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Gender Differences in Bystander Attitudes

Towards Relational Aggression
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Chapter I

Review of the Literature

Middle school is a tumultuous right of passage in any person's life. It is the bridge between elementary school and high school, and is marked by several major life events. Pubertal changes, increasing demands from parents and teachers, and romantic interests, are just a few of the changes most pre-teens experience during this developmental period. It is also during the middle school years that aggressive behaviors increase, for both boys and girls. However, the aggression each gender experiences becomes much different during these middle school years.

Aggression is defined as either physical or psychological harm inflicted on an individual by someone else (Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006). A majority of the research on aggression has focused on boys and physical aggression (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Fagot & Hagan, 1985; Pellegrini, & Bartini, 2000). However, it is not just boys who experience or perpetrate aggressive behaviors during this time. Aggression among girls is most commonly seen in the form of relational aggression, in which damage to relationships, or even just the threat of relationship damage, serves as a vehicle of harm. This type of aggression can be just as detrimental to girls as physical aggression is to boys (Crick, Ostrov, & Werner, 2006).

In November 2000, a 14-year-old Canadian girl name Dawn-Marie committed suicide. The note she left said she had been bullied by girls at school, and death was her only escape. Police launched an investigation of these bullies, three other girls in Dawn-Marie's grade, and found that a breakdown in a group of friends caused one young girl to
begin harassing Dawn-Marie, and she encouraged her other friends to participate. This behavior was deemed criminal, charges were filed, and thus began a landmark trial against the teenagers who had aggressed against Dawn-Marie. The girl who seemed to be at the forefront of this bullying was found guilty of uttering threats and criminal harassment. In the judge's remarks on this case, she noted that bystanders added to the power of the bully by letting the harassment go on without intervening ("B.C. Girl Convicted," 2002).

This case is noteworthy for several reasons. First, it highlighted and criminalized certain covert, and sometimes overt, behaviors that are common in middle-and high schools around the world. Second, the behaviors on trial in this case are understood to be typical of relational aggression. This is a covert kind of aggression most commonly seen among young teenage girls, often resulting in the damage of relationships. The other aspect of this case that is so important is the emphasis the judge placed on the importance of bystanders in the empowerment of the bully. Understanding both relational aggression and the attitudes and effects of bystanders, can have a significant impact on the design of intervention and prevention programs to decrease or eliminate some of these behaviors. The goal of this study is to focus on both of these constructs in an effort to increase the understanding of the relationship between relational aggression and bystanders, and what, if any, gender differences in bystander attitudes exist.

**Relational Aggression**

Relational aggression has been defined as behavior that intends to harm another person through the exploitation of a relationship that damages another’s sense of group inclusion and acceptance, or by damaging friendships and self-esteem (Crick, Casas, & Nelson, 2002; Remillard & Lamb, 2005; Underwood, 2004). Behaviors such as malicious
gossip, social exclusion and ignoring are typical examples of relational aggression (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006). The central aspect of this type of aggression is that it occurs within a relationship. Relational aggression occurs within close social or friendship networks, and the behaviors make it extremely hurtful to the victim.

Relational aggression is similar to other constructs such as social aggression, which Galen and Underwood (1997) defined as behaviors that damage another's self-esteem or social status. These behaviors can include rolling eyes, spreading rumors, or verbal rejection. For the purpose of this study, the term relational aggression will be used to describe all of these behaviors.

The general term “bullying” is defined as repeated actions that are intended to cause either physical or psychological harm to someone else, often within the peer group (Garandeau & Cilessen, 2006). Bullies may use either physical or relational aggression, or both, but the constructs themselves are very distinct (Wemer & Nixon, 2005). Relational aggression is more covert and indirect, in that it is often non-verbal and can occur without anyone but the victim ever knowing what occurred (Underwood, 2004). Both physical and verbal aggression are forms of direct, or overt aggression, which has been the focus of the majority of past research (Wemer & Crick, 1999). This type of direct aggression often involves public name calling or physical contact, including hitting, punching, pushing and kicking, sometimes leaving bruises and other marks.

Werner and Crick (1999) pointed out that direct aggression is more frequently perpetrated by boys, and subsequently there have been more studies conducted solely with boys or too few girls.

Studies on physical aggression have shown these behaviors can be both physically and psychologically damaging to the victims (Blood & Blood, 2007; Dao et al., 2006),
and relational aggression also has been shown to have significant psychological effects (Crick, Ostrov, & Werner, 2006). Victims have been found to have higher rates of depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Coyne et al., 2006). Researchers have speculated that relational aggression is particularly damaging because it deprives children of their social need for peer relationships; the sense of closeness and acceptance that children derive from peer relationships are critical for a child's sense of well-being (Crick, Casas, & Nelson, 2002; Santrock, 2003).

As previously mentioned, it is often understood that girls are at the center of this kind of aggression, either as the perpetrator or the victim (Wemer & Crick, 1999). But why? What is it about girls and their relationships that cause them to resort to these behaviors? There are many theories and studies that explore this phenomenon, and they will be described here.

**Girls and Relational Aggression**

In order to understand why girls resort to relational aggression, it is first important to identify how they tend to look at aggression. Researchers have found that girls reported significantly higher levels of relational aggression than boys, whereas direct aggression is more common among boys (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Crick & Nelson, 2002). This difference may be because boys view aggression differently than girls. Campbell, Muncer, and Gorman (1993), in a study of adults, found that men viewed aggression as a means to control their environment and maintain their integrity, whereas women believed it would terminate their relationships. In a study of 4th, 7th, and 10th graders, Galen and Underwood (1997), using self-report rating scales focused on social behavior, found that 4th, 7th, and 10th grade girls perceived relational aggression to be more hurtful than boys, whereas boys in the same age groups viewed physical aggression as more hurtful.
than girls. These girls also rated social aggressors as angrier than boys rated the same aggressor, suggesting that boys do not see this type of aggression as a function of anger. These findings further demonstrate that perceptions of aggression, particularly relational aggression, differ according to gender.

There are several hypotheses for why girls use relational aggression more often than boys, and why girls see it as more hurtful. Researchers argue that relationships play an especially large role in girls' social development (Gilligan, 1982). Gilligan found that girls perceive isolation as the biggest threat to their well being, whereas boys fear entrapment and smothering. Underwood (2004) speculated that female relationships have more emotional intimacy and self-disclosure than male relationships, however the flip side of this results in the ability of girls to use this strong desire for connectedness against each other. Crothers, Field, and Kolbert (2005) reinforced this theory with their study of a sample of 15-year-old girls. They took a quantitative and a qualitative approach, using both self-report inventories and semi-structured interviews. Results showed that that girls were most afraid of social abandonment, and believed they must be vigilant in maintaining their relationships to avoid any sort of dissolution.

Other researchers have argued that girls are socialized to behave in a certain way, to always be nice and to avoid conflict in order to maintain relationships (Hadley, 2003; Sippola, Paget, & Buchanan, 2007; Underwood, 2004). Because they are given few socially acceptable ways to express their anger, girls express their negative feelings through more covert behaviors. Girls are expected to be "good," to have no bad thoughts or feelings, to avoid conflict and never be mean, and to silence themselves rather than speak their true feelings (Simmons, 2002; Underwood, 2004).
Fagot and Hagan (1985) observed toddlers in play-groups and the responses of parents and teachers to aggressive behaviors. They found that parents and teachers encouraged or ignored boys' physical conflicts whereas direct aggression in girls was strongly discouraged and often punished. It seems that girls are taught from an early age to suppress their anger and find other channels through which to express it. Relational aggression allows girls to maintain the façade of being nice, while releasing their anger at the same time.

These features of girls' socialization have been recognized as early as 1967, in Horney's theory of female development (Horney, 1967). She saw girls receiving social and cultural messages that resulted in the devaluation and sexualization of girls. Sippola, Paget, and Buchanan (2007) described these messages as such: girls are accepted if they take care of their physical appearance, if they are nice to others, and if they are cooperative and not overtly aggressive or competitive. According to this view, adolescent girls must remain nice in a society that values competition and achieving superiority over others. Therefore, relational aggression is merely a response to the hypocrisy of the culture in which these adolescent girls live, and is, in fact, an adaptive response (Killen, Crystal, & Watanabe, 2002).

The question still remains as to why girls begin to resort to these behaviors. This may be better understood in looking at the development of this type of aggression, from pre-school through adolescence.

*The Development of Relational Aggression*

Relational aggression changes with development based on social, cognitive and emotional maturation in the child (Crick et al., 2002). Crick, Casas, and Ku (1999) found forms of relational aggression as early as preschool, such as being left out of the group, or
being told "you're not my friend" if there was a refusal to comply with a playmate's request. Underwood (2003) explained that these behaviors in preschool are used primarily as persuasion efforts (i.e., dis-inviting a peer to a birthday party because he or she won't share the crayons), rather than malicious attempts to manipulate behavior or isolate the victim.

There are no real gender differences at this point in regard to both physical and relational aggression. Some researchers argued that aggression can be viewed as a normative developmental process that supports adaptation and teaches children about social norms through adult guidance (Farmer, Xie, Cairns, & Hutchins, 2007). In fact, it is in this stage of development when parents and teachers begin to discourage physically aggressive behaviors observed in girls (Fagot & Hagan, 1985). As children develop into middle childhood, overtly aggressive behaviors are viewed as unacceptable, and therefore become more covert and indirect.

In middle childhood, a pronounced gender difference emerges in overtly aggressive behavior, and remains for the rest of the lifespan (Underwood, 2003). Several factors are responsible for these changes to occur, cognitive development being one of them. At this age children begin more routinely to think through actions and manipulate them mentally so they can see them from two sides, which creates greater unity of thinking. This phase is also characterized by declining egocentrism, in which children can think about how others perceive them and how they perceive others. Their social relations also begin to change, in that children can regulate their interactions with each other through rules, and they begin to take intentions into account in judging behavior (Cole & Cole, 2001). These changes could explain why the type of aggression children use in middle childhood begins to vary and becomes more complex.
As children develop cognitively and their thinking becomes more complex, the frequency of social aggression may increase (Bjorkqvist, 1994; Underwood, 2003). This change in interaction also may be related to the reliance on close same-gender friendships that emerge during this developmental stage. In their discussion of friendships and social networks, Cairns, Xie, and Leung (1998) explained that children are attracted to others who are similar to them. As these friendships become more stable, they are likely to become more similar as they interact with each other, and develop new, concurrent beliefs and viewpoints through their social exchanges.

During the time these friendships become more stable, a hierarchy of groups emerges, with some groups and individuals having greater influence and status than the others in the broader social context of their grade or school (Adler & Adler, 1995). These groups often consist of leaders and followers, and the leaders will use both prosocial and aggressive strategies to gather and maintain followers (Farmer et al., 2007; Hawley, Little, & Card, 2007). In a study of 315 third through sixth graders, Grotpeter and Crick (1996) gave participants a friendship quality measure, and they found that friendships that included some kind of relational aggression were also high in intimacy, exclusivity, and jealousy. These findings may suggest that as complex cognitive processes are beginning to emerge, friendships become somewhat more vulnerable to relationally aggressive behaviors. This vulnerability becomes increasingly salient as children develop into early adolescence.

Middle school is an important transitional period in a child’s life for many reasons. Puberty begins for most children during this time, and there is also increased freedom and responsibility, and more demanding expectations than in elementary school (Farmer et al., 2007). Middle school students are often moving from an environment
where they had one or two teachers during the day to one in which they have five or six. It is also during this time when there may be a reshuffling of peer relationships. During times when the social hierarchy is not clearly defined, the susceptibility for certain expressions of aggression to occur increases (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000). It is during this social instability that the quest for popularity may lead to increasingly aggressive behaviors.

During the pre-teen years, the child’s peer group can become an important part of his or her identity. It is during this time that social status in particular becomes a central concern for young adolescents. Strategies such as gossiping, starting rumors, manipulation of friendships, and abandoning existing friendships for higher status peers are used (Farmer et al., 2007). In fact, it is during young adolescence when relational aggression reaches its peak. For example, Rose, Swenson, and Waller (2004), in a longitudinal study using self-report questionnaires, found that young adolescents (grades 7-9) were more likely to use relational aggression than children (grades 3-5). They found that the older girls in their sample were more likely to use relational aggression than the younger girls. Numerous other studies have reached similar conclusions (e.g., Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Ferguson, & Gariepy, 1989; Galen & Underwood, 1997).

There have also been numerous studies that have examined the role of social status in relational aggression. In their longitudinal study using conflict narratives of children from both the fourth and seventh grades, Xie, Cairns, and Cairns (2002) found that children who were adept at relational aggression tended to have higher social status, and a relatively good understanding of the dynamics of the classroom or social context within the school. Hawley et al. (2007), in a sample of pre-adolescents using self-report
questionnaires, found that those who used both prosocial and aggressive strategies within their friendships had the highest social status, as well.

Paradoxically, Underwood (2003) pointed out that protecting relationships is paramount during this developmental period, making their destruction more harmful. Therefore, because of the emphasis on the peer group and the importance of these relationships, combined with the desire to establish and maintain social positions, behaviors such as social exclusion and alienation increase in prevalence, but also in hurtfulness (Cairns et al., 1989; Hawley, 2003). The prevalence of these aggressive behaviors may also be explained by a competitiveness that has not previously existed in development: the competition for the attention of boys.

Horney (1967) first theorized that the rivalry among girls may become more intense during adolescence in order to gain or maintain the attention of boys. According to Horney, competition is the driving force behind some of these behaviors. As mentioned before, Horney suggested that expression of hostility takes place in a cultural context that centers around an emphasis on success. This competition exists because of the emphasis of Western culture to rely on others’ status and accomplishments as a measure of one’s self-worth. Relationally aggressive behaviors are used proactively to pursue their social goals and either gain or maintain feelings of self-worth.

According to Horney (1967) this is particularly true of the girls she referred to as “the feminine type.” These girls strive to be the center of attention of their male counterparts. Sippola et al. (2007) described this type of girl as someone who compares herself, particularly her physical appearance, to other girls, and is envious of those who are attractive to the opposite sex. Her self-esteem rests on her ability to attract boys, and she is sensitive to any perceived threat that might upset this status. She therefore reacts
in a way to protect her standing among her peers, and these reactions often include relationally aggressive behaviors such as gossiping and social exclusion. One of the targets of this gossiping may sometimes be newly formed romantic relationships.

According to some researchers in this field, romantic relationships become a salient issue in relational aggression. It seems that the increased importance of romantic relationships during this developmental period provides further fodder for gossip, name-calling and rumors, which are three especially harmful forms of relational aggression (Crick et al., 2002). In a study of middle and late adolescents, participants filled out self-report measures that examined adolescents’ outcome expectancies in using relational aggression. The authors found the participants to be particularly sensitive to the implication of relational aggression on dating and romantic relationships (Goldstein & Tisak, 2004).

There are several developmental factors that seem to lead to the proliferation of this type of aggression. It is interesting, though, that many of these relationally aggressive behaviors must occur in the context of a group. Gossiping, social exclusion, rumor spreading, and even name-calling require an audience of at least one for them to have maximum effectiveness. However, these bystanders have largely been overlooked in the literature. What has been studied in regards to bystanders will be explored here.

**The Role of Bystanders in Relational Aggression**

Thus far, most research on bullying, including relational aggression, has focused on the bully, the victim, or features of that dyad. However, relational aggression rarely takes place in a dyad. The only way to socially isolate another person or spread gossip about individuals is to get others involved. This means that when the relationally aggressive behavior takes place, many other children are aware of it, participate in it, or
Gender Differences in Bystander Attitudes

at a minimum, are present when it happens (O’Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Consequently, the role of bystanders in relational aggression is an important one. This deficiency of research suggests a lack of understanding of important elements of this type of aggression. This lack of research does not mean that bystanders are not critical in the presence of relationally aggressive behaviors. In fact, frequency studies have shown that exposure to relational aggression is extremely common, suggesting that bystanders may be crucial in its presence, severity, and perpetuation.

For example, Lampert (1998) surveyed 305 high school girls and found that once or more per week, 20% of the sample were exposed to direct and indirect bullying, and 65% were moderately or severely upset when watching others get bullied. Self-report questionnaires were also given to this sample, and Lampert found that feelings of anger and powerlessness were associated with witnessing these bullying experiences. However, in fitting with the trend of most research on relational aggression, this study only used girls in the sample, which leaves information about the role of male bystanders of relationally aggressive behaviors completely unexplored.

Others have noticed the deficiency in research of bystander roles in peer abuse, as well. Carney (2000) noted that bystanders are often overlooked. In her study on the perceptions of bystanders in peer victimization, participants included 201-13 to 17 year old middle school and high school students. Using self-report measures, the students reported whether they had been a victim or bystander of peer abuse in the past two years. Carney found that everyone in the sample had either been a victim or witnessed peer abuse within the past two years. In addition, the author gave participants a fictional scenario about a depressed adolescent who experienced chronic peer abuse, followed by a suicidal probability questionnaire. She found that the bystanders in this study empathized...
with the victim and identified with the victim’s feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem, and suicidal feelings. Carney concluded that those who witness peer abuse but remain inactive are not immune to the suffering of the victims. This study, although contributing valuable insight into the attitudes of bystanders, did not look specifically at relational aggression, and through the vignette, focused on suicidal peers.

In order to better understand the role of bystanders of relational aggression, it is helpful to examine the role of bystanders in physical aggression. O’Connell et al. (1999) found that the presence of others played an important role in physical bullying. They examined the peer interactions of 120 first through sixth graders on the playground and found that bullying is more likely to persist if bystanders are present when it occurs. In discussing their observations, they emphasized that bullying takes place within a social context, one in which certain elements create an environment ripe for bullying behaviors. Bullies attract the attention of their peers during these negative interactions, and bystanders either join with the bully, or passively watch the bullying unfold. Garandeau and Cillessen (2005), in their article on the role of the bystander in bullying situations, emphasized that when any sort of victimization is witnessed, bystander behavior can never be neutral. Either bystanders choose to take sides with the victim, actively join in with the bully, or simply remain passive. Although passivity may seem like a neutral behavior, in actuality it reinforces the aggression when there are no negative consequences for the bully’s behavior.

Twemlow, Sacco, and Williams (1996) took a slightly different stance on bystander behavior. They conceptualized two types of bystanders, the victim form and the bully form. The victim forms of bystanders often become victims themselves, and view the bully-victim interaction through the eyes of the victim. On the other hand, the
bully form of bystanders find pleasure in observing the bully’s behaviors toward the victims and creates diversions or assist the bully in his behavior in other ways. In the previously mentioned study that used a playground observation methodology, O’Connell et al. (1999) found that peers spent more than one-fifth of their time on the playground actively joining with the bully to abuse the victim. Understanding these dynamics between bullies, victims, and bystanders is critical in designing effective interventions to reduce bullying.

In another study, Tisak and Tisak (1996) examined bystander responses to conflict behavior by presenting written vignettes to 195 fourth, sixth, and eighth graders. Each participant read two vignettes, one of which involved hitting, and another of which involved stealing. Participants then answered questions about the bystanders’ expected behavior after witnessing an aggressive act and the victims’ expected behavioral response to the aggressive act. They found that the children took into account the relationship between the bully and victim when they decided whether or not the bystander would intervene. They also found that boys were more likely to endorse that bystanders would confront the bully than girls (71% of boys vs. 39% of girls).

To further investigate these results, Tisak, Maynard, and Tisak (2002) developed an instrument called the Adolescent Intention to Respond to Aggression scale (AIRA; Maynard & Tisak, 2002) in order to investigate adolescent’s judgments about the likelihood that they would respond to an aggressive action. They administered the AIRA to 510-9th through 12th graders. They found that girls reported that they would be more likely than boys to intervene in verbally aggressive acts. Together, these studies suggest that boys are more likely to intervene in physically aggressive acts than girls, whereas girls feel more comfortable intervening in relationally aggressive acts.
An important difference between relational aggression and physical aggression is the degree to which it can be witnessed by others: physical aggression is generally public and a fairly obvious act by a bully who is easily identified, whereas acts of relational aggression are more complex. Bullies who engage in relational aggression often use the peer group itself as a means of attack, which allows the aggressor to use the group as a shield behind which he or she can hide (Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006). Xie, Swift, Cairns, and Cairns (2002), in their longitudinal narrative study of 475 seventh graders, found that several participants who were victims of relational aggression could not identify who was responsible for the incident.

Furthermore, the same tools the bully uses to aggress against the victim are the same reasons witnesses may not intervene in the behavior. In other words, the goal of relational aggression is often to socially isolate the victim, and it is this fear of social isolation that may cause bystanders to remain silent (Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006). Adler and Adler (1995) performed a study involving observations and interviews with pre-adolescent cliques and found that clique members often follow or condone the behaviors of the central group members for fear of derision and exclusion. This should not be surprising in light of Asch's (1956) famous study of conformity in which adults were unwilling to speak out against the group “norm” in an effort to conform. Translate these findings into middle school culture, and it becomes no surprise that young adolescents are wary to speak out against the group.

The power of conformity becomes especially strong when the bullies have achieved high status within the peer group. As mentioned before, pre-adolescent cliques are often based on a hierarchical structure in which there is a clear leader (Bukowski & Sippola, 2001). Adler and Adler (1995) found that the central clique members often
turned against outsiders, and picked on those who had lower status within the clique. O'Connell et al. (1999) found that high status peers were more likely than low status peers to intervene in overt bullying behaviors, but if the high status peers are the ones doing the bullying, as appears to be the case in relational aggression, who will then intervene for the victims?

O'Connell et al. (1999) pointed to desensitization as another possible reason for the passivity of bystanders. Their study focused on boys and physical bullying on the playgrounds, but the idea of desensitization could also hold true for relational aggression. The more gossiping, rumor spreading, and exclusion the peer group observes, the more common (and acceptable) the behavior appears, and the less likely it becomes anyone will intervene. Unfortunately, there is no research specifically examining relational aggression and desensitization and should be a topic of future examination.

A fear of being the next victim may also contribute to what causes the other members of the group to participate in or ignore the relationally aggressive behaviors. There is also qualitative information with young adolescents that shows most peers hold the victims responsible for their unfortunate circumstance (Owens, Slee, & Shute, 2001). This may be due to the effectiveness of the bully, or to other group processes such as cognitive dissonance or rationalization. It also may be the case that the peer group does not realize their inaction or involvement in certain behaviors is causing any harm. In fact, Salmivalli et al. (1996) found that sixth grade children underestimated their own participation in these behaviors. Hazler (1996) described these bystanders as understanding what is happening, but are paralyzed into inaction by not knowing enough about their roles, emotional reactions, or responsibilities.
Gender Differences in Bystander Attitudes

Self-Efficacy

The inability to step forward and speak out against the bully may be related to the bystander's self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) defined this construct as the perceived ability to produce a desired action. He argued that people often know the appropriate actions necessary to achieve a desired end. However, in order to participate in these actions or behaviors, individuals need to be confident that their actions will be effective (Muris, 2001). Those individuals with low self-efficacy believe their efforts will be ineffective, and so do not take action. Conversely, those with high self-efficacy perceive their actions as an effective means in achieving their desired ends (Muris, 2002).

Self-efficacy has been related to poor adjustment in both children and adults (Bandura, Pastorelli, Barbanelli, & Caprara, 1999). Bandura (1997) postulated that when people view themselves as unable to achieve desired outcomes, they are likely to be depressed. He also believed that when people see themselves as unable to cope with threatening events, this may lead to, or be indicative of, anxiety. Muris (2002) also pointed out that low social self-efficacy may hinder the formation of positive social relationships, especially in children.

In his study on self-efficacy, Muris (2002) examined 596 normal adolescents. Participants completed the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children, as well as scales measuring symptoms of anxiety disorders, depression, and trait anxiety. His results showed that low levels of self-efficacy were accompanied by high social anxiety and higher rates of depressive symptoms. Specifically, low social self-efficacy was strongly related to social phobia, low academic self-efficacy to school phobia, and low emotional self-efficacy to generalized anxiety.

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Similarly, in a longitudinal study, Bandura, Pastorelli, Barbaranelli, and Caprara (1999) examined the connection between self-efficacy and childhood depression. They looked at the relationship between social and academic self-efficacy and depression in a sample of 282 children with a mean age of 11.5 years. The severity of children’s level of depressive symptoms were reassessed one and two years later. Results indicated that low social and academic self-efficacy were predictive of long-term depression. Furthermore, depression was more strongly linked to low self-efficacy over time for girls than for boys.

As evidenced by these studies, the assessment of self-efficacy in children has focused on three areas: social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy. Emotional self-efficacy pertains to the perceived capability of coping with negative emotions, academic self-efficacy is the perceived capability to learn and do well in school, and social self-efficacy is the perceived capability for peer relationships and assertiveness (Muris, 2001). In the context of bystanders of relational aggression, it seems that the latter form of social self-efficacy is the most pertinent.

*Empathy*

Another mediator in whether a bystander will step forward may be strongly linked to empathy. Empathy is defined as feelings of warmth, compassion, and concern in one individual to the observed experiences of another, and sharing in the observed emotional state (Davis, 1983; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Loudin, Loukas, & Robinson, 2003). Current approaches to this construct view it as multidimensional, with both a cognitive and emotional component (Davis, 1994; Gini, Albiero, Benelli & Altoe, 2007). The cognitive component refers to the ability of the individual to identify and understand the other person’s perspective. The emotional component is the tendency to experience feelings of concern and/or sympathy towards others. These two components can be
studied and measured separately, but both are needed to capture empathy as a whole (Hoffman, 2001).

Empathy has been indicated in several studies as an important component in both bullying and helping behavior. Kaukiainen et al. (1999) examined relationships between empathy and three types of aggressive behavior. They used peer-estimation techniques with participants who were 526 Finnish children ages 10 through 14. They found that those children with higher empathy scores were less physically, verbally, and indirectly aggressive. They found that empathy may mitigate the likelihood that aggressive behaviors will occur. Loudin, Loukas, and Robinson (2003), in a study of college students, found using self-report questionnaires that low empathic concern predicted aggressive behaviors in males only. This indicates that gender differences may be an important component in empathy and aggressive behaviors.

There is also considerable evidence that empathy is associated with helping behavior. Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, and Birch (1981) defined this as "altruistic motivation." In their landmark study on empathic concern, their participants included 44 college-aged women who watched another female undergraduate receive electric shocks. They then had the opportunity to help her by taking the remaining electric shocks themselves. Batson et al. found that the women high in empathy helped the victim regardless of the ease or difficulty in escaping the situation. Ease of escape refers to the relative costs to the person for not helping the victim, for example in the easy condition, the participant no longer had to watch the victim being shocked if they decided not to help. Participants low in empathy were less likely to help when it was easy to escape.
Davis (1983) also found that emotional reactions of warmth, sympathy, and concern were significantly related to helping a victim, whereas feelings of unease were not. He also found that women helped more frequently than did men, which again points to the possible significance of gender differences in empathy. Both of these studies used college students' samples, however there are similar findings among studies examining children and adolescents (de Wied, Branje, & Meeus, 2007; Hanson & Mullis, 1985; Karniol, Gabay, Ochion, & Harari, 1998; Silfver & Helkama, 2007).

Gini, Albiero, Benelli, and Altoe (2007) studied Italian adolescents using self-report questionnaires, and found that empathy was positively associated with helping victimized peers, but only for boys. Similarly, in another study with Israeli adolescents who completed an empathy scale and gender role orientation inventory, Karniol, Gabay, Ochion, and Harari (1998) found that girls scored significantly higher on self-report measures of empathic concern than boys. Raboteg-Saric (1997), using a self-report questionnaire, also found significant sex differences in prosocial behavior, with these behaviors strongly tied to emotional empathy in girls.

In one of the only studies examining empathy and prosocial behavior in American early adolescents, Estrada (1987) used video clips and self-report questionnaires in her study of 89 high school students. She argued that the use of realistically portrayed hypothetical situations on video allows for greater opportunities for examining responses to others who are being victimized. She found that prosocial behaviors were positively correlated with scores on self-report measures of cognitive understanding, perspective taking, and sympathy. Together, the findings of these studies indicate that empathy is clearly an important aspect of helping behavior in response to
relationally victimized peers, though there has been little research directly examining the issue.

Empathy is only one of the factors that researchers have yet to explore in terms of bystander relationships with victims. Self-efficacy is another of these relatively unexplored constructs in bystander behavior. Examining these factors and their respective roles in bystander behavior is essential in understanding bystander willingness to allow victimization to occur. Bystander behavior remains enigmatic for researchers, and bystander behavior in regards to relational aggression has been neglected in the current literature on this topic. Relational aggression, which reaches its peak in middle school, is dependent on bystander cooperation and collaboration in order for the behaviors to be effectively harmful. Social exclusion, rumor spreading, and isolation all require the assistance of the peer group. Therefore, it is important for researchers to understand the role of bystanders in order to create effective interventions. The goals of this study are to clarify the role of the peer group, particularly any gender differences that may exist among bystanders of relational aggression, as well as determine the function of both self-efficacy and empathy in bystander behavior.
Chapter II

Rationale and Hypotheses

Research suggests that relational aggression is a considerable problem in middle schools all over the world (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Crick, et al., 2002; Galen & Underwood, 1997), with girls as the more frequent perpetrators of this type of aggression (Hadley, 2003; Underwood, 2004). This seems to be due to the emergence and convergence of several factors, including cognitive development, the establishment of a social hierarchy, and the emergence of dating relationships (Cairns et al., 1989; Crick et al., 2002; Goldstein & Tisak, 2003; Hawley, 2003; Rose et al., 2004). It is therefore important to focus on this age group in the current investigation of relational aggression.

A more complete understanding of relational aggression cannot be possible without an understanding of the dynamic process of relational aggression. In this type of aggression, the perpetrators often use the peer group as a weapon against the victim (Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006). Many researchers believe peers play a vital role in this type of aggression (Adler & Adler, 1995; Hazler, 1996; Garandeau & Cillessen, 2006), but there has been little research to help explain how or why. This deficiency in research indicates a lack of understanding into the importance of the peer group in the emergence and perpetuation of such behaviors. In addition, this study will attempt to clarify the role of male bystanders in relational aggression, including their perceptions and attitudes towards these types of behaviors, which has been neglected in the literature thus far.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that boys may be fostering and encouraging this behavior (Simmons, 2002), but there is no empirical data to support these claims.
Self-efficacy, the perceived ability to produce a desired outcome, may be one reason bystanders do not become involved in relationally aggressive disputes (Bandura, 1997). If an individual does not think his or her actions will be effective, there is little likelihood that an intervention will occur. Social self-efficacy is one facet of this construct, and it is defined as the perceived capability for peer relationships and assertiveness (Muris, 2001).

Previous studies (e.g., Davis, 1983) have found that emotional reactions of warmth, sympathy, and concern were significantly related to prosocial behaviors, such as intervening in a dispute. Several studies have shown that girls score higher than boys on self-report measures of empathy (de Wied et al., 2007; Hanson & Mullis, 1985; Karniol et al., 1998; Raboteg-Saric, 1997; Silvfer & Helkama, 2007), which is striking in light of girls’ more active participation in relational aggression. As such, understanding the role that empathy plays in relational aggression seems worthwhile.

The goal of this study is to clarify the role of the peer group, particularly any gender differences that may exist among bystanders in relationally aggressive behavior. In light of the above, the following hypotheses will be examined:

**H1:** Girls’ ratings of the hurtfulness of relationally aggressive behaviors depicted in video vignettes will be significantly higher (more negative) than boys’ ratings of the same behaviors.

**H2:** Girls’ ratings of the aggressiveness of relationally aggressive behaviors depicted in video vignettes will be significantly higher (more negative) than boys’ ratings of the same behaviors.

**H3:** Boys will be significantly less likely to endorse intervening in the behaviors when compared to girls.
H₄: Participants whose ratings suggest they identify with the victim will score significantly higher on the empathy scale when compared with participants whose ratings suggest they do not identify with the victim.

H₅: Participants who identify with the passive bystanders and who do not endorse intervening behaviors will score significantly lower on questions pertaining to self-efficacy than participants who do endorse intervening.
Chapter III

Method

Participants

Participants of this study will be students in grades 5-8, from St. Pius X Catholic School in Edgewood, KY. This is a parochial school that serves children from grades K-8. At St. Pius, the total enrollment for 2008-2009 is 576 (St. Pius X School Profile, 2008). The majority of students at St. Pius X are Caucasian, and come from families with middle to upper middle incomes. We anticipate that approximately 250 students will enroll in the study. All participants will be evaluated as a group in a classroom setting, during a religion class session.

Power Issues

In order to determine the appropriate number of participants, issues of power are often considered using Cohen's (1992) primer as a reference. However, this method depends on using similar studies to assist in determining an appropriate sample size in order to find significance at $p = .05$. This would be the first study to measure this issue, and so there are no sample sizes available to determine power. Comparable studies have used sample sizes ranging from 12 (Bornhofen & McDonald, 2008) to 585 (Crozier et al., 2008). The majority of studies had sample sizes between 60 and 80. This study will utilize a convenience sample of all middle school students at St. Pius X whose parents grant permission for participation. To address issues of power, effect sizes will be reported and discussed.
Measures

*Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C)*: Muris (2001) created this 24-item scale that represents three areas of self-efficacy: Social Self-Efficacy, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Emotional Self-Efficacy. Each item is scored on a 5-point scale, with 1 = not at all and 5 = very well. For example, item 2 asks “How well can you express your opinions when other classmates disagree with you?” Scores range between 24 and 120. Low total scores on the SEQ-C indicate lower self-efficacy. The mean score for girls was found to be 75.3, while the mean score for boys was found to be 78.9. In order to test the hypothesis regarding those with lower self-efficacy scores, “low self-efficacy” will be defined as a score lower than the aforementioned average (75.3 for girls, 78.9 for boys).

Muris (2001) performed a factor analysis and found that the majority of items demonstrated consistent factor loadings. Internal consistency reliability was also found to be acceptable (α=.88). Factor analysis of this measure revealed social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy were factors that kept with the intended subscales. Results also showed that the SEQ-C has satisfactory internal consistency. The scores correlate in a meaningful way with the Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI; Kovacs, 1981), suggesting adequate convergent validity. See Appendix A for the complete scale.

*Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)*: The IRI was designed by Davis (1980) and is a 28-item self-report questionnaire that consists of four 7-item subscales, each of which assesses a specific aspect of empathy. The four subscales measure Perspective Taking, Fantasy, Empathic Concern, and Personal Distress. The Perspective Taking (PT) subscale measures the tendency to adopt the psychological viewpoint of others, and the Fantasy (FS) subscale assesses the respondents’ ability to resonate with the feelings of
fictitious characters in books, movies, and plays. The Empathic Concern (EC) subscale measures sympathy and concern for others, and the Personal Distress (PD) subscale measures the respondents own feelings of anxiety in tense interpersonal situations. Each item is rated on a scale ranging from 0 (not at all like me) to 4 (very much like me). For example, item 11 asks, “I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.” Scores can range between 0 and 112, with higher scores reflecting greater overall empathy. No mean overall scores were reported. Each scores for each subscale can range between 0 and 28. The mean scores of males for each subscale are as follows: FS=15.73, PT=16.78; EC=19.04, and PD=9.46. The mean scores of females for each subscale are as follows: FS=18.75, PT=17.96, EC=21.67, and PD=12.28.

Davis (1980) found that all four subscales were found to have satisfactory internal consistency ($\alpha=.82$). In a study examining the scale’s convergent and divergent validity, Davis (1983) compared the IRI to measures of social functioning, self-esteem, emotionality, and sensitivity to others. The IRI was found to have adequate convergent and divergent validity. See Appendix B for the scale. In order to test the hypothesis regarding those with higher empathy scores, the empathy cutoff score will be a combined score that falls above the sum of the aforementioned averages (62 for boys, 77 for girls).

**Video Vignette Questionnaire:** After being presented a series of video vignettes, some of which contain relational aggression, some of which contain positive interactions, and some of which contain neutral interactions, participants will fill out a set of questions associated with each vignette (Appendix C). This questionnaire was developed by the principal investigator for the present study. Questions will be screened for appropriateness with a group of pilot participants, but there are no validity or reliability...
data available. Appendix E lists all of the items from the current draft of the questionnaire that will be summed in order to compare ratings of the behaviors displayed in the video vignettes regarding hurtfulness between boys and girls. In addition, Appendix F lists all of the items that will be summed in order to compare ratings of intervening in the observed behavior between boys and girls. In addition, in order to test the hypothesis that those who identify with the victim will have higher empathy scores, those who identify with the victim will be identified based on item 1 of 8 video vignettes (scenes 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14).

Materials

Film stimulus: The stimulus tapes that will be used in this study consist of a series of short segments from the film Odd Girl Out (Adelson & McLaughlin, 2005; See Appendix D for listing of scenes). Some scenes will portray a type of relational aggression in which there are bystanders, some scenes will portray positive interactions in which there are bystanders, and some scenes will be neutral. These video clips were chosen by the principal investigator and will be approved for realism and appropriateness in a pilot study by middle school students, high school students, and adults. In addition, to assure that the content of the clips will not be inappropriate for these students, the school's principal or her designee will view and approve these clips.

Procedure

All students in grades 5-8 at St. Pius X School will be invited to participate. A waiver of written informed consent will be requested from Xavier University's Institutional Review Board. Parents of these students will be sent a Permission Slip (Appendix G) instructing them to return the form if they will not allow their child to participate.
Data collection is expected to occur over the course of two days. On the first day, students in a religion class will initially be presented with a Letter of Assent (Appendix H), which will inform them that their participation is voluntary, and they may withdraw from participation if they choose to do so. Those who do not choose to participate or whose parents have returned the consent form will leave the room. Once the participants have been determined, they will be given a card with a number on the front. They will be asked to write their name on the other side of the card. Next, they will be asked to label the questionnaires with the number on the card. Once they have done so, cards will be collected. This is to insure that questionnaires across the different days are assigned to the same people. Participants will then fill out the SEQ-C (Muris, 2001) and the IRI (Davis, 1980).

On the second day, the cards filled out the previous day will be returned to the appropriate participants. They will be asked to write the number on the card on the Video Vignette Questionnaire, and after this has been completed the cards will be collected and destroyed. Participants will then watch clips from the film stimulus tape. Table I presents the order to be used. Before the stimulus tape is shown, a synopsis of the film will be given, including an introduction of the main characters. A latin square design will be used to counter-balance the order of the video clips according to the Table Appendix I. After each video clip is shown, participants will be asked to complete a series of questions developed by the principal investigator (Appendix C). Participants will be asked not to write their name on any forms or questionnaires to protect confidentiality.
Chapter IV

Proposed Analyses

The purpose of the current study is to compare boys’ and girls’ attitudes and reactions toward a series of video vignettes, some of which include relational aggression. Other comparisons will be made regarding empathy and its relationship with participants’ identification with the victim, as well as self-efficacy and its relationship with participants’ willingness to intervene. Correlations will be conducted to examine relationships among all dependent measures as preliminary analyses.

The first three hypotheses deal with mean ratings of attitudes toward aggressive behaviors, and also ratings of intervening behaviors. Independent samples t-tests will be used to compare 1) ratings of the behaviors displayed in the video vignettes regarding hurtfulness between boys and girls (Appendix E lists all of the items summed for H1), 2) ratings of the behaviors displayed in the video vignettes regarding aggressiveness between boys and girls (Appendix F lists all of the items summed for H2), and 3) ratings of intervening in the observed behavior between boys and girls.

Independent sample t-tests will also be used to examine the final two hypotheses, which involve identification with the victim or the bystanders, and mean ratings on an empathy scale and a self-efficacy scale. Comparisons between the empathy scale scores of those participants who endorsed identification with the victim (based on item 1 of scenes 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14), and those who did not endorse identification with the victim will be made. The initial analyses will include the entire sample, with follow-up t-tests conducted separately for boys and girls. In the final hypothesis, comparisons
between the self-efficacy scale scores of those students who endorsed intervening behaviors and those students who did not endorse intervening behaviors will be examined.
References


Appendix A

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C)

The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate number on the scale: 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. When you have decided on your answer, circle the number below the question. READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING. Answer as honestly as you can. Thank you.

1. How well can you get teachers to help you when you get stuck on schoolwork?
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all Very well

2. How well can you express your opinions when other classmates disagree with you?
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all Very well

3. How well do you succeed in cheering yourself up when an unpleasant event has happened?
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all Very well

4. How well can you study when there are other interesting things to do?
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all Very well

5. How well do you succeed in becoming calm again when you are very scared?
   
   1  2  3  4  5
   Not at all Very well
6. How well can you become friends with other children?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

7. How well can you study a chapter for a test?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

8. How well can you have a chat with an unfamiliar person?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

9. How well can you prevent yourself from becoming nervous?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

10. How well do you succeed in finishing all your homework every day?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

11. How well can you work in harmony with your classmates?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

12. How well can you control your feelings?

1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

13. How well can you pay attention during every class?

1  2  3  4  5
14. How well can you tell other children that they are doing something that you don’t like?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

15. How well can you give yourself a pep-talk when you feel low?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

16. How well do you succeed in passing all subjects?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

17. How well can you tell a funny event to a group of children?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

18. How well can you tell a friend that you don’t feel well?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

19. How well do you succeed in satisfying your parents with your schoolwork?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

20. How well do you succeed in staying friends with other children?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well

21. How well do you succeed in suppressing unpleasant thoughts?
1  2  3  4  5
Not at all Very well
22. How well do you succeed in passing a test?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Very well

23. How well do you succeed in preventing quarrels with other children?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Very well
Appendix B

Interpersonal Reactivity Index

The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings in a variety of situations. For each item, indicate how well it describes you by choosing the appropriate letter on the scale at the top of the page: A, B, C, D, or E. When you have decided on your answer, circle the letter on the answer sheet next to the item number. READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING. Answer as honestly as you can. Thank you.

ANSWER SCALE:

A B C D E
Does Not Describe Me very well
Does not describe me well

1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me. (FS)

A B C D E
Does not describe me well

2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me. (EC)

A B C D E
Does not describe me well

3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the "other guy's" point of view. (PT) (-)

A B C D E
Does not describe me well

4. Sometimes I don't feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems. (EC) (-)

A B C D E
Does not describe me well
5. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel. (FS)

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<td>Describes me very well</td>
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6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease. (PD)

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<td>Describes me very well</td>
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7. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don't often get completely caught up in it. (FS) (-)

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<td>Describes me very well</td>
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8. I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision. (PT)

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<td>Describes me very well</td>
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9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them. (EC)

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10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation. (PD)

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<td>Does not describe me well</td>
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<td>Describes me very well</td>
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</table>
11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective. (PT)

A   B   C   D   E
Does not describe me well

12. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me. (FS) (-)

A   B   C   D   E
Does not describe me well

13. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm. (PD) (-)

A   B   C   D   E
Does not describe me well

14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal. (EC) (-)

A   B   C   D   E
Does not describe me well

15. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste much time listening to other people's arguments. (PT) (-)

A   B   C   D   E
Does not describe me well

16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters. (FS)

A   B   C   D   E
Does not describe me well
17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me. (PD)

A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe Describes me
me well very well

18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel very much pity for them. (EC) (-)

A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe Describes me
me well very well

19. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies. (PD) (-)

A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe Describes me
me well very well

20. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen. (EC)

A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe Describes me
me well very well

21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both. (PT)

A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe Describes me
me well very well

22. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person. (EC)

A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe Describes me
me well very well

23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character. (FS)
24. I tend to lose control during emergencies. (PD)
A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe
me well
Describes me
very well

25. When I’m upset at someone, I usually try to "put myself in his shoes" for a while. (PT)
A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe
me well
Describes me
very well

26. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the
events in the story were happening to me. (FS)
A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe
me well
Describes me
very well

27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces. (PD)
A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe
me well
Describes me
very well

28. Before criticizing somebody, I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their
place. (PT)
A  B  C  D  E
Does not describe
me well
Describes me
very well
Appendix C

Video Vignette Questionnaire (Draft)

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. The following statements inquire about your thoughts and feelings regarding a variety of video clips. READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING. Answer as honestly as you can. Thank you.

NOTE: This questionnaire will be revised after piloted.
RA= RELATIONAL AGGRESSION
PI=POSITIVE INTERACTION
NS=NEUTRAL SCENE
*This key will not be on the actual questionnaire

What is your gender? (Please circle one)

Male  Female
SCENE 4
(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   _____ Vanessa (the one who was asked to sit at another table).
   _____ Stacey (the one who was at the table and told Vanessa they would talk later)
   _____ Nikki (the one who told Vanessa to sit at the other table)
   _____ One of the people sitting at the table watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after her friends told her to sit at a different table? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Happy Happy Neutral/Fine Hurt Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider asking someone to sit at another table to be? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Nice Nice Neutral Mean Very Mean

4. If you were someone sitting at the table full of girls, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Nikki to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very likely Likely Somewhat Likely Not very likely Not likely at all
SCENE 6
(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   ______ Vanessa (the one who received the text messages)
   ______ Stacey (one of the girls sending the text messages)
   ______ Nikki (one of the girls sending the text messages)
   ______ One of the people sitting in class watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt when she received those text messages? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Happy  Happy  Neutral/Fine  Hurt  Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider this text message to be? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Nice  Nice  Neutral  Mean  Very Mean

4. If you were someone sitting in class, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Vanessa and Stacey to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very likely  Likely  Somewhat Likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all
SCENE 7
(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   _____ Vanessa (the girl who was the subject of the yearbook cover)
   _____ Melissa (the one who showed the yearbook cover)
   _____ Stacey or one of the other people watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after yearbook cover incident? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   1Very Happy 2Happy 3Neutral/Fine 4Hurt 5Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider making this yearbook cover to be? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   1Very Nice 2Nice 3Neutral 4Aggressive 5Very Aggressive

4. If you were someone sitting at the table full of girls, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Melissa to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   1Very likely 2Likely 3Somewhat Likely 4Not very likely 5Not likely at all
SCENE 8
(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   ______ Vanessa (the girl who was called “slut at work”)
   ______ Billy (the one who said Vanessa was a “slut at work”)
   ______ One of the people watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after Billy called her a “slut at work”? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Happy  Happy  Neutral/Fine  Hurt  Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider being called a “slut at work”? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Nice  Nice  Neutral  Aggressive  Very Aggressive

4. If you were someone watching Billy call Vanessa a “slut at work”, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell ___ to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very likely  Likely  Somewhat Likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all
SCENE 10
(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   ______ Vanessa (the one who came up to the table to sit down).
   ______ Stacey (the one who said hi)
   ______ Tiffany (the one who put the backpack in the chair)
   ______ One of the people sitting/standing around the table watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after they wouldn’t let her sit at the table? (Please circle one)

   1    2    3    4    5
   Very Happy  Happy  Neutral/Fine  Hurt  Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider keeping someone from sitting at a
   lunchtable to be? (Please circle one)

   1    2    3    4    5
   Very Nice  Nice  Neutral  Aggressive  Very Aggressive

4. If you were someone sitting at the table, how likely would it be that you would do or
   say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Tiffany to stop) ? (Please circle one)

   1    2    3    4    5
   Very likely  Likely  Somewhat Likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all
SCENE 11
(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?

______ Vanessa (the one who hiding in the bathroom stall).
______ Nikki (the brunette girl talking about Vanessa)
______ Tiffany (the blonde girl talking about Vanessa)
______ One of the other people in the bathroom listening to Nikki and Tiffany?

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after listening to what these girls were saying? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very Happy Happy Neutral/Fine Hurt Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider this gossiping to be? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very Nice Nice Neutral Mean Very Mean

4. If you were someone in the bathroom, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Nikki and Vanessa to stop)? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very likely Likely Somewhat Likely Not very likely Not likely at all
SCENE 13

(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?

______ Vanessa (the one who came up to say hi to Alicia).

______ Emily (the one gave Vanessa a hug)

______ Billy (the one called them “lesbos”)

______ One of the other people standing around the lockers watching it happen

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after Billy called she and Emily “lesbos”? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very Happy Happy Neutral/Fine Hurt Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider calling someone a “lesbo” to be? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very Nice Nice Neutral Mean Very Mean

4. If you were someone standing around these lockers, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Billy to stop)? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very likely Likely Somewhat Likely Not very likely Not likely at all
SCENE 14
(RA)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   ______ Vanessa (the one whose IM’s were being read aloud).
   ______ Nikki (one of the people reading Vanessa’s IMs aloud)
   ______ Tiffany (one of the people reading Vanessa’s IMs aloud)
   ______ One of the people standing in the hall watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after her IM conversation was read aloud? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Happy Happy Neutral/Fine Hurt Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider reading IMs to other people to be? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Nice Nice Neutral Mean Very Mean

4. If you were someone listening to these IMs being read aloud, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Nikki and Tiffany to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   Very likely Likely Somewhat Likely Not very likely Not likely at all
SCENE 2

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?

   _____ Vanessa (the one Stacey bought the jeans for).
   _____ Stacey (the one who bought Vanessa’s jeans)
   _____ One of the people standing in line watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after Stacey bought Vanessa the jeans? (Please circle one)

   1     2     3     4     5

   Very Happy    Happy    Neutral/Fine    Hurt    Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider buying things for your friends to be? (Please circle one)

   1     2     3     4     5

   Very Nice    Nice    Neutral    Mean    Very Mean

4. If you were someone standing in line at this store, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Stacey to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1     2     3     4     5

   Very likely    Likely    Somewhat Likely    Not very likely    Not likely at all
SCENE 9

(P1)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?

_____ Vanessa (the one who was talking to Stacey).

_____ Stacey (the one who apologized)

_____ One of the people in the hall watching it happen

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after Stacey apologized? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very Happy Happy Neutral/Fine Hurt Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider apologizing to be? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very Nice Nice Neutral Mean Very Mean

4. If you were someone watching Stacey apologize, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Stacey to stop) ? (Please circle one)

1 2 3 4 5

Very likely Likely Somewhat Likely Not very likely Not likely at all
SCENE 12
(PI)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   ____ Vanessa (the one whose friend came to visit her).
   ____ Emily (the one who came to visit Vanessa)
   ____ One of the people in the hospital watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after her friend came to visit her? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Happy Happy Neutral/Fine Hurt Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider visiting your friend in the hospital to be? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Nice Nice Neutral Mean Very Mean

4. If you were someone at the hospital watching this happen, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Emily to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1 2 3 4 5
   Very likely Likely Somewhat Likely Not very likely Not likely at all

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SCENE 1
(NS)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   _____ Vanessa (one of the girls shopping).
   _____ Stacey (one of the girls shopping)
   _____ Nikki (one of the girls shopping)
   _____ One of the people in the store watching it happen

2. How do you think Vanessa felt while she was shopping with her friends? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Happy  Happy  Neutral/Fine  Hurt  Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider shopping to be? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Nice  Nice  Neutral  Mean  Very Mean

4. If you were someone watching them shop, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell them to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very likely  Likely  Somewhat Likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all
SCENE 3
(NS)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   ______ Vanessa (the one said she’d do Stacey the favor)
   ______ Stacey (one of the girls at the table)
   ______ Nikki (the one who asked Vanessa to do Stacey a favor)
   ______ One of the people at the coffee shop watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa having coffee with Stacey and Nikki? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Happy  Happy  Neutral/Fine  Hurt  Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider having coffee with friend to be? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Nice  Nice  Neutral  Mean  Very Mean

4. If you were someone at the coffee shop watching them talk, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Nikki to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very likely  Likely  Somewhat Likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all
SCENE 5
(NS)

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   _____ Vanessa (the one who gave the answer).
   _____ Emily (the one who gave the rest of the answer)
   _____ One of the people sitting in class watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt while sitting in class? (Please circle one)
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Happy  Happy  Neutral/Fine  Hurt  Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider sitting in class to be? (Please circle one)
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Nice  Nice  Neutral  Mean  Very Mean

4. If you were someone sitting in class watching them give answers, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell them to stop) ? (Please circle one)
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Very likely  Likely  Somewhat Likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all
Repeat of Scene 10

1. What should Vanessa have done?

2. What should one of the people watching have done?
Appendix D

List of Scenes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Minutes into Movie</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scene 1</td>
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<td>Positive interaction</td>
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<td>Scene 4</td>
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<td>Scene 5</td>
<td>22:40</td>
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<td>Scene 6</td>
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<td>Scene 7</td>
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<td>Scene 9</td>
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<td>Positive Interaction</td>
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<td>Scene 10</td>
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<td>Positive Interaction</td>
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<td>Scene 14</td>
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Appendix E

**Summed Items for Hypothesis 1**

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Appendix F

Summed Items for Hypothesis 2

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Appendix G

Draft of Letter of Assent

Dear Students,

My name is Shannon Odell and I am a graduate student in psychology from Xavier University. I'm with you today because I am doing a research project as a requirement for one of my classes. My research project is a study about certain kinds of aggression you see some girls taking part in, like gossiping, excluding, and spreading rumors. Today, I'm going to ask you to watch scenes from movies and television shows and complete some forms that will help me understand what you think about these behaviors.

I will ask you NOT to write your names on any of the forms so no one will be able to know your answers or what you write. I will not let anyone see your answers or any other information about you. Your teachers, principal, and parents will never see the answers you gave. So please be as honest and open as you can with all of the questions.

You do not have to be in this study. No one will get angry or upset with you if you decide not to do this. Just tell your teacher or me if you don’t want to take part in this study. If you decide to be in the study but later you change your mind, then you can say you do not want to be in the study anymore.

If you have any questions at any time, please ask your teacher or me.

If you want to be in the study, please sit quietly and wait for me to give further instructions.

If you DO NOT want to be in the study, turn this paper over and I will know that I should not give you the forms because you don’t want to participate.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Shannon Odell
Appendix H

Draft of Permission Slip

Dear Parents,

My name is Shannon Odell and I’m a graduate student in the clinical psychology program at Xavier University. For my major research project, I am working within St. Pius X to assess attitudes about certain aggressive behaviors, such as gossiping, excluding, and spreading rumors. Because St. Pius X is strongly committed to making sure students have a safe and healthy place to learn, I ask you to allow your child to participate. Students in grades 5-8 will be asked to watch video clips and fill out surveys sometime in December.

There are no risks for you or your child by participating. Your child’s schooling will not be influenced in any way whether or not you choose to participate. Your child will have the opportunity to refuse to participate if he or she chooses. I believe the information gathered in this study will tell us more about these aggressive behaviors.

If you decide that you do NOT want your child to complete the surveys, please check the box below and return it to school with your child to return to the teacher.

☐ I do NOT want my child to complete the surveys.

Child’s name: __________________________

If you have any questions, please contact me (360-481-0532), your child’s teacher, or my research supervisor Dr. Kathleen Hart (745-3278).

Please return this form back to school by

Sincerely,

Shannon Odell, M.A.
Appendix I

Latin Square Design of Video Vignette Presentation

Table 1

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P=Positive
N= Neutral
A=Aggressive

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Chapter V: Dissertation

Abstract

The objectives of this study were to examine bystander attitudes in relational aggression, focusing primarily on gender differences, and to examine the roles that self-efficacy and empathy play in bystander behaviors toward relational aggression, particularly the impact they may have on victim identification and intervening behavior. Participants were 212 middle school students, grades 5 through 8, who completed measures of self-efficacy and empathy, and watched a series of video vignettes, three of which contained relationally aggressive behavior, and after each vignette filled out a questionnaire about the observed scene. Results showed that girls found the observed behaviors significantly more hurtful and more aggressive than boys, and girls also endorsed that they would be more likely to intervene. Self-efficacy was found to be a factor in intervening in the behavior, and empathy was related both to identification with the victim and to intervening behavior.
Gender Differences in Bystander Attitudes

Towards Relational Aggression

Relational aggression has been defined as behavior that intends to harm another person through the exploitation of a relationship that damages another's sense of group inclusion and acceptance, or by damaging friendships and self-esteem (Crick, Casas, & Nelson, 2002; Remillard & Lamb, 2005; Underwood, 2004). Behaviors such as malicious gossip, social exclusion and ignoring are typical examples of relational aggression (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006). The central aspect of this type of aggression is that it occurs within a relationship, typically within a close social or friendship network, which increases the hurtfulness of the behavior. Relational aggression is subtle and indirect, in that it is often related to vocal tone or non-verbal cues, thus flying "under the radar" of most observers; victims, however, are painfully aware (Underwood, 2004). It is also important to note that many relationally aggressive behaviors occur in the context of a group. Gossiping, social exclusion, rumor spreading, and even name-calling require an audience of at least one to be effective. The role that witnesses (often referred to as bystanders) play has largely been overlooked in the literature.

Researchers have found that girls reported significantly higher levels of relational aggression than boys, whereas direct aggression is more common among boys (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Crick & Nelson, 2002). Some studies indicate that this difference may be due to gender differences in perceptions of aggression. In a study of 4th, 7th, and 10th graders, Galen and Underwood (1997) found that girls in these age groups perceived relational aggression to be more hurtful than
boys, whereas boys in the same age groups viewed physical aggression as more hurtful than girls.

The Role of Bystanders in Relational Aggression

Thus far, most research on bullying, including relational aggression, has focused on the bully, the victim, or features of that dyad. However, relational aggression rarely takes place in a dyad. The only way to socially isolate another person or spread gossip about individuals is to get others involved. This means that when the relationally aggressive behavior takes place, other children are aware of it, participate in it, or at a minimum, are present when it occurs (O’Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Consequently, the role of bystanders in relational aggression is an important one. The nature of many of these behaviors (i.e., gossiping, excluding, spreading rumors) requires either the active participation of or implicit acceptance by both the larger social group; failure to address this in previous studies ignores critical features that likely contribute to the behavior. In fact, frequency studies have shown that exposure to relational aggression is extremely common, suggesting that bystanders may be crucial in its presence, severity, and perpetuation. In addition, bystanders may suffer negative psychological affects as a result of that exposure.

In fact, Lampert (1998) surveyed 305 high school girls and found that once or more per week, 20% of the sample were exposed to direct and indirect bullying, and 65% were moderately or severely upset when watching others get bullied. The students also completed questionnaires, and Lampert found that feelings of anger and powerlessness were associated with witnessing these bullying experiences. However, consistent with the trend of most research on relational aggression, this study only sampled girls, which
leaves information about the role that male bystanders play in relationally aggressive behaviors completely unexplored.

The role of bystanders in physical aggression may provide insight into the role of bystanders of relational aggression. O'Connell et al. (1999) examined the peer interactions of 120 first through sixth graders on the playground and found that physical bullying is more likely to persist if bystanders are present when it occurs. In discussing their observations, the authors emphasized that bullying takes place within a social context, one in which certain elements create an environment ripe for bullying behaviors. Bullies attract the attention of their peers during these negative interactions, and bystanders either join with the bully, or passively watch the bullying unfold.

Garandeau and Cillessen (2006) emphasized that when any sort of victimization is witnessed, bystander behavior is never neutral. Either bystanders choose to take sides with the victim, actively join in with the bully, or remain passive. Although passivity may seem like a neutral behavior, in actuality it reinforces the aggression when there are no negative consequences for the aggressors. Understanding the dynamics between bullies, victims, and bystanders is critical in designing effective interventions to reduce bullying.

**Self-Efficacy**

The inability to step forward and speak out against the bully may be related to the bystander’s self-efficacy, which is defined as the perceived ability to produce a desired action (Bandura, 1997). People often know the actions necessary to achieve a desired end, but they fail to act because they do not feel that their actions will be effective (Muris, 2001). Social self-efficacy is the perceived capability for peer relationships and assertiveness (Muris). In the context of bystanders of relational aggression, it seems this
specific form of self-efficacy is the most pertinent. Previous studies examining self-efficacy and bystander behavior in children have shown that high levels of social self-efficacy were associated with helping behavior, whereas low levels of self-efficacy were associated with passive bystander behavior (Andreou, Vlachou, & Didaskalou, 2005; Gini, Albiero, Benelli, & Altoe, 2008). However, these studies have focused on physical aggression, and there is a need for research examining the relationship between self-efficacy and likelihood to intervene in relational aggression. Based on the previous research, it is possible that self-efficacy may serve to mediate the action or inaction of bystanders in relational aggression, as well.

Empathy

Another possible mediator in behavior may be empathy. Empathy is defined as feelings of warmth, compassion, and concern in one's experiences when observing the experiences of another, and sharing in the observed emotional state (Davis, 1983; Eisenberg & Strayer, 1987; Loudin, Loukas, & Robinson, 2003). Current approaches to this construct view it as multidimensional, with both cognitive and emotional components (Davis, Luce, & Kraus, 1994; Gini, Albiero, Benelli & Altoe, 2007). The cognitive component refers to the ability of the individual to identify and understand the other person's perspective. The emotional component is the tendency to experience feelings of concern and/or sympathy towards others. These two components can be studied and measured separately, but both are needed to capture empathy as a whole (Hoffman, 2001).

Empathy has been identified in several studies as an important component in both bullying and helping behavior. Kaukiainen et al. (1999) examined relationships between empathy and three types of aggressive behavior. They used peer-estimation techniques...
with 526 Finnish children ages 10 through 14, and they found that those children with higher empathy scores were less physically, verbally, and indirectly aggressive. There is also considerable evidence that empathy is associated with helping behavior. Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, and Birch (1981) defined this as “altruistic motivation.” Gini and colleagues (2007) studied Italian adolescents using self-report questionnaires and found that empathy was positively associated with helping victimized peers, but only for boys. Together, the findings of these studies indicate that empathy is an important aspect of helping behavior in response to relationally victimized peers, though there has been little research directly examining the issue.

Examining the roles that empathy and self-efficacy play in bystander behavior may add greater clarity to understanding bystander willingness to allow victimization to occur. Bystander behavior remains enigmatic for researchers, and bystander behavior in regards to relational aggression has been neglected in the current literature on this topic. Relational aggression, which reaches its peak in middle school, is dependent on bystander cooperation and collaboration in order for the behaviors to be effectively harmful. Social exclusion, rumor spreading, and isolation all require the assistance of the peer group. Therefore, it is important for researchers to understand the role of bystanders in order to create effective interventions.

The aims of the current study were twofold. First, we wanted to examine bystander attitudes in relational aggression, focusing primarily on gender differences. Second, we wanted to examine the role that self-efficacy and empathy play in bystander behaviors toward relational aggression, particularly the impact they may have on victim identification and intervening behavior. We hypothesized that girls’ ratings of both the hurtfulness and aggressiveness of relationally aggressive behaviors depicted in video...
vignettes would be significantly higher (more negative) than boys’ ratings of the same behaviors. We also hypothesized that boys would be significantly less likely to endorse intervening in the behaviors when compared to girls. In terms of empathy and self-efficacy, we hypothesized that participants who identify with the victim would score significantly higher on the empathy scale when compared with participants whose ratings suggest they did not identify with the victim, and those participants who did not endorse intervening behaviors would score significantly lower on questions pertaining to self-efficacy than participants who endorsed intervening.

Method

Participants

Participants were 212 students in grades 5 through 8 from St. Pius X School in Edgewood, Kentucky. St. Pius X is both an elementary and middle school (Kindergarten through 8th grade) with relatively stable enrollment across time. All students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 were invited to participate. Of the 237 students eligible, data for 25 students were not available; 15 students had incomplete measures, four chose not to participate, and six had parents who opted to withdraw their children from participation.

The final sample consisted of 109 girls and 103 boys (51% female, 49% male). Table 1 presents the distribution of boys and girls across grade levels, along with mean age by grade. Participants did not provide information about race or ethnicity, but a visual survey of the sample indicates that a majority of the participants were Caucasian.

Measures

Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children (SEQ-C). Muris (2001) created this 24-item scale to measure three areas of self-efficacy: Social, Academic, and Emotional. A Total score on this measure represents the child’s overall level of self-efficacy; the Total
score was used in this study. Each item is scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very well). For example, item 2 asks “How well can you express your opinions when other classmates disagree with you?” No age range for the SEQ-C was reported, though the measure was normed on a sample of young adolescents. Total scores range from 24 to 120, with higher scores indicating higher self-efficacy. Normative data for the SEQ-C indicates that the mean score for girls is 75.3, while the mean score for boys is 78.9.

Factor analysis has supported the three subscales, as well as the total score (Muris, 2001). Internal consistency reliability was also found to be acceptable (α=.88), which is satisfactory. The scores correlate in a meaningful way with the Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI; Kovacs, 1981), suggesting adequate convergent validity (Muris). See Appendix A (p. 41) for the complete scale.

*Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI).* The IRI, designed by Davis (1980), is a 28-item self-report questionnaire that consists of four 7-item subscales, each of which assesses a specific aspect of empathy. The four subscales measure Perspective Taking, Fantasy, Empathic Concern, and Personal Distress. The Perspective Taking (PT) subscale measures the tendency to adopt the psychological viewpoint of others, and the Fantasy (FS) subscale assesses the respondents’ ability to resonate with the feelings of fictitious characters in books, movies, and plays. The Empathic Concern (EC) subscale measures sympathy and concern for others, and the Personal Distress (PD) subscale measures the respondents’ own feelings of anxiety in tense interpersonal situations. Each item is rated on a scale ranging from 0 (not at all like me) to 4 (very much like me). For example, item 11 asks, “I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.”
No age range for the scale was reported, though the IRI has been used in several studies with a sample of young adolescents (Davis et al., 1994). Total scores, which were used in this study, can range between 0 and 112, with higher scores reflecting greater overall empathy. In a study examining the scale's convergent and divergent validity, Davis (1983) compared the IRI to measures of social functioning, self-esteem, emotionality, and sensitivity to others. The IRI was significantly correlated with these measures, with $r$'s ranging from .10 to .49. No normative data are available. See Appendix B (p. 45) for the scale.

Video Vignette Questionnaire: After being presented a series of nine video vignettes, (three containing relational aggression, three containing positive interactions, and three containing neutral interactions), participants answered a set of questions associated with each vignette (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was developed by the principal investigator for the present study. Questions were screened for appropriateness and readability with a group of pilot participants, but there are no validity or reliability data available. Item 2 for scenes 3, 5, and 7 (the relationally aggressive scenes) were used to compare ratings of the behaviors displayed in the video vignettes regarding hurtfulness of the portrayed teens' behavior. Item 4 for scenes 3, 5, and 7 were used to compare ratings of intervening in the observed behavior. Questions regarding hurtfulness, aggressiveness, and likelihood to intervene were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = not hurtful/aggressive at all, and 5 = very hurtful/aggressive. The questions regarding likeliness to intervene were also on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = very likely to intervene, and 5 = not likely to intervene. In order to identify those participants who identified with the victim in the video scene, item 1 ("Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you're a different gender?)") was used; each identified
character was assigned a score, with scores of 1 indicating that the participant identifies with the victim, 2 indicating identification with the perpetrator, and 3 indicating identification with one of the bystanders.

**Materials**

*Film stimulus.* The stimulus tapes for this study consisted of nine short segments from the film *Odd Girl Out* (Adelson & McLaughlin, 2005; See Appendix B for a listing of scenes). Three scenes portrayed a type of relational aggression in which there are bystanders, three scenes portrayed positive interactions in which there are bystanders, and the interpersonal interactions of three scenes were neutral. These video clips were chosen by the principal investigator and were approved for realism and appropriateness in a pilot study by high school students and adults. In addition, to assure that the content of the clips were not inappropriate for these students, the school counselor also viewed and approved these clips.

The first relationally aggressive scene takes place in a cafeteria. The main character, Vanessa, tries to sit down at her normal lunch table, but is prevented from doing so by one of the girls sitting at the table. There are several bystanders at the table watching Vanessa’s exclusion from her normal group of friends. Scene 2 takes place in a bathroom. Vanessa is hiding in the stall, but the girls outside the stall know that she is there. Vanessa can hear the girls gossiping about her. There are several bystanders listening in on the malicious things these girls are saying. Scene 3 takes place in the hallway of school. Vanessa overhears two girls reading aloud a personal Instant Message conversation Vanessa had with another girl in school. There are several bystanders present, listening to them read this private conversation.

*Procedure*
The study was approved by Xavier University’s Institutional Review Board (Appendix C). A Permission Slip (Appendix D) was sent home to the parents of students in grades 5 through 8 one week before the study took place, instructing them to return the form if they did not want their child to participate. Only those students whose parents/guardians did not return a permission slip were invited to complete the measures. Six students’ parents indicated they did not wish for their child to participate (two 5th graders, two 6th graders, and two 7th graders); another four children (all from the 5th grade) opted not to participate after receiving the assent form. Children who did not participate were excused to the computer lab to complete an alternate assignment given by their teacher.

Data were collected in the religion class for each grade in groups of approximately 20 students. These students were initially presented with the Letter of Assent (Appendix E) and the measures. The examiner first read aloud the letter, informing them that their participation was voluntary, they could refuse participation at any time, and their grade would not be affected by their refusal.

Several counterbalancing measures were taken to prevent order effects in completing the measures. Each class alternated between either first viewing the video clips and then completing the self-report measures, or first completing the self-report measures and then viewing the video clips. Within each class, the order of the self-report measures was also alternated in each packet, meaning some of the participants first filled out the IRI, and some of the participants first filled out the SEQ-C. Another counterbalancing measure was used in regards to the order of the video clips. See Appendix I (p. 71) for the Latin Square Design used to determine the order of video
vignettes. After each video clip was shown, the film was stopped and the participants were asked to fill out the corresponding questions on the Video Vignette Questionnaire.

Results

We examined gender differences in bystander attitudes towards relational aggression and the role of empathy and self-efficacy using several strategies. First, we performed bivariate correlation analyses to examine possible relationships between the variables studied, including age, grade, scores on measures of empathy and self-efficacy, and ratings of perceived hurtfulness, aggressiveness, and likelihood of intervention. The results are presented in Table 2. There were significant but small negative correlations between scores on the SEQ-C (a measure of self-efficacy) and intervening behavior in all three scenes (ranging from $r = -0.27$ to $r = -0.31$), indicating that participants with higher overall SEQ-C scores reported a higher likelihood to intervene. In addition, there were small but significant positive correlations between grade level and intervening behavior in all three scenes (range was $r = 0.23$ to $r = 0.27$), indicating that older students reported they would be less likely to intervene.

There were also significant correlations between scores on the IRI (a measure of empathy) and ratings of the hurtfulness of the bully’s behavior. Specifically, there was a very small but significant negative correlation between age and empathy scores ($r = -0.15$, $p = 0.03$), with younger students receiving higher IRI scores. There was also a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.23$, $p = 0.01$) between IRI scores and ratings of hurtfulness for the bathroom scene (Scene 2), indicating that participants with higher IRI scores felt that the vignette behaviors in Scene 2 were more hurtful than those with lower IRI scores.
In regards to ratings of aggressiveness of the vignette behavior and students’ IRI scores, there were also several significant correlations. There were small but significant correlations between the IRI score and ratings of aggressiveness in all three scenes (ranging from $r = .19$ to $r = .20$). This means that people who scored higher on the IRI also saw the observed behaviors as more aggressive than participants who scored lower on the IRI.

Next, we examined the differences between boys and girls identifications with victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. See Table 3 for the distribution of character identification between boys and girls. Across scenes, a majority of participants identified with one of the bystanders, which was especially true for boys. There was also a significant minority who identified with the victim, which was especially true for girls for the lunchroom scene (Scene 1).

We then examined gender differences in ratings of hurtfulness of the vignette behaviors using independent samples $t$-tests. Table 4 presents the means, standard deviations, $t$-test results, and effect sizes for these analyses. Notably, the average ratings for boys and girls for all scales was quite high, indicating both boys and girls perceived the viewed behaviors as hurtful. Boys’ and girls’ ratings differed significantly for the lunchroom scene and the IM scene (Scenes 1 and 3), with girls rating the behavior as more hurtful than boys. Effect sizes were calculated for significant results, and these indicated moderate effects for both scenes.

We also examined gender differences in ratings of aggressiveness of the vignettes using independent samples $t$-tests. Boys’ and girls’ ratings differed significantly for all three scenes, with girls rating the observed behaviors as more aggressive than boys (see Table 4). The calculated effect sizes indicated moderate effects for all three scenes. In
addition, we examined gender differences in intervening behaviors using an independent samples \( t \)-test. Boys' and girls' ratings differed significantly for the lunchroom scene (Scene 1), with girls endorsing that they would be more likely to intervene than boys. The effect size for this scene was moderate \( (d = .39) \).

Differences between grade level and ratings of likelihood to intervene were examined using a 1-way ANOVA. Table 5 presents means, standard deviations, and \( F \) scores across grade levels for the three scenes. Student ratings on likelihood to intervene differed significantly by grade, with younger children indicating they would be more likely to intervene than older students. Follow-up tests were conducted to evaluate pairwise differences among the means. There was a significant difference between fifth graders and both seventh and eighth graders in all scenes \( (p = .01) \), indicating that fifth graders were more likely to endorse intervening in these behaviors than the older participants. There was also a significant difference between sixth and seventh graders for the bathroom scene \( (p < .05) \), indicating that sixth graders were more likely to intervene in this scene than the participants in seventh grade.

Additionally, we examined the differences in empathy scores of participants who identified with the victim and those who did not identify with the victim using independent samples \( t \)-tests. Identification with the victim was based on a score of 1 on question 1 on the Video Vignette Questionnaire. Table 6 presents means, standard deviations, and \( t \)-test results. There was a significant difference between IRI scores for those who identified with the victim in the lunchroom scene (Scene 1), versus those who did not \( (t =2.20, p = .03) \). In light of the significant correlations between IRI scores and intervening behavior, we ran an exploratory analysis to examine possible differences between IRI scores and ratings of likeliness to intervene. There was a significant
difference between IRI scores for those who endorsed intervening behavior, and those who did not in the lunchroom scene (Scene 1; \( t = 3.95, p = .001, d = .54 \)), and the IM scene (Scene 3; \( t = 3.69, p = .01, d = .51 \)), but not for the bathroom scene (Scene 2; \( t = 1.96, p > .05 \)).

Finally, we examined the differences in self-efficacy scores of participants who endorsed intervening behaviors with those who did not in the three scenes using an independent samples t-test. Results were significant for all three scenes, with those who endorse intervening behaviors also having significantly higher SEQ-C scores (see Table 7). The effect sizes for the lunchroom scene and the IM scene (Scenes 1 and 3) were relatively large, and the effect size for the bathroom scene (Scene 2) was moderate.

Discussion

Although many studies have documented the prevalence of bullying in middle schools, and features of the bully, victim, and bully-victim relationships have been explored, only recently has attention been paid to the role of bystanders in relational aggression. The goal of the present study was to seek to better understand the role of bystanders by examining gender differences in bystander perceptions of relational aggression, as well as the role of self-efficacy and empathy in bystander behaviors (i.e., intervening).

Findings indicate that overall, girls view relationally aggressive behavior somewhat differently than boys. Results showed that girls rated two of the relationally aggressive scenes (the lunchroom scene and the IM scene) as more hurtful than did boys. Interestingly, the scene in which boys' and girls' ratings of hurtfulness did not differ was the most overtly aggressive scene they viewed. In this scene, in which the main character is hiding in a bathroom stall listening to a group of girls saying horrible things about her,
both boys and girls rated the behavior as hurtful ($M=4.95$ for boys and 4.97 for girls on a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 = Very Hurtful). For the other two scenes, which involve the main character being excluded from her regular lunch table, and two girls reading aloud the main character’s private instant message conversation, both boys’ and girls’ average ratings were high, indicating that both boys and girls viewed the scenes as hurtful. However, according to the results, girls viewed these scenes as significantly more hurtful than boys.

Girls rated all three scenes as depicting greater aggression than did the boys. As was the case for hurtfulness ratings, both boys and girls rated these scenes as aggressive, with mean scores for both groups over 4 on a 5-point Likert scale (for hurtfulness ratings, $M = 4.71$ for boys and 4.87 for girls across the three scenes; for aggressiveness ratings, $M = 4.54$ for boys and 4.77 for girls across the three scenes). These findings are important, because previous studies on gender differences have emphasized that girls view these behaviors as more hurtful and more aggressive than boys (Galen & Underwood, 1997; Coyne et al., 2006), leaving the impression that boys do not find the behaviors as negative. However, the data reported in these studies suggests that boys also perceived these behaviors as negative. A study by Crick, Bigbee, and Howes (1996) found that both girls and boys viewed relationally aggressive acts as angry, harmful behaviors, which supports the current findings. Because so few studies have emphasized boys’ ratings of these behaviors, it is important to note that boys find these behaviors as both hurtful and aggressive, and their attitudes should be explored in future research.

No previous study has explored students’ likelihood to intervene in relationally aggressive behaviors. We found that the mean ratings for both boys’ and girls’ likeliness to intervene were relatively low, suggesting that much of the sample felt they would
intervene in the behaviors depicted in the scenarios. Girls rated themselves as being more likely to intervene in the lunchroom scene than boys, but in the other two scenes, boys’ and girls’ ratings did not differ. However, the range of scores was more variable than those assessing the aggressiveness and hurtfulness of the behaviors. The standard deviations for the aggressive and hurtfulness ratings ranged from .21 to .68, whereas the standard deviations ranged from 1.04 to 1.12 for intervening. Table 8 presents a breakdown of endorsed scores, with 22.9% of the girls endorsing they would be “very likely” to intervene, compared with 14.6% of boys, which is a significant difference ($\chi^2 = 5.53, p < .05$). Most boys ($M = 65\%$ across the three scenes) took a more neutral stand towards intervening, endorsing either “Likely” or “Somewhat Likely.”

The girls’ high ratings of intervening are interesting findings, in that the prevalence of relational aggression is high, and most observations of relational aggression indicate that bystanders rarely intervene (Simmons, 2002). It appears that bystanders would like to think they would intervene in the types of behaviors presented in these hypothetical vignettes, but when a similar situation occurs in front of them, they may be less likely to actually follow through on their interventions.

When asked to identify the character in the scenario with whom the student most identified, a majority of the sample ($M = 69.6\%$ across the three scenes) identified with the bystanders, and a large majority of the boys ($M = 72.2\%$ across the three scenes) identified with the bystanders in all three scenes. However, there were boys ($M = 15.9\%$ across the three scenes) who identified with the victim, which is another important finding, given that most of the research on relational aggression has focused on girls as both the bully and victim. This level of identification suggests that relationally
aggressive behaviors do not occur solely among girls; there are boys who feel just as
victimized from these types of behaviors.

In addition, there were also several participants ($M = 9.3\%$ across the three
scenes) who identified with the perpetrators; the highest percentage occurred for the
lunchroom scene, in which the main character is excluded from the lunch table by a
group of girls. A large number of boys identified with the perpetrator in this scene,
which could be the result of the subtleness of the scene, in which the aggression occurs
with a smile. The boys may have mistaken the smile for friendliness, instead of as a
covely aggressive act. Alternatively, this may indicate that boys may in engage in
relationally aggressive behaviors more commonly than assumed. There were very few
participants ($M = 1.4\%$ across the three scenes) who identified with the perpetrator in the
bathroom scene. This may mean that this type of behavior (which had the highest
hurtfulness and aggressiveness ratings) is relatively rare, or that participants were only
willing to admit to certain types of aggressive behaviors. They could admit to ignoring
and excluding, but initiating malicious gossip was not something to which they would
admit active participation.

Another important finding related to empathy scores and respondents’
identification with the victim. The results partially supported our hypothesis, in that there
was a significant difference between empathy scores for those who identified with the
victim in the lunchroom scene, and those who did not. However, this was the only scene
for which this was the case. This may be due to the fact that more people identified with
the victim in the lunchroom scene than in any of the other scenes. There was also a
correlation between empathy and intervening behavior, and exploratory analyses found
that empathy scores were significantly different for those who endorsed intervening
behavior and those who did not in the lunchroom scene and the IM scene. The results suggest that those who have higher a higher degree of empathy may be more likely to intervene in these relationally aggressive behaviors. These results make sense in light of similar findings by Davis et al. (1999), which suggest that people who have higher scores on a measure of empathy are more likely to intervene in aggressive behaviors. Similarly, Gini et al. (2007) found that empathy was positively associated with helping victimized peers.

Self-efficacy was also found to be an important factor in intervening behavior. Results for all three scenes supported our hypothesis that participants with higher self-efficacy scores endorsed intervening in the relationally aggressive behaviors more commonly. These findings suggest that participants who had higher self-efficacy may have felt that their actions would be more effective in stopping the behavior. Midlarsky and Hannah (1985) found that young adolescents are more inhibited in helping because they fear three things: social disapproval, embarrassing the potential recipient of help, and being incompetent as a helper. These findings help to explain the results of this study, in that children with higher self-efficacy may not view themselves as being incompetent helpers.

This study has several important findings, however there are weaknesses in the methodology that need to be addressed. First, there was a lack of diversity in the sample, which precludes generalizing the findings to the general population. However, the sample was drawn from a school that had sought help for problems with relational aggression, which ensured that the sample had at one time been exposed to the types of behaviors seen in the vignettes. This exposure made their experiences of these behaviors more pertinent in their identification with certain characters and in their ratings of these
behaviors. Second, the measure used to assess boys and girls' ratings of hurtfulness, aggressiveness, and likeliness to intervene was not an empirically validated one. In addition, the measure was piloted on a group participants consisting of both adolescents and adults to ensure the created measure was assessing the appropriate constructs. Finally, asking participants to identify with and intervene in fictional scenarios may not provide accurate estimations of certain elements of bystander behavior, such as intervening in the observed behavior. From the safety of their seat, it may have been easier to say they would intervene in the behavior when they would never do such a thing in reality. Additionally, the vignettes included actors they may have seen in other movies or television shows, which may have made it easier to identify with some characters than others.

Because this was the first study to examine gender differences in bystander attitudes, there are several possible avenues for future research. Further exploring bystanders' roles in relational aggression will be important in helping to develop comprehensive interventions for these types of behaviors. In particular, results indicate that finding ways to promote both empathy and self-efficacy may increase intervening in these types of behaviors, and may be important elements to include in these future interventions. There are interventions that currently exist to increase both empathy and self-efficacy. Dixon (1980) developed the Caring Curriculum, which was designed to foster the development of empathy in a school setting. In addition, Andreou, Didaskalou, and Vlachou (2007) developed a curriculum-based bullying intervention, aimed to enhance students' self-efficacy for intervening in bully/victim incidents. Future interventions for bullying specific to relational aggression should combine interventions
like these and include both boys and girls in order to help empower bystanders and decrease relationally aggressive behaviors.

In addition, examining more variables as to when peers are more likely to intervene will be an important avenue of future research. For example, O'Connell et al. (1999) pointed to desensitization as another possible reason for the passivity of bystanders. Their study focused on boys and physical bullying on the playgrounds, but the idea of desensitization could also hold true for relational aggression. The more gossiping, rumor spreading, and exclusion the peer group observes, the more common (and acceptable) the behavior appears, and the less likely it becomes anyone will intervene. Unfortunately, there is no research specifically examining relational aggression and desensitization and should be a topic of future examination.

A further area of focus for future research includes examining the effects of relational aggression on boys. The results of this study suggest that boys are also victims of relational aggression, however boys have thus far been neglected in the research on this topic. The present study was an important first step in examining both boy and girl bystander roles in relational aggression, but more needs to be done in order to better inform practitioners, teachers, and parents about these behaviors that negatively effect the lives of so many.
References


Table 1

*Distribution of Boys and Girls across Grade Levels*

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<td>(9.4)</td>
<td>(20.8)</td>
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<tr>
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### Table 2

**Correlations between Age, Grade, Summary Scale Scores, and Scene Ratings**

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<td>.24**</td>
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<td>.23**</td>
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<td>0.20**</td>
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<td>3. SEQ-C tot score</td>
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<td>-0.21**</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
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<td>.27**</td>
<td>0.15*</td>
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<td>6. Hurtful Sc. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.19**</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mean Sc. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>-0.18**</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mean Sc. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.22**</td>
<td>-0.14*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Mean Sc. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Intervene Sc. 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.57**</td>
<td>.59**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Intervene Sc. 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Intervene Sc. 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**

* denotes a significance level <.05, ** denotes a significance level <.01
IRI = Interpersonal Reactivity Index, SEQ-C = Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for Children, Tot score = Total Score, Sc. = Scene, Sc.1 = Lunchroom scene, Sc.2 = Bathroom scene, Sc. 3 = IM scene
Table 3

Boys’ and Girls’ Identification with Victims, Perpetrators, and Bystanders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Victim</th>
<th>Perpetrator</th>
<th>Bystander</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom Scene</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(18.4)</td>
<td>(37.6)</td>
<td>(31.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(50.5)</td>
<td>(43.1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom Scene</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14.6)</td>
<td>(23.9)</td>
<td>(1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(83.5)</td>
<td>(75.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(14.6)</td>
<td>(16.5)</td>
<td>(2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(82.5)</td>
<td>(83.5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

Means, Standard Deviations, and Statistical Results of Boys' and Girls' Ratings of Hurtfulness, Aggressiveness, and Likeliness to Intervene for the Video Vignettes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td>(SD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n = 109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hurtful</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom Scene</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.36)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom Scene</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.57)</td>
<td>(0.43)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aggressive</strong>&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom Scene</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.61)</td>
<td>(0.58)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom Scene</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.56)</td>
<td>(0.37)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.68)</td>
<td>(0.54)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Likely to Intervene</strong>&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom Scene</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.12)</td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom Scene</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.08)</td>
<td>(1.13)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
<td>(1.10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: <sup>a</sup>Ratings are based on a 5 pt. Likert scale, where 5 = most hurtful/aggressive, and 1 = least hurtful/aggressive.

<sup>b</sup>Ratings are based on a 5 pt. Likert scale, where 5 = Not likely to intervene, and 1 = Likely to intervene.
Table 5

*Means, Standard Deviations, and F scores for Grade Level and Likeliness to Intervene* Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Grade 5 M (SD)</th>
<th>Grade 6 M (SD)</th>
<th>Grade 7 M (SD)</th>
<th>Grade 8 M (SD)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>1.95 (0.91)</td>
<td>2.18 (1.06)</td>
<td>2.65 (1.22)</td>
<td>2.74 (1.07)</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>1.91 (1.07)</td>
<td>2.18 (1.08)</td>
<td>2.79 (1.06)</td>
<td>2.60 (1.06)</td>
<td>7.27</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td>2.14 (0.98)</td>
<td>2.52 (1.00)</td>
<td>2.88 (1.13)</td>
<td>2.78 (1.03)</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scores are on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = Likely to Intervene and 5 = Not likely to intervene.
Table 6

*MMeans, Standard Deviations, and Statistical Results for IRI Scores and Identification with the Victim*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Victim (SD)</th>
<th>Non-Victim (SD)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td>92.92 (13.22)</td>
<td>88.36 (13.79)</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td>92.49 (12.20)</td>
<td>88.96 (14.04)</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td>91.94 (12.73)</td>
<td>89.22 (13.92)</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 7

**SEQ-C Score Mean Differences for Interveners and Non-Interveners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interveners (SD)</th>
<th>Non-Interveners (SD)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom Scene</td>
<td>87.15 (9.73)</td>
<td>80.19 (10.03)</td>
<td>-3.71</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom Scene</td>
<td>86.97 (9.61)</td>
<td>82.45 (10.54)</td>
<td>-2.30</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td>87.80 (9.44)</td>
<td>78.82 (10.25)</td>
<td>-5.10</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Higher scores on the SEQ-C indicate higher self-efficacy.*
Table 8

*Differences between Male and Female Endorsed Intervening Ratings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Likely</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Likely</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IM Scene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Very</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Likely</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Video Vignette Questionnaire

*Note: This version of the questionnaire contains all of the questions used, however the order of the questions varied based on the order in which the clips were presented.

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. The following statements ask about your thoughts and feelings about a series of video clips. READ EACH ITEM CAREFULLY BEFORE RESPONDING. Answer as honestly as you can. Thank you.

What is your gender? (Please circle one)

Male       Female

What is your age? _____________

What is your grade? _____________
SCENE 1A

1. Who in this scene do you relate to the most (even if you’re a different gender)?
   ______ Vanessa (the one Stacey bought the jeans for).
   ______ Stacey (the one who bought Vanessa’s jeans)
   ______ One of the people standing in line watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after Stacey bought Vanessa the jeans? (Please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neutral/Fine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What type of behavior would you consider buying things for your friends to be? (Please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Nice</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If you were someone standing in line at this store, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a parent, or tell Stacey to stop)? (Please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCENE 2A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?
   
   _____ Vanessa (the one who earned the 4.0)
   _____ Stacey (the one who earned the 3.7)
   _____ Nikki (the one who told Vanessa’s GPA)
   _____ One of the people at the coffee shop watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt having coffee with Stacey and Nikki? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Happy Happy Neutral/Fine Hurt Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider having coffee with friend to be? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Nice Nice Neutral Mean Very Mean

4. If you were someone at the coffee shop watching them talk, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a parent, or tell Nikki to stop)? (Please circle one)

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very likely Likely Somewhat Likely Not very likely Not likely at all
SCENE 3A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?
   - [ ] Vanessa (the one who came up to the table to sit down).
   - [ ] Stacey (the one who said hi).
   - [ ] Tiffany (the one who put the backpack in the chair).
   - [ ] One of the people sitting/standing around the table watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after they wouldn’t let her sit at the table? (Please circle one)

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | Very Happy | Happy | Neutral/Fine | Hurt | Very Hurt |

3. What type of behavior would you consider keeping someone from sitting at a lunch table to be? (Please circle one)

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | Very Nice | Nice | Neutral | Mean | Very Mean |

4. If you were someone sitting at the table, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Tiffany to stop)? (Please circle one)

   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
   | Very likely | Likely | Somewhat Likely | Not very likely | Not likely at all |
SCENE 4A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?

_____ Vanessa (the girl with the shorter brown hair who was shopping).
_____ Stacey (the girl with the long brown hair who was shopping)
_____ Nikki (the girl with black hair who was shopping)
_____ One of the people in the store watching it happen

2. How do you think Vanessa felt while she was shopping with her friends? (Please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Neutral/Fine</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Very Hurt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What type of behavior would you consider shopping to be? (Please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Nice</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Very Mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If you were someone watching them shop, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a parent, or tell them to stop)? (Please circle one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
<td>Not very likely</td>
<td>Not likely at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCENE 5A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?
   - ______ Vanessa (the one who was hiding in the bathroom stall).
   - ______ Nikki (the brunette girl talking about Vanessa)
   - ______ Tiffany (the blonde girl talking about Vanessa)
   - ______ One of the other people in the bathroom listening to Nikki and Tiffany?

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after listening to what these girls were saying? (Please circle one)

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3. What type of behavior would you consider this gossiping to be? (Please circle one)

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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4. If you were someone in the bathroom, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Nikki and Vanessa to stop)? (Please circle one)

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SCENE 6A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?
   _______ Vanessa (the one who was talking to Stacey).
   _______ Stacey (the one who apologized)
   _______ One of the people in the hall watching it happen

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after Stacey apologized? (Please circle one)

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<tr>
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<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Neutral/Fine</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Very Hurt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What type of behavior would you consider apologizing to be? (Please circle one)

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Nice</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Very Mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If you were someone watching Stacey apologize, how likely would it be that you
   would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Stacey to stop)? (Please circle one)

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<th>5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Somewhat Likely</td>
<td>Not very likely</td>
<td>Not likely at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SCENE 7A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?

   _____ Vanessa (the one whose IM’s were being read aloud).
   _____ Nikki (one of the people reading Vanessa’s IMs aloud)
   _____ Tiffany (one of the people reading Vanessa’s IMs aloud)
   _____ One of the people standing in the hall watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after her IM conversation was read aloud? (Please circle one)

   
   
   
   

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Happy  Happy  Neutral/Fine  Hurt  Very Hurt

3. What type of behavior would you consider reading IMs to other people to be? (Please circle one)

   
   
   
   

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Nice  Nice  Neutral  Mean  Very Mean

4. If you were someone listening to these IMs being read aloud, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell Nikki and Tiffany to stop)? (Please circle one)

   
   
   
   

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very likely  Likely  Somewhat Likely  Not very likely  Not likely at all
SCENE 8A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?

_____ Vanessa (the one whose friend came to visit her).

_____ Emily (the one who came to visit Vanessa)

_____ One of the people in the hospital watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt after her friend came to visit her? (Please circle one)

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<th>4</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Neutral/Fine</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Very Hurt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What type of behavior would you consider visiting your friend in the hospital to be? (Please circle one)

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Nice</td>
<td>Nice</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Very Mean</td>
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</table>

4. If you were someone at the hospital watching this happen, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a parent, or tell Emily to stop)? (Please circle one)

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</tbody>
</table>
SCENE 9A

1. Who in this scene do you think acts the most like you (even if you’re a different gender)?
   _____ Vanessa (the one who gave the answer).
   _____ Emily (the one who gave the rest of the answer)
   _____ One of the people sitting in class watching it happen.

2. How do you think Vanessa felt while sitting in class? (Please circle one)

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<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Happy</td>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Very Hurt</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. What type of behavior would you consider sitting in class to be? (Please circle one)

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<td>Nice</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Very Mean</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

4. If you were someone sitting in class watching them give answers, how likely would it be that you would do or say something (such as tell a teacher, or tell them to stop)? (Please circle one)

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Appendix B

List of Scenes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Minutes into Movie</th>
<th>Type of Scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 1</td>
<td>10:10</td>
<td>Positive interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2</td>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Neutral Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 3</td>
<td>23:00</td>
<td>Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 4</td>
<td>14:57</td>
<td>Neutral Scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 5</td>
<td>24:00</td>
<td>Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 6</td>
<td>28:45</td>
<td>Positive Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 7</td>
<td>1:15:10</td>
<td>Aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 8</td>
<td>1:11:30</td>
<td>Positive Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 9</td>
<td>22:40</td>
<td>Neutral Scene</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Approval Letter from Xavier University IRB
December 26, 2008

Ms. Shannon ODell, MA
2905 Linwood Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45209

Dear Ms. Odell:

The IRB has received the requested modifications to your protocol #0557, *Gender Differences in Bystander Attitudes Toward Relational Aggression* using expedited review procedures. Your study is approved in the Expedited category. Your approval expires December 26, 2009. A progress report, available at [http://www.xavier.edu/irb/forms.cfm](http://www.xavier.edu/irb/forms.cfm), is due by that date.

If you wish to modify your study, it will be necessary to obtain IRB approval prior to implementing the modification. Please also remember to notify the IRB of any adverse events, should they occur, immediately.

Thank you for your timely and appropriate response the Committee's requests. We wish you success with your research!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Charles Grossman, PhD
Vice Chair, Institutional Review Board

C: Dr. Kathleen Hart, Faculty Advisor
Appendix D

Permission Slip

January 5, 2009

Dear Parents,

My name is Shannon Odell and I'm a graduate student in the clinical psychology program at Xavier University. For my major research project, I am working within St. Pius X to assess students’ attitudes about ways that pre-teens interact with each other, including certain aggressive behaviors, such as gossiping, excluding, and spreading rumors. Students in grades 5-8 will be asked to watch video clips and fill out surveys sometime in early January 2009. This will be done during a session of your child’s Religion class and should take about 30 minutes.

There are no foreseeable risks for you or your child by participating. Your child’s schooling will not be influenced in any way whether or not you participate. Before surveys are distributed, your child will also have the opportunity to refuse to participate if he or she chooses.

If you decide that you do NOT want your child to complete the surveys, please check the box below and return it to school with your child to return to the teacher.

☐ I do NOT want my child to complete the surveys.

Child’s name: __________________________

If you have any questions, please contact me (360-481-0532), your child’s teacher, or my research supervisor Dr. Kathleen Hart (513-745-3278). You can also contact the Xavier University Institutional Review Board (513-745-2870).

Please return this form back to the school by January 12 if you do NOT want your child to participate.

Sincerely,

Shannon Odell, M.A.
Dear Students,

My name is Shannon Odell and I am a graduate student in psychology from Xavier University. I'm with you today because I am doing a research project as a requirement for one of my classes. My research project is a study about ways that kids your age get along. Today, I'm going to ask you to watch scenes from a movie and answer questions about what you've seen. You will also fill out some forms that will help me understand what you think about yourself and these behaviors. All of this will take about 45 minutes or less.

I will ask you NOT to write your names on any of the forms so no one will know your answers or what you write. I will not let anyone see your answers or any other information about you. Your teachers, principal, and parents will never see the answers you gave. So please be as honest and open as you can with all of the questions.

You do not have to be in this study. No one will get angry or upset with you if you decide not to do this, and your grades will not be affected by your participation. Just tell your teacher or me if you don't want to take part in this study. If you decide to be in the study but later you change your mind, then you can say you do not want to be in the study anymore.

If you have any questions at any time, please ask your teacher or me.

If you want to be in the study, please sit quietly and wait for me to give further instructions.

If you DO NOT want to be in the study, turn this paper over and I will know that I should not give you the forms because you don't want to participate.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Shannon Odell.