"Tripartite Coordination" to Promote Effective Management of School Bullying among Junior High School Students in Poor Villages

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Abstract: In this study, 3652 students from primary schools in poor T county (town) of Guangxi are selected by stratified random sampling method to analyze the types, time and place of school bullying, as well as the causes of it. 2337 of the 3652 students have experienced school bullying, with 7,943 cases. The main factors for being bullied include being unlikable, verbal conflict, poor relationship and weakness. Univariate analysis reveals that there are significant differences of the causal relations between whether students experienced school bullying incidents and factors such as students' grade, being an only child, being in a left-behind family, quantity of close friends, relationship with classmates, and family care, etc. Regression analysis shows that students coming from left-behind families are as risk factors for the occurrence of school bullying; higher grade, more close friends, and family care and attention are protective factors for the occurrence of school bullying. Based on the analysis of the results of school bullying among junior high school students in poor areas, this paper takes the most important accompanying environment of students' growth – school – as the breakthrough window, and builds a tripartite coordination management system of home-school-individual with the support of prevention and control policies of school bullying in China. By building such a system, it is hoped that students can grow up healthily, and school bullying can be eliminated.

Keywords: poverty-stricken areas; junior high school students; school bullying; tripartite Coordination System

1. Introduction

Bullying among elementary and middle school students is an aggressive behavior that occurs on or off campus (including primary, secondary, and vocational schools) in which one party (individual or group) causes physical or psychological harm to another party on a single or multiple occasions. It is a type of undesirable event that occurs frequently both at home and abroad, where there is an imbalance of power between the two parties involved [1]. It may occur between students, or between teachers and students. The phenomenon usually results in trauma and distortion of the victim, as well as low achievement in schoolwork and interpersonal alienation. It may even force the victim to develop retaliatory aggressive behavior or turn the victim to bullying others [2]. With the in-depth promotion of poverty eradication in China, school bullying among middle school students, who are the key group for intergenerational poverty interruption in poor areas, has increasingly become a hot issue of great concern to the current society. According to the different ways of occurrence, bullying behaviors can be divided into four categories: physical bullying, verbal bullying, relationship bullying and cyber bullying, etc. Traditional bullying mainly refers to the first three categories. This study is about junior high schools in poor areas, where cyberbullying exists but is not particularly prominent due to the limited development of local online information systems. Therefore, this study aims to understand the prevalence of traditional bullying in junior high schools in poor areas and explore the influencing factors, so as to provide a basis for more targeted prevention and control.

2. Objects and methods

2.1 Object

T County is a poor county in the contiguous stone desertification special hardship area of Yunnan-Guangxi-Guizhou region, with 9 towns and 1 township under its jurisdiction, and a total of 10

township junior high schools whose school population has continued to maintain a size of about 9000 in recent years. After preliminary interviews, it was found that school bullying was prevalent in the county's township middle schools. In this regard, it is of typical and positive significance to analyze the current situation and causes of school bullying among middle school students in the township of the county and to implement targeted prevention and control to ensure students' school safety.

This study was conducted with the consent of school authorities, students, and parents. 3652 middle school students in the township of the county were selected as the study subjects by stratified random sampling method, including: 1899 male students and 1753 female students; 1242 7th grade students, 1351 8th grade students and 1059 9th grade students; 1789 left-behind students and 1863 non-left-behind students. A total of 3710 copies of the questionnaires were distributed, and 3652 copies were effectively collected, with a valid recovery rate of 98.44%.

2.2 Methods

Combining the Chinese version of Olweus Bullying Questionnaire revised by Wenxin Zhang et al. and the bullying scale compiled by Yingwei Yang et al., the design and pre-survey were finalized. The final version was the School Bullying Questionnaire for Junior High Schools in County T. The questionnaire includes the personal information of the surveyed students, their perceptions of school bullying, the time and place of school bullying incidents, and the causes of school bullying, etc. The questionnaire was distributed in October-November 2020, and the survey was completed centrally by students organized on site with informed consent and collected on site. The questionnaire Cronbach α= 0.87.

2.3 Statistical analysis

SPSS 20.0 was applied to analyze and produce statistical data. The factors associated with the occurrence of school bullying were explored using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), t-test and Logistic regression analysis, with $P<0.05$ indicating statistical significance.

3. Results

3.1 Analysis of the characteristics of the occurrence of bullying in school

Table 1: Analysis of the characteristics of campus bullying

characteristic	Cases (n = 7943)	Proportion
Types of bullying		
Physical bullying (fighting, pushing, etc.)	2794	35.18
Verbal bullying (nickname, menace, threat, ridicule, abuse, etc.)	1881	23.68
Relationship bullying (isolation, exclusion, rumors, etc.)	1442	18.16
Cyber bullying	639	8.04
Property bullying (coercion, extortion, blackmail, etc.)	402	5.06
Sexual bullying (sexual assault, tease on sexual orientation, etc.)	329	4.14
Counterattack bullying	237	2.98
Ganging up on others	219	2.76
Bullying time		
Lunch break	2885	36.32
Dusk	2556	32.18
Weekends and holidays	786	9.89
Other time	1716	21.6
Bullying place		
Student dormitory	3049	38.39
Remote corners of Campus	2830	35.63
Classroom	1461	18.39
Playground	420	5.29
Other places	183	2.30

Among the 3652 students, 2337 students experienced school bullying with 7943 cases. The analysis

of the types of school bullying shows that verbal bullying, physical bullying, and relationship bullying are the top three types of bullying; the occurrence time of school bullying incidents is mainly concentrated in the lunch break and evening time. The locations of bullying incidents in junior high school campus are mainly in student dormitories, isolated corners of campus and classrooms.(See Table 1)

3.2 Cause analysis of students being bullied

The students think that the main reasons for them being bullied include being unlikable, verbal conflict, poor relationship, weakness and so on. See *Table* 2 for details.

Table 2: Analysis of the causes of bullying on campus

	Number of cases (n = 3652)	Proportion (%)
Causes of campus bullying		
See somebody as dislikable	1369	37.48
Speech conflict	856	23.44
Poor relationships	520	14.25
The bullied are weak	462	12.64
Conceptual differences	202	5.52
The bullied has good grades	134	3.68
Unknown reasons	109	2.99

3.3 Analysis of the differences in the occurrence of campus bullying

Table 3: Analysis of differences in the occurrence of bullying on campus

factor		Number of cases	Bullying cases	Chi-square value / x2	P
Gender	Male	1899	1242（65.38）	0.180	>0.05
	Female	1753	1096（62.50）		
Grade	Grade seven	1242	1023（82.35）	19.303	<0.05
	Eighth grade	1351	840（62.16）		
	Grade nine	1059	475（44.83）		
Being only child	Y	1461	1223（83.75）	22.573	<0.05
	N	2191	1114（50.83）		
Coming from left-behind family	Y	1789	1697（89.80）	55.498	<0.05
	N	1863	730（39.22）		
Quantity of friends	0~1	1515	1242（81.93）	26.684	<0.05
	2~4	1370	822（60.00）		
	≥5	767	274（35.71）		
Academic record	Excellent	950	603（63.46）	3.707	>0.05
	Average	1607	1132（70.45）		
	Bad	1095	603（55.00）		
Relationship with classmates	Good	858	274（31.91）	39.993	<0.05
	Common	1899	1223（64.42）		
	Bad	895	840（93.88）		
Can you control your emotions	Y	1388	840（60.53）	0.642	>0.05
	N	2264	1497（66.13）		
Family care	Caring	913	420（46.00）	20.372	<0.05
	Common	1607	950（59.09）		
	Indifferent	1132	968（85.48）		

Table 3 shows that there are significant differences between whether a student get bullied on campus and factors of grade, being only child, coming from left-behind family, quantity of friends, relationship

with classmates, relationship with parents (P < 0.05); there are no significant differences between whether a student get bullied on campus and factors of gender, academic performance, emotional control (P < 0.05).

3.4 Multi-factor regression analysis of the occurrence of school bullying

Based on the results of the univariate analysis, factors that differed are selected and included in the regression equation, and the data are fitted by logistic regression. The dependent variable (Y) is included in the study as "occurrence of bullying in school", and the independent variables are included as student grade, whether the student is an only child, whether the student comes from a left-behind family, quantity of his/her friends, his/her relationship with classmates, and his/her family care, with dummy variables assigned to student grade, quantity of his/her friends, and his/her family care. The assignment table of each variable is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Variable assignment of influencing factors of bullying on campus

independent variable	name	assignment
Student grade	X1	Grade seven = 1, grade eight = 2, grade nine = 3
Whther an only child	X2	Y=1，N=2
Whther comes from left behind family	X3	Y=1，N=2
Quantity of friends	X4	0 ~ 1 = 1, 2 ~ 4 = 2, ≥ 5 = 3
Relationship with classmates	X5	Good = 1, general = 2, poor = 3
Family care	X6	indifference = 1, general = 2, care = 3

Logistic regression analysis shows that the grade, quatity of friends, coming from a left-behind family and lacking family care are the main influencing factors of students being campus bullied; among these factors, students coming from left-behind families are as risk factors for the occurrence of school bullying; higher grade, more close friends, and family care and attention are protective factors for the occurrence of school bullying (P < 0.05) (See *Table 5*)

Table 5: Multivariate regression analysis of bullying on campus

factor		β	S.E.	Waldx2	P	OR（95%CI）
constant		2.084	1.362	2.331	<0.05	8.007
Student grade		-0.517	0.258	4.594	<0.05	0.578（0.372，0.960）
Number of friends	0 ~ 1			10.045	<0.05	
	2-4	-0.849	0.457	3.371	<0.05	0.430（0.174，1.046）
	≥ 5	-1.722	0.549	10.052	<0.05	0.184（0.065，0.527）
Left behind families		-1.142	0.477	5.503	<0.05	0.315（0.126，0.839）
Family care	indifference			16.350	<0.05	
	general	-0.612	0.473	1.765	<0.05	0.539（0.221，1.357）
	care	-2.134	0.552	14.798	<0.05	0.114（0.043，0.353）

4. Discussion

4.1 Analysis of the current situation and causes of school bullying among junior high school students in poor areas

The study was conducted on 3652 junior high school students who boarded in poor areas. It was found that 2337 students had encountered school bullying in the past and 7943 cases of school bullying were encountered. There were significant differences in the incidence of school bullying by gender and whether the students were left-behind families; there were no significant differences in the incidence of school bullying among students in different grades. The study suggests that bullying in secondary schools in poor areas is a key issue in school safety. As parents go out to work, students may lack good family environment and education, and are more likely to develop loneliness, low self-esteem, introversion, short temper and poor interpersonal communication skills.As a result, students from left-behind families are more likely to face the problem of bullying in schools, and the problem is more

prominent and serious. The research data of T County Rural Junior High School, which is a typical secondary school in a poor area, largely reflects the current status of teaching management in junior high schools in poor areas.   In families from poor areas, parents often choose to go out of the county/towns to work, so that most of the students become "left-behind students". Teachers should pay more attention to these students and provide them with proper guidance.

Through research and analysis of the current situation and causes of campus bullying among students in rural junior high schools in County T, it was found that the top three types of campus bullying include verbal bullying, physical bullying, and relationship bullying; the occurrence time of campus bullying among students in junior high schools is mainly concentrated in lunch break and dusk.   The locations of school bullying incidents among junior high school students were mainly in student dormitories, remote corners of the campus, and classrooms. The study concluded that there were certain shortcomings in the campus management of T County rural junior high schools, and the school authorities did not take targeted measures to respond to school bullying incidents, which aggravated the occurrence of school bullying incidents. Students believe that the reasons for students being bullied mainly include looking dislikable, verbal conflicts, poor relationships with classmates, and their weaknesses. The occurrence of campus bullying incidents has increased the misperceptions of the bullied, and has also seriously affected their learning and life. The survey found that the occurrence of campus bullying incidents is mainly related to the fact that the root causes of the conflicts between the bullies and the bullied have not been resolved in time, and the bully's idea of "violence against violence". It is suggested that there is a lack of moral education in schools for middle school students, and students do not receive proper family guidance and school education in the process of forming their three views. The bullying students incorrectly absorbed the idea of "strong power" from the violent movies and videos in the society and the Internet, which led to the school bullying incident.

4.2 Analysis of the factors influencing the occurrence of school bullying among middle school students in poor areas

The univariate analysis of the factors influencing the occurrence of school bullying revealed that there were significant differences in the relationship between the occurrence of school bullying and students' grade, being an only child, coming from a left-behind family, quantity of friends, relationship with classmates, and family care. On the basis of the results of univariate analysis, the factors with differences were screened and included in the regression equation. The data shows that the factors of students' grade, being an only child, coming from left-behind families, number of close friends, relationship with classmates, and family concern are the main factors influencing the occurrence of school bullying. Among these factors, coming from left-behind families is a risk factor for the occurrence of school bullying. Being a senior student, having more close friends, and having a high level of family care and attention are protective factors for the occurrence of school bullying. The analysis of the survey data shows that the occurrence of school bullying decreases as students' grade level rises; the number of students' friends can reflect students' personal interpersonal skills, and students with good interpersonal skills are less likely to experience school bullying on campus; students from left-behind families are more likely to experience school bullying. The reason for this is that children in left-behind families are often raised in an "unsupervised" manner, and junior high school is an important period for students to form their values.   With the continuous development of network communication technology, junior high school students are exposed to more information outside of school, where there are many undesirable information, and junior high school students are not yet mature so that they lack effective screening ability and reasonable cognition of information. With the influence of the external environment, students are more likely to behave in a transgressive manner in their daily life, leading to a greater frequency of current school bullying incidents. In addition, the study also reveals that family care is beneficial to students' physical and mental development. The more parents care about their students, the more comprehensive and accurate they can be about their children's school life, and the more they can provide timely feedback on school bullying incidents and assistance to schools. In this way, the continuous occurrence of school bullying incidents is less likely to happen to students.

5. Reflections on the tripartite management system of home-school-individual

The middle school stage is an important period of personality development. The immaturity of students' cognition, rebellion and skepticism are the typical psychological characteristics of students at this stage, leading them to criticize or deny phenomena in a one-way manner.During the "initial" socialization process of education, junior high school students will experience the tearing process

between their "social self" and their "original self", during which they are bound to feel depressed and in pain. As a result, students will experience a crisis of social role identity and a disruption of their inner instincts, which will lead to a disruption of their self-identity and incoherence. In order to construct a harmonious sense of sameness, students will have reality conflicts. With the catalyst of adverse external environment, school bullying has become a way for students to vent their emotions, which happens frequently and cannot be stopped at once. Based on this fact, this paper proposes a tripartite management system of family-school-individual from the perspective of the most important accompanying environment for students' growth - school - as a breakthrough window with the support of the prevention and control policy of school bullying in China.

5.1 Broaden the "passive-active" channels of school bullying within the school: get parents and students involved

In order to achieve early detection, prevention, and control of school bullying, the "passive-active" channels of school bullying should be expanded comprehensively. Passive channels include: first, to set up complaint boxes and telephone numbers in the school and at the school gate, so that students and others who find bullying can report it in a timely manner; second, to establish a special website for the prevention of bullying in schools, and to receive complaints from students, parents and related persons while promoting anti-bullying. Proactive channels of reflection include: first, to distribute school bullying questionnaires (at the middle or end of each school year) to prevent and control school bullying in the first stage; second, to carry out a comprehensive school bullying combing survey, and to conduct in-depth communication with parents to understand and grasp the psychological situation of students. In order to prevent bullying, it is important to look for signs of bullying or hidden dangers in time[4].

5.2 Educational activities to promote the development of students' "socialization of goodness": let students grow up

Education is a value-added activity that nurtures students' transformation from the "ego" to the "social ego" and leads them to "goodness". The "evil" of bullying breaks through the bottom line requirements for students to grow and become successful. It is a "cancer" in our high-quality education system. Schools must integrate the efforts of all sectors of society and actively carry out special anti-bullying education activities to guide students to think and act kindly.The education activities include the following two points. First, it is important to carry out moral education and practice activities that focus on the core socialist values of solidarity and friendliness to cultivate mutual respect, understanding, tolerance and care among students, as well as interpersonal communication skills that can help students to help and integrate with others. The analysis of the attribution of school bullying shows that moral sentiment and interpersonal and communication skills are important protective factors to prevent the occurrence of school bullying. Second, it is necessary to strengthen education on the rule of law. Based on the blueprint of the Youth Rule of Law Education Syllabus jointly issued by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, and the National Office for the Promotion of Law in June 2016, the concept of human rights should be used as the purpose to cultivate students' concept of rule of law and awareness of rules. The Tort Liability Law, the Public Security Management Punishment Law and the Criminal Law on the rights and interests of personal property can prompt students to be brave and adept at taking up the weapons of the law to defend their rights and interests after encountering bullying in schools.

5.3 Forming a "home-school-individual" school bullying response team and defining specific anti-bullying steps

A dedicated school bullying response team is a must for effective school bullying management to avoid the haste and delay in the response to school bullying. The survey of rural middle schools in County T showed that none of them had a permanent structure, and school bullying is relatively common in primary and secondary schools elsewhere in China. In Japan, a neighboring country, the Bullying Prevention and Countermeasures Promotion Act was introduced last year, and Article 22 of the Act clearly stipulates that schools must establish a special organization to prevent bullying in schools; in Korea, the School Violence Prevention and Countermeasures Act also explicitly requires "schools to set up autonomous committees for school violence countermeasures to consider matters of violence prevention and control in schools"[4] . Based on the experience of Japan and Korea, and in accordance with Articles 13 and 17 of the "Rules for Discipline in Elementary and Secondary Education (for Trial Implementation)" published by the Ministry of Education in December 2020, this paper proposes that a

standing response team for bullying in schools should be established. The group should be composed of staff, student representatives, parent representatives, and representatives of relevant parties in the community; specific response steps for individual cases should be specified (see Figure 1).
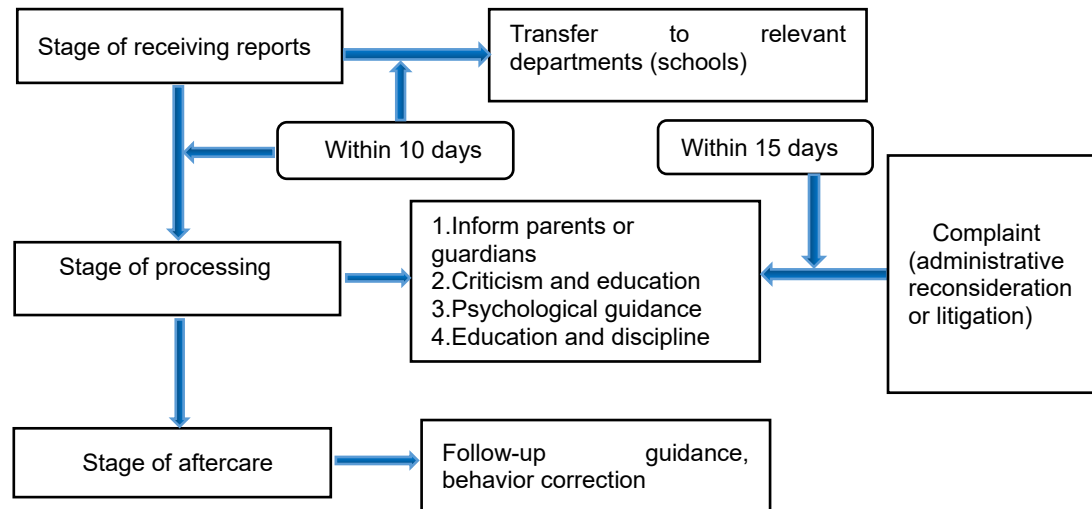

Figure 1: Response process of bullying on campus

Acknowledgements

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