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**Exploring Bullying Problems among Primary, Secondary and High School
Students**

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ABSTRACT

Experiences of peer bullying like those depicted in the opening vignettes are far too common an occurrence in schools worldwide. Being bullied can be tremendously painful, and victimization has been associated with a myriad of adjustment problems. It was reported that almost one in three students had been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month. The prevalence of student bullying varied largely in different countries and regions. One crucial cause of this was that there was no standard definition of bullying or cyberbullying in international surveys (UNESCO, 2019). Since the concept of bullying was initiated half a century ago, arguments over its definition, features, and effectiveness of anti-bullying programs have always existed. Relying on these research topics and to the related literature, this research aimed to identify the essential features of student bullying to distinguish it from other negative behaviors by classifying the relationships between bullying, violence, and cyberbullying, delimiting its connotation and extent, and defining it through new perspectives.

To achieve these goals, three empirical studies were employed in this research. The first study was a questionnaire administered to 60 in-service primary, secondary, and high school teachers in China to learn teachers' viewpoints about bullying problems according to their experience. For making up for the inadequacy in the first quantitative study, the second study interviewed three teachers in primary, secondary, and high schools separately to collect the data on the mechanism of student bullying, the related countermeasures adopted, and their effect. Based on the two studies' results, the third study, the control condition of imagined contact experiments, tried to analyze the effects of a positive relationship between intergroup members in supporting vulnerable peers in bullying behaviors, thereby reducing the incidents of student bullying in schools.

Based on the abovementioned analyses and results, this research proposed a new definition of student bullying characterized by three new features, classified bullying as the primary stage before student violence, and student violence was a qualitative change of bullying, which makes this definition more operable and practical in practice. The results of the third study, the imaged contact, showed that positive contact was associated with more empathy, better helping attitudes, and less intergroup

discrimination, exclusion, and aggression. It was essential for peers to offer help to some unpopular or disabled students in class, thereby counteracting the occurrence of bullying events and protecting the bullied students from further harm. Thus, peer supports are the potential power to address bullying problems. Furthermore, four strategic measures were put forward on the grounds of the abovementioned results in the end.

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CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF BULLYING AMONG PRIMARY, SECONDARY, AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Literature review of the bullying phenomenon

Article 29 (1) of General Comment No. 1 of Committee on the Right of the Child (CRC, 2001) declared that the aim of education is the following: The instruction to which every child has a right is one designed to provide the child with life skills, to strengthen the child's capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture which is infused by appropriate human rights values. The goal is to empower the child by developing their skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem, and self-confidence (Special Representative of the Secretary-General [SRS], 2016).

Resolutions 69/158 of 18 December 2014, 71/176 of 19 December 2016, and resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2018 on protecting children from bullying, together with all its previous resolutions on the rights of the child and the solutions adopted by the Human Rights Council, recognizing the importance of international, regional and bilateral multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives to advance the adequate protection and promotion of the rights of the child and the elimination of violence against children, including all forms of bullying (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2019).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2017) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development established the goal (e.g., Sustainable Development Goal, Target 4) to ensure the right of education of all children and young people in safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments. "Safe to learn" is another initiative dedicated to ending violence in and through schools so that children are free to learn, thrive, and pursue their dreams. As part of UNESCO's commitment to prevent and address the issue of violence and bullying, including cyberbullying at school, UNESCO has published many reports and taken a lot of actions to achieve these goals.

November 5, 2020, was the first international day against violence and bullying, including cyberbullying at school, proposed by France, Mexico, and Morocco, before the 207th session of the Executive Board and the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO on November 2019, which aimed at creating a global movement to end

bullying in schools by raising awareness, exchanging best practices and mobilizing governments, experts and the educational community. All member states, organizations of the United Nations system, other relevant international and regional organizations, and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, individuals, and relevant stakeholders, would be called to promote, celebrate and facilitate the observance of the international day. It is an appropriate opportunity to address the phenomenon of violence and bullying in primary, secondary, and high schools and promote a culture of respect for pupils' rights and zero tolerance to violence and bullying among school students so that all children and young people could fulfill their rights to education, health, and well-being.

It was reported that more than one billion children worldwide attended school (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], 2009; SRSG, 2016). These children should enjoy their rights to be taught in a safe and stimulating environment. However, not all schooling has guaranteed such opportunities. Many of these girls and boys were exposed to bullying, sexual and gender-based violence, corporal punishment, and other forms of unfair treatment. Many are also exposed to schoolyard fighting, gang violence, assault with weapons, and sexual and gender-based violence by their peers. The new form of violence was also affecting children's lives, primarily the phenomenon of cyber-bullying via mobile phones, computers, websites, or social networking sites (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, 2016; Pinheiro, 2006).

The results of the "U Report," carried out by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in 2016, collecting data through an online opinion poll to gather viewpoints of over 100,000 children and adolescents worldwide based on their experience of bullying, suggested that: (a) two-thirds participants reported they had been bullied; (b) nearly one quarter reported they had been bullied for their physical appearance, one quarter because of their gender or sexuality, almost one quarter because of their ethnicity or national origin, and over one quarter for unspecified reasons; (c) one-third thought being bullied was expected and did not tell anyone, one quarter did not know who to tell, over 4 in 10 did not tell anyone, because they were afraid or ashamed (SRSG, 2016).

Data from the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) of World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) showed that the prevalence rate of the students having been bullied ranged from 7.1% to 74% (data collected between 2003-2017), while the Health Behavior in School-aged Children's (HBSC) data (data collected

between 2001-2014 in 144 countries and territories) from 8.7% to 55.5%. The prevalence and frequency of school bullying vary among regions and countries. The highest proportion of students who reported having been bullied lay in sub-Saharan Africa (48.2%) in comparison with the lowest in Europe (25%), the Caribbean (25%), and Central America (22.8%) (see Figure 1.1). UNESCO's (2019) report demonstrated that: Globally, nearly one in three students (32%) had been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month period.

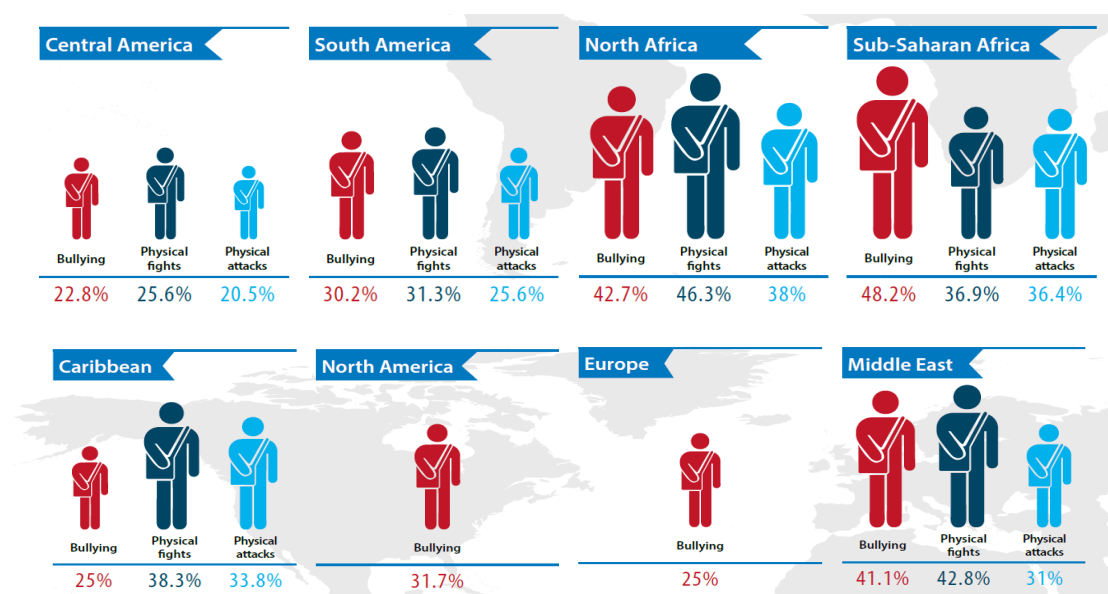


Figure 1.1. Percentage of students who were bullied, in a physical fight, or physically attacked. Overview of different forms of school violence and bullying prevalence in other world regions, the source was from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2019 report. Data on the prevalence of bullying and different types of bullying are drawn mainly from the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) and the Health Behavior in School-aged Children Study (HBSC).

Many facts had been revealed through the data and measurements of the GSHS, HBSC, and other organizations, such as physical bullying was the most common type. Sexual bullying was the second most common in all regions except Europe and North America. In contrast, psychological bullying was the most common type of bullying in Europe and North America area, and cyberbullying was a growing problem based on reports by children aged 11-16 years in seven European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom), data showed that the incidence of cyberbullying was rising from 7% in 2010 to 12% in 2014 (see Figure 1.2).



Figure 1.2. Change in the percentage of children aged 11-16 who use the Internet to report being cyberbullied in Europe. According to UNESCO's report, Mascheroni and Cuman's data source, 2014.

School violence and bullying had imposed severe consequences not only on students involved in this phenomenon but also on society, mainly displayed on three aspects, students' educational achievements, physical and mental health development or well-being, and societal problems.

Data on students' educational consequences (mainly from the Program for International Students Assessment) concluded that: (a) children who had been bullied scored lower in tests than their non-bullied peers; (b) the educational effects on bullied students and bystanders were also significant on the part of successfully accomplishment of study, the consequences included missing class, avoiding school activities, playing truant or dropping out of schools.

Bullying's consequences deeply affected children's physical and mental health development or well-being, which exhibited as (a) children who were frequently bullied were more likely to feel like an outsider at school; (b) GSHS (2019) reported that bullying was associated with bad habits, such as higher rates of smoking, alcohol and drug use; (c) bullying has a bearing on students' earlier sexual experience; (d) school violence may lead to physical injuries and harm; (e) bullying has a high relationship with lower rates of well-being at school.

School violence and bullying in and around the school also had significant effects on society, which might be demonstrated in the short-term and long-run impact. Such impact on bullied and perpetrators could bring about an unsafe school environment for all students and cause an increased risk of antisocial and criminal behaviors.

Goal 4 of *The Global Education 2030 Agenda* (UNESCO, 2015) aimed to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" and declared that:

School-related violence in all its forms is an infringement of children's and adolescents' rights to education, health, and well-being. No country can achieve

inclusive and equitable quality education for all if learners experience violence and bullying in school. (p.10)

Therefore, it was emergent and meaningful to explore this unique phenomenon in-depth, which could help build a friendly relationship between students among primary, secondary, and high school and construct a safe and warm school environment, promoting the full development of all children in the world.

A search of the PsycINFO database with the term “bully” turned out only four books, journal articles, chapters, or dissertations on the subject of bullying in 1988. By 2001, there were 123, and more than 150 published each year since 2004 (Olweus, 2010). In China, the increased attention on bullying among students has been fueled in recent years. A search on www.cnki.net showed the trend of concentration on the term “Qilin” (Chinese term corresponds to bullying) published from 1988 to 2020 (see Figure 1.3), which indicated that it was not until 2015 that the phenomenon of bullying among school students began to draw the public and researchers’ concern and interest. In 2016, the number of articles related to bullying topic exceeded 500.

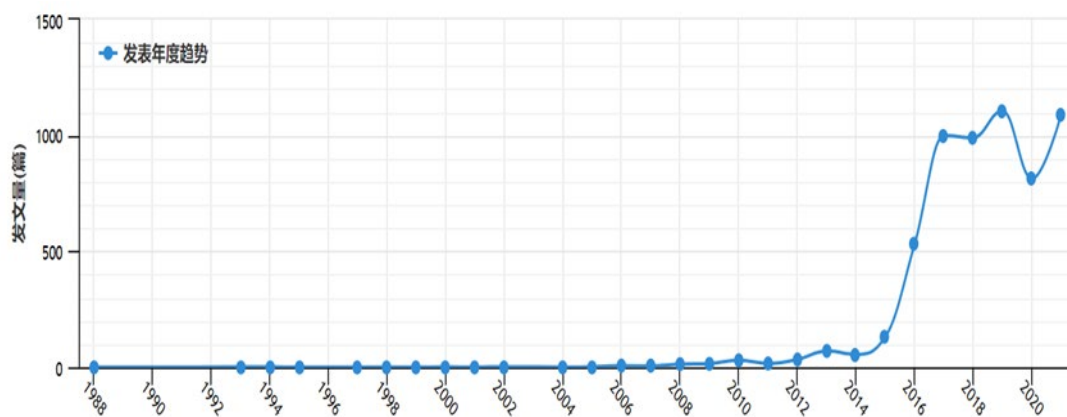


Figure 1.3. There are annual trends in the number of articles on the subject “Qilin” published from 1988-2020. The horizontal axis represents the year, and the vertical axis represents the number of articles published.

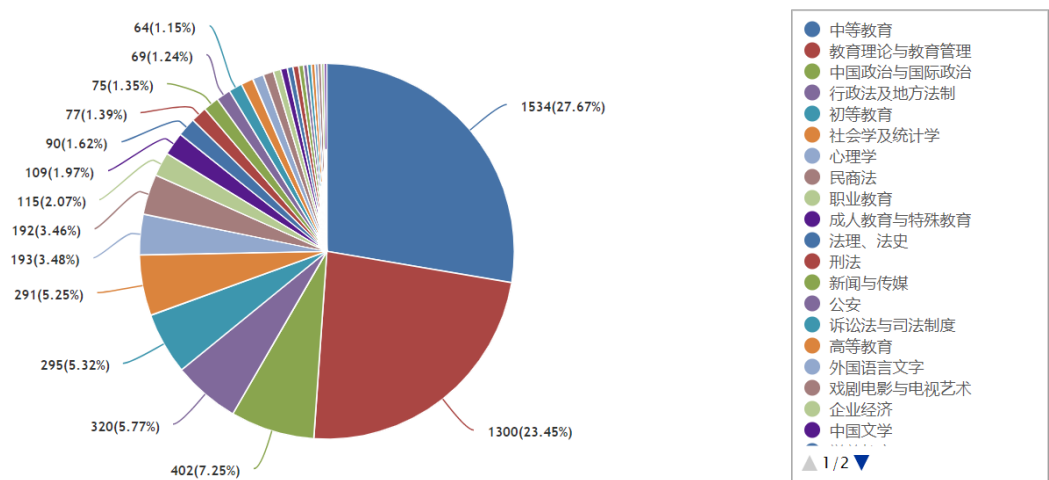


Figure 1.4. This pie chart represents the number of articles published in different disciplines. The number of articles published in secondary education disciplines is the largest, accounting for 27.67%. Educational theory and education management disciplines ranked second, for 23.45%. The source was from China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI).

Researchers from various disciplines have also addressed what is now called school bullying or violence from different professional perspectives since the 1970s. As shown in the following tables (Table 1.1, Table 1.2, Table 1.3.), citations in the “https://web.b.ebscohost.com/” research database with title or keywords “school bullying” or “school violence” or “students bullying,” Published Date: 1960/01/01-2021/01/31, the total publication numbers are 44,945.

Table 1.1. Source types (all results).

Name	Count
Academic Journals	24,655
Journals	24,239
Magazines	7,669
Reports	4,679
News	4,297
Books	1,957
Dissertations	1,721
Reviews	831
Conference Materials	299
Trade Publications	255
Government Documents	51
CEUs	15

Biographies	8
Overviews	1

Note. Data from <https://web.b.ebscohost.com>

Table 1.2. *Methodology.*

Name	Count
Quantitative Study	4,519
Qualitative Study	951
Interview	906
Longitudinal Study	540
Literature Review	283
Focus Group	152
Follow-up Study	143
Nonclinical Case Study	133
Mathematical Model	107
Prospective Study	79
Systematic Review	70
Clinical Case Study	55
Meta-Analysis	54
Retrospective Study	53
Clinical Trial	39
Field Study	25
Treatment Outcome	23
Experimental Replication	12
Scientific Simulation	10
Twin Study	6
Meta Synthesis	1

Note. Data from <https://web.b.ebscohost.com>

Table 1.3. *Database distribution.*

Name	Count
Education Source	13,482
APA PsycInfo	9,032
SocINDEX with Full Text	4,976
ERIC	4,951
Regional Business News	4,590
CINAHL Complete	3,172
Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection	1,873
Business Source Complete	1,698
SPORTDiscus with Full Text	645
APA PsycArticles	314
Historical Abstracts	64
RILM Abstracts of Music Literature	43
MLA International Bibliography with Full Text	39
Philosopher's Index	36
International Political Science Abstracts	17
GreenFILE	11
Mental Measurements Yearbook	2

Note. Data from <https://web.b.ebscohost.com>

As stated above, the phenomenon has attracted the attention of all parties. Although many achievements have been made in this field, there are still a lot of controversial topics and unknown areas in this field today. To achieve the goal of UNESCO on this subject, this research tried to propose theoretical innovations and practical verifications of this phenomenon based on previous research results.

Concept of bullying

Bullying

Olweus, the first to propose the concept of bullying, was a psychologist in Sweden in the late 1960s and early 1970s. With the publication of the book: *Aggression in the schools: bullies and whipping boys*, the problem of student bullying has entered people's field of vision since then. Based on the research of a robust societal

phenomenon of peer harassment or victimization, Olweus doubted the suitability of the use of the term “mob” to describe the kind of peer harassment that occurred in school settings (Olweus, 1973, 1978, 2010), and initiated another term “bullying” to refer to the phenomenon. Olweus (1993) defined bullying as: “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (p.9). He generalized the characteristics of this definition as three criteria: “intention,” “repetitiveness,” and “imbalance of power” between the bullies and the victims (Olweus, 1993, 2010). He (2010) also ascribed bullying problems as a subset of aggression.

To investigate the prevalence of bullying among elementary and middle school students, Olweus employed the Olweus Bullying Prevention Questionnaire (OBQ) to measure bully/victim problems. The latest version of OBQ was edited in 2007, compared with the previous version, the new one expanded the definition of bullying as follows: (a) say mean and hurtful things/make fun of others/mean and hurtful names calling on others; (b) purposely isolate or exclude another student(s) from their group of friends; (c) hit, kick, push shove around, or lock them inside the room; (d) spread false rumors or tell lies about another student(s) to make others unpopular; (e) other hurtful things like that. He specifically stressed two points: teasing was done in a friendly and playful way; the other was the fight between two students of about the same strength or power, were not bullying behaviors (Olweus, 2010).

Since then, other researchers have given many definitions of bullying from different perspectives, but most of them were derived from the one defined by Olweus. Even though more than 30 years of research on bullying, the field has yet to reach a unanimous agreement on its definition (Cuadrado, 2012). Nevertheless, it seemed that the use of the three criteria given by Olweus for the classification of a behavior as bullying now was well accepted among both researchers and practitioners (Olweus, 2010; Smith & Brain, 2000).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying appeared as a new form of violence compared with traditional bullying and was a relatively recent phenomenon that has received much attention from both researchers and the media. Some challenges concerning the boundaries and relationships of cyberbullying and traditional bullying mainly lay in the following areas:

Was cyberbullying a new phenomenon or a subcategory or form of traditional bullying? Should cyberbullying be regarded as a distinct phenomenon with unique characteristics that differ from traditional bullying? What was the relationship between cyberbullying and traditional bullying? Controversies like these still exist today.

Global Kids Online did not refer to cyberbullying and used “online hurtful behavior” instead of its survey. UNESCO report (2019) defined cyberbullying as follows: One or more students were bullied by messages (e.g., someone sending mean messages, postings, emails, and text messages or creating a website that made fun of someone) or by pictures (e.g., someone taking and posting online unflattering or inappropriate photos of a student without permission), or being treated in a hurtful or nasty way by mobile phones (e.g., texts, calls, video, clips) or online (email, instant messaging, social networking, chatrooms). This definition only specified the ways and methods used in cyberbullying and did not concern other aspects imposed on the bullied students.

All in all, as emphasized in the report of UNESCO of 2019, there was no standard definition of bullying and cyber-bullying in international surveys now.

Natures and characteristics of bullying and cyberbullying

Current research agreed on the following general factors contributing to the bullying phenomenon in schools.

1) There was blatant discrimination between genders of students engaging in school bullying behaviors. Data from the Global School-based student’s Health Survey (GSHS) showed that boys were more likely to involve in or experience bullying behaviors (2016). Many more boys than girls bullied others, and a relatively large percentage of girls reported that they were mainly bullied by boys (Olweus, 1993).

2) The Young Lives Project (2016) found that boys in school were at significantly higher risk of physical and verbal bullying, while girls experienced indirect and relational bullying at high rates. A national survey indicated that 61% of boy bullies reported bullying others with physical violence compared with 30% of girl bullies; in contrast, 43% of girl bullies reported isolating others compared with 26% of boy bullies (UNESCO, 2014). Bullying with physical means was less common among girls. However, girls typically used more subtle and indirect ways of harassment such as

spreading rumors, intentional exclusion from the group, and manipulation of friendship relations (Olweus, 1993. 2010).

3) Types of school bullying might vary with age. Data from three national surveys in the USA showed that the common forms of bullying, including verbal insults, hitting, theft, threats, spreading rumors, and social exclusion, would tend to decrease with age, with in-person bullying falling by nearly 50% between the age of 14 and 18. At the same time, cyberbullying was reported to decrease at a slower rate, from 17% to 13% (CDC, 2014). WHO (2014) report showed that bullying in physical aggression was more frequent in primary school, whereas cyberbullying took place more in middle school. Bullying peaks appeared during the middle school period (i.e., 12-15 years) and tended to decrease till the high school period (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Hymel & Swearer, 2015), and there was a magnificent shift of bullying forms from physical bullying to indirect and relational bullying with students' age increasing (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Rivers & Smith, 1994).

4) It was stated that the size of the class of school had been exposed to be of negligible importance for the relative frequency or level of bully/victim problems in the course or school based on some international research (Olweus, 1993; Rutter, 1983).

5) The typical victims were characterized as usually physically weaker than their peers (particularly in boys), sensitive, submissive, shy, withdrawn, who had few or no friends in school, and had negative friendship qualities (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; see also Cook et al., 2010; Hawker & Boulton, 2000), while typical bullies were often observed physically more robust than their peers, who were usually hot-tempered, aggressive, with a negative attitude toward schools (Olweus, 1993).

6) Victims of bullying suffer from severe symptoms of mental health problems in the short term. Furthermore, the long-lasting effects can persist until late adolescence (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; see also Arseneault et al., 2010). Children who were victims of bullying have been consistently found to be at higher risk for internalizing problems, in particular diagnoses of an anxiety disorder (Stapinski, 2014) and depression in young adulthood and middle adulthood (18–50 years of age) (Takizawa et al., 2014). Victims were also at increased risk for displaying psychotic experiences at age 18 and having suicidal ideation (Wolke et al., 2014), attempted and completed suicides (Takizawa et al., 2014). Moreover, victimized children were found to have lower educational qualifications, who performed worse at financial management

(Wolke et al., 2014), and earned less than their peers even at age 50 (Wolke & Lereya, 2015; see also Brown & Taylor, 2008; Takizawa et al., 2014).

Ttofi et al. (2011) underscored that bullying perpetrators were more likely involved in later criminal offending and psychotic symptoms, which might lead to adult adversities (Klomek et al., 2015). Results from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development revealed that bullying in childhood might increase the likelihood of later adverse outcomes: bullying at age 14 predicted violent convictions between ages 15 and 20, self-reported violence at age 15–18, low job status at age 18, drug use at age 27–32, and an unsuccessful life at age 48 (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011). Some follow-up studies reported that approximately 35-40% of boys who were characterized as bullies in grades 6-9 had been convicted of at least three officially registered crimes by the age of 24, in contrast with only 10% of the control boys who were not bullies in school (Olweus, 1994).

7) The bullied (victims) students could be classified as two types according to their behaviors, the passive or submissive victim (who would not retaliate if being attacked or bullied), and the provocative victim (who was bullied and would bully other weaker students at the same time) (Olweus, 1994).

8) Causes of the bullying phenomenon were complicated and were not clear until now. Some researchers have touched on this issue. Olweus (1994) concluded that rearing conditions, group mechanisms, and social factors might contribute to this phenomenon. UNESCO (2019) reported that the critical influencing factors included: (a) not conforming to gender norms; (b) physical appearance; (c) race; (d) nationality or color.

Bullying's typology

Bullying behaviors among students could be classified into different types or forms.

1) The most straightforward way to categorize it was traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Traditional bullying included: (a) physical direct bullying; (b) verbal direct bullying; (c) non-verbal direct and indirect bullying (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4. *A classification of bullying.*

Forms of bullying		Direct	Indirect
Physical bullying		Hitting, beating another person, kicking or spitting, assaulting someone or throwing stones, etc.	
Non-physical	Verbal	Verbal insults, name-calling, spreading malicious rumors, etc.	
	Non-verbal	Showing obscene gestures, hiding other students' belongings, etc.	Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity, isolation, etc.

2) One popular classification was: (a) physical bullying (e.g., being hit, hurt, kicking, push, being shoved around or locked indoors, having things stolen, having personal belongings taken away or destroyed, or being forced to do things); (b) psychological bullying (e.g., verbal abuse, emotional abuse, and social exclusion); (c) sexual bullying (e.g., being made fun of with sexual jokes, comments or gestures); (d) cyberbullying (e.g., being bullied by messages, taking and posting online unflattering or inappropriate pictures of a student without permission, being treated in a hurtful or nasty way by mobile phones) (UNESCO, 2019).

Another classification was that bullying comprised four forms: physical bullying (e.g., hitting, kicking, damaging victim's property), verbal bullying (e.g., name-calling, threats, intimidation), relational or social bullying (e.g., social exclusion, relation control, rumor spreading), and cyberbullying, it was a new form that emerged with the rapid development of Internet technology.

Prevalence of bullying

It was reported that almost one in three students (32%) had been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month (UNESCO, 2019). However, there were significant differences in the prevalence and frequency of bullying between regions globally. CSHS data revealed that the prevalence of being bullied ranged from 7.1% to 74%, HBSC survey ranged from 8.7% to 55.5% (UNESCO, 2019).

GSHS suggested that 96 countries and territories' data showed that, overall, almost one in five (19.4%) students had been bullied at school on one or two days, one in 20 (5.6%) on three to five days, and one in 13 (7.3%) on six or more days during the previous month. Program for International Students Assessment (PIRLS, 2016) data from 50 countries and territories indicated that 29% of 9-10 year children had been bullied every month and 14% had been bullied every week in the past school year.

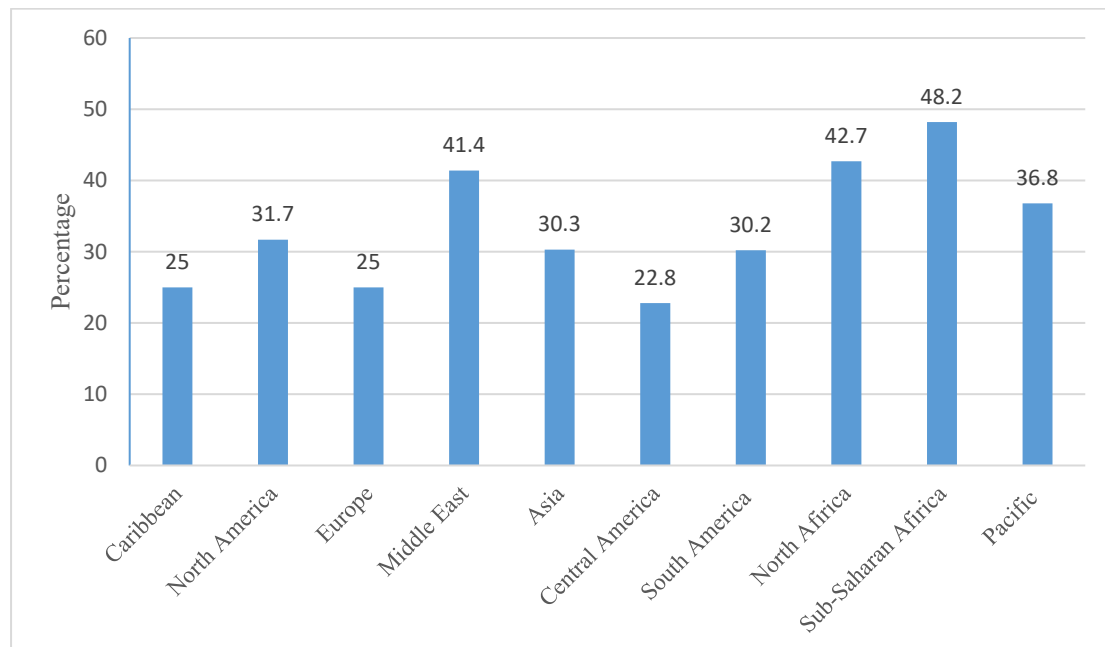


Figure 1.5. *Percentage of bullied students, in a physical fight or physically attached. Source cited from Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying. UNESCO, 2019.*

In Australia, it was estimated that one child in 6 was subjected to bullying every week (Rigby, 2002). Previous studies in Norway and Sweden found that 15% of students reported being involved in bully/victim problems at least 2-3 times per month (Olweus, 1993). Studies in the United States yielded slightly higher rates of bullying, ranging from a low of 10% for “extreme victims” of bullying (Perry et al., 1988) to a high of 75% who reported being bullied at least one time during their school years (Hoover et al., 1993). In a nationally representative study of American students in Grades 6 to 10, Nansel et al. (2001) reported that 17% had been bullied with some

regularity (several times or more within the semester), and 19% had bullied others. Based on a national survey, Olweus (1993) estimated that about 15% of the students in primary and junior high schools were involved in bullying behaviors now and then or more frequently.

As shown in Figure 1.5, prevalence rates of bullying varied considerably in different regions, which might be associated with the following factors: (a) the differences across cultural backgrounds of other countries and regions; (b) the way and method of data source collections (e.g., the design and content of the questionnaires or the way of administration); (c) the definition of bullying used (there has not been a uniform definition of bullying in school accepted undoubtedly, and many languages do not even have an equivalent word for the term “bullying”); (d) rating categories (ranging from general frequencies such as “rarely” or “often” to specific frequencies such as “once” or “several times a week”); use of composite or single items to rate bullying and victimization; (f) variation in cut-off points and demarcation to distinguish children who are or are not categorized as either bullying or as victimized (Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Boyle, 1996).

Causes of bullying

Significant achievements have been attained through a lot of empirical and theoretical research. However, the causes of the phenomenon of bullying are still ambiguous and uncertain, although it has been initiated for more than half a century. Some findings have been proposed from different aspects, perspectives, disciplines as follows:

1) Olweus claimed that bullying was a subset of aggressive behavior aggression (Olweus, 2010).

2) Social-ecological theory based on Bronfenbrenner’s ecological framework illustrated the intersecting systemic influences which comprised four parts: the microsystem or the immediate social environment; the mesosystem or social environment; the exosystem and macrosystem, these contributed to school violence, bullying, and peer victimization problems (Garbarino, 2001; Newman et al., 2000; Olweus, 1993), which supported the hypothesis that bullying and peer victimization are reciprocally influenced by the individual, family, peer group, school, community, and

society. Three sections, including the role of attachment style, parenting style, and social support, originated from the social-ecological theory, have attracted significant attention and gained a laundry list of research outcomes. Troy and Sroufe (1987) exposed that children having insecure, anxious-avoidant, or anxious-resistant attachments at the age of 18 months would be more likely to become involved in bullying at the age of four and five years later than those children with secure attachments. Parenting styles of child-rearing behaviors also served as models upon which children base their expectations of future interactions with others. Olweus summarized that too little love and care and too much freedom in childhood would strongly contribute to the development of an aggressive reaction pattern, parents' use of "power assertive" children rearing methods such as physical punishment and violent emotional outbursts would raise the children's level of aggression (Olweus, 1993).

Although Bronfenbrenner's social-ecological framework implied the intricacy of human behavior, it was difficult to empirically examine, evaluate and testify this complexity influenced mutually, at what level or close correlation those factors effectuated, especially at the macrosystem level.

3) The temperament of individual children played an integral part in developing an aggressive reaction pattern. Children with a "hot-headed" temperament would be more likely to develop into aggressors than those with ordinary or more quiet dispositions (Olweus, 1993).

4) Internalization problems associated with the bullies and the victims' internal experience and morality construction. The internalization process and external issues developed children's behavior and valuable powers. Many explanations had been put forward to explain the relationship that aggressive students at high ratings of internal disorders, including withdrawn depression, anxious depression, and somatic complaints (Crick et al., 2006). External problems were similar to the social-ecological theory; external environment (macro environment, meso environment, and microenvironment) could influence and shape children's behaviors. As mentioned above, family factors had been closely associated with children's aggressive behavior (Coyne et al., 2011). Children reared under harsh treatment, and little parental warmth care might be at high risk for aggressive behavior (Griffin & Gross, 2004) as it was shown that a positive school climate could effectively reduce bullying problems by enforcing norms of a safe environment and fostering solid relationships (Rosen et al., 2017).

5) The perspective maintained that peer aggression was a form of the typical socialization process, which sometimes served adaptive social functioning among humans and other primates through offering evolutionary advantages to the group (Frisén et al., 2012; Jimerson & Huai, 2010).

Consequences of bullying

The consequences of bullying behavior manifest a series of individual, educational and social problems.

1) In terms of individual aspects, bullying harmed the bullies and the victims. As was shown in the nature and characteristics of bullying and cyberbullying, bullying behavior had severe short-term and long-term adverse effects on both parties.

2) Concerning educational consequences, as aforementioned, bullying resulted in (a) children who were frequently bullied being more likely to feel like an outsider at school; being bullied could affect continued engagement in education. Children who were frequently bullied were more likely to leave school after finishing secondary education than those who were not frequently bullied (see Table 1.5); (b) children who were bullied scored lower in tests than their non-bullied peers. Poor discipline and an unsafe school environment were associated with lower academic achievement (see Table 1.6, Table 1.7).

Table 1.5. *Comparison between being frequently bullied and other student outcomes.*

	Frequently bullied	Not frequently bullied
Expected to end their education at the secondary level	44.5%	34.8%
Feel like an outsider (or left out of things at school)	42.4%	14.9%
Skipped school at least 3-4 days in the previous two weeks	9.2%	4.1%
Feel anxious for a test even if well prepared	63.9%	54.6%

Note. The data source was from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2015.

Table 1.6. *The difference in learning achievement between students who were bullied and not bullied.*

	Never or almost never been bullied	Bullied monthly	Bullied weekly
Learning achievement scores	521	507	482

Note. The data source was from the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, 2015. The scale has a typical range of achievement between 300 and 700.

Table 1.7. *The difference in learning scores between students who were bullied and those who were not bullied.*

	Not bullied	Bullied
Scores in mathematics	715.11	699.74
Scores in reading	715.43	696.91

Note. The data source was from the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education, 2013. The center point is 700 for both reading scores and mathematics scores.

3) Negative consequences on family, school, and community as follows: (a) school bullying and violence could cause physical injuries and harm, which was associated with higher rates of smoking, alcohol, and cannabis use, which was also associated with earlier age of first sexual experience (UNESCO, 2019); (b) bullying behavior resulted in an unsafe school environment, students who were bullied frequently were more likely to report low life satisfaction than those who were not bullied; (c) in addition to result in substantial personal suffering and difficulties for individuals and families, bullying problems could cause huge costs for society (Olweus & Breivik, 2014). Sourander et al. (2007) pointed out that former victims and bullies were “over-consumers” of society’s health and social support systems due to long sick leaves, unemployment, and early pensioning. A study carried out in the UK in 2010 found that 16-year-old bullied students were three times more likely to suffer from depression and five times more likely to have a criminal record at age 23 and 33 than those who had not been bullied (Smith & Kilpatrick, 2017; see also Ellery et al., 2010).

It was reported that the psychological/psychiatric treatment and health-related costs caused by bullying behavior were a big deal for the society. These social-economic costs could be embodied in many respects, including the forgone benefit from early school drop-out and destruction of social order and wealth as reported that gang

violence in Los Angeles alone was thought to cost the U.S. criminal justice system US\$1.145 billion each year (Davis, 2011). Youth violence in Brazil was estimated to cost nearly US\$19 billion every year (SRSG, 2013). These statistics proved that investment in violence prevention was good governance and respect for human rights.

Prevention and intervention theories and programs

A salvo of prevention and intervention theories and programs to address students bullying problems have been put forward and implemented in many countries and areas around the world (e.g., Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States), proposers, researchers or practitioners have collected empirical data and qualitative sources. However, the cultural backgrounds and contextual considerations shared among programs differed and economic development among other countries was also at different levels. All of these endeavors and diligent work helped to understand antecedents and outcomes associated with bullying behaviors and the effectiveness of these intervention and prevention programs in reducing bullying behaviors.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), initiated in the 1980s in Norway by Olweus, following his scholarship in this scope, was considered the blueprint of all the other school-based bullying prevention and intervention programs worldwide. The primary goal of OBPP was: “to reduce as much as possible ideally to eliminate completely—existing bully/victim problems in and out of the school settings and to prevent the development of new problems” (Olweus, 1999, p. 65). These goals were achieved by constructing students’ social environment on four levels (Olweus & Limber, 2010): (a) the school level, which was associated with a bullying prevention coordination committee established at the whole school. The committee consisted of 8-15 individuals, including school leaders, teachers of all grades, school management or service staff, student parents, and community organizations. Committee members led the anti-bullying campaign after participating in the 2-day OBPP program training. The committee needed to meet at least once a month to formulate anti-bullying rules and

regulations, evaluate the school's bullying situation and monitor the implementation of the OBPP program. Every year, an anti-bullying activity was held throughout the school for new and old students to draw their attention to bullying issues, and parents were invited to participate in the school's anti-bullying campaign; (b) the class level, this level was associated with posting and implementing school-wide anti-bullying rules and regulations in each class, class meetings to deal with bullying problems were held in each class regularly, parents were invited to participate in relevant class meeting activities; (c) the individual level, at the individual level, educators strengthened the supervision of "hot spots" (places prone to be bullying), all school staff participated in training to deal with student bullying, and worked with parents and mental health workers to help bullied students and correct bullies; (d) community-level (an American researcher added this one), the community-level involved community members in the anti-bullying campaign. The OBPP was based on four principles: (a) adults should be enthusiastic and actively participate in the lives of students; (b) the bottom line of unacceptable student bullying behavior must be set clearly; (c) non-corporal punishment and non-malicious behaviors used to deal with students who undermine the anti-bullying rules and regulations must be insisted on; (d) educators should actively take and play an authoritative role in the anti-bullying movement (Olweus & Limber, 2010; Olweus, 1993a, 2001a; Olweus et al., 2007).

Three large campaigns had been implemented to evaluate the long-term and short-term effectiveness of the OBPP: (a) the New Bergen Project against bullying, run from 1997 to 1998 in Norway, comprised some 3,200 students in grades 5-7 and grade 9 from 14 intervention and 16 comparison schools (Olweus, 1999a, 2014). The main results showed a marked reduction (by 50% or more) in self-reported bully/victim problems after a period of about 8 or 20 months of intervention. The study also implied that the effect applied to boys and girls and students from all grades. School climate had changed to be more friendly, and there was an increase in student satisfaction with school life at the same time (Olweus, 1991, 1993, 2014); (b) the Oslo Project against bullying ran from 1999 to 2000 among ten intervention schools with a total of some 2,300 students in grades 5-7 and 9 (Olweus, 2001a, 2014). No comparison schools were selected in this project. Studies showed an average reduction across the three grades of some 40% for being bullied and about 50% for bullying others in this project. Similar results obtained varied in the USA, Germany, and the UK (Olweus, 2004; Olweus & Limber, 1999; Smith & Sharp, 1994); (c) the New National Initiative against bullying

was implemented in the spring of 2002 and the autumn of 2002, comprising more than 100 schools with approximately 21,000 students in grades 4-7. Results indicated substantial relative reductions, varying from 32% to 34% for being bullied and from 37% to 49% for bullying other students (Olweus, 2014).

Olweus suggested that teachers were the key agents in the OBPP components, concerning the nature and mechanisms of its effects as well as its products, and OBPP could significantly help reduce the incidence of bully/victim problems in schools based on some empirical analyses. An analysis made by Limber et al. (2018) provided strong support for the effectiveness of the OBPP with U.S. students in the elementary, middle, and early high school grades. Based on a large-scale longitudinal study, which involved more than 30,000 students in grades 3–11 from 95 schools in central and western Pennsylvania over three years, employed a quasi-experimental extended age-cohort design to examine self-reports of being bullied, as well as bullying others, covering all forms of bullying—verbal, physical, indirect, bullying through sexual words and gestures. Studies in many countries and places explored that the effects of OBPP were positive. For instance, a study using an experimental pre-test/post-test comparison, including a control group involving six secondary schools in Malaysia, showed that OBPP effectively reduced school bullying problems (Yaakuba, 2010).

In addition, some researchers have raised arguments over the results of the effectiveness and the cost of implementation of OBPP. Bauer et al. (2007) argued that OBPP had no overall effect on the grounds of a non-randomized controlled trial with ten public middle schools (7 interventions and three control). Beckman and Svensson (2015) showed that using the OBPP to reduce the number of victims of bullying would cost 131,250 Swedish Kronor (€14,470) per victim. The OBPP was a cost-effective intervention program.

Other bullying prevention and intervention programs

1. The Method of Shared Concern

This method was developed by Pikas (1989, 2002), a Swedish psychologist. The Method of Shared Concern did not seek a punitive approach to deal with bullying/victim incidents. Instead, it emphasized establishing or re-establishing positive relations between those involved by organizing group meetings beginning with individual interviews, based on the assumption that the relationships amongst students

strongly influenced bullying behaviors. This method composed a multi-stage process, which could cause a shift in the group dynamics and provide an environment where the students might engage in a negotiation process to bring about a peaceful and sustainable outcome. As was described by Rigby and Griffiths (2009), the method mainly included the following procedure: (a) bully/victim problems were identified; (b) several students were identified as likely to have taken part in the bullying or to support it in some way; (c) the targeted person was seen interviewed; (d) several days later, follow-up meetings were held with individual bullies; (e) in the group meeting of suspected bullies, each member was asked to say what they had done to try to improve the situation; (f) in a brief meeting with the target, they could usually be induced to join the group for a final meeting, with assurances that progress could be made at the meeting; (g) in the meeting with the suspected bullies and the target present, sometimes called the summit meeting, the practitioners enabled the students to express their thoughts about how they wish to proceed to resolve the issue.

The Method of Shared Concern had been used in anti-bullying programs in several countries. Some studies, implemented in England, Australia primary and secondary schools, had reported that the method was effective, but it should not be used in cases of very severe and criminal bullying behaviors; nor in instances in which the bullying was relatively mild, for which some individual counseling might be sufficient (Rigby & Griffiths, 2009).

2. The Sheffield Bullying Prevention Project

Based on a form of the Olweus questionnaire, the Sheffield Project was modified for using in English schools in 1991 (Smith et al., 2004). In this Project, 23 participating schools were asked to include the “core intervention,” which comprised a basic “whole school policy” on bullying behaviors. The whole school policy was characterized as follows: (a) identifying a need for policy development; (b) policy development; (c) implementing the policy, and (d) evaluation. Some optional interventions included: (a) curriculum-based strategies. This curriculum helped raise awareness of bullying, enhance awareness of victims’ feelings, and encourage pupils to talk about it and what should be done about it; (b) intervening in bullying situations, these approaches aimed to work directly with pupils involved in bully/victim problems; (c) making changes to playgrounds and lunch breaks, aiming to improve the quality of children’s break time and playtime experiences (Whitney et al., 2002).

Results implemented in different primary and secondary schools suggested a positive impact. The interventions also showed that it was unlikely to eliminate school bullying behaviors.

3. The Bully-Proofing Your School (BPYS)

The BPYS, developed in the early 1990s in the United States by some school-based practitioners (Plog et al., 2011), was designed to reduce school bullying and improve the overall climate in elementary schools. It was initially published in 1994 and updated in two versions (Plog et al., 2011; Garrity et al., 2004). The critical components of BPYS lay in each of the various development level curricula, which aimed to train teachers who could instruct students and direct parents and the school community about this program. The implementation contained three phases: (a) pre-implementation, assessing the types and frequency of bullying in school, making behavioral expectations and disciplinary plans; (b) implementation phase, in this phase, a committee supported by school administrators piloted the following five components: staff training, student instruction, individualized interview for victims, individualized interview for bullies, parents, and community involvement; (c) sustained implementation, this phase emphasized the need for regular cadre meetings, accommodation of staff changes, efforts to keep the program visible and fresh, integration of BPYS with other programs and the stated goals of the school, empowerment of students, and continued technical assistance and financial support (Plog et al., 2011; Elliott, 2006). The ongoing evaluation was an essential factor in implementing this program, which was carried out until the final phase—sustained implementation.

BPYS was similar to Olweus' Bullying Prevention Program in many aspects. Based on interviews with over 200 students and staff in schools where BPYS had been implemented, research showed that BPYS could positively affect discipline and behavior in elementary school but not as expected in secondary school (Plog et al., 2011; Berkey et al., 2001).

4. The Flemish Anti-Bullying Intervention Program

Triggered by the work of Olweus and the Sheffield anti-bullying project (Stevens, 2004; Smith and Sharp, 1994), the Flemish Anti-Bullying Intervention Program was founded and developed on the principles of health education research (Stevens, 2004; see also Bartholomew et al., 1998; Damoiseaux et al., 1993; Green & Kreuter, 1991), which included four successive steps: (a) a prevalence study was made to analyze the

seriousness and characteristics of bully/victim problems in Flemish schools; (b) identifying the behavioral determinants of bully/victim problems; (c) outcomes of the intervention; (d) evaluating the outcomes of the program with its objectives. The Flemish Anti-Bullying Intervention Program consisted of three modules: (a) intervention in the school environment (e.g., a whole-school anti-bullying policy, increasing awareness of bully/victim problems among students, parents, school staff, providing specific training sessions for all target groups); (b) intervention with the peer group (e.g., curriculum-based activities aims at enhancing positive attitudes towards children); and (c) support for bullies and victims (e.g., changing a bully's behavior by using repair procedures and behavioral contracting, intensive support for the victims of bullying, enhancing students' social skills).

Findings illustrated that the Flemish Anti-Bullying Intervention Program was ineffective in reducing peer aggression and victimization as the model program compared with the very positive outcomes observed in the Norwegian study (Stevens, 2004).

5. The Sevilla Anti-Violencia Escolar (SAVE)/Anti-Bullying Intervention Program

The Sevilla Anti-Bullying Intervention Program was implemented in five schools in Spain during the 1995-1996 academic year (Jimerson, 2010; Ortega et al., 2004). The model highlighted interpersonal relationships in two dimensions: the dimension of "convivencia" (the Spanish term signifies a spirit of solidarity, fraternity, co-operation, harmony, a desire for mutual understanding, the desire to get on well with others, and the resolution of conflict through dialogue or other non-violent means.); and the dimension of activity. The main components in this program included: (a) democratic management of interpersonal relationships; (b) cooperative group work; (c) education of feelings, attitudes, and values; (d) direct interventions with students at risk or involved in bullying.

Regarding reducing bullying incidence, data indicated that it had significantly decreased, particularly concerning the number of victims (Ortega & Lera, 2000).

6. Kiva Anti-Bullying Intervention Program

Kiva Anti-Bullying Intervention Program (Kiva is an acronym of the expression "Kiusaamista Vastaa," which means against bullying in Finnish) was a national anti-bullying program in Finland formulated in 2006, which focused on three aims: (a) reducing pro-bullying behaviors, increasing peer support for victims and influencing classroom norms; (b) stopping the ongoing bullying, supporting the victims; (c)

increasing peer support for the victim. The KiVa program' basic features included: (a) a huge variety of concrete materials for students, teachers, and parents; (b) utilization of the Internet and virtual learning environments, such as a computer game against bullying; and (c) emphasis on the bystanders, to encourage them to show that they were against bullying and supported the victim, rather than encouraged the bully.

Data showed that a nine-month exposure to the KiVa anti-bullying program resulted in decreased peer nominations for bullying behavior, for bullies of medium or low popular status but not for highly popular bullies. This suggested that popular bullies were less responsive to anti-bullying interventions than less popular bullies. (Garandeau et al., 2014).

7. The Friendly Schools Project

The Friendly Schools Project, a 3-year randomized control trial implemented in Australia, started in 2000, aimed to use the principles of successful practice for bullying reduction in schools to design, implement, and assess a multi-level and multi-component whole-school bullying reduction intervention (Cross et al., 2004). The project targeted three levels: (a) the whole-school community as part of building their commitment and capacity to address bullying; (b) raising awareness of students' families through skills-based self-efficacy activities; (c) training grades 4–5 students and their teachers through the provision of support materials.

This comprehensive whole-school program, including capacity improvement and parental involvement, appeared to reduce bullying behavior more than other programs without these components (Cross et al., 2012). It also reduced students' self-reported experience of loneliness and improved their perception of school safety (Cross et al., 2018).

8. The Steps to Respect Bullying Prevention Program

The Steps to Respect (STR) Bullying Prevention Program, published in 2001, relied on a social-ecological prevention model to increase school staff awareness and responsiveness, foster socially responsible beliefs among students, and teach students social-emotional skills to reduce bullying behavior. The program included: (a) developing and communicating clear school-wide anti-bullying policy and procedures; (b) increasing adult awareness, responsiveness, and guidance about bullying events; and (c) increasing systematic supports for prosocial behavior (Jimerson & Huai, 2010; Hirschtein & Frey, 2006).

A multilevel analysis on this program indicated that higher levels of program engagement correlated with lower school bullying problems, and enhanced school climate and attitudes led to less support of bullying (Low, 2013).

9. The Bully Busters Bullying Prevention Program

The Bully Busters program comprised three versions: the middle school version was published in 2000 (Horne, 2010; Newman et al., 2000); the elementary version in 2003 (Horne et al., 2010); and the parent version in 2008 (Horne et al., 2010). This program was premised on an ecological model. The risk and protective factors of the individual child, the family, the school, the community, and societal events could mutually impact each other, affecting and reducing behaviors accordingly. This program included seven modules: (a) increasing awareness of bullying; (b) examining the development and the variety of bullying; (c) recognizing the victim of bullying; (d) providing specific strategies to create a bully-free classroom; (e) improving victims' skills in coping with bullying behaviors; (f) establishing a classroom environment to prevent bullying problems; (g) applying the skills of management of personal emotions to teachers and students. Meanwhile, every module provided several components: (a) the theoretical background for the module topic; (b) relevant research related to the topic; (c) guidelines for implementing activities with students; (d) teacher defined their goals related to the module and identified specific students in particular need; (e) teachers evaluated their knowledge of the topic and the implementation of the module, reviewed their goal to assess the success of the implementation; (f) written guidelines for directing discussions related to the topic of the module; and (g) planned activities for students; each activity was followed by questions that facilitated processing each of the activities with students.

A study conducted by Howard et al. (2002) showed that the intervention program was effectively increased knowledge of bullying intervention skills, and classroom incidences of bullying were reduced compared with their pre-intervention levels.

10. The PEACE (Preparation, Education, Action, Coping, and Evaluation) Pack

The PEACE Pack program was a systematic framework for schools to evaluate the status of their anti-bullying policy about policy and grievance procedures, curriculum initiatives, and student social support programs (Slee, 2010, 2001). The PEACE Pack process included: (a) preparation (e.g., establishing a capable committee to run this program); (b) education (e.g., collecting information through surveys and interviews, giving feedback to the committee); (c) action (e.g., developing policies and

grievance procedures, developing plans); (d) coping (e.g., launching policy involving students, staff and parents, implementing plans); (e) evaluation (e.g., evaluating the implementation, giving feedback to school).

Empirical research evidenced that 29% of boys and 20% of girls (aged 8–12 years) in primary school had reported being bullied “less” after one-year-long interventions (Slee, 2010). In Japan, findings also showed a significant reduction in bullying by 13% in Grade 7 and 29% in Grade 8, respectively, after a one-year-long program implementation (Slee, 2010, 1999).

11. The Donegal Primary Schools Anti-Bullying Intervention Project

The Donegal Primary Schools project was implemented in 42 schools in Ireland between 1998 and 2000 after a national survey on bullying behavior investigation, the survey revealed that the problem of bullying was widespread throughout primary and post-primary school, based on the four critical elements of the second nationwide program to prevent bullying in Norwegian schools, the Donegal Primary Schools Anti-Bullying Intervention Project was proposed as following: (a) training of a network of professionals who could provide training and support for individuals or groups involved; (b) teacher’s resource pack containing information and materials about dealing with bullying problems; (c) parents’ resource pack providing information to improve parents knowledge of bullying as well as skills on how to deal with it; (d) working with pupils to create an environment that did not accept bullying, including the enhancement of students’ awareness-raising and participation in the anti-bullying campaign (O’Moore & Minton, 2010).

Statistics from the pre-program and post-program Olweus questionnaires’ evaluation evidenced that the project had appeared to be successful. There was a significant reduction of 19.6% in reports of being victimized in the last school term and a substantial decrease of about 43.0% being bullied within the previous five school days.

12. McKAY School Safety Program (MSSP)

The MSSP, a bilingual and bicultural program (English and Spanish), was developed to use among 9–11 years old children in 2004. The goals of MSSP were: (a) increasing the knowledge concerning school safety (e.g., bullying, self-esteem, respect of personal space, internet bullying, sexual exploitation) with bilingual languages among Hispanic students; (b) teaching students how to protect themselves; (c) identifying persons who might harm them; (d) teaching students about how to report to adults when being aggressed. The components of the program included: (a) an advisory

council, appointed by the superintendent, was formed to assure MSSP' goals, the council was comprised of a wide range of specialists in many walks (e.g., project director, curriculum specialist, MSSP trainers, research director, administrative assistant teachers, school counselors, school psychologist, co-principal investigators, law enforcement officers, an accreditation specialist, and several parents); (b) six lessons concerning six themes (self-esteem, internet safety, stranger beware, when a stranger is not so strange, no bullying allowed, don't invade my space) were developed to be used among students; (c) curricula (e.g., videos, pre-tests, post-tests, and worksheets) were developed for the six lessons; (d) supporting student's social-emotional needs while improving cognitive skills in culturally appropriate ways; (e) training was developed in working with children; (f) two co-principal investigators were in charge of the implementation of the MSSP curricula .

As findings showed, parents confirmed that students felt safer in the community after MSSP was implemented in school. Counselors and teachers stated that MSSP had a positive influence on students and that disclosure about bullying and sexual abuse had increased (Robles-Pina, 2010).

13. The NoTrap! Program (let's not fall into the trap! program)

The NoTrap program, first launched in 2008 (Menesini et al., 2015; Palladino et al., 2012), was based on the hypotheses that the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) could increase the risk of cyberbullying and could also be used to enhance positive behavior and protect students from the great dangers they faced online. It was an intervention for high schools to prevent and combat both traditional bullying and cyberbullying. The peer-led model was applied in online and face-to-face settings in this program. The core principles included in all editions were: (a) adults (psychologists and experts) helped to improve the knowledge and awareness of the students, some of the students in each class were invited and trained to become peer educators to participate in this program; (b) the trained peer educators carried out some activities with their peers and offer support anonymously (using nicknames) to all people requesting help on the webpage of the program.

The latest edition was launched in 2011, which maintained some general practical methods tested by previous versions and added some new components (e.g., cooperative work in the face-to-face context) that appeared to be effective (Menesini et al., 2015; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). A training unit for teachers was emphasized in the

first part of the program to highlight the higher involvement of adults in the cooperation with students on school rules against bullying and cyberbullying.

Data collected from the control and experimental groups showed a significant decrease in victimization, bullying, cyber-victimization, and cyberbullying in the experimental groups (Menesini et al., 2015).

Overall, a meta-analysis done by Gaffney et al. (2019) on the abovementioned school-based anti-bullying programs had been tested to reduce bullying perpetration and victimization in schools globally. These results suggested that anti-bullying programs reduce school bullying perpetration by approximately 19-20% and school-bullying victimization by about 15-16%. Ttofi et al. (2011) concluded that anti-bullying programs effectively reduced bullying and victimization. Moreover, analyses of systematic coding of program elements revealed the most important aspects associated with a decrease in bullying were: parent training, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, school conferences, information for parents, classroom rules, classroom management, and videos. The most crucial program elements associated with decreased victimization were videos, disciplinary methods, work with peers, parent training, cooperative group work, and playground supervision.

Menesini and Salmivalli (2017) pointed out that whole-school programs were often complicated, consisting of various components targeted at different levels of influence (individual students, parents, classrooms, whole schools) and including multiple methods. The other parts were typically evaluated in combination rather than separately. Consequently, the contribution of each component to the overall effects of a given program was hard to explore. But positive effects were usually involved with the following factors: (a) intensive and long-lasting implementation; (b) people's fidelity in implementation; (c) parents seemed to strengthen the effects; (d) raising awareness among students; (e) enhancing anti-bullying norms and responses within classrooms; (f) teachers' anti-bullying attitudes to students.

ANALYSES OF THE DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Definitions of three concepts

The concept was the cardinal principle that revealed the nature and characteristics of a phenomenon, which regulated the connotation of an object and confined its extent. A clear and implementable operational definition was the first to measure any behaviors (Bovaird, 2010). Accordingly, it was essential to conceptualize this phenomenon concretely that differentiated it from other problems.

Figure 2.2 showed that bullying was a subset of violence, which was broken down into three types. Meanwhile, the UNESCO (2019) report also included some violent forms against students perpetrated by teachers or other school staff. This research only focused on the bullying phenomenon among elementary, secondary, and high school students. Bullying among other relationships was excluded. As UNESCO (2019) stated, there was no standard definition of bullying or cyberbullying in international surveys. Therefore, the first step in this research was to clarify the connotation, extension, characteristics, and relationships with other concepts of bullying.

Violence

It was not until 1992 that the construct of school violence (or violence in school) had been used widely to describe violent and aggressive acts in school (Furlong & Morrison, 2000). School violence was now conceptualized as a multifaceted construct involving criminal and aggressive actions in schools, which inhibited development and learning and harmed the school's climate. The World Health Organization (WHO) defined violence as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation. (WHO, 2002, p. 5)

According to its characteristics, this concept of violence was further divided into three broad categories: (a) self-directed violence; (b) interpersonal violence; (c) collective violence. Another classification of violence included: (a) physical violence;

(b) sexual violence; (c) psychological violence; (d) involving deprivation or neglect violence (UNESCO, 2019). Figure 2.1 illustrated the concept of violent acts, the horizontal array showed who was affected, and the vertical array described how they were affected.



Figure 2.1. A typology of violence. Data source from *World Report on Violence and Health, 2002*.

UNESCO proposed a general definition of violence based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression:

School violence refers to physical, psychological, and sexual violence and bullying. It takes place inside or outside of the classroom, around schools, on the way to or from school, and online. Students experience school violence. It can be perpetrated by students, teachers, or other school staff. (UNESCO, 2019. p. 3)

Johnson and Ferraro (1999) pointed out that school violence represented broad categories of acts that might range from harassment to murder. School violence involves acts of physical, sexual, or psychological aggression that might or might not result in injury or death. These acts could be perpetrated by students against other students, students against teachers, and teachers against students, though students committed most acts of school violence against other students.

Miller and Kraus (2008) concluded that school violence included; still, they did not limit to such behaviors as child and teacher victimization, child and teacher perpetration, physical and psychological exploitation, cyber victimization, cyber threats and bullying, fights, bullying, classroom disorder, physical and mental injury to teacher and student, cult-related behavior and activities, sexual and other boundary violations, and use of weapons in the school environment.

Astor et al. (1999) suggested that school violence covered many intentional or reckless behaviors, including physical harm, psychological harm, and property damage. These behaviors varied in severity and frequency: murder, carrying weapons, sexual harassment, school fighting, bullying, verbal threats and intimidation, corporal punishment, gang violence, hate, vandalism, and dating violence (Burcky et al., 1988; Cano et al., 1998).

Meyer-Adams and Conner (2008) categorized school violence as high-level and low-level school violence. High-level school violence (e.g., possession and use of weapons, severe physical attacks) grabbed the headlines and the public's attention. It resulted in zero-tolerance policies and procedures, such as metal detectors, locker searches, security personnel, and expulsion (Welsh, 2000). However, although incidents of high-level violence were devastating, their occurrences were relatively rare (Astor et al., 1999, 2005; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2004; Kaufman et al., 2000; Welsh, 2000). The most common form of low-level violence was bullying, defined as threats or intimidation; verbal cursing, teasing, or both; stealing passively or by force; and physical attacks (Flannery et al., 2004; see also Nansel et al., 2001, 2003; Newman et al., 2005; Olweus, 1977, 1993, 2003).

Hoang (2001) suggested that the definition of school violence was an unacceptable social behavior ranging from aggression to violence that threatened or harmed others, went beyond highly publicized incidents of mass bloodshed to include acts such as bullying, threats, and extortion. Therefore, school violence spanned a broad range of antisocial behaviors that law enforcement must address.

Reininghaus et al. (2013) showed that school violence was defined as actions carried out by a school community intended to cause harm against any community member, whether students, teachers, directors, staff, or parents. This type of violence arose within educational establishments but might also occur in other school places, such as nearby or where extracurricular activities were conducted (Abramovay & Rua, 2002; Díaz-Aguado, 2005; Mena & Vizcarra, 2001).

Henry et al. (2013) defined school violence as using force toward another that resulted in harm. This simple version of this definition limited the concept of violence to extreme physical power (Champion, 1997), as in power employed against common right, against the law, and public property (Rush, 1994). This narrow definition included intimidation by the threat of force. The Justice Department's definition of violent victimization had physical attacks or taking property from the student directly

by force, weapons, or threats (Bureau of Justice, 1998b). However, this kind of definition omitted several critical elements of harm. First, it excluded the emotional and psychological pain that resulted from the domination of some over others. Second, it focused on the visible, intentional interpersonal harms between individuals but excluded harms by institutions or agencies on individuals. Third, it ignored the violence of social processes that produced a systemic social injury, such as that perpetrated through institutionalized racism and sexism. Fourth, it excluded the symbolic violence of domination that gentle, invisible form of violence, which was never recognized as such and was not so much undergone as chosen, the violence of credit, confidence, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, gratitude, piety (Bourdieu, 1977, 1992). This subtle form of violence brought coercion through the power exercised in hierarchical relationships.

Table 2.1. *Comparisons of different viewpoints on the definitions of violence.*

	Intention	Process/Mean	Consequences/Impact
WHO	Intentional	Physical force or power, threatened or actual	Injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation
UNESCO			Physical, psychological, and sexual violence and bullying
Johnson & Ferraro		Physical, sexual, or psychological aggression	May or may not result in injury or death
Miller & Kraus		Cult-related behavior and activities, sexual and other boundary violations, and use of weapons in the school environment	Physical and psychological exploitation, cyber victimization, cyber threats and bullying, fights, bullying, classroom disorder,

			physical and mental injury
Astor et al.	Intentional or reckless	Murder, carrying weapons, sexual harassment, school fighting, bullying, verbal threats, intimidation, corporal punishment, gang violence, rape, hate crimes, vandalism	These behaviors vary in severity and frequency, physical harm, psychological harm, and property damage
Meyer-Adams & Conner		Possession and use of weapons	High-level school violence, severe physical attacks
		Threats or intimidation; verbal cursing, teasing, or both; stealing passively or by force; and physical attacks	Low-level bullying
Hoang		Threatens or harms others	Such as bullying, threats, and extortion. school violence spans a broad range of antisocial behavior
Reininghaus et al.	Intend to cause		Cause harm against any member of that community
Henry et al.		Force, weapons, or threats	Harm through physical attacks or taking property

A comparison of different viewpoints about the definition of violence on three standards was shown in Table 2.1. Some generalizations could be deduced: (a) consequences were the leading indicators to demonstrate the concept of violence' basic features. Nearly all researchers and organizations agreed on this point. Still, there were

some differences in the degree of this behavior's consequences, which laid arguments on detailed and further classification between two concepts--bullying and violence. It was of great significance to divide the types of violence into two different levels, high-level and low-level; (b) as was shown in Table 2.1, most of the researchers agreed on the following points of view: severe means or harmful tools had been used in the violent behaviors, e.g., murder, carrying weapons, which might result in severe damage, e.g., injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation; (c) perpetrators' intentional, deliberately attempts were not generally recognized, which led to a paradoxical contraction: perpetrators could not execute such mean, horrible and harmful hurt on some other students (victims) without tools prepared and plans elaborately organized.

Bullying

In Figure 2.2, the UNESCO report (2019) categorized bullying as one type of school violence, albeit school violence had not been conceptualized, bullying was characterized by aggressive behavior that involved unwanted, negative actions, was repeated over time, and an imbalance of power or strength between the perpetrators and the victims. This definition of bullying was analogous to Olweus's expressions, that "a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students" (Olweus, 1993, p. 9). As discussed previous, Olweus further suggested that bullying occurred when three criteria were met: (a) it was aggressive behavior or intentional "harm doing"; (b) which was usually carried out with some repetitiveness; (c) there was an interpersonal power imbalance relationship favoring the perpetrator(s) between bully (bullies) and victim(s) (Olweus, 2017). It seemed that the three criteria of "intention," "repetitiveness," and "imbalance of power" had been used to judge a behavior as bullying was now well accepted among both researchers, practitioners, and some organizations. (Smith et al. 2012; see also Olweus, 2010; Smith & Brain, 2000).

Lines (2008) compared some typical definitions and concluded bullying as: "bullying behavior is continual physical, psychological, social, verbal or emotional methods of intimidation by an individual or group. Bullying is an action such as hitting or name-calling that makes you feel angry, hurt or upset" (p.19).

Smith and Sharp (1994)) put forward that:

Bullying can be described as the systematic abuse of power. There will always be power relationships in social groups, by strength or size or ability, the force of personality, sheer numbers, or recognized hierarchy. Power can be abused; the exact definition of what constitutes abuse will depend on the social and cultural context, but this is inescapable in examining human behavior. If the abuse is systematic—repeated and deliberate—bullying seems a good name to describe it. (p. 2)

Tattum and Tattum (1992) proposed the following definition: Bullying was the willful, conscious desire to hurt another and put them under stress. Thus bullying was conceived as a desire (Rigby, 2012). Whereas, this definition was a popular one, endorsed at one time by the Scottish Council for Educational Research.

Based on a UK high court publication, covering the first case treated as bullying by an English court, Roland (1998) suggested that “Bullying is longstanding violence, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or a group and directed against an individual who is not able to defend himself in the actual situation” (Roland, 1998, p. 21).

Björkqvist et al. (1982) suggested that bullying was a particular case of aggression that was social. This definition was similar to Olweus’ (2010) classification of bullying that bullying should be regarded as a subset of aggression.

Besag (1989) believed that bullying was behavior that might be defined as the repeated attack (e.g., physical, psychological, social, or verbal) by those in a position of power, formally or situationally, on those who were powerless to resist, causing other people to distress for their gain or gratification.

Mellor (1997) suggested that bullying happens when one person or group tries to upset another person by repeatedly saying nasty or hurtful things. Sometimes bullies hit or kick people or force them to hand over money; sometimes, they tease them frequently. The person who was being bullied found it challenging to stop this from happening and was worried that it would happen again. It might not be bullying when two people of roughly the same strength fight or disagree.

Farrington (1993) suggested that bullying was repeated physical or psychological oppression on a less powerful person by a more powerful one.

Rigby (2002) tried to present a comprehensive definition that could hardly miss any category: Bullying involved a desire to hurt or hurtful action, a power imbalance, (typically) repetition, and unjust use of power, resulted in evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.

It was not until 2016 that Chinese researches had decided to use the Chinese item “Qilin” to match the term of bullying based on Chinese context, which was defined by the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China (MOE, 2017) as:

Student bullying occurring inside or outside the campus refers to one party (individual or group) deliberately or maliciously committing bullying or insult through physical, language, and online methods on other students one or more times, causing the other party (individual or group) physical and psychological harm, property loss, or mental damage. (MOE, 2017, p. 3)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of America (CDC, 2014) described bullying as:

Any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of children who are not siblings or current dating partners involves an observed or perceived power imbalance repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth, including physical, psychological, social, or educational damage. (CDC, 2014, p.7)

The CDC definition distinguished bullying from child maltreatment by noting that the behavior must occur between peers and not include adult aggression directed toward children. Furthermore, the CDC definition differentiated bullying from sibling violence by noting that bullying was inappropriate to describe the siblings’ conflict.

Table 2.2. *Comparison of different viewpoints on the definitions of bullying.*

	Intention	Process/ Means	Consequences / Impact	Imbalance	Frequency
UNESCO				Imbalance of power or strength	Once or twice a month or more, repeated over time
Olweus	Intentional			Power imbalance	Repetitive-ness
Lines		Physical, psychological, social, verbal, or emotional methods of intimidation	Feel angry, hurt, or upset		Continual

Smith & Sharp	Deliberate	Abuse of power			Systematic, repeated
Tattum & Tattum	Willful, conscious desire	Hurt	Under stress		
Roland		Physical or psychological	Violence,		Longstanding
Björkqvist et al.		Aggression			
Besag	Intention	Attack of physical, psychological, social, or verbal	Causing distress	Power imbalance	Repeated
Mellor		Saying nasty or hurtful things, hit or kicked or forced, teased	The bullied worried that it would happen again		Again and again
Farrington		Physical or psychological oppression		Power imbalance	Repeated
Rigby	Desire to hurt	Unjust use of power, hurtful action	A sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim	Power imbalance	Repetition
MOE	Deliberately	Maliciously, insults through physical, language, and online methods,	Resulting in the other party (individual or group) physical injury, property loss, or mental damage		Once or more
CDC			May inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth, including physical, psychological, social, or	The observed or perceived power imbalance	Repeated, multiple times, or is highly likely to be repeated.

			educational harm		
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By comparing the above definitions (see Table 2.2), results showed that nearly all researchers or organizations mentioned two points: means used in bullying behaviors (which accounted for 76.9%), consequences or impact of bullying (69.2%), more than half of the parties' definitions included these two elements. Six parties touched the criterion of intention. The percentage was 46.2%. Six parties mentioned the standard of power imbalance and 11 numbers for frequency (repetitiveness) criterion, which accounted for 46.2% and 84.6%, respectively. Although the criterion of frequency (repetitiveness) had received the highest recognition, the percentage was 84.6%, which was inconsistent with the conclusions of the subsequent research.

Some researchers attempted to categorize the definition of bullying from the teachers' and children's perspectives. For instance, Boulton (1997) indicated that teachers reckoned bullying could be both physical and mental/emotional. Most of the teachers in his sample defined bullying as physical and verbal abuse and forcing others to do things that they do not want to do.

By and large, Olweus's (1993) definition of bullying might be the most popular and widely accepted in today's research. He considered that bullying was a subset of aggression or aggressive behaviors (Olweus, 2010) and concluded that fights or quarreling between two students of approximately the same strength (physical or psychological) should not be regarded as bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993). These conclusions laid the foundation for our in-depth research.

Cyberbullying

It was not clear whether the term "cyber-bullying" was first coined by Canadian Bill Belsey (2005) or an American lawyer Nancy Willard (2003) (Shariff, 2009). Cyberbullying has existed since the internet became popular among ordinary people in the 1990s. However, it increased dramatically in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Over the past 10-12 years, cyberbullying has appeared to be a new form of violent conduct in the electronic communication context. The excellent communication convenience brought about by electronic technology has considerably impacted young people curious about new things. Some researchers believe that cyberbullying differs from

traditional school bullying and reported high prevalence figures. Others consider cyberbullying a sub-type of conventional school bullying with high overlap. To clarify this fact, we first started with its definition too.

UNESCO (2019) defined cyberbullying as follows:

Cyberbullying includes being bullied by messages, i.e., someone sending mean instant messages, postings, emails, and text messages or creating a website that makes fun of a student or by pictures, i.e., someone taking and posting online unflattering or inappropriate photos of a student without permission; it also refers to being treated in a hurtful or nasty way by mobile phones (texts, calls, video clips) or online (email, instant messaging, social networking, chatrooms) and online hurtful behavior. (p. 14)

Belsey (2005) suggested the definition of cyber-bullying as cyberbullying involved the use of information and communication technologies such as email, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others (Bauman, 2007).

Hunter (2012) pointed out that bullying was any activity that used force or threats to persecute people and made them feel bad. Cyberbullying was a type of bullying that used electronic media. Cyberbullying could use email, IM, text messages, and images accessed from a phone or computer. Web pages, blogs, chat rooms, and social networking sites like Facebook and My Space could also carry bullying messages and pictures. Cyberbullying was sometimes also called cyber harassment, mainly if it involved adults.

McQuade et al. (2009) described cyberbullying as when a person used IT to embarrass, harass, intimidate, threaten, or otherwise cause harm to individuals targeted for abuse. Cyberbullying amounted to a technological extension of physical bullying traditionally carried out face-to-face or indirectly over the telephone or through typed or handwritten messages. Regardless of the technologies employed, cyberbullying was closely related to traditional bullying.

Smith et al. (2008) defined cyberbullying as “an aggressive act or behavior that is carried out using electronic means by a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself ” (p. 376). Other definitions subsequently defined cyberbullying as including the intention of harming (Slonje & Smith, 2008), an imbalance of power (Tokunaga, 2010). Patchin and Hinduja

(2006, 2015) also included the repetition in time and extended the means in the definition of cyberbullying. Standards used in cyberbullying comprised computers, mobile phones, and other electronic devices. Concerning repetition in time, there was a debate in the literature as to whether cyberbullying, given its potential of going viral and reaching an infinite potential number of people even with only one single act, needed to be repeated in time by the cyberbully? On the other hand, need an imbalance of power between the cyberbully and the cyberbullied students in the virtual network space as required in the entire area defined in traditional bullying?

Chadwick (2014) considered that cyberbullying could be defined as using technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person. Cyberbullying usually involves frequent communication over some time. It had many similarities with offline bullying; however, it differed in the person/people engaging in bullying behaviors being anonymous. Cyberbullying was comprehensive and fast-reaching, and the material sent or uploaded can be challenging to remove.

Table 2.3. *Comparison of different viewpoints on the definitions of cyberbullying.*

	Means/Tools	Consequences/Impact	Frequency
UNESCO	Messages, emails, and text messages or creating a website, inappropriate pictures, by mobile phones	Being treated in a hurtful or nasty way	
Belsey	Information and communication technologies such as email, cell phone, and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites	Hostile behavior	Repeated,
Hunter	Electronic media, email, IM, text messages, images accessed from a phone or computer. Web pages, blogs, chat rooms, and social networking sites	Make the bullied feel bad	
McQuade, Colt & Meyer	Using IT to embarrass, harass, intimidate, threaten, by telephone or through typed or handwritten messages.	They are causing harm to individuals targeted for such abuse.	
Smith et al.	Using electronic means	An aggressive act or behavior	overtime

Chadwick	Using technology to harass, threaten, embarrass,		Over some time.
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Based on the comparative analyses of Table 2.3, a generalization can be concluded that most researchers' definitions of cyberbullying were the same or similar in many respects. Although the purpose of cyberbullying tended to be identical to that of traditional bullying (Smith, 2016; Ovejero et al., 2013), there was still no consensus about its more specific characteristics (Olweus, 2013; see also Smith et al., 2012; Ybarra et al., 2012). This was due to its intrinsic complexity and to the fact that many cyberbullying types existed depending on the means employed to practice (e.g., e-mail, cell phone, text messages, websites, chats, social networks, digital images, online games, etc.), and each one was used more in one age group than in another, or more by subjects depending on some characteristics or others (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Nevertheless, many definitions for cyberbullying resemble one another, and most repeat the bullying definition but require electronic means (Tokunaga, 2010; see also Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Smith et al., 2008).

Although several researchers considered cyber-bullying as a sub-category of traditional bullying that occurred through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (Wong-Lo & Bullock, 2011), others regarded it as a completely different type of aggression with distinctive participant profiles, motives, personal characteristics, and roles (Antoniadou & Kokkinos, 2015). However, the indisputable fact was, cyber-bullying and traditional bullying had significant high correlations (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Lorent et al. (2016) pointed out that although there was no agreement on whether cyber bullying was just a form of bullying or a different phenomenon, it was found that there was an overlap between the two (Ortega-Ruiz et al., 2012).

Analyses on three concepts

Classification of bullying by UNESCO

As was agreed in the United Nations Secretary-General (2016) report, there has not come into being an international standard definition of what constitutes bullying or

consolidated information on its severity and frequency. The current surveys to address this issue with different age groups cover different periods and types of behavior. Thus, divergent approaches and measurements made it difficult to precisely evaluate and measure this phenomenon’s global prevalence. UNESCO report (2017) delimited the scope of school violence and bullying as follows: (a) school violence encompasses physical violence (including corporal punishment); psychological violence (including verbal abuse); sexual violence (including rape and harassment); and bullying (including cyberbullying); (b) bullying is a type of violence, which is a pattern of behavior that hurts the victim, the bully, and bystanders. Bullying was defined as “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, the behavior is repeated, or overtime” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 1); (c) school violence and bullying are perpetrated by students, teachers, school staff or social community members (UNESCO, 2017). UNESCO report (2019) illuminated these concepts by a graph as follows:

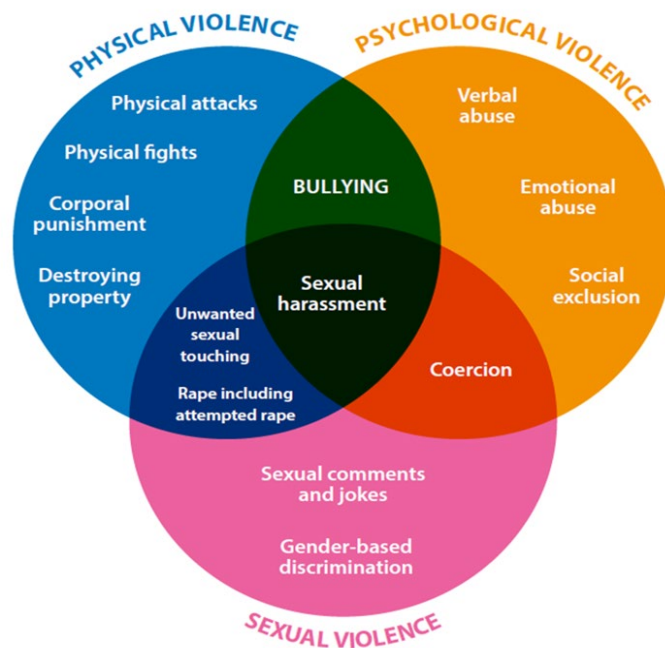


Figure 2.2. *Conceptual framework of school violence and bullying. Source cited from Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying.*

As Figure 2.2 illustrated, bullying was categorized as a subset of school violence, while school violence was broken down into three types (see Figure 2.3).

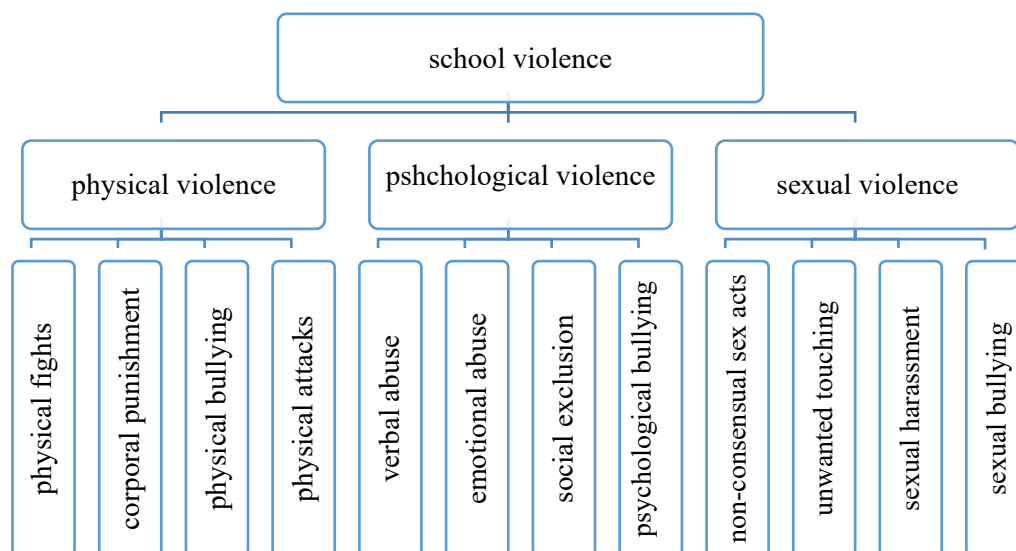


Figure 2.3. *Concept of school violence's diagram.*

The definitions of different forms of school violence and other types of bullying in the UNESCO (2019) report were mainly used in the GSHS and the HBSC international surveys. It also indicated that there had not been a standard definition of bullying or cyberbullying in their surveys. As the language and culture of different countries were diverse, there was no equivalent term for “bullying” in France and Spain. In Scandinavia and Germany, the term “bullying” and “mobbing” were used as well (Craig et al., 2000; Smith et al., 2002). In Japan, the term that appeared to be most equivalent to bullying was “ijime,” but its connotation did not include physical violence in the Japanese context (Smith et al., 2002).

The Italian terms “prepotenza” and “violenza” seemed identical to bullying but had more physically violent connotations. Moreover, laughing at someone else or making fun of other persons in Italian culture seemed less severe than in Northern countries (Gini, 2004). In the US, the term “victimization” and “peer rejection” tended to be used frequently (Smith et al., 2002). Teachers and children often did not define bullying the same way. This can limit the reliability of the questionnaire approach even when a survey was read to children (Harris & Petrie, 2003). The results of the Italian version of the OBQ administered in two Italian cities showed that about 42% of children in primary school and 28% in the secondary school reported having been bullied by their peers at least sometimes in the previous three months, which tended to be higher in Italy than that in other countries (Gini, 2004; Genta et al., 1996), the reason may be attributed to the differences of cultural background.

Based on the analyses mentioned above, we need to compare and analyze two relationships and their components to understand better and explore the definition of bullying.

Bullying vs. violence

As shown in Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3, bullying has been categorized as one type of violence. There are at least four contradictions in this classification: (a) bullying overlaps with other forms of violence, and it is not easy to distinguish them clearly. For instance, sexual bullying refers to “being made fun of with sexual jokes, comments or gestures” (UNESCO, 2019, p. 14), while sexual violence is defined as “forced sexual intercourse or any other sexual acts against one’s will, and non-contact sexual abuse, such as exhibitionism and verbal sexual harassment”(UNESCO,2019, p. 15). The two definitions here lead to a more complicated and obscure situation. What are the clear circumscriptions between “sexual comments or gestures” and “verbal sexual harassment”? However, teachers have difficulty responding to students’ reports of aggression and bullying for their absence in witnessing the behavior (Nelson et al., 2019; Mishna et al., 2006). The division between sexual bullying and sexual violence lacks operability in practice and makes practitioners more confused; (b) the adverse effects, consequences, harm, and severity of bullying are significantly different from other forms of violence. For instance, according to Olweus (1993) and GSHS’ (2019) claim, a physical fight between two students of about the same strength or power should not be regarded as bullying behavior, which belongs to a physical fight, a form of violence. There must be an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim in a bullying event. A problem arises in this comparison; the consequence and harm may not be serious in the violent physical fight because the two parties are of about the same strength or power; in other words, they are evenly matched. In contrast, some bullying events may result in severe consequences due to the power imbalance between two parties. This can be proved in the following chapters. In another form of violence--physical attacks, the result would be tragic when one or more students hurt other people with a weapon. The results are pretty different by comparing the consequences of physical attacks with social exclusion. In summary, this classification will make the concept more confusing; (c) if some conflicts, with minor effects and relatively small negative impacts on the bullied students, are classified as violent behaviors, may not

conform to reality, and would expand the extent of the concept of violence, which is not conducive to adopt targeted prevention and control measures; (d) the definitions of different forms of school violence are vague, and lack operability in practice.

In line with the earlier analyses and comparison, the relationship between bullying and violence may be generalized as violence is a qualitative change of bullying, an advanced stage with the development of student bullying. There is no simplistic relationship between the two, nor is it just a difference in classification form, but two conflicting manifestations with different natures of the same phenomenon at various stages of development. Meyer-Adams and Conner (2008) categorized school violence in two forms: high-level school violence and low-level school violence. The most common form of low-level violence is bullying. Furthermore, bullying and violence are interrelated: (a) bullying is the primary development stage before violence, and violence is the advanced stage and inevitable result of the development of bullying; (b) violence and bullying are intersecting. When bullying develops to a certain level and stage, it contains violence. If the response measures against bullying are improper or insufficient, then bullying may quickly turn into violence; (c) effective implementation of anti-bullying programs and measures can reduce the incidence of bullying. Accordingly, reducing bullying will correspondingly reduce the incidence of violence to a certain extent and even prevent school violence.

There are some significant differences between bullying and violence: (a) bullying problems are subordinate to the management of schools' daily educational and teaching activities, and bullying behaviors violate school's disciplines and rules, its consequences have not yet reached the level of violation of the laws; (b) violence is a qualitative change of bullying. It violates more than just school disciplines or regulations. Its consequences violate related laws and deserve legal sanctions. In response to the issue of violence in school, educators must initiate emergent response plans and crisis management measures, cooperate with legal agencies and take corresponding measures from the perspectives of protecting the bullied students and saving the bullies; (c) the measures and means to deal with violence are different from those to bullying. The focus of addressing bullying problems should be set on the prevention stage, adopting a program suitable for coping with bullying issues according to the circumstance of different schools, taking advantage of the close cooperation of other parties such as families and communities, and striving to stifle student bullying problems in its infancy. Conversely, the focus of dealing with violence in school is to

reduce the incidence of bullying and correct the bullying incidents having occurred effectively; (d) violence in school has a clear purpose, and the goal of student bullying is not necessarily concrete. This can be corroborated in the following study. Some bullying incidents happened between students that they did not know each other, the cause of bullying might be the bully's bad mood. It was also reported that some younger children did not understand what bullying is at all in junior elementary school, and some bullies reported that they had done it just for fun.

Bullying vs cyberbullying

As discussed previously, cyberbullying has appeared as a new form of violence over 10-12 years. There was no agreement on whether cyber-bullying was just a form of bullying or a different phenomenon, but it was reported that there was an overlap between the two. On how to understand the relationship between the two, Olweus and some researchers made practical attempts from the angle of the prevalence of the two.

To get empirical estimates of the prevalence of cyberbullying, Olweus collected data with prevalence figures from 440,000 students in grades 3-12 from 2007 to 2010 in the U.S. and 41 schools over five years from 2006 to 2010 in Norway. By comparing the prevalence rates of cyberbullying with the prevalence rates of traditional verbal bullying, results indicated that cyberbullying is a quite low-prevalence phenomenon, which accounts for only some 25-35% of the level of conventional bullying by direct verbal means (Olweus, 2018). The overlap of cyberbullying and traditional bullying has varied from about 50% (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004) to 67% (Hinduja & Patchin, 2012), 75% (Smith et al., 2008), and even 90% (Salmivalli & Pöyhönen, 2012). Waasdorp and Bradshaw's (2014) report also demonstrated that approximately 23% of the students in 58 high schools (grades from 9 to 12) reported being victims of any form of bullying (cyber, relational, physical, and verbal) within the last month, and 25.6% of those victims reported having been cyberbullied. 50.3% of victims reported being victimized by all four forms, whereas only 4.6% reported being cyberbullied.

Concerning the adverse effects of cyberbullying, surveys indicated that: (a) the negative impact on the pure cyber victims who had been bullied with electronic but not traditional means, mainly manifested in psychological areas such as self-esteem; (b) if a student suffered both cyberbullying and traditional bullying, the negative impact of cyberbullying can be negligible compared with that of traditional bullying; (c) when

students suffer from cyberbullying and different forms of traditional bullying at the same time, then the negative impact of cyberbullying does not significantly increase the degree of negative impact on the bullied students (Olweus, 2012).

As there is a high degree of overlap between traditional bullying and cyberbullying, and the former is much more frequent than the latter, some researchers employed school-based anti-bullying programs with a crucial focus on traditional bullying to address cyberbullying, results documented clear reductions for both cyberbullying and traditional bullying (Olweus, 2017; Gradinger et al., 2015; Williford et al., 2013). This showed that anti-traditional bullying programs were effective in dealing with cyberbullying. In a large-scale Finish KiVa project, conducted by Salmivalli and Pöyhönen (2011), results suggested that it did not necessarily require programs tailored to target specific forms of bullying as cyberbullying.

In a nutshell, bullying contains traditional bullying and cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a new form of bullying with respect to traditional bullying. It is closely related to traditional bullying. Although we cannot ignore the adverse effects of cyberbullying on elementary and middle school students, the fact is that, compared with traditional forms of bullying, cyberbullying does not surpass traditional forms of bullying in terms of incidence and degree of harm to the bullied students. By and large, cyberbullying is the continuation of traditional bullying in information technology and the extension of traditional bullying from natural places to cyberspace. Thus, cyberbullying should be regarded as a subset of student bullying. At the same time, cyberbullying and traditional bullying are interrelated: (a) cyberbullying rarely occurs alone, and in most cases, it happens with different forms of traditional bullying. Cyberbullying and traditional bullying cross each other. There is a high percentage of overlap between the two; (b) cyberbullying and traditional bullying have a common origin. They both stem from school.

The main differences between cyberbullying and traditional bullying lie in four aspects: (a) cyberbullying occurs in virtual cyberspaces, while traditional bullying occurs in real places, e.g., schools, communities, transportation to and from school, or other places that are related to students' study and life; (b) cyberbullying generally uses network information or electronic methods, such as pictures, videos, text messages, etc. The tools include computers, mobile phones, etc. Traditional bullying mainly includes speech, body, relationship, or other tangible offensive devices; (c) cyberbullying spreads rapidly, which is not restricted by time, space, etc., and is relatively difficult to

manage. Traditional bullying mainly occurs in the entire area, and the control is relatively easy; (d) the negative impact of cyberbullying on the bullied students primarily focuses on the spiritual or psychological level. Moreover, the adverse effects of traditional bullying also include physical harm.

Analysis of Olweus' three criteria of bullying

The three criteria, “intention,” “repetitiveness,” and “imbalance of power” initiated by Olweus (1993, 2010), have been used by many researchers to classify aggressive behaviors. However, perceptions of bullying on these three criteria from pupils and teachers should be considered. Investigations in primary, secondary, and high school teachers on the three criteria have been done in this research. Details will be presented in chapter three. By and large, about 26.7% of respondents agreed with “repetitiveness,” 3.3% of respondents mentioned “intention,” the criterion of “imbalance of power” got the highest approval, about 46.7% of respondents considered it. The data acquisition instrument is a questionnaire applied to a sample of 60 teachers in China. In the above analyses on the definition of bullying, the percentage of the criteria of “intention” and “imbalance of power” contained in researchers' reports only accounted for 46.2% separately.

Some surveys on students' three criteria showed that many children did not apply the three criteria. Concerning the criterion of “repetitiveness” (repetition), in the survey of Madsen (1996), only 3% of teenagers are allured to it. Another survey, made by Naylor et al. (2006) on 1820 students aged from 11 to 14 years, showed that the proportion was 9%. About 6% of students (n=1727) aged from 8 to 18 years in a survey in Canada reported this criterion (Cuadrado-Gordillo, 2012; Vaillancourt et al., 2008), and 30% of the participants (n=877) of 13 years old in Sweden referred to it (Cuadrado-Gordillo, 2012; Frisén et al., 2008).

Concerning the notion of “intention” (intent to hurt others), the work of Everett and Price (1995) found that 17% of the 726 students perceived the intention in the bully students. Other studies found the proportion of students in primary, secondary, and high schools who applied the criterion of intention to classify a behavior as bullying ranged from 1.7% (Cuadrado-Gordillo, 2012; Vaillancourt et al., 2008), 3.9% (Naylor et al.,

2006), 5% (Madsen, 1996) to 13% (Guadrado-Gordillo, 2012; Guerin & Hennessey, 2002).

The proportion of students who considered the “imbalance of power” between the bully and bullied students varied from 16% (Madsen, 1996), 19% (Frisén et al., 2008), 26% (Vaillancourt et al., 2008), or 40% (Guadrado-Gordillo, 2012; see also Guerin & Hennessey, 2002; Naylor et al., 2006).

In summary, the three criteria have not been approved by most teachers and students.

The definition of school bullying

To explore the definition of bullying in-depth, the composition and extension of bullying must be studied first. The design of a purpose predetermines the conceptual structure of a phenomenon. The main piece of bullying is the bully and the bullied students; bullying behavior cannot occur without these two parties. The extension confines its compass and excludes other similar activities.

The bully and the victim

Children involved in bullying behaviors are usually classified as different roles according to their engagement and performance (see Figure 2.4): (a) bully (bullies), students who administer or plot the bullying and play a leading role; (b) followers or Henchmen, who take sides at a positive attitude toward bullying and participate in bullying behavior but do not play a leading role; (c) supporters or passive bullies, who don't join in the behavior to bully the target student(s) but take active and openly support (e.g. by laughter or exclamation) to reinforce the bullying degree; (d) passive supporters of possible bullies, who like bullying but do not display obvious supportive actions; (e) disengaged onlookers, who may watch what happens but do not take sides and have not perspectives on bullying; (f) possible defenders, who dislike bullying and believe that they should help the bullied student(s) from being bullied, but do not take actions; (g) defenders of the victim, who dislike the bullying and take measures to help the bullied students; (h) the bullied student(s) or victim(s), the target student(s) who is exposed to bullying.

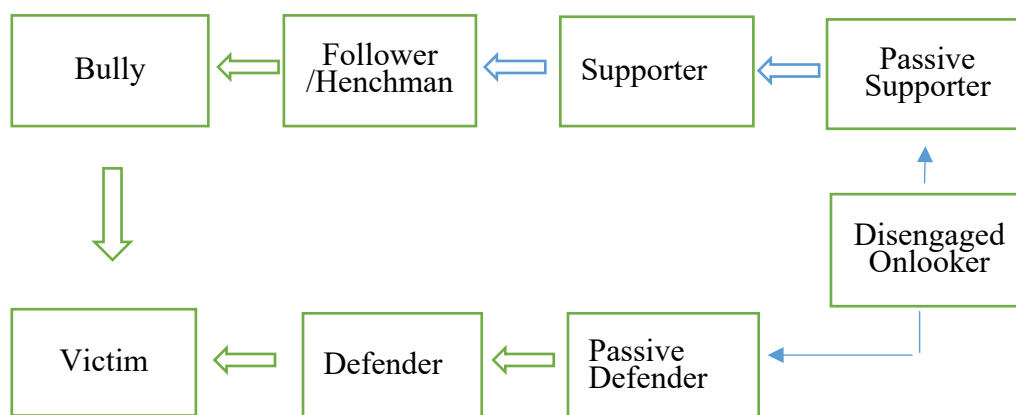


Figure.2.4. *The spectrum of different roles involved in student bullying behaviors.*

Among them, the fundamental constituents are the bully and the bullied students. Some bullying incidents do not necessarily include other perpetrators or onlookers. For research purposes, we only discuss the relationship between the two parties here. Nearly all researchers consider the bully a winner and the bullied student a victim in a bullying event. The long-term and short-term studies have revealed that the consequences and influence of bullying on the bully and bullied students are equally severe. For example, longitudinal data demonstrated that bullies, as well as aggressive boys, are more likely to develop anti-social behaviors, to commit adult crimes, and to become abusive spouses and parents in their adulthood (Gini, 2004; see also Coie & Dodge, 1998; Farrington, 1991; Olweus, 1993). On the other hand, children who are victimized repeatedly for a long time may have low levels of self-esteem, higher rates of absenteeism from school, show psychosomatic symptoms and chronic depression, and, in dire circumstances, commit suicide (Gini, 2004; see also Carney, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; O’Moore & Hillery, 1991; Sharp et al., 2000). All these conclusions prove both the bully and the bullied are victims. It is inappropriate only to use the term “victim” to refer to the bullied student, and it is not conducive to in-depth research on this issue. In summary, the bully and the bullied students are all victims of bullying problems.

Student bullying or school bullying

Some terminologies used in this area are still irregular today. The terms referring to the phenomenon of bullying among primary, secondary, and high school students used in current research include: “school bullying,” “campus bullying,” “victimization,”

“harassment,” “violence,” “school violence,” or only “bullying.” These usages of such irregular terms lead to confusing understanding and the lack of academic rigor in practice and studies. Taking the term --“school bullying” as one example, there are at least three relationships: student vs. student, student vs. teacher, student and teacher vs. people outside school. The term “school bullying” cannot accurately indicate that bullying occurs only between students. It has been reported that some bullying behaviors happened between teachers and students or between students and social idlers. To avoid this rough usage of terms, it is strongly advised to use the standard term “student bullying” in all cases. The term “student bullying” not only clearly states the connotation of the concept but also accurately limits its extension, “student bullying” claims that bullying behaviors occur only among students, excludes bullying behaviors that happen between other relationships, and makes the concept more critical clearly and operable.

The definition of student bullying

Based on the discussions above and some data to be presented in Chapter 3, the definition of student bullying can be concluded as follows:

In school or cyberspace related to students’ study and life, individual or gang of primary and middle school students who use tangible (e.g., strength advantages, tools, etc.), intangible (e.g., influence, information technology, etc.) or other abnormal methods to infringe on the rights and interests of other students, to gain a particular advantage or experience, which may cause damage to the physical and mental health of other students or lead to potential risk consequences.

Student bullying is the primary stage before student violence, which is not conducive to all students' healthy growth and overall development; corresponding preventive measures must be taken to prevent this behavior from occurring.

This definition clarifies bullying behaviors’ goal to gain a particular advantage or experience. The goal of benefit represents some purposely or deliberately implemented bullying behaviors’ objectives, for example, possession of the property, disputes resolution, letting others obey their orders, etc.; the goal of experience refers to some behaviors’ objectives without malicious and intentional purposes, for instance, making fun of somebody although with non-malicious intent but let others uncomfortable or

embarrassed, bullying behaviors caused by mood, etc. Notwithstanding that the goal of bullying is included in this definition, it does not function as the criterion to classify whether a behavior is bullying or not.

This definition clearly states that student bullying mainly happens in school or cyberspace regarding where it occurs. One of the past controversies was that cyberbullying had not yet appeared in the context in which Olweus defined the concept of bullying. Whether Olweus' definition of bullying included or applied to the cyberbullying phenomenon was a big problem. This definition, concerning the location where student bullying occurs, clearly includes cyberbullying as a form of student bullying and settles the past disputes over the relationship between cyberbullying and bullying.

The definition highlights two points: the process or means used in student bullying behaviors, and the other is bullying's consequences or direct influence on bullied students. These are the basic features and main criteria to identify and determine a behavior as bullying. Concerning the first point, a student bullying event characterizes as (a) the methods, means, or tools used by the bully may cause physical or/and mental harm to the bullied students; (b) the bullied students suffered abnormal or unfair treatment according to common sense. Regarding the second point, the bullied students have suffered or are likely to suffer physical or/and psychological harm. These three criteria, being generalized as "methods and means," "abnormal or unfair treatment," and "physical or/and psychological harm," are the basic standards to define student bullying behaviors.

This definition clarifies the relationship between the two concepts--student bullying and student violence. It also helps to distinguish student bullying events from other negative behaviors based on its three essential features. In summary, this definition of the concept is relatively accurate, its extent is clear, and its operability is strong. Using this definition in practice may generate a reasonably reliable result on the incidence of student bullying and contribute to adopting an effective and targeted response program to address student bullying issues.

COMPARISONS AND ANALYSES OF TEACHERS' VIEWPOINTS ON STUDENT BULLYING

Aims and overview of the studies

As aforementioned, the definition of bullying was initiated half a century ago. Nevertheless, there were still some disagreements on it. Students' viewpoints on this issue varied largely from ages, genders, and roles; this mainly manifested in the low-grade students' interviews. A Chinese researcher, Huang (2016), surveyed 100 pupils of grade 3 in primary schools in Shanghai city, demonstrating that some students could not distinguish their bullying behaviors. Smith and Levan (1995) examined 6-7 years old students' opinions on the definition of bullying and found that approximately 87% of them reported that fighting with someone was bullying (Naylor et al., 2006). Olweus (1994) stressed that bullying should not describe quarreling or fighting between two students of approximately the same strength (physical or psychological); there must be an asymmetric power relationship between them. It demonstrated that further clarification of the definition of bullying was essential for a deeper understanding of this problem.

The present work aimed to examine further the connotation and extent of the definition of bullying among primary, secondary, and high school teachers. Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed in two studies to investigate teachers' viewpoints on this issue. Teachers' knowledge and recognition of bullying were the fundamental principles to address school problems. Firstly, teachers' knowledge on bullying can help them to pay attention to this issue; Secondly, teachers' recognition and knowledge determine their attitude and skills in dealing with bullying events that they encountered; thirdly, all school-based bullying prevention and intervention programs highlight teachers' performance and roles in the implementation of those projects. In OPBB, for instance, teachers were the cores to prevent, find and settle bullying problems among students and were the coordinators to contact parents involved; finally, teachers were the most critical factors to influence primary, secondary and high school students' behaviors. Naito (1990) argued that teachers' lack of moral authority had been approved a relative increase in bullying in the classroom. Studies in South Korea showed that teachers' ineffective intervention in bullying might be significantly associated with the prevalence of bullying in school (Lee, 2011; see also

Park, 2003; Yang, 2005). Menesini and Slmivalli (2017) emphasized that teachers' attitudes were essential factors in determining the effectiveness of anti-bullying interventions.

Given these standpoints, the investigation of student bullying on the elementary and middle school teachers was critical. In the first study, questionnaires, containing closed questions, open questions, and multiple-choice questions, were administered to 60 teachers (every 20 in each teaching stage, meanwhile, ten male, ten female) in China, which mainly focused on the following topics: (a) teachers' viewpoints and understanding on bullying; (b) teachers' experience of dealing with bullying episodes; (c) teachers' propositions on this issue. This study tried to explore the differences of bullying definition and cognition among teachers in different teaching levels and deduced a more general meaning of bullying from these findings together with previous analyses. This could help promote the development of the understanding and propositions on addressing student bullying problems in school.

In the second study, three teachers (each 1 in different levels) in China were asked to narrate their opinions on their previous experience coping with bullying incidents. This study aimed to collect first-hand information from the experienced teacher's notion of bullying and the effectiveness and outcomes of their methods to address different bullying events, which can help make up for the shortcomings in the first questionnaire study.

All in all, the two studies aimed to explore the fundamental issues of the concept of bullying and made it more distinguishable and operable in practice, especially for teachers and other practitioners who faced these problems directly in schools, and laid the foundation for proposing a systematic and feasible plan in response to the student bullying.

Study 1

Introduction

The first study investigated teachers' knowledge and viewpoints on the bullying problems among primary, secondary, and high school students. Teachers' experiences on coping with student bullying episodes were collected to testify the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs and methods. The questionnaire also included such questions as the general causes of bullying events and the more effective factors implemented to reduce bullying incidences.

Based on the previous research and analyses, this questionnaire did not apply Olweus' (1993, 2010) three criteria (intention, repetitiveness, and imbalance of power or strength) to participants. Findings may reveal the current situation in the sampled schools, which also helped propose the relevant anti-bullying plans in the last chapter.

In addition, some comparisons of teachers' knowledge between different grades and levels can also help bring about the cardinal differences in the characteristics of student bullying behaviors that occurred in primary, secondary, and high schools.

Participants

Participants were 60 in-service teachers in primary, secondary, and high schools in China (Table 3.1); every 20 in different levels, ten male and ten females, aged between 23 to 50 years (total $M_{age} = 35.17$, $SD=8.338$) (see Table 3.5), five teachers (the percentage was 8.3%) did not register their ages. In the primary school, the $M_{age}=37.15$ (Table 3.2), in the secondary school, the $M_{age}=33.44$ (Table 3.3), in the high school, the $M_{age}=34.6$ (Table 3.4) (all the missing values were deleted). The mean age in primary school was higher than that of the other two. The mean teaching period in the primary school was 4.25 ($1=$ less than one year; $2=$ 1-5 years; $3=$ 6-10 years; $4=$ 11-15 years; $5=$ 16-20 years; $6=$ over than 20 years) (Table 3.6), in the secondary school 3.26 (Table 3.7), in the high school 3.30 (Table 3.8). The teachers' teaching period in the primary school was slightly higher than the other two. The general average means teaching period was 3.61 (Table 3.9). They all completed the questionnaire individually through the internet.

Concerning their school typologies, most of them were from public schools, a few of them from private schools, school types were not the factors about bullying problems, and the questionnaire did not consider this item compulsory. All the participants registered anonymously; only their genders, ages, teaching period, and levels were required.

Table 3.1. *Distributions of the number of teachers with different teaching periods at various school levels.*

Teacher numbers Teaching period	Primary school	Secondary school	High school
Less than one year	1	1	2
1-5 years	5	10	7
6-10 years	3	3	2
11-15 years	1	2	4
16-20 years	2	1	3
More than 20 years	8	3	2

Table 3.2. Descriptive statistics of teachers' age in primary school.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Age	20	27	23	50	37.15	9.544	-.032	.512	-1.528	.992
Valid N (listwise)	20									

Table 3.3. Descriptive statistics of teachers' age in secondary school.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Age	18	25	23	48	33.44	7.205	.554	.536	-.718	1.038
Valid N (listwise)	18									

Table 3.4. Descriptive statistics of teachers' age in high school

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Age	15	27	23	50	34.60	7.863	.124	.580	-.713	1.121
Valid N (listwise)	15									

Table 3.5. Total descriptive statistics of teachers' age in primary, secondary, and high school.

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Age	53	27	23	50	35.17	8.338	.265	.327	-1.119	.644
Valid N (listwise)	53									

Table 3.6. Descriptive statistics of teaching period and staying at current school in primary school.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Teaching period	20	1	6	4.25	1.803	-.415	.512	-1.505	.992
Staying at current school	20	1	6	3.70	1.976	.283	.512	-1.907	.992
Valid N (listwise)	20								

Note. Teaching period are classified as 6 levels: 1= less than one year; 2= 1-5 years; 3=6-10 years; 4= 11-15 years; 5= 16-20 years; 6= over than 20 years. Staying at current school with the same classification.

Table 3.7. *Descriptive statistics of teaching period and staying at current school in secondary school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Teaching period	19	1	6	3.26	1.593	.623	.524	-.860	1.014
Staying at current school	20	1	6	2.95	1.572	1.175	.512	.033	.992
Valid N (listwise)	19								

Note. Teaching period are classified as 6 levels: 1= less than one year; 2= 1-5 years; 3=6-10 years; 4= 11-15 years; 5= 16-20 years; 6= over than 20 years. Staying at current school with the same classification.

Table 3.8. *Descriptive statistics of teaching period and staying at current school in high school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Teaching period	20	1	6	3.30	1.490	.061	.512	-1.183	.992
Staying at current school	20	1	6	2.80	1.322	.863	.512	.276	.992
Valid N (listwise)	20								

Note. Teaching period are classified as 6 levels: 1= less than one year; 2= 1-5 years; 3=6-10 years; 4= 11-15 years; 5= 16-20 years; 6= over than 20 years. Staying at current school with the same classification.

Table 3.9. Total descriptive statistics of teaching period and current school stay in primary, secondary, and high school.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Teaching period	59	1	6	3.61	1.671	.145	.311	-1.375	.613
Staying at current school	60	1	6	3.15	1.665	.801	.309	-.836	.608
Valid N (listwise)	59								

Note. Teaching period are classified as 6 levels: 1= less than one year; 2= 1-5 years; 3=6-10 years; 4= 11-15 years; 5= 16-20 years; 6= over than 20 years. Staying at current school with the same classification.

Method

Description of the definition of student bullying at school. An open question was given to all teachers involved to collect teachers' viewpoints on this issue according to their experience. Olweus and other researchers' definitions of bullying were not listed in the questionnaire to avoid inducing participants' ideas on this issue. This question explored the teachers' general opinions and knowledge on student bullying problems. Teachers' experience working with students, parents, and colleagues can construct their viewpoints on this issue.

The essential features of student bullying behaviors. This was another open question in the questionnaire. The essential elements were the fundamental principles to distinguish the student bullying behaviors from similar ones. This question helped to know how participants recognized bullying behaviors in practice. This directly determined what kind of methods for participants to adopt. In OBPP, once an event was confirmed as a bullying behavior, three-level (the school level, the class level, and the individual level) activities needed to be activated (Olweus, 1993). It often required many people to work together. Therefore, determining whether an incident was student bullying was a prerequisite for taking relevant measures.

Differences between student bullying and other negative behaviors. Participants were asked to think about the differences between student bullying and other negative behaviors, which can further classify the standards telling the bullying behaviors from other negative ones based on the basic features given above.

Experience in student bullying incidents. Participants were also asked to describe one to three bullying episodes they had experienced, to specify the whole process. For the features of bullying episodes: "What aspects of the episode made it an act of bullying?", for the measures they had taken: "How did you intervene in the episode described?", for the effectiveness of the actions against bullying episodes: "How did you think we should intervene in an episode like the one you described?". If there was no relevant bullying experience, they could skip this question.

Characteristics of the bullies and the bullied students. Typical bullies were characterized as having an aggressive reaction pattern. The bullied students were usually classified into two types: the passive or submissive victims and the provocative

victims (Olweus, 1994). To get teachers' images of typical bullies and bullied students, participants were asked to detail the general performance of the two parties.

Differences of gender, age et al. in student bullying events. "Concerning bullying at school, have you noticed any differences related to gender or age and any other factors?" Of course, only those with relevant experience need to answer this question.

Causes of student bullying behaviors. As aforementioned, the causes of bullying were very complicated; some general factors played essential roles in leading to bullying incidents. Participants needed to list what factors, in their opinion, led some students to bully, and conversely, led others to be bullied. Seven items, concerning both parties, were listed in the questionnaire: (a) psychological factors/personality; (b) physical/genetic factors; (c) problems related to the family; (d) problems related to school; (e) influence of peers; (f) influence of the media; (g) culture of belonging.

Intervention and prevention measures against student bullying used in practice. In terms of measures having been taken against bullying events: "what strategies or interventions did you use in your teaching activities regarding bullying?" Participants need not answer if they had no related experience. Six participants in the primary school responded to this question, 7 in secondary school and 6 in high school.

The current status of student bullying in school. This item included two questions: one was the frequency of bullying behaviors, participants responded on a 7-point scale (1=rare; 4= nor rare nor frequent, medium; 7=very frequently); the other was the consequence of bullying episode, participants responded on a 7-point scale (1=a little harmful; 4=medium; 7=very severe) too. Six teachers in the primary school answered this question, seven in the secondary school, and six in the high school.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-bullying intervention programs. To assess the general effects of anti-bullying programs implemented in the whole school, participants were requested to face: "In your teaching activity, how do you rate the strategies or interventions that are generally used to address bullying behaviors?" Participants did not need to answer if they had no related experience. Respondents answered on a 7-point scale (1=no effective; 4=media; 7=very effective). Six respondents in the primary school answered this question, seven in secondary school and six in high school.

Kinds of plans, intervention, or prevention anti-bullying program. To learn teachers' information on other measures, methods, or programs to address bullying

problems in China, participants were also asked to list some anti-bullying projects or programs they were familiar with.

Results

Description of the definition of student bullying at school. The primary school teachers' opinions and viewpoints on the definition of student bullying were generalized and synthesized as follows: (a) school bullying referred to behaviors such as bullying, verbal humiliation, extortion, and even assault among students. The other three respondents shared the same or similar opinions; (b) school bullying was a kind of anomie behavior that occurred between students and classmates; (c) student bullying occurring inside or outside the campus referred to one party (individual or group) deliberately or maliciously committed bullying or insult through physical, language, or online methods on other students one or more times, causing the other party (individual or group) physical and psychological harm, property loss, or mental damage. This was the standard definition of student bullying proposed by the Ministry of Education of China in 2017. Nine respondents in the primary school hold this definition; (d) school bullying referred to bullying and extortion among classmates. School bullying mainly occurred in primary and middle schools. As many countries implemented a 9-year compulsory education system, the victims might be bullied for a long time. The bullying process contained a complex state of interaction. Bullying behaviors can cause psychological problems, deeply affect health, and even affect personality development on the bullied students; (e) I thought that fights, intimidation, threats, and verbal violence among students belonged to campus bullying; (f) a school bullying incident occurred among students deliberately or maliciously through physical, language, and online means, which caused harmful results; (g) school violence was committed by a single person or a small number of people. The most frequently occurring areas were hidden places on campus; (h) violent behavior was such actions as beating and scolding others; (i) bullying the weak students with either physically or mentally methods, which was a recurring behavior; (j) school bullying referred to the bullying behaviors on vulnerable students; (k) the definition of student bullying was: gang fights, chasing and intercepting others; (l) school bullying was an offensive behavior that occurred on and off-campus. It included both direct bullying and indirect bullying. School bullying was

not the same as school violence. School violence included school bullying, and school bullying was the most common type of school violence. School bullying refers to the deliberate abuse by language, physical strength, internet, equipment, etc. Both happened on and off the school campus and resulted in a certain degree of infringement against students' physiology, psychology, reputation, rights, and property.

The secondary school teachers' viewpoints on student bullying definition were summarized as follows: (a) one or more students intentionally teased one or more other students with words or actions, or maliciously isolated other students; (b) forcing other students to do things that they did not want through coercion or violence; (c) bullying, verbal humiliation, extortion, and assault among student peers; (d) long-term, repeated, non-incident behavior, usually manifested as the small bullied by the big, the weak bullied by the strong, or the senior bullied by the junior; (e) school bullying referred to an incident that a strong party conducted a physical or psychological attack on the weak one among students at school, which caused the bullied students to suffer physical and mental harm; (f) school bullying referred to behaviors such as bullying, verbal humiliation, extortion and even assault among students. School bullying did not necessarily occur on campus. The primary manifestation was that the physically strong students bullied the weaker students, causing them to feel pain in mentality and body. School bullying was usually recurring, rather than a single incident; (g) school student bullying included physical bullying, verbal insults, and school violence. It caused severe harm to the students' body and mentality; (h) acts of mistreating other students; (i) school bullying was a verbal, emotional, and physical abuse among students.

The views of other teachers were consistent with the definition concluded by the Ministry of Education of China.

High school teachers' opinions and standpoints were generalized and synthesized as follows: (a) student bullying was realized by physically oppression, beating, verbal attacks, insults, relationship isolation or mental control, which resulted in inequality, injustice, etc.; (b) students were physically assaulted or personally insulted by other students on campus or off campus; (c) student bullying was a kind of interpersonal conflict including verbal violence, behavioral violence, or isolation, which might cause physical and psychological harm to the person concerned; (d) school bullying was a particular type of offensive behavior, which referred to physical and psychological actions conducted by the stronger party against the weaker party; (e) a deliberately repeated negative behavior that caused physical and mental harm to the weaker party;

(f) behaviors committed intentionally to one or more students through insulting language or actions, usually occurred on campus; (g) the action of forced obedience among primary and middle school students was bullying; (h) students made verbal or physical attacks on one or more students due to his or their “unsocial” characteristics; (i) infringement on other students’ liberty through language or behavior abuse; (g) students suffered from language and behavioral attacks or mental injuries.

Other teachers’ viewpoints were in line with the definition concluded by the Ministry of Education of China.

In addition to the standard definition proposed by the Ministry of Education of China, common points can be found: the concept of student bullying has not been standardized in China until now; some respondents used “campus bullying,” and others used “school bullying.” Some of them referred to the concept of violence and classified bullying as a form of violence.

The essential features of student bullying behaviors. Concerning the basic features of student bullying behaviors, 12 respondents in the primary school reported the criterion of imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied student, six respondents agreed that bullying was a repeated behavior, only one respondent referred to the standard of intention (bullying behavior was an intentional act). 4 respondents considered the consequences might cause physical and/or mental harm to the bullied. Other features advanced by teachers in the primary school included: bullying usually happened in the less crowded location, and it was not easy to be discovered.

In secondary school, six respondents pointed out an imbalance of strength or power between the two parties, four respondents mentioned the feature of repetitiveness, and no respondent referred to the criterion of intention. Six respondents said the consequences of bullying behavior. They also noted that bullying was not easy to be discovered, and the bullied students usually did not disclose it to the adults.

In high school, 10 reported the power imbalance between the bully and the bullied student. Six mentioned that bullying was usually repeated behavior. One referred to the criterion of intention, and five believed that bullying behavior was not easy to discover. Nine considered the consequences of bullying deeply harmed the bullied student.

Differences between student bullying and other negative behaviors. Except that one respondent did not answer and one did not know in the primary school, 13 respondents believed bullying was more severe and harmful than other negative behaviors. The consequences of bullying may result in short or long-term mental harm

on the bullied students. Five others claimed the criteria such as “intention,” “repetitiveness,” or “imbalance of power.”

One respondent did not answer; 18 confirmed that bullying behavior had a profound negative impact on the bullied students and the school environment compared with other negative behaviors. The bullied students may have a severe mental illness; only one considered that repetitiveness and power imbalance were the basic features of student bullying different from other negative behaviors.

Eleven respondents in high school reported that bullying had a more severe influence than other negative behaviors. Moreover, bullying may cause serious mental or physical harm to the bullied students. Three respondents considered the criterion of “intention” and the harmful consequences, and three respondents mentioned the standard of “repetitiveness” together with the deadly consequences. One believed that the difference between bullying and negative behavior was the feature of concealment, i.e., bullying is more difficult to be discovered, and two teachers did not respond.

Experience in student bullying incidents. Concerning the experience of student bullying incidents, four teachers (others did not respond) in the primary school reported one episode of student bullying event, respectively, and 2 gave an account of two episodes separately. Episode 1 described a higher grade student assaulted the lower grade student; episode 2 described senior students extorted money from junior students; episode 3 pictured student A nicknamed student B; episode 4 concerned the stronger bullied, the weaker; episode 5 depicted a violent fight event originated from insult and cyberbullying; episode 6 described a student with physical disabilities suffered from verbal insults; episode 7 narrated that student A threatened student B to obey his orders; episode 8 was a physical attack.

In response to the question of what aspects of the episode made it an act of bullying, the answers were as follows: (a) behaviors harmed the bullied students; (b) it was an unfair issue; (c) the victims were usually the weak students; (d) several students bullied one student.

The interventions and preventions used in the episode included: (a) blocking the bullying event immediately; (b) organizing a class meeting; (c) informing the students’ parents involved; (d) conducting psychological and mental health consultation; (e) educating the bullies; (f) strengthening legal education in the class.

The respondents in the primary school considered the following measures were helpful and practical: (a) regular legal education on students; (b) investigation on the

causes of student bullying events; (c) raising students' awareness; (d) parents' collaboration with schools; (e) creating a good school environment; (f) preventive measures were more critical than interventions; (g) building strong communication and understanding ties between teachers and students to ensure that problems can be found in the first time; creating files for disadvantaged and "problem" students in school, and paying particular attention to such students.

Three teachers (others did not answer) in the secondary school detailed three episodes based on their experience: (a) episode 1 was a gang bullying event between two groups, knives were used to attack the bullied students. Teachers and administrators rushed to the scene and stopped the conflict from worsening. The tools (knives) used in this episode and the possible harmful consequence of this conflict made teachers think it was a bullying incident.

Measures were taken to address this bullying episode involved: (a) exploring the cause of this episode in the first place; (b) appeasing the bullied student; (c) organizing corresponding class meetings to deal with this problem; (d) notifying relevant parents; (e) sanctions were implemented against the bullies; (f) relevant measures to prevent the recurrence of school bullying incidents were formulated. Respondent also confirmed the following measures played important roles: (a) strengthening legal education for all students; (b) raising students' awareness and knowledge on bullying and how to deal with it; (c) implementing whole school preventions against student bullying; (d) guiding family education; (e) relevant responsible entities must fulfill their social responsibilities to prevent cyberbullying from happening.

Episode 2 described that one student in grade 9 extorted money from another student in grade 7. Respondent judged this episode as a bullying incident based on two features: (a) the bullied student was intimidated and beaten; (b) unfair extortion. The respondent took the following measures to deal with it: (a) finding the cause of the event; (b) asking the bully to return the property; (c) organizing relevant class meetings.

Episode 3 detailed a girl who suspected another girl of spreading rumors about herself and ganging up to abuse and intimidate the suspect in the playground. This event was reported to the teachers by onlookers. The respondent claimed it to be a bullying incident based on two factors: (a) several students threatened one; (b) intimidation and abuse were implemented. The teacher emphasized the following steps to cope with bullying problems: (a) educating students on laws and regulations at the school level;

(b) strengthening the understanding and trust between teachers and students at the class level; (c) the cultivation of self-control ability for students at the individual level.

Only one respondent in the high school reported one episode, boy A was jealous of boy B's good relationship with the girl he liked and ganged up on boy B; they used wooden sticks to attack boy B, which caused boy B's body to be injured. Given the severe consequence, the episode was regarded as a student bullying event. The respondent reported to the school administrators and informed the parents of both parties. This respondent also urged to implement a systematic punishment mechanism against the bullies to reduce the incidence of student bullying events.

Characteristics of the bullies and the bullied students. The respondents in the primary school listed some typical characteristics of the bullies and the bullied students, the bullies usually characterized as (a) self-centered; (b) impolite and arrogant, their behaviors were usually unreasonable, and they liked to gang up; (c) violent and unstable emotion, they usually had a bad temper; (d) disobeying the rules; (e) more muscular body; (f) lack of sympathy for the victimized classmates; (g) dislike of learning and score lower in studies.

Typical behaviors of the bullied included: (a) introverted; (b) socially impaired, timid and troublesome; (c) usually walking alone; (d) with physical disabilities and intellectual disabilities; (e) behavior silent with poor expression skills; (f) not taken seriously among classmates, has few friends and very lonely in school; (g) spoiled, cowardly and shy; (h) reluctant to tell teachers and parents about things; (i) weak physical appearance.

Teachers in the secondary and high schools reported similar characteristics. But respondents in the high school also added the follows: (a) the bully student was aggressive, who usually had bad habits, for instance, smoking, drinking, destroying property, etc.; (b) the bully student was often an extrovert and had a lot of friends; (c) not only the bully but also the bullied student often scored poor academic performance.

Differences of gender, age et al. in student bullying events. Respondents in the primary school suggested that: (a) children (whether boys or girls) in one-parent families and left behind were susceptible to be bullied by others; (b) lower grade students were vulnerable to be bullied by higher grades; (c) senior students bullied junior students; (d) boys were more involved in physical bullying, while girls were more involved in non-physical bullying. Two teachers insisted that there was no noticeable difference in gender and age in student bullying.

It is worth noting that disagreements on gender differences still existed in the secondary and high school respondents. In high school, teachers who believed that girls were more involved in bullying than boys outnumbered those with the opposite views.

Causes of student bullying behaviors. Factors that affect the bully students' behavior were divided into seven items: psychological factors/personality; physical/genetic factors; problems related to the family; issues related to school; the influence of peers; the power of the media; culture of belonging. Respondents were required to list the details according to these items given (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10. *Factors affecting the bully students.*

Factors	Specific description
Psychological / personality	Selfishness, domineering and impulsive, larking about, personality distortion, self-centered, lack of compassion, hot temper, showing off, highly expressive, without a proper sense of right or wrong, seeking a sense of presence, lack of feeling of guilty, aversion to learning, hyperactivity disorder, jealousy, paranoid personality, radical personality, desire for attention
Physical / Genetic	Aggressive, physically strong, energetic, the family genetic link, parents' personality, adolescent rebellion, hormone secretion,
Problems related to the family	Parents doting, single-parent families, lack of love, lack of family education, domestic violence, parents have bad habits or even anti-social behavior, parents' rude family education and education methods, lax discipline to children, disharmony in family relationships, tension with parents, insufficient parental companionship and care, parental indulgence, grumpy parents,
Problems related to school	Loose school management, no prevention plans, teachers lack relevant training, failure to detect and address bullying incidents timely, lack of

	educational attention to the development of children's upbringing, no paying attention to the forms and methods of education, inadequate dissemination of information on how to deal with bullying in the school, problems lie in ethical education, teachers' negligence, neglecting students' mental health education, teacher's attitude, and educational approach, the school environment is not friendly and safe, no clear laws, regulations, disciplinary punishments, etc. against bullying in schools, lack of focus on bullying phenomenon, too little communication between teachers and students,
Influence of peers	Imitating others and considering bullying as a fun thing, peers' coaxing mentality, like to make gangs, idolatry, peer abetting, peers' bad habits,
Influence of the media	Violent videos and games, plots of TV series and movies, the influence of the internet
Culture of belonging	Naughtiness is child's nature, clan culture in some areas, lack of faith, the culture of conviviality, the absence of traditional culture

The same seven items were applied to investigate the causes of those vulnerable to being bullied (see Table 3.11).

Table 3.11. *Factors for those who were vulnerable to being bullied.*

Factors	Specific description
Psychological / personality	Introverted, low self-esteem, lack of love, cowardly, timid, shy, lack of communication skills, not confident, Sensitive, quiet and obedient, weird personality, paranoid, autistic behavior, aversion to learning,

Physical / Genetic	Physical weak, fat or thin body, mental or physical disability, parents' personality inheritance, unattractive appearance,
Problems related to the family	No effective communication between children and parents, children's distrust of their parents, lack of parental care, divorced family, parents' carelessness about children, left-behind children's upbringing, stern parenting, and little communication, Poor family economic situation,
Problems related to school	Lack of attention on these students from school failed to help him build self-confidence, teacher's attention mainly focused on students who scored well, teachers lack relevant training, no prevention plans, lack of knowledge on how to protect oneself, failure to detect and address bullying incidents timely, lack of educational attention to the development of children's upbringing, no paying attention to the forms and methods of education, inadequate dissemination of information on how to deal with bullying in the school, problems lie in ethical education, teachers' negligence, lack of mutual understanding and trust between teachers and students, neglecting students' mental health education, teacher's attitude, and educational approach, the school environment is not friendly and safe, poor management and insufficient care, no clear laws, regulations, disciplinary punishments, etc. against bullying in schools, lack of focus on bullying phenomenon,
Influence of peers	Fear of revenge has few friends, unpopular, no peers' support force, often belittled by peers,

Influence of the media	Lack of discrimination and judgment in the media reports,
Culture of belonging	

Intervention and prevention measures against student bullying used in practice. The number of teachers who answered this question in the primary school was eight, in the secondary school was eight too, and in the high school was six. Findings were as follows: (a) class meetings were a vital platform to explain the relevant anti-bullying knowledge and rules, to enhance student’s awareness, and to resolve conflicts among students; (b) working closely with parents to address bullying incidents; (c) using cases to educate and guide students; (d) conducting relevant ethical and legal education; (e) training competent and responsible students leaders in the classroom, who acted as teachers’ “eyes” to detect and report problems to teachers; (f) organizing parents meeting regularly; (g) posters against student bullying displayed prominently in classrooms; (h) organizing colorful and various class activities; (i) performing scenario-playing activities.

The current status of student bullying in school. Participants were asked to rate the frequency of student bullying incidents on a scale from 1 (*rare*) to 7 (*very much*). The mean (missing values were excluded) in the primary school was 2.00 (Table 3.12), in the secondary school 3.16 (Table 3.13), in the high school 3.83 (Table 3.14). The average mean was 2.69 ($SD=1.371$) (see Table 3.15).

Responses were again provided concerning the consequence of student bullying incidents on a 7-point scale (from 1 = *small harmful* to 7 = *very serious and very dangerous*). The result showed that the mean (missing values were excluded) in the primary school was 5.76 (Table 3.16), in the secondary school 5.47 (Table 3.17), in the high 5.56 (Table 3.18). The average mean was 5.59 ($SD=1.367$) (see Table 3.19).

Table 3.12. *Descriptive statistics of the frequency of student bullying incidents in primary school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Frequency	17	1	7	2.00	1.541	2.375	2.438	.550	6.838	1.063
Valid N (listwise)	17									

Table 3.13. *Descriptive statistics of the frequency of student bullying incidents in secondary school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Frequency	19	1	6	3.16	1.344	1.807	-.012	.524	-.046	1.014
Valid N (listwise)	19									

Table 3.14. *Descriptive statistics of the frequency of student bullying incidents in high school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Frequency	18	1	5	2.83	.985	.971	.369	.536	.106	1.038
Valid N (listwise)	18									

Table 3.15. *Total Descriptive statistics of the frequency of student bullying incidents in primary, secondary, and high school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Frequency	54	1	7	2.69	1.371	1.880	.781	.325	.736	.639
Valid N (listwise)	54									

Table 3.16. *Descriptive statistics of the consequence of student bullying incidents in primary school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Consequences	17	3	7	5.76	1.602	-.910	.550	-.800	1.063
Valid N (listwise)	17								

Table 3.17. *Descriptive statistics of the consequence of student bullying incidents in secondary school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Consequences	19	3	7	5.47	1.219	-.652	.524	.017	1.014
Valid N (listwise)	19								

Table 3.18. *Descriptive statistics of the consequence of student bullying incidents in high school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Consequences	18	3	7	5.56	1.338	-1.045	.536	.203	1.038
Valid N (listwise)	18								

Table 3.19. *Total descriptive statistics of the consequences of student bullying incidents in primary, secondary, and high school.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Consequences	54	3	7	5.59	1.367	-.777	.325	-.498	.639
Valid N (listwise)	54								

Evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-bullying intervention programs. Participants responded on a scale from 1 (= *minimal effectiveness*) to 7 (= *very large-effectiveness*) to assess the efficacy of anti-bullying intervention programs implemented in their practice. Statistics (missing values were excluded) showed that the mean in the primary school was 5.44 (Table 3.20), in the secondary school 5.37 (Table 3.21), in the high school 4.78 (Table 3.22). The average mean was 5.19 ($SD=1.302$) (see Table 3.23).

Table 3.20. *Descriptive statistics of the evaluation of strategies or interventions generally used in primary school practice.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Effective of intervention	16	2	7	5.44	1.711	-1.155	.564	.297	1.091
Valid N (listwise)	16								

Table 3.21. *Descriptive statistics of the evaluation of strategies or interventions generally used in secondary school practice.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Effective of intervention	19	3	7	5.37	1.116	-.569	.524	-.514	1.014
Valid N (listwise)	19								

Table 3.22. Descriptive statistics of the evaluation of strategies or interventions generally used in high school practice.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Effective of intervention	18	3	6	4.78	1.003	-.288	.536	-.884	1.038
Valid N (listwise)	18								

Table 3.23. Total descriptive statistics of the evaluation of strategies or interventions generally used in primary, secondary, and high school practice.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Effective of intervention	53	2	7	5.19	1.302	-.636	.327	-.173	.644
Valid N (listwise)	53								

Kinds of plans, intervention, or prevention anti-bullying programs. The last question was information about the plans, interventions, or prevention of anti-bullying programs in China today. The following were some of the relevant programs that had been implemented and would be implemented in China based on the collation of this questionnaire: (a) Several Provisions of Tianjin Municipality on Preventing and Governing School Bullying, initiated in November 2018, which was the first local law to regulate the student bullying prevention and intervention programs in China; (b) Strengthening Comprehensive Management Plan for Primary and Middle School Students Bullying. This plan was jointly issued by eleven departments led by the Ministry of Education in 2017. The project mainly included five aspects: guiding ideology, basic principles, governance content and measures, division of responsibilities, and work requirements. The outstanding features of this plan were: focusing on systematic construction in the overall thinking and comprehensive management in specific measures and striving to solve the practical problem of student bullying with systematic construction and comprehensive management. The particular measures proposed are to strengthen school management, accelerate the construction of campus video surveillance systems, emergency alarm devices, etc., and establish and improve various rules and regulations to prevent student bullying. The school should establish a student bullying management committee based on actual conditions; (c) The newly revised Law on the Protection of Minors on June 1, 2021. For the first time, the issue of student bullying might be tackled in the form of legislation.

Discussion

Description of the definition of student bullying at school

No noticeable differences were found by comparing the definitions of student bullying given by teachers at different teaching levels. Most of them focused on seven aspects: purpose (including process), means, consequence (including influence), nature of the behavior, frequency or repetitiveness, intention, imbalance of power. Of course, no respondent reported one definition containing all seven items. Nevertheless, most highlighted two aspects: (a) process and means; (b) consequences and influence.

Two respondents (the percentage was 3.3%) touched on the purpose of bullying, and one was that bullying was the action of forced obedience; the other was forcing other students to do what they did not want to do.

About 52 respondents (including the teachers who used the definition proposed by MOE) concerned means or methods used in bullying, for example, verbal humiliation, extortion, assault, fights, intimidation, threats, beatings and scolding, chasing and intercepting, verbal insults, coercion or violence, physical and psychological attack, emotional and physical abuse, physically oppression, relationship isolation or mental control, etc. The numbers accounted for 86.7% of the total.

There were approximately 44 (the percentage was 73.3%) respondents who also emphasized the consequence and influence of bullying, for instance, causing psychological problems, profoundly affecting health, and even affecting personality development on the bullied students, causing them to feel pain in mentality and body, which caused harmful results, the infringement against students' physiology, psychology, reputation, rights, and property, etc.

Four respondents (6.7%) were concerned about the nature of bullying. For instance, bullying was anomie, offensive, infringing and unfair behavior, etc.

Six respondents (10.0%) mentioned the criterion of repetitiveness (frequency) only. They used the flowing terms such as: for a long time, recurring behavior, long-term, repeated, usually frequent, etc.

Concerning the criterion of intentionality, 28 respondents (46.7%) used the following terms in their definitions: deliberately or maliciously, deliberate, intentionally tease, malicious isolation, non-incidenta l behavior, consciously, intentionally, etc.

Concerning the criterion of imbalance of power, there were about 22 (36.7%) respondents who included this criterion in their definition by using the following terms: bullying the weak students, on vulnerable students, the small bullied by the big, the weak bullied by the strong, or the senior bullied by the junior, attack on a weak one, physically strong students bullied the more vulnerable students, conducted by the stronger party against the weaker party, etc.

Two noticeable results were indicated in this analysis: one was that means(including process), consequences (including influence) were recognized and employed in their definition by most respondents; the other was that although many

people considered power imbalance as an essential feature of bullying, which was not included in many respondent's definitions.

About 24 respondents invoked the definition concluded by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE) in 2017. Therefore, it was necessary to analyze this one. It was the first time to clarify the connotation and extension of the bullying phenomenon in a Chinese background, which demonstrated: (a) the subject relationship of bullying was clear, student bullying was behavior that occurred between primary and middle school students; (b) clarifying the methods of bullying, such as physical, language, and online methods; (c) the consequences of bullying were definite, causing physical injury, property loss or mental damage to the other party.

However, there were also the following problems in practical applications: (a) it was not appropriate to include property damage due to student bullying. The effects of student bullying were mainly psychological or physical harm or potential threats and injuries to the bullied student. The property loss should be the target or purpose of the bullying. The consequence of the property loss was the negative impact or harm caused to the bullied student; (b) this definition did not distinguish between student bullying and violence.

The essential features of student bullying behaviors

Data statistical analyses on the question of the basic features of student bullying behavior displayed that 60 teachers responded to this question, among them there were 28 (the percentage was 46.7%) respondents (12 in primary school, six in secondary school, and 10 in high school) agree with the criterion of "imbalance of power" between the bully and the bullied student, 16 (which accounts for 26.7%) respondents (six in the primary school, four in the secondary school and six in the high school) reported the feature of "repetitiveness" and only two (the proportion was 3.3%, one in the primary school, and one in the high school) mentioned the feature of "intention." As we all know, the three criteria, "intention," "repetitiveness," and "imbalance of power" proposed by Olweus (2010, 1994), were the basic features of student bullying, which were also used to classify a behavior as bullying event and were used to distinguish the negative behaviors from bullying. In this study, only the two standards of "imbalance of power" and "repetitiveness" received partial support; meanwhile, the number of

teachers who accepted the standard of “imbalance of power” accounted for 46.7%, while most respondents rejected the standard of “intention,” it only accounted for 3.3%. These findings were corroborated in Study 2.

In addition to the above mentioned three well-accepted criteria among both researchers and practitioners (Olweus, 2010; Smith & Brain, 2000), respondents also listed two other features of student bullying: one was the consequences causing physical and/or mental harm to the bullied students, the percentage of teachers who considered this feature account for 71.7% (13 in the primary school, 16 in the secondary school and 14 in the high school), which was higher than that of “imbalance of power.” The notion of the consequence of bullying was also used to judge bullying behaviors by some teachers in Study 2; another notion mentioned by many teachers was the concealment of bullying behavior, respondents believed that student bullying behaviors were undetectable and covert, some of them were not easy to discover, because not only the bullies but also the bullied students did not want to tell adults due to some reasons. It had been reported that only about 20% of children disclosed bullying behaviors (Hamiwka, 2009; Limber et al., 1998).

Differences between student bullying and other negative behaviors

Survey results showed that most teachers regarded the severe consequence, which may lead to severe mental or physical harm on the bullied students, as the fundamental difference between student bullying and other negative behaviors. A total of 42 (13 in primary school, 18 in secondary school, and 11 in high school) respondents held this position; this result was associated with the above findings. In contrast, the number of respondents who reported Olweus’ three criteria in the primary school was five, in the secondary school was one and in the high school was three.

Experience in student bullying incidents

As reported, the forms of bullying episodes in the primary school mainly included: (a) the junior was bullied by the senior; (b) extortion; (c) nickname calling; (d) verbal insults; (e) control others; (f) fight/ attack, etc. In secondary school, they displayed as (a) gang bullying, (b) money extortion, (c) rumor spreading. In high school, it demonstrated conflict in love affairs.

Based on the forms of bullying episodes, some notable features can be extrapolated in general from above: (a) bullying forms varied according to different students ages and teaching periods, the manifestation of bullying behaviors developed from relatively simple to more complicated ones; (b) with the constant maturity of students' physiology and psychology, together with the improvement of cognitive ability and knowledge level, their activity spaces were expanded, and their acting ability increased, the forms of bullying had evolved from simplistic traditional bullying to a relatively more complicated combination of traditional bullying and cyberbullying; (c) the purposes and motives of bullying were becoming more and more complex; (d) the methods used by the bully were becoming more offensive and dangerous; (e) the consequences of bullying were getting worse and severe.

Concerning the aspect that made the respondents classify it as a bullying behavior, one significant criterion used in these episodes was the consequence of bullying; other criteria also included: means and methods used in bullying behaviors; for instance, in one episode, knives were used to attack the bullied students, in the high school episode, the bully used wood sticks to beat the bullied student. These were the primary standards for the respondents to employ in their practice.

The effectiveness of interventions and preventions, carried out by the respondents in those episodes, were more associated with the following elements: (a) finding out the causes of bullying; (b) making the best use of class meetings; (c) support from parents involved; (d) a trustful relationship between teachers and students.

Characteristics of the bullies and the bullied students

Some characteristics of the bullies and the bullied students enumerated by the respondents were analogous to those reported by other researchers. For the bully students who usually were extroverts and had a good relationship with many friends (no matter what type of a friend), physical advantage (maybe stronger than their classmates) and friend relationship created an imbalance of power between them and other students. Many of them were tired of learning and scored lower in tests (UNESCO, 2019), and they usually attained below-average school achievement; this point was a little different from what Olweus (1994) had reported that the bully students usually got average, above or below average in elementary school. They were quickly engaged in other antisocial behaviors, including vandalism, drinking, and associated with "bad

companions” (Olweus, 1994). The bully students usually expressed less sympathy for the bullied ones; they were hot-tempered, aggressive, and had low frustration tolerance, they often had difficulty conforming to rules and regulations.

The general characteristics of the bullied students were similar to those descriptions identified by other researchers. But findings also revealed that some bullied students usually lacked practical skills or had psychological problems, for example, lack of social skills, not confidence in oneself, poor frustration resistance, etc. It showed that they needed to improve their abilities in this area with the help of other parties.

Differences of gender, age et al. in student bullying events

Findings in this questionnaire suggested that some views were the same as other researchers; some were quite different. According to Olweus’ Bergen Study (1994), the main differences lay in the following aspects: results showed that boys were more often victims, especially in direct bullying. Some respondents in this study concluded that girls were more involved in bullying than boys; the number of respondents in the high school even outnumbered those who held the opposite views. Some teachers even considered that girls were more involved in perpetrators of bullying than boys. Explanations on this may be: (a) some boys may become less masculine due to the influence of some movies and TV series in recent years; (b) the size of our samples was inadequate, and detailed analyses on this aspect needed to be undertaken in the future.

Another notable result presented by many respondents was that children (whether boys or girls) in one-parent families or left behind were vulnerable to being bullied by others. With the rapid development of China’s economy and the reconstruction of social structure, family, the basic unit of society, had been undergoing profound changes, this social background differed from other countries.

It was also confirmed that lower grade students were vulnerable to being bullied by higher grade students, junior students were at high risk to be bullied by senior students. The result of the Bergen study (Olweus, 1994) indicated that more than 50% of the bullied children in the lower grades reported having been bullied by older ones.

Causes of student bullying behaviors

Causes of student bullying behaviors were complex, consisting of various components targeted at different levels of influence. The heterogeneous elements typically effected in combination rather than separately. Consequently, the contribution of each element to the overall effects was unclear (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). But two factors were considered to be the most significant by respondents.

One was that the problems related to the family, the family environments shaped children's personality and behaviors, even the genetic factors were inherited from parents. Parents' way of education and upbringing, family structure, parents' educational and economic levels, and social status were the main factors that contributed to bullying behaviors. For instance, some parents had low academic levels and did not know how to educate their children; some made a living away from home, resulting in the neglect of children; some children lived in single-parent or divorced families, sometimes there was tension between them. In a nutshell, all these factors profoundly influenced children's performance, not only on the bullies but also on the bullied students.

The other was the problems related to school, which can be generalized as four parts: (a) the school management system; (b) teachers and staff's knowledge and recognition on bullying problems; (c) the school curricula and activities; (d) teachers' attitude and sense of responsibility. Effective school management can create a safe and harmonious environment; many bullying episodes happened in unstructured contexts such as playgrounds where teachers were not present frequently (Carroll-Lind & Kearney, 2004; Leff et al., 2003). Respondents reported that they lacked relevant knowledge and training on this issue; sometimes, they could not clearly distinguish bullying from other negative behaviors. These might limit them from addressing bullying problems. China's current primary and middle school curricula valued the acquisition of knowledge and despised the cultivation of personal morality, which may lead to deviations in student values. Teachers' apparent anti-bullying attitude and sense of responsibility can help deter and detect bullying events.

Intervention and prevention measures against student bullying used in practice

The effective intervention and prevention measures used in practice by respondents mainly concentrated on the two levels, three parties, and four points.

Two levels included individual level and class-school level, personal level focused on the bully and bullied students, as the discussion concluded in the previous chapters, either the bully or the bullied students were all victims, the bully needed to correct their behaviors, change bad habits and hobbies, and establish a correct outlook on life and values. The bullied students needed to build self-confidence, improve social skills, and collective awareness. Class and schools should employ strict management systems to create a safe campus and class environment at the class-school level.

Three parts comprised teachers, students, and parents. Teachers were the key roles in settling students bullying problems, who also worked as coordinators to communicate with parents; students should work closely and help each other in facing the menace of bullying among them; parents needed to introspect their behaviors having influenced on children and worked with the school to tackle bullying issues.

Four points included the relationship between teachers and students, class meetings, peer supports, related curricula, and activities. The relationship between teachers and students predetermined the discovery of bullying events early. As reported, teachers were often the last to be told about bullying at school (Carroll & Kearney, 2004) due to the ineffective communication channels; class meetings, emphasized by many teachers, were useful platforms to raise students' awareness against bullying; peer supports offset teachers' vacancy in some places or times, and peer support could also help teachers to disclose bullying behaviors earlier and to prevent some bullying events from deteriorating; related curricula functioned as shaping individual personality and behavior, and some activities many promote friendship between children and enhance the awareness of cooperation in solving problems, other activities might help to improve the bully students' sympathy for others.

The current status of student bullying in school

The frequency of student bullying incidents that occurred in the primary school (*Mean=2.00*) is lower than that in the secondary school (*Mean=3.16*), and the high school (*Mean=2.83*) is the highest. This trend was significantly distinct from what Olweus had concluded. Olweus illustrated that the percentage of students who reported being bullied decreased with higher grades; the reasons might be that a certain proportion of the victims were gradually able to develop strategies for escaping bullying as they grew older, another possible explanation was that the students might become

less vulnerable with increasing age. The interpretation of this questionnaire's statistical results may lie in the following aspects: (a) the sample size was too small; (b) the samples from elementary school concentrated in the same area and were not widely representative; (c) the questionnaire surveys in elementary school teachers mainly focused on two adjacent schools, while the questionnaire surveys of secondary school and high school teachers came from different regions.

The average mean of 2.69, compared with the highest score of 7, was a little severe than that reported by UNESCO (2019); it was reported that almost one in three students (32%) had been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the last month.

All respondents in primary school, secondary school, and high school considered the consequences of student bullying incidents severe problems. The three means in the primary school were 5.76, in the secondary school 5.47, in the high 5.56. The average mean was 5.59. Results implied that student bullying needed to be taken seriously; it differed from other students' negative behaviors.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-bullying intervention programs

To evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying intervention programs implemented in respondents' practice, teachers in primary and secondary school had confidence in their measures to address student bullying events, the mean in the primary school was 5.44, in the secondary school 5.37, which were higher than that in the high school ($M=4.78$). This showed that there was a decrease in the evaluation of the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures used in their practice, which may be explained that teachers were increasingly anxious about the effects of their efforts to deal with bullying, as children grew up, their acting ability had enhanced, and activity space had expanded, methods used in bullying behaviors may become more and more harmful, and consequences may be severe, and systematic anti-bullying intervention programs urgently needed in primary and middle school in China.

Kinds of plans, intervention, or prevention anti-bullying programs

As indicated in the above result, there was a decrease in evaluating the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures used in respondents' practice. Teachers in the primary and middle schools needed relevant training and systematic anti-bullying

intervention and prevention programs in their practice; no one mature program like OBPP comes into being in Chinese background.

Study 2

Introduction

To make up for the inadequacy in the quantitative Study 1, the second study aimed to interview three teachers (1 in primary school, 1 in secondary school, and 1 in high school) with experience in dealing with student bullying episodes to collect first-hand data. All these works had been done through telephone communication.

The first interviewee was a man teacher named Stephon in a primary school, who teaches grade 3 now. He reported a repeated student bullying event occurred in his class last year. One boy had been bullied by three other boy classmates alone or together for a long time. He put forward his understanding of student bullying and his criteria for judging these behaviors and gave relevant solutions and suggestions on addressing it.

The second interviewee was a lady teacher, H (as requested, she did not want her real name to be used in this paper), who worked in a secondary school today. She provided detailed information on a typical bullying episode that happened in her class in 2018, which included: the whole process of that bullying event; the family status of the bully and the bullied student; what she had done on that event; her perspectives on bullying phenomenon and her school environment. She also proposed some measures on how to respond to student bullying problems.

The third interviewee is a man teacher in a private high school; his surname is Ding. He described gang bullying in his class 4 years ago; a group of girls bullied a girl student at night, the bullied student was sent to the local hospital the next day. He also gave some exceptional viewpoints on student bullying according to his long-term teaching experience.

Participants

Stephon, a man teacher, was 42 years old. He had worked in a public primary school for 18 years in Yangjiang city, Guangdong province, China. He was a postgraduate who majored in Chinese. The primary school had nearly 600 students,

most of them lived in the local city, and a few came from other regions or provinces whose parents worked in Yangjiang city.

Lady H is a bachelor's degree graduate, majored in mathematics. She had worked in a public secondary school for six years in Zhongshan city, Guangdong province. She taught grade 8 today. The public secondary school was a large-scale one in Guangdong province with nearly 2,200 students and 157 teachers and staff.

Ding was a man teacher, majored in mathematics too; he had worked in a private high school for nine years in Shenzhen city of Guangdong province. He worked in a public school for seven years before joining the private school. The private school had nearly 1,200 students and 98 teachers and administrators.

These three interviews were recorded with the interviewees' consent, and these interview activities complied with relevant Chinese laws and regulations.

Interview 1

Stephon recounted a student bullying incident that occurred last year in grade 3. Three boys often bullied another boy individually or in partnership; the means of bullying mainly included: nickname, shoved, taking away the bullied boy's toys, etc. After this was discovered, he criticized and educated the bullies involved, reassured the bullied student, and learned more about the family situation of the bullied boy. The bullied boy's father often beat him after drinking, and his mother often suffered from domestic violence. He lived in an environment that lacked care, which had caused the boy to be timid and cowardly. He dared not resist or tell adults when he was bullied and did not know how to get out of trouble. The following part was an excerpt (rearranged according to the record):

Question (by me): How did you find this bullying behavior?

Answer (by Stephon): A girl in my class told me about that after school.

Question: Is the girl the bullied boy's good friend?

Answer: No, the girl is not the bullied boy's friend. She told me that she thought the bullying behavior was unfair. Generally speaking, girls are more sympathetic than boys.

Question: After you received the report, why did you think this episode was a student bullying behavior?

Answer: The bullied boy had been bullied by the other three boys many times, and the boy did not score well. I thought the event was severe.

Question: What measures had you taken to deal with it?

Answer: Firstly, I inquired about learning the details about it; secondly, I held a meeting with the three bullies and criticized them seriously, making them promise not to do such things to other students again; thirdly, I appeased the bullied boy and tried to seek support from his parents, but I found that the bullied boy lived in an unhappy family.

Question: Did you contact the bullies' parents?

Answer: No, I did not. I decided if the three bullies did not repent for their deeds and kept making the same mistakes.

Question: Did the three bullies change their behaviors after that?

Answer: Yes, I asked two responsible girls, included the one who told me this episode, to be on the alert for the three bully boys' follow-up performance and help the bullied boy more in life and study. I have paid particular attention to the bullied boy since then.

Question: Do you suppose your measures against bullying behaviors were effective?

Answer: Yes, I do.

Question: What criteria do you use to determine bullying behavior in practice?

Answer: Fairness and severity of the incident.

Question: What were the causes of the bullying that occurred according to your inquiry?

Answer: According to my inquiry on the three bully boys, they just believed it was fun to do so, and maybe the bullied boy was timid and a coward.

Question: Can you distinguish student bullying events from other similar activities?

Answer: Frankly speaking, it is not easy to do that. In my opinion, student bullying events are more severe than other similar activities.

Question: In this episode, the bullied boy has been bullied many times. Do you agree that "repetitiveness" is the essential feature of student bullying behaviors?

Answer: Sorry, I do not know.

Question: What are the leading causes of student bullying events?

Answer: Family and parents are the leading causes; in this event, the bullied boy suffered from long-term drunken violence by his father, which caused him to be timid and coward and became the target of bullying.

Question: What strategies or interventions did you use in your teaching activity regarding bullying?

Answer: I trained several responsible and sympathetic students to help me manage my daily affairs. I asked them to report to me immediately in case of student bullying occurred. I also used the class meetings to raise their awareness of bullying and asked students to help against bullying behaviors.

Question: Do you have any suggestions on dealing with student bullying?

Answer: Some parents involved needed to be educated in response to students bullying incidents.

Results

In response to the frequency of student bullying incidents in his school, on a scale from 1 (=rare) to 7 (= very frequently) for him to judge, she scored 4 points. This was lower than the mean value of 5.19 in Study 1. But he considered that maybe there were a lot of other student bullying events that had not been revealed in his school because not only the bully but also the bullied student did not want the adults to know what they had done.

As is shown in Study 1, Stephon also reckoned that the teachers in his school lacked knowledge and training in the student bullying area, they did not know the features of this phenomenon and could not distinguish it from other similar activities, what their judgment on this issue was the seriousness of the events. He also expressed to have some guidance to direct them to prevent, intervene, judge, and cope with student bullying events in the future. They mainly relied on experience to deal with such problems in practice.

The bully students did not have definite objectives through bullying behaviors; they believed these activities were fun. Unfortunately, the timid and cowardly boy was the target for his growth environment. Although Stephon did not provide more details about the background of the three bully boys' families, the bullied boy's growth experience testified that family factors played the most crucial role in the causes of the

student bullying phenomenon. He even suggested that some parents needed education in nurturing their children. He also claimed that parents should spend more time taking care of their children, neither scolding nor spoiling them when they made mistakes, and providing a warm family environment for them to grow up.

Another significant point in this interview was that the bullied student classmate, a girl, reported this bullying episode, whereas she was not his good friend. She said this issue to her teacher due to her sympathy for the bullied boy, which showed that peers' support was cardinal to discover and counter bullying behaviors among students. One effective measure taken by Stephon in his practice was the training of several responsible and sympathetic students in class; they could help him manage daily affairs and report to him some severe issues that happened in class. Stephon could know the class dynamics for the first time and respond accordingly.

In this episode, the bullied student had been bullied by three boys for a long time, which fit in the standard of Olweus' "repetitiveness." Still, Stephon did not reckon the "repetitiveness" as the essential feature of student bullying behaviors. He judged bullying incidents based on two criteria: the severity of the behaviors, severity referred to the consequences of the event, and the nature of the event itself. This provided an additional perspective on the nature of bullying. Another criterion is the fairness of the behavior itself.

Interview 2

Lady H worked in a secondary school for six years in Zhongshan City, China. According to her account, the bullying incident happened shortly after working as a teacher. At that time, she was a novice and lacked working experience. She was under tremendous psychological pressure in the face of student bullying events.

H taught Grade 8 now. There were 14 Grade 8 in this school today; each class had about 40-46 students. Meanwhile, students who immigrated from other areas account for nearly a quarter of the total number in this school. She detailed one typical student bullying episode in her class between boys in 2018. The bully (the bully was named as A in the following for privacy protection) lived in a remarried family (his father divorced when he was five years old and married another lady, the lady was not his biological mother), his father was busy with business and had less time to educate

and take care of him, the bully usually had a tense relationship with his family members. He was opposed to learning and liked to get on with friends in society. The bullied student (the bullied student was named as B in the following for privacy protection) lived in a happy and wealthier family. His father and mother were all workers, and they all took good care of the boy. The boy performed well in the class and was popular. The cause of this episode was that A could not find one of his belongings and suspected B had stolen it; Boy A threatened B to return or compensate it in the playground. B denied A's accusation against him but suffered from intimidation. B reported this to his parents after school, and B's parents informed H immediately.

H talked with A and B separately the next day to understand the truth and found out that it was not B who had stolen A's belonging in the end. After that, she gave A critical education, let A apologize to B for his nasty words and deeds in public, and showed her definite attitude against student bullying behaviors in-class meetings. She also provided psychological counseling for B and A. She used this as a case in-class session to tell students how to deal with similar problems. She reported the solution about this event to the parents involved, obtained B's parent's allowance, and asked A's father to pay more attention to the child's growth.

She reported that she was a novice and lacked teaching experience. Still, she concluded this episode was bullying behavior according to the process of the event and the means used by A. Although this episode did not lead to severe and uncontrollable consequences, it reminded H that preventing student bullying events were more critical than intervention. She claimed that no serious student bullying incidents happened after that in the class she managed. The followings were parts of the interview (rearranged according to the record):

Question (by me): How did you conclude that episode was a student bullying behavior?

Answer (by H): I think it's a severe issue according to my intuition.

Question: Do you know the three criteria, "intention," "repetitiveness," and "imbalance of power," are the characteristics of student bullying behaviors?

Answer: Frankly speaking, I do not know about that, but student B was intimidated by student A was the factor for me to decide that event was bullying behavior.

Question: Did you report the solution to the school headmaster in charge of these issues?

Answer: No, because I thought that event did not lead to severe results, and I believed I could solve it by myself though I was a novice at that time.

Question: Do you think the measures you took in that issue were effective? And what are the most influential factors or methods to deal with student bullying behaviors according to your experience?

Answer: In that event, I see that the teacher's attitude is the most critical factor in addressing student bullying problems. More communication and understanding with children and establishing a trusting relationship with each other are effective methods.

Question: Are you familiar with the knowledge of student bullying now? What do you think are the characteristics of student bullying?

Answer: I am not familiar with the relevant knowledge about that, but I believe that the student bullying behavior usually used abnormal means, for example, intimidation, beatings, and even the use of knives to hurt other students.

Question: Do you think bullying behaviors take place frequently in your school?

Answer: No, I don't think so, but I believe that similar incidents often occur among students.

Question: Can you distinguish similar incidents from student bullying behaviors accurately?

Answer: Frankly speaking, I can't do that.

Question: Do you agree with the three characteristics (intention, repetitiveness, and imbalance of power)?

Answer: I agree with the feature of "imbalance of power" between the bully and the bullied students.

Question: Why don't you agree with the other two characteristics?

Answer: I don't think some bullying incidents are premeditated by the bully. As far as I know, some bullying incidents were because the bully got two more glances. Furthermore, the bully did not necessarily see the student being bullied before, or there was no conflict between them.

Question: And what about the characteristic of "repetitiveness"?

Answer: As I just told you, after my detailed inquiry about the bully and the bullied students in this episode, the bullied student said to me that the bully had not bullied him before this incident.

Question: What do you usually do in your practice to prevent student bullying incidents?

Answer: Firstly, I usually communicate more with students and keep abreast of their dynamics; secondly, I keep in close contact with parents; thirdly, I make the best use of class meetings to strengthen education and guidance for students.

Question: According to your comprehension, what are the leading causes of student bullying?

Answer: Family factors are the leading causes, including parents' rearing style, parents' educational level, and family economic situation, etc.

Question: Do you have any other suggestions for dealing with student bullying?

Answer: I suggested that some relevant departments edit pamphlets on student bullying incidents and distribute them to students and teachers.

Results

This interview indicated that some teachers at the secondary school level had not a definite idea of the definition of student bullying, and they were short of knowledge and training in this area; they could not tell the differences between bullying behaviors and similar activities because they did not master the characteristics of student bullying phenomenon. H realized that bullying behaviors might result in severe and uncontrollable consequences, which must be contained timely. H did not agree with Olweus' criteria of "intention" and "repetitiveness," she determined that episode as student bullying behavior based on the means used by the bully and the severity of the possible consequences. She exemplified cases to support her viewpoints, including bullying incidents between students who did not know each other and bullying simply due to the bully student's bad mood. Still, she believed in the standard of "imbalance of power" between the bully and bullied students.

H did not consider that student bullying behaviors frequently occur in her school; if responded on a scale from 1 (*=rare*) to 7 (*=very often*), she scored 2 points. This is lower than the mean value of 5.19 in Study 1.

In the episode of this interview, the bully lived in a remarried family, family environment and lax family education led to a tense relationship between the student and his family. As reported by H, the bully was not physically strong, but he had some friends in the society so that he could bully others. In other words, the imbalance of power originated from the bully student's friends. The bullied student had a good

relationship with his parents and told them what happened timely to get help from his family and school teachers convenient, which was an essential step for the bullied student to avoid being further harmed.

H confirmed that teachers' attitude was the key factor in addressing student bullying. She made the best use of class meetings to show her firm anti-bullying attitude to all students, which was a kind of support to the possible bullied students. They knew how to do it while encountering bullying behaviors. She also emphasized that establishing a trusting relationship between teachers and students by communicating more was the best way to detect bullying events early. Students were willing to tell teachers what happened. The bullied students would also feel relieved to say to their teachers. Teachers' attitudes also prevented the bullying incidents from getting worse.

According to her viewpoints: "behind every problematic child there was a problematic family." she claimed that family factors were the leading causes of student bullying phenomenon. This was similar to the viewpoints provided by Stephon in interview 1.

H also pointed out, teachers in secondary school needed knowledge and training in this area. It would take a lot of time for teachers to cope with student bullying problems in practice. A systematic intervention and prevention program was urgently required in the middle schools. She suggested a relevant manual on dealing with student bullying problems should be published shortly, which could help teachers react to this issue and help students better protect themselves.

Interview 3

Ding is 40 years old, and he once worked in a small public school. He joined the present private school nine years ago. This private school, founded in 2010, was a new one compared with the other two. He told me a bullying episode occurred between girls four years ago: two girls had a conflict over a typical boyfriend. The bully girl gathered six friends and bullied the other girl (the bully and the forced girls belonged to different classes) one night (they were all boarding students). The bully girls used many inhumane methods to torture the bullied girl, for instance, slap, beat, insult, abuse, etc., which caused the bullied girl to suffer from severe physical and mental harm. The following interview part was an excerpt (rearranged according to the record):

Question (by me): How did you find this episode?

Answer (by Ding): I went to my class the next day morning and found that the bullied girl was absent, so I went to her dormitory to have a look. The bullied girl was lying in bed. I asked her why she was missing. She did not tell me the truth. In the beginning, she excused herself that she was ill. I found her face swollen and different from being sick. She told me the truth in the end under my repeated inquiry.

Question: What did you do next after you found the truth?

Answer: I reported this issue to the school leaders in charge and called an ambulance to send the bullied girl to the local hospital. Then I informed the bullied girl's parents.

Question: Did you call the police?

Answer: No, we didn't.

Question: Why?

Answer: First, before we decided to call the police, I needed to hear the bullied girl's parents' advice; second, we believed our school could deal with this episode.

Question: What are your next steps and measures to handle this event?

Answer: Firstly, we organized a meeting attended by the school leaders in charge, the bully girl's parents, the bullied girl's parents, and me; secondly, after the meeting, we gave critical instruction to the bully girl and her six friends, included the boy involved; thirdly, we carried out school-wide related prevention and education activities to address this kind of problems; finally, we urged the parents of the bully to strengthen the discipline of their children.

Question: How do you evaluate the measures and interventions you have taken to address this problem?

Answer: I believe the measures and interventions we took were adequate at that time.

Question: Do you have a systematic anti-bullying program after that episode? What measures have you taken today to address student bullying?

Answer: Speaking, we do not have one systematic anti-bullying program in our school until now, and we know and understand the student bullying phenomenon in recent years. For example, we have taken some measures, inviting the court judge to report the relevant cases to influence all students; raising teachers' and students' awareness of coping with bullying behaviors; resolving the bullying problem as soon as it is discovered.

Results

Although Ding had listed some practical measures and interventions to address bullying problems, for instance, teachers should pay attention to the performance of the students at any time, grasp the dynamics of them, and solve the issues immediately without delay, report to school leaders in time and seek the cooperation of parents in case of severe bullying events. He claimed that he could not distinguish student bullying behavior from similar problems and could not tell the basic features of student bullying. He did not consider bullying incidents frequently occurring in the school he served. He believed that the episode was an unanticipated event. The reason was that as students aged and expanded their knowledge, they had understood and mastered more and more skills and methods of how to communicate and live with others. However, he also pointed out that they needed the knowledge and guidance in the bullying area to better direct teachers to understand and deal with such issues in practice. He believed bullying incidents might result in severe and uncontrollable consequences once they happened, which was massive harm to the students who had been bullied, and the school environment.

This interview discovered that: (a) the cause of bullying has evolved from name-calling to love affairs with the development of their physical growth; (b) bullying methods and means were more harmful than that in the secondary and primary period (slap, beat, insult, abuse, etc. were used in this bullying event); (c) even some high school students did not know how to protect themselves (the bullied girl did not tell her teacher or her parents timely); (d) the bullied student was not necessarily one that unpopular in the class.

Some problems still lay in the school: (a) many teachers cannot tell the difference of student bullying from other similar behaviors; (b) teachers still lacked the knowledge of the student bullying phenomenon; (c) there was not a systematic anti-bullying policy or program in some Chinese high schools; (d) anti-bullying problems had not attracted enough attention in some schools.

Some valuable experience and lessons had gained from this interview. Those were: (a) teachers' attitude and concern for students played an essential part in coping with bullying problems; (b) Ding stated that the bullied girl was a cheerful student and

was popular in her class. The girl also had some good friends, which prevented her from being bullied by others. This feature was different from what Olweus once pointed out that the victims were lonely and abandoned at school (1994), the victims didn't have a single good friend in their class (1994); (c) parents' education and way of upbringing on children were critical factors in shaping students' behavior. In this event, Ding explained that the bully girl grew up in a family with divorced parents; she lived with and was pampered by her father, who was hot temper. This was precisely what H said in the second interview that "behind every problematic child, there was a problematic family."; (d) the bully girl had never been recorded or reported as a bully before this bullying behavior in high school, relevant record or report of her in the primary and secondary school was lack. Nevertheless, according to Ding's account, the bullied girl had never been bullied before this severe bullying behavior; th did not comply with Olweus' (1993, 2010) "repetitiveness" criterion; (e) the bullied girl had never been bullied by other students before this incident according to Ding's report. Thus the bullied girl was neither a "passive or submissive victim" nor a "provocative victim" due to Olweus' classification; (f) Ding reported that the reason why he concluded this incident was a bullying behavior was based on the event serious consequence. This showed that teachers' judgment on bullying behavior did not follow Olweus' three criteria (intention, repetitiveness, and imbalance of power); (g) the bully girl's six friends participated in the bully event, they lacked details about their last performance on this aspect.

Discussion

Table 3.24. *Comparison of the three student bullying events.*

	Primary school	Secondary school	High school
Type of bullying	Direct traditional	Direct traditional	Direct traditional
Causes of bullying	The bullied student was cowardly;	Lax of the family education on the bully student	Unclear
Objective	For fun	Suspecting the bullied student had taken away the	Be jealous for boyfriend

		bully boy's belongings	
Methods and means	Nickname, shove, take away the bullied boy's toys, etc.	Intimidation, threat, etc.	Slap, beat, insult, abuse, etc.
Consequence	A little serious	Serious	Very serious
Intention	No intention	Intention	Intention
Repetitiveness	For a long time	Once	Once
Imbalance of power	Imbalance	Imbalance	Imbalance

As shown in Table 3.24, the three bullying incidents had their commonalities, but they were pretty different in many ways. The commonalities mainly reflected in the following aspects: (a) three bullying events were all direct traditional bullying behaviors; (b) the consequences of them were that the bullied students had suffered from physical and/or psychological harm; (c) the ways of the three bullying events were all physical bullying; (d) the methods used in the three events were severe, such as hit, shoved, threatened, slapped, abused, etc.; (e) they were all gang bullying, the bullied student was bullied by more than one bully students; (f) it is evident that there was an imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied students; (g) all three bullying incidents were effectively dealt with and did not cause further deterioration; (h) the family environment was essential to a child development, in the first episode, the bullied student lived in a family where domestic violence occurred frequently, in the secondary episode, the bully student lived in a remarried family, and in the third episode, the bully girl lived in a divorce family too.

The differences between the three incidents were significant: (a) the consequences of bullying behaviors were becoming more and more severe; for instance, the bullied girl in the third episode was hospitalized after that; (b) the reasons for bullying were getting more complex, in the first episode, the reason was simply for fun, in the third one, it became the competition of a boyfriend; (c) methods and means used in them were becoming more offensive and dangerous, in the primary school, the bully students used such as hit, nickname, etc., while in the high school, the bully students

used worse ways; (d) causes of bullying were more and more complicated with students' physical and psychological growth.

The three interviewees' viewpoints were close in many ways. They all accepted that teachers in the primary and middle schools lacked the relevant knowledge, training, and guidance in student bullying scopes. They claimed that the bullying behaviors might result in severe consequences and harmful effects, but it is challenging to distinguish student bullying events from destructive behaviors. As illustrated in Table 3.24, some bullying events did not necessarily occur repeatedly for a long time. Even once severe bullying behavior may cause the bullied student to suffer from injuries. Given these points, their judgments on bullying behaviors could be summarized as the following useful ones: (a) fairness of the event itself, if the nature of the incident went against the principles of fairness and justice, then it was bullying behavior; (b) the severity of the event outcomes, if the outcomes of the incident were serious or could lead to dire consequences, then it was an incident of bullying. All three interviewees stressed this point, and this was the core standard for them to determine bullying events in their practice; (c) the bullied student suffered physical and/or psychological harm; (d) the first interviewee also touched on the point of methods and means used by bully students, if one or more students used ways or means that may result in physical or psychological harm to other students, then this behavior was bullying events.

Olweus' (1993, 2010) three criteria (intention, repetitiveness, and imbalance of power) were not gained broad support by the three interviewees, they confirmed that there was an imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied students, but they also stated that this one was not the criterion for them to determine student bullying behaviors. Concerning the other two measures----“repetitiveness” and “intention,” they retorted with examples that some bullying behaviors happened suddenly between classmates who did not know each other. The bully did not like the bullied student at first glance. In the third interview, the bullied girl was forced only once and suffered severe physical harm; the criterion of “repetitiveness” was less significant in the third interview episode than was manifested in the first interview event.

The incidence of student bullying reported by the three interviewees was much lower than the statistics obtained in Study 1 ($M=5.19$); Stephon scored 2 points on a scale from 1 (=rare) to 7 (= very frequently), H scored 4. Notwithstanding Ding did not report, still he did not believe bullying incidents often occurred in the high school he served. The results might be associated with two reasons: one was that the sample

size was too small, there were only three interviewees, and the other was that the interviewees were unwilling, to tell the truth for their schools' honor. However, they all agreed that student bullying behaviors were covert and undetectable, which was in line with the reports done by other researchers. Carroll-Lind & Kearney (2004) indicated that the bullied students were often too embarrassed or frightened to tell the bullying events to adults. It had been reported that only about 20% of children would disclose bullying behaviors (Hamiwka et al., 2009; Limber et al., 1998). In the first interview, the bullied student's classmate reported the bullying behavior to Stephon, who was not the bullied student's good friend. Even the bullied girl in the high school did not tell her teacher timely. These indicated that: (a) not only the bully but also the bullied students did not want to report to the adults due to some reasons, for instance, humiliation, the fear of retaliation by the bully, lack of trust with adults; (b) some bullied students didn't know protect or how to protect themselves; (c) some schools' bullying prevention system was not perfect, students did not know how to tell adults in the first moments.

All three interviewees emphasized the role of the family in the growth and development of children. The family environment and the parenting style n affected the bully's behavior and values and had the same effect on the bullied student. This was also stressed in Study 1. In the first interview, the bullied boy lived in an unhappy family who was often mistreated by his drunken father, and he was distrustful of his family. He dared not tell his parents and other adults when he encountered bullying. Conversely, in the second interview, the bullied boy told his parents immediately after being forced. His parents informed the teacher directly and actively participated in solving this problem. In the second and third interviews, the bullies were associated with family problems too.

The three interviewees had adopted similar methods and measures concerning the intervention and prevention measures according to their experience. The identical methods and measures mainly included: (a) taking an active and anti-bullying attitude toward bullying behaviors; (b) trying to win the attention and support from students' parents; (c) class meetings were essential platforms for raising awareness among students; (d) communicating more with students and building a relationship of mutual trust with students.

In summary, some general conclusions might be concluded, and those are: (a) student bullying had different manifestations in different teaching stages. As students

age, their physical and mental development and improvement of cognitive level, the causes of bullying will become more complex, the methods used in bullying behaviors will become more violent, and the consequences may be more serious; (b) in response to student bullying incidents at different teaching stages and ages, various response measures and methods should be adopted. For instance, after the students reach puberty, psychological education and counseling related to love affairs should be strengthened; (c) given the hidden nature of student bullying, it is recommended to cultivate responsible students to participate in activities that assist teachers in coping with class bullying incidents. In the first interview, Stephon trained several responsible and sympathetic students to help him cope with relevant issues and achieve positive results; (d) applicable education methods to cultivate students' sympathy and friendly relationship should be emphasized. As reported in the first interview, the bullied student's classmate, a girl who reported the long-term bullying behavior to Stephon after school. Therefore, ushering all students in the actions against bullying and providing peer support for the bullied and the bully students; (e) with the development of interpersonal relationships, the role of peer support, especially the attitude of bystanders, should be highlighted to counteract bullying problems, this would be examined in the next chapter.

EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS OF IMAGINED CONTACT AND BULLYING

Aims and overview of the studies

The present work aimed to examine the imagined contact, a multifaceted approach that helped strengthen its effect. It could impact children's response to bullying behaviors, especially for the bully and bullied' peers that appeared as bystanders in many bullying incidents. As aforementioned, one marked feature of student bullying incidents was its concealment. Many bullying behaviors happened in unstructured contexts such as playgrounds where teachers were not present frequently (Leff et al., 2003). Limber et al. (1998) investigated that only about 20% of children disclose bullying behaviors. Both bullies and victims were usually reluctant to disclose the bullying behaviors to adults (Hamiwka, 2009; Batche, 1994). Carroll and Kearney (2004) revealed that if victims of bullying told someone about their bullying experiences, they most likely disclosed to their friends rather than their teachers. It seemed that teachers were often the last to be told at school.

In interview 1 of Study 2 and episode 3 (in the secondary school) of Study 1, the bullying episodes were reported to the teacher by the bullied student's peers or onlookers. Figure 2.4 also showed that some bystanders were constantly engaged in a bullying event and played different roles. The bully in a gang bullying was often supported directly or indirectly by others. They usually played as followers, supporters, or passive supports, respectively. The prevalence of peer victimization was related to bystander roles in a given social context, such as a classroom or a school (Sjögren et al., 2020). Specifically, peer victimization had been displayed to be more often with more reinforcers and fewer defenders in the school context (Denny et al., 2015; see also Kärnä et al., 2010; Salmivalli et al., 2011; Thornberg & Wänström, 2018). Therefore, the roles of peers were vital factors in dealing with student bullying issues.

Olweus' (1993) survey indicated that the bullies usually had many friends, while the bullied students usually had few friends and walked lonely due to some reasons, for example, lack of social skills or experience, family growth environment, personality, or physical disabilities, etc. As findings in Study 1 indicated, the bullied students were usually not taken seriously in the class and were unpopular. One criterion of the essential feature concluded by Olweus (1993, 2010) was "imbalance of power,"

sometimes, the power imbalance endowed on the bullies was often enhanced by their friends, as shown in the episode of Study 1. Accordingly, a good relationship between the bullied students with his friends and classmates might help to change the imbalance between them, which could also change the bystanders' attitudes toward the bullied students in the bullying situations. Thus, the incidence of student bullying might be significantly reduced.

This study tried to examine the effectiveness of friendship between students by evaluating their roles in bullying behavior and attitudes toward their disabled friend when he/she was bullied by other children in experimental imagined contact conditions. Which could contribute to counteracting the occurrence of bullying behaviors among students on three aspects: (a) with the help of responsible students, teachers could find bullying behavior that was happening or was about to happen timely; (b) students' role shift in the bullying behavior might prevent some bullying events from happening by persuading the bullies; (c) more students were willing to provide support in bullying incidents to help the bullied student.

The hypothesis of imagined contact

Intergroup contact theory has been considered as the most influential theory in the effort to reduce prejudice against several groups in a variety of social contexts (West & Bruckmüller, 2013; see also Crisp et al., 2012; Crisp et al., 2009;), which was a new indirect contact strategy for promoting tolerance and more positive intergroup relations (Miles & Crisp, 2014; Crisp & Turner, 2009). Imagined contact refers to the act of imagining oneself in social interaction with a member of another group (West & Bruckmüller, 2013; Stathi et al., 2012). It was an intervention to reduce intergroup bias and improve intergroup relations through imagined interacting with members of other groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Allport, 1954). Many research demonstrated that mental imagery elicits neurological, emotional, and motivational responses similar to real experiences (Kosslyn et al., 2006; Dadds et al., 1997). Briefly, the theory was based on the hypothesis that imagining interactions with members of other groups might generate the same consequences as those in actual interaction settings.

Over 70 studies have shown that the imagining of a positive interaction with an outgroup member could help reduce prejudice and encourage positive intergroup

behavior (Miles & Crisp, 2014). It has been effectively used in a variety of fields and a lot of countries, including the U.K. (West et al., 2011), the US (Harwood et al., 2011), Mexico (Stathi & Crisp, 2008), Cyprus (Husnu & Crisp, 2010a), Italy (Vezzali et al., 2011) and Japan (Rivers, 2011). Studies have documented that imagined contact effects mainly worked on the following aspects of the participants: attitudes, contact intentions, helping intentions, and behavior (Vezzali et al., 2020).

Imagined contact has also been proved to be a powerful strategy for reducing prejudice in children (Vezzali et al., 2020; see also Cameron et al., 2011; Miles & Crisp, 2014; Stathi et al., 2014). Some studies showed that children who engaged in imagined contact subsequently showed more positive attitudes, more remarkable perceived similarity, and willingness for intergroup contact (Stathi et al., 2014). It was reported that imagined contact affected out-group attitude and perceptions of warmth, competence, and intended behavior (Cameron et al., 2011). Implications for imagined-contact theory and the development of prejudice-reduction techniques for schools might enhance the positive relationships between students and create a safe and harmonious school environment.

Introduction

This study aimed to investigate the associations of positive relationships between children and their reactions to counteract bullying behaviors based on the analyses on the effects of the hypothesis of imagined contact, some scenarios were created to test the participants' attitude toward a disabled boy in a wheelchair, and their reactions to the bullying behavior, executed by other children, on the disabled boy.

Six items, affective empathy, outgroup attitudes, contact intentions, helping intentions, reaction to social exclusion, and reaction to name-calling behavior, were used in the questionnaire. These indexes of affective empathy, outgroup attitudes, and contact intentions represented the participants' attitude helping intentions, and reaction to social exclusion mainly reflected participants' willingness to help their friend, the disabled boy in a wheelchair. Response to name-calling behavior displayed the participants' responses to bullying behaviors, demonstrating their roles.

12 grade 3 students of elementary school attended this study. They were randomly divided into two groups according to their genders, 6 in the experimental

condition group, 6 in the control group. Meanwhile, each group had 3 boys and 3 girls. They all attended 3 sessions. Children in the experimental condition would attend imagined contact activities. They were asked to imagine making friends with a disabled boy in a wheelchair. They completed the questionnaire individually in the end, except in the third session, the questionnaire would be finished one week after the third session.

Students in the control group did not attend the imagined contact game but only completed the questionnaire according to the pictures given. All the data collected were analyzed by SPSS 25.

Participants

Participants were 12 elementary school children (6 males, 6 females) in grade 3, recruited from 2 classes in a primary school in Yangjiang city, China. Age ranged from 10 years to 12 years ($M_{age} = 10.8$ years). Children were from two classes of grade 3. Specifically, they were randomly allocated to the experimental ($N = 6$) or the control group ($N = 6$) according to their gender, so that each group had 3 females and 3 males. The sample size was small due to the influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic. We had to minimize the sample selection range and places in this study.

The data collection was entrusted to two Chinese teachers, one was Stephon (his profiles in Study 2), a man teacher, who also was the interviewee in Study 2; another was a women teacher, L (she did not want her name to be used in this study), she was 34 years old. They all worked in the same school. They were trained and directed by the researcher through telephone and other communication, such as email communication, WeChat contacts, etc. They were assured that they would implement this research fidelity and did exactly as requested.

Children in the experimental group took part in three intervention sessions with Stephon. The interventions were implemented on Thursday afternoon once a week for 3 consecutive weeks, with each session lasting approximately 30 minutes. Each participant was provided with a colorful picture of a disabled boy in a wheelchair in the first session. Stephenson would describe this picture to the participants before they were asked to imagine one scenario in the following. Then the next part was divided into three steps. Firstly, participants were asked to imagine a scenario to meet a disabled

boy in a wheelchair (they did not know each other before). They became friends and played together pleasantly. This part would last for 2-5 minutes.

Secondly, participants were asked to give an account of what they had imagined and wrote down some details according to their imagines, each for 10-15 minutes; to enhance the influence on the participants in this period, Stephon would put forward some questions for the participants, for example, “what do you think of children who make fun of other children poorly?”; “What kind of boy or girl may treat other children poorly?”; “And what kind of boy or girl may be the target of being treated poorly?”, etc.

Thirdly, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire individually, which contained the dependent measures. The first session mainly centered on the “inclusion of the other in the self,” “Affective empathy,” “Outgroup attitudes,” and “helping intentions.” The following was an example of the positive contact instructions provided each week in the first step:

I want to invite you to close your eyes and imagine the following pictures for two or five minutes. One day in your residential area, you meet an unknown disabled child in a wheelchair by chance. At first, you don't know what to say. However, after a while, you play together and become friends. Please imagine the scene you are playing together and what you are talking about.

The following was another example of instructions in the second step each week: Please close your eyes and imagine the situation that your new friend in the wheelchair is made fun of by other children for his disabilities for two or five minutes, and imagine how you react to that.

To minimize the possibility of subtyping the imagined contact partner, impairing the generalization process, the imagined intergroup context was systematically varied (Stathi et al., 2014; Vezzali et al., 2012). Every week, participants imagined interacting with a different disabled child in a different contact scenario.

In the second session, participants were asked to imagine two scenarios. Firstly, participants were asked to imagine meeting the disabled boy in the wheelchair at recess one week later, to think about what you say to each other and what you do together. After that, there was a free discussion between Stephon and all the participants. Participants were asked to write down the details about their interacting activities. This part would last for 10-15 minutes. Secondly, participants were asked to imagine a scenario: at the end of a school day. You were playing with some schoolmates in the

park, another unknown disabled boy in a wheelchair would like to join in to play together, some of your classmates rejected his request. How would you behave in this situation? Thirdly, participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire individually. The questionnaire here focused on the following dependents: “helping intentions,” “contact intentions,” “reaction to social exclusion,” and “reaction to name-calling behavior.”

In the third intervention session, participants were asked to image the same as detailed in the second session. Still, the second imaging scenario had changed to the following: you were walking down the hall, and you heard a child (A) saying a bad word to an immigrant child (B), and what would you do in this situation. The questionnaire here centered on the same indexes as in the second one. Still, it was completed one week after the last intervention session to test the time-dependent effects in the imagined contact.

Participants allocated to the control group, after being provided with a description of a child in a wheelchair (as we did in the experimental group), were only asked to complete the dependent measures without engaging in the activities performed by the experimental group.

Method

Inclusion of the other in the self. IOS was used to measure the closeness between the participants and others (Vezzali et al., 2020; Aron et al., 1992). Participants were presented with five pairs of overlapping circles varying in their degree of overlap between the self as one circle and the outgroup member (disabled children in a wheelchair) as the other circle. Participants responded on a five-point scale according to the distance of the two circles (*1= exclusive relationship; 3= medium; 5= very close relationships*).

Affective empathy. To evaluate participants’ sympathy on the outgroup members, Capozza et al. (2013) used two items to assess this index: “Do you think you can understand the emotions that children (boys or girls) in a wheelchair feel?”; “Do you think you can feel the emotion that children (boys or girls) in a wheelchair feel?” Participants rated each item on a 5-point response scale (from 1= *absolutely not* to 5= *definitely*).

Outgroup attitudes. A colorful feeling thermometer (Vezzali et al., 2020; Esses et al., 1993) was used to evaluate participants' attitude to the disabled children wheelchair, with scores ranging from 0 (*I do not like them at all*) to 10 (*I like them a lot*); 5 was the neutral point representing *I do not know, or I am not sure*.

Contact intentions. Participants were provided a 5-point scale (1= *absolutely not*; 3= *do not know, not sure*; 5=*definitely*) to test their willingness to make friends with the disabled child in a wheelchair. Two items were employed in the questionnaire (Capozza, 2021): "I would tell him/her that, if he/she likes, we could spend the afternoon together." (in the second session); "I would tell the immigrant child that, if he/she likes, we could spend the afternoon together." (in the third session)

Helping intentions. Four items were used, "Would you help a child (boy or girl) with disabilities and in a wheelchair having difficulties with their homework?"; "If a child (boy or girl) with disabilities and in a wheelchair lost a book, would you help him/her to find it?" (the two was used in the first session); "I would get close to the child with disabilities to cheer him/her up." (in the second session); "I would get close to the immigrant child to cheer him/her up." (in the third session). A 5-point scale was used (1 = *absolutely not*, 5 = *definitely yes*).

Reaction to social exclusion. Palmer and Abbott (2018) suggested that bullying was one form of discrimination resulting from prejudice and stereotypes. This item was used to assess participants' attitudes toward discrimination against the disabled. Participants in the second and third intervention session scenarios to imagine that another disabled child, they did not know each other, was rejected to join them to play together (in the second session), was verbal bullied (in the third session scenario), how they would react, and were presented with three items: "I would try to convince the others to invite the child with disabilities."; "I'd get upset with the other children of the group."; "I would try to convince child A to apologize to the immigrant child." Participants rated each item using a scale from 1 (*absolutely not*) to 5 (*definitely yes*).

Reaction to name-calling behavior. This index represented participants' final reactions while encountering a bullying behavior. In the third session, participants were asked to imagine being at the end of the school day, they walked down the hall of the school and hearing someone (child A) shout a bad word to an immigrant (child B), and what they would react to that bullying behavior.

They were then presented with four items in the third session: "I would try to convince child A to apologize to the immigrant child."; "I would tell my teachers what

child A did.”; “I would tell the immigrant child’s teacher what A did.”; “I would tell my family what A did.” Participants rated each item using a scale from 1 (*absolutely not*) to 5 (*definitely yes*).

Results

Means and standard deviations of all measures in the first session were presented in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2; the second session results were reported in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4; analyses of data one week after the third session were presented in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6. The means comparison of different indexes between the experimental and control conditions varied.

In the first session, results showed that although Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances was unequal ($p=.049$), the not assumed equal variances still indicated *IOS* differed significantly between groups ($p = .007$). The mean between the two conditions was significant too, the mean of the experimental condition was 4.5000, and the control condition was 2.8333. Concerning affective empathy, equal variances assumed showed significant differences ($p = .016$), but the mean difference was noticeable. The mean in the experimental condition was 4.5000. The control condition was 3.3333. About the index of outgroup attitude, the result was different from others, the mean point in the experimental condition was 8.5000, and the control condition was 7.0000. Still, the assumed equal variances indicated no significant ($p = .135$) difference between groups. Regarding the helping intentions, equal variances assumed showed a significant difference ($p = .016$) between the two groups, and the mean points in the experimental and control conditions were 4.5000 and 3.3333, respectively.

Indexes in the second session and one week after the third session was the same, in the second session, considering the helping intentions, the mean point in the experimental condition was 4.6667, a little higher than that in the first session and the control condition, the trend was evident too. Notwithstanding, equal variances were not assumed. It was still related to a significant difference ($p = .025$) between the two conditions. Results of the third session showed the opposite; equality of variances was equal, and $p = .060$, it did not differ significantly from each other. However, the mean point in the experimental condition was still 4.6667, and it decreased a little ($M=3.6667$) in the control condition.

As for contact intentions, the first session did not include this item. The first time being evaluated in the second session, the not assumed equal variances ($p = .105$) were associated with no significant difference. The same in the final evaluation, $p = .403$. The mean point in the experimental condition was even decreased from 4.6667 (in the second session) to 3.8333 (one week after the third session). Moreover, it displayed the same direction in the control condition, from 3.8333 (in the second session) to 3.5000 (one week after the third session).

Concerning reaction to social exclusion, the outcomes in the last two evaluations were nearly the same, assumed equal variances were associated with no significant difference in the second session and the one week after the third session, from $p = .092$ to $p = 1.000$, it became less and less significant. The mean point in the experimental condition decreased to the same as that in the control condition in the final evaluation, from 4.3333 to 3.8333.

The reaction to name-calling behavior in the second session and the one week after the third session resulted in different outcomes. In the second session, assumed equal variances ($p = .010$) indicated a significant difference between the two conditions. In comparison, in the one week after the third session, it appeared to be no significant, $p = .1110$. The mean point in the experimental condition displayed the same trend, and it decreased from 4.5000 (in the second session) to 4.0000 (one week after the third session). Conversely, it increased slightly from 2.8333 (in the second session) to 3.1667 (one week after the third session).

Concerning the fact that the first two questionnaires were administrated to the participants after the imagined contact game, while in the last session, they were presented to the participants one week after the imagined contact game to test if the time effects were significant in this study. Two analyses were employed in this study to testify the correlations between the second (data collected in the second session) and the third data (data collected one week after the third session) in the experimental condition. One analysis was paired samples correlations of SPSS. For example, the index of helping intentions 2 represented the data collected in the second session, and helping intentions 3 described the data after the third session, same as follows. Pair 1 in Table 4.7 and Table 4.8 indicated that $p = 1.000$, $df=5$, no significant difference between the two items. Outcomes from Pair 2, Pair 3, and Pair 4 showed the same results, $p = .141$, $p = .203$, and $p = .296$, respectively.

Another analysis was Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. Table 4.9 showed the same results as above. For the subject of the helping intention, the mean score in the second session ($M = 4.6667$) was nonsignificantly at the $p > .05$ level ($p = 1.000$) than that after the third session. Other subjects, contact intentions, reaction to social exclusion, and reaction to name-calling behavior, displayed similar results, the $p = .129$, $p = .180$, and $p = .257$ separately.

Table 4.1. *Statistics analyses between the experimental and control conditions in the first session.*

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
IOS	Experimental	6	4.5000	.54772	Control
	Control	6	2.8333	.98319	.40139
Affective empathy	Experimental	6	4.5000	.54772	Control
	Control	6	3.3333	.81650	.33333
Outgroup attitude	Experimental	6	8.5000	1.04881	.42817
	Control	6	7.0000	13.29662	5.42832
Helping intentions	Experimental	6	4.5000	.54772	.22361
	Control	6	3.3333	.81650	.33333

Table 4.3. *Statistics analyses between the experimental and control conditions in the second session.*

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Helping intentions	Experimental	6	4.6667	.51640	.21082
	Control	6	4.0000	.00000	.00000
Contact intentions	Experimental	6	4.6667	.51640	.21082
	Control	6	3.8333	.98319	.40139
Reaction to social exclusion	Experimental	6	4.3333	.51640	.21082
	Control	6	3.8333	.40825	.16667
Reaction to name-calling behavior	Experimental	6	4.5000	.54772	.22361
	Control	6	2.8333	1.16905	.47726

Table 4.4. Mean comparison between experimental condition and control condition in the second session.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Helping intentions	Equal variances assumed	40.000	.000	3.162	10	.010	.66667	.21082	.19693	1.13640
	Equal variances not assumed			3.162	5.000	.025	.66667	.21082	.12474	1.20859
Contact intentions	Equal variances assumed	5.568	.040	1.838	10	.096	.83333	.45338	-.17687	1.84353
	Equal variances not assumed			1.838	7.564	.105	.83333	.45338	-.22276	1.88943
Reaction to social exclusion	Equal variances assumed	1.607	.234	1.861	10	.092	.50000	.26874	-.09879	1.09879
	Equal variances not assumed			1.861	9.494	.094	.50000	.26874	-.10315	1.10315
Reaction to name-calling behavior	Equal variances assumed	2.168	.172	3.162	10	.010	1.66667	.52705	.49233	2.84100
	Equal variances not assumed			3.162	7.094	.016	1.66667	.52705	.42375	2.90959

Table 4.5. *Statistics analyses between the experimental and control conditions one week after the third session.*

	Condition	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Helping intentions	Experimental	6	4.6667	.51640	.21082
	Control	6	3.6667	1.03280	.42164
Contact intentions	Experimental	6	3.8333	.75277	.30732
	Control	6	3.5000	.54772	.22361
Reaction to social exclusion	Experimental	6	3.8333	.75277	.30732
	Control	6	3.8333	.40825	.16667
Reaction to name-calling behavior	Experimental	6	4.0000	.63246	.25820
	Control	6	3.1667	.98319	.40139

Table 4.6. Mean comparison between experimental condition and control condition one week after the third session.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Helping intentions	Equal variances assumed	1.800	.209	2.121	10	.060	1.00000	.47140	-.05035	2.05035
	Equal variances not assumed			2.121	7.353	.070	1.00000	.47140	-.10394	2.10394
Contact intentions	Equal variances assumed	.094	.765	.877	10	.401	.33333	.38006	-.51349	1.18016
	Equal variances not assumed			.877	9.135	.403	.33333	.38006	-.52448	1.19115
Reaction to social exclusion	Equal variances assumed	1.712	.220	.000	10	1.000	.00000	.34960	-.77896	.77896
	Equal variances not assumed			.000	7.707	1.000	.00000	.34960	-.81155	.81155
Reaction to name-calling behavior	Equal variances assumed	3.750	.082	1.746	10	.111	.83333	.47726	-.23007	1.89674
	Equal variances not assumed			1.746	8.533	.117	.83333	.47726	-.25538	1.92205

Table 4.7. Paired samples statistics between the second and third experimental condition data.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Helping intentions 2	4.6667	6	.51640	.21082
	Helping intentions 3	4.6667	6	.51640	.21082
Pair 2	Contact intentions 2	4.6667	6	.51640	.21082
	Contact intentions 3	3.8333	6	.75277	.30732
Pair 3	Reaction to social exclusion 2	4.3333	6	.51640	.21082
	Reaction to social exclusion 3	3.8333	6	.75277	.30732
Pair 4	Reaction to name-calling behavior 2	4.5000	6	.54772	.22361
	Reaction to name-calling behavior 3	4.0000	6	.63246	.25820

Table 4.8. Paired samples test between the second and third experimental condition data.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Helping intentions 2 - Helping intentions 3	.00000	.89443	.36515	-.93864	.93864	.000	5	1.000
Pair 2	Contact intentions 2 - Contact intentions 3	.83333	1.16905	.47726	-.39350	2.06017	1.746	5	.141
Pair 3	Reaction to social exclusion 2 - Reaction to social exclusion 3	.50000	.83666	.34157	-.37802	1.37802	1.464	5	.203
Pair 4	Reaction to name-calling behavior 2 - Reaction to name-calling behavior 3	.50000	1.04881	.42817	-.60066	1.60066	1.168	5	.296

Table 4.9. *Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test between the second and third experimental condition data.*

Statistics				
	Helping intentions 3 - Helping intentions 2	Contact intentions 3 - Contact intentions 2	Reaction to social exclusion 3 - Reaction to social exclusion 2	Reaction to name-calling behavior 3 - Reaction to name-calling behavior 2
Z	.000 ^b	-1.518 ^c	-1.342 ^c	-1.134 ^c
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.129	.180	.257

Note. a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. b. The sum of negative ranks equals the sum of positive ranks. c. Based on positive ranks.

Discussion

In the first interaction session, the multifaceted form of imagined contact effectively promoted more positive intergroup relations in terms of ISO, affective empathy, and helping intentions. Positive contact was associated with more empathy, better helping attitudes and outgroup attitudes, and less intergroup discrimination, exclusion, and aggression. Conversely, negative contact was related to more intergroup discrimination, exclusion, aggression, less empathy, and worse outgroup attitude. Although there was no significant difference in outgroup attitude, the mean difference between experimental and control conditions was still evident.

As discussed previously, the bullies were characterized as having less sympathy for the bullied students, the followers, and other supporters lacked empathy for the bullied students' situation. A positive relationship was fundamental for peers to offer help to some unpopular or disabled students in class, which supported this research's previous hypothesis that some of them might persuade the bullies to give up their bullying intentions due to the increased empathy for the disabled students.

Results in the second intervention indicated that contact intentions and reaction to social exclusion were not as significant as expected. However, the mean points in the experimental (4.6667 and 4.3333 respectively) condition were still higher than those in the control condition (3.8333 and 3.8333 respectively), which demonstrated that positive intergroup relationships could promote children to accept other unsociable students and correspondingly reduce social exclusion.

The subjects of the helping intentions and reaction to name-calling behavior appeared to be significant, which showed that more empathetic students would like to offer help to the bullied students, notwithstanding, the name-calling index here referred to report bullying behavior to the adults, such as teachers, their parents, etc.

However, the final data were collected one week after the third intervention session. The reaction to name-calling behavior was not as significant as in the second intervention session, but the helping intentions differed significantly from the control condition. This indicated that students still would like to help their friends by disclosing to the adults. The reason that the subject was not significant as expected may be due to (a) time effects mediated participant's empathy and closeness with their new disabled friend because the final questionnaire was administered to them one week after the

third intervention session; (b) personally engaging in a reaction toward the perpetrator of bullying behavior put the participant at great risk of a reciprocal reaction from the bully, compared to supporting the bullied student by reporting to the adults they could report to the adults privately without being noticed by the bully; (c) the engagement of a single person's power might not change the balance of power between the bully and the bullied student, especially in a gang bullying behavior. But this situation could be changed by encouraging more and more students to participate in the whole peer support actions actively.

The time effects of mediating participants' attitudes and behavior did not significantly differ between the second intervention session and the third intervention session of the experimental condition. Still, the mean points decreased, except for the subject of helping intention's mean point did not change, the mean points in the items of contact intentions fell from 4.6667 to 3.8333; in reaction to social exclusion from 4.3333 to 3.8333; and in reaction to name-calling behavior from 4.5000 to 4.0000. This indicated that imaged contact effects decreased over time, impacting children to create a positive relationship that needed continuous reinforcement.

Finally, the results of this study may be limited to the particular target group and the measure of evaluation employed. Therefore, to extend the findings in this area, future studies should expand the size of samples, make them more representative, and use more specific measures, such as mediation analysis, assessment of the effects of indirect and direct contact.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH STUDENT BULLYING AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present research aimed to provide a new path and perspective for re-understanding and solving the problem of bullying among students in primary, secondary, and high schools. Based on previous analyses and conclusions, student bullying exhibited as following characteristics:

First, student bullying occurs in the real space and virtual space. Cyberbullying was a new form of student bullying concerning traditional bullying. The incidence of cyberbullying was not higher than that of traditional bullying. Its consequences were mainly concentrated in the psychological field, not more severe than traditional bullying. Moreover, it did not necessarily require programs tailored to target specific forms of bullying as cyberbullying (Salmivalli & Pöyhönen, 2011).

Second, many teachers and practitioners usually use the following three standards to replace Olweus' criteria in their practice to identify a behavior as student bullying: methods and means; abnormal or unfair treatment; physical or/and psychological harm.

Third, the experimental study showed salient positive peer relationships in dealing with bullying events. Peer support might include: encouraging the bullied students to overcome difficulties, reporting bullying behavior to the adults, persuading the bully from giving up bullying intentions, and offering support for the bullied in a bullying event.

In short, although the causes of student bullying were complicated and unclear, the results of some meta-analyses showed that school-based anti-bullying programs were effective in reducing bullying perpetration victimization (Gaffney et al., 2019). Cyberbullying and traditional bullying stemmed from the school, where children studied together. Student bullying mainly occurred in places related to school, and the school had hardware and software facilities and staffing to deal with student bullying. Moreover, student bullying seriously deviated from the school's educational goals.

Given these factors, this research proposed four ways and theories to deal with student bullying: school-based theory, peer support, three-phase theory, and different period theory.

School-based strategy

The school-based strategy for counteracting student bullying problems was proposed based on the abovementioned analyses and discussion, which comprised two levels: the school level and the teachers' level. The school-level included the establishment of a sound mechanism for responding to student bullying the whole school. This mechanism could be divided into three stages: (a) preventive mechanism stage; (b) responding mechanism stage; (c) rehabilitative (aftermath) mechanism stage.

This strategy was on the grounds of the analysis of the causes of student bullying. Causes of student bullying can be generalized as macro, meso, and micro factors. It can also be synthesized from the survey discussion in Chapter 3. Family education and upbringing environment and school management may be the two most important causing factors. As discussed previously, the causes of student bullying are complicated and interconnected. There was one cause with multiple effects, one with various reasons, the exact cause with different products, and the same effect with other causes. By simplifying the complexity, all factors can be divided into two categories, namely controllable factors and uncontrollable factors.

The uncontrollable factors may be causes of student bullying, comprised family environments, way of parental education and upbringing, the influence of social media, etc. These factors were classified as uncontrollable because they could not be controlled, but because they required the cooperation of many departments and a long time to solve them completely, operability in practice was not strong. For instance, as shown in chapter three, problems related to children's families were the leading cause of student bullying. Still, parents of different families had different education and economic status levels. Other families had different ethnic, cultural, and traditional backgrounds in Italy. Thus, parents of different families may use different educational and upbringing methods to cultivate their children, let alone some children were from single-parent or divorced families. Moreover, some students were raised by grandparents. According to Edwards' (2016) empirical investigation and analysis on 4552 cases of student bullying in grades 7-8, students raised by grandparents were more involved in bullying behaviors than children raised by their parents, whether they are perpetrators or targets of bullying. It was too difficult to cope with these factors effectively in a short time.

The controllable factors mainly lay in schools; the direct and rapid effect can be achieved by adjusting the school's management system and education methods. The main assumptions were as follows: (a) bullying among primary and middle school students mainly occurred on campuses and campus-related real or virtual places. This

provided realistic conditions for tackling the bullying problem; (b) primary, secondary and high schools were systematic (institutional) organizations that affect students' physical and mental development. Schools, especially public schools, were systematic, specialized, structured, and institutionalized organizations established under national laws and regulations. Schools have clear educational goals and tasks, strict management systems and rules, specific funding guarantees, teaching hardware and software facilities, and types of equipment. These controllable environmental factors provided an institutional and operating platform and a systematic guarantee platform for schools to deal with student bullying problems; (c) schools had a certain number of professional faculty. Educators were able to implement school interventions, related rules and regulations to deal with student bullying; (d) schools had related moral education courses and practical activities to influence students' behaviors; (e) in addition, there were other related full-time education managers and hierarchical management organizations in elementary and middle schools in China.

The comparison of the effectiveness of efficacy between schools and laws in dealing with student bullying problems further demonstrated the rationality of school-based theory. Many researchers strongly proposed related laws to address student bullying events. As analyzed in previous chapters, student bullying was the primary development stage of violence, and violence was the advanced stage and inevitable result of the development of bullying behavior. If the measures to deal with bullying were timely and appropriate, it would significantly reduce or eliminate the occurrence of violent incidents. Student bullying problems were subordinate to the management of schools' daily educational and teaching activities, and bullying violated school discipline and rules. Its consequence had not yet reached the level of violation of the laws. Furthermore, the law was a disciplinary measure after the event, and many bullying events were difficult to disclose. It was reported that about 23% of bullied adolescents had not told anyone about the bullying (Frisén et al., 2008). The critical principle of responding to bullying was to prevent it from occurring, not just punish the bully with the law. The previous discussion confirmed that either the bully or the bullied students were all victims. The legal punishment on the bully also heralded his/her academic failure. Consistent with general evaluations of statewide anti-bullying laws in the U.S., comparisons of rates of bullying before and after the passage of the Iowa Safe Schools Law revealed no reductions in rates of bullying (McGeough, 2020).

The school-level preventive mechanism stage focused on two goals: (a) reducing the incidence of student bullying; (b) trying to detect student bullying events early. The prevention mechanism clarified the work leadership group for student bullying and violence to achieve these objectives, including the group's structure, functions, and responsibilities. At the same time, the prevention mechanism also clarified the work process for preventing student bullying and violence, including the identification, response, and handling process. It even included discovering the hidden factors of student bullying in the class; the prevention mechanism also clearly proposed relevant training, including teachers, parents, students, and even corresponding drills. Courses and activities to effectively deal with student bullying problems should be carried out in the daily teaching process, compiling manuals on coping with student bullying problems for teachers and students of different ages and grades to reference.

The responding mechanism stage of the school level aimed to stop student bullying events from getting worse and solve this problem as soon as possible. This stage centered on specifying student bullying behaviors judgment standards, principles, and methods of handling the incident, including the handling of both parties, the communication between the parents of the students involved, and the assistance and cooperation of other departments.

The school level's rehabilitative (aftermath) mechanism stage mainly paid attention to the correction of the bully and the comfort of the bullied students. Four steps needed to be employed in this stage, firstly, determining relevant disciplinary measures for bullies; secondly, according to the cause, degree, and consequences of the bullying incident, appropriate plans, and programs to correct the bully and promote the bullied students should be developed; thirdly, it needed to file, record, and continue to track the transformation and the recovery of the bullied students, improving or adjusting related plans based on the follow-up development of the matter and feedback; finally, summing up experience to enhance the ability and level of coping with student bullying, perfecting the mechanism for responding to student bullying.

Teachers' level was associated with three aspects of work, i.e., collaboration with colleagues, relying on and guiding students, coordination with parents. Responding to student bullying was a dynamic and continuous process, which required many teachers' close cooperation. Depending on and teaching students focused on two parts: (a) building trust relationships between teachers and students. As analyzed previously, some bullied students did not disclose bullying partly due to the distrust of their teachers;

(b) training competent and responsible students leaders in the classroom, who acted as teachers' "eyes" to detect and report problems to teachers, with the help of these "eyes," teachers could discover student bullying problems at the first time and took measures to prevent them from getting out of control or getting worse. Teachers may also reduce their work intensity relatively. In OBPP, to reduce the incidence of student bullying, it was required to have adequate adult supervision during break times and at hot spots (where bullying was prone to occur) (Olweus, 1993)—reducing the incidence of student bullying by increasing teachers' density not only increased teachers' workload but also did not necessarily detect relatively hidden student bullying, such as relationship bullying. As reported in Study 2, student bullying behaviors were characterized as undetectability and concealment; (c) coordination with parents was essential, especially in the rehabilitative (aftermath) stage. Teachers needed parents to monitor the transformation process and performance of the bully. If the bully could not be integrated into the class, teachers should have negotiated with their parents to consider arranging for students to transfer to another school.

Peer support

The fundamental principle in peer support was the guidance and leadership of teachers. Peer support theory was highlighted in the NoTrap program, where some peers were trained to act as educators who mainly offered support anonymously (using nicknames) to all people requesting help on the webpage of the program. In this research, peer support played an essential part in counteracting bullying occurrence, helping the bullied get out of the predicament, and offering assistance to correct the bully's behaviors.

As shown in the experimental condition imagined contact, students can generate sympathy and responsibility for the bullied students through training and guidance. Based on this assumption, peer support functions on two levels: individual and organizational based on this assumption 1. The personal level was manifested as such work: raising other students' awareness when encountering bullying behaviors, daring to stop them and tell teachers immediately, helping the bullied students get out of trouble, offering assistance to help the bully get rid of bad habits, etc. The organizational level is associated with working with other students to formulate anti-

bullying rules and regulations, putting up anti-bullying posters in the class, and working together to assist teachers in helping the bully and the bullied students on the right track.

Peer support derives from two theories. One is Piaget's Cognitive Constructivism Theory, which suggested that Children are an independent variable rather than a dependent variable. We must pay attention to the role of social interaction in the cognitive process of children. Without mutual communication and cooperation with others in thought, the individual can never assemble his calculations into a coherent whole. Knowledge is not a simple copy of external objects, nor is it the unfolding of the pre-formed structure within the subject, but the result of the gradual construction of the subject's continuous interaction with the external world; knowledge is an active and constant construction activity, and development is not from the internal dominated by mature or external teaching, it is a dynamic construction process. Children will re-construct their intelligence's basic concepts and thought-forms through their actions. The other is Dewey's new student view, which claimed that: firstly, students are social people, with the unique value of the human initiative, thoughts, and feelings; secondly, students are developing individuals with special physical and mental characteristics that are different from adults, and have potential development capabilities; finally, students are people with subjectivity, development, and gestalt.

Based on the above assumption, peer support can kick in the following parts to counteract bullying behaviors: (a) breaking the imbalance of power or strength between the bully and the bullied students. One of Olweus' three criteria of bullying was an imbalance of power, which made the bullied students not dare revolt or retaliate. When other students' support joins in, it will change this balance; (b) discovery of student bullying events becomes more accessible than before. As documented by some researchers, bullying tended to be a hidden activity, and both bullies and victims were reluctant to disclose to adults (Hamiwka, 2009; see also Batche, 1994). If victims of bullying told someone about their experience, they most likely announced it to their friends rather than teachers (Carroll-Lind, 2004); (c) when most students work together to oppose bullying behaviors among them, a safe and friendly school environment will be formed. A positive school climate will increase the sense of connectedness to peers and belonging to the school, students will perform better academically, which will reduce the likelihood of aggressive behaviors correspondingly (Orpinas & Horne, 2010; see also Eisenberg et al., 2003; Orpinas et al., 2003; Resnick et al., 1997).

Three-phase strategy

All school-based anti-bullying programs employed unified plans and measures to counteract student bullying problems. The fact is that student bullying is dynamic and has different stages of development according to the relationship between bullying and violence. As we all know, student bullying is subject to the same laws as any other living thing in the world. It was born, it culminates, and it decays. Thus, student bullying had at least three forms: embryonic, developmental, and violent. Each stage embraced different features and determining factors due to its construction.

The embryonic stage was the brewing and formation process of bullying which mainly concerned with the incentives for bully students. The first factor for student bullying behavior started from some incentives. Incentives here included intrinsic incentives that the bully students inherited or were influenced by external environmental factors and had internal motivations acquired and formed individually. When the external stimulus conditions did not exceed the bully's inner stimulus balance, the bullies were afraid or unable to commit bullying. The external conditions comprised mandatory components and educational elements. The compulsory components referred to those school rules, disciplines, management, etc., the educational elements incorporated moral preaching, empathy, emotional influence, etc. The external stimulus conditions worked mutually to keep the bully students' internal balance, and these were what the school and teachers needed to execute in the embryonic stage. The more effective these external stimulus conditions were implemented, the less the bullying occurred.

The developmental stage referred to the status that the internal balance was broken. The bully was transformed from a potential bully to a real one. For those bullies who had already implemented bullying behaviors, if there were no timely and effective intervention measures, their bullying behaviors would become more frequent, and the consequences of bullying would become more and more severe;

The violent stage was no longer pure bullying but had become violent behavior. Its consequences may have violated the law and required police intervention to assist in the investigation and handling process. The bully needed to bear relevant legal sanctions.

At different stages of bullying development, response measures should be various, and the focus of attention should be different. According to the characteristics of

different sets of bullying development, the corresponding response measures can be divided into three levels: (a) prevention, (b) intervention, and (c) rectification level.

The prevention level involved the process of prevention program mainly centered on the phase of daily management and education, which aimed to “stifle student bullying in the cradle.” The key and cardinal measures adopted in this level mainly included: (a) curriculum constructions to counteract student bullying. The curriculum involved moral construction, and moral preaching should be paid more attention to. As demonstrated previous, the bullies were usually characterized as lack of companion and sympathy on others, children with higher moral disengagement may display more aggression, such as bullying (Thornberg & Jungert, 2014; see also Bandura et al., 1996; Barchia & Bussey, 2010; Paciello et al., 2008; Pelton et al., 2004; Pornari & Wood, 2010;). Some studies also showed that essential moral sensitivity in bullying was negatively related to the bystanders who pro-bully behaviors but positively related to the defenders’ behaviors (Thornberg & Jungert, 2013); (b) classroom-level and school-level anti-bullying meetings. Study 1 and Study 2 revealed the importance of classroom-level and school-level meetings. Classroom-level meetings were the platform for teachers to show their anti-bullying attitude and raise students’ awareness against bullying, which helped to improve students’ self-evaluation and management ability. School-level anti-bullying meetings can reduce some bullying events between different grades and classes.

As shown in chapter 3, it was demonstrated that lower grade students were vulnerable to being bullied by higher grades. School-level class meetings could mobilize the resources of the whole school, coordinate the functions of different classes, and create a safe school environment; (c) some extracurricular activities helped students cooperate. Some extracurricular activities can contribute to assisting the students in collaborating to achieve a common goal closely. Students were able to learn mutual respect and build friendships while completing the task. It was confirmed that there was a negative correlation between participation in extracurricular activities and bullying perpetration and victimization among children and adolescents. Children who participated in various extracurricular activities exhibited the least frequent bullying perpetration (Riese et al., 2015). National-wide findings demonstrated that engagement in extracurricular activities was significantly associated with lower odds of experiencing bullying victimization among those with disabilities (Haegele et al., 2020); (d) the construction of student organizations. For instance, student class committees

and school student unions were platforms where students could rely on and voice their interests. The class committees and student unions could formulate specific regulations or conventions against bullying in the class based on the particular conditions of the school course, clearly opposing bullying at the institutional level. They may formulate specific punishment and assistance measures. Under the unified arrangement of the school and the guidance of teachers, these organizations could also conduct self-education on anti-bullying in the class and school-wide from time to time, enhance everyone's level of awareness and sense of responsibility in dealing with bullying issues, and organize all students to participate in actions to deal with bullying.

The intervention level focused on the period when student bullying behavior was happening or was about to happen, which included bullying was being planned and ready to be implemented. The goal at this stage was to take steps to prevent bullying from happening or continuing. To achieve this goal, the key measures needed to be placed on the following points: (a) value the role of students. As discussed in peer support, other students were usually the first to discover bullying behaviors due to concealment of bullying. Teachers should make the best use of the assistance of students. The participation of primary and middle school students in the process of intervention in bullying helped to cultivate their sense of fairness and justice, and social responsibility; (b) the teacher's guiding role in the whole process. Teachers' role in the organization and guidance of students to help each other would improve students' ability on self-education and self-management; (c) peer support mechanism. This point had been thoroughly discussed in the peer support part.

The rectification level of bullying was associated with work and measures implemented after bullying, which aimed at helping the bullied and reforming the bullies. Teachers and students worked together to complete this work. Relevant measures needed to be completed step by step: firstly, trying to find out the direct origin of the bullying episode. As analyzed above, different bullying events had other causes. Finding the cause was a prerequisite for solving the bullying problem; secondly, evaluating the harm and negative consequences on the bullied students, and determining parties involved to participate in the process of solution; thirdly, employing specific measures and plans to help the bullied student according to his/her performance, for example, psychological counseling, improvement of the social skills of the bullied student, adjustment of the seat distance between the two parties, designation of specific students to offer assistance, etc.; fourthly, developing relevant correction plans for the

bully according to his/her characteristics, for instance, conversation, bullies must make sure to correct shortcomings and mistakes, designation of specific students who were responsible for supervising and assisting the bullies, etc.; fifthly, implementation of plans and programs developed, recording the follow-up process, and adjusting the relevant response plan in time according to the effect feedback; finally, archiving relevant records, summing up experience and lessons.

Different period strategy

The different period strategy was related to students' different growth stages and cognitive abilities. Study 2 in Chapter 3 documented that development and cognitive level improved with students aged. The causes of bullying would become more complex, the methods used in bullying behaviors would become more violent, and the consequences may be more serious. Given the differences in students' cognitive ability, cognitive level, way of thinking, physical development status, and acting ability in the primary, secondary, and high schools, different measures against bullying should be employed according to these indices. According to the teaching period, it was roughly divided into three stages: (a) the primary school period, (b) the secondary school period, and (c) the high school period.

According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, elementary school students (6-12 years old) were at the specific computing stage. Their intuitive, concrete and vivid logical thinking ability had gradually increased. However, their abstract ability was still relatively limited. They were emotionally unstable and impulsive, had weak self-control, lacked social skills and experience, and had limited ability to distinguish right from wrong. At the end of elementary school, they formed their character and outlook on life. But the willpower was still not firm enough, and the ability to analyze problems was still developing. Therefore, they easily get discouraged and emotionally unstable when encountering difficulties and setbacks.

Previous analyses indicated that, in this period, the goal of student bullying was not definite. The means and methods used were not severe, and the consequences of bullying might not be as harsh as happened in their adolescent period. Moreover, some students even could not distinguish bullying behaviors. Measures adopted in this period

should be according to students' characteristics, such as role-playing, classroom scenarios, etc.

Junior middle school students enter the formal computing stage (over 11 years old). They can think abstractly, deal with hypothetical questions and think about possibilities. Significant changes have taken place in the body shape, the body function is gradually improving, and it is slowly entering puberty. At the same time, psychological changes have occurred accordingly. The curiosity and desire for inquiry brought about by sexual maturity in adolescence promote the development of adolescent sexual consciousness. Self-awareness began to develop, with a particular ability to evaluate and pay attention to shaping one's image. However, the independence and criticality of thinking are still in their infancy, easily affecting the outside world.

In this period, the purpose of student bullying started to become apparent. The means and methods used in bullying might be violent and dangerous, leading to more severe consequences. Moreover, as their bodies mature, they begin to pay attention to the opposite sex, especially the boys. Their functional space has expanded to cyberspace already. Some cyberbullying events might occur. In this period, preventive measures and strategies should center on sex education, social approach, social skills improvement, etc.

High school students' body develops rapidly, self-awareness is significantly enhanced, and the ability to think and deal with things has developed considerably. Their social consciousness has been close to maturity, gradually formed its outlook on life and values, and independent views on social realities. But they still lack social experience.

Given the improvement of students' social skills and other abilities, such as self-emotion control. The preventive measures in this period need to pay attention to the understanding and value of healthy life, marriage and childbirth-related knowledge, and laws and regulations.

Limits, Strengths, and Future directions

Notwithstanding this research comprised qualitative and quantitative studies, some limitations of our studies should be noted. First, the data from the questionnaire

and the experiment were obtained on self-report, which may be affected by response biases (e.g., self-enhancement, impression management; Paulhus, 1991) or distortions (e.g., autobiographical memory; Kolodner, 1983; memory distortion; Roediger & McDermott, 2000; Flash-bulb effects; Bovaird, 2010). However, in the experimental study, previous statistical analysis showed no significant differences between the last experimental data (data from the second intervention session and after the third intervention session). The reaction to name-calling behavior was not as significant as in the second intervention session, compared with the control condition. And in the last intervention, except for the subject of helping intention's mean point did not change, the other three' mean points decreased salient over a week and the mediation processes of time effects needed to be included in future studies.

Second, the size of our samples was inadequate both in Study 1, Study 2. In the experimental study, respondents in Study 1 and Study 2 mainly concentrated in Guangdong Province, a relatively developed and affluent area in China. There are relatively few left-behind children in this region compared with other relatively backward areas. Thus it is not widely representative. Especially in the experimental study, only 12 children of grade 3 attended our study. The inadequacy of samples and representativeness was evident in Study 1 and Study 2. In particular, we only relied on convenience samples of Chinese respondents, and thus our findings may not be necessarily generalizable to other countries' populations or different cultural contexts. Future studies could employ more representative samples from other regions and countries and significant differences. Significant polated from those comparisons, contributing to a further in-depth understanding of the problem.

Third, in the experimental study, except for the small size of the samples, participants were from the same school. Random allocation of them was done only at the level of genders rather than at the level of the individual. Children from the same class in the experimental condition might have discussed the imagined contact games with their students in the control condition, limiting the possibility of finding intervention effects executed in the imagined contact activities. Further study was needed to allocate participants according to their schools. Moreover, this experimental study was entrusted to two Chinese teachers. We could not completely rule out the role that demand characteristics might have played in the intervention sessions. Although the experimental and control conditions were conducted by two teachers, the questionnaire administered and the intervention conducted were implemented by the

same teacher, which might work as the role effects in this study.

Fourth, concerning the definition of student bullying in this research, we focused only on the perspectives from teachers in primary, secondary, and high school teachers. Parents' and students' viewpoints were omitted. Comparing different stakeholders' opinions on this phenomenon will yield more objective and closer answers to the essence of things.

Fifth, all the strategies proposed in this research for dealing with student bullying phenomenon only based on theoretical analyses and comparisons with other anti-bullying programs and plans, which demonstrated to be effective on the grounds of characteristic generalization, empirical short-term and long-term quasi-experiments need to be implemented corresponding to testify its effectiveness and efficacy and to identify which factors are more responsible for the good outcomes and more effective than others. Through rigorous evaluations, effective intervention and prevention programs should be utilized (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Systematic anti-bullying programs should be developed to ensure that elements have been proven effective in high-quality evaluations (Farrington & Ttofi, 2009). Moreover, further research is needed to clarify the cost of implementation and its operability.

Despite these limitations, our results provided a comprehensive understanding of student bullying definition. Data analyses and overview comparisons show that the definition of bullying should be explained from the behaviors' purpose and intention, process, method, means used, consequences, and negative impact. Our results clarify the connotation of bullying and also limit its extension. We also confirmed that the bullied and the bullies are victims due to the negative consequences on both the bully and bullied students. Therefore, it is inappropriate to use "victim" to refer to the bullied student.

Furthermore, we explored, as far as we know, for the first time to generalize the essential features of bullying as follows: (a) methods and means; (b) abnormal or unfair treatment; (c) and physical or/and psychological harm. Which were more operable in practice than those three criteria (intention, repetitiveness, imbalance of power) put forth by Olweus (1993, 2010), and they reflect the characteristics of bullying more truthfully. However, this research also clarified the relationship between bullying and violence and noted that bullying and violence are interrelated and different. They are two different stages of development of the same phenomenon. Bullying is the primary development stage before violence, and violence is the advanced stage and inevitable

result of the development of bullying. The practical implementation of anti-bullying programs and measures can reduce the incidence of bullying, correspondingly minimize the incidence of violence to a certain extent and even prevent school violence. This distinction avoids conceptual confusion in practical applications and helps take more targeted measures to deal with student bullying.

Another possible extension of this research would be the experimental condition imagined contact used to testify the effects of positive intergroup relationships in counteracting student bullying behaviors. Statistical analyses indicated that positive intergroup relationships could generate more empathy, better-helping attitudes, and outgroup attitudes, thus could reduce less intergroup discrimination, exclusion, and aggression and reducing the incidence of student bullying behaviors correspondingly. Results also revealed that personal relationships could offer more help to the vulnerable bullied students. However, it displayed that some students might be reluctant to engage in personally protecting the bullied student in the bullying events for fear of being retaliated by the bully. More students' engagement could help change this situation. In addition, helping intentions in them illustrated more willingness. They could report the bullying behaviors to adults, thus could contribute to achieving one of our goals of tackling bullying problems.

Moreover, four strategic theories to cope with student bullying problems are initiated in this research, which highlights that schools are the primary platforms, teachers are the cardinal executors, and students are the main force. There are different stages in the development of bullying. The growth of students also has different stages of development. These relevant theories are helpful to adopt more targeted prevention and intervention measures for student bullying to varying stages of development.

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