

The Relationship between Bullying Victimization and Loneliness of Middle School Students: The Mediating Effect of Perceived Social Support

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Abstract: To explore the relationship between secondary school students' sense of social support, loneliness and bullying victimization. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 600 secondary school students from a secondary school in a district of Chongqing, using a convenience sample method. Analysis of correlation shows significant correlation between variables. Perceived social support played a complete mediating role between loneliness and bullying victimization. Perceived social support reduces loneliness and bullying victimization among secondary school students.

Keywords: Middle school Students; Bullying Victimization; Loneliness; Perceived Social Support

1. Introduction

In recent years, the school bullying incident has been frequently exposed in various media, which has aroused widespread concern in society and aroused strong concern and discussion[1]. School bullying involves special groups and takes place in special places. Its particularity has aroused widespread concern in academic circles and has become a research hot-spot in the field of education in recent years. School bullying has already been upgraded from a school accident to a social problem, which has become a social focus of the whole society. Studies have pointed out that bullied people often have many psychological adverse reactions, such as depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, loneliness and other emotions, and may even have a tendency to commit suicide. At the same time, being bullied will also cause physical and academic negative effects, such as sleep disorders and low academic performance. A large number of studies show

that middle school students encounter school bullying, which will lead to a strong sense of loneliness and affect their physical and mental health. In order to better cope with the harm caused by school bullying, this paper intends to explore the relationship among bullying victims, loneliness and perceived social support of middle school students, so as to provide theoretical support for effective prevention and governance of school bullying[2].

The impact of bullying victimization on loneliness. Bullying is the behavior that one or more people repeatedly abuse or attack the victim for a period of time, including verbal bullying, physical bullying and relationship bullying. According to ecosystem theory, there are many factors that trigger bullying, but different individual factors are important influences. On the other hand, loneliness is a subjective psychological feeling and a negative emotional response, which occurs when a person feels that there is a lack of satisfactory interpersonal relationship and there is a difference between his communication expectation and the actual level of communication with others. The study found that students with higher loneliness are more likely to be victims[3]. Therefore, this study puts forward hypothesis 1: Loneliness positively predicts bullying victims, which means that middle school students with higher loneliness are more likely to be bullied.

The perceived social support means that individuals feel material or spiritual support and help from all aspects of society. It can effectively reduce the negative impact of negative life experiences. Research shows that middle school students' good perceived social support can reduce their sense of isolation and effectively cope with school bullying[4]. When an individual's family support, friend support, and other support are all at a high level, the

degree of bullying victimization is reduced and the impact of bullying victimization can be reduced. Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis 2: Perceived social support plays an intermediary role between loneliness and bullying victimization.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Object

Data were collected in a middle school in a district of Chongqing. 600 questionnaires were collected in this study. There are 320 boys and 280 girls. There are 310 people in junior high school and 290 people in senior high school.

2.2 Research Tools

2.2.1 Delaware Bullying Victimization Scale-Student

In this study, Delaware bullying victimization scale-student is adopted. The scale uses a six-point score of "1 ~ 6" (from "1= never" to "6= every day"). The higher the score, the more serious the situation of bullying victimization. An item with a score greater than 3 indicates that the subject thinks he is being bullied.

2.2.2 University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale-8

This study used UCLA Loneliness Scale developed by Hays (1987). It includes eight questions, of which six are positive integral and two are negative scoring. The scale adopts a four-point score of "1 ~ 4" (from "1= never" to "4= always"), and the higher the score, the higher the loneliness level.

2.2.3 Perceived Social Support Scale

This study uses the Perceived Social Support Scale to investigate. There are 12 questions in the questionnaire, all of which are positive scores. The higher the scale score, the higher the perceived social support[5].

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Descriptive Statistical Results Analysis

The results showed that there was a significant difference in bullying victimization between secondary school students of different genders ($P < 0.05$). The results show that boys are more likely to be bullied than girls. There are significant differences in bullying victimization among middle school students of different grades

($P < 0.05$). The results show that middle school students are more likely to encounter bullying behavior than high school students. There were significant differences in bullying victimization among students with different family situations ($p < 0.05$)

There is no significant difference in loneliness among secondary school students of different genders ($P > 0.05$). There is no difference in loneliness among middle school students in different grades ($P > 0.05$). There was a significant difference in loneliness among students with different family situations ($P < 0.05$).

There are significant differences in perceived social support among middle school students of different sexes ($P < 0.05$), and girls get more perceived social support. There was no difference in the perceived social support among secondary school students of different grades ($P > 0.05$). There are significant differences in perceived social support among students with different family status ($P < 0.05$).

3.2 Correlation Analysis

The bullying victimization, loneliness and perceived social support of middle school students are significantly correlated. There is a significant positive correlation between bullying victimization and loneliness ($r = 0.628$, $P < 0.001$). There is a significant negative correlation between bullying victimization and perceived social support ($r = -0.208$, $P < 0.001$). The loneliness is negatively correlated with perceived social support ($r = -0.220$, $P < 0.001$).

Table 1. Correlations of Variables

| | bullying victimization | loneliness | perceived social support |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| bullying victimization | - | | |
| Loneliness | 0.628** | - | |
| perceived social support | -0.208** | -0.189** | - |

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

3.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was made on bullying victimization, loneliness and perceived social support. The effects of loneliness and perceived social support on bullying victimization were investigated respectively.

The results of regression analysis showed that loneliness had a significant positive predictive effect on bullying victimization ($\beta=0.628$, $p<0.001$). Perceived social support has a significant negative predictive effect on bullying victimization ($\beta=-0.208$, $p<0.001$).

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results

| dependent variable | predictor variable | β | t | p |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------|--------|-------|
| bullying victimization | loneliness | 0.628 | 13.456 | 0.000 |
| | perceived social support | -0.208 | -3.550 | 0.000 |

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results

| dependent variable | predictor variable | R | R2 | F | p |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| bullying victimization | loneliness | 0.628 | 0.394 | 181.053 | 0.000 |
| | perceived social support | 0.208 | 0.043 | 12.605 | 0.000 |

3.4 Intermediary Effect Test

In this study, Model4 from the Process macro program developed by Hayes (2013) was used to analyse the role of loneliness on bullying victimization among secondary school students and the mediating role of perceived social support. As shown in Figure 1, the non-parametric sampling method with deviation correction is adopted to test the mediating effect by taking 5000 samples, and the 95% confidence interval of the mediating effect is estimated. The results showed that the confidence intervals of the indirect effect of loneliness on bullying victims, the intermediary effect of the perceived social support, the total effect and the direct effect all do not include 0, and the P values are all less than 0.05, indicating that the sense of social support has a significant intermediary effect between loneliness and bullying victims, and the intermediary effect is 0.420. After controlling for perceived social support, the effect of loneliness on bullying victimization was not significant, with the interval (UUCI=-0.119, ULCL=0.212) containing 0, so that perceived social support acted as a full mediating effect between loneliness and bullying victimization.

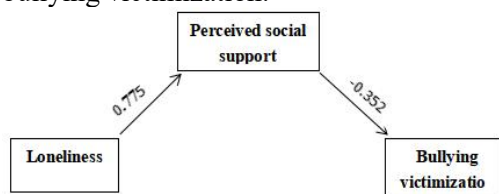


Figure 1. Mediating Effect Analysis Results

4. Discussion

4.1 Status of Bullying Victimization, Loneliness and Perceived Social Support among Secondary School Students

The results of this study show that boys are significantly more likely to be victims of bullying than girls. Junior high school students are more likely to be victims of bullying than senior high school students. Junior high school students are gradually entering adolescence, when their physical and mental development is not balanced, and they are prone to rebelliousness and lack the ability to deal with bullying. High school students' academic tasks increase, their personality gradually improves, and their self-adjustment ability increases when facing conflicts. Therefore, high school students suffer less from bullying than junior high school students. There is a significant difference in the bullying victimization of secondary school students in different family situations. Students living with their parents scored significantly lower on bullying victimization than students whose parents were not at home and students whose parents died and were raised by their relatives. Both parents at home will give students more care and protection, greatly reducing the risk of being bullied.

The results of this study showed significant differences in loneliness among students with different family situations. Students who live with their parents scored significantly lower in loneliness than those whose parents were not at home and those whose parents died and were raised by relatives.

The results of this study show that there are significant differences in students' perception of social support between different sexes. Girls scored significantly higher than boys in the perception of social support, and their ability to perceived social support was significantly higher than boys. There are significant differences in perceived social support among students with different family circumstances. Students who live with their parents scored significantly higher in perceived social support than students whose parents were not at home and those whose parents died and were raised by relatives. Parents who stay at home will pay more attention to their children and give them more love and understanding, so that students

can feel love and improve their ability to feel love and support.

4.2 Correlation between Bullying Victimization, Loneliness and Perceived Social Support of Middle School Students

This study shows that there is a significant correlation between bullying victimization, loneliness and perceived social support among middle school students. There is a significant correlation between bullying and loneliness, which shows that the higher the loneliness, the easier it is to be bullied. There is a negative correlation between loneliness and social support. People with a high loneliness lack the ability of emotional communication and interpersonal communication in their daily life, which leads to their low sense of social support. A negative correlation was found between bullying victimization and perceived social support. It means that the lower the perceived social support, the higher the possibility of being bullied. Good peer relationships and strong family support can not only reduce the occurrence of bullying victimization, but also buffer the effects of bullying victimization and maintain the physical and mental health of individuals.

4.3 Mediating Effects of Perceived Social Support between Bullying Victimization and Loneliness.

This study conducted a test of the mediating role of perceived social support between loneliness and bullying victimization. The results show that the perceived social support plays a completely mediating role between loneliness and bullying victimization. Loneliness can influence bullying victimization through the mediation of perceived social support. Various forms of support in social networks, including emotional support, information support and substantive support, can effectively reduce loneliness and make them better cope with setbacks and difficulties.

5. Conclusion

The results show that bullying victimization of middle school students is positively correlated with loneliness and negatively correlated with perceived social support. Perceived social support plays a completely mediating role between loneliness and bullying victimization.

6. suggestion

The results show that loneliness can affect bullying victimization through the mediating role of perceived social support. According to the theory of social support, various forms of support from social networks, including emotional support, information support and substantive support, can effectively reduce students' loneliness and make them better cope with setbacks and difficulties. For middle school students who are growing up, being bullied is a major life challenge, which requires more protection and help from social support. Specifically, family, friends, relatives and teachers are all supporters to alleviate middle school students' loneliness. In the face of frequent school bullying incidents, we should first face up to its harm, see the physical and mental impact on teenagers, and formulate corresponding laws and regulations to stop bullying incidents. Secondly, build a helping alliance to prevent school bullying, improve students' ability to perceive social support and provide practical social support, so as to reduce loneliness and bullying, and help students cope with difficulties and challenges in their growth.

7. Limitations

First, the sample size of the study is insufficient, and the sampling range is not comprehensive, so there are still shortcomings in the representativeness of the sample. In the future, the number and source of samples can be further expanded, and the universality of the research results can be improved. Secondly, the main body of this study is middle school students, but the middle school students with different special experiences have not been studied, and the comprehensiveness of the study is enhanced through reasonable comparison. Thirdly, the research adopts the methods of literature and questionnaire to focus on the influence of perceived social support and loneliness on bullying victims. The diversity of methods needs to be improved. In the future, more comprehensive research results can be obtained with the help of interviews and experiments, and instructive achievements promotion experiments can be carried out. In addition, this study is a cross-sectional study, and subsequent longitudinal studies can be added to track the individual's

development process, make a more reasonable explanation of the results, and put forward more targeted educational suggestions.

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