Dimensions of School Climate Associated with Reports of Bullying and Victimization in a Setting Serving Predominantly Latino Youth

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Abstract
Over the past decade, there has been increased recognition of the importance of school climate and school climate reform to address school violence. School climate has been found to have a significant impact on bullying reports and victimization, however correlations between these variables may differ among Latino, economically disadvantaged youth. Results indicated that reports of witnessing bullying and bullying victimization were correlated to the Teaching and Learning, Relationships, or Emotional Environment dimension, however no correlations were found with the Physical Environment, Community Engagement, and Morale in the School Community dimensions. Implications for school administrators, faculty, and staff are discussed.

Keywords:Bullying, school climate, victimization, Latino

Introduction

School districts across the United States have transitioned to interventions focused on school climate reform as a catalyst to address and impact school violence over the past decade (American Institute for Research, 2015; Steffgen, Recchia, & Viechtbauer, 2013; Thapa, Cohen, Guffrey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). School climate reform has also gained popularity due to positive correlations found between school climate and reduction of risky behaviours in students (Klein, Cornell, & Konold, 2012), student willingness to seek help in situations involving bullying (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2010), and negative correlations with bullying behaviours (Wang, Berry, & Swearer, 2013).

Bullying prevention research highlights specific characteristics that may predispose specific students to have a higher likelihood of becoming a target of bullying behaviours (Esbensen & Carson., 2009; Nansel et al., 2001). A recent survey conducted by the Human Rights Campaign (2016) found Latino youth to be 20% more likely to be victims of bullying than their non-Latino peers. Latino youth surveyed reported changing their appearance, fearing speaking Spanish, and changes in their personal behaviours due to fear of bullying or harassment (HRC, 2016). Although research indicates school climate is an important factor in the prevention of school violence among youth (Klein et al., 2012), current studies also indicate that Latino youth may not benefit from the same protective factors or be burdened by the same risk factors, associated with school climate, as their non-Latino peers (Hong et al., 2014). For example, positive relationships with teachers is considered a protective factor associated with school climate. However, a research study found student-teacher relationships and parent-teacher relationships may be impacted by the reluctance of staff to contact Latino parents due to language barriers (Olsen, 2008). Additionally, some teachers and staff may hold negative or prejudicial attitudes toward Latino students which may limit their capabilities to provide an effective educational environment (Olsen, 2008; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008).

Economic disadvantage, or perceptions of economic disadvantage, adds an additional dimension when investigating correlations between school climate, bullying victimization, and race. Research findings indicate economic disadvantage can place a student at higher risk of bullying victimization. A meta-analysis of 22 studies on bullying and socioeconomic status (SES) found a strong association between targets of bullying and economically disadvantaged and although low SES was a poor predictor of bullying others, it was associated with higher odds of being a victim or bully-victim (an individual who may have been a target of bullying behaviours at some point and either currently, or simultaneously perpetrates bullying behaviours) (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). Economically

disadvantaged youth are more likely to attend large, overcrowded schools associated with high levels of bullying behaviour (Barnes, Belsky, Broomfield, & Melhuish, 2006). Bullying has been found to be correlated with poor health outcomes later in life, especially in children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Due, Damsgaard, Lund, & Holstein, 2009). In a comparative, cross-sectional, multilevel study conducted in 35 countries, due and colleagues found that children from less affluent families and from countries and schools with wide economic disparities were more likely to experience bullying (Due et al., 2009). A follow up study found that children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who were exposed to bullying were more likely to suffer from depression later in life than their more affluent counterparts (Due et al., 2009).

The implementation of school climate interventions and reduction of school related violence may support adherence to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Klein, 2015) by improving the overall school and the academic environment and increasing equal access to education. The authors noted that some dimensions of the environment (e.g., school, neighbourhood) may also place children in low SES families at a higher risk of being victimized.

The preceding findings were the impetus for the current study. The purpose of the current study was to identify which specific dimensions of school climate contributed to reports of bullying and victimization in an urban, private secondary school setting serving primarily Latino, economically disadvantaged youth. After a review of school climate literature, our assumptions were that all dimensions of school climate would significantly predict bullying and victimization. Data from a school climate survey was analysed to address the following research questions: 1) which dimensions of school climate are correlated with student reports of bullying? and 2) which dimensions of school climate are correlated with student reports of bullying victimization?

School Climate, Bullying, and Latino Youth

Defining School Climate

There is not a current consensus among researchers regarding a specific definition of school climate, but the most frequently used definition of school climate was developed by The National School Climate Council (Thapa et al., 2013). The National School Climate Center (2015) recommends the following definition of school climate and a sustainable, positive school climate respectively:

"School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures." (NSCC, 2015, para.3).

"A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment. " (NSCC, 2015, para. 4).

Domains and Dimensions of School Climate

School climate research refers to aspects of the environment as domains and dimensions. Thapa and colleagues (2013) identified the following five dimensions of school climate after conducting an extensive review of school climate research : (a) Safety (e.g., rules and norms, physical safety, social-emotional safety); (b) Relationships (e.g., respect for diversity, school connectedness/engagement, social support, leadership, and students' race/ethnicity and their perceptions of school climate); (c) Teaching and Learning (e.g., social, emotional, ethical, and civic learning; service learning; support for academic learning; support for professional relationships; teachers' and students' perceptions of school climate); and (d) Institutional Environment (e.g., physical surrounding, resources, supplies), and (e) the School Improvement Process (p. 359). A review of school climate research conducted by Wang and Degol (2015) identified four domains and 13 dimensions of school climate; "(a) academic (i.e., teaching and learning, leadership, professional development); (b) community (i.e., quality of relationships, connectedness, respect for diversity, partnerships); (c) safety (i.e., social and emotional safety, physical safety, discipline and order); and (d) institutional environment (i.e., environmental adequacy, structural organization, availability of resources." (p. 321).

A positive school climate may support student academic achievement and positive social-emotional development (Sherblom, Marshall, & Sherblom, 2006; Way, Redd, & Rhodes, 2007). Person-environment theories posit that positive school climate is correlated with academic achievement due to an increase in academic motivation and interest (Moos, 1987). These concepts support the relationship between academic performance and social emotional well-being and student perceptions of how their personal abilities, preferences, and characteristics are congruent with the social processes of their setting (Moos, 1987).

Latino students and perceptions of school climate

Researchers have investigated differences in student perceptions of school climate based on race including Slaughter-Defoe and colleagues (1996) survey of 1260 African American and Latino, third grade students. Latino and African American student perceptions of the importance of specific dimensions of school climate varied. Latino students perceived teacher fairness, praise, and caring for students to be most important (Slaughter-Defoe, & Carlson, 1996). More recently, Voight and colleagues (2015) conducted a study to investigate racial gaps in perceptions of school climate and correlations with racial achievement gaps in middle schools. Latino students had lower perceptions of school safety, connectedness, perceived opportunities for participation, and adult-student relationships than their White counterparts. Racial differences or gaps between Latino and White student perceptions of adult-student relationships and opportunities for meaningful participation were found to be due to within school differences. Racial gaps in perceptions of school connectedness and safety were found to be due to between school differences.

Bullying and School Climate

The U.S. Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control, and a significant number of State Departments of Education consider school climate reform to be an essential part of bullying prevention (Cohen & Friedberg, 2013; Thapa at al., 2013). Bullying behaviours and school climate have been found to be negatively correlated, the more supportive and positive the school climate, the less likely bullying behaviours are tolerated by stakeholders in the school (Cohen & Friedberg, 2013). Positive school climate

supports the reduction of aggressive behaviours by promoting safe and healthy relationships and safe environments and increasing the presence of positive role models demonstrating prosocial behaviours, such as teachers, administrators, and staff (Cohen, 2014; Espelage, Low, & Jimerson, 2014). In a recent study conducted by Acosta and colleagues (2018) indicated that positive school climate in secondary school settings had a positive impact on students' experiences of cyberbullying, increased student perceptions of school connectedness and peer attachment and students reported greater levels of assertiveness and empathy. Associations between peer aggression and positive school climate remain positive among some students with racial/ethnic differences. Konold and colleagues found significant differences in associations between school climate, peer aggression, and school engagement between Black and White youth, however there were no significant differences found between White and Latino youth. Although racial and ethnic differences among youth and associations between bullying and school climate may differ, overall a positive school climate has a positive impact on student perceptions of bullying. School climate reform, in urban settings, may encounter several barriers such as higher staff /administration turnover, limited funding, larger class size, higher rates of staff assaults, and higher prevalence of workplace bullying.

Students of colour and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds perceptions of school climate may be impacted differently than others based on various factors. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students of colour may experience disproportionately more negative outcomes in school and multiple areas (Civil Rights Data Collection, 2014). Negative outcomes can be reflective of school climates that are not considerate of or inclusive of economically disadvantaged students or students of colour and are more considerate of White middle class culture (Silva, Langhout, Kohfeldt, & Gurrola, 2015). Students of colour and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may receive harsher discipline and consequences than their White peers and have been found to experience a disproportionate number of suspensions, expulsions, and discipline referrals (Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert, 2010; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). These differences in the school experiences of students of colour and White students, and the disadvantages experienced by students of colour and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds make it important to consider race when assessing school climate (Hope, Skoog, & Jagers, 2015; Shirley & Cornell, 2012).

Economically disadvantaged student perceptions of school climate have been found to be a moderating factor between poverty and behaviour (Hopson & Lee, 2011). This study suggests that the climate of schools that serve predominantly economically disadvantaged students put them at risk of being the target of bullying. The study confirms that Latino students may perceive school climate differently than their European American peers. Learning about which dimensions of school climate are related to bullying and victimization will provide an initial foundation to develop targeted interventions and implement policy changes to reduce bullying and prevent its deleterious consequences.

Methods

Participants

The sample included 361 students (N=361) reflected an urban, private, secondary school in the Eastern United States with a preponderance of Latino students and economically disadvantaged youth. There were 165 (46%) males and 196 (54%) females. In addition, 35 % of the participants were 9th graders (n=125), 28 % 10th graders (n=102), 20 % 11th graders (n=72), and 17 % 12th graders (n=62). Sample ethnicity was composed

of 271 Latino students (75%), 67 African American students (19%), 3 Asian/Pacific Islander students (1%), 7 Caucasian students (2%), and 13 others (4%). One hundred percent of the sample are eligible or receive free or reduced lunch as it is a requirement to attend the school.

Table 1. *Demographics of the students*

Category	*N*	%
Gender		
Female	196	54
Male	165	46
Grade		
9th	125	35
10th	102	28
11th	72	20
12th	62	17
Race/Ethnicity		
Caucasian/White	7	2
Black/African American	67	19
Latino	271	75
Asian/ Pacific Islander	3	1
Other	13	4
Report of bullying occurrences	86	23.31
Report of bullying victimization	43	11.65

Data Collection

A link to a web-based student and faculty version of the New Jersey School Climate Survey 2012 was emailed to the school counselor. The web-based survey included an Informed Consent form on the first page of the survey which required students to select "I accept to proceed with the survey." School counselors facilitated the assent process for students. Students completed the survey in the school's computer lab by class. Parents were notified of the survey administration via email and through a letter sent home in the mail. Per Institutional Review Board (IRB) guideline, parents were instructed to notify the school if they did not want their child to take part in the survey. This method of consent was approved by the IRB due to the study posing no more than minimal risk to the study participants and the study being classified as exempt. A large percentage of parents were Spanish speaking only, therefore, letters were sent home in English and Spanish. The study and procedures described above were approved by the IRB.

Survey Instruments

Demographic information. On the student demographic form, we inquired about gender, race, grade level, years of attendance at the school, and number of clubs students belonged to.

School climate survey. Student perceptions of school climate were measured using The New Jersey School Climate Survey 2012 (NJSCS). NJSCS was developed by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), in collaboration with the Bloustein Center for Survey Research (BCSR) at Rutgers University to collect and analyze information

from diverse school populations to reinforce positive school climate and address vulnerabilities in conditions for learning.

NJSCS (2012) student survey included questions organized into six areas or dimensions: (a) Physical Environment, which measures scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building comprised 4 items including "My school is kept clean"; (b) Emotional Environment, which measures attitudes toward physical safety, the social environment, and individual emotional safety, comprised 11 items including "Most students in my school do all their homework"; (c) Teaching and Learning, measured the academic climate of the school and probes support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, attitudes about ownership of teaching and learning, and general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the schools' overall instructional quality and consisted of 16 items including "My teachers think all students can do challenging school work"; (d) Relationships, measuring depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communication efforts and the fairness of the administration of the school's academic and social environments (14 items). A sample item is "Students at this school are often teased or picked on"; (e) Community Engagement, measuring incorporation of parents and community members into social and academic life of the school (3 items). A sample survey question from this dimension is "My family wants me to do well in school"; and (f) Morale in the School Community, measuring the school's ability to support and rally the local community to healthy and positive outcomes (3 items). A sample question is "I wish I went to a different school". Participants respond to each items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree to 5=Strongly Agree.

Mean and median score for each dimension of school climate were calculated and used for analyses, with higher scores indicating higher (more positive) perceptions of each dimension of school climate. The internal consistency reliability for this instrument in the current study was α=.94.

Bullying. Student reports of experiences with bullying was measured using self-report questions. Participants were given a definition of bullying ("Bullying specifically involves 3 things: An unwanted aggressive behavior, a real or perceived power imbalance, and a behavior is repeated, or has potential to be repeated over time") and asked 2 self-report questions. Occurrence of bullying was measured by an item asking: "Does bullying occur at your school?" Student's experience of bullying victimization was assessed through an item: "Have you been a victim of bullying during this school year?" We used a categorical scale; "1=yes", "2=No", "3= I am not sure." for the occurrence of bullying and "1=yes", "2=No", "3= No, but I am aware of a person who has." for the report of victimization.

Data Analysis

Students were informed that they were not required to answer every question in the survey and this resulted in about 87% of all eligible students completing the entire survey. Manual calculation of domain scores identified about 75 cases of missing data. The following method was employed to reduce the number of cases; if a participant answered at least 60% of the questions in a specific domain, the average of those answers was used to calculate domain scores. If a participant answered less than 60% of the questions in a specific domain, their response was considered a missing data point. Normality and heteroscedasticity of the data were examined. Almost all the data was located in the 95% confidence interval of an Anderson-darling Normality test and heteroscedasticity did not seem to be a problem. However, the Community Engagement for students was not

normally distributed and median score was calculated instead of mean. Statistical analyses were conducted with the assistance of the Statistics Consulting Center.

Two sets of binary logistic regression analyses were conducted to evaluate which, if any, of the six dimensions (Physical Environment, Emotional Environment, Teaching and Learning, Relationships, Moral in the School Community, Community Engagement) were associated with the occurrence of bullying in the school and students' perceptions of bullying victimization. Scores on each dimension of school climate were used as predictor variables. Occurrence of bullying and experience of victimization, the outcome variables in this study, were dichotomized for analysis by logistic regression. Two questions were used ("Does bullying occur at your school?" and "Have you been a victim of bullying while you have been at this school?") and responses were coded in 0 (No) or 1 (yes). "No" responses were pooled with "Not Sure" due to no significant differences being found between the two responses.

Results

The percentage of respondents who reported occurrences of bullying and experiences of bullying victimization were analyzed and presented in Table 1. Data revealed that 23.31% of students reported that bullying occurs at school and 11.65% of students reported that they had been a victim of bullying. A chi-square test of association assessed whether demographic variables of gender, grade level, and race/ethnicity were significantly related to reports of bullying and being victimized. There is a statistically significant difference in gender (p=.03) that female students (16.1%) were more likely to report victimization than male students (7%). There are no significant differences between the other demographic variables and bullying. A summary of students' perceptions of the six domains of school climate (Physical Environment, Emotional Environment, Teaching and Learning, Relationships, Moral in the School Community, Community engagement) are presented in Table 2. The most positively rated domain of school climate was the Community Engagement domain. (Median= 4.67) and the least positively rated domain was the Physical Environment domain (M= 3.11, SD= .66).

Table 2. *Students' perception of school climate*

Dimension	*N*	*M (SD)*
Physical environment	349	3.11 (0.66)
Emotional environment	325	3.46 (0.50)
Teaching and learning	312	3.44 (0.56)
Relationships	322	3.33 (0.56)
Moral in school community	324	3.35 (0.87)
Community engagement	322	4.67

Logistic Regression Analyses

Effects of school climate on reports of bullying occurrences. Table 3 shows the results from two logistic regression models of occurrence of bullying and experience of bullying victimization. The first logistic regression model of Teaching and Learning was positively associated with student reports of bullying experiences (β= 1.115, p = .005), while Relationships (β= -1.827, p < .001) and Emotional Environment (β= -.973, p =.034) were negatively (inversely) related to student reports of bullying, so that the odds ratios indicate students' perceptions of specific school climate dimensions were significantly associated with higher odds of student reports of bullying experiences. Each unit increase in teaching and learning dimension increased the odds of student reports of bullying

experiences was 3.05 times. The relationship dimension was associated with 84% lower odds of student reports of bullying experiences and the emotional environment was associated to 62% lower odds of student reports of bullying experiences. Logistic regression analyses of the community engagement, physical environment, and morale in the school community dimensions did not produce a statistically significant result.

Effects of school climate on reports of bullying victimization. The second logistic regression model showed student perceptions of the Relationships dimension and Teaching and Learning dimension to be significant predictors of reports of victimization. The Relationships dimension was inversely related to victimization of bullying (β = -1.516, p =.003) and the Teaching and Learning dimension was significantly associated to victimization (β = 1.059, p =.028). Specifically, students who had positive perceptions of the Relationships dimension (OR = 0.22) were less likely to report bullying victimization, while students who had positive perceptions of the Teaching and Learning dimension (OR=2.88) were more likely to report bullying victimization. Logistic regression analyses of the Community Engagement, Physical Environment, Emotional Environment, and Morale in the School Community dimensions were not statistically significant predictors of student reports of bullying victimization.

Table 3. *Logistic regression of dimensions of school climate on reports of bullying*

	Bullying occurrence				Victimization			
predictors	*β*	SE	OR (95% CI)	*p*-value	*β*	SE	OR (95% CI)	*p*-value
Community engagement	.210	.194	1.23 (0.84, 1.80)	.272	.054	0.234	1.066 (0.67, 1.67)	0.815
Relationships	-1.827**	.452	.16 (0.07, 0.39)	<.001	-1.516**	0.518	0.22 (0.08, 0.61)	.003
Teaching and learning	1.115**	.404	3.05 (1.38, 6.73)	.005	1.059*	0.488	2.88 (1.11, 7.51)	.028
Emotional environment	-0.973*	.470	0.38 (0.15, 0.95)	.034	-0.796	0.562	0.45 (0.15, 1.36)	.151
Physical environment	-0.267	.274	0.77 (0.45, 1.31)	.331	-0.116	0.334	0.89 (0.46, 1.71)	.728
Moral in the school community	-0.240	.227	0.79 (0.50, 1.23)	.291	-0.080	0.275	0.92 (0.54, 1.58)	.772
χ^2	65.75***				27.38***			
R^2	.18				.11			
adjusted R^2	.17				.08			

Discussion

Student Reports of Bullying Incidents and Victimization

School climate research often analyses school climate as a whole, including all dimensions of school climate in data analysis. This study is one of few studies to analyse

specific dimensions of school climate as predictors of student reports of bullying experiences and bullying victimization. Even fewer studies have been conducted among predominantly Latino, economically disadvantaged youth in secondary settings. We found student perceptions of the Teaching and learning dimension were positively associated with student reports of bullying. Positive student perceptions of the Emotional Environment and Relationships dimensions were associated with a decrease in student reports of bullying. This finding is supported by current research studies which denote the importance of the teacher's role in bullying prevention (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2014). Teachers are on the front lines and are usually the first point of contact for a student who may report witnessing bullying (Lund, Blake, Ewing, & Banks, 2012). Our findings denote similarities in student perceptions of dimensions directly related to teachers' roles and functions in a sample of predominantly Latino, economically disadvantaged youth. Contrary to previous research findings on school climate dimensions and their relationship to reports of bullying, the Community Engagement, Physical Environment, and Morale in the School dimensions were not significantly predictive of student reports of bullying (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Johnson, 2014; Gase et al.,2017; Konishi, Miyazaki, Hymel, & Waterhouse, 2017).

Student perceptions of the Relationships and Teaching and Learning dimension were found to be predictive of student reports of bullying victimization. Positive perceptions of the Relationships dimension were found to be inversely associated with student reports of bullying victimization. This finding is consistent with the literature as perceived social support has been found to be a moderator of bullying victimization (Davidson & Demaray, 2007; Rothon, Head, Klineberg, & Stansfeld, 2011). This result is also supported by previous studies that students' levels of school connectedness are related to their experience of peer victimization (O'Brennan & Furlong, 2010). Students who perceive the school environment to be socially supportive are less likely to report being a victim of bullying. Brewster and Bowen (2004) stated that teacher support is significant for the school engagement of Latino middle and high school students. Positive perceptions of the Teaching and Learning dimension, however, were positively associated with student reports of bullying victimization. In a review of the impact of whole school interventions on bullying, the most significant predictor of positive outcomes was the teacher-student relationship (Brewster & Bowen, 2004; Richard, Schneider, & Mallet, 2012).

It was surprising that the Community Engagement, Physical Environment, and Morale in the School Community dimensions were not found to be predictive of either student reports of bullying or student reports of bullying victimization. These findings are illustrative of the importance of conducting an assessment of school climate prior to the implementation of a bullying prevention program. Thapa and colleagues (2013) confirm the necessity of conducting this task and denote a need for more studies and well defined models of school climate as well. School administrators may implement whole school interventions without taking these steps which can result in ineffective interventions.

The National School Climate Council (2015) advocates for the implementation of school climate interventions as a catalyst to reduce bullying and victimization. Schools serving economically disadvantaged populations with limited funds could customize interventions based on assessment results. The lack of significance regarding the predictive relationship between reports of bullying occurrences and victimization are contradictory to bullying prevention studies using the socioecological model as a foundation (Espelage & Swearer, 2010; Lim & Hoot, 2015; Pepler, Craig, Jiang, & Connolly, 2008; Slocum, Esbensen, & Taylor, 2014; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Through the application of the socioecological models, research studies have been published

regarding the importance of the role of parents and members of the community in bullying prevention (Axford et al., 2015; Kolbert, Schultz, & Crothers, 2014). The results of this study indicate that there may be some instances in which parent involvement and/or community engagement are not predictive of bullying reports or victimization. These findings may represent the change in parental role as children move from elementary to secondary school settings (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

The Emotional Environment dimension was found to be predictive of student reports of victimization, however it was not found to be predictive of student reports of witnessing bullying. These findings confirm previous research focused on investigating schools with authoritative discipline approaches, school climate, and reports of bullying victimization (Gerlinger & Wo, 2016). Gerlinger and Wo (2016) found that schools which utilize authoritative discipline approaches had significantly less reports of student victimization. More recently, this approach, defined by a highly-structured approach to discipline within school settings, is used in schools with significant numbers of economically disadvantaged youth instead of more exclusionary methods (Cornell, Allen, & Fan, 2012). The implementation of this approach to discipline may explain the lack of significance of this finding.

Limitations

This study sample is limited to a non-random, convenience sample of high school students in a private school. Over 70% of the sample identified as Latino and approximately 100% of the sample were economically disadvantaged youth. Although the sample was illustrative of the specific topic, there were few opportunities for comparison within the school setting. Additional limitations of the study were the use of a self-report instrument and the administration of the instrument in their school setting. Although none of the teachers were present during the administration of the instrument, student opinion could be biased by being in the school and the perception that faculty may at some point have access to the results**.**

Implications and Conclusion

Our findings highlight several implications for school personnel working with economically disadvantaged youth. First, school personnel need to examine specific dimensions of school climate related to bullying in their school. For example, we found student perceptions of the Teaching and Learning, Emotional Environment and Relationship dimensions are associated with bullying. School personnel should particularly focus on these dimensions to prevent and intervene in situations involving bullying (Smith & Low, 2013; Veenstra, Lindenberg, Huitsing, Sainio, & Salmivalli, 2014).

Schools serving economically disadvantaged youth often encounter budget issues. Tailoring an intervention to the specific needs of the population could maximize effectiveness and impact and, simultaneously, minimize the need for significant funding. Involving family participation, integrating community resources and establishing social networks may produce more significant and sustainable outcomes of interventions aimed at bullying prevention and school climate improvement. Brewster and Bowen (2004) also emphasized the importance of collaboration between school personnel, parents, and the Latino students. This ecological and socio-cultural approach may help school to prioritize programs and curriculums for positive development of marginalized youth.

School counsellors and teachers need to advocate for economically marginalized students by preventing bullying and its potential impacts. Students in lower SES

neighbourhoods are more likely to report bullying others, to be victimized, and perceive others being bullied (Reyes-Portillo, 2013). School counsellors' multicultural knowledge competence was found to be positively related to their intervention in bullying, discrimination, or harassment related to Latino ethnicity (Toomey, & Storlie, 2016). School personnel should take advocacy roles to improve mental health and socioemotional development of these students. Our findings highlighted that positive student perceptions of the Relationships and Emotional Environment dimensions of the school climate, in a low SES school was predictive of lower reports of bullying victimization. Gage and colleagues (2014) also stated that general adult support decreased reports of bullying victimization, not only for high-risk students but for all students. School personnel can work on improving the emotional environments in schools. School counsellors and teachers can improve school connectedness by promoting activities and curriculum focused on relationships, individual or group counselling programs, and ultimately enrich students' overall experience in school.

Our findings highlighted student perceptions of school climate, witnessing bullying and bullying victimization were related to the Emotional Environment, Teaching and Learning, and Relationships dimensions among a sample of predominantly Latino students. These findings differ from previous school climate research studies and support the importance of school administrators and staff being mindful of the impact of culture on the academic and socio-emotional well-being of economically marginalized students. Nasir and colleagues (2017) contended that urban educators must be aware of the impact of racialized stereotypes, reframe those stereotypes, and support student's critical consciousness. For example, if counsellors, administrators, teachers, and staff serve economically disadvantaged youth, they must be cautious and mindful of their own attitudes, biases, and assumptions about this population. School administrators, faculty, and staff should consider culturally unique factors that may impact or influence bullying victimization, reporting, and perpetration. Developing a deeper understanding of how to implement culturally sensitive interventions informed by social justice can also have a significant impact on school climate as well (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007).

Continuing education courses focused on serving ethnically marginalized, economically disadvantaged youth could be provided to allow professionals in the field to sharpen their skills and utilize case studies to prepare them for their work with students and families in this population. Moreover, stakeholders at the university level can also serve as consultants within the school community to help members be mindful of their perceptions and biases on economic status, systemic oppression, and school climate and classroom dynamics, and bullying. Wang et al. (2013) also emphasized that education at preservice and in-service level should train school personnel to collaborate with Latino families. Undergraduate and graduate programs, such as Teacher Education, Educational Leadership, and Counsellor Education programs, could modify curriculum to prepare professionals to be more effective in the field when working with this population by infusing information regarding the specific needs of economically disadvantaged youth. Although this information is often discussed in specific courses, such as Multicultural Education, these courses are often taken as an elective. University programs should integrate information regarding special populations throughout curricula in several core courses within undergraduate and graduate programs leading to positions in school settings.

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