sociological survey responses and interviews, as well as to consider separately the methodology and techniques of applying these methods. This separation is not always justified, as, for example, methodological principles for the development of questionnaires and formal interviews are almost identical, while holding between formalized and unstructured interviews, and there are huge differences.

Further, according to domestic sources , all kinds of interviews are separated by technique of on the one hand , free , non-standardized , formalized (all three words are synonymous ) , on the other hand, the " free" , standardized , formalized .

*Interview analysis*

Interview relates to methods of sociological research poll. The essential feature of this method is targeted to give the socio- psychological interviewer communication with the respondent. Interview method is very popular today in sociological practice. This is due primarily to its versatility: it can be used to obtain information about the past, present and future of the people being studied, as well as subjective and behavioral information. Of course, you can study the behavior of people, and watching them purposefully, i.e. using the method of observation. However, watching , very difficult "to penetrate " into the subjective world of man , the world of his assessments , plans and motives of those or other actions, stereotypes. Only questionnaires methods, primarily interviews give researchers a chance.

*Structural analysis*

A structural approach to narrative analysis emphasizes how a story is told. The language plays an important part in the structural analysis of the text. The content of the text is important but emphasis is on the formal and structural means of analysis, for example how the story is developed, organized and how it ends. Labov and Waletzky (1967) argue that narratives have formal properties and each has a function. A fully formed narrative should have six elements: abstract (a short summary of the narrative); orientation (the time, place, situation, and participants); complicated action (the sequence of events); evaluation (the significance and meaning of the action, and the attitude of the narrator); the result or resolution of what finally happened; and coda (the return of the perspective to the present). A narrator creates his or her story of experiences, weaving all of these elements or some of them together (Riessman, 2008).

*Dialogic-performance analysis*

Dialogical-performance analysis of narratives emphasizes dialogical process between narrator and listener. The focus is on a narrator's speech or "who, why, and when" in a conversation. Both teller and listener join together in a conversation to create a story. It is a co-construction when a teller and a listener create meaning collaboratively in a particular setting

### *Thematic analysis*

Most commonly used in narrative analysis and phenomenology, the thematic analysis focuses on the content and the local context of the interviews. Thematic analysis is flexible, diverse, and complex (Braun & Clark, 2006; Holloway & Todres, 2003). Its flexibility makes it suitable for a variety of disciplines and modes of analysis, such as health research, grounded theory, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis. In this method of narrative analysis, the researcher organizes the data by themes and then interprets them in light of thematic development. The themes are influenced by prior and emergent theory, the ultimate purpose of the investigation (Riessman, 2008). The emphasis here is what is said, and not how it is said. The thematic analysis is useful for theorizing across a number of cases. The investigator finds common thematic elements across research participants' interviews, thus creating a typology for supporting a theory or developing a theory.

### **The in-depth interviews**

Research methodology provides conceptual instruments which, when used appropriately, will answer the research questions. The researcher had chosen as research method for obtaining answers for research questions the in-depth interview. According to the in-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation.

### *Procedure*

This research work based on case-study. Three participants were interviewed with in-depth methodology, each interview in 2-2,5 hours long. All participants are currently college students, experienced bullying in school years.

### *Discussion*

As it was shown previously, the research in this area is primarily quantitative and provides a group perspective of the experiences and responses of victims. In this section, researcher will present qualitative studies conducted on the experiences and responses of victims. Although it is important to note that previous studies were undertaken from the victims' perspectives, the emphasis is on victimhood and effects of bullying. These studies did not focus on the active responses of the bullied children.

After reviewing the selected qualitative studies on bullying from the perspectives of victimized children, three themes emerged. First, victims, parents, and teachers find it difficult to identify bullying behavior. Second, there is an emphasis on strategies for alleviating bullying. Finally, the studies focus on victims' reactions to verbal aggression. Although the following two studies do not directly focus on victims' experiences and responses, they do discuss the contexts of responses and experiences. The findings revealed that defining bullying behavior, and deciding whether an incident is perceived as bullying, could be complex. Often teachers, children, and parents did not agree on what constitutes a bullying behavior.

Mishna (2004) in her study also confirmed that children do not report bullying incidents because reported victimization is underestimated and not given serious consideration by teachers. Research reports that 25 percent of teachers thought that ignoring

the problem might help (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Children were adamant that telling adults made things worse for them. This finding is consistent with similar findings in the literature (Gamliel, Hoover, Daughtry, & Imbra, 2003; Geiger & Fischer, 2006).

The empirical study of bullying victims has primarily been concerned with their negative emotional consequences (Hawker and Boulton 2000) or on emotional coping responses (Kristensen and Smith 2003), while few studies examine the behavioral or protective responses of bullying victims. Coping responses most often employed by bullying victims include ignoring the bully, telling the bully to stop, asking an adult for help, or fighting back (Smith, Shu and Madsen 2001). Depression, low self-esteem, and high levels of anxiety are reported by most victims of bullying, both in the short-and long-term after the bullying event (Seals and Young 2003, Juvonen, Graham, and Schuster 2003).

This research concluded that verbal abuse was a daily occurrence in the classroom. Some students were more vulnerable to verbal aggression than others because of their physical characteristics. There were gender differences in the ways children responded to verbal aggression. Girls considered verbal aggression as an immature act by boys and did not want to lower themselves to the level of boys who acted immaturity (Geiger & Fischer, 2006). Verbal aggression often led to physical aggression. This study confirmed the findings of Mishna (2004) and Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, and Wiener, (2005) studies about teachers' responses to verbal aggression in their classrooms. Usually, teachers showed lack of concern, were unfair, and provided no constructive solution to the situation. Mishna (2004) provided some reasons for the lack of concern from teachers.

This study used in-depth, interviews for data collection. There were three interviewed. Based on analysis of personal narrative and Grounded Theory approach, researcher concluded seven common coping mechanisms for all responders.

***Incongruent cognitions***

Incongruent cognitions represent depersonalization of their identity, wish of being “removed” from their traumatic experience. It is important to note that incongruent cognitions showed during interview with all participants. Thus, participants still experience the traumatic memories that provide actualization of such coping mechanism.

*“...and You thought... You are not able to answer them...” (P.1)*

***Humor***

Participant 3 was pointing out the amusing aspects of the problem at hand. Also he provided "positive reframing" of different aspects during interview.

*“...and then they (bullies) left our class, and I start to be funny, give jokes. I became more open for people.” (P.3)*

***Seeking support***

Seeking support is considering be asking for help, or finding emotional support from family members or friends. Participants deny any consciously directed seeking for help or support from family or teachers. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that some authorities influenced on participants' rope among classmates.

*“It is seems to begin in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, even early, in 7<sup>th</sup>, when our supervising teacher changed for leading teacher, they (bullies) start to be quiet.” (P.3)*

It also important to note, that not only authorities were providing some support, but it is appeared that peers and friends were also objects of seeking support mechanism.

*“I had a friend, we were banding together, because he was as me” (P.2)*

### ***Physical recreation***

One of mechanisms that helped to deal with stress of being bullied is physical recreation.

*“We were playing games outside....also I was skinning... ”(P.3)*

### ***Self-blame***

Internalizing the issue, and blaming themselves (beyond just taking responsibility for participants’ actions), one of coping mechanism detected by researcher. It is also leads to low self-esteem.

*“I am loser....We were group of losers” (P.3)*

### ***Intellectualization***

As one of coping mechanism intellectualization taking an objective viewpoint on the whole picture of subjective experience of bullying victims. As the results of interview showed, participants have tendency to take outer point of view for their own experience.

*“...as I said before they (bullies) were from difficult families... ”(P.3)*

### ***Fantasy***

Engaging in daydreams about how things should be, rather than doing anything about how things are. Participants provided tendency toward daydreaming.

*“...when I came home, and start to showering, I had a greater argument for them...also I was imagining for striking back... ”(P.3)*

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2006; Kristensen & Smith, 2003). A few studies have examined behavioural or self-protective responses to bullying (Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Skinner, 2002; Tannebaum, Varjas, Meyers, & Parris, 2011).

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even counter-attacking was not out of the question as a response. Counter-aggressive responses were surprisingly common for boys.

On the basis of these results, the researchers concluded that when bullies attack they do not always expect submission from their victims. They also confirmed that bullies did expect some kind of response such as “a powerless counter attack” or “crying.” According to this research, a crying victim was not as rewarding for bullies as “one who could be provoked to ineffective, ridiculous counters aggression . . . that gave a good show to the whole peer group” (Salmivalli et al., 1996, p. 108).

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### **Long-term Effects of Bullying**

Researchers have begun to establish a literature base documenting the long-term effects of childhood/adolescent bullying among college students (Dempsey & Storch, 2008; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Jantzer et al., 2006; Newman et al., 2005; Olweus, 1993; Schafer et al., 2004; Tritt & Duncan, 1997). Adequate assessment of the nature of clients presenting problems, as well as factors contributing to these problems is critical to providing effective treatment (Hood & Johnson, 2002). Understanding the aspects associated with the long-term effects of bullying may strengthen the initial assessment phase of counseling by assisting college mental health professionals to identify former victims of bullying and determining if further assessment of associated consequences is needed. Retrospective studies of college

students who experienced bullying during childhood and/or adolescence were more likely than non-bullied peers to experience depression (Roth et al. 2002; Storch et al., 2001), anxiety disorders (McCabe, et al., 2003; Roth, Cole, &Heimburg) and problems in interpersonal relationships (Ledley et al, 2006; Schafer et al., 2004). College students who recalled a history of bullying during school age years reported more symptoms of depression in comparison to adults who did not recall experiencing bullying during their primary and secondary school years (Hawker & Boulton; Jantzer et al.; Olweus, 1993). Additionally, college students who reported being former victims of school-aged bullying were more likely to endorse feeling that they had little control over outcomes in their lives (Dempsey & Storch, 2008) and lower self-esteem (Olweus). These factors also have been found to be associated with a greater risk for depression (Orth, Robins, Trzesniewski, Maes, & Schmitt, 2009; Robbins & Hayes, 1995).

From participants recalling being confronted by past victims, to participants who previously bullied had an unpredictable theme emerged that offers insight into the damaging and unnecessary effects of bullying. These effects were not just on the victim but even on the bully. The types of regrets representing participants' varying experiences after bullying, lend insight into what others might experience as they move beyond the role of bully into the reflective role of mature adult.

This research demonstrates that student perceptions (including those experiencing bullying as victim, bully, and witness) must define bullying and all its related elements. If we are to attempt to stop bullying, we must know what it is to those involved. In addition, the research also shows that students are coming to realize that bullying is not an individual act, but something that tends to be supported by a group's action or inaction.

Education on the role of groups in bullying may assist in one person being able to sway a group to change the outcome of a bullying situation. Just as some people egg-on the bully and some stand and watch without intervening in any way, it should be hoped that individuals could have the courage and skills needed to intervene.

### ***Future research recommendations***

#### **Cyberbullying**

For future work in this field researcher recommends to add Cyberbullying as one of form of bullying. It is a form of indirect relational bullying that has become increasingly frequent with adolescents. Cyberbullying can be defined as willful and repeated harm inflicted through electronic media such as personal computers, e-mail, instant messaging, Facebook, chat rooms, websites, text messaging, and video clip bullying through mobile phone cameras (Wang, Iannott, & Nansel, 2009). The list of ways to subvert the use of electronic media is long and new methods continue to emerge in the high-tech field. According to Wilard (2004), cyberbullying can occur in various forms including flaming, harassment, cyber-stalking, denigration (put-downs), masquerading, outing, and trickery and exclusion.

Despite its recent emergence, cyberbullying is becoming one of the most common means of bullying among adolescents. Reports of electronic bullying perpetration range from 4 to 18%, and rates are considerably higher at 7 to 35% for victimization (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007; Hinduja & Patchin, 2009; Mitchell, Ybarra, & Finklehor, 2007). Kowalski and Limber (2007) in their study of 3,767, middle school students from the Southwestern and Northwestern U.S. found that 22% of students reported being involved in cyberbullying, including 4% as bullies, 7% as victims, and 7% as both. In a Canadian study

of 264 students from three junior high schools, Li (2006) reported that almost 50% of students were both bully and victim and 25% of those had been cyberbullied.

Although the intent of bullying is the same, cyberbullying and traditional bullying differ in many ways. Cyberbullying is covert and adults may underestimate the number of youth involved and affected by it. It gives the perpetrator complete anonymity and is therefore difficult to detect (Keith & Martin, 2005). The sense of anonymity and lack of face-to-face contact with the victim gives the bully a feeling of disinhibition.

### *Limitations of the Research*

Researcher faced with several limitations considering actualization this work. It was problematically to recruit participants suitable for this research work. It is also possible for participant to be affected by memory loss and maturation. As interview were conducted though time perceptivity, memory loss could influence for the results. In addition, the participants may have wanted to project themselves in particular ways to the interviewer or they may have wanted to protect themselves. It is very possible that some participants may have been bullied more, or have been more engaged in the role of the bully, than they led the researcher to believe. Nevertheless, the lack of capacity in qualitative methodology on the part of the researcher influenced on collected data.

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