

THE PREVALENCE OF BULLYING IN  
CENTRAL FLORIDA MIDDLE SCHOOLS  
AS PERCEIVED BY STUDENTS

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study was developed to produce data about the prevalence of bullying in Central Florida middle schools. The research was intended to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on bullying and victimization. The focus for this study was provided through research questions: (a) to determine if there is a mean difference in perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity; (b) to determine if there is a mean difference in perceived bullying among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity; (c) to determine what support do students perceive Central Florida middle school staff provide to students who are bullied; (d) to determine what school locations, if any, do Central Florida middle school students perceive to be the most prevalent for bullying activities; (e) to determine if there is a relationship between skipping school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida; (f) to determine what is the average number of school days skipped by middle school students in Central Florida due to perceived victimization; (g) to determine if there is a relationship between feeling safe at school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida; (h) to determine if there is a relationship

between student perceptions of whether teasing and bullying harms their grades and perceived victimization for middle school students in Central Florida; and (i) to determine if there is a relationship between students showing interest in their school work and perceived victimization by Central Florida middle school students.

The population of this study was comprised of students in grades 6-8 in three Central Florida school districts during the 2007 - 2008 school years. Data were generated from the 13 schools located in Brevard, Osceola and Volusia counties using a self-reporting survey.

Based on the research findings, it was determined that bullying is prevalent in Central Florida schools, with 21% ( $n = 133$ ) of the students perceiving themselves as a victim of teasing and bullying. Students who perceive themselves as a bully was 5% ( $n = 30$ ). Minority students perceived themselves as victims the most. Minority students in the sixth grade and non-minority students in the seventh grade, regardless of gender, perceived themselves as victims the most. Students in the sixth grade, regardless of race and gender, perceived themselves as bullies more than students in other grade levels. Students, who perceived themselves as victims, feel it is because they had good grades and show interest in their school work. Perceived

victims of teasing and bullying also have poorer grades. Most students, who are victims of bullying, do feel somewhat safe at school and feel what the school is doing about the teasing and bullying problems was sufficient. When asked about attendance, a majority of students reported they have not skipped any days of school as a result of being teased or bullied. Students also identified all campus locations as areas where teasing and bullying takes place, with the gym having the most occurrences.

This is dedicated to the students who have endured  
the emotional and physical pain of being bullied.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS**

SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
TABS-S	Teasing and Bullying Survey - Students



## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

Schools are seeing an increase in violence on their campuses. The percentage of violent incidents reported by victims, in public schools, has increased from 71 to 81% between the school years of 1999-2000 and 2003-2004 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). One such form of violence is in the form of school shootings that began to receive national attention during 1995 (Leary, Kowalsiki, Smith & Phillips, 2003). The incidents listed below are just a sample of a child's desperate response to being bullied.

The morning of April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School in Colorado had a shooting that was identified as the worst in U.S. history. At approximately 11:20 A.M., Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, walked onto the school campus and opened fire on their classmates. Within 16 minutes of their entry, 13 people were dead and 21 wounded before the two boys turned the guns on themselves as a result of being unpopular, teased, and bullied by other students; mostly by the athletes. (Leary et al., 2003).

On March 5, 2001, another well-known shooting occurred when a 15-year old student by the name of Andy Williams entered Santana High School in Santee, California with a 22-caliber revolver. He took the lives of two students and wounded 13

people due to being maliciously bullied by his classmates (Leary et al., 2003).

A female student was the perpetrator in a school shooting on March 7, 2001 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Catherine Bush, 14, shot the head cheerleader coach in the shoulder because she felt betrayed by the victim who apparently shared the contents of e-mails with others in the school. Catherine had been teased and harassed at her previous school and was similarly tormented when she transferred to a private school.

Bullying among children is nothing new and is known as one of the leading problems facing United States' schools today (Holt & Keyes, 2004). Although many educators have always known there is bullying taking place, it was not until the 1970s before researchers began study bullying methodically (Olweus, 1978, 1993, 2003). During the last 30 years, studies on bullying have become the focus of many international studies (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). During the 1980s and early 1990s, the United States began to study bullying among children. United States' schools today face a big problem on their campus, which is bullying (Holt & Keyes, 2004; Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992). Approximately 15% of students experience bullying either as a victim or initiator (Banks, 1997; Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993). Bullying is a problem that can have major

affects on how students develop academically, psychologically, and socially. Although bullying is a problem at all levels of education it reaches its peak during the middle school years (Harris & Petrie, 2004; Lösel & Bliesener, 1999; Rigby & Slee, 1999). Since bullying peaks during middle school, this age group was selected for this study to determine the perceived prevalence in Central Florida.

Bullying can take two different forms: direct and indirect. With direct bullying the victim is subjected to teasing, taunting, name calling, hitting, kicking, stealing, verbal or physical threats. During indirect bullying the victim is ignored, excluded intentionally by others, or has rumors spread about them (Harris & Petrie, 2004; Morita, Soeda, Soeda & Taki, 1999; Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2001).

#### Purpose of Study

Since the study of bullying in American schools is still in its infancy, this subject needs to be studied further. Adolescence can be a stressful time for children that can result in impetuous behaviors, mood swings, insults and rejections by peers; which can ultimately result in suicide or homicide (Olweus, 1991). This study was conducted to determine the perceived prevalence of bullying according to bullies and

victims in grades six through eight in Central Florida school districts since bullying is reported to be at its highest during this age group. This study also examined student's attitudes towards school, their perceived feelings of safety, student perceptions of school interventions, their perceptions on how being a victim impacts their grades, how students perceive the impact on school attendance, and what locations ("hot spots") are perceived to be the areas where bullying occurs most according to students.

The results of this study will not only contribute to the current research about bullying in the United States, but those in the Central Florida area too. This study will also provide a better understanding of student perceptions of the prevalence of bullying at the middle school level to school and district employees especially those in the districts that participated in the study.

#### Research Questions

1. What is the mean difference in perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?

2. What is the mean difference in perceived bullying among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?
3. What support do students perceive Central Florida middle school staff provide to students who are bullied?
4. What school locations, if any, do Central Florida middle school students perceive to be the most prevalent for bullying activities?
5. What is the relationship between skipping school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?
6. What is the average number of school days skipped by middle school students in Central Florida due to perceived victimization?
7. What is the relationship between feeling safe at school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?
8. What is the relationship between student perceptions of whether teasing and bullying harms their grades and perceived victimization for middle school students in Central Florida?

9. What is the relationship between students showing interest in their schoolwork and perceived victimization by Central Florida middle school students?

### Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are provided to clarify terms used in the study:

#### Bully:

Coloroso (2003), cites four characteristics of a bully, which are: (1) an imbalance of power, in which the bully is bigger, stronger, or more favorably situated than the victim; (2) the bully has an intent to harm, knowing he or she will inflict emotional or physical pain, and revels in that fact; (3) a threat of further aggression exists, in which the bully and victim both know that this act of aggression will not be the last; and (4) terror persists—the extreme, continuing agitation of the victim (pp. 13-14).

#### Bullying:

Hazler (1996) defines bullying the repeated (not just once or twice) harming of others. This can be done by physical attack or by hurting others feelings through words, actions or social exclusion. Bullying can be done by one person or by a group. It is an unfair match since the bully is either physically, verbally, and/or socially stronger than the victim (p.6).

#### Cyberbullying:

Belsey (as cited by Anderson and Sturm, 2007) stated cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messaging, defamatory personal Web sites and defamatory online personal polling Web sites to support deliberate,

repeated, and hostile behaviour [*sic*] by an individual or group that is intended to harm others (p. 24).

#### Nonverbal Bullying:

Sullivan, Cleary, and Sullivan (2004), state that nonverbal bullying can take the form of direct or indirect bullying. Direct nonverbal bullying includes making rude gestures and mean faces. Indirect nonverbal bullying includes purposely and often systematically ignoring, excluding, and isolating; sending hateful notes, and making other students dislike someone (p.5)

#### Physical Bullying:

Sullivan et al. (2004), states physical bullying often causes visible hurt in the form of cuts and bruises (p.6).

#### Sexual Harassment:

Coy (2001) describes sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual behavior that interferes with an individual's life. It can be viewed as unwelcome sexual advances, a demand for sexual favors, touching in a sexual way or accusations of homosexuality and lesbianism (p.2).

#### Verbal Bullying:

Sullivan et al. (2004), identifies verbal bullying as abusive telephone calls, extortion of money or material possessions, general intimidation or threats of violence, name-calling, racist remarks or teasing, sexually suggestive or abusive language, spiteful teasing or making cruel remarks, and spreading false and malicious rumors (p.5).

#### Victim:

Hazler (1996), claims a victim is someone who is harmed by others who verbally, socially, or physically attacked them (p.7).

### Significance

The United States lags behind Europe, Australia, and Canada when looking at bullying behaviors (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). During the late 1980s and early 1990s, bullying received attention from the public and research community in the United States (Olweus, 1993). There are contradictions in the current research as to who the victims of bullying are, the locations of these activities, and the affects it can have on children. The primary purpose of this study was to add to the knowledge base regarding bullying at the middle school level in the United States and to provide scientific research on the prevalence of bullying in schools located in the Central Florida area.

### Delimitations

The study was delimited to the participating middle schools in the Central Florida area.

### Limitations

There were four limitations for this study. The first limitation was the response rate of parents who gave consent to allow their child to participate in the study. The second limitation was the school districts and schools who were willing to participate. The school districts that declined participation



stated they were concerned with the amount of time that would be required of the school personnel. The schools that declined were not only concerned with the time required of school personnel, but also with the loss of instructional time. Next, it was possible that students were skipping school due to being teased and bullied. The small percentage rate, of students who skipped school, could have been the result of students not being there to take the survey. Finally, the student responses were obtained through a self-reporting survey instrument.

#### Assumptions

An assumption of this study was that the participating schools distributed the parental consent forms to all students in 6-8 grades to provide an opportunity for all students to participate. Another assumption was that the students who completed the survey answered the questions honestly.

#### Organization of the Dissertation

The subsequent chapters will include a review of literature in Chapter 2; Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology of the study; and analyses of the data collected from the study will be discussed in Chapter Four. Finally, Chapter Five will discuss and interpret the analyses presented in the previous chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW**

### Introduction

Violent behaviors have become a reality in our schools. One such form of violence is in the form of bullying. The study of bullying is still fairly new in term of research, but the occurrence of bullying is not (Hazler, 1996). As a result of students being bullied, there have been 250 deaths on school campuses since 1992 (Garrett, 2003). In a report from the United States Secret Service, a majority of the students who have attacked their classmates did so in retaliation from being bullied. Some of the bullying they experienced has taken place over a long period of time (Garrett, 2003).

Approximately, 15% of students are either bullied or is the person behind the bullying behavior on a regular basis (Banks, 1997; Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993). Bullying can majorly affect how students grow psychologically, academically and socially. Bullying is an activity that exists around the world and can range from mild to moderate to severe. Bullying was always been seen as a natural part of growing up; then in 1970s, more focus was placed on the problem of bullying. Bullying is a behavioral area that needs to be studied further due to the

lasting effects it can have on children. Several countries such as Japan, England, Norway, The Netherlands, and most recently the United States of America have focused on the frequency and location of bullying activities.

### What Is Bullying?

Bullying is not easy to define since it involves aggressive behaviors such as hitting or kicking. Activities such as the spreading of rumors, exclusion, or manipulation are classified as passive bullying. Regardless of whether the bullying is aggressive or passive, the definitions of bullying vary by researchers and countries. Olweus, a leader in research on bullying offered what is considered to be a classic definition of bullying. According to Olweus (1993), "A student is being bullied or victimized when she or he is exposed, to repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more of the students" (p. 53-54). Other researchers have also defined bullying. For example, Smith and Sharp (1995) describes bullying as, "The systematic abuse of power...repeated and deliberate" (p.2), whereas Australian researchers, Rigby and Slee (1999) define bullying as "oppression directed by more powerful persons or by a group of persons against individuals who cannot

adequately defend themselves" (p.324). In the United States, Hazler (1996) states that:

Bullying can be commonly defined as repeatedly (not just once or twice) harming others. This can be done by physical attack or by hurting others' feelings through words, actions, or social exclusion. Bullying may be done by one person or by a group. It is an unfair match since the bully is either physically, verbally, and/or socially stronger than the victim (p. 6).

Inequity of power, intent to harm, threat of further aggression and terror are four factors that all bullying activities have in common (Coloroso, 2003). Besage (1989) added a fifth factor which is competitiveness. Although this is a socially acceptable behavior, it causes others to feel inferior.

### Prevalence of Bullying

There has been limited research conducted in the U.S. to examine the incidence and prevalence of bullying among school-aged children (Harachi, Catalano, & Hawkins, 1999). What is known about bullying in schools is that bullying and harassment are pervasive problems. Data collected from adolescent students showed that 72% of females and 81% of males felt they have encountered some form of bullying while in school (Hoover et al., 1992). When averaged out, 76.8% of students will have experienced some form of bullying during the K-12 schooling. Students in every grade level have problems with bullying, but

it is at its worst during the beginning of middle school (Sullivan et al., 2004). In the 1998-1999 study of 83 sixth graders and six sixth grade teachers, 75% of students were victimized by a bully (Paulk, Swearer, Song, & Carey 1999). Students tend to identify their peers as bullies or victims more often than the teachers.

Between the ages of 12 and 18, bullying tends to decline as the students get older. This is supported by Olweus (1993) who surveyed 83330 students and came to the conclusion that the percentage of students who were bullied decreased by age. The Olweus (1993) study showed that students in grades 2-6 who were bullied were 11.6%, whereas students in grades 7-9 were 5.9%. Espelage and Asidao (2001) support these claims with data from their study of 89 middle school students (grades 6-8) in three schools that were located in three mid-sized Mid-western towns (p. 51). Students first completed a 30-minute survey and then over the course of the next month researchers interviewed the individual students for 30 to 60 minutes. Espelage and Asidao, (2001) asked middle school level students how they would define bullying, provide locations where bullying takes place in their school, share why they think some students bully while other are victims, discuss their perceptions of how the teachers and principal handled bullying activities, and were asked to develop

strategies that would help combat the bullying problems. The purpose of their survey and interviews was to determine the need for an intervention program. The results of the study showed sixth graders in all three schools were more likely than eighth graders to experience name-calling and teasing.

In their study of sixth graders, Peskin, Tortolero, and Markham (2006) support the claim that sixth graders were more likely to be harassed. This study was based on eight predominantly Black and Hispanic secondary schools (5 middle and 3 high schools) in a large urban school district in Texas where they found the highest level of victimization in the sixth grade; with one in five students reported being bullied. The middle school students in grades 6-8 consisted of about 60% of the sample.

### Forms of Bullying

Bullying can include such activities as teasing, taunting, calling names, hitting, kicking, stealing, threatening someone, or using a weapon (Harris and Petrie, 2004). Another form is indirect bullying where the perpetrator spreads rumors about someone, ignores or excludes others intentionally, or influences others to do these activities (Harris and Petrie, 2004). Forms

of bullying can then be subdivided into five general categories: verbal, physical, relational, racial and sexual.

### Verbal

Verbal bullying is the most common and can have many forms of abuse such as name-calling, making fun of appearance, assailing another child's academic or athletic abilities, spreading rumors or racist remarks. Most girls use this form of bullying, which is classified as indirect bullying.

Verbal bullying has expanded into cyberspace which is the most recent form of harassment. This type of bullying involves using electronic mediums such as cell phones, e-mail, pagers, instant messaging or websites to degrade and verbally abuse their target (Anderson and Sturm, 2007).

Cyberbullying is different from verbal bullying in three ways (Conn, 2004). First, this type of verbal bullying allows the bully to be anonymous by using fictitious names. Next, since cyber bullies are unable to see their victims they do not realize the coercion that is produced by their actions. Finally, bullying over the Internet is more difficult to trace than bullying that occurs in person (Conn, 2004). Older students tend to experience this type of bullying more than the younger students since they are the largest group using computer

services such as e-mail and instant messenger without the need for adult assistance. This type of bullying can also cause the child to experience stress, tension, low self-esteem, and depression. These problems can then lead to social problems, interpersonal victimization and the victim harassing peers themselves (Chamberlin, 2006).

### Physical

When asked what the characteristics of bullying are, most people would provide examples of physical abuse. This type of behavior includes any type of physical activity such as punching, kicking, biting, to name a few. The destruction of one's property is also another characteristic of physical bullying. This is the most identifiable form of bullying in terms of scars, but less than one-third of students experience being bullied this way (Coloroso, 2003).

### Relational

One form of bullying that is difficult to detect and is experienced by mostly females is relational bullying. Bullying of this nature usually begins at the start of adolescence. Students who practice this form of bullying try to destroy



friendships among their peers by ignoring, isolating or excluding others (Coloroso, 2003).

## Racial

Information addressing bullying and its link to race/ethnicity is scarce (Besage, 1989; Duncan, 1999; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). One possible reason for this is because it is hard to establish if the bullying was racially motivated. It is possible that although the bullying occurred between different races, it could be for non-racial reasons.

Belonging to a particular ethnic group can give rise to bullying and harassment (Rigby, 2001). The most common form of racial bullying is the use of derogatory names. Prejudices often begin as early as preschool and the students mimic the actions of their parents (Coy, 2001).

In their study of the 89 students from three middle schools located in Mid-Western towns, Espelage and Asidao (2001) found that students were targets of harassment based on their ethnicity. The students of ethnic minority, Latinos and African Americans, attended schools that consisted of primarily a Caucasian student body. Another study that supports these findings was of eight middle schools who were predominately African American and Latino students in Texas (Peskin,

Tortolero, and Markhan, 2006). The study by Peskin et al. (2006) determined that the majority of minority victims were in the sixth grade, with one in five of them reported being bullied.

Contrasting to the studies mentioned previously, a study of another racially diverse school by Graham and Juvonen (1998), determined that the numerical minorities (Caucasian, Asians, Persians, and bi-racial children) had more peer-nominated victims than would be expected by chance, whereas the two groups who were the numerical majorities (African Americans and Latinos) had fewer members perceived as victims and more members perceived as aggressive. Besage (1989) summarizes the study on racism and bullying when she asserts that:

Racism is too complex an issue to be subsumed under the heading of bullying, to be mentioned as a mere insertion, but it is pertinent because it most often takes the form of bullying - be it social, psychological or physical in nature (p. 47).

#### Sexual

The United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, (2001), cites the legal definition of sexual harassment as, "The unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature". Sexual bullying can take various forms including physical, verbal and/or relational (Coloroso, 2003).

Sexual harassment at school is reported by many students. Seventy-nine U.S. schools participated in the 1993 study by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) on sexual harassment. Of the 1632 boys and girls who were randomly sampled in grades 8-11, results showed that 79% of females and 49% of males responded that they have experienced sexual harassment in one form or another (Lipson, 2001). In a more recent study conducted in 2000 by Harris Interactive for the AAUW, 8 out of 10 students will have been a victim of sexual harassment during their school career. This study also determined that the percentage of girls (83%) and boys (56%) who experienced sexual harassment had increased (Lipson, 2001).

### Characteristics of Bullies

Bullies share a common characteristic, which is their aggression toward peers (Olweus, 1993). Other characteristics include the need to feel power and in control, little empathy for victims and claims that they were provoked by the victim, and generally defiant towards adults (Banks, 1997). Although often viewed as antisocial and more than likely to break rules, bullies are usually dominant, impulsive, and unafraid, but well integrated into peer groups. Bullies also have a strong self-esteem, which is contrary to popular beliefs (Banks, 1997;

Olweus, 1993). Middle school students, who bully, tend to have lower grades and develop a negative attitude towards school (Olweus, 1993).

In a study of 244 Caucasian (43.3%) participants whose ages ranged from 13-19 in British Columbia, 32.1% of respondents classified themselves as a pure bully. By gender this resulted in 30% of males and 40% of females identifying themselves as a bully (Viljoen, O'Neill, & Sidhu, 2005).

Contradictory to the above findings, Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, & Mickelson (2001) presented data from the first two years of a five-year longitudinal study. The participants in their study included 133 sixth-grade students from a Mid-western middle school where 5.3% of the respondents identified themselves as a bully on a self-reporting questionnaire.

### Characteristics of Victims

A victim can be anyone who shows vulnerability and does not have the support of a group. Olweus (1978, 1993, 1999) classifies victims into two categories: passive and provocative. Another type of victim that has not been studied as much is the bully-victim.

The passive victims are the most common. Students are labeled as passive victims when they do little to provoke their

attackers directly; rather they are withdrawn and are anxious in social situations. They usually appear depressed to their peers too. This type of victim will also quickly submit to his or her bullies' demands, may display emotional distress, and not fight back (Olweus, 1978; Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990; Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001; Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993).

The less common type of victim is the victim who is also confrontational. This type of victim is known as a bully-victim. These victims behave in ways that are annoying, immature, or inappropriate. Many times, they have difficulty focusing on an activity and can behave in ways that is considered annoying by others; which causes other to react negatively towards them. These students are often regarded as irritating, stupid or silly. Victims who fit into this category usually do not have the support of their teachers since they become impatient and annoyed with the behaviors (Sullivan et al., 2004).

The third type of victim is the bully-victim. Few studies have addressed this type of student, but this person is not only a bully in some situations, but in other situations can be the victim. Over one-half of bullies have reported being victims as well as a bully (Haynie et al., 2001). In this study, 4263 students completed surveys in one Maryland school district that consisted of seven middle schools (grades 6-8). Students were

asked to answer a 116 item survey about behaviors and attitudes targeted by an intervention program. Of the 301 students who identified themselves as a bully, 53% of them also identified themselves as a victim. Haynie et al. (2001), also determined that adolescents, who both bully and have been victimized exhibit the following characteristics:

Compared with non-bullying youth and even to those who bully only, bully-victims were found to score higher on measures of externalizing behaviors and hyperactivity and depressive symptoms and tend to score lower on measures of scholastic competence, social acceptance, behavior conduct, and global self-worth (p. 32).

Viljoen et al. (2005) conducted a study of British Columbia students which showed that the smallest were those who identified themselves only as a victim. Of these students, an overall percentage of 8.2% was reported, with 6.2% being male and 16% being female. The largest groups of victims from their study were the bully-victims, with 37% being self-identified. Other researchers suggest that the bully-victim group represents a small proportion of the victim group (Lösel & Bliesener, 1999; Graham & Juvonen, 1998; Olweus, 1993).

To summarize, the typical victims are more anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive, and quiet, regardless of the type of bullying. They have a low self-esteem in which they feel stupid, ashamed, and unattractive (Olweus, 1999). Since many bully victims do not have friends, they will often be identified

as a loner. The research of Junger-Tas (1999) supports Olweus' findings. Their research showed that victims are usually not accepted by other children in social situations. Lösel and Bliesener (1999) also support the characteristics of victims above, by saying, "Victims tend to be outsiders, relatively fearful, shy and depressive... exhibit little self-confidence and suffer more frequently from psychosomatic complaints" (p.224).

### Gender

Most research and literature addresses the topic of gender in bullying. Males have reported being bullied more often than females (Rigby, 2002). For instance, in a study of 6883 students in grade 6 and 6868 students in grade 8, it was determined that victims in grade 6 could be characterized as male coming from high SES families, having good academic status, and poor physical conditioning. In grade 8, victims of bullying were characterized as being male, low grades and not physically fit (Ma, 2002). Perry et al. (1988) research contradicts this finding by showing that girls seem to be at risk for victimization as much as boys.

Harris Interactive completed a study for the American Association of University of Women Educational Foundation in which they compared results of their 1993 study to the results

of their 2000 study. In the 2000 study, Harris Interactive interviewed a 2064 public school students who were representative of students nationally in eighth through 11<sup>th</sup> grade (compared to 1632 in 1993) (Lipson, 2001). Both surveys showed that girls and boys are almost equally afraid of being hurt in schools regardless of whether they attend an urban or suburban/rural school setting (Lipson, 2001). Another study also showed that students, regardless of gender, were at risk for being bullied and do not feel safe at school (Pepler, 2005).

In a study completed by Seals & Young (2003), 454 public school students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade were investigated on the occurrence of bullying and victimization. Their study showed that both male and female bullies targeted the same sex when acting alone. Smith (2000) agrees that boys have the tendency to bully boys, but claims girls experience bullying from both sexes.

#### Location of Bullying Activities

All forms of bullying occur mostly within the school setting (Almeida, 1999; Lipson, 2001; Lösel & Bliesener, 1999; Ma, 2002; Morita et al, 1999; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2000; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Little is known on where bullying occurs in middle school. In a five-year longitudinal



study by Swearer and Carey (2003), participants reported bullying occurring in more than one location. Their research showed that bullying occurred most frequently in hallways, academic classrooms, gym and/or recess, and after school.

According to Olweus (1993), the most common place that bullying occurred in school was on the playground, followed by the hallways, classroom, and to and from school respectively. Another area that he has determined to be a risk area for bullying is the restrooms. In an Australian study completed by Rigby (2002), students perceived the following as places with the greatest to least frequency for bullying: recess, classroom, on the way home from school & on the way to school. He explains that recess provides the most opportunity for bullying because there are younger children around, less adult supervision and activities that are less structured. Smith (2000) supports these findings with his claim that the majority of bullying takes place in areas such as the playground, the classroom and corridors. In a preliminary study by Harris and Petrie (2004), students reported being bullied or seeing others being bullied more in the lunchroom, followed by the classroom, co-curricular events, on the way home, to and from school, and at recess in no particular order.

Overall, research has shown consistency among the various locations bullying occurs, but not in the same frequency for each location.

Adult supervision is vital to the prevention of bullying. Students seem to sum up the locations for bullying the best by claiming that bullying goes on in places where the teachers can not hear them. Another student stated bullying goes on all around and takes place where the teacher is not going to look (Epselage & Asidao, 2001).

#### Impact of Bullying

When listing problems that students face, bullying is near the top of the list (Garrett, 2003). Many adults see bullying as a normal part growing up. Although bullying is common, it is misleading to suggest that it does not impact a student's well-being (Hazler, 1996). An overwhelming 90% of young people who have reported being bullied believed it has caused them problems. Frequently bullied students, who have mental health issues, also tend to lack support from adults. This statement is supported by Rigby (2000) who conducted a research study on the mental health of 845 children in three secondary schools in South Australia. Questionnaires were administered anonymously in class by the teacher and were answered by 450 boys and 395 girls

whose ages ranged from 12-16 years. The instrument that was used in this study was a 28-item General Health Questionnaire that was devised by Goldberg and Williams in 1991 as cited by Rigby 2000. This instrument consisted of four seven-item subscales to measure the overall mental health of people. The results of the study do suggest the possibility for mental health issues even though the correlation was low. It was determined that girls are twice as likely as boys to experience mental health problems that included somatic, anxiety, social issues, and depression. Victim Scale A was used to determine the extent which students saw themselves as a target for bullying at school. The overall correlation for Scale A was .38 ( $p < .001$ ) for girls and .21 ( $p < .05$ ) for boys. Victim Scale B focused on five different actions that are commonly involved with bullying incidences. These included direct verbal (being called harmful names and being teased in an unpleasant way); relational (being left out of activities); being hit or kicked; and finally threatened. The correlation for this scale was .43 for girls and .24 for boys ( $p < .001$ ).

There is also a correlation between being bullied and absenteeism from school. Students who are bullied are reluctant or afraid to go to school. For instance, so they won't be bullied, approximately 160,000 students stay home from school

(Leary, Kowalski, Smith, & Phillips, 2003). A study by Peterson and Rigby (1999) supports the correlation of being victimized and absenteeism through a two-year study of students in grades 7, 9, 10 and 11. Students in grade 8 were excluded due to unforeseen circumstances and students in grade 12 were also excluded from the study in order to focus on their academics. Fourteen percent of the boys and 12% of the girls in the study reported staying away from school as a result of being bullied (Peterson and Rigby, 1999).

The difficulties a child experiences adjusting is associated with how long they have been bullied. According to Kochenderfer-Ladd and Ladd (2001), results from their studies have shown that peer harassment that lasts shorter or longer durations may not have the same affects on different dimensions of children's development. Their research has shown that loneliness may emerge at the onset of peer victimization, whereas negative school attitudes or social dissatisfaction may not develop unless peer victimization persists. Being a victim can impact a student in several ways: psychologically, socially, and academically.

## Psychological Impact

Being labeled as a victim often leads to feelings of inadequacy and failure. In a study of 31,980 children who were between the ages of 8-18 over a 7-year period, it was determined that the victimized students were unhappier more than the non-victimized students (Rigby, 2002). Students were administered the Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ) in which they had to indicate which face most likely describes them when they are at school. Although a majority of children (85% of girls and 77% of boys) have pointed to happy faces ranging from a broad smile to a slight smile, a small minority of them (4% of girls and 7% of boys) chose unhappy faces from a slight frown to a heavy frown. Students who were victimized at least once a week were 7 times more likely to see themselves as unhappy for girls with the ratio of 3 to 1 for boys.

Paul and Cillessen (2003) obtained conflicting data in a study that showed that only girls experienced harmful consequences of victimization in early adolescence. During the spring of four consecutive school years as students from one cohort were followed longitudinally from grade 4 to grade 7. The sample sizes were 658, 638, 600 and 600, for grades 4-7, respectively. Approximately 50% of the students each year were female with the ethnic make-up of the sample at the beginning of

the study (grade 4) was 77% White, 14% Black, 8% Latino, and 1% of other origin. Students rated themselves each year on six constructs that included: internalizing problems (loneliness or depression), disruptive conduct, anxiety/withdrawal, peer sociability, social self-efficacy, and academic self-efficacy. A significant effect of gender was found for self-ratings of depression,  $F(1, 357) = 13.67, p < .009$ , anxiety-withdrawal,  $F(1, 363) = 15.62, p < .009$ , and perceived prosocial behavior,  $F(1, 358) = 6.86, p < .009$ . Girls ( $M_{adj} = .34, SE = .11$ ) had higher scores than boys ( $M_{adj} = .21, SE = .10$ ) for depression. Girls ( $M_{adj} = .38, SE = .10$ ) also had a higher anxiety-withdrawal than boys ( $M_{adj} = -.15, SE = .09$ ). In summary, victimized girls had higher levels of depression, anxiety, negative social perceptions, as well as self-reported disruptive behavior.

Other behaviors that were found to correlate with being bullied were trouble sleeping, wetting the bed, sadness, and headaches and stomachaches. The most extreme consequence of bullying is the loss of the victim's life due to homicide or suicide (Williams, Chambers, Logan & Robinson, 1996).

### Social Impact

Students who have experienced bullying have also experienced social withdraw. These children often have

difficulty initiating and maintaining social and peer relations (Swearer et al., 2001). Bullying can have an effect on all students, not just the victim. Sullivan et al. (2004) identified five levels that form a ripple affect. The first level is with the student who feels unsafe because of bullying. Next, the parents and family feel anger and empathy for the victim of bullying. Third level of impact is with the observers at school who feel that it could happen to them. The fourth level affected is others at school who hear what is happening and do not feel the school is safe. The fifth and final level is with the wider community. Once a student does not feel safe at school, they tend to feel the community is not safe either.

Schools that are considered unsafe by students do not handle the problem of bullying appropriately. School staff thinks that the problem of bullying will go away since they are aware of it (Sullivan et al., 2004). If schools continue to ignore bullying problems, then victims may begin to regard these behaviors as acceptable (Garrett, 2003).

#### Academic Impact

There is limited research on how bullying impacts academics. What is known is that victims have poor academic performance as a result of persistent harassment by other

students (Olweus, 1993; Perry et al., 2001). The overpowering attention students place on their psychological and social well-being from being bullied can also contribute to poor grades (Hazler, 1996).

Graham, Bellmore, & Juvonen (2003), asked 785 sixth-grade students (348 boys and 437 girls,  $M = 11.5$  years of age) from eight middle schools, in metropolitan Los Angeles, to participate in the study. The ethnic make-up of the group was 45% Latino, 39% African American, 6% Caucasian, 5% Asian, and 5% from other ethnic groups. In order to determine academic performance, the students' homeroom teacher rated school engagement and grade point average (GPA) of the students. The survey instrument used with the teachers to determine student engagement was an 18-item Teacher Report of Engagement Questionnaire (TREQ; Wellborn & Connell, 1991 as cited in Graham et al., 2003). They conducted four separate factorial ANOVAs analyzing teacher ratings of academic engagement and students' semester GPA for the victim group: true victims, self-identified, peer-identified, & non-victims)  $\times$  2 (academic engagement)  $\times$  2 (GPA).

Their findings showed that for academic engagement a significant main effect of the victim group was found  $F(3,733) = 32.67$  ( $p < .01$ ), gender  $F(1,733) = 9.57$  ( $p < .01$ ); and ethnicity



$F(1,733) = 32.13$  ( $p < .01$ ). True victims were rated as less engaged than non-victims. The peer-identified victims resembled the true victims as being disengaged, whereas the self-identified and non-victims were engaged. Girls were rated more engaged than boys and Latinos were more engaged than African Americans. There was also a significant main effect found with the actual grades for the victim group  $F(3,733) = 16.29$  ( $p < .001$ ), gender  $F(1,733) = 9.57$  ( $p < .001$ ); and ethnicity  $F(1,733) = 32.13$  ( $p < .001$ ). Academic advantage was shown for both non-victims and self-identified victims, while the relatively poor achievement was shared by true victims and peer-identified victims. The gender and ethnicity main effects indicated that girls had better grades than boys and Latinos did significantly better than African Americans.

#### Assistance from School Staff

Students tend to lack confidence when seeking assistance from a school staff member on a bullying problem. The reason for this lack of confidence is because students perceive school staff members as not concerned about bullying. In a study of 684 students Italy, Fonzi, et al. (1999) determined that when students reach middle school, nearly half of the victims do not

report their experiences to school staff since they feel that they will assist them in solving the problem.

In their research of 89 middle school students in three Midwestern schools, Espelage and Asidao (2001) determined that children feel the faculty and staff did very little about bullying at the school. The participants' ages ranged from 11 to 14 in grades 6-8. The sample included 55 males and 34 females with a racial composition as follows: 68 European American, 13 African American, 4 Asian American, 1 Hispanic American, and 3 biracial. Participants completed a 30-minute survey that was read to them and then were interviewed in-depth a month later by the principal investigator and a graduate research assistant. Through the interviews it was determined that the students felt how adults advised them to handle a situation was not always helpful. Examples included parents telling them to ignore the bully or to go tell the teacher. Some students felt that the faculty and staff were not very attentive to the problem of bullying in their school. Espelage & Asidao (2001) went on to say that many of the students criticized teachers because they would see the bullying going on, but chose to ignore it. These findings are supported by Hoover, Oliver, and Hazler (1992), whose study showed that 66% of victimized students did not feel school staff responded adequately to bullying. Students also

felt the teachers and principal lacked the necessary confidentiality when dealing with bullying.

The research of Swearer and Cary (2003) is contradictory to the findings discussed above. In their longitudinal study of Midwestern middle school students in grades 6-8, they determined that bullies, victims and students who did not fall into either category felt that when the school knew bullying had occurred, they responded satisfactorily. On the other hand, their research did find that bully-victims did not feel the school handled the issues of bullying well. Eighty percent of the studies' population felt that the school should be concerned about bullying and reported that the school staff did not know that the bullying had occurred.

#### Summary

In summary, peer harassment is becoming so common, that most children have been bullied at least once during their K-12 schooling (Kochernderfer-Ladd & Ladd, 2001). As stated previously, bullying is something that is a problem for students in every grade, but with the most effect on students is at the middle school level.

Hazler (1996) sums up the problem of bullying when he states, "It is not a problem confined to the only one area or

group of people" (p.12). These behaviors can have a dramatic affect on student's psychological, academic and social well-being. When comparing the frequency of bullying, studies show that students experience bullying more during school hours than before and after school (Almeida, 1999; Lispon, 2001; Lösel & Bliesener, 1999; Ma, 2001; Morita et al, 1999; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2000; Smith & Sharp, 1995; Whitney & Smith, 1993).

Bullying activities go beyond the scope of teasing amongst children. It can and does have many immediate and future consequences. Bullying is not inevitable, but it can be reduced. As Espelage and Swearer (2003) asserted, "A great deal about the bullying phenomenon has been learned in the past two decades; however, much is still unknown about this complex dynamic" (p.379). In order to protect our students, schools need to make bullying prevention a top priority.

The degree to which students are affected psychologically, socially, or academically by peer victimization is based on the type of harassment they experience. Students who enter new peer groups may buffer themselves from the problem of bullying, but it could also place them in contact with aggressive peers (Kochernderfer-Ladd & Ladd, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the current research on bullying. More specifically it will determine how

prevalent bullying is with students in grades six through eight in Central Florida Schools. It will also determine how safe students feel at school, their perceptions of what the school does to intervene, the locations of these activities and how bullying is related to gender and ethnicity.

Chapter three will focus on the research methodology that was used to conduct my research. This chapter will include an introduction, the setting of the research environment, methods of data collection and analysis and an overview of the chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY**

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology and statistical procedures used to determine the prevalence of bullying and victimization at the middle school level. This study was initiated in summer of 2007, with the contacting of school districts and school principals. The data collection took place during September and October 2007.

The subsequent sections will describe the statement of problem, the setting of the study, the research participants, discuss the methods used for data collection, profile the instrument used, recount the research questions, data analysis, and will conclude with a summary of this chapter.

### Purpose of the Study

Since the study of bullying in American schools is still in its infancy this is a behavioral area that needs to be studied further. This particular study was conducted to determine the prevalence of bullying according to bullies, victims, and bully-victims in grades six through eight in Central Florida school districts. It looked at the student's attitudes toward school, perceived feelings of safety, perceived impact

bullying/victimization can have on grades, and the perceived impact bullying/victimization has on attendance. Sixth through eighth grade students were chosen for this study since this is the time of major changes that students go through emotionally, physically and psychologically. Olweus (cited by Seals & Young, 2003) supports this reasoning by stating, "...adolescence has been characterized as a period of transitional stress resulting in impulsive behaviors and rapid fluctuations in emotions, and exposure to repeated insults and rejections by peers could generate deadly results such as suicide or homicide (p.736).

The results of this study will contribute to the current research about bullying in the United States, more precisely the Central Florida area. The study will also provide a clearer understanding of the prevalence of bullying and victimization at the middle school level to school and district employees.

### Setting

The research will be conducted with middle school students who are enrolled in the sixth through eighth grades in the Central Florida area. Five K-8 schools, 24 schools with grade levels 6-8 and eight charter schools will be asked to participate. These schools are located in urban and rural areas of Florida.

## Methods

### Data Collection

Approval to conduct the study with human subjects was obtained from the University of Central Florida's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A). School superintendents in the Central Florida area (Brevard, Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian Rivera, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Marion, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia) were contacted in June 2007 via a letter outlining the study and requesting permission to conduct the study in their school district (Appendix B). Two weeks after the first mailing, a reminder postcard was sent to the ten superintendents who did not respond. The necessary paperwork to conduct a study was completed for those districts that responded. Four Central Florida school districts, Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Volusia counties, granted permission to conduct the study.

Once permission was obtained from the school district, a letter was sent to middle school principals in September 2007 requesting permission to conduct the study at his or her school (see Appendix C). A modified version of the contact methods suggested by Dillman (2000) was used. The first contact with the



school principal included a personalized letter that detailed the study and a response postcard with postage was also included. The letter sent to the school principal was personalized, since studies have shown response rate to be higher when letters are personalized (Dillman, 2000). The letters were type written on various marbleized, pastel colored paper, so that it was distinguishable from other letters the principal may have received. The postcard that was enclosed measured 4" x 6" and included yes/no check-off box on whether the principal wanted their school to participate, the school name and district name typed in by the researcher and a space for the approximate number of students enrolled to be written in (Appendix D). Those who did not respond within two weeks of the first mailing, were sent a thank you/reminder postcard asking for their assistance in this study (Appendix E). The third and final contact was made the first of October 2007 via e-mail sent to the school principal. This e-mail included an electronic version of the postcard and a final request for the school's participation in the study.

## Students

Principals at the participating school were asked to designate one staff member from the school to be the contact person who would handle the materials. The designated contact person was directed to distribute one copy of the parental consent form to all students in grades 6-8. Due to the districts' concerns with varying school schedules and activities, principals were provided the opportunity to choose the classes that the consent forms were distributed to students.

Through their classes, students were provided one copy of the parental consent letter during late September/Early October 2007. It was suggested to the school personnel to have the students write the name of the teacher who distributed parental consent form in the left hand corner of the paper. This would assist schools in locating the students who have parental consent. Since the two principal languages spoken in Florida schools are English and Spanish, the parental consent forms were written in English on one side and Spanish on the other (Appendix F). The parental consent informed parents the nature of the study and assured them that the results of their child's survey would be kept confidential. They were also informed that all data collected would be reported in the form of group data so their child would not be personally identified to school

personnel as a bully, victim or bully-victim. Parents were also informed of their option to withdraw their child from the study at anytime without penalty. The directions on the letter asked parents to return the form to their child's teacher. Schools were asked to provide students 3-5 days to return the consent forms and to provide reminders to the students to return the forms. All of the returned consent forms were then returned to the researcher where they were copied and stamped "PARENT'S COPY". These were then returned to the school to be distributed to the respective students to take home to their parents.

A check-off sheet of directions for distribution of materials was provided to each school in order to increase the reliability of the surveys since all student participants would be receiving the same directions (Appendix G). The person(s) administering the surveys was asked to distribute the parent copy of the signed consent form along with a child assent. The survey administrator was then directed to ask students to follow along as they read the following statement from the child assent form aloud to students (Appendix H).

Please Read this explanation carefully, and ASK any  
QUESTIONS before signing.

You are being asked to participate in a research  
study. You will be asked to complete a brief  
questionnaire about your experiences with bullying.

Your responses will be kept completely confidential, which means that your name will be separated from your answers and will not be shared with anyone else. No one but me, Marty Norris, and my professor will see your responses, so please try to answer honestly. The information will provide valuable knowledge about young people in general and your private, individual information will not be published. If you become uncomfortable at any time, please tell me immediately. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and YOU MAY STOP AT ANY TIME.

I volunteer to take part in this research study and know that I can quit at any time I want to.

After reading the assent form, the person(s) administering the survey was directed to ask if any students wished not to participate. Those who agreed to participate were asked to sign and date the assent form. The survey administrator was then instructed to collect the assent forms in no particular order. This was done so the surveys could not be matched with the child assent forms. Students were then provided a copy of the survey instrument and were directed not to put their name on it. Students returned the surveys to the person(s) administering the survey. The researcher has asked that the surveys and assent forms be kept in two separate mixed order stacks to further the children's anonymity. All completed surveys and assent forms were then returned to the designated contact person at the school. Additionally, although there were no anticipated risk or student distress from participating in this study, schools were

informed that the university Institutional Review Board wanted a school guidance counselor or school psychologist available in the event a student became upset during or after answering the questions on the survey.

A box with pre-paid postage and the researcher's address on it was enclosed along with the parent copies of the consent forms, surveys and child assent forms that were sent to the school. A thank you card that was addressed to the students and personnel of the school was also included for their participation in the study. The school's designated contact person was instructed to return all of the surveys and child assent forms to the researcher in the return box.

#### Instrument

The instrument used for data collection, Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS-S). This instrument was designed to measure the prevalence of teasing and bullying according to bullies, victims, and bully-victims. It also measured student's attitudes towards school, feelings of safety, and the impact bullying can have on grades and school attendance. The student version of the instrument was written at the fourth grade reading level according to *The Lexile Framework for Reading* (Bodin & Clopton, 2006). The odd number questions,

on the instrument, asked the students about their experiences of having been victimized within the last month and the even numbered items asked about having victimized someone else.

The TABS-S instrument consists of a total of 110 questions with: (1) four Likert items on feelings about school and classes using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from extremely happy to extremely unhappy; (2) five Likert items were on feelings and perceptions of teasing and bullying with a six-point scale ranging from not at all to a whole lot; (3) two items on skipping school used a yes/no scale and number of days ranging from 0-5 and more; (4) one Likert item on the number of friendships the student has using a scale of 0-5 and more; (5) five questions on the perceptions of teasing and bullying used a yes/no format, with follow-up questions using number to determine how many students and number of times witnessed; (6) 80 paired Yes/No items on specific teasing and bullying behaviors experienced (40 items) or engaged in (40 items) during the past month; (7) two items on self-concept as one who experiences and/or engages in teasing and bullying behaviors which used a yes/no format; (8) one Likert item, which was subdivided into nine campus locations, asked students to either mark never, sometimes, or many times for each location; (9) one item on the student's own actions upon observing teasing and

bullying with choices being I join in too I try to stop it; (10) one question asked the students what the school does about teasing and bullying on a 3-point Likert scale with choices being makes things worse to makes things better; (11) on a 5-point Likert scale, students were provided choices of whether what the school did was way too little to is way too much; and finally, (12) students were provided eight choices on how they perceived what the school does about teasing and bullying. The choices included: (a) they teach us not to tease and bully and what to do about it, (b) they try not to let it happen, (c) they try to stop it if it does happen, (d) they just talk about it, (e) they are still trying to decide if there is a teasing/bullying problem, (f) they don't think there is a teasing/bullying problem, (g) they do not help the kids who get teased or bullied, and (h) they do nothing about the kids who tease/bully. Four questions asked for the student's demographic information that included their age range, gender, grade level and ethnicity.

The reliability and validity were studied using data from 5111 students at 33 schools with 49.6% of the participants being male and 50.4% female with a mean age of 13.8 years ( $SD = 2.4$  years). Cronbach's alpha yielded a coefficient of .932 for Victim Scale scores and a coefficient of .933 for Bullying Scale

scores. Evidence of validity for scores produced from the Victim and Bully Scales was studied by examining the respective mean scores for students who did and did not self-categorize as: 1) "Someone who is bullied by others" and 2) "Someone who bullies others." The mean comparisons were statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) thus lending evidence for validity of the scale scores. The absence of inflection points in the Receiver Operating Characteristics (ROC) curves for Victim and Bully scores showed no clear cut-points. Thus, labeling is arbitrary, except by self-categorizations; 22.1% self-categorized as victims, 5.8% as bullies, 6.3% as bully-victims, and 65.9% as neither (Bodin & Clopton, 2006).

The developer of the original instrument granted the researcher permission to use and modify the layout of the instrument (see Appendix I). The original format consisted of print on both sides of paper that measured 8 1/2" x 11" with a staple in the left corner. This style of formatting is considered unconventional in surveys; whereas a booklet format, with pages taller than they are wide, is a standard reading format for most western cultures (Dillman, 2000). The instrument was retyped on legal size paper that measured 8 1/2" x 14" and printed using the landscape setting (see Appendix J).



## Research Questions

To determine the prevalence of bullying and victimization in middle school, the following research questions were studied:

1. What is the mean difference in perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?
2. What is the mean difference in perceived bullying among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?
3. What support do students perceive Central Florida middle school staff provide to students who are bullied?
4. What school locations, if any, do Central Florida middle school students perceive to be the most prevalent for bullying activities?
5. What is the relationship between skipping school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?
6. What is the average number of school days skipped by middle school students in Central Florida due to perceived victimization?
7. What is the relationship between feeling safe at school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?

8. What is the relationship between student perceptions of whether teasing and bullying harms their grades and perceived victimization for middle school students in Central Florida?
9. What is the relationship between students showing interest in their schoolwork and perceived victimization by Central Florida middle school students?

#### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Graduate Pack 15.0 for Windows. Once the surveys were returned, each district was assigned a code that allowed the researcher to compare the data by districts. Responses for the items on the survey were converted to numerical scores for each item and entered into SPSS. The reliability scores for the Victim and Bullying Scale were also generated for this study since it contained a different sample of students than those tested by the author. The evidence for internal consistency reliability and construct validity will be obtained using data from this study as well.

## Research Question 1

Research question one was: "What is the mean difference in perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?"

Demographic data will be used in conjunction with the odd numbered statements 1-79 which belongs to the subscale of being a victim. Students will respond "yes" or "no" on whether the activity happened to them within the last month. A composite scale will be created using the mean from the responses to the victim subscale in the instrument. Examples of questions from the victim subscale include: 3) Someone bossed you around; 33) Someone swore or cursed at you - words or hand motions; and 63) Someone slapped, pinched, punched or kicked you. The independent variables for research question one are grade level (6, 7, & 8), gender, and ethnicity. A three factorial ANOVA will be conducted with the significance level of alpha .05 being used.

## Research Question 2

Research question two was: "What is the mean difference in perceived bullying among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?" To answer this question, demographic data will be used along with the even numbered survey statements 2-80 that belong to the subscale of

being a bully. Students will respond "yes" or "no" to whether they participated in each activity listed within the last month. A composite scale will be created using the mean from the responses to the bullying subscale in the instrument. Examples of questions from the bullying subscale include: 4) You bossed someone around; 34) You swore or cursed at someone - words or hand motions; and 64) You slapped, pinched, punched or kicked someone. The independent variables for research question two are grade level (6, 7, & 8), gender, and ethnicity (minority, non-minority) so a three factorial ANOVA will be performed. A significance level will be determined by applying an alpha level of .05.

### Research Question 3

Research question three was: "What support do students perceive Central Florida middle school staff provide to students who are bullied?" To answer this research question, frequency distribution and percents will be calculated for questions 1-3 in Section E of the survey. These questions asks the students what their school does about teasing and bullying, is what the school doing about teasing and bullying enough, and what does their school do about teasing and bullying.

#### Research Question 4

Research question four was: "What school locations, if any, do Central Florida middle school students perceive to be the most prevalent for bullying activities?" To determine the location(s) where bullying activities are most prevalent, frequency distribution and percents will be calculated using the responses from Section D on the survey instrument. The school locations include: classroom, gym, locker room, cafeteria, athletic field, school bus, hallway, bathroom, and other.

#### Research Question 5

Research question five asked: "What is the relationship between skipping school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?" Question 1 from Section B of the survey asked the student if they ever skipped school. This question will be used in conjunction with question 81 that asks the student if they felt they were someone who gets bullied to determine the relationship between school attendance and victimization. A chi-square test of independence will be used, with statistical significance being determined by applying an alpha level of .05.

#### Research Question 6

Research question six asked: "What is the average number of school days skipped by middle school students in Central Florida due to perceived victimization?" If the student answers "yes" to question 1 in Section B, they will then answer question 2 in Section B. This question asks the student how many days during the past month they skipped school. Students are provided choices of 0-5 and more. If they check the box for more, they will be asked to write the number of days in the blank provided. The mean will be calculated to determine the average number of days that students skipped school due to perceived victimization.

#### Research Question 7

Research question seven asked: "What is the relationship between feeling safe at school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?" On the survey, question six in Section A of the survey asks students how safe they felt at school and will be used in conjunction with question 81 which asks the students if they felt they were someone who gets bullied to answer this research question. A chi-square test of independence will be used, with statistical

significant relationships being determined by applying an alpha level of .05.

#### Research Question 8

The eighth question was: "What is the relationship between student perceptions of whether teasing and bullying harms their grades and victimization for middle school students in Central Florida?" Question eight in Section A of the survey asks the students whether teasing and bullying harms their grades. In order to determine the relationship between student grades and victimization, this question will be used in conjunction with question 81 that asks the students if they felt they were someone who gets bullied. To determine if there was a relationship, a chi-square test of independence will be used. Significant relationships will be determined by applying an alpha level of .05.

#### Research Question 9

The ninth and final research question asked: "What is the relationship between students showing interest in their schoolwork and perceived victimization by Central Florida middle school students?" Question nine of Section A of the survey asks students how much they are bullied because of showing interest

in their school work. This will be used along with question 81 that asks the students if they felt they were someone who gets bullied. To determine if there is a relationship, a chi-square test of independence will be used. Significant levels will be determined by applying an alpha level of .05.

### Summary

This chapter has explained the setting of the study, what instrument and methods were used to collect the data. It has also provided a rationale on why these methods of data collection were chosen and how the data were analyzed. Chapter Four will focus on the analysis and interpretation of the collected data and methods used to complete the analysis.



## CHAPTER FOUR ANALYSIS OF DATA

### Introduction

This quantitative study was developed to gather information about the prevalence of bullying in Central Florida middle schools. The purpose of this research was to contribute to the existing research on bullying and victimization, with a focus on middle schools in the Central Florida area. Nine research questions provided the focus for this study. The research questions were:

1. What is the mean difference in perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender and ethnicity?
2. What is the mean difference in perceived bullying among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?
3. What support do students perceive Central Florida middle school staff provide to students who are bullied?
4. What school locations, if any, do Central Florida middle school students perceive to be the most prevalent for bullying activities?

5. What is the relationship between skipping school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?
6. What is the average number of school days skipped by middle school students in Central Florida due to perceived victimization?
7. What is the relationship between feeling safe at school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?
8. What is the relationship between student perceptions of whether teasing and bully harms their grades and perceived victimization for middle school students in Central Florida?
9. What is the relationship between students showing interest in their schoolwork and perceived victimization by Central Florida middle school students?

### Reliability and Validity

A factor analysis was conducted on the 82 items of the *Teasing and Bullying Survey (TABS)* using maximum likelihood analysis. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many coefficients of a .10 and above. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklín value was .84, exceeding the recommended value of .6

and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached significance supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix.

The factor analysis using maximum likelihood analysis revealed one factor extracted. This was capable of explaining roughly 63.9% of all the variable variances. A review of the initial factor loadings suggests a proper solution was attained through maximum likelihood, as it was capable of converging in five iterations. A plot of the eigenvalues is provided in Figure 1. A review of the initial factor loadings suggests that a proper solution was attainable through principal components, as it was capable of converging in five iterations (See Table 1).

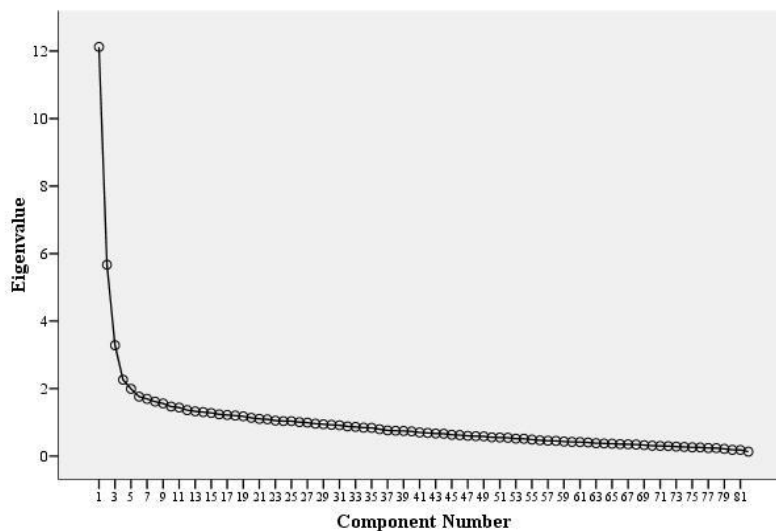


Figure 1 Screeplot of Eigenvalues from the Factor Analysis of the Teasing and Bullying Survey

Table 1

Summary of Items and Factor Loadings for Promax Rotation of Two-Factor Solution of the Teasing and Bullying Survey ( $n = 753$ )

Items	Pattern Coefficients		Structure Coefficients		Communalities
	Factor Loadings		Factor Loadings		
	1	2	1	2	
<u>Victim Self-Reported Items</u>					
29. Someone laughed at or teased you.	<b>.709</b>	-.207	<b>.633</b>	.054	.438
19. Someone called you names or put you down.	<b>.676</b>	-.098	<b>.640</b>	.150	.418
81. Do you think of yourself as someone who gets teased/bullied by others?	<b>.609</b>	-.250	<b>.517</b>	-.207	.321
59. Someone pushed or tripped you.	<b>.592</b>	-.038	<b>.578</b>	.179	.335
17. Someone acted as if you were weird.	<b>.580</b>	-.102	<b>.543</b>	.111	.303
15. Someone was rude to you.	<b>.557</b>	-.008	<b>.554</b>	.197	.307
63. Someone slapped, pinched, punched or kicked you.	<b>.554</b>	.115	<b>.578</b>	.318	.367
3. Someone bossed you around.	<b>.549</b>	-.053	<b>.530</b>	.149	.283
7. Someone acted as if you were disgusting.	<b>.547</b>	-.057	<b>.526</b>	.144	.280
47. Someone threatened you verbally.	<b>.545</b>	.145	<b>.599</b>	.345	.377
33. Someone swore or cursed at you.	<b>.538</b>	.062	<b>.561</b>	.259	.318
31. Someone played a mean trick or joke on you.	<b>.505</b>	.003	<b>.506</b>	.188	.256
27. Someone made fun of a person or thing you care about.	<b>.500</b>	-.064	<b>.476</b>	.119	.230
67. Someone threw something hard or sharp at you.	<b>.493</b>	.101	<b>.531</b>	.282	.290
21. Someone spread rumors or stories about you.	<b>.486</b>	.052	<b>.505</b>	.230	.257
61. Someone scratched you or pulled your hair.	<b>.482</b>	.137	<b>.532</b>	.314	.299
53. Someone purposely tore, broke, or ruined something of yours.	<b>.478</b>	.105	<b>.516</b>	.280	.276
13. Someone would not play or talk to you.	<b>.474</b>	.016	<b>.480</b>	.190	.230
45. Someone would not leave you alone when you asked them to.	<b>.471</b>	-.030	<b>.460</b>	.142	.212
55. Someone made you give him/her something.	<b>.465</b>	-.075	<b>.438</b>	.096	.197

Items	Pattern Coefficients		Structure Coefficients		Communalities
	<u>Factor Loadings</u>		<u>Factor Loadings</u>		
	1	2	1	2	
75. Someone hurt you with an object other than a gun or knife.	<b>.440</b>	.055	<b>.460</b>	.216	.214
9. Someone bothered or ignored you.	<b>.435</b>	-.017	<b>.428</b>	.143	.184
39. Someone was mean about your not acting like a boy or girl.	<b>.432</b>	.022	<b>.440</b>	.181	.194
71. Someone threatened you with an object other than a gun or knife.	<b>.432</b>	.154	<b>.489</b>	.312	.259
37. Someone was mean to you about you being a boy or girl.	<b>.429</b>	.019	<b>.437</b>	.177	.191
79. Someone teased or bullied you in some other way.	<b>.423</b>	-.068	<b>.398</b>	.087	.163
1. Someone ignored you or would not answer you.	<b>.420</b>	.052	<b>.439</b>	.206	.195
41. Someone was mean about your race, religion, or nationality.	<b>.414</b>	.025	<b>.423</b>	.177	.180
43. Someone of your own race accused you of acting like a person of another race.	<b>.400</b>	.016	<b>.406</b>	.163	.165
11. Someone picked a fight with you.	<b>.399</b>	.048	<b>.417</b>	.194	.176
51. Someone played "keep away" with your things.	<b>.389</b>	.010	<b>.393</b>	.153	.154
5. Someone tried to stop you from being someone else's friend.	<b>.375</b>	-.061	<b>.352</b>	.077	.127
23. Someone from school was mean to you by e-mail, IM, TM, or Internet.	<b>.366</b>	.019	<b>.373</b>	.153	.140
35. Someone was mean about you look, dress, walk, talk, or smell.	<b>.346</b>	-.089	<b>.313</b>	.038	.105
57. Someone locked you up or trapped you somewhere.	<b>.327</b>	.105	<b>.365</b>	.225	.143
73. Someone threatened you with a gun or knife.	<b>.315</b>	.083	<b>.345</b>	.199	.125
49. Someone threatened to hurt you/beat you up.	<b>.241</b>	.027	<b>.251</b>	.115	.064
25. Someone from school posted photos of you on the Internet or by cell phone.	<b>.186</b>	.173	<b>.250</b>	.242	.088
77. Someone hurt you with a gun or knife.	<b>.180</b>	.120	<b>.224</b>	.186	.063
65. Someone threw you down or held you down.	<b>.164</b>	.051	<b>.183</b>	.111	.036

Items	Pattern Coefficients		Structure Coefficients		Communalities
	<u>Factor Loadings</u>		<u>Factor Loadings</u>		
	1	2	1	2	
<u>Bully Self-Reported Items</u>					
66.You threw someone down or held them down.	-.082	<b>.582</b>	.131	<b>.552</b>	.311
28.You made fun of someone or something they care about.	-.098	<b>.576</b>	.120	<b>.542</b>	.301
48.You threatened someone verbally.	-.014	<b>.571</b>	.195	<b>.566</b>	.320
20.You called someone names or put them down.	.059	<b>.567</b>	.268	<b>.589</b>	.350
70.You choked someone.	-.145	<b>.566</b>	.063	<b>.513</b>	.282
38.You were mean about someone being a boy or girl.	-.093	<b>.555</b>	.111	<b>.521</b>	.279
74.You threatened someone with a gun or knife.	-.125	<b>.550</b>	.076	<b>.504</b>	.267
22.You spread rumors or stories about someone.	-.031	<b>.548</b>	.170	<b>.536</b>	.288
16.You were rude or disrespectful to someone.	-.001	<b>.535</b>	.196	<b>.535</b>	.286
54.You purposely tore, broke, or ruined something of someone's.	-.016	<b>.516</b>	.173	<b>.510</b>	.261
72.You threatened someone with an object other than a gun or knife.	-.039	<b>.481</b>	.137	<b>.467</b>	.219
36.You were mean to someone with an object other than a gun or knife.	.074	<b>.469</b>	.246	<b>.496</b>	.251
78.You hurt someone with a gun or knife.	-.114	<b>.465</b>	.057	<b>.423</b>	.190
60.You pushed or tripped someone.	.037	<b>.453</b>	.203	<b>.466</b>	.219
40.You were mean about someone not acting like a boy or girl.	-.048	<b>.446</b>	.116	<b>.429</b>	.186
64.You slapped, pinched, punched, or kicked someone.	.151	<b>.444</b>	.314	<b>.499</b>	.269
58.You locked someone up or trapped them somewhere.	-.128	<b>.440</b>	.034	<b>.393</b>	.169
24.You were mean to someone from school by e-mail, IM, TM, or Internet.	.025	<b>.434</b>	.184	<b>.443</b>	.197
34.You swore or cursed at someone.	.057	<b>.418</b>	.210	<b>.438</b>	.195
8. You acted as if someone was disgusting.	.095	<b>.411</b>	.246	<b>.446</b>	.207

Items	Pattern Coefficients		Structure Coefficients		Communalities
	<u>Factor Loadings</u>		<u>Factor Loadings</u>		
	1	2	1	2	
32.You played a mean trick or joke on someone.	.041	<b>.409</b>	.191	<b>.424</b>	.181
42.You were mean about someone's race, religion, or nationality.	-.022	<b>.381</b>	.118	<b>.373</b>	.140
10.You bothered or ignored someone.	.124	<b>.381</b>	.263	<b>.426</b>	.195
52.You played "keep away" with someone's things.	-.009	<b>.379</b>	.130	<b>.376</b>	.141
4. You bossed someone around.	.096	<b>.379</b>	.235	<b>.414</b>	.179
46.You would not leave someone alone when they that person asked you to.	.186	<b>.374</b>	.324	<b>.443</b>	.226
82.Do you think of yourself as someone who teases/bullies others?	.037	<b>.371</b>	.173	<b>.385</b>	.149
44.You accused someone of your own race acting like a person of another race.	.015	<b>.350</b>	.143	<b>.356</b>	.127
14.You would not play or talk with someone.	.237	<b>.348</b>	.364	<b>.438</b>	.238
6. You tried to stop someone from being someone else's friend.	-.021	<b>.294</b>	.087	<b>.286</b>	.082
80.You teased/bullied someone in some other way.	.044	<b>.280</b>	.147	<b>.296</b>	.090
62.You scratched someone or pulled their hair.	.146	<b>.271</b>	.245	<b>.324</b>	.219
69.Someone choked you.	.168	<b>.255</b>	.262	<b>.317</b>	.125
2. You ignored someone or would not answer them.	.221	<b>.242</b>	.310	<b>.323</b>	.147
30.You laughed at, teased or made fun of someone.	.050	<b>.175</b>	.114	<b>.193</b>	.039
50.You threatened to hurt someone or beat them up.	.002	<b>.162</b>	.062	<b>.163</b>	.027
12.You picked a fight with someone.	-.041	<b>.130</b>	.006	<b>.115</b>	.015
56.You made someone give you something.	-.098	<b>.121</b>	-.053	<b>.085</b>	.016
68.You threw something hard or sharp at someone.	.012	<b>.103</b>	.050	<b>.108</b>	.012

Items	Pattern Coefficients		Structure Coefficients		Communalities
	<u>Factor Loadings</u>		<u>Factor Loadings</u>		
	1	2	1	2	
76.You hurt someone with an object other than a gun or knife.	.017	<b>.092</b>	.051	<b>.099</b>	.010
18.You acted as if someone was weird, awkward, or different.	.023	<b>.091</b>	.056	<b>.100</b>	.010
26.You posted photos of someone from school on the Internet or by cell phone.	.020	<b>.063</b>	.043	<b>.070</b>	.005

*Note.* Major loadings for each item are bolded.



The two-factor solution explained a total of 21.7% of the variance, with Factor 1 contributing 14.8% and Factor 2 contributing 6.9%. To aid in the interpretation of these two-components, oblimin rotation was performed. The rotation solution revealed the presence of simple structure. The names of the two factors are as follows: Factor 1, victim scale and Factor 2, bullying scale as shown in Table 1. There was a weak correlation between the two factors ( $r = .37$ ). The results of the analysis supported the use of the victim and bully items as separate scales, as suggested by the survey author (Bodin, 2006).

Perceived bullying and victimization was measured using the *Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS-S)* that was created by Arthur M. Bodin, Ph.D., ABPP. Since this study was conducted with a different sample of students than that of the authors of the scale, reliability was studied using the data from the 753 students at the 13 participating schools in the Central Florida area. According to Bodin and Clopton (2006), the *Teasing and Bullying Survey* has a very good internal consistency, with Cronbach alpha coefficients reported of .932 for the victim scale and .933 for the bully scale. In the current study, the victim scale had a very good internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .891. The

internal consistency for the bullying scale was good with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .704. The interpretations of internal consistency were based on the guidelines used by Pallant (2007).

### Population and Demographic Characteristics

There were six schools in Brevard County that agreed to participate, with five schools returning the surveys. In Osceola County, of the seven schools that agreed to participate, five schools returned the surveys. Volusia County had six schools agreeing to participate, with three schools returning surveys.

A total of 753 usable surveys were returned from the three Central Florida school districts that participated in the study. There was 21% ( $n = 133$ ) of the study population who considered themselves as a victim of teasing and bullying. Those students who perceived themselves as a bully was 5% ( $n = 30$ ). Table 2 presents the demographic information of the respondents by school district including gender, grade level, age, and ethnicity.

Table 2  
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Brevard	Osceola	Volusia	Total
Gender (n = 712)				
Boys	133 (45%)	139 (45%)	38 (35%)	310 (44%)
Girls	160 (55%)	172 (55%)	70 (65%)	402 (57%)
Total	293 (41%)	311 (44%)	108 (15%)	712 (100%)
Grade (n = 753)				
6	22 (7%)	174 (53%)	57 (51%)	253 (34%)
7	173 (55%)	46 (14%)	28 (25%)	247 (33%)
8	20 (38%)	106 (33%)	27 (24%)	253 (34%)
Total	315 (42%)	326 (43%)	112 (15%)	753 (100%)
Age (n = 753)				
10	0 (0%)	6 (2%)	0 (0%)	6 (.8%)
11	21 (7%)	116 (36%)	27 (24%)	164 (22%)
12	106 (34%)	85 (26%)	39 (35%)	230 (31%)
13	124 (39%)	87 (27%)	26 (23%)	237 (32%)
14	53 (17%)	30 (9%)	17 (15%)	100 (13%)

Characteristic	Brevard	Osceola	Volusia	Total
15	10 (3%)	2 (.6%)	3 (.4%)	15 (2%)
16	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (.1%)
Total	315 (42%)	326 (43%)	112 (15%)	753 (100%)
Ethnicity (n = 713)				
African-American	34 (11%)	12 (8%)	10 (4%)	56 (8%)
Caucasian	211 (70%)	144 (47%)	63 (58%)	418 (58%)
Hispanic	18 (6%)	92 (32%)	14 (13%)	124 (17%)
Mixed	27 (9%)	43 (14%)	12 (11%)	82 (11%)
American-Indian/ Alaskan-Native/ Asian/ Pacific-Islander	12 (4%)	11 (4%)	10 (9%)	33 (5%)
Total	302 (42%)	302 (42%)	109 (15%)	713 (100%)

Note. Not all respondents responded to all survey items

There were 753 students who participated in the study. Of these, 310 (44%) were males and 402 (57%) were females. This study was conducted in Central Florida middle schools where grade levels range from sixth to eighth grade. Of participants, 253 (34%) were sixth graders, 247 (33%) were seventh graders,

and 253 (34%) were eighth graders. The majority of participants were 12 years old ( $n = 230$ , 31%) and 13 years old ( $n = 237$ , 32%). A total of 719 respondents identified their ethnicity. Of the respondents, 56 (8%) were African-American; 418 (58%) were Caucasian; 130 (18%) were Hispanic; 82 (11%) classified themselves as Mixed; and 33 (5%) identified themselves as either American Indian/Alaskan-Native/Asian or Pacific Islander. Due to small numbers of minority participants, for purposes of analysis in research question(s) one and two, these were collapsed into one group titled "minority group". The Caucasian group was labeled non-minority.

Table 3 provides the student demographics for each participating school district (Florida Department of Education, 2007). The percentages of male and female students in this study were comparable to the overall populations in each district. The percentage of students by grade level was also comparable, except for sixth graders in Brevard County who had a 7% participation rate, compared to a district average of 31%. Ethnicity of students in this study and within the districts was also comparable. The only exception in this category was with the African-American students in Volusia County. The study had 4% African-American participate, compared to the 14% within the district.

Table 3  
Overall District Demographics of Students

Characteristic	Brevard	Osceola	Volusia	Total
<b>Gender (n = 44,241)</b>				
Boys	8,738 (51%)	6,366 (52%)	7,677 (51%)	22,781
Girls	8,267 (49%)	5,897 (48%)	7,296 (49%)	21,460
Total	17,005 (38%)	12,263 (28%)	14,973 (34%)	44,241
<b>Grade (n = 44,241)</b>				
6	5351 (31%)	4108 (33%)	4934 (33%)	14973
7	5867 (35%)	4069 (33%)	5147 (34%)	15083
8	5787 (34%)	4086 (33%)	4892 (33%)	11085
Total	17,005 (38%)	12,263 (28%)	14,973 (34%)	41,141
<b>Ethnicity (n =44,244)</b>				
African-American	2,470 (15%)	1,352 (11%)	2,100 (14%)	5,922
Caucasian	12,013 (71%)	3,800 (31%)	9,707 (65%)	25,520
Hispanic	1,298 (8%)	6,181 (50%)	2,298 (15%)	9,777
Mixed	835 (5%)	590 (5%)	613 (4%)	2,038
American-Indian/ Alaskan-Native/ Asian/ Pacific-Islander	389 (2%)	343 (3%)	255 (2%)	987
Total	17,005 (38%)	12,266 (28%)	14,973 (34%)	44,244

## Research Question 1

What is the mean difference in perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?

A three-way ANOVA was conducted to explore if there was a mean difference in perceived victimization, as measured by the Teasing and Bullying Survey (TABS), of Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender and ethnicity. The three independent variables included grade level (6, 7, & 8), gender (male & female) and ethnicity (minority & non-minority). A significance level of .05 was used. Based on Levene's test of equality of variances, the variances were assumed to be homogenous. The Shapiro-Wilks tests of normality indicated non-normality ( $W = .949, p = .000$ ). However, ANOVA is robust to violations of non-normality given an unbalanced design and homogeneity of variances as seen in this study. A review of residual plots indicated some independence and thus there maybe an increased likelihood of a Type I and/or Type II error.

The interaction effect between ethnicity, grade level and gender on perceived victimization was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 684) = 1.71, p = .18$ . The interaction between grade level and gender was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 684) = .64, p = .53$ . The interaction between ethnicity and gender was not statistically significant,  $F(1, 684) = 2.39, p =$

.12. There was a statistically significant interaction between ethnicity and grade level,  $F(2, 684) = 3.17, p = .04$ ; with a moderate effect size (partial eta squared = .09). Non-minority boys and girls had higher means for being a victim of teasing and bullying in grades 6-8, than those students who were minority (see Table 4). There was not a statistically significant main effect for ethnicity,  $F(2, 684) = .12, p = .72$ , nor for grade,  $F(2, 684) = .79, p = .46$ . There was a statistically significant main effect for gender,  $F(1, 684) = 3.94, p = .05$ , with a moderate effect size (partial eta squared = .06). Males perceived themselves as victims of bullying more than females. Post hoc comparisons were not computed because there were fewer than three levels of the independent variables. The means and standard deviations for perceived victims are presented in Table 4.

Table 4  
Descriptive Statistics for Victims

Grade	Boys			Girls		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
	Minority					
6	1.77	.20	49	1.72	.22	70
7	1.74	.24	41	1.63	.24	41
8	1.76	.19	43	1.76	.15	47



Grade	Boys			Girls		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
			Non-Minority			
6	1.72	.21	51	1.73	.17	46
7	1.75	.19	66	1.75	.22	88
8	1.75	.21	55	1.72	.21	99
			Total			
6	1.75	.21	100	1.72	.20	116
7	1.75	.21	107	1.71	.23	129
8	1.75	.20	98	1.73	.19	146

Note. Not all respondents responded to all survey items.

Table 5  
Three-Way Analysis of Variance Summary for Victims

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
Ethnicity	1	.005	.005	.12	.72	.000
Grade	2	.066	.033	.79	.46	.002
Gender	1	.166	.166	3.94	.05	.006
Ethnicity x						
Grade	2	.267	.134	3.2	.04	.009
Ethnicity x						
Gender	1	.101	.101	2.4	.12	.003
Grade x Gender	2	.054	.027	.64	.53	.002
Ethnicity x						
Grade x Gender	2	.144	.072	1.7	.18	.005
Error	684	28.851	.042			
Total	138.963	371				

Note.  $R^2 = .023$  (Adjusted  $R^2 = .008$ )

## Research Question 2

What is the mean difference in perceived bullying among Central Florida middle students based on grade level, gender, and ethnicity?

A three-way ANOVA was conducted to explore if there was a mean difference in perceived bullying, as measured by the Teasing and Bullying Survey (TABS), of Central Florida middle school students based on grade level (6, 7, & 8), gender (male & female) and ethnicity (minority & non-minority). A significance level of .05 was used. Based on Levene's test of equality of variances, the variances were assumed to be homogenous. The Shapiro-Wilks tests of normality indicated non-normality ( $W = .041, p = .000$ ). However, ANOVA is robust to violations of non-normality given an unbalanced design and homogeneity of variances as seen in this study. A review of residual plots indicated some independence and thus there may be an increased likelihood of a Type I and/or Type II error.

The interaction effect between ethnicity, grade level and gender was not statistically significant,  $F(4, 691) = .02, p = .99$ . The interaction effect between grade level and gender was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 684) = 2.22, p = .11$ . The interaction effect between ethnicity and grade level was also not statistically significant,  $F(2, 684) = .52, p = .60$ .  $F(1, 684) = 3.94, p = .05$ . There was a statistically significant main

effect for grade level,  $F(2, 684) = 6.54, p = .02$ ; however the effect size was small (partial eta squared = .02). Sixth grade students perceived themselves as bullies more than seventh and eighth grade students. Post-Hoc comparisons using Scheffe's test indicated that the mean score for the 6th grade group ( $M = 1.93, SD = .14$ ) was significantly different from the 8th grade group ( $M = 1.88, SD = .17$ ). The 7th grade group ( $M = 1.90, SD = .17$ ) did not differ significantly with either of the other groups. The main effect for gender,  $F(2, 684) = .11, p = .74$ , did not reach statistical significance. The main effect for ethnicity,  $F(2, 684) = .72, p = .40$ , did not reach statistical significance. The means and standard deviations for perceived bullies are presented in Table 6. Table 7 presents the between-subject effects perceived bullying among students in Central Florida middle schools.

Table 6  
Descriptive Statistics for Bullies

Grade	<u>Boys</u>			<u>Girls</u>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
	Minority					
6	1.94	.15	49	1.92	.12	70
7	1.90	.13	41	1.87	.21	41
8	1.85	.14	43	1.90	.14	47

Grade	Boys			Girls		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
			Non-Minority			
6	1.93	.19	51	1.93	.10	46
7	1.93	.18	66	1.90	.14	88
8	1.87	.25	55	1.89	.13	99
			Total			
6	1.94	.17	100	1.92	.11	116
7	1.92	.17	107	1.89	.16	129
8	1.86	.21	98	1.89	.14	146

Note. Not all respondents responded to all survey items.

Table 7  
Three-Way Analysis of Variance Summary for Bullies

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
Ethnicity	1	.018	.018	.72	.40	.001
Grade	2	.168	.336	6.54	.00	.019
Gender	2	.013	.003	.110	.74	.000
Ethnicity x Grade	2	.026	.013	.52	.60	.002
Ethnicity x Gender	1	.000	.000	.01	.94	.000
Grade x Gender	2	.114	.057	2.22	.11	.006
Ethnicity x Grade x Gender	2	.016	.008	.317	.73	.001
Error	684	17.58	.026			
Total	696	2537.25				

Note.  $R^2 = .027$  (Adjusted  $R^2 = .011$ )

### Research Question 3

What support do students perceive Central Florida middle school staff provide students who are bullied?

Table 8 presents the frequency distributions and percentages of Central Florida middle school students' perceptions of the support provided by school staff for students who are bullied. The frequency distributions and percents were calculated with questions E1 through E3 (see Appendix J). The results of this analysis are below. Students were asked to mark the statement that best described their perception of how the school handled teasing and bullying.

#### What Your School Does About Teasing and Bullying:

Almost 50% of the respondents ( $n = 311, 46\%$ ) perceived what the school was doing about teasing and bullying was making things better and was also just about right ( $n = 330, 49\%$ ).

#### What Does Your School Do About Teasing and Bullying?

Over one-half of the Central Florida middle school students who participated in the study ( $n = 431, 57\%$ ) agreed with the statement that the school teaches them not to tease and bully and what to do about if they are. This was followed by 388

students (52%) who felt that the school did not try to stop teasing and bullying if it does happen. Of the 752 students who responded, over half ( $n = 406$ , 54%) did not feel the school did not try to let teasing and bullying happen. Contrary to the perceptions above, 78% ( $n = 589$ ) of students disagreed with the statement that the school just talks about it. Almost 90% of students disagreed with the statement ( $n = 668$ , 89%) they the school is still trying to decide if there is a teasing and bullying problem. Over 90% of students ( $n = 706$ , 94%) feel that the school is aware that there is a teasing and bullying problem and they ( $n = 686$ , 91%) perceive the school providing assistance to the students who were being teased or bullied. Finally, 92% of students ( $n = 689$ ,) perceived the school doing something about the kids who were doing the teasing and bullying.

In summary, students perceive the school staff being aware of teasing and bullying on campus. They also perceive what the schools are doing to be "just about right" and making things better. The students also feel that the schools are assisting the victims of teasing and bullying, while doing something about the kids who are the bullies.

Table 8  
 Frequency Distributions and Percentages- Central Florida Middle School  
 Students' Perception of Support Provided by School Staff for Students Who Are  
 Bullied

Support Provided	<i>n</i>	%
<b>What your school does about teasing and bullying:</b>		
Makes things worse	71	10.5
Makes no difference	295	43.6
Makes things better	311	45.9
Total	753	100
<b>What your school does about teasing and bullying:</b>		
Is way too little	98	14.4
Is a bit too little	150	22.1
Is just about right	330	48.6
Is a bit too much	65	9.6
Is way too much	36	5.3
Total	679	100
<b>What does your school do about teasing/bullying?</b>		
They teach us not to tease and bully and what to do about it.		
Agree	431	57.4
Disagree	320	42.6
Total	751	100
They try not to let it happen.		
Agree	346	46.0
Disagree	406	54.0
Total	752	100

Support Provided	<i>n</i>	%
They try to stop it if it does happen.		
Agree	364	48.4
Disagree	388	51.6
Total	752	100
They just talk about it.		
Agree	163	21.7
Disagree	589	78.3
Total	752	100
They are still trying to decide if there is a teasing/bullying problem.		
Agree	84	11.2
Disagree	668	88.8
Total	753	100
They don't think there is a teasing/bullying problem.		
Agree	46	6.1
Disagree	706	93.9
Total	752	100
They do not help the kids who get teased or bullied.		
Agree	66	8.8
Disagree	686	91.2
Total	752	100
They do nothing about the kids who tease/bully.		
Agree	63	8.4
Disagree	689	91.6
Total	752	100

Note. Not all participants responded.



#### Research Question 4

What school locations, if any, do Central Florida middle school students perceive to be the most prevalent for bullying activities?

The frequency distributions and percentages of perceived victimization, as measured by Section D of the Teasing and Bullying Survey (TABS), were calculated for each location on the school campus where students have had or seen teasing and bullying taking place (see Appendix J). Table 9 presents the frequencies and percentages for each location.

#### School Locations for Teasing and Bullying

The first location on campus students were asked about was the classroom ( $n = 693$ ). Over half of the students ( $n = 361$ , 52%) stated they never seen or experienced teasing and bullying in the classroom. Almost 50% of students ( $n = 332$ , 48%) reported seeing or experiencing teasing and bullying either sometimes or many times in the classroom.

The next area was the gym ( $n = 689$ ). Over 50% of students ( $n = 357$ , 52%) stated they have experienced or witnessed teasing and bullying taking place in the gym either sometimes or many times. There were 332 students (48%) who stated they have never seen bullying activities in the gym.

The third school location that students were asked about was the locker room ( $n = 689$ ). Over 50% of the students ( $n = 376$ , 55%) reported never seeing or experiencing teasing and bullying taking place in this location. Almost half of the students ( $n = 313$ , 45%) reported bullying activities in the locker room sometimes or many times.

When asked about the cafeteria, 691 students responded. Over half of the students ( $n = 349$ , 51%) reported never seeing teasing and bullying taking place in the cafeteria. Seeing or experiencing teasing and bullying in the cafeteria sometimes or many times was reported by 342 students (50%).

Many students do not see the athletic field as an area where teasing and bullying takes place ( $n = 683$ ). Sixty percent of the students ( $n = 411$ , 60%) reported never seeing teasing and bullying taking place here. Forty percent of the students reported experiencing or seeing teasing and bullying either sometimes or many times on the athletic field ( $n = 272$ , 40%).

Of the 682 students who responded to this question, 392 students (57.5%) reported not experiencing or seeing teasing and bullying taking place on the school bus. Experiencing or seeing teasing and bullying on the school bus was reported by 290 students (42.5%).

Next, students were asked about the hallway and stairs ( $n = 693$ ) Over 50% of students reported that they never see teasing and bullying taking place ( $n = 382, 55\%$ ). Of the total responses, 311 students (45%) reported seeing or experiencing bullying sometimes or many times in this location.

When asked about the bathroom ( $n = 685$ ), 75% of the students ( $n = 515, 75\%$ ) stated they never see teasing and bullying taking place. There were 170 students (25%) who reported seeing or experiencing bullying in the bathroom sometimes or many times.

Finally, students were asked to report on other areas. Almost 80% of students ( $n = 276, 78\%$ ) reported not seeing or experiencing teasing and bullying in any other area on campus. There were 80 students (23%) who reported bullying activities taking place either sometimes or many times in other areas.

In summary, the majority of Central Florida middle school students reported not seeing or experiencing teasing and bullying taking place in various locations on the school campus. Only approximately one-third of the students report teasing and bullying activities taking place sometimes. Less than 17% of students reported seeing or experiencing teasing and bullying activities taking place in any of the nine locations listed.

Table 9

Frequency Distributions and Percentages- Central Florida Middle School  
 Students' Perception of School Locations for Bullying Activities

Location	<i>n</i>	%
<b>*Classroom</b>		
Never	361	52.1
Sometimes	279	40.3
Many Times	53	7.6
Total	693	100
<b>*Gym</b>		
Never	332	48.2
Sometimes	237	34.4
Many Times	120	17.4
Total	689	100
<b>*Locker Room</b>		
Never	376	54.6
Sometimes	210	30.5
Many Times	103	14.9
Total	689	100
<b>*Cafeteria</b>		
Never	349	50.5
Sometimes	238	34.4
Many Times	104	15.1
Total	691	100

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Location	<i>n</i>	%
<hr/>		
*Athletic Field		
Never	411	60.2
Sometimes	185	27.1
Many Times	87	12.7
Total	683	100
*School Bus		
Never	392	57.5
Sometimes	189	27.7
Many Times	101	14.8
Total	682	100
*Stairs/Hallway		
Never	382	55.1
Sometimes	215	31.0
Many Times	96	13.9
Total	693	100
*Bathroom		
Never	515	75.2
Sometimes	124	18.1
Many Times	46	6.7
Total	685	100
*Other		
Never	276	77.5
Sometimes	39	11.0
Many Times	41	11.5
Total	356	100

---

\* Not all participants responded.

### Research Question 5

What is the relationship between skipping school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?

A chi-square test for independence was conducted to evaluate whether there was a relationship between perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (yes/no) and skipping school (yes/no). The test was conducted using an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis was that proportions are equal, and the alternative hypothesis is that proportions are not equal. There was a statistical significance between those students who perceive themselves as a victim and skipping school, Pearson  $\chi^2 (1, N = 612) = 4.26, p = .04, \phi = .083$ . The phi statistic indicates a small effect. However, the assumption of five frequencies per cell was violated; therefore these results should be interpreted with caution. Of students who perceived themselves as being bullied, only 5% of them skipped school while 95% of the students did not skip school (see Table 10).

Table 10  
 Comparison of Respondents Skipping School and Perception of Being a Victim

Perceives self as being teased/bullied	Skipped School		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	6 (5%)	121 (95%)	127
No	8 (2%)	477 (98%)	485
Total	14 (2%)	598 (98%)	612

Research Question 6

What is the average number of school days skipped by middle school students in Central Florida due to perceived victimization?

The frequency distributions and percentages for the number of days skipped during the last month by Central Florida middle school students who perceived themselves as victims was measured by Question 2 in Section B of the Teasing and Bullying Survey (TABS) (see Table 11). Of the 749 students who responded to this question, over 96% of them stated that they have not skipped school at all as a result of being teased or bullied.

Table 11  
 Frequency Distributions and Percentages - Number of Days Skipped School In  
 the Last Month Because of Teasing or Bullying

Number of school days skipped	N	%
0	724	96.1
1	6	.8
2	3	.4
3	3	.4
4	3	.4
5	2	.3
more than 5	8	1.1
Total	749	100

#### Research Question 7

What is the relationship between feeling safe at school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?

A chi-square test for independence was calculated comparing perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (yes/no) and feeling safe at school (yes/no). The test was conducted using an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis is that proportions are equal, and the alternative hypothesis was that proportions are not equal. Students who perceive themselves as a victim of teasing and bullying, was statistically significant to feeling safe at school, Pearson  $\chi^2$  (5, N = 622) = 29.57,  $p = .00$ , phi = .218. The phi statistic indicates a small to moderate effect. Using the "rule of thumb" value of standardized



residual (SR) of 2 (in absolute value), three cells contributed significantly to this relationship (AcaStat, 2008). More respondents were observed in students who perceived themselves as a victim of bullying, with very little feelings of safety (SR = 2.1; 10 observed, 5.1 expected) and in those who perceived themselves as victims of bullying and feeling safe a little (SR = 3.1; 24 observed, 12.8 observed). On the other hand, in the group who perceived themselves as victims of bullying, and feeling safe a whole lot at school (SR = -2.0; 21 observed, 32 expected) significantly less were observed than expected. A conclusion can be made that students who have a self-perceptions as a victim of teasing and bullying were likely too feel somewhat safe at school (see Table 12). However, the assumption of five frequencies per cell was violated; therefore these results should be interpreted with caution. There maybe an increased chance of making an incorrect decision (i.e. Type I or Type II error).

Table 12

Comparison of Feeling Safe at School and Perceiving Self As A Victim

Perceives self as victim	not at all	very little	a little	somewhat	a lot	a whole lot	Total
Yes	4 (3%)	*10 (8%)	*24 (18%)	42 (32%)	32 (24%)	*21 (15%)	133
No	16 (3%)	14 (3%)	36 (7%)	119 (24%)	175 (36%)	129 (26%)	489
Total	20 (3%)	24 (4%)	60 (10%)	161 (26%)	207 (33%)	150 (24%)	622

Note. all data are observed counts

\* Counts contributed to the association

### Research Question 8

What is the relationship between student perceptions of whether teasing and bullying harms their grades and perceived victimization for middle school students in Central Florida?

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (yes/no) and teasing/bullying harming their grades (yes/no). The test was conducted using an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis was that proportions are equal, and the alternative hypothesis is that proportions are not equal. There was a statistical significance between student who perceive themselves as a victim and teasing and bullying harming their grades, Pearson  $\chi^2$  (5, N = 622) = 63.51, p = .00, phi = .320. The phi statistic indicates a moderate effect. However, the assumption of five expected

frequencies per cell was violated; therefore these results should be interpreted with caution. Using the "rule of thumb" value of standardized residual (SR) of 2 (in absolute value), five cells contributed significantly to this relationship (AcaStat, 2008). The categories that contributed the most were students who perceived themselves as a victim and who believed teasing/bullying harmed their grades 'a whole lot' (SR = 3.0; 9 observed, 3.4 expected), 'a lot' (SR = 4.1; 14 observed, 4.9 expected), and 'a little' (SR = 2.1; 28 observed, 18.8 expected). Of students who did not perceive themselves as a victim, the category that contributed the most were students who believed teasing/bullying harmed their grades 'a lot' (SR = -2.1; 9 observed, 18.1 expected). A conclusion can be made that those students, who perceive themselves as victims, are more likely to have poorer grades (see Table 13). However, the assumption of five frequencies per cell was violated, therefore these results should be interpreted with caution. There maybe an increased chance of making an incorrect decision (i.e. Type I or Type II error).

Table 13

Comparison of Teasing/Bulling Harming Grades and Perceiving Self as a Victim

Perceives self as victim	not at all	very little	a little	somewhat	a lot	a whole lot	Total
Yes	*54 (41%)	*28 (21%)	15 (11%)	13 (10%)	*14 (11%)	*9 (7%)	133
No	359 (73%)	60 (12%)	29 (6%)	25 (5%)	*9 (39%)	7 (1%)	489
Total	413 (66%)	88 (14%)	44 (7%)	38 (6%)	23 (4%)	16 (3%)	622

Note. all data are observed counts

\*Counts were contributing to the association

### Research Question 9

What is the relationship between students showing interest in schoolwork and perceived victimization by Central Florida middle school students?

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to evaluate whether there was a relationship to perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (Do you think of yourself as someone who gets teased/bullied by others?) and being teased/bullied for showing interests in their schoolwork (How much are you or others teased/bullied because of good grades or for showing a lot of interest in schoolwork?). The test was conducted using and alpha of .05. The null hypothesis was that proportions are equal, and the alternative hypothesis was that proportions were not equal. Students who perceive themselves as a victim of teasing and bullying, was

statistically significant to showing interests in their schoolwork, Pearson  $\chi^2$  (5,  $N = 621$ ) = 46.11,  $p = .00$ , phi = .272. The phi statistic indicates a small to moderate effect. Using the "rule of thumb" value of standardized residual (SR) of 2 (in absolute value), five cells contributed significantly to this relationship (AcaStat, 2008). The categories that contributed the most were students who perceived themselves as a victim and who believed they were teased/bullied for showing interest in their schoolwork 'a whole lot' (SR = 3.7; 15 observed, 6 expected), 'a lot' (SR = 2.3; 19 observed, 11.3 expected), 'somewhat' (SR = 2.2; 25 observed, 16.2 expected), 'very little' (SR = -2.4; 12 observed, 23.4 expected) and 'not at all' (SR = -2.4; 39 observed, 57.4 expected). A conclusion can be made that students will be teased and bullied due to showing interest in their schoolwork. The assumption of five frequencies per cell was met (see Table 14).

Table 14

Comparison of Being Teased and Bullied Because of Good Grades and Showing Interests In Schoolwork

Perceives self as victim	not at all	very little	a little	somewhat	a lot	a whole lot	Total
Yes	*39(30%)	*12(9%)	22(17%)	*25(19%)	*19(14%)	*15(11%)	132
No	231(47%)	98(20%)	62(13%)	51(10%)	34(7%)	13(3%)	489
Total	270(44%)	110(18%)	84(14%)	76(12%)	53(9%)	28(5%)	621

Note. all data are observed counts

\*Counts were contributing to the association

### Ancillary Analysis

After analyzing the data from research questions 7-9, additional testing was completed by collapsing the Likert scales into two categories (yes/no). The purpose of the additional analysis was to determine if there still would be significant relationships when comparing the category (not at all) to the categories (very little, a little, somewhat, a lot, a whole lot) that were combined under one heading. The results of the ancillary analysis are discussed below.

#### Ancillary Analysis Research Question 7

A chi-square test for independence was calculated comparing the victimization among Central Florida middle school students

(yes/no) and whether they feel safe at school (yes/no). The Likert scale for feeling safe was collapsed into two categories: (no) for 'not at all' responses and (yes) for all other responses. The test was conducted using an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis was that proportions are equal, and the alternative hypothesis is that proportions are not equal. A chi-square test of independence indicates there was no significant association between students who perceive themselves as victims of teasing/bullying and feeling safe at school, Pearson  $\chi^2$  (1,  $N = 622$ ) = .023,  $p = .878$ ,  $\phi = -.006$ .

#### Ancillary Analysis Research Question 8

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to evaluate if there was a relationship between perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (yes/no) and teasing/bullying harming their grades (yes/no). The test was conducted using an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis was that proportions are equal, and the alternative hypothesis is that proportions are not equal. There was a statistically significant association between those students who perceive themselves as a victim of teasing/bullying and teasing/bullying harming their grades, Person  $\chi^2$  (1,  $N = 622$ ) = 50.46,  $p = .00$ ,  $\phi = -.285$ .

The phi statistic indicates a moderate effect. Using the "rule of thumb" value of standardized residual (SR) of 2 (in absolute value), three cells contributed significantly to this relationship (AcaStat, 2008). The categories that contributed the most were students who perceived themselves as a victim and who believed that teasing/bullying did not harm their grades (SR = -3.7; 54 observed, 88 expected) and those who believed teasing/bullying harmed their grades (SR = 5.1; 79 observed, 45 expected). Of students who did not perceive themselves as a victim, the category that contributed the most were students who believed teasing/bullying harmed their grades (SR = -2.7; 130 observed, 164 expected). A conclusion can be made that those students who perceive themselves as a victims, are more than likely to have poorer grades. The assumption of five frequencies per cell was met (see Table 15).

Table 15  
Ancillary Comparison of Teasing/Bullying Harming Grades and Perceiving Self as a Victim

Perceives self as victim	yes	no	Total
Yes	*54 (40.6%)	*79 (59.4%)	133
No	359 (73.4%)	*130 (26.6)	489
Total	413 ( 66.4%)	209 (33.6%)	622

Note: all data are observed counts  
\*Counts were contributing to the association



### Ancillary Analysis Research Question 9

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to evaluate whether there was a relationship to perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (yes/no) and being teased/bullied for showing interests in their schoolwork (yes/no). The test was conducted using an alpha of .05. The null hypothesis was that proportions are equal, and the alternative hypothesis was the proportions were not equal. There was a statistically significant relationship between students who perceive themselves as a victim of teasing and bullying and showing interests in their school work, Person  $\chi^2$  (1,  $N = 621$ ) = 13.24,  $p = .00$ ,  $\phi = -.146$ . The phi statistic indicates a small moderate effect. Using the "rule of thumb" value of standardized residual (SR) of 2 (in absolute value), two cells contributed significantly to this relationship (AcaStat, 2008). The categories that contributed the most were students who perceive themselves as a victim and who believed they were teased/bullied for showing interested in their schoolwork (SR = 2.1; 93 observed, 75 expected) and those who did not believe they were teased/bullied for showing interest in their schoolwork (SR = -2.4; 39 observed, 57 expected). A conclusion can be made that students will be teased or bullied due to showing interest in

their school work. The assumption of five frequencies per cell was met (see Table 16).

Table 16  
Ancillary Comparison of Being Teased and Bullied Because of Good Grades and Showing Interest in Schoolwork

Perceives self as victim	yes	no	Total
Yes	*39 (29.5%)	*93 (70.5%)	132
No	231 (47.2%)	258 (52.8%)	489
Total	270 (43.5%)	351 (56.5%)	621

Note: all data are observed counts  
\*Counts were contributing to the association

### Summary

An analysis of the data obtained from the middle school respondents in Central Florida schools given during the Fall 2007 school year has been presented in this chapter. Data analyses for each of the nine research questions were presented. Results of the statistical tests, including tables, figures, and supporting narratives were also displayed.

A summary and discussion of these findings are presented in Chapter 5. Conclusions drawn from this research are presented, as well as recommendations for interventions and future research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, & RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### Problem Statement

There has been an increase of national attention on school violence. Since 1992, there have been 250 violent deaths in schools as a result of someone being bullied (Garrett, 2003). Recently, the United States has begun focusing on the issue of bullying. Although studies have been done, there are none that look at the prevalence in Central Florida middle schools. Since there is no research in this area, this study was conducted to determine the prevalence of bullying in Central Florida schools from the viewpoint of bullies, victims, and bully-victims in grades six through eight. It looked at students' attitudes towards school, perceived feelings of safety, perceived impact bullying/victimization can have on grades, and the perceived impact bullying/victimization has on school attendance.

#### Methodology

##### Population and Data Collection

The survey population was comprised of 753 middle school students in grades 6-8 in three different Central Florida school

districts. The first contact with principals was made in September 2007 with a personalized letter explaining the purpose of the study and to request permission to conduct the study in their school. Included in this mailing was a pre-paid response postcard. The second contact that was mailed two weeks after the first mailing was a "thank you/reminder" postcard requesting their assistance with the study. The third and final contact was made via electronic mail with a final request for the school's participation and an electronic copy of the response postcard. Principals at 20 schools agreed to participate with students at 13 (65%) schools returning completed surveys.

#### Instrumentation

Data were collected using the Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS-S). This instrument was modified from its original version that consisted of questions listed on the front and back of 8 1/2 x 11" paper into the current version used in this study which was a booklet form.

The instrument consisted of 110 items that measured how teasing and bullying impacted students' attitudes towards school, feelings of safety, impact on grades, impact on school attendance, and impact of school intervention programs. The odd numbered questions asked participants about their experiences of

having been victimized within the last month and the even numbered items asked about them victimizing others. The instrument also included demographics that included: district name, grade level, age, gender, and ethnicity. The Cronbach alpha coefficients reported by Bodin and Clopton (2006) were .932 on the victim scale and .933 for the bully scale. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for this study were .891 for the victim scale and .704 for the bully scale. Evidence of validity was provided through a factor analysis.

### Summary and Discussion of Findings

The summary and discussions of findings for the collected data in response to the nine research questions is as follows:

#### Research Question 1

Is there a mean difference in perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender and ethnicity?

Based on the results of a three-way ANOVA, there was not a statistically significant interaction between ethnicity, grade level, and gender on perceived victimization in Central Florida middle schools. However, there was statistically significant interaction between ethnicity and grade level and a statistically significant main effect for gender.

Although there is limited research on bullying and its links to race/ethnicity, what is known is that students who belong to a particular ethnic group can give rise to bullying and harassment (Rigby, 2001). In a study by Peskin et al. (2006), it was determined that one in five minority students would be bullied. This study concurs with these findings in that students who belong to a minority group are most likely to experience teasing and bullying. It was determined that minority male students in the sixth grade are the most likely to be a victim of teasing and bullying. This group was followed by minority males and females in the eighth grade who were as equally likely to be a victim of teasing and bullying.

Although research has shown that minority students are most likely to experience teasing and bullying, this study also determined that some non-minority students perceive themselves as victims of teasing and bullying. This study showed that males in the seventh and eighth grades and females in the seventh grade are the most likely to experience teasing and bullying among non-minority students.

The finding in this study also showed a statistically significant main effect for gender. When examining the data for gender, boys were found to have a higher mean of perceived victimization than girls. Although the boys' perceptions of

teasing and bullying were higher, there was little mean difference from the girls' perception of being a victim. The findings of this research contradict the findings of other research. Most research shows that males and females are equally likely to be victims of teasing and bullying (Perry, et. al., 1988; Lipson, 2001; & Seals and Young, 2003).

#### Research Question 2

Is there a mean difference in perceived bullying among Central Florida middle school students based on grade level, gender and ethnicity?

Based on the results of a three-way ANOVA, there was not a significant interaction between ethnicity, grade level, and gender on perceived bullying in Central Florida middle schools. There was a statistically significant main effect for grade level.

Although bullying can be a problem at all levels of schooling, research has shown that it is at its worst at the start of secondary school (Sullivan, et al., 2004). The findings from this research study showed that students, regardless of race or gender, were most likely to perceive themselves as a bully in the sixth grade. These findings are supported by research from Olweus (1993) and Swearer et al., (2001). Both of these studies showed that sixth grade students identify

themselves as bullies more than students in grades seven and eight.

This study also showed a decrease in the mean score of boys who perceived themselves as bullies as they progressed through middle school. Girls showed a decrease in the amount of bullying they did between sixth and seventh grade. During the seventh and eighth grade years, the perception of being a bullied leveled off.

### Research Question 3

What support do students perceive Central Florida middle school staff provide to students who are bullied?

Research has shown that students who are teased and bullied tend to lack confidence when asking for assistance from school staff (Espelage and Asidao, 2001). Over half of the 684 students in a study did not report a bullying incident since they felt that the school staff does not assist with solving the problem (Fonzi et al., 1999). Students in this study felt that what the schools were doing was actually making things worse.

In contrast, 46% ( $n = 311$ ) of the Central Florida students who participated in the study were satisfied with what the school was doing about teasing and bullying. This supports the longitudinal study of Swearer and Cary (2003) who stated that the



bullies, victims and other students felt the school responded satisfactorily when they knew bullying had occurred.

Another finding in the research that was supported through this study is that schools have found, even with the best of intentions, problems such as bullying are very difficult to solve (Sullivan, et al., 2004). It was determined through this study that 44% of the students felt that what was being done about bullying did not have a positive or negative impact on the situation.

#### Research Question 4

What school locations, if any, do Central Florida middle school students perceive to be the most prevalent for bullying activities?

The frequency distributions and percentages of perceived victimization were calculated for each location on the school campus. Although little is known about where bullying occurs in middle school, one thing researchers agree on is that all forms of bullying occur mostly within the school setting (Almeida, 1999; Lipson, 2001; Lösel & Bliesener, 1999; Ma, 2002; Morita et al, 1999; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2000; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993). However, there is a discrepancy among researchers as to where in the school setting bullying occurs. The only common area that researchers have identified is the

playground/recess area (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2002; Smith, 2000). This is where the commonalities end. In this study, the gym (51.8%) had the highest reported frequency of bullying activities, followed by the cafeteria (49.5%), classroom (47.9%), locker room (45.4%), Stairs/Hallway (44.9%), school bus (42.5%), athletic field (39.8%), bathroom (24.8%) and other locations (22.5%).

Even though researchers do not agree on frequency of bullying in certain locations, what we do know is that they all agree that it is taking place. Perhaps the students say it best when asked about the locations of bullying. They claim it is not in one spot, but somewhere where the teacher is not going to look (Espelage & Asidao, 2001).

#### Research Question 5

Is there a relationship between skipping school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?

A chi-square test for independence was conducted to evaluate whether there was a relationship between perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (yes/no) and skipping school (yes/no). Research is scarce on school attendance and bullying, but the research that has been conducted in this area suggests evidence of correlation between

absenteeism and being a victim of bullying. In a study by Peterson and Rigby (1999), they found that 14% of boys and 12% of girls skipped school to avoid being bullied. The findings of this study were inconsistent with the finding above. Only 5% ( $n = 6$ ) of the Central Florida middle school students who perceived themselves as a victim reported skipping school.

#### Research Question 6

What is the average number of school days skipped by middle school students in Central Florida due to perceived victimization?

The frequency distributions and percentages for the number of days skipped during the last month were used to answer this question. There are few researchers that have examined the number of days students skip school due to being bullied. What is known is that nearly 160,000 students stay away from school in order to avoid being bullied (Leary et al., 2003).

It was determined in this study that eight students (1.1%) reported skipping five or more days. This was followed by six students who skipped one day. Two, three, and four days were reported by three students each and two students reported skipping 5 days as a result of being bullied. The majority of students though, over 90% ( $n = 724$ ), reported they have not skipped any school due to being bullied.

## Research Question 7

Is there a relationship between feeling safe at school and perceived victimization among middle school students in Central Florida?

A chi-square test for independence was calculated comparing perceived victimization among Central Florida middle school students (yes/no) and feeling safe at school (yes/no). Research on how safe students feel at school and bullying is limited. What research has shown is that victims of teasing and bullying do not feel safe (Sullivan et al., 2004). Contradictory to the findings of Sullivan et al. (2004), it was determined through this study that Central Florida middle school students who are victims of bullying feel somewhat safe within their school. Nearly 90% of students ( $n = 119$ , 89%) identified their feelings of being safe as (a little,  $n = 24$ ), (somewhat,  $n = 42$ ), (a lot,  $n = 32$ ), and (a whole lot,  $n = 21$ ). Research by Rigby and Slee (1999) supports these findings. Their research showed that regardless of how often a student is bullied, they usually feel their school is safe.

## Research Question 8

Is there a relationship between student perceptions of whether teasing and bullying harms their grades and perceived victimization for middle school students in Central Florida?

A chi-square test of independence showed statistical significance between Central Florida students who perceived themselves as victims of teasing and bullying and harming their grades. The research on how bullying impacts students' grade is scarce. What is known is that students tend to have poor academic performance as a result of being teased and bullied (Olweus, 1993; Perry et al., 2001). In a study by Graham, Bellmore, & Juvonen (2003), it was found that students who were identified as true victims had poorer academic achievement. The findings from this study support the claims made by other researchers in that students who perceive themselves as a victim of bullying are more likely to have lower grades. Over one-half of the students ( $n = 79$ , 59%) reported bullying harming their grades compared to 41% ( $n = 54$ ) who said that bullying did not harm their grades at all.

## Research Question 9

Is there a relationship between students showing interest in their schoolwork and perceived victimization by Central Florida middle school students?

A chi-square test of independence showed a statistically significant relationship between Central Florida students who perceived themselves as a victim of teasing and bullying and showing interest in their school work. To this researcher's knowledge, there are no studies that have examined bullying and interest in schoolwork. What was learned through this study was that students who have good grades and show interests in their schoolwork tend to perceive themselves as victims of teasing and bullying. Seventy percent of the students ( $n = 81$ ) reported that they are teased or bullied because of good grades either a little ( $n = 22, 17\%$ ), somewhat ( $n = 25, 19\%$ ), a lot ( $n = 19, 14\%$ ), or a whole lot ( $n = 15, 11\%$ ). This was compared to 30% of the participants ( $n = 39$ ) who reported they were not bullied at all.

### Implications of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the information it provides to the district level and school level staff. Based on the findings from this study, it is recommended that school administrators:

1. School administrators should read academic literature on teasing and bullying.
2. School administrators should review bullying prevention plans used by other schools, so they can implement a plan that will assist with preventing and stopping bullying.
3. Position faculty and staff on campus where bullying activities may occur. Have the staff listen to the conversations that are taking place among students and intervene when necessary to stop or prevent bullying taking place.
4. Have the faculty monitor their students for drastic changes in academic performance and attendance, since these changes can be sign of a student being bullied.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Future research needs and recommendations were identified from the analysis of the data for the present study. Future research recommendations include:

1. Have teachers identify students who are bullies or victims rather than rely on student self-report data. Having teachers identify students who are bullies and

victims would provide valuable information since students maybe reluctant to do so for the fear of retaliation.

2. Breakdown the study by types of bullying (i.e. cyberbullying, verbal, non-verbal, relational, etc.). Identify the types of bullying at a school would allow school staff and administrators to focus their bullying prevention program around those topics that are the most prevalent for their school.
3. Compare K-8 schools to 6-8 middle schools. By comparing school configurations, district leaders can determine whether a K-8 school increases incidences of bulling over a traditional middle school setting with grades 6-8.
4. Compare the prevalence of bullying county by county. Comparing the results of each county will allow other districts to examine
5. Group ethnicity by Hispanic and Non-Hispanic. Central Florida has an increasing Hispanic population. Florida's Hispanic population is on the rise. During the last four years from 2004-2008, Florida's Hispanic population has grown from 22% to 32% (Florida Department of Education, 2008). By grouping students into two ethnic categories



would allow school districts to compare the two largest groups of students (Hispanic and Non-Hispanic).

6. Conducting an intervention program such as the [Olweus Bullying Prevention Program](#). This research based intervention would provide K-12 schools the interventions need to prevent and reduce bullying problems, while improving peer relationships.

### Conclusions

This study sought to determine the perceived prevalence of bullying according to bullies and victims in grades six through eight in Central Florida school districts since bullying is reported to be at its highest during this age group. This study also examined student's attitudes towards school, their perceived feelings of safety, student perceptions of school interventions, their perceptions on how being a victim impacts their grades, how students perceive the impact on school attendance, and what locations are perceived to be the areas where bullying occurs most according to students. In the subsequent paragraphs, specific conclusions and recommendations for schools will be discussed.

The study of race and its link to bullying is scarce. What is known is that belonging to a particular racial group can

contribute to the likeliness of a student being bullied (Rigby, 2001). The results of this study support this statement. It was determined that minority students perceive themselves as victims more than non-minority students. Of these students, sixth grade students had the highest perception of being a victim. It is recommended that schools implement an intervention program that focuses on reducing the amount of bullying among minority students through educating students on diversities. This program should also focus on physical, verbal and relational bullying (Peskin et al., 2006). It needs to be noted that one should exhibit caution when examining the link between bullying and race, since it could have resulted for non-racial reasons.

Research studies have shown that seventh grade students do the most bullying (Seals & Young, 2003). This study contradicts the findings of this study. The results of this study showed that minority and non-minority students in the sixth grade were most likely to perceive themselves as bullies. This was followed by students in the seventh grade and then eighth grade. The results of this study could be explained by a study conducted by Espelage and Asidao (2001). In their study, students who were identified as bullies stated they felt it was their turn to bully others, since they have been the victim previously. Another possible explanation for these findings lies in the

configuration of the schools as either containing grades 6-8 or K-8. Another unknown variable is whether the schools have an area on campus designated for sixth graders only, which would suggest the bullying took place among students in the same grade level. Since there is not research on school grade level configurations, it is recommended that school administrators develop guidelines as to what is considered bullying and document these incidences on student's discipline cards. The data gathered from the discipline cards will assist the administrators in determining which school configurations have the most bullying. It is also recommended that administrators implement a bullying prevention program such as the *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*. This particular program has shown a 50% reduction in bullying incidences within the first two years of implementation (Olweus, 1993).

Determining the location of bullying on school campus is difficult. What research has shown is that bullying occurs mostly on school campuses (Almeida, 1999; Lipson, 2001; Losel & Bliesener, 1999; Ma, 2002; Morita et al, 1999; Olweus, 1993; Smith, 2000; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Whitney & Smith, 1993). The location of where bullying activities occur is the only commonality among research studies. There are discrepancies among researchers on which locations have the most occurrences

of bullying. The most common area reported among researchers is recess (Rigby, 2002; Smith, 2000). In the current study, it was determined that Central Florida middle school students perceive bullying taking place mostly in the gym. This was followed by the cafeteria, classroom, locker room, stairs/hallway, school bus, athletic field, bathroom, and other. It is recommended that school staff be vigilant in all locations of the school campus. This idea is supported by Olweus who is considered to be the leader in bullying research. In his studies, Olweus (1993) has shown that the size of the class has no affect on whether bullying takes place, but increased supervision does. The more supervision that a school provides, especially during break times, such as lunch, recess, and class transitions, the less likely bullying will occur.

Previous research has shown that 160,000 students skip school each year as a result of being teased/bullied (Leary et al., 2003). The findings from the Central Florida study contradict those of other researchers. It was found in this study that a majority of students reported not skipping school as a result of being teased/bullied. When asked about the number of days skipped, over 96% of students who perceived themselves as victims reported not skipping any school. It is possible that the students who chose not participate in the study or who were

absent on the day of the survey are the ones who are being teased/bullied. It is recommended that teachers examine their attendance records closely and look for trends of absenteeism. Teachers and school staff also need to be trained in what characteristics to look for when a student is the victim of teasing and bullying.

Research on whether students feel safe at school is very limited. There are two studies that have opposing views on how safe students feel. In a study by Sullivan et al. (2004), they determined that students who are teased and bullied do not feel safe at school. Whereas, the study by Rigby and Slee (1999) showed that no matter how often a student is teased/bullied, they usually feel safe at their school. In the study on Central Florida middle schools, nearly 90% of the students felt somewhat safe at school. This feeling of safety can be contributed to the fact that students are satisfied with the support that school staff is providing to the victim. In addition, actions taken by the school to stop bullying also play a role in students feeling safe.

Although there is limited research on how bullying affects academics, what is known is that victims have lower grades (Graham et al., 2003; Olweus, 1993; Perry et al., 2001). The study on Central Florida students supports other researchers'

findings. The current study showed that over one-half the students ( $n = 79, 59\%$ ) who perceived themselves as a victim reported bullying harming their grades. Teachers need to be aware of the primary and secondary signs of victimization. One of the secondary signs of a student who is being teased or bullied is a sudden or gradual decline in academic performance (Olweus, 1993). It is recommended that teachers be cognizant of their students' grades and report any unusual declines to the guidance counselor and school administrators.

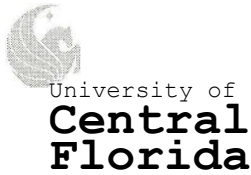
Finally, to this researcher's knowledge, there are no studies that examined bullying and interests in school work. What was determined through this study was that students perceive they are bullied because they show interests in their school work. Seventy percent of students in Central Florida middle schools reported that they are teased/bullied because of good grades. It is possible that students who are considered above average or gifted will have a higher probability of being bullied, since these students tend to make better grades and show more interests in their school work. It is recommended that teachers and staff be more observant in the classroom and hallways for students being bullied because of academics. What the teachers need to look for are other students who are nudging

each other or snickering when a student answers a question (Sullivan et al., 2004).

Chapter five provided a summary of the findings from this study and how it relates to other research. In addition, recommendations for the schools and districts were made, along with suggestions for future research.

**APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL**





University of Central Florida  
Institutional Review Board Office of  
Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or  
407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

## EXPEDITED CONTINUING REVIEW APPROVAL NOTICE

From: UCF Institutional Review Board  
FW A00000351, Exp. 5/07/10,  
IRB00001138

To: Marty Norris

Date: August 14,  
2007

IRB Number: SBE-0603761

Study Title: Bullying in Secondary  
Schools

Dear  
Researcher,

This letter serves to notify you that the continuing review application for the above study was reviewed and approved by the IRB Vice-chair on 8/14/2007 through the expedited review process according to 45 CFR 46 (and/or 21 CFR 50/56 if FDA-regulated).

Continuation of this study has been approved for a one-year period. The expiration date is 08/13/2008. This study was determined to be no more than minimal risk and the category for which this study qualified for expedited review is:

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Subjects or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

All data must be retained in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password protected

computer if electronic information is used. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

To continue this research beyond the expiration date, a Continuing Review Form must be submitted 2 - 4 weeks prior to the expiration date. Use the Unanticipated Problem Report Form or the Serious Adverse Event Form (within 5 working days of event or knowledge of event) to report problems or events to the IRB. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. Changes can be submitted for IRB review using the Addendum/Modification Request Form. An Addendum/Modification Request Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin on 08/14/2007  
03:04:09 PM EDT

**APPENDIX B: LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT**

June 4, 2007

Dear [Superintendent's name]:

My name is Marty Norris and I am a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida under the direct supervision of Debbie Hahs-Vaughn, Ph.D. As a requirement for graduation, I need to complete a research study. As you are aware, teasing and bullying occurs more in our schools today than ever before and there is limited research on bullying in the Central Florida area. The purpose of this study is to determine how students in sixth through eighth grade perceive the prevalence of teasing and bullying and what locations bullying activities are most common.

I would like your permission to conduct my study in your district. Permission to conduct this study in your district and the encouragement of principals to allow their schools to participate would be greatly appreciated. The instrument being used to collect data is the *Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS-S)*, created by the clinical psychologist, Arthur M. Bodin, Ph.D. The instrument has a reliability of .933 for the bullying scale and .932 for the victim scale. The survey was written at a fourth grade level and should take the students no longer than 20-30 minutes to complete. Please be assured that individual schools will not be mentioned by name since all data will be in the form of group data.

Upon agreeing to participate, schools will receive enough copies of the parental consent forms to be given to each student in grades 6-8 along with a return box with pre-paid postage affixed. After these are returned to me, the school will then receive a photocopy of the parental consent form to be returned to the students, child assent forms, the student surveys, and a return box with pre-paid postage affixed.

Any paperwork that is required to conduct research in your county can be sent to my attention electronically at [norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us](mailto:norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us) or by mail to 3405 South Delaware Avenue St. Cloud, Florida 34769.

If at any time you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at [norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us](mailto:norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us) or by phone at 407-414-1915. I look forward to working with your district on this important study.

Sincerely,

Marty Norris

**APPENDIX C: 1<sup>ST</sup> CONTACT**

September 2007

Dear [Principal's Name]

My name is Marty Norris and I am a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida under the direct supervision of Debbie Hahs-Vaughn, Ph.D. As a requirement for graduation, I need to complete a research study. Teasing and bullying occurs more in our schools today than ever before and there is limited research on the prevalence of bullying in the Central Florida area. The purpose of this study is to determine how students in sixth through eighth grade perceive the prevalence of teasing and bullying and to what extent.

I would like your permission to conduct my study at your school. Permission to conduct this study in your school and your staff's encouragement of students to return the consent forms would be greatly appreciated. The survey should take the students no longer than 20-30 minutes to complete, depending on their reading level. The classes and times for administering the survey will be left to your discretion. Please be assured that your school will not be mentioned by name since all data will be in the form of group data for the county.

Upon agreeing to participate, you will receive enough copies of the parental consent forms to be given to each student in grades 6-8 along with a return box with pre-paid postage affixed. These will be paper clipped in stacks of 25 for easier distribution to teachers. After these are returned to me, you will then receive a photocopy of the parental consent form to be returned to the students, child assent forms, the student surveys, and a return box with pre-paid postage affixed.

Attached you will find the approval letter from the district office, UCF's IRB and a postcard for your response. If you would, please complete the information on the postcard and return it to me. If at any time you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail at [norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us](mailto:norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us) or by phone at 407-414-1915. I look forward to working with you on this important study.

Sincerely,

Marty Norris

**APPENDIX D: 1<sup>ST</sup> CONTACT POSTCARD**

September 2007

Yes, please include our school in the study on bullying.

Marty Norris



No, please do not include our school in the study on bullying.

St. Cloud, FL 34769

**School:**

**District:**

**Number of Students Enrolled in grades 6-8:** \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX E: 2<sup>ND</sup> CONTACT POSTCARD**

September 15, 2007

Dear [Principal's Name]:

During the first week of June, a letter was sent to you requesting permission to conduct a doctoral study on bullying in your school.

As of today, I have not received a reply and wanted to follow-up with you. If you would, please send your response card to me or send your response electronically to:  
norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us.

Thank you for your attention in this matter,

Marty Norris

**APPENDIX F: PARENTAL CONSENT**

**Parental Informed Consent**

October/November 2007

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida under the supervision of faculty member, Dr. Debbie Hahs-Vaughn, conducting research on bullying and victimization among students in 6th, 7th & 8th grade. The questionnaire will explore the relationship of bullying and victimization to gender, ethnicity, self-esteem and how students and staff perceive the effects bullying can have on academics, social and psychological well-being. The results of this study will contribute to the research currently available by focusing on school districts in Central Florida. These results may not directly help your child today, but may benefit future students and schools.

Using a statistical program, students whose parents have consented to allow participation, will be randomly selected for a questionnaire on bullying and victimization that will take approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. An employee at your child's school will administer the questionnaire during the time and class designated by the school principal. Questionnaire results will be stored in a locked cabinet at the home of the researcher and will be destroyed soon after the research process is complete.

Your child's name will be kept confidential and will not be used in any report, analysis, or publication. Student names will be collected for matching purposes only and all identifying information will be replaced with code numbers. The list connecting your child's name to this number will be kept in a locked cabinet at the home of the researcher and will be destroyed soon after the research process is complete. All data will be reported in the form of group data.

Your child will be allowed the right to refuse to answer any questions that make him/her uncomfortable, and he/she may stop participating in this research at any time. The principal of the school has been asked to have a guidance counselor available in the event your child becomes upset due to bad bullying experiences they may have had. Your child will be reminded of this immediately prior to the completion of the questionnaire.

You may contact me at 407-870-4995 or email at [norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us](mailto:norrism@osceola.k12.fl.us) or my advisor, Dr. Debbie Hahs-Vaughn at 407-823-1762 or by email at [dhahs@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:dhahs@mail.ucf.edu), for any questions you have regarding the research procedures. Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCF IRB office, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, University Towers, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246, or by campus mail 32816-0150. The hours of operation are 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday except on University of Central Florida official holidays. The telephone number is (407) 823-2901.

Sincerely,

Marty Norris

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the procedure described above for the Student Bullying Questionnaire.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand a copy of the signed consent form will be sent home with my child on the day they complete the survey.

I voluntarily give my consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in Marty Norris' study entitled, "Bullying In Secondary Schools" and to complete the Student Teasing and Bullying Questionnaire during the time and class designated by the school's principal.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Date

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Guardian Date  
(or Witness if no 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Guardian)

**Please sign and return this page to your child's school.**

**APPENDIX G: SURVEY ADMINISTRATOR CHECKLIST**

### Checklist for survey administrators

**In order to provide each student with the same directions for taking the survey, please use the following checklist as a guideline on what needs to be done.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Distribute the photocopies of the signed parental consent forms to the appropriate students and ask them to take them home to their parents.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please give each student a Child Assent form and ask him or her to follow along on their assent form, as you read aloud the following statement:

**Please Read this explanation carefully, and ASK any Questions before signing.**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about your experiences with bullying. Your responses will be kept completely confidential, which means that your name will be separated from your answers and will not be shared with anyone else. No one but me, Marty Norris, and my professor will see your responses, so please try to answer honestly. The information will provide valuable knowledge about young people in general and your private, individual information will not be published. If you become uncomfortable at any time, please tell me immediately. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and YOU MAY STOP AT ANY TIME.

I volunteer to take part in this research study and know that I can quit at any time I want to.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please direct the students to sign, date and print their name on the form if they agree to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Collect the child assent forms in no particular order.

\_\_\_\_\_ Distribute the student questionnaires and remind students **not** to write their name on the survey. Please collect the surveys when the students are finished and/or before leaving the room. **Note:** Please keep the student assent forms and surveys in two mixed ordered stacks. This will assist in assuring the student responses will remain anonymous.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please return the surveys and child assent forms to the designated contact person at your school.

**Thank you for assisting me with the administering of the survey. Your assistance in this important study is greatly appreciated!**

**APPENDIX H: CHILD ASSENT FORM**

**ASSENT FORM**

PROJECT: Bullying In Secondary Schools

RESEARCHER: Marty Norris

CONTACT: Marty Norris at 407-870-4995 or Dr. Barbara Murray at 407-823-1473

University of Central Florida, College of Education

P.O. Box 161250, Orlando, FL 32816

Please READ this explanation carefully, and ASK any QUESTIONS before signing.

You are being asked to participate in a research study. You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about your experiences with bullying. Your responses will be kept completely confidential, which means that your name will be separated from your answers and will not be shared with anyone else. No one but me, Marty Norris, and my professor will see your responses, so please try to answer honestly. The information will provide valuable knowledge about young people in general and your private, individual information will not be published. If you become uncomfortable at any time, please tell me immediately. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary, and YOU MAY STOP AT ANY TIME.

I volunteer to take part in this research study and know that I can quit at any time I want to

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Student



**APPENDIX I: PERMISSION TO USE SURVEY**

**ARTHUR M. BODIN, Ph.D., ABPP**

555 MIDDLEFIELD ROAD, RM 210  
PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA 94301-2124  
PHONE (650) 328-3000  
FAX (650) 328-4334  
WWW.FAMILYANDMARRIAGE.COM

BOARD CERTIFIED IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY  
AMERICAN BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BOARD CERTIFIED IN FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY  
AMERICAN BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BOARD CERTIFIED IN FAMILY PSYCHOLOGY  
AMERICAN BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Thank you for requesting the School Version of the Teasing and Bullying Survey (TABS-S). You have my permission to use the Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version (TABS-S). This instrument is at the Fourth Grade reading level on a word by word basis and according to "The Lexile Framework for Reading" (710L). In the few instances of words beyond the Fourth Grade reading level I have tried to overcome the difficulty by adding one or two simple synonyms so that the child is likely to be able to read at least one of the words.

The School Version of the TABS may take about 10-25 minutes, depending on grade level. The TABS-S is taken anonymously so as to encourage student candor and allow principals to authorize its use without parental permission and without worrying about child abuse reporting.

The TABS-S begins with four questions about how the student likes the school, how happy the student is with classes and with school outside of classes, and how are the student's grades, using seven-point scales. Next come five questions about how much teasing and bullying have affected the student, using a six-point scale ranging from "Not At All" to "A Whole Lot." Specifically, these questions ask:

1. How much does school teasing/bullying upset you?
2. How safe do you feel at your school?
3. How much does school teasing/bullying cause you worry or fear?
4. How much does school teasing/bullying harm your grades?
5. How much are you or others teased/bullied because of good grades or for showing a lot of interest in schoolwork?

The section ends with eight questions:

1. Have you ever skipped school because of teasing or bullying?
2. If yes [to question 1], how many days in the past month?
3. How many good friends do you have at your school?
4. Have you been teased or bullied by any student(s) from school in the past month?
5. If yes, by how many students?
6. Have you teased or bullied any students from school in the past month?
7. If yes, how many students?
8. About how many times do you see teasing or bullying in a school day?

The second part of the TABS-S contains 82 paired items, 80 of which ask about their experience in the past month. The odd numbered items ask about having been victimized and the even numbered items ask about having victimized someone else. Students check a Yes or No answer to each question. The last pair of items (81-82) taps the student's self-concept regarding whether he or she is teased or bullied and whether he or she teases or bullies.

The third part of the TABS-S begins with: "Have you ever talked with an adult about your being teased or bullied?" and "If so, which adult(s)?" (from a list of 12 choices). These questions are followed by a short section designed to identify "Hot Spots," which allows students to indicate how often they or others are teased and/or bullied at each of nine locations. Next come three auxiliary questions concerning the student's perception about what the school does about teasing and bullying, since hopelessness about the school's proactive and reactive efforts may contribute to desperate behavior. The final question is about what the student does upon seeing teasing and bullying.

I would be very grateful if you would be willing to explore the possibility of sharing with me for research purposes the TABS-S data from your research. I look forward to hearing from you. I am eager to help you adapt the TABS-S to your specific purposes and, if you are interested, to discuss possibilities for collaborative research and publication. My work number is (650) 328-3000.

Sincerely,



Arthur M. Bodin, Ph.D., ABPP  
Clinical Psychologist

**APPENDIX J: SURVEY**

**TEASING AND BULLYING SURVEY:  
SCHOOL VERSION (TABS-S)**

by

Arthur M. Bodin, Ph.D., ABPP  
(650) 328-3000  
[www.familyandmarriage.com](http://www.familyandmarriage.com)  
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**Start Here:**

The following questionnaire will measure the prevalence of teasing and bullying, attitudes toward school, feelings of safety, impact on grades, impact on school attendance, and impact of intervention programs. The results from this study may not directly benefit students today, but may benefit future students. Your participation in this questionnaire is voluntary. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. Thank you in advance for your participation in this research.

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female

What is your ethnicity? *(Please check all that apply)*

- African-American/Black
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian-American/Asian/Pacific Islander
- European-American/White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Mixed (any combination)

**A1. How do you like your school? *(Please circle one number)***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I hate it	I dislike it a lot	I dislike it	I equally like and dislike it	I like it	I like it a lot	I love it

**A2. How happy are you with your classes? *(Please circle one number)***

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I hate it	I dislike it a lot	I dislike it	I equally like and dislike it	I like it	I like it a lot	I love it

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!**

E1. What your school does about teasing and bullying? *(please check only one)*

- 1. Makes things worse.
- 2. Makes no difference/keeps things the same.
- 3. Makes things better.

E2. What your school does about teasing and bullying? *(please check only one)*

- 1. Is way too little.
- 2. Is a bit too little.
- 3. Is just about right.
- 4. Is a bit too much.
- 5. Is way too much.

E3. What does your school do about teasing and bullying? *(please check all that apply)*

- 1. They teach us not to tease and bully and what to do about it.
- 2. They try not to let it happen.
- 3. They try to stop it if it does happen.
- 4. They just talk about it.
- 5. They are still trying to decide if there is a teasing/bullying problem.
- 6. They don't think there is a teasing/bullying problem.
- 7. They do not help the kids who get teased or bullied.
- 8. They do nothing about the kids who tease/bully.

E4. What do you do when you see teasing and bullying among students? *(please check all that apply)*

- 1. I join in.
- 2. I just watch.
- 3. I try to ignore it or pretend not to see it.
- 4. I tell an adult.
- 5. I try to stop it.

A3. How happy are you with school outside of classes? *(Please circle one number)*

Extremely Unhappy	Very Unhappy	Somewhat Unhappy	Equally Happy & Unhappy	Somewhat Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

A4. How are you feeling? *(Please circle one number)*

Way below average	Well below average	A little below average	About average	A little above average	Well above average	Way above average
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

For A5 - A9, please circle one number for each question.

- ▶▶▶▶▶ Not At All
- ▶▶▶▶ Very Little
- ▶▶▶ A Little
- ▶▶ Somewhat
- ▶ A Lot
- ▶▶▶▶▶ A Whole Lot

- A5. How much does school teasing/bullying upset you?..... 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A6. How safe do you feel at your school?..... 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A7. How much does school teasing/bullying cause you worry or fear?..... 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A8. How much does school teasing/bullying harm your grades?..... 0 1 2 3 4 5
- A9. How much are you or others teased/bullied because of good grades or for showing a lot of interest in schoolwork?..... 0 1 2 3 4 5

B1. Have you ever skipped school because of teasing or bullying?  Yes  No

B2. If yes, how many days in the past month? (Please check one box)  
 0  1  2  3  4  5  More: \_\_\_\_ (please say how many days)

B3. How many good friends do you have at your school? (Please check one box)  
 0  1  2  3  4  5  More: \_\_\_\_ (Please say how many friends)

B4. Have you been teased or bullied by any student(s) from school in the past month?  
 Yes  No

B5. If yes, by how many students? (Please check all that apply)  
 1  Group of 2-5 together  2-5 by themselves  Group of 6+ together

B6. Have you teased or bullied any students from school in the past month?  
 Yes  No

B7. If yes, how many students? (Please check one box)  
 1  2  3  4  5  More: \_\_\_\_ (Please say how many students)

B8. About how many times do you see teasing or bullying in a school day? (Please check one box)  
 0 times  1-2 times  3-9 times  10-20 times  21 or more times

C1. Have you ever talked with an adult about your being teased or bullied?  
 Yes  No

C2. If yes, which adult(s)? (Please check all that apply)  
 Parent or Guardian  School Nurse  
 Other Family Member  Playground Supervisor  
 Teacher  Lunchroom Person  
 Vice Principal  Parent Volunteer  
 School Counselor or Psychologist  
 Outside Counselor or Psychologist  
 Security or Police  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

D. Hot Spots: (Please check one box for each place to show how often you or others are teased/bullied there)

	Never	Sometimes	Many Times
Classroom.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gym.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change Room/Locker Room.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lunchroom/Cafeteria.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playground/Athletic Field.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stairs/Hallway.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Washroom/Bathroom.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please say where

**In the past month:**

- 63. Someone slapped, pinched, punched, or kicked you.....
- 64. You slapped, pinched, punched, or kicked someone.....
- 65. Someone threw your down or held you down.....
- 66. You threw someone down or held them down.....
- 67. Someone threw something hard or sharp at you.....
- 68. You threw something hard or sharp at someone.....
- 69. Someone choked you.....
- 70. You choked someone.....
- 71. Someone threatened you with an object other than a gun or a knife.....
- 72. You threatened someone with an object other than a gun or a knife.....
- 73. Someone threatened you with a gun or a knife.....
- 74. You threatened someone with a gun or a knife.....
- 75. Someone hurt you with an object other than a gun or a knife.....
- 76. You hurt someone with an object other than a gun or a knife.....
- 77. Someone hurt you with a gun or a knife.....
- 78. You hurt someone with a gun or a knife.....
- 79. Someone teased/bullied you in some other way *(please exp. how)*.....
- 80. You teased/bullied someone in some other way *(please exp. how)*.....

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>81. Do you think of yourself as someone who gets teased/bullied by others?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>82. Do you think of yourself as someone who teases/bullies others?</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Read each sentence on the left and then check either **Yes** or **No** to show whether it happened at school (or on the school bus) in the past *month*.

**In the past month:**

- 1. Someone ignored you or would not answer you.....
- 2. You ignored someone or would not answer them.....
- 3. Someone bossed you around.....
- 4. You bossed someone around.....
- 5. Someone tried to stop you from being someone else's friend.....
- 6. You tried to stop someone from being someone else's friend.....
- 7. Someone acted as if you were disgusting or gross.....
- 8. You acted as if someone was disgusting or gross.....
- 9. Someone bothered or annoyed you.....
- 10. You bothered or annoyed someone.....
- 11. Someone picked a fight with you.....
- 12. You picked a fight with someone.....
- 13. Someone would not play or talk with you.....
- 14. You would not play or talk with someone.....
- 15. Someone was rude to you or disrespected you.....
- 16. You were rude to someone or disrespected someone.....
- 17. Someone acted as if you were weird, awkward, or different.....
- 18. You acted as if someone were weird, awkward, or different.....
- 19. Someone called your names or put you down.....
- 20. You called someone names or put them down.....

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**In the past month:**

21. Someone spread rumors or stories about you.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
22. You spread rumors or stories about someone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
23. Someone from school was mean to you by e-mail, IM, TM, or Internet.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
24. You were mean to someone from school by e-mail, IM, TM or Internet.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
25. Someone from school posted photos of you on the Internet or by cell phone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
26. You posted photos of someone from school on the Internet or by cell phone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
27. Someone made fun of a person or something you care about.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
28. You made fun of a person or something someone cares about.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
29. Someone laughed at, teased, or made fun of you.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
30. You laughed at, teased, or made fun of someone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
31. Someone played a mean trick or "joke" on you.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
32. You played a mean trick or "joke" on someone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
33. Someone swore or cursed at you — with words or hand motions.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
34. You swore or cursed at someone — with words or hand motions.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
35. Someone was mean about how you look, dress, walk, talk, or smell.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
36. You were mean to someone about how they look, dress, walk, talk, or smell.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
37. Someone was mean about you being a boy or girl.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
38. You were mean about someone being a boy or girl.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
39. Someone was mean about your not acting like a boy or girl.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
40. You were mean about someone not acting like a boy or girl.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
41. Someone was mean about your race, religion, or nationality.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
42. You were mean about someone's race, religion, or nationality.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

12-4-06 Teasing and Bullying Survey: School Version ©2006 by Arthur M. Boivin, Ph. D., AIPP. All Rights Reserved

**In the past month:**

43. Someone of your own race accused you of acting like a person of another race.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
44. You accused someone of your own race acting like a person of another race.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
45. Someone would not leave you alone when you asked them to.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
46. You would not leave someone alone when that person asked you to.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
47. Someone threatened you saying things like "I'll get you!" or "You are going to get it!".....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
48. You threatened someone, saying things like "I'll get you!" or "You are going to get it!".....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
49. Someone threatened to hurt you or beat you up.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
50. You threatened to hurt someone or beat them up.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
51. Someone played "keep away" with your things.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
52. You played "keep away" with someone's things.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
53. Someone purposely tore, broke, or ruined something of yours.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
54. You purposely tore, broke, or ruined something of someone's.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
55. Someone made you give him or her something that is yours.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
56. You made someone give you something that is theirs.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
57. Someone locked you up or trapped you somewhere.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
58. You locked someone up or trapped them somewhere.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
59. Someone pushed or tripped you.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
60. You pushed or tripped someone.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
61. Someone scratched you or pulled your hair.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
62. You scratched someone or pulled their hair.....	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	

**APPENDIX K: BREVARD COUNTY LETTER**

**School Board of Brevard County**  
2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way Viera, FL 32940-6699  
Richard A. DiPatri Ed.D, Superintendent



To: Marty Norris

From: Neyda Riley, Assistant Director  
Office of Accountability, Testing, & Evaluation  
Brevard Public Schools

Subject: Acceptance of Application to Conduct Research

Title: Bullying in Secondary School

Date: August 23, 2007

Dear Researcher:

Thank you for your application to conduct research in the Brevard Public Schools. This letter is official verification that your application has been accepted and approved through the Office of Accountability, Testing, & Evaluation.

This is a reminder that you must contact the principal(s) of the school(s) listed on your application, present them with copies of your Application Form, and secure their signatures for approval. Approval of your study at the district level does not obligate principals to participate in the proposed research.

In the future if you have any questions or concerns, please contact Neyda Riley at 321/633-1000 extension 368. Please submit your research findings and summary to the address below, Good luck.

Office of Accountability, Testing, & Evaluation  
Research Results  
Brevard Public Schools  
2700 Judge Fran Jamieson Way  
Viera, Florida 32940

Office of Accountability, Testing & Evaluation  
Phone: (321) 631-1911 FAX: (321) 633-3465

**APPENDIX L: OSCEOLA COUNTY LETTER**

Secondary Education  
817 Bill Beck Boulevard  
Kissimmee, Florida 34744-4495

In regards to: Doctoral Study on Bullying

Chuck Butler  
Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
817 Bill Beck Blvd.  
Kissimmee, FL 34744



**Charles E. Butler**  
Assistant Superintendent  
for School Services

**The School District of Osceola County**  
817 Bill Beck Boulevard  
Kissimmee, Florida 34744-4495

Office: (407) 870-1900      Mobile: (407) 908-6622  
Sui. Com: 340-4065      Fax: (407) 876-1811

E-Mail Address: [butlerc@osceola.k12.fl.us](mailto:butlerc@osceola.k12.fl.us)

Dear Mr. Butler:

Per our meeting on August 21, 2006 at your office, I am sending the information you have requested for me to conduct my doctoral study in the Osceola County School District.

The study will be conducted in the following schools:

I have also included a list of the criteria that we discussed in our meeting:

- Students will complete the questionnaire anonymously
- Teachers have the right to decline participation with students in their class
- School-based Administrators will decide when and where the questionnaires will be completed
- Parental permission will be obtained before students will be selected
- Students will be randomly selected
- The names of the school and the district will be coded to further protect the anonymity of the students and staff.
- A copy of the data for Osceola County will be provided to you upon completion
- I will send a copy of the UCF approval letter to your office and the schools prior to starting the study
- The questionnaires will be completed in one day.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [norism@osceola.k12.fl.us](mailto:norism@osceola.k12.fl.us) or by phone at (O) 407-870-4995 or (C) 407-414-1915.

Sincerely,

Marty Norris

APPROVED  
8/23/06

**APPENDIX M: VOLUSIA COUNTY LETTER**



**Dr. Margaret A. Smith**  
Superintendent of Schools

P.O. Box 2410  
Daytona Beach, Florida 32115-2410

DeLand  
(386) 734-7190

Daytona Beach  
(386) 255-6475

729 Loomis Avenue  
Daytona Beach, Florida 32114

New Smyrna Beach  
(386) 427-5223

Osteen  
(386) 860-3322

**School Board of Volusia County**

**Dr. Al Williams, Chairman**  
**Ms. Judy Conte, Vice-Chairman**  
**Ms. Candace Lankford**  
**Mr. Stan Schmidt**  
**Mrs. Diane Smith**

September 11, 2007

Mr. Marty Norris  
3405 S. Delaware Avenue  
St. Cloud, FL 34769

Dear Mr. Norris:

I have received your request to conduct research with Volusia County Schools. I understand you will be conducting research on "Bullying in Central Florida Middle Schools". I am approving your request to conduct this research with teachers and 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. As with all request to do research; participation is at the sole discretion of the principals, teachers and by parent permission for the students.

By copy of this letter, you may contact our Middle/High School Coordinator Ms. Deborah Drawdy at extension X60196; she can assist you in contacting your target group. We request that you conduct your survey with as little disruption to the instruction day as possible.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of your project at the completion of your study.

Sincerely,

Chris J. Colwell, Deputy Superintendent  
Instructional Services

CJC/mf

cc: Ms. Deborah Drawdy, Coordinator – Middle/High School Services

An Equal Opportunity Employer

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