

Coping with on and offline bullying: The psychological effects

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Anti-bullying policies

- All schools in ROI required to have a new anti-bullying policy in place by April 11th to account for the new forms of bullying
 - Anti-Bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools – Circular 0045/2013
 - Defines bullying as
 - “Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time” (p.8, 2013)



Rates of Victimization: ROI

- EU Kids Online 2013 (O'Neill & Dinh)
 - 23% bullied online or offline over the past 12 months
 - Online or mobile is less common at 4%
 - Overall higher than European average of 19% but lower for cyberbullying (6%)
- However this is lower than rates reported by O'Moore (2012) for experiencing bullying on and offline (29.8%)

Psychological Effects of Bullying

- Evidence of the psychological effects of victimisation for cyber and traditional forms of bullying
- Depression:
 - Depression considered one of the most prominent outcomes of peer victimisation (Dejardins & Leadbeater, 2011; Pouwelse, Bolman, Lodewijkx & Spaa, 2011)
 - Cyber-victimisation related to depression (Perren, Dooley, Shaw, & Cross, 2010; Wang, Nansel & Iannotti, 2011)
 - Also has emerged as a possible predictor or risk factor for victimisation (Sweeting, Young, West & Der, 2006)
 - Could be a bidirectional relationship



Psychological Effects of Bullying

- Anxiety
 - Social anxiety associated with victimisation (Juvonen & Gross, 2008)
 - Students who exhibit higher rates of anxious or withdrawn behaviour associated with higher risk of victimisation (Paul & Cillessen, 2003)
- Behavioural problems
 - Conduct and emotional problems associated with cyber victimisation (Dooley, Gradinger, Strohmeier, Cross, & Spiel, 2010; Gradinger, Strohmeier, Spiel, 2009)

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Coping

- Coping defined as: the cognitive and behavioural effects employed to reduce, master or tolerate internal and external demands that are consequences of stressful events (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)
- Negative effects of cyber bullying on physical and mental health can be alleviated by the use of beneficial coping strategies (Machmutow, Perren, Sticca & Alsaker, 2012; Perren et al., 2012)



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Coping

- Cyber victims report that they are less likely to report the problem to an adult suggesting that they may try to solve it themselves or consult friends (Dooley et al., 2010)
 - Need to equip students with the skills to cope with the behaviour
 - Social problems solving skills critical to in developing a solution
- Cassidy and Taylor (2005) suggest that victims are more likely to exhibit poor psychological health if they employ ineffective coping strategies (aggression) or feel unsupported when experiencing victimisation.

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Social Support

- Peer
 - Peer social support negatively associated with verbal, physical and cyber bullying (Williams & Guerra, 2007)
 - Supportive network of peers may protect from victimisation (Eliot, Cornell, Gregory & Fa, 2010; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000)
- Parental
 - Also associated with lower levels of all forms of bullying including cyber bullying (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009)



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Self-Efficacy

- Self-efficacy refers to the perception of an individual's abilities to organise and deliver courses of actions, attain designated goals and organise their psychological functioning (Bandura, 1977)
- Three domains
 - Academic Self-Efficacy – about academic competence
 - Social Self-Efficacy – competence about developing and maintaining social relationships
 - Emotional Self-Efficacy – competence in controlling negative emotions

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Self-Efficacy

- Low self-efficacy associated with engaging in bullying and victimisation (Keltikangas-Jarvinen & Pakasiahti, 1999)
- Similarly, bullying negatively associated with overall self-efficacy and academic domain (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012)
- Victimization negatively related to overall self-efficacy and its three specific domains (Kokkinos & Kipritsi, 2012)

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Social Identity

- Social identity theory: positive social identity is positively associated with self-esteem.
- When threats are made to social identity this threatens self-esteem and results in a defence of social identity (Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 2002).
- Centres of groups processes and membership
- Abrams et al. (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2007) has highlighted the role of social identity in victimisation and through this, how bullies identify their victims.
- Traditional victimisation associated with lower perceived social identity (Cassidy, 2009)
 - group process also exist in cyberworld.



Aim

- Aim of the research is threefold
 - Examine the predictors of involvement in bullying behaviour (traditional and cyber)
 - Social Self-Efficacy, Social Identity and Perceived Social Support
 - Examine those effective coping strategies as reported by those victimised on or off line
 - Builds upon the work of Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, and Alsaker (2012)
 - Examine psychological effects of involvement in bullying

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Measure of Traditional and Cyber Bullying and Coping

- Report of incidence of traditional and cyber bullying and coping strategies
 - Originally employed by Alsaker and Brunner (1999) and Alsaker (2003)
 - Adapted by Machmutow, Perren, Sticca, and Alsaker (2012)
 - The current study further developed this measure to adapt the recommended coping to include actual reporting of coping strategies used by victims

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Psychological Variables

- Social Support
 - Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley, 1988)
 - Friends
 - Family
 - Significant other
- Social Identity
 - The Social Identity Scale (Karasawa, 1991)
- Social Self-Efficacy
 - Social Self-Efficacy Scale (Muris, 2001)

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Psychological Variables

- Mental Health
 - Depression, Anxiety & Stress Scale (DASS 21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)
- Problematic Behaviour
 - Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 2001)

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Implications

- Aims to examine how these factors play a role for involvement in bullying behaviour on and off line.
- Identifying the predictors or protective factors for victimisation
- Establish the coping strategies recommended and employed by victims and how these relate to the psychological effects of bullying
- In doing so, help develop an understanding in preventing traditional and cyberbullying.



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