Bullying, Self-esteem and Victimization

Bullies target individuals with low self-esteem to be the receivers of their negative abuse which can be both mental and physical in nature. Self-esteem can be defined as the degree to which we perceive ourselves positively or negatively; our overall attitudes towards ourselves (Baron et al., 2008). There are important evaluations to make and discussion to be had on self-esteem and victimization. The first point of clarification that needs to be addressed is that anyone can become the victim of bullying, much like anyone can display aggressive behavior that would be constituted as bullying. For research purposes and based on our definition bullying needs to occur when there is an imbalance of power between two groups, more than just one time. So for study purposes an individual event would not be of importance for data collection. This is why for this case study education and training would need to occur in order to defining bullying and victimization to our participants.

Self-esteem plays a vital role in examining victimization; based on theory a bullying victim with a high self-esteem level would not be affected by bullying. However, bullying is considered to be a face threat (a factor that lowers self-esteem,) so therefore bullying in fact can affect any individual overtime.

Methodology

• Study focused on 7th grade Buffalo middle school students
• Surveys will be conducted to test for bullying amongst students using the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire
• Students broken up into groups based on survey score of level of bullying
• Control and test group set to confirm communication strategy between students and their parents
• Teachers will also be surveyed on hypothetical bullying situations and graded based on their score on the bullying survey
• Results tabulated to determine if there is a causal relationship between students and parents communication and bullying/victimization

Parents and Culture

Communication norms between parents and children are different depending on each family’s culture and the norms of society. Based on the research by Rudy & Grusec, (2006) we see that bullying is not affected by communication/ parenting style, rather bullying is affected by communication effectiveness. In other words if one family is from a collectivist culture and the other family is from an individualist culture, their children are at equal risk for being bullied. What Rudy & Grusec, 2006 show is that bullying/ victimization rates are not statistically significant based on parenting style or cultural factors. This is where this case studies theory is derived based on bullying/ victimization being related to message cognition and intentionality rather than parenting style. It is highly plausible that if parents and children are not communicating with agreement that these students are at higher risk of victimization. What causes these communication breakdowns can be multiple factors: lack of communication between children and parents, language barriers between children and parents (i.e. jargon, slang,) conversation orientation, etc.

Students and parents that have positive relationships and that show communication agreement are less likely to be bullying/ victimized.

Works Cited