Chapter 5

Conclusions and Discussion

The objectives of this study were to measure the prevalence of physical bullying and investigate the factors associated with physical bullying among lower secondary school students in Pattani province, southern Thailand. We aimed to develop a model for describing the risk factors of student bullying. Participants in this study comprised 244 lower secondary school students in Pattani province. The responses from these subjects were obtained using a structured questionnaire. Questions on bullying referred to events in 2006 during either the previous six months (1 May to 31 October) or during the previous month (in November) preceding the interview.

5.1 Conclusions

This study showed that bullying is a problem among lower secondary school students (M1-M3) in Pattani province, southern Thailand. The author found that the prevalence of physical bullying was 18.5% (95% CI: 13.6-23.4). Gender was not significantly associated with bullying others (boys = 18.7%, girls = 18.2%). Similar to results from other countries, we concluded that there are differences in rates of bullying among individuals from different family environment. Moreover, our study suggests that besides family environment, factors such as age group, ethnicity, and school type are important risk factors for bullying others, which remain significant after multivariable adjustment. In addition, the author found that most of the bullying students admitted having witnessed physical violence from their parents. Therefore, in this study

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confirm the research hypothesis that students who had experience of parental violence are more likely to be bullies at school.

In southernmost of Thailand specifically, it is important that Pattani province should consider school bullying as a serious problem, and be aware that it has negative consequences on students' psychological health as well as on their school achievement (Totten and Quigley, 2005).

5.2 Discussion

This research studied the prevalence and predictors of physical bullying among lower secondary school students (M1-M3) in Pattani province, southern Thailand. The prevalence of physical bullying during both the preceding six months and during the previous month was found to be 18.5% (95% CI: 13.6-23.4).

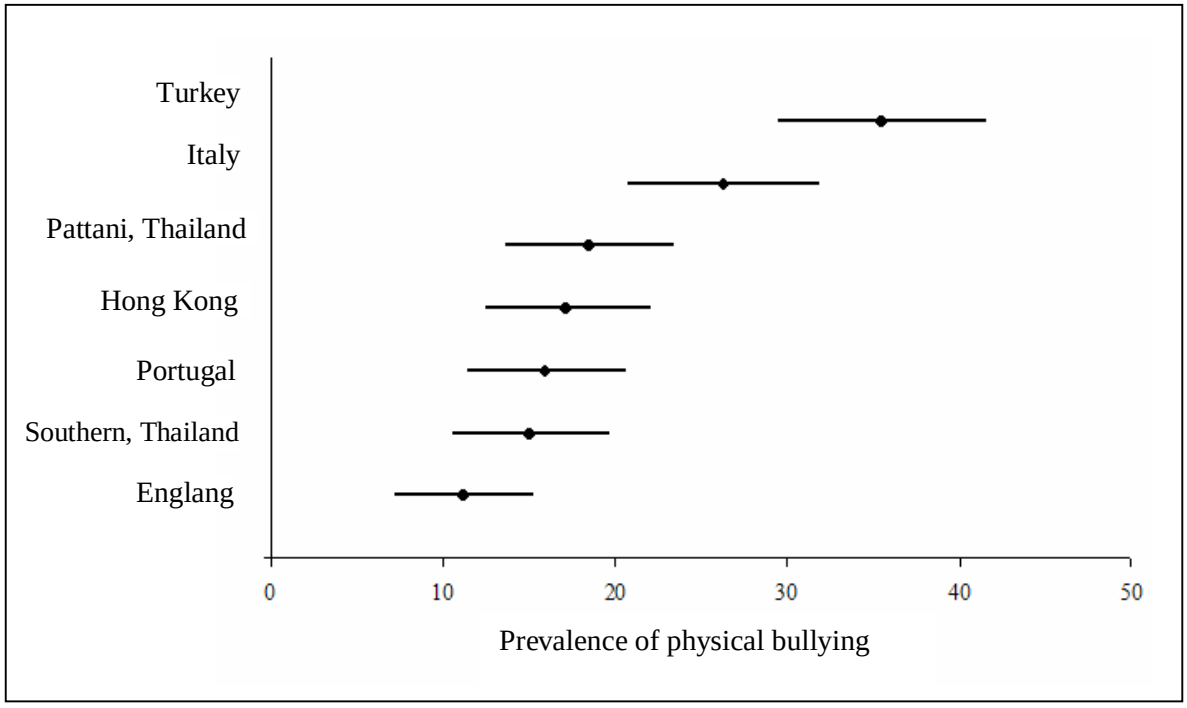

Figure 5.1: Prevalence and 95% CI for bullying compared to previous research

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Figure 5.1 shows a comparison of the prevalence for bullying others in the current study with previous studies. Results from this study were not much different from most other studies. However, a study in Turkey indicated that the prevalence of bullying others was much higher with 35.5% (CI: 29.5-42.0) (Kepenekci and Cinkir, 2006).

The estimated prevalence of physical bullying in school seems to depend on the study design, definitions of bullying, and cultural differences. However, there are many causes of bullying that are not only related to the individual, but also to the socio-family environment.

This study found that the four factors: age group, ethnicity, school type and parental violence are positively associated with physical bullying.

Students aged 14 years or over were more likely to physically bully others compared to those aged less than 14 years. These results are similar to those found by Woods and White (2005) in England and Pereira et al. (2004) in Portugal. They found that older and often stronger students tended to bully others.

Thai students were more likely to physically bully others compared to students of Malay or Chinese ethnicity. This result is not consistent with previous studies. Many studies have reported a difference of bullying among ethnic groups, such as white students (3.5%) were more likely to being directly bullied than black students (2.6%) (DeVoe and Kaffenberger, 2005). In contrast to a study in South Africa, ethnicity was not significantly associated with bullying others (Greeff, 2004). The explanation for this may be due to the difference of samples, cultural differences, and definitions of bullying.

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Our study found that students who had witnessed physical violence between their parents were more likely to bully others compared to those who had never witnessed physical violence. Exposure to parental violence is related to negative behaviour of students. Other studies (Totten and Quigley, 2005; Ahmed and Braithwaite, 1996; Craig et al., 1998; Stevens et al., 2002) reported that students who bullied tend to come from violence families, negative emotional attitudes (e.g., lack of warmth, more conflict, punishment and a less close relationship with their parents). In addition, students who came from urban schools were approximately 4 times more likely to physically bully others than were those from rural schools.

This study provides some directions for attempting to reduce the problems of bullying. It might be useful if teachers and other authorities assist parents to reduce their own level of family violence as a way of helping their children. Furthermore, action in urban areas and especially among those of Thai ethnicity seems to be more urgent than in rural areas and among other ethnic groups.

5.3 Limitations and recommendation

There are some limitations to the current study. The sample selection was based on the convenience technique therefore; the subjects may not represent all lower secondary school students in Pattani province. If further research is done in this area, stratified random sampling method should be used to get a sample were representative of the target population.

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