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**Preventing School Bullying: Should Schools Prioritize an Authoritative School Discipline Approach Over Security Measures?**

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*A common response to school violence features the use of secu- rity measures to deter serious and violent incidents. However, a second approach, based on school climate theory, suggests that schools exhibiting authoritative school discipline (i.e., high struc- ture and support) might more effectively reduce school disorder. We tested these approaches on less serious, but more frequent, incidents of student victimization—physical, verbal, and rela- tional bullying—using a nationally representative sample of 12- to 18-year-olds. We found that students in schools with positive school climates, as based on authoritative discipline theory, were significantly less likely to report bullying victimization. The security measures approach had no association with physical and verbal* *bullying and only a marginal association on relational bullying.*

*KEYWORDS bullying, student victimization, school violence, authoritative school discipline, school climate, security measures*

Schools across the nation adopted zero-tolerance policies related to weapons, drugs, gangs, and violence after a series of school shootings and violent incidents swept media headlines in the mid-1990s. Along with these policies came a number of school safety measures aimed to protect students from serious violent or substance-related incidents (Juvonen, [2001](#_bookmark42); Reddy et al., [2001](#_bookmark57); Schreck, Miller, & Gibson, [2003](#_bookmark68)). Schools increasingly adopted law enforcement strategies rather than educational models to combat school violence (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, [2000](#_bookmark11); Hyman & Perone, [1998](#_bookmark41)). This resulted with some schools more closely resembling detention centers than safe learning environments (Reyes, [2006](#_bookmark58)), a process which developed concurrently with a host of other negative experiences among students (Casella, [2001](#_bookmark16); Hirschfield, [2008](#_bookmark39); Kupchik, [2009](#_bookmark43); Reyes, [2006](#_bookmark58); Simon, [2007](#_bookmark70)). State legislators are once again making these policies a top priority fol-

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lowing several recent school shooting incidents. Over 450 additional bills related to school safety have been filed between 2012 and 2013. As of December 6, 2013, 84 proposals have been introduced that create the option for or require armed staff members, 101 bills vow to increase police in schools, and 74 bills propose to ease gun restrictions (Shah & Ujifusa, [2013](#_bookmark69)). An additional 76 bills are related to upgrading school security measures. In contrast, a total of 81 bills were proposed that related to improving school climate and increasing supportive services for students.

School security measures are geared towards serious or violent offenses, though the success of these policies and subsequent safety measures in reducing school victimization is debatable (Heaviside, Rowand, Williams, & Farris, [1998](#_bookmark37); Schreck et al., [2003](#_bookmark68); Skiba & Peterson, [1999](#_bookmark71); Skiba et al., [2008](#_bookmark72)). Moreover, their influence on the more frequent low-level victimizations, such as bullying, may be even less effectual. Bullying is largely unregulated by official security measures, though it can have severe consequences that are commonly related to some of the more violent incidents (Flannery, Wester, & Singer, [2004](#_bookmark24); Levin & Madfis, [2009](#_bookmark45); Vossekuil, [2002](#_bookmark85)). Rather than rely on additional security measures to deter school victimization, as the influx of recent legislative proposals suggests, it might be more effective to prioritize a school environment based on order, fairness, certainty of punishment, and positive teacher-student relationships, particularly for bullying victimization. Students are most likely to feel unsafe in schools where bullying prevails (Brown, [2006](#_bookmark12); Hanish & Guerra, [2002](#_bookmark34); Safer, [1986](#_bookmark66); Varjas, Henrich, & Meyers, [2009](#_bookmark84)), and this oftentimes results in school or classroom avoidance (Arnette & Walsleben, [1998](#_bookmark3); Hanish & Guerra, [2002](#_bookmark34); Meyer-Adams & Conner, [2008](#_bookmark48); Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, [2010](#_bookmark61)) and accompanying psychosocial problems (Peleg-Oren, Cardenas, Comerford, & Galea, [2010](#_bookmark53)). It is therefore important for schools to address bullying and provide safe environments for all students.

This article investigates the effectiveness of student victimization pre- ventive measures on three forms of bullying. The three types of bullying— physical, verbal, and relational—are defined according to the revised Olweus Bully*/*Victim Questionnaire (Olweus, [1996b](#_bookmark52)) and other early work that cate- gorized bullying (Smith & Sharp, [1994](#_bookmark75)). We first analyze the relation between security measures and bullying victimization in school. Then, we test the association of the school climate approach, specifically focusing on aspects of authoritative discipline theory (i.e., school structure and support), with school bullying and compare these results with those of the secure building strategy.

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# Predictors and Problems of Bullying

Bullying is an acute and complicated problem that disrupts student learning and negatively affects the perception of school as a safe social environment. Olweus ([1996a](#_bookmark51)) defines bullying in the following way:

A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students *...* Negative actions can be carried out by physical contact, by words, or in other ways, such as making faces or mean gestures, and intentional exclusion from a group. (p. 265)

Bullying generally includes a physical or psychological imbalance of power between the victim and the bully (Espelage et al., [2013](#_bookmark21); Olweus, [1993](#_bookmark50)), and both bullies and victims are likely to suffer from serious short- and long-term repercussions.

There are various correlates of bullying, which range from individ- ual and family characteristics to peer, classroom, and school characteristics (Espelage & Swearer, [2011](#_bookmark23)). Studies have found differences in the types and effects of school bullying victimization by gender, race and ethnicity, age (Dukes, Stein, & Zane, [2010](#_bookmark19); Meyer-Adams & Conner, [2008](#_bookmark48); Nansel et al., [2001](#_bookmark49); Ttofi & Farrington, [2008](#_bookmark80); Underwood & Rosen, [2011](#_bookmark83); Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, [2009](#_bookmark87)), and socioeconomic background (Burrow & Apel, [2008](#_bookmark15)). Male, middle school (compared to high school), and lower socioeconomic background students have reported a higher amount of bullying victimiza- tion. The association between race and bullying victimization has not been clear-cut. This may be due to cultural differences in understanding bullying behaviors and the subsequent underreporting by some student populations. There are also differences between students in standard and special edu- cation programs and those with different types of disabilities. Students with disabilities, in general, have been found to be victimized at a higher rate than students without disabilities (Rose, Espelage, Aragon, & Elliott, [2011](#_bookmark63)), but the severity of the disability is also predictive of significantly higher bullying vic- timization rates (Rose, [2011](#_bookmark62)). The number of friends a student has, and the intensity of the relationship, serves as protective factors against bullying vic- timization. Students with supportive peer groups have been associated with lower reports of bullying and other victimization (Bollmer, Milich, Harris, & Maras, [2005](#_bookmark8); Espelage & Holt, [2001](#_bookmark22); Pellegrini & Bartini, [2000](#_bookmark54); Schmidt & Bagwell, [2007](#_bookmark67)). There are also school and classroom elements that can foster bullying and other aggressive behaviors, such as poor teacher-student relationships and inconsistent or inappropriate responses to student behavior (Doll, Song, Champion, & Jones, [2011](#_bookmark18)).

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Although bullying usually consists of lower-level incidents of aggression or harassment, the consequences of repeated victimization can be quite seri- ous and long lasting (Takizawa, Maughan, & Arseneault, [2014](#_bookmark78)). Victims of bullying commonly report undesirable physical and*/*or psychological effects (Ttofi & Farrington, [2008](#_bookmark80)). For instance, youths who experience frequent bullying are more likely to report symptoms related to depression and suici- dal ideation (Pranjic´ & Bajraktarevic´, [2010](#_bookmark56)), loneliness (Nansel et al., [2001](#_bookmark49)), anxiety and low self-esteem (Bouman et al., [2013](#_bookmark9); Smith, Polenik, Nakasita, & Jones, [2012](#_bookmark73)), lower attachment to school (Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, [2013](#_bookmark17); Robers, Kemp, Truman, & Snyder, [2013](#_bookmark60)), and myriad other anti- social and problem behaviors (Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, & Loeber, [2011](#_bookmark82)). Furthermore, youth who engage in both bullying behaviors and victim- ization exhibit the poorest psychosocial functioning (Haynie et al., [2001](#_bookmark36); Nansel et al., [2001](#_bookmark49); Peleg-Oren et al., [2010](#_bookmark53)). If the effects of bullying are left unacknowledged and untreated, these cases might end tragically through self-harm or violent retaliation (Brunstein Klomek, Sourander, & Gould, [2010](#_bookmark13); Levin & Madfis, [2009](#_bookmark45)). A preemptive strategy for reducing school violence is to address bullying issues before they become a serious threat to school safety.

# Deterrence Through Security Measures

Schools nationwide quickly adopted costly security measures and strict poli- cies in response to several highly publicized school shootings (Addington, [2009](#_bookmark2); Reddy et al., [2001](#_bookmark57); Welsh, [2000](#_bookmark89)) and a growing fear of crime (Burns & Crawford, [1999](#_bookmark14); Lawrence & Mueller, [2003](#_bookmark44); Simon, [2007](#_bookmark70)). Contrary to what these policies portend, violent student victimization is a rare occurrence. In 2009, 3% of students reported theft victimization and only 1% reported violent victimization (Robers et al., [2010](#_bookmark61)). Still, over the last decade, there has been an increase in the percentage of public schools reporting the use of numerous safety and security measures (Addington, [2009](#_bookmark2); Robers et al., [2010](#_bookmark61)). Around 70% of students ages 12 to 18 reported the presence of security guards and*/*or police officers, and 11% reported the use of metal detectors at school (Robers, Kemp, Truman, & Snyder, [2011](#_bookmark59)).

In addition to catching or preventing unlawful behavior (e.g., weapon carrying or drug-related crimes), school security measures act as deter- rent mechanisms to protect students from serious and violent incidents. As nearly every school adopted some form of security measure (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, [2001](#_bookmark30)), research developed to analyze how well these mea- sures work. However, there is little research on how effectively these security measures protect students from less serious incidents. If these measures work to deter violence and aggression in schools, then it is plausible that they could also prevent school bullying. Students may perceive security mea- sures as part of a “no-nonsense” message put forth by the school; thus, some students might avoid all forms of aggressive behavior. The presence of these numerous procedures and programs, however, can be intimidating for students, and the justification for incorporating them diminishes without evidence that they reduce school violence.

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Physical surveillance measures—such as weapons deterrence (e.g., metal detectors, locker or bag searches), campus security, or police officers— aim to prevent the most extreme forms of violence, but they may be accompanied by unintended consequences. In some cases, even if security measures have been shown to increase physical safety (Garver & Noguera, [2012](#_bookmark27)), they are also associated with greater conflict between school per- sonnel and students (Garcia, 2003; Garver & Noguera, [2012](#_bookmark27)). Schreck et al. ([2003](#_bookmark68)), however, did not find that additional security measures had any sort of increased safety benefits. In their study on victimization among middle and high school students, they reported that the presence of these mea- sures (e.g., guards, metal detectors, locked doors, supervision in the hallway, etc.) failed to reduce the likelihood of both theft and violent victimization. Maskaly, Donner, Lanterman, and Jennings ([2011](#_bookmark47)) compared the effects of school characteristics, including the number of safety measures, on school violent crime in schools with school resource officers (SROs) only, private security only, and schools with neither SROs nor private security. They found that increased security measures are associated with higher violent crime, and there are only marginal differences between the schools with different types of security personnel. They also did not directly address school bully- ing, which is far more common than incidents involving weapons and can be related to serious school violence (Bowers, Holmes, & Rhom, [2009](#_bookmark10); Fox & Levin, [2003](#_bookmark26); Vossekuil, [2002](#_bookmark85)). Moreover, security measures compromise psychological safety as they increase students’ fears and anxieties (Garver & Noguera, [2012](#_bookmark27); Hankin, Hertz, & Simon, [2011](#_bookmark35); Juvonen, [2001](#_bookmark42); Perumean- Chaney & Sutton, [2012](#_bookmark55)). The presence of these security measures could have adverse effects on school climate (Hirschfield, [2010](#_bookmark40)). Mayer and Leone ([1999](#_bookmark46)) found that efforts to control school premises in a highly restrictive manner—metal detectors, locked doors, security guards, and staff patrols— were associated with higher levels of school disorder, suggesting a reciprocal, destructive relation.

In sum, school security measures are often used in response to highly publicized, but rare, violent school incidents, but they are not consistently shown to improve school safety or prevent violence. Moreover, there is little research on how they affect less serious incidents like bullying (Blosnich & Bossarte, [2011](#_bookmark7)). These safety tactics cost millions of dollars to imple- ment and enforce, but resources to prevent student aggression and antisocial behaviors may be better used on a different approach. Schools could bene- fit from creating a positive school climate in which both students and staff are encouraged to follow school rules, treat each other with respect, and demonstrate tolerance and understanding towards one another.

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# Authoritative School Discipline: Consistent Rules, Fairness, and Respect

Not all school violence prevention practices are based on law enforcement and security measures. Some schools promote psychologically safe school climates or focus on skill building rather than the deterrent value of punish- ment (Juvonen, [2001](#_bookmark42)). The type of preventive measure the district or school decides to utilize depends on their assumption of what works.

Authoritative school discipline is a concept based on the combination of structure and support in schools (Gregory & Cornell, [2009](#_bookmark32)). Structure refers to the consistent and fair enforcement of school rules, while support is founded in the care and attention provided by adults. Together, these school features help foster a positive school climate. In a study testing authorita- tive discipline theory, Gregory and colleagues ([2010](#_bookmark33)) analyzed the effects of structure (students’ experiences of fair and consistently enforced rules) and support (students’ perceptions of staff as caring and helpful) on school safety, as measured by student-reported victimization, student perceptions of bullying at school, and teacher perceptions of bullying at school. They found that schools with more structure and support were associated with less stu- dent victimization and bullying, particularly when structure and support were taken together.

The findings from the Gregory and colleagues study are consistent with prior research on school structure and support. Schools that exhibit these aspects of authoritative school discipline are associated with more positive student perceptual and behavioral outcomes (Astor, Guerra, & Van Acker, [2010](#_bookmark5); Wang, Selman, Dishion, & Stormshak, [2010](#_bookmark88)). Positive teacher-student relationships, for example, are associated with higher reports of student acceptance of school norms and rules (Rutter, [1982](#_bookmark65)). Schools with unfair, unclear, and inconsistently enforced rules exhibit the worst discipline prob- lems (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, [2005](#_bookmark31); Gottfredson & Gottfredson, [1985](#_bookmark29)). Likewise, students are likely to reject the values of the school if they do not believe in the legitimacy of the disciplinary actions or feel teachers are not respectful of students (Stewart, [2003](#_bookmark76)). Mayer and Leone ([1999](#_bookmark46)) use the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to examine the relations among four concepts: secure building (school security measures), system of law (stu- dent understandings of rules and consequences for breaking rules), school disorder (the degree of violence and disruption in the school), and indi- vidual self-protection (student feelings and actions in response to school disorder). They found that more disorder was present when attempts to secure the school were through physical and personnel-based security mea- sures. However, when schools emphasized and consistently enforced school rules, school disorder was lowered. Thus, system of law more effectively reduces school disorder as compared to the secure building concept, which in turn lowers students’ fear of victimization and reduces school avoidance. Similarly, Welsh ([2001](#_bookmark90)) reported reduced victimization, offending, miscon- duct, and avoidance and increased feelings of safety for similar preventive measures.

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# Goals of the Present Study

While the security measures strategy for reducing school violence and aggression might have some safety benefits, it is not directly aimed at pre- venting less serious incidents like school bullying. It is possible, however, that there is some deterrent value of visible security measures for prevent- ing bullying. It is also possible that the prioritization of authoritative school discipline might provide better results in terms of lowered victimization and school bullying since an emerging body of research suggests that authorita- tive discipline characteristics, such as structure and support, are paramount to influencing school victimization (Gottfredson et al., [2005](#_bookmark31)). No study to our knowledge has empirically compared rule and teacher effects with those of security measures in terms of school bullying. In the current study, we utilize the SCS to the NCVS in order to empirically examine this proposition with respect to school bullying victimization.

# DISCUSSION

While serious school violence is uncommon, every school in America expe- riences some level of bullying among its students. Although the incidents are considered lower levels of victimization, these repeated occurrences can cause grave consequences. Thus, effective strategies of bullying prevention are crucial for keeping schools safe. Schools that adopt security measures reflect a commitment to the law and order or “get tough” approach. However, research shows that the effectiveness of these measures is inconclusive. A second, more holistic method is one supported by authoritative discipline theory, which emphasizes social cohesion among students and faculty. This approach posits that student behavior is a direct reflection of the school’s cul- ture; schools that underscore the importance of prosocial beliefs, norms and rules result in less school disorder. This article supports the latter approach in preventing school bullying. Our findings suggested that the dual presence of school structure and support mechanisms was related to significantly lower levels of bullying, while the security measures approach was not as protec- tive. Though we have yet to find a study that directly compares these two approaches, especially in regards to school bullying, our findings are sup- ported in the literature on school security measures (Burrow & Apel, [2008](#_bookmark15); Schreck et al., [2003](#_bookmark68); Wynne & Joo, [2011](#_bookmark91)) and characteristics of authoritative school discipline (Gottfredson et al., [2005](#_bookmark31); Welsh, [2001](#_bookmark90)).

We found that security measures had minimal reducing effects for all three types of bullying victimization. This finding is consistent with prior work on security measures and low-level peer victimization (Blosnich & Bossarte, [2011](#_bookmark7)) and security measures and criminal victimization (Wynne & Joo, [2011](#_bookmark91)). The significant relation between security measures and reported physical and verbal bullying disappeared once the authoritative discipline measure was included in the model, suggesting that the authoritative school discipline strategy was associated with both lower physical and lower ver- bal bullying victimization. Although we did not see the same pattern in the

relational bullying models, we note that the already low strength of the rela- tion between security measures and reported relational bullying was even further reduced once authoritative discipline was introduced. For each type of bullying, the authoritative discipline strategy was associated with signif- icantly less bullying victimization. While we are unaware of any previous research that directly compares the security measures approach with author- itative school discipline on three different forms of student bullying, our results confirm the original work done by Gregory and colleagues ([2010](#_bookmark33)) and similar measures used in research on school climate and student victimization (Astor, Benbenishty, Zeira, & Vinokur, [2002](#_bookmark4); Bear, Gaskins, Blank, & Chen, [2011](#_bookmark6); Espelage et al., [2013](#_bookmark21); Henry, Farrell, Schoeny, Tolan, & Dymnicki, [2011](#_bookmark38); Thapa, Cohen, Higgins-D’Alessandro, & Guffey, [2013](#_bookmark79)).

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Our findings regarding student characteristics confirm prior research on bullying victimization. Like previous studies, we found that older and non-White students were less likely to report bullying victimization. We also found that males reported statistically significant higher rates of physical bul- lying victimization and lower rates of relational victimization, as compared to females, which is similar to previous work (Varjas et al., [2009](#_bookmark84); Wang et al., [2009](#_bookmark87)). The number and strength of friendships was also associated with lower reports of bullying victimization (Wang et al., [2009](#_bookmark87)). Our findings are generally consistent with other areas of student victim research, which report that higher academic performance serves as a buffer for victimization, while extracurricular activities (Burrow & Apel, [2008](#_bookmark15); Wynne & Joo, [2011](#_bookmark91)) and a gang presence at school (Wynne & Joo, [2011](#_bookmark91)) are associated with a higher reporting of victimization. Also analogous to prior work, we did not find a significant association between single parent (Burrow & Apel, [2008](#_bookmark15)) or poverty (Wynne & Joo, [2011](#_bookmark91)) with student victimization. However, our results deviated from previous work on school victimization (see Burrow & Apel, [2008](#_bookmark15); Wynne & Joo, [2011](#_bookmark91)) in terms of school type (public or private) because we found a significant, negative relation between private schools and physical bullying victimization.

The findings from this study are important for understanding bullying victimization prevention for a number of reasons. There are almost no dif- ferences in the prevention of physical bullying compared to verbal and relational bullying through the use of security measures. This safety approach is typically aimed towards physical acts of violence, yet we found no support for this as an effective strategy. This is also the first study to directly compare the use of security measures with an authoritative discipline approach to analyze their effects on school bullying victimization. The robust association between authoritative discipline and lower reported bullying victimization was consistent for all three types of bullying. This suggests that schools might experience similar results by prioritizing both structure and support over security measures.

# Comprehensive Antibullying Programs

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In the past few years, bullying has been recognized as a serious problem in the United States, and most states have adopted antibullying laws and policies to be implemented in elementary and secondary schools. A large body of literature exists on which components of antibullying programs, many of which are school-based interventions (Smith, Ananiadou, & Cowie, [2003](#_bookmark74)), are the most efficacious. There is some consensus that a comprehen- sive approach—one that involves the entire school rather than just targeted individuals—tends to result in less bullying (Vreeman & Carroll, [2007](#_bookmark86)). This suggests that preventive measures that address whole-school norms and beliefs regarding bullying—essentially, factors of structure and support—are the most successful.

A well-known and internationally tested antibullying program is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), which involves individual, classroom, and school-level interventions (Olweus, [1993](#_bookmark50)). Through raising awareness, establishing clear rules against bullying, and meeting with bul- lies, victims and their families, this program has proven to reduce bullying, and numerous other antisocial behaviors among school-age children, and improving peer relations. For example, results from the First Bergen Project— the initial nationwide campaign against bullying in Bergen, Norway—include a bully*/*victim reduction of at least 50%, as well as reductions in antisocial behaviors such as vandalism, fighting with the police, drunkenness, pilfer- ing, and truancy (Olweus, 2005). There were also improvements to order and discipline, social relationships, attitudes towards school, and student satisfaction with school. Similar, yet weaker (roughly between 20% and 40% bully*/*victim reductions), results have been found in several follow-up stud- ies of OBPP (i.e., New Bergen Project against Bullying and New National Initiative Project) and have been replicated in other countries (see Olweus & Limber, 2010).

In a recent systematic review and meta-analysis on the effectiveness of

antibullying programs, Ttofi and Farrington ([2011](#_bookmark81)) found that whole-school approaches were significantly related to less bullying but not victimization. Disciplinary methods, though, were significantly related to both bullying and victimization. As OBPP stresses, firm sanctions for bullies resulted in reduced bullying. Other successful factors include high intensity and duration and increased supervision. Additionally, Ttofi and Farrington recommend that new antibullying initiatives go beyond the school to address wider systemic factors, like the family. Essentially, the more elements included in the pro- gram, and the greater the intensity and duration of the program (Farrington & Ttofi, 2010; Fox, Farrington, & Ttofi, [2012](#_bookmark25)), the more likely it is to suc- cessfully prevent bullying (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, [2010](#_bookmark77)). The virtual absence of any type of official security measure is notable in the literature on bullying prevention. The present study found that the general

presence of these measures did not help create school cultures that are conducive to lowered aggression and violence.

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# Implications for Policy and Practice

Our findings have implications for policy and practice. First, our research suggests that improving the school’s climate through high structure and sup- port mechanisms is an effective way of preventing school bullying. School principals should focus on cultivating school cultures that emphasize both tolerance and respect while maintaining order through fair and consistent rules. As authoritative school discipline theory suggests, student behavior will reflect the expectations of the school and its personnel if students internalize the school’s norms, beliefs, and mission. Teacher morale and teacher-student relationships are just as important for maintaining order as school discipline. Second, schools that rely on deterrence mechanisms might be inadvertently augmenting preexisting behavioral problems. These inva- sive security measures, however, might foster a school climate that is built on fear, punishment, and negative perceptions of the law, thereby reinforcing aggressive and violent attitudes among students.

# Limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, although we consider three forms of bullying, we were unable to include cyberbullying since the SCSs to the NCVS do not include questions on cyberbullying until the 2009 survey year. Cyberbullying is a distinct dimension of school bullying that deserves future attention. Second, the administration of the SCS is structured to capture the experiences and feelings of victims, yet bullying is an interaction between the perpetrator(s) and victim. Unfortunately, our findings cannot speak to the characteristics of bullies nor the factors that influence their decision to offend. We were also unable to identify those who are both bullies and victims. Similarly, we did not examine other factors of school bullying that have been shown to predict it. For instance, previous research suggests that direct measures of parental bonding exert strong effects on school bullying (Ttofi & Farrington, [2008](#_bookmark80)). We also recognize that our measure of author- itative school discipline does not fully encompass the characteristics that could contribute to school structure and support. The SCS does not provide the detailed information necessary to fully test the two constructs separately using confirmatory factor analysis. However, our findings for authoritative discipline as a single measure support prior research testing this theory. Moreover, we are constrained to analyzing school-level prevention efforts based on student self-reports of school characteristics due to data limita- tions. Finally, our study is limited to a pooled cross-sectional analysis; we are unable to assess the casual effects of security measures or authoritative school discipline on student bullying.

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# CONCLUSION

School bullying remains a pervasive and serious problem, but this does not justify the hasty adoption of punitive measures and sanctions in schools. This study communicates the policy value of the authoritative discipline approach for bullying reduction. Considering the marginal effects of the secu- rity measures approach, and the independently meaningful findings of the authoritative school discipline approach, we recommend that schools adopt more consistent rule-oriented and teacher-driven bullying prevention mech- anisms. While the inclusion of security measures is associated with some reduction in school bullying victimization, the marginal benefits do not merit the psychological risks and steep financial expenses.

# COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and*/*or publication of this article.