Prevalence of School Bullying Rates From 2005 to 2017

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not school bullying rates have been increasing, decreasing or have remained constant over time. A secondary data source, NCES School Crime Supplement survey, was used for this study. The SCS survey is administered every two years and for the purpose of this study, the years 2005 and 2017 were examined. Since this is a nationwide survey, there are roughly 9,500 students ages 12 through 18 in U.S. public and private elementary, middle, and high schools that take this survey every two years. Using an independent samples t-test, ten survey questions were examined to determine if school bullying rates have been increasing, decreasing, or remaining constant from 2005 to 2017. Overall, the results revealed that school bullying rates have shown a significant decrease from 2005 to 2017. Further research is recommended using a different research design to explore the factors that have led to the reduction in school bullying rates.

Keywords: School Bullying, Bullying Rates, School Crime Supplement

👥 IRB Decision Testing

👥 Exempt C

It looks like your study is exempt from IRB approval. You should have your study approved by the highest person in the department or area overseeing the targeted participants. For example, a campus-wide survey should be approved by the President, a student or faculty survey should be approved by the Academic Dean, and a survey specific to a certain major should be approved by the Area Chair. Refer to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(5) However, you should carefully review all procedures and questions to ensure that anonymity is protected especially in the case of institutional surveys where questions such as age, race and gender could be used to identify participants even if they are not asked for their names.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Our nations' schools should be a safe and secure place where all students feel protected and free from harm. That being said, bullying is known to have a strong presence in schools and students are experiencing a growing sense of fear and frustration. For several years, parents, teachers, and most importantly students, have been adversely affected by the prominence of this school phenomenon. According to Gourneau, "not only do many bullied students experience low self esteem and depression, but they also live their school days filled with stress" (Gourneau, B). Bullying has affected the level to which students are able to learn and grow within the school context. One of the biggest issues is that students do not feel safe. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, safety is the second most important need that a person must have fulfilled in order to motivate positive behavior. Bullying creates a toxic environment in schools, which could ultimately have a negative impact on education in the United States. In order for students to feel protected from bullying, it is up to administration and teachers to put a higher focus on figuring out methods to help prevent and address bullying.

According to Cornell and Limber, "two events in 1999 were turning points in the recognition of school bullying as an important societal problem in the United States" (Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P.). These events included the shooting at Columbine High School as well as the establishment of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling, Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, stating that schools, "could be liable for failure to stop student-to-student sexual harassment" (Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P.). Around this time, bullying started to receive higher levels of attention in the early 2000s when school shootings started to become more frequent and

bullying was recognized as something that needed to be treated. Since then, policies and laws have been put into place that require school systems to implement practices to prevent bullying; however, these rules are only effective if school administration and staff are all on board with the same mission to reduce bullying. This study is being conducted in order to examine whether school bullying rates are increasing, decreasing, or remaining constant with no change. The purpose of this study is to hopefully educate parents, teachers, and administrators on if they have had an impact on reducing bullying rates and if not, open their eyes to see areas that they can have an impact on reducing bullying in our schools.

Purpose of the Study

In this study we are going to examine the following questions in depth: What is bullying? What are the different types and forms of bullying? What is the nation doing to prevent and reduce school bullying? The ultimate goal of this research study is to figure out if bullying rates are increasing or decreasing in order to conclude if the nation's prevention strategies are working. This is important to figure out because it could reveal if schools are doing what they can to reduce bullying since the effects of bullying can be detrimental to the health and education of students.

Significance of the Study

The goal of this study is to decide whether bullying rates are decreasing or increasing over time. Perhaps, it could also help researchers figure out if laws and regulations against bullying have had any type of impact upon the rate of bullying. If the rate of bullying seems to be diminishing, schools and administrations would hopefully be able to have confidence in bullying prevention efforts and be motivated to continue to push for school intervention against school bullying.

Limitations

The following are limitations to this study:

1. The data is pulled from a secondary source, therefore the researcher has not been directly involved in the survey process of the results for this study.

2. The data does not directly associate anti bullying regulation and school prevention systems to be the direct effect on bullying rates.

3. The SCS states one possible limitation, "In 2007, the questionnaire was changed so that otherwise eligible household members who had attended school sometime during the school year were included. Previously, household members needed to have attended school at any time during the 6 months preceding the interview" (National Crime Victimization Survey-School Crime Supplement).

Definition of Terms

1. <u>Bullying</u>: a negative behavior directed by someone trying to have power and control over someone else.

2. <u>Cyberbullying</u>: bullying by use of technology such as computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Oftentimes the identity of the bully is unknown.

3. <u>SCS (School Crime Supplement)</u>: Part of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) survey that, "collects information about victimization, crime, and safety at school. The SCS is a national survey of approximately 9,500 students ages 12 through 18 in U.S. public and private elementary, middle, and high schools. The SCS was conducted in 1989, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017" (NCES).

4. <u>Anti-bullying regulation</u>: legislation that is enacted to help reduce and prevent bullying.

5. <u>Bullying intervention</u>: strategies to intervene and combat bullying.

Overview of the Study

This research study is composed of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and includes the problem being researched, significance of the study, the purpose of the study, definition of terms found in the study, and the limitations. The second chapter includes the review of literature related to the study. The third chapter covers the methodology of how the research was collected and obtained. In chapter four, the findings of the study are analyzed, and chapter five is the summary of findings portion of the study that includes conclusions and recommendations for future research related to this topic.

Chapter II

Literature Review

What is School Bullying?

We hear about this topic all the time. Various sources state that bullying is a national epidemic and, "perhaps the most underreported safety problems on American school campuses" (Sampson, R.). Bullying is not a new problem, however it started to gain higher levels of attention following the school shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 (Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P.). In the United States, due to the rise of school shootings, suicides, and harmful behavior in schools, the problem of bullying has grown a strong awareness. Most school shooting attackers who survived reported to have been bullied which was a main cause for their attack (Sampson, R.). Bullying takes on many definitions depending on who you ask. Some people view bullying as harmless and believe that kids are just being kids. The most commonly used definition is that bullying is a negative behavior directed by someone trying to have power and control over someone else. It is, "an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the target" (Allen, Kathleen P.). One specific source states that bullying contains multiple components and can be defined as, "unwanted aggressive behavior; observed or perceived power imbalance; and repetition of behaviors or high likelihood of repetition" (Facts About Bullying). This type of behavior acts with the intent to hurt, harm, or humiliate another individual who is unable to make it stop. Some forms of teasing and fighting are not considered bullying if the two persons engaging in the act are approximately the same strength. Bullying, "entails repeated acts by someone perceived as physically or psychologically more powerful" (Sampson, R.). According to the National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice, "nationwide, about 20% of students ages 12-18 experienced bullying."

Students that are being bullied are not the only ones that are negatively affected by the occurrence of bullying. Another source stated that, "70.6% of young people say they have seen bullying in their schools" (Facts About Bullying). Bystanders can be negatively impacted as well, whether they feel victimized, traumatized, or on the contrary, impacted to become a bully themselves. Baller, Wenos, and Peachy agree that, "bullying is known to be contagious within peer groups, as it is often experienced as aggression throughout middle childhood and is then amplified in adolescence to include other undesirable group behaviors, such as smoking and drug use" (Baller, S. L., Wenos, J. Z., & Peachey, A. A.). Since bullies have the reputation of gaining attention and results through being relentless, it is easy to want to become this type of person in the pursuit of power (Gourneau, B.). Bullying takes on several different forms and types that range in effect and intensity.

What Are The Different Types/Forms/Modes of School Bullying?

Research states that there are predominantly three types of bullying: verbal bullying, social bullying, and physical bullying (What Is Bullying). Verbal bullying includes actions such as taunting, teasing, inappropriate sexual comments, name-calling, and threatening to cause harm. Physical bullying includes actions such as kicking, hitting, pinching, spitting, breaking someone's possessions, and mean hand gestures. Social bullying includes actions such as leaving someone out on purpose, embarrassing someone in public, spreading rumors, and telling other kids not to be friends with someone. (What Is Bullying). Some forms of bullying are minor and can be handled by school teachers or administration, such as {tripping, intimidation, rumor-spreading and isolation, theft of valued possessions, destruction of another's work, and name-calling} (Sampson, R.). Other more serious forms of bullying, "can fall into criminal categories, such as harassment, hazing, or assault" (Facts About Bullying).

There are two modes of bullying: direct and indirect. Direct modes of bullying occur when the victim is present in the bullying process whereas indirect modes occur when the victim is not present to try and defend themselves (Facts About Bullying). Studies show that boys are more likely to engage in direct bullying (physical, verbal), whereas girls are more likely to engage in indirect bullying (spreading rumors, social exclusion) (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.).

Considering today's technology, a new form of bullying surfaced as social media and smartphones came into existence. Cyberbullying is defined as, "bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets" (What Is Cyberbullying). The development of these devices has made bullying in the form of cyberbullying easier than ever before. There are many platforms for cyberbullying such as social media, SMS, apps, and forums that include actions such as hateful texting, insulting voicemails, humiliating pictures, threatening messages, and more (Gourneau, B.). Just like traditional bullying, some types of cyberbullying are minor and others can be unlawful, criminal behavior" (What Is Cyberbullying). Researchers have found that students view cyberbullying as being worse and making a bigger impact than traditional bullying due to the widespread public audiences, which is said to be the most harmful form" (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). Unfortunately, there is no escape from cyberbullying since it can be ongoing 24/7 (Gourneau, B.). Even with the entry of cyberbullying, traditional bullying is still a problem that needs attention. There are many negative effects of bullying varying from moderate to severe.

Effects of School Bullying

Bullies have created a reputation for themselves as being disrespectful individuals with nothing positive to offer but this stereotype has been falsified (Gourneau, B.). One of the main

reasons that bullies act out is due to the behavior that they are experiencing at home and outside of school. Unfortunately, the trickle effect of bullying causes significant negative effects on those involved. There are a few different types of students bullies tend to target. Since bullying is defined as a desire for power, bullies are going to target individuals that they can gain power over. This type of individual tends to be non-athletic, quiet, nerdy, skinny, anxious, insecure, and afraid of confrontation (Gourneau, B.). The target for bullies is also usually described as being passive, having few friends, depressed, and they tend to see themselves as unattractive and less important compared to their peers (Gourneau, B.). Sadly, this type of passive target is known to rarely report that they are being bullied and seek help.

For many years, bullying was disregarded because it was thought of as "simply a rite of passage or relatively harmless behavior that helps build young people's character" (Sampson, R.). However, researchers now conclude that bullying results in immediate harm as well as long-lasting mental distress on students for not only the victim but also the bully (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). In some instances, the effects of bullying can be minor but in other instances, bullying can result in devastating outcomes. At a minor level, victims of bullying might "withdraw from friends and activities, experience lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression, anxiety and anger" (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). In extreme cases, victims, "have resorted to more violent, destructive ways to cope with their constant stress which includes seeing the only option as suicide" and school harm such as shootings (Gourneau, B.). Victims of bullying have higher levels of academic disengagement and decreased academic performance, (Bhat, 2008; Rigby, 1997) (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). It is much harder for these students to concentrate on schoolwork when they are consumed with fear and anxiety since they have to continuously face their tormentor (Gourneau, B.). As one can see

there are many negative effects of bullying. Fortunately, the last twenty years has seen an increase in bullying awareness and efforts to help prevent, intervene and address bullying in schools.

Overview of School Bullying Interventions in the United States

"The best way to minimize bullying is to prevent it from happening" (Gourneau, B.). Since the early 21st century, schools in the United States have put an increased amount of attention on how to prevent and reduce bullying. "From 1990 to 2010, more than 120 bills were enacted by the states to introduce or amend education or criminal justice statutes that address bullying" (Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P.). In the same year of the tragic shooting at Columbine High School, "the U.S. Supreme Court (Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education, 1999) established that schools could be liable for failure to stop student-to-student sexual harassment" (Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P.). These events marked the start of a tremendous amount of attention concerning children's rights in the United States. By 2015, all but one state had passed a law stating that they will direct school districts to develop and implement policies to address bullying. While there are no mandatory federal laws that schools must comply with to prevent bullying, the majority of states are onboard with adhering to the encouraged practices within school districts.

Bullying prevention starts with school administrators' commitment and intensive effort to prevent and reduce bullying (Sampson, R.). The first and most effective form of bullying intervention is to train and educate school districts, teachers, and parents on bullying prevention as well as awareness programs for students (Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P.). The research concludes the validity and importance of a systematic whole-school approach as the best way to manage bullying behaviors in schools (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). Researchers

have specifically identified six broad factors that have been found to prevent bullying. These factors include, "engaged principal leadership, a supportive school culture, proactive school policies, procedures and practices, school-community training and education, a protective school environment, and shared ownership throughout the whole school and surrounding community" (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.).

Research has found that it is difficult for teachers to identify certain types of bullying behaviors that are less egregious which is why it is critical for teachers to be trained and educated in order to identify acts of bullying and intervene effectively (Allen, Kathleen P.). Bullying prevention programs are helpful in providing teachers with knowledge of bullying and violence, how to respond to these instances, and how to modify interactions with students in order to reduce instances of bullying and violence (Allen, Kathleen P.). In order for a school to be effective with implementing bullying prevention programs, there is one key ingredient that must exist which is consistency. Each school needs to have a clear and consistent definition of bullying as well as policies in place for how to consistently handle and respond to bullying and school administrators and staff needs to all be in agreement and onboard (Baller, S. L., Wenos, J. Z., & Peachey, A. A.). The response to focusing on consistent interventions ultimately creates a positive school environment and further fosters program fidelity among employees (Baller, S. L., Wenos, J. Z., & Peachey, A. A.). A positive school environment has been proven to reduce the level of bullying.

School counselors, "play an integral role in developing and implementing comprehensive bullying prevention and interventional programs in schools" (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). Schools leverage the expertise of well-equipped school counselors to create effective bullying awareness programs in order to create safer schools. These individuals are trained and

"uniquely positioned to educate students, parents, and staff about bullying; and facilitate communication around anti-bullying policies" (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). School counselors focus on addressing areas that teachers might not be experts in which include, "empathy training, social skills, appropriate humor, and respect" (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). Another effective practice of school counselors in the pursuit of bullying prevention is that they are able to work with and educate parents. Research states that "positive parental behaviors are associated with decreased bullying behaviors and victimization rates" (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.). Schools are highly encouraged to not only educate school administrators and staff but also parents who are willing to help with the issue.

In conclusion, bullying appears to be extremely prevalent in schools and can be detrimental to education and the mental distress of students. Bullying takes on many forms and modes, and the effects range in severity. Results can range from hurt feelings to suicides. It is possible to reduce the occurrences of bullying through prevention and intervention; however, this requires communities to work together in order to address bullying effectively. Administration and teachers can have a positive effect in reducing bullying within their schools, and they will be even more effective at doing this if parents are on board with the efforts as well. As Bonni Gourneau stated, *"If bullying is ever going to be a thing of the past, parents, students, and teachers must collaborate to overcome this epidemic of a lack of empathy for others' feelings amongst today's youth" (*Gourneau, B.*)*.

Chapter III

Methodology

Overview

Bullying has been a concern in schools for many centuries. There are various types of bullying which include being made fun of, called names or insulted, being the subject of rumors, threatened with harm, tried to make do things did not want to do, excluded from activities on purpose, property destroyed on purpose, and having been pushed, shoved, tripped or spit on. Overtime, schools have implemented various types of regulations and bullying prevention programs in order to try and reduce the amount of bullying. Even with all of the steps schools are taking to reduce bullying rates, it is still apparent that bullying continues to have a strong presence in schools. The question is whether these rates continue to increase over time or if the actions taken to reduce bullying are effective in reducing the rate of bullying. This chapter is an overview of the methodology for this study which includes a description of the secondary data source used, the data collection instrument, and a description of the sample population.

Data Source

A secondary source of raw data will be used for this research topic pertaining to bullying in schools. The sample size is approximately 9,500 students biennial. This survey that interviews students ages 12-18 every year since 1989 holds the title School Crime Supplement (SCS). The SCS survey was, "created as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and co-designed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)" (Crime & Safety Surveys (CSS)). The SCS survey focuses on collecting data on crime, victimization, and safety in schools. This survey covers a plethora of topics such as,

"alcohol and drug availability; fighting, bullying, and hate-related behaviors; gun and weapon carrying; and gangs at school" (Crime & Safety Surveys (CSS)). For the purpose of this study, we will focus specifically on the findings of fighting, bullying, and hate-related behaviors from the survey that focus on the extent to which students report to have been bullied according to different characteristics.

Data Collection Instrument

The School Crime Supplement survey has been administered to students in the United States ages 12 through 18 every biennially since 1989. For purposes of this study, we will review years 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, and most recently 2017. This survey takes approximately 3 to 15 minutes to complete depending on the circumstances with 10 minutes being the average. The SCS survey is authorized by law and requires that all household information be kept confidential. Since this survey includes more information than just bullying, we will specifically look at key characteristics that pertain to bullying in order to narrow down the scope of the research study. These characteristics include sex (male/female), questions regarding if the students have been a victim of bullying and how often, and types of bullying such as: made fun of, spread rumors about, threatened with harm, pushed or shoved, making you do something you do not want to, exlusion from activities on purpose, and the destruction of someone's property on purpose (yes/no).

Population

The target population for the School Crime Supplement (SCS) survey's students ages 12 through 18. This survey is administered to students at both private and public schools from elementary, middle, and high schools. This survey does not include home schooled students. In

order to be as diverse and inclusive as possible, this survey targets students of all backgrounds ranging from students who have never been a victim of bullying to those who have been suspended or expelled, since these students sometimes have something to add regarding acts of bullying as well.

Procedure

This study began by encountering the secondary data source during preliminary research of bullying statistics. After reviewing the statistics from the School Crime Supplement survey, literature was reviewed and analyzed to compare findings against the data source results. Then, select portions of the data were pulled from the survey and added to an excel spreadsheet. These pieces of data include 1) overall rates of bullying, 2) bullying rates for male students, 3) bullying rates for female students, and 4) rates for different types of bullying according to different classifications including a) made fun of, called names or insulted, b) subject of rumors, c) threatened with harm, d) tried to make do things did not want to do, e) excluded from activities on purpose, f) property destroyed on purpose, and g) pushed, shoved, tripped or spit on. The data results from years 2005 and 2017 were pulled in order to use an independent samples t-test to test for significance based on the research questions below.

Research Questions

Research Questions 1: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade students?

Research Question 2: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade male students?

Research Question 3: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade female students?

Research Question 4: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for different types of bullying for 6-12 grade students?

Different types include:

a) made fun of, called names or insulted

b) subject of rumors

c) threatened with harm

d) tried to make do things did not want to do

e) excluded from activities on purpose

f) property destroyed on purpose

g) pushed, shoved, tripped or spit on.

Chapter IV

Findings of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not the rate of school bullying in the United States is staying the same, increasing, or decreasing overtime. This study showed that school bullying rates are decreasing. Between 2005 and 2017, the percentage of students ages 12 through 18 who reported being bullied at school during the school year decreased from 29 to 20 percent. The research questions focused on looking at overall bullying rates for all participants, male only, female only, and also bullying rates by type of bullying.

Data Collection

A secondary source, School Crime Supplement (SCS), was used as the research data for this study. This survey interviews approximately 9,500 students ages 12-18 biennial. This study will compare data results between 2005 and 2017 to test if there was a significant shift in bullying overtime. Since this was a nationwide survey, there were more than eighteen thousand participants in 2005 and 2017 combined, therefore, the DF will not be reported in each research question.

Study Results

Research Questions 1: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade students between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you been bullied" was the test variable and the grouping variable was the year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, $t = 8.32$, $p=.001$. Therefore, the null

hypothesis was rejected. Students in 2017 (M = 20.2, SE = 0.71) were significantly less likely to report that they were bullied than students in 2005 (M = 28.5, SE = 0.70).

Table 1

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported being bullied between 2015-2017

Group		*M*	*SE*	*df*	*t-value*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Students	2005	28.5	0.70	18,998	8.32	.001*
Bullied	2017	20.2	0.71			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 2: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade male students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade male students between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you been bullied" was the test variable and the grouping variable was the year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, t = 8.63, p=.001. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Male students in 2017 (M = 16.7, SE = 0.87) were significantly less likely to report that they were bullied than students in 2005 (M = 27.5, SE = 0.90).

Table 2

Summary of 6-12 grade male students who reported being bullied between 2015-2017

Group		*M*	*SE*	*df*	*t-value*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Male	2005	27.5	0.90	18,998	8.63	.001*
Students	2017	16.7	0.87			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 3: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for 6-12 grade female students?

 An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant

change in overall bullying rates for 6-12 grade female students between 2005 and 2017. The

average response to the question "have you been bullied" was the test variable and the grouping

variable was the year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, $t = 4.47$, $p=.001$. Therefore, the

null hypothesis was rejected. Female students in 2017 (M = 23.8, SE = 1.01) were significantly

less likely to report that they were bullied than students in 2005 (M = 29.7, SE = 0.85).

Table 3

Summary of 6-12 grade female students who reported being bullied between 2015-2017

Group		*M*	*SE*	*df*	*t-value*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Female	2005	29.7	0.85	18,998	4.47	.001*
Students	2017	23.8	1.01			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 4a: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for students who reported being made fun of, called names or insulted for 6-12

grade students?

 An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant

difference in the average number of 6-12 grade students who reported being "made fun of, called

names, or insulted" between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you

been made fun of, called names, or insulted" was the test variable and the grouping variable was

the year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, t = 7.32, p=.001. Therefore, the null

hypothesis was rejected. Students in 2017 (M = 13.0, SE = 0.56) were significantly less likely to

report that they were made fun of, called names, or insulted than students in 2005 (M = 18.9, SE

= 0.58).

Table 4

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported being made fun of, called names, or insulted

between 2015-2017

Group		M	SE	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Made fun of, called	2005	18.9	0.58	18,998	7.32	.001*
names, insulted	2017	13.0	0.56			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 4b: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for students who reported being the subject of rumors for 6-12 grade students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant

difference in the average number of 6-12 grade students who reported being "the subject of

rumors" between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you been the

subject of rumors" was the test variable and the grouping variable was the year (2005 and 2017).

The test was not significant at, t = 1.86, p=.077. Although the probability of significance is close

to the .05 threshold at 7.7%, the null hypothesis is retained. The rates of students who reported

being the subject of rumors in 2017 (M = 13.4, SE = 0.59) were not significantly different from the rates reported in 2005 (M = 14.9, SE = 0.54).

Table 5

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported being the subject of rumors between 2015-2017

Group		M	SE	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Subject of	2005	14.9	0.54	18,998	1.86	.077
rumors	2017	13.4	0.59			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 4c: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall bullying rates for students who reported being threatened with harm for 6-12 grade students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the average number of 6-12 grade students who reported being "threatened with harm" between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you been threatened with harm" was the test variable and the grouping variable was the year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, t = 2.21, p=.004. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Students in 2017 (M = 3.9, SE = 0.32) were significantly less likely to report that they were threatened with harm than students in 2005 (M = 4.9, SE = 0.32).

Table 6

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported being threatened with harm between 2015-2017

Group		M	SE	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)

Threatened	2005	4.9	0.32	18,998	2.21	.004*
with harm	2017	3.9	0.32			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 4d: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for students who reported being tried to make do things they did not want to do for

6-12 grade students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant

difference in the average number of 6-12 grade students who reported being "tried to make do

things they did not want to do" between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question

"have you been tried to make do things you did not want to do" was the test variable and the

grouping variable was the year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, t = 4.51, p=.001.

Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Students in 2017 (M = 1.9, SE = 0.23) were

significantly less likely to report that they were tried to make do things they did not want to do

than students in 2005 (M = 3.5, SE = 0.27).

Table 7

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported being tried to make do things they did not want to

do between 2015-2017

Group		*M*	*SE*	*df*	*t-value*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Tried to make do things	2005	3.5	0.27	18,998	4.51	.001*
they did not want to do	2017	1.9	0.23			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 4e: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for students who reported being excluded from activities on purpose for 6-12 grade

students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant

difference in the average number of 6-12 grade students who reported being "excluded from

activities on purpose" between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you

been excluded from activities on purpose" was the test variable and the grouping variable was

the year (2005 and 2017). The test was not significant at, $t = 1.21$, $p=.328$. Therefore, the null

hypothesis is retained. The rates of students who reported being excluded from activities on

purpose in 2017 (M = 5.2, SE = 0.39) were not significantly different from the rates reported in

2005 (M = 4.6, SE = 0.30).

Table 8

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported being excluded from activities on purpose

between 2015-2017

Group		*M*	*SE*	*df*	*t-value*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Excluded from	2005	4.6	0.30	18,998	1.21	.328
activities on purpose	2017	5.2	0.39			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 4f: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for students who reported having their property destroyed on purpose for 6-12

grade students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant

difference in the average number of 6-12 grade students who reported having "their property

destroyed on purpose" between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you

had your property destroyed on purpose" was the test variable and the grouping variable was the

year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, t = 6.34, p=.001. Therefore, the null hypothesis

was rejected. Students in 2017 (M = 1.4, SE = 0.16) were significantly less likely to report that

they have had their property destroyed on purpose than students in 2005 (M = 3.5, SE = 0.29).

Table 9

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported having their property destroyed on purpose

between 2015-2017

Group		M	SE	df	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Property destroyed	2005	3.5	0.29	18,998	6.34	.001*
on purpose	2017	1.4	0.16			

*p < 0.05

Research Question 4g: Between 2005 and 2017, was there a significant change in overall

bullying rates for students who reported being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on for 6-12 grade

students?

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a significant difference in the average number of 6-12 grade students who reported being "pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on" between 2005 and 2017. The average response to the question "have you been pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on" was the test variable and the grouping variable was the year (2005 and 2017). The test was significant, $t = 6.61$, $p=.001$. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Students in 2017 ($M = 5.3$, $SE = 0.37$) were significantly less likely to report that they were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on than students in 2005 ($M = 9.2$, $SE = 0.46$).

Table 10

Summary of 6-12 grade students who reported being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on between 2015-2017

Group		*M*	*SE*	*df*	*t-value*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
Pushed, shoved,	2005	9.2	0.46	18,998	6.61	.001*
tripped, or spit on	2017	5.3	0.37			

*p < 0.05

Summary

After conducting an independent-samples t-test for each research question, it can be confirmed that school bullying rates are decreasing. Eight out of the ten research questions had a p-value of .001 which confirms the significance of the difference in data. One out of the ten questions was close to testing positive for significance at a p-value of .007. Question 4e (6-12 grade students who reported being excluded from activities on purpose) was the only question out of the ten research questions that did not test significant with a p-value of .328. The next chapter will take a closer look at the research data and the research literature in chapter two in

order to examine the scope and findings, limitations of this study, and recommendations for

future studies.

Chapter V

Summary of Findings

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the rates of school bullying have been increasing or decreasing overtime from 2005 to 2017. The results were examined using an independent-samples t-test. This chapter contains a summary of the findings, interpretation of findings, limitations, recommendations, and conclusions from this study.

Summary of the Findings

The major question addressed in this study was, has the rate of school bullying been increasing, decreasing, or remaining constant overtime. There was a significant trend that emerged from the National Crime Victimization Survey - School Crime Supplement data that was used for this research.

In order to observe the rates of bullying in schools, there were multiple categories that broke down the data into smaller parts, which were examined in this research study. Those parts included a break down by male, female and types of bullying to include being made fun of, called names or insulted, being the subject of rumors, threatened with harm, tried to make do things did not want to do, excluded from activities on purpose, property destroyed on purpose, and having been pushed, shoved, tripped or spit on.

The significant trend that emerged from the results of the SCS survey was that, in general, school bullying has seen a significant decrease between 2005 and 2017. Out of the ten categories that were researched, eight tested to show a significant decrease in bullying rates. What is interesting is that two categories did not test as significant and the null hypothesis were

retained for both. One of those categories was very close to testing for significance, however there was one category in particular that had a high p-value and showed little significance, which included students who have been excluded from activities on purpose.

Interpretation of Findings

There are multiple interpretations that came out of this study. As stated in chapter one, the ultimate goal of this research study is to figure out if bullying rates are increasing, decreasing or remaining constant in order to conclude if the nation's prevention strategies are working. We can conclude with confidence that the rates of school bullying for 6-12 grade students has been decreasing from 2005 to 2017. We cannot conclude with confidence that the decrease in bullying rates is due to the direct correlation of the nation's prevention strategies. However, it is highly probable that the increase in school bullying prevention and regulation has helped with the reduction in bullying rates over time.

As stated before, "the best way to minimize bullying is to prevent it from happening" (Gourneau, B.). It could be that schools have put an increasingly higher focus on bullying prevention. We can see this from Cornell and Limber's study stating that, "From 1990 to 2010, more than 120 bills were enacted by the states to introduce or amend education or criminal justice statutes that address bullying" (Cornell, D., & Limber, S. P.). Another researcher stated that bullying prevention starts with school administrators' commitment and intensive effort to prevent and reduce bullying (Sampson, R.). Finally, another group of researchers state the same, that research concludes the validity and importance of a systematic whole-school approach as the best way to manage bullying behaviors in schools (Ockerman, M. S., Kramer, C., & Bruno, M.).

One possible reason that research question 4e (being excluded from activities on purpose) did not test significant is that it could be a type of bullying that is hard to notice. As stated

earlier, research has found that it is difficult for teachers to identify certain types of bullying behaviors that are less egregious which is why it is critical for teachers to be trained and educated in order to identify acts of bullying and intervene effectively (Allen, Kathleen P.). It could also be that since this particular type of bullying, being excluded from activities on purpose, is more common among students, that it is not reported or identified as much as more serious types of bullying.

Another possible reason for the decrease in bullying rates could be that cyberbullying, defined as, "bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets" has increased, therefore decreasing the amount of traditional bullying instances. (What Is Cyberbullying). However, cyberbullying was not taken into consideration for the purpose of this study, and therefore this is simply a theory and cannot be confirmed.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation to this study is that a secondary data source was used. This could be a limitation as the researcher was not directly involved in the creation and administration of the survey. There could also be minor errors in the survey over time that were unbeknownst to the researcher. Another reason why using a secondary source might be a limitation is due to the fact that the numbers for sample size are averaged. This was not an issue for this survey, since the population size was large enough.

Another limitation of this study is that the secondary source data did not directly correlate with school prevention programs or other types of anti-bullying regulations. Therefore, the researcher cannot conclude that school regulation and prevention programs are the reason that bullying has decreased.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future research on this topic should include both the variables of bullying rates alongside school regulation and prevention programs.

2. Future research should consider a smaller and more observable sample size in order and know the audience and results better.

3. Future research should include cyberbullying to see if it could be the reason that traditional bullying has seen a decrease as cyberbullying has increased.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine if the rates of bullying in schools have been increasing, decreasing, or remaining constant over time. Results of the School Crime Supplement survey and the independent samples t-tests indicated that overall, there has been a significant decrease in the rate of school bullying between 2005 and 2017. The null hypothesis was rejected for eight out of the ten research questions. While we can't say with full certainty, educators should consider the reasons why bullying decreased over time and realize that they play an integral part in helping reduce the rates of bullying.

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