You can’t sit with us: The role of ethnicity in responding to situations of exclusion bullying

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Introduction

Exclusion Bullying (ExB)

• Many youth experience bullying with short- and long-term negative consequences for victims and victimizers (Weinberg et al., 2010)

• Peer exclusion is often used as a means to bully (Seals & Young, 2003), particularly if the victimizer is more socially skilled or dominates the social group (Seals, 2007)

• Exclusion Bullying (ExB) differs from traditional bullying in the amount of time spent excluding the victim, and the expressed intent of the victimizer (Seals & Young, 2003)

Response Strategies

• Effectively responding to bullying can reduce the duration of bullying and the associated negative outcomes (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004)

• However, youth often utilize ineffective strategies (e.g. aggression)

• Previous research has identified:
  • Which response strategies are most effective
  • How certain groups of adolescents respond to bullying
  • But has failed to:
    • Represent diverse populations and individuals most likely to be targeted by bullies
    • Examine whether endorsement of different response strategies differs for same- versus cross-ethnic bullying scenarios

The Current Study

• Examined the role of participant, excluder, and victim ethnicity in participants’ responses to same- and cross-ethnicity ExB scenarios

Hypothesis

• Selection of different response strategies would relate to the ethnic composition of the victim and excluder dyad, reflecting stereotyped beliefs about how victims of a particular ethnicity should, or do, respond

Methods

Participants

• 219 9th graders (Mage = 14.84, SD = 0.68) from schools in a large, ethnically diverse metropolitan region in the Mid-Atlantic U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>46 (21%)</td>
<td>38 (18%)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European-American</td>
<td>81 (38%)</td>
<td>54 (25%)</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>127</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
<td><strong>219</strong></td>
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Measures

Peer Relationship Survey (Peoples, 2007)

• Self-reported participant demographic information (gender, ethnicity)

• Assessed participants’ responses to four ExB Scenarios

Analyses: Repeated Measures ANOVA

2 (participant gender: male, female) x 2 (participant ethnicity: Af-Am, Eu-Am) x 4 (scenario/character ethnicity) x 4 (response selection: aggressive, assertive, adult assistance, avoidant)

Result

Main Effect

• Response Selection x Gender: F(3, 594) = 4.17, p < 0.001, η² = 0.03

• Follow-up: Univariate ANOVAs and pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments revealed the following significant findings:
  • Assertive Response Selection: F(3, 603) = 7.79, p < 0.001, η² = 0.04
  • Avoidant Response Selection: F(3, 603) = 0.693, p < 0.001, η² = 0.052

Discussion

• Societal and peer norms about social hierarchy and group stereotypes may influence the responses deemed appropriate in given ethnic contexts

• There is a need for prevention and intervention programs to consider the nuanced role of ethnicity in responding to bullying

• Future research should assess whether bystander interventions might also differ depending on ethnic composition of bullying dyads

References


