REPUTATIONAL ORIENTATIONS AND AGGRESSION: EXTENDING REPUTATION ENHANCEMENT THEORY TO UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL AGED BULLIES

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Abstract

The research reported in this thesis investigated the reputational orientations and aggressive behaviour of primary school aged bullies. It also sought to determine whether the reputational orientations of bullies who were loners differed to those who had established friendship networks. To achieve the research aims four separate yet inter-related studies were conducted. *Study One* explored the construct of reputation and its relevance to the bullying behaviours of 23 male and 23 female Grade 5 (10 year old) children from eight separate primary schools. All of these children had been suspended from school because of their bullying. Semi structured interviews revealed that reputation was an important construct to bullies, primarily because of the feelings of strength, power, and social status attributed to them by others as a result of their bullying. They also reported that the type of image and status they attained from bullying others was what they were actively seeking. To achieve their desired image different types of overt and covert bullying acts were perpetrated. The bullies also revealed that they carefully selected the physical locations where they bullied others so as to maximize the visibility of their actions to others. The school oval, playground and toilets were the most popular locations, but the use of new media such as mobile phones and the internet allowed them to bully others without the presence of an audience. The bullies also reported that their victims communicated what had happened to them to others, which disseminated their actions to a wider audience. It was clearly evident from Study One that the construct of reputation was important to bullies and was worthy of further investigation.

The findings from the first study were used in *Study Two* to modify and generate new items for a number of instruments. These modified instruments, namely The

Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire, The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression, and The Loner Scale were pilot tested with 30, 10 to 13 year old primary school-aged students and their teachers. Of the 30 students 12 had been suspended for bullying. (A fourth instrument, The Reputation Enhancement Scale has been subjected to exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and was not pilot tested.) The item functioning of the three instruments were then examined. For the Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire item affectivity ranged between .58 and .99, item discrimination ranged between .02 and .80, and Cronbach's alpha = .98. The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression item affective values ranged between .58 and .88, item discrimination between .72 and .90, and Cronbach's alpha = .97. For The Loner Scale item affectivity ranged between .46 and .65, item discrimination between .29 and .62, and Cronbach's alpha = .72.

Study Three further established the psychometric properties of the three instruments and investigated reputational orientations and aggressive behaviour in primary school bullies and non bullies. In total 132 children (62 males and 70 females) from Grades 5, 6 and 7 completed the Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire, The Reputation Enhancement Scale, and The Loner Scale. Of these students 38 (22 males and 16 females) had been suspended from school for bullying. The teachers of all the participants also completed the Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression for each of the students. Maximum likelihood factor analysis with orthogonal (Varimax) rotation revealed a two factor structure for the Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire (i.e., bullying $\alpha = .89$ and Victimization $\alpha = .87$), a one factor structure for The Child and Adolescent scale

of Aggression (i.e., aggression α = .98), and a two factor structure for the Loner Scale (i.e., Loner by Circumstances α = .67 and Loner by Choice α = .69).

Overall 78% of the sample had been bullied during the school academic year and 61% reported that they had bullied others. Calling others mean names, making fun of them, or teasing them in a hurtful way was the most "general type" of bullying while excluding or ignoring peers was the next most reported bullying behaviour (40%). Cyber bullying was the least reported method of bullying with approximately 10% reporting having used it. Although male bullies reported slightly higher total mean scores than female bullies for bullying a one way between groups analysis of variance revealed no significant main effect. A significant interaction effect was evident for aggression, with the mean aggression score for male bullies being higher than that for the female bullies. For the non bullies, however, the opposite was the case.

Multivariate Analyses of Variance with adjusted Bonferroni alpha levels revealed that there were group differences on 4 of the 16 reputation enhancement variables. (There was no multivariate main effect for Age, however.) Bullies reported significantly higher scores than non bullies on self-perceived social deviancy norms, evaluative reactions to others social deviance, non conforming self-perception, and non conforming ideal public self. To examine the reputational orientations of bullies according to their Loner status an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. Loner bullies scored significantly higher than loner non bullies on measures of social deviancy and non conformity. Although there were no significant differences between these two groups on the remaining reputational enhancement variables, self-perceived social deviance norms, self-perceived

social conformity norms, and evaluative reactions to others social conformity did approach levels of significance. Interestingly, loner bullies scored higher than the loner non bullies on the two conforming variables (i.e., self-perceived social conformity norms and evaluative reactions to others social conformity).

The final study in this thesis, *Study Four*, built on the findings of Study Three and further explored the significance of reputation in the lives of both male and female primary school aged bullies. To this end, semi structured interviews were conducted with 28 (18 male and 10 female) Grade 5 (n = 11), 6 (n = 8) and 7 (n = 9) primary school aged children who had school records officially documenting periods of bullying. Results demonstrated that becoming a bully was a deliberate choice and the feelings of power, dominance over others, personal admiration of socially deviant acts, and image and status reinforced this choice. Visibility of bullying was important in cultivating the image of a bully and so bullies carefully chose the locations in which they bullied others. The bullies also identified in-group status and a hierarchy or pecking order which was determined by the individual's involvement in (and severity of) antisocial acts. Cyber bullying was an attractive option to some bullies because it offered a degree of anonymity and also allowed them to generate suspense and fear thereby adding to the psychological aspects of bullying.

Overall, the findings from the studies clearly demonstrate the applicability of Reputation Enhancement Theory to bullying. This is interpreted and discussed in the light of the research literature reviewed in the thesis. The limitations of the research conducted are then acknowledged and suggestions are made for further research.

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Declaration

This thesis is my own work and no part of it has been submitted for a degree at this, or any other, university.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title	
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	vi
Declaration	vii
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables	xiii
List of Figures	xv
List of Appendices	xvi
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	1
Reputation Enhancement	4
Aggression and Bullies	6
Significance of the Research	10
Structure of the Thesis	11
CHAPTER TWO	
LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	14
Prevalence of Bullying	20
Physical Location of Bullying	25
Cyber Bullying	26
Gender and Age Differences in Bullying	30
Consequences of Bullying	33
Bullies and their Motivations	35
Reputation Enhancement Theory	40

Differentiating Reputations by Gender, Age and Status 43

Reputation Enhancement and Bullies 50

Aggressive Behaviour and Bullies 52

Categorising Bullying and Aggressive Behaviours 54

Loners and Bullying 60

Summary 62

Research Questions 63

CHAPTER THREE
STUDY ONE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCT OF BULLYING FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF BULLIES

Method 65

Participants and Settings 65

Semi Structured Interviews 67

Procedure 69

Data Analysis 70

Results 71

Bullies on Bullies 71

Bullies on Victims 76

Bullies on Onlookers 78

Discussion 81

CHAPTER FOUR
STUDY TWO: INSTRUMENT SELECTION AND INITIAL VALIDATION OF THE BULLYING SCALES, LONER SCALE, AND CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SCALE OF AGGRESSION

Phase 1: Selection of Instrumentation 85

Phase II: Testing the Feasibility of the Instrumentation 98

Participants and Settings 98

Procedure 98

Data Analysis 100

Results 101

The MR-OBVQ (bullying) 101

Item Affectivity 101

Item Discrimination 107

Reliability Analysis 109

The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression 111

Item Discrimination 114

Reliability Analysis 115

The Loner Scale 117

Item Discrimination 119

Reliability Analysis 119

Summary 120

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY THREE: FURTHER VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS AND AN EXAMINATION OF THE REPUTATIONAL ORIENTATIONS AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF BULLIES AND NON-BULLIES

Method 122

Participants and Settings 122

Instrumentation 123

Procedure 125

Results 126

Factor Analysis of the MR-OBVS 126

Internal Consistency 133

Factor Analysis of the Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression 134

Internal Consistency 138

Factor Analysis of the Loner Scale 140
Internal Consistency 143
The Reputation Enhancement Scale 144
Internal Consistency 144
Summary 145

CHAPTER SIX
STUDY THREE: DIFFERENCES IN BULLIES AND NON-BULLIES REPUTATIONAL ORIENTATIONS AND AGGRESSION
Results 146
Bullying 147
Descriptive Statistics 147
Aggression 151
Reputational Orientations and Bullies 153
Loner Status and Bullies 155
Loner Bullies versus Loner Non Bullies 156
Summary of Findings 159

CHAPTER SEVEN
STUDY FOUR: BULLIES, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND REPUTATIONS OF CHOICE
Method 161
Participants and Settings 161
Semi Structured Interviews 162
Procedure 164
Data Analysis 166
Results 166
Why Bullies Bully Others and How They Feel When They Do This 166
Bullying as a Deliberate Choice 168
Visibility of Actions – Being Seen by Others 168

Making Sure Others Witness the Bullying 171

Bullies Admiration of Others Involved in Socially Deviant Acts 172

Why Do Bullies Believe that Children Their Age also Admire

Socially Deviant Acts and Bullying 175

Bullies and Friendships 176

Some Use Cyber Bullying (like the Internet and SMS) 177

Summary 179

CHAPTER EIGHT

GENERAL DISCUSSION 182

Implications for Education 198

Limitations and Directions for Future Research 200

REFERENCES 202

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	The Bullying Behaviours for which Participants had been Suspended	67
2.	Original R-OBVS Items and Items Generated from the Study One interviews	89
3.	The 20 Child & Adolescent Scale of Aggression	91
4.	The 10 Loner Scale items	93
5.	Item Affectivity of the MR-OVBQ Scale	104
6.	MR-OBVQ Items with High Affectivity	107
7.	Item Discrimination for the OBVQ	109
8.	Cronbach's Alphas if Items are Deleted	110
9.	Item Affectivity of the CASA Scale	112
10.	CASA Items with Affectivity >.80	114
11.	Item Discrimination of the CASA Scale	115
12.	Cronbach's Alphas if Items are Deleted	116
13.	Item Affectivity of the Loner Scale	117
14.	Item Discrimination of the Loner Scale	119
15.	Cronbach's Alphas if Items are Deleted	120
16.	The Dimensions of the Modified Revised OBVS	124
17.	Eigenvalues and Percentages of Total Variance of the 22 MR-OBVS Items	129
18.	Communalities and Rotated Factor Loadings for MR-OBVS Items	131
19.	Item – Total Statistics for 20 MR-OBVS Items	134
20.	Eigenvalues and Percentages of Total Variance of the 20 CASA Items	136
21.	Communalities and Rotated Factor Loadings for 20 CASA Items	137

22. Item-Total Statistics for the 20 CASA Items 139

23. Eigenvalues and Percentage of Total Variance of the 10 Loner Scale Items 141

24. Communalities and Rotated Factor Loadings for 8 Loner Scale Items 142

25. Item-Total Statistics for 8 Loner Scale Items 144

26. Percentage of Bullying Reported by Participants (n = 132) across all Response Options of the MR-OBVS (11) Items 149

27. Percentage of Bullying Reported by Bullies (n = 38) across all Response Options of the MR-OBVS (11) Items 150

28. Mean Levels of Aggression according to Group (Bully status) and Gender 152

29. Univariate F statistics, Observed means, and Standard Deviations for the Reputation Enhancement Variables (df = 1, 128) with Group (Bully vs Non Bully) as the Independent Variable 154

30. Mean (standard deviations in parentheses) RES Scale Scores and *t* tests for Loner Bullies and Loner Non Bullies 158

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	Factor Leadings for the 15 First-Order Factors of the Three Second-Order Factors	97
2.	Q-values (affectivity) of Modified OBVS Items	105
3.	Examples of Q-values (affectivity) of CASA Items	113
4.	Q-values (affectivity) of Loner Scale	118
5.	Significant Interaction between Gender and Group Mean Aggression Scores	152

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix

1. Study One Information Sheet and Consent Form

2. Instrumentation

3 Study Two Information Sheet and Consent Form

4. Study Three Information Sheet and Consent Form

5. Study Four Information Sheet and Consent Form

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that bullying is a universal phenomenon, but because of the various definitions and measures used exact prevalence rates have not been established (see Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006). Generally, over the past 25 years prevalence rates have been reported to range from 7% to 27% (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Lowenstein, 1978; Newson & Newson, 1984; Olweus, 1997; Slee, 1994; Smith & Sharp, 1994). However, when examined in relation to geographical location and gender, engagement in bullying has ranged from 13% among girls and 28% among boys in the UK, to as much as 67% (girls) and 78% (boys) (in Greenland) (King, Wold, Tudor-Smith, & Harel, 1996). Irrespective of any definitional issues, what is clear from the extensive research conducted is that school bullying is a serious problem for students and educators alike (Marini et al., 2001, 2006; Smith et al., 2002), with victims often experiencing a range of adverse outcomes (Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal, & Albayrak-Kaymak, 2007). For example, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Loeber & Coie, 2001; Rigby, 2008), and emotional problems, suicidal ideation, loneliness, school refusal and even death (Fried & Fried, 1996; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen, & Rimpela, 2000; Newman, Holden, & Delville, 2005; Woods & White, 2005) have all been consistently documented in the research literature.

Perhaps the earliest definition of bullying, which was subsequently utilized in bullying research worldwide, was that of Olweus (1993a) which stated a student is bullied or vicitimised when he/she is "exposed, repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. Bullying is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict injury or discomfort upon another" (p. 9). Nation, Vieno, Perkins and Santinello (2008) argue that bullying is often defined in terms of a power differential between the victim and the perpetrator and that Olweus's (1993a) definition is important for modern research because it indicates an imbalance of power, and specifically excludes negative actions among students with the same psychological or physical strength. Nation et al. (2008) also hypothesize that power plays an important role in bullying, which is in line with Pellegrini and Long's (2004) earlier suggestion that power (and dominance) are used in strategic and calculating ways by bullies. The present research seeks to investigate the power aspect of bullying by examining the importance of reputation in the lives of those who bully. (The role of reputation is described in more detail later in this chapter and extensively in Chapter Two.)

In one of the largest studies to date, involving 123,227 11–15 year olds from 28 different countries Due, Holstein, Lynch, Diderichsen, Gabhain, Scheidt and Currie (2005) argue that bullying decreases with age. Conversely, Beran and Li (2005) report that bullying increases from primary school to secondary school and then decreases thereafter. According to Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal and Albayrak-Kaymak (2007) bullying "peaks" during the primary school years. Although there appears to still be some slight contention pertaining to prevalence rates and trends generally, it is agreed among researchers that physical aggression

(e.g., hitting, kicking, shoving), verbal threats of violence, property damage to, and theft of belongings (including clothing), spreading lies and rumours, and exclusion are consistently reported as bullying behaviours (Glover, Gough, Johnson, & Cartwright, 2000). Researchers also agree that boys, overall, are more likely to be involved in bullying than girls (Baldry, 2004), and that there are differences in the types of bullying in which boys and girls indulge (Gini, 2006). That is, girls are more likely to be involved in indirect bullying either as bullies, victims, or both, whereas boys are more likely to inflict direct physical pain on others (Baldry, 2004). Rigby (2008) provides strong support for this, showing that boys are more direct and physical, while girls tend to be indirect or relational (for a review see Rigby, 2008).

Over the past 10 years advances in technology and increased access to mobile phones and the Internet by children, have given rise to what has popularly become known as cyber bullying. Although research into this aspect of bullying is still embryonic (Smith et al., 2008) it has been reported that up to 25% of children in the UK have experienced it; other studies have reported rates of cyber bullying ranging from 1% to around 10% (e.g., Balding, 2005; Li 2005; Noret & Rivers, 2006; Sakellariou, 2005; Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2006). Of particular interest to the present research and its focus on reputation enhancement is that although the cyber bully does not receive instant recognition from his/her victim and peers for cyber bullying, positive reinforcement and prestige is received later, seemingly by sharing the abusive texts or video clips with a wider audience at a later date (Smith et al., 2008). This is supported by the earlier findings from the first Youth Internet Safety Survey (2000) which indicated that

around 50% of the abusive information cyber bullying victims receive is also posted or sent to someone else.

Reputation Enhancement

Bullying is a social group process prevalent in the school environment (Woods & Wolke, 2004). The extensive research conducted into bullying to date provides a strong indication that image (Rigby, 2008), the need to dominate others in the course of establishing a hierarchy (Pellegrini, 2004), and the establishment and maintenance of peer status (Juvonen et al., 2003; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2007) and social status in general (Sumajin, Fishbein, & Ritchey, 2001) are important motivations why young person's bully others. These motivations, which are also social group processes (Carroll, Houghton, Durkin, & Hattie, 2009), are very much aligned with the key elements of Reputation Enhancement Theory (RET: Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995) which has become a dominant theory in explaining why young people engage in delinquent and antisocial acts (see Carroll et al., 2009 for a review). Currently, no empirical evidence appears to exist, however, specifically examining the applicability of this theory to bullying.

RET argues that individuals choose a self-image or social identity and then promote this before an audience of their peers. The feedback received from the audience assists the individual to develop and maintain this social identity of choice within a community. Visibility of actions to others, are therefore key elements on which the psychology of reputation has been built (Emler, 1984). To gain social visibility there has to be direct witnessing of the acts by others, and/or self-disclosure through gossip and exchange of information (Carroll et al., 2009). In line with this and therefore indicative that reputation enhancement may be a

significant motivator of why individuals engage in bullying, is that it occurs predominantly in contexts where there is an audience present (Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001; Gini, 2006; Sakellariou, 2005). Rigby (2008) went so far as to suggest that bullies want attention and an audience to impress, while Gamliel, Hoover Daughtry and Imbra (2003) proposed that bullies actually used the audience as a "theatre" to their advantage.

As stated previously, although RET does not appear to have been examined in the context of bullying there is powerful supporting empirical evidence of its relevance in explaining why at risk and not at risk children and adolescents in mainstream primary and secondary schools and detained populations become involved (and maintain their involvement) in other antisocial and delinquent types of activities (see Carroll, 1994, 2002; Carroll et al., 1997; Carroll, Baglioni, Houghton, & Bramston, 1999; Carroll et al., 2003; Carroll, Hattie, et al., 2001; Carroll, Houghton, & Baglioni, 2000; Carroll, Houghton, et al., 1999; Carroll, Houghton, et al., 2001; Houghton & Carroll, 1996; Houghton et al., 2007). There is no doubt then that reputation plays a central role in the lives of children and adolescents whether in conformity (Buelga et al., 2008) or crime (Carroll et al., 2009); whether this is the case for those involved in bullying remains untested, however.

The research conducted to date also demonstrates that differences are clearly evident in the reputational orientations of young persons at specific age levels. Carroll et al. (2009) point to the final years of primary school as particularly important for the initiation of a reputation. That is, by Grade 5 (10 years of age) children designated as 'at risk' (i.e., individuals involved in risk taking behaviour

that is defined as volitional behaviour of which the outcome is uncertain and which entails negative consequences: Pat-Horenczyk et al., 2007) ideally wish to be perceived and described by others as non conforming, describe themselves and ideally wish to be described as non conforming, and admire socially deviant activities (including bullying). These individuals attempt to cultivate a non conforming type of reputation through the behaviours in which they indulge. In line with this, and with the tenet of the present research, researchers have also found that some boys acquire a dominant status in the later primary school years by bullying and defying teachers' authority (Adler & Adler, 1996; Estell, Farmer, & Cairns, 2007). Research also shows that although reputation is detectable prior to the transition to adolescence, it is not firmly established until the early high school years (Carroll et al., 2009).

Thus, as the later primary school years (Grade 5 onwards) are an important point in time for the initiation of reputations of choice, and bullying (also at this time) is thought to assist individuals to gain status, the present research will focus on this time period. In doing so, not only will the motivations of bullies be further understood but the findings arising may open up opportunities for making recommendations about refining and/or developing new bullying interventions.

Aggression and Bullies

Aggressive behaviour is usually defined as behaviour intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual (Berkowitz, 1993; Olweus, 1978, 1999). The definition/meaning of bullying is closely linked to this since it is usually regarded as a subcategory of aggressive behaviour (Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007). While some researchers view bullying as a subset of aggression (see Sakellariou,

2005), others emphasise that unlike bullying, aggressive behaviour does not always involve an abuse of power (Rigby, 2008). Houlston and Smith (2009) support this latter point and argue that the repetitiveness of bullying and the imbalance of power between a bully and their victims distinguish bullying from the broader concept of aggression.

According to Ostrov, Ries, Stauffacher, Godleski and Mullins (2008) the focus of past aggression research has primarily been on physical aggression or the intent to hurt others through physical harm or intent. However, research into aggressive behaviour has demonstrated that physical aggression is not the only type of aggressive behaviour generally perpetrated against others. Indeed, McBurnett, Lahey, Rathouz and Loeber (2000) argue that although aggression is often treated as a relatively homogeneous category of behaviour, it is commonly acknowledged that a unitary construct of aggression does not suffice. Consequently, over the past 20 years there have been important conceptual changes in the study of aggressive behavior, including that with children. In particular, subtypes of aggressive behaviour have been distinguished on the basis of form (e.g., physical and social aggression) and function (e.g., proactive and reactive aggression). Early research pertaining to bullies and aggression had a similar focus (Olweus, 1991) and findings tended to describe bullies as aggressive, with positive attitudes toward instrumental violence (Hoover & Juul, 1993). The conceptual changes alluded to above have also permeated the bullying research and the evidence, although somewhat mixed, describes bullies as proactively aggressive (Baldry, 2004; Crick & Dodge, 1999) and both reactive and proactively aggressive (Camodeca, Goossens, Meerum, Terwogt, & Schuengel, 2002; Salmivalli, & Nieminen, 2002).

(These categories of bullying are described in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis.)

Although the research reported in this thesis is primarily concerned with the reputational orientations of bullies, their aggressive behaviour is also worthy of investigation. Lopez, Perez, Ochoa and Ruiz (2008) argue a link exists between the two, while Rigby (2008) and Houlston and Smith (2009) postulate that bullying is distinguishable from the broader concept of aggression and should therefore be examined separately. According to Estell, Farmer and Cairns (2007) and Woods (2009) aggressive behaviour on the part of bullies is a strategy for garnering status over both members of one's own group and individuals in the larger social network (see Adler & Adler, 1996; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001). Consequently, the aggressor is accorded high status by peers (Hawley & Vaughn, 2003) and assigned an identity characterized by strength and power (Rodriguez, 2004). A number of other researchers support this, asserting that it is because of their (i.e., the bullies) need to dominate others (Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006; Woods, 2009) and the status they seek to acquire, that they bully aggressively (Buelga, Musitu, Murgui, & Pons, 2008; Sijtsema et al., 2009). The popularity of the bully and his/her place in the pecking order within the peer group, and the influence of that peer group has also been strongly linked with bullying (e.g., Pellegrini, 2004; Salmivalli et al., 1997; Woods & Wolke, 2004). Woods (2009) established that some aggressive primary school aged children are not only popular among peers, but are perceived as cool and central to the social network. Furthermore, continued (repetitive) aggression on the part of these children was a means of re-affirming their popularity (Woods, 2009).

Thus, the findings from the extensive research conducted by Carroll and colleagues over the past two decades that demonstrates the importance of being involved in antisocial behaviour if a non conforming reputation of choice is to be attained appears highly relevant in offering a plausible explanation for why young persons indulge in bullying. Indeed, Reputation Enhancement Theory (Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995) may be highly applicable in explaining why bullies bully and also whether bullying is a deliberate choice on the part of the perpetrator. To date, however, this has not been examined. Knowing why children engage in bullying is a pre-requisite for the development of effective interventions (Polman, Orobio, de Castro, Thomaes, & van Aken, 2009).

Earlier in this chapter the point was made that bullying is a social, group process (Woods & Wolke, 2004). Research also shows that bullies belong to larger peer groups than more prosocial children (Salmivalli et al., 1997; Woods, 2009) and it has even been suggested that bullies' groups may attract members through the appeal of associating with winners (Estell et al., 2007). There is some evidence, however, that suggests that some bullies operate on their own rather than in a group (Sakellariou, 2005). If the key elements for reputation enhancement include the presence of an immediate audience who directly witness the acts of bullying and aggression (see Carroll et al., 2009) how then does the loner bully fit with Reputation Enhancement Theory? To date, it appears that no research has investigated loner bullies and reputation enhancement and therefore the present research will attempt to address this issue. Recent research with school aged loners by Houghton, Carroll, Tan and Hopkins (2008) and Tan, Houghton and Carroll (in press), reveals that loner delinquents are clearly differentiated from social delinquents according to the frequency and severity of the delinquent acts

they commit, particularly in terms of property offences, physically aggressive acts, and drug-related offences. Differences were also evident in the reputational orientations of these loner and social delinquents in terms of their admiration for socially deviant activities, the manner in which they desire to be seen by others, and who they communicate their antisocial activities to. Specifically, loners appear to be less concerned about how others perceive them and how they perceive others, do not want to be perceived as having a conforming reputation, while at the same time do not actively seek an outright public nonconforming reputation. Tan, Houghton and Carroll (in press) hypothesise that loners may have some level of disparity between their self-image and the public image they desire and that this may provide a new avenue for effective intervention.

The idea that bullies are universally rejected by their peers and relegated to the margins of the school social structure is not supported by the existing literature, nor is the thought that bullies are highly social in their peer group presence (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Estell et al., 2007; Olweus, 1993a). Anecdotal evidence (Cordin, 2007; Houghton, Cordin, & Hopkins, in press) suggests that some young offenders and mainstream adolescents achieve a delinquent identity and enhance their reputations among peers by committing delinquent acts, but without the presence of an audience. Whether this is the case for those who bully others, but alone, is not known. The present research will therefore investigate the reputations of loner and non loner bullies.

Significance of the Research

Bullying is a complex multidimensional phenomenon (Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006) which may be a precursor to more severe forms of school violence

(Nation, Vieno, Perkins, & Santinello, 2008). The need to be powerful, and to dominate others and impress an audience and maintain social status have all been suggested by researchers as reasons for why young person's bully others. It is posited here that Reputation Enhancement Theory may provide a strong theoretical explanation of just why bullies choose to bully. To date this has not been investigated and therefore the present research is highly significant in that it focuses on a yet to be investigated topic. The present research is significant in three other ways. First, the present research will further validate a number of recently developed instruments. Second, it will be the first to determine differences in the reputational orientations and aggression of bullies and non bullies. It will also investigate these differences according to the loner status of bullies. Third, it will advance theoretical understanding of bullying and reputation enhancement in children and in doing so will provide information which may contribute to the development of effective interventions to reduce bullying.

Structure of the Thesis

The following chapter (Chapter Two) provides a critical review of the literature. The construct of bullying is discussed along with definitional issues, prevalence rates and gender and age related differences. The physical locations of where bullying occurs are described, and this provides the first insights into the potential relevance of Reputation Enhancement Theory (RET) to bullying. An overview of RET is then provided in conjunction with the very limited research conducted in the field of bullies and reputations. Aggression, particularly in relation to bullying is then examined and this is followed with reference to the brief amount of research undertaken on children who are loners. A series of research questions are then presented at the conclusion of this chapter.

Chapter Three, which reports Study One, describes the methodology and results of an exploratory study involving 46 Grade 5 primary school aged children (23 male and 23 female) who had been suspended from school because of their bullying behaviour. This qualitative study explores both male and female primary school aged bullies' perspectives of bullying behaviour.

Chapter Four provides details of the two phases of research which comprises Study Two. Initially, the rational for the selection of instruments: The Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire (R-OBVQ: Olweus, 1996), The Reputation Enhancement Scale (Carroll, Houghton, Hattie, & Durkin, 1999), The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression (Cordin, Hopkins, & Houghton, 2007) and The Loner Scale (Tan, 2008; see Tan, Houghton, & Carroll, in press) are provided. Phase II of Study Two describes the pilot testing of the instruments with 40 children and their teachers and the preliminary validation through item affectivity, item discrimination and Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Chapter Five outlines Study Three which describes a larger scale study in which the psychometrics of the instruments are further validated. Phase I describes the design and methodology used in the validation of the instruments and the factor structures of the instruments that were established. Then, in Chapter Six the Phase II analyses of the differences in scores on the instruments of 132 mainstream primary school aged bullies and non bullies are examined.

The fourth and final study of the thesis is reported in Chapter Seven. This study further explores both male and female primary school aged bullies' behaviours

and the significance of reputations in their lives. Specifically, it investigates aspects of reputation found to be significant in the lives of bullies, as reported in the previous quantitative study. To this end 28 bullies (18 male and 10 female) from Grades 5 to 7 are interviewed.

Finally, Chapter Eight presents a general discussion in which the results obtained from all four studies are interpreted in light of the research questions generated and the literature reviewed earlier in the thesis. Directions for future research are also suggested.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Extensive research has been conducted on bullying over the past 25 years (see Juvenon & Graham, 2001; Pellegrini, 1998; Rigby, 2008; Rigby & Smith, 1996; Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, & Jugert, 2006; Smith, 2002; for comprehensive reviews). Shariff (2008) argued the point that "bullying has been understood as an age old societal problem, beginning in the school yard and often progressing to the boardroom" (p. 11). According to Kyriakides, Kaloyirou and Lindsay (2006) it is only recently that bullying has received substantial research and societal attention, possibly due to its multi-dimensional character which has raised a variety of constraints in its definition and measurement. One of the earliest definitions of bullying, which became the basis for the development of worldwide collaborative research activity (see Ortega & Mora-Merchan, 1995; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001; Smith et al., 1999), was that of Olweus (1993a):

> a student is being bullied or vicitimised when he/she is exposed, repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another (p. 9).

Although the primary focus of the research reported in this thesis is bullies, it should be noted that Olweus (1991, 1993a) and later Solberg and Olweus (2003) distinguished (in their definitions) two major roles within bullying, that of the bully and that of the victim. The bully was often described as a child who bullied peers sometimes, once or more a week, on a repeated and systematic basis, for at least 3 months. Conversely, a victim was a child bullied sometimes, once or more a week, over a time period of at least 3 months. A third role was also subsequently identified, namely that of the bully-victim (i.e., children who match both descriptions), and this was further distinguished according to whether an individual was a passive victim or an active victim (i.e., a child showing aggressive-reactive behaviour) (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Olweus, 1993b; Schwarz, Dodge, & Coie, 1997). In most instances this was not included as a third separate category but was subsumed under the "victim" role.

Rigby (2008) proposed there is no absolute consensus on how bullying should be defined. Traditional definitions have viewed bullying as a subset of aggression (Sakellariou, 2005). For example, Hazler et al. (1992) defined bullying as "a form of aggression in which a student or group of students, physically or psychologically abuse a victim over a period of time" (p.20). According to Drake et al. (2003), however, when a conflict is between students of nearly equal physical strength, it is not bullying. The psychological aspect of bullying appears to have been first included in a definition by Besag (1989) who stated "bullying is repeated attacks – physical, *psychological*, social or verbal – by those in a position of power, which is formally or situationally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification"

(p.4). Olweus (1993a) and Kyriakides et al. (2006) also emphasized that such attacks or actions can emanate from, for example, making faces, obscene gestures, and exclusion from a group as well as the physical. They also highlighted that not every negative act might be considered as bullying, however, because it presupposes an imbalance in strength between the participants.

Not surprisingly then, bullying has been classified and defined in a number of ways. For example, Olweus (1994) added that bullying can also include behaviours such as gossiping and exclusion, often called by others as indirect or relational bullying (see Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Smith and Sharp (1994) in the UK proposed that a student is being bullied or picked on when another student says nasty and unpleasant things to him/her, or when a student is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, and/or when no-one ever talks to him/her. Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano and Slee (1999) simplified matters by suggesting that bullying is aggressive behaviour, repeated and systematically directed towards a weaker individual.

As the phenomenon has become more fully understood definitions have taken into consideration more factors. For example, taking a health professionals perspective Srabstein (2009) defined bullying as a multi-faceted form of maltreatment derived from complex biopsychosocial and cultural precursors. Pellegrini (2002) acknowledged both the proactive nature of bullying which was used to achieve a desired end, and the reactive nature which was an emotional response to frustration and anger. Behaviours such as spitting, browbeating, ridicule, sarcasm and scape goating have also been included in definitions of bullying by Campbell

(2005) and DiGiulio (2001). Campbell (2005) and Olweus (2001) also acknowledged that in bullying the victim could not easily defend him/herself. Finally, Harris and Petrie (2002) proposed that bystanders who witness bullying are also victims (even though they remain uninvolved) because they feel powerless, experience a loss of self-esteem and become afraid that they may be the next victim.

Although definitions have evolved and been refined over time the practical exercise of identifying bullying incidents remains complicated (Rigby, 2002). For example, psychological intent to hurt someone is an elusive concept, particularly if the bully justifies his/her actions based on an anti-victim attitude, thus minimizing or suppressing thoughts and feelings about the harm incurred (Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990; Phillips, 2003). Furthermore, the term “repetition” may in some instances muddy the waters. Is it (definition wise) strictly bullying when someone bullies each of several children once, or is this repetitive? Similarly, the determination of a power imbalance is not an easy one to make (Woods & Wolke, 2003), particularly in the case of non-face-to-face or indirect bullying (Rigby, 2002).

This latter point pertaining to non face to face bullying is particularly important given the increasing popularity of the new media and a range of online social networking sites which have given rise to new forms of cyber bullying (Shariff, 2008). Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell and Tippett (2008) highlighted the emergence of electronic technologies in recent years, particularly mobile phones and the Internet, as increasing the potential for bullying. Moreover, these

same authors stated that with the "increasing penetration of networked computers" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376) the potential for such bullying has increased. These points relating to the increased availability of and access to technology is supported by Charlton, Panting and Hannan (2002) who found that: 50% of upper primary school aged students owned a mobile phone; at least 60% of adolescents sent around three SMS messages daily; 6% sent 10 per day; and 1% sent more than 20 per day. In Australia, Mathews (2004) - through an Australian Psychological Society research project - reported that 83% of 12 to 18 years olds owned mobile phones with 57% acquiring them prior to 13 years of age. Girls were found to send significantly more SMS messages than boys, approximately 60% of males and females reported they did not adhere to school rules over mobile phone use, and 32% admitted using their mobile phones/SMS messaging during class time. Such data illustrate the potential for young person's to become involved in cyber bullying, either as perpetrators or victims, or both.

Belsey (2005), as cited in Shariff (2008) originally defined cyber bullying as

> the use of information and communication technologies such as email, cell phone, and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory on line personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others (p. 29).

Shariff and Strong-Wilson (2005) (cited in Shariff, 2008) refined this definition to read as cyber bullying

> comprises covert psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic media such as cell phones, weblogs and web sites, online chat rooms, MUD rooms (Multi User Domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like) (p.30).

The most recent definition of cyber bullying appears to be that proposed by Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell and Tippett (2008): "An aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself" (p. 376). While succinct, this definition appears to lack the comprehensiveness included in the earlier definitions.

Generally, it appears that definitions of bullying are consistent internationally and place an emphasis on several factors. Specifically, bullying involves an individual perpetrator or group of persons who harm another(s) through words, physical violence, psychological and/or electronic means, the individual or group is either physically, verbally or socially stronger than the victim(s), and in most instances the act of bullying is repeated over time.

Irrespective of any definitional issues and evolving technology which has required refinement of definitions, research has demonstrated that bullying *per se* is a significant educational problem worldwide (Ma, 2002), which can lead to loss of self-esteem (Boulton & Smith, 1994), concentration and learning (Sharp & Smith,

1994), onset of stress related symptoms (e.g., headaches, nightmares), school phobia (Sharp & Smith, 1994) and depression (Olweus, 1993a). For some victims the adverse effects spill over to family members such as parents, who according to Besag (1989) may feel ashamed because their son/daughter is a social failure by not being able to fend off any attacks. For others the consequences have led to serious injuries and in some cases death for the bully, the victim or both (Fried & Fried, 1996; Due, Holstein, Lynch, Diderichsen, Gabhain, Scheidt, & Currie, 2005).

Prevalence of Bullying

Although the primary focus of this thesis is on the reputational orientations of bullies it is important to establish, albeit briefly, that bullying occurs across all cultures and ages and is committed by both males and females. Nation, Vieno, Perkins and Santinello (2008) pointed out that several studies have suggested that bullying may be the most common form of school violence. In support of this Smith and Brain (2000) (as cited in Gini, 2006) hypothesized that bullying represents “a universal phenomenon and can be observed in all classrooms” (p. 52). However, although numerous studies have been conducted, the exact prevalence rates of bullying have not been established, largely due to the variety of definitions and measures used (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). For example, Fekkes, Pijpers and Verloove-Vanhorick (2005) reported a general (international) prevalence rate of bullying of between 14% and 27%. Other estimated prevalence rates have included 15% in Norway (Olweus, 1997), 7% in England (Smith & Sharp, 1994) 18% to 20% in England (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Lowenstein, 1978; Newson & Newson, 1984), and 25% in Australia (Slee, 1994). A World

Health Organization (WHO) international survey of adolescent health-related behaviors (see King, Wold, Tudor-Smith, & Harel, 1996) found students who reported taking part in bullying at least once during the current school term ranged from a low of 13% of girls and 28% of boys in Wales (UK) to a high of 67% of girls and 78% of boys in Greenland. The percentage of students who reported having been victims of bullying, ranged from a low of 13% of girls and 15% of boys in Sweden to a high of 72% of girls and 77% of boys in Greenland.

Early research suggests that prevalence rates may have been lower but have generally increased over time, although there are differences according to geographical location. For example, Olweus's (1978) pioneering research with 8 to 16 year olds found that 9% had experienced some kind of bullying, while 7% said they had bullied others. In a subsequent study (Olweus, 1991) found that 15% of Norwegian school aged students had been bullied or had bullied others. In similar age groups of school aged students Salmivalli, Lappalainen and Lagerspetz (1998) reported that 4.7% of Finnish students were victims of bullies, while in the UK 27% were (Whitney & Smith, 1993). In Italian schools approximately equal numbers of students have reported being involved in bullying, either as bullies or as victims: 7% of middle school students reported being involved in bullying or having been bullied (Menesini, Eslea, & Smith et al., 1997).

An analysis of data from a 1997/1998 WHO survey of students in the United States indicated that 19.5% reported bullying others three or more times over the previous year, and 8.8% reported bullying others once a week or more during the

same period of time. The percentage of those who reported having been bullied was similar, with 16.9% reporting being bullied three or more times over the past year and 8.4% reporting being bullied once a week or more (Nansel et al., 2001). Other survey research suggests that prevalence rates may be much higher, with as many as 75% of adolescents having been victimized at least once during their school years (Hoover et al., 1992). However, it should be noted that the time period for reporting episodes of bullying in this study was much longer i.e., "during the school years", compared to other studies that stipulated "the previous year". With regard to younger aged school students, Perry, Kasel and Perry (1988) reported that 10% of 9 to 12 year old boys and girls in the United States are victims of "extreme peer abuse." Whether such peer abuse equates to bullying is not clear, however.

In what appears to be one of the most comprehensive studies to date on bullying (Due, Holstein, Lynch, Diderichsen, Gabhain, Scheidt, & Currie, 2005) data were reported from 123,227 11–15 year olds (across 28 countries) to the question "During this term how often have you been bullied at school?" Large variations were evident in rates of bullying, with the lowest prevalence found in Sweden (5.1% for girls and 6.3% for boys) and the highest in Lithuania (38.2% for girls and 41.4% for boys). In addition, the prevalence of bullying was found to decrease with age and with the exception of Hungary and Russia, more boys than girls were involved in bullying.

In another large scale study Glover et al. (2000) examined the prevalence rates of different types of bullying occurring across 25 secondary schools. Data revealed

that almost 50% of students reported property damage against their belongings, 17% had had money taken off them and 12% reported having had their clothing damaged. Boys who bullied reported engaging in pushing others (66%) most frequently, followed by punching (51%), tripping (41%), making threats of violence (40%) and kicking (35%). Behaviours such as spreading lies was experienced by 22% of participants and of these most were boys. On the other hand, of the 11% reporting being excluded from a social group, slightly more were girls than boys.

In Australia, Rigby and colleagues have conducted a number of well planned studies investigating various aspects of bullying, including prevalence. For example, Rigby and Slee (1991) reported that approximately 10% of their sample of 68, 6 to 16 year olds had been bullied. Approximately 11% of these children reported verbal bullying (e.g., name calling) "very often" as against 4.5% who reported physical bullying (e.g., being hit or pushed) "very often". The small sample size and wide age range suggests that these data should be treated with a degree of caution. Having said this, however, in 1996 Rigby more or less replicated the study with 8 to 18 year olds and reported similar findings. That is, name calling and teasing occurred almost twice as often as physical bullying, and there was very little difference between boys and girls in their experience of verbal bullying. In other (earlier) research conducted in1994 Rigby found that at least 14% of primary school aged children were bullied "at least once per week or more often". In subsequent research in 1995 Rigby and Slee (see Rigby, 2008) revealed that up to 19% of boys and 14% of girls aged between 10 and 17 years were bullied "at least once per week". In his final study in the 1990s, Rigby

(1998) found that of 38,000 children aged 7 to 17 years surveyed approximately 16% indicated they had been bullied "at least weekly" during the school year.

A recent large scale survey of 1530 Australian school students (age range 9 to 18 years) from schools in the metropolitan areas of Sydney and Brisbane, was reported by Sakellariou (2005). Results obtained from the administration of psychometrically valid instruments revealed that over 44% of participants believed bullying was a common phenomenon in school, with 29.5% reporting it happened "often" and 14.7% "very often". When asked if they had witnessed bullying at any time during the year only 5.8% said they had <u>not</u>. The majority of bullying (18.1%) occurred in Grade 8, followed by Grade 11 (16.2%) and Grade 6 (13.5%). Of those admitting to bullying others, 4.1% did it on their own once a week, while 2.5% reported involvement on their own several times a week. Verbal bullying through name calling was reported by 52% of participants and this was followed by teasing (37%), spreading rumours (29%), exclusion (26%), physical aggression (26%), and property damage/theft (24%). From these data, overall, it was shown that girls were more inclined to employ indirect methods of bullying, such as exclusion, in comparison to boys who were more likely to use direct physical means.

In summary, the research demonstrates that bullying is prevalent among males and females in school environments, and across different cultures. The data cited also shows there are variations in prevalence rates, which in some instances fluctuate considerably. According to Schwartz et al. (2001) the differences in reported prevalence estimates, even among reasonably similar populations, might

be due to researchers using different definitions, classification criteria, measurement procedures, and in some cases relatively small sample sizes.

Physical Location of Bullying

With reference to the contexts in which bullying occurs, the research evidence suggests that generally it is primarily in the school environment (Ma et al., 2001). There is a plethora of studies identifying the physical locations in schools where bullying tends to occur and these locations will be identified here with reference to a selection of the studies conducted. Observational studies for example, have shown that 85% of bullying episodes occur where children interact in unstructured contexts, such as during recess and in outdoor play (Gini, 2006). Isernhagen and Harris (2002) found that 74% of bullying took place at lunch times and 73% during extra-curricular events. (These same authors also reported that 26% of bullying occurrs on the way to school and 46% on the way from school.) Research has also shown that bullying occurs in school hallways, on school buses, and in the cafeteria (Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001). These locations for bullying found support in a relatively recent Australian study by Sakellariou (2005). For example, 53% and 42% of students respectively, reported being bullied "sometimes" or "often/very often" during recess, 55% (sometimes) and 19% (very often/often) in the corridors, and 40% (sometimes) and 14% (very often/often) on the way home. With reference to the toilet areas, 17.2% reported being bullied in this location sometimes and 5.3% often/very often.

What is apparent from the research cited is the common factor between the studies of students interacting informally in these locations, often with little supervision.

This is not to say that bullying does not occur in the classroom, however, where there is often stricter supervision. Indeed, Sakellariou (2005) found that 58.5% of her sample of 1530 students had been bullied in the classroom sometimes and 27% very often/often.

Cyber Bullying

Recent advances in the new media, including electronic technology, have provided another avenue for bullying, which is an interactive, and in most cases informal process where (once again) little formal supervision is available. Known as cyber bullying, this type of bullying owes its "popularity" to young person's ease of access to, and willingness to use, technology. More than half a billion (580 million) people worldwide had Internet access in 2003 (Nua Internet Surveys, 2003) and nine in ten children and adolescents used the Internet (Statistics Canada, 2004; Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor, 2006). Widespread use also occurred in schools with about 60% of students accessing the Internet during lunch times and after school (Statistics Canada, 2004). Furthermore, in this same time period approximately 50% of young people owned mobile phones (Li, 2005). In Australia the situation was similar around the same time, with 23% of 6 to 13 year olds, and 55% and 65% of 12 to 13 year old boys and girls, respectively owning a mobile phone.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Li (2005) drew attention to the fact that bullying had "gone digital" (p. 271) as a direct result of advancements in information and communication technology. Indeed, the power and impact of cyber bullying was recently proclaimed in the USA where the media headlined the

case of “Mother accused of cyber-bullying faces year in prison and $300,000 fine” (http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2008/nov/27/myspace-usa). This case detailed a 49 year old woman accused of creating a fictitious persona on MySpace to bully a 13-year-old neighbour who subsequently took her own life. This was the first public trial for cyber-bullying in the USA, but because no laws existed under which the adult could be charged in her home state, prosecutors decided to charge her on the basis that she had violated the terms of MySpace's user agreement. This prohibits the use of false names, the harassment of other users and the soliciting of personal information from minors. Other cyber bullying cases which have been headlined in the media along with the proliferation of cases in schools means that laws are being initiated to deal with this technology based aspect of bullying (see Shariff, 2008).

With reference to the prevalence rates of cyber bullying Smith et al. (2008) pointed out that although studies have been conducted research is still at an early stage. In 2002 The National Children’s Home reported that 25% of 11 to 19 year olds in the UK reported experiencing cyber bullying, while in 2003 in the UK Oliver and Candappa suggested that 4% of 12 to 13 year olds had received nasty text messages. From a single item on a survey Balding (2005) reported that 1% of 10 to 11 year olds had been bullied by others using mobile phones. It should be noted, however, that these data were based on a single item and should therefore be interpreted with some caution. In a subsequent study of 11,000 UK students between the years 2002 to 2005 by Noret and Rivers (2006) almost 6% said they had received nasty or threatening text messages. Girls reported more of this over the four years compared to boys.

In a study consisting of two surveys and focus groups Smith et al. (2008) reported that both surveys showed that between 5% and 10% of 11 to 16 year olds had been cyber bullied in the previous two months, which was "lower than the rates for traditional bullying" (p. 382). Although mobile phones through the use of SMS and calls was the most frequently cited method of cyber bullying, participants were especially aware of picture/video clip bullying occurring. When asked why they were particularly aware of this, the primary reason given was that it (i.e., picture/video clip bullying) achieves a wider audience. (Speed of communication and accessibility of information through new media technology has been cited by others as beneficial in achieving wider audiences: Donchi & Moore, 2004; Lee & Leets, 2002). Smith et al. (2008) also found that cyber bullying primarily occurs outside of school hours and that victims of traditional bullying were also victims of cyber bullying. When asked why individuals or groups cyber bullied, the over whelming response from participants was that it was "entertainment" or "it was just having a bit of fun". Smith et al. (2008) postulated that while cyber bullying means the perpetrator is less likely to receive direct gratification because he/she cannot see the victim's direct response, they may get some rewards by sharing the abusive texts or video clips with a wider audience thus receiving social prestige.

In a study involving 432, 12 to 16 year old Canadian students Li (2005) reported that almost 70% had heard of incidents of cyber bullying, 25% had received forms of cyber bullying themselves, and approximately 3% had perpetrated this form of bullying. In the same year Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor (2006) reported the findings from telephone interviews conducted as part of the Second Youth

Internet Safety Survey with 1500, 10 to 17 year olds. Nine percent of participants reported being the target of internet bullying in the previous year (which was a 50% increase over the First Youth Internet Safety Survey conducted in 2000). Of those bullied, one in three had been targeted more than three times, either by the same or different person(s). Approximately 50% of these targets reported that the bullying involved information being posted or sent to someone else, particularly through instant messaging and blogging, and chat rooms.

From a sample of 1,378 under 18 year olds (Mean age 14.8 years) Hinduja and Patchin (2008) reported no significant differences in males and females who reported being perpetrators or victims of cyber bullying, which is contrary to the gender differences reported in "traditional bullying". Specifically, 32% of boys and 36% of girls reported having been victims of cyberbullying, whereas 18% of boys and 16% of girls reported harassing others while on-line.

In Australia, Sakellariou (2005) found that 11.5% of her sample had been bullied via the Internet, with 2% stating that this occurred on a weekly basis. In addition, 7.9% of students had been bullied via email and 6.6% through text messaging. Although relatively new, 4.8% of students also reported receiving electronically transmitted images when bullied. When examined according to age groups, the Years 8 to 10 (13 to 15 years olds) students received significantly more bullying text messages (9.2%) than the primary (3.1%) and senior secondary (6.9%) students. When those who had been on the receiving end of cyber bullying were asked how they felt about this, 80% reported they were upset to a degree ranging from "a little upset" to 'very upset". Overall, less students (16%) found cyber

bullying to be less upsetting than traditional face to face bullying, 47% found it just as upsetting and 15% found it more upsetting.

Thus, although computers, the Internet, mobile phones and other new media technologies may have a beneficial impact on learning and student interactions, they can also act as a medium through which students engage in malevolent behaviours (Shariff, 2008). Hinduja and Patchin (2008) pointed out that although computer-mediated communication has been studied extensively in a variety of fields, victimization through threats of violence on-line is a relatively new area of research that is only now being more fully explored (Berson, Berson, & Ferron, 2002; Finn 2004; Lamberg 2002; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Given the ever increasing evidence demonstrating the link between technology and school bullying (Beran & Li, 2005) this specific field requires further investigation. Furthermore, given the wider audience who can be reached using this technology and the social prestige that young people attain by sharing the abusive texts or video clips with this audience, any investigations might examine how this technology relates to reputation enhancement theory.

Gender and Age Differences in Bullying

Although boys and girls have been found to frequently engage in bullying, gender differences have clearly been identified in the types of bullying behaviours in which they indulge (see Gini, 2006; Olweus, 1996; Rigby, 1997; 2008). Generally, boys have been found to be more direct and physical while girls tend to be more indirect or relational (Bjorkquist, 1994; Crick, 1995; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Lagerspetz & Bjorkquist, 1994; Lagerspetz, Bjorkquist, & Peltonen, 1988).

For example, whereas boys tend to hit and kick, girls are said to exclude others and start rumours (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995, 1996; Wolke et al., 2000). Indeed, girls' aggressive bullying behaviours are generally less prevalent than those of boys (Archer, 2004; Moffitt et al., 2001; Offord, 2001). Rather, the research evidence shows that the more insidious nature of indirect (relational) bullying, which includes such behaviours as malicious gossiping and social exclusion, is more common among girls than boys (Bjorkquist, Lagerspetz & Kaukiainen, 1992).

Gender differences have also been found in children's and adolescents' *perceptions* of bullying. Rigby (1996, 1997) for example found that Australian school students believed that bullied children deserved what happened to them. According to Rigby (1996) the students' prevailing perceptions of bullies – especially the boys' – were of being strong, powerful, and able to control others. The importance of such socio-metric status was highlighted by Woods (2009) because these attributes inform peers that one is a force to be reckoned with. (This is expanded upon in the next section of this chapter which reviews Reputation Enhancement Theory.) Several studies have also shown that girls tend to have more positive attitudes towards the victims of bullies than boys and are more empathetic with and supportive of them (Crick & Werner, 1998; Menesini et al., 1997; Rigby & Slee, 1993).

With reference to *age*, some research shows higher levels of bullying in primary schools (range 15% to 35%, see Whitney & Smith, 1993) and declining in secondary school (range 5% to 16%; see Elsea & Rees, 2001; Olweus, 1991;

Rigby, 2008; Smith, Madsen, & Moody, 1999, for a review; Whitney & Smith, 1993). According to Smith et al. (1999) the reductions in prevalence rates with increasing age may be due to several reasons, which mainly pertain to developmental changes in the individual. Specifically, younger children use a more inclusive bullying concept that includes any act of unjustified aggression and are less likely to refrain from bullying due to socialisation pressure. Studies conducted among younger children (Alsaker & Olweus, 1993; Alsaker & Valkanover, 2001; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Monks, Ortega Ruiz, & Torrado Val, 2002; Hanish, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Fabes, Martin, & Denning, 2004) have shown that bullying is a serious problem even in kindergarten, the consequences often leading to school avoidance (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). This pattern appears to continue in the elementary school years with Orpinas, Horne and Staniszewski (2003) reporting that 89% of U.S. elementary school children being the target of at least one aggressive act.

As an individual gets older and progresses through the school system (i.e., grades) each successive grade level means there is less likelihood of victimization, because increasingly fewer are older in the surrounding peer hierarchy. It may be that individuals again become vulnerable to older adolescents when entering secondary school, but they experience less bullying from same-age peers because peer-status factors related to establishing social dominance appear to stabilize by age 15. In addition, increasing social skills and social cognition, socialization, more complex group structures, increased understanding of others' feelings may contribute to a decline in bullying (Smith et al., 1999a).

Consequences of Bullying

The consequences of bullying for both bullies and victims have been well documented (for a review see Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal, & Albayrak-Kaymak, 2007). Research cites introverted personality, frequent presentation of emotional problems including depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation as well as loneliness, isolation and school refusal as consistently associated with bullying (Greenbaum, 1989; Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1992; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen, & Rimpela, 2000; Nansel et al,. 2001; Newman, Holden, & Delville, 2005; Woods & White, 2005). Rigby (2003) summarized that: (i) cross-sectional surveys show bullying is significantly related to low levels of psychological well-being and social adjustment and to high levels of psychological distress and adverse physical health symptoms; (ii) retrospective reports and studies suggest that bullying may contribute to later difficulties with health and well-being; and (iii) longitudinal studies provide stronger support that bullying is a significant causal factor in schoolchildren's lowered health and well-being and that the effects can be long-lasting. Furthermore, the longitudinal data indicate that the tendency to bully others at school significantly predicts subsequent antisocial and violent behaviour.

Other data are supportive of this, including that from follow up studies conducted in Norway (Olweus, 1997), showing that 70% of children originally identified as bullies in Grades 6 to 9, had been convicted of at least one criminal offence by the age of 24 years. In reviewing these data, Griffin and Gross (2004) suggested that bully status could be a risk factor for later diagnosis of conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder. This is further supported by the substantial

"trajectory" evidence demonstrating that children who display bullying behaviours often grow up to become perpetrators of violence, specifically domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assaults and hate crimes (Brendtro & Long, 1994; Garrity et al., 1996; Hoover & Oliver, 1996; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsay, 1995). In addition, bullying has been found to inculcate beliefs supportive of violence (Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999).

Although the focus of this thesis is on bullies rather than victims it is recognized that the victims of bullies also experience adverse consequences and these should not go unacknowledged. For example, internalizing disorders are frequently reported by victims and those who experience this are said to feel trapped, begin to believe the taunts, ruminate about violence, and contemplate suicide (Bulach, Fulbright, & Williams, 2003). Victims not only experience health related problems, but in some cases also develop problematic reactions towards others or themselves (Carney, 2000; Hazler, 1996, 1997). For example, victims have reported developing feelings of vengeance, anger, helplessness, self-pity, and public humiliation (Borg, 1998); all of which can lead to tragic consequences (Rigby & Slee, 1999). Children who are *constantly* victimized by bullies have been found to have low levels of self-esteem, higher rates of absenteeism from school, psychosomatic symptoms and chronic depression and, in extreme circumstances, suicide ideation (Carney, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; O'Moore & Hillery, 1991; Sharp & Herrick, 2000).

There are also adverse consequences associated with witnessing bullying as a *bystander* and developing feelings towards the victim after the incident. For

example, Boulton and Underwood (1992) conducted a survey of 290 children from three urban middle schools in Yorkshire, UK and found that 20.1% were upset by bullies victimizing others. In addition among those children who reported having helped victims, 27.1% admitted that bullying upset them. In some cases being a bystander and witnessing acts of bullying can result in similar consequences to those experienced by bullies and victims (Olweus, Alikasifoglu et al., 2007).

With reference to the present research reported in this thesis the feelings of humiliation and disgrace often experienced by victims' public disparagement may have particular importance. For example, whether bullies perpetrate this kind of action to deliberately achieve a desired reputation of non conformity, power and dominance has yet to be investigated and if this is the case, then there are important implications for the development of more effective interventions, both for bullies and their victims.

Bullies and their Motivations

Furlong et al. (2003) stated that only bullies can know their motivations. According to Rigby (2008) 30% of secondary school and 20% of primary school children cite personal justifications such as "to get even", "to show how tough I am", and "just for fun" for bullying others. Pellegrini (2004) explained bullying in schools as largely due to the need to dominate others in the course of establishing a hierarchy in the pecking order. According to Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rantenen and Rimpela (2000) bullies are also more likely to be involved in risky behaviours such as smoking, drinking, and early sexual activity than other groups of children.

Other research has similarly reported high levels of association between bullies and delinquency (Van der Wal et al., 2003), truancy (Alikasifoglu et al., 2007), and substance use, cheating on tests, and bringing weapons to school (Berthold & Hoover, 2000). All of these behaviours have been found to be strongly associated with attaining status and a particular reputation of choice among peers, and finding a place in the pecking order (see Carroll, Houghton, Durkin, & Hattie, 2009).

Rigby (2008) made the point that bullying is by and large a public event because of the locations in which it occurs. He went on to say that bullies are not ashamed of what they are doing, and that they want attention and an audience of peers to impress. Peer status has been highlighted by researchers such as Juvonen et al. (2003) and Kalitala-Heino et al. (2007) as potentially being an important element to bullies and as a significant motivation for their involvement in bullying. O'Connell et al. (1999) analysed videotaped segments of playground bullying and noted the central role of peer spectators in the social context of bullying episodes. Indeed, research shows that bullies are often popular within their group, and that their groups tend to be larger than those of non-bullies (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Woods, 2009). Rigby (1996) (as cited in Gini, 2006) also highlighted the importance of status for bullies citing research showing that other students depicted bullies as being strong, powerful and able to control others. Similarly, Sumajin, Fishbein and Ritchey (2001) demonstrated that bullying behaviours were used to maintain social status. According to Gamliel, Hoover, Daughtry and Imbra (2003) bullies use peer presence to their advantage - as a theatre for their bullying. The ages at which social status assumes increased levels

of importance was shown by Olweus (1993a, 1993b) to be around 10 to 13 years of age.

The research cited thus far showing that social status is important from around 10 years of age and that involvement in non conforming behaviours assists young persons to attain a reputation of choice highlights the importance of conducting research in the upper primary school years of schooling. What has not been investigated to date, however, is whether reputational status in bullying is important at this period in time. Extensive empirical research over the past 15 years (see Carroll et al., 2009 for a review) has demonstrated not only the significance of reputational orientations in children's and adolescents' involvement in a range of delinquent and other antisocial activities, but also that reputation becomes significant from around grade 4-5 (approximately 9-10 years of age) and increases in significance thereafter (Carroll, Baglioni, Houghton, & Bramston, 1999; Carroll, Houghton, & Baglioni, 2000; Houghton, Carroll, Odgers, & Allsop, 1998; Odgers, Houghton, & Douglas, 1996). This mass of research is based on Reputation Enhancement Theory (RET: see Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995), from which Carroll and colleagues argued that, for some young people, involvement in antisocial activities is a deliberate choice in order to gain a desired reputation (see Carroll, Green, Houghton, & Wood, 2003; Carroll, Houghton, Durkin, & Hattie, 2001; Carroll, Houghton, Durkin, & Hattie, 2003; Carroll, Hemingway et al., 2006; Carroll et al., 2009; Houghton, & Carroll, 2002). The key elements on which the psychology of reputation is built is visibility of actions to others, the audience to whom these actions are visible, as well as the perceptions and descriptions of ourselves and others which foster our self-image

(Emler & Reicher, 1995). Thus, it appears that bullying and reputation may have much in common.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter bullying is a social group process that is prevalent in schools (Woods & Wolke, 2004), yet to date no research appears to have investigated whether bullying is a deliberate choice on the part of young people as a means of establishing a reputation. Some related research has been conducted, however, which offers some tentative support for this premise. For example, bullying has been explained by, among other things, group mechanisms and friends' expectations (Olweus, 2001; Rigby, 2005; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Indeed, observational studies conducted while children freely interacted during recess and in outdoor play, have confirmed the crucial role of peers in bullying by consistently noting peer involvement in 85% of bullying episodes (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig, 1998; Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000). Other studies have also revealed the strong influence of group behaviour and/or the influence of the peer group or network on children's bullying (Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Salmivalli et al., 1997; Woods & Wolke, 2004). These findings appear relevant to earlier research (Ajzen, 1988) that clearly demonstrated that the development of attitudes towards someone is determined by what they think about a person's pursuit of a particular course of action.

Many of these peer and group processes are social-psychological and as such are strongly aligned to Reputation Enhancement Theory (Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995), a theory which has become dominant in explaining why young people indulge in antisocial behaviour and delinquent activities. (Reputation

Enhancement Theory is described in more detail in the next section of this chapter.) The importance of reputation to bullies has to date remained relatively unexplored, however. This is somewhat puzzling given that the reinforcing role of peers (who help and encourage the aggressor) in boosting the recognition and social approval of the aggressive behaviour almost certainly enhances the reputation of the perpetrator (Carroll, 2002; Carroll et al., 2009). Associated aggression research clearly demonstrates that many aggressors are perceived by peers as having high status (Hawley & Vaughn, 2003; Woods, 2009), and as having a need for power (i.e., being stronger and more powerful than others) and creating a particular identity in the peer group (Rodriguez, 2004).

There appears to be only one study to date that has examined the role of reputation in bullying. In this study Buelga, Musitu, Murgui and Pons (2008) surveyed 1319 Spanish adolescents aged 11 to 16 years using the Reputation Enhancement Scale (Carroll, Houghton et al., 1999). The findings confirmed that adolescents' aggression was a strategy to achieve power and status within the peer group and also as a means to achieve the perpetrators' ideal reputation of choice. In conclusion, Buelga et al. (2008) made two salient points. First, "reputation has a statistically significant relation with peer aggression" (p.198) and second, "the construction and management of reputation should be included in programs of prevention of violent behavior in the school setting, as this is undoubtedly a very important variable in the life of adolescents" (p. 198). While this research is important it should be noted that only one subscale (consisting of 15 items) of the 17 subscale Reputation Enhancement Scale was used; this provided data on perceived reputation and ideal reputation only. Thus, many aspects of reputation

enhancement and its applicability to bullies remain uninvestigated and therefore unanswered. If this potentially important social-psychological phenomenon is to be included in school programmes then a more comprehensive investigation is warranted.

The research presented in this thesis seeks to address this by building on the extensive research of Carroll and colleagues (for a comprehensive review see Carroll et al., 2009) which culminated in a theoretical model which assumes a social-psychological approach to explain that many children and adolescents become involved in delinquent and antisocial activities to establish and subsequently maintain a reputation of choice. To place the present research into context Reputation Enhancement Theory will now be examined, albeit briefly.

Reputation Enhancement Theory

According to Reputation Enhancement Theory (Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995) individuals carefully choose a particular self-image or social identity and then promote this before an audience of their peers. This audience then provides feedback so that the social identity chosen by the individual develops and maintains within the community. In addition, individuals go to great lengths to both develop and maintain this image of choice (Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995). According to Emler (1990) reputations are the products of social processes, not just the impressions that individuals hold of themselves. Furthermore, people must be connected to others in a relatively stable community of mutually acquainted and conversing individuals to have a reputation (Hopkins & Emler, 1990).

Hopkins and Emler (1990) hypothesized that individuals communicate their social identities through intentional, visible behaviour to persuade others that they belong to a particular social category. Therefore, an integral argument of RET is that individuals have public reputations and that this is the social goal of their conduct (Hopkins & Emler, 1990). Social visibility is therefore important and the ways in which this is sustained includes direct witnessing of the acts by others, by self-disclosure, gossip and exchange of information (Carroll et al., 2009). That is, in Emler's (1984) words, individuals are both students of reputations and promoters of their own reputations. Promoting a reputation is particularly important because of the credit it attributes to individuals within their social community (Emler, 1990; Emler & Reicher, 2005). In the context of the present research this may be particularly relevant since prior research highlights the importance of the peer group in bullying and also the physical locations (that ensure visibility) in which the bullying takes place.

How individuals generally choose to be defined is based on the selection of one specific kind of social identity over another (Emler, 1984). This has been substantiated by Carroll and colleagues (see Carroll et al., 2009 for a review). These researchers have clearly demonstrated that some children and adolescents choose to be law-abiding, athletic, or academic and pursue and conforming type of reputation. Conversely, they have also shown that a reputation for antisocial behavior is a deliberate choice by others because delinquent action is not only a means of creating a certain (tough) reputation amongst outsiders, but it also provides the condition for group membership (Emler & Reicher, 1995). Reicher

and Emler (1986) made the point that the visibility of chronic rule breakers' conduct or the damage it will do to their reputations is not miscalculated; rather, they deliberately foster this reputation. Indeed, research involving children and adolescents involved in illegal or non conforming activities (e.g., conflict with teachers, aggression, damage to property, dangerous use of drugs) consistently points to the fact that gaining or consolidating peer status through such involvement is a powerful motivation (Carroll, 1994; Carroll, Houghton et al., 1999; Carroll et al., 2003; Carroll, Houghton, & Odgers, 1998; Houghton & Carroll, 1996; Houghton, Odgers, & Carroll, 1998; Odgers, Houghton, & Douglas, 1996; Goldstein, 1994; Lagree & Fai, 1989).

Involvement in delinquency is a prime example of the acquisition of social visibility through the presence of a regular audience who provide feedback (Emler, 1983, 1984, 1990; Emler & Reicher, 2005; Goffman, 1972; West & Farrington, 1977). Moreover, if an individual wishes to claim a delinquent identity, he/she must be seen to break rules and regulations and become deliberately nonconforming (Hopkins & Emler, 1990). In doing so, public proof of character is provided (Goffman, 1972). To acquire and maintain a delinquent identity requires an audience who share a subculture (Gold & Petronio, 1980), and to ensure visibility delinquent activities are not committed alone but in company (Reicher & Emler, 1986). It may be, as postulated by Reicher and Emler (1986) that without the social support of a peer group a delinquent (or non delinquent) reputation is hard to sustain. For non delinquents, families and teachers provide the social support and feedback (Hopkins & Emler, 1990), whereas for delinquents, alternative audiences such as peers are sought to sustain their

reputations (Emler, 1984; Farrington & West, 1990; Carroll et al., 2009; Junger-Tas, 1992).

The steep rise which occurs in delinquency at the onset of adolescence is for many young people associated with their movement away from the supervision and protection of parents to peers (Emler, 1984). Increases in routine contact with like-minded peers that provide the audience necessary to enhance a reputation is associated with this change. Reicher and Emler (1986) and Carroll et al. (2009) clearly demonstrate that the active employment of many positive strategies of offending allows delinquents to achieve their desired status and enhance their reputations in early to mid-adolescence, while continued (but not so active) involvement in later adolescence functions to maintain credit or status within the group. Perhaps the active employment of bullying behaviours allows primary school aged children achieve the status and reputation they desire?

Differentiating Reputations by Gender, Age and Status

Research to date suggests that choice of reputation is affected by a number of variables, including gender, age and group status (i.e., delinquent, at risk and not at risk, suspended, detained). With reference to *gender* there is substantial evidence that males admit to a greater number of delinquent acts and seek a more non conforming reputation (see Carroll et al., 2009). However, Kerpelman and Smith-Adcock (2005) acknowledged that research on RET to date has almost exclusively been used to guide research with male adolescents. In earlier research Carroll et al. (2003) had concluded that reputation enhancement is salient for girls. Moreover, this point was made some 10 years earlier by Emler and Reicher

(1995) who asserted that although girls are less likely to adopt the oppositional stance that promotes non conforming reputations and delinquent behaviour, further insight is required to understand the female social experience so as to extend RET to girls' delinquency. Hence, the present research which appears to be the first to examine reputation enhancement and bullies will include gender within any analyses.

Of the limited reputation enhancement research conducted with girls, Kerpelman and Smith-Adcock (2005) demonstrated that not only is reputation enhancement a strong and direct predictor of girls' involvement in antisocial activities, but that girls' social groups or the approval of girlfriends are influential in their indulgence in these activities. Although only a small number of females who reported involvement in antisocial activities were included in the sample, Kerpelman and Smith-Adcock (2005) concluded: "Taken together, the findings highlight the importance of using a psychosocial perspective (i.e., reputation enhancement) when examining girls' delinquency" (p. 194).

Gender differences have also been identified in research conducted by Carroll, Green, Houghton and Wood (2003) which surveyed 965 adolescents (467 males, 498 females) aged 12 to 18 years in two capital cities of Australia (Perth and Brisbane). Using the Reputation Enhancement Scale (RES), which is described in detail on page 93 of this thesis, a significant main effect of gender was found, with univariate and post hoc statistics revealing that females placed more value on friendship and group membership, admired socially conforming activities more so than males (e.g., returning what they have borrowed, obeying parents, receiving

good grades), perceived themselves to be more conforming (e.g., get along well with others, have a good reputation), would ideally like to be perceived by others as conforming (trusting, good), described themselves with positive attributes (kind, friendly) and communicated more with adults and parents than did males. In other words, females reported a higher desire than males for a conforming reputation and were more likely to participate in activities that supported this reputation. Conversely, males reported a higher admiration for socially deviant activities (e.g., dealing drugs, stealing, truancy, taking drugs), perceived themselves to be non conforming (e.g., breaking rules, getting into trouble), and reported informing their peers of their non conforming behavior more so than did females. Overall, the males ideally wished to be perceived as tough, leaders and popular. It appears on the face of it, therefore, that males are *more* interested than females with attaining and maintaining a non conforming reputation.

In a recent survey of over 1300 adolescents, however, Carroll, Houghton, Khan and Tan (2008) found that female delinquents do seek non conforming reputations similar to those of their male counterparts. Specifically, when males were initially compared to females they (i.e., males) scored significantly higher on reputation enhancement variables pertaining to social deviance and a non conforming reputation. When 31 at-risk females were subsequently pair wise age matched with 31 not-at-risk females, the at-risk females scored significantly higher on reputation enhancement variables relating to social deviance and non conformity. That is, the at risk females expressed an admiration for others who were involved in delinquency, reported that their friends did not see them (i.e., the at risk females) as socially conforming, but rather as a ‘bad kid’, ‘getting into trouble’,

'breaking the rules', and being 'tough'. These at risk females also expressed a desire to be seen in this way by friends. Finally, at-risk females were less willing than not-at-risk females to communicate or brag about their pro-social behaviour to friends, parents, and/or other adults. Of particular note was that Carroll et al. (2008) reported that at risk females committed their delinquent acts in a more covert manner and did not readily admit to committing these acts. On the other hand, at risk males tended to be more overt in their actions and openly admitted to committing delinquent acts. These findings tend to support the earlier research of Martin (1997) who in a qualitative interview based study involving 12 at risk adolescent females found that they concealed their non conforming activities as a means of protecting their reputations.

Significant gender differences in reputational orientation have also been found in younger children. For example, in a study involving the administration of the Reputation Enhancement Scale (Carroll et al., 1999) to 886 Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 primary school aged children Carroll, Houghton and Baglioni (2000) found that boys perceived themselves as tougher, more popular, and more of a leader than their female counterparts and ideally wished to be perceived in the same way by their peers. In the context of the present research these findings highlight that there are gender differences in reputation, which become salient and meaningful at around 10 years of age (grade 5).

With further reference to *age*, there is an increase in routine contact with like-minded peers at the age of about 10 or 11 during the latter stages of primary school (Hopkins & Emler, 1990). Involvement in antisocial and delinquent

behaviour also increases steeply during early adolescence. Research conducted with 886 Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 primary school aged children by Carroll, Houghton and Baglioni (2000) found children not at-risk of adverse life outcomes perceived themselves and ideally wished to be perceived as conforming persons, while at-risk children perceived themselves and ideally wished to be perceived as non conforming. This showed that during the early primary school years children are able to differentiate the kind of reputation they seek to acquire. Carroll et al. (2000) subsequently stated that the age related differences evident among primary and secondary students provides strong support for the hypothesis put forward by Emler (1984) and Hopkins and Emler (1990) that around early adolescence reputation and social status development occurs. A finding of particular importance to the present research, however, was that in replicating the earlier high school work in the primary school setting the reputational model did not fit the data well; parameters were meaningless and not interpretable. As such, Carroll et al. (2000) reported that the second-order model of the Reputation Enhancement Scale could <u>not</u> be replicated with the primary school sample. These authors concluded that the findings indicated that the salience of peer reputation is detectable at least as early as the transition to adolescence, but because reputations are not established until the early high school years, primary school is an opportunistic time to intervene.

Carroll and colleagues (see Carroll, 1994; Carroll et al., 2009; Carroll, Houghton et al., 1999; Carroll et al., 2003; Houghton & Carroll, 1996; Houghton, Carroll, Tan, & Hopkins, 2008; Tan, Houghton, & Carroll, in press) have also shown that reputation differentiates between groups of young persons according to their

group status. For example, in the primary school years Carroll, Houghton and Baglioni (2000) reported that at-risk children admired socially deviant activities (e.g., bullying and/or smoking cigarettes, school truanting, and stealing money) significantly more so than children not at-risk. At-risk children also perceived themselves and ideally wished to be perceived as a bad kid, a troublemaker, a bully, breaking rules, doing things against the law, and getting into trouble with the police. They described themselves and ideally wished to be described as mean, nasty, and breaking the rules significantly more than participants classified as not at-risk. On the other hand, not at-risk children (compared to the at-risk children) perceived themselves and ideally wished to be perceived as a good person, getting along well with other people, likely to do well at school, and trustworthy with secrets.

Similar findings showing differences between delinquent incarcerated and at-risk groups have also been reported (see Carroll et al., 2009 for a review). For example, delinquent incarcerated individuals see themselves as non conforming (e.g., one who breaks rules) and want to be perceived by others in this way (e.g., getting into trouble with the police, doing things against the law). These same individuals also admire socially deviant activities (e.g., drug dealing, stealing). However, Carroll and colleagues found no differences between incarcerated delinquent, at-risk, and nondelinquent adolescents in their self-presentation behaviours in that all aspired to being tough, a leader, good looking, powerful, and popular, irrespective of their delinquent/non delinquent status.

Qualitative research (Houghton & Carroll, 1996) supports the empirical evidence showing the differential importance of reputation to groups. For example, adolescents at risk utilize class and school behaviour management systems within the school setting to attain a non conforming reputation. Contrary to not at risk adolescents, at-risk individuals utilize teacher behaviour management strategies such as reprimands, being sent out of class, and names put on chalk board and school-based behaviour management systems, including time out, detention, and suspension to enhance their reputations of choice among peers. According to adolescents at risk the highly public nature of these management strategies provides them with opportunites to maximize their visibility through the interaction of their behaviour and the teacher's response to it. In doing so, they promote their reputation of choice before their peers.

In a large scale study of 965 adolescents (467 males, 498 females) aged 12 to 18 years Carroll, Green, Houghton and Wood (2003) examined the effects of age and *level* of delinquency involvement on reputational orientations. Adolescents aged 12 to 14 years were found to be most concerned with their non conforming reputation. That is, compared to 15 to 17 year olds, the 12 to 14 year old adolescents more openly admired socially deviant activities, perceived themselves to be tough, leaders, popular, and nonconforming (e.g., trouble makers). There were some 12 to 14 year old adolescents, however, who perceived themselves as conforming (e.g., having a good reputation). Since most 12 to 14 year olds are in the early to mid stages of adolescent development, the choice of a conforming or non conforming reputation assumes increasing importance, thus adding support to Emler's (1990) contention that reputations become highly important at the onset

of adolescence. Peer communication of non conforming deviant behaviour was found to be greatest for 14 to 16 year olds, which is consistent with Emler's (1984, 1990) assertion that once a reputation has been established, its maintenance is of critical importance. To do this, adolescents must behave in a manner consistent with this reputation and/or communicate this behaviour to others.

Reputation Enhancement and Bullies

Given the extensive research evidence pointing to the importance of initiating, establishing and/or maintaining a reputation of choice (whether conforming or non conforming) in the lives of primary and secondary school aged students the question remains as to whether this is also the case in the lives of bullies. It appears that apart from the Buelga et al. (2008) study no other research has specifically examined the importance of reputation to bullies. This is somewhat puzzling since researchers have alluded to (i) the pervasiveness of bullying being partly explained by group mechanisms (see Olweus, 1973, 2001; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004); (ii) the strong influence of group behaviour on an individual's behaviour in bullying situations (Salmivalli, Huttunen, & Lagerspetz, 1997); (iii) the influence of the peer group or network of friends to which a student belongs (Cairns & Cairns, 1994); (iv) bullies admiration of power, need to cultivate an image, and dominate others (Boulton, Bucci, & Hawker, 1999; Woods, 2009); and (v) the development of pro-bullying attitudes particularly evident in pre-adolescents (Gini, 2006).

This is not to say that theories similar to reputation enhancement theory have not been examined. According to Gini (2006), for example, the inter group processes

cited above are consistent with Tajfel's social identity theory (see Brown, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This theory proposed that

> an individual's perceptions and attitudes and behaviour towards in-group and out-group members ultimately derive from their desire to identify with and belong to a group seen as superior to other groups in order to enhance their own self-esteem (Gini, 2006, p. 53).

According to Ojala and Nesdale (2004) belonging to a social group provides members with a sense of social identity, and this not only describes them, but also prescribes their appropriate behaviours. In the context of bullying, Ojala and Nesdale (2004) suggested that children in the "in-group" tended to consider bullying to be more acceptable when it was consistent with group norms and when it was against an out-group person who was considered to be a potential threat to the in-group. This was supported by Gini's (2006) findings from a study of 455 pre-adolescent boys and girls (mean age 12.5 years). Specifically, social power and group status were seen as two of the primary motives in peer victimization, especially during early adolescence when children are attempting to raise their social status. Gini (2006) concluded that the findings were (i) consistent with major social psychological explanations of intergroup relationships which propose that children enter into peer groups and develop friendships due to social identity concerns, and consequently (ii) more research is needed to develop school based intervention programmes that focus on group identification processes.

Of particular note for the present research was Gini's (2006) suggestion that young people attempt to raise their social status to enhance their own standing and gain a dominance over peers and as such they "view aggressive behaviour towards weaker peers as an effective way to achieve social power" (p. 62). In line with this Woods (2009) pointed out that children who are aggressive tend to use their aggression to maintain their status, particularly by attacking those lower down the hierarchy. Other researchers have also made the point that bullies (boys in particular) can find aggression as an acceptable way of interacting with other peers (Simpson & Cohen, 2004). Indeed, research clearly demonstrates that aggressive adolescents at school show a very strong need for social recognition; they would like to be considered as powerful, socially accepted, different, and rebellious by their classmates (Rodrıguez, 2004). Thus, aggressive behaviour may be very important in the cultivation of reputations and as such may be critical in the everyday lives of bullies.

Aggressive Behaviour and Bullies

Although leading researchers such as Coie and Dodge (1998) have noted that aggression has proven to be difficult for researchers to define, it has been defined by Berkowitz (1993) and Olweus (1973, 1999) as "behaviour intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another individual". Bullying on the other hand has been defined as a type of peer aggression aimed at causing physical and or psychological harm to one or more students who are weaker and unable to defend themselves (Rigby, 1996; Smith & Sharp, 1994). Rigby (2002) observed that ‘‘to some it may seem like splitting hairs to make a distinction between aggression and bullying, and it is evident that some writers have been reluctant to embrace

the term ‘bullying’, preferring the term aggression - a term more familiar to researchers. . .’’ (p. 30). Thus, while there is considerable overlap between the two definitions and while bullying is viewed as a subset of aggression by some (Sakellariou, 2005), others such as Rigby (2008) have pointed out that aggressive behaviour does not always involve an abuse of power – the combatants may be approximately equal in strength and power. Rigby (2008) developed this argument further suggesting that in the case of bullying a judgment is made that the aggressive behaviour in question is not justified; the perpetrator should not be permitted to dominate a less powerful person; and the person under attack should not be oppressed (p. 25). In concluding, however, Rigby appears to confuse his argument, stating that “we may reasonably focus on one aspect only of aggression: namely bullying” (p.25). Irrespective of the arguments it is clear from the literature reviewed earlier in this chapter that bullying is predicated on or closely aligned with, or considered to be a subset of the overarching concept of aggressive behaviour (Griffin & Gross, 2004), whether physical, verbal, or psychological or all three.

In recent research Lopez, Perez, Ochoa and Ruiz (2008) suggested a tentative link between school aggression, bullying and reputation. They hypothesized that negative interactions with peers led to the development of attitudes of rejection and rebelliousness and hence aggressive behaviour, particularly in boys. Indeed, it is well documented that adolescents who show negative attitudes and who look for social recognition as being powerful and rebellious individuals (Carroll, Green, Houghton, & Wood, 2003; Emler & Reicher, 2005) are more likely to

participate in aggressive and antisocial activities. Whether this is also true of upper primary school young person's who bully remains unknown.

Categorising Bullying and Aggressive Behaviours

Olweus (1993a) proposed bullying categorizations of *direct* and *indirect*, the former including physical aggression (hitting, kicking, shoving), name-calling and teasing, threats, and having money or items taken or damaged (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). (This form of bullying has also been called *overt* aggression, see Crick, 1995.) In contrast, indirect – or *covert* bullying (Crick, 1995) – includes spreading false rumours and using a third party to harm others (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). This is closely linked to *relational aggression* which involves the use of manipulating relationships to harm others (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996). Longitudinal data clearly demonstrates that young persons who present with aggressive behaviour are more likely to develop antisocial behaviours, commit adult crimes and become abusive spouses and parents (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Farrington, 1991; Olweus, 1993b). Thus, in the context of the present research which seeks to investigate bullies and reputation enhancement it is important to review the work on aggression since aggressors and victims exist within relationships which are embedded within the social nature of the peer group. Understanding why bullies use aggressive behaviour to potentially achieve status among peers is important since the victims of such behaviour (be it indirect, relational or social) can become depressed, anxious, lonely, and have more negative thoughts about their physical appearance, global self-worth, and friendships (e.g., Craig, 1998; Eslea, 2005; Henington et al., 1998; Paquette & Underwood, 1999).

Research over the years has identified distinct categories of aggressive behaviour, including reactive, proactive, overt, and relational aggression that to all intents and purposes are similar to those developed for bullying. Although related, reactive and proactive aggression represents two distinct subtypes of aggression (Fite, Colder, Lochman, & Wells, 2008). Recent research (see Polman et al., 2009) suggests, however, that proactive aggression is uniquely related to bullying behaviours. *Proactive* aggression has been defined as an "unprovoked aversive means of influencing or coercing another person and is more goal-directed than reactive aggression" (Price & Dodge, 1989, p. 456). It has also been described as "calculated" (Fite et al., 2008). Proactive aggression is consistent with social learning theory which posits that aggression serves the function of helping one to attain a desired goal (Bandura, 1973). Conversely, *reactive* aggression is thought to be "a defensive reaction to a perceived threatening stimulus and is accompanied by some visible form of anger (e.g., angry facial gesture or verbalizations)" (Price & Dodge, 1989, p. 456). Reactive aggression is best explained by the frustration aggression model, which posits that aggression is an angry and hostile reaction to frustration (Berkowitz, 1978). *Overt* (or direct) aggression, which has been shown to be stable across time, is characterized by openly confrontational behaviour toward others (e.g., physical assault, verbal threats, attacks against their property - which may include destruction - see Connor, Melloni, & Harrison, 1998). *Relational* (or covert, or indirect) aggression does not involve a direct confrontation between the aggressor and victim. Rather it may comprise exclusion or rejection from a social group, the spreading of rumours, keeping of secrets, or causing embarrassment in a social setting (Crick et al., 1996).

Juxtaposing the bullying and aggression information led Olweus (1991) to describe bullies as impulsive, aggressive, dominative, non-empathetic and physically strong. Hoover and Juul (1993) added that bullies have a positive attitude toward instrumental violence and a favourable self-image. The question remains, however, why do bullies bully? Sijtsema, Veenstra, Lindenberg and Salmivalli (2009) hypothesized that it is because bullies have a stronger status need (combining dominance and prestige) than most others, particularly more so than the victims they choose to bully. Furthermore, this may be heightened because of a certain social hierarchy that exists, which is partly the result of aggressing against peers. Indeed, some bullies openly admit that they want to be dominant and achieve social status (Boulton & Underwood, 1992) and this is supported by findings demonstrating that bullies dominate others by the use of aggression (see Pakaslahti & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 1998; Pellegrini et al., 1999; Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2006). Very little research appears to have differentiated the type of aggressive behaviour used by the bullies, however. In some relatively small scale research Cillessen and Mayeux (2004) found that while aggression is likely to lead to social rejection, both relational and physical aggression are likely to predict perceived popularity. In other words, bullies are likely to be perceived as popular, but not as socially preferred. This is tentatively supported by related research conducted by Vaillancourt and Hymel (2006) that found when students were asked to directly nominate the most popular classmates they related the request to perceptions of power rather than social preference.

In one of the very few studies to examine the function of bullying, aggression and "striving for status" Sijtsema et al. (2009) reported that while male bullies were

high on proactive aggression this was less obvious in female bullies, who were more reactive in their aggressive behaviour. Of particular interest was that fourth-grade boys used proactive aggression as a means of gaining prestige and status. While female bullies also sought a similar status among their peers, they tended to use reactive aggression more so than proactive. The authors, cautioned, however, the differences could have been the result of items in their reactive aggression scale being more applicable to girls, whereas the proactive items were more applicable to boys. They also cited difficulties with their proactive aggression scale items as a possibility for differences occurring. Nevertheless, not withstanding these cautions it was concluded that boys may be more focused on dominating and thus use more proactive aggression as a means to achieve this. Based on the findings Sijtsema et al. (2009) recommended that interventions should focus on providing possibilities for children to achieve status in different ways, thereby avoiding the bullying strategy to which seemingly many children with status goals have adapted their behaviour.

Crick and Dodge (1999) advanced the hypothesis that bullies are proactively aggressive. Research has found, however, that bullies tend to show both reactive and proactive aggressive behaviour (Camodeca, Goossens, Meerum, Terwogt, & Schuengel, 2002; Pellegrini et al., 1999; Roland & Idsoe, 2001; Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). Schwartz et al. (1997) suggested that there should be a strong association between being a bully and proactive aggression, since bullies are more likely to hold positive beliefs regarding the outcome of their aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, associations with delinquent or like-minded peers may play a part in the relationship between proactive aggression and bullying since research

demonstrates that proactively aggressive children tend to associate with other proactively aggressive children (See Fite et al., 2008). In an investigation of social information processing, Crick and Dodge (1996) reported that proactively aggressive children evaluated aggression in a more positive way and as a valid means to reach goals. In comparison, the reactively aggressive children attributed hostile intent to their peers and responded in an aggressive way. In contrast to Crick and Dodge (1996), the earlier findings of Dodge (1991) obtained from a sample of 1,062 children aged 10 to 12 revealed that bullies were both reactively and proactively aggressive.

Several studies have suggested that peer-rejected children are generally more aggressive than their non-rejected peers (Asher & Dodge, 1986), with up to 48% of peer-rejected boys being aggressive, impulsive, and disruptive (Cillessen, Van Ijzendoorn, Van Lieshout, & Hartup, 1992). Research has also shown that aggressive children often have a well developed network of friends, are solid members of peer clusters and are as likely as other children to be named “best friend” (Cairns et al., 1988). In support of this, Xie et al. (2002) found that socially aggressive adolescents had high levels of “social network centrality” and were nuclear members of nuclear groups. These individuals have also been found to be perceived by peers as popular in terms of their social status, social power, impact, and visibility; all of which corresponds to peers’ perceptions of a child’s social reputation (Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1998; Prinstein & Cillessen, 2003). In line with this, aggression has been shown to be positively correlated with perceived popularity and as a means to maintain (Cillessen & Mayeux, 2004) and

improve social status (Luthar & McMahon, 1996; Sandstrom, 1999), and lead to reciprocal friendships (Cairns & Cairns, 1994).

Prinstein and Cillessen (2003) argued that aggressive adolescents are accorded generally high status when defined by high levels of peer-perceived popularity. This has also been found to be the case with younger primary school aged children in grades four to eight, where perceived popularity has been found to be positively correlated with physical and relational aggression (LaFontana & Cillessen, 2002). With reference to indirect aggression (or “relational aggression” which refers to a similar phenomena, see Bjorkquist, 2001) this has been defined as “a kind of social manipulation (in which) the aggressor manipulates others to attack the victim, or, by other means, makes use of the social structure in order to harm the target person, without being personally involved in attack” (Bjorkquist, Osterman, & Kaukiainen, 1992, p. 52). The primary characteristic of this being the absence of direct confrontation between the perpetrator and the victim and hence the role played by the social community i.e., the audience.

Although bullying is seen by many as an aggressive act, differences may exist between bullies and the types of aggressive behaviours they use. Vaillancourt, Hymel and McDougall (2003) alluded to this in their study of grade 6 through to grade 10 bullies. That is, socially rejected psychologically troubled bullies were distinguishable from bullies with leadership qualities and high levels of peer-perceived popularity. In earlier research Boulton and Smith (1994) found bullies were often rejected by their peers, which may to some extent be similar to Vaillancourt et al’s. (2003) socially rejected bullies. Indirectly, yet importantly,

this highlights another aspect of bullying which appears to have been under-investigated to date, that of bullies with limited, if any friends - loners who bully.

Loners and Bullying

Individuals with none or very limited friendships have been classified as "loners" by some researchers (Demuth, 2004) and as "social isolates" by others (e.g., Adler & Adler, 1996). Irrespective of the name used, a common issue appears to be their limited friendship patterns (Demuth, 2004). Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (see Kreager, 2004) demonstrates that social isolates who report having significant trouble with others ('peer trouble isolates') are *more* likely to become involved in antisocial activities and to form delinquent peer associations than isolates who report having little trouble with others ('invisible isolates'). Although there is research pointing to bullies as social and popular members of peer groups, there is also research suggesting that some are social isolates with limited, if any friends (see Boulton & Smith, 1994; Vaillancourt et al., 2003). In Australia, Sakellariou (2005) found that although group bullying occurred more frequently than individual bullying, there was a small core group of 2.5% of students who engaged in bullying on their own "several times a week" and 4.1% who did so "once a week". That bullying occurs by individuals, possibly in private, warrants further investigation.

To date, very limited research has examined the possibility that social bullies and loner bullies strive for different social status or reputations. This is not to say that related research into loners does not exist. For example, in a recent study Houghton, Carroll, Tan and Hopkins (2008) used the Loner Scale (see Houghton

et al., 2008; Tan, Houghton & Carroll, in press) to identify a core group of high school students aged 10 to 18 years who were loner delinquents. Findings revealed that these loner delinquents committed significantly higher rates of all types of antisocial behaviour than non loner non delinquents of the same age, and significantly higher rates of physically aggressive activities, stealing, and hard drug-related activities than non loner delinquents of the same age. Of particular interest to the present research is that overall, the reputational orientations of loners were suggestive of individuals who wished to be non conforming but desired this to be of a private nature, which may be why they committed their delinquent activities without the presence of an immediate audience.

It appears that to date, loners have not been investigated in the context of bullying. This is important since, as highlighted earlier in this thesis, 85% of bullying episodes occur in unstructured but highly public contexts in the presence of an immediate audience (e.g., recess and in outdoor play, school hallways, in the cafeteria, on school buses, and on the way to or from school: see Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001). If reputation and the desire to attain a specific social image is the driving force behind why bullies bully, how then does a loner who bullies others but in private fit with Reputation Enhancement Theory? Without the necessary visibility - a key element upon which the psychology of reputation is built - is a reputation possible for loner bullies? It may be that cyber bullying offers opportunities for bullies, and loner bullies in particular, to perpetrate their acts without the presence of an immediate wider audience. Alternatively, cyber bullying often reveals the identity of the bully which gives rise to the visibility of actions. Subsequent sending on of texts or images to peers (friends and enemies

alike) then widens this visibility. However, there may be other ways, such as the victim or the victim's parents telling others by word of mouth, who then tell others. In this way the identity of the loner bully is revealed and spread, thus ensuring a reputation is built. The present research will therefore investigate quantitatively the reputational orientations of bullies who are loners and then explore qualitatively, along with other aspects of bullying, the reasons why these individuals bully in this way.

Summary

Although bullying has been defined in a number of ways definitions of bullying are consistent internationally and place an emphasis on several factors: bullying involves an individual perpetrator or group who harms another(s) through words, physical violence and/or electronic means; the individual or group is either physically, verbally or socially stronger than the victim(s); and in most instances the act of bullying is repeated over time. As research has burgeoned so too has our understanding of the multi faceted nature of bullying, particularly in terms of the proactive and reactive course it can take and the consequences it can have on victims (and bystanders). The relatively new form of bullying known as cyber bullying has increased the potential for bullying.

Generally, the prevalence rates of bullying have been reported as between 7% and 27%, although some data such as that from Lithuania puts it as high as 38.2% for girls and 41.4% for boys. In Australia, prevalence appears to be between 4.5% and 44%. Most bullying tends to occur where students interact informally, often with little direct supervision. With reference to gender differences boys and girls have

been found to frequently engage in bullying, but they usually differ in the type of bullying in which they indulge. With reference to *age*, the prevalence rates appear to fluctuate, with research seeming to suggest that bullying decreases as children grow older. For victims of bullying, depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation as well as loneliness, isolation and school refusal are consistently cited as adverse outcomes.

The reasons why bullies bully are less well understood. Many bullies cite personal justifications for bullying, but because bullying is by and large a public event peer status appears to be an important motivator. Indeed, extensive related empirical research has clearly demonstrated the significance of status and reputational orientations in children's and adolescents' involvement in a range of delinquent and other antisocial activities. The key elements on which reputation is built are visibility of actions to others, the audience to whom these actions are visible, as well as the perceptions and descriptions of ourselves and others which foster our self-image. Given the visible nature of bullying it is posited here that reputation is a key element underlying the motivations for why bullies bully. At the same time, however, there may be a small core group of students who engage in bullying on their own. For these loners, reputation may have a different saliency.

Research Questions

The present research thesis has a number of avenues to investigate in relation to bullies and their reputational orientations. Thus, based on the aims of the proposed research and in view of the literature reviewed, the major research questions to be addressed in this research are:

Research Question 1. Is reputation important to bullies?

Research Question 2. What activities do bullies engage in (and in which locations) to gain visibility of actions and hence achieve their reputation of choice?

Research Question 3. Are the instruments valid measures of bullying behaviour, physical and verbal (proactive-reactive) aggression, loner status and reputation?

Research Question 4. What are the patterns of bullying behaviour, physical and verbal (proactive-reactive) aggression, and reputational orientations among middle to upper primary school aged bullies?

Research Question 5. Are there differential patterns of bullying behaviour, physical and verbal (proactive-reactive) aggression, and reputation as a function of age and gender?

Research Question 6. Are there differential patterns of reputational orientations as a function of loner status?

Research Question 7. What is the importance of visibility of actions and the presence of an immediate audience for reputation enhancement, in terms of the motivations for bullying?

Research Question 8. Does cyber bullying – an apparently anonymous mode of bullying - enhance the reputations of bullies?

Research Question 9. Is Reputation Enhancement Theory applicable to bullies?

CHAPTER THREE

STUDY ONE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE CONSTRUCT OF BULLYING FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF BULLIES

This chapter describes the methodology and results of Study One, the purpose of which was to explore both male and female primary school aged bullies' perspectives of bullying behaviour and also the effects their behaviour has on victims. Since the aim of the next study (Study Two) is to examine the reputational orientations of bullies, and the nature of their aggressive and bullying behaviour (e.g., verbal/physical/electronic), and given the absence of research examining bullying and reputational orientations, it was important to first conduct exploratory research. Hence, in this first study a series of individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with bullies, using a qualitative approach. According to Owens, Shute and Slee (2000) qualitative studies can provide rich and unique detail about bullying, including the relational variety where children are excluded from groups or made the subjects of malicious rumours. Moreover, Owens, Shute and Slee (2000) asserted that a qualitative approach demonstrates that children can articulate unusual or non-intuitive aspects of bullying that fall outside pre-conceptions.

Method

Participants and Settings

Forty six Grade 5 primary school aged children (23 males and 23 females, aged 10 to 11 years) were selected to participate because each had been suspended from

school during the current school year because of their bullying behaviour(s). Table 1, which shows the bullying behaviours for which these students were suspended, clearly demonstrates the range of verbal, physical and indirect methods of bullying perpetrated in primary school contexts. Grade 5 was selected because research shows that younger children (i) use a more inclusive bullying concept that includes any act of unjustified aggression and are less likely to refrain from bullying due to socialisation pressure (Smith et al., 1999), and (ii) around Grade 5 the importance of establishing a desired reputation becomes salient (Carroll et al., 2009).

The participants were drawn from eight separate primary schools located in a range of socio economic status areas, across the metropolitan area of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. These schools were selected by the researcher (through personal contacts) because of their documented histories of children involved in bullying. The total number of Grade 5 students on roll in the eight schools was 180. Therefore, the 46 students identified as bullies represented approximately 25.5% of the total (bully and non bully) Grade 5 population available.

All interviews were conducted in a room specifically set aside by each of the schools for this purpose. These rooms provided a relaxed atmosphere, were free from distraction and comfortable for both the researcher and participants during the interviews. The researcher sat opposite but slightly to one side of each of the participants and an audio recorder was placed on the table in full view.

Table 1. The bullying behaviours for which participants had been suspended

Bullying Behaviours at School (Sample N = 46)	
Male (N=23)	Female (N=23)
Verbal abuse including swearing	Verbal abuse including racist language
Physical threats/assault of students staff, including use of weapons	Physical threats/assaults of /and students and staff including use of weapons
Damaging property of peers	Spitting on peers
Graffiti threats and hurtful messages	Spreading rumours
Stealing peer's money and lunch	Ostracism of peers
Theft of school property	Writing obscene graffiti about peers (threats) on public places
Using other students to bully peers	Encouraging others to bully

Semi Structured Interviews

Having face to face encounters between researcher and participants enables the researcher to understand the participants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Throughout all interviews cognizance was taken of Wood's (1992) enumeration of skills which are necessary to ensure that the interview is as productive as possible. These skills include: Active listening, which demonstrates that the interviewer is hearing, reacting and occasionally constructing interpretations; focusing or keeping the interview on the subject; explicating where material is incomplete or ambiguous; and checking for accuracy by pressing points,

rephrasing and summarising. In this way, the researcher becomes a partner with the participant, with both of them working together to "get the story straight" (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). Accordingly, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe as deeply as possible into the individual's subjective experiences of the phenomenon in question.

Initially on meeting, the participants were engaged in general conversation for two or three minutes by the researcher. They were then asked what they thought bullying was. Following this each was then told that bullying was when a student or several other students: Say mean and hurtful things or make fun of someone or call him/her mean and hurtful names; completely ignore or exclude him/her from their group of friends or leave him/her out of things on purpose; hit, kick, shove around or threaten him/her; tell lies or spread false rumours about him/her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her; and other hurtful things like that (see Olweus, 1996 as cited in Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007). Participants were then asked whether they thought this was an appropriate way to describe bullying. Once participants had commented on this they were told they were going to be asked to assume the positions of (i) a bully carrying out the bullying, (ii) a victim receiving the bullying, and (iii) an onlooker who witnessed the bullying. It was decided to use this approach rather than ask them directly about their bullying so as to remove ownership of ideas from them. This has been used successfully in other research with children at risk and involved in risk taking behaviours (see Durkin & Houghton, 2000). Participants were then asked some questions for each position taken. These questions sought information about the types of aggression bullies used and the motivations behind them; the physical

locations in which bullying occurred; the role of an audience; whether bullies were trying to achieve an image; the effect of the bullying on the victims and others; and how peers perceived bullies. Throughout the interviews the interviewer probed with further questions whenever information volunteered seemed incomplete or it offered new insights on the topic being discussed.

Procedure

Prior to the research being conducted, approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the administering Institution. Contact was initially made by telephone with the principals of eight schools identified by teacher colleagues of the researcher as being known for documented bullying. At this time the purpose of the research was explained to the principals along with how any outcomes of the research might assist teachers and schools to understand bullies and develop more effective prevention strategies. Principals were asked if they would be interested in participating and if so would they be willing to forward a letter of introduction, an information sheet and consent form, which are reproduced in Appendix 1, to the Grade 5 teacher(s) in his/her school. All eight principals agreed to do this and within the following seven days the researcher was informed that all eight teachers had also agreed to assist in the research.

The researcher subsequently met with each of the eight teachers separately at their respective schools, at which time the teachers were asked to use the school's Managing Student Behaviour records to identify children suspended from school for bullying during that school year (i.e., during the past six months). In total 46 students were identified across the eight schools.

An introductory letter (which is reproduced in Appendix 1) from the researcher explaining the purpose of the research and a consent form was then sent to the parent/guardian(s) of each identified child asking permission for their son/daughter to participate in the interviews. A 100% positive response rate occurred and so times were arranged with the schools for the participants to be interviewed separately. All interviews were conducted by the researcher who met each participant at the designated interview room and initially engaged them in general conversation. After a couple of minutes the purpose of the research was explained and each participant was given the option of not participating. Confidentiality of responses was emphasized. All participants agreed to continue in assisting with the research. The researcher then pointed out the audio-recorder and asked the participant if it was OK to record the interview. Again all participants agreed to this.

All recordings were subsequently transcribed by the researcher. A second person independent of the research listened to 25% of the transcribed interviews so that a measure of rater reliability could be obtained. In this instance there was a 94% level of agreement indicating a high level of reliability.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the interviews began with transcription. After the transcription process, each interview was re-read several times to identify major categories. The information obtained from all of the interviews was then analyzed using procedures similar to those used by Zemke and Kramlinger (1985). This involved writing notes into the margins of the hard copy of each interview; generating a list

of key ideas, words, phrases and verbatim quotes; using these ideas to construct items and organizing them in their appropriate categories; examining the contents of each category and selecting the most useful and pertinent items for the various categories.

Results

The results are presented in three sections: bullies on bullies; bullies on victims; and bullies on onlookers. These are now presented.

Bullies on Bullies

All male and female participants' described bullies as individuals who used verbal and physical aggression against others so as to look *tough* and *hard*. This was a strategy used so that they would be easily identifiable by others:

> *Bullies push, shove, kick and steal things from others to look tough (male student)*
>
> *Everyone knows bullies 'cos they're hard (female student)*

Participants also related that bullies show other students no respect. For example, they grab items off others to see how they react and they get enjoyment out of doing this. They were also described by participants as physically stronger and as having more confidence. Some students' comments were:

> *When they are confident they start to be mean and tease you (female student)*
>
> *They swear at you loudly and tease you about your weight and height, like fat and short (female student)*
>
> *They call your parents rude names (male student)*
>
> *Cos they're much stronger and confident they think they do as they want to (male student)*

> *Bullies are stronger so they take things of you, like lunch and money – they really enjoy doing it (female student)*
>
> *You can't stop them as they think they can do whatever they want and get away with it. Who is going to challenge them? (male student)*

Both male and female participants overwhelmingly reported that bullies felt great, mean, strong, powerful, and cool as a result of their bullying. Furthermore, acts of bullying got them *"recognition from their mates"*. The comments from three male bullies sum this up:

> *I feel great as I am a real man and am tough (male student)*
>
> *I feel cool and powerful and fantastic (male student)*
>
> *Bullies think they're strong and that they're better than everybody else because they can hurt people and get their own way. They feel very powerful, that they are the ruler of the school (male student)*

One female bully commented:

> *I feel happy and powerful when I make them cry. I'm the best (female student)*

The participants in this study, especially the females, described that gaining power over others was a critical issue and that gaining acceptance, recognition and the status that they were seeking was also important for them. As two female bullies stated:

> *Bullies feel stronger and tougher than everybody and so they think they are more popular, they want to be on top, like all the kids never respect them so they fight and bash people to get that respect (female student)*
>
> *Doesn't the saying go – If you can't beat them, join them! And if I bully I'll get more attention and respect (female student)*

Committing these acts of bullying appears to be commensurate with a specific image according to the bully participants, who described bullies as nasty, aggressive, antisocial rule-breakers, and pleasure seekers who enjoy it when someone is hurt or upset by them:

> *Bullies just tease and are mean to people to impress other people. They pick on other people so they feel good (male student)*

In some instances participants stated that this image was reinforced by persons in positions of authority, including parental figures:

> *The teacher always tells me I'm a bad person, I don't have any good in me and that my parents tell me that I am bad at home and that no-one likes me and I am mean to everyone (male student)*

Some of the male and female participants reported a proactive side to their bullying in an attempt to gain a *strong* and *powerful* image, particularly through acts of intimidation. As one male bully asserted:

> *I threaten to bash them after school if I don't get recess money and I feel pretty good they are afraid of me and give me what I ask for. If they don't I hit them and take it off them.*

Overall, the male and female participants highlighted the power they gained from bullying. Almost all of the bullies belonged to a group which also contained bullies and they gained great reinforcement from these peers. As two bullies commented:

> *We all bully. That's what it's all about. I mean getting respect from your mates (male student)*

> *It's well good when your mates are telling you to carry on and how good you're doing. Sometimes they join in and we give someone a real good going over (female student)*

Thus, it seems that bullying is very closely aligned to social status within the bully's immediate peer group. Reinforcement and status also seem to come from a wider audience, however. According to the bullies who were involved in this exploratory study they bragged to others (bullies and non bullies) how they (i.e., the bullies) had hit someone, or called them bad and rude names and nothing happened to them; moreover their victims told others (students and teachers) what had happened to them. Hence, the bullies' image of power was also reinforced by the victims communicating what had happened to them to others. Some of the female participants also commented that they felt good when they bullied as it "*let their anger out*". It seems therefore that bullying may be, to some female bullies, a form of self-regulation. As one female stated:

> *I'm angry so I bully and feel good about letting my anger out on others*

What was also evident from the interviews was that the female participants reported feeling very little remorse over their acts of bullying. When asked what they would say to a victim, both males and females reported that verbal abuse, particularly in the form of name calling, threats and obscenities, would primarily be used. Some of the typical examples cited by males and females were

> *You dumb ass idiot, I'm going to bash you later, watch your back. I'll be there (male student)*
>
> *You're a wimp, a loser (female student)*
>
> *You're such a dork and an ugly one (female student)*

> *You're a wimp so you'd better give me your lunch money or you know what you'll get (male student)*

When asked what they would do to a victim the males overwhelmingly cited physical acts of bullying, including hitting, kicking, pushing, and bashing:

> *Trip him, kick him in the guts and do some more to make him cry Chase and push them, spit on them and laugh until they cry*

Female particpants also cited similar physical acts of bullying:

> *I pulled her hair, slapped, kicked and spit on her and felt good*
>
> *I tripped and teased someone and slapped them on their back when they were on the ground and ran away. I came back and slapped her again for dobbing on me*

More indirect types of bullying were also mentioned by the females, including, rumour-mongering

> *I tell their secrets and say untrue things to everyone about them*

Ostracism of individuals was also cited by females:

> *Tell friends not to play with her because she's got like a bad disease and so has her family and everyone believes it*
>
> *I was mean back to her and horrible. I got my friends not to be friends with her and she cried*

One female participant commented that in some cases girl bullies recruited their friends to assist in the bullying

> *She said something to me so I started to tease her, call her names, swore at her and then got two of my friends to gang up on her and call her names and stuff like that. I got others not to invite her to sleepovers. At birthday parties, I told my friends never talk to her*

Bullies on Victims

When asked how they thought victims felt when bullied the male bully participants were overwhelmingly in agreement citing *sad, bad and upset, scared* and *angry*. In addition, they believed that the victims felt *"helpless and weak"* when victimized. The female participants in the study used the same kinds of descriptors as the males when describing how victims felt when bullied. As one female stated

> *When bullied – victims feel very unhappy, angry, helpless, weak, stupid, idiotic and really, really depressed*

When asked what victims say to bullies when being bullied male participants cited general types of remarks such as leave me alone, get lost and go away. Some of the participants reported that victims attempted to leave the scene so that the bully would not follow them and stop their actions. One participant stated that a victim had once said to him *that "he was only bullying everyone to feel like he had power over them"*.

The verbal protestations made by victims to the female participants were very similar to those of the males, but they (the female bullies) added that if they were in the shoes of the victims they would stand up and fight for their rights by telling the bully to stop it or say mean things back to the bully. A typical comment from the female bullies who participated was

> *Would you please stop teasing me, you don't like being teased so don't do it to me (female student)*

They also commented that if they were the victim they would retaliate against the bully to make him/her understand what it feels like to be the victim. As one female stated:

> *Leave me alone, I didn't do anything to you, so back off and go away (female student)*

When asked what victims *do* when bullied, the male participants reported that in addition to crying or walking/running away, the majority of the victims tell their teacher about the bullying:

> *They walk off, try not to cry and go to the closest teacher and tell them what the bully is saying and doing (male student)*

Some male participants reported that in some cases victims were very public in their response to the bullying, particularly in front of their peers. The female participant's responses were similar to those of their male counterparts, except they stated that female victims told parents, or a sibling, in addition to teachers. What was quite evident from both the male and female participants was that victims communicated their plight to persons in authority - from whom they could seek relief from being victimized, and that this was often in a very public manner. The bullies also reported that the victims almost always cried in front of their friends or teachers when reporting being bullied.

Bullies on Onlookers

When asked how they thought onlookers felt when they witnessed an act of bullying, male participants predominantly responded, *sad/bad*. These males also stated that while the immediate onlooker was scared by seeing the bullying, it was not only he (i.e., the immediate onlooker) who got to know about the act of bullying, suggesting that the immediate onlooker communicated the act to others later. Moreover, these individuals who learned about the bullying second hand from the onlooker also became scared of the bully. Overall, the female participant's responses were very similar to those of the males. The females reported, however, that their acts of bullying really intimidated onlookers, and that this engendering of fear in others was very important to them. As with the males, the communication of the bullying to others who did not actually witness the act directly was very important, presumably for spreading the image of the bully.

According to the male participants onlookers tended to do nothing when they witnessed an act of bullying, mainly because they were scared to stop it or feared that it could also happen to them if they intervened during the bullying. Furthermore, if it didn't happen to them at that time then it would probably happen at a later and more opportune time. In the few instances where onlookers did become involved male and female participants said it was usually in the form of a verbal comment, such as

> *Leave him alone; pick on someone your own size (male student)*

Female participants were in agreement with the males in that onlookers tended to do nothing and in the exception where a comment was made to a female bully it comprised something like

> *Can you please stop picking on her, how would you feel if the same happened to you (female student)*

Both male and female participants made reference to the fact that onlookers, like victims, often told someone in authority about the bullying they witnessed:

> *He will run off and tell a teacher or an adult to come and stop it* (*male student*)

The male and female participants also reported that they ensured bullying took place mainly in public places, primarily because there are witnesses (i.e., on lookers) to the act and this gives bullies the greatest recognition possible among peers. As the participants stated

> *The most popular place to bully is the oval, because there are more people around (male student)*

> *On the oval bullies threaten for money or just push someone down on the grass for the fun of it and to impress their friends and anyone around (female student)*

According to the male and female participants the school toilets were also areas for bullying because there were often witnesses to the acts, and victims were "*powerless*" because of the lack of adult supervision. Moreover, the toilets were seen not only as an ideal place for physical bullying, but also for more covert acts of bullying. As two participants commented

> *In the toilet I slapped her on the head, scratched her face, called her a coward and kicked her (female student)*

> *In the toilets bullies spread secrets and rumours about people they don't like. They tease people and are mean. Some write nasty things on the toilet walls and doors (female student)*

The majority of both male and female participants suggested that they were proactive in their "toilet" bullying as this was a place where victims *"could do nothing except cry and try to run away for help"*. They also stated that the restricted area in the toilets made it easy to prevent their victims from escaping. Moreover, acts of writing messages on walls were seen as an excellent way of communicating threats against specific others and for warning others (not directly threatened by the written messages) to learn "*who was the boss*". According to the male participants the toilets were an excellent place for generating fear because their victims were very vulnerable and the toilets were used by lots of people at breaks who would see the bullying. In addition, they (male bullies) could deny doing any bullying because of the limited adult supervision and fear generated in any witnesses (i.e., on lookers).

Toilets were not the only place where covert acts of bullying took place, with male and female participants also cited the classroom. As one participant summed it up

> *In the classroom bullies send notes about your family, and say bad things and show rude fingers to you and threaten you by showing a punch (male student)*

Irrespective of where the bullying took place and whether it was physical, verbal or covert it appears that the presence of others, or the communication of the act to others, appears crucial. As one participant summed up

> *I've hurt others and people watch me and say good on ya you're making someone cry. They then tell others (male student)*

Discussion

Bullying among primary school children is, according to some researchers, an antecedent to more violent behaviour in later grades (O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999; Saufler & Gagne, 2000) and therefore intervening prior to this time is important. The interview data generated from this initial exploratory study with 46 males and females identified through school records as having been suspended from school for bullying has confirmed some known facts about bullies; it has also opened up some new lines of enquiry, particularly in terms of reputation and image. What is clear from this exploratory research is that bullying is similar in most respects for middle primary school aged males and females as are the desired outcomes.

According to the participants in this first study bullying can take many forms, including physical and verbal, deliberate exclusion, written communication, and electronic. While both male and female bullies employ physical aggression, girls reported to employing more indirect methods of bullying, such as exclusion and spreading rumours, which is in line with previous research findings (see Bjorkquist et al., 1992; Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006; Lagerspetz et al., 1988; Owens, 1996; Owens & MacMullin, 1995; Rivers & Smith, 1994;

Sakellariou, 2005; Tulloch, 1995). Although some limited research (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick et al., 1997) has examined relational and overtly aggressive behaviours in male and female bullies, it appears that limited research has distinguished between proactive and reactive verbal and physical forms of aggressive behaviours. According to Sijtsema, Veenstra, Lindenberg and Salmivalli (2009) bullies should be more proactively than reactively aggressive since the former is deliberate behaviour directed towards an expected outcome. This research will therefore attempt to further explore this aspect of aggressive behaviour in both male and female bullies. This is an important issue, particularly in relation to gender since Ahmad and Smith (1994, p.83) noted that "studies on sex differences in bullying are important not only for the detection of bullying by teachers and parents but for awareness-raising in pupils, and focusing efforts to reduce school bullying and improve the lives and happiness of many children during their school careers."

A crucial finding from this exploratory research suggests that social identity and reputation is very important to bullies and that their bullying provides an ideal vehicle through which to attain a desired reputation and in some cases acceptance among their peer group. This is supportive of Sijtsema et al's. (2009) hypothesis, that status on the basis of domination and eliciting admiration from peers is the quest of bullies. Indeed, the peer group was cited by many of the participants as of particular importance to them, for it provided the immediate audience where the reputation of choice could be cultivated. Extensive research has demonstrated that many primary and secondary school aged school students resort to antisocial and illegal activities to initiate their desired nonconforming reputation and that

continued involvement in at risk and delinquent behaviours maintains this reputation over time (see Carroll, 1995; Carroll et al., 1999; Carroll, Durkin, Hattie, & Houghton, 1997; Carroll, Houghton, Durkin, & Hattie, 2009; Carroll et al., 2003; Emler, 1990; Emler & Reicher, 1995; Houghton & Carroll, 1996, 2002). To date, however, there appears to have been no investigations into the potential applicability of Reputation Enhancement Theory (Emler, 1984) to bullies and their bullying.

The physical locations where bullying took place were also highlighted by bullies as important in terms of developing a reputation among peers. That is, bullies identified highly public places where more often than not an audience or witness was present). According to Emler (1984) and Emler and Reicher (1995) Reputation Enhancement Theory posits that individuals choose a particular self-image they wish to promote before an audience of their peers and this audience then provides feedback so that the individual develops and maintains this social identity within a community. According to (Kuhnke, 1995) bullies are frequently committed to cliques and get into conflicts while with these cliques or other individuals, which appears to be in line with the principles of Reputation Enhancement Theory.

Overt and covert acts of bullying were also reported to occur in the classroom, whether a teacher was present or not. During this time there is an immediate audience for the bully to impress and with whom to share his/her behaviour; this is the essence of Reputation Enhancement Theory. However, classroom bullying can also be highly covert in nature, delivered through gestures of derision by

individuals or groups, or as shown recently by Sakellariou (2005) through electronic means (SMS messages, email and Internet). To date, this has not been fully explored and no research appears to have examined whether there are differing reputations associated with these newer types of bullying compared to the more overt physical and verbally aggressive acts of bullying. Furthermore, little is known whether these more covert types of bullying are conducted by individuals alone or by persons in conjunction with others.

In conclusion, investigators have suggested that in addition to assertiveness training, anger management and social problem solving which address skill deficits more comprehensive anti-bullying programmes are required (Fonagy et al., 2005). To achieve this, however, more research is necessary to fully understand the socio psychological motivations of bullies. In this regard, the present research appears to have revealed a new element to bullying. That is, bullies appear to be striving to attain a reputation; more specifically one of a non conforming nature. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of this, further investigation is now warranted. Without such information, the development and implementation of interventions which more specifically address a group of young people who appear to strive towards non conformity through their bullying activities will be restricted. The present research will therefore investigate the reputations of bullies. In addition, it will examine this variable according to their friendship networks (i.e., whether they are loners or non loners). In doing this, the applicability of Reputation Enhancement Theory to bullying will be determined.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDY TWO: INSTRUMENT SELECTION AND INITIAL VALIDATION OF THE BULLYING SCALES, LONER SCALE, AND CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SCALE OF AGGRESSION

Study One revealed that reputation appears to be very important to bullies and that they strive to achieve a specific reputation, particularly among like-minded peers. Indeed, the findings from Study One have much in common with Reputation Enhancement Theory (RET), except that this theory has yet to be applied to bullies. Not only are bullies frequently in conflict with other individuals, but this most often occurs in public places where an audience or witnesses are present. The presence of an audience is critical in establishing and maintaining reputations. It was also found that bullying can be covert in nature, particularly with access to SMS texting, email and the Internet. Thus, the presence of an *immediate* audience may not be essential for bullies. To investigate RET in the context of bullying appropriate instrumentation had to be selected and if necessary modified. This first phase of Study Two therefore describes the instruments selected and the subsequent testing of their item functioning in a pilot study.

Phase I: Selection of Instrumentation

Following a thorough literature search four instruments were selected for inclusion in the research. These were the Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire (R-OBVQ: Olweus, 1996), The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression (Cordin, Hopkins, & Houghton, 2007), The Loner Scale (Tan, 2008),

and The Reputation Enhancement Scale (Carroll, Houghton, Hattie, & Durkin, 1999). These (last three instruments) which are reproduced in Appendix 2, will now be described in turn.

The Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire (R-OBVQ: Olweus, 1996), a revised version of an earlier questionnaire developed by Olweus (1978), is the most widely used and respected instrument internationally for measuring the phenomenon of bullying. It has been used in large scale studies in the UK, Spain, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia, the USA, Finland and Japan (see Kyriakides et al., 2006 for a review). This instrument is divided into two parts, Part I (questions 5 to 24) refers to the initiation of acts of bullying perpetrated against the individual responding to the questionnaire and Part II (questions 25 to 40) refers to the expression of bullying by the respondent against others. In total, 40 items measure physical, verbal, indirect, racial, and sexual forms of bullying against other individuals. It also provides data on where the bullying occurs, pro bullying and pro victim attitudes and the extent to which teachers, peers and parents are informed about and react to the bullying. The duration and frequency of the bullying are also examined (see Olweus, 1997).

The R-OBVQ gives greater emphasis to verbal bullying since this has been identified as the most frequent form in schools (Rigby, 1997; Smith et al., 1999) and to the characteristics of bullies rather than victims, since teachers identify bullies as the primary issue of major concern (Nakou, 2000). Individuals provide information to R-OBVQ items using five response options, namely “it happened to me several times a week” (score 5), “it happened to me once a week” (4), “it

happened to me two or three times a month" (3), it happened to me only once or twice in the past two months" (2), and it hasn't happened to me in the last two months" (1). Thus, the higher the score the more frequent the bullying.

Although the psychometrics of the R-OBVQ has been established Kyriakides et al. (2006) questioned whether each of the items contributes in a meaningful way to the construct being investigated. To answer this they used a Rasch model, which is based on the idea "that useful measurement involves examination of only one human attribute at a time on a hierarchical more than/less than line of enquiry" (Bond & Fox, 2001, cited in Kyriakides et al., 2006, p. 785), to analyze data obtained from 335 Greek Cypriot primary school aged children (M = 11.9 years) from seven separate schools. The eight R-OBVQ items concerned with the extent to which individuals bullied others and the eight questions concerned with being victimized were found to have a good fit to the measurement model. Item separation (i.e., reliability) was computed to be higher than 0.85, thereby indicating satisfactory reliability. When the two parts (i.e., victim and bully) of the questionnaire were examined a statistically significant negative correlation was found ($r = 0.78$, $p < .001$) indicating consistency in responses of individuals to both parts of the questionnaire.

By supporting the conceptual design of the R-OBVQ this Rasch analysis addressed an important element in the design of psychometrically appropriate instrumentation to investigate bullying. Indeed, it identified three main negative acts, namely verbal, indirect and physical, as representing the overarching concept of bullying. However, although it provided strong support for the validity and

reliability of the R-OBVQ it did not include cyber forms of bullying, as identified by the participants in Study One of this thesis. Given that Charlton et al., (2002) identified that over 60% of UK and US primary school aged children own mobile phones this form of communication may be of potential importance in bullying at the primary school level. More recent data from Australia would seem to support this. For example, Matthews (2004) reported that 83% of Year 7 to Year 12 school aged students owned mobile phones, with 57% reporting first ownership while at primary school. When aspects of bullying were examined, 10% of adolescents said they had received threatening messages, while 29% reported receiving messages from individuals with whom they did not wish to be in contact with. Of particular relevance to the present research was that younger adolescents (12 to 13 year olds) were significantly more likely to receive these kinds of unwanted messages. Also in Australia, Campbell and Gardner (2005) found that 25% of Year 8 secondary school students (13 year olds) knew someone who had been bullied by electronic means. When pressed further, 11% of these students identified themselves as perpetrators of electronic bullying. Similar findings have been reported from the UK and USA. In the UK for example, Rivers (2003) found that 6% of school aged students received threatening SMS messages or emails, while the National Children's Home (2002) reported that around 25% of children had been bullied via mobile phones or the Internet. In the USA Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that 15% of children identified themselves as Internet bullies while 7% said they were the targets of such bullying.

While it appears that the prevalence of electronic bullying is somewhere between 7% and 25%, information of this type appears to be relatively limited from

primary school aged children. The present research seeks to address this issue by including additional items specific to electronic bullying in the instrument to measure bullying. These new items were generated from the Study One interview data and are shown in Table 2 along with the original R-OBVS items identified by Kyriakides et al. (2006) in their Rasch analysis.

Table 2. Original R-OBVS items and items generated from the Study One interviews.

R-OBVS Domain	Item description
Being victimized	
	Called mean names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way
	Left out of things, excluded, or ignored
	Hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors
	Other students told lies about me or tried to make others dislike me
	Money or other things taken away from me or destroyed
	Threatened to do things I didn't want to
	Bullied with mean names about my race or colour
	Bullied with mean names with a sexual meaning
Bullying others	
	I called them mean names, made fun of or teased in a hurtful way
	I kept them out of things, excluded, or ignored them
	I hit, kicked, pushed, and shoved them around or locked them indoors
	I spread false rumours about them and tried to make others dislike them
	I took money or other things from them or damaged their belongings
	I threatened or forced them to do things they didn't want to
	I bullied them with mean names about their race or colour
	I bullied him or her with mean names with a sexual meaning
Cyber-based items generated from Study One	
	I have had threatening or hurtful calls made to me on my mobile phone by others
	I have sent threatening or hurtful emails to others
	I have sent threatening or hurtful text (SMS) messages to others.
	I have had threatening or hurtful emails sent to me.
	I have had threatening or hurtful text (SMS) messages sent to me.
	I have used a mobile phone to make threatening or hurtful calls.

Thus, the Modified Revised (MR-OBVS) Scale to be administered in the pilot study comprised 22 items measuring three aspects of bullying and victim behaviour (i.e., physical, verbal and cyber). In addition, there were two general questions pertaining to whether a person was a bully or a victim.

The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression (CASA, Cordin, Hopkins, & Houghton, 2007) was developed in response to research over the past two decades which clearly showed that aggressive behaviour presents in multiple forms. Specifically, aggression manifests as proactive and reactive (see Day, Bream, & Paul, 1992; Dodge, 1991; Dodge & Coie, 1987; Pulkkinen, 1996; Vitaro et al., 1998). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analytical studies have confirmed this (Crick & Dodge, 1996; Little, Jones, Hendrich, & Hawley, 2003; Poulin & Boivin, 2000).

The CASA is a 20-item teacher report measure of proactive and reactive physical and verbal aggression in children. Respondents use options scored from zero (Definitely not true of this child) to 3 (Definitely true of this child); the higher the scores, the greater the aggression. The CASA has excellent psychometric properties as demonstrated by Houghton, Cordin and Hopkins (in press). In their study involving 137 children aged six to 16 years (approximately 50% of who had been suspended from school) four factors measuring aggression, which cumulatively accounted for 69.27% of the variance, initially emerged. However, when the factor structure was interpreted for substantive meaning and to check for conceptual difference three factors best fitted the model. These were Physical Aggression (PA), Reactive Verbal Aggression (RVA), and Proactive Verbal Aggression (PVA). Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) for the overall scale was .94,

while the three subscales also revealed a high degree of internal consistency with PA (α = .93), RVA (α = .81), and PVA (α = .81). Thus the CASA is seen as ideal for use in the present research. The items making up the CASA are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The 20 Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression Items.

Aggression Domain and Item Description
Physical Aggression
Physically attacks others when threatened
Uses physical force to dominate others
Premeditates physically aggressive acts against others
Physically lashes out at others when very annoyed or frustrated
Threatens others physically to get what they want
Initiates fights for no apparent reason
Uses his/her physical presence to get others to gang up against a vulnerable individual
Reacts physically when denied what they want
Makes clear verbal threats of violence towards others when provoked
Reacts in an angry physical manner against others when accidents occur
Reactive Verbal Aggression
Becomes verbally angry when he/she does not get own way
Verbally attacks a person when there is a difference of opinion
Is inappropriately rude in telling others what they think of them when provoked
Uses offensive words to hurt, abuse or insult others for no apparent reason
Curses others viciously when provoked
Becomes angry and breaks things when annoyed or frustrated

Table 3. The 20 Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression Items.

Proactive Verbal Aggression
Spreads cruel gossip and rumours about others for no apparent reason
Verbally attacks vulnerable individuals for no apparent reason
Verbally encourages others to take part in acts of hostility
Exaggerates or tells lies about others for no apparent reason

The Loner Scale (Tan, 2008) is a 10-item subscale of The *Reputation Enhancement Scale* (RES; Carroll, Houghton, Durkin, & Hattie, 1999b) and assesses children's friendship networks. Of the 10 items making up the Loner Scale, five are related to whether an individual's status as a loner is by choice, while the remaining five relate to loner status by circumstances (e.g., peer rejection). The 10 items are scored from zero (Definitely Not True) to three (Definitely True), with items 4 and 9 being reverse scored. (Table 4 shows the original 10 Loner Scale items.) Data from a recent study involving 149 high school participants subjected to maximum likelihood (ML) factor analysis with (orthogonal) varimax rotation by Tan (2009) (for a review see Tan, Houghton, & Carroll, in press) revealed a two-factor solution. Factor 1 comprised of four items measuring whether individuals showed a personal preference to be alone and was labelled "Loner by choice"; Factor 2 consisted of five items measuring loneliness/social isolation resulting from rejection and was labelled "Loner by circumstances". The alpha coefficients of the two subscales revealed a high degree of internal consistency with Loners by choice (α = .79) and Loners by circumstances (α = .74).

Table 4. The 10 Loner Scale items.

Domain and Item Description
Loner by Choice
I do things on my own because I prefer my own company
I feel more at ease with others than being on my own
I deliberately choose to be by myself than with others
When I have a chance to join in with others, I choose not to
Even if I can find company or friends when I want to, I choose not to
Loner by Circumstances
When I suggest doing something, no-one joins in with me
I do things on my own because no one else will do things for me
Although I like to be with others, they leave me out
No one listens to me when I say something
I get invited to parties and other social gatherings

The Reputation Enhancement Scale (RES: Carroll et al., 1999) has extensive psychometric data (exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses) pertaining to its reliability and validity with primary and high school at risk and not at risk students and incarcerated delinquents and therefore will not be pilot tested (see Carroll, Baglioni, Houghton, & Bramston, 1999; Carroll et al., 2001; Carroll, Houghton, & Baglioni, 2000; Carroll et al., 2009; Carroll, Green et al., 2003; Carroll et al., 1999; Houghton, Carroll, Tan, & Hopkins, 2008).

The RES was developed by Carroll et al. (1999) from interviews and reviews of the literature and relevant instruments. Initially, 160 items were reduced to 148 which clustered into seven dimensions initially labelled: sociability, social desirability, self-perception of public self, ideal public self, self-description of private self, ideal private self, and communication of events on the basis of previously reported research findings.

Briefly, the eight *sociability* items are measured on a 6-point scale ranging from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree,* and examine the value participants place on friendship and group membership. In the present research the eight *sociability* items were replaced with the newly developed 10 item Loner Scale (Tan, 2008). The 32 *social desirability* items (using a 6-point response format consisting of: *not at all*, *very little*, *somewhat*, *quite a bit*, *very much*, and *completely)* examine the admiration of socially conforming and socially deviant activities. The 15 *self-perception of public self* items (e.g., your friends think that you are popular) are premised on the question "What do your friends think of you?" Responses are given using a 6-point scale anchored with *never*, *hardly ever*, *occasionally*, *sometimes*, *often,* and *always*. This scale measures how participants think their peers view them in terms of their conforming and non conforming behaviour and their reputational status. The 15 *ideal public self* items are identical to the 15 self-perception items, except that the focus question asks "What would you like your friends to think of you?" This provides a measure of how participants would ideally like to be viewed. If participants score highly on non conforming items, then they ideally wish to be viewed as more delinquent in character than someone who scores low on the non conforming items. The response format is identical to

the self-perception 6-point response format used for responses to the ideal public self items. The 12 *self-description of private self* items measure how participants describe themselves now in terms of power (i.e., strong-weak; tough-soft) and activity (i.e., mean-kind; nasty-friendly) and are based on a list of semantic differentials. A 6-point response scale ranging from one extreme (e.g., "I think I am a leader") to the other (e.g., "I think I am a follower") is utilized for respondents. The *ideal private self* items measure how participants would ideally like to be viewed in terms of power and activity attributes (e.g., break the rules, mean, nasty which suggests they ideally wish to be viewed as more delinquent in their activities). These items are identical to the 12 self-description items, but the focus statement is: "Describe how you would really like to be". The response format is identical to that of the self-description items. The *communication of events* items seeks to determine the patterns of disclosure of events to adults and/or peers by adolescents. A series of events (e.g., stealing money from a shop, gaining the highest marks in the class, cheating on an exam) are presented to participants. These participants indicate using a 3-point response format ("yes", "perhaps", and "no"), whether they would disclose information concerning the different events to different categories of people (i.e., best friend, group of friends, teacher, mum, dad, brothers/sisters).

In terms of the RES's development a series of exploratory factor analyses (EFA) resulted in127 reputational items yielding 15 factors. Two factors were measured on the *social desirability* dimension (an individual's admiration of social deviance and social conformity); three factors were measured on the *self-perception of public self* and *ideal public self* dimensions (reputational, conforming, and non

conforming self-perception, and reputational, conforming, and non conforming ideal public); two factors were measured in each of the two dimensions (i.e., activity self-description, power/evaluation self-description, activity ideal private self, and power/evaluation ideal private self) of the *self-description of private self* and *ideal private self*; and two factors were measured (peer communication and adult communication) for the *communication of events* scale.

The findings of the EFA were then cross-validated by Carroll et al. (1999) with the item responses of 260 participants (80 incarcerated delinquent [M = 16.1 years, range 11.6 to 18.1 years], 90 at-risk [M = 14.4 years, range 12.2 to 17.2 years], and 90 not at-risk [M = 14.4 years, range 12.2 to 17.6 years] males) using MICFA (Krakowski & Hattie, 1993) a first-order, maximum-likelihood confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) program (Krakowski & Hattie, 1993). A structural equation modeling approach was used (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1989) to confirm the second-order factor structure. In summary, 15 first-order factors were derived from the EFA and CFA (sociability, admiration of social deviance, admiration of social conformity, non conforming self-perception, conforming self-perception, reputational self-perception, non conforming ideal public self, conforming ideal public self, reputational ideal public self, activity self-description, power/evaluation self-description, activity ideal private self, power/evaluation ideal private self, peer communication, adult communication). Six first-order factors were grouped together to form a second-order factor labelled Non conforming Reputation, five first-order factors were grouped together to form a second-order factor labelled Conforming Reputation, and four first-order factors were grouped together to form a second-order factor labelled

Self-Presentation. (Carroll et al., 2009 provide a full description of the development and validation of the RES.) The factor structure of the RES is illustrated in Figure 1 which is reproduced with permission from Carroll et al., 2009.

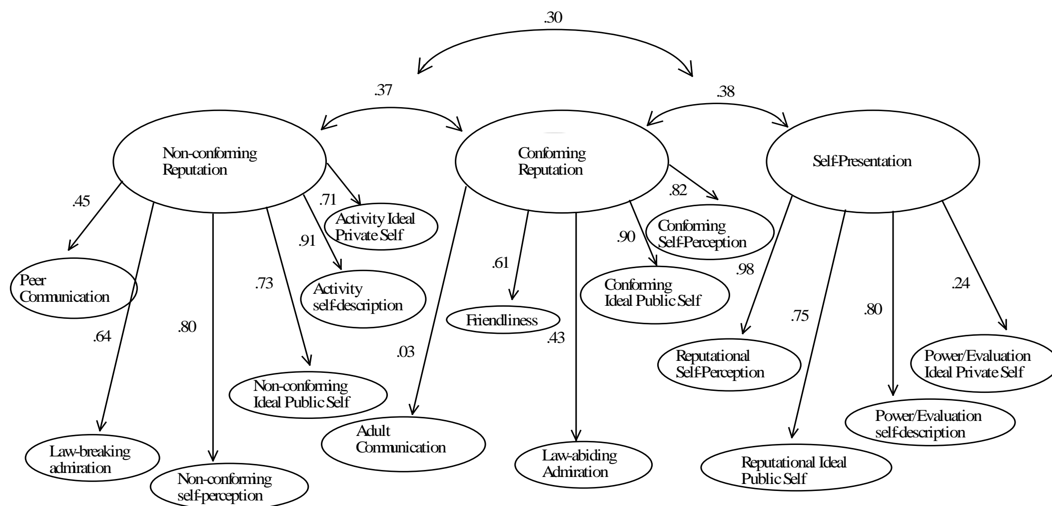

Figure 1 . Factor loadings for the 15 first-order factors of the three second-order factors.

Extensive research by Carroll and colleagues (see Carroll et al., 2009) has demonstrated that the reputational profiles of non delinquent, at-risk, and delinquent adolescents differ significantly. Delinquents and young person’s at-risk see themselves as non conforming (e.g., one who breaks rules) and as wanting to be perceived by others in this way (e.g., getting into trouble with the police, doing things against the law). They admire socially deviant activities (e.g., drug dealing, stealing). On the other hand, non delinquent persons see themselves as conforming and want to be perceived by others in this way (e.g., a good person, trustworthy, getting along well with others). The research shows that different groups of children and adolescents strive for and seek to maintain different kinds of reputations and an audience is necessary for this. For young people who transgress

the rules and mores of society, the social goal appears to be to have a public delinquent reputation. Whether this is the case for bullies is yet to be investigated.

The readability of each of the four scales described is at approximately nine years of age and their reading ease score is 91, representing less than six years of schooling (Flesch, 1948).

Phase II: Testing the Feasibility of the Instrumentation

Participants and Settings

In this phase, 30 primary school aged students (12 males and 18 females) whose ages ranged between 10.1 and 13.3 years and five teachers participated. The children were enrolled in two separate primary schools located in low and middle socio economic status areas as determined by an index defined at the postcode level from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998). Of the five teachers one was male and four were female. The teaching experience of these teachers ranged from five years through to 40 years. All teachers provided data on at least two children who had been suspended from school for bullying peers. These teachers also provided information on at least two other children (randomly selected) who had no record of bullying. To be included in this phase of the research teachers had to have taught the selected children for a minimum of 12 months.

Procedure

Prior to the research being conducted, approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the administering Institution. As in the previous research study the researcher initially contacted the principals (by telephone) of

the two schools purposefully selected on the basis of their documented histories of children being involved in bullying. At this time the purpose of the research was explained to the principals along with how the outcomes of the research might assist teachers and schools to understand bullies and develop more effective prevention strategies. Principals were asked if they would be interested in participating and if so would they be willing to forward a letter of introduction, an information sheet and consent form, which are reproduced in Appendix 3, to the Grades 5, 6 and 7 teacher(s) in his/her school. Both principals agreed to this and the teachers approached subsequently agreed to assist in the research. The letter of introduction, information sheet and consent form were then mailed to the parents of 72 randomly selected children (6 boys and 6 girls) from each of Grades 5, 6 and 7, from where the sample would be generated for the pilot study. In total 30 parents volunteered their children to participate (41.6% positive return) and of these 12 had been suspended for bullying.

The *MR-OBVS* and *Loner Scale* were administered to the 30 children in two small groups (one in each school) in a room set aside for the specific purpose of the research. Teachers also completed the CASA for each of the participating children and these were then matched (by the teachers) to the children's completed instruments using a code, which to the researcher ensured data were de-identified. Prior to administration, the researcher informed all children that if they had any queries or required any clarification they should signal for assistance. Confidentiality of responses was emphasized. All appeared to find the *MR-OBVS* and *Loner Scale* straight forward to complete, and no clarifications were sought.

Data Analysis

This phase of the research provides the quantitative analyses of the data obtained from the pilot study involving three of the four instruments to be included in the main study. The results of the various analyses are presented in two separate sections. The first section deals with the item affectivity of the instrument through the use of a Guttman matrix and scaling procedure. A Guttman scale, where the data fit a Guttman pattern (Guttman, 1944, 1950), is the next best model of measurement to Rasch (Guttman, 1950; Michell, 1990; Wright, 1996). When the data fit a Guttman pattern, each total score represents a unique response pattern, where a higher total score provides a higher ranking estimate of the variable. This then guarantees that a higher score means a higher amount of the variable. Furthermore, because the items have been created and specifically worded to relate to the variable (usually it is difficult to obtain the right wording to obtain a Guttman pattern), one has measured a unidimensional variable. The second section examines item discrimination of the instrument.

All participant responses for each of the three instruments were entered into separate EXCEL spreadsheets. This resulted in a combination of data sets. To avoid repetition of writing in this section, the matrix for the *MR-OBVQ* will be used as an example of how the data were analysed. This procedure was identical for all instruments except that the number of rows and columns in each matrix varied due to the different number of items in the instruments. The *MR-OBVQ* data matrix comprised 30 rows (corresponding to the 30 children being rated by the teachers) and 24 columns corresponding to the total number of items in the *MR-OBVQ* instrument. (The matrix for each of the other two instruments differed

due to the different number of items in each.) Initially, a thorough visual examination was undertaken to determine whether there were any missing data or anomalies within the data set. The psychometrics of the instrument was then examined.

Results

The MR-OBVQ (bullying)

All 30 participants' responses to the 24 items of the *MR-OBVQ* instrument were recorded directly onto the instrument. The participants scored a rating from 0 (Never) to 3 (Several times a week) for each of the 24 items. These responses were then summed to attain a total score on the MR-OBVQ instrument. For each participant, the person-total score (raw score, *T*) and the relative total score (*f*) were computed. The total MR- OBVS score (*T*) of each of the 30 participants in the sample was calculated by the summation of the participants' individual item responses.

Item Affectivity

Each of the scores was normalized (i.e., rescaled) by converting it to a proportion (*f*) of the maximum MR-OBVQ score attainable (i.e., 72), yielding an *f*-value for each participant in the range of 0 to 1. The rows of the raw data matrix (i.e., the 30 participants) were then sorted according to decreasing *f* scores.

When constructing a measure, as wide a range as possible between the item of the lowest frequency and the highest frequency is preferable, as this will allow for sensitivity to variations between participants. A variable in which items are clustered is less sensitive to variations between participants, and thus less

effective in discerning differences between respondents. Once the items for the MR-OBVS had been ranked according to the person-total scores [the item-total score (T) and the f score], the relative total score (p) for each item and the item affectivity index (q), where q = 1 - p were computed.

The sum of the participants' responses for each of the individual *MR-OBVQ* items (i.e., the 24 columns of the matrix) were calculated and converted to a proportion (p) of the maximum score attainable on that item (i.e., n x 3, where 3 corresponds to the maximum response option for the *MR-OBVQ* items and n is the number of participants who responded to that item). If all 30 participants responded positively to the item, the maximum response is 30 x 3 = 90. An associated q-value was then calculated for each of the items by complementing its p-value (i.e., $q = 1 – p$), thus yielding complementary proportions which must also range from 0 to 1. The q-values represent the affectivity of the *MR-OBVQ* items, with high q-values indicative of those items which participants find difficult to rank highly or endorse. The data pertaining to the 24 items (i.e., the columns) were then ordered by increasing q-values (or affectivity). Their total scores produced a matrix of the data set, sometimes referred to as the Guttman form. This refers to the degree of uniformity in the pattern of responses when the data have been ordered according to item and person totals simultaneously. The response patterns of individual participants (in the rows) should reflect decreasing responses across the columns (which have been sorted according to increasing affectivity). Converting the data to this form then facilitates the interpolation of any missing data points by simple inspection based on the most probable response.

Visual inspection of the Guttman matrix revealed no missing data points for the 24 items of the *MR-OBVQ* and that the distribution of the data conformed to the Guttman form (i.e., highly endorsed items amalgamated towards the top left hand corner of the matrix and least likely endorsed items amalgamated towards the bottom right hand corner of the matrix).

As can be seen in Table 5, the affective values for the *MR-OBVQ* instrument range between .58 and .99 indicating low to very high affectivity values. Participants were less likely to endorse Item 13 ("I have bullied others with mean names about their race or colour", q = .99), Item 15 ("I have sent threatening or hurtful text messages to others", q = .97), Item 6 ("I have had threatening or hurtful calls made to me on my mobile phone by others", q =.96), Item10 ("I have sent threatening or hurtful emails to others", q = .96) and Item 24 ("I have used a mobile phone to make threatening or hurtful calls", q = .96). The item which participants found easiest to endorse was Item 1 "How often have you been bullied at school this year", q = .58)

Table 5. Item affectivity of the MR-OBVQ Scale.

Item	*q*	Item	*q*
1	.58	13	.99
2	.74	14	.90
3	.73	15	.97
4	.72	16	.75
5	.94	17	.95
6	.96	18	.77
7	.69	19	.66
8	.89	20	.67
9	.90	21	.95
10	.96	22	.78
11	.85	23	.74
12	.76	24	.96

Figure 2 shows examples of the q-values for the *MR-OBVQ* items and how these can be mapped directly onto the order. These examples indicate their level of affectivity within the *MR-OBVQ* instrument.

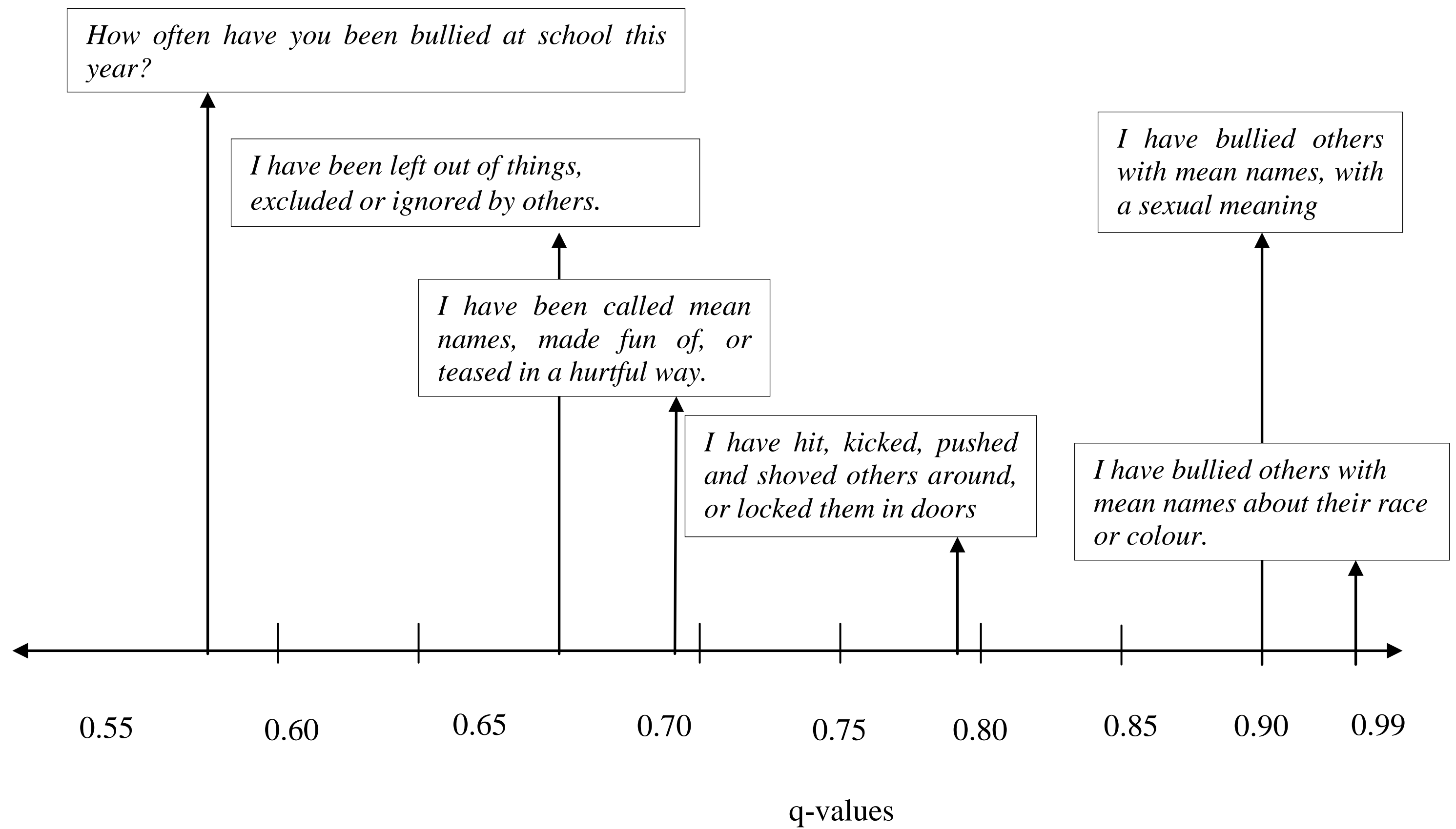

Figure 2. Q-values (affectivity) of modified OBVS items.

There were 11 items that yielded very high q-values (i.e., greater than .8) and these are shown in Table 6. In general, the more affective or less affective the item the lower the discriminating power. The range of recommended *q*-values is between .2 and .8. Although, it may be wise to discard such items on a statistical basis, previous research cited earlier in this chapter pertaining to the Revised OBVS underscores their practical relevance as too valuable to lose. Furthermore, the items most difficult to endorse were primarily cyber and indirect bullying based items and as most of these items are new, they should be included in a larger scale survey. In addition, the sample comprised a substantial number of bullies, all of who had been suspended from school for physical and verbal assault of teachers and/or peers. None had been identified in school records for using cyber bullying. Therefore they may have found cyber bullying items difficult to endorse.

Table 6. MR-OBVQ items with high affectivity

Item and Description	q-value
13. Have bullied others with mean names/race & colour	.99
15. Have sent threatening or hurtful text messages to others	.97
6. Had threatening or hurtful calls made to me on my mobile	.96
10. Sent threatening or hurtful emails to others	.96
24. Have used a mobile phone to make threatening or hurtful calls	.96
17. Have had threatening or hurtful emails sent to me	.95
21. Had threatening or hurtful text messages sent to me	.95
5. Taken money/other things from others or damaged their belongings	.94
14. Threatened or forced others to do things they didn't want to	.90
9. Bullied others with mean names with a sexual meaning	.90
8. Been threatened or forced to do things didn't want to	.89

Item Discrimination

Item discrimination represents the degree of correlation of the responses obtained for a particular item to the total score of the scale and reflects how well each of the items discriminate between individuals based on their rating scale total score. To assess how well the items in the *MR-OBVQ* instrument rate in their use, the item-discrimination index for each item was determined by computing a bivariate correlation.

Item discrimination coefficients will ideally yield a positive value within the range of 0 to 1. As can be seen in Table 7, the absolute magnitude of the correlation coefficients for the 24 items of the *MR-OBVQ* range between .02 and .80. Ideally, the item discriminations should be all positive and be similar in value and not too close to 0 or 1. This testing of internal consistency can identify items that are ambiguous, or not of the same type as the rest of the scale. The item discriminations for each of the *MR-OBVQ* items, all of which showed a positive association, are shown in Table 7. As can be seen in Table 7, Items 6, 10, 15, 21 and 24 yielded correlations close to 0 and subsequently were reconsidered whether they were of a magnitude that would cause concern (given that values close to zero indicate a weak correlation with the mean response profile). All of the items were cyber bullying related and given that these items were those that participants also found difficult to endorse (as shown by q indices) for the reasons outlined earlier they were examined more closely. On the basis of the bully participants' bullying records, the practical significance of the cyber items and that the larger scale main study would include a range of children not involved in such extremes of bullying it was decided to retain these items for the main study.

Table 7. Item discrimination for the MR-OBVQ.

Item	*r*	Item	*r*
1	.71**	13	.11
2	.73**	14	.55**
3	.80**	15	.02
4	.44*	16	.45*
5	.34	17	.28
6	.06	18	.40*
7	.61**	19	.72**
8	.39*	20	.78**
9	.21	21	.16
10	.08	22	.64**
11	.49**	23	.55**
12	.71**	24	.09

**$p < 0.01$ level (*two-tailed*); * $p < 0.05$ level (*two tailed*).

Reliability Analysis

To measure the internal consistency of the *MR-OBVQ* Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated. Nunnally (1978) recommends a minimum Cronbach alpha value of .7. Thus, in this sample with an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .98, the instrument can be considered highly reliable. Table 8 shows the Cronbach alphas if items were removed from the analysis. As can be seen from Table 8 the overall alpha level would not increase if any items were removed.

Table 8. Cronbach's alphas if items are deleted.

Item	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
1. How often have you been bullied	.97
2. How often taken part in bullying	.96
3. I have been hit, kicked, pushed	.96
4. Students have told lies about me	.97
5. I have taken money/other things from others	.95
6. I have had threatening calls on my mobile	.97
7. I have called others mean names or teased them	.97
8. I have threatened or forced others to do things	.97
9. I have bullied other with names of sexual meaning	.96
10. I have sent threatening emails to others	.97
11. I have spread false rumours about others	.97
12. I have had money taken away from me	.95
13. I have bullied others with mean names/race/colour	.95
14. I have been threatened/forced to do things	.96
15. I have sent threatening/hurtful text messages	.97
16. I have been bullied mean names/sexual meaning	.96
17. I have had threatening/hurtful emails sent to me	.97
18. I have been bullied with mean names/race/colour	.97
19. I have been left out of things	.97

Table 8. Cronbach's alphas if items are deleted.

Item	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
20. I have been called names/teased	.95
21. I have had threatening/hurtful text messages sent to me	.96
22. I have hit, kicked, pushed others	.96
23. I have excluded others	.97
24. I have used a mobile phone to make threatening calls	.97

The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression

As can be seen in Table 9, the affective values for the CASA range between .58 and .88 indicating mid to relatively high affectivity values. Participants were less likely to endorse Item 14 ("Initiates physical fights for no reason", q = .88) and most likely to endorse Item 15 ("Is inappropriately rude in telling others what he/she thinks of them when provoked", q = .58).

Table 9. Item affectivity of the CASA Scale.

Item	*q*	Item	*q*
1	.69	11	.71
2	.72	12	.72
3	.69	13	.74
4	.67	14	.88
5	.64	15	.58
6	.77	16	.64
7	.61	17	.82
8	.62	18	.71
9	.81	19	.76
10	.64	20	.61

Figure 3 shows examples of the q-values for the CASA items and how these can be mapped directly onto the order. These examples indicate their level of affectivity within the CASA instrument.

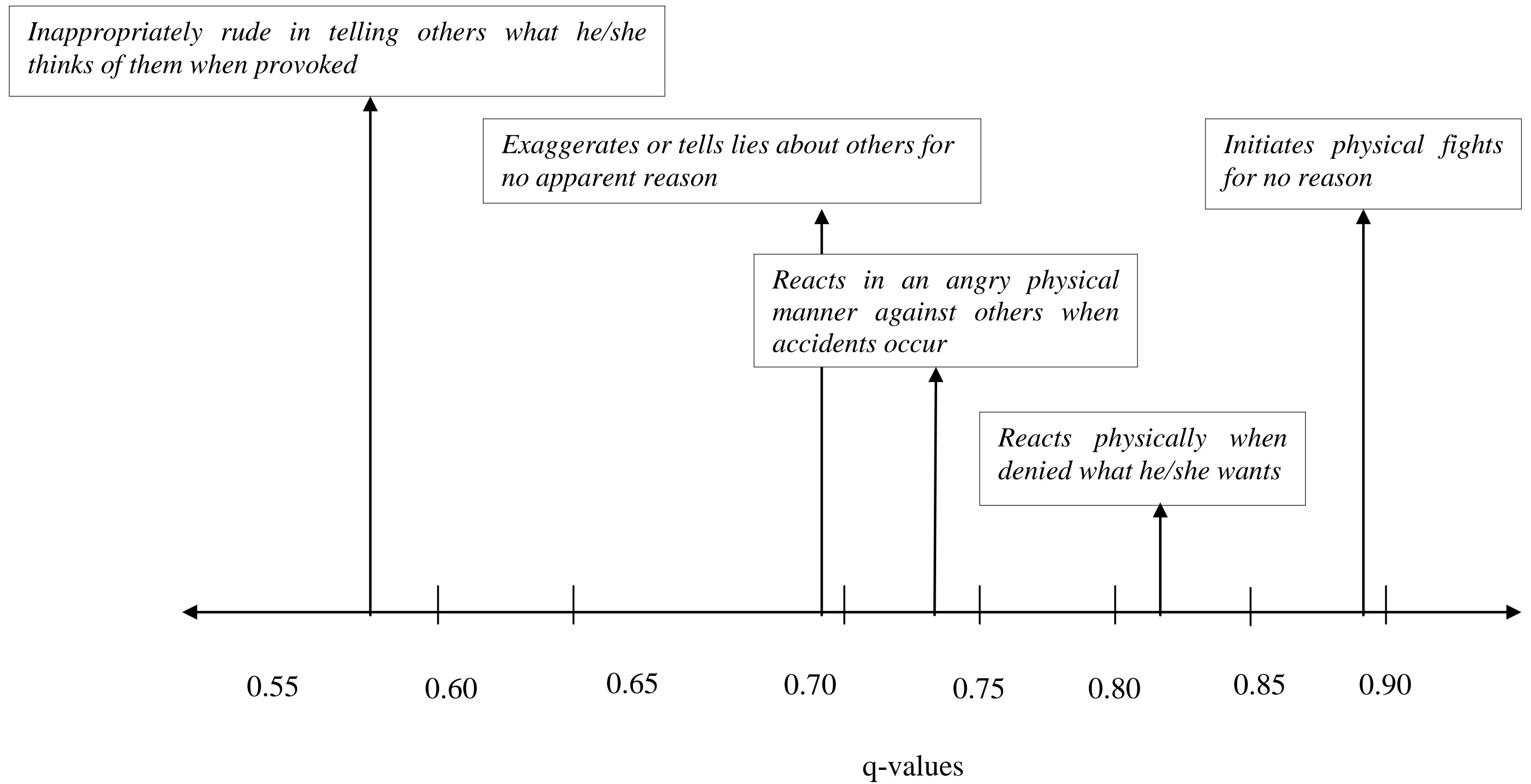

Figure 3. Examples of Q-values (affectivity) of CASA items.

There were three items that yielded relatively high q-values (i.e., greater than .8) and these are shown in Table 10. Of the three, only item 14 ("Initiates physical fights for no reason", q = .88) was substantially higher than .8. Given that this is a relatively new item examining proactive physical aggression it was retained.

Table 10. CASA items with affectivity > .80.

Item Description	q-value
14. Initiates physical fights for no reason	.88
15. Reacts physically when denied what he/she wants	.82
6. Premeditates physically aggressive acts against others	.81

Item Discrimination

To assess how well the items in the CASA instrument rate in their use, the item-discrimination index for each item was determined by computing a bivariate correlation. As can be seen in Table 11 the absolute magnitude of the correlation coefficients for the 20 items of the CASA instrument range between .72 to .90 and all showed a positive association. None of the items were close to zero and therefore, in conjunction with the item affectivity indices, all items were retained.

Table 11. Item discrimination of the CASA Scale.

Item	*q*	Item	*q*
1	.78**	11	.88**
2	.76**	12	.81**
3	.83**	13	.81**
4	.72**	14	.73*
5	.88**	15	.90**
6	.85**	16	.81**
7	.89**	17	.85**
8	.88**	18	.82**
9	.76**	19	.85**
10	.78**	20	.79**

** $p < 0.01$ level (*two-tailed*); * $p < 0.05$ level (*two tailed*).

Reliability Analysis

To measure the internal consistency of the CASA, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated. In this sample with an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .97, the instrument can be considered highly reliable. Table 12 shows the Cronbach alphas if items were removed from the analysis. As can be seen from Table 12 the overall alpha level would not be increased if any items were removed.

Table 12. Cronbach's alphas if items are deleted.

Item description	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
1. Uses physical presence against an individual.	.97
2. Becomes angry and breaks things when annoyed.	.96
3. Exaggerates or tells lies for no reason.	.97
4. Spreads gossip and rumours about others.	.95
5. Verbally attacks vulnerable individuals for no reason.	.95
6. Uses physical force to dominate others.	.96
7. Curses others viciously when provoked	.94
8. Makes verbal threats of violence towards others	.93
9. Premeditates physical aggressive acts against others	.94
10. Verbally encourages others in acts of hostility	.92
11. Physically attacks others when threatened	.96
12. Physically lashes out when annoyed/frustrated	.97
13. Reacts in angry physical manner when accidents occur	.95
14. Initiates physical fights for no reason	.92
15. Inappropriately rude and tells others when provoked	.94
16. Becomes verbally angry when not get own way	.96
17. Reacts physically when denied what they want	.97
18. Uses offensive words against others for no reason	.97
19. Threatens others physically to get what wants	.97
20. Verbally attacks person when difference of opinion	.94

The Loner Scale

As can be seen in Table 13, the affective values for the Loner Scale range between .46 and .65 indicating mid affectivity values. Participants were likely to endorse all of the items, as shown by the range between Item 4 (“I feel more at ease with others than being on my own”, *q* = .46) and Item 6 (“I deliberately choose to be by myself than with others”, *q* = .65).

Table 13. Item affectivity of the Loner Scale.

Item	*q*	Item	*q*
1	.52	6	.65
2	.60	7	.63
3	.59	8	.54
4	.46	9	.56
5	.59	10	.64

Figure 4 shows examples of the q-values for the Loner Scale items and how these can be mapped directly onto the order. These examples indicate their level of affectivity within the Loner Scale. None of the items yielded high q-values (i.e., greater than .8) or low q values (i.e., less than .2) and all items were therefore retained for examination in conjunction with the item discrimination indices.

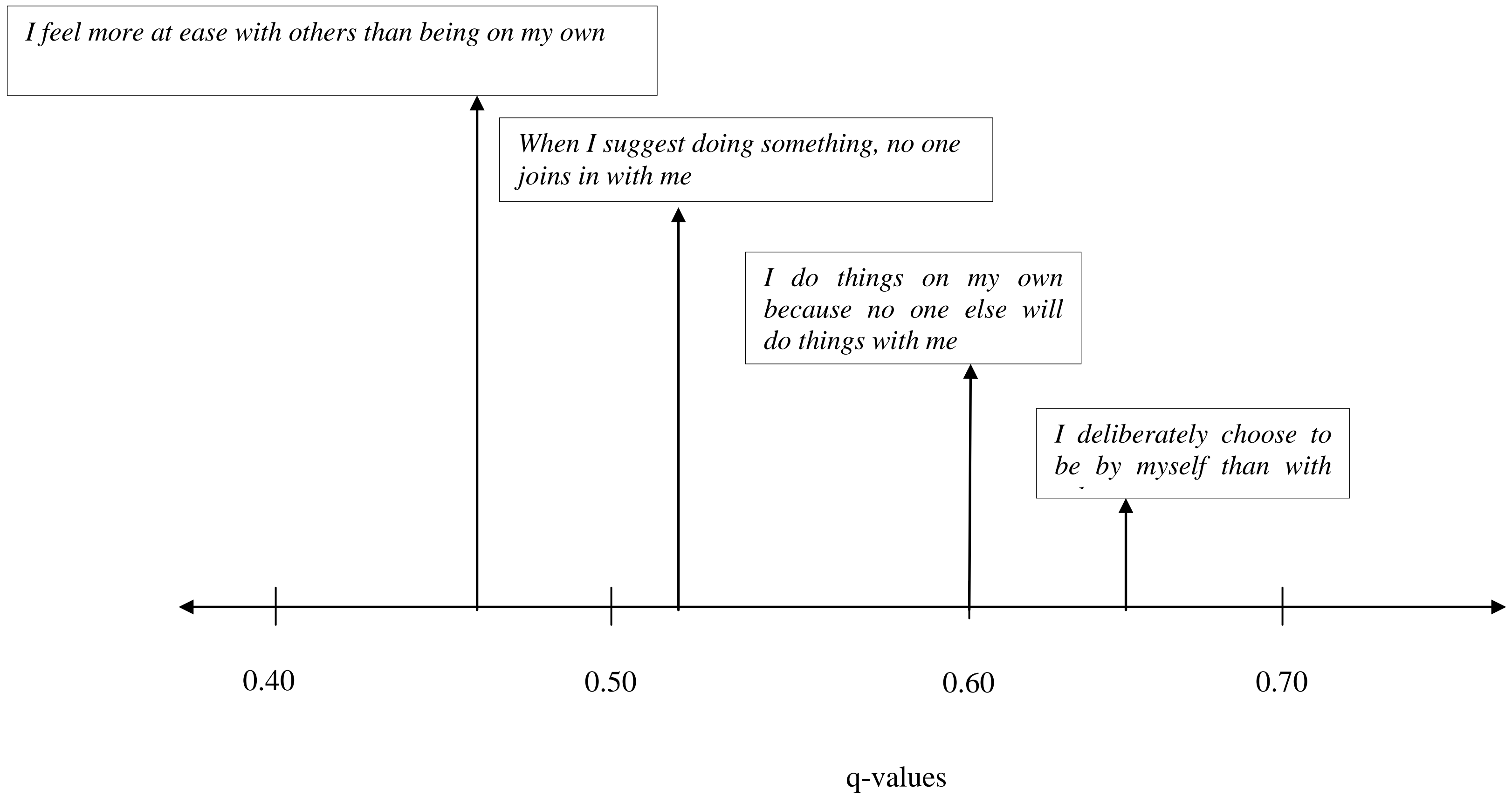

Figure 4. Q-values (affectivity) of Loner Scale.

Item Discrimination

To assess how well the items in the Loner Scale instrument rate in their use, the item-discrimination index for each item was determined by computing a bivariate correlation. As can be seen in Table 14 the absolute magnitude of the correlation coefficients for the 10 items of the Loner Scale range between .29 to .62 and all showed a positive association. None of the items were close to zero and therefore, in conjunction with the item affectivity indices, all items were retained.

Table 14. Item discrimination of the Loner Scale.

Item	*q*	Item	*q*
1	.36	6	.52**
2	.62**	7	.29
3	.58**	8	.65**
4	.38**	9	.48**
5	.30	10	.43*

** $p < 0.01$ level (*two-tailed*); * $p < 0.05$ level (*two tailed*).

Reliability Analysis

To measure the internal consistency of the Loner Scale, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated. Nunnally (1978) recommends a minimum Cronbach alpha value of .7. Thus, in this sample with an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .72, the instrument can be considered reliable. Table 15 shows the Cronbach alphas if items were removed from the analysis. As can be seen from Table 15 if items were removed, there would be no increase in the overall alpha level above .72.

Table 15. Cronbach's alphas if items are deleted.

Item	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted
1. When I suggest doing something no one joins in with me	.71
2. Do things on own because no one will do things with me.	.72
3. Do things on own because prefer own company.	.72
4. Feel more at ease with others.	.73
5. Like to be with others but they leave me out.	.71
6. Deliberately choose to be with self.	.72
7. Chance to be with others but choose not to.	.71
8. No one listens to me when I say something	.71
9. Get invited to parties and other social gatherings	.71
10. Even if find company I choose to be alone	.72

Summary

Overall, the item affectivity and discrimination indices and internal reliabilities of the items making up the *MR-OBVQ*, *CASA* and *Loner Scale* was determined by a Guttman analysis of the data provided for 30 primary school aged children, 12 of who had been suspended from school for bullying. This preliminary analysis was conducted to determine the sensitivity of the instruments. The CASA and Loner scale performed satisfactorily, but children found it difficult to endorse a number of items making up the *MR-OBVQ* (i.e., those items with a high q-value). These items also

presented with correlation coefficients less than .3. As mentioned earlier, although statistically their removal would be recommended, in this instance it was decided that because of (i) the nature of the bullying behaviours of the children in the pilot sample, (ii) that the main study would include children exhibiting a wider range of bullying behaviours, and (iii) the clinical merit of the new cyber items, all should be retained. The following chapter describes Study Three which sought to further establish the psychometric properties of the instruments prior to conducting a larger scale survey to examine reputation and bullying.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY THREE: FURTHER VALIDATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS AND AN EXAMINATION OF THE REPUTATIONAL ORIENTATIONS AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF BULLIES AND NON BULLIES

The preceding chapter described Study Two, in which the item functionality of the new instruments was examined. In addition, the internal consistencies of these instruments were also established. Study Three, which comprises two parts, describes a larger scale study. First, the factor structures of the instruments are established. Then, differences in scores on the instruments of a larger sample of mainstream primary school aged bullies and non bullies are examined.

Method

Participants and settings

The total sample comprised of 132 children (62 males [47%] and 70 females [53%]) from Grades 5 (n = 27), 6 (n = 53) and 7 (n = 52). The ages of these participants ranged from 10.0 to 12.75 years (Mean age = 11 years 4 months, SD = 8.8 months). Of the 132 children, 38 (22 males and 16 females) had been suspended from their school, as shown by official school documentation, for bullying peers. The remaining children (n = 94, 40 males and 54 females) had no official records of bullying. These children (i.e., bullies and non bullies) provided information by responding to items on the MR-OBVQ, The Loner Scale, and Reputation Enhancement Scale. In addition, a total of six teachers (2 males and 4 females) also participated by completing the Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression (CASA) for each child in the study. These

teachers, whose teaching experience ranged from 4 to 33 years, were required to have taught the children for whom they completed an instrument for at least one school year. None of the bullies who participated in Studies One and Two were included in this third study.

All participants were recruited from three Western Australian State Government primary schools located in low to middle socio-economic status areas as determined by an index classified at the postcode level from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002). The schools were purposefully selected by the researcher in order to ensure that the research sample contained children who met the criteria for identification as a bully (i.e., official school documentation showing suspension for bullying).

Instrumentation

Four instruments, which are reproduced in Appendix 2, were administered to the children. *The Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression, The Reputation Enhancement Scale*, and the *Loner Scale* were all described in detail in the previous chapter. The fourth instrument administered, *The Modified Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire*, is based on *The Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ: Olweus, 1996)* (which was described in Chapter Four of this thesis). As a result of the interviews conducted in Study One of the thesis new items for inclusion in the *R-OBVQ* were generated. The item affectivity and discrimination indices subsequently calculated in Study Two, produced a modified version of the *R-OBVQ*. This (i.e., the *MR-OBVQ*) comprised 22 items, 11 of which referred to the initiation of acts of bullying perpetrated by the individual, while 11 referred to acts

being initiated against an individual. Two items asked participants whether they had been bullied or had bullied others. The items measured verbal, physical and cyber aspects of bullying.

Although the psychometrics of the *R-OBVQ* has been established, Kyriakides et al. (2006) questioned whether each of the items contributes in a meaningful way to the construct being investigated. Using a Rasch model Kyriakides et al., (2006) identified eight *R-OBVQ* items concerned with the extent to which individuals bullied others and eight items concerned with being victimized and these had a good fit to the measurement model. Item separation (i.e., reliability) was computed to be higher than 0.85, thereby indicating satisfactory reliability. Although three main negative acts, namely verbal, indirect and physical bullying represented the overarching concept of bullying, cyber forms of bullying were not included. Thus, in this study The *MR-OBVQ* included six items measuring cyber bullying. The number of items comprising the *MR-OBVQ* is shown in Table 16.

Table 16. The Dimensions of the Modified Revised OBVQ.

Dimension	No. of Items	Item Number
Bully	12	2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 22, 23, 24
Victim	12	1, 3, 4, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21
Cyber Bullying	6	6, 10, 15, 17, 21, 24 (included above)

Procedure

Prior to the research being conducted, approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the administering Institution. The researcher then made contact by telephone with the principals of 10 schools to explain the purpose of the research and to describe how the outcomes of the research might assist teachers and schools to understand bullies and develop more effective prevention strategies. At this time it was also ascertained whether bullying was currently occurring in the school. Of the ten, the principals of three of the schools responded affirmatively and also expressed an interest in participating in the research. These three principals were subsequently contacted again by the researcher seven days later at which time the purpose of the research and the potential outcomes was further explained. Principals were also asked if they would invite the teachers of Grades 5, 6 and 7 to be involved. These teachers subsequently agreed to assist in the research. Seven days after the initial contact was made the researcher delivered letters of introduction, information sheets and consent forms, which are reproduced in Appendix 4, to each school for forwarding to all parents of children in Grades 5, 6 and 7 asking permission for their son/daughter to participate in the study. After a one week period a positive return response rate of 58% was obtained from parents willing to allow their child(ren) to participate. These 132 children were included in the study.

Mutually convenient times for instrument administration were subsequently arranged by the researcher with each school. The *MR-OBVS, Loner Scale, and Reputation Enhancement Scale* were completed by the children in each of the classes in one group. That is, during a regular school lesson, the researcher (who is a registered

teacher) administered the instruments in collaboration with the class teacher, while another relief member of staff taught the non participants in the library. In addition, the regular class teachers of the participating classes in each of the schools completed a *CASA* for each of the children. These were then matched by the teacher to the children's three completed instruments by means of a coding system, which had been established prior to administration. (The researcher was unaware of the children's identities and teachers did not have access to children's responses.) Prior to administration, the researcher informed all children that if they had any queries or required any clarification they should signal for assistance. All appeared to find the instruments straight forward to complete, and no clarifications were sought.

Following the administration of the instruments in one of the schools (the one which provided the largest sample) it was noted that during their (i.e., the school's) photocopying of the *MR-OBVQ*, one of the items had been omitted (item 8 "I have threatened or forced others to do things they did not want to do"). Therefore, it was decided to remove the corresponding victim item (item 14 "I have been threatened or forced by others to do things I did not want to do"). Thus, for the data analyses the *MR-OBVS* comprised 20 items.

Results

Factor Analysis of the MR-OBVS

The MR-OBVS data were subjected to maximum likelihood factor analysis with orthogonal (Varimax) rotation using SPSS Version 14.0 (SPSS Incorporated, 2005). To assess the factorability of the data two statistical measures were performed using

SPSS: Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1954) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Kaiser, 1970; 1974). The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should be significant at $p < .05$ for the factor analysis to be considered appropriate. The KMO index ranges from 0 to 1, with Kaiser designating levels of less than .60 as the minimum value (or "mediocre") for a good factor analysis and .80 as "meritorious" (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In the present sample, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant [$\chi^2 = 1515.728$, $df = 231$, $p = .000$] and the KMO obtained was [.841] and therefore factor analysis was appropriate.

Given the inclusion of new cyber bullying items Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with Maximum Likelihood extraction was conducted. The intention was also to examine the factor structure of the *MR-OBVQ* in the light of the Rasch analysis findings described earlier in this thesis (Kyriakides et al., 2006). Previous analyses of bullying characteristics using the R-OBVQ have consistently found three forms, namely physical, verbal and indirect (see Besag, 1989; Olweus, 1993b; Sharp & Smith, 1994).

Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum and Strahan (1999) argued that when choosing the best method of factor extraction, maximum likelihood factor analysis "allows for the computation of a wide range of indexes of the goodness of fit of the model and permits statistical significance testing of factor loadings and correlations among factors and the computation of confidence intervals" (p. 277). Maximum likelihood factor analysis obtains, by successive factoring, a set of factors each of which in turn explains as much variance as possible in the population correlation matrix, as

estimated from the sample correlation matrix (Kline, 2000). The goal of maximum likelihood factor analysis is to reproduce the correlation matrix with a few orthogonal factors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

In the present study, the number of factors extracted was determined by five criteria: (a) the Kaiser's Criterion or eigenvalue rule of extracting factors with eigenvalues greater than one (Kaiser, 1970; 1974); (b) an examination of the Scree plot (Cattell, 1966); (c) the percentage of variance accounted for by the factor solution (Hair et al., 2006); (d) an evaluation of the factor loading patterns (Floyd & Widaman, 1995); and (e) the Interpretability criteria.

The first criterion used to estimate the number of factors to extract was the eigenvalue rule or Kaiser's Criterion, where it is suggested that only those factors with an eigenvalue of one or more are retained for further investigation. As can be seen in Table 17, in the present study 4 items obtained eigenvalues greater than one, with the first factor having an eigenvalue of 7.43. Table 17 also shows the percent of variance accounted for by each factor (Factor I = 33.77%) and this is followed by a cumulative percent which is a sum of all previous factors. The Total Variance Explained is presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Eigenvalues and Percentage of Total Variance of the 22 MR-OBVS Items.

	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (SSL) Communalities (h^2)		
	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	7.431	33.777	33.777	5.462	24.829	24.829
2	2.114	9.610	43.387	4.083	18.558	43.387
3	1.570	7.135	55.316			
4	1.110	5.046	60.363			
5	.978	4.445	68.953			
6	.912	4.145	70.434			
7	.886	4.025	72.978			
9	.649	2.951	79.150			
10	.635	2.887	82.037			
11	.572	2.599	84.636			
12	.518	2.355	86.991			
13	.454	2.064	89.055			
15	.385	1.748	92.672			
16	.334	1.518	94.190			
17	.290	1.318	95.508			
18	.269	1.223	96.730			
19	.240	1.092	97.882			
20	.192	.871	98.693			
21	.157	.712	99.405			
22	.131	.595	100.000			

Note: Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood. Items 8 and 14 removed.

The second criterion used to estimate the number of factors to extract was the Scree plot which involves examining the graph of the eigenvalues plotted against the factors. A judgment is made where the discontinuity in eigenvalues occurs and a line is drawn through where the points change slope. Examining the Scree plot in the present study, suggested two or possibly three factors should be retained, which cumulatively accounted for 43.39% of the variance.

To fully determine the number of factors to extract, several factor analyses using maximum likelihood factor analysis with orthogonal (Varimax) rotation were conducted on the *MR-OBVS* items as suggested by the Scree plot. The number of

factors was manually specified at two, three, four, and five. According to Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006) Varimax is the preferred method of rotation where data will be subsequently used in multivariate analysis (as in the present research). At the conclusion of each analysis, the item loading tables were examined.

The percentage of variance was the third criterion used to determine the number of factors to extract. This is based on achieving a specified cumulative percentage of total variance. While desirable in social sciences to account for at least 60% of the variance among observed variables (Hair et al., 2006), Kline (2000) proposed that it is not uncommon to interpret factor solutions that account for as little as 30% of the variance. In column two of Table 18, the initial communalities are presented. A variable with an initial communality of less than .50 is unacceptable and Costello and Osborne (2005) suggest that a communality of less than .40 may show that the item is unrelated to the other items.

Table 18. Communalities and Rotated Factor Loadings for MR-OBVS Items.

Item and Description	(h^2) Initial	Varimax Rotated Factor Loadings 1	2
Factor 1: Bullying			
22. Have hit or kicked and shoved others or locked them indoors	.75	.807	
5. Took money from others or damaged their belongings	.70	.754	
2. How often taken part in bullying	.68	.745	
9. Bullied others with mean names with a sexual meaning	.62	.722	
7. Have called others mean names or teased them in a hurtful way	.62	.702	
11. Spread false rumours about others to make others dislike them	.62	.673	
13. Bullied others with mean names about their race or colour	.55	.629	
23. Kept others out of things/excluded or ignored them	.54	.614	
6. Have had threatening or hurtful calls made to me on my mobile phone by others	.49	.451	
24. Have used a mobile phone to make threatening or hurtful calls	.56	.438	
15. Have sent threatening/hurtful texts	.45	.434	
21. Have received threatening or hurtful text (SMS) messages sent to me	.49	.425	
10. Have sent threatening or hurtful emails to others	.46	.348	
Factor 2: Victimization			
16. Have been bullied with mean names with a sexual meaning	.67		.761
4. Other students lied about me to make others dislike me	.55		.761
20. Have been called mean names or teased in a hurtful way	.66		.688
12. Have had money or other things taken from me or destroyed	.58		.660
19. Left out of things and excluded or ignored by others	.56		.651

Table 18. Continued

Item and Description	(h^2)		
17. Have had threatening or hurtful emails sent to me	.59		.569
1. How often been bullied	.48		.562
3. Been hit or kicked and shoved around or locked indoors	.48	.304	.512
18. Have been bullied with mean names about my race and colour	.49	.423	.474

Note: 1. Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood
2. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

The fourth criterion was the examination of the factor loading patterns. Given the goals of obtaining simple structure, with item loadings above .30, no or few item cross-loadings and no factors with fewer than three items, it was decided that two factors obtained the best fit to the data. (A number of items did cross load and were above .3 but removal of these items and subsequent factor analyses did not result in clean factor solutions. Therefore it was decided to retain these items on the basis of their theoretical importance to that factor.)

The fifth criterion, interpretability, relates to whether each factor has a substantive meaning as presented in Table 18. The factors that have high loadings have excellent face validity and appear to be measuring some underlying construct. The first factor is composed primarily of variables that are measuring bullying traits such as hitting others, verbally threatening others and using cyber technology to make threats and was therefore labeled **bullying**.

Items 6 (Have had threatening or hurtful calls made to me on my mobile phone by others) and 21 (Have received threatening or had hurtful text (SMS) messages sent to me) are victimization items yet loaded on the bullying factor. It is possible that these cyber items are interpreted by children as both bully and victim behaviours. It appears that some victims who receive threatening or hurtful mobile phone calls or hurtful text messages "fire off" replies because of the supposed anonymity of these cyber processes. Given this potential confusion these two items were removed from the main data analysis. The second factor is composed of variables that measure victimization, which include being physically and verbally assaulted, being excluded, and receiving cyber messages, and was therefore labeled **victimization**.

The present study factor analysis supports the use of bullying and victimization as distinct subscales. Given the interpretation of factor loadings for items 6 and 21 these were removed from the *MR-OBVS* for the main study which is reported in the next chapter of this thesis.

Internal Consistency

To estimate the internal consistency of the solution, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α) was calculated for the *MR-OBVS* and for each factor. According to Pallant (2005) alpha coefficients above .70 are indicative of acceptable reliability. In the present study a high degree of internal consistency was evident with $\alpha = .91$, which suggests the *MR-OBVS* functioned as a relatively homogenous scale for this sample. Alpha coefficients revealed a high degree of internal consistency for each of the two subscales with bullying ($\alpha = .89$) and victimization ($\alpha = .87$).

As shown in Table 19, the scale comprised an 11-item Bullying subscale and a 9-item Victimization subscale. Inspection of the corrected-item correlations and alpha coefficients in Table 19 suggests that the deletion of any single item would not substantially improve the internal consistency of the scale.

Table 19. Item-Total Statistics for 20 MR-OBVS items.

Item Description	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Bullying		
2. How often taken part in bullying	.68	.90
22. Have hit or kicked and shoved others or locked them indoors	.61	.89
5. Taken money from others or damaged their belongings	.63	.88
9. Bullied others with mean names with a sexual meaning	.56	.90
11. Spread false rumours about others to make others dislike them	.62	.91
7. Have called others mean names or teased them in a hurtful way	.60	.90
13. Bullied others with mean names about their race or colour	.52	.90
23. Kept others out of things/excluded or ignored them	.57	.90
15. Sent threatening or hurtful text (sms) messages to others	.39	.91
24. Have used a mobile phone to make threatening or hurtful calls	.46	.89
10. Have sent threatening or hurtful emails to others	.36	.90
Victimization		
1. How often have you bullied at school this year	.56	.90
4. Other students lied about me to make others dislike me	.50	.89
16. Have been bullied with mean names with a sexual meaning.	.55	.88
20. Have been called mean names or teased in a hurtful way	.58	.90
12. Have had money or other things taken from me or destroyed	.56	.91
19. Left out of things and excluded or ignored by others	.53	.90
17. Have had threatening or hurtful emails sent to me	.58	.90
3. Been hit or kicked and shoved around or locked indoors	.55	.86
18. Have been bullied with mean names about my race and colour	.61	.90

Factor Analysis of the Child and Adolescent Scale of Aggression

The CASA data were subjected to maximum likelihood factor analysis with

orthogonal (Varimax) rotation using SPSS Version 14.0 (SPSS Incorporated, 2005). In the present sample, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant [$\chi^2 = 3889.159$, $df = 190$, $p = .000$] and the KMO obtained was [.941] and therefore factor analysis was appropriate.

The intention was to examine the factor structure of the *CASA* in the light of the previous research findings described earlier in this thesis. The only previous factor analysis has found three factors underlying these traits (see Houghton, Cordin, & Hopkins, in press). The factors derived from this which formed the subscales comprised a 10-item Physical Aggression subscale, a six-item Reactive Verbal Aggression subscale, and a four-item Proactive Verbal Aggression subscale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of each of the subscales revealed a high degree of internal consistency with Physical Aggression ($\alpha = .93$), Reactive Verbal Aggression ($\alpha = .81$), and Proactive Verbal Aggression ($\alpha = .81$).

The first criterion used to estimate the number of factors to extract was the eigenvalue rule or Kaiser's Criterion, where as can be seen in Table 20, one item obtained eigenvalues greater than one with the first factor having an eigenvalue of 15.502. Table 20 also shows the percent of variance accounted for by each factor (Factor I = 77.51%) and this is followed by a cumulative percent which is a sum of all previous factors. The Total Variance Explained is presented in Table 20.

Table 20. Eigenvalues and Percentage of Total Variance of the 20 CASA Items

	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (SSL) Communalities (h^2)		
	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	15.50	77.510	77.510	15.265	76.324	76.324
2	.621	3.106	80.616			
3	.537	2.638	83.299			
4	.471	2.353	85.652			
5	.453	2.266	87.918			
6	.399	1.997	89.915			
7	.337	1.687	91.603			
8	.308	1.540	93.143			
9	.262	1.311	94.453			
10	.214	1.072	95.525			
11	.172	.861	96.386			
12	.153	.766	97.153			
13	.122	.611	97.764			
14	.109	.547	98.311			
15	.088	.442	98.753			
16	.070	.352	99.106			
17	.053	.265	99.371			
18	.050	.251	99.621			
19	.044	.218	99.840			
20	.032	.160	100.000			

Note: Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

The second criterion used to estimate the number of factors to extract was the Scree plot which suggested one factor should be retained, which cumulatively accounted for 77.50% of the variance. To fully determine the number of factors to extract, several factor analyses using maximum likelihood factor analysis with orthogonal (Varimax) rotation were conducted on the *CASA* items. At the conclusion of each analysis, the item loading tables were examined.

The percentage of variance was the third criterion used to determine the number of factors to extract. This is based on achieving a specified cumulative percentage of total variance. In column two of Table 21, the initial communalities are presented.

Table 21. Communalities and Rotated Factor Loadings for the 20 CASA Items

Item and Description		
2. Becomes angry and breaks things when annoyed or frustrated	.93	.937
8. Makes clear verbal threats of violence towards others when provoked	.93	.930
7. Curses others viciously when provoked	.90	.915
11. Physically attacks others when threatened	.94	.914
20. Verbally attacks a person when there is a difference of opinion	.92	.912
19. Threatens others physically to get what he/she wants	.88	.903
12. Physically lashes out at others when annoyed or frustrated	.82	.888
10. Verbally encourages others to take part in acts of hostility	.89	.885
5. Verbally attacks vulnerable individuals for no apparent reason	.90	.879
16. Becomes verbally angry when he/she does not get their own way	.88	.870
18. Uses offensive words to hurt, abuse or insult others for no apparent reason	.86	.861
4. Spreads gossip and rumours about others for no apparent reason	.87	.861
17. Reacts physically when denied what they want	.89	.857
6. Uses physical force to dominate others	.82	.847
9. Premeditates physically aggressive acts against others	.82	.843
1. Uses his/her physical presence to get others to gang up against a vulnerable	.81	.839
13. Reacts in an angry physical manner against others when accidents occur	.83	.837
14. Initiates physical fights for no reason	.85	.834
3. Exaggerates or tells lies about others for no apparent reason	.80	.833
15. Inappropriately rude in telling others what he/she thinks of them when provoked	.88	.813

Note: 1. Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood
2. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

The fourth criterion was the examination of the factor loading patterns. Given the goals of obtaining simple structure, with item loadings above .30, no or few item cross-loadings and no factors with fewer than three items, it was decided that one factor obtained the best fit to the data.

The fifth criterion, interpretability, relates to whether each factor has a substantive meaning as presented in Table 21. The factor is composed of variables that are measuring aggressive behaviours, including both proactive and reactive forms of physical and verbal aggression and was therefore labelled **aggression**. The interpretation of these factors is not consistent with that of Houghton, Cordin and Hopkins (2008) who reported three factors. However, it is consistent with Dodge and Coie (1987) and Crick and Dodge (1999) who suggested that bullies present with both reactive and proactive aggression and measurement bias might play a role as teachers may focus on the final part of the aggressive interaction and have difficulties distinguishing between the proactive and reactive. Thus, they may merge all aggression episodes into one broad category (Crick & Dodge, 1999; Dodge & Coie, 1987).

Internal Consistency

To estimate the internal consistency of the solution, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α) was calculated for the *CASA*. According to Pallant (2005) alpha coefficients above .70 are indicative of acceptable reliability. In the present study a high degree of internal consistency was evident with $\alpha = .98$, which suggests the *CASA* functioned as a relatively homogenous scale for this sample. Inspection of the corrected-item

correlations and alpha coefficients in Table 22 suggests that the deletion of any single item would not substantially improve the internal consistency of the scale.

Table 22. Item-Total Statistics for the 20 CASA Items

Item Description	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Aggression		
1. Uses his/her physical presence to get others to gang up against a vulnerable individual	.83	.97
2. Becomes angry and breaks things when annoyed or frustrated	.93	.98
3. Exaggerates or tells lies about others for no apparent reason	.83	.96
4. Spreads gossip and rumours about others for no apparent reason	.86	.96
5. Verbally attacks vulnerable individuals for no apparent reason	.88	.98
6. Uses physical force to dominate others	.84	.98
7. Curses others viciously when provoked	.91	.97
8. Makes clear verbal threats of violence towards others when provoked	.92	.97
9. Premeditates physically aggressive acts against others	.84	.95
10. Verbally encourages others to take part in acts of hostility	.88	.98
11. Physically attacks others when threatened	.90	.96
12. Physically lashes out at others when annoyed or frustrated	.88	.97
13. Reacts in an angry physical manner against others when accidents occur	.82	.98
14. Initiates physical fights for no reason	.83	.96
15. Is inappropriately rude in telling others what he/she thinks of them when provoked	.81	.98
16. Becomes verbally angry when he/she does not get their own way	.86	.98
17. Reacts physically when denied what they want	.85	.96
18. Uses offensive words to hurt, abuse or insult others for no apparent reason	.86	.97
19. Threatens others physically to get what he/she wants	.89	.98
20. Verbally attacks a person when there is a difference of opinion	.91	.97

Factor Analysis of the Loner Scale

The Loner Scale data were subjected to maximum likelihood factor analysis with orthogonal (Varimax) rotation using SPSS Version 14.0 (SPSS Incorporated, 2005). In the present sample, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant [$\chi^2 = 223.127$, $df = 45$, $p = .000$] and the KMO obtained was [.761] and therefore factor analysis was appropriate.

In the only factor analysis to date, Tan, Houghton and Carroll (in press) reported a two factor solution which explained a total of 51.1% of the variance, with Factor 1 (Loner by Choice – 4 items) contributing 28.0% and Factor 2 (Loner by Circumstances – 6 items) contributing 12.8%. The alpha coefficients of the two subscales revealed a high degree of internal consistency for Loners by choice (α = .79) and Loners by circumstances (α = .74).

The first criterion used in the present study to estimate the number of factors to extract was the eigenvalue rule or Kaiser's Criterion, and as can be seen in Table 23, 3 items obtained eigenvalues greater than one with the first factor having an eigenvalue of 3.05. Table 23 also shows the percent of variance accounted for by each factor (Factor I = 30.52%) and this is followed by a cumulative percent which is a sum of all previous factors. The Total Variance Explained is presented in Table 23.

Table 23. Eigenvalues and Percentage of Total Variance of the 10 Loner Scale items.

	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (SSL) Communalities (h^2)		
	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %	Total	Variance %	Cumulative %
1	3.052	30.520	30.520	1.654	16.544	16.544
2	1.269	12.688	43.208	1.562	15.262	31.806
3	1.047	10.473	53.680			
4	.999	9.989	63.669			
5	.815	8.149	71.818			
6	.730	7.296	79.114			
7	.626	4.025	85.376			
8	.552	6.263	90.894			
9	.475	5.518	95.647			
10	.435	4.753	100.000			

Note: Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

The second criterion used to estimate the number of factors to extract was the Scree plot and after examining the Scree plot in the present study, it suggested two factors should be retained, which cumulatively accounted for 43.2% of the variance.

The percentage of variance was the third criterion used to determine the number of factors to extract. In column two of Table 24, the initial communalities are also presented.

Table 24. Communalities and Rotated Factor Loadings for 8 Loner Scale items

Item Description	(h^2) Initial	Varimax Rotated Factor 1	2
Factor 1: Loner by Circumstances			
1. When I suggest doing something no one joins me.	.26	.937	
5. Although I like to be with others they leave me out	.29	.445	
2. Do things on my own as no one will do things with me.	.27	.374	
8. No one listens to me when I say something	.31	.400	
Factor 2: Loner by Choice			
6. I deliberately choose to be by myself than with others.	.33		.645
10. Even finding company or friends when I want I choose to be alone.	.30		.491
3. I do things on my own because I prefer my own company	.33		.483
7. When I have a chance to join with others I choose not to.	.19		.370

Note: 1. Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood
2. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

*The fourth criterion was the examination of the factor loading patterns a*nd it was decided that two factors obtained the best fit to the data. Items 4 and 9 did not load on either of the factors (hence the 8 items in Table 24)..

The fifth criterion, interpretability, relates to whether each factor has a substantive meaning as presented in Table 24. The first factor is composed primarily of variables that are measuring Loner traits related to rejection and being left out of things by others and was therefore labelled **Loner by Circumstances**. The second factor is

composed of variables that measure Loner traits, which include choosing to be alone, and was therefore labelled **Loner by Choice**. The interpretation of these factors is consistent with that of Tan, Houghton and Carroll (in press) who also reported two factors which were labelled: Loner by Circumstances and Loner by Choice. The present factor analysis supports the use of Loner by Choice and Loner by Circumstances as distinct subscales.

Internal Consistency

To estimate the internal consistency of the solution, Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α) was calculated for the Loner Scale and for each factor. In the present study a satisfactory degree of internal consistency was evident overall with $\alpha = .76$, which suggests the *Loner Scale* functioned as a relatively homogenous scale for this sample. Alpha coefficients revealed a satisfactory degree of internal consistency for each of the two subscales with Loner by Circumstances ($\alpha = .67$) and Loner by Choice ($\alpha = .69$). As shown in Table 25, the scale comprised a 4-item Loner by Circumstances subscale and a 4-item Loner by Choice subscale.

Inspection of the corrected-item correlations and alpha coefficients in Table 25 suggests that the deletion of any single item would not substantially improve the internal consistency of the scale overall.

Table 25. Item-Total Statistics for the 8 Loner Scale Items.

Item and Description	Corrected Item-Total	Cronbach's Alpha if
1. When I suggest doing something no one joins in.	.42	.73
2. I do things on my own because no one else will do	.40	.74
3. I do things on my own because I prefer my own company.	.49	.72
5. Although I like to be with others they leave me out.	.49	.72
6. I deliberately choose to be by myself than with others.	.49	.72
7. When I have a chance to join in I choose not to.	.39	.74
8. No one listens to me when I say something	.49	.72
10. Even finding company or friends when I want choose to be alone	.43	.73

The Reputation Enhancement Scale

Internal Consistency

Although the RES has produced consistent factor solutions and strong internal reliabilities with different populations (see Carroll et al., 2009 for a full review of EFA and CFA over 15 years), the internal consistencies of its subscales were estimated in the present research. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients (α) were as follows: Self-perceived social deviance norms (α = .86); Self-perceived social conformity norms (α = .81); Evaluative reactions to others social conformity (α = .79); Evaluative reactions to others social deviance (α = .84); Non conforming self-perception (α = .87); Non conforming ideal public self (α = .88); Conforming self-perception (α = .77); Conforming ideal public self (α = .80); Activity self-description (α = .73); Activity ideal private self (α = .81); Power/evaluation self-description (α = .71); Power/evaluation ideal private self (α = .75); Brag (α = .68); Rebel (α = .70); Status (α = .67); and Face (α = .66).

In the present study a high degree of internal consistency was evident across the subscales of the RES.

Summary

This third study built on the previous ones in which the instruments were selected (and in some instances modified) and then examined in a pilot study in terms of their item affectivity and discrimination indices and internal reliability. In this third study of the thesis 132 children (62 males and 70 females aged 10 to 12.75 years and their teachers completed the instruments. Of the 132 children, 38 (22 males and 16 females) had been suspended from their school, as shown by official school documentation, for bullying. With reference to the psychometrics of the instruments, the *MR-OBVS* comprised two factors (bullying and victimization) and had a high degree of internal consistency. For the *CASA* one factor (aggression) was evident along with a high degree of internal consistency. Finally, the *Loner Scale* was found to comprise two factors (Loner by Circumstances and Loner by Choice), and to have satisfactory internal consistencies. All of the internal reliabilities of these instruments, and the Reputation Enhancement Scale were strong. In the next chapter, the differences in reputational orientations and aggressive behaviour of bullies and non bullies are examined using these instruments.

CHAPTER SIX

STUDY THREE: DIFFERENCES IN BULLIES' AND NON BULLIES' REPUTATIONAL ORIENTATIONS AND AGGRESSION

Results

This chapter presents the results from the analyses of the group differences on the scales administered. First, the descriptive statistics for bullying for the total sample ($n = 132$) are given, albeit briefly. This is followed by an examination of the kinds of bullying perpetrated by the bullies (n = 38). These data are presented briefly as they are not the primary focus of the thesis, rather differences in the reputational orientations of bullies and non bullies are. A one way between groups Analysis of Variance on aggression is then presented to explore the impact of gender (n = 22 male bullies, 16 female bullies) on bullying. Still focusing on the bullying data, a two way between groups Analysis of Variance is then detailed which examines the impact of group and gender on levels of aggression, as measured by the *CASA*.

Second, the results of a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) are presented. The MANOVA explored the effect of the independent variables of group (bully and non bully) and gender on the 16 variables of the Reputation Enhancement Scale (RES). The Pillais criterion was used to evaluate multivariate significance given the unequal cell sizes and potential for violation of error variances (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Univariate F-tests were conducted when significant

multivariate results were obtained. *F*-values were determined to be significant using Bonferroni adjusted alpha levels of .003 for the RES variables to control for Type 1 errors. Effect sizes and power estimates are reported.

Third, differences in reputational orientations were further investigated using independent samples t-tests with relatively small groups of children identified as loner bullies ($n = 12$) and loner non bullies ($n = 15$). (It was not possible to construct groups comprising social bullies and non loner non bullies to conduct a four way comparison.)

Bullying

Descriptive statistics

The sample comprised 132 primary school aged students (Grade 5 n = 27, Grade 6 n = 53, and Grade 7 n = 52) and of these 70 were females and 62 were males. Overall, 38 of the 132 had been suspended from school for bullying and of these 22 were male and 16 were female. With reference to grade level and bullying 8 of the bullies were in Grade 5, 13 in Grade 6, and 17 in Grade 7. The data from the *MR-OBVQ* revealed that overall 78% of the total sample reported having been bullied during the present school academic year and approximately 61% reported that they had bullied others. Only 22% reported they had never been bullied and only 39% said they had never bullied others. (This descriptive analysis includes the 38 bullies.) Table 26 shows the percentage of bullying across all of the response options according to the *MR-OBVS* items.

As can be seen in Table 26 almost 40% of the participants reported that they had never taken part in bullying others during the school year (a period of 10 months). Conversely, almost 45% reported bullying others once or twice during the school year, and over 10% reported bullying two to three times each month. It appears from Table 26 that calling others mean names, making fun of them, or teasing them in a hurtful way was the most frequently reported type of bullying throughout the school year, with over 50% of participants perpetrating it either two or three times a month or once or twice throughout the year. This was also the most frequently cited bullying behaviour with 1.5% stating they carried it out several times a week. Using the same categories reveals that keeping others out of things, excluding or ignoring them was the next most reported bullying behaviour (40%). Cyber bullying was the least reported used method of bullying as shown by items 10, 15, and 24. In each of these instances approximately 80% and over reported never having used this form of bullying. Over 10% of participants did report having used these different forms of cyber bullying once or twice during the past 10 months of the school year, however.

Table 26. Percentages of Bullying Reported by Participants (n = 132) across all Response Options of the MR-OBVS (11 items).

Item and Description	Never	Once or twice	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Several times a week
2. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school this year?	38.6	43.9	12.1	4.5	0.8
5. I have taken money or other things from others, or damaged their belongings.	61.4	25.0	10.6	2.3	0.8
7. I have called others mean names, made fun of, or teased them in a hurtful way.	43.2	39.4	11.4	4.5	1.5
9. I have bullied others with mean names with a sexual meaning.	63.6	25.0	8.3	2.3	0.8
10. I have sent threatening or hurtful emails to others.	85.6	12.1	1.5	0.8	.00
11. I have spread false rumours about others and tried to make others dislike them.	60.6	22.0	15.2	1.5	0.8
13. I have bullied others with mean names about their race or colour.	66.7	20.5	9.8	3.0	.00
15. I have sent threatening or hurtful text (SMS) messages to others.	79.5	12.9	4.5	2.3	0.8
22. I have hit, kicked, pushed and shoved others around, or locked them indoors.	63.6	19.7	12.9	3.8	.00
23. I have kept others out of things, excluded or ignored them.	56.1	35.6	5.3	3.0	.00
24. I have used a mobile phone to make threatening or hurtful calls.	84.8	11.4	3.8	.00	.00

With reference to the 38 children who had been suspended for bullying, it appears from Table 27 that very few of them reported perpetrating their acts several times each week. Only two of the bullying items (Item 2 – the general question and Item 7 "I have called others mean names, made fun of, or teased them in a hurtful way") revealed such a frequency of involvement. Almost all of the 38 bullies reported carrying out their bullying either two or three times a month or once or twice throughout the school year. This was consistent across all of the different types of

bullying (i.e., verbal, physical and cyber e.g., sending hurtful SMS messages). Less than 30% of bullies reported using cyber bullying techniques such as emails and/or mobile phones to bully others.

Table 27. Percentages of Bullying Reported by Bullies (n = 38) across all Response Options of the MR-OBVS (11 items).

Item and Description	Never	Once or twice	Two or three times a month	About once a week	Several times a week
2. How often have you taken part in bullying another student(s) at school this year?	0	18	14	5	1
5. I have taken money or other things from others, or damaged their belongings.	4	18	13	3	0
7. I have called others mean names, made fun of, or teased them in a hurtful way.	2	19	11	4	2
9. I have bullied others with mean names with a sexual meaning.	10	16	9	3	0
10. I have sent threatening or hurtful emails to others.	26	9	2	1	0
11. I have spread false rumours about others and tried to make others dislike them.	4	13	18	2	0
13. I have bullied others with mean names about their race or colour.	10	13	11	4	0
15. I have sent threatening or hurtful text (SMS) messages to others.	12	18	5	3	0
22. I have hit, kicked, pushed and shoved others around, or locked them indoors.	8	10	16	4	0
23. I have kept others out of things, excluded or ignored them.	11	18	5	4	0
24. I have used a mobile phone to make threatening or hurtful calls.	26	8	4	0	0

The mean total bullying score for male bullies (M = 12.50, *SD* = 4.98) was marginally lower than that for the female bullies (M = 12.87, *SD* = 2.93). A One way between groups Analysis of Variance was conducted to explore the impact of gender (n = 22 male bullies and n = 16 female bullies) on bullying (using the 11 bullying items on the *MR-OBVS*). Levene's test was .935 therefore the homogeneity of variance assumption was not violated. No significant main effect of gender [F (1, 36) = .062, p =.804, partial η^2 = .002] was evident.

Aggression

A two way between groups Analysis of Variance was conducted to examine the impact of group and gender on levels of aggression, as measured by the *CASA*. There was a significant interaction effect (i.e., a combination of the independent variables) between group and gender [F (1, 3) = 23.95, p < .001, partial η^2 = .158] (which is shown in Figure 5). Inspection of Figure 5 indicates that the mean aggression score for male bullies (M = 38.32, *SD* = 10.41) was higher than that for the female bullies (M = 28.81, *SD* = 8.94). For the non bullies, however, the opposite was the case with female non bullies (M = 1.22, *SD* = 2.51) scoring higher mean levels of aggression than the male non bullies (M = .30, *SD* = .85). Table 28 shows the mean levels of aggression for the sample and according to gender and group. (Notwithstanding the interaction effect, there were significant main effects for group and gender, but these were accounted for in the interaction.)

Figure 5. Significant Interaction between Gender and Group Mean Aggression Scores.

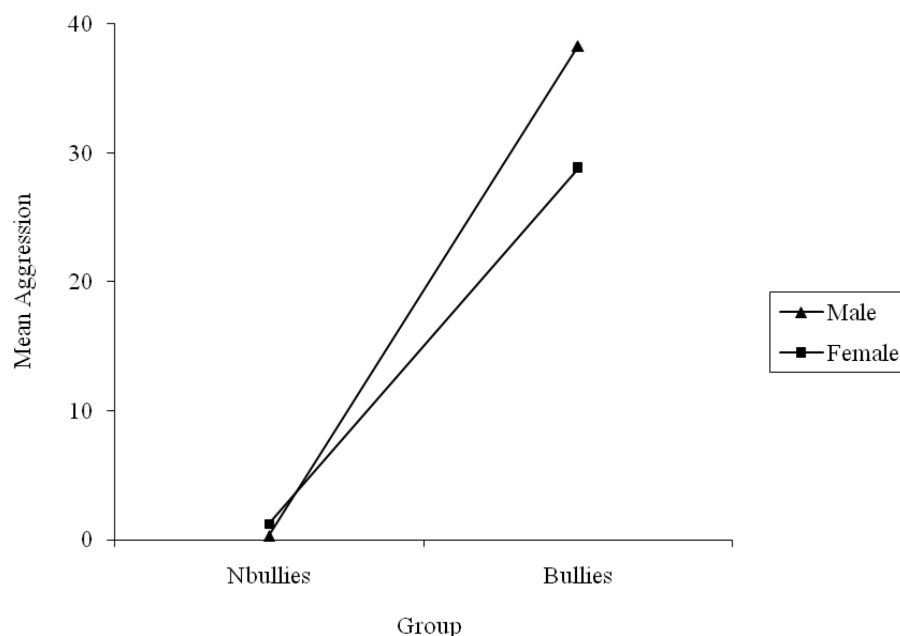

Table 28. Mean Levels of Aggression according to Group (Bully Status) and Gender.

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male Non Bully	40	0.30	0.85
Male Bully	22	38.32	10.41
Totals	62	13.79	19.34
Female Non Bully	54	1.22	2.51
Female Bully	16	28.81	8.94
Totals	70	10.47	16.35

Reputational Orientations and Bullies

A 2 x 2 (Group by Gender) between-subjects Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) explored the effects of the independent variables on the 16 dependent variables of the RES. A second MANOVA examined the effects of grade level on the 16 dependent variables of the RES. Given the sample size and number of dependent variables an adjusted Bonferroni alpha level of $p < .003$ was used in both analyses. In the first MANOVA the results revealed no significant interaction effects, but there was a multivariate main effect of group [F (15, 114) = 5.67, $p < .001$, partial η^2 = .43]. There was no significant main effect for gender [F (15, 114) = 2.01, $p > .05$, partial η^2 = .21]. In the second MANOVA no significant main effect of grade [F (2, 230) = 1.26, $p > .05$, partial η^2 = .14] was evident. The results of the univariate F-tests for the main effect of group are presented in Table 29 along with the associated observed means.

As can be seen in Table 29 the univariate F-tests and observed means for the main effect of group, demonstrated that 4 of the 16 reputation enhancement variables differed at the .003 level. Specifically, bullies reported statistically significant higher scores than non bullies on self-perceived social deviancy norms (spsd) [F (1, 128) = 36.58, $p < .001$, partial η^2 = .22], evaluative reactions to others social deviance (opsd) [F (1, 128) = 23.148, $p < .001$, partial η^2 = .15], non conforming self-perception (nconsp) [F (1, 128) = 47.56, $p < .001$, partial η^2 = .27], and non conforming ideal public self (nconips) [F (1, 128) = 32.748, $p < .001$, partial η^2 = .20].

Table 29. Univariate F Statistics, Observed Means, and Standard Deviations for the Reputation Enhancement Variables (df = 1, 128) with Group (Bully vs. Non Bully) as the Independent Variable.

Dependent variable	Mean square	*F*-value	*p*-value	Partial η^2	Power estimate	Bully		Non Bully	
						M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Self-perceived social deviance norms	1343.97	36.58	.000	.222	1.00	20.13	6.70	12.73	5.88
Self-perceived social conformity norms	33.31	.765	.383	.006	.140	21.97	6.26	21.09	6.70
Evaluative reactions to others social deviance	888.96	23.15	.000	.153	.998	21.97	5.83	15.82	6.38
Evaluative reactions to others social conformity	6.807	.180	.672	.001	0.71	21.71	5.34	21.28	6.38
Nonconforming self-perception	1548.96	47.56	.000	.271	1.00	22.82	7.60	14.50	5.22
Conforming self-perception	9.034	.260	.611	.002	.080	32.74	5.95	33.33	5.80
Nonconforming ideal public self	1080.83	32.74	.000	.204	1.00	21.29	6.87	14.43	5.44
Conforming ideal public self	9.034	.260	.611	.002	.080	32.74	5.95	33.33	5.80
Activity self-description	112.44	3.84	.052	.029	.494	25.84	6.90	28.05	4.65
Power/evaluation self-description	90.59	3.90	.050	.030	.500	23.92	6.00	21.99	4.23
Activity ideal private self	9.616	.388	.535	.003	.095	30.21	5.30	30.85	4.79
Power/evaluation ideal private self	24.21	.857	.356	.007	.151	29.08	5.40	27.69	5.42
Brag	2.28	.238	.627	.002	.077	5.68	3.09	6.16	3.13
Status	3.59	.285	.595	.002	.083	6.24	3.58	5.77	3.52
Face	3.62	.381	.538	.003	.094	3.08	3.47	2.66	2.87
Rebel	.293	.033	.856	.000	.054	3.58	2.75	3.70	3.05

Although the findings from the investigation revealed no significant differences in the reputational orientations of the participants according to grade level ([F (2, 126) = 1.13, $p > .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$], there were trends indicating that Grade 7 participants reported higher levels for three of the four reputational variables, namely evaluative reactions to others social deviance (opsd), non conforming self-perception (nconsp), and non conforming ideal public self (nconips) than did the Grades 5 and 6 participants.

Loner Status and Bullies

In the literature review of this thesis (Chapter Two) it was shown that although there is research pointing to bullies as social and popular members of peer groups, there is also research suggesting that some are social isolates with limited, if any friends (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Sakellariou, 2005; Vaillancourt et al., 2003). To date, no research appears to have examined this using a reputable instrument (such as the *Loner Scale*) or in an empirical manner. Thus, to explore the differential patterns of reputational orientations of bullies, a sample of loner bullies was identified. To achieve this it was necessary to first establish cutoff scores which differentiated those individuals with elevated levels of loneliness tendencies. Two procedures were employed to establish these cutoff scores. Initially, a frequency distribution was generated with the *Loner Scale* score. A visual examination revealed a positively skewed distribution, with most of the distribution being concentrated on the left portion of the figure, with a tapering tail to the right. This form of distribution where fewer participants scored higher on the Loner Scale was anticipated given that a small

proportion of the sample was expected to be loners. Next, cutoff scores were estimated using the descriptive statistics for the *Loner Scale*. In this instance, a criterion of one and half standard deviations above the mean score (see Tan, Houghton, & Carroll, in press) was utilised to estimate the cutoff scores for the loners (M = 2.38, SD = 2.1) which corresponded to scores of 5.53. Based on these cutoff scores, 12 (28.9%) of the 38 bullies were identified as loner bullies (LB). Using the same criteria, 15 of the total sample were identified as loner non bullies (LNB). At this stage it was not possible to cleanly identify social bullies (i.e., non loner bullies) as nearly all of the bullies' loner scale scores tended to skew nearer the mean cutoff score for LB status. These two groups (LB and LNB) permitted some preliminary analyses using *t* tests to test for differences.

According to Hair et al. (2006), the *t*-test assesses the statistically significant difference between two independent sample means for a single dependent variable, and works with small group sizes. There were a total of 15 dependent variables (RES variables) and for each of the combinations of independent sample means, independent-sample *t*-tests were conducted. A level of p <.05 was used to determine whether there were significant differences in group means on each of the 15 dependent variables.

Loner Bullies versus Loner Non Bullies

As Levene's test of homogeneity of variances was significant for the RES subscale Activity Self-Description (activsd) the unequal variances estimate was used in this

instance. As can be seen in Table 30 the loner bullies and the loner non bullies differed significantly from each other on the Evaluative Reactions to Others Social Deviance (opsd), Non Conforming Self-Perception (nconsp) and Non Conforming Ideal Public Self (nconips) subscales. The loner bullies scored significantly higher than the loner non bullies, respectively on: Evaluative Reactions to Others Social Deviance (opsd) (M = 24.42, SD = 5.99, M = 18.27, SD = 6.87), Non Conforming Self-Perception (nconsp) (M = 25.17, SD = 10.16, M = 12.93, SD = 4.82), and Non Conforming Ideal Public Self (nconips) (M = 22.00, SD = 7.83, M = 13.67, SD = 6.03). There were no significant differences between the groups on the remaining RES subscales, although Self-Perceived Social Deviance norms (spsd), Self-Perceived Social Conformity norms (spsc), and Evaluative Reactions to Others Social Conformity (opsc) approached levels of significance. Of particular interest with these, however, is that the loner bullies scored higher than the loner non bullies on the two conforming variables (i.e., Self-Perceived Social Conformity Norms ~ spsc and Evaluative Reactions to Others Social Conformity ~ opsc). The means and standard deviations for these are shown in Table 30.

Table 30. Mean (standard deviations in parentheses) RES Scale Scores and *t tests* for Loner Bullies and Loner Non Bullies.

Reputation Variables	Loner Bullies Mean (SD)	Loner Non Bullies Mean (SD)	*t*	*p* (2-tailed) *p < .05 **p < .001
Self-perceived social deviance norms	20.75 (7.89)	15.0 (7.40)	1.95	.063
Self-perceived social conformity norms	22.08 (.7.17)	17.20 (6.11)	1.91	.067
Evaluative reactions to others social conformity	22.67 (5.10)	18.53 (5.60)	1.90	.069
Evaluative reactions to others social deviance	24.42 (5.99)	18.27 (6.87)	2.44	.022*
Nonconforming self-perception	25.17 (10.61)	12.93 (4.81)	4.13	.000**
Nonconforming ideal public self	22.00 (7.82)	13.67 (6.03)	3.13	.004*
Conforming self-perception	32.92 (6.80)	30.33 (6.76)	.98	.334
Conforming ideal public self	32.92 (6.80)	30.33 (6.76)	.98	.333
Activity self-description	24.75 (9.52)	26.80 (4.89)	-.67	.509
Activity ideal private self	30.33 (4.75)	30.13 (6.03)	.094	.926
Power/evaluation self-description	24.33 (8.84)	19.33 (5.05)	1.85	.076
Power/evaluation ideal private self	30.25 (5.43)	27.53 (7.51)	1.05	.303
Brag	5.00 (2.69)	4.40 (3.04)	.535	.597
Rebel	4.25 (2.99)	4.13 (3.14)	.098	.923
Status	6.83 (4.13)	6.27 (3.81)	.370	.714
Face	3.42 (4.01)	3.73 (3.06)	-.223	.818

Summary of Findings

The primary focus of the research reported in this thesis is the applicability of Reputation Enhancement Theory to children who are bullies. To date, little if any empirical research has been conducted on bullying and reputation. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, Reputation Enhancement Theory (Emler, 1984) posits that much adolescent behaviour is motivated by the desire to present the self to the peer community in a particular way (Emler & Reicher, 1995) and is also a means to impress peers and gain their approval (Agnew, 1991). Research by Carroll and colleagues demonstrates this also applies to children from as early as Grades 4 to 5 (see Carroll, Houghton, Durkin, & Hattie, 2009 for a comprehensive review). The data presented in this chapter reveals some interesting findings pertaining to bullies in regard to this.

Overall, bullies expressed a higher admiration for non conforming activities (e.g., dealing drugs, stealing, truancy, taking drugs), perceived themselves to be non conforming (e.g., breaking rules, getting into trouble), and ideally wished to be perceived by their peers as tough, leaders and popular. It can be concluded, therefore, that bullies in this study were more interested than non bullies with attaining and sustaining a non conforming reputation. Since these bullies reported a higher degree of aggressive behaviour the results suggest that aggression may be an additional element in bullies' self-presentation and their quest for a non conforming reputation. These assertions are in line with Emler and Reicher's (1995) proposal that reputation is a strategy of self-protection and redress for the individual and the group.

The research conducted in this present study appears to be the first to investigate differences in loner bullies and loner non bullies' reputational orientations. Two, albeit relatively small groups were differentiated, namely bullies who were loners and loners who were non bullies. The findings are particularly interesting in the light of the construct of lonerism. For example, loners who were bullies scored higher than loners who were not bullies on the variables relating to social non conformity, suggesting that bullying may contribute to the non conformity, rather than lonerism. Of course, two more groups consisting of bullies who are non loners and non loner non bullies would have been highly desirable to fully explore the effect of lonerism on bullying, but this was not possible given the cutoff scores generated. Nevertheless, the findings have provided opportunities that will now be further investigated in the subsequent chapter which presents a qualitative follow-up investigation of reputational orientations and loner status from the perspectives of a large sample of primary school aged bullies.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDY FOUR: BULLIES, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND REPUTATIONS OF CHOICE

This chapter describes the methodology and results of Study Four, the purpose of which was to further explore both male and female primary school aged bullies' behaviours and the significance of reputation in their lives. This final study extends the findings of the previous quantitative study (and the two preceding studies) by conducting semi structured interviews with primary school aged bullies to determine the importance of visibility of actions and the presence of an audience for reputation enhancement. Furthermore, this study further explores (qualitatively) the empirical findings from the previous study, namely the motivations for bullies' personal admiration of socially deviant acts (spsd), their belief that children their age also admire such socially deviant acts (opsd), and why they (i.e., the bullies) want their friends to see them as non conforming (nconips). The interviews also sought to explore the differences between loner and non loner bullies possible use of cyber bullying techniques.

Method

Participants and Settings

Twenty eight (18 male and 10 female) Grades 5 (n = 11), 6 (n = 8) and 7 (n = 9) primary school aged children were purposefully chosen to participate in this

qualitative study. Each had school records officially documenting their bullying and none had participated in previous studies reported. Of the 28, 20 (71%) had been suspended from school at some time during the previous six months because of their bullying of peers. The remaining eight had records of bullying but had not been suspended from school. The participants were drawn from four separate primary schools located in low to middle socio-economic status areas, across the metropolitan area of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. Each of the schools had between 390 and 500 students on roll. As in the earlier studies reported in this thesis the schools were identified by the researcher (through personal contacts) because of their reported incidence of bullying.

All interviews were conducted in a room specifically set aside by each of the schools for this purpose. These rooms were free from distraction and consisted of a table and two chairs. The researcher sat opposite but slightly to one side of each of the participants during the interviews and an audio recorder was placed on the table in full view.

Semi Structured Interviews

It was highlighted in Study One of this thesis that face to face encounters between researcher and participants enables the researcher to understand the participants' perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). The information generated in Study One through the interviews provided the impetus and framework for the quantitative studies conducted. To conclude the research presented in this thesis a qualitative approach is

again adopted, but this time in order to bring this first research on bullies and social reputations to a conclusion. Throughout all of the interviews in this present study the researcher listened actively, kept the interview focused on the subject at hand, explicated material where necessary, and sought clarification to ensure accuracy. In this way, the researcher becomes a partner with the participant, with both of them working together to “get the story straight” (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). Accordingly, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe as deeply as possible into the individual’s subjective experiences of the phenomenon in question.

The interview comprised nine primary questions, which were asked as the participants volunteered information. That is, if an individual offered information about a subject area prior to that question, it was asked at the time to ensure continuity of responses. Participants were told by the researcher that if there were any words they did not understand or were not sure of they should say so at that time and the interviewer would explain more clearly. The primary interview questions were:

Question 1. Why do you bully others and how do you feel when you do this?

Question 2. When you started bullying others did you deliberately choose to be a bully?

Question 3. Some other students your age said that bullies like to be seen by others when they bully. Why do you think this is so?

Question 4. Why do bullies bully other kids in front of others?

Question 5. How do bullies want their friends to see them?

Question 6. Bullies admire others who admire socially deviant acts, why is this so?

Question 7. Why do bullies believe that children their age also admire socially deviant/antisocial acts such as bullying?

Question 8. Is it the case that some bullies have no friends? Why is this so?

Question 9. We have talked about how important it is for bullies to be seen. But some bullies use cyber bullying (like the Internet and SMS). Are these bullies different to those with friends or those who use other forms of bullying? Why do they use these techniques like SMS?

Procedure

Approval to conduct the research had been previously obtained from the administering Institution. Contact was initially made by the researcher by telephone with the principals of four schools identified by teacher colleagues of the researcher as being known for incidents of bullying. At this time the purpose of the research was explained to the principals and any questions they had were answered. The principals were then asked if they would be interested in participating and if so would they be willing to forward a letter of introduction, an information sheet and consent form (which is reproduced in Appendix 5) from the researcher to the parent/guardian(s) of Grades 5, 6 and 7 students who had documented incidents of bullying. The written materials explained the purposes and potential outcomes of the research and asked parents/guardians for their permission for their son/daughter to participate in an

interview. Of the 46 sets of parents/guardians contacted permission was obtained from 28 (61% return response rate).

Dates and times for the interviews were arranged with the schools and the students. Participants were met at the interview room by the researcher, who introduced himself and then engaged in general conversation with them for two or three minutes. The aims of the research were explained to each participant and then each was reminded that they could withdraw from the research at any time if they wished to do so. None of the participants did so. Participants were also asked for permission to audio record the interview. They were told that if they objected, the recorder would not be switched on and notes would be taken (if they agreed). All participants agreed to the audio recorder being used during the interview.

Participants were first told that bullying was when a student or several other students: Say mean and hurtful things or make fun of someone or call him/her mean and hurtful names; completely ignore or exclude him/her from their group of friends or leave him/her out of things on purpose; hit, kick, shove around or threaten him/her; tell lies or spread false rumours about him/her or send mean notes, use the Internet or SMS, and try to make other students dislike him or her; and other hurtful things like that (see Olweus, 1996 as cited in Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007). Participants were then asked each of the nine questions cited above. During each of these questions, the interviewer probed with further questions when relevant information was volunteered.

A second person independent of the research checked all transcribed interviews against the audio recordings to obtain a measure of inter-rater reliability. Overall, there was a 98% agreement between the researcher and the second person.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the interviews began with transcription. After the transcription process, each interview was re-read several times to identify major categories. The information obtained from all of the interviews was then analyzed using procedures similar to those used by Zemke and Kramlinger (1985) and used earlier in Study One of this thesis. This involved writing notes into the margins of the hard copy of each interview; generating a list of key ideas, words, phrases and verbatim quotes; using these ideas to construct items and organizing them in their appropriate categories; examining the contents of each category and selecting the most useful and pertinent items for the various categories.

Results

Why Bullies Bully Others and How They Feel When They Do This

When asked why bullies bully others and how they feel when they do this there was an overwhelming consensus among the participants related to their own personal admiration of socially deviant acts (spsd) and the pleasure that they obtained from committing them. Dominance over others was also very important. Participants cited the happiness they felt when hurting others, along with feelings of "*power*", "*strength*", "*toughness*", "*image*", being "*cool*" and gaining "*respect*" and

"*recognition*". Some also mentioned that bullying was a means for them to fit in. Some of the direct quotes in support of these attributes included

> *You're tougher than the other kids and you can rule the school (male year 5)*
>
> *You feel strong about being able to boss everyone around (male year 5)*
>
> *You are stronger and tougher than everybody and you're more popular (male year 6)*
>
> *I want to be on top, like all the kids never respect me so I fight with people to get that respect (male year 6)*
>
> *I feel hatred, but also feel good about myself when I bully someone. You feel bigger than the other kids and stronger (female year 5)*
>
> *You feel great and sometimes you just love to bully people because it's so much fun (female year 6)*
>
> *Bullies hurt others because it makes them feel better by hurting other people (female year 7)*

Boys thought girl bullies were "*worse*" than boy bullies, primarily because of the type of physical bullying they perpetrated and also because of the duration of the bullying. For example as some of the male participants stated

> *Girls are worse because they scratch and stuff (male year 6)*
>
> *Boys call names push n fight but girls scratch, slap and pull hair (male year 5)*
>
> *Girls tease about what you look like and what you wear (male year 7)*
>
> *Boys do something and then they leave you alone but girls just keep going on and on (male year 6)*

The girl bullies agreed with this, highlighting the group aspects of their bullying and also the more non physical types of bullying they used:

> *Girls can be really mean – I mean they say bad things and leave messages and notes about others for others to find (female year 6)*
>
> *I have seen three or four girls pick on someone all at once. One is pushing and threatening while the others are saying nasty things and swearing and pushing in the back (female year 5)*
>
> *The one who is doing the bullying is the hardest in the group (female year 6)*
>
> *Girls are more insulting in how they do things (female year 6)*
>
> *Girls gang up on others and call names and don't invite others to sleepovers and say bad things about a person's mother (female year 7)*

Bullying as a Deliberate Choice

Almost all of the male and female participants reported that becoming a bully was a deliberate choice on their part. Very few, if any of the participants mentioned that they just drifted into bullying. Rather, it was a choice, with the most frequently cited reason for this being that becoming a bully gave an

> *Image of toughness (male year 6)*
>
> *Feelings of being top (female year 6)*

Visibility of Actions – Being Seen by Others

According to the participants, being seen by others when bullying is very important and that this ties in very much with the image bullies are trying to cultivate. To get

this image it is important to use the appropriate location, that is, one which affords high levels of visibility. The participants identified the classroom, playground, school oval, bike racks, basketball/netball courts, and in some instances, the canteen as areas where they bullied others. The primary reason for this, according to the bullies in this study, is the high level of visibility which comes with these areas. This visibility helps them to build an image of toughness in front of others. As some reiterated:

> *I choose my place carefully. I mean why get somebody if no one is going to see you do it. You get nothing from that (male year 7)*
>
> *When others see you it makes you feel great because they know not to mess with you (male year 6)*

Of particular note was that in six instances girls also cited the "*toilets*" as a place for carrying out their bullying. According to these girl bullies the toilets allowed for visibility in a number of ways. First, there was the <u>immediate</u> audience visibility, as cited by some of the female bullies:

> *Splash water on others, push them over and feel good about it – impress mates who always know that it's on (female year 7)*
>
> *Bully in the toilets by ganging up and pushing them down on to the floor in all the slippery stuff. We all have a good laugh (female year 6)*

Second, the toilets also encouraged the more subtle types of <u>delayed</u> audience visibility/appreciation. According to the female bullies interviewed the toilets were ideal places for leaving messages about others, spreading "*gossip*" and/or being "*threatening*". For example,

Everyone has to head for the toilets at some time. I wrote S is a filthy slut and P can't be trusted so don't tell her things (female year 6)

In the toilets secrets and rumours are spread (female year 7)

This is not to say that the toilets were not used by boys for the purposes of bullying:

People go in the toilets and you can follow them in, stalk them and stuff. Then beat them up in there (male year 6)

From the interviews conducted it appears that for boys an "immediate audience" may be more important in the development of their image as a bully. That is, they like to be directly witnessed perpetrating their acts against others, which are primarily physical in nature, so that others see them as tough, as breaking the rules, and as being someone not to mess with. For girls, however, a delayed audience may assume as much importance as an immediate audience, seeing as they also communicate through more covert means (e.g., leaving messages on walls). Reaching the delayed audience was not only achieved by leaving messages on toilet walls and doors, however. Female bullies cited the use of cyber methods as another way in which they informed peers that something was "*going to happen in the toilets*":

I tell my friends it's on through mobile phone (female year 6)
Using the school library Internet is a good way to make sure all my mates know what I'm going to do (female year 5)

Irrespective of the method of bullying used or whether its purpose is to reach an immediate or delayed audience, it appears that visibility of actions is critical for bullies if they are to cultivate the desired image they seek.

Making Sure Others Witness the Bullying

Being a bully meant that an individual was well known among peers and teachers in school and that having an identity for doing this was an excellent way to enhance a reputation for non conformity. When asked why bullies bully other kids in front of others the interview findings were very much in line with the findings from the quantitative research. That is, bullies wanted their friends to see them as non conforming (nconips), as being tough and strong. Moreover, the bullies who were interviewed were all very strong in their opinions that not only was it important for their friends to see them bullying, but it was just as important for others to see them (i.e., on lookers). This ensured that both insiders to the bullying group and outsiders saw the bully as tough and "*not to be messed with*". Furthermore, according to the bullies being seen as someone who does not care about school rules was a way of projecting a non conforming image to friends and peers and enemies alike:

I want everyone in the school to know I'm really hard (male year 5)

Teachers keep telling me about bullying and the school has an anti bullying programme, but that won't stop me. Breaking school rules and anti bullying rules makes me look worse and only makes others more scared of me (female year 7)

In addition, breaking the school rules and bullying others was seen as a way of fitting into the group. As one male and one female bully stated:

> *Because your friends go yeah, your cool, you fit into the group (male year 7)*
>
> *My mates say break the rules go on break them (female year 6)*

Furthermore, being seen as someone who pays no attention to school anti bullying programmes was also important in terms of developing visibility of actions

> *They (teachers) keep telling us about not bullying and to stick to the anti bullying messages in the programmes we get, but that won't stop me (or my mates). Breaking the anti bullying rules shows them I'm not scared of teachers or the school (male year 6)*

Bullies' Admiration of Others Involved in Socially Deviant Acts

When asked specifically about what they thought about others who were bullies and/or who were involved in antisocial things, almost all of the particpants stated they admired them. Involvement in socially deviant or unacceptable acts was seen as a way of being "*cool"* and as projecting a *"bad rep"*. Involvement in other types of antisocial behaviour was not the norm for all; however many of the participants reported that they indulged in such acts. Overall, the admiration expressed for others who were bullies and also for their involvement in additional antisocial acts appeared to give individuals a sense of group affiliation and belonging. Furthermore, the more severe the bullying the greater the admiration bullies had for other bullies, irrespective of whether it was a male or female bully involved. As participants stated:

> *T is real hard. He can be really, really nasty. He gets into your face and really scares you. It is usually in front of his mates and not even they will challenge him. It's always in front of others with T. And they all like it – shouting and telling him to hit the person (male year 6)*
>
> *I know lots of boys who bully others. They also do other things like damaging school property. Sometimes they go around in groups at night and break people's mail boxes down or graffiti on their walls (male year 6)*

It appears that the like-mindedness and group affiliation with others who are also non conforming is very important to bullies. However, their admiration of others also allowed them to differentiate a hierarchy or pecking order within groups. For example,

> *T can hit hard and he can say really bad things about you or your family. He is the baddest I know. He says doing this gets him what he wants. No one messes with him. You got to like him though (male year 5)*

> *X - she is something else. I have seen her nick things from the shop as well cool as anything. She asks you what you want and then just goes right in and takes it. One of her favourite ways is to ask for something on a shelf and when the woman isn't looking quickly takes something and hides it up her sleeve. If she is seen she just shouts and threatens to come back throw petrol on the door or something (female year 7).*

It appears that as suggested by Reputation Enhancement Theory that there is a like-mindedness about what bullies admire and also an in-group status whereby they differentiate a hierarchy. What is also evident according to the bullies in this study is that this order is not fixed and that a person can move either up or down the hierarchy according to his/her activities, including involvement in bully related antisocial acts outside of school hours. During the interviews some bullies admitted to seeking out the property (i.e., the home address) of peers who they bullied at school and deliberately damaging items such as mail boxes, flower beds and trees. According to these bullies this resulted in a greater fear among their victims who soon associated the property damage with the bully and told their friends at school about it. This further enhanced the reputation of the bully within the school community. This appeared to be further compounded, in some instances, when the parents (householders) also complained to the school (or police in some cases) about the

bully. Although the bullies did not admit to these adults that they committed the acts, their school peers were informed through the communication network. By standing up to these adults in authority the reputation of the bully was enhanced, and this was even further enhanced because fellow students were aware of the entire episode. Indeed, most of the bullies who perpertrated the out of school hours antisocial behaviour openly stated that it was their intent to do it and be found out. For example,

> *A is smart. He visits their houses late at night. He has kicked down mail boxes, thrown eggs at people's windows and doors and he doesn't care. When C's parents complained he just told them it wasn't him, even though we all knew he had done it (male year 7)*

> *B is smart. He stands outside K's house and does something when K's parents are watching. He then runs away and next day at school tells us all about it (male year 6)*

For females, however, it was more a case of getting away with it without being found out, which may be why cyber type bullying appeared more prevalent among the female bullies. As one of the girl bullies commented

> *Us girls can be different to boys when we want. They (boys) go hard and hit people and threaten them but sometimes we leave messages which can be more fun. I think it really gets to others especially when they do not know who did it. We don't get caught - but they do have a good idea who did it (female year 7)*

> *Not getting found out is part of the fun even if most of the others have a good idea of who did it. Seeing the poor saddo trying to find who wrote about her is a real laugh and because she doesn't know it's easy to do it again and again (female Year 6)*

Why do Bullies believe that Children their Age also Admire Socially Deviant Acts and Bullying?

When asked this almost all of the bullies had very little to say. The overwhelming response was because it gets you "*respect*". This respect came from the "*strength*" and "*image*" associated with bullying and other acts of antisocial behaviour. As one individual aptly summarized:

> *If they* (i.e., other students) *could do it they would, but most are too weak or are vermin (male year 5)*

Other relevant comments included

> *Bullies fight and bash people to get respect (male year 5)*
>
> *If I bully I'll get more attention and respect (male year 6)*
>
> *If you want respect you just got to do it – right (male year 7)*

The only other reason put forward during the interviews, about which the bullies (males and females) were in agreement was that the "*image*" and "*rep*" that went with bullying was "*bad*". That is, being seen as tough, hard, a leader, and breaking the rules portrayed them as mean, strong, and cool individuals and gave them feelings of power, especially around the school. Furthermore, acts of bullying got them *"recognition"*. The following comments illustrate this:

> *I feel great as I am a real man (male year 5)*
>
> *I feel cool and powerful and fantastic (male year 6)*
>
> *Hitting someone and making them feel bad makes you feel good (male year 6)*

Bullies are strong and because they can hurt people and get their own way they feel powerful, that they are the ruler of the school (male year 7)

I feel happy and hard when I make others cry (female year 6)

A number of the bullies also related their bullying to entertainment, commenting

Because you make someone cry its like entertainment (female year 6)

You just love to bully people 'cos it's so much fun, especially for others watching (male year 7)

Bullies and Friendships

With respect to friendship, bullies reported a mix of opinions. Initially, most suggested that all bullies have friends. But on reflection and as a result of the researcher probing the issue, all participants reported that there were some bullies who were "*weirdos*" who no one wanted to be friends with. These bullies were perceived as strange and scary, even to other bullies. These were individuals they "*stayed away from*". Some even admitted to telling teachers to stay away from these individuals. Furthermore when asked about these, the bullies described them as "*having no friends*" and said they were unpredictable and that they never knew what to expect from them. As the following quotes illustrate:

X can be really nice and quiet. I mean you wouldn't know he was a bully. But he will suddenly grab you and try and strangle you. Nobody likes to be standing by him (male year 7)

She can suddenly explode and if you're close you can really cop it – for no reason like (female year 6)

The bullies with friends were not seen as bad as the loner type bullies:

> *G has no friends. He is always on his own because he's weird. Just standing next to him is scary and you have to watch him all the time. We have asked him to join us before but he just says get lost he needs no one (male year 6)*

Most bullies with friends were said to get along with them, although some of the bullies said "*friends*" simply "*hung out*" with them to look bad (i.e., tough and non conforming). However, in some instances this had the opposite effect and resulted in the hangers on being bullied by other bullies:

> *I get picked on because I hang around with a group of bullies - yeah I get picked on but I put up with it 'cos the payout is worth it (female year 7)*

Some Use Cyber Bullying (like the Internet and SMS)

According to some bullies this is a good way to get at peers. The most prominent methods of use cited were mobile phones, the Internet and SMS text messages. Some of the girl bullies also reported that they used face book and personal blogs where they could change and/or add to the content for others to read. For example,

> *S is one of the best at this. She changed somebody's details so it read that she was a slapper and was calling others sluts and bitches (female year 7)*

> *Sending texts and emails means you can carry on to whoever you like after hitting them or scaring them. Texting can be done anytime. I like sending them late at night so they* (i.e., the victim) *switch their mobiles on next morning and the message is waiting for them (male year 6)*

When asked whether bullies who use SMS, mobile phones, the Internet and other electronic means had a specific image, the bullies in this study were non committal.

That is, they said nearly everyone they knew sent nasty messages and some had even phoned their victims. The "*fun*" of this was in the suspense it created. Comments included

> *Its real fun waiting for them next day just to see how they act when they see you (male year 7)*

> *They will never look at you in class so I always know they've seen my text (female year 5)*

> *I can be real mean and bitchy after sending a message. I just pretend everything is OK for like two or three days. Then when everything seems normal I hold my phone up to the person and wave it about with a smile on my face (female year 7)*

According to the bullies, the females in particular, the cyber bullying didn't have the same immediate impact of, for example, hitting someone. Nor did it provide the immediate audience necessary for enhancing a reputation. Nevertheless, others did get to know about SMS messages or Internet or face book bullying activities through word of mouth. Some bullies stated that they themselves began spreading the word that messages had been sent. During the interviews the bullies alluded to cyber bullying being a more sinister method frequently utilized by those with no friends. One female bully referred to another bully to illustrate this

> *P is scary enough. She doesn't bother with anyone else and she would bash you if you just looked at her. But when she sends a message you had better watch your back (female year 6)*

Once you were known for being a bully an immediate audience was not necessary to gain a non conforming reputation. That is, there were other ways to maintain your

reputation, such as leaving threatening messages on toilet walls, sending texts or making threats over the Internet. The bullies in the present study were adamant that most bullies used electronic forms to bully others, with the majority of Internet based bullying occurring at school. When asked whether bullies who use electronic means are loners and are different to those with friends or those who use other forms of bullying the consensus was yes, but no (they are not different to others who bully in other ways). On further questioning it became clear that loners were perceived by non loner bullies as "*weird*" and "*off the planet sometimes*". However, their aim was to bully others to gain an image, which was the same motivation as theirs (i.e., the non loners), so they were no different.

Summary

There was an overwhelming consensus that becoming a bully was a deliberate choice and it appears that the pleasure, happiness, feelings of power and personal admiration of socially deviant acts reinforced their choice. This not only supports Reputation Enhancement Theory but is in line with the work of O'Connell, Pepler and Craig (1999) and Saufler and Gagne (2000) which claimed bullying among primary school aged children is an antecedent to achieving goals. What is clear from this research is that bullying is similar for primary school aged males and females, as are the desired outcomes – an image and reputation of choice. Again in line with Reputation Enhancement Theory, being seen by others (i.e., visibility of actions) is critical in cultivating the image of a bully. To achieve this, deliberate choice again comes into play through the choice of locations in which (and through which) high numbers of

students transit. This ensures that other bullies, victims and onlookers alike witness the bully as tough and non conforming. Extensive research shows that primary school aged school students who seek to initiate, establish and maintain a desired non conforming reputation resort to illegal and antisocial activities and continue to indulge in them over time (Carroll et al., 2000; Carroll, Houghton et al., 2009 for a review; Carroll, Baglioni et al.,1999).

Earlier research by Kuhnke (1995) revealed that bullies are frequently committed to cliques and get into conflicts while with groups. The present findings also show that bullies openly admire others involved in bullying and antisocial behaviour and this leads to a sense of group affiliation and belonging, once again supporting the principles of Reputation Enhancement Theory. Also in line with Carroll's (1995) reputation research with young offenders the bullies in this study identified in-group status and a hierarchy or pecking order which was determined by the individual's involvement in (and severity of) antisocial acts.

According to some bullies cyber techniques such as mobile phones, the Internet, SMS text messages, face book and personal blogs are excellent vehicles through which they could reach others both in and out of school hours to perpetrate their bullying. This fits well with the definition of cyber bullying coined by Belsey (2005), as cited in Shariff, (2008, p. 29) as

> Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as email, cell phone, and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory on line personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

Willard (2003) also included the term flaming with cyber bullying to demonstrate that sending derogatory messages to a person(s), harassing and denigrating (put downs), masquerading, outing and excluding were frequently used techniques. It seems from the bullies in this study that far from the internet being a "gift from the devil" (Soloyon, 2005) it (and other cyber techniques) are attractive to them because they offer a degree of anonymity. The suspense that cyber bullying techniques perpetuate allows only the victim and bully to know "who did it" in the first instance, thereby adding to the psychological aspects of bullying. The psychological consequences of this can be devastating (Gati et al., 2002) and it creates a hostile physical environment where individuals feel unsafe and where equal opportunities are reduced (Shariff & Strong-Wilson, 2005). Cyber bullying may therefore possibly be the ultimate reputation enhancer for young people, because hundreds of perpetrators can subsequently witness <u>and</u> get involved in the bullying and abuse, even those who may not normally engage in bullying at school – that is, perpetrators can hide behind the technology (Shariff, 2008). This relatively new method of bullying will be discussed further along with all of the findings from the four studies in the final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A relatively brief discussion of the findings for each of the four studies conducted has been presented previously. This final chapter discusses the findings and implications arising from the overall investigation into bullies, the types of aggression they present with, the significance of reputation orientations, and loner status. It brings together the findings into a coherent whole and relates these findings back to the original research questions and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Following this, the implications of the findings to education are presented along with an acknowledgement of the limitations of the research and directions for future research.

This present research set out to specifically examine the reputational orientations of bullies and the applicability of Reputation Enhancement Theory to them, since to date it appears not to have been investigated; there is, however, much anecdotal evidence attesting to its importance. Conducting a series of separate, yet sequentially linked quantitative and qualitative studies, allowed a comprehensive picture to be developed pertaining to bullies and how they ensure their reputations of choice are established and communicated to others. By interviewing a large number of bullies in the final study the importance of initiating, establishing and maintaining a particular reputation was well and truly established. These studies were predicated on nine research questions which were generated in response to the critical review of the research

literature undertaken and also in light of the main aims of the research reported in this thesis.

To answer *Research Question One*, which asked is reputation important to bullies, 46 Grade 5 (10 year olds) children (23 male and 23 female) from eight separate primary schools who had been suspended from school because of their bullying were interviewed. Findings clearly demonstrated that bullying whether physical, verbal, social (exclusion, spreading rumours), written or cyber based was conducted for the purposes of gaining a desired reputation. These activities also enhanced acceptance among like-minded peers. This was the case irrespective of gender, although girls tended to employ more indirect methods of bullying which is in line with previous research findings (e.g., Kyriakides, Kaloyirou, & Lindsay, 2006; Sakellariou, 2005).

The bullies reported feelings of strength, power, recognition and being cool as a result of their bullying. Furthermore, they reported that the recognition they gained from bullying gained them the status that they were seeking. Peer status has been highlighted by Juvonen et al. (2003), Kalitala-Heino et al. (2000) and Rigby (1996) as important to bullies and as a significant motivation for their involvement in bullying. The findings are also in line with recent research by Rigby (2008) and Pellegrini (2004) showing bullies engaged in bullying "to show how tough I am", and because of the need to "dominate" others in the course of establishing a hierarchy or pecking order. Sijtsema et al. (2009) revealed that bullies were often assisted by the group to achieve their desired status. In the present research there were no apparent gender

differences in the perspectives of the bullies as both males and females highlighted the power they gained from bullying. These findings, overall, are in line with the work of Carroll, Baglioni et al. (1999) and Carroll, Houghton et al. (2000) who found reputation initiation assumed increased importance among both male and female young persons in the middle to final years of primary schooling (i.e., from 10 years of age).

Emler (1984) argued that social reputation and image become highly important with the onset of adolescence and that the visibility of activities by an individual to a peer audience is critical, particularly in the upper primary school years. *Research Question Two* sought to explore this by asking what activities bullies engage in, and in which locations, to gain visibility of actions and hence achieve their reputation of choice. As stated above the bullies in the first study carefully selected the locations of where they bullied others (e.g., school oval, toilets, classrooms), primarily because they wanted their behaviours to become known to an immediate and wider audience as this gave them the greatest recognition possible among peers. They also stated that in these locations their victims were powerless. This supports Gini (2006) who cited evidence that 85% of bullying episodes occur where children interact in unstructured contexts and Astor, Meyer and Pitner (2001) who noted a common factor in bullying being when students interact informally in locations with little supervision.

According to Reputation Enhancement Theory (Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995) individuals choose a particular self-image they wish to promote before an audience of

their peers and this audience then provides feedback so that the individual develops and maintains this social identity within a community. Thus, it appears that bullies carefully select the locations for their bullying so as to maximize their visibility to others, which appears to be in line with the principles of Reputation Enhancement Theory. Rigby (2008) emphasized the public nature of bullying because of the locations in which it occurs. He added, that bullies are not ashamed of what they are doing rather they want attention and an audience to impress. Inextricably linked to this need for visibility of actions is how the actions are communicated to others. According to the bullies in the first study they openly bragged to others about their behaviour; they also stated that their victims communicated to others (students and teachers) about what had happened to them. Hence, the reputation they seek to attain is strongly reinforced through a number of sources.

With reference to the actual types of behaviour engaged in within each of the locations cited above, the bullies in the first study acknowledged the use of both overt and covert acts, including hitting, pushing, kicking, swearing, gestures of derision, leaving messages written in public places, through to the use of the new electronic media. Irrespective of the nature of the bullying, it was conducted in locations where visibility is high. Given the recurring references in the popular media to cyber bullying and although Sakellariou (2005) drew attention to the importance of the "physical location" of Cyber Space, the bullies in this exploratory study did not make much reference to this. Only a small number of the bullies acknowledged the use of electronic forms of bullying, although the majority knew someone who had used it.

The main reason for this might have been that all of the bullies in the exploratory study had been suspended from school primarily for physical acts of bullying (coupled in most cases with verbal bullying). Given that almost all had heard about others indulging in cyber bullying this aspect was included in the subsequent studies.

Overall, it became clear that the young persons in the exploratory study were striving to attain a non conforming reputation through their bullying and as such the findings in response to the first two research questions provided strong support for further investigations into the applicability of Reputation Enhancement Theory to bullies. Indeed, there appears to be a familiar cyclical nature to reputation enhancement and bullies similar to that of young offenders and at risk youth (see Carroll et al., 2009). That is, bullies commit acts of bullying, sometimes in a proactive manner, in highly visible locations to impress others. The bullies themselves ensure their behaviours are publicized by subsequently bragging to others, while their victims furthered the cause by also telling others (students and teachers), and onlookers also communicate the act of bullying to others. Thus, the communication of events is very well developed in the construct of bullying and serves to enhance the reputation of the bully.

Study Two reported in this thesis was concerned with *Research Question Three* which asked are the instruments valid measures of bullying, physical and verbal (proactive-reactive) aggression, loner status and reputation. *The Revised Olweus Bullying/Victim Questionnaire* (R-OBVQ: Olweus, 1996), *The Reputation Enhancement Scale* (RES: Carroll, Houghton, Hattie, & Durkin, 1999), *The Child*

and Adolescent Scale of Aggression (CASA: Cordin, Hopkins, & Houghton, 2007), and The Loner Scale (see Tan, Houghton, & Carroll, in press) were all administered at different times in the research. As detailed in Chapter Four, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling has confirmed the 2nd-order factor structure of the RES with primary school aged children and high school adolescents at risk and not at risk, and detained populations (Carroll, Houghton et al., 1999). Therefore no factor analytic procedures were conducted with the RES in the present research. With regard to the R-OBVQ (Olweus, 1996), a number of items were added in an attempt to examine cyber bullying and therefore the psychometrics were re-examined. Prior to the main study, the *MR-OBVQ*, the *CASA*, and the *LS*, were all subjected to item affectivity and discrimination analyses. Each of these instruments were found to have excellent item functioning and after the removal of redundant items, strong internal reliabilities: *MR-OBVQ* $\alpha = .98$; *CASA* $\alpha = .97$; *LS* $\alpha = .72$.

Unlike most other research, the present research conducted item affectivity and item discrimination statistical techniques prior to any internal consistency statistics. In doing so the constructs of bullying, aggression and loner status were established. All instruments were subsequently administered to a larger sample of 132 children (62 males and 70 females) from Grades 5, 6 and 7. Of these, 38 (22 males and 16 females) had been suspended from their school because of bullying others. Factor analysis of the *MR-OBVQ* revealed two factors each with a high degree of internal consistency: Bullying ($\alpha = .89$) and Victimization ($\alpha = .87$), which is consistent with

previous international research and the Rasch analysis which identified the items comprising bullying and victimization (see Kyriakides et al., 2006 for a review).

With reference to the *CASA* one single factor measuring aggressive behaviours, which included both proactive and reactive forms of physical and verbal aggression was evident (α = .89). This is contrary to some previous research showing that aggressive behaviour presents in multiple forms (Dodge, 1991; Dodge & Coie, 1987; Little, Brauner, Jones, Hendrich, & Hawley, 2003 for example). Moreover, it is not consistent with Cordin (2007) and Houghton, Cordin and Hopkins (in press) who from a study of 137 suspended adolescents reported three factors as follows: Physical Aggression, Reactive Verbal Aggression and Proactive Verbal Aggression. In contrast Polman et al. (2009) found similar outcomes (one factor) to the present research in that reactive and proactive aggression were highly correlated. Other research has also found high correlations between reactive and proactive aggression (e.g., Card & Little, 2006; Polman, de Castro, Koopps, Van Boxtel, & Merk, 2007).

It may be, as shown by the official school records of the participants in the present study that their bullying was aggressive *per se*. That is the participants were suspended specifically for physical aggression which also included verbal threats against peers. Previous research has also shown bullying to be linked with aggression *per se*, (i.e., not differentiated according to proactive/reactive and verbal/physical) (see Camodeca & Goossens, 2005). This finding may, however, be due to methodological reasons. Kempes, de Vries, Matthys, van Engeland and van Hooff

(2008) for example suggest that teachers tend to view the aggressive acts of children as a whole, rather than physical or verbal or as reactive or proactive which is why teacher report questionnaires often produce substantial correlations between forms of aggression. This may have been the case in the present research.

For the *LS* two factors were revealed, namely Loner by Circumstances (α = .67) and Loner by Choice (α = .69). While these Cronbach alphas are relatively low, they approximate very closely to Pallant's (2005) recommendation that alpha coefficients of .70 and above are indicative of acceptable reliability. As highlighted earlier in Chapter Two of this thesis the research on loners is very limited. However, these factors are consistent with that of Tan (2008), Houghton, Carroll, Tan and Hopkins (2008) and Tan, Houghton and Carroll (in press).

Thus, in response to Research Question Three, extensive item affectivity and discrimination statistical techniques, internal consistencies and factor analyses were performed on these instruments and results showed them to be reliable measures of bullying, aggression, and loner status.

Study Three sought to address Research Question Four, which asked what are the patterns of bullying, physical and verbal (proactive-reactive) aggression, and reputational orientations among upper primary school aged bullies? Of the total sample of 132 children 61% reported that they had bullied others, with 45% doing it once or twice during the school year, and over 10% two to three times each month.

Verbal bullying was reported to be the most frequent followed by excluding or ignoring. In line with the findings in the exploratory Study One, cyber bullying was the least used method of bullying (approximately 10%). These findings question Li's (2005) contention that bullying has "gone digital". Indeed, the rates reported in the present study are considerably lower than the 25% reported by Li (2005). They are in line, however, with the earlier findings of the 2002 National Children's Home, Oliver and Candappa (2003), Balding (2005) Noret and Rivers (2006), Ybarra, Mitchell, Wolak and Finkelhor (2006), and Smith et al. (2008) that also found similar rates of cyber bullying. In relation to the Australia data, the present findings are remarkably close to the 11.5% cited by Sakellariou (2005).

When the data of the 38 identified bullies was examined only two of them bullied several times each week. Almost all of the bullies perpetrated their acts two or three times a month or once or twice throughout the school year. This was consistent across all of the different types of bullying. There were no significant gender differences in terms of bullying scores between the 22 male bullies and 16 female bullies, which was to be expected given that all 38 had been suspended from schools because of their bullying of others.

Researchers have reported different categories of aggression, namely reactive, proactive, overt, and relational (Berkowitz, 1978; Fite, Colder, Lochman, & Wells, 2008; Price & Dodge, 1989) which include physical aggression (hitting, kicking, shoving), name-calling and teasing, making threats, and having money or items taken

or damaged, spreading false rumours and using a third party to harm others (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, 1993a). In the present research aggression was found to be unidimensional, however. (Reasons for this such as teacher bias were described earlier on page 189.) Given this unidimensionality it is difficult to compare the present findings with other research, such as that by Sijtsema et al. (2009) that reported male bullies to be high on proactive aggression whereas female bullies were more reactive. Other research findings relating to this are somewhat mixed (see Ostrov, Ries, Stauffacher, Godleski & Mullins, 2008). However, there is evidence that girls tend to be more relationally aggressive than boys during childhood, possibly because of the greater importance they place on social interactions and relationships (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Complicating matters further in the present research was an interesting interaction which occurred with regards to aggression. That is, mean aggression scores for male bullies was higher than that for the female bullies; the opposite was the case for non bullies however, with females scoring higher than males.

Since the single aggression score arising in the present research comprises items of proactive and reactive aggression, tentative support may be forthcoming for research which has found bullies show both reactive and proactive aggression (Camodeca, Goossens, Meerum, Terwogt, & Schuengel, 2002; Pellegrini et al., 1999; Roland, & Idsoe, 2001; Salmivalli, & Nieminen, 2002). In further support of this assertion and as a precursor to support Reputation Enhancement Theory, are Buelga, Musitu, Murgui and Pons (2008). Although using an adolescent sample, these researchers

confirmed that adolescent's total aggression was a strategy to achieve power and status within the peer group and also as a means to achieve the ideal reputation of choice.

Finally, longitudinal research findings pertaining to aggression are quite mixed. Murray-Close, Ostrov and Crick (2007) showed aggression and in particular relational aggression, increases for females during middle childhood. Conversely, Park et al. (2005) reported greater reductions in aggression for girls over boys from Grade 1 through to Grade 5. On the other hand, Cillessen and Mayeaux (2004) found greater stability in 10 to 14 year old girls (over boys) for physical aggression and relational aggression.

Peer status was highlighted by Juvonen et al. (2003) and Kalitala-Heino et al. (2000) as being an important characteristic to bullies and as a significant motivation for their involvement in bullying. The present study appears to be among the first to examine peer status, in terms of reputation and bullies, from an empirical perspective and therefore there is little previous research with which the findings can be readily compared. The present findings clearly revealed that bullies reported significantly higher scores than non bullies on a number of reputational variables. For example, they more openly admired peers of their age who were involved in non conforming activities such as truanting from school, smoking cigarettes, fighting, dealing drugs, and being rude to teachers (i.e., self-perceived social deviancy norms: spsd). They also believed that other children of their age would have the same type of admiration

for individuals involved in such activities (i.e., evaluative reactions to others social deviance: opsd). In addition, they believed that others saw them as someone who breaks rules, is a trouble maker, a bully, tough, and doing things against the law (i.e., non conforming self-perception: nconsp). In line with this they wanted others to view them in this manner (i.e., non conforming ideal public self: nconips). Although no significant differences were evident in reputational orientations according to grade level trends indicated that as participants grew older opsd, nconsp, and nconips assumed increased importance. This is supportive of Carroll, Baglioni et al. (1999) who found that reputational orientations assume greater significance from grade 4 (approximately 9-10 years of age) onwards. These findings are also very much consistent with those of Carroll et al. (2000) in research conducted with Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 at risk and not at risk primary school aged children. That is, the at-risk children admired socially deviant activities, perceived themselves and ideally wished to be perceived as troublemakers, bullies, breaking rules, and ideally wished to be described as such significantly more so than not at-risk children. Furthermore, these present study findings are consistent with those reported from studies involving incarcerated individuals and high school adolescents who are at risk (see Carroll et al., 2009).

In terms of age (and Research Question 5) no significant differences were evident in reputational orientations. Of particular interest, however, is that the trends indicated older participants (grade 7) believed that other children of their age admired individuals involved in socially deviant activities (opsd), believed that others saw

them as someone who breaks rules, is a trouble maker, a bully (inconsp), and wanted others to view them in this manner (nconips). These findings are consistent with the extensive work of Carroll and colleagues (see Carroll et al., 2009) demonstrating that reputations are initiated in primary schools prior to the secondary school experience.

Research Question 6 asked, are there differential patterns of reputation orientation as a function of loner status? To answer this question, comparisons were made between relatively small groups of loner bullies and loner non bullies. Bullies who were loners scored higher on social non conformity norms. The only other similar research to which the present findings can be compared is that of Tan, Houghton and Carroll (in press). In comparing four groups of loner and non loner delinquents/non delinquents Tan et al. (in press) found that loner delinquents committed significantly more criminal acts than non loner non delinquents. In terms of reputational orientations the findings of the present research are remarkably similar to those of Tan et al. (in press). That is, loner delinquents (like loner bullies) had greater levels of admiration for socially deviant activities, saw themselves as delinquent and non conforming, believed that others viewed them in this way, desired others to view them as such, and ideally wished to be seen in this non conforming light. Thus, it appears that like loner delinquents, loner bullies have public reputations and this may be the social goal of their conduct, as posited by Hopkins and Emler (1990). What is not clear, however, is how do loner bullies create the social visibility (whereby others directly witness their acts) so necessary for the establishment of a reputation? As shown in the present study loner bullies do not communicate information to others by self-

disclosure, gossip and exchange of information, a key element necessary for the development of reputation (Carroll et al., 2009). This was further explored in Study Four.

Study Four examined to a greater extent the importance of visibility of bullying actions and the presence of an audience for reputation enhancement, in terms of the motivations for bullying. This study addressed Research Question 7: What is the importance of visibility of bullying actions and the presence of an audience for reputation enhancement, in terms of the motivations for bullying? Interviews with 28 bullies revealed that power, strength, toughness, image, being cool and gaining respect and recognition (all characteristics associated with reputation) were the main reasons why they bullied. Thus, as O'Connell, Pepler and Craig (1999) and Saufler and Gagne (2000) demonstrated, bullying among primary school children is an antecedent to achieving goals – in this case the goal of a non conforming reputation. To achieve this goal bullies deliberately select their physical location where visibility is high. This is in line with Rigby's (2008) assertion that bullying is a public event because bullies want an audience to impress. Hoover (2003) described the physical location as the theatre of bullying and this most aptly describes the importance of visibility. This construct of "theatre" also applies to the different types of audience. For example, leaving highly visible messages in toilets or on the Internet is a theatre in itself whereby the bully can also reach the delayed audience, rather than the just immediate audience most frequently referred to in Reputation Enhancement Theory (Emler, 1984). The interview data confirmed the empirical evidence gathered in the

previous research study that visibility of actions is critical to bullies, whether directly witnessed or delayed.

The reputation enhancement aspect of bullying, which has strong support from this present research, may also be linked with aggression. Research suggests that bullies use aggressive behaviour because it is purposeful in helping them to reach their own goals, including achievement of higher status in and among the peer group (Sutton, 2001). Because bullies have a narcissistic view of themselves characterized by dominance (Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi, & Lagerspetz, 1999) and are aware of their dominant status they use their aggressive behaviour in a much more subtle and persuasive manner against others (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005). The findings from Studies One and Four in the present research add support to these earlier findings with bullies consistently alluding to dominance over others by aggression throughout the studies. It is also worth noting that bullies in the present research expressed greater levels of admiration for socially deviant activities and believed that others of their age were similarly admiring. Previous research is in some ways supportive of this. Dodge (1991) and Loeber and Coie (2001) for example, reported that bullies believed that everyone who behaved aggressively to others did so deliberately for a purpose.

Much has been written, particularly in the popular media, about cyber bullying. Research Question 8 enquired whether cyber bullying – an apparently anonymous mode of bullying – enhances the reputations of bullies. The present findings, first,

confirm that its consequences can be devastating (Gati et al., 2002) and it can create a hostile and suspicious physical environment (Shariff & Strong-Wilson, 2005). Second, the present findings confirm that it enhances the perpetrators reputation. Bullies in the present research confirmed that sending an SMS or using the Internet and its variations allowed them to continue bullying the victim after (or instead of) hitting them or scaring them. Furthermore, it appears that cyber bullying allows bullies to create a fear of apprehension among their victims by sending threats late at night so they (i.e., the victims) find it waiting for them the next morning prior to school. Moreover, the victim was well aware of who was sending the messages or threats, thereby enhancing reputations.

The question is, however, do cyber mechanisms of bullying offer anonymity as postulated by Harmon (2004)? In cyber bullying the perpetrator is less likely to receive direct gratification (Smith et al., 2008) and the present research concurs with this. It appears from the present findings, however, that anonymity is not guaranteed and bullies do not want this. Indeed, as demonstrated in the present research, the delayed gratification was highly reinforcing to the bullies because of the suspense it created. This also permitted the bullies to further enhance their reputation by deliberately delaying their ultimate gratification (i.e., by not openly admitting to the victim it was them) for several days and then ensuring the victim knew it was them by holding their mobile phone aloft.

In support of generalizing Reputation Enhancement Theory to bullies (Research Question 9), the findings clearly demonstrate that they are striving to attain a non conforming reputation of choice and that they go to great lengths to promote this reputation before an audience of their peers (Emler, 1984; Emler & Reicher, 1995). Furthermore, as Emler (1990) hypothesized individuals communicate their social identities through intentional, visible behaviour to persuade others that they belong to a particular social category – in this case bullies. The present research also revealed that a reputation for non conformity is a deliberate choice because it is not only a means of creating a certain (tough) reputation amongst outsiders, but it also provides the condition for group membership (see Emler & Reicher, 1995 for a review). As Reicher and Emler (1986) emphasized, the visibility of rule breakers' conduct or the damage it will do to their reputations is not miscalculated; rather, they foster this reputation. It provides public proof of character (Goffman, 1972). Thus, in summary reputation enhancement is eminently generalisable to bullies and may be an explanation for their motivations.

Implications for Education

Developing a clearer understanding of bullying and the significance of reputation is important because of the potential benefits for the prevention of such antisocial behaviour during adolescence and beyond and also in terms of preventing the adverse consequences to victims. Rigby (2008) points to the importance of research-led best practice, while Carroll and colleagues (see Carroll et al., 2009) have demonstrated extensively the significance of reputation in explaining why young people indulge in

antisocial and delinquent behaviours. Carroll et al (2000) have found that the salience of reputation is detectable at least as early as the transition to adolescence, but because reputations are not established until the early high school years, primary school is an opportunistic time to intervene. Thus, the present findings have strong implications for education in the primary school years. This is further strengthened by Lynam's (1997) claims that schools are the best place to conduct research because as individuals get older research/treatment programmes are confounded by issues such as substance abuse and incarceration. Understanding the developmental trajectories to antisocial behaviour (such as bullying) in younger populations not affected by these confounds (i.e., those in younger primary school grades) provides the best opportunities for developing effective treatments.

The findings from the present research have major implications for educators and psychologists. First, the further validation of the *CASA* and *Loner Scale*, provide reliable instruments with which to assess lonerism and aggression. Indeed, the adverse consequence of having no friendship networks has been recently demonstrated (see Tan, Houghton, & Hopkins, in press). While the bullies in the present research did not differentiate verbal and physical aggression in reactive and proactive forms the *CASA* provides educators with the opportunity to more fully explore the types of aggression bullies present with. This is particularly important given the ever increasing rates of aggressive behaviour and subsequent suspensions in primary schools. These two instruments also permit school psychologists to develop

intervention strategies that are more specific in their focus and hence more efficacious in their outcomes.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It should be acknowledged that the research presented in this thesis focused only on bullies in Grades 5, 6 and 7 and therefore whether Reputation Enhancement Theory is applicable to bullies of other ages is not known. Moreover, nothing is known about the specific reputations of the victims of the bullies. Future research should address this by obtaining data from a wider age range of primary and secondary aged students, including bullies and victims. Extensive research has shown that reputations change over time through stages of initiation, establishment and maintenance and that risk taking behaviours are associated with these various stages of change (see Carroll et al., 2009). Research is now needed to establish whether bullies progress through similar stages of reputation initiation, enhancement and maintenance and/or whether reputation is stable over time. Longitudinal designs should therefore be used to examine the developmental trajectories of bullying and reputation through the school experience. Knowing this would allow the development of age appropriate prevention/intervention programmes specifically aimed at the socio-psychological variables associated with bullying. This would increase the probability of successful treatment outcomes.

Understanding the nature of bullies along with their motivations for involvement in such acts has important implications. However, given the high prevalence rates of

psychopathology among the primary school aged population (see Langsford, 1999) educators need to take care when identifying children as bullies; some may have undiagnosed disorders such as oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder which require different kinds of treatment.

In conclusion, bullying in schools is worldwide and during the past 10 years in particular it has become a very much researched construct. It is also evident that there are many forms of bullying perpetrated by young persons, of both genders, in groups and alone. The research presented in this thesis has identified reputation as a key element on which the various forms of bullying may be built and as such has advanced theoretical understanding. What is now required is the application of this theory in the development and empirical evaluation of prevention and intervention strategies which facilitate the everyday prosocial functioning of bullies rather than their involvement in bullying.

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APPENDIX 1. Study One Information Sheet and Consent Form

APPENDIX 2. Instrumentation

APPENDIX 3. Study Two Information Sheet and Consent Form

APPENDIX 4. Study Three Information Sheet and Consent Form

APPENDIX 5. Study Four Information Sheet and Consent Form