Exploring the Relationships Between Extracurricular Activities, Social Support, and Bullying Behaviours in Irish Secondary Schools

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Abstract
A study exploring the relationships between extracurricular activities, level of social support and bullying behaviours in a purposive sample of 134 second year students from boarding and non-boarding secondary schools. Cyberbullying and traditional bullying scales were used in the self-report questionnaires, along with a social support at school measure. The study found that traditional bullying scales were significantly correlated with bullying victimisation.

Introduction

Background
- Cyberbullying is defined as “an aggressive act or a blurring of acts carried out a group or an individual repeatedly and over time against a victim on whom cannot easily defend himself” (Oliveira, 1993).
- Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon, using electronic means of contact.
- Bullying behaviours refer to traditional bullying perpetration & victimisation, as well as cyberbullying perpetration & victimisation.

Research
- The reaction of the bystander has an important role to play in stopping the ongoing bullying behaviours.
- Traditional bullying scales were used in the self-report questionnaires, along with a social support at school measure. The study found that traditional bullying scales were significantly correlated with bullying victimisation.

Method

Participants
- Purposive sample of 134, 2nd year students
- 3 different secondary schools
- 79 female, 59 male, Mean age 13.73
- 30 Boarders, 85 Non-Boarders

Research in Ireland
- Rates of bullying (p < .05 & .02), respectively (Minton & O’Moore, 2005), however, cyberbullying was not explored
- Cyberbullying perpetration & vic. 9% & 14% in 2012 however, 2/3 of participants were male (O’Moore et al., 2015).

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 – There will be a significant difference in the level of bullying behaviours between groups of extracurricular activity (sports, non-sports, sports + non-sports, none) and possibly implementation in other school examined in order to reduce bullying behaviors.

Hypothesis 2 – The frequency of extracurricular activity and social support at school will have a negative association with bullying behaviours.

Hypothesis 3 – There will be a significant difference in level of cyberbullying involvement between males and females.

Hypothesis 4 – Frequency of bullying behaviour will differ significantly across the type of student (boarder, non-boarder)

Research Question 2 – Why do you think students sometimes bully/get bullied by others?

Qualitative Findings

- As hypothesis 1 was supported suggesting that cyberbullying levels haven’t fallen, the sample of 2/3 male participants affected the O’Moore study (2012).
- Boarding school approached to tackling bullying should be looked at in order to reduce it’s level in non-boarding schools. This contradicts comparisons in Australia (Mander et al., 2014).
- The reaction of the bystander has an important role to play in stopping the ongoing bullying behaviours.

Limitations
- Levine’s test of normality was broken for extracurricular activity groups (school measure). An analysis from Welsh test of equation of means had to be used for statistical analysis.
- Shapiro-Wilk’s test for each scale not significant, meaning the skew of the 4 bullying and 1 social scale was not normal.
- The number of boarders (n = 30) vs non-boarders (n = 83).

Conclusions
- As hypothesis 3 was supported suggesting that cyberbullying levels hadn’t fallen, the sample of 2/3 male participants affected the O’Moore study (2012).
- Boarding school approached to tackling bullying should be looked at in order to reduce it’s level in non-boarding schools. This contradicts comparisons in Australia (Mander et al., 2014).
- The reaction of the bystander has an important role to play in stopping the ongoing bullying behaviours.

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Future Implications
- Boarding school approaches to tackling bullying should be looked at and possible implementation in other school examined in order to reduce bullying behaviors.
- Intervention techniques should incorporate differences for all-male and all-female school in order to focus on traditional or cyberbullying respectively.
- To combat slumber-talk’s text breaks, dichotomize by classifying participants who scored higher than one another, in an adjusted figure, on at least one of the bullying items would be classified as either a cyberbully, cybervictim, traditional bully, or traditional victim respectively.

If you need help, please speak to:
- Teenline Online: www.teenline.ie
- Free Talk: Torn to S0015
- Sticks and Stones online anti-bullying programme: www.sticksandstones.ie

Images
- Fig. 1: Graph showing 2015
- Fig. 2: Graph showing 2016

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