

The Relationship Among Underrepresented Bullying Participant Roles and Social Support



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Agenda



- **Previous Research**
 - Ecological Context
- **Goals**
- **Method**
 - Participants
 - Scale Development to assess bully participant roles (BPRS)
 - Social support assessment (CASSS)
 - Procedure
 - Participant group creation
- **Results**
 - Confirmation of groups
 - Differing frequency of perceived support by groups
 - Importance of perceived support
- **Limitations**
- **Implications for practitioners**

Previous Research



- **Social support and participant roles**
 - students uninvolved in the bullying dynamic report perceiving greater levels of peer social support as compared to victims of bullying or bully-victims (Holt & Espelage, 2007)
 - social support moderated the relationship between victimization and internalizing distress from bullying (Davidson & Demaray, 2007)
 - seminal article by Demaray and Malecki (2003) that examined the perceived frequency and importance of social support by bullies, victims, and bully-victims

Previous Research



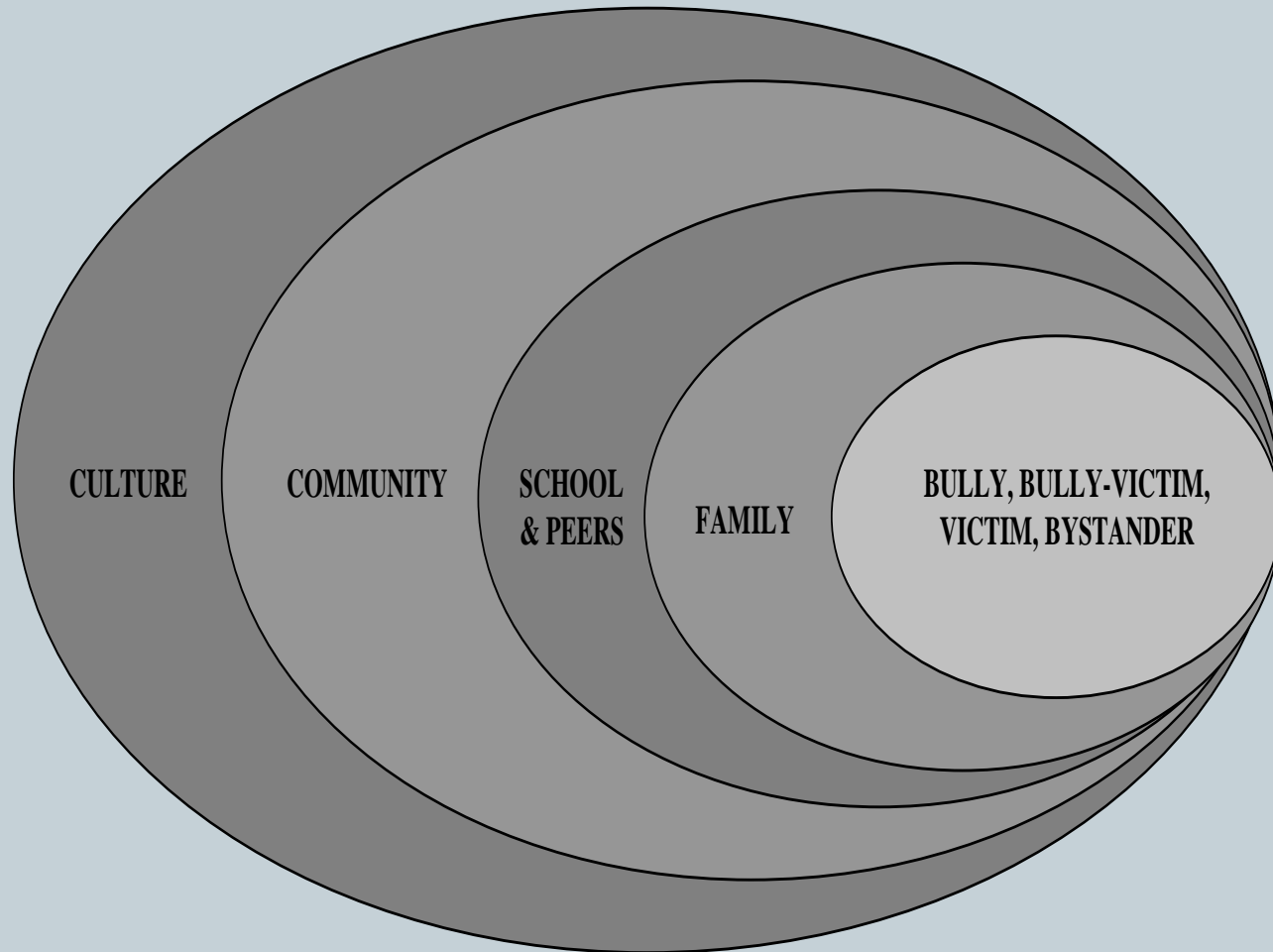
- The majority of research has examined the roles of bully, victim, and bully/victim
- Current study aims to extend the Demaray and Malecki research
 - Other participant roles such as the Defender and Outsider

The Social Ecological Model



- What is social support?
 - Social support can be defined as the knowledge that a person is cared for, esteemed, and belongs to a large network of concerned people (Pearson, 1986).
- That network of people can be examined within a particular student's micro-, meso-, exso-, and macrosystem to include family, friends, peers, the school system and its staff, and the larger community (Bronfrenbrenner, 1980).
- Espelage's work

The Social Ecological Model



Participant Roles



- More research must focus on other participant roles (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Pellegrini & Long, 2002; Rodkin & Hodges; 2003).
- Although there appears to be support for examining participant roles beyond that of the bully and victim, there has been a relatively small amount of research within this area and the research that has been conducted has largely taken place outside of the U.S.
- Current study aims to examine support in the lives of bully, victim, and bully/victim, but other roles as well
 - Defenders
 - Outsiders

Research Questions



- An examination by gender of the hypothesized differences among perceptions of the frequency of social support by bullies, victims, defenders, and outsiders
- An examination of the hypothesized differences among perceptions of the importance of social support by bullies, victims, defender, and outsiders

Participants



- 247 Junior High students
 - 40% of the student population participated in the study.
- 125 (50.6%) seventh graders
- 122 (49.4%) eighth graders
- 135 (54.7%) females
- 112 (45.3%) males
- The majority of the sample was White-non Hispanic ($n = 212, 85.0\%$)

Measures



- **Bully Participant Role Survey**: designed to provide information about various participant roles in bullying situations (Summers & Demaray, 2008).
 - Measures children and adolescents' perceptions of bullying in their school.
 - The measure yields four different participant roles including Bully, Victim, Defender of the Victim, and Outsider.
 - Factor analytic evidence confirmed a four factor structure for participant roles with item loadings ranging from .596 to .828 depending on the subscale.
 - Alpha coefficients are .93, .93, .90, and .87 for the Defender, Victim, Bully, and Outsider subscales, respectively

Measures



- The Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale: Assesses children and adolescents' perceptions of social support (CASSS; Malecki, Demaray, & Elliott, 2000).
 - Five sources of perceived support are assessed: parents, teachers, classmates, close friends, and school.
 - Participants rate the frequency and the importance of the social support they receive on each test item.
 - Strong psychometric evidence for use as a research measure

Procedures



- Parental consent and participant assent obtained
- IRB approval
- Data collection took place during language arts class, which was a 90 minute block of time.
- Only students who completed the survey were in the classroom.
- The primary investigator and classroom teacher were present at all times with all groups of students.
- Group numbers ranged from 5 students to 20 students.
- Directions for each measure were clearly explained to each group and any questions were answered by the primary investigator.
- All measures were administered in a counter-balanced order by each group.

Procedures



- Participant Group Creation
- For a number of analyses in the current study, groups were compared by participant role:
 - Bully, Victim, Bully/Victim, Defender, Victim/Defender, Outsider, and Comparison.
 - Students were categorized into groups utilizing a cut-score methodology.
 - Previous researchers utilized the 25th percentile and higher when creating groups (Demaray & Malecki, 2003; Haynie et al., 2001; Holt & Espelage, 2007).
 - The 15th percentile cutoff was chosen in the current study.

Participant Groups by frequency count and overall percent

Group	N	%
Comparison	120	48.6
Bully	32	13.0
Victim	22	8.9
Bully/Victim	11	4.5
Defender	27	10.9
Victim/Defender	7	2.8
Outsider	28	11.3

Results: Preliminary Analyses



- Participant group confirmation
 - ANOVA: IV = participant group; DV = BPRS subscale scores (Victim, Bully, Defender, Outsider)
 - Group status by Victim subscale was significant [$F(6, 240) = 80.72, p < .001$]
 - ✦ Post hoc Scheffe': Victim groups had higher scores on this subscale (Victim, Bully/Victim, Victim/Defender) as compared to other groups (Comparison, Bully, Outsider, Defender)
 - Group status by Bully subscale was significant [$F(6, 240) = 73.02, p < .001$]
 - ✦ Post hoc Scheffe': Bully and Bully/Victim groups had higher scores on this subscale as compared to other groups (Comparison, Victim, Victim/Defender, Outsider, and Defender)
 - Group status by Outsider subscale was significant [$F(6, 240) = 20.90, p < .001$]
 - ✦ Post hoc Scheffe': Outsider group had higher scores on this subscale as compared to all other groups (Bully, Victim, Bully/Victim, Victim/Defender, and Defender).
 - Group status by Defender subscale was significant [$F(6, 240) = 46.43, p < .001$]
 - ✦ Post hoc Scheffe': Defender and Victim/Defender groups had higher scores as compared to all other groups (Bully, Victim, Bully/Victim, and Outsider)

Results: Frequency of Social Support



- A MANOVA was conducted on the CASSS Subscales (Parent, Teacher, Classmate, Close Friend, and School) by participant group status (Bully, Victim, Bully/Victim, Defender, Victim/Defender, Outsider, and Comparison).
- The MANOVA was significant, Wilks' Lambda = .604 $F(30, 952) = 4.21, p < .001$.
- Follow-up ANOVAS indicated significant differences on all five subscales
 - Parent Support = $F(6, 239) = 7.88, p < .001$
 - Teacher Support = $F(6, 239) = 5.91, p < .001$
 - Classmate Support = $F(6, 239) = 9.79, p < .001$
 - Close Friend Support = $F(6, 239) = 3.45, p < .01$
 - School Support = $F(6, 239) = 8.30, p < .001$

Results: Frequency of Social Support



- Post hoc Scheffe' Results:
 - Parent Frequency of Support
 - ✦ The Bully/Victim group < the Comparison, Bully, Defender, and Outsider groups.
 - Teacher Frequency of Support
 - ✦ The Bully/Victim group < the Comparison, Defender and Outsider group.
 - ✦ The Bully group < the Defender group.
 - Classmate Frequency of Support
 - ✦ The Victim group < the Comparison, Bully and Defender group.
 - ✦ The Victim/Defender and Outsider groups < the Defender group.
 - Close Friend Frequency of Support
 - ✦ The Victim group < the Defender group.
 - School Frequency of Support
 - ✦ The Victims, Bully/Victim, Victim/Defender and Outsiders groups < the Defender group.
 - ✦ The Bully/Victim group < the Comparison group.

Results: Importance of Social Support



- In order to investigate group differences in the importance of social support by participant status, multiple ANCOVAs were conducted with frequency of subscale support held as a covariate.
 - All covariates were significant
 - Parent support was not significantly different by group.
 - Teacher, Classmate, Close Friend, and School importance were significant [$F(6, 236) = 2.24, p < .05$; $F(6, 237) = 2.16, p < .05$; $F(6, 236) = 2.74, p = .01$; $F(6, 237) = 3.15, p < .01$, respectively]

Results: Importance of Support



- **Post-hoc comparisons:**
 - **Teacher importance of social support**
 - ✦ The Bully group < the Comparison, Victim, Defender, and Victim/Defender groups.
 - **Classmate importance of social support**
 - ✦ The Comparison, Bully, and Outsider groups < the Defender group.
 - ✦ The Bully and Outsider groups < Victim/Defender.
 - **Close friend importance of social support**
 - ✦ The Comparison, Bully, and Outsider groups < the Victim group.
 - ✦ The Outsider group < the Comparison, Bully/Victim, and Defender groups.
 - **School importance of social support**
 - ✦ The Comparison, Bully, and Outsider groups < Defender group
 - ✦ The Defender group < Victim/Defender group.
 - ✦ All groups < Victim group

Results: Social Support and Participant Scores



- Four Simultaneous Regression Analyses
- The Bully subscale score regression was significant, $R^2 = .228$, $p < .001$.
 - Parent ($\beta = -.117$, $p < .01$), Teacher ($\beta = -.116$, $p < .001$), Classmate ($\beta = .157$, $p < .001$), and School support ($\beta = -.100$, $p < .05$), all emerged as unique predictors.
- The Victim subscale score regression was significant, $R^2 = .265$, $p < .001$.
 - Parent ($\beta = -.134$, $p < .05$), Classmate ($\beta = -.289$, $p < .001$), and Close Friend support ($\beta = .104$, $p = .05$), emerging as unique predictors.
- The Outsider subscale score regression was significant, $R^2 = .049$, $p < .05$.
 - School support was an unique predictor ($\beta = -.089$, $p < .05$).
- The Defender subscale score regression was significant, $R^2 = .138$, $p < .001$.
 - Teacher ($\beta = .128$, $p < .05$), Classmate ($\beta = -.147$, $p < .05$), Close Friend ($\beta = .183$, $p < .001$), and School support ($\beta = .178$, $p < .01$) all emerged as unique predictors.

Discussion



- **Importance of School Support**
 - Defenders and Victim/Defenders rate this as more important than other groups.
 - Defenders reported perceiving more support than other groups.
- **Defenders**
 - Positive relationship with teacher, classmate, close friend, and school support
- **Victims**
 - Bully/victims, victims, and defender/victims consistently reported less frequent support from all sources.
- **Bullies**
 - Positive relationship with classmates
 - Negative peer effect (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999; Prinstein & Wang, 2005)

Limitations



- Participant role group size
- Sample diversity
- Cross-sectional
- Self-report
- Cyber-bullying

Implications for Practitioners



- School-related support (teacher, classmate, close-friend and school) appears to be important for middle school students.
 - This appears to be particularly important for victims and defenders.
- Three-tiered model
 - Tier 1: Improve access (or perceived access) to supports from school.
 - ✦ Teachers in hallways
 - ✦ Greetings
 - ✦ Access to support personnel for all students
 - Tier 2/3
 - ✦ Strategies for identified defenders
 - ✦ Caution against a 'bully' group