Bullying among immigrant and non-immigrant early adolescents: School- and student-level effects

Irene Vitoroulis*, Katholiki Georgiades

Offord Centre for Child Studies, McMaster Innovation Park, Suite 201A, L8P 0A1, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Immigrant
Adolescence
Bullying
School immigrant density
School climate
Multilevel modeling

ABSTRACT

We examined the association between school immigrant concentration and bullying among immigrant and non-immigrant early adolescents, and identified potential explanatory factors. First generation immigrant students had reduced odds of victimization and perpetration in schools with high (20–60%), compared to low, levels of immigrant concentration. Second generation immigrant students had reduced odds of ethnic/racial victimization in moderately concentrated schools; while non-immigrants had increased odds in the same schools. Non-white students had increased odds of ethnic/racial victimization compared to White students. While students' sense of school belonging and perceived teacher cultural sensitivity were negatively associated with bullying, they did not account for the differential associations noted above. Results demonstrate the importance of immigrant density as a protective school characteristic for immigrant and ethnic minority youth. Additional social processes operating in schools that may explain bullying behaviors among immigrant and non-immigrant youth should be explored to inform programs for promoting inclusion in schools.

1. Introduction

Schools represent important institutions that have the potential to shape the nature of social relationships and bullying behaviors amongst peers. An emerging body of evidence suggests that ethnic congruence in school – the numerical representation of same ethnicity peers – conditions level of risk for bullying (Benner & Graham, 2007; Georgiades, Boyle, & Fife, 2013; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, & Medicine, 2016). A higher representation of a student's ethnic group in a school has been associated with decreased experiences of bullying and increased perceptions of school belonging and safety (e.g., Benner & Crosnoe, 2011; Benner & Graham, 2007; Juvenen, Nishina, & Graham, 2006). These benefits in student outcomes may arise because of the equal distribution of power among groups or a 'goodness of fit' between individual students and the greater student body with shared characteristics that can serve as the basis for homophily and support in peer networks.

While the ethnic composition of schools might be a useful index in countries with relatively large representations of specific ethnic minority groups, in a country such as Canada with an immigrant population that is highly ethnically diverse, similar patterns may be anticipated in relation to immigrant congruence in schools—a 'person-context fit' matching based on a shared immigrant background. European evidence suggests that higher school immigrant concentration is associated with lower levels of peer victimization among immigrant and ethnic minority students (Mehari & Farrell, 2015; Tolsma, van Deurzen, Stark, & Veenstra, 2013; Walsh et al., 2016). Yet, in the North American literature, studies examining the association between school immigrant concentration, bullying behaviors and potential mechanisms that account for this associations are relatively scarce. The objectives of the present study were to

* Corresponding author. McMaster University, 1280 Main Street West, L8S 4K1, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.
E-mail addresses: vitoroui@mcmaster.ca (I. Vitoroulis), georgik@mcmaster.ca (K. Georgiades).

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.10.008
Received 9 March 2017; Received in revised form 19 October 2017; Accepted 21 October 2017
0140-1971/ © 2017 The Foundation for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.
examine the extent to which (1) school immigrant concentration moderates the association between student immigrant generational status and bullying victimization and perpetration; and (2) students' perceptions of teacher support for cultural diversity and students' sense of belongingness to their school account for the moderating effects of immigrant concentration.

1.1. Theoretical framework

‘Person-context fit’ theoretical models provide a meaningful framework for examining the interaction between a student's own background, the concentration of other immigrant students in a school and the incidence of bullying. According to Moos (1987), ‘person-environment fit’ is achieved through the interaction between individual (e.g., socio-demographic) and contextual (e.g., family, school) factors. Applying this framework suggests that peer relationships can be influenced in part by the ‘goodness of fit’ between a student’s characteristics and those of the student body. As such, the risk for bullying may in part be dependent upon the representation of similar peers in a school that can increase opportunities for developing positive peer relationships.

There is an extensive literature demonstrating that children tend to affiliate with peers who share a similar ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic background (Fortuin, van Geel, Zibera, & Vedder, 2015; Smith, Maas, & van Tubergen, 2014; Strohmeier & Dogan, 2012). Newcomer youth, especially during the first years of resettlement, display friendship homophily based on shared immigrant background, and a higher representation of immigrant students in a school is related to greater friendship homophily (Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2009). This proclivity is likely associated with shared acculturation-related experiences (Smith et al., 2014; Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2009; Titzmann, Silbereisen, & Mesch, 2012) that can increase a sense of ‘fitting in’ or belongingness with one's social context and decrease risk for peer rejection and victimization. A sense of belongingness can be especially important for foreign-born youth, whose entry and integration into Canadian schools can resemble the experiences of students who transition between schools. Increased sense of belongingness during transition periods benefits marginalized youth who might not be fully integrated in their school setting, and may display lower levels of emotional and conduct problems (Juvenen & Knifsend, 2016; Waters, Cross, & Shaw, 2010). Findings in support of the ‘person-context fit’ model demonstrate that ethnic and immigrant congruence in school is associated with fewer emotional and behavioral problems and a higher sense of belongingness (Benner & Graham, 2007; Demanet, Van Praag, & Van Houtte, 2016; Georgiades, Fife, & Boyle, 2013). Thus, in schools with higher immigrant concentration, immigrant students may experience a greater sense of belonging because of increased opportunities to form positive relationships that can be associated with a decreased risk for bullying.

Findings on school compositional characteristics and bullying demonstrate a link between a numerical power imbalance between groups and peer victimization (Graham, 2006). This line of research suggests that students who belong to a numerical minority group in their school are more likely to experience victimization and mental health difficulties by virtue of their underrepresentation and potentially their lack of social power at the group level (e.g., Graham, Bellmore, & Mize, 2006). Students who belong to smaller groups may deviate from the majority group norm or be different in discernible ways, such as appearance, language and behavior, which can increase risk for peer rejection and victimization (Scherr & Larson, 2010). Children from both immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds often differ along several of these dimensions, and depending on the composition of their school, these differences may represent a ‘poor fit’ with their environment that can result in bullying. Therefore, in schools with low immigrant concentration, immigrant students may be perceived as different compared to the larger body of non-immigrant students, and consequently, experience higher levels of peer victimization. Similar processes can occur for non-immigrant students attending schools with higher concentrations of immigrant students. Non-immigrant students in these contexts may be perceived as not ‘fitting in’ or have decreased opportunities to develop positive relationships with peers from similar backgrounds.

1.2. School immigrant concentration and bullying

Most of the evidence to date has focused on indices of school ethnic diversity or density and their association with bullying. North American findings (i.e., US) demonstrate that ethnic diversity, defined as the numerical distribution of ethnic groups in a school, at extreme low or high levels is associated with more peer aggression (e.g., Bellmore, Nishina, You, & Ma, 2012) or with lower levels of peer victimization among ethnic minority youth (e.g., Juvonen et al., 2006). Similarly, studies that have focused on the percentage of ethnic majority versus minority students in a school or the proportion of same-ethnicity peers also suggest that as the proportion of ethnic minorities increases, levels of externalizing behaviors (including aggression) decrease among ethnic minority students (e.g., Gieling, Vollebergh, & van Dorselaer, 2010).

While these approaches are informative in contexts where ethnic groups can be clustered into distinct or predominant categories, such as Hispanic and African American in the U.S. or Turkish and Moroccan in Europe, the conceptualization and measurement of these indices in the Canadian context can be challenging due to the socio-demographic composition and the distribution of the population across schools. Canada is considered highly ethnically diverse: over 20% of the Canadian population is foreign-born and more than 200 distinct ethnic groups are represented across the country in our most recent Census (Statistics Canada, 2013). This level of diversity poses methodological challenges in adequately representing homogeneous groups at the individual and contextual level. Moreover, foreign nativity status is prevalent and may represent a salient characteristic that brings youth together and facilitates the establishment of peer relationships on the basis of shared migration and resettlement challenges and opportunities. These shared experiences may serve as a source of support and bonding in peer networks. Immigrant sociocultural adaptation is intertwined with the necessity to learn a new language, adapt to new settings with different value systems, customs and beliefs, while at the same time experiencing separation from relationships and bonds with family and friends in the country of origin (Berry, 1994; James, 1997). These experiences are generally universal among immigrant groups, independent of ethnic background, and the
دریافت فوری
متن کامل مقاله

امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات