

Gendered Effects of School-Aged Bullying on Emerging Adulthood

Kristin Ziehl & Eliza Smith, Dr. Susan Wolfgram, University of Wisconsin-Stout

Research Question & Hypotheses

What are the gendered effects of school-aged bullying on emerging adulthood?

This study had three hypotheses: (1) females would suffer more severe consequences as a result of bullying; (2) males would be more likely to experience physical bullying; and (3) females would be more likely to experience all other forms of bullying with relational bullying being the most common form experienced.

Purpose

- 1) Examine the relationship between the effects of school-aged bullying on emerging adulthood with a sample inclusive of both males and females in order to compare groups.
- 2) Develop a reliable survey instrument which measures emerging adult perceptions of the personal consequences of having been bullied during the school-aged years.
- 3) Increase the awareness of how bullying during the school-age years affects individuals over the lifespan, most notably during emerging adulthood.

Theoretical Framework

Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory claims that bullying at a young age would lead to poor management of the Industry versus Inferiority stage for both males and females. Due to this mismanagement, an individual would then face negative consequences during emerging adulthood as they struggle with future stage conflicts.

Literature Review

Adams & Lawrence (2011) supported that there are profound, negative consequences associated with being bullied that perpetuate into the college years.

Dempsey & Storch (2008) found that recalled adolescent relational victimization was related to increased symptoms of depression and social anxiety.

Klomek, Sourander, & Gould (2010) indicated that bullying behavior and cyber bullying were associated with increased risks of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts. This association varies by sex.

Miller & Vaillancourt (2007) supported that recalled indirect peer victimization was a predictor of self-oriented perfectionism. Recalled direct (physical/verbal) victimization held no relation.

Segrin, Nevarez, Arroyo, & Harwood (2012) found that parental loneliness and history of being bullied were each significant predictors of young adult loneliness as well as indirect effects through reduced social skills.

Cross Tabulations

		LCP						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	9.1%	45.5%	27.3%	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%	100.0%	
Female	14.3%	28.6%	21.4%	35.7%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	

		FDP						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	36.4%	45.5%	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%	100.0%	
Female	21.4%	14.3%	35.7%	21.4%	0.0%	7.1%	100.0%	

		FLL						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	27.3%	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	0.0%	27.3%	100.0%	
Female	14.3%	21.4%	28.6%	28.6%	7.1%	0.0%	100.0%	

		LSE						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	36.4%	18.2%	9.1%	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%	100.0%	
Female	0.0%	42.9%	28.6%	14.3%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%	

		FIS						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	9.1%	27.3%	18.2%	18.2%	9.1%	18.2%	100.0%	
Female	14.3%	42.9%	35.7%	0.0%	7.1%	0.0%	100.0%	

		SPF						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	18.2%	0.0%	27.3%	18.2%	18.2%	18.2%	100.0%	
Female	7.1%	14.3%	28.6%	35.7%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%	

		PHT						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	36.4%	18.2%	18.2%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%	100.0%	
Female	71.4%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	100.0%	

		CNM						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	0.0%	9.1%	18.2%	45.5%	9.1%	18.2%	100.0%	
Female	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	35.7%	21.4%	28.6%	100.0%	

		EFD						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	0.0%	36.4%	9.1%	18.2%	18.2%	18.2%	100.0%	
Female	0.0%	7.1%	7.1%	35.7%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%	

		WOL						
GEN	SD	D	SLD	SLA	A	SA	Total	
Male	54.5%	18.2%	9.1%	18.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
Female	42.9%	7.1%	7.1%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	100.0%	



Implications for Practitioners

- It can not be assumed that females suffer more consequences than males during emerging adulthood. Therefore prevention efforts need to be more inclusive of males when it comes to addressing the effects of school-aged bullying.
- School systems need to be more involved with awareness, prevention, and intervention strategies when it comes to school-aged bullying.
- In addition to reaching out and educating students about bullying, educators and counselors also need to address faculty and family-oriented approaches for prevention and intervention methods.
- Post-secondary education institutions should consider promoting a team of collegiate students of emerging adulthood age to develop a presentation and enter elementary school systems in order to educate about the effects of bullying.
- It is crucial for practitioners to conduct further research and present statistical data on the subject to increase the awareness of other professionals in the Family Studies field.

Implications for Future Research

Future research would benefit greatly from: a large national, randomized sample; broadening the age range of this study; examining this research problem longitudinally; exploring the evolution of these effects throughout the lifespan of an individual; and by conducting a global study that would incorporate diverse cultures.

Conclusion

Our research took one small step within our field to provide more data on whether or not a gender difference exists between the effects of school-aged bullying and emerging adulthood. The mixed support for our hypotheses leads us to believe that this is a complex, multifaceted issue that needs to be scrutinized from countless more angles and viewpoints.

In order for a more clear view of this subject to be established, a mixed methods approach of both qualitative and quantitative data would be most useful. The addition of qualitative responses would enhance the understanding of this issue as the authenticity of the participant's lived experiences would provide more insight into the effects of bullying. In addition to the need for education and prevention when it comes to bullying, bystander intervention must become a priority as well. Bullying is an issue that will continue to spread maliciously until our society chooses to take a stand against the victimization of others.

Variables

Independent Variable

- GEN (Gender)

Dependent Variables

- LCP (I often feel a lack of companionship)
- FDP (Most days I feel sad or depressed)
- FLL (I often feel lonely)
- LSE (I have low self-esteem)
- FIS (I often feel isolated)
- SPF (I often strive to be perfect so my peers don't reject me)
- PHT (My peers hit, kicked, pushed, or shoved me around)
- CNM (I was called mean names, made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way)
- EFD (I was excluded from different groups of friends on purpose)
- WOL (I was bullied online through social networks)

Demographic Variables

- AGE (Age)
- BUL (I was bullied)
- NOT (I was not bullied)

Results Summary

Hypothesis #1: Mixed support. Found that females feel a more intense lack of companionship (LCP) during emerging adulthood when compared to males. Males have more powerful feelings of isolation (FIS) during emerging adulthood due to bullying during the school-aged years.

Hypothesis #2: Did not find support for this hypothesis because there was no variance between genders when comparing the factor for physical bullying (PHT).

Hypothesis #3: Mixed support. Females experienced more intense relational bullying (EFD) and cyberbullying (WOP) than males. Relational bullying (EFD) was the most reported type of bullying for females. Remaining variable (CNM) did not result in a difference between genders.

Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha measures reliability and our survey items measured 0.811.

"Bullying is a hard thing to fight...it's going to happen no matter what because some kids feel they need to be better than others.

The part that will change is the people that stand up against the bullies." — Anonymous Participant