Bullying and Video Games: Children's and Parents' Perspectives

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Abstract

This study examined whether children who bully others are likely to prefer playing mature and violent video games. Canadian Parents (n = 1000) and their children (ages 10-17 years; n = 1000) completed an online survey of children's bullying behaviors and video games. Ordinal regression analyses showed that parents' and children's reports of child preferences for mature and violent video games were significantly related to their perpetration of bullying and cyber-bullying.

Background

❖ Bullying is a significant social problem worldwide with 10.7% of adolescents (aged 11-15 years) reporting bullying others, 12.6% report being bullied, and 3.6% reporting both bullying others and being bullied (Craig et al., 2009).

❖ Prevalence rates of cyber-bullying vary with approximately 11 to 17% of children cyber-bullying others (Beran & Li, 2005, 2007; Li, 2006, 2007).

❖ Playing video games, particularly those games involving violence, is a well-known correlate of aggression (Anderson, 2010a, 2010b). However, less is known about video gaming in relation to bullying.

Purpose of the Current Study

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between children's (aged 10 to 17 years) video game preferences and their perpetration of bullying and cyber-bullying, utilizing both parent and child reports.

Participants and Measures

A stratified Canadian random sample of 1000 parents (n = 720 mothers, mean age = 43.0 yrs) and their children ages 10 to 17 years (487 girls).

Measures	Example Item
Participants were provided with a definition of bullying, highlighting the aggressive act, intentionality, repetition, power imbalance, and various forms of bullying	
General Bullying and Cyber-Bullying	How often have you been bullied in the last month?
Video Game Maturity and Violence	What are your three favorite video games? - Video games were coded for violence and maturity based upon ESRB ratings (2010)

Analyses and Results

4 Ordinal Regressions Analyses:

❖ Parent reports of video game maturity/violence and general bullying, controlling for parent sex, child sex/age.

❖ Child reports of video game maturity/violence and general bullying, controlling for child sex/age.

❖ Parent reports of video game maturity/violence and cyber-bullying, controlling for general bullying, parent sex, child sex/age.

❖ Child reports of video game maturity/violence and cyber-bullying, controlling for general bullying, child sex/age.

Parent and Child Reports of Video Games and General Bullying: Child sex explained a significant amount of variance (no interaction effects) for both parent and child reports. Significant change in model fit was obtained when maturity and violence were entered for both reports.

Parent and Child Reports of Video Games and Cyber-Bullying: General bullying explained a significant amount of variance in both parent and child reports. Significant change in model fit was obtained when maturity and violence were entered for both reports.

Ordinal Regression Analyses

General Bullying				
	Parent Reports		Child Reports	
	Pseudo R^2	Change in Log Likelihood (df change)	Pseudo R^2	Change in Log Likelihood (df change)
Control Variables	.03	134.23** (3)	.51	106.44** (4)
Video Games Maturity & Violence	.04	279.97** (2)	.58	30.47** (2)

Cyber-Bullying				
	Parent Reports		Child Reports	
	Pseudo R^2	Change in Log Likelihood (df change)	Pseudo R^2	Change in Log Likelihood (df change)
Control Variables	.04	101.04** (2)	.50	134.84** (3)
Video Games Maturity & Violence	.05	347.98** (2)	.53	49.91** (2)

Pseudo R2 involves the Nagelkerke Pseudo R2 statistic *p < .05, **p < .01

Conclusions

❖ Video game maturity and violence were significantly associated with general bullying perpetration, according to parent and child reports.

❖ General bullying, and video game maturity and violence were significantly associated with cyber-bullying perpetration, according to parent and child reports.

❖ Children who play violent and mature video games are likely to bully and cyber-bully their peers.