

The role of hope, life satisfaction, and motivation in bullying among adolescents*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role hope, life satisfaction, and motivation, in predicting bullying statuses of adolescents who experienced the Van earthquake in 2011. Participants were 317 secondary school students from the province of Van. of 317 students, 168 were female (53%), and 149 males (47%). The Bully/Victim Questionnaire, The Satisfaction with Life Scale, The Children's Hope Scale, The Academic Motivation Scale and a demographic information form were used to collect data. Data were analyzed via multiple logistic regression. The results revealed that the increase in life satisfaction and motivation decreased the likelihood of being categorized as 'bully/victim'. Some suggestions for intervention were made based on the findings.

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Keywords:

Bullying, life satisfaction, hope, motivation

Introduction

Bullying, one of the most common problems in today's schools, is a serious issue that negatively influences not only adolescents' academic, social, and emotional development, but also their physical health and positive psychological functioning (Veenstra, Lindenberg, Oldehinkel, De Winter, Verhulst, & Ormel, 2005). Despite this, bullying in schools is steadily increasing (Rigby, 2012), in parallel with its negative effects on the future expectations of victims (Lane, 1989; Olweus, 2005). It is noted that anxiety disorder, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder are amongst the potential consequences of bullying exposure, as well as hopelessness (Beane, 2008). Moreover, adolescents with one of the roles in bullying, such as bully, victim, or bully/victim, are at risk in terms of psychosomatic problems, compared to their non-affected peers. All the evidence suggests that bullying can hinder psychological well-being.

Defining and determining bullying require a professional specification and focus on this specific topic. Bullying can be defined as repeated deliberate aggression towards victims, in the presence of a considerable power imbalance between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993). By definition, a typical case of bullying behavior consists of repetitive actions towards the victim. Bullying is also defined as a student's exposure to physical, verbal or emotional abuse by one or more students (Gordon Murphy, 2009). Another definitive factor for the bullying behavior is that verbal or emotional actions as well as physical actions, could be considered destructive. According to Fleming and Jacobsen's study (2010), exposure to bullying among adolescents can vary internationally; however, it was found that, across 19 developing and underdeveloped countries, between 2 and 6 out of every 10 middle schools students were exposed to bullying. According to Ttofi,

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Farrington, and Lösel (2012), there is a 66 percent likelihood that student bullies will display similar behaviors in their later life and the same likelihood that they will show violent behavior in their later lives. In other words, two out of every three bullies continue these behaviors in later years. These findings highlight that bullying behavior is a continuing risk in later years.

Hope is negatively related with bullying (Leung, 2010), and defined as the cognitive patterns which involve pathways by which individuals can attain their aims (Snyder, 2002), and different approaches to the process of attaining the desired aim, and perceptions of enabling motivation to reach solutions (Rand & Cheavens, 2009). Atik (2009) compared secondary school students' hope levels with their bullying status, and found that increased age contributed to likelihood of being bullied, whereas being female decreased it. He also found that hope was not a significant factor among student bullies, while an increase in the hope level reduced the likelihood of students being categorized as victim or bully/victim. Involvement in bullying may decrease motivation (Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel; McLean, 2005). Exposure to bullying was emphasized to negatively affect the motivation and creativity (Hoel, Sheehan, Cooper, & Einarsen, 2011); and with lower motivation, it can be more difficult to take on fundamental life responsibilities. (Schwickerath & Zapf, 2011). Hiloğlu and Cenksever-Önder (2010) found that as a part of life satisfaction, social environment and school were the negative predictors of being bullied, school environment was the negative predictor of being victimized, and school was a contributor to victimization. A study conducted by You, Furlong, Felix, Sharkey, and Tanigawa (2003) found that the effect of life satisfaction on the level of hope was stronger among victims of bullying compared to unaffected students.

Compared to previous research on bullying in relation to hope, life satisfaction, and motivation, this study offers several unique characteristics. First, hope, life satisfaction, and motivation were discussed in terms of all their roles among participants from Van, a city in eastern Turkey hit by a disastrous earthquake in 2011, i.e. all participants had undergone a traumatic experience. Bullying might be considered a similar traumatic experience (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996, Carney, 2008; Leung, 2010). Furthermore, it is possible that exposure to bullying leads to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). According to DSM-IV-TR (2001) A1 diagnosis criteria for PTSD, are either the presence of a psychological pressure caused by a life threatening issue, or the witnessing of or exposure to another's risk of death. A2 criterion specifies that the individual should be burdened with emotions and feelings such as fear and hopelessness. These criteria suggest that students' negative experiences following physical, verbal, social, or cyber bullying could involve destructive feelings, an ongoing pain and feelings of being unsafe (Sullivan, 2011). In addition, exposure to bullying at times leads individuals to the feelings of hopelessness (Olweus, 1996), thus, arguably, showing parallels between the effects of bullying and the effects of PTSD, which is characterized with the feelings of hopelessness according to DSM-IV. Thus, this study has claims to being unique, since participants' experiences involve both earthquake and potential bullying.

School guidance systems are responsible for planning interventions, and the prevention of bullying, since the negative impacts of victimization are known to have long term psychological and social consequences (Smith & Brain, 2000), and earthquake experience is considered to have similar long-term consequences (Yöndem & Eren, 2008; Smith & Brain, 2000). Factors affecting mental health and well-being in bullying have long been emphasized (Rigby, 2003; Young, & Sweeting, 2004). Therefore, outputs in relation to students' hope, life satisfaction, and educational motivation, taking into account their bullying status, potentially provide new perspectives for school counselling and guidance services in regard to preventive, educational, and interventional efforts.

Method

Participants

Participants were obtained from two different middle schools in Van, using non-random sampling method. Of 317 participants, 168 were females (53%), and 149 were males (47%). 147 (46.4%) were in their first year, 105 (33.1%) in their second-year, and 65 (20.5%) in their third-year of the national three-year secondary school system ($x = 12.8$). 178 (86.2%) of the participants' mothers were educated to primary school level, 25 (7.9%) to middle school, 2 (0.6%) to high school level, whereas 203 (64%) of the participants' fathers were

educated to primary school level, 63 (19.9%) to secondary school, 21 (6.6%) to high school, and 5 (1.6%) to undergraduate level.

Data Collection Instruments

The olweus bully/victim questionnaire (OBVQ). Was originally developed by Olweus, but the current form, revised by Solberg and Olweus (2003), is the widely used version. The 40-item questionnaire was appropriate for middle school students. It had 5-level Likert type items (A- It hasn't happened to me in the last two months; B- It has happened to me only once or twice; C- It has happened to me 2 to 3 times a month; D- It has happened to me once a week; E- It happened to me several times a week). 7 items were in victim category, measuring victimization, and another 7 items were in bully category, measuring bullying status. Those who were assigned to both categories were categorized as bully/victim, while those not involved in either were categorized as "not involved", based on their responses. The Turkish version, adapted by Dölek (2002), was reported to have reliability coefficients of .71 and .75 for the bully and victim sections, respectively (Atik, 2006). Similarly, Yöndem and Totan (2008) reported reliability coefficients of .82 and .76 for the bully and victim sections of the scale respectively. In this study, internal consistency calculations were found to be .78 for the victim, and .86 for the bully sections.

The satisfaction with life scale (SWLS). The 5-item 7-level Likert type scale that was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) aimed to measure general life satisfaction levels of individuals. Higher scores indicated higher life satisfaction levels. The alpha coefficient for the reliability of the scale was reported as .87 (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Validity and reliability study of the Turkish form of the scale conducted by Yetim (1991) reported an alpha of .85, and a split-half coefficient of .75. Another study conducted among university students (Köker (1991) indicated .81 as internal consistency coefficient. A study with middle school students reported the reliability coefficient as .69 (Kırtıl, 2009), and a study with high school students, .84 (Çeçen-Eroğlu & Dingiltepe, 2012). In this study, the reliability coefficient was reported as .71.

The children's hope scale (CHS). CHS was originally developed by Snyder et. al. (1997), and adapted to Turkish by Atik and Kemer (2009). The 6-item 6-level Likert type scale was appropriate for 6-18 year olds. Coefficients for the reliability of the original form ranged from .72 to .86, and its split-half reliability was reported to be .71 (Snyder et. al., 1997). The scale was reported to have .74 for the internal consistency, and .57 for the test-retest reliability (Atik & Kemer, 2007). In addition, the scale showed a single-factor construct based on the confirmatory factor analysis, and positively correlated with self-esteem and academic achievement among secondary school students (Atik & Kemer, 2007). Furthermore, Atik and Kemer (2009) found no significant difference between male and female participants in terms of hope, but there were statistically significant differences between the grade levels for hope scores, which were higher for 6th grade students compared to the 7th and 8th grades. In this study, the internal consistency alpha coefficient was .74.

The academic motivation scale (AMS). Originally developed by Vallerand, Blais, Brière, and Pelletier (1989) in French, and adapted to Turkish by Kara (2008), AMS aimed to measure the students' academic motivation levels. AMS consisted of 12 items with a 5-level Likert type rating. The Turkish version has four subscales: amotivation, intrinsic motivation, external regulation, and introjected regulation; however, it gives a single total score extracted from these constructs that measure student motivation in the educational process. In the Turkish adaptation study of the scale, a four-factor model was reached with the factor loadings over .38, and eigenvalues over 1, accounting for 63.48% of the data variance (Kara, 2008). Item total correlations were over .60, internal consistency for the four subscales ranged from .78 to .84 and was .84 for the whole scale. In this study, the reliability coefficient was calculated as .78.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data were collected from participants in two schools in central Van 6 months after the 7.2 (Richter) earthquake on the 23rd October, 2011, which killed 644 (Erdik, Kamer, Demircioğlu, & Sesetyan, 2012). Multiple categorical logistic regression was selected for data analysis since the dependent variable was categorical. 21st version of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. Level of significance was accepted as .05 in this study.

Findings

A multiple categorical (multinomial) logistic regression analysis was used to analyze the contribution of gender, life satisfaction, hope, and motivation in explaining the likelihood of being categorised as a bully, or victim, or both. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics related to the variables in the equation model.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	\bar{x}	s.d.	Minimum	Maximum	Correlations (<i>n</i> = 307)			
					1	2	3	4
Gender (male) [1]	.47		0	0				
Life Satisfaction [2]	26.26	6.13	6	35	.01			
Hope[3]	24.32	6.44	6	36	-.02	.21**		
Motivation[4]	40.46	9.09	12	60	.05	.04	.38**	
Bully-Victim [5]	.20				.20**	-.23**	-.17**	-.15**
Victim[6]	.38				-.07	.00	.08	.13**
Not involved[7]	.42				-.09	.19**	.06	-.01

** *p* < .001

As shown in Table 1, 20% were categorized as bully/victim, 38% as victim, and 42% as not involved. Those in the bully category (*n*= 8) were excluded from the data set due to the inadequate number. In addition, there were statistically significant positive correlations between being male and being in the bully/victim category (*r* = .20), and statistically significant negative correlations between being male, and life satisfaction (*r*= -.23), hope (*r*= -.17), and motivation (*r* = -.15). Being a victim revealed no significant correlation with the predictor variables, other than a significant positive correlation observed between being not involved and life satisfaction (*r*= .19). Then, a multiple categorical logistic regression analysis was run to find out how the observed variables contributed to the participants' likelihood of being classified in one of the bullying categories. The results were given below in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of logistic regression parameter estimates

Status ^a		B	SE	Wald	sd	<i>p</i>	Exp(B)	%95 C. I. for Exp (B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Bully-Victim	Constant	3.61	1.07	11.42	1	.00			
	Life satisfaction	-.12	.03	16.83	1	.00	.89	.84	.94
	Motivation	-.04	.02	2.96	1	.09	.97	.93	1.00
	Hope	-.03	.03	1.00	1	.32	.97	.92	1.03
	Male	1.21	.34	12.50	1	.00	3.37	1.72	6.60
Victim	Constant	.16	.88	.04	1	.86			
	Life Satisfaction	-.04	.02	3.44	1	.06	.96	.91	1.00
	Motivation	.02	.02	1.72	1	.19	1.02	.99	1.05
	Hope	.00	.02	.01	1	.92	1.00	.96	1.05
	Male	.03	.26	.02	1	.90	1.04	.62	1.73

a. The reference category is: Not involved

As seen in Table 2, hope did not significantly contribute to being in the not involved category, and did not significantly contribute to distinguishing being in one of the victim categories (bully/victim or victim), from being in the not involved category (*B* = -.03 and .00, respectively; *p*> .05). Moreover, the role of hope in explaining the overall interaction between the dependent and independent variables in the equation model was not statistically significant (-2 log likelihood coefficient odd ratio = 37.21). Results also showed that motivation did not significantly contribute to distinguishing the two bullying categories; however, it contributed to decreasing the unexplained variation (-2 log likelihood coefficient odd ratio = 22.97). For this reason, hope was excluded in the repetition of the analysis of the equation model, shown in Table 3.

Table 3 revealed that an increase in the life satisfaction contributed to a decline in the likelihood of being in the bully/victim category, and a greater likelihood of being in the not involved category. Every one unit increase in the life satisfaction scores caused a decrease in the likelihood of being in bully/victim rather than in the not involved category, in the condition that all other predictor variables remained constant. In other

words, an increase in the life satisfaction contributed to an 11% decrease in the odds ratio $[(.89-1.00)*100]$, that is, in the likelihood of being in the bully/victim category. The range of the participants' life satisfaction scores was 29 (35 to 6). A 29-point difference indicated a 52% decrease $[\exp(b)^{29}]$. Similarly, one unit increase in the motivation score indicated a 4% decrease $(.96-1.00)$ in odds ratio of being categorized as bully/victim. Being male increased by 3.40 times (340%) the risk of being in the bully/victim category. In other words, being male increased the likelihood of being categorized as bully/victim (77%) $(1/[1+\exp(-B)])$. In this vein, a regression equation model for bully/victim would be given as follows:

$$L = \ln(P/(1-P)) = 3.43 - .12 * \text{life satisfaction} - .04 * \text{Motivation} + 1.22 * \text{Male}$$

$$P = 1 / (1 + e^{(3.43 - .12 * \text{Life satisfaction} - .04 * \text{Motivation} + 1.22 * \text{Male})})$$

Table 3. The results of the multinomial logistic regression parameter estimates after the exclusion of hope variable

Status ^a		B	SE	Wald	sd	p	Exp(B) (odds ratio)	95% C.I. for Exp (B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Bully-Victim	Constant	3.43	1.05	10.61	1	.00			
	Life satisfaction	-.12	.03	19.48	1	.00	.89	.84	.94
	Motivation	-.04	.02	5.33	1	.02	.96	.92	.99
	Male	1.22	.34	12.76	1	.00	3.40	1.74	6.65
Victim	Constant	.19	.85	.05	1	.83			
	Life satisfaction	-.04	.02	3.51	1	.06	.96	.91	1.00
	Motivation	.02	.01	2.10	1	.15	1.02	.99	1.05
	Male	.03	.26	.01	1	.90	1.03	.62	1.73

a. The reference category is: Not involved

Therefore, for the female and male participants, who had low, moderate, and high life satisfaction and motivation, the equation above predicted the likelihood as .97, .90, and .47; and .21, .12, and .04, of being bully/victim respectively. In other words, according to the equation model predictions, the rates at which students would be bully/victims are as follows: 97% of males and 90% of females with lower life satisfaction and motivation scores; 47% of the males and 21% of the females with moderate scores in life satisfaction and motivation; and 12% of the males and 4% of females with higher scores in life satisfaction and motivation. In addition to these results, none of the predictor variables significantly accounted for being in the victim category.

Consequently, being bully/victim was negatively related with higher life satisfaction, and positively related with being male and having lower motivation. Model fit coefficient was found to be high (-2 log likelihood) 560.18, $\chi^2_6 = 44.28, p = .00$. A model fit coefficient that shows the relationship level among the dependent and independent variables, combination was high (-2 log likelihood) 560.18, $(\chi^2_6 = 44.28, p = .00)$. The variance that the predictors explained for the bullying categories was significant, however, their levels were low (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .15$). The contribution of all variables in the last model was statistically significant in explaining the bullying statuses, and the model's likelihood in the accuracy of categorization was 44.3%. However, it is important to note that the accuracy of this result might be influenced by outlier and influential observations. In order to test this effect, a binomial logistic regression analysis was run between the not involved and victim groups, but no outlier or influential observation was found. The same analysis conducted for the bully/victim and not involved groups identified 3 outliers or influential observation, based on Cook's distance and standardized values. The analysis was conducted again following the removal of those observations, with no major change (44.1%), and therefore, those observations were returned to the data set. In addition, the estimation over the likelihood should not have a higher value than the estimation caused by chance. For this purpose, the accuracy rate for the proportional chance ratio was 45% $(\%20 + \%38 + \%42 = \%36 * 1.25)$ and for maximum chance accuracy ratio was 53% $(\%42 * 1.25)$. In the final step of the analysis, the split-sample validation was conducted and results are shown below in Table 4.

Table 4 showed that accuracy ratios obtained from the cross validation analysis (.40 and .38) were below the ratios revealed by the original model's accuracy ratios (.56 and .47). According to Table 4, life satisfaction

had a stable role in predicting the bullying statuses. However, motivation and gender (being male) varied based on the two validation applications. Therefore, it is necessary to be cautious when interpreting the role of gender and motivation for results that were not replicated in validation sample, and also due to the chance criteria.

Table 4. The results of the validation analyses

	Full Model	Split= 0 (n= %20)	Split=1 (n= %80)
Model χ^2	44.28	13.94	39.20
Nagelkerke R ²	.15	.28	.16
Accuracy Rate for Learning Sample		.56	.47
Accuracy Rate for Validation Sample		.40	.38
Significant Coefficients (p < 0.05)	Life satisfaction Motivation Male	Life Satisfaction	Life satisfaction Motivation Male

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, it was aimed to predict the bullying status of a group of adolescent participants with earthquake experience, using the combination of a set of variables, including hope, life satisfaction, and motivation, in addition to gender. Olweus's (Solberg & Olweus, 2003) categorization of bullying was used, among the four categories; however, the category of bully was so limited as to require the exclusion of its data, and the three remaining categories for the examination of the data were bully/victim, victim, and not involved.. Statistical process showed that out of 10 participants, 2 were bully/victims, and 4 each were in the victims and not involved group.

Studies of adolescent bullying from different locations of Turkey show that the ratios for not being involved in bullying range from 6 out of 10 (Atik, 2009; Totan & Kabakçı, 2010; Atik, Özmen & Kemer, 2012), to 7 out of 10 (Atik & Kemer, 2008; Yöndem & Totan, 2008), and even to 8 out of 10 (Atik, 2009). In this study, surprisingly 6 out of 10 participants were involved in at least one of the bullying categories. It is known that traumatic experience increases the risk of victimization (Carney, 2008), and that post-traumatic negative symptoms can raise the psychotic symptoms when the bullying is statistically kept controlled (Campbell & Morrison, 2007).

The relationship between the bullying and traumatic experience can also be observed in adult professional life. For instance, Tehrani (2004) reported that almost half of babysitters were victimized, and more than half witnessed bullying in their work settings. Furthermore, she found that victimization can cause an increase or recurrence in the negative effects of trauma. Similarly, Matthiesen and Einarsen (2004) concluded that 3 of every 4 participants exposed to bullying showed PTSD symptoms. From this point of view, the observed increase (in comparison with related research reported in Turkey) in the involvement in bullying among the participating adolescents of Van may be connected with their traumatic earthquake experience.

Bullying statuses vary according to gender, and some bullying categories might even be characterized as gender-specific (Salmivalli & Peets, 2009). For example, in the past, involvement as a bully or bully/victim in mid-childhood or adolescence may have been considered a source of pride among males; however, in the present, bullying is perceived as destructive among adolescent females (Salmivalli & Peets, 2009). Young and Sweeting (2004) stated that victimization positively correlated with the increase in the males' adoption of typical gender roles. They also stated that gender role engagement played an important role only in becoming a bully; their study did not support the assumption that whether one becomes a victim or bully could be differentiated based on the gender. In addition, psychological well-being can be affected by the increase in the gender roles, though its significance was low (Young & Sweeting, 2004). In this vein, Turkish studies tended to focus on the prevalence of bully/victim status among male students (Atik, 2006-2009; Atik & Kemer, 2008;

Totan & Yöndem, 2007, Totan, 2008). Supporting the previous findings, the findings of the current study revealed a positive correlation between being male and being bully/victim. In other words, being male increased the likelihood of being bully/victim almost three times, while being female decreased it.

Findings of this study revealed that higher life satisfaction contributed to decrease the likelihood of being in bully/victim category, rather than not being involved. Similarly, the higher motivation scores indicated a decreased likelihood of being categorized as bully/victim. Although hope facilitates the recovery from traumatic experiences (Leung, 2010), in this study, it was not found to be a significant predictor. In addition, none of the predictors significantly explained being in the victim category rather than not involved. The recent earthquake experience may be the reason for this finding. Leung (2010) found that victimization was negatively related to hope, and also that hope and happiness were significant predictors of growth following an involvement in bullying experience. Atik (2009) concluded that hope contributed to the decrease in being categorized in the victim and bully/victim groups.

The findings in this study showed that being bully/victim was negatively related to life satisfaction and hope, but positively related to lower motivation and being male. Psychological well-being might be combined with positive functioning as an individual, and avoiding unfunctional stress and negative feelings (Forrest, Bevans, Riley, Crespo, & Louis, 2013). In contrast, victimization was related to general stress, mental stress responses, lower levels of self-confidence (Vartia, 2001). Also exposure to bullying negatively contributed to mental health, and therefore, was emphasized as negatively affecting psychological well-being (Rigby, 2000; 2003). O'Moore (2000) stated that exposure to bullying increased feelings of loneliness and rejection. Bullies and adolescent bully/victims with peer acceptance had positive attitude toward their psychological well-being (Felipe, Garcia, Babarro, & Arias, 2011). Studies examining either motivation or bullying in isolation are quite limited, and of the few that relate these two concepts, most focused on the motivation underlying factors in the bullying involvement (Oliver, Hoover, & Hazler, 1994; Rigby, 1995). According to a study conducted among Australian high school students, exposure to peer bullying predicted the lower self-esteem, lower levels of connectedness with the peers, teachers, and with their schools, and lower levels of their motivation to academic achievement (Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel, 2005). Students categorized in bully/victim status are considered to be at greatest risk, since they were characterized with lower levels of hope, life satisfaction, and motivation.

Proportional and maximum chance accuracy ratios higher than the model's accuracy ratio indicate that results should be treated with caution. This could be regarded as a limitation of the study. It is difficult to make clear inferences about tendency in bullying because of limited previous knowledge of the prevalence of bullying in Van. Life satisfaction and motivation were found to have significant roles in explaining the decrease in being bully/victim, regardless of the lack of clarity about the role of the earthquake in the prevalence of bullying. Therefore, the role of satisfaction and motivation should be considered by school counselors in their prevention-focused attitudes and action for dealing with bullying in schools.

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