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Students' Judgments about Bullying Situations in Schools: Differences among Students with

Bullying Experience, Victimization Experience, and No Experience

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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Committee in charge:

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Abstract

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by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Berkeley

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In the current study, I examined students' judgments as well as assessed if there are differences in the judgments among three groups of middle and high school and college students ages 12-23 who reported having (a) engaged in bullying, (b) experienced bullying victimization, and (c) had no experience of bullying. I employed social domain theory as my theoretical framework and a mixed method approach that consisted of statistical analyses and a semi-structured interview with questions about hypothetical bullying situations. I conducted a combination of Fisher's exact tests, McNemar's test, and logistic regression to analyze participants' judgments. I found that students with bullying experience, just like their peers with victimization experience and no experience, disapproved of unprovoked bullying and aggression in general primarily due to concerns about injuries and harm. Similar to their peers, students with bullying experience also disapproved of bullying even in situations with mitigating factors, such as when the intention of the protagonist was to avoid becoming the target of bullying or when the protagonist was less physically strong than the target. The current study adds to the growing body of evidence that people with aggressive behaviors do engage in moral judgments and are just as concerned about the potential harm from bullying and aggression as their peers without bullying experience.

Keywords: moral judgments, moral reasoning, bullying, aggression, aggressive behaviors, violence, violent behaviors, social domain theory

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There is a common notion that students who engage in bullying and aggressive behaviors are morally deficient or have an underdeveloped moral sense (Kollerová et al., 2014; Sticca & Perren, 2015). By definition, bullying and aggression are behaviors intended to hurt others (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Olweus, 1993). Because of the harm involved, people may not naturally be concerned with students who engage in bullying (Cowie & Colliety, 2016). Considering the perspectives of students engaging in bullying may also upset victims of bullying and their families and will most likely draw criticisms from others (Cowie & Colliety, 2016). Such social criticisms and the harm involved in bullying can be one of the potential reasons why much more attention is given to the victims of bullying rather than to the students who engage in bullying. Students who engage in bullying are generally less likely to receive support (Sigurdson et al., 2015). Less attention also means less understanding about students who engage in bullying. The lack of support and understanding about bullying perpetration creates a vicious cycle: students who engage in bullying behaviors hurt others and receive minimal empathy and support, so they continue to engage in bullying.

It is important to break this cycle because research has revealed that students who have engaged in bullying have a host of health issues and poor academic and life outcomes (Frisén & Bjarnelind, 2010; Juvonen et al., 2003; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Sigurdson et al., 2015). The challenges that influenced them to engage in bullying behaviors also tend to persist into adulthood (Sigurdson et al., 2015). To break this cycle and to develop a deeper understanding about bullying perpetration, I focus on the social cognitive factors, specifically students' judgments and moral reasoning, and the differences in judgments among students with different experiences of bullying (i.e., perpetration, victimization, and no experience). I also focus on understanding how students with different experiences of bullying weigh, balance, and prioritize individual and situational factors as well as conflicts of interests and personal goals, a process that Turiel (2022) referred to as coordination.

Researchers have explored the social cognitive processes of bullying perpetration and most of the past studies employed moral disengagement theory (Hymel et al., 2005; Killer et al., 2019; Swearer et al., 2014; Teng et al., 2020). There are several theoretical and methodological limitations associated with employing moral disengagement theory. The idea of moral disengagement stems from Bandura's (1977) cognitive social learning framework. He proposed that people can selectively disengage from their moral values by cognitively reconstructing their thoughts about inhuman conduct to more justifiable and worthy conduct. The theoretical limitation of moral disengagement theory is that the theory presumes bullying perpetration as a result of an individual's disengagement from their moral values rather than as a result of a judgment and decision-making process that involves both moral and nonmoral (e.g., social or pragmatic) considerations of a situation.

This presumption classifies bullying perpetration as solely immoral, which precludes the possibility that a person who engaged in bullying perpetration may also have moral considerations in a bullying situation and may have weighed and balanced moral and nonmoral considerations. In addition, most researchers who employed moral disengagement theory used surveys, which limited the extent to which they could engage in probing. A scant amount of research examining bullying behaviors through the lens of moral reasoning has been conducted using semi-structured interviews. Despite being time consuming, a semi-structured interview

allows for probing participants' judgments, which will help to understand people's reasoning, minimize socially desirable responses, and reduce suggestive questioning from the researchers.

To my knowledge, only Caravita et al. (2009) and Thornberg et al. (2016, 2017) employed social domain theory as an alternative to moral disengagement theory in examining bullying perpetration. Social domain researchers maintain that issues pertaining to morality differ from issues pertaining to conventional practices and that people often coordinate factors in these two domains (moral and conventional) when making judgments about what is right and wrong. However, in both the 2016 and 2017 studies, Thornberg and his colleagues also used a survey method in their studies and did not attempt to study the judgments of students who engaged in bullying. Thus, no comparisons between students with and without bullying perpetration experience were made. Caravita et al. did make comparisons between students who engaged in bullying and those who did not using a semi-structured interview. However, Caravita et al. primarily explored youth's judgments about moral and school rules and did not directly address bullying situations.

In the current study, I address these theoretical and methodological limitations in the extant literature by applying social domain theory and using semi-structured interviews. I also expand on existing literature by focusing on understanding bullying perpetration through comparing the judgments of students who reported as having engaged in bullying with those who did not. The purpose of this research is to deepen our understanding about bullying perpetration by (a) examining students' judgments and (b) assessing if there are differences in the judgments among students who engaged in bullying, experienced bullying victimization, and did not experience bullying. I first provide a review of the conceptualization of bullying and aggression. Next, I provide a brief overview of several prominent moral theories and the conceptualization of morality within each theory. I then discuss the basis for examining bullying perpetration through the lens of moral reasoning and the applications of social domain theory in investigating people's moral judgments.

Conceptualizing Bullying and Aggression and the Impacts of Bullying

General Definition of Bullying

Beginning in Sweden during the late 1960s, social interest in bullying spurred research on bullying behaviors (Heinemann 1973, as cited in Olweus, 1978). Heinemann, a Swedish physician, introduced the term "mobbing" to denote the situation when a group of individuals took negative actions upon a single person who was perceived as different from the group (Heinemann 1973, as cited in Olweus, 1978). Later, Olweus (1978), a Norwegian-Swedish psychologist and luminary in the field of bullying research, refined the concept of mobbing and introduced the term "bullying." Olweus maintained that bullying is different from mobbing in three ways. First, bullying differs from mobbing in that mobbing denotes group violence, whereas bullying does not. Olweus (1978, p. 12) stated that, in the case of mobbing, "collective aggression by a homogenous group tends to obscure the contribution made by individual members" and that "members of the group potentially take part in the activity to varying degrees even in situations of all against one." Second, mobbing implies that the circumstance is temporary and situational, whereas acts of bullying exclude occasional, non-serious negative actions and place emphasis on negative actions that are carried out repeatedly over time. Lastly, in acts of bullying, the victim is not necessarily an outcast as in the case of mobbing.

Olweus (1993)'s definition of bullying, which has become the most commonly accepted definition by researchers, is as follows:

> A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students…negative action [happens] when someone intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another...the student who is exposed to the negative actions has difficulty defending him/herself and is somewhat helpless against the student or students who harass. (pp. 9–10).

Olweus (1978, 1993) identified the three main principles that define bullying behaviors: intent to harm, repetition, and an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and target. Olweus explained that the repetition of the act serves to differentiate bullying from the occasional normative aggression observed in human interactions (e.g., interpersonal conflict). However, he added that, in some cases, a single and serious incident can still be regarded as bullying depending on the context. He also stressed that the term bullying should only be used to describe situations in which there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target. According to Olweus, situations when two students are of similar strength (physical or psychological) should not be described as bullying. When an imbalance of power exists, bullying victims are helpless and incapable of defending themselves against the perpetrator. Current studies on bullying have adopted at least one of these three definitional principles (Slattery et al., 2019).

Moreover, many researchers agree that bullying is a group process that involves people participating in different roles (Rodkin et al., 2015; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). A common categorization of the roles includes four types: bullies, victims (sometimes called targets), bully-victims (victims of bullying perpetration who also bully others), and bystanders (Rodkin et al., 2015). Later research further refined bullying roles into five types: Machiavellian bullies, assistants, victims, defenders, and outsiders (Demaray et al., 2016). Machiavellian bullies are often the ring leaders who are popular and socially competent with high self-esteem and other assets. Assistants are the bully followers who are personally involved in aiding and abetting the bully ringleader in carrying out bullying perpetration or otherwise watching and expressing approval during bullying episodes. Defenders are typically onlookers who stand out to help and speak for the victims and outsiders are onlookers who stay uninvolved.

In this study, I referenced both Demaray et al. (2016) and Rodkin et al. (2015) regarding bullying roles but moved away from the traditional label of referring to students as bullies. I focused on bullies in this study but referred to them as students with bullying experience. Referring to bullies as students with bullying experience aligns more with the social domain perspective by focusing on the reported behaviors and their experiences with bullying to avoid presuming bullying as a trait that defines a student. I referred to victims as students with victimization experience. I used victimization interchangeably with bullying victimization in this study unless otherwise noted. I referred to students who reported no engagement in bullying or experiences of victimization as students with no experience. I did not measure the roles of bully-victim, assistants, defenders, and outsiders because, at the time of this study, reliable instruments available to measure these roles all used the word "bullying" in the instrument (Demaray et al., 2016; Salmivalli et al., 1996; Summers, 2008). The word "bullying" is used inconsistently among researchers, students, parents and school staff (Slattery et al., 2019). Therefore, I avoided using the word "bullying" in this study to prevent restricting participants' judgments to any preconceived notion of bullying.

Bullying, Aggression, and Violence

There are nuanced differences among bullying, aggression, and violence despite the terms being used interchangeably at times. According to Allen and Anderson (2017), aggression is any behavior that is intended to hurt another person, and the person being targeted and harmed is motivated to avoid that harm. Violence is an extreme form of aggression that leads to severe harm. The intentions of the actor and the targeted person are essential factors in distinguishing aggressive behaviors from other phenomena. An actor must have an intention to harm; this means accidental harm such as unintentionally elbowing someone is not considered aggressive behavior. The targeted person must also have a motivation to avoid that harm; thus, an actor who harms the targeted person for the benefit of that person — such as when a doctor amputates a patient's limb to save his life — is not engaging in aggressive behavior.

There are many ways in which aggression is categorized such as by the response modality (i.e., physical, verbal, relational, and cyber), by the immediacy of the act (direct and indirect), or by instigation (proactive and reactive; see Allen & Anderson, 2017, for a comprehensive review). Researchers agree that bullying perpetration can be considered as a subtype of aggression, specifically proactive, goal-directed aggression (Dodge & Coie, 1987; Espelage, 2004; Salmivalli et al., 2011; Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). Proactive aggression is defined as premeditated hurtful behaviors that are done to achieve aggressor's goals or obtain something that the aggressor wants (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Dodge et al., 1997). Proactive aggression is different from reactive aggression, which is defined as reactive behaviors in response to something that happened (perceived or real) and is usually characterized as impulsive, thoughtless (i.e., unplanned), and driven by anger (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Dodge et al., 1997). By definition, repeated aggressive and violent behaviors done by someone who is more powerful than the targeted person can be considered as bullying perpetration.

Impacts on Health and Academics

Research revealed that children who are involved in bullying, regardless of their role, experience psychosocial challenges, externalizing and internalizing problems, and academic difficulties. However, there are mixed results when comparing these impacts among the different roles in bullying. Nozaki (2019) found that students with bullying experience had lower levels of depression and higher levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction when compared to students who experienced bullying victimization and bully-victims, especially when controlling for a number of factors, including socioeconomic status, support from parents and teachers, and having more close friends. On the other hand, Sigurdson et al. (2015) found that students with bullying experience had higher levels of externalizing behaviors and depressive symptoms whereas students experiencing bullying victimization had higher anxiety, somatic complaints, and attentional issues. In regard to daily functioning, Sigurdson et al. also found that students with bullying experience tend to have a reduced level of leisure activities, students experienced bullying victimization tend to be absent from school more frequently, and bully-victims tend to have higher levels of interpersonal problems.

Among these different roles, students experiencing bullying victimization were twice as likely to have received help than students engaging in bullying perpetration behaviors or bully-victims. Bully-victims had the lowest school engagement and grades when compared to students engaging in bullying perpetration behaviors and students experiencing bullying victimization, and the school engagement of students engaging in bullying perpetration behaviors was lower than that of students experiencing bullying victimization (Juvonen et al., 2003; Kowalski & Limber, 2013). Overall, bully-victims experienced the most psychosocial and academic

difficulties, students engaging in bullying perpetration behaviors experienced more academic difficulties, and students who experienced bullying victimization encountered more psychosocial difficulties when comparing among these different roles of bullying.

Conceptualization of Morality and the Development of Social and Moral Knowledge

Thinkers throughout the world at various times in history dating back to the 6th century BCE, from Laozi and Gautama to Aristotle, conceptualized moral capacity in humans and attempted to define morality. Some emphasized moral reasoning and choices whereas others maintained that morality was determined by our biological dispositions or by our culture or society. Similarly, scholars in contemporary times from various fields (e.g., philosophy, anthropology, psychology) have formulated theories about their conceptualizations of morality and the mechanisms of moral development. Different schools of thought have placed varying degrees of importance on the role of environmental and cultural factors, emotions, cognition, and biological make-up in the development of morality. In the following section, I provide a brief overview of different theoretical views on learning and moral development including cultural psychology, socialization, and social learning theory, which is relevant to the application of moral disengagement theory to bullying in later sections. I also discuss structural-developmental theories of learning and moral development and social domain theory, which is the theoretical framework underlying the current study.

Cultural Psychology

Cultural psychologists such as Richard Shweder maintain that culture is the primary source of morality, and moral values and ideologies are socially constructed, transformed, and transmitted through social communication (Shweder et al., 1987, 1997; Shweder & Sullivan, 1993). Since culture dictates the form and content of morality, what may be conveyed as moral by a given culture can encompass a wide range of social practices. At the same time, Shweder believed that the contrasts in theory between individualism and collectivism, independence and interdependence, and egocentrism and socio-centrism can be used to characterize the variations in morality and culture.

In Shweder et al.'s (1997) "Big three" of morality, they broadly characterized morality as autonomy based on individual rights; community based on communal values, social hierarchy, and duty; and divinity based on concepts of sanctity and purity usually coming from laws of God or some divine being. Results from past research have revealed that some social practices seen as a personal choice by U.S. participants were seen as having moral implications in Indian participants (Shweder et al., 1987). For example, Miller and Bersoff (1992) asked the participants if it was alright or not alright to steal a train ticket if the train was the only way to attend a best friend's wedding. The Indian participants indicated that the stealing is justified since the person made a promise to attend the wedding, but the U.S. participants answered otherwise. Miller and Bersoff concluded that there was a strong orientation to prioritize interpersonal commitments among the Indian participants compared to the U.S. participants, suggesting that morality is strictly determined by cultural values and social practices. This perspective is in contrast to social domain theory, discussed in a later section, in which morality is conceptualized as relating to harm and justice. Social domain theory also posits that people across the globe will consider harm and unfairness as unacceptable regardless of cultural values (see Shweder et al. [1987] and Turiel et al. [1987] for more details).

Socialization and Internalization

Similar to cultural psychology in the belief that morality is determined by the environment, socialization theorists, such as Martin Hoffman and Joan Grusec, conceptualized

moral development as a process of change from external control to internal control of conduct (Grusec et al., 2014; Hoffman, 2000). Socializing agents such as parents and teachers inculcate children with a set of social standards, rules, and values, and often utilize rewards and punishment to facilitate children learning and acquiring these sets of social standards and values. When a child has successfully been socialized, this child will no longer require the external constraints of social rules. The child has internalized these rules and will act accordingly even when no adults are monitoring him or her.

The socialization approach focuses on parenting style and parent behavior. Grusec et al. (2014) reviewed a large body of research and indicated that mothers' sensitivity to children's distress in their first year of life was predictive of better self-regulation, emotion regulation, and fewer behavioral challenges in toddler years. Mothers' responsiveness to children's requests was also predictive of children's compliance (Kochanska et al., 2005). Parents guided learning about morally relevant situations through conversations about emotions and misbehaviors is predictive of better internalized social value (Kochanska et al., 2003; Laible & Thompson, 2002).

Social Learning Theory

Based on the behavioristic principle of stimulus-response in social learning theory, Bandura (1977) maintained that children and adolescents tend to engage in behaviors that they believe will lead to rewards and avoid behaviors that they believe will lead to punishment. Bandura expanded this behavioristic principle in explaining human learning and behavior to include cognitive processes such as attention, retention (memory), and motivation. These cognitive processes enable individuals to learn through observations and vicarious experiences and not only limited to learning by direct instructions and first-hand experiences.

In the realm of morality, children learn about standards of conduct through observing models and other socializing agents such as parents, teachers, and peers (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) maintained that behavioral control starts off as external when children are young. As children become increasingly more exposed to their environment and have more opportunities to observe models of moral standards of conduct, vicarious reinforcement (seeing a model being rewarded for certain behaviors and punished for other behaviors) and self-evaluative consequences will serve as an internal control for reinforcing socially desirable behavior and avoiding transgressive behavior. Bandura asserted that the self-evaluative mechanism does not operate unless activated and that self-deterring consequences are most likely to be activated when harm stemming from personal conduct is unambiguous. This self-evaluative mechanism is at the basis of Bandura's moral disengagement theory, which is discussed below.

Structural-Developmental Theories

Piaget and Kohlberg. There are several influential researchers in the structural-developmental framework (also referred to as structural-cognitive or constructivist): Piaget, Kohlberg, and Turiel. Piaget (1932/1997) studied morality by exploring children's concepts about rules. He proposed that there are two major phases of moral judgments — heteronomous and autonomous. In the heteronomous phase, children's understanding of the social world and their moral judgments are mainly based on their interactions with adults (typically parents) and other authority figures. Children focus on objective responsibility, meaning that they only take into consideration the consequences of an action and neglect or are not yet aware of the intentions and motive of the actor. As children grow older and have more opportunities to interact with peers, children construct their understanding of social life through these interactions with peers. Peer interactions facilitate children's understanding of cooperation, social functioning, group consensus, and fairness, providing the basis for children to develop more adequate

thinking about social interactions. They also develop mutual respect for each other and an understanding of the nature of social rules based on cooperation and reciprocal norms.

Kohlberg (1976) elaborated on Piaget's formulation and theorized that children are initially concerned about punishment, individual needs, and desires, as well as adhering to social rules and standards. It is not until late adolescence or adulthood that judgments are based on reciprocity and justice, rather than strictly being compliant with social standards and conventions. In both Piaget (1932/1997) and Kohlberg's formulations, an individual's moral development involves a process of differentiating the need to comply with rules and concerns with material values (e.g., punishment avoidance, material consequences) from understanding the nature of social relationships based on cooperation, reciprocity, and fairness. In the differentiation models, children do not distinguish between judgments about social authority and rules from issues of harm and fairness until later stages.

Social Domain Theory. In contrast to the differentiation models of Piaget and Kohlberg, Turiel (1983) developed social domain theory and proposed that there are different categories or domains of thinking relating to our social lives that develop simultaneously and not through a process of differentiation. Turiel maintained that there are three main domains of thinking: the moral, the social conventional, and the personal/psychological. Moral prescriptions are characterized as obligatory, not contingent on rules, authority, or common practice and universally applicable (across different contexts). In other words, the consequences of acts in the moral domain are intrinsic to the act itself and are not affected by social rules, consensus, or contexts (e.g., hitting will hurt the person being hit).

On the other hand, the conventional domain pertains to an individual's understanding of social and cultural standards, which include arrangements, rules, expectations, customs, and behavioral uniformities that organize and determine how people are expected to interact within a social system. For example, calling a teacher by their first name is not wrong when there is no rule prohibiting students to call their teachers by their first names. The relationship between an act in the conventional domain and its consequence is determined by group consensus and agreement rather than being derived intrinsically from the act, as in the case of moral conduct. Individuals also develop judgments in the personal domain, which entails autonomy, independence, and personal preferences and choices (Nucci, 1981). These are aspects of life that people judge as individual decisions, such as one's choice of friends and hobbies and, therefore, are considered outside the realm of moral concerns and regulation by conventional rules or authority figures.

From decades of research, results revealed that children, starting from a young age, are able to distinguish between the moral and social conventional components of social interactions (Smetana, 2013). Children's thoughts and judgments about transgressions involving harm and unfairness are qualitatively different from thoughts and judgments about violations of conventional rules, which do not typically have the features relating to harm and fairness (e.g., dress codes in schools).

Criterion Judgments and Justification Categories. As mentioned above, social concepts and judgments are organized by domains. Development in these domains involves a qualitative transformation of the forms of organization. Two aspects are imperative for the analysis and development of social concepts: criterion judgments and justification categories. Criterion judgments serve to distinguish the nature of social events (e.g., moral vs. conventional), which establish the parameters of domain knowledge. Scholars have examined several criterion judgments and the most relevant to this study are rule contingency, authority directives, and

generalizability. Rule or convention contingency pertains to whether the righteousness of an act is based on existing rules or common practices. Similarly, authority directive pertains to whether the righteousness of an act is dependent on authority approval. Research results revealed that people judged moral transgressions as wrong even when there were no rules prohibiting the transgressions or when an authority figure allows the transgressions (Turiel, 1983). For example, when asked, "is it alright to hit Johnny if there is no rule which prohibits hitting" and "is it alright to hit Johnny if the teachers permit hitting in class," people judged hitting as wrong in both scenarios. Another criterion is generalizability, which serves to differentiate whether or not the righteousness of an act is universally applicable. Research results indicated that people judged unprovoked harm (e.g., hitting and pushing) as wrong regardless of the countries that one is in, suggesting that the judgment about harm as wrong is generalizable to different places (Turiel, 1983). For example, people judged the behavior as wrong when asked the question, "Is it ok or not ok for a different country to allow hitting?"

Studies on justification categories have helped researchers to understand people's forms of reasoning in evaluating an act (Davidson et al., 1983; Turiel, 1983). For example, study participants in Davidson et al. (1983) were presented with situations involving transgressional behaviors and were asked to rank the degree of wrongness and explain their reasons for the ranking. Transgressions in the moral domain were ranked the most wrong and were justified as wrong based on reasons related to justice, harm, and rights. When presented with a situation involving moral transgressions, people were concerned about the interests of the potential victim. People were also concerned about maintaining a balance of rights between all parties involved in the situation. For example, people explained that someone could have gotten hurt, or it would not be fair if a person took another person's money when he did not earn it.

The conventional transgressions were ranked less wrong than moral transgressions and were justified on social-organizational grounds such as customs, traditions, or approval by an authority (e.g., the act is okay if the teacher gives permission). The acts ranked the least wrong were those deemed to be a personal matter only affecting the actor. People's reasoning about personal matters pertains to individual preferences or prerogative. For example, a male having long hair is not deemed wrong because people judge it as a personal prerogative. Together, the criterion judgments and justification categories were used to define the domains as well as establish parameters of knowledge within domains (Davidson et al., 1983; Nobes & Pawson, 2003; Turiel et al., 1987).

Social Cognition, Moral Evaluations, and the Contexts of Bullying and Aggression

Theories of morality and moral development can be helpful in understanding bullying and aggressive behaviors, and moral judgments and reasoning in particular are empirically and conceptually relevant to the study of bullying perpetration behaviors. Empirically, research has shown that the descriptions of bullying align with the characterizations of moral transgressions, as behaviors and social interactions that involve harm (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001; Donoghue et al., 2015; Waseem et al., 2014). Conceptually, if bullying is a moral issue, it involves people's moral judgments about what should and should not be done and cannot be understood solely by empirical descriptions of the behavior (Kohlberg, 1971).

Furthermore, comparing the judgments of people having different experiences of bullying can be beneficial in deepening the understanding of bullying perpetration. Studies have revealed some level of differences in the judgments between the people who engaged in bullying or aggression from those of the victims and people who were not involved (Astor, 1994; Gini et al., 2011; Haddock & Jimerson, 2017; Levasseur et al., 2017; Nucci & Herman, 1982; Obermann,

2011; Perren et al., 2012; Stein & Jimerson, 2020; Tisak & Jankowski, 1996). It is important to note that bullying is a multifaceted issue that involves influences from social cognitive and social-ecological dimensions (Swearer et al., 2014; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). In this study, I focus on the social cognitive influences, which are factors or processes at the individual level. More specifically, I focus on people's moral judgments as well as judgments in other domains to expand our understanding about bullying perpetration. In the following section, I provide a brief overview of the applications of social domain theory on bullying perpetration behaviors.

Social Domain Theory and Bullying

From the social domain theory perspective (also referred to as domain perspective), individuals make judgments by evaluating both the individual and situational factors at hand and coordinate (weigh, balance, and prioritize) these factors along with existing social knowledge from different domains in their decision-making process. In instances of bullying perpetration, individuals are theorized to make active appraisals of the different situations, meaning individuals take contextual and individual factors into account and coordinate existing and new information from various domains as part of their decision-making process. The domain perspective described here is different from the moral disengagement theory of selectively disengaging from one's moral values.

The results of studies in the 1980s and 1990s in which the domain theory framework to investigate the moral judgments of children with aggressive and violent behaviors suggested that these children did not have a moral deficit or a lack of moral knowledge (Nucci & Herman, 1982). Children with aggressive behaviors, just like their counterparts without aggressive behavior, were able to distinguish between moral and social conventional components of a situation and disapprove of violence in unprovoked situations. The moral judgments of the two groups differed in situations of provoked harm. Children with a history of aggressive behaviors were more likely than children without aggressive behaviors to approve the use of violence in response to a provocation and justified their approval based on the basis of harm that resulted from provocation. On the other hand, children without aggressive behaviors disapproved of the use of violence and focused on the harm itself stemming from the use of violence in any situation, provoked or unprovoked.

More recent studies also shed light on the social cognitive processes of students who engage in bullying. Caravita et al. (2009) found that children who engaged in bullying were more likely to perceive rules as dependent on authority when compared to students who did not engage in bullying. In other words, rule-breaking behaviors done at the command of authority or done outside of schools were less likely to be considered as wrong by children who engaged in bullying perpetration behaviors. Students who engaged in bullying were also less likely to judge rule-breaking behaviors in the social-conventional domain as wrong in comparison to victims and bystanders. Thornberg et al. (2017) found that, when compared to students who have no experience of bullying or have experienced bullying victimization, students who have engaged in bullying were less likely to judge bullying and repeated conventional transgression as wrong and to use reasoning in the moral domain.

In Levasseur et al. (2017)'s study, participants were given two hypothetical bullying situations. Students who engaged in bullying were significantly more likely to rate one situation as less wrong than the other situation, suggesting that students who engaged in bullying might have coordinated information and knowledge in various domains differently than students who experienced bullying victimization or students with no experiences of bullying. Students who engaged in bullying in Levasseur et al.'s study also reported that they would evaluate the

bullying perpetration differently if peers were seen as approving of the bullying behavior. Aligned with Thornberg et al. (2017), in the Levasseur et al. study, students who engaged in bullying were also less likely to use reasoning in the moral domain and were more likely to use reasoning in the personal domain.

To summarize, students who engaged in bullying judged bullying as morally wrong in general. However, students who engaged in bullying were less likely to view bullying as wrong than students who experienced bullying victimization or students with no experience of bullying. Researchers do not yet know why students who engaged in bullying were less likely to judge bullying as wrong than other students. The studies reviewed here employed survey methods that did not allow for probing of the participants' thought processes. However, these research results point to the direction that students who engaged in bullying had potentially coordinated information and knowledge from various domains in a way that was different from students with no experiences of bullying or with experiences of bullying victimization as mentioned by Levasseur et al. (2017).

In addition, students who engaged in bullying were also more likely to depend on existing rules or authority in their moral judgments and had a different focus than other students, as in the case of Nucci and Herman (1982) and Caravita et al. (2009). Students who engaged in bullying in those studies did not apply their general understanding that bullying is wrong to different contexts. Some students who engaged in bullying focused on the harm stemming from provocation whereas others judged bullying as less wrong in the context when there were no explicit rules.

The Current Study

The review of the literature on moral judgments about bullying revealed several important research gaps. First, past research on moral judgments about aggression and bullying primarily employed moral disengagement theory, and empirical work using alternative theories are lacking. Moral disengagement theory presumes bullying perpetration is a result of disengagement from moral values rather than a judgment and decision-making process that involves considerations from multiple domains, both moral and non-moral (e.g., social or pragmatic). As a result, little is known about the factors that students with bullying experiences take into consideration and whether they reason differently about bullying than their peers without bullying experience. Secondly, the limited empirical work on moral judgments about bullying using a domain theory approach either used a survey method, which does not allow researchers to probe and clarify participants' reasoning, or did not make comparisons between students who had bullying experience and those who did not.

In the current study, I addressed these theoretical and methodological limitations in the extant literature by employing social domain theory as the theoretical framework and a semi-structured interview method that has been extensively used in research on social and moral development. The semi-structured interview included questions and hypothetical stories that were designed to elicit participants' judgments about bullying and aggression. Specifically, participants were asked about harm in different situations: aggression in general, bullying in an unprovoked situation (i.e., protagonist hits target every day for no legitimate reason), and bullying in an ambiguous situation (i.e., protagonist hits target every day to avoid getting picked on by another group of students who bully others in the same school). The participants were also asked about bullying with different levels of individual difference—that is, when the protagonist was physically more powerful than the target and vice versa—in both the unprovoked situation and ambiguous situations.

Research Questions

The primary purpose of the current research was to understand students' decisions about bullying by exploring and comparing the judgments of three groups of students who have (a) bullying experience, (b) victimization experience, and (c) no experience. I use judgment to include both evaluation and justification and use reasoning interchangeably with justification. This study addressed the following research questions.

1. Do students with bullying experience, compared to their peers with victimization or no experience, judge physical aggression in a general situation, bullying in an unprovoked situation, and bullying in an ambiguous situation differently?
2. Do the judgments of students with bullying experience differ from their peers with victimization or no experience when there are power differentials between the protagonist and the target in both the unprovoked and ambiguous situation?
3. Are students' judgments about bullying contingent upon teachers' directives or common practice in a classroom or another country, and are the criterion judgments of students with bullying experience different from their peers with victimization experience or no experience?

Hypotheses

With respect to the first research question, based on previous findings that children with or without violent behaviors disapproved of unprovoked violence (Astor, 1994; Nucci & Herman, 1982; Turiel, 1983; Wainryb & Turiel, 1994), I hypothesized that students with bullying experience, just like their peers with victimization experience or no experience, would judge that physical aggression in general as wrong for reasons relating to harm (Hypothesis 1a). In addition, since bullying is a form of aggression, I hypothesized that all students, regardless of their past experience of bullying, would disapprove of bullying in the unprovoked situation for moral reasons, such as concerns about injuries and harm (Hypothesis 1b). However, because Astor (1994) and Nucci and Herman (1982) found that students engaging in challenging behaviors might focus on different aspects (moral or not) of a situation, I hypothesized that students with bullying experience would be more likely than their peers to approve of bullying in the ambiguous situation for reasons such as protecting the protagonist (Hypothesis 1c).

For the second research question, I hypothesized that students with bullying experience, like their peers in the other two groups, would disapprove of bullying coming from a physically stronger protagonist to a less powerful target due to the potential for serious harm (Hypothesis 2a). However, based on Nucci and Herman (1982), who found that some students with behavioral disorders approved of aggression because the victim did not seem hurt, I hypothesized that students with bullying experience, different from their peers, would approve of bullying coming from a physically powerful protagonist to a more powerful target because the target being more powerful may be less likely to get hurt (Hypothesis 2b).

With regard to the third research question, results from Astor (1994) do not fully align with results from Nucci and Herman (1982) regarding whether children's judgments are contingent on authority directives. Astor found that children with or without violent behaviors focused on the intrinsic harm invoked by the violent transgression in an unprovoked situation as the basis of their disapproval of violence suggesting that their disapproval was not dependent on adult constraint or social rules. On the other hand, Nucci and Herman found that children with behavioral challenges were more likely than children without behavioral challenges to indicate an action as wrong due to the protagonist being punished by an authority. Since I did not expect students' judgments to differ by their past experience and the sample population from Astor's

study more closely resembled the sample population of the current study, I hypothesized that the judgments of students about bullying, regardless of their past experience of bullying, will not be contingent upon authority directives or any common practices (Hypothesis 3).

Method

Participants

The participants in the study were 53 middle, high school, and college-aged students enrolled in school at the time of recruitment and spoke fluent English. One participant was dropped from the study due to duplicate and conflicting survey responses. Therefore, a total of 52 students were included in the analysis. Forty-four percent of the students ($n = 23$) were middle and high school students between the ages of 12-17 years and 56% ($n = 29$) were college students ages 18 to 23 years who reported attending school at least part time. Of the 52 students, 54% ($n = 28$) were males and 46% ($n = 24$) were females. The sample of students included in this study was predominately Black (53%; $n = 27$) and Asian (31%; $n = 16$). The rest of the sample consisted of 10% ($n = 5$) White, 2% ($n = 1$) Hispanic, and 4% ($n = 2$) multiracial. Participants were recruited from several sources: (a) community organizations serving K–12 students, such as after-school and summer school programs, (b) parent groups and college student groups on social media, and (c) UC Berkeley Department of Psychology's Research Participation Program (RPP), which is available to students from any discipline enrolling in psychology courses to take part in research conducted by the UC Berkeley Psychology Department and other affiliated departments.

Design and Procedures

Participants, who provided consent or whose parents provided permission, first completed a 5-minute survey consisting of the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (Parada, 2000) and demographic questions (i.e., age, gender, and ethnicity). For teenage students, demographic data were collected from their parents along with the permission form. Survey and demographic data were collected through Qualtrics, an online survey platform.

Based on the survey responses, purposeful sampling was used to select students to be invited to the interview. Purposeful sampling allowed for a balance of participants representing the three different bullying experience groups (i.e., students reported as having bullying experience, victimization experience, or no experience). In the interview, all participants were asked general questions about aggression and contextualized questions about bullying (see Appendix A for a complete interview guide). Interviews were recorded and transcribed for the purpose of data analysis.

All interview participants were compensated with a $10 Amazon gift card or Venmo credit. There were four $50 Amazon gift cards offered through a drawing to all participants except college students recruited through RPP. College students recruited through RPP received a half research participation credit for a course of their choice for completing the survey and another half credit for completing the interview online.

Measures

Semi-Structured Interview

The specific objective of the interview was to explore how students evaluate physical harm in different bullying situations and justify their evaluations. Participants were presented with questions about aggression in a general situation as well as six hypothetical bullying situations. The contents of the hypothetical situations were developed based on information consolidated from previous studies, news reports, anecdotes from educators, and the pilot of this study with eight college students. Two components of the interview

were systematically varied: (a) a contextual difference (i.e., general, unprovoked, and ambiguous situations) and (b) an individual difference (i.e., power disparity between the protagonist and his target). The six hypothetical situations are presented in Table 1.

Participants were first presented with the general situation that included questions designed to elicit their evaluation and justification about the acceptability of physical aggression in general. Participants were asked an initial question to elicit evaluation of the act—is it okay or not okay to engage in an act of physical aggression? Then, participants were asked the criterion judgment questions—is it okay or not okay for a class to implicitly accept hitting and kicking other classmates, for a teacher to permit hitting and kicking other students, and for another country to allow hitting and kicking others? These questions assessed whether participants' negative evaluation of the act was dependent on common practice or authority contingency and whether they generalized their evaluation to different societies.

Participants were then presented with six hypothetical bullying situations. In the unprovoked situations, the protagonist engaged in bullying because he wanted to impress other students by showing off how cool and strong he was. In the ambiguous situations, the protagonist engaged in bullying because he wanted to preemptively avoid becoming the target of a group of students who bully others in the same school. The power disparity between the protagonist and his victims has two levels: the protagonist was older, taller, and bigger than the victim; and the protagonist was younger, shorter, and smaller than the victim. Participants were presented with

Table 1

Hypothetical Bullying Situations

Contextual/Individual Factors	Unprovoked	Ambiguous
Equal Power between Protagonist and Target	Michael and Aaron are both 12th graders. They are about the same height and size. Throughout the school year, Michael punches and kicks Aaron almost every day because Michael likes to impress the other students by showing how cool and able he is. As a result, Aaron has a lot of physical injuries and pain from Michael's punching and kicking.	Some students in Mark's school pick on other students and hit and kick them almost every day. Mark is afraid that these students will also start to pick on him. So, to avoid being hit and kicked, he wants to appear tough and starts to punch and kick other students who are about the same size and age as him almost every day too. Steven was among the students who got kicked by Mark every day.
Powerful Protagonist	David is in 12th grade and Ryan is in 9th grade. David is a big and tall guy and Ryan is small and short. Throughout the school year, David hits and kicks Ryan almost every day because David likes to impress other students by showing how cool and able he is. As a result, Ryan has a lot of physical injuries and pain from David's hitting and kicking.	Some students in Kevin's school pick on other students and hit and kick them almost every day. Kevin is afraid that these students will also start to pick on him. So, to avoid being hit and kicked, he wants to appear tough and starts to punch and kick other students who are younger and smaller in size than him almost every day too. Ben was among the students who got kicked by Kevin every day.

Contextual/Individual Factors	Unprovoked	Ambiguous
Less Powerful Protagonist	James is in 10th grade and Tom is in 12th grade. James is small and short and Tom is big and tall. Throughout the school year, James punches and kicks Tom almost every day because James likes to impress other students by showing how cool and able he is. As a result, Tom has a lot of physical injuries and pain from James's punching and kicking.	Some students in John's school pick on other students and hit and kick them almost every day. John is afraid that these students will also start to pick on him. So, to avoid being hit and kicked, he wants to appear tough and starts to punch and kick other students almost every day. Some of these students are even older and bigger than him. Robert was among the students who got kicked by John every day.

Note. Across situations, the protagonists in the stories are the students who bully the targets.

these two levels of power disparity in both the unprovoked and ambiguous situations. Consistent with previous studies, the gender of the protagonist in the hypothetical situations corresponded to the gender of the participant and the order of the stories was counterbalanced across participants (Gingo et al., 2017). Similar to the general situation, participants were also asked to evaluate the protagonist's act of hitting first, then provide justifications for their evaluations in each of the six hypothetical situations. After obtaining their initial evaluation, participants were then asked the criterion judgment questions.

Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI)

The Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (Parada, 2000) is an empirically validated self-report measure designed to identify students ages 12 to 17 who were involved in bullying as a perpetrator and/or as a victim (see Appendix B). This measure has two sections. Section A includes 18 questions that asks students how often during this school year they acted in the following ways to other students: teased, pushed, made up jokes about others, threatened others, got other students to start a rumor about a student, and got other students to ignore or exclude a student. Section B includes 18 questions about how often they experienced the following during this school year: got teased, pushed, made fun of, threatened, and excluded. Each section uses a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *never, 2= sometimes, 3 = once or twice a month, 4 = once a week, 5 = several times a week, and 6 = every day*) to indicate the frequency of behaviors during the current school year.

For participants over 18 years of age, I modified the prompt from asking the participants about this school year to asking the participants to recall when they were in their last year of high school. Higher scores indicate more self-reported bullying perpetration, victimization, or both. Reliability coefficients for the APRI are adequate, with alpha coefficients ranging from .83 to .93 for scores on the perpetration scale and .88 to .94 for scores on the victimization scale (Balan et al., 2020). Internal consistency is also adequate for total scores: total bully score = .92 and total victims score = .94.

Coding and Reliability

The coding systems were adapted from previous social domain theory studies (Astor, 1994; Davidson et al., 1983; Nucci et al., 2017; Turiel, 1983) and two components from the interviews were coded: (a) the evaluation of the initial question (e.g., is it okay or not okay for the protagonist to bully) and criterion judgment questions and (b) the justifications of both the

initial and criterion judgment questions. Evaluations were coded as positive (the act is alright or acceptable), negative (the act is not alright or unacceptable), or mixed (the act can be alright or not alright; it depends). The coding systems were finalized through an iterative process based on participant responses in the present study. The final version of the coding schemes was derived after all 52 interviews had been coded and modified based on inconsistencies, errors, and interrater discrepancies and are presented in Table 2. Due to limited representations, positive and mixed evaluations were combined into a single category for the purpose of statistical analyses to distinguish between evaluations that were negative and not negative (i.e., positive or mixed).

To establish inter-coder reliability, 14 (27%) interviews were randomly selected for an additional coder to recode. The second coder was a fourth-year doctoral student in the UC Berkeley School Psychology Program and was trained on the research design and the coding categories. Inter-rater agreement was assessed using Cohen's kappa. The interrater agreement was $\kappa = .93$ for evaluations and $\kappa = .71$ for justifications, which indicates substantial agreement for justifications and almost perfect agreement for evaluations (Cohen, 1960). The two coders resolved all coding discrepancies prior to analysis.

Table 2

Categories and Descriptions of Justification Scheme

Category	Description
	Moral
Physical harm	Reponses relating to concerns about physical well-being and safety of the receiver of an action or a third party as well as a desire to avoid hurting others physically or avoid putting others in harm's way. Participants may indicate that the act will lead to any types of physical injuries and harm or that the action threatens safety using words such as dangerous, unsafe, war, or that a target may end up in a hospital. Participants may also refer to the need to maintain safety (e.g., a teacher is supposed to protect and not encourage violence).
Psychological harm	Responses relating to concerns about psychological well-being, feelings, and/or desire to avoid hurting others' feelings or putting others down. Participants may refer to any type of mental suffering such as depression, anxiety, hurting the target's feelings or self-esteem, or making target feel alienated.
Harm is negligible	Participants may indicate that actions will not lead to too much physical or psychological harm or lead to no physical/psychological harm.
Lack of fairness, equality, or justice	Responses relating to concerns about the target receiving unfair or unjust treatment, being in a disadvantageous position, and/or the lack of ability to defend oneself. Participants may indicate that the protagonist is taking advantage of the target or refer to the principle of equality stating that everyone is equal and people should be treated equally.
Fairness	Responses relating to the principle of fairness and/or refers to an action being fair. Participants may indicate that an action is ok because both the protagonist and the target are of same physical size. Therefore, it's a fair fight or that the protagonist is not taking advantage of the target since they are of the same physical size.
Reciprocity	Participants may indicate that one should treat others like how you want to be treated; if you don't want to be hit, then you shouldn't hit others.
Violation of rights	Participant may use the word "rights" (in the sense of human rights, fundamental rights, constitutional rights) to refer to the rights of a person or people and either implicitly or explicitly indicate that one's rights are being violated, undermined, or it's against one's rights or that one should be under the protection of rights that person/people should enjoy (e.g., "not ok to hit them because they have their rights/they have their individual rights). This code is also used in the sense of human rights, and it is different from the responses indicating that countries or authorities have the right to exercise their authority or jurisdiction)
Respect/disrespect	Responses relating to respecting or not respecting one's will/decision. Participants may indicate that the protagonist is being disrespectful by "dragging innocent people into violence when they don't want to" or "disregard their decision."
Categorically wrong	Participants may indicate that an act is wrong without additional justification (e.g., "It is just wrong," "What is wrong is wrong," "there is no reason, it's wrong"). This code is also used when the participants refer to an individual's moral values and beliefs (e.g., "it is morally wrong" or "it is against my moral").
Negative influence/impact	Response that indicates some degree of negative influences. Participants may indicate that teachers will send students down the wrong path if teachers allow bullying behaviors or if the class implicitly accepts bullying, students will grow up seeing violence as a normal thing, which will have negative effects on self and others in the now or future.

Category	Description
Wrongful intention	Responses relating to the intent or motivation of an actor (student, teacher, parent, principal, etc.). Participants may indicate that the actor's intent will lead to harm or is malicious. Participants may also refer to a lack of proper reason and indicate that hitting is not alright because he is hitting for no reason or endangering the target's welfare without provocation (e.g., Robert didn't do anything to John. Robert is innocent). Additionally, participants may refer to self-serving intentions, intentions that are only for the protagonist's benefit, and/or being selfish. For example, "it is not ok because she (protagonist) is prioritizing her own physical safety over Sophia's (target). Or "it's not okay for Melody to beat up her other classmates just to avoid being a victim herself.
Intent to avoid harm	Responses relating to the actor's intention to avoid harm. This code is used specifically for the ambiguous situations (Hypothetical Stories 4,5,6). Participants specifically referred to the context in hypothetical stories where the protagonist's intent is to avoid getting hit by others. For example, it is ok in this case (when the actor is trying to avoid getting hit by others), they have a reason for doing it (which is to avoid getting hit by others). Or "it is okay because he had a reason why he did it. He didn't just do it because we wanted to show off! He did it to avoid getting bullied. This code is different than Code 162. This code is specifically used when the participant mentions the word "self-defense" and indicates the action is ok because of the need to defend oneself.
Self-defense	Avoidance of harm is not coded as self-defense because the researcher did not probe to see how the participants define self-defense. Some participants perceived the hitting and punching in the ambiguous situations (Hypothetical Stories 4, 5, and 6) as self-defense, others perceived the punching as wrong because the actors in the stories are not in immediate danger and their targets were not the ones who initiated the aggression. Therefore, I think it may be helpful to separate avoidance of harm (Code 162) and self-defense (Code 163) when discussing the results.

<div align="center">Conventional</div>

Category	Description
Social standards, rules, or laws	Responses relating to some form of established norms, social standards, laws, or rules (e.g., it is ok because a country can make their rules and laws; it is not ok because people may want to engage in violence and not be punished in the absence of law). Participants may also refer to legal ramification such as formal punishment in the forms of expulsion or suspension (e.g., it is not ok because teachers and the school will be sued).
Collective agreement	Responses relating to some form of collective agreement. Participants may indicate an action is alright because everyone is fine with it. This code is not to be confused with the Personal code. This code focuses on collective agreement (e.g., they all agreed; if he accepts it that means he agrees to it), whereas the Personal code focuses on the individual level such as when a person provides permission.
Authority and jurisdiction	Responses relating to authority power (jurisdiction/sovereignty) or the rights embedded in a particular position such as teachers, parents, organizations (school board, government).

Category	Description
	Personal
Personal choice	Responses relating to the consent or permission from the person receiving the action (e.g., it is ok if the person he is hitting is ok with it). This is different than the conventional code. In the personal domain, permission is more on the individual level (an individual is agreeing/disagreeing with something one-on-one with the protagonist) whereas the conventional domain relates to a collective agreement to some rules, usually rules that were already established.
Harm to the actor due to revenge	Responses relating to harm or some negative consequences toward the aggressor in the form of revenge. For example, Robert might take revenge and hit John back.
	Pragmatics
Unpractical	Participants may indicate that the action (hitting, punching) will not solve a problem, is not an efficient way to resolve the problem, or may indicate that other ways are better than the action in solving a problem. Participants may also indicate that there is no point of doing such action. This is different than the Wrongful Intention code, which focuses on intention rather than consequence. In the case of Wrongful Intention, the action is deemed as illegitimate. In the case of Unpractical, the action is deemed as not resulting in desirable consequences.
Desirable or practical solution	Participants may indicate that the action will bring desirable consequences or is the only way to solve the problem.
	Uncodable
Uncodable	The response is vague or ambiguous.

Data Analysis Procedure

Via a mixed-methods approach, evaluations, criterion judgments, and justifications were analyzed using the Stata IC Version 15 and MaxQDA 2022. The analysis involved a combination of Fisher's exact tests, binomial logistic regressions, and McNemar's tests. Fisher's exact tests were used to compare whether or not there was a significant difference among the evaluations of the three groups of students (students with bullying experience, victimization experience, and no experience). Fisher's exact tests were used in lieu of chi-square tests because Fisher's exact tests address the issue of smaller sample size in this study (e.g., expected values of less than 5). Binomial logistic regression was conducted to determine whether there was a significant relationship between past bullying experience and the types of moral justifications (moral-harm and moral-other). McNemar's test was performed to analyze whether changes in evaluations and justifications across different hypothetical stories were significantly different within each of the three groups of bullying experience given that the responses were not independent of one another (i.e., paired).

All three groups of students provided at least one moral justification in each hypothetical situation and very few students in each of the three groups ($n < 4$) provided only non-moral justifications. Therefore, responses that did not include at least one moral justification were dropped because including these responses might potentially bias the results. A binomial dependent variable was created that listed responses as having a moral-harm justification versus moral-other justification. The codes of physical harm and psychological harm were combined into moral-harm justification. Participants who provided at least one justification related to physical or psychological harm were coded as 1. Then, the rest of the sub-justification categories in the moral domain were combined into moral-other justification and were coded as 0.

To correct for the increase in the likelihood of Type 1 errors, which occur when multiple statistical tests are administered on the same data set, Bonferroni corrections were used. The new significance level set after the Bonferroni correction was an alpha level of 0.001. The results in this section reported to be significant are based on the new alpha level. I also calculated the Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega for the bullying perpetration and victimization scales for reliability purposes. For the bullying scale, the alpha was 0.983 and omega was 0.984. For the victimization scale, the alpha was 0.981 and the omega was 0.983.

Results

The results of this study are presented in three parts. First, I present the analysis on gender and age. Next, I present the analysis of students' judgments about bullying in different contexts and any differences across contexts. Finally, I present the analysis of students' judgments about power disparities in bullying situations and any differences across varying levels of power disparity.

Gender and Age Differences

The evaluations and justifications between the two gender and age groups (i.e., teenage students and college students) were examined. Results from both Fisher's exact tests for evaluations and binomial regressions for justifications yielded no significant differences between the two gender groups or age groups ($p > 0.05$ for all tests). Since there were no gender and age differences, I combined gender and age in the analyses below.

Judgments about Bullying in Different Contexts

Evaluations

Table 3 presents the percentages of students' evaluations in bullying situations with contextual differences (i.e., general, unprovoked, ambiguous) as well as the evaluations for the corresponding criterion judgment questions. All students with bullying and victimization experience negatively evaluated aggression in general and bullying in the unprovoked situation. In the ambiguous situation, most students, regardless of their past experiences, still provided a negative evaluation, although a slightly higher percentage of students with victimization experience provided a negative evaluation than students with bullying experience or no experience (100%, 87%, and 86% respectively). Follow-up criterion judgment questions in all three situations showed that more than 96% of students with victimization experience, 78% with bullying experience and 86% with no experience maintained their negative evaluation meaning that their evaluations were not contingent on teacher authority and common practices in the classroom or country. Results of the Fisher's exact tests to determine between-group differences in students' evaluations of both the initial question and criterion judgment questions yielded no statistically significant difference among the three groups of students ($p > 0.14$ for all tests).

Justifications

To determine whether students' past bullying experiences was a predictor of the type of justifications provided (e.g., moral-harm or moral-other), a series of binomial logistical regressions were performed. Results indicated that past bullying experiences were not significantly related to the types of justifications provided in the general, unprovoked, and ambiguous situations ($p > 0.02$ for all tests; see Table 4). Similarly, logistic regressions for the follow-up criterion judgment questions also showed non-significant results ($p > 0.02$ for all tests).

Differences Across Contexts

Most of the participants (92%; $n = 48$) provided a negative evaluation in both the general and unprovoked situations, and only a small percentage of students with bullying experience and no experience provided a non-negative response (i.e., mixed or positive) in the ambiguous situation (see Table 4). The majority of the students (90%; $n = 47$) also maintained their negative evaluation in the criterion judgment questions in the three situations. Results of the McNemar's tests revealed no significant differences in these changes of responses across the three situations ($p > 0.25$ for all tests). In other words, there were no significant differences in the likelihood of each of the three groups of students changing their evaluations across the three contexts of bullying and aggression.

Table 5 presents the percentages of participants' justification categories in bullying situations with contextual differences. The percentages of students in all three groups providing a moral-harm justification were higher in the general situation (bullying = 83%, victimization = 100%, no experience 86%) than in the unprovoked situation (70%, 86%, and 57% respectively). The percentages of students in all three groups providing a moral-harm justification were also higher for most of the criterion judgment questions for the two situations. Furthermore, the percentages of students in the bullying and no experience groups providing a moral-harm justification for the initial and criterion judgment questions were higher in the unprovoked situation (bullying = 48–73%; no experience = 57–86%) than the ambiguous situation (61–70%; 29–57% respectively). For students with victimization experience, the percentages of students providing a moral-harm justification for the initial and criterion judgment questions were higher in the ambiguous situation (82–91%) than the unprovoked situation (77–86%). To determine if differences in proportions were statistically significant, McNemar's tests were performed, and

Table 3

Percentages of Participants' Evaluations by Group in Situations with Contextual Differences

	General Situation			Unprovoked Situation			Ambiguous Situation		
	Bullying (n = 23)	Victimization (n = 22)	No Experience (n = 7)	Bullying	Victimization	No Experience	Bullying	Victimization	No Experience
Initial Question									
Ok	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	14%
Not Ok	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	86%	87%	100%	86%
Depends	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	4%	0%	0%
Convention Criterion Judgment									
Ok	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	14%
Not Ok	91%	100%	86%	91%	100%	100%	78%	100%	86%
Depends	9%	0%	14%	9%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%
Authority Contingency Criterion Judgment									
Ok	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%
Not Ok	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	96%	100%	86%
Depends	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Generalizability Criterion Judgment									
Ok	9%	5%	0%	9%	0%	0%	9%	5%	14%
Not Ok	87%	95%	100%	91%	100%	100%	87%	95%	86%
Depends	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%

Table 4

Logistical Regressions for Predictors of Justification Categories in Situations with Contextual Differences

	General Situation				Unprovoked Situation				Ambiguous Situation			
	B	OR	SE	p	B	OR	SE	p	B	OR	SE	p
Initial Question												
Bullying Group	-0.13	0.88	1.22	0.92	-1.24	0.29	0.26	0.18	-2.76	0.06	0.08	0.02
No Experience	-	-	-	-	-1.48	0.23	0.26	0.20	-1.78	0.17	0.27	0.26
Gender (Male)	-0.99	0.37	0.49	0.45	-0.76	0.47	0.43	0.41	-0.51	0.60	0.58	0.60
Age (Teenage)	1.78	5.93	8.38	0.21	-1.13	0.32	0.29	0.21	-0.96	0.38	0.38	0.33
Convention Criterion Judgment												
Bullying Group	-0.30	0.74	0.61	0.72	-1.87	0.15	0.13	0.03	-0.68	0.50	0.44	0.44
No Experience	0.82	2.26	3.10	0.55	-0.88	0.42	0.45	0.42	-2.76	0.06	0.07	0.02
Gender (Male)	1.68	5.36	5.25	0.09	-1.22	0.30	0.26	0.16	-1.49	0.22	0.23	0.14
Age (Teenage)	0.95	2.59	2.45	0.32	-1.88	0.15	0.15	0.05	0.02	1.02	0.91	0.98
Authority Contingency Criterion												
Bullying Group	-0.49	0.61	0.66	0.65	-1.41	0.24	0.21	0.11	-1.65	0.19	0.19	0.10
No Experience	-0.63	0.53	0.83	0.68	-1.73	0.18	0.19	0.11	-2.31	0.10	0.12	0.05
Gender (Male)	2.23	9.30	12.37	0.09	-1.08	0.34	0.31	0.24	-0.47	0.62	0.66	0.66
Age (Teenage)	-1.59	0.20	0.23	0.15	-0.77	0.46	0.41	0.39	-1.13	0.32	0.30	0.23
Generalizability Criterion Judgment												
Bullying Group	1.05	2.86	3.33	0.37	-0.37	0.69	0.66	0.70	-0.95	0.39	0.40	0.36
No Experience	-	-	-	-	-0.06	0.94	1.35	0.97	-2.29	0.10	0.12	0.06
Gender (Male)	0.70	2.01	2.58	0.59	1.62	5.06	5.54	0.14	-1.17	0.31	0.34	0.29
Age (Teenage)	-3.63	0.03	0.04	0.01	-1.87	0.15	0.17	0.08	-0.31	0.73	0.74	0.76

Note. Regression results were not obtained for groups who only provided a moral-harm justification and no moral-other justification. Results were also not obtained if a group became the new reference group when the victim group (default reference group) had only moral-harm justification.

Table 5

Percentages of Participants' Justifications by Group in Situations with Contextual Differences

	General Situation			Unprovoked Situation			Ambiguous Situation		
	Bullying (n = 23)	Victimization (n = 22)	No Experience (n = 7)	Bullying	Victimization	No Experience	Bullying	Victimization	No Experience
Initial Question									
Moral-harm	83%	100%	86%	70%	86%	57%	65%	91%	57%
Moral-other	17%	0%	14%	30%	14%	43%	30%	9%	29%
Non-moral	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	14%
Convention Criterion Judgment									
Moral-harm	65%	82%	86%	48%	77%	71%	61%	82%	29%
Moral-other	26%	18%	14%	48%	23%	29%	30%	18%	71%
Non-moral	9%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%
Authority Contingency Criterion Judgment									
Moral-harm	74%	91%	86%	65%	82%	57%	65%	86%	57%
Moral-other	13%	9%	14%	26%	14%	43%	26%	9%	43%
Non-moral	13%	0%	0%	9%	5%	0%	9%	5%	0%
Generalizability Criterion Judgment									
Moral-harm	70%	73%	100%	73%	82%	86%	70%	86%	43%
Moral-other	13%	18%	0%	18%	18%	14%	22%	9%	43%
Non-moral	17%	9%	0%	9%	0%	0%	9%	5%	14%

results revealed no significant differences between the responses for the general situation and the unprovoked situation or between unprovoked and ambiguous situation within each of the three groups of students ($p > 0.25$ for all tests).

Summary

It was hypothesized that students with bullying experience, similar to their peers, would disapprove of physical aggression in general and bullying in the unprovoked situation due to harm but would approve of bullying in the ambiguous situation for reasons relating to protecting the protagonist. Results showed that these hypotheses were partially supported. Different than what was hypothesized, students with bullying experience, just like their peers without bullying experience, disapproved of bullying and aggression primarily due to concerns about injuries and harm in all the situations presented to them even when the intention of the protagonist was to avoid becoming the target of bullying.

Judgments about Power Disparities in Bullying

Evaluations

Table 6 presents the percentages of evaluations regarding power disparities between the protagonists and targets in both the unprovoked and ambiguous bullying situation. Most students, regardless of their past bullying experience, negatively evaluated bullying irrespective of the protagonists' physical size and strength. All students with victimization and no experience evaluated all situations with power disparities as wrong whereas 87% and 96% of the students with bullying experience evaluated the less powerful protagonists in the ambiguous situation and the powerful protagonists in the ambiguous situations as wrong, respectively. Follow-up criterion judgment questions showed that all but one student with victimization experience maintained their negative evaluation whereas more than 83% of the students with bullying experience and 86% of the students with no experience maintained their negative evaluation in the criterion judgment questions. Results of the Fisher's tests revealed no significant between-group differences in both the initial and criterion judgment questions in all situations regarding power disparity ($p > 0.23$ for all tests).

Justifications

A series of binomial logistical regression were performed to determine whether students' past bullying experiences were associated with the type of justifications (moral-harm or moral-other) provided in the situations regarding power disparities. Results indicated that past bullying experiences were not a significant predictor of the types of justifications provided by the students ($p > 0.39$ for all tests; see Table 7). Logistic regressions for criterion judgment questions also revealed non-significant results ($p > 0.007$ for all tests). The justifications for conventional criterion judgment for the unprovoked less powerful protagonist situation was the only scenario that was somewhat close to significance ($p = 0.007$).

Differences Across Varying Levels of Power Disparity

All students with victimization and no experience provided a negative evaluation across all situations with power disparities. When comparing the situations with power disparities, a higher percentage of students with bullying experience provided a negative evaluation in the situations when the protagonists were stronger (100% when unprovoked; 96% in ambiguous) as compared to the situations when the protagonists were less strong (96% when unprovoked and 87% in ambiguous). Most students maintained their negative evaluation when answering the criterion judgment questions. Results of the McNemar's tests indicated that these differences were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$ for all tests).

Table 6

Percentages of Participants' Evaluations by Group in Situations with Power Disparities

	Powerful Protagonist - Unprovoked			Less Powerful Protagonist - Unprovoked			Powerful Protagonist - Ambiguous			Less Powerful Protagonist - Ambiguous		
	Bullying (n = 23)	Victim-ization (n = 22)	No Experience (n = 7)	Bullying	Victim-ization	No Experience	Bullying	Victim-ization	No Experience	Bullying	Victim-ization	No Experience
Initial Question												
Ok	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Not Ok	100%	100%	100%	96%	100%	100%	96%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%
Depends	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Convention Criterion Judgment												
Ok	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Not Ok	96%	100%	100%	96%	100%	100%	91%	100%	86%	83%	100%	100%
Depends	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	14%	13%	0%	0%
Authority Contingency Criterion Judgment												
Ok	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Not Ok	100%	100%	100%	96%	100%	100%	96%	100%	86%	96%	95%	100%
Depends	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	14%	0%	5%	0%
Generalizability Criterion Judgment												
Ok	4%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%
Not Ok	91%	100%	100%	83%	100%	86%	87%	100%	86%	91%	100%	100%
Depends	4%	0%	0%	4%	0%	14%	9%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%

Table 7

Logistical Regressions for Predictors of Justification Categories in Situations with Power Disparities

	Powerful Protagonist - Unprovoked				Less Powerful Protagonist - Unprovoked				Powerful Protagonist - Ambiguous				Less Powerful Protagonist - Ambiguous			
	B	OR	SE	p	B	OR	SE	p	B	OR	SE	p	B	OR	SE	p
Initial Question																
Bullying Group	-0.51	0.60	0.60	0.61	-0.85	0.43	0.42	0.39	-0.57	0.56	0.46	0.48	-0.65	0.52	0.43	0.43
No Experience Group	-0.75	0.47	0.65	0.59	-	-	-	-	-0.26	0.77	1.00	0.84	-0.14	1.15	1.45	0.91
Gender (Male)	-1.00	0.37	0.40	0.36	-0.90	0.41	0.44	0.40	0.19	1.21	1.04	0.82	-1.60	0.20	0.19	0.10
Age (Teenage)	-2.25	0.11	0.12	0.04	0.40	1.49	1.55	0.71	-0.66	0.51	0.44	0.43	0.39	1.47	1.33	0.67
Convention Criterion Judgment																
Bullying Group	-2.48	0.08	0.10	0.04	-2.74	0.06	0.07	0.007	-0.96	0.38	0.62	0.55	-1.11	0.33	0.28	0.20
No Experience Group	-1.49	0.23	0.35	0.34	-1.41	0.24	0.30	0.25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gender (Male)	0.04	1.04	0.97	0.97	-0.93	0.40	0.36	0.30	2.37	10.69	16.12	0.12	-0.78	0.46	0.43	0.41
Age (Teenage)	-0.61	0.54	0.54	0.54	-0.98	0.38	0.36	0.31	-	-	-	-	-0.26	0.77	0.80	0.80
Authority Contingency Criterion Judgment																
Bullying Group	-2.24	0.11	0.14	0.09	-2.18	0.11	0.12	0.05	-0.68	0.50	0.45	0.45	-0.30	0.74	0.67	0.74
No Experience Group	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.05	0.95	1.26	0.97	-0.30	0.74	1.03	0.83
Gender (Male)	-1.10	0.33	0.42	0.38	-2.40	0.09	0.12	0.08	-0.69	0.50	0.49	0.48	0.88	2.41	2.34	0.37
Age (Teenage)	-1.91	0.15	0.20	0.15	-1.04	0.35	0.39	0.34	-1.12	0.33	0.32	0.25	-1.16	0.31	0.32	0.25
Generalizability Criterion Judgment																
Bullying Group	-1.02	0.36	0.33	0.26	-1.09	0.33	0.28	0.19	-1.63	0.20	0.21	0.13	-0.44	0.64	0.64	0.65
No Experience Group	-1.02	0.36	0.41	0.37	-	-	-	-	-0.52	0.59	0.90	0.73	-0.52	0.60	0.81	0.70
Gender (Male)	-1.31	0.27	0.26	0.18	-0.36	0.69	0.63	0.69	-0.46	0.63	0.66	0.66	-0.77	0.46	0.47	0.45
Age (Teenage)	-2.02	0.13	0.13	0.04	0.32	1.38	1.27	0.73	-1.93	0.14	0.15	0.07	-2.47	0.08	0.10	0.03

Note. Regression results were not obtained for groups who only provided a moral-harm justification and no moral-other justification. Results were also not obtained if a group became the new reference group when the victim group (default reference group) had only moral-harm justification.

Table 8 presents the percentages of participants' justification categories in bullying situations with power disparities. The percentages of all three groups of students providing a moral-harm justification in both the initial and criterion judgment questions were higher overall for situations with a physically stronger protagonist than the situations with a less strong protagonists as indicated in Table 8. To determine if differences in proportions were statistically significant, McNemar's tests were administered, and results revealed no significant differences across all bullying situations with power disparities in within each of the three groups ($p > 0.25$ for all tests).

Summary

It was hypothesized that students with bullying experience, similar to their peers, would disapprove of a physically more powerful protagonist bullying a less powerful target due to the potential for serious harm but would approve of bullying if the protagonist is less powerful than the target because the target is less likely to get injured. Results showed that these hypotheses were partially supported. Different than what was hypothesized, students with bullying experience, just like their peers without bullying experience, disapproved of bullying even when the protagonist was less physically strong than the target primarily due to concerns about harm because the stories indicated that the target still end up getting injured.

Discussion

In this study, I utilized the social domain framework to examine students' evaluations and reasonings about bullying in a sample of 52 teenage and college-age students. The students were categorized into one of the three groups (i.e., students with bullying experience, with victimization experience, and with no experience) based on their self-reported experience of bullying. Findings from the statistical analyses partially supported the hypotheses that students with bullying experience, just like their peers with victimization or no experience, disapproved of aggression in general and unprovoked bullying for reasons relating to harm (Hypotheses 1a–1b). Contrary to what was hypothesized, students with bullying experience did not approve of bullying in the ambiguous situation (Hypothesis 1c). Similar to students with victimization or no experience, students with bullying experience also disapproved of bullying in the ambiguous situation due to harm.

Moreover, it was expected that students with bullying experience would disapprove of bullying from a physically strong protagonist to a less strong target but would approve of bullying from a less physically strong protagonist to a strong target due to negligible harm, whereas students without bullying experience would disapprove of bullying regardless of the power dynamics between the protagonists and targets (Hypotheses 2a–2b). Findings from the current study partially supported these hypotheses in which students with bullying experience also disapproved of bullying even when the protagonist was physically less strong than his or her target. In other words, all three groups of students expressed disapproval of bullying and were concerned about the harm involved regardless of the physical power of the protagonist.

Additionally, findings also supported the hypothesis that the judgments of students about bullying, regardless of their past experience of bullying, would not be contingent upon authority directives or any common practices (Hypothesis 3). All three groups of students judged bullying as wrong, even when it was permitted by the teacher or when it was commonly accepted by classmates. Students from all three groups also generalized their disapproval when bullying was allowed in another country.

Overall, students from all three groups disapproved of bullying and aggression even when there were potential mitigating factors, such as avoiding being the target of bullying or

Table 8

Percentages of Participants' Justifications by Group in Situations with Power Disparities

	Powerful Protagonist -			Less Powerful Protagonist -		
	Bullying (n = 23)	Victim-ization (n = 22)	No Experience (n = 7)	Bullying	Victim-ization	No Experience
Initial Question						
Moral-harm	83%	86%	86%	61%	77%	100%
Moral-other	17%	14%	14%	26%	14%	0%
Non-moral	0%	0%	0%	13%	9%	0%
Convention Criterion Judgment						
Moral-harm	57%	95%	86%	48%	86%	71%
Moral-other	35%	5%	14%	39%	14%	29%
Non-moral	9%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%
Authority Contingency Criterion Judgment						
Moral-harm	74%	95%	100%	61%	82%	100%
Moral-other	22%	5%	0%	26%	9%	0%
Non-moral	4%	0%	0%	13%	9%	0%
Generalizability Criterion Judgment						
Moral-harm	65%	86%	71%	57%	77%	86%
Moral-other	22%	14%	29%	30%	18%	14%
Non-moral	13%	0%	0%	13%	5%	0%

when the protagonist was less physically strong. Students' disapproval of bullying was primarily due to the potential harm involved in situations of bullying and aggression and were not contingent upon authority directives and common group practices. The findings from the current study partially align with previous research on the moral judgments of students with behavioral challenges as discussed below.

Differences in Students' Judgments of Bullying in Different Contexts

In schools, students are sometimes faced with judgments about bullying, aggression, and harm in straightforward situations that lack competing concerns, but they may also face multifaceted situations where concerns about harm may be pitted against concerns with mitigating factors (e.g., self-preservation, peer norms, negligible harm). In this study, students assessed various kinds of situations – aggression in general, bullying in the unprovoked situation, and bullying in the ambiguous situation. In the general situation, students assessed the situation about hitting another person in general and whether it was generally alright or not alright. In the unprovoked situations, students reasoned about a protagonist who bullied another student without provocation and with no other reason than to show off his physical strength. In the ambiguous stories, the protagonist's choice to bully stemmed from a concern of becoming a target of bullying. Participants assessed situations in which the protagonist bullied a student in the same school to avoid becoming the victim of bullying by other students in the school.

As expected, students with bullying experience, just like their peers without bullying experience, disapproved of physical aggression in the general and unprovoked bullying situations. Different from what was expected, however, they also disapproved of bullying in the ambiguous situations. Students, both with and without bullying experience, disapproved of bullying in these situations primarily due to reasons relating to harm. As "Alex[1]," a student with bullying experience stated, "It [hitting/bullying] is not okay in any form. It hurts people and I don't really like seeing people being hurt so it's not okay." This response is similar to what was found in previous social domain research (Astor, 1994; Nucci & Herman, 1982). Astor's (1994) findings revealed that children with violent behaviors were just as likely as children without violent behavior to disapprove of unprovoked violence but were more likely to approve of violence as a response to verbal provocation. However, it was not clear whether children with violent behaviors would still be more likely to express approval if there was a mitigating factor without provocation (i.e., avoid becoming targets of bullying). The findings from the current study addressed this gap and showed that students with bullying experience were just as likely to disapprove of bullying, even if it was to avoid becoming targets of bullying, suggesting that provocation is an important factor that can influence the judgment and decision-making process of students who engage in aggressive behavior regarding aggression.

The present research also builds on Astor's (1994) findings by showing that, of the very few students with bullying experience who initially expressed approval for bullying, most also expressed disapproval of bullying when harm was emphasized (i.e., by the use of a probing question: is [bullying] still ok if it causes injuries). Based on the social information processing model (Crick & Dodge, 1994), this result potentially suggests that those few students might have interpreted the situations differently due to unique individual factors. Crick and Dodge (1994) theorized that children's different biological capabilities and sets of past experiences influence their cognitive processes (e.g., attention span, ability to interpret others' intention) for making sense of different kinds of social situations and, in turn, influence their subsequent behavior. In a study exploring children's attribution of protagonists' intentions in hypothetical stories, Arsenio

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[1] All names are pseudonyms.

(2010) found that children engaged in reactive aggression were uniquely and significantly related to attributing hostile intentions in ambiguous situations (i.e., got hit by a ball by an unknown person) and had higher attention problems and lower verbal abilities than children engaged in proactive aggression or children without aggressive behaviors.

Based on Arsenio's (2010) study and, since bullying is theoretically similar to proactive aggression, it is likely that most students with bullying experience in the current study had engaged in proactive aggression and had similar social cognitive processes as their peers without bullying experience. Thus, no difference in judgments was found between students with and without bullying experience. Those very few students with bullying experience in the current study who initially approved of bullying but later disapproved of bullying when their attention was directed to focus on harm, might have engaged in reactive aggression and their interpretation and judgments were influenced by their social cognitive processing or other factors that are unique to the individual student. Thus, these unique individual differences were not ascertained by statistical tests. Future studies on the differences between students who bully and those who do not should use measures that can differentiate the different bullying roles in more delineated ways and control for factors relating to students' social cognitive processing.

In regard to students' reasons for their disapproval, the majority of students with bullying experience, just like their peers with no bullying experience, disapproved of bullying primarily due to concerns relating to harm. Qualitatively, students with victimization experience disapproved of physical aggression almost exclusively due to the potential harm that bullying may cause, whereas a few students with bullying experience disapproved of aggression and bullying due to moral reasons other than harm. A few students with bullying experiences disapproved of bullying due to the need to have a justifiable intention (i.e., when someone provoked the protagonist first) when engaging in aggression. A few others also considered reciprocity as one of the reasons not to engage in bullying. They indicated that people should treat others how one wants to be treated and not to act aggressively towards others because no one wants to be hit. There were also a few students with bullying experience who indicated that aggressive behavior is just categorically wrong without elaboration.

These results aligned with Astor (1994) who found that employment of moral reasoning was not dependent on approval or disapproval of the act and that both children with or without violent behaviors were concerned about harm from violence. Same as Astor's finding, the current study found that, while four students had a mixed response or positive response in the ambiguous situations, only two students provided non-moral justifications indicating that two of the four students who provided mixed or positive responses also justified their evaluation using moral reasons. In addition, Astor found a higher percentage of students who did not engage in violent behavior disapproved of violence due to concerns about physical harm, whereas a higher percentage of students who engaged in violent behavior disapproved of violence due to concerns of the psychological harm from provocation. While the current study did not analyze physical and psychological harm separately, it was found that most students with or without bullying experience primarily disapproved of bullying due to concerns about physical harm and there were no significant differences in the concern between harm and other moral reasons, such as concerns about the wrongfulness of the protagonist's intention or reciprocity in interpersonal relationships. In other words, students with bullying experience were just as likely to be concerned about harm from bullying as their peers without bullying experience. Based on these results, the non-significance among the three groups of students could be because the students'

judgments were similar, and they did not judge the ambiguous situation in this study differently than the unprovoked situation.

Differences Across Contexts and Students' Coordination

Another interpretation of the non-significant results in the current study is that, although the contexts were different, students from all three groups did not take the contextual differences into account. In other words, the absence of significant differences in judgments among the three groups might be due to the lack of perceived differences between the contexts and not merely due to similarities in students' judgments. This interpretation is ruled out because students' responses in the interviews do not corroborate this interpretation. The analyses of the justifications in the present study revealed that students coordinated different contextual factors of the three situations when making judgments. Consider the following example from "Charlie," a student with bullying experience, when asked whether it was ok for the protagonist to hit the target every day to avoid becoming a target of bullying by another group of students:

> "It's not ok …because uh well I guess, [Kevin is] causing harm…even though he is still wrong, he had a better reason [than David, the unprovoked protagonist] because he's trying to avoid getting picked on but David is just doing it for basically just to show off."

Charlie recognized the mitigating factor of the attempt for self-preservation and still judged the protagonist's action as wrong because it caused harm. A more plausible explanation is that the similarity in judgments about the three situations may be seen as an indication that bullying to avoid getting bullied, although different from unprovoked bullying, is still wrong as in the case of unprovoked bullying in students' judgments.

In the case of the current study, it is proposed that students did recognize the different contextual factors but arrived at a similar judgment after coordinating the different aspects of the contexts and judged bullying others to avoid getting bullied as a wrong action for self-preservation purposes. Reasoning from "Francis," a student with victimization experience, supports this interpretation:

> "No, I think if Stephen [the target] is not doing anything, if Stephen's not attacking him, it's not right for Mark [the protagonist] to attack Stephen. But in a situation [if] Stephen is attacking Mark and Mark is fighting back, I think we can take that as self-defense."

Many students across the three groups were hesitant to accept bullying behaviors even if this was the only option to avoid getting picked on. As "Hayden," a student with bullying experience stated,

> "It is definitely not okay for Mark to punch and kick Stephen just to avoid getting kicked by others. It isn't morally reasonable and cool. Even if that's the only way that doesn't make it cool because you are causing pain and harm to someone."

This result suggests that well-intended transgression involving harm (such as self-preservation in this case) is not always evaluated positively, which is a result similar to the findings obtained in the study of necessary harm (Jambon & Smetana, 2014).

If the results from the current study suggest that there are no significant differences between the moral judgments of students with and without bullying experience regarding unprovoked bullying, how are students with bullying experience different from their peers without bullying experience? From a domain perspective, the difference between students with and without bullying behaviors lies in how they coordinate the different aspects of a situation. As suggested by Astor's (1994) findings, students who engaged in violent behaviors focused on the psychological harm from provocation and potentially weighed such harm with harm from violence. After weighing and balancing these two factors (harm from provocation versus harm

from violent act), they determined that violence in response to provocation was acceptable since provocation cause psychological harm. Similarly, evidence from interview excerpts was also discussed above that students in the current study acknowledged the mitigating factors of the attempt for self-preservation in the ambiguous situation and most students still judged the protagonist's action of bullying as a way to avoid becoming the target as wrong. For example, Charlie indicated that "he [Kevin] had a better reason [than David, the unprovoked protagonist] because he's trying to avoid getting picked on" but "[Kevin] is still wrong." Students like Charlie appeared to have weighed and balanced the need for self-preservation and the harm from bullying and came to the conclusion that bullying as a response to avoid getting bullied is wrong.

The interview excerpt below from "Jordon," a student with bullying experience, also demonstrates the coordination process when asked if it is ok to hit the target every day as a way to avoid getting bullied:

Jordon: for this case I might feel it's actually ok because the reason why he [John] is doing is not because he really wants to do it. He is trying to avoid others being violent on him. So, I think for him, because he's still a kid, he feels that's the best way out, that's how he feels [unintelligible]. So, for me in this case, I may actually overlook the fact that there was violence because he was being scared. He did it out of fear. It's not like he really wanted to do it.

Researcher: Okay, and even when Robert (the target) is getting bruises is that still okay?

Jordon: The bruise part makes me kind of sit on the fence and I feel like if he was just being violent and there was no bruise, I might actually feel it is ok. But the fact that there are bruises and there are some levels of injuries make me want to tell you I rethink my choice of it being okay.

In this excerpt, Jordon took into account the protagonist's age ("he's still a kid"), point of view ("he feels that's the best way out"), and reason for action ("he did it out of fear"). As can be seen in this conversation, it was somewhat difficult for Jordon to judge whether the protagonist's action was alright or not alright. When harm was emphasized, Jordon re-considered their choice and judged the behavior as wrong. These results suggest that students with bullying experience are not morally deficient or lacking moral thinking. They engage in moral judgments but potentially weigh and prioritize the various contextual and individual factors differently when compared to their peers without bullying experience. The decision to engage in harmful behaviors may not have come lightly and more research on this coordination process is needed.

Differences in Students' Judgments about Power Disparities in Bullying

In this study, students also assessed bullying situations involving power differentials wherein the protagonist was physically stronger than the target and vice versa. Students were asked to assess bullying with these two different power dynamics in both the unprovoked and ambiguous situations. Results did not support the hypothesis that students with bullying experience would be more likely to approve of bullying when one is not very hurt – an explanation for the positive evaluations of moral transgression offered by Nucci and Herman (1982). Students with or without bullying experience judged acts of bullying with the two power differentials as unacceptable due to moral reasons, such as potential harm to the targets or concerns about the targets' ability to defend themselves. Even when the protagonist is physically less powerful and was deemed less likely to cause harm to the target, students were concerned about potential psychological stress.

In regard to students' justifications, contrary to Nucci and Herman (1982), students with bullying experience in the current study did not provide significantly more categorically wrong

justifications. Students with bullying experience were just as concerned about the potential harm involved in bullying as their peers without bullying experience. Upon closer examination of the students' justifications, qualitatively, students disapproved of bullying in both situations with the protagonist being physically stronger and vice versa. As "Kendall," a student with bullying experience, stated,

 "Because violence is violence, coming from a very tall person or very short person, the end result might also be the same because, at the end of the day, it will inflict injury on the person…. because you have to consider… the injuries you might cause and the emotional trauma you might cause on him. It might actually make him more....less confident you know....gets scared of other children so it's not okay."

Only less than three students with bullying experience mentioned that bullying could be acceptable if the target themselves agreed to it. However, these students disapproved of bullying when bullying explicitly led to injuring the target.

In general, students disapproved of bullying by a physically stronger protagonist due to concerns about the potentially larger magnitude of harm and the target's inability to protect themselves against someone who was more powerful, as demonstrated by the following comment by "Morgan," a student with bullying experience:

"Ryan is quite short so... and David is quite tall, very physical[ly strong]. The injury it might impose on Ryan might be much compared to when the reverse is the case so Ryan may have more injuries, more life-threatening injuries because he is getting beaten by someone way stronger than him and he may not actually have to be able to retaliate because he looks small so that's more the major reason."

Additionally, aside from physical harm, students also disapproved of bullying by a physically less strong protagonist by considering the possibility of psychological harm or discomfort from a smaller protagonist when the possibility of physical harm was less. As "Riley," one student with bullying experience indicated,

"[there are] bruises on her arm and stuff like she's still able to physically harbor, and even if it wasn't that physically harming I think it's still like emotionally taxing to have someone like trying to like hitting, kick[ing] you every day."

Students' qualitative responses suggest that, regardless of the size of the people involved in bullying, people focus on the action and the amount of harm stemming from the action as a basis for disapproval.

Criterion Judgments

Across all hypothetical bullying situations and aggression in a general situation, students' evaluations were not contingent on authority directives or common practice in the classroom and generalized their disapproval of bullying and aggression to another country because of concerns about harm. As a student with bullying experience indicated, "...even though it's a different country with its own set of rules, it's still, you know, not right to be hurting other people…" This example aligns with previous social domain research and supports the theoretical assumption that people distinguish the moral domain from the conventional domain (Smetana et al., 2018; Turiel, 1983). This result also supports findings by Astor (1994) who found children with or without violent behaviors disapproved of violence due to harm involved in violent transgression and their disapproval was not dependent on authority directives or social rules.

The results of the current study did not support the findings from Nucci and Herman (1982) possibly due to differences in sampling. Nucci and Herman's sample population were children from a special education classroom for students diagnosed with behavioral disorders,

whereas the samples of both Astor and the current study were youth from general classrooms who might or might not have been diagnosed with conditions relating to challenging and disruptive behaviors. It is possible that Nucci and Herman's sample represented a population on the more severe end of the spectrum of children with aggressive behaviors, or that their sample represented a different clinical population with other underlying distinctions, such as psychological differences that resulted in diverging outcomes between the current study and Nucci and Herman's study.

Gender and Age Differences

Results from the current study did not reveal a significant difference between males and females or ages. However, it is cautioned that this should not be interpreted as evidence that gender and age do not affect judgment regarding bullying. Previous research has revealed that moral judgments about certain situations (e.g., unprovoked hitting) do not vary with age, whereas in some situations (e.g., hitting an antagonist), a curvilinear pattern was observed in which the preteens and late adolescents were more likely to judge the action as wrong and the early adolescents were less likely to judge the action in the same situation as wrong (Nucci et al., 2017). In more complex situations involving moral ambiguity (e.g., conflict of interest) and multiple influencing factors, late adolescents' reasoning were more multidimensional than preteens demonstrating awareness of moral ambiguity and considerations of multiple factors more consistently (Nucci et al., 2017; Smetana et al., 2012). Moreover, results from past research on gender differences are inconsistent. Some studies revealed that girls demonstrated greater distinctions between moral and conventional domains whereas other studies showed boys demonstrated greater distinction (Yoo & Smetana, 2022). The effects of gender and age were not the focus of this study. The subjects in the three groups were selected only for their experiences of bullying and victimization and ethnicity and gender were ignored in the selection process. Therefore, differences regarding gender and age were not expected within the sample of the current study.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study had a number of limitations and opportunities for future investigation of bullying behavior. As noted in the introduction, bullying is a multifaceted issue that involves influences from both the social-cognitive and social-ecological dimensions (Swearer et al., 2014; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Research has found a number of social-ecological factors that influence bullying behaviors that this study did not control for, such as peer influence and group norms (Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004) and school context and climate (Bradshaw et al., 2009). In addition to social-ecological factors, this study also did not control for a number of individual cognitive factors that were found to be related to aggressive behaviors, such as attention span and verbal ability (Arsenio, 2010). Future studies would benefit from controlling for these factors.

Moreover, the current study only relied on self-report for the make-up of three groups of bullying roles (bullying, victimization, and no experience/no involvement). Although the bullying group in the current study consisted of students who engaged in a higher frequency of bullying perpetration behavior than victimization behavior, the current study was not able to discern whether students who had only bullying experience and no victimization experience would judge bullying behavior differently than students who had only victimization experience or both experiences. Relying only on self-report also increased the likelihood of social-desirability bias. Future studies would benefit from having a third person, such as a parent or a teacher, report on bullying behaviors and use measures that can differentiate the different bullying roles in a more delineated way.

Additionally, the participants' responses in the semi-structured interviews can be influenced by the interactions with the researcher who was interviewing them. Therefore, the interview responses in the current study could also be influenced by social desirability bias. To reduce the effect of social-desirability bias in the interview responses of the current study, participants were informed about the choice to turn off their cameras, which allowed the participants to be relatively more anonymous. Future studies would benefit from weighing the advantages or disadvantages of having virtual interviews that allow participants to turn off the camera versus in-person interviews.

Lastly, the sample of the current study was predominantly Black and Asian, which is not representative of the student population in public schools. The sample size was relatively small. Therefore, the results from the current study should not be generalized to students in the current public K-12 system. Future studies should focus on obtaining a more representative sample in order to improve the generalizability of the results.

Implications

Bullying and aggressive behaviors can have a direct and immediate impact on interpersonal relationships with parents, teachers, and peers, which can negatively impact learning outcomes and opportunities. For example, students do not enjoy playing with peers who are aggressive and disruptive. Teachers may find it difficult to teach students who engage in aggressive behaviors, especially when those behaviors are disruptive. Schools may feel pressured by victims' families to suspend or even expel students who have aggressive behaviors. Some aggressive behaviors can quickly escalate into actions with profound negative consequences that require the involvement of the justice system. It is understandably difficult to empathize with students with bullying experience when harm is involved and natural to assume that people who harm others have little moral sense. However, students with bullying experience will only become more ostracized the less we understand their perspectives and reasons for their bullying behaviors. The current study adds to the growing body of evidence that people with aggressive behaviors, just like their peers with no aggressive behaviors, do engage in moral judgments and are just as concerned about the potential harm from aggression. In light of the findings from the current study, it is not to minimize the deeply problematic nature of bullying and aggression, but to reduce stigma and the common impression (or misconception) that students who engage in aggression are the "bad kids" who have no concern or hesitation about hurting others.

The fact that many students with bullying experience and behavioral challenges do have concerns about others' welfare and reasons as to why they acted aggressively should not be overlooked. Neglecting to recognize this may lead to ineffective interventions and bring about negative ramifications on service delivery. Past research has revealed that students who engaged in aggressive behaviors were less likely to have received help than students who did not engage in aggressive behaviors (Sigurdson et al., 2015). This failure to provide adequate support may not only exacerbate aggressive behaviors but also fuel distrust among students, teachers, and parents and perpetuate the stigma about students with aggression. Continued research is required to develop a deeper understanding of bullying perpetration and to support educators, particularly classroom teachers who interact with students on a daily basis, in understanding the perspectives of their students who may have behavioral challenges. Future research on anti-bullying policy may also benefit from understanding the impact of incorporating the perspectives of all the parties involved (e.g., the student who bullied, the student who was bullied, and the bystander) in the investigation and whether that may help reduce stigma among students towards students who bully others and improve services for students who bully others. Doing so may help to

understand the challenges of students with aggression, foster a willingness to support them, and bring a more positive and collaborative learning environment to both students with and without behavioral challenges.

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Appendix A

Bullying in Schools: Adolescents' Judgments and Evaluation of Social Situations Involving Persisting Aggressive Behaviors

<Participant ID>

I will first ask you some general questions and there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in what you think. Would it be alright or not alright to punch and kick someone causing pain to that person? Why or why not?

     i.   Should a person be punished or not when this person punches and kicks another person? Why or why not?

    ii.   Which person deserves more punishment, the one who punches and hurts someone once or many times? Why?

2. Would it be alright or not alright for a more powerful person who is bigger, taller, and older to punch and kick a smaller, shorter, and younger person many times throughout the school year causing this person pain? Why or why not?

     i.   What about the opposite? Would it be alright or not alright for a less powerful person who is smaller, shorter, and younger to punch and kick a bigger, taller, and older person many times throughout the school year causing this person pain? Why or why not?

    ii.   Which one deserves more punishment, a more powerful person punching and hurting a less powerful person or a less powerful person punching and hurting a more powerful person? Why?

3. Suppose in a class, and students in that class accept punching and kicking others, is it ok or not ok for the class to accept that? Why or why not?

4. What if a teacher in a classroom said it is ok to punch and cause another person pain, would it be alright or not alright to punch others? Why or why not?

5. Suppose that in another country, they decided that it is alright for people to punch and hurt other people, is that alright or not alright? Why or why not?

Now, I will read some hypothetical stories that describe situations involving people being aggressive repeatedly towards other people. And, again, there are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in what you think.

1.   **A. Unprovoked - Bully and Victim with equal power**

        Michael and Aaron are both 12th graders. They are about the same height and size. Throughout the school year, Michael punches and kicks Aaron almost every day because Michael likes to impress the other students by showing how cool and able he is. As a result, Aaron has a lot of physical injuries and pain from Michael's punching and kicking.

     Evaluation and Justification:

        Is it ok or not ok for Michael to punch and kick Aaron every day as a way to impress other students, why or why not?

     Evaluation of target:

What do you think Michael sees Aaron as? (or How would Michael describe Aaron?)

Convention (group norms):

What if in their class, it is generally accepted that people punch and kick other classmates every day, is it alright or not alright for Michael to punch and kick Aaron and causing him injuries and pain? Why or why not?

Authority:

What if their teacher said it's ok to punch and kick people every day, is it ok or not ok for Michael to punch and kick Aaron every day? Why or why not?

Generalizability:

Suppose that in another country, they decided that it is alright to punch and kick other people every day, is it ok or not ok for Michael to punch and kick Aaron every day?

2. **Unprovoked - Bully is more powerful**

David is in 12th grade and Ryan is in 9th grade. David is a big and tall guy and Ryan is small and short. Throughout the school year, David hits and kicks Ryan almost every day because David likes to impress other students by showing how cool and able he is. As a result, Ryan has a lot of physical injuries and pain from David's hitting and kicking.

Evaluation and Justification:

Is it ok or not ok for David to punch and kick Ryan every day as a way to impress other students, why or why not?

Evaluation of target:

What do you think David sees Ryan as? (or How would David describe Ryan?)

Convention (group norms):

What if in their class, it is generally accepted that people punch and kick other classmates who are smaller and weaker every day, is it alright or not alright for David to punch and kick Ryan and causing him injuries and pain? Why or why not?

Authority:

What if their teacher said it's ok to punch and kick people who are smaller and less strong every day, is it ok or not ok for David to punch and kick Ryan every day? Why or why not?

Generalizability:

Suppose that in another country, they decided that it is alright to punch and kick people every day if the people they punch are smaller and less strong, is it ok or not ok for David to punch and kick Ryan every day?

3. **Unprovoked - Bully is more vulnerable**

James is in 10th grade and Tom is in 12th grade. James is small and short and Tom is big and tall. Throughout the school year, James punches and kicks Tom almost every day because James likes to impress other students by showing how cool and able he is.

As a result, Tom has a lot of physical injuries and pain from James's punching and kicking.

Evaluation and Justification:

> Is it ok or not ok for James to punch and kick Tom every day as a way to impress other students, why or why not?

Evaluation of target:

> What do you think James sees Tom as?

Convention (group norms):

> What if in their class, it is ok for people who are smaller and less strong to punch and kick other classmates who are bigger and stronger than themselves every day, is it alright or not alright for James to punch and kick Tom and causing him injuries and pain? Why or why not?

Authority:

> What if their teacher said it's ok to punch and kick people who are bigger and stronger than themselves every day, is it ok or not ok for James to punch and kick Tom every day? Why or why not?

Generalizability:

> Suppose that in another country, they decided that it is alright to punch and kick people every day if the people they punch are bigger and stronger, is it ok or not ok for James to punch and kick Tom every day?

For Stories 1-3:

Should Michael, David, or James, be punished?

Who should receive more punishment, Michael, David, or James? Why or why not?

4. A. Ambiguous - Bully and Victims with equal power

> Some students in Mark's school pick on other students and hit and kick them almost every day. Mark is afraid that these students will also start to pick on him. So, to avoid being hit and kicked, he wants to appear tough and starts to punch and kick other students who are about the same size and age as him almost every day too. Steven was among the students who got kicked by Mark every day.

Evaluation and Justification:

> Is it ok or not ok for Mark to punch and kick other students every day as a way to avoid being beaten up by others, why or why not?

Evaluation of target:

> What do you think Mark sees Steven as?

Convention (group norms):

> What if in their class, it is generally accepted that people punch and kick other classmates every day, is it alright or not alright for Mark to punch and kick other students and causing them injuries and pain? Why or why not?

Authority:

> What if their teacher said it's ok to punch and kick people every day, is it ok or not ok for Mark to punch and kick other students every day? Why or why not?

Generalizability:

Suppose that in another country, they decided that it is alright to punch and kick other people every day, is it ok or not ok for Mark to punch and kick others every day? Why or why not?

5. **Ambiguous - Bully is more powerful than victims**

Some students in Kevin's school pick on other students and hit and kick them almost every day. Kevin is afraid that these students will also start to pick on him. So, to avoid being hit and kicked, he wants to appear tough and starts to punch and kick other students who are younger and smaller in size than him almost every day too. Ben was among the students who got kicked by Kevin every day.

Justification:

Is it ok or not ok for Kevin to punch and kick the younger and smaller students every day as a way to avoid being beaten up by others, why or why not?

Evaluation of target:

What do you think Kevin sees Ben as?

Convention (group norms):

What if in their class, it is generally accepted that people punch and kick other classmates who are smaller and younger every day, is it alright or not alright for Kevin to punch and kick the younger and less strong classmates and causing them injuries and pain? Why or why not?

Authority:

What if their teacher said it's ok to punch and kick students who are younger and smaller every day, is it ok or not ok for Kevin to punch and kick the younger and smaller students every day? Why or why not?

Generalizability:

Suppose that in another country, they decided that it is alright to punch and kick people every day if those people they punch are younger and smaller, is it ok or not ok for Kevin to punch and kick those people every day? Why or why not?

6. **Ambiguous - Bully is more vulnerable**

Some students in John's school pick on other students and hit and kick them almost every day. John is afraid that these students will also start to pick on him. So, to avoid being hit and kicked, he wants to appear tough and starts to punch and kick other students almost every day. Some of these students are even older and bigger than him. Robert was among the students who got kicked by John every day.

Justification:

Is it ok or not ok for John to punch and kick other students every day as a way to avoid being beaten up by others, why or why not?

Evaluation of target:

What do you think John sees Robert as?

Convention (group norms):

What if in their class, it is ok for people who are smaller and less strong to punch and kick other classmates who are bigger and stronger than themselves every day, is it alright or not alright for John to punch and kick the bigger and stronger students and causing them injuries and pain? Why or why not?

Authority:

What if their teacher said it's ok to punch and kick people who are bigger and stronger than themselves every day, is it ok or not ok for John to punch and kick the bigger and stronger students every day? Why or why not?

Generalizability:

Suppose that in another country, they decided that it is alright to punch and kick people every day if those people they punch are bigger and stronger, is it ok or not ok for John to punch and kick the bigger and stronger every day? Why or why not?

For Stories 3-6:

Should Mark, Kevin, or John be punished?

Who deserves more punishment, Mark, Kevin, or John? Why or why not?

Appendix B

C2. Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument

SECTION A

Since you have been at this school THIS YEAR how often HAVE YOU done any of the following things to a STUDENT (or students) at this school. CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT IS CLOSEST TO YOUR ANSWER.

	In the past year at this school I…	Never	Sometimes	Once or twice a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Everyday
1.	Teased them by saying things to them	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Pushed or shoved a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Made rude remarks at a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Got my friends to turn against a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Made jokes about a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Crashed into a student on purpose as they walked by	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Picked on a student by swearing at them	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Told my friends things about a student to get them into trouble	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Got into a physical fight with a student because I didn't like them	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Said things about their looks they didn't like	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Got other students to start a rumor about a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	I slapped or punched a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Got other students to ignore a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Made fun of a student by calling them names	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Threw something at a student to hit them	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Threatened to physically hurt or harm a student	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Left them out of activities or games on purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	Kept a student away from me by giving them mean looks	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION B

Please indicate how often a student (or students) at this school has done the following things TO YOU since you have been at this school this year. CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT IS CLOSEST TO YOUR ANSWER.

	In the past year at this school ...	Never	Sometimes	Once or twice a month	Once a week	Several times a week	Everyday
1.	I was teased by students saying things to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I was pushed or shoved	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	A student wouldn't be friends with me because other people didn't like me	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	A student made rude remarks at me	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	I was hit or kicked hard	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	A student ignored me when they were with their friends	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Jokes were made up about me	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Students crashed into me on purpose as they walked by	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	A student got their friends to turn against me	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	My property was damaged on purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Things were said about my looks I didn't like	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	I wasn't invited to a student's place because other people didn't like me	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	I was ridiculed by students saying things to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	A student got students to start a rumor about me	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Something was thrown at me to hit me	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	I was threatened to be physically hurt or harmed	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	I was left out of activities, games on purpose	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	I was called names I didn't like	1	2	3	4	5	6

Scoring Instructions

Point values are assigned as indicated above.
Section A contains the bullying items.
Subscale scores are computed as follows:
Verbal bullying: Items 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, and 14
Social bullying: Items 4, 8, 11, 13, 17, and 18
Physical bullying: Items 2, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 16

Section B contains the victim items.
Subscale scores are computed as follows:
Verbal victimization: Items 1, 4, 7, 11, 13, and 18
Social victimization: Items 3, 6, 9, 12, 14, and 17
Physical victimization: Items 2, 5, 8, 10, 15, and 16

Scoring is achieved by adding the items up for each individual total score (bullying and victimization) or for each subscale score (verbal, social, and physical). Any student who scores 18 for either the bullying or victimization total score has never been bullied or has never bullied others. There are no cut off scores for this instrument. For the subscales, a score of 6 means the respondent has never been bullied or has never bullied others in that particular way.

References

Parada, R. H. (2000). *Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument: A theoretical and empirical basis for the measurement of participant roles in bullying and victimization of adolescence: An interim test manual and a research monograph: A test manual.* Penrith South, DC, Australia: Publication Unit, Self-concept Enhancement and Learning Facilitation (SELF) Research Centre, University of Western Sydney.

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