
This version is available at https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/25737/

Strathprints is designed to allow users to access the research output of the University of Strathclyde. Unless otherwise explicitly stated on the manuscript, Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Please check the manuscript for details of any other licences that may have been applied. You may not engage in further distribution of the material for any profitmaking activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute both the url (https://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/) and the content of this paper for research or private study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge.

Any correspondence concerning this service should be sent to the Strathprints administrator: strathprints@strath.ac.uk

http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/25737/

Strathprints is designed to allow users to access the research output of the University of Strathclyde. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. You may not engage in further distribution of the material for any profitmaking activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute both the url (http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk) and the content of this paper for research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge. You may freely distribute the url (http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk) of the Strathprints website.

Any correspondence concerning this service should be sent to The Strathprints Administrator: eprints@cis.strath.ac.uk
Hostile attributions bias and perceived self-efficacy of adolescent bullies, victims, bully-victims, and those uninvolved in bullying.

Simon C. Hunter, James M.E. Boyle & David Warden
University of Strathclyde

BPS Scottish Branch Conference 2004
Fisher’s Hotel, Pitlochry, 26-28 November

simon.hunter@strath.ac.uk
Background

- Clarification of the cognitive underpinnings of involvement in bullying should improve intervention and prevention work.

- **Self-efficacy?**
  - distinguish between efficacy for aggressive and non-aggressive behaviours?

- **Hostile attributions biases?**
  - Regardless of hostile attribution bias, self-efficacy (as above) predicts use of aggression or prosocial behaviour.
  - However, hostile attribution biases may differentiate between bullies and bully-victims.
Background

• Theoretical basis for differentiating intervention and/or prevention based on theory?

Hypotheses
1. Victims will have lower overall self-efficacy (i.e. for both aggressive and non-aggressive actions) compared to uninvolved pupils
2. Bully-victims and bullies will have higher aggressive self-efficacy than victims and uninvolved pupils
3. Bully-victims will have a higher hostile attribution bias than victims, bullies and uninvolved pupils
Method

- Participants were 520 pupils (49% male) aged 12 - 14 years attending mainstream Scottish schools. Three hundred and six pupils were in Secondary Two and 205 in Secondary Three.

- Measures were completed in classroom settings:
  - victimisation
  - self-efficacy – vignette measure
  - hostile attribution bias – vignette measure

(latter two measures based on Hubbard et al.’s 2001 measures)
Results

- Bullies: 5% overall (7% of boys, 4% of girls)
- Bully-victims: 9% overall (9% of boys, 8% of girls)
- Victims: 35% overall (33% of boys, 36% of girls)
- Uninvolved: 51% overall (50% of boys, 52% of girls)

- Aggressive and non-aggressive self-efficacy scores correlated ($r = .44$, $p < 0.001$)
- Neither type of self-efficacy correlated with hostile attribution score

- 3-way mixed-ANOVA: gender x bullying involvement (bully/ bully-victim/ victim/ uninvolved) x self-efficacy (aggressive/ non-aggressive)
Results

Self-efficacy:
• 3-way mixed-ANOVA: gender x bullying involvement (bully/ bully-victim/ victim/ uninvolved) x self-efficacy (aggressive/ non-aggressive):
  - no effect of gender.
  - main effect of self-efficacy: overall, pupils reported significantly higher non-aggressive than aggressive self-efficacy.
  - main effect of bullying involvement: victims reported significantly lower overall self-efficacy than uninvolved pupils.
  - no interactions.
Results

Hostile Attribution Bias:
• 2-way ANOVA: gender x bullying involvement (bully/bully-victim/victim/uninvolved)
  → no main effects or interactions.
Discussion

• Victims reported significantly lower self-efficacy than uninvolved pupils (and were lower than all other groups at a trend level)
  → such perceptions are likely to contribute toward the maintenance of victimisation by encouraging less adaptive responses i.e. submissive and unassertive behaviours

• Hostile attribution biases unrelated to status
  → perhaps bully victims are not simply provocative victims, and these two groups must be distinguished more clearly