PARENTAL DISCIPLINE PRACTICES AND LOCUS OF CONTROL: RELATIONSHIP OF BULLYING AND VICTIMIZATION EXPERIENCES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Authors
Constantinos M. Kokkinos
&
Georgia Panayiotou
The study was conducted to examine the association between parenting locus of control, discipline practices and bullying and victimization experiences of elementary school children.
Background Information

Bullying and victimization are common problems faced by children and adolescents worldwide. Family characteristics of children involved in bully–victim behavior seem to be a significant causal factor. Amongst these family characteristics parenting style and discipline practices stand out. Parental locus of control seems to have a direct impact on parenting practice.
The Study

- The study involved a sample of 186 school children, (ages 9 -13, 87 boys, 93 girls, 6 not reported), and their parents (160 total, ages 28 – 53, 50 fathers, 110 mothers).

- Various self-report measures were used to assess bully – victim problems at school (the measurement tools looked at direct and indirect bullying).

- The measurement scales employed a forced choice format.
The Study

Attention was focused on:-

- The incidence of bullying & victimization.
- Self-esteem.
- Parent education (as an indicator of SES).
- Students’ academic achievement.
- Discipline practices.
- Parenting locus of control.
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Parenting</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Implications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rule setting</td>
<td>Negatively and significantly associated with parental efficacy, parental responsibility and parental control of child’s behavior.</td>
<td>A positive association between rule setting and an internal locus of control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punishing</td>
<td>Positively and significantly related to parental efficacy and control of child’s behavior.</td>
<td>A positive association between punishing and an external locus of control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistency</td>
<td>Positively and significantly related to parental efficacy, belief in fate/chance, and parental control of child’s behavior.</td>
<td>A positive association with an external locus of control.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

Results indicate a high association between bullying and victimization results.
Regression analyses did not sustain the hypothesis that parental discipline practices predict children’s involvement in bullying and victimization.
Regression analyses partially supported the hypothesis that children’s behavior helps to shape parental discipline practices through locus of control.
Discussion

Results suggest that parents with an external locus of control tend to use more authoritarian discipline approaches, while having an internal locus of control can predict the use of effective limit setting practices.
Questions

1: Given what you know about locus of control, what suggestions would you offer to a teacher who has to deal with behavioral issues related to the concept?

2: How would you respond to this claim? “There are inequities that exist in inner city school systems that almost seem to make them very fertile grounds for the cultivation of a crop of students who have no choice but to resign themselves to the idea of an external locus of control.”
Questions

3: Locus of control is a fixed personality construct. What is your reaction to this statement?

4: Do you know of any other models of locus of control, and, if so, how do they compare to Rotter’s model that is mentioned in the study?