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VICTIM RESPONSE TO HURTFUL TEASING EPISODES: PERCEPTUAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

Edward P. Mockus

184 Pages December 2014

The purpose of this study was purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the dynamics of hurtful teasing in middle-school-aged boys and how it relates to child victimization. Specifically, this study: (1) examined how victim responses to hurtful teasing influenced participants' perceptions of, and behaviors towards the victims of a hurtful teasing episode; and (2) assessed the moderating effects of participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning on the influence of victim response to hurtful teasing.

Participants included 169 middle school boys enrolled in 5th through 8th grade. Participants completed self-report measures to assess individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning, after which participants viewed one of three videos depicting a boy's response to hurtful teasing. Victim response was manipulated in three ways: a verbally hostile response, a humorous response, and an ignore response. Following the teasing video, participants' perceptions of the teasing episode were assessed via self-report measures and participant' behavioral reactions were measured by resource allocation activity to determine the amount of help they would provide the victim. This is the first known study to behaviorally measures participants' reactions to hurtful teasing.

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Results indicated significant main effects of victim response, main effects of individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning, and interactions between victim response and individual difference variables that influenced participants' perceptions of the victim and willingness to allocate resources to the victim of hurtful teasing.

Implications of this study inform relevant directions for future research regarding the study of hurtful teasing and peer victimization. Practical implications include suggestions for improving targets of individual and school wide interventions in the movement to reduce the prevalence of hurtful teasing and increase the likelihood that peer support will occur.

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VICTIM RESPONSE TO HURTFUL TEASING EPISODES: PERCEPTUAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

EDWARD P. MOCKUS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Psychology

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2014

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VICTIM RESPONSE TO HURTFUL TEASING EPISODES: PERCEPTUAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS

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I would like to thank my family, friends, committee members, and colleagues for their endless love, support, encouragement, and effort. You have made this project worthwhile. I could not have done this without you.

E.P.M.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, childhood bullying has received significant public and research attention. As such, increases in intervention programs designed to reduce and eliminate bullying are being marketed towards principals, teachers, and parents. Bully victimization has been associated with severe and long-term psychological and social problems: distress, loneliness, low self-esteem, psychosomatic complaints, depression, academic difficulties, school drop-out, as well as increased risk of psychopathology, suicidal ideations, and suicide attempts (Card, 2003; Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, 2012; Harris & Petrie, 2003; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Rutter & Behrendt, 2004). Nearly 30% of middle school students report having a moderate to frequent involvement in bullying, and 64% of students report feeling somewhat or very concerned about bullying (Howard & Landau, 2005; Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simon-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). Increased research, intervention, and public attention are understandable given the severe consequences associated with bullying.

Bullying involves repeated aggressive behavior towards a peer and is characterized by an imbalance of power and systematic abuse (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2002). There are four general categories of bullying behavior: physical bullying, relational bullying, verbal bullying, and more recently identified cyberbullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012; Willard, 2004). Physical bullying includes behaviors such as hitting, pushing, holding, spitting, throwing objects, using

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weapons, and making threatening movements (Ma, Stewin, & Mah, 2001; Rigby, 2000). Relational bullying has been defined as "a purposeful manipulation or damage to peer relationships" (Crick, 1996, p. 2317), and includes social exclusion, rumor spreading, and withholding friendships (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Crick, 1996). Verbal bullying includes behaviors such as teasing, threats, degrading comments, name-calling, put-downs, and sarcastic comments (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997). Finally, cyberbullying involves "sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the Internet or other digital communication devices" and may include messages or photos sent through email, text messages, social networking sites (e.g., *Facebook.com* or *Twitter.com*), chat rooms, personal websites, on-line bulletins, or message forums (Willard, 2004; p. 1).

Although the physical harm associated with physical bullying and the ostracizing effects of relational bullying are often considered the most painful forms of bullying, research suggests that verbal bullying can be equally problematic (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997). As indicated by Whitney and Smith (1993) and Kowalski (2003), the most common form of bullying is teasing and name-calling.

Teasing is a strategy to engage in verbal bullying for the purpose of intentionally inflicting harm on another person. When teasing is cruel and performed repeatedly, its consequences are in the same class as physical assault, and can be as painful to the victim as physical injury (Kowalski, 2003; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Hurtful teasing can lead to poor interpersonal relationships, lower self-esteem, body image issues, social anxiety, and weakened perceptions of relational closeness (Cash, 1995; Ledley, Storch, Coles, Heimberg, Moser, & Bravata, 2006; Rieves & Cash, 1996; Storch, Roth, Coles, Heimberg, Bravata, & Moser, 2004; Strawser, Storch, & Roberti, 2005). The first

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purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of teasing and child victimization.

Research indicates that the majority of bullying episodes occurs in the presence of a group (i.e., two or more peers; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig & Pepler, 1997; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Atlas and Pepler (1998) and Craig and Pepler (1995) discovered that nearly 85% of bullying occurs in the presence of others (i.e., bystanders), and that peer-driven intervention occurs in only 10% of bullying episodes. Research by Salmivalli, Voeten, and Poskiparta (2011) indicated that peers take on three general roles during bullying episodes. These include assisting the bully, defending the victim, or being passive (i.e., not doing anything). O'Connell and colleagues (1999) found that one-half (i.e., 54%) of peer witnesses passively watched a bullying episode occur, whereas the other half either defended the victim (25%) or supported the bully (21%). As bystanders often differ in how they respond to bullying events, little is known about the predictors of participant roles or how these various roles impact the perceptions of other peer bystanders. In this study, a contextual view of bullying was applied such that participants observed (i.e., were bystanders to) a hurtful teasing episode involving a peer perpetrator, victim, and passive bystander (i.e., a bystander who did nothing in reaction to the hurtful teasing episode).

Another factor shown to affect bystanders' perceptions and behaviors towards victims is the way the victim responds to the bullying behavior. Research has shown that a victim's response to being bullied influences bystanders' perceptions of victim popularity, potential intervention effectiveness, victim blame, and decisions to intervene (Broussard & Wagner, 1988; Davies, Rogers, Whiteleg, 2009; Landau, Milich, Harris, &

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Larson, 2001; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012; Ross & Horner, 2009). Ross and Horner (2009) found that when victims more frequently responded to bullying episodes in socially appropriate ways (e.g., using a stop signal, ignoring the bully, walking away) compared to socially inappropriate responses (e.g., complaining, whining, laughing), the overall prevalence of bullying decreased. Davies and colleagues (2009) found that victims who did not defend themselves against the perpetrators (i.e., did not resist or fight back) elicited increased perceptions of blame and negativity from bystanders. This study examined the influence of a victim's response on bystanders' perceptions of hurtful teasing episodes.

Current research has indicated the influence of individual differences on bystanders' perceptions of bullied victims (Howard, Landau, & Pryor, 2014). This project examined how participants' individual differences (i.e., empathy for the victim, perceived responsibility to intervene, tolerance of aggressive solutions to problems, personal history with bullying and hurtful teasing) moderate the influence of victim response on participants' perceptions of and behaviors towards a teasing episode.

Whereas understanding the influence of victim response and individual differences may provide insight as to how bystanders will perceive and interpret a hurtful teasing episode, understanding how and why people engage in prosocial behavior may provide insight as to how bystanders will behave when exposed to such victimization. Research indicates that people are more likely to provide help and allocate resources to others to eliminate their own feelings of negative emotionality and to maintain distributive justice (Adams, 1963; Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Dovidio et al., 2006; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). When observing distress in others or an imbalance in the

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reward distribution in a relationship, people become motivated to restore equity by means of providing additional support to those in need. Research shows that people tend to overcompensate (via additional monetary reward, attention, direct assistance) others who are withheld appropriate resources and undercompensate others who have been wrongfully compensated (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Baumann, 1982; Dovidio et al., 2006; Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981). As a victim to hurtful teasing could be considered one who has been wrongfully treated, this study examined the ways in which participants' allocated resources to victims of hurtful teasing. This is the first known study to examine the allocation of resources in the context of teasing.

This study answered two primary research questions: (1) Does victim response significantly influence participants' perceptions of the hurtful teasing episode and the participant' resource allocations towards the victim? (2) How do participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning moderate the influence that victim response has on perceptions of participants who witness a teasing episode and resource allocation to the victim?

To answer these research questions, participants completed a series of self-report questionnaires (i.e., empathy, normative beliefs about aggression, perceived bystander responsibility, belief in a just world, and personal history with victimization) and then viewed a video of a hurtful teasing episode. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions in which victim response was manipulated. The three victim response conditions included a victim who responded with hostility, a victim who responded with humor, and a victim who did not respond. Participants' attitudes and perceptions of the teasing episode were assessed through a series of post-video questionnaires (i.e.,

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perceptions of social preference, victim blame, and perceived victim's pain).

Following their exposure to the post-video questionnaire, participants engaged in a resource allocation activity in which the participants were asked to allocate rewards (i.e., cookies) to the victim. This process allowed the influence of victim response to be measured behaviorally. This is the first known study to employ a behavioral measure to assess participants' reactions to hurtful teasing.

It was anticipated that differences in victim response would elicit changes in participant' perceptions toward the victim of the hurtful teasing episode (i.e., perceptions of social preference, victim blame, perceived victim's pain), as well as the number of resources the participants allocated to the victim. Moreover, it was anticipated that the participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning (i.e., empathy, normative beliefs about aggression, perceived bystander responsibility, belief in a just world, and personal history with victimization) would moderate those effects.

Overall, results indicated that main effects of victim response, main effects of individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning, and interactions between victim response and individual difference variables significantly impacted participants' perceptions of the victim and willingness to allocate resources to the victim of hurtful teasing.

Victims that *ignored* the teasing: received more positive views from participants with more tolerance for overt aggression and relational aggression; received more negative views from participants with less perceived responsibility, stronger beliefs in a just world; received higher ratings of perceived pain from participants with higher empathy, higher perceived responsibility, more tolerance for overt aggression, less

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tolerance for relational aggression, less personal victimization history; and received more resource allocations from participants with higher empathy, higher perceived responsibility, higher tolerance for overt aggression, less tolerance for relational aggression, less personal victimization history, weaker stronger beliefs in a just world.

Victims that responded to the teasing with *humor*: received more positive views from participants with lower tolerance of overt and relational aggression; received more negative views from participants with less perceived responsibility, weaker beliefs in a just world; received higher ratings of perceived pain from participants with more empathy, less perceived responsibility, less tolerance of overt aggression, more tolerance of relational aggression, less personal victimization history; and received more resource allocations from participants with less empathy, less perceived responsibility, less tolerance for overt, more tolerance for relational aggression, more personal victimization experience, stronger beliefs in a just world.

Victims that responded to the teasing with *hostility*: received more positive views from participants with lower tolerance of overt aggression, higher tolerance of relational aggression and; received more negative views from participants with less empathy, weaker beliefs in a just world; received higher ratings of perceived pain from participants with more empathy, less perceived responsibility, less tolerance of overt and relational aggression, less personal victimization experience; and received more resource allocations from participants with more empathy, less perceived responsibility, lower tolerance for overt aggression, higher tolerance for relational aggression, more personal victimization experience, stronger beliefs in a just world.

An interesting finding of this study includes the two victim response dichotomies

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that appear to influence participants' reactions to the victims of hurtful teasing: active versus passive victim responses (e.g., passive responses yield more victim blame overall and greater likability for participants with greater aggression tolerance), and socially appropriate versus socially inappropriate responses (i.e., socially appropriate responses yield more cookie allocations). The way in which the participant was influenced by these victim response dichotomies, however, was moderated by the participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning. As such, these results support the continued study of participants' individual differences and how they moderate participant reactions to teasing and peer victimization.

The large number of significant effects found in this study demonstrate the complex influences that children face (knowingly or unknowingly) when responding to teasing. Future research should continue to assess the moderating effects of individual differences in participants' socio-cognitive functioning on victim response to hurtful teasing. For research to more accurately examine teasing within a true social-ecological perspective, however, future research also consider the interaction effects between victimization type and type of bystander response. Replication of this study across victimization type (i.e., physical bullying, relational aggression, cyberbullying) will allow researchers to understanding the conditions for which victim response and individual differences are most influential. Moreover, as teasing is most likely to occur in the presence of bystanders (Atlas & Pepler, 1998) and as differences in bystander behavior influence other bystanders (Latané & Darley, 1968; Howard et al., 2014; Salmivalli et al., 2011), knowledge of how bystanders' responses to teasing influences participant reactions is needed to truly understand teasing from the social-ecological perspective.

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Unfortunately, examination of the four-way interaction between participants' individual differences, victim response type, victimization type, and bystander response is likely outside of the scope of any one study.

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CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bullying, Teasing, and Peer Victimization

Bullying is a problem that many school-age children and adolescents experience each day, and within the past decade, bullying has received significant public and research attention. As such, increases in intervention programs designed to reduce and eliminate bullying are being marketed towards principals, teachers, and parents. As observed in recent history, the consequences of bullying can be tragic, such that those who were victimized acted out with mass murder shootings followed by subsequent suicides (e.g., Columbine shooting or Virginia Tech shooting). Case study research by Leary, Kowalski, Smith, and Phillips (2003) indicated that across 15 school shootings between 1995 and 2001, rejection in the form of ostracism and bullying was present in all but two of the incidents. Whereas most victims do not respond with school shootings, bully victimization has been associated with various long-term psychological and social problems: distress, loneliness, low self-esteem, psychosomatic complaints, depression, poor concentration, academic difficulties, school drop-out, running away, body image concerns, and eating disorders, as well as increased risk of psychopathology, suicidal ideations, and suicide attempts (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008; Breseman, 2005; Card, 2003; Cash, 1995; Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, 2012; Furman & Thompson, 2002; Harris & Petrie, 2003; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004; Rutter & Behrendt, 2004; Sharp, Thompson, & Arora, 2000; Twemlow &

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Fonagy, 2001). Nearly 30% of middle school students report having moderate to frequent involvement in bullying, and 64% of these students reported feeling somewhat or very concerned about bullying (Howard & Landau, 2005; Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simmon-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001). Not surprisingly, children who report being bullied at school also report worrying about future victimization (Boulton, Trueman, & Murray, 2008).

Bullying involves repeated, deliberate, aggressive behavior towards another peer and is characterized by an imbalance of power and systematic abuse (Olweus, 1993; Randall, 1997; Rigby, 2002). Bullies attempt to dominate and intimidate victims using their authority, size, or power to harm (or attempt to harm) their victims. Victims are often left with feelings of helplessness, anxiety, and depression (Futterman, 2004). There are four general categories of bullying behavior: physical bullying, relational bullying, verbal bullying, and more recently identified cyberbullying (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Willard, 2004).

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying (or traditional bullying) includes behaviors such as hitting, pushing, holding, spitting, throwing objects, using weapons, and making threatening movements (Ma, Stewein, & Mah, 2001; Rigby, 2000). Although some episodes of physical bullying may seem trivial (e.g., pulling hair, shooting rubber bands or spit balls, snapping one's bra strap, or giving a wedgie), other episodes are more severe (e.g., individual or group beatings, choking, shooting, or locking the victim in a locker; Shariff, 2008). Research indicates that boys are more likely to be targets of physical bullying than girls (Furlong, Chung, Bates, & Morrison, 1995; Rigby, 2000; Rose & Rudolph, 2006).

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In addition, boys are more likely than girls to be violent and destructive when bullying does occur (Borg, 1998; Rose & Rudolph, 2006).

Relational Bullying

Relational bullying (or indirect bullying) has been defined as "a purposeful manipulation or damage to peer relationships" (Crick, 1996, p. 2317), and includes social exclusion, rumor spreading, and withholding friendships (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006; Crick, 1996). There is evidence to show that relational aggression occurs in the early years of life, such that 17% of preschool-aged children (3 to 5 years) engage in relationally aggressive behaviors, as reported by teachers and peer nominations (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997). As children age, relational bullying increases in frequency and complexity (Crick, Grotpeter, & Bigbee, 2002). Research by Sharp (1995) indicates that victims identified relational bullying (specifically when resulting in social exclusion) as the worst form of bullying, and Hawker (1998) reported that victims of relational bullying tend to have greater emotional distress than victims of physical bullying. When compared to boys, girls are more likely to engage in and be victims of relational bullying (Crick et al., 1997; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Whitney & Smith, 1993); however, according to Harachi, Catalano, and Hawkins (1999), relational bullying among girls can often be dismissed by educators as normative behavior.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves "sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the Internet or other digital communication devices" (p. 1), and may include messages or photos sent through email, text messages, social networking sites (e.g., *Facebook.com* or *Twitter.com*), chat rooms, personal websites, on-line bulletins, or message forums

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(Willard, 2004). Cyberbullying is a form of relational bullying conducted through electronic media and has emerged with the increased use of the Internet and cell phone text messaging. With cyberbullying, rumors and lies can spread significantly faster than with traditional word-of-mouth communication. Forms of cyberbullying include flaming (e.g., sending angry, rude, or obscene comments), online harassment (e.g., unsolicited comments intended to annoy, alarm, or abuse another), cyberstalking (e.g., harassment that is intimidating or that includes threats of harm), denigration (e.g., sending untrue or rude statements about a person to other people), masquerading (e.g., pretending to be someone else), outing (e.g., sending or posting information that is sensitive and potentially embarrassing about a person), and exclusion (e.g., rudely leaving someone out of an online group; Willard, 2005).

Research indicates that cyberbullying is more likely to happen outside of school, in chat rooms, through instant messaging, and through text messaging (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2006; Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, 2008). Cyberbullying that does occur during school hours is most often transmitted through cell phone text messages, and because cell phone use is typically banned during school hours, cyberbullying in schools is less likely to be reported for fear of disciplinary consequence (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007). The most common and most hurtful form of cyberbullying, as reported by students, is the public posting of embarrassing pictures or videos, unbeknownst to the victim (Slonje & Smith, 2008; Smith et al., 2008). There are mixed findings with regard to which gender is more likely to engage in or be victimized by cyberbullying. In samples of middle school students, Wang, Ianotti, and Nansel (2009) and Kiriakidis and Kavoura (2010) found that boys

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were more likely to be cyberbullies than girls, whereas Williams and Guerra (2007) did not find gender differences in cyberbullying.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying includes behaviors such as teasing, threatening, degrading comments, name-calling, put-downs, and sarcastic comments (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997). Whereas some behaviors associated with verbal bullying can be interpreted as playful and innocuous (e.g., two friends playfully teasing each other), verbal bullying is a strategy to intentionally inflict harm on the victim (Mills & Carwile, 2009). Moreover, although the physical harm associated with traditional bullying and the ostracizing effects of relational bullying are often considered the most painful forms of bullying, research suggests that verbal bullying can be equally painful (Clarke & Kiselica, 1997).

Review of Teasing

Hurtful teasing is a verbal bullying strategy used to intentionally dominate, intimidate, and harm another person. As indicated by Whitney and Smith (1993) and Kowalski (2003), the most common form of bullying is teasing and name-calling. When teasing is cruel and performed repeatedly, its consequences are in the same class as physical assault and reportedly can feel just as painful to the victim as physical injury (Kowalski, 2003; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Cruel and hurtful teasing is associated with poor interpersonal relationships, lower self-esteem, negative body image, social anxiety, and it weakens perceptions of relational closeness (Cash, 1995; Ledley, Storch, Coles, Heimberg, Moser, & Bravata, 2006; Rieves & Cash, 1996; Storch, Roth, Coles, Heimberg, Bravata, & Moser, 2004; Strawser, Storch, & Roberti, 2005).

As outlined by Mills and Carwile (2009), "bullying is *clearly* defined as an

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aggressive act that attempts to inflict harm on a victim" (p. 281). One challenge with identifying teasing as an act of verbal bullying is that not all teasing acts *clearly* attempt to inflict harm (i.e., not all teasing is considered hurtful). In fact, teasing can be playful, fun, and have prosocial effects when used appropriately. For example, teasing can be a form of play (i.e., playful teasing) that can increase positive parent-child interactions in families, as well as a way to teach children to learn flexible thinking and the pretend nature of speech (Eisenberg, 1986). Further, teasing in early peer relationships has shown to be used as a technique for expressing the liking for one another (Voss, 1997). Finally, Shapiro, Baumeister, and Kessler (1991) found that teasing is a commonly used strategy for building and maintaining interpersonal relationships, approaching difficult conversational topics, and having fun.

If teasing can be both playful and hurtful, how can we discriminate between these two very different acts of communication? The three characteristics most often associated with all episodes of teasing (i.e., both playful teasing and hurtful teasing) include (a) aggression or challenge to one's identity, (b) humor or play, and (c) ambiguity (Mills & Carwile, 2009). Exploring the associated characteristics of teasing behaviors may help separate the boundaries between teasing as a playful, prosocial, and communicative act (i.e., playful teasing) and teasing as a cruel, hurtful, verbal bullying behavior (i.e., hurtful teasing).

Aggression or challenge to one's identity in teasing. Of all characteristics associated with teasing, aggression/challenge to one's identify is likely the one most closely linked to bullying (Alberts, 1992; Kowalski, 2003; Shapiro et al., 1991). Shapiro and colleagues (1991) first identified that aggression/challenge is a key component to

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teasing, and Mottet and Thweatt (1997) defined teasing as "an intentional aggressive form of verbal communication" (p. 242). Scambler, Harris, and Milich (1998) described teasing as having a hostile component, and Pawluk (1989) described teasing as a way of taunting or baiting another. Within the literature, aggression in teasing appears to stem from the fact that teasing is often used to provoke, manipulate, or incite some form of anger from another.

Not all scholars agree that aggression is the fundamental characteristic of teasing. For instance, Keltner, Capps, Kring, Yound, and Heerey (2001) suggested that, whereas aggression is present in some cases of teasing, it is not a necessary condition. Similarly, Mills and Babrow (2003) described that aggression is involved in many acts that are *labeled* teasing, but insist that aggression is not a teasing requirement. Further, Kruger, Gordon, and Kuban (2006) explained that some teasing is "designed with the sole purpose of hurting, humiliating, or harassing the target of the tease. Often individuals tease to flirt, socialize, play, enhance social bonds, teach, entertain (themselves, the target, or an audience), or to express affiliation, affection, and even love" (p. 412).

Take the following teasing example, as offered by Weger and Truch (1996), which describes two friends playing on a basketball court. After one player misses a shot that he typically would make, the other player says, "That's a brick, what is wrong with you!?" (p. 15). The shooter then responds humorously, and makes an additional joke about his missed shot. Weger and Truch (1996) note that whereas the shooter was the recipient of a tease, this comment informed the other players on the court, as well as the others watching in the audience, that his friend normally makes this shot and missing it was an anomaly. Through teasing, one friend was effectively protecting the reputation of

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the teased target. This example of teasing illustrates that teasing does not need to be aggressive, but in fact can serve as a prosocial and communicative act.

Prior to accurately determining whether a teasing act is aggressive, one must first assess the intentionality of the act; when witnessing teasing acts, however, bystanders may not be able to decode the teaser's unspoken intentions. Instead, bystanders can only see the verbal and nonverbal cues and reactions (i.e., the way the teased and other bystanders respond to the teasing) that allow them to make judgments about the nature of the interaction (Mills & Carwile, 2009). Bystanders cannot know whether the teaser was motivated by aggression (i.e., the desire to harm the target), but they can analyze the communicative cues to clarify whether the teasing episode appears to be a positive, neutral, or negative experience for the target. As in the basketball example cited above, if paying proper attention, witnesses would see that the teasing was grounded in sportsmanship and friendship, and that the tease was more for the player's benefit than harm.

Humor or play in teasing. The existence of humor in teasing is critical in establishing whether the teasing is to be considered playful or hurtful. Humor is a verbal or nonverbal display to indicate whether the content is to be taken seriously or jokingly; therefore, the prerequisite for experiencing the fun in playful teasing derives from the existence of humor (Lightner, Bollmer, Harris, Milich, & Scambler, 2000; Shapiro et al., 1991). In nearly all definitions of teasing, humor or play is required (Mills & Carwile, 2009). Kowalski (2003) explains that teasing must have an element of play, and Alberts (1992) suggested that teases must be "couched in some situational qualifiers indicating playfulness" (p. 155).

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As play requires some level of lightheartedness and amusement, it is associated with positive feelings between participants, creates an affirming and playful atmosphere, and provides clear indicators that an enjoyable exchange is possible. Hurtful teasing (i.e., teasing intended to harm the victim, associated with verbal bullying) lacks this reciprocal humor, such that the teaser looks to enjoy himself or herself *at the expense* of the target, rather than *with* the target (Mills & Carwile, 2009). In this situation, hurtful teasing is not play, but victimization. Although playful teasing intentionally provokes or challenges the identify or goals of the target, the accompaniment of relevant and playful cues allows the act to communicate a positive and prosocial message rather than a cruel and hurtful one (Keltner et al., 2001). In short, hurtful teasing uses humor at the expense of the target and playful teasing uses humor to support and laugh with the target.

Mills and Babrow (2003) assert that both hurtful and playful teasing use a combination of two observable behaviors: a challenge issued by the teaser, and a play framework that allows the provocation to be interpreted alternatively (i.e., not as a hurtful act, but rather as a playful and prosocial act). For instance, as seen in an example by Mills and Carwile (2009), after seeing a friend's exam score of A+, a peer may grin and say, "Wow! You really need to study a bit harder!" (p. 284). Although the content of the phrase challenges the friend's study habits, the grin provides the required cue of playfulness that prompts the friend to interpret the message, not as a hurtful critique, but as a compliment. Simply put, hurtful teasing is a teasing act that withholds play (i.e., reciprocal humor and enjoyment). Without play, there cannot be playful teasing, only victimization.

Ambiguity in teasing. Ambiguity is not an inherent characteristic of teasing, but

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develops when the elements of challenge and play are less clear. Eisenberg (1986) explained that ambiguity in a tease derives when the content of the message contrasts with the metamessage (i.e., the underlying meaning of the content). The metamessage is made apparent by the use of a disclaimer or contextualization cues (e.g., exaggerating intonations, laughing, smiling, winking; Eisenberg, 1986). At times, the play is obvious, as is the meaning of the playful tease; in other instances, however, interpreting the meaning of the tease is difficult because the meaning is less obvious (Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, & Gilovich, 2004). When the metamessage is less apparent, ambiguity arises.

As discussed above, bystanders do not have access to knowing other's internal intentions or motivations, but instead must deduce these from the contextual and communicative cues (i.e., the way the victim and bystanders react to the tease). Research by Kruger and colleagues (2006) indicate that the different interpretations that arise from the ambiguity presented in teasing are contingent on the role that one plays in the interaction (Kruger et al., 2006). For instance, when teased targets believe that the motivation to tease was playful or prosocial, they are more likely to evaluate the tease, teaser, and bystanders positively; however when teasers followed instructions to be antagonistic, teasers rated the teases more negatively than did the targets or observers. In addition, Sharkey (1992) explained that regardless of the teaser's actual intent, the teased may perceive a teasing act as ridicule or aggressive, ultimately changing the nature of the intended act. Whereas the tease may be prosocial in origin, if the target's information about the motives is more limited than the teaser's knowledge of the situation, the target may evaluate the tease inaccurately.

Teasing is a communicative act that challenges the target's goals or sense of

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identity while simultaneously invoking play or humor to provide alternative interpretations of the challenging content (Mills & Carwile, 2009). It is the interplay of these two elements that separates playful teasing (i.e., teasing that can be prosocial in nature) from hurtful teasing (i.e., teasing that is aggressive and can be considered acts of verbal bullying; Mills & Carwile, 2009). Referring to the basketball example above, after one player misses a shot, the other player's comment initially challenges the shooter's identity of being a good basketball player; however, when taken in context, the shooter's humorous response and reciprocal enjoyment of the interaction qualifies the comment as being a prosocial and playful tease. Playful teasing occurs when the amount of play clearly outweighs the amount of challenge. Hurtful teasing occurs when the amount of challenge clearly outweighs the amount of play. Ambiguous teasing arises when the amount of play and challenge are presented relatively equally. This study sought to gain a better understanding of the factors that influence participants' perceptions and interpretations of teasing acts.

Interpretation of teasing. Due to the potential ambiguity found in the metamessage of a tease, regardless of the original intent of the tease, the response to the tease ultimately alters the meaning of the tease and sets the tone for further interaction (Mills & Carwile, 2009). Kowalski (2003) explains that "before people can tease others effectively, they need to know some things about them. Thus, the act of teasing conveys some degree of intimacy between the teaser and the target'' (p. 18). Those teased will often examine their relationship with the teaser to decide whether the tease is hurtful/hostile or playful/prosocial (Alberts, Kellar-Guenther, & Corman, 1996). Children as young as 6 years have demonstrated the use of relationship information to interpret

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meaning of interactions in ambiguous situations (Pillow & Anderson, 2006). Understanding the various factors of how teases are given and taken, as well as the socially acceptable boundaries of teasing topics, may provide insight to strategies that could reduce teasing ambiguity, and also more accurately identifying when teased targets are in need of support or intervention.

Gender differences. Previous research has highlighted various gender differences in ways that teasing is enacted and understood (Maccoby, 1998; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Eder (1991) reported that teasing and verbal taunts are part of male socialization, and Kowalski (2003) explained that boys often tease each other and learn how to use verbal jibes as a form of play. Given that playful teasing is a common strategy that boys use for social development, there may also be expectations for various socially acceptable responses when being teased. Whereas boys are more likely to engage in teasing, girls are more likely to interpret teasing as stressful and hurtful (Mooney, Creeser, & Blatchford, 1991; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Similarly, Rudolph (2002) identified that, even though boys report greater overt victimization (e.g., hurtful teasing, fighting) than girls, these peer stressors are more strongly associated with anxiety and depression in girls.

Development of these gender differences can be explained by differences in societal expectations and gender stereotypes. Rose and Rudoloph (2006) and Scambler and colleagues (1998) indicate that whereas teasing is often encouraged for boys, girls are often expected to play nice and be kind (i.e., refrain from teasing). Further, Bell and Healey (1992) identified that teasing in boys was positively associated with interpersonal solidarity, but inversely related for girls. This may explain the social norm that girls are not supposed to engage in teasing because it may appear antagonistic, a quality that is

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traditionally "un-lady like." Moreover, because teasing relies on a combination of play and challenge, engaging in any form of teasing may be discouraged for girls. Therefore, girls may be less trained to engage in and interpret hurtful or playful teasing interactions.

Taboo teasing topics. In addition to gender effects on the perceptions and enactment of teasing, there are various social guidelines for teasing that make certain topics appropriate or unacceptable topics of teasing (Aronson et al., 2007). When teasing violates these socially established topic restrictions, the tease can no longer be considered playful, and instead automatically qualifies as hurtful teasing even if the teaser has prosocial intentions. In general, these topics include things that the person cannot control, such as appearance, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion (Aronson et al., 2007). It is not surprising that these topics are all discussed under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act such that creating a hostile environment in the workplace based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or national origin violates federal law (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Pub. L. 88-352). Further, teasing about these topics, regardless of location or situation, qualifies as hurtful teasing and should be considered harassment (Mills & Carwile, 2009).

Aronson and colleagues (2007) identified that the immutable qualities of people (i.e., qualities that cannot be changed) are considered taboo topics for teasing. For instance, as women are taught to have an attractive physical appearance and take pride in their bodies, teasing a woman about her body image would be an inappropriate form of teasing (Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997). Individuals with eating disorders or body dysmorphic disorders who are teased about appearance experience greater risks that decrease self-esteem and increase risks of depression, compared to those who are not

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diagnosed with these disorders (Buhlmann, Cook, Fama, & Wilhelm, 2007). Similarly, children with uncontrollable physical traits that differ from the status quo will perceive teasing about appearance as more hurtful (Gerrard, 1991). Further, Klein (2006) explains that teasing based on heterosexual norms is particularly damaging to gay youth. Although playful teasing can be fun and have prosocial benefits, the use of inappropriate teasing topics, regardless of the intended meaning, automatically qualifies the exchange as hurtful teasing. As written by Mills and Carwile (2006), "in fact, even if said with a smile, it is clear that comments dealing with sensitive subjects are not funny, and have little potential to be playful to the recipient of the comments" (p. 291).

Conclusion

Hurtful teasing is the most common strategy used to engage in verbal bullying, occurs in nearly all other forms of bullying and has shown to have long-lasting negative social-emotional and behavioral effects on its victims. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of children's hurtful teasing episodes as it relates to verbal bullying and peer victimization. Not all victims, however, respond to hurtful teasing in the same way. As this form of bullying is most often performed in the presence of others (Craig, Pepler, & Blais, 2007; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Pozzoli & Gini, 2010; Tapper & Boulton, 2005), understanding the influence of victims' responses can inform and clarify the social-ecology of hurtful teasing and its effects on bystanders. The following section presents the related literature that may help to explain this influence.

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Victim-Response Literature

The way in which one responds to victimization has shown significant impact on how others perceive the victim and the teasing episode. Research has shown that a victim's response to being bullied influences bystanders' perceptions of victim popularity, potential intervention effectiveness, victim blame, and decisions to intervene (Broussard & Wagner, 1988; Davies, Rogers, & Whiteleg, 2009; Landau, Milich, Harris, & Larson, 2001; Ross & Horner, 2009).

How Victims Respond

Shapiro and colleagues (1991) assessed children's self-reported emotions after being teased. Results indicated that nearly all (97%) children reported experiencing negative feelings (e.g., anger and embarrassment), and no children reported experiencing positive feelings. Further, when self-reporting response alternatives, results indicated that 39% of children reported that they would reciprocate the teasing in a hostile way, 24% would ignore the teasing or walk away, 12% would laugh along with the teaser, 10% would fight the teaser, and 4% would tell the teacher (Shapiro et al., 1991).

Similarly, research by Tapper and Boulton (2005) indicated that when responding to verbal, relational, and physical aggression, victims are most likely to respond by fighting back physically or non-physically (e.g., respond with teasing), and least likely to respond by withdrawing from (e.g., not responding to) the episode. One factor that may moderate victim responses to peer victimization, however, is victim gender. For instance, Kochenderfer and Ladd (1996) and Salmivalli, Karhunen, and Lagerspertz (1996) found that victimized boys were more likely to respond by bullying the perpetrator in return, and less likely to respond passively. In contrast, victimized girls were more likely to

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respond by doing nothing or running away, and less likely to fight back. More recently, research by Craig and colleagues (2007) supported the existence of a gender difference with victims' responses to peer victimization. According to their results, whereas most victims reported trying to ignore the victimization, girls were significantly more likely to seek help or report the victimization and boys were more likely to fight back or use humor in response to the victimization.

Victim response has been shown to differ based on the type of victimization received and its perceived effect. For example, when comparing victims' responses to overt relational aggression, Phelps (2001) found that victims were more likely to respond to overt aggression with externalizing strategies (e.g., hitting or throwing something at the perpetrator). Likewise, victims were more likely to respond to relational aggression with internalizing (e.g., crying or ruminating) or distancing (e.g., trying to ignore it) strategies. In another study by Remillard and Lamb (2005), victim responses were influenced by the victims' perceptions of friendship with the perpetrator and the degree to which the victimized felt hurt. For instance, when victim to relational aggression felt more hurt by the victimization were more likely to keep to themselves, blame themselves, distract themselves, and use wishful thinking. Furthermore, victims were more likely to talk with others about their relational aggressive experience when they still considered the perpetrator as one of their friends.

The above literature highlights that victims often differ in the way they respond to victimizing episodes. However, this research also highlights the specific differences in victim responses due to victim gender, the type of aggression experienced, and the victim's perceptions of the victim-perpetrator relationship. To further expand the social-

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ecological perspective on bullying, it is not only important to understand how victims will respond to victimizing episodes, but it is also important to understand the influence that victim response has on the observing bystanders.

Victim Response Influences on Bystanders

Specific victim responses have been associated with eliciting more positive versus more negative reactions from perpetrators and bystanders. For instance, Ross and Horner (2009) examined victim response and bully behavior before and after the implementation of a school bully prevention program. Their results indicated that the frequency of bullying episodes decreased as certain victim responses increased. Specifically, the frequency of playground bullying episodes decreased as victims more frequently engaged in responses that were considered socially appropriate (e.g., using a stop signal, ignoring the bully, walking away) and less frequently engaged in responses considered socially inappropriate (e.g., laughing, complaining, whining). Results of this study also indicated that as victims more frequently engaged in socially appropriate responses, bystanders were also more likely to engage in helping behaviors (e.g., using a stop signal, helping the victim walk away).

In a similar study, Davies and colleagues (2009) examined the influence of victim responses on adult bystanders' behavior and perceptions of a hypothetical rape scenario. Participant bystanders viewed hypothetical men and women, and measured their perceptions of victim blame. Results indicated that women blamed the victim less than men. Further, adult male victims were more likely to be blamed for the victimization if the victim did not resist compared to adult female victims who did not resist the victimization. Results of this study support findings in previous studies examining victim

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blame (e.g., Kassing & Prieto, 2003), such that victims who do not try to defend themselves against a perpetrator are more likely to elicit negative perceptions from bystanders.

Georgesen, Harris, Milich, and Young (1999) examined children's perceptions of victim responses after viewing videos of hypothetical hurtful teasing episodes. Four different victim responses were used: humor (e.g., commenting on the teaser's behavior), hostility (e.g., calling the teaser names), ignoring (e.g., turning away from the teaser), and empathy (e.g., telling the teaser that he or she would not tease them if he or she knew how it felt). After viewing the hurtful teasing episode, participants rated their perceptions of friendliness and popularity of the teased victim, and identified the victim response they thought was the most effective way to respond to the victimization. Consistent with similar studies (e.g., Scambler et al., 1998), results indicated that humor was perceived as the most effective victim response and hostility was considered the least effective victim response. Victims who responded with humor were perceived as being more popular than victims who responded alternatively, and victims who responded with hostility were perceived as the least friendly compared to victims who engaged in other responses.

In a similar study by Landau and colleagues (2001), children's and pre-service teachers' reactions to a videotaped teasing episode were assessed. Victim responses were manipulated such that victims responded to the victimization with hostility, by ignoring, or with humor. After viewing a video, children's and pre-service teacher's rated their perceptions of victim friendliness, popularity, the effectiveness of the victim's response in stopping the teasing episode in the moment, as well as its effectiveness in preventing future teasing episodes. Participants rated how much fun or hurtful the teasing would be,

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how angry the victim was, and how they would have felt if they were the victims of the teasing. Last, the pre-service teachers were asked to indicate how they thought their students would react to the teased victim.

Results indicated that pre-service teachers predicted that their students would rate the victim more positively, and would rate the victim response as more effective, than the children actually did, regardless of the teasing episode they observed. Further, pre-service teachers underestimated how angry or upset the child participants rated each teasing episode, as well as underestimated how hurtful the children thought the teasing would be. Regarding perceptions of victim response, results indicated that victims who responded with humor or by ignoring the teasing were rated as friendlier and more popular than victims who responded with hostility. Also, victims who responded with hostility were rated as more angry than victims who responded otherwise.

Finally, in a more recent study, Martinez-Dick and Landau (2012) examined the influence of victim response on participants' perceptions of cyberbullying scenarios. Child participants viewed scripted cyberbullying episodes in a chat room in which the victim either responded actively (i.e., the victim retaliated against the aggressor) or passively (i.e., the victim did not respond to the aggressor). Results indicated that victims who responded actively (i.e., with hostility) were less liked by the participants and were more likely to be blamed by participants for their victimization. Furthermore, results indicated that when victims responded passively (i.e., did not respond to the aggressor), bystanders' individual difference variables impacted the participants' views of the victimizing episode. Specifically, when observing victims who responded passively, participants with greater empathy, greater perceived responsibility to intervene, and a

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lower tolerance for aggression were less likely to blame the victim and more likely to like the victim. Moreover, ratings of social preference and victim blame explained the greatest variance in predicting participants' decisions to contact outside authorities (e.g., adults) to help stop the cyberbullying (Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012).

Conclusion

The above research indicates clear differences regarding the ways victims respond to victimization, as well as the influences that victim responses have on the perceptions of others. The purpose of this study was to further understand the impact that victim response has on a teasing episode. The design of this study replicated the design of the studies described above (i.e., Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al., 2001; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012; Scambler et al., 1998); however, these studies were limited in that they only collected self-report data from the participant. By means of further understanding the impact that victim response has on bystanders of a hurtful teasing episode, this study also included a behavioral measure to assess the participants' observable reactions to the hurtful teasing. In the context of this study, middle school-aged boys observed hurtful teasing scenarios. Therefore, this study examined the influence that victim response has on boys' perceptions of hurtful teasing episodes, as well as their behaviors towards the victim as moderated by their individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning.

The Bystander Effect

Much research has been conducted in the field of social psychology regarding the influence that adult bystanders have on the likelihood that others will support a victim, a phenomenon known as the bystander effect (Darley & Latané, 1968; Latané & Darley, 1968; Levine & Crowther, 2008). In the late 1960s, research on bystander behavior was

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first conducted after the now famous murder of Kitty Genovese in Queens, NY. In attempts to explain this event, social psychologists sought to understand why the 37 people who heard and witnessed this brutal murder failed to intervene or even make a phone call to the police in time to save the victim's life. Research by Darley and Latané (1968) later identified this phenomenon as the *bystander effect*, which explains a reduction in likelihood that an individual will intervene in an emergency situation due to the presence of (or perceived presence of) others.

In the first experimental study of the bystander effect, Latané and Darley (1968) placed male undergraduate students in a room that began to fill with thick smoke. Participants were either placed in the room alone, in the presence of a passive confederate (i.e., a confederate who purposefully did not react to the smoke filling the room), or with two other participants. Results indicated that participants were most likely to report the smoke when alone (i.e., 75% report rate), compared to the 38% report rate when placed with other participants, or 10% with a passive confederate. These researchers concluded that when faced with an ambiguous, but potential emergency situation, people consider bystander behavior as a way to inform their personal reactions to or perceptions of the situation. Specifically, when exposed to others who reacted passively to the smoke, participants were significantly more likely to assume that the situation was not an emergency (i.e., that the smoke was not a serious threat) and that action (i.e., leaving the room and calling for help) was not warranted.

In the context of bullying, research indicates that the majority of bullying episodes occurs in the presence of a group (i.e., two or more peers; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig & Pepler, 1997; O'Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Atlas and Pepler (1998) and

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Craig and Pepler (1995) determined that nearly 85% of bullying occurs in the presence of bystanders, and that peer-driven intervention to stop the bullying occurs in only 10% of bullying episodes, despite the fact that the majority of children individually endorsed defending the victim (Gini, Pozzoli, Borghi, & Franzoni, 2008; Mensini et al., 1997; Rigby & Slee, 1993). The examples above clearly support the existence of the bystander effect, such that the behavior of bystanders significantly influences the behavior of other bystanders when exposed to emergency situations. This further emphasizes the need to examine the factors that influence the social-ecology of hurtful teasing and its effects on bystanders' perceptions and behaviors.

Conclusion

The presence of passive bystanders has shown significant influence on other bystanders' reactions to crisis situations. Verbal bullying, in the form of hurtful teasing, is most likely to occur in the presence of bystanders, and observers are more likely to be informed by their individual differences to guide their interpretations and reactions to hurtful teasing when in the presence of passive bystanders. Therefore, participants in this study served as observers to hurtful teasing episodes involving a peer perpetrator, victim, and passive bystander (i.e., a bystander who did nothing in reaction to the hurtful teasing episode).

Individual Differences in Socio-Cognitive Functioning

As described above, recent innovative laboratory research demonstrates that participants' individual differences are the most robust predictors of behavioral and perceptual reactions to physical bullying (Howard et al., 2014) and cyberbullying (Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012) episodes. Thus, another important factor for

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consideration includes individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning and how these factors may influence participants' perceptions, interpretations, and reactions to situations involving hurtful teasing. This research examined how participants' individual differences (i.e., empathy, normative beliefs about aggression, perceived bystander responsibility, belief in a just world, and personal history with hurtful teasing) moderate the influence of victim response on perceptions of and reactions to a hurtful teasing episode witnessed by the participant.

Empathy

Empathy is the feeling and reaction one has in response to another's experience and the ability to understand and experience another's emotions (Cohen & Strayer, 1996; Davis, 1983; Eisenberg, 2003). The construct of empathy is comprised of two components: affective and cognitive (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Affective empathy, which is often described as empathic concern, involves the ability to accurately identify and understand another's emotions, as well as the ability to respond to another's distress with sympathy and compassion (Cliffordson, 2001; Feshback, 1997). Cognitive empathy, which is often described as perspective taking, involves the ability to understand another's thoughts, motives, and intentions, as well as the ability to adopt another's point of view (Cliffordson, 2001, Feshback, 1997; Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Historically, although empathic concern and perspective taking have been described as two separate constructs, they are more often considered to be closely overlapping and highly related (Bell & Wolfe, 2004; Blair, 2005; Eisenberg, Zhou, & Koller, 2001; Hinnant & O'Brien, 2007).

Although research indicates the strong association between empathy and

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perspective taking, their relative strength in predicting prosocial behavior tends to differ. For example, Davis (1983) assessed the difference between perspective taking and empathy in the prediction of helping behavior. Results indicated that adult participants with a higher level of empathic concern were more likely to provide help to a distressed victim. In contrast, participants' scores of perspective taking did not significantly influence reports of adult helping behavior. This relationship between empathy (i.e., affective empathy), perspective taking (i.e., cognitive empathy), and adult helping behavior is also consistent with other research studies (e.g., Caravita, Blasio, Salmivalli, 2008; Correia & Dalbert, 2008; Litvack-Miller, McDougall, & Romney, 1997).

The predictive utility of affective empathy (i.e., the ability to identify and understand another's emotion) and cognitive empathy (i.e., the ability to understand another's thought, motive, and perspective) on bystander helping behavior has shown to be consistent among child participants, as well. For instance, Shechtman (2002) examined the predictive power of affective and cognitive empathy on aggressive behaviors among 7- to 14-year-old boys. Consistent with trends from the adult literature, results indicated that boys with a lower level of affective empathy were more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors, whereas their scores of cognitive empathy did not significantly predict their level of aggression.

Whereas the results of multiple studies identify the differential influences of empathy and perspective taking on decisions to engage in prosocial and aggressive behavior, the majority of research examining influences of affective empathy and cognitive empathy indicates that these two constructs have similar impact on victimization and helping behaviors. For instance, lower levels of affective and cognitive

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empathy are strongly associated with more frequent engagement in physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying behaviors (Bryant, 1982; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006; Maeda, 2004; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008; Schultze-Krumbholz & Scheithauer, 2009; Short & Simeonsson, 1986; Strayer & Roberts, 2004; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003). Likewise, a higher level of empathy is related to less frequent engagement of aggressive and socially inappropriate behaviors (Warden & Mackinnon, 2003).

With regards to the influence of empathy on a bystander's behavior, Gini, Albierno, Benelli, and Altoe (2007) assessed how children's self-reported empathy and social self-efficacy influenced their bystander roles. Bystander roles were determined by classroom peer nominations. Results indicated that children who self-reported as having higher empathy and social self-efficacy were more likely to be identified by their classmates as being a bystander who would actively defend a victim of bullying. Likewise, children with lower self-reported empathy and social self-efficacy were more likely to be identified by classmates as a passive bystander (i.e., one who passively remains outside of the victimizing situation; Gini et al., 2007). These results were replicated in a similar study, indicating that children with less empathy were not only more likely to be passive during bully episodes, but were also more likely to accept the bully's actions (Boswell, 2009). Boswell's (2009) research results further indicate that children with less empathy and greater normative beliefs about aggression are more likely to blame the victim for being victimized, which is a perspective significantly associated with lower levels of helping behaviors (Braman & Lambert, 2001; Reichle, Schneider, & Montada, 1998).

Regarding the relationship between empathy and resource allocation, research

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indicates that people with greater empathic concern (i.e., affective empathy) report that helping others is more rewarding to them than those with less empathic concern (Batson et al., 1991; Dovidio et al., 2006; Fultz et al., 1986). Moreover, those with higher affective empathy will provide more help than those with lower empathy when they do not witness the benefits of their support, and even when others are not in positions to evaluate them (Batson & Ahmad, 2001; Batson, Batson, Slingsby, Harrell, Peekna, & Todd, 1991; Fultz, Batson, Fortenbach, McCarthy, & Varney, 1986).

In summary, level of empathy has shown to have significant influence on bystanders' decisions to engage in prosocial versus aggressive behaviors, particularly regarding one's likelihood to engage in helping behaviors during bullying scenarios. For these reasons, the current study assessed how participants' level of empathy moderates the influence that victim response has on perceptions of, and helping behaviors towards, a victim of hurtful teasing.

Perceived Bystander Responsibility

Perceived responsibility (or bystander responsibility) refers to a person's willingness and belief that he or she should help another who is in need (Frey, Hirschstein, Snell, Van Schoiack Edstrom, MacKenzie, & Broderick, 2005). Although few studies have been conducted linking perceived responsibility and bullying, this construct has been assessed in the adult social psychology literature related to the theory known as the social responsibility norm. Introduced by Berkowitz and Daniels (1963), this theory explains the responsibility people feel to help those in need, such that people perceive that the welfare of others may depend on their help (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963; Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964; De Cremer & van Lange, 2001). The social responsibility

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norm further posits that people's desire to help others in need occurs without contingency of receiving a tangible or social reward (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963).

Few studies have examined the construct of perceived responsibility with children's bystander helping behavior and peer victimization. Rigby and Johnson (2006) examined the influence of children's attitudes, expectations, perceptions of peer norms, and perceived responsibility on bystander behavior. Results indicated that children's perceived bystander responsibility was significantly influenced by the expectations and norms of their friends and parents. Specifically, children reported being more responsible and more likely to help a victim if they held the belief that their friends and parents would want them to intervene. These results are also supported in a more recent study by Pozzoli and Gini (2010), which confirmed that children with greater perceived responsibility were more likely to report that they would help a victim, but only when these children thought it was expected of them by their peers.

In addition to influencing bystanders' willingness to provide help to victims, perceived responsibility is also associated with other related factors. For example, increased levels of children's perceived responsibility is associated with a reduced likelihood of engaging in aggressive behaviors (Frey et al., 2005; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008), a greater likelihood empathizing with and having a positive attitude toward the victim (Howard et al., 2014; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008), a lower likelihood of blaming the victim (Howard et al., 2014), decreased normative beliefs about aggression (Howard et al., 2014), a weaker belief in a just world (Howard et al., 2014), and lower level of moral disengagement (Howard et al., 2014). Moreover, each of these factors has been shown to significantly influence bystanders' perceptions of, behaviors

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toward, and willingness to intervene in a victimizing episode (Braman & Lambert, 2001; Frey et al., 2005; Howard et al., 2014; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008; Reichle et al., 1998).

In conclusion, it is clear that children's perceived bystander responsibility appears to influence their attitudes toward peer victimization and decisions to provide help to those victimized. These findings have never been applied to children's hurtful teasing. As such, the current study assessed how participants' perceived responsibility moderates the influence of victim response on perceptions of and responses to hurtful teasing episodes.

Normative Beliefs About Aggression

Normative beliefs about aggression refers to the level of acceptability of aggressive solutions to social challenges (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). They guide one's actions by informing which behaviors are considered acceptable, and which should be avoided. Children and adolescents who believe aggression is normative are significantly more likely to engage in physical, verbal, relational, and cyber aggression (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lim & Ang, 2009; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Williams & Guerra, 2007). Normative beliefs about aggression develop over time and are influenced by one's social environment. For instance, research by Bennet and Fraser (2000) indicated that children exposed to violence or raised in violent communities are more likely to accept aggression compared to those who are exposed to less community violence. Greater exposure to violence also relates to having stronger retaliatory beliefs about aggressive acts, such that it is more acceptable to engage in aggression once provoked (e.g., more acceptable to fight back; McMahon, Felix, Haplert, & Petropoulos, 2009).

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Regarding the development of aggression tolerance, one's normative beliefs about aggression have been shown to become more stable as people mature (Henry, Guerra, Huesmann, Tolan, VanAcker, & Eron, 2000). Henry and colleagues (2000) explain that in early childhood, attitudes and schema are only beginning to form, and as children mature, their attitudes and beliefs solidify. Moreover, research results by Werner and Nixon (2005) indicate that people's normative beliefs about aggression can be specific to a particular type of aggression (i.e., physical vs. verbal vs. relational). For instance, if one has strong normative beliefs about verbal aggression, he or she will more likely engage in verbally aggressive behavior compared to other forms of aggression. Normative beliefs about specific types of aggression have also been shown to differ by gender. For instance, boys report that it is more appropriate to engage in physical aggression when angry, whereas girls report that responding with relational aggression is more appropriate (Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996).

The above research confirms the influence that normative beliefs about aggression have on individuals and social networks in predicting aggressive attitudes and responses. For these reasons, the current study assessed how participants' normative beliefs about aggression moderate the impact that victim response has on perceptions of hurtful teasing episodes.

Belief in a Just World

First proposed by Lerner (1980), the belief in a just world theory suggests that people view the world as a fair and just place, and therefore individuals are responsible for any unfortunate condition or suffering to which they are exposed. According to Lerner (1980), those who believe in a just world attribute negative life events to the

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individual's own behavior or attitude, rather than potential external causes. For instance, one's strong belief in a just world has shown to be related to more negative views of people with disabilities, as well as more likely to oppose providing financial aid to disadvantaged groups (Applebaum, 2002; Furnham, 1995).

This theory can be used to explain perceptions of victim blame: Since people generally receive the things they deserve, good things will happen to good people and bad things will happen to bad people (Lerner, 1980). Ultimately, this perspective can be used to guide bystanders' perceptions as to how much victims deserve their suffering and whether they should be provided with assistance (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Overall, research indicates that many people hold victims responsible for their suffering by indicating that they deserve the harassment, that they are to blame, and/or that it is their own fault for having the negative experience (Hafer & Bégue, 2005; Johnson, Mullick, & Mulford, 2002). As such, blaming the victim is greater among bystanders who have a strong belief in a just world (Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2001).

One's belief in a just world may be partially maintained by the process of immanent justice, which explains that a mistake made by a person brings on that person's future suffering (Callan, Ellard, & Nicol, 2006). For example, in a study by Jose (1990), participants read various stories about different prosocial and antisocial behaviors and their positive and negative consequences. In one story, two boys stole apples from an orchard. One boy gets caught, and the other runs away and falls into a river while running over a rotted bridge due to the added weight of the apples. In another version of the story, the one boy still gets caught, and the other still falls into the water; however, the fall is not due to the added weight of the stolen apples. Results of this study indicated that,

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regardless of whether the second boy fell into the water due to the added weight of the apples, children attributed the falling experience to their past stealing behavior. Further, the consequences to the boys in the story were rated as more fair when they matched the valence of the boys' past prosocial and anti-social behaviors. That is, children rated it as more fair for boys to fall in the river after stealing the apples compared to boys who did not steal the apples (Jose, 1990).

As discussed above, Howard and colleagues (2014) examined the influence of bystander behavior in a physical bullying episode by manipulating bystander behavior with video recorded child actors. Male child participants viewed the bullying videos and were then asked to play an online computer game with the alleged victim of physical bullying. Results indicated that the participants' tendency to ostracize the victim in the game was moderated by participants' just world belief. Specifically, boys who more strongly believed that the world is just were more likely to ostracize the victim.

Similarly, research by Wesselmann, Wirth, Pryor, Reeder, and Williams (2012) indicates that perceptions of the justifiability of the victimizing act influences bystander behavior towards the victim. Specifically, participants were more likely to compensate (i.e., increase their interactions with) a victimized target when the reason for the victimization was inexplicable. However, when the reason for the victimization was justifiable (i.e., the victim became a burden on the group), bystanders actively ostracized the victim themselves (Wesselmann et al., 2012).

In summary, one's belief in a just world has significant influence on an individual's perceptions of victims, as well as decisions to engage in helping behaviors. As such, the current study assessed how participants' belief in a just world moderates the

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impact that victim response has on reactions to hurtful teasing episodes.

Personal History with Victimization

A personal history with victimization refers to one's direct and vicarious exposure to peer victimization. In a study by Rigby and Johnson (2006), results indicated that a significant predictor of bystanders' intentions to provide support in a bullying scenario included the bystanders' history as a bully or as a bystander. Specifically, bystanders were more likely to report intentions to intervene if they themselves had rarely or never bullied others and whether they had previously intervened in the past (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Likewise, as bystander roles have shown to be relatively stable over time, one's previous bystander behavior could be a reasonable predictor for one's future bystander behavior (Salmivalli et al., 1996). Therefore, one's history with victimization seems to play an influential role in how he or she will respond to victimizing scenarios. Even so, one's personal history has not been the focus of hurtful teasing research.

Children's history with teasing has also shown to impact how they perceive a teasing scenario (Perry, Williard, & Perry, 1990; Scambler et al., 1998). For example, Scambler and colleagues (1998) showed child participants videotaped interactions of three child actors in which one child was being teased by another, and the third actor remained passive (i.e., did nothing). The victim responded in one of three ways: with hostility, with humor, and by ignoring the hurtful teasing. Results indicated that the participants' history of being a teaser influenced their interpretations of the observed teasing episode. Specifically, participants who had a history of teasing others derogated the victim who ignored the teasing, compared to participants who did not have a history of teasing others.

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Thus, one's history with victimization may further influence one's perceptions of and behavioral response towards peer victimization and hurtful teasing episodes, and these may further influence the perceptions and decisions of other bystanders. For these reasons, the current study assessed how participants' personal history with hurtful teasing moderated the influence of victim response on perceptions of, and behaviors towards, a victim of hurtful teasing.

Conclusion

As described above, individual differences such as empathy, normative beliefs about aggression, perceived bystander responsibility, belief in a just world, and personal history with victimization can significantly influence children's attitudes and prosocial behaviors towards peers, as well as significantly influence bystanders' decisions to allocate resources to victimized peers. Given the influence of these factors on a bystander's perception of and response to peer victimizing scenarios, this study examined how each of these individual differences moderates the impact of victim response on perceptions of, and behaviors towards, a hurtful teasing episode.

Assessing the Influence of Victim Response and Individual Differences

Perceptions of Social Preference

Perceptions of social preference have shown significant influence on bystanders' attitudes and behaviors towards the victim. As such, this study assessed the participants' social preference for the victim. For the purpose of this study, social preference was defined as perceptions of likability and perceived similarity with the victim. This section presents the influence that bystanders' perceptions of victim likability and similarity have on the amount of help they are willing to provide (i.e., the amount of resources the

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participant is willing to allocate to the victim; Anderson & Williams, 1996; Byrne, 1971; Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006; Kelley & Byrn, 1976; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Victim likability. Interpersonal attraction, or having positive feelings about a person in need, has also shown to influence helping behavior. When the person in need is rated as being more socially attractive, whether it is based on physical appearance, likability, previous friendly behavior, or positive personal qualities, bystanders report being more likely to provide help (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Harrell, 1978; Keley & Byrne, 1976; Kleinke, 1977). For instance, in a study by Chiang (2008), results indicated that participants provided greater allocation of resources to group members with whom they preferred to interact, as well as to group members they believed would provide them with greater benefits.

Georgesen and colleagues (1999) examined children's perceptions of victim responses after viewing videos of hypothetical hurtful teasing episodes. Four different victim responses were used: humor (e.g., commenting on the teaser's behavior), hostility (e.g., calling the teaser names), ignoring (e.g., turning away from the teaser), and empathy (e.g., telling the teaser that he or she would not tease them if he or she knew how it felt). After viewing the hurtful teasing episode, participants rated their perceptions of friendliness and popularity of the teased victim, and identified the victim response they thought was the most effective way to respond to the victimization. As consistent with similar studies (e.g., Scambler et al., 1998), results indicated that victims who responded with humor were perceived as being more likable and popular than victims who responded alternatively, and victims who responded with hostility were perceived as the

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least likable and friendly compared to victims who engaged in other responses.

In the context of this study, participants' perceptions of victim likability were assessed. It was anticipated that participants would be more likely to provide more assistance to (i.e., allocate more resources to) a teased victim whom is perceived as more likable (i.e., having a higher rating of social preference or interaction desire) compared to victims who are not perceived as likable (i.e., having a lower rating of social preference or interaction desire).

Similarity. Consistent with the common phrase that "birds of a feather flock together," previous research indicates that bystanders are more likely to provide help to others who are similar to themselves, compared to others whom they consider dissimilar (De Cremer, 2002; De Cremer & Stouten, 2003; Dovidio, 1984; Dovidio et al., 2006; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Kramer & Brewer, 1984; van Vugt & Hart, 2004). Perceived similarity has shown to increase perceptions of personal connection (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuberg (1997), as well as increase perceptions of interpersonal attraction (Byrne, 1971), both of which are associated with increases in helping behaviors. As explained by Dovidio and colleagues (2006), helping others who share similar values, interests, and beliefs is reported to be more pleasing than helping others who are dissimilar. As such, there may also be additional costs (e.g., greater feelings of shame or guilt) associated with not helping someone who seems to have greater similarity to the potential helper (Dovidio et al., 2006).

In this study, participants' perceptions of victim similarity were also assessed, and likewise, it was anticipated that participants who reported being more similar to the victim would provide more assistance (i.e., allocate more resources) to a teased victim

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than one who was perceived as less similar.

Perceptions of Victim Blame

In addition to social preference, perceived victim blame has shown to have a significant effect on bystanders' attitudes and behaviors towards a victim. If a victim is considered deserving of his or her suffering, bystanders may be less likely to provide assistance to the victim (Lerner, 1980; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Overall, research indicates that many people hold victims responsible for their suffering by indicating that they deserve the harassment, that they are to blame, and/or it is their own fault for having the negative experience (Hafer & Begue, 2005; Johnson et al., 2002).

Research by Wesselmann and colleagues (2012) further exemplifies how perceived justifiability of a victimizing act influences bystander behavior towards the victim. Specifically, participants were more likely to compensate (i.e., increase their interactions with) a victimized target when the reason for the victimization was inexplicable. However, when the reason for the victimization was justifiable (i.e., the victim became a burden on the group), bystanders actively ostracized the victim themselves (Wesselmann et al., 2012).

In this study, participants' perceptions of victim blame were assessed. It was anticipated that participants who attributed less victim blame would provide more help (i.e., allocate more resources) compared to the victim perceived as being more to blame (i.e., that the victimization is more justified).

Perceptions of How Hurt the Victim Feels

Perceptions of how hurt a victim feels may also influence a bystander's helping behavior. Shapiro and colleagues (1991) assessed children's self-reported emotions after

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being teased. Results indicated that nearly all (97%) children reported experiencing negative feelings (e.g., anger and embarrassment). Further, as described above, Landau and colleagues (2001) assessed children's reactions to teasing videos after manipulating the victim's response to the hurtful teasing (i.e., responding with hostility, humor, or by ignoring the teaser). In addition to perceived response effectiveness, researchers also assessed the children participant's perceptions of how upset they thought the victim felt. Results indicated that participant bystanders rated the victim as more angry when responding with hostility compared to victims who responded with humor or by ignoring the teasing (Landau et al., 2001).

The degree to which a victim is perceived as hurt may influence a bystander's level of empathic concern. That is, victims perceived as being more hurt may more likely trigger empathic responses in bystanders. Results from numerous research studies have indicated that a higher level of empathic concern was more likely to lead to help of a distressed victim (Caravita et al., 2008; Correia & Dalbert, 2008; Davis, 1983; Gini et al., 2007; Howard et al., 2014; Litvack-Miller et al., 1997).

Therefore, this study assessed participants' perceptions of how much a teasing episode hurt the victim. It was anticipated that victims who responded with hostility would be rated as feeling more hurt than victims who responded otherwise.

Resource Allocation and Helping Behaviors

Whereas differences in victim response may provide insight as to how participant bystanders perceive and interpret a hurtful teasing episode, understanding how and why people engage in prosocial behavior may provide insight regarding how one will behave when witnessing such victimization. Prosocial behaviors are generally defined as actions

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that help or benefit others (Hinde & Groebel, 1991). For the purpose of this study, resource allocation was used to assess helping behavior; that is, ways in which participants altered the distribution of resources to compensate a person in need. Understanding the factors that influence why and how people engage in helping behaviors may help to inform the social ecology of hurtful teasing episodes. This is the first known study to examine children's efforts to compensate a victim of hurtful teasing. Whereas this study does not aim to test theories of resource allocation and helping behavior, the three general models discussed below can be used to explain when, why, and how people engage in prosocial behaviors.

The Negative State Relief Model (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Baumann, 1982) explains the influence that negative emotions have on helping behavior. Observing someone victimized (e.g., hurtfully teased) produces a negative emotional state in the bystander, and therefore motivates the bystander to engage in behavior that will provide relief (e.g., via helping the victim). This process posits that a bystander's primary motive for engaging in helping behavior is egoistic, such that the main reason to help the victim is routed in self-interest, rather than for the strict benefit of the victim (Dovidio et al., 2006).

The Arousal: Cost-Reward Model (the Cost-Reward Model; Piliavin, Dovidio, Gaertner, & Clark, 1981) posits that feelings of increased arousal motivate a bystander to take action and the direction of this action is shaped by a cost-reward framework. Once aroused, a bystander will rationally analyze the perceived costs and rewards associated with each potential response, and then perform the behavior that will maximize personal reward (Piliavin et al., 1981).

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Whereas the Negative State Relief Model (Cialdini et al., 1982) and the Cost-Reward Model (Piliavin et al., 1981) provide a theoretical foundation for when and why bystanders may help (i.e., allocate resources to a victim), the Equity Principle provides insight as to how that bystander may actually respond. The Equity Principle (Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961) refers to the fairness for ways resources, rewards, or consequences are allocated, and when bystanders perceive an imbalance in the reward distribution in a relationship, they become motivated to restore its equity (Dovidio et al., 2006).

In summary, although testing these different models is beyond the scope of this investigation, the Negative State Relief Model (Cialdini et al., 1982), the Arousal: Cost-Reward Model (Piliavin et al., 1981), and the Equity Principle (Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961) provide a framework to explain why and how bystanders help others in need. This study examined the participants' willingness to provide help to victims of hurtful teasing by assessing patterns of participants' allocation of resources (i.e., distribution of cookies) to the victim of hurtful teasing. According to the theories above, people will be motivated to help (i.e., allocate resources) in ways that are fair, just, and maintain equity (Adams, 1963; Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Dovidio et al., 2006; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). When people observe distress in others (e.g., observe a victim being hurtfully teased that does not deserve it), they become motivated to restore equity by means of overcompensating that person (i.e., provide them with more help or resources; Cialdini et al., 1982; Dovidio et al., 2006; Piliavin et al., 1981). It was anticipated that participants would be more likely to help (i.e., provide more resources) to a victim when that victim responded passively to the teasing, and when that victim was perceived as being more socially preferred and less to blame for his suffering.

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Research Questions and Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to: (1) examine how victim responses to hurtful teasing influenced participants' perceptions of and behaviors towards the victims of a hurtful teasing episode; and (2) assess the moderating effects of the participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning.

At the start of the data collection procedure, participants completed a series of self-report questionnaires that assessed participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning including empathy, normative beliefs about aggression, perceived bystander responsibility, belief in a just world, and personal history with victimization. After completion of the individual difference measures, participants viewed one of three randomly assigned teasing videos in which victim response was manipulated via a hostile response, humorous response, or response that ignored the teasing. Following the teasing video, participants' attitudes and perceptions of the teasing episode were assessed through a series of post-video questionnaires (i.e., positive views of the victim, negative views of the victim, and victim's pain), and participants' behavioral reactions to the teasing episode were assessed through completion of a resource allocation activity. This was the first known study to employ a behavioral measure to assess participants' responses to hurtful teasing.

Overall, I hypothesized that participants' reactions to hurtful teasing episodes would be influenced by victim response, and that these effects would vary based on the participants' varying individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning.

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Hypothesis 1: A Victim's Response to Hurtful Teasing Will Influence Participants' Perceptions of the Victim and Willingness to Allocate Resources to the Victim

Hypothesis 1A: Positive views of the victim. Positive views of the victim involved a measure that included items that assess participants' perceptions of social preference, perceptions of likability, desire to interact with, and similarity with victim. Previous research indicates that victims who responded to harassment with hostility were perceived as less likable and less popular by other children, but that minimal differences between humorous and ignore responses were indicated (Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al., 2001; Martinez-Dick & Landau; 2012; Scambler et al., 1998). Moreover, research by Ross and Horner (2009) indicated victims were rated as more likable when victims responded to bullying episodes in more socially appropriate ways (e.g., ignoring the bully, using a stop signal, walking away) compared to victims who provided more socially inappropriate responses (e.g., complaining, whining, aggression, laughing). As such, I hypothesized that participants would endorse the most positive views of the victim for victims who ignored the teasing, followed by victims who responded with humor, and the least positive views to the victim who responded with hostility.

Hypothesis 1B: Negative views of the victim. Negative views of the victim included items that assessed the participants' perceptions of victim blame, the justifiability of the teasing behavior, and perceived need for intervention. Previous research indicates that victims tend to be perceived as more deserving of their suffering simply due to their victim status, and furthermore, victims who are blamed more for their suffering are less likely to be perceived as deserving of help (Callan et al., 2006; Gini et al., 2008; Hafer & Bégue, 2005; Howard et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2002; Lerner, 1980).

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Moreover, research by Waas and Honer (1990) indicated that children are more likely to attribute blame and evaluate negatively peers who are disliked by others. Finally, given that victims are more likely to be rated as more disliked when responding to victimization with hostility (e.g., Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al., 2001; Scambler et al., 1998), I hypothesized that participants would endorse more negative views of the victim who responded with hostility, followed by victims who responded with humor, and the least negative views to victims who responded by ignoring the teasing.

Hypothesis 1C: Perceived victim's pain. Perceived victim's pain involved the participants' perceptions of how much the observed teasing hurt the victim. Child bystanders to hurtful teasing have been shown to rate victims as feeling more angry who responded with hostility compared to victims who respond with humor or by ignoring the teasing, but that no differences were indicated between the humor and ignore response (Landau et al., 2001). Likewise, I hypothesized that participants' in this study would also rate the victims who responded with hostility as feeling more hurt than victims who responded with humor or by ignoring the teasing. No differences between the humor and ignore response were anticipated.

Hypothesis 1D: Resources allocation. Resource allocation refers to the participants' behavioral response to the hurtful teasing and was measured by the number of cookies allocated to the victim after the participant viewed the teasing episode. Research indicates that participants are more likely to provide greater allocation of resources to those whom they socially prefer (Chiang, 2008; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Harrell, 1978; Kelley & Byrne, 1976; Kleinke, 1977; Williamson & Clark, 1992). Likewise, according to theories of resource allocation, people are motivated to help (i.e.,

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allocate resources) in ways that are fair, just, and maintain equity (Adams, 1963; Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Dovidio et al., 2006; Walster et al., 1978). Specifically, when people observe distress in others (e.g., observe a victim being hurtfully teased), they are likely to become motivated to restore equity by means of overcompensating that person (i.e., providing that person with more help/resources; Cialdini et al., 1982; Dovidio et al., 2006; Piliavin et al., 1981). Research further indicates that participants are less likely to provide a victim with help if they find the victimization justified (Wesselmann et al., 2012). Considering that participants were expected to rate victims who provided an ignore response as the most positive and the least negative, I hypothesized that participants would allocate victims who responded with ignoring with the most cookies. Likewise, as participants were expected to rate victims who provided a hostile response as least positive and most negative, I hypothesized that the least number of cookies would be allocated to victims who responded with hostility.

Hypothesis 2: The Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing Episodes Will be Moderated by Participants' Individual Differences Socio-Cognitive Functioning

The influence of six individual differences in participants' socio-cognitive functioning were examined: empathy, perceived bystander responsibility, tolerance of overt aggression, tolerance of relational aggression, belief in a just world, and personal experience to victimization. Overall, it was expected that participants' perceptions of and reactions to hurtful teasing would be influenced by victim response, but that these effects would vary based on the participants' reported individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning.

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The following hypotheses were derived from multiple theories (e.g., Mechanisms of Bystander Behavior [Latané & Darley, 1970], Belief in a Just World Theory [Lerner, 1980], Normative Beliefs About Aggression [Huesmann & Guerra, 1997], Perceived Bystander Responsibility [Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963], Negative State Relief Model [Cialdini et al., 1982], Cost-Reward Model [Piliavin et al., 1981], Equity Principle [Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961]) as well as additional research studies (e.g., Howard et al., 2014; Landau et al., 2001; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012) that demonstrate the influence of individual differences on prosocial attitudes and behaviors. Across this literature, empathy and perceived bystander responsibility are two individual differences variables related to participants' increased prosocial behaviors (e.g., Howard et al., 2014). Likewise, tolerance of overt aggression, tolerance of relational aggression, and belief in a just world, are individual differences generally associated with increased aggression tolerance (e.g., Howard et al., 2014). Specific hypotheses for each variable are presented.

Hypothesis 2A: Moderating effects of empathy. These constructs have shown significant associations with one's decisions to engage in prosocial behaviors (e.g., Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963; Caravita et al., 2008; Correia & Dalbert, 2008; De Cremer & van Lange, 2001; Dovidio et al., 2006; Frey et al., 2005; Gini et al., 2007; Litvack-Miller et al., 1997). Thus, these constructs should intensify the pattern of preferences predicted in Hypothesis 1A. I will now expand on each of these patterns.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, more empathic participants would endorse more

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positive views of the victim, and that this correlations would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, more empathic participants would endorse less negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the strongest for the victim in the hostile response condition, compared with the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, more empathic participants would rate the teasing as more painful to the victim, especially for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, more empathic participants would allocate more cookies to victims, and particularly to victims in the ignore and humor response

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conditions compared with victims in the hostile response condition.

Hypothesis 2B: Moderating effects of perceived bystander responsibility. Given the strong association between the prosocial characteristics of perceived bystander responsibility and empathy across the literature, I expected that perceived bystander responsibility would moderate victim response in the same pattern as empathy.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater perceived responsibility would endorse more positive views of the victim, and that this correlation would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with greater perceived responsibility would endorse less negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the strongest

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for the victim in the hostile response condition, compared with the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with more perceived responsibility would rate the teasing as more painful to the victim, and this effect would be amplified for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater perceived responsibility would allocate more cookies to victims, and that this effect would be amplified for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response conditions.

Hypothesis 2C: Moderating effects of tolerance for overt aggression. Research indicates that children and adolescents who believe aggression is normative are more likely to engage in physical, verbal, relational, and cyber aggression (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lim & Ang, 2009; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Williams & Guerra, 2007).

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of overt aggression would endorsements fewer positive views of the victim, and that this correlation would

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be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of overt aggression would endorse more negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant inverse correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the weakest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants more tolerant of overt aggression would rate the teasing as less painful for victims, and that victim pain would be attenuated most for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of overt aggression

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would allocate less cookies to victims, particularly for victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with victims in the hostile response condition.

Hypothesis 2D: Moderating effects of tolerance for relational aggression. In general, I expected that participants' tolerance for relational aggression would moderate victim response in the same pattern as participants' tolerance for overt aggression.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would endorsements fewer positive views of the victim, and that this correlation would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would endorse more negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant inverse correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the

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weakest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would rate the teasing as less painful for victims, and that victim pain would be attenuated most for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would allocate less cookies to victims, particularly for victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with victims in the hostile response condition.

Hypothesis 2E: Moderating effects of personal history with victimization. Intuitively, I assumed that participants' with more personal experience with victimization would demonstrate greater empathic concern for the victim. As such, hypotheses related to the moderating effects of personal history with victimization were treated consistently with the hypothesized effects of empathy.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater personal victimization experience would endorse more positive views of the victim, and that these correlations would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response

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conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with greater personal victimization experience would endorse fewer negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the strongest for the victim in the hostile response condition, compared with the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with greater personal experience with victimization would rate the teasing as more painful to the victim, and that this effect would be amplified for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater personal victimization experience would allocate more cookies to victims, and this effect would be amplified for

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participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

Exploratory research question: Moderating effects of belief in a just world. Within the research literature, the influence of belief in a just world has been consistent with other variables relating to tolerance of relational aggression. Moreover, a strong belief in a just world is associated with increased negativity towards the victim and a higher level of victim blame, such that these individuals feel the victim is deserving of the negative experience (Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2001; Hafer & Begue, 2005; Johnson, Mullick, & Mulford, 2002; Lerner, 1980; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Whereas there is sufficient research evidence to predict that participants' just world belief will influence a participants' response to teasing, there does not exist substantial evidence to inform specific moderation effects of participants' just world belief on victim response. As such, moderation effects were exploratory due to the lack of previous evidence on this issue. For all exploratory research questions related to participants' belief in a just world, I anticipated that participants' just world beliefs would have significant moderation effects on victim response type but that the specific directions of this moderation were not predicted.

Positive views of the victim. I anticipated that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses (i.e., that participants' endorsements of positive views of the victim would decrease as participants' just world beliefs increased); specific directions of this moderation, however, were not anticipated.

Negative views of the victim. I anticipated that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses (i.e., that participants' endorsements of

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negative views of the victim would increase as participants' just world beliefs increased); specific directions of this moderation, however, were not anticipated.

Perceptions of victim pain. I anticipated that significant inverse correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses (i.e., that as participants' just world beliefs increased, participants' would rate the teasing as less hurtful); specific directions of this moderation, however, were not anticipated.

Resource allocations. I anticipated that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses (i.e., that as participants' just world beliefs increased, participants' would allocate less cookies to victims); specific directions of this moderation, however, were not anticipated.

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CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

Participants included 169 male students, aged 10 to 15 years (M = 12.3, SD = 1.24), who were enrolled in 5th through 8th grade general education classrooms. Participants included 51 students enrolled in 5th grade (30.2% of total participants), 15 (8.9%) students enrolled in 6th grade, 54 (32%) students in 7th grade, and 49 (29%) students enrolled in 8th grade. Participants were recruited from three geographic regions: Thirty seven participants were recruited from a university's department of psychology child participant pool in a medium-sized city in central Illinois; 76 participants were recruited from a school district in the northwest suburb of Chicago, IL; and 56 participants were recruited from a school district in northern Baltimore, MD. Inexplicably, 36 participants (35 of which were students in the Baltimore region) indicated being "female" on the demographic form completed at the beginning of the study. Due to these differences and the potential for confounding data from these participants, data analysis was conducted both with and without the 36 "female" participants. Results indicated minimal differences between results, and results involving the removal of the female participants indicated greater divergence from the literature (i.e., more unexpected results). As such, responses from the 36 "female" participants were included with all data analyses.

Justification to select only male participants is founded in previous research

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highlighting the various gender differences in ways that teasing is enacted and understood (Maccoby, 1998; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Specifically, boys are more likely to engage in the overt, aggressive victimizing behaviors that are associated with physical and verbal bullying, whereas girls are more likely to engage in the indirect forms of victimization that are associated with relational aggression (Borg, 1998; Crick et al., 1997; Mooney et al., 1991; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Rudolph, 2002). Moreover, whereas boys report greater exposure to hurtful teasing, these stressors are more likely interpreted as stressful and hurtful, and more strongly associated with anxiety and depression for girls (Mooney, Creeser, & Blatchford, 1991; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Rudolph, 2002). Due to the nature of these gender differences, the current study focused on boys exclusively.

Instruments

Multiple self-report measures were used to assess the variables associated with the participant participants' perceptions of hurtful teasing episodes, as well as their individual socio-cognitive differences that may moderate such effects. In addition to the self-report data collected, participants engaged in a resource allocation activity to measure their behavioral responses to victims of the hurtful teasing scenarios.

Individual Differences in Socio-Cognitive Functioning

The following self-report measures were utilized to assess the participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning. These included measures of empathy, perceived responsibility, normative beliefs about aggression, belief in a just world, and one's personal experience with victimization.

Empathy. The *Bryant Empathy Scale* (Bryant, 1982) was used to assess participant empathy (see Appendix A). The *Bryant Empathy Scale* (Bryant, 1982) has

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been frequently used to assess empathic concern (e.g., "It makes me sad to see a boy who can't find anyone to play with.") in children and adolescents (Bare, 2006; Bryant, 1982; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003; Woods, Wolke, Nowicki, & Hall, 2009). Scores from the original *Bryant Empathy Scale* (Bryant, 1982) utilized a 22-item self-report measure integrating responses in the format of "yes/no" and a 9-point Likert scale ranging from "very strongly disagree" to "very strongly agree," with higher scores indicating greater empathic concern. Reliability efforts indicated test-retest reliability ranging from .74 to .83 on the total score (Bryant, 1982).

Results from previous research that has modified the response options of the *Bryant Empathy Scale* (Bryant, 1982) have consistently shown acceptable levels of reliability. Specifically, Correia and Dalbert (2008) shortened the response options to a 6-point Likert scale and achieved an alpha coefficient of .78, and studies that have further modified the response options to a 5-point Likert scale have shown a coefficient of .70 (e.g., Warden & Mackinnon, 2003; Woods et al., 2009). This scale has shown acceptable convergent validity with other empathy measures, and level of empathy has shown inverse correlations with self-reported rates of aggressive behavior (e.g., Feshbach & Roe, 1968; Mehrabian & Epstein, 1972). In the current study, response options were formatted to maintain consistency across each measure. Specifically, response options involved a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with higher scores indicating greater empathy (e.g., Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012). Reliability data for the current study indicated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .76$).

Perceived responsibility. Perceived responsibility was assessed by using five items from the *Student Experience Survey: What School is Like for Me* (Frey et al., 2004;

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see Appendix B). Responses (e.g., "If my friends were passing mean notes about another kid, I would tell them to stop.") were measured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "not true" to "very true," with higher scores indicating greater perceived responsibility. Research indicates high internal consistency with this measure that ranges from .86 to .89 (Edstrom, Bruschi, & MacKenzie, 2004; Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008). Previous validity efforts indicated that level of perceived responsibility is negatively correlated with self-reported rates of children's acceptance of aggression, and engagement in bullying and cyberbullying (Frey et al., 2005; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008). Reliability for the current study indicated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .80$).

Normative beliefs about aggression. Participants' normative beliefs about aggression were assessed using the *Revised Normative Beliefs about Aggression Scale* (NOBAGS; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; see Appendix D). The NOBAGS (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997) is a 13-item self-report scale that assesses participants' attitudes and tolerance for aggression on a Relational Aggression subscale (e.g., "If you're angry, it is OK to say mean things about other kids to your friends") and an Overt Aggression subscale (e.g., "It is usually OK to push or shove other people around if you're mad"). Response options involved a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "it's really wrong" to "perfectly OK," with higher scores indicating the participant is more likely to endorse and accept aggressive solutions to social problems. Previous validity efforts indicated that NOBAGS scores are strongly correlated with self-reports and peer nominations of aggressive behavior (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). Moreover, research among middle-school children indicated acceptable internal consistencies for this measure (i.e., alpha

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coefficients of .80 on the Overt Aggression subscale and .83 on the Relational Aggression subscale; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008). Reliability statistics for the current study indicated an alpha coefficient of .78 for all NOBAGS items, an alpha coefficient of .76 for the Overt Aggression Subscale, and an alpha coefficient of .77 for the Relational Aggression Subscale.

Belief in a just world. Participants' perceptions of a just world view were assessed using a modified form of the *Belief in a Just World Scale* (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), which was previously modified for use in research by Howard and Landau (2005) and Howard and colleagues (2014; see Appendix D). Response options involved a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with higher scores indicating a stronger belief in a just world (i.e., the victim is deserving of his suffering). Previous validity scores reported by Howard and Landau (2005) and Howard and colleagues (2014) indicated inverse association with one's just world belief and scores of victims' social preference. Previous reliability efforts indicated adequate internal consistencies ranging from .64 to .68 (Ambrosio & Sheehan, 1990; Lea & Fekken, 1993). For the current study, reliability was demonstrated by an alpha coefficient of .65.

History of victimization. Participants' personal history of victimization was assessed with the *Personal Experiences with Bullying Survey* (Howard & Landau, 2005) and the *Relational Aggression Scale* (McFarland, 2008). The *Personal Experiences with Bullying Survey* (Howard & Landau, 2005) is a 6-item questionnaire designed to assess how often participants have been directly and indirectly exposed to acts of bullying (see Appendix E). Language of this scale was formatted to assess participants' exposure to

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hurtful teasing, rather than their exposure to bullying, as originally assessed with this measure. Among the six items, only one question directly assessed participants' personal history of victimization (i.e., how frequently the participant has been the target of teasing or bullying). The item response is arranged by a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "very much less than other students" to "very much more than other students," with higher scores indicating a greater victimization history.

The *Relational Aggression Scale* (McFarland, 2008) was used to assess participants' self-reported engagement in relational aggression and hurtful teasing (see Appendix F). This is a 5-item scale, and response options are constructed on two contrasting statements (e.g., "Some teens say mean things about other kids they don't like" and "Other teens don't say mean things about other kids they don't like"). Participants were instructed to choose between the two statements and then rate whether the statement is either "sort of true" or "really true" for that participant. No specific validity data are available; reliability efforts, however, indicate adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .69$; McFarland, 2008). Due to unexpected complications in participants' responses to this measure (represented equally across all geographic regions), responses from 61 participants (36% of total participants) were eliminated due to incorrect completion of the scale; therefore, scores from the *Relational Aggression Scale* (McFarland, 2008) were not considered in subsequent data analysis. As such, participants' personal experience with victimization (i.e., how often the participant has been the victim of teasing) from the *Personal Experiences with Bullying Survey* (Howard & Landau, 2005) was the only item used to assess participants' history with victimization.

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Stimulus Materials

Participants were randomly assigned to view one of three videotaped conditions depicting a hurtful teasing episode between middle-school-aged male actors, in which the teased victim's response was experimentally manipulated. Specifically, one video showed the victim respond to the teasing with hostility, one showed the victim respond with humor, and one showed the victim not responding to the teasing (i.e., ignored the teasing). The videos shown to participants were the same used in previous research involving children's reactions to hurtful teasing that have shown successful manipulation checks (e.g., Landau et al., 2001; Scambler et al., 1998). Use of only boy actors in the stimulus videos is justified due to boys being more likely than girls to engage in hurtful teasing behaviors, due to children's strong tendencies engage in same-sex interactions, and due to this study's recruitment of male participants (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig & Pepler, 1995; Kowalski, 2003; Maccoby, 1990; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Salmivalli et al., 2011).

Each video began with exactly the same introduction (lasting about 75 seconds), and shows an adult man introducing a group task to three middle school-aged boys sitting around a table. The adult explains that the purpose of the task is to see "How children who don't know each other work together on a project," after which the adult leaves the room to let the children work on the task (a block design puzzle). After the adult leaves, the boys begin talking and introducing themselves to each other, at which time they start asking questions to the target child who will be teased (i.e., Chris). The target child discusses what he likes to do, his family, and where he goes to school. While discussing his current grade in school, the target child reveals that he repeated third grade because he

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had moved from another state. At this time, another child (i.e., Pat; the teaser) delivers the teasing statement: "I've never heard of someone flunking before just because they changed schools. You must be pretty dumb if the teacher said you have to take a whole year over."

The experimental manipulation occurred after that teasing statement is made, and consists of three victim response conditions. In the *Hostile* condition, the victim responded to the teasing with anger by loudly saying, "Oh yeah? Well, you're stupid *and* ugly!" In the *Ignore* condition, the victim did not respond to the teasing comment, but instead paused for a moment, turned to the third child, and asked him calmly, "What grade are you in?" In the *Humorous* condition, the victim responded with a sarcastically humorous response by saying, "You sure have an interesting way of making friends."

Immediately following the teased victim's response, each video was concluded by the third child (i.e., Taylor; the passive bystander) saying, "Hey, I think if we put this here we'll be done," then correctly placing the final piece to the block puzzle and saying, "Yeah it works! Go knock on the door and tell him we're done." Of note, all three videos are identical except for the manipulated victim response occurring between the same opening and closing segments.

Participants' Response to Observed Teasing

Scores to the following self-report measures were used to represent the dependent variables in this study. These included the participants' positive views of the victim, negative views of the victim, perceptions of victim's pain, and resources allocated to the victim. All self-report measures discussed below were adapted from previous studies and used to assess participant perceptions of teasing, physical bullying, or cyberbullying (e.g.,

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Howard & Landau, 2005; Landau et al., 2001; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012; Scambler et al., 1998). Relevant to note, this is the first known study to employ a behavioral measure to assess participants' reactions to hurtful teasing episodes.

Positive views of the victim. Positive views of the victim were assessed with a measure including items examining participants' perceptions of social preference, likability, desire to interact with, and similarity with the victim. These were assessed by a 13-item measure developed and utilized in previous research by Howard and Landau (2005) and Howard and colleagues (2014; see Appendix G). This scale assessed victim likability (e.g., "If Chris was in your class, how much would other kids him?"), as well as social preference for the perpetrator, victim, and bystander in a fictitious bullying episode (e.g., "How many friends would Chris have in comparison to Pat and Taylor?" and "How much you would want to be a partner in a school project with each boy"). Response options are based on a 4-point Likert scale and are specific to each item (e.g., "Other kids would really dislike him a lot" to "Other kids would really like him a lot," as well as "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree"), with higher scores indicating more positive views of the victim. Reliability statistics for the current study indicated an acceptable internal consistency, $\alpha = .83$.

Negative views of the victim. Negative views of the victim were assessed using a measure that examined participants' perceptions of victim blame, justifiability of the teasing behavior, and perceived need for intervention (see Appendix H). These factors were assessed using a modified form of the *Belief in a Just World Scale* (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), which was previously modified for use in research by Howard and Landau (2005) and Howard and colleagues (2014) by inserting the name of the identified victim into the

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original scale items so that participants' attitudes toward a specific character could be assessed. Response options involved a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with higher scores indicating a stronger belief in a just world (i.e., the victim is deserving of his suffering). Reliability statistics for the current study indicated a good alpha coefficient of .84.

Perceptions of victim's pain. As used in similar studies (e.g., Landau et al., 2001; Scambler et al., 1998), perceived victim's pain in response to teasing was assessed through items on a 3-item self-report measure assessing participants' perceptions of how upset the victim was as a result of the teasing (i.e., How upset was Chris from being teased? How mad was Chris when he was being teased? How much were Chris's feelings hurt from being teased? see Appendix I). Response options were based on a 4-point Likert scale and are specific to each item (e.g., "Chris was not hurt at all" to "Chris was very hurt,"), with higher scores indicating perceptions of greater victim pain. Reliability statistics for the current study indicated an acceptable alpha coefficient of .76.

Resources allocated to the victim. Research involving resource allocation has traditionally been used to examine participants' sensitivity to concepts involving principles of equity and distributive justice (e.g., assessing the fairness for ways resources, rewards, or consequences are allocated to the self and others; Adams, 1963; Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Dovidio et al., 2006; Homans, 1961). For example, Ng and colleagues (2011) examined the way children and adults allocated resources (i.e., pennies) to participations after completing a paired task with another child. Likewise, in a study by Batson and colleagues (1995), participants were assigned to allocate resources (i.e., lottery tickets) to individuals in their 4-person group after reading notes from

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confederate group members designed to generate empathy among participants. Other studies (e.g., Bickman & Kazman, 1973; Regan & Gutierrez, 2005) used more direct resource allocation activities to assess the influence of perceptions of need on monetary donations. Specifically, Regan and Gutierrez (2005) conducted a field experiment with adults, in which confederates approached participants in a supermarket and asked for 25 cents to help purchase a high-need item (i.e., milk), a low-need item (i.e., cookie dough), or a low-need item with negative social connotations (i.e., alcohol).

In the current study, participants engaged in a resource allocation activity in which each participant was asked to allocate resources (i.e., cookies), in any desired amount, to the participants' self, the victim, the teaser, a passive bystander, as well as a neutral participant who did not take part in the teasing episode (i.e., was identified as the next child participant in the study; see Appendix K). Specifically, participants indicated how many cookies, between 0 and 10, they would like to give to each identified individual. This resource allocation activity allowed the influence of victim response and individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning to be examined behaviorally. Research indicates that the order in which participants provide help to victims and perpetrators influences the pattern of help (Adams & Mullen, 2014). Specifically, adult participants were less likely to compensate a victim after first providing punishment to a perpetrator (Adams & Mullen, 2014). As such, participants in this study allocated resources to the victim before any other character to minimize this restorative justice effect. Resource allocation was scored as proportion of cookies given to the victim relative to cookies allocated to all characters in the video (i.e., the number of cookies

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allocated to the victim divided by the sum of cookies allocated to the victim, teaser, and passive bystander).

Procedure

Following Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and parent permission, the data collection process occurred in one session, via a computer program, and lasted about 30 to 45 minutes per participant. Data from in the Central Illinois region were collected individually and in a private room on a university campus. Data from the Chicago suburbs and the greater Baltimore area were collected in school computer labs in groups of 8 to 15 students.

At the start of the data collection procedure, participants were informed that they were "invited to participate in a research study on what middle school students are like today," and that the researcher was "especially interested in what middle school students think and feel about relationships with others." After this, participants provided assent and completed a brief demographic form. Participants then completed all self-report measures to assess individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning (i.e., empathy, normative beliefs about aggression, perceived bystander responsibility, belief in a just world, and personal history with victimization).

After completion of the individual difference measures, participants were informed that they "will watch a video of three students your age who just finished a study similar to the one you are participating in," and that "after watching the video, you will complete a survey about the people in the video." Participants viewed one of the three randomly assigned teasing videos in which victim response was manipulated via a hostile response, humorous response, or response that ignored the teasing. Following the

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teasing video, participants completed a series of post-video questionnaires to assess reactions to the teasing episode (i.e., positive views of the victim, negative views of the victim, and victim's pain), as well as the resource allocation activity via distribution of cookies to the teased victim of.

Following completion of the resource allocation activity, participants received debriefing and participation in the study was concluded.

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CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Correlational Analyses

A comprehensive Pearson Product-Moment correlation matrix examining all individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning and dependent variables was used to facilitate interpretation of the data. This correlation matrix is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients Across Individual Difference and Dependent Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Empathy	-									
2. Responsibility	.41**	-								
3. Overt Aggression	-.29**	-.15*	-							
4. Relational Aggression	.05	-.14	.27**	-						
5. Just World Belief	.19*	.54**	.10	.07	-					
6. Personal Victimization	.07	.06	-.06	.11	-.09	-				
7. Positive Victim Views	.12	.06	-.15*	.07	.12	-.01	-			
8. Negative Victim Views	-.34**	-.18*	.03	-.14	-.03	.36**	-.31**	-		
9. Perceived Pain	-.06	-.12	-.17*	-.33**	.07	-.19*	-.24**	.05	-	
10. Resource Allocations	-.04	-.03	-.06	.36**	.11	.06	.31**	-.16*	-.10	-

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Regarding correlations across participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning, results indicated a significant correlation between the two

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variables related to prosocial behavior: empathy and perceived bystander responsibility, $r = .41$, $p < .01$. Specifically, participants who were more empathic were also reported greater perceived bystander responsibility.

Likewise, tolerance of overt aggression exhibited significant inverse relations with empathy, $r = -.29$, $p < .01$, and perceived responsibility, $r = -.15$, $p = .05$, indicating that participants who endorsed greater values associated with prosocial behavior endorsed less toleration of overt aggression. Unexpectedly, results indicated significant correlations between participants' belief in a just world with empathy, $r = .19$, $p = .01$, and perceived responsibility, $r = .54$, $p < .01$. These data indicate that participants who endorsed greater values associated with prosocial behavior also endorsed stronger just world beliefs (i.e., that a victim is responsible for his suffering), a variable that historically has been related to bystanders' tolerance for aggression (e.g., Gini et al., 2008; Howard et al., 2014).

Among the three measures related to aggression tolerance, the NOBAGS Overt Aggression subscale, the NOBAGS Relational Aggression subscale, and the Belief in a Just World Scale, the only significant correlation was between tolerance for overt aggression subscale and tolerance for relational aggression, $r = .27$, $p < .01$, indicating that participants who endorsed higher tolerance for overt aggression also endorsed a higher tolerance for relational aggression.

Regarding correlational analyses among the dependent variables, as expected, participants' positive views of the victim was significantly negatively correlated with negative views of the victim, $r = -.31$, $p < .01$, negatively correlated with perceived victim pain, $r = -.24$, $p < .01$, and positively correlated with number of resources

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allocated to the victim, $r = .31$, $p < .01$. That is, participants who endorsed more positive views of the victim endorsed fewer negative views of the victim, rated the victim as feeling less pain, and allocated more resources to the victim. As expected, resource allocation was inversely associated with participants' negative views of the victim, such that more negative views of the victim (i.e., more victim blame) was associated with fewer cookie allocations to the victim, $r = -.16$, $p = .04$.

Finally, correlational analyses showed a number of significant correlations between participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning and the participants' ratings on the dependent measures. An inverse correlation between participants' self-reported tolerance for overt aggression and positive views of the victim was indicated, $r = -.15$, $p < .05$, indicating that participants with more tolerance to overt aggression endorsed less positive views of the victim.

As expected, participants' negative views of the victim (i.e., victim blame) were negatively correlated with participants' empathy, $r = -.34$, $p < .01$, negatively correlated with perceived responsibility, $r = -.18$, $p = .02$, and unexpectedly positively correlated with participants' personal experience of victimization, $r = .36$, $p < .01$.These data indicated that less negative views of the victim (i.e., less victim blame) were endorsed for participants with more empathy, more perceived bystander responsibility, and less personal victimization experience.

Inverse correlations were indicated between participants' ratings of victim pain with participants' individual differences in tolerance for overt aggression, $r = -.17$, $p = .03$, tolerance for relational aggression, $r = -.33$, $p < .01$, and personal experience with victimization, $r = -.19$, $p = .01$. As such, participants rated the teasing as less painful for

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the victim when participants had greater tolerance for overt aggression, greater tolerance for relational aggression, and more personal victimization experience. Finally, the number of resources participants' allocated to victims was unexpectedly positively correlated with participants' tolerance for relational aggression, indicating that participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression allocated more resources to the victim, $r = .36$, $p < .01$.

Sample Population

Participants in this study included boys enrolled in 5th through 8th grade at schools located in three geographic regions: Central Illinois, a northwest suburb of Chicago, IL, and northern Baltimore, MD. For the purpose of detecting any moderating influences of these demographic variables, an omnibus Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) using the Wilks' Lamda (Λ) criterion was examined. Specifically, participants' victim response condition, grade, and geographic region were entered into a general linear model analysis as fixed factors and all individual difference measures of socio-cognitive functioning were entered as continuous predictors. This analysis controlled for any variance accounted for by the demographic variables while simultaneously testing all of the hypotheses. Results of the omnibus MANOVA indicated that the Wilks' Lamda test was significant for both grade, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .66$, $F(12, 360.14) = 45.09$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$, and for geographic region, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .69$, $F(8, 272) = 6.94$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .17$. These results indicate that the participants' grade and geographic region accounted for a substantial amount of variance of the dependent variables. As such, grade and geographic region were included as fixed factors within all hypothesis tests to control for the variance accounted for by these two demographic variables.

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As specific hypotheses for grade and geographic region were not made for this study, their main effects were not interpreted, nor were any interactions with other variables considered. Results of the omnibus MANOVA and accompanying univariate analyses relevant to each a priori hypothesis are discussed below. Please note that all *p* values for follow-up univariate analyses should be interpreted with caution due to the conflation of alpha associated with conducting repeated univariate analyses subsequent to multivariate testing. As such, effect sizes are reported for all follow-up univiariate analyses to provide a context for evaluating the inferential statistics.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: A Victim's Response to Hurtful Teasing Will Influence Participants' Perceptions of the Victim and Willingness to Allocate Resources to the Victim

The omnibus MANOVA revealed a significant multivariate main effect for victim response on participants' perceptions of the victim and participants' willingness to allocate resources to the victim, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .84$, $F(8, 272) = 3.13$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. These data indicate a medium multivariate effect. Given the significance of the overall test, the univariate main effects were examined. Results for the univariate examinations are displayed below within each specific hypothesis. Table 2 lists all descriptive statistics for each dependent variable by condition.

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Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables by Victim Response Condition*

Dependent Variable	Victim Response	*M*	*SD*
Positive Views of the Victim	Hostile (*n* = 59)	2.58	.55
	Humor (*n* = 50)	3.21	.36
	Ignore (*n* = 56)	2.95	.30
Negative Views of the Victim	Hostile	2.17	.38
	Humor	2.17	.41
	Ignore	2.32	.59
Perceived Victim Pain	Hostile	2.93	.64
	Humor	2.56	.40
	Ignore	2.68	.57
Resource Allocations	Hostile	.40	.13
	Humor	.50	.18
	Ignore	.50	.15

Hypothesis 1A: Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that participants would endorse the most positive views of the victim for victims who ignored the teasing, followed by victims who responded with humor, and the least positive views to the victim who responded with hostility. The univariate main effect of victim response on positive views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = .03$, $p = .97$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. These data indicated a small univariate effect. As such, Hypothesis 1A was not supported.

Hypothesis 1B: Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that participants would endorse more negative views of the victim who responded with hostility, followed by victims who responded with humor, and the least negative views to victims who responded by ignoring the teasing. The univariate main effect of victim response on negative views of the victim was significant, $F(2, 139) = 3.31$, $p = .04$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Results indicate that victim response accounted for about 4% of the variance of participants' negative views of the victim, indicating a small effect. Pairwise comparisons

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were analyzed with Scheffé post-hoc tests (see Table 2). Data indicated that participants endorsed more negative views of the victim for victims who ignored the teasing compared to victims who responded with humor, $p = .03$, $d = .24$, and that marginally significantly more than victim who responded with hostility, $p = .09$, $d = .33$. Differences in participants' negative views of victims who responded to the teasing with hostility and humor were not significantly different, $p = .84$, $d = .08$. As such, Hypothesis 1B was not supported.

Hypothesis 1C: Perceived victim's pain. I hypothesized that participants would rate the victims who responded with hostility as feeling more hurt than victims who responded with humor or by ignoring the teasing. No difference between the humor and ignore response was anticipated. The univariate main effect of victim response on participants' perceptions of victim was nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = .90$ $p = .41$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. These data indicated a low univariate effect. As such, Hypothesis 1C was not supported.

Hypothesis 1D: Resources allocations. It was hypothesized that participants would allocate the greatest number of resources (i.e., cookies) to victims who responded to teasing with ignoring and the fewest number of cookies to victims who responded with hostility. The univariate main effect of victim response on resources allocated to the victim was significant, $F(2, 139) = 6.10$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. Results demonstrate that victim response accounted for about 8% of the variance in the number of cookies allocated to victims, indicating a medium univariate effect. Pairwise comparisons were analyzed with Scheffé post-hoc tests indicating that participants allocated more cookies to victims who responded with ignoring, $p < .01$, $d = .71$, and humor, $p < .01$, $d = .64$,

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compared with victims who responded with hostility (see Table 2). No significant differences were indicated between the ignore and humor responses, $p = 1.00$, $d < .01$. Thus, Hypothesis 1D was supported such that the ignore victim response resulted in the greatest number of cookie allocations and that the hostile victim response resulted in the fewest number of cookie allocations.

Hypothesis 2: The Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing Episodes Will be Moderated by Participants' Individual Differences in Socio-Cognitive Functioning

I examined individual difference variables included those historically related to prosocial attributes (i.e., empathy, perceived bystander responsibility), those historically related to aggression tolerance (i.e., tolerance to overt aggression, tolerance to relational aggression, belief in a just world), and the participant's personal history with teasing. Overall, it was hypothesized that participants' reactions to hurtful teasing episodes would be influenced by victim response, but that these effects would vary based on the individual differences of the participant bystanders.

I examined these hypotheses using the same omnibus Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) presented above, for which victim response condition, grade, and geographic region were entered into the model as fixed categorical factors and all individual difference measures of socio-cognitive functioning entered as continuous predictors. Specifically for Hypothesis 2, the two-way interactions between the hypothesized individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning and victim response were examined and interpreted to analyze moderation effects. Results for the univariate examinations are displayed below within each specific hypothesis. As indicated above,

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all *p* values for follow-up univariate analyses should be interpreted with caution due to the conflation of alpha associated with conducting repeated univariate analyses. Strength and direction of moderation effects were analyzed through examination of the regression coefficients (β) associated with each interaction variable.

Hypothesis 2A: Moderating effects of empathy. Results of the omnibus MANOVA indicated that the main effect of empathy was marginally significant, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .94$, $F(4, 136) = 2.29$, $p = .06$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, and a significant multivariate two-way interaction was indicated for empathy and victim response regarding their effect on the set of dependent variables, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .80$, $F(8, 272) = 4.06$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$. These data indicated medium to large multivariate effects.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, more empathic participants would endorse more positive views of the victim, and that this correlations would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect of empathy on positive views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = 1.44$, $p = .23$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Likewise, the two-way interaction between victim response and empathy regarding their influence on positive view of the victim was also nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = .42$, $p = .66$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Effect sizes for each were small. As such, Hypothesis 2A regarding positive views of the victim was not supported.

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Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses, but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the hostile response condition compared with victims in ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, more empathic participants would endorse less negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect of empathy on negative views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = .24$, $p = .62$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$. Likewise, the two-way interaction between victim response and empathy regarding their influence on negative view of the victim was also nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = 1.35$, $p = .26$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. These data indicated small effects. As such, Hypothesis 2A regarding negative views of the victim was not supported.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses, but that this correlation would be the strongest for the victim in the hostile response condition compared with the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, more empathic participants would rate the teasing as more painful to the victim, especially for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect of empathy on perceived victim pain was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = 2.52$, $p = .12$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$; the two-way interaction

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between victim response and empathy regarding their influence on perceptions of victim pain, however, was significant, $F(2, 139) = 3.84$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$, and indicated a small univariate effect. Examination of the regression coefficients indicated positive correlations for participants' empathy and perceptions of victim pain across all victim response conditions; these correlations, however, were substantially stronger for participants who viewed the hostile victim response ($\beta = .78$) when compared to participants who viewed the humor ($\beta = .12$) and ignore ($\beta = .06$) victim responses. As such, Hypothesis 2A regarding perceptions of victim pain was supported.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses, but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions compared with the hostile victim response. That is, more empathic participants would allocate more cookies to victims, and particularly to victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect of empathy on resources allocated to the victim was marginally significant and indicated a small univariate effect, $F(1, 139) = 3.76$, $p = .06$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. A significant two-way interaction between victim response and empathy regarding their influence on resource allocations was also found, $F(2, 139) = 8.94$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$, which qualifies the pattern for which participants' empathy is associated with changes in cookies allocated to the victim. These data indicated a small to medium effect. Examination of the regression coefficients indicated a positive correlation between participant empathy and cookie allocations for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition, $\beta = .23$, and the ignore response condition, $\beta = .15$. A

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weak, but negative correlation was indicated for participants who viewed victims in the humor response (β = -.07). These data indicate that more empathic participants allocated more cookies to victims, but only for victims who responded to the teasing by ignoring or with hostility. Moreover, the number of cookies allocated to victims was amplified for victims who responded to the teasing with hostility. As such, Hypothesis 2A regarding resource allocations to victims was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2B: Moderating effects of perceived bystander responsibility. Results of the omnibus MANOVA indicated that the main effect of perceived responsibility was significant indicating a large multivariate effect, *Wilks' Λ* = .84, $F(4, 136) = 6.24$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$. The multivariate two-way interaction was indicated for perceived responsibility and victim response regarding their effects on the set of dependent variables was also significant and indicated a large effect, *Wilks' Λ* = .75, $F(8, 272) = 2.72$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater perceived responsibility would endorse more positive views of the victim, and that this correlation would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect of perceived bystander responsibility on positive views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = 1.68$, $p = .20$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. The two-way

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interaction between victim response and perceived bystander responsibility regarding their influence on positive views of the victim was also nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = .89$, $p = .41$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. These data indicated small effects. As such, Hypothesis 2B regarding positive views of the victim was unsupported.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with greater perceived responsibility would endorse less negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect of perceived bystander responsibility on negative views of the victim was significant and indicated a moderate effect, $F(1, 139) = 8.65$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Results demonstrated that participants with greater perceived responsibility endorsed fewer negative views of the victim regardless of the observed victim response, $\beta = -.20$. The two-way interaction between victim response and perceived bystander responsibility regarding their influence on negative views of the victim was marginally significant and qualifies the pattern for which participants' perceived responsibility is associated with changes in negative views of the victim , $F(2, 139) = 2.64$, $p = .08$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. These data indicated a small effect.

Examination of the regression coefficients indicate negative correlations between between participants' perceived responsibility and negative views of the victim (i.e.,

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victim blame) across all victim response conditions, but that the strength of this negative correlation was determined by type of victim response observed. Specifically, participants with higher perceived responsibility endorsed somewhat fewer negative views of the victim after observing the victim respond with hostility (β = -.04). This pattern was attenuated for victims observed to respond with humor (β = -.20), and the strongest attenuation occurred for victims observed to respond by ignoring (β = -.42). These data indicate that participants with greater perceived responsibility endorsed fewer negative views (i.e., less blame) for victims who responded with humor, even less blame for victims in the ignore response, and the least blame for victims who ignored the teasing. As such, Hypothesis 2B as it relates to negative views of the victim was partially supported.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the strongest for the victim in the hostile response condition, compared with the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with more perceived responsibility would rate the teasing as more painful to the victim, and this effect would be amplified for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect of perceived bystander responsibility on perceptions of victim pain was significant and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) = 5.36$, $p = .02$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Examination of the regression slope indicated, unexpectedly, that participants with greater perceived responsibility rated the teasing as less painful to victims, β = -.25. A marginally significant two-way interaction between victim response type and perceived

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bystander responsibility regarding their influence on perceptions of victim pain was also indicated, which qualifies the ways for which participants' perceived bystander responsibility is associated with changes in participants' perceptions of victim pain, $F(2, 139) = 2.77$, $p = .07$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. These data indicated a small effect.

Examination of the regression coefficients indicate a weak, but positive correlation between participants' perceived responsibility and ratings of victim pain for participants who viewed the ignore response condition ($\beta = .08$), as well as negative correlations for participants who viewed the humor victim response ($\beta = -.36$) and the hostile victim response, $\beta = -.33$. These data indicate that participants with greater perceived responsibility rated the teasing as less painful for the victim, but only for participants who viewed victims respond to the teasing with humor or hostility. As such, Hypothesis 2B as it relates to perceived victim pain was not supported.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater perceived responsibility would allocate more cookies to victims, and that this effect would be amplified for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response conditions.

The univariate main effect of perceived bystander responsibility on resources allocated to the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = 1.11$, $p = .29$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$; the two-way interaction between victim response and perceived bystander responsibility

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regarding their influence on resource allocations, however, was significant, $F(2, 139) = 16.30$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$. These data indicated a medium effect.

Examination of the regression coefficients indicated a positive correlation between participants' perceived responsibility and cookie allocations for participants who viewed the ignore response condition ($\beta = .15$), as well as negative correlations for participants who viewed the humor victim response ($\beta = -.36$) and the hostile victim response, $\beta = -.33$. These data indicate that participants with greater perceived responsibility allocated more cookies to victims, but only for participants who viewed victims who ignored the teasing. Moreover, participants with greater perceived responsibility allocated fewer cookies to victims who responded with humor and hostility. As, such Hypothesis 2B as it relates to resource allocations was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2C: Moderating effects of tolerance for overt aggression. Results of the omnibus MANOVA indicated that the main effect for tolerance of overt aggression was marginally significant, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .94$, $F(4, 136) = 2.06$, $p = .09$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, which indicates a medium effect. The multivariate two-way interaction was significant for tolerance of overt aggression and victim response regarding their effect on the set of dependent variables and indicated a large multivariate effect, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .70$, $F(8, 272) = 6.58$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of overt aggression

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would endorsements fewer positive views of the victim, and that this correlation would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect of tolerance to overt aggression on positive views of the victim was significant, $F(1, 139) = 6.52$, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Examination of the regression slope indicated that, in general, participants with greater tolerance of overt aggression endorsed fewer negative views of the victim, $\beta = -.19$. A significant two-way interaction between victim response and tolerance to overt aggression regarding their influence on positive views of the victim was also revealed, which qualifies under which conditions tolerance of overt aggression is more strongly associated with changes in positive views of the victim, $F(2, 139) = 4,88$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$. These data indicated a small to medium effect.

Examination of the regression coefficients indicated a weak, but positive correlation between participants' tolerance for overt aggression with positive views of the victim for participants who viewed the ignore response condition ($\beta = .13$), as well as negative correlations for participants who viewed the humor victim response ($\beta = -.19$) and the hostile victim response, $\beta = -.53$. These data indicate that participants with greater tolerance of overt aggression endorsed fewer positive views of the victim, but only for participants who viewed victims respond with humor and hostility. This inverse association was the strongest for the hostile victim response. Alternatively, participants with greater tolerance of overt aggression endorsed more positive views of the victim after viewing the victim who ignored the teasing. As such, Hypothesis 2C regarding

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positive views of the victim not supported.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of overt aggression would endorse more negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect of tolerance for overt aggression on negative views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 137) = .97$, $p = .32$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. The two-way interaction between victim response and tolerance for overt aggression regarding their influence on negative views of the victim was also nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = 1.19$, $p = .31$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$. These data indicated small effects. As such, Hypothesis 2C regarding negative views of the victim was unsupported.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant inverse correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the weakest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants more tolerant of overt aggression would rate the teasing as less painful for victims, and that victim pain would be attenuated most for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

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The univariate main effect for tolerance of overt aggression on perceptions of victim pain was nonsignificant, $F(1, 137) = .67$, $p = .41$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$; the two-way interaction, however, was significant between victim response and tolerance of overt aggression regarding their influence on perceived victim pain, $F(2, 137) = 9.42$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$. These data indicated a small effect.

Examination of the regression coefficients indicated a positive correlation between participants' tolerance for overt aggression with perceptions of victim pain for participants who viewed the ignore response condition ($\beta = .42$), as well as negative correlations for participants who viewed the humor victim response ($\beta = -.51$) and the hostile victim response, $\beta = -.14$. These data indicate that participants with greater tolerance for overt aggression rated the teasing as more painful for the victim, but only for victims who responded by ignoring the teasing. Alternatively, participants with greater overt aggression tolerance rated the teasing as less painful for victims who responded with humor and hostility, and this inverse association was the strongest for the humor victim response. As such, Hypothesis 2C regarding perceptions of victim pain was not supported.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses, but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would endorsements fewer positive views of the victim, and that this correlation would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile

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response condition.

The univariate main effect for tolerance of overt aggression on resource allocations to victims was marginally significant and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) = 2.97$, $p = .09$, partial $\eta^2 < .2$; the two-way interaction between victim response and tolerance of overt aggression regarding their influence on resource allocations, however, was significant, which qualifies the pattern of the main effect, $F(2, 139) = 14.88$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$. These data indicated a large multiviariate effect.

Examination of the regression coefficients indicated a strong and positive correlation between tolerance for overt aggression and resource allocations for participants who viewed the ignore victim response ($\beta = .12$), a weak and negative correlation for participants who viewed the hostile victim response ($\beta = -.07$), and a negative correlation for participants who viewed the humor victim response, $\beta = -.18$. Specifically, participants with greater overt aggression tolerance allocated fewer cookies to victims, but only for participants who viewed the hostile and humor condition. This negative association was somewhat stronger for participants who viewed the humor victim response. Alternatively, participants with greater tolerance for overt aggression allocated more cookies to victims who responded with ignoring. As such, Hypothesis 2C regarding resource allocations was not supported.

Hypothesis 2D: Moderating effects of tolerance for relational aggression. Results of the omnibus MANOVA indicated that the main effect for tolerance of overt aggression was significant, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .84$, $F(4, 136) = 6.46$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$, and a significant multivariate two-way interaction was indicated for tolerance of overt aggression and victim response regarding their effect on the set of dependent variables,

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Wilks' $\Lambda = .70$, $F(8, 272) = 6.71$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$. These data indicated large multivariate effects.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would endorsements fewer positive views of the victim, and that this correlation would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect for tolerance of relational aggression on positive views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = 1.12$, $p = .29$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$; the two-way interaction between victim response and tolerance of relational aggression regarding their influence on positive views of the victim, however, was significant, $F(2, 139) = 8.54$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$. These data indicated a medium effect.

Examination of the correlation coefficients indicated positive correlations for participants' tolerance for relational aggression and their positive views of the victim after observing victims in the ignore victim response ($\beta = .23$) and hostile victim response ($\beta = .23$), but negative correlations after observing victims in the humor victim response, $\beta = -.33$. That is, participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression endorsed less positive views of the victim, but only after observing the victim respond with humor; otherwise, participants with greater relational aggression tolerance endorsed more positive views of the victim. As such, Hypothesis 2D regarding positive views of

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the victim was partially supported.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would endorse more negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect for tolerance of relational aggression on negative views of the victim was significant and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) = 4.86$, $p < .03$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. Examination of the regression slope indicated, unexpectedly, that participants with greater tolerance of relational aggression endorsed fewer negative views of the victim, regardless of observed victim response, $\beta = -.14$. The two-way interaction between victim response and tolerance of relational aggression regarding their influence on negative views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = 1.95$, $p = .15$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. As such, Hypothesis 2D regarding negative views of the victim was not supported.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant inverse correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that this correlation would be the weakest for victims in the hostile response condition, compared with victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would rate the teasing as less painful for victims, and that victim pain would be attenuated most for participants who observed victims in the hostile response

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condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect for tolerance of relational aggression on perceptions of victim pain was significant and indicated a small to medium effect, $F(1, 137) = 11.47$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$. Examination of the regression slope indicated that participants with greater tolerance of relational aggression increased rated the teasing as less painful to victims regardless of observed victim response, $\beta = -.25$. A significant two-way interaction between victim response and tolerance of relational aggression regarding their influence on perceptions of victim pain was also indicated, $F(2, 139) = 7.07$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$. These data indicate a small to medium effect.

Examination of the correlation coefficients indicate negative correlations for participants' tolerance for relational aggression and perceptions of victim pain, but only when participants viewed victims in the ignore victim response ($\beta = -.48$) and hostile victim response ($\beta = -.42$). Positive correlations were indicated between tolerance for relational aggression and perceptions of victim pain after observing victims in the humor response condition, $\beta = .18$. These data indicate that participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression rated the teasing as less painful for the victim when the participant observed the ignore and hostile responses, but rated the teasing as more painful after observing victims in the humor victim response. As such, Hypothesis 2D regarding perceptions of victim pain was partially supported.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared

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with the hostile victim response. That is, participants more tolerant of relational aggression would allocate less cookies to victims, particularly for victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect for tolerance of relational aggression on resource allocations was significant and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) = 7.84$, $p = .05$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$; the two-way interaction between victim response and tolerance of relational aggression regarding their influence on resource allocations was also significant, which qualifies the pattern of this main effect, $F(2, 139) = 9.45$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$. These data indicate a medium effect. Examination of the correlation coefficients indicated a weak, but negative correlation for participants' tolerance for relational aggression and resource allocations, but only after participants observed the victim respond with ignoring ($\beta = -.04$); otherwise, positive correlations were found for participants' tolerance for relational aggression and resource allocations after observing victims in the ignore humor response ($\beta = .08$) and hostile response ($\beta = .12$) conditions, with a slightly stronger correlation indicated for victims who responded with hostility. As such Hypothesis 2D regarding resource allocations was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2E: Moderating effects of personal history with victimization. Results of the omnibus MANOVA indicated that the main effect for personal history of being victimized was significant and indicated a large multivariate effect, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .88$, $F(4, 136) = 4.48$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .12$. The multivariate two-way interaction for personal history of victimization and victim response was also significant and indicated a large effect, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .76$, $F(8, 272) = 4.90$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$.

Positive views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be

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indicated across all three victim responses, but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater personal victimization experience would endorse more positive views of the victim, and that these correlations would be stronger for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect for participants' personal victimization experience on positive views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = .49$, $p = .48$, partial $\eta^2 < .01$; likewise, the two-way interaction between victim response and personal victimization experience regarding their influence on positive views of the victim was also nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = .91$, $p = .40$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Further, these data indicated low effects. As such, Hypothesis 2E regarding positive views of the victim was unsupported.

Negative views of the victim. I hypothesized that significant negative correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses, but these correlations would be the greatest for victims in the hostile response condition compared with victims in ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with greater personal victimization experience would endorse fewer negative views of the victim, and that this negative correlation would be strongest for participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect for personal victimization experience on negative views of the victim was marginally significant and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) =$

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6.49, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. Examination of the regression slope indicated that participants with greater personal victimization experience endorsed more negative views of the victim (i.e., more victim blame) regardless of type of victim response observed, $\beta = .11$. The two-way interaction between victim response and personal victimization experience regarding their influence on negative views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = .66$, $p = .52$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. These data indicate a medium effect. Thus, Hypothesis 2E regarding negative views of the victim was not supported.

Perceptions of victim pain. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses, but that this correlation would be the strongest for the victim in the hostile response condition compared with the ignore response and humor response conditions. That is, participants with greater personal experience with victimization would rate the teasing as more painful to the victim, and that this effect would be amplified for participants who observed victims in the hostile response condition compared with participants who observed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions.

The univariate main effect was significant for personal victimization experience on perceptions of victim pain and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) = 8.91$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Examination of the regression slope indicated that participants with greater personal victimization experience rated the teasing as less painful regardless of type of victim response observed, $\beta = -.11$. The two-way interaction between victim response and personal victimization experience regarding their influence on perceived victim pain was marginally significant, $F(2, 139) = 2.85$, $p = .06$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$. These data indicated a small effect.

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Examination of the correlation coefficients indicated negative correlations between participants' personal victimization experience and perceptions of victim pain across all victim responses, but that the strengths of these correlations differed depending on type of victim response observed. Specifically, as participants' personal victimization experience increased, participants perceptions of victim pain decreased most rapidly for victims observed in the hostile response ($\beta = -.24$), followed by victims in the ignore response ($\beta = -.10$), and that the weakest negative correlation was indicated after observing victims in the humor response, $\beta = -.02$ (see Figure 11). As such, Hypothesis 2E regarding perceptions of victim pain was not supported.

Resource allocations. I hypothesized that significant correlations would be indicated across all three victim responses but that these correlations would be the strongest for victims in the ignore response and humor response conditions, compared with the hostile victim response. That is, participants with greater personal victimization experience would allocate more cookies to victims, and this effect would be amplified for participants who viewed victims in the ignore and humor response conditions compared with participants who viewed victims in the hostile response condition.

The univariate main effect for personal victimization experience on resource allocations was nonsignificant, $F(1, 142) = 1.77$, $p = .19$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Likewise, the two-way interaction between victim response and personal victimization experience regarding their influence on resource allocations was also nonsignificant, $F(2, 128) = .78$, $p = .46$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. These data indicated low effects. As such, Hypothesis 2E regarding resource allocations was not supported.

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Exploratory research question: Moderating effects of belief in a just world. Previous research shows that the socio-cognitive belief in a just world is related to one's tolerance of aggression. A strong belief in a just world is associated with increased negativity towards victims and higher ratings of victim blame (Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2001; Hafer & Begue, 2005; Johnson, Mullick, & Mulford, 2002; Lerner, 1980; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Whereas there is sufficient research to predict that participants' just world beliefs would influence their response to teasing, there does not exist substantial evidence to inform specific hypotheses on moderation effects of participants' belief in a just world regarding victim response. As such, moderation effects were. For all exploratory research questions related to participants' belief in a just world, I anticipated that participants' just world beliefs would have significant moderation effects on victim response type but that the specific directions of this moderation were not predicted.

Results of the omnibus MANOVA indicated that the main effect for just world belief was significant, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .84$, $F(4, 136) = 6.72$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$, and a significant multivariate two-way interaction was indicated for just world belief and victim response regarding their effect on the set of dependent variables, *Wilks'* $\Lambda = .74$, $F(8, 272) = 5.34$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$. These data indicated large multivariate effects.

Positive views of the victim. The univariate main effect for just world belief on positive views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = 1.15$, $p = .28$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. Likewise, the two-way interaction between victim response and belief in a just world regarding their influence on positive views of the victim was also nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = .97$, $p = .38$, partial $\eta^2 = .01$. These data indicated small univariate effects.

Negative views of the victim. The univariate main effect for just world belief on

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negative views of the victim was nonsignificant, $F(1, 139) = 3.50$, $p = .06$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$; a significant two-way interaction, however, was indicated between victim response and just world belief regarding their influence on negative views of the victim, $F(2, 136) = 1.45$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$. These data indicate a medium effect.

Examination of the correlation coefficients indicated a positive correlation between participants' beliefs in a just world with negative views of the victim, but only after the victim was observed to ignore the teasing ($\beta = .76$). Negative correlations were shown between participants' just world beliefs and negative views after viewing the victim in the humor response ($\beta = -.11$) and hostile response ($\beta = -.08$). These data indicate that participants with stronger beliefs in a just world endorsed more negative views of the victim (i.e., more victim blame), but only for victims who ignored the teasing. Moreover, participants with stronger beliefs in a just world endorsed less negative views of the victim who responded to the teasing with hostility and humor, and that this inverse association was amplified for victims who responded with hostility.

Perceptions of victim pain. The univariate main effect for just world belief on perceived victim pain was significant and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) = 6.90$, $p = .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Examination of the regression slope indicated that participants with greater beliefs in a just world rated the teasing as more hurtful to the victims regardless of victim response observed, $\beta = .29$. The two-way interaction between victim response and belief in a just world regarding their influence on perceived victim pain was nonsignificant, $F(2, 139) = 2.14$, $p = .12$, partial $\eta^2 = .03$. These data indicated a small effect.

Resource allocations. The univariate main effect for just world belief on

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participants' resource allocations to the victim was significant and indicated a small effect, $F(1, 139) = 9.58$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Examination of the regression slope indicated that participants with greater beliefs in a just world allocated slightly more cookies to victims regardless of victim response type observed, $\beta = .05$. The two-way interaction between victim response and just world belief regarding their influence on resource allocations was significant, which better qualifies the pattern of the main effect, $F(2, 139) = 12.31$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .15$. These data indicated a medium effect.

Examination of the correlation coefficients indicated a negative correlation between participants' beliefs in a just world with number of cookies allocated to victims, but only after the victim was observed in the ignore response ($\beta = -.09$). Positive correlations were shown between participants' beliefs in a just world with number of cookies allocated to victims after participants' observed the hostile response ($\beta = .12$) and humor response ($\beta = .27$), with stronger associations indicated for participants who observed the humor response. These data indicate that participants with stronger beliefs in a just world allocated less cookies to victims, but only for victims observed to ignore the teasing. Alternately, participants with stronger beliefs in a just world allocated more cookies to victims who provided the hostile or humor response, and that this effect was amplified when victims responded with humor.

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CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of the perceptions of hurtful teasing among middle school-aged boys. Specifically, this study: (1) examined how victim responses to hurtful teasing influenced participants' perceptions of, and behaviors towards the victim of a hurtful teasing episode; and (2) assessed how participant' reactions to hurtful teasing were moderated by their individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning.

Teasing, bullying, and peer victimization are problems that many school-age children and adolescents experience each day, and within the past decade, bullying has received significant public and research attention. As observed in recent history, the consequences of bullying can be tragic, such that some of those who were victimized acted out with mass murder shootings followed by subsequent suicides (e.g., Columbine shooting or Virginia Tech shooting). Case study research by Leary, Kowalski, Smith, and Phillips (2003) indicated that across 15 school shootings between 1995 and 2001, rejection in the form of ostracism and bullying was present in all but two of the incidents. Whereas most victims do not respond with school shootings, bully victimization has been associated with various long-term psychological and social problems: distress, loneliness, low self-esteem, psychosomatic complaints, depression, poor concentration, academic difficulties, school drop-out, running away, body image concerns, and eating disorders, as well as increased risk of psychopathology, suicidal ideations, and suicide attempts (Beaty

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& Alexeyev, 2008; Breseman, 2005; Card, 2003; Cash, 1995; Furman & Thompson, 2002; Cornell et al., 2012; Harris & Petrie, 2003; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Reid et al., 2004; Rutter & Behrendt, 2004; Sharp et al., 2000; Twemlow & Fonagy, 2001).

Teasing and name-calling is often regarded as the most common form of bullying, and when performed repeatedly, it can be as painful to the victim as physical injury (Kowalski, 2003; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Hurtful teasing is a strategy evident across all types bullying and is used to clearly and intentionally dominate, intimidate, and harm the other person. One challenge with identifying teasing as an act of verbal bullying, however, is that not all teasing acts *clearly* and *intentionally* inflict harm on the victim. That is, previous research shows that not all teasing is considered hurtful, and when used appropriately, teasing can be playful, fun, and have prosocial effects (Eisenberg, 1986; Shapiro et al., 1991; Voss, 1997). Moreover, both children and adults have shown to use teasing as a playful strategy to express affection and negotiate interpersonal conflict (Eder, 1991; Keltner et al., 2001). The way in which one responds to victimization has shown significant impact on how others perceive the victim and the teasing episode. Research has shown that a victim's response to being teased and bullied influences bystanders' perceptions of victim popularity, potential intervention effectiveness, victim blame, and decisions to intervene (Broussard & Wagner, 1988; Davies et al., 2009; Landau et al., 2001; Ross & Horner, 2009).

More recent laboratory research has demonstrated that participant bystanders' individual differences are the most robust predictors of behavioral and perceptual reactions to physical bullying (Howard et al., 2014) and cyberbullying (Martinez-Dick &

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Landau, 2012) episodes; however, these results have not yet been examined within the context of hurtful teasing. Within the literature, individual differences such as empathy (the feeling and reaction one has in response to another's experience and the ability to understand and experience another's emotions), perceived bystander responsibility (a person's willingness and belief that he or she should help another who is in need), normative beliefs about aggression (the level of acceptability of aggressive solutions to social challenges), belief in a just world (that the world as a fair and just place, and that individuals deserve any positive and negative condition to which they are exposed), and personal history with hurtful teasing (one's direct and vicarious exposure to peer victimization).

I hypothesized that victim's response to hurtful teasing would influence participants' reactions to the victim of hurtful teasing, and that these effects would differ based on participants' varying individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning. Participants' reactions to the victim included measures of participants' positive views of the victim, negative views of the victim, perceived victim pain, and number of resources allocated to the victim. Participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning included assessment of empathy, perceived bystander responsibility, tolerance for overt and relational aggression, personal experience with victimization, and belief in a just world.

The examination of victim response to hurtful teasing and the moderating effects of participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning was accomplished by asking 169 middle school boys, enrolled in 5th through 8th grade, to complete a computer-based research project about how middle school students are like today, how

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middle school students think and feel about relationships with others, and how middle school students react when witnessing teasing. Specifically, participants were randomly assigned to view one of three, 3-minute videos, depicting a boy's response to hurtful teasing. The victim's response was manipulated in three ways: (a) a verbally hostile response (he teases back); (b) a humorous response (he gives a sarcastically humorous response); (c) no response (he ignores the teasing). Prior to viewing the teasing episode, participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning were assessed via self-report measures. Following the teasing video, participants' perceptions of the teasing episode were assessed via self-report measures. Participants then engaged in a resource allocation activity to determine how many resources they would allocate to the victim in the video. Specifically, participants designated a desired number of cookies (0-10) to give to the victim as an operationalization of helping behavior.

Findings

Overall, results indicated that victim response to hurtful teasing significantly impacted participants' reactions to the victims. The direction and strength of these effects, however, were moderated by the participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning. The moderating effect of these predictive variables is presented below.

How Does Victim Response to Hurtful Teasing Influence Participants' Perceptions of the Victim and Willingness to Allocate Resources to the Victim?

Research by Shapiro and colleagues (1991) indicated that when asked how they would respond to teasing and peer victimization, 39% of children reported that they would reciprocate the teasing in a hostile way, 24% reported they would ignore the

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teasing or walk away, 12% would laugh along with the teaser, 10% would fight the teaser, and 4% would tell the teacher. In addition, victim response to teasing (i.e., hostile, humor, and ignore) has been associated with more positive and more negative reactions from bystanders (Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al., 2001; Scambler et al., 1998). Results of these studies indicated that participants rated victims as least friendly and least popular when victims provided a hostile response compared to a humor or ignore response (Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al., 2001; Scambler et al., 1998). Scambler and colleagues (1998) and Georgesen and colleagues (1999) found that participants rated victims who gave the humor response as most friendly and most popular compared to other victim responses. Howard and colleagues (2001) found that participants rated victims who gave the hostile response as being more hurt (i.e., in more pain) than victims who provided the humor and ignore responses.

This study examined the effects of victim response type (i.e., a hostile response, humor response, or ignore response) on participant reactions to hurtful teasing (i.e., positive views of the victim, negative views of the victim, perceived victim pain, number of resources allocated to the victim). This is the first known study to examine participants' behavioral reactions to various victim responses to hurtful teasing. Whereas significant main effects were expected for all dependent variables, results indicated significant main effects on two of the four variables: participants' negative views of the victim and the number of cookies the participants allocated to the victim.

Specifically, participants endorsed more negative views of the victim (i.e., greater victim blame and greater justifiability of the teasing) when the victim ignored the teasing compared to the victims who responded with humor or hostility. No differences in

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participants' negative views of the victim were found when the victim responded with hostility or humor. These findings did not support the hypothesis. Whereas previous research indicates that participants rate victims who respond to teasing and cyberbullying by ignoring as more likeably and more friendly compared to victims who respond with hostility (Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al., 2001; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012; Scambler et al., 1998), no known studies have specifically examined the effects of victim response to hurtful teasing on participants' negative views of the victim, as defined as perceptions of victim blame, the justifiability of the teasing behavior, and perceived need for intervention.

Previous research indicates mixed findings regarding the influence of victim response type and perceptions of victim blame. These results are consistent with adult studies indicating that victims who do not defend themselves against a perpetrator are more likely to elicit perceptions of victim blame and other negative perceptions from bystanders (Davies et al., 2009; Kassing & Prieto, 2003). In contrast, research involving children's cyberbullying indicates that participants endorsed greater victim blame for victims who responded with hostility compared to victims who did not respond to the aggressor (i.e., provided an ignore response), but these effects only occurred for participants high in empathy, high in perceived bystander responsibility, and low in aggression tolerance (Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012). These data indicate an important distinction and provide support that participants' individual differences are the most robust predictors of participants' reactions to peer victimization (Howard & Landau, 2014; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012). This suggests that, in general, victims who respond "passively" (i.e., ignore response) to teasing are rated as more to blame than

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victims who respond "actively" (i.e., hostile or humor response), but that these ratings may change based on the participants personal levels of empathy, perceived bystander responsibility, and aggression tolerance. The moderation effects of participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning are discussed in the sections below.

Regarding the influence of victim response on the number of cookies participants allocated to the victim, this is the first known study to examine participants' behavioral reactions to various victim responses to hurtful teasing. Previous research indicates that participants' resource allocations are influenced by two major factors: social preference and perceptions of justice. Specifically, participants are more likely to provide greater allocation of resources to those whom they rate as more socially attractive, more likable, more friendly, greater preference to interact with, or more physically attractive (Chiang, 2008; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Harrell, 1978; Kelley & Byrne, 1976; Kleinke, 1977; Williamson & Clark, 1992). The Equity Principle (Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961) refers to the fairness for ways resources, rewards, or consequences are allocated, and research indicates that when bystanders perceive an imbalance in the reward distribution in a relationship, they become motivated to restore its equity (Adams, 1963; Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Dovidio et al., 2006; Walster et al., 1978). Likewise, research by Wesselmann and colleagues (2012) indicates that perceptions of the justifiability of the victimizing act influences bystander behavior towards the victim. Specifically, participants were more likely to compensate (i.e., increase their interactions with) a victimized target when the reason for the victimization was inexplicable. However, when the reason for the victimization was justifiable (i.e., the victim became a burden on the group), bystanders actively ostracized the victim themselves (Wesselmann et al., 2012).

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Results to this study revealed that participants allocated the greatest number of cookies to victims who ignored the teasing and responded to the teasing with humor, compared to the victim who responded with hostility. These results were consistent with hypotheses. Given the inverse association between victim blame and resource allocations amongst the literature (e.g., Adams, 1965), these data contradict the results present above, such that the ignore victim response elicited the most negative views (i.e., the greatest blame) and the greatest number of cookie allocations. These data suggest that another factor(s) other than perceived need influenced participants' decisions to provide victims with help (i.e., cookies).

This contradiction is best explained by the influence of socially appropriate versus socially inappropriate victim responses in peer victimization episodes. For example, Ross and Horner (2009) examined the influence of children's victim responses to playground bullying episodes. Their results revealed that as victims more frequently engaged in socially appropriate responses (e.g., ignoring the bully or using a stop signal), bystanders were more likely to provide the victim help compared to when the victim engaged in a socially inappropriate response (e.g., complaining or whining; Ross & Horner, 2009). This pattern supports results from the teasing literature indicating that teased victims who respond with hostility (i.e., a socially inappropriate response) are often rated as least likable, least friendly, and least socially preferred (Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al, 2001; Scambler et al., 1998). As such, these results suggest that resource allocations were more strongly based on victim likability and acceptance than perceived need for support.

In summary, the pattern of these data seem to suggest the existence of two victim response dichotomies that influence participants reactions to victims of hurtful teasing:

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active versus passive victim responses (i.e., passive responses yield more victim blame); and socially appropriate versus socially inappropriate responses (i.e., socially appropriate responses yield more cookie allocations). The main effects of victim response type on participants' reactions to the victims were found in both support of and contrast with previous literature. These findings are important because they highlight the fact that participants will not react to all hurtful teasing situations in the same way. Thus, the participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning are likely the best predictors of participants' reactions to peer victimization. The following section describes the relations between participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning and victim response type regarding their influence on participants' reactions to the victim.

How Does Empathy Moderate the Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing?

Empathy involves the ability to accurately identify and understand another's emotions, thoughts, motives, intentions, as well as the ability to respond to another's distress with sympathy and compassion (Cliffordson, 2001; Feshback, 1997; Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Research on bystander empathy in both adults and children has been linked to helping behavior, such that those with higher levels of empathic concern are more likely to provide help to a distressed victim (Caravita et al., 2008; Correia & Dalbert, 2008; Davis, 1983; Howard et al., 2014; Litvack-Miller et al., 1997). Research indicates that children with higher empathic concern were more likely to be identified by their classmates as ones who would actively defend a victim of bullying, whereas children with lower empathy would more likely be identified as passive bystanders (i.e.,

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ones who does not actively provide help to the victim; Boswell, 2009; Gini et al., 2007). Among the bullying and cyberbullying literature, participants with more empathy report being more willing to help a victim, more likely to rate the victim as likable, and less likely to blame the victim for their suffering than participants with less empathy (Boswell, 2009; Gini et al., 2007; Howard & Landau, 2014, Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008; Schultze-Krumbholz & Scheithauer, 2009; Tehila, 2011).

This study examined how empathy moderated the effects of victim response on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing. Based on previous research, it was expected that the current study would yield a similar pattern of findings in which greater participant empathy would be linked to more positive views of the victim (i.e., more likability, more social preference), less negative views of the victim (i.e., less victim blame), higher perceptions of victim pain, and more cookies allocated to the victim. Results indicated significant interactions between participants' individual differences in empathy and teased victim response regarding the effects on participants' perceptions of victim pain and on the number of cookies participants allocated to the victim.

Regarding perceptions of victim pain, more empathic participants rated the teasing as more painful to victims across all victim responses, but victims who responded with hostility were rated as feeling the most pain. These findings supported the hypotheses. As empathy involves one's increased sensitivity to identify and understand another's emotions and distress (e.g., Cliffordson, 2001; Feshback, 1997; Miller & Eisenberg, 1988), it is not surprising that perceptions of victim pain for hostile victims is amplified for more empathic participants. It seems participants with higher empathy are able to "uncover" the underlying reason why the victim responds with hostility. That is,

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only participants with higher empathy have the capacity to see through the negative evaluation of the hostile victim response and think, "this victim is responding angrily, they must be in a lot of pain," rather than participants with lower empathy that are more likely to overlook the victim's pain by thinking, "this victim is responding angrily, what a jerk."

Regarding resource allocations, more empathic participants allocated more cookies to the victims, but only to victims who emitted an ignore response or hostile response. This result was amplified for the hostile victim. Alternatively, more empathic participants allocated slightly fewer cookies to victims after observing the victim respond with humor than participants with less empathy. These results partially supported hypotheses. As discussed above, two major variables shown to influence participants' resource allocations is victim likability (Chiang, 2008; Dovidio & Gaertner, 1983; Harrell, 1978; Kelley & Byrne, 1976; Kleinke, 1977; Williamson & Clark, 1992) and perceptions of victim need (Adams, 1965; Cialdini et al., 1982; Homans, 1961; Piliavin et al., 1981).

Models such as the Negative State Relief Model (Cialdini et al., 1982), the Arousal: Cost-Reward Model (Piliavin et al., 1981), and the Equity Principle (Adams, 1965; Homans, 1961) posit that participants would be motivated to provide the victim who is more hurt with more resources by means of restoring equity. As participants with greater empathy rated teasing as more hurtful to victims in the hostile condition compared to victims in the ignore and humor conditions, as a result, it is no surprise that more empathic participants allocated more resources to the hostile victims, as well.

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How Does Perceived Bystander Responsibility Moderate the Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing?

Perceived bystander responsibility refers to a person's willingness and belief that he should help another who is in need (Frey et al., 2005). Within the adult social psychology literature, this construct posits that those high in perceived bystander responsibility feel that the welfare of others may depend on their help (e.g., Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963; Berkowitz & Daniels, 1964; De Cremer & van Lange, 2001), such that their desire to help others in need occurs without contingency of receiving a tangible or social reward (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963). Similar to empathy, research in the bullying and cyberbullying literature has indicated people with higher perceived responsibility also report being more likely to help a victim, rate the victim as more likable, and blame the victim less than those with lower perceived responsibility (Gini et al., 2007; Howard & Landau, 2014, Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008). In fact, results of this study indicated a significant and positive simple correlation between participants' empathy and perceived responsibility, indicating that these variables are linked. This simple correlation, however, does not take into account the variation explained for by other variables, however and should be interpreted with caution.

This is the first known study to specifically examine how participants' perceived bystander responsibility moderated the effects of victim response on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing. Based on previous research, it was expected that the current study would yield a similar pattern of findings in which participants' greater perceived responsibility would be linked to more positive views of the victim (i.e., more likability, more social preference), less negative views of the victim (i.e., less victim blame), higher

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perceptions of victim pain, and more cookies allocated to the victim. Results indicated significant interactions between participants' individual differences in perceived bystander responsibility and victim response regarding their effects on participants' negative views of the victim, perceptions of victim pain, and on the number of resources allocated to the victim.

Regarding negative views of the victim (i.e., perceived victim blame and justification of the teasing), participants higher in perceived bystander responsibility endorsed fewer negative views of the victim, regardless of victim response type. The moderating effects of participants' perceived responsibility on victim response indicated that victims who responded with humor were rated as less to blame than the victim who responded with hostility, and victims who responded by ignoring were rated as the least to blame compared to the other victim responses. These data converge with previous research from the bullying and cyberbullying literature that indicate participants with higher perceived responsibility are more likely to empathize with, have a positive attitude toward, and a lower likelihood to blame the victim (Howard et al., 2014; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008).

Regarding participants' perceptions of victim pain, participants with higher bystander responsibility unexpectedly rated the teasing as less painful for the victim, regardless the victim response observed. Perceived bystander responsibility is a person's willingness to help another who is in need (Frey et al., 2005) and given its association with empathy, participants were expected to rate the teasing as more painful for the victim. This effect is qualified, however, by the interaction between perceived bystander responsibility and victim response regarding their influence on perceived victim pain.

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Data indicated that participants with higher perceived responsibility rated the teasing as less painful than participants with lower perceived responsibility, but only for victims who responded to the teasing with humor or hostility.

Researchers explain that ambiguity in a tease arises when the intentions of the teaser and the intentions of the victim become less obvious (Eisenberg, 1986; Epley et al., 2004). Regardless of the original intent of the tease (in this case, the intent of the tease was meant to be hurtful), researchers posit that the victim's response to the tease ultimately alters the meaning of the tease and sets the tone for further interaction (Kowalski, 2003; Mills & Carwile, 2009). Per results of this study, for participants with greater perceived responsibility, participants rated victims who responded actively to the teasing (i.e., hostile and humor response) as feeling less pain than victims who responded passively (i.e., ignore response).

These results reveal an important distinction. Whereas these results indicate that more empathic participants rated the teasing as most painful to the victim who responded with hostility, even though perceived responsibility is linked with prosocial behaviors, participants with greater perceived responsibility are not necessarily more skillful in effectively decoding the intentions and emotions of the victim. That is, when observing the victim who responds actively (i.e., with hostility or humor), participants with higher perceived responsibility might think, "I'm ready to help, but since you're doing something, you seem to have it under control, and therefore my help is not needed." If this distinction between empathy and perceived responsibility is true, then these data suggest the need for victims to better clarify their intentions if wishing to solicit help from others high in perceived responsibility.

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Regarding resource allocations, participants' with a greater sense of bystander responsibility allocated more cookies to victims, but only for victims who ignored the teasing. Alternatively, participants' with greater perceived responsibility allocated fewer cookies to victims who responded with humor and hostility. Consistent with the pattern found with participant empathy, these data support research indicating that people give more help to those who need it. Specifically, participants with higher perceived responsibility rated the victim who provided a passive victim response (i.e., ignored the teasing) as feeling the most pain and provided this victim with the most resources compared to victims who responded actively (i.e., with hostility or humor).

From an action potential perspective, these data are both valuable and concerning, and support the literature indicating that the victim's response to the tease ultimately influences the way others perceive and react to the interaction (e.g., Kowalski, 2003; Mills & Carwile, 2009). These data suggest that even though children with higher perceived bystander responsibility may be willing to providing victims with assistance, if a clear signal from the victim is not communicated that the victim wants or needs help, these children will overlook the opportunity to provide assistance.

How Does Tolerance of Overt Aggression Moderate the Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing?

The tolerance of aggressive solutions to social challenges guide one's actions by informing which behaviors are considered acceptable and which should be avoided (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). Children and adolescents who believe aggression is normative are significantly more likely to engage in physical, verbal, relational, and cyber aggression (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lim & Ang, 2009; Martinez-Dick &

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Landau, 2008; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Williams & Guerra, 2007). Children exposed to violence or raised in violent communities are more likely to accept aggression compared to those who are exposed to less community violence (Bennet & Fraser, 2000), and greater exposure to violence also relates to greater acceptance for engaging in aggression once provoked (i.e., that it is more acceptable to fight back; McMahon et al., 2009).

This study examined how participants' tolerance for overt aggression moderated the effects of victim response on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing. Based on previous research, it was expected that the current study would yield a similar pattern of findings in which participants' greater tolerance for overt aggression would be linked to less positive views of the victim (i.e., less likability, less social preference), more negative views of the victim (i.e., more victim blame), less perceptions of victim pain, and less cookies allocated to the victim. Results indicated significant interactions between participants' individual difference in tolerance for overt aggression and victim response regarding effects on participants' positive views of the victim, perceptions of victim pain, and on the number of resources allocated to the victim.

Regarding positive views of the victim, participants with greater tolerance of overt aggression generally endorsed fewer positive views of the victim, regardless the victim response observed. This result converges with literature indicating that children and adolescents who believe aggression is normative are significantly more likely to engage in peer victimization and derogate the victim (Howard et al., 2014; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lim & Ang, 2009; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Williams & Guerra, 2007). The moderation of participants' tolerance for overt

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aggression on the effect of victim response indicated, however, that participants with more tolerance for overt aggression rated the victim as less positive when the victim responded with humor and the least positive for the victim who responded with hostility, compared to the ignore victim response. These data support the dichotomy that participants with higher tolerance to overt aggression prefer victims who respond passively (i.e., ignore or "sit and take" the teasing) rather than victims who respond actively to the teasing (i.e., with humor or hostility).

These data diverge from research in the bullying and cyberbullying literature indicating that participants higher in aggression tolerance endorsed less positive views of the victim when the victim responded with humor and the least positive views when the victim ignored the aggressor (Howard & Landau, 2014; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012). Also, as research indicates that participants with greater tolerance to aggression are more accepting of the use of aggression to solve problems (Bennet & Fraser, 2000; Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; McMahon et al., 2009; Williams & Guerra, 2007), these findings further diverged from the expectation that participants with greater overt aggression tolerance would more strongly accept victims who emitted responses consistent with aggression (or at least, not rate them as *less* positive).

The pattern for this data could be explained, not by the victim's behavior in isolation, but in context of the aggressor's behavior. That is, since participants higher in overt aggression tolerance would be expected to accept and tolerate aggressive behaviors (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997), this would also indicate that these participants would rate the actual act of hurtful teasing as more acceptable and less problematic. As such, it is possible that when participants high in overt aggression tolerance observed victims

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respond with an active victim response, they may interpret the victim as more negative because they are overreacting. That is, for participants with higher tolerance to overt aggression, the active victim responses are considered socially inappropriate responses to teasing (hence the endorsement of less positive victim views) and the passive victim response is considered socially appropriate (hence the endorsement of more positive victim views).

Regarding participants' perception of victim pain, participants with greater tolerance for overt aggression rated the teasing as less painful for victims, but only for victims who responded with hostility and even less painful for victims who responded with humor. Alternatively, participants with greater tolerance for overt aggression rated the teasing as more painful for the victim who ignored the teasing. Results of various studies in the teasing literature indicate that participants frequently rate the victim in the hostile response as feeling the most pain, being the most angry, or being the most hurt by the teasing (Georgesen et al., 1999; Landau et al., 2001; Scambler et al., 1998), however, these studies did not consider the moderating effect of overt aggression tolerance on victim response to hurtful teasing. Regarding expectations for ways boys are expected to handle and respond to teasing, teasing and verbal taunts are often a part of male socialization, and boys are expected to some degree to better manage these behaviors without getting upset (Eder, 1991; Kowalski, 2003; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Given this socialization practice, combined with participants who are more tolerant of overt aggression, it is no surprise that participants higher in overt aggression tolerance rated the victim who responded with hostility and humor as feeling less pain than the victim who ignored the teasing, as these are the responses that these participants are socialized to

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expect (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Regarding participants' perceptions of socially appropriate versus socially inappropriate responses, is it possible that participants with higher tolerance for overt aggression *enjoy* seeing the victim feel pain, rather than simply *tolerate* it? This may explain the link between participants with greater overt aggression tolerance rating passively responding victims as both more likable and feeling more pain, compared to actively responding victims who were rated as both less likable and feeling less pain.

Regarding resource allocations, participants with greater tolerance for overt aggression allocated less cookies to victims who provided the hostile response and the least cookies to victims provided the humor response, compared to victims who gave the ignore response. Alternatively, participants higher in overt aggression tolerance allocated more cookies to victims who ignored the teasing. Again, these findings converge with research indicating that participants allocate resources based on perceptions of need, such that participants with more tolerance of overt aggression rated the passive victim response as most painful to the victim and provided that victim with the most resources, compared with the active victim responses. This pattern was consistent for the hostile and humor victim response, as well.

How Does Tolerance of Relational Aggression Moderate the Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing?

As indicated above, one's tolerance of aggressive solutions to social challenges guides actions by informing which behaviors are considered acceptable and which are inappropriate (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997). In addition to examining the influence of participants' tolerance of overt aggression, this study also examined how participants'

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tolerance of relational aggression moderated the effects of victim response on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing. Relational aggression includes behaviors such as social exclusion, rumor spreading, and withholding friendships as an intentional strategy to cause another harm (Crick, 1996; Bauman & Del Rio, 2006).

Based on this previous research, it was expected that the current study would yield the same pattern of findings for that of overt aggression tolerance, such that it would be linked to less positive views of the victim (i.e., less likability, less social preference), more negative views of the victim (i.e., more victim blame), less perceptions of victim pain, and less cookies allocated to the victim. As expected, simple correlations indicated a significant and positive correlation between relational aggression tolerance and overt aggression tolerance. Results indicated significant interactions between participants' individual differences in tolerance for relational aggression and victim response regarding their effects on participants' positive views of the victim, negative views of the victim, perceptions of victim pain, and on the number of resources allocated to the victim. The directions of these interactions, however, were contradictory to most hypotheses. Each interaction effect is presented below followed by an attempt to logically connect these data together.

Regarding positive views of the victim, participants' with greater tolerance for relational aggression endorsed less positive views of the victim, but only for victims who provided a humor response. Otherwise, participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression unexpectedly endorsed more positive views of victims who provided the hostile or ignore response. The pattern of these findings is highly inexplicable. According to previous research, participants who are more tolerant of relational aggression should

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have considered behaviors consistent with relational aggression as more positive (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997), but instead, victims who responded with humor were rated as least likable compared to victims who emitted the hostile and ignore responses. These data further diverge from previous research that has shown that when responding passively to cyberbullying, participants with higher aggression tolerance rated the victim as less positive (Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012), and that greater tolerance for aggression was associated with less positive views of bullied victims (Howard et al., 2014). Whereas these data do not fit results of previous studies examining the moderating effects of relational aggression tolerance to bullying and cyberbullying, it is possible that the children react to hurtful teasing differently than bullying and cyberbullying. It is noteworthy to mention that this is the first known study to specifically examine the interaction of tolerance for relational aggression and victim response on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing and this may be an important consideration for determining how these factors differ across peer victimization type.

Regarding negative views of the victim (i.e., victim blame, perceived justification for the teasing), these data unexpectedly showed that regardless of observed victim response, participants with more tolerance for relational aggression endorsed less negative views of the victim (i.e., less victim blame, fewer perceptions that the victim was deserving of the teasing); and likewise, participants with less relational aggression tolerance endorsed more negative views of the victim (e.g., more victim blame). Research by Howard and colleagues (2014) indicated that participants with greater tolerance for aggression had a greater tendency to endorse more negative views of the victim, as they related to victim blame and perceptions of justifiability of the victimization. Although

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unexpected, it is again relevant to note that this specific moderation effect has yet to be examined among the hurtful teasing literature. It may be possible that participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression do not see the hurtful teasing as problematic, and therefore, do not see need to attribute blame to the victim as there is no problem towards which to attribute blame.

Regarding perceptions of victim pain, participants with more tolerance for relational aggression rated the teasing as less painful for victims who responded with hostility and by ignoring the teasing, than victims who responded with humor. In fact, ratings of victim pain was amplified for victims who responded with humor. These results converge with research showing that children with more normative beliefs about relational aggression linked to greater acceptance for engaging in relational aggression solutions once provoked, as well as more likely to engage aggression themselves (Huesmann & Guerra, 1997; Lim & Ang, 2009; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2008; McMahon et al., 2009; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004; Williams & Guerra, 2007). These findings are similar to that of participants with higher overt aggression tolerance, such that that victims who were rated as feeling the most pain were also rated as least positive. While previous research documents victims who respond with hostility as feeling the most pain and the least liked (e.g., Landau et al., 2001), these findings converge with previous research indicated that the most robust predictors of participant response are individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning (Howard et al, 2014).

Regarding resource allocations, participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression allocated more resources to victims, but only for the victim who responded with hostility. Small and nearly insignificant associations were indicated for victims who

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emitted an ignore response (indicating slightly less resources from participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression) and humor response (indicating slightly more resources from participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression). As this is the first known study to directly assess the moderation of tolerance for relational aggression on victim response to hurtful teasing, a direct comparison to the research literature is challenging. Results of previous bullying and cyberbullying research indicated that tolerance for aggression was linked to fewer resource allocations to victims (Howard et al., 2014; Martinez-Dick & Landau, 2012). These studies, however, examined participants' overall normative beliefs about aggression, and did not individually discriminate between tolerance of overt aggression versus tolerance of relational aggression.

Research by Mills and Carwile (2009) posit that ambiguity in teasing arises when the intentions of the teaser and victim are unclear. As the humor victim response used in the current study was imbedded with sarcasm, it is possible that participants with higher relational aggression tolerance were unable to decode the intention of the victim. In fact, as the hostile victim response provides a much clearer indication of the victims' intent (i.e., to hurtfully tease back), this may provide explanation for why participants with greater relational aggression tolerance endorsed more positive views of hostile victims and more resource allocations to hostile victims when compared to victims who responded with humor.

Overall, participants with higher tolerance for relational aggression endorsed the least positive views of the victim and rated the victim as feeling the least when the victim responded to the teasing with humor, compared to victims who responded with hostility

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or by ignoring the teasing. Participants with higher tolerance for relational aggression endorsed more positive views of the victim and rated the teasing as more painful for victims who responded to the teasing with hostility or by ignoring. Victims who responded with hostility received the greatest number of resources from participants with greater tolerance for relational aggression. It is relevant and unnerving to note, that despite the lack of clear pattern of influence, participants' tolerance for relational aggression significantly impacted all four dependent variables, which indicates that this variable is highly worthy of future research to better understand its influence on participant reactions to victims of hurtful teasing.

How Does Personal Victimization Experience Moderate the Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing?

Personal victimization history refers to one's direct exposure to hurtful teasing and peer victimization. Research has shown that a significant predictor of participants' intentions to provide support in a peer victimization scenario included the participants' history as a bystander or bully (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Specifically, participants have shown to report more intentions to support the victim if they themselves had rarely or never bullied others and whether they had intervened in the past (Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Children's history with teasing has also shown to impacts for how participants perceive a teasing scenario, such that participants who had a history of teasing others derogated the victim who ignored the teasing, compared to participants who did not have a history of teasing others (Perry et al., 1990; Scambler et al., 1998). Whereas past research has examined how one's personal engagement of teasing and bullying effects reactions to future victimization episodes, no known research has examined the link

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between one's personal history of being victimized on their reactions to other victimization episodes. As such, this study examined how participants' personal victimization experience moderated the effects of victim response on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing. Results indicated significant interactions between participants' personal victimization experience and victim response regarding their effects on participants' negative views of the victim and perceptions of victim pain.

Regarding negative views of the victim participants with greater histories with victimization (i.e., participants that reported more frequently being targets of hurtful teasing) unexpectedly endorsed more negative views of the victim, regardless of the observed victim response. It was anticipated that the victims with greater personal histories of victimization would rate victims as less negative as it was assumed that these participants would show more empathy and forgiveness for seeing other children being teased.

Regarding perceptions of victim pain, victims with higher personal victimization experience also unexpectedly rated the teasing as less painful to victims; this pattern was qualified, however, by the type of victim response observed. Specifically, participants with greater victimization histories rated teasing as less painful for victims who gave the humor, even less painful for victims who responded with humor, and the least painful for victims that emitted the hostile response. These data diverged from expectations that victims with greater personal victimization histories would be more empathic and intuitive when seeing other children teased and rate them as feeling more pain.

Overall, participants with greater histories with victimization endorsed more negative views of the victim and rated the teasing as less painful for the victim.

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Moreover, participants with more victimization experience rated the teasing as less painful for victims who ignored the teasing and much less painful for victims who responded with hostility. These data indicate a concerning pattern that warrants additional research. Whereas research indicates that participants who endorse more frequent enactment of teasing and bullying are more likely to derogate the victim (e.g., Perry et al., 1990; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Scambler et al., 1998), the opposite effect was anticipated for those who have been victimized.

One reason for this pattern may be due to a potential desensitization effect. Research examining children's development of normative beliefs about aggression indicates that increased exposure to violence is linked to increased tolerance of aggressive acts (Bennet & Fraser, 2000; McMahon et al., 2009). As such, it is possible, that the more teasing one experiences the less painful they think it is for others. Previous research, however, indicates that when hurtful teasing occurs repeatedly it can be as painful to the victim as physical injury (Kowalski, 2003; Whitney & Smith, 1993), and can lead to poor interpersonal relationships, lower self-esteem, body image issues, social anxiety, and weakened perceptions of relational closeness (Cash, 1995; Ledley, Storch, Coles, Heimberg, Moser, & Bravata, 2006; Rieves & Cash, 1996; Storch, Roth, Coles, Heimberg, Bravata, & Moser, 2004; Strawser, Storch, & Roberti, 2005). Moreover, as repeated victimization is linked to attributions of lower self-esteem, then, participants with greater personal victimization histories may actually start to believe that they are to blame for their own victimization, and therefore, rate other victims as deserving of their suffering, as well. It is important that future research examine the influence of personal history with victimization, not only on other victims, but also on the self. A better

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understanding of this influence may lead to more effective interventions and the protection of the social-emotional and behavioral functioning for teased victims.

How Do Beliefs in a Just World Moderate the Effects of Victim Response on Participants' Reactions to Hurtful Teasing?

The belief in a just world theory suggests that people view the world as a fair and just place, and therefore, individuals are responsible for any unfortunate condition or suffering to which they are exposed (Lerner, 1980). Those with strong beliefs in a just world attribute negative life events to the individual's own behavior or attitude, rather than potential external causes (Lerner, 1980). Strong beliefs in a just world have shown to be related to more negative views of people with disabilities and providing less financial charity to disadvantaged groups (Applebaum, 2002; Furnham, 1995). Among the children's bullying literature, stronger just world beliefs have been linked to participants' tendency to rate the victim as more deserving of their suffering and in less need for bystander assistance (Howard et al., 2014; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). This study examined how participants' beliefs in a just world moderated the effects of victim response on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing. Results indicated significant interactions between participants' individual differences in beliefs in a just world and victim response regarding their effects on participants' negative views of the victim, perceptions of victim pain, and on the number of resources allocated to the victim.

Regarding participants' negative views of the victim, participants with stronger just world beliefs endorsed more negative views of the victim (i.e., more victim blame) only for victims who responded passively to (i.e., ignored) teasing. Alternatively, participants with stronger just world beliefs endorsed less negative views of the victim

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who responded actively (i.e., with hostility or humor). For this study, the measure for negative views of the victim included items related perceptions of victim blame, the justifiability of the teasing behavior, and perceived need for intervention. As previous research shows stronger just world beliefs are linked to increased victim blame (Howard et al., 2014; Rigby & Johnson, 2006) it was expected that participants would endorse more negative views of the victim across all victim response types. Consistent with above findings, these results support the data that victims who responded passively (i.e., ignore response) are blamed more for the teasing compared to victims who respond to the teasing actively (i.e., hostile or humor response).

Regarding perceptions of victim pain, participants with stronger just world beliefs unexpectedly rated the teasing as more painful for victims regardless of observed victim response. The divergence of these results with the literature makes an important distinction. Whereas research indicates that participants high in just world beliefs rate victims as more deserving of their victimization (e.g., Lerner, 1980; Applebaum, 2002; Rigby & Johnson, 2006), no known study explicitly examines the link between just world beliefs and perceptions of teased victims' pain. It may be possible that those with high just world beliefs are capable of identifying pain in victims, but that the identification of pain does not necessarily lead to helping behaviors. That is, they may think, "Yes, you're hurting badly, but you still brought this on yourself." Future research should continue to analyze these relations so that a better understanding can be reached.

Lastly, participants' beliefs in a just world moderated the effect of victim response on the number of cookies that participants allocated to victims. Participants with stronger just world beliefs allocated slightly fewer resources to the victim who responded

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with hostility and even less resources to victims who responded with humor. In contrast, participants with stronger beliefs in a just world allocated more cookies to victims who provided the ignore response. These data diverge with previous research, as presented above, which links stronger just world beliefs with less support given to victims (Howard et al., 2014; Rigby & Johnson, 2006). Interestingly, preliminary analysis indicated a significant positive association between participants' beliefs in a just world and participants' perceived bystander responsibility. These data may suggest that whereas participants with stronger just world beliefs believe that the world is a fair place in which "good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people," participants with stronger just world beliefs may also feel that they can help the victim do something to improve their "victim status." Interestingly, beliefs in a just world was the first variable to diverge from the finding that victims who felt more pain also received more resources. In fact, for participants with greater just world beliefs, resource allocations appeared to be determined by the participants' ratings of victim blame. That is, the victim response that resulted in the most blame received the least resources from participants with stronger just world beliefs (i.e., ignoring), and the victim response that result in the least blame received the most resources (i.e., humor).

General Summary of Findings and Future Research Implications

Overall, the main effects of victim response, main effects of individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning, and interactions between victim response and individual difference variables indicated significant impacts on participants' perceptions of the victim and willingness to allocate resources to the victim of hurtful teasing. This is the first known study to examine these specific relationships between victim response

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type and individual differences in socio-cognitive function on participants' reactions to hurtful teasing. As such the patterns of convergence and divergence of these data with that of the children's bullying and general peer victimization literature are important in identifying the way(s) hurtful teasing is interpreted by children.

Victims that *ignored* the teasing: received more positive views from participants with higher tolerance for overt aggression and relational aggression; received more negative views from participants with less perceived responsibility and stronger beliefs in a just world; received higher ratings of perceived pain from participants with more empathy, more perceived responsibility, higher tolerance for overt aggression, lower tolerance for relational aggression, and less personal victimization history; and received more resource allocations from participants with more empathy, more perceived responsibility, higher tolerance for overt aggression, lower tolerance for relational aggression, less personal victimization history, and weaker stronger beliefs in a just world.

Victims that responded to the teasing with *humor*: received more positive views from participants with lower tolerance of overt and relational aggression; received more negative views from participants with less perceived responsibility and weaker beliefs in a just world; received higher ratings of perceived pain from participants with more empathy, less perceived responsibility, lower tolerance of overt aggression, higher tolerance of relational aggression, and less personal victimization history; and received more resource allocations from participants with less empathy, less perceived responsibility, lower tolerance for overt aggression, higher tolerance for relational aggression, more personal victimization experience, and stronger beliefs in a just world.

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Victims that responded to the teasing with *hostility*: received more positive views from participants with lower tolerance of overt aggression and higher tolerance of relational aggression; received more negative views from participants with less empathy and weaker beliefs in a just world; received higher ratings of perceived pain from participants with more empathy, less perceived responsibility, lower tolerance of overt and relational aggression, and less personal victimization experience; and received more resource allocations from participants with more empathy, less perceived responsibility, lower tolerance for overt aggression, higher tolerance for relational aggression, more personal victimization experience, and stronger beliefs in a just world.

Despite the high prevalence of hurtful teasing and the occurrence hurtful teasing in all forms of bullying (Kowalski, 2003; Whitney & Smith, 1993), few studies have specifically examined hurtful teasing from a social-ecological perspective. As indicated above, this is the first known study to examine the effects victim response type and individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning on, not only participants' perceptions of victims, but also on their behavioral reactions to them. As these data lead to practical research and treatment implications, there is much to be learned regarding the moderating effect of participants' individual differences on their reactions to teasing. As such, direct replication of this study is encouraged to further substantiate the findings of this research.

Also, given the large number of significant effects found in this study, these data demonstrate the complex influences that children face (knowingly or unknowingly) when responding to teasing. Thus, future research should continue to assess the moderating effects of individual differences in participants' socio-cognitive functioning on victim

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response to hurtful teasing. For research to more accurately examine teasing within a true social-ecological perspective, however, future research also consider the interaction effects between victimization type and type of bystander response. Replication of this study across victimization type (i.e., physical bullying, relational aggression, cyberbullying) will allow researchers to understanding the conditions for which victim response and individual differences are most influential. Moreover, as teasing is most likely to occur in the presence of bystanders (Atlas & Pepler, 1998) and as differences in bystander behavior influence other bystanders (Latané & Darley, 1968; Howard et al., 2014; Salmivalli et al., 2011), knowledge of how bystanders' responses to teasing influences participant reactions is needed to truly understand teasing from the social-ecological perspective. Unfortunately, examination of the four-way interaction between participants' individual differences, victim response type, victimization type, and bystander response is likely outside of the scope of any one study.

As discussed above, an interesting finding of this study includes the two victim response dichotomies that appear to influence participants' reactions to the victims of hurtful teasing: active versus passive victim responses (e.g., passive responses yield more victim blame overall and greater likability for participants with greater aggression tolerance), and socially appropriate versus socially inappropriate responses (i.e., socially appropriate responses yield more cookie allocations). The way in which the participant was influenced by these victim response dichotomies, however, was moderated by the participants' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning. As such, these results support the continued study of participants' individual differences and how they moderate participant reactions to teasing and peer victimization.

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Particularly evident with findings for the interaction between victim response and tolerance for relational aggression regarding, there these findings suggest there may have been ambiguity in the way participants interpreted the humor victim response. This is evidenced by participants responding to the humor response similarly to the ignore response for some dependent variables, but responding to the humor response similarly to the hostile response for other variables. Research involving the different types of humor used interpersonal relationships may explain some of these differences (Martin, Puhlik, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003). For example, research by Klein and Kuiper (2006) indicate that the type of humor used by the victim (i.e., affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, self-defeating humor, and aggressive humor) impacts whether others will view the victim as more positive or more negative. Specifically, Klein and Kuiper (2006) posit that affiliative humor enhances one's relationship with others and that it is adaptive, pleasant, and enjoyable to most individuals. Affiliative humor is most likely associated with peer acceptance (Klein & Kuiper, 2006). In contrast, aggressive humor, or humor that is used for the purpose of disparaging or manipulating others (as seen in sarcasm) is more strongly associated with peer victimization and peer rejection (Klein & Kuiper, 2006; Martin et al., 2003). Likewise, research by Campbell, Martin, and Ward (2008) shows that, regarding problem solving strategies for adult dating couples, more affiliative humor and less aggressive humor leads to greater relationship satisfaction, stronger perceptions of interpersonal closeness, and better problem resolution. Ambiguity in teasing arises when the intentions of the teaser and victim are unclear (Mills & Carwile, 2009). The humor victim response used in the current study was imbedded with sarcasm (i.e., most similar to aggressive humor), which may support why participants often reacted similarly

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to the humor and hostile response. Future research should continue exploration of the subtleties in humor and how they influence participants' response to hurtful teasing.

Limitations

As reported above, preliminary analyses indicated that participants' grade and geographic region accounted for a substantial amount of variance of the dependent variables. As specific hypotheses for grade and geographic region were not made for this study, however, their main effects were not interpreted, nor were any interactions with other variables considered. Previous research indicates that individual differences in socio-cognitive function regarding both prosocial attributes and attributes related to aggression tolerance are nested by classroom. Future research should directly examine how students' individual differences cluster by geographic region. As various states are now mandating the use of social-emotional learning (SEL) standards (e.g., ISBE, 2004), this research could also bring light in evaluation of the effectiveness of SEL curriculum. Likewise, future research should directly examine the moderating influence of grade on the effects of victim response to teasing. As the influence of grade is better understood, targets of SEL curriculum could become more specific, more targeted, and ultimately more effective.

Another limitation of this study is that it examined the influence of victim response to teasing with boys only. While examination of boys only was justified due to boys being more likely than girls to engage in the overt, aggressive victimizing behaviors associated with hurtful teasing and verbal bullying (e.g., Borg, 1998; Crick et al., 1997; Mooney et al., 1991; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Rudolph, 2002), this does not mean that hurtful teasing occurs in isolation of girls or that girls do not also engage in hurtful

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teasing. In fact, research indicates that girls are more likely to interpret the stressors associated with hurtful teasing and peer victimization as hurtful, and personal victimization experience is more strongly associated with anxiety and depression for girls (Mooney et al., 1991; Rose & Rudolph, 2006; Rudolph, 2002). As such, future research should examine the different ways girls are influenced by victim responses to teasing and individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning.

To further expand the social-ecological perspective on hurtful teasing, this was the first known study to employ a behavioral measure through participant exposure of teasing episodes. Although this method provided a more accurate measurement of the social-ecology of peer interaction, due to the fact that participants knew they were taking part in an experiment, there remains the possibility that participant responses do not reflect their decisions in the real world. Likewise, although every opportunity was made to minimize response bias, due to the sensitive nature of the test material and perceived need to provide socially appropriate responses, the possibility of a response bias remains present.

A limitation to this study with regard to the generalizability of this data is that the participants in this study did not have a prior relationship with the teased, victim, or teaser, nor did the participants have any background information regarding these characters. The definition of bullying indicates that bullying is a *repeated* aggressive behavior toward another peer (Olweus, 1993). Likewise, research indicates that bystanders often use their previous relationship with the victim and teaser to inform their reactions to the teasing episode (Kowalski, 2003). Future research should examine the influence of relationship history to examine the amount of variance it can account for

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regarding participants' reactions to teasing episodes, relative to victim response and participants' individual difference in socio-cognitive functioning.

A final limitation to this study is that it did not manipulate or examine the influence of different bystander responses to teasing on participants. Research indicates that a major influence in the way bystanders react to teasing, bullying, peer victimization, and other emergency situations is based on the observed reactions of other bystanders (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Howard et al., 2014; Latané & Darley, 1968; Miller & McFarland, 1987; Salmivalli et al., 2011). While examination of this effect was outside the scope of this study, investigation of the influence of bystander response to hurtful teasing is an integral link to providing true understanding of the social-ecological nature of teasing and all other forms of peer victimization.

Implications for Future Practice and Intervention

The practical implications of this study inform both individual and school wide interventions in the movement to reduce the prevalence of hurtful teasing and increase chances that peer intervention will take place. Research indicates that peer intervention occurs in only 10% of peer victimization episodes, but once one bystander takes initiative to help, other bystanders are more likely to step in (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Craig & Pepler, 1995). These results provide valuable information for teaching victims the best ways to respond (or worst ways to respond) to solicit help and/or positive evaluation from peers.

Strategies for the Victim

This study examined the influence of three victim responses to hurtful teasing: an ignore response, a hostile response, and a humor response. Per results to this study, a victims' response to hurtful teasing has significant impact on the way others perceive and

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react. Depending on the victim's goal in terms of what the victim wants to get from the teasing episode, however, these data suggest that the victim must react differently depending on the audience.

Strategies to maximize positive views of the victim. For victims who want to maximize positive views from bystanders (e.g., likability, social preference), these data show that the most positive views of the victim were given for victims who responded by ignoring the teasing. Unfortunately, these data also show that the ignore response elicited the most negative views of the victim (e.g., perceptions of victim blame, justifiability of the teasing). Whereas victims received less negative views from participants when giving the humor or hostile response, participants also endorsed less positive views for these victims. As indicated in the results above, there appears to be a distinction between a passive victim response (i.e., ignore response) and an active victim response (i.e., hostile or humor response). Whereas passive responses led to increased perceptions of victim blame, participants also rated the victim as most positive when giving the passive response. These results are consistent with research indicating participants' positive ratings for victims who respond with more socially appropriate strategies (Ross & Horner, 2009). Implications for practice (and future research) include teaching victims to respond to the teasing with a clear and nonaggressive signal to indicate that the victim is not okay with the teasing (e.g., calmly saying, "I don't like what you're saying," "I am not okay with how you're talking to me," or "Please stop."). This may indicate to others that the victim is not comfortable with what the teaser is saying without engaging in a hostile reaction (or with a reaction that is perceived by others as hostile).

Strategies to minimize negative views of the victim. It is unfortunate to note

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that the greatest amount of variance on participants' negative views of the victim occurred in occurred in isolation of victim response. That is, these data showed that perceptions of victim blame were formulated on the main effects of participants' pre-established individual differences (i.e., perceived responsibility, tolerance for relational aggression, personal experience with victimization). Whereas these data indicate that the best strategy a victim can use to minimize participants' perceptions of victim blame is to respond to the teasing actively (i.e., with humor or hostility) rather than passively (i.e., by ignoring), these data also indicate that victims may not have enough power to influence bystander perceptions of victim blame, and that this valuation may be predetermined by the bystanders' individual differences in socio-cognitive functioning.

Strategies to communicate victim pain. Due to the socialization practices for boys regarding expectations for ways to handle and respond to teasing (e.g., Eder, 1991; Kowalski, 2003; Rose & Rudolph, 2006), victims may wish to respond in ways that communicates whether they are feeling pain and want help or whether they are able to "handle" the teasing. If it is the victim's goal to indicate to others that the teasing is hurtful and that support is needed, the victim must provide the appropriate response to accurately communicate this. This response, however, depends on the people in his immediate environment. For instance, victims' who gave the hostile and humor responses were rated as feeling less pain by participants with higher tolerance to relational and overt aggression. In contrast, victims who gave the hostile response were rated as feeling more pain for participants who were more highly empathic. That said, if victims wish to select the best response strategy to communicate that the teasing is hurtful, victims must first be able to accurately read their audience and match their response accordingly.

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If the victim wishes to communicate that the teasing is not hurtful, across all variables that significantly effected participants' perceptions of victim pain, the humor victim response was either associated with lower ratings of pain (particularly for participants higher in tolerance of relational aggression) or did not affect perceptions of victim pain. As such, responding with humor is likely the victims' best option.

Strategies to maximize resource allocations. Across all variables indicating a significant effect on the number of resources (i.e., cookies) allocated to the victim, the ignore victim response resulted in the participant allocating more cookies to the victim compared to the humor and hostile victim responses. As such, if it is the victim's goal to solicit help from others (as operationalized in this study by the number of cookies participants allocated to the victim), then these data indicate that the ignore victim response is best.

Strategies for Bystanders

The variability within these data indicate that participants are not that accurate in for deciding how much pain the victim feels, whether the victim deserves the teasing, or whether the victim needs help. Moreover, previous research identifies even more variability between perceptions of teasing between peer and teacher bystanders (Landau et al., 2001). Across all dependent variables in this study, participants' tolerance for relational aggression and tolerance for overt aggression consistently accounted for the greatest amount of variance in participants reactions to the teasing episodes. As such, school wide efforts should prioritize students and teachers of the harmful effects of teasing and minimize tolerance of aggression. Although playful teasing is a strategy socialized amongst boys in our society that has shown to have prosocial effects

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(Eisenberg, 1986; Shapiro, 1991; Voss, 1997), hurtful teasing is a strategy used to clearly and intentionally dominate, intimidate, and harm the other person (Mills & Carwile, 2009). Students and teachers need to learn that hurtful teasing should never be tolerated.

Moreover, students and teachers need to learn to seek out providing assistance to the victim, as that the victim may be less likely to ask for help directly. In previous research involving focus-groups of middle-school-aged boys, participants reported that they are less likely to approach teachers if they feel it is not safe to approach them, if they feel like they are burdening the teacher in some way, if they feel like the teacher is too busy, or if they feel their request will not result in the help they are seeking (Mockus et al., 2012). Taken together, these data indicate the utility for teachers to create and post signs identifying "Safe Zones," "No Tolerance Zones," or "Bully Free Zones" so students know exactly where and who they can go to if support is needed.

Finally, these data support organized school wide efforts designed to maximize positive behaviors within school systems, such as Positive Behavior Intervention Support (Illinois PBIS Network, 2010, Illinois PBIS Network, 2012). The more that students are praised and rewarded for supporting others, the more likely they will do so. Moreover, as teachers provide rewards for helping behaviors, the more sensitive and responsive teaching staff will become to the needs of the students. Engaging in these initiatives will help create, among both students and teaching staff, a culture of helping others in need and a culture of intolerance to peer harassment.

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APPENDIX A

BRYANT EMPATHY SCALE

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1. It makes me sad to see a girl who can't find anyone to play with.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

2. People who kiss and hug in public are silly.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

3. Boys who cry because they are happy are silly.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

4. I really like to watch people open presents, even when I don't get a present myself.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

5. Seeing a boy who is crying makes me feel like crying.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

6. I get upset when I see a girl being hurt.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

7. Even when I don't know why someone is laughing, I laugh too.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

8. Sometimes I cry when I watch TV.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

9. Girls who cry because they are happy are silly.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

10. It's hard for me to see why someone else gets upset.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

11. I get upset when I see an animal being hurt.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

12. It makes me sad to see a boy who can't find anyone to play with.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

13. Some songs make me so said I feel like crying.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

14. I get upset when I see a boy being hurt.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

15. Grown-ups sometimes cry even when they have nothing to be sad about.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

16. It's silly to treat dogs and cats as though they have feelings like people.

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1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

17. I get mad when I see a classmate pretending to need help from the teacher all the time.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

18. Kids who have no friends probably don't want any.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

19. Seeing a girl who is crying makes me feel like crying.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

20. I think it is funny that some people cry during a sad movie or while reading a sad book.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

21. I am able to eat all my cookies even when I see someone looking at me wanting one.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

22. I don't feel upset when I see a classmate being punished by a teacher for not obeying school rules.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

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APPENDIX B

ITEMS FROM THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY:

WHAT SCHOOL IS LIKE FOR ME

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1. If a bunch of kids at school were teasing another kid, I would calmly tell them to stop.
1 = Not true 2 = A little true 3 = pretty true 4 = very true

2. If I saw someone being ganged up on at school, I would tell an adult.
1 = Not true 2 = A little true 3 = pretty true 4 = very true

3. If my friends were passing mean notes about another kid, I would tell them to stop.
1 = Not true 2 = A little true 3 = pretty true 4 = very true

4. If my friends were telling lies about another kid, I would tell them to stop.
1 = Not true 2 = A little true 3 = pretty true 4 = very true

5. If I saw someone being hit or pushed around at school, I would tell an adult.
1 = Not true 2 = A little true 3 = pretty true 4 = very true

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APPENDIX C

NORMATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT AGGRESSION SCALE – REVISED

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Instructions: The following questions ask you about whether you think certain behaviors are WRONG or are OK. Mark the answer that best describes what you think. Circle ONE and only one answer.

1.	In general, it is OK to hit other people.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
2.	In general, it is OK to tell your friends not to be friends with someone you don't like.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
3.	In general, it is OK to yell at others and say bad things.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
4.	It is usually OK to push or shove other people around if you're mad.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
5.	It is wrong to insult other people.	It's really wrong	It's sort of wrong	It's sort of OK	Perfectly OK
6.	If you're angry, it is OK to say mean things about other kids to your friends.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
7.	In general, it is OK to take your anger out on your friends by using physical force.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
8.	It is wrong to take it out on others by saying mean things when you're mad.	It's really wrong	It's sort of wrong	It's sort of OK	Perfectly OK
9.	If you're angry, it is OK to say mean things to other people.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
10.	It is usually OK to keep someone you don't like from sitting with your group of friends (for example, at the lunch table).	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
11.	It is OK to stop talking to someone if you're angry.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong
12.	It is generally wrong to get into physical fights with others.	It's really wrong	It's sort of wrong	It's sort of OK	Perfectly OK
13.	In general, it is OK to stop being someone's friend if you're angry at them.	Perfectly OK	It's sort of OK	It's sort of wrong	It's really wrong

Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 12 represent the Overt Aggression subscale.
Items 2, 6, 10, 11, and 13 represent the Relational Aggression subscale.

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APPENDIX D

BELIEF IN A JUST WORLD SCALE

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1. I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

2. I feel that a person's efforts are noticed and rewarded.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

3. I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments they get.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

4. I feel that people who meet with misfortune have brought in on themselves.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

5. I feel that people get what they deserve.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

6. I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

7. I basically feel that the world is a fair place.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

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APPENDIX E

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH BULLYING SURVEY

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1. When you see someone being teased or bullied at school, how do you feel about what you see?

1 = I feel excited, because I like a good fight.
2 = I feel fearful, because I am not sure what will happen next.
3 = It doesn't bother me. I don't have feelings about it either way.
4 = I feel relieved, because it is not happening to me.
5 = I feel helpless, because I do not believe that I can stop it.

2. When you see someone teasing or bullying another student, how do you feel about the bully?

1 = I admire him/her.
2 = I feel angry toward him/her.
3 = I do not care one way or another.
4 = Helpless, because I do not believe I can stop him/her.

3. If teasing or bullying happens in your school, I am most likely the:

1 = Bully
2 = Victim
3 = Assistant to bully (I help the bully)
4 = Defender of victim (I help the victim)
5 = Outsider (I don't take sides, I stay away)

4. Some students get teased or bullied a lot and other students don't get teased or bullied much. How often do *you* get teased or bullied by others?

1 = very much less than other students
2 = less than other students
3 = the same as other students
4 = more than other students
5 = very much more than other students

5. How worried are you about being teased or bullied?

1 = not at all concerned
2 = a little/ somewhat concerned
3 = very concerned

6. How often you do you see other students get teased or bullied at school?

1 = never
2 = sometimes
3 = often

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APPENDIX F

RELATIONAL AGGRESSION SCALE

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Really true for me	Sort of true for me				Sort of true for me	Really true for me
		Example:				
		Some teens have long hair	BUT	Other teens have short hair.		
		Some teens say mean things about other kids they don't like	BUT	Other teens don't say mean things about other kids they don't like.		
		Some teens won't let certain other kids hang out with them	BUT	Other teens let all kids hang out with them.		
		Some teens do not usually make fun of other kids	BUT	Other teens make fun of other kids a lot.		
		Some teens tease other kids they don't like	BUT	Other teens don't tease other kids, even if they don't like them.		
		Some teens never gossip (tell stories) about kids they don't like	BUT	Other teens gossip (tell stories) about kids they don't like.		

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APPENDIX G

POSITIVE VIEWS OF THE VICTIM

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1. If Pat was in your class, how much would other kids like him?

1	2	3	4	5
Other kids would really dislike him a lot	Other kids would dislike him a little	Not Sure/ Neutral	Other kids would like him	Other kids would really like him a lot

2. If Chris was in your class, how much would other kids like him?

1	2	3	4	5
Other kids would really dislike him a lot	Other kids would dislike him a little	Not Sure/ Neutral	Other kids would like him	Other kids would really like him a lot

3. If Taylor was in your class, how much would other kids like him?

1	2	3	4	5
Other kids would really dislike him a lot	Other kids would dislike him a little	Not Sure/ Neutral	Other kids would like him	Other kids would really like him a lot

4. How would you feel about Pat?

1	2	3	4	5
I would really dislike him a lot	I would dislike him a little	Not Sure/ Neutral	I would like him	I would really like him a lot

5. How would you feel about Chris?

1	2	3	4	5
I would really dislike him a lot	I would dislike him a little	Not Sure/ Neutral	I would like him	I would really like him a lot

6. How would you feel about Taylor?

1	2	3	4	5
I would really dislike him a lot	I would dislike him a little	Not Sure/ Neutral	I would like him	I would really like him a lot

7. How similar do you think you are to Chris?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all similar	Not that similar	Not Sure/ Neutral	Similar	Very similar

8. How popular do you think Pat is?

1	2	3	4	5
Very unpopular	Unpopular	Sort of popular	Popular	Very popular

9. How popular do you think Chris is?

1	2	3	4	5
Very unpopular	Unpopular	Sort of popular	Popular	Very popular

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10. How popular do you think Taylor is?

1	2	3	4	5
Very unpopular	Unpopular	Sort of popular	Popular	Very popular

11. How much do you think you have in common with Chris?

1	2	3	4	5
Nothing in common	Not much in common	Not Sure/ Neutral	A few things in common	Many things in common

How much do you agree with the following statements?

12. I would be friends with Pat.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

13. I would be friends with Chris.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

14. I would be friends with Taylor.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

15. I would be Pat's partner on a school project.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

16. I would be Chris's partner on a school project.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

17. I would be Taylor's partner on a school project.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

18. If I were team captain of a dodgeball game, I would choose Pat first to be on my team.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

19. If I were team captain of a dodgeball game, I would choose Chris first to be on my team.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

20. If I were team captain of a dodgeball game, I would choose Taylor first to be on my team.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

21. If Chris was in my school, he would have the fewest friends compared to Pat and Taylor.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

22. If Chris was in my school, he would have the most friends compared to Pat and Taylor.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

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APPENDIX H

NEGATIVE VIEWS OF THE VICTIM

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1. I feel that Chris got what he was entitled to have.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

2. I feel that Chris's efforts were noticed and rewarded.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

3. I feel that Chris earned the punishments he got.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

4. I feel that Chris brought on his misfortune himself.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

5. I feel that Chris got what he deserved.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

6. I feel that rewards and punishments are fairly given to Chris.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

7. For Chris, I basically feel that the world is a fair place.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

8. Chris would not get picked on if he behaved differently.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

9. I feel that Chris got what he had coming to him.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

10. I feel like someone should have helped Chris out.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

11. Chris was treated unfairly.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

12. Chris was just unlucky.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

13. Chris is probably the type of kid who gets picked on all the time.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

14. Chris did not need any extra support.
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

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APPENDIX I

PERCEPTIONS OF VICTIM'S PAIN

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1. How upset was Chris from being teased?

1	2	3	4
Not at all upset	A little upset	Upset	Very upset

2. How mad was Chris when he was being teased?

1	2	3	4
Not at all mad	A little mad	Mad	Very mad

3. How much were Chris's feelings hurt from being teased?

1	2	3	4
Not at all hurt	A little hurt	Hurt	Very hurt

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APPENDIX J

RESOURCE ALLOCATION ACTIVITY

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On a scale of 1 – 10 (1 being "not at all" to 10 being "very much so") please indicate how much you like to eat cookies as a snack or dessert:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Please write down in the space provided how many cookies each person should receive for participating in the study.

You are not allowed to give any more than 10 cookies to any of the boys, including yourself.

___ You

___ Chris

___ Taylor

___ Pat

___ The next child participant who will come after you

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