Privileged Helping and Bullying: Conceptual support for high-power behaviors

Chelsea Green, Brianna Blevins, Lindsey Poe and Latoshia Belcher
Center for Applied Behavior Systems, Department of Psychology, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia

Introduction

The development of an effective bullying-prevention and prosocial-promoting intervention requires a better understanding of helping and aggressive behavior in context with person factors (e.g., power), environment (e.g., bullying behavior), and group membership. Researchers have defined bullying as repeated aggressive behavior, involving the perception of a power imbalance (e.g., teachers, students). In efforts to study this type of behavior, researchers have developed conceptual models of bullying, aggressive behavior, and prosocial behavior across a differential as a guide for developing an effective prosocial focused intervention to prevent aggression and bullying.

Method

For this study, we were interested in popularity as the sole power imbalance. We extended beyond agression and bullying to include prosocial and high-power behaviors (i.e., privileged prosocial behaviors).

Participants: 475 6th (n = 214) and 7th grade (n = 260) from two middle schools in southwest Virginia. School A (n = 209) and School B (n = 260). 43% female, 44% male, and 11% unidentified.

Group membership (method in Atik & Guneri, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victors</td>
<td>At least 1 aggressive act and 3 prosocial acts received and popularity power imbalance (reporting less power than perpetrator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressors</td>
<td>At least 3 aggressive acts and popularity power imbalance (reporting less power than perpetrator)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipients</td>
<td>At least 3 aggressive acts and popularity power imbalance (reporting more power than victim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Performers</td>
<td>At least 3 prosocial acts received and popularity power imbalance (reporting more power than victim)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Recipients</td>
<td>At least 3 prosocial acts performed and popularity power imbalance (reporting more power than recipient)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 ANOVAs on three DVs

Life Satisfaction

| Life Satisfaction | Children with prosocial behavior who perceived high-power positive social influences (i.e., privileged prosocial recipients) scored significantly lower on life satisfaction than prosocial recipients. Both high-power positive social influences and prosocial behavior across a power differential could play a role in higher life satisfaction scores than those who did not report a power differential. |

References