Parental Moral Disengagement Induction as a Predictor of Bullying and Cyberbullying: Mediation by Children’s Moral Disengagement, Moral Emotions, and Validation of a Questionnaire

# Details

## Year

2019

## DOI

10.1007/s12187-019-09670-2

## Issued

2019

## Language

English

## Volume

13

## Issue

3

## Start Page

## End Page

## Authors

Zych I.;Gómez-Ortiz O.;Fernández Touceda L.;Nasaescu E.;Llorent V.

## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Child Indicators Research

## Publisher

Springer Science and Business Media LLC

## Topics

* Risks and harms
* Other
* Online safety and policy regulation
* Social mediation

## Sample

This study included a sample of 1,483 Primary (n = 598) and Secondary (n=885)Education students enrolled in eight schools in two big cities and two towns in the south of Spain. One school was public, and seven schools were semi-private, all of them with average socioeconomic status. Three schools were lay, and four schools were religious. Among the Primary Education students, 46.3% were girls and 53.2% were boys (M age= 10.50; SD= .96). Among the Secondary Education students, 48.8% were girls and 50.6% were boys (M age= 14.14; SD= 1.40). Students were enrolled in Grades 5 and 6 (Primary Schools) and 1 to 4 (Secondary Schools).

## Implications For Parents About

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

The The need of developing and implementint anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying parent training focused on morality induction and morality enhancement in students

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Other

## Other Stakeholder Implication

NGOS

# Abstract

Little is known about the relation between parental morality induction, moral function-
ing in children and children’s involvement in bullying and cyberbullying. This study aimed at advancing knowledge on parenting practices regarding morality induction. The Perceived Parental Moral Disengagement Induction Questionnaire was designed and validated. The relation between the perceived parental moral disengagement induction, bullying and cyberbullying mediated by children’s moral disengagement and moral emotions was explored in this study. The survey was answered by 1483 Primary and Secondary Education students enrolled in eight different schools. High perceived parental moral disengagement induction, children’ s high moral disengagement and low moral emotions were related to high involvement in bullying and cyberbullying. Parenting practices regarding morality predicted moral functioning in children which in turn predicted bullying and cyberbullying. Thus, bullying and cyberbullying could possibly be decreased by enhancing morality in children and
promoting desirable morality-related parenting practice

# Outcome

This study was conducted to advance in the knowledge on the dynamic relations among parental induction of moral disengagement, moral functioning in children, and involvement in bullying and cyberbullying. Results show that high moral disengagement was related to high involvement in bullying perpetration and victimization in Primary and Secondary education.

Low moral emotions were related to high cyberperpetration in Primary and Secondary Education. The relation between cyber victimization and low moral emotions was significant in Secondary Education but not in Primary Education. The authors point out that it seems that bullies find excuses and justify their immoral acts and feel less moral emotions related to the transgressions that probably decrease their motivation to desist from bullying, adding that "It is also possible that victims who believe that transgressions can be justified do not seek help and assume that there might be a reason to hurt them" (Zych et al., 2019: 1078).

On the other hand results of this study show that high parental moral disengagement induction perceived by the children and adolescents was related to high bullying and cyberbullying perpetration mediated by high moral disengagement and low moral emotions. Zych et al. (2019: 1078) point out that "It is possible that children who perceive that their parents justify their transgressions are likely to increase their own moral disengagement regarding different aggressive behaviors including bullying and cyberbullying". These moral disengagement mechanisms decrease their moral emotions to which Zych et al. (2019: 1078) point out that "if they do not feel guilty or ashamed after hurting other children, they
might continue to do this and become bullies or cyberbullies".

The current study has some important implications for policy and practice. The authors address the need for designing tailored anti-bullying and anti-cyberbullying interventions which might include parental training and should be necessarily implemented as extracurricular activities and would require investment in these programs (Zych et al., 2019: 1080).