

The Impact of Personality Traits and Physical Punishment on Bullying

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Abstract

Bullying is a phenomenon occurring all over the world. Previous research shows that youths who are being physically punished by their parents are at higher risk for being involved in bullying. There are four groups when it comes to bullying, the neutrals, bullies, victims, and bully-victims. A limitation of previous research was that no one has examined why youths who are being exposed to physical punishment by their parents often become a part of bullying. Our focus was on the four bullying groups of youths in the ages 13 to 15. We proposed that in order to understand how parents' use of physical punishment against their youths is connected with being a bully or a victim at school, we need to take the personality traits self-esteem and impulsivity under consideration. The results showed that when parents used physical punishment against their youths and the youths had certain personality traits, the risk for being a part of bullying increased. In conclusion, the youths were at higher risk of being victims of bullying if they had low self-esteem, they were at higher risk of being bullies if they were impulsive, and they were at higher risk of being bully-victims if they were both impulsive and had low self-esteem, meaning that we need to investigate further different personality traits and their effect on youths bullying involvement in school.

Keywords: *physical punishment, youths, bullying, bully-victims, impulsivity, self-esteem*

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Påverkan av personlighetsdrag och fysisk bestraffning inom mobbning

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Sammanfattning

Mobbning är ett fenomen som inträffar över hela världen. Tidigare forskning visar att när ungdomar blir fysiskt bestraffade av sina föräldrar ökar risken för inblandning i mobbning. Det finns fyra grupper när det kommer till mobbning, de neutrala, mobbare, offer och bully-victims. En svaghet med tidigare forskning var att ingen har undersökt hur inblandning i mobbning ser ut för dem som blir utsatta för fysisk bestraffning av sina föräldrar. Vårt fokus var på de fyra grupperna inom mobbning för ungdomar mellan åldrarna 13 till 15. Vi föreslår att för att förstå hur föräldrars fysiska bestraffning på sina ungdomar hänger samman med att vara mobbare eller offer i skolan, behöver man ta hänsyn till ungdomarnas självkänsla och impulsivitet. Resultaten visade att om föräldrar slår sina ungdomar samt om ungdomarna besitter en viss typ av personlighetsdrag, ökar risken för att de blir inblandade i mobbning. Sammanfattningsvis, ungdomarna riskerade att bli offer för mobbning om de hade dåligt självförtroende, de riskerade att bli mobbare om de var impulsiva, och de riskerade att bli bully-victims om de samtidigt hade dåligt självförtroende och var impulsiva. Detta innebär att vi behöver fortsätta undersöka olika personlighetsdrag och deras påverkan på ungdomars inblandning inom mobbning i skolan.

Nyckelord: fysisk bestraffning, ungdomar, mobbning, offer för mobbning, bully-victims, impulsivitet, självkänsla

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The Impact of Personality traits and Physical Punishment on Bullying

Over the last year in Sweden, 20 % of youths reported that been harassed by a peer (Friends, 2016). Swedish law states that if a youth is being harassed by its peer it is bullying (SFS 2010:800). Furthermore, the law says that the only one that can decide if someone is being bullied is the victim itself and nobody else. The law is also very clear that if someone is suspecting that a youth is being bullied they have to report it (SFS 2010:800).

There are different terms for the different bully subgroups. Andershed, Kerr, and Stattin (2001) mentions four natural different bullying subgroups, bullies are those that are harassing their peers, victims are those being exposed to peers' harassment (Friends, 2016), bully-victims are those who both bully others and are victim of bullying themselves and the neutral group are the ones without any bully-victim involvement (Andershed et al., 2001). Bully-victims can sometimes have other names like aggressive-victims (Andershed et al., 2001) or victim-perpetrators (Thomas et al., 2017). In our study, we use the terms; bullies, victims, bully-victims and neutrals.

Who are the bullies, victims, and the bully-victims?

What characterize these groups? According to the Swedish national encyclopedia (2018) a person who is a bully often is aggressive towards everyone, including its peers. Bullies do not care about how other people feel when they behave the way they do, they often have good confidence, wants to feel above everyone else and have an impulsive behavior (Nationalencyklopedin, 2018; Olweus, 1997). Another characteristic of bullies, seems to be an advantage in physical strength (Olweus, 1997), either they have strong physical capacity themselves or they go after victims that are physically subordinate to them. Bullies often show an excessive amount of outbursting anger (Olweus, 1997). They also seem to have a small number of friends that tolerates and accepts their behavior towards other peers' (Olweus, 1997).

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Victims of bullying often do not have any friends (Olweus, 1997). Victims are very quiet and insecure about themselves (Nationalencyklopedin, 2018; Olweus, 1997). The lack of friends does not help these feelings of insecurity. They have a lot of feelings and often cry when exposed to bullying, even often as young children (Olweus, 1997). Many of the victims have no self-confidence, and they do not feel good about themselves (Nationalencyklopedin, 2018; Olweus, 1997). Victims usually feel that they are ugly, a disgrace and that no one wants to be their friend (Olweus, 1997).

When it comes to bully-victims, they are a mixture of both natures, that is, they have the characteristics of bullies but also of the victims (Andershed et al., 2001; Olweus, 1997). Bully-victims are persons who often express their anger and feelings very clearly and are less prone to internalizing their emotions (Andershed et al., 2001). But, bully-victims do have problems with internalizing issues as well, for example anxiety (Kozasa, Oiji, Sawa, & Kim, 2017; Olweus, 1997). In addition, bully-victims have more issues with their mental and social capacity compared to the other groups (Goldbach, Sterzing, & Stuart, 2018; Kozasa et al., 2017). It is not unusual that bully-victims have issues such as symptoms of ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Olweus, 1997), like being hyperactive and having concentration difficulties.

Physical punishment

Since 1979 it has been against the law for a parent to physically punish their youths in Sweden (SFS 1983:47). This means that parents cannot punish their youths with physical violence in any way, shape or form. In Sweden, we care about people's human rights, their life quality and their well-being overall (Mänskliga rättigheter, 2001). Despite of this, youths are still being physically punished by their parents.

Physical punishment by the parents makes the youths feel less loved. In a previous study from Jamaica, the results showed that almost every single one of them was physically

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punished in their home, and the youths felt psychologically worse the more severe the physical punishment had been (Steely & Rohner, 2006). A study from Turkey, (Erkman & Rohner, 2006), showed that the harder physical punishment the youth got exposed to, the less loved they felt. The feeling of not being loved could lead to psychological problems and seems to be a global issue for youths (Atik & Güneri, 2013; Erkman & Rohner, 2006; Kokkinos, 2013; Steely & Rohner, 2006). So, it is a serious problem that parents use physical punishment because that just makes them feel less loved which may lead to serious consequences such as involvement in bullying.

There are different reasons for youths to become bullies, victims of bullying or bully-victims. Låftman, Modin, and Östberg (2017) are arguing that one factor for being a victim of bullying is because of what social class the youth comes from. If the parents of the youth belong to working class, the risk for being exposed of bullying increases, opposed to if their parents would have had a high-class work (Låftman, et al., 2017). Låftman et al. also discuss other factors, such as foreign ethnicity of the family or if the youth only lives with one parent they are at higher risk for being a victim of bullying. Thomas et al. (2017) discloses that if a youth is a bully they are more likely to drink alcohol or to be involved with drugs. Therefore, surroundings and settings of different kinds may very well impact the youths' involvement in bullying.

Meanwhile, psychological disorders can frequently be shown amongst the victims of bullying, for example anxiety disorder (Georgiou & Fanti, 2017; Thomas et al., 2017). On the other hand, if a youth has ADHD, which may affect for example impulsivity, the risk is higher for him or her to become a bully (Rajendran, Kruszewski, & Halperin, 2016). Previous research shows that it is more likely for a youth to become a bully if they do not feel bad about how they behave towards others or how it might affect them (Jansen et al., 2017), so if a youth has trouble with impulsivity it could affect their involvement within bullying. When it

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comes to bully-victims, it is common that they meet criterias of psychological disorders, for example Major Depressive Disorder and Conduct Disorder (Thomas et al., 2017). Georgiou and Stavrinides (2013) and Jansen et al. (2017) argue that youths are at greater risk of becoming involved in bullying if they have low social competence. The group of youths who seem to have the lowest social competence are the bully-victims (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2013). Ergo, different personality traits like for example impulsivity, could predict what direction the youth might take within bullying,

The life of youths who are being victimized is hard. Bjereld, Daneback, and Petzold (2017) argue that victims of bullying have a harder time to develop good relationships, specifically with their parents. They show that the youths do not want to talk about their victimization with their parents, because their parents never listen according to the youths. Georgiou and Fanti (2010) talk about how many of these targeted youths, who are exposed to the perpetration of bullies, take out their anger at home, which can cause a worse family dynamic than they already have. Victims of bullying often feel lonely (Atik & Güneri, 2013) and their self-esteem is low (Nation, Vieno, Perkins, & Santinelo, 2008). This make them even more vulnerable for exposure to bullying (Herba et al., 2008). Finally, bully-victims, has the highest vulnerability when it comes to feeling rejected by parents and by peers, and to be victimized by bullies (Herba et al., 2008). Herba et al. also talk about how the youths' negative feelings may increase and that it sometimes leads to suicide. Therefore, to reduce the risk of negative feelings and their potential consequences, it is important to provide social support to the victims of bullying.

Parental implication in the development of bullying

Parenting is a key factor when it comes to bullying. Many researchers have come to the conclusion that physical punishment by a parent is associated with youths' involvement in bullying (De Vries et al., 2017; Georgiou & Fanti, 2010; Gómez-Ortis, Romera, & Ortega-

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Ruiz, 2016; Hwang, Doh, & Shin, 2008; Shetgiri, Lin, & Flores, 2015). Bullies and victims of bullying are often victims of violence in other environments, like their family homes (Lereya, Samara, & Wolke, 2013; Lucas, Jernbro, Tindberg, & Janson, 2016; Shetgiri, et al., 2015).

Gómez-Ortis et al. (2016) argue that when a parent is expressing his or her feelings of anger towards their youths in a physical manner, it is affecting the youth in such a way that they can start to use the same forms of physical punishment in school towards their peers. But, if the youth has a good relationship with their parents they are less likely to be involved in bullying (Lereya, Samara, & Wolke, 2013; Mohebbi et al., 2016; Shetgiri et al., 2015). Furthermore, mothers seem to have a key role in the dynamic in a family, because if she does not give love to her youths, they feel rejected and may develop the behavior of a bully (Mohebbi et al., 2016). So, if parents physically punish their youths, the risk for being a part of bullying increases.

Parents also have a role in preventing bullying from happening. Georgiou and Fanti (2017) show that parents have little ideas of what their youths are doing in school. They conclude that if the youth is a bully, victim or both, parents often does not know about it. That is, because the youths might not tell them if something happens in school or not. But if parents start to listen and ask more about the youths' day and start to monitor them in a nice way, this could be a protective factor, meaning that bullying would not occur in the same extent. For example, if the youth got more involved in the household and chores that needs to be done, they would make more decisions on their own; it would decrease bullying victimization (Nation et al., 2008). If parents create good bonds with their youths it can make them feel safe and loved, which could lead to bullying decreasing as well (Kokkinos, 2013). Although, according to Holt, Kantor and Finkelhot (2008) the prevalence for talking to their parents about bullying increases if the youth is a victim. Thus, parents have to actively try to be a part of their youths' life, to find out what is happening.

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Parents are frequently implicated in the development of bullying. Strong evidence suggests that many bullies have parents who are hostile, punitive, and rejecting (Kilpatrick, Demaray, & Kerres Malecki, 2003). The mechanisms whereby negative parenting fosters bullying, however, are far from clear. Most explanations involve direct links whereby parents teach coercive behaviors to children (Trifan & Stattin, 2015). Parents who behave coercively in interpersonally frustrating situations prevent the development of emotional regulation, which gives rise to angry, coercive interactions with peers (Trifan & Stattin, 2015). De Vries et al. (2017) proposed that fathers who used physical punishment against their youths, affected the youths' behavior towards their peers. They argue that if the parent is having an economic crisis or some other bad circumstance in life the parent might physically punish the youth because of the stress connected to that circumstance.

Furthermore, when the youth arrives at school after being physically punished by their parents he or she might have built up an anger inside and need to act aggressive towards peers because the anger is too much to handle. De Vries et al. states that the reason for that potential outburst towards peers at school can be a side effect of a parents' physical punishment and could lead to difficulties in the youths' development, like for example the youths' social skills. Mohebbi et al. (2016) concludes that parents of bullies often have an authoritarian parenting style and do not make the youth feel safe. But, if youths do not feel safe and supported the involvement in bullying increases (Herráiz & Gutiérrez, 2016; Mohebbi et al., 2016). Rajendran et al. (2016) shows that if parents are having a parenting style that is good for the relationship between the youth and the parents, the risk for being involved in bullying decreases. So, physical punishment is not an effective way of handling the correction of a youth who misbehaves, if parents want a socially well adapted youth.

A problem with the existing literature might be no one has investigated specifically the youths who are being physically punished by their parents and why that affects their

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involvement in bullying. This can be considered a knowledge gap which needs to be addressed. The existing literature has focused on a wide sample of youths, both physically punished by parents and not physically punished by parents, and what this might do to their involvement in bullying. Among the youths that are being physically punished at home, how many of them are bullying peers, victim themselves or bully-victims? How many of them have low self-esteem or high impulsivity? These are questions that previous research has not looked at enough or not at all in for example Sweden, and therefore we want to examine this. This is a knowledge gap that should be examined more because if we can learn why something occurs, we can learn how to prevent it. To obtain knowledge applicable in Sweden by collected data among Swedish youths might help us with where to implement the most effective preventive actions towards that group who is vulnerable.

We need to gather more information since according to previous research physical punishment is a big risk factor for becoming a part of bullying. There is a lot of research on parental abuse that focuses on specifically the outcomes of the physical punishment, for example, how physical punishment will affect the youths' mental health or their aggression (Gomés-Ortis et al., 2016; Wang & Kenny, 2014).

In this study, our purpose is to see whether youths who are being physically punished by their parents displays certain types of behavior later in school in forms of bullying and/or victimization. We will look at youths' personality traits and whether it could explain their bullying and victimization experiences in school.

Our research questions are: Why does physical punishment often make youths become bullies, victims or bully-victims? And, is it because of personality traits such as impulsivity and self-esteem?

We hypothesize that youths who are being physically punished at home will be more involved in bullying and victimization than youths who are not being physically punished at

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home. We also hypothesize that bullies will have high scores on impulsivity and victims will have low scores on self-esteem and when it comes to bully-victims, they will have high scores on impulsivity and also low scores on self-esteem.

Method

Participants

We were able to gather data from an existing research project that is called “Seven Schools”, which is a longitudinal study that collected data from recruited youths’ within grades 7-9 in a medium sized community in Sweden (Stattin & Latina, 2018). They chose the schools that were connected to the most troubled neighborhoods, but the data itself was collected from the youths in their schools while they were attending class. The youths were given questionnaires to answer questions about their demographics, experiences with school, parents and peers. In the sample there were 945 participants, between the ages 13-15, with the selection of both boys ($M = 13.9$, $SD = 0.73$) and girls ($M = 13.97$, $SD = 0.75$). There were 1002 participants in the beginning but 57 of them did not conclude the entire questionnaire.

Measures

We measured four different variables, bullying, physical punishment, impulsivity and self-esteem. The measurements were reliable and we described their Cronbach’s alpha values one by one and exemplified some of the questions that were asked to the participants. Cronbach’s alpha is a tool that measures the reliability on the scale, meaning that the scales items should all measure the same thing. If the Cronbach’s alpha value is over .70 the reliability is good (Bryman, 2011). In the questionnaires, at first, the youths got to answer some demographic questions about for example their gender, age and what grade they were in. After that they were provided with questions of personal experiences.

Bullying. To measure bullying the questionnaire was divided into two separate scales, one for youths who are bullying others and the other scale for those being a victim of

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bullying. To measure bullies, the youths were giving four questions and responded on a 4-point Likert scale accordingly; “1= *No, it has not happened*”, “2= *Yes, it has happened once or twice*”, “3= *Yes, it has happened once a week*”, and “4= *Yes, it has happened several times a week*”. The items that were used for measuring bullies were for example, “*Have you said nasty things, mocked or teased anyone in an unpleasant way at school?*”, “*Have you beaten, kicked, or assaulted anyone in an unpleasant way at school?*”, or “*Have you participated in ostracizing someone?*”. The Cronbach’s alpha value for the bullying scale was .71.

To measure victimization of bullying, the youths were giving three questions and responded on a 4-point Likert scale accordingly; “1= *No, it has not happened*”, “2= *Yes, it has happened once or twice*”, “3= *Yes, it has happened once a week*”, and “4= *Yes, it has happened several times a week*”. The items that were used for measuring victims were as follows, “*Have you been mocked, teased in an unpleasant way, or has anyone said nasty things to you at school or on the way to or from school?*”, “*Sometimes one can be ostracized by someone or some people and not be allowed to hang out with them. Has this happened to you?*”, and “*Sometimes someone can be ostracized by someone or some people and not be allowed to hang out with them. Has this ever happened to you?*”. The Cronbach’s alpha value for the victimization scale was .70.

Physical punishment. To measure physical punishment the scale had six questions and the youths responded a 3-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = *Never*” to “3 = *Many times*”. The items used were for example “*Have this ever happened to you? Has your mother/father...*” then followed by these questions: “*...given you a beating?*”, “*...pushed, grabbed, or shaken you hard?*”, or “*...hit or slapped you?*”. The Cronbach’s alpha value for these items was .94.

Impulsivity. We used a measure of impulsivity that also has been used previously by Andershed, Kerr, Stattin, and Levander (2002). There were 12 statements, with the answering

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possibilities of a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = *Don't agree at all*” to “4 = *Agree completely*”. The items used were for example, “*I often talk before I think*”, “*I often do things, without thinking ahead*”, or “*I like doing exciting and dangerous things, even if they are prohibited or illegal*”. The Cronbach's alpha value for these items was .80.

Self-esteem. Rosenberg's (1979) measurement for self-esteem was used, and we had 10 items for the participants to answer. There were 10 statements, with the answering possibilities of a 4-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = *Don't agree at all*” to “4 = *Agree completely*”. The items used were for example, “*On the whole, how satisfied are you about yourself?*”, “*At times, you think you are not good at all*”, or “*You feel that you are a person of worth, at least on an equal plane on others*”. The Cronbach's alpha value for these items was .85

Procedure

Data were gathered from the research project called “Seven schools”. Data were collected at an average Swedish town on seven middle-school where youths got a Swedish questionnaire to fill in. They gathered the data from students between grades 7-9. They had both the parents and the youths consent and the participants got information about the confidentiality, anonymity and that they did not have to answer the questions if they did not want to. In this study, we have used the scales that were relevant for our purpose, meaning the questions that were about physical punishment, different types of bullying and victimization, self-esteem and impulsivity.

Statistical analyses

First of all, in order to examine the different combinations of bullying and victimization in the sample we performed a hierarchical cluster analysis. According to the literature, the number of clusters should at least explain 67 % of the error sums of squares (Everitt, Landau, Leese, & Stahl, 2010, p. 71-110; Ward, 1963).

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After the cluster analysis, we examined how many of the participants who had been physically punished by their parents. We did a crosstab analysis to examine the association between the cluster solution with parent's physical punishment.

Our final analyze was a multinomial regression analysis with the participants who had been physically punished by their parents. We analyzed the different cluster groups and two different personality traits, self-esteem and impulsivity, that potentially could explain differences among the bully-victim clusters. The reason for conducting a multinomial regression analysis was that our dependent variable was a qualitative variable. Furthermore, the multinomial regression analysis was also used because we wanted to see if self-esteem or impulsivity were predictors for youths that were being physically punished by their parents to be involved in bullying. Therefore, a regular regression analysis would not be pertinent. For the multinomial regression analysis, we needed a reference group, and we selected the neutrals to be the reference group. The multinomial regression analysis gave us information of how the different personality traits differed between the groups.

Results

In our study we investigated two measurements, to bully other peers or to be a victim of bullying by peers. We used a hierarchical cluster analysis called Ward's method, which is a tool used to categorize for example participants into different groups depending on what characteristics they have (Ward, 1963). Using z-scores, the neutral range is between -.50 and .50 (Ward, 1963), all the participants was compared to each other to locate their differences and similarities to see if they should be in the same cluster group or not. With these criteria we found four clusters, bullies, victims, bully-victims and neutrals, which are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1

A cluster analysis of bullying and victimization

	Bully	Victim	Bully-victim	Neutrals
Bully	1.50	-0.16**	2.17	-0.42**
Victim	-0.14**	1.41	2.04	-0.43**
N	107	122	44	648

Note: N = the number of participants; Low = less than -.50 and lower, neutral = -.50 to .50, and high = .50 and higher.

** There is no association between those defining traits and that specific cluster group.

Next, we divided the participants into two groups, those who had been physically punished by their parents and those that had not been physically punished by their parents. The results showed that 184 participants (19.5 %) had been physically punished by their parents and 761 participants (80.5 %) of the participants had not been physically punished by their parents. We cross-tabulated the bullying groups with this dichotomous measure of physical punishment. We found statistically significant differences in bullying-victimization between the participants who had been physically punished and those who had not $\chi^2(3) = 109.24, p < .001$. As can be seen in Figure 2, twice as many of the participants were classified as bullies among those who were physically punished by their parents in comparison with the participants who had not been punished (18.3% versus 9.8 %), more of them were classified as victims (24.6% versus 10.8 %) and considerable more were classified as bully-victims (15.4% versus 2 %).

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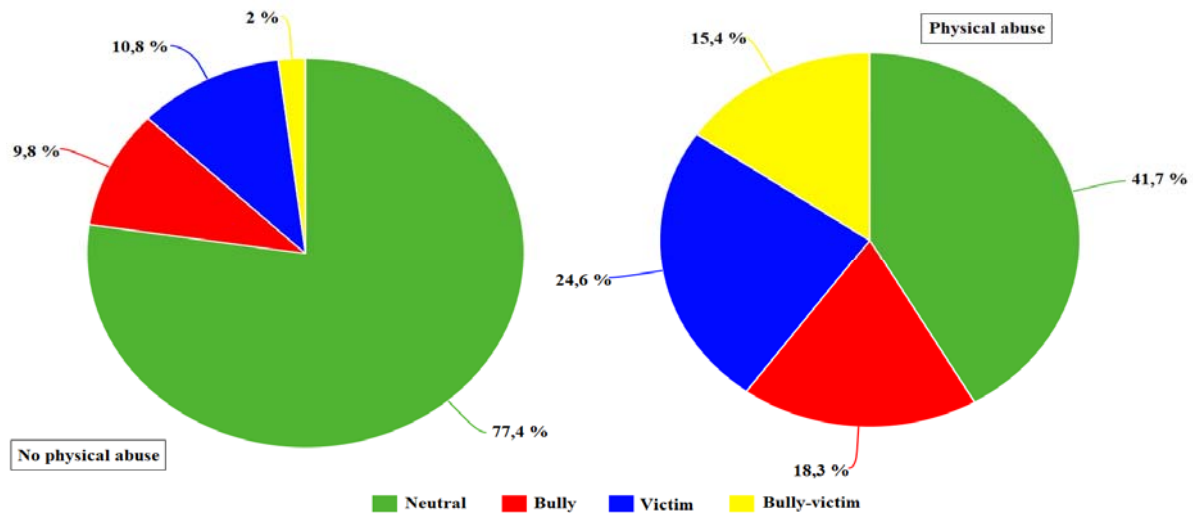


Figure 2. Bullying and victimization among participants who had been physically punished by their parents and those who had not.

Using a multinomial regression analysis, we specifically examined the participants who had been physically punished by their parents, 19.5% of the population in this study. The dependent variable in this case was the four clusters. We chose the neutral group as our reference group because in a multinomial regression analysis one needs to have a group to test against. The independent variables were impulsivity and self-esteem. The results showed a significant statistical difference between the groups. In Table 2, you can see the beta-scores on each cluster group and what they score on each personality trait. The further away a participant scores from 0, the more prominent is that personality trait. This means that a low score is closer to 0 (Field, 2018). Bullies scored high on impulsivity and average on self-esteem, which means that a bully could be characterized by impulsive behavior. Victims of bullying had scores of a negative beta-value on self-esteem but had average scores on impulsivity, which means that victims could be characterized by poor self-esteem. Bully-victims scored high on impulsivity and had negative beta-value scores on self-esteem, which means they could be characterized as both having an impulsive behavior and also poor self-esteem.

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Table 2

A multinomial regression analysis examining differences between the clusters

	Bully	Victim	Bully-victim	Likelihood Ratio
Self-esteem	-0.07	-1.0	-0.80	17.39**
Impulsivity	0.80	-0.52	0.88	13.43**

Note. The further away the score is from 0 the more prominent is that personality trait.

** = $p < .01$, meaning that there are significant differences between the groups when it comes to the two traits.

Discussion

Our purpose with this study was to see whether youths who have been physically punished by their parents differ from youths who have not been exposed to parents' physical punishment, when it comes to their involvement in bullying and victimization at school. We examined if two personality traits, impulsivity and self-esteem, could explain the bullying and victimization experiences.

We did a hierarchical cluster analysis of the youths' bullying and victimization experiences at school and found four groups: bullies, victims, bully-victims, and a group of youths who were neither bullies nor victims, neutrals. The proportions of youths who were bullies, victims, and bully-victims were considerable higher among youths who had been punished by their parents than among the youths who had not been punished.

Previous research has investigated the four groups within bullying and their differences, also how the parents' use of physical punishment towards the youths might affect their involvement within bullying (Lucas et al., 2016). But, previous research does not investigate why physical punishment might affect the youths in the direction of being involved in bullying.

In this study, we have tried to explain *why* youths who have been physically punished by their parents differ in their bullying and victimization experiences from the youths who

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have not been physically punished. This has not been done before. In this study, we focus on the specific personality traits of impulsivity and self-esteem.

Specifically, we hypothesized that youths who were impulsive and were physically punished by their parents were more likely to bully their peers at school. They would be aggressive against others in a similar way as their parents were aggressive to them. In contrast, youths who were physically punished by their parents and had low self-esteem, we hypothesized, would risk being bullied by others at school. We found support for these assumptions. In the group of youths who had been physically punished by their parents, those who were bullies were particularly characterized by high impulsivity, those who were bullied were particularly characterized of having low self-esteem, and the bully-victims were both characterized by high impulsivity and low self-esteem.

We hypothesized that youths that were being physically punished at home would be more involved in bullying and victimization than youths who were not being physically punished at home. The results supported this hypothesis which was no surprise since it is well in line with previous research. There was almost twice as high percent in the different bullying and victimization groups if they had been physically punished than if they had not been physically punished. An explanation for this result could be that when youths are being physically punished by their parent/parents, they will feel less loved and therefore they may not be adequately socially equipped to interact with other peers because of fear. This might result in other youths around him or her might think that he or she is weird and start to bully that youth. Or the other way around, the youth who is being physically punished at home may feel the need to take out the anger on others and start to bully them (Shetgiri et al., 2015). When it comes to a bully-victim he or she may not know how to react to the fact that one or both parents are physically punishing him or her, they might not know how to cope with such a situation and sometimes their answer in that confused state could be to bully other peers

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(Hong, Kim, & Piquero, 2017), or sometimes being bullied themselves because they do not know how to socially interact with peers or how to stand up for themselves.

The feeling of not being loved could also potentially affect the youths' self-esteem in a negative matter. Physically abusive parents might therefore not only affect the youths feeling towards their parents, but also their feeling towards themselves - which is a predictor for being a victim of bullying.

The second hypothesis was also supported by our result. We hypothesized that bullies would have high scores on impulsivity and victims would have low scores on self-esteem and when it came to bully-victims, they would have high scores on impulsivity and also low scores on self-esteem. The results showed that youths who had lower self-esteem was more likely to be a victim and the youths that had higher impulsivity was more likely to become a bully. Bully-victims had both higher impulsivity and lower self-esteem. The reason for this result may be because of the effect of being physically punished. Like previous research discloses, physical punishment might lead to not feeling loved (Erkman & Rohner, 2006) meaning that because of that feeling the youths develop different traits and the reason for that may have to do with not only the amount of social support or the environment but also maybe genetics. In conclusion, what we could see was that their different personality traits were an additional risk factor for being a victim, bully or a bully-victim.

According to our result we could see that youths who were being physically punished at home by their parents could predict a bullying, victimization or a bully-victim behavior. Although, we should not forget that there might be other factors that could also predict bullying that this study did not examine. Låftman et al. (2017) says that for example social class is a factor when it comes to bullying, with that in mind we still argue that physical punishment is a big risk factor for youths to become a bully, victim or a bully-victim, but there might also be other risk factors that has to be taken into account.

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We could not answer our research question to full extent because there can always be other factors that could affect bullying. But, our questions have been answered partially; we do now know that personality traits do predict involvement within bullying as well as physical punishment by parents. Impulsivity, for example, is likely to make the youths lack self-control. According to Myers (2013) people are prone to control their feelings when it comes to social environments, and not act on everything they feel. The youths of the parents who use physical punishment were more likely to score high on impulsivity, therefore had a lack of self-control. It might be a vicious circle (Georgiou & Fanti, 2010), that the youths have trouble with behaving according to the parents' standards which could lead to more physical punishment or even more dismissive or absent parents, and therefore also increase involvement within bullying. Wikström (2005) talks about the importance of element of nurture from parents and maybe that is a factor as well, that the youth does not get the necessary love from the parents because they just punish their son or daughter instead of being understanding and caring.

The result of our study showed a higher prevalence of bully-victims; than we expected, between youths who were being physically punished by their parents than and those youths who were not being physically punished by their parents. We had hypothesized that there would be a difference but for a youth to be at approximately seven times more risk for being a bully-victim if they were physically punished by their parents, was not something we expected. The reason for the results showing such a difference between the groups may have to do with the great impact of physical punishment and that it potentially affects youths more than we knew.

A limitation with our study is that youths may have answered the questions in an untruthful manner, they might have thought we wanted a specific answer and therefore answered that way, which is called social desirability. Another limitation is that the results

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may not have reached the group who are being more exposed to physically punished by their parents and also are involved in bullying. Their parents might have not given their consent to participation in the study or the youth may have skipped school because maybe they have got a visible bruise from their parents' physical punishment or they are victims of bullying and wants to avoid their bullies. That may affect our results in a negative way because potentially we did not reach the most vulnerable youths.

All of our scales had Cronbach's alpha value over than .70, which is a strength in our study. This means our scales had high reliability and therefore we can rely on our data and that our data is measuring the right thing, and if we did the research again, we would get the same results. Another strength is that our results are based on a representative sample which means we can make stronger generalizations. This affects our results in a positive way since we want to be able to generalize the results to more youths than just those we had as participants. Another strength in this research is that no previous research has yet to examine this specific part of this field and that we are opening up a new way of thinking that could have a very positive effect in future research. Furthermore, researchers and also society as a whole should be interested in our findings and would want to see how to develop them even further or use this knowledge for the sake of the youths, our future. Another strength of our study is that it has been very inexpensive and because we have been provided with data that has not been analyzed before, we have had a lot of time to make sure we did use the right analysis in examining the data and to get as accurate of a result and analysis as possible.

Our research provides new input on future research. Existing research do not examine why a physically punished youth is more prone to being involved in bullying, our research will not affect existing research since there are no contradictions.

Our results in this study will reveal for other researchers that specifically the meaning of personality traits on bullying involvement is interesting to examine even deeper in future

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research. This is important to look further into because personality traits are a partial predictor for youths that are being exposed to physical punishment by their parents. As a suggestion, future research could examine other types of personality traits to see how those could potentially affect youths in their involvement in bullying. More knowledge within this area of bullying is necessary to find the right prevention methods to help vulnerable youths in the most efficient way.

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