



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of School Psychology

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jschpsyc

Evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: A large scale study of U.S. students in grades 3–11

Susan P. Limber^{a,*,1}, Dan Olweus^{b,1}, Weijun Wang^c, Matthew Masiello^d,
Kyrre Breivik^e

^a Department of Youth, Family & Community Studies, 2038 Barre Hall, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634, United States

^b Psykologkonsult Dan Olweus, Vognstolbakken 16, NO-5096 Bergen, Norway

^c The State University of New York at Buffalo, Research Institute on Addictions, University at Buffalo, State University of New York, 1021 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14203, United States

^d University of Massachusetts Memorial Children's Medical Center, Health Alliance Hospital, 60 Hospital Rd., Leominster, MA 01453, United States

^e Regional Centre for Child and Youth Mental Health and Child Welfare, Uni Research Health, Nygårdsgaten 112-114, 5008 Bergen, Norway



ARTICLE INFO

Action Editor: Michelle K. Demaray

Keywords:

Bullying victimization

Bullying perpetration

Evaluation

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Anti-bullying programs

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to evaluate a large-scale implementation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program with children and youth in grades 3–11 in the U.S. Two major sets of analyses are presented, one following 210 schools over two years (Study 1; $n = 70,998$ at baseline) and the other following a subsample of 95 schools over three years (Study 2; $n = 31,675$ at baseline). Schools were located in 49 counties in central and western Pennsylvania. The Mplus 7.0 program was used to analyze the data which had a multilevel structure, with students nested in schools and program effects based on school-aggregated outcome variables. For almost all grades, there were clear reductions in the two key dimensions, being bullied and bullying other students. Average Absolute Change amounted to approximately 3%, implying that almost 2000 students had escaped being bullied in the two-year study. School-level Cohen's d 's were large or fairly large. The longitudinal analyses documented increases in students' expressions of empathy with bullied peers, marked decreases in their willingness to join in bullying, and perceptions that their primary teacher had increased his or her efforts to address bullying. Overall, effects were stronger the longer the program had been in place. The analyses provided strong support for the effectiveness of the OBPP with U.S. students in elementary, middle, and early high school grades in Pennsylvania schools. Future research is warranted to assess program effectiveness in different racial/ethnic and community settings and to examine the relation between fidelity of implementation and outcomes.

Bullying is an ancient phenomenon, yet systematic research on the nature and prevalence of bullying and efforts to prevent bullying are relatively recent. The earliest study on bullying was conducted in the 1970s in Scandinavia (Olweus, 1973, 1978), and the first systematic attempts to prevent bullying also began in Scandinavia. In 1983, the Norwegian Ministry of Education launched a nationwide campaign to address bullying in schools, in response to public concerns that were fueled by the suicides of three teenagers who allegedly had been severely bullied by their peers. An initial version of what later became known as the Olweus Bullying

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: slimber@clemson.edu (S.P. Limber), olweus@uni.no (D. Olweus), wwang@ria.buffalo.edu (W. Wang), mmasiello@healthalliance.com (M. Masiello), Kyrre.breivik@uni.no (K. Breivik).

¹ The first two authors contributed equally to this article.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2018.04.004>

Received 24 February 2017; Received in revised form 5 January 2018; Accepted 25 April 2018

0022-4405/© 2018 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Society for the Study of School Psychology.

Prevention Program (OBPP) was developed, implemented, and evaluated within this same context (Olweus, 1991, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Although international research on bullying grew slowly in the 1980s and 1990s, it was not until the late 1990s and 2000s that attention to bullying exploded among researchers, policy makers, and the general public in the U.S. and in many other countries (Berger, 2007). Today, bullying is commonly recognized as a serious public health problem affecting children and adolescents in the U.S. and around the world (Masiello & Schroeder, 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, 2016).

Bullying is a subset of aggressive behavior that is commonly repeated and involves a power imbalance between a target and his or her perpetrator(s) (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014; Olweus, 1993). In the U.S., nearly one-quarter of students ages 12–18 report having been bullied during the school year (Zhang, Musu-Gillette, & Oudekerk, 2016) and 14% of 3rd–12th graders reported having been bullied 2–3 times per month or more (Luxenberg, Limber, & Olweus, 2015). The many short- and long-term negative psychosocial, mental health, physiological, and behavioral effects of being bullied have been thoroughly documented and will not be reiterated here (for overviews, see Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; Olweus, 2013; Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, & Loeber, 2011a). Similarly, bullying others has been associated with a number of short- and long-term negative characteristics, but of a different nature than those of individuals who have been bullied (for overviews, see Cook et al., 2010; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016; Olweus, 2013; Ttofi, Farrington, & Lösel, 2012). Common consequences of being bullied by peers are largely internalizing, and include depression, poor self-esteem, and suicidal ideation, whereas children and youth who bully peers are characterized by externalizing problems, such as violence, rule breaking behavior, and delinquency.

As Olweus (1993) emphasized at an early stage, bullying is not only a health problem but also a serious violation of fundamental human rights. In recognition of children's rights to be safe in school, and in response to concerns about the negative human and societal effects of bullying, a number of school-based bullying prevention efforts have been launched in recent years (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2016). Several meta-analyses and/or systematic reviews of these prevention programs have been conducted, with somewhat mixed results (for a review, see Ttofi, Eisner, & Bradshaw, 2014). The most comprehensive meta-analysis to date was conducted by Ttofi and Farrington (2009, 2011). In this analysis, which included 44 evaluations of school-based intervention programs, the authors concluded that anti-bullying programs were effective in reducing bullying and/or victimization by an average of 17–23% but that the effect sizes were relatively small. There was great variation in program effects, however, and the authors noted that programs implemented in Europe were more effective than those implemented in the U.S. The authors also observed that “programs inspired by the work of Dan Olweus worked best” (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011, pp. 41–42). Indeed, while the average Odds Ratio for all included studies was 1.36 for bullying perpetration and 1.29 for bullying victimization, the (unweighted) average for evaluations of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was markedly higher, 1.83 and 1.80, respectively (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011, Table 3, pp. 36–37).

1. Brief description of the OBPP

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP; Olweus, 1991, 1993, Olweus & Limber, 2010a, 2010b) is the oldest and one of the most researched bullying prevention programs in the world. It represents a whole-school comprehensive approach that includes schoolwide, classroom, individual, and community components. The program is focused on both short-term and long-term change that will create a safe and positive school environment. The overarching goals of the OBPP are to reduce existing bullying problems among students, prevent new bullying problems, and achieve better peer relations (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). These goals are pursued by restructuring the school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying behavior and to build a sense of community. The program was designed and initially evaluated for use in elementary, middle, and junior high schools.

The OBPP is built on four basic principles. Adults at school should: (a) show warmth and positive interest in students; (b) set firm limits to unacceptable behavior; (c) use consistent positive consequences to acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behavior and non-physical, non-hostile consequences when rules are broken; and (d) function as authorities and positive role models (Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007). These principles have been translated into interventions at the school, classroom, individual, and community levels (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 2010a, 2010b). Parent involvement is encouraged at all levels (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). There are eight school-level components, which are implemented school-wide, including the development of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC, a building-level coordinating team of administrators, teachers, non-teaching staff, and parents that is responsible for ensuring that all components of the OBPP are implemented with fidelity); the yearly administration of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ, Olweus, 2007a); training and ongoing consultation for members of the coordinating team and all school staff; the adoption of clear rules and policies about bullying; and the review and refinement of the school's supervisory system to reduce bullying. Classroom-level components of the program include holding regular class meetings to build understanding of bullying and related issues through discussions and role play, and build class cohesion; posting and enforcing school-wide rules against bullying; and holding periodic class-level meetings with parents. Teachers are also encouraged to integrate bullying prevention messages and strategies throughout the curriculum. Individual-level components of the OBPP include supervision of students' activities, particularly in known hot-spots for bullying; training for all staff to help them intervene on-the-spot when bullying occurs or is suspected; and follow-up interventions with children and youth involved in bullying. Finally, BPCC members are encouraged to involve one or more community members on their team, look for ways that community members can support the school's program, and collaborate to spread bullying prevention strategies and messages into other community settings that involve children and youth (Olweus & Limber, 2010b).

School staff are supported in their implementation by manuals for teachers and for members of the BPCC, class meeting resource

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6843707>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6843707>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)