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Parents' Responses to Coping with Bullying: Variations by Adolescents' Self-Reported Victimization and Parents' Awareness of Bullying Involvement

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Received: 29 June 2018; Accepted: 24 July 2018; Published: 25 July 2018



Abstract: Bullying has been recognized as an important risk factor for mental health. A growing number of researchers have encouraged parents to work collaboratively with schools to prevent and intervene in bullying situations. This study explores the relationship between parents' awareness of bullying involvement, adolescents' self-reported victimization, and six possible parents' responses to their child's victimization. The participants were 1044 seventh–tenth grade students and their parents. Logistic regressions analyses were applied to determine if parents' awareness of victimization and adolescents' self-reporting of victimization were associated with parents' responses to bullying victimization. The results showed that parents' awareness of bullying and adolescents' self-reported victimization were only associated with the “defends herself/himself” and “talks to bully” response. In other words, the parents who believe their child has been bullied are less likely to encourage their children to talk with the bully, and when children are victimized, it is less likely that their parents will encourage them to defend themselves or talk with the bully.

Keywords: bullying; cyberbullying; family; parents; bullying awareness; coping strategies

1. Introduction

Bullying is an intentional and aggressive behavior that is repeatedly performed by one or several individuals against someone unable to defend him/herself (Smith 2016). Bullying can be verbal (e.g., name calling, threats), physical (e.g., punching, kicking hitting, harming personal belonging), and can include social-relational aggression (e.g., rumor spreading, social exclusion). Other more recent forms of bullying attacks are made using the internet and information–communication technologies (ICT), known as cyberbullying (e.g., posting the victim's private photos online).

Although the last two decades have witnessed a significant decrease in bullying in many countries, bullying is still a major problem among young people. Prospective longitudinal and cross-sectional studies indicate that victims of bullying are more likely than non-victimized youth to report emotional distress, low self-esteem, symptoms of depression, social isolation, anxiety, and lower life satisfaction, as well as poor academic performance, school absenteeism, and suicidal ideation (Moore et al. 2017; Wolke 2017). Given these risks, it is necessary to make effective intervention and prevention efforts to work with and attend to victimized students. Parents are encouraged to work collaboratively with schools to intervene and prevent bullying by increasingly more researchers (Rigby 2017; Zych et al. 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to know parents' perceptions of bullying and how they respond to bullying victimization. The current study focuses on parents' awareness of bullying

and adolescent's self-reported victimization as potential factors that are related to how parents respond to their child's victimization.

1.1. Parents and Their Awareness of Bullying Victimization

Parents play an important role in intervening and preventing bullying situations. Previous research has indicated that parents' responsiveness to a child's victimization is related to the child's ability to cope with bullying (Lester et al. 2017). Nevertheless, parents are not normally aware of the child's victimization, because children are quite often reluctant to reveal anything to their parents about their bullying experiences (Bjereld et al. 2017). Youth may hide that they are bullied, because they feel shame, they think it is not serious enough, they believe that informing their parents could make their problem worse, or they attempt to solve the problem themselves. If they are victims of cyberbullying, youths may fear their parents will control or limit their internet or cellphone use (Yubero et al. 2018; Stavrinides et al. 2015).

Previous research has shown that parents believe that bullying is a serious problem and estimate higher rates of victimization than do teachers (Gradinger et al. 2017). However, very few studies have analyzed parent/child agreement on bullying involvement. An investigation with American children has shown that parents report fewer cases of bullying than do youths, but parents tend to perceive their child being bullied when the child has never reported this (Holt et al. 2008). Along the same lines, a study analyzing cyberbullying in Amsterdam conducted by Dehue et al. (2008) found that the percentage of parents who reported that their children are being cyberbullied is much lower than the percentage of children who report being cyberbullied.

1.2. Parents and Their Response to Bullying Victimization

Research findings suggest that the quality of relationships with parents is closely related to bullying/cyberbullying. In particular, previous research suggests that parents being available and open to communicate with children are in a better position to help avoid bullying and protect children from its negative consequences. In the United States of America (USA), the research conducted by Wang et al. (2009) reported that parental behaviors involving positive communication to understand adolescents' concerns and problems, or skills to make upset adolescents feel better, actually protect them from bullying. Elgar et al. (2014), also in the USA, reported that family communication and contact can help adolescents to be protected from the harmful effects of bullying. Despite the fact that such positive communication per se does not prevent suffering from bullying, it helps to create trust and allows youths to be aware that they can rely on family members to help them and to provide adaptive ways to cope with bullying. Moreover, previous research has indicated that parental warmth is consistently associated with lower cyberbullying victimization (Elsaesser et al. 2017).

When parents become aware of their child's victimization or when a child discloses bullying, numerous parents do not know how to help their child to cope with bullying. However, parents' responses to bullying may differ (e.g., contacting the school administrator or school teacher, contacting the bully or his/her parents (Hale et al. 2017; Waasdorp et al. 2011)). Practitioners and researchers suggest that parents first help by carefully listening to their child, not making decisions on the spur of the moment or adopting responses that do not contemplate the child's opinion, because rushed decisions can worsen victimization or model unsuitable response strategies (Buelga et al. 2017; Cross et al. 2018). Researchers encourage parents to notify schools and to work collaboratively with schools to overcome bullying. Previous research conducted with parents of victimized youth from elementary, middle, and high schools has revealed that most parents respond by talking to their child about victimization and contacting the administrator or teacher (Waasdorp et al. 2011).

1.3. The Present Study

The present study was designed to extend previous research to help explain the association between adolescents' self-reported victimization, parents' awareness of bullying, and their responses

to bullying victimization. Therefore, the primary aims of this study were as follows: (a) to evaluate the degree of agreement between parent/child reports of bullying/victimization involvement; (b) to examine parents' responses to bullying victimization; (c) to explore whether some demographic variables (child's age and gender) were related to parents' responses to their child's victimization; and (d) to investigate the associations between parents' awareness of bullying involvement, adolescents' self-reported victimization, and six possible parents' responses to their child's victimization.

Based on previous research documenting that parents tend to report lower bullying rates than do students, the hypothesis was that parents/children's agreement on bullying victimization would not be high. It was also expected that parents who are aware of their child's victimization would be more likely to use any responses included in this study to cope with the victimization. Likewise, parents whose children report being bullied would also be more likely to use any responses included in the study. Finally, it was hypothesized that it would be more likely that parents with younger children would contact schools and talk to the bully or his/her parent rather than encourage their children to defend themselves and/or ignore the problem.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

A total of 1044 adolescents from four public secondary schools and their parents participated in this study. The adolescents were students in four public secondary schools in the Castilla-La Mancha region (Spain). A total of 24% were in grade 7, 24.3% were in grade 8, 24.9% in grade 9, and 26.8% in grade 10. A total of 45.5% participants were males, and 54.5% participants were females. The ages ranged from 12–17 years old ($M = 14.39$; $SD = 1.54$). On average, the parents were 42.95 years old (range: 34–52 years). A total of 700 (67.1%) of the parents were female, and 344 (32.9%) of the parents were male.

2.2. Procedure

Students in the four secondary schools were asked to participate ($N = 1258$). The students took part in the study if they returned a form in which their parents had to give their parental consent (32 parents did not give parental consent). The parents or legal guardians who gave parental consent received a questionnaire to assess parents' awareness of bullying involvement and their responses to bullying victimization. The parents' questionnaire had a code in order to pair data with their child's. A total of 85.08% of the parents returned the questionnaire to the school. In 50.3% of cases, mothers filled in the questionnaire alone, fathers completed it in 16.4% of cases, and mothers and fathers worked together in 33.3% of cases.

The adolescents completed the 20-min questionnaire in groups of approximately 25 students at school under the supervision of at least one of the researchers. The participants were assured that their individual responses would remain anonymous and would not be seen by their parents, peers, or teachers.

2.3. Measurement Variables and Instruments

First, the adolescents gave information about their age, gender, and grade. After that, they filled out a battery of questions regarding self-reported bullying victimization. The parents had to report if they knew their child was being victimized and indicate how they responded or will respond to bullying.

2.3.1. Self-reported Bullying Victimization

The scale used was the Bullyharm (Hall 2016), a 14-item self-reported measure to self-report different bullying behaviors in the real world and on the internet occurring during the last month. The items were scored on a 3-point scale (0 = *never*; 1 = *1 or 2 times in the past month*; 2 = *about 1 time a*

week; or 3 = twice a week or more). Examples of items are “said something to scare or intimidate me” and “sent me a mean email, instant message, or text message”. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient was 0.86.

2.3.2. Parents’ Awareness of Bullying Involvement

Following Holt et al. (2008), the parents responded “Yes” or “No” to a single question: “have you ever suspected or found out that your child might be bullied by other children?”

2.3.3. Parents’ Responses to Bullying.

The parents’ responses to bullying were assessed by a single question (“What have you done when your child told you about being bullied, or you noticed that she/he was being bullied?”) to which they could endorse up to six possible responses: “encourage my child to defend himself/herself”, “tell my child to ignore/do nothing”, “contact the school”, “control his/her internet access and cellphone use”, “talk to the bully”, and “talk to the bully’s parents”. The parents had to select three responses that described their behavior when they discovered that their child was being bullied.

3. Results

3.1. Overview of the Analyses

Percentages of the adolescents’ self-reported victimization were first computed. Second, the parents/adolescents concordance was examined using the parents’ beliefs and the adolescents’ self-reports of bullying involvement. Third, percentages of the parents who endorsed each possible response to their child’s victimization were computed. Fourth, differences in each parent’s response according to the adolescents’ self-reported victimization and the parents’ beliefs about their child’s victimization status were examined using a chi-square test. Finally, the extent to which gender, age, the parents’ beliefs, and the child’s self-reports related to each parent’s response was evaluated through a logistic regression analysis. SPSS 20.0 statistical software was used for all the analyses.

3.2. Self-Reported Victimization and Parent/Child Concordance

The participants were considered victims of bullying if they reported having suffered one or more of the behaviors included in the questionnaire at least once a week during the last month. That is, the participants indicated experience of any of the 14 behaviors included in the questionnaire “about 1 time a week” in the last month. This criterion fits the emphasis placed on bullying as a repetitive behavior. According to this condition, 979 adolescents (93.8%) indicated that they had not been a victim of bullying, while 65 (6.2%) of the participants in the sample indicated that they had been victims of bullying at least once a week in the last month. Among the participants, 6.7% of females ($n = 38$) were bullied and 5.7% of males were bullied ($n = 27$). There were no sex differences (χ^2 (d.f.:1) = 0.438; $p = 0.523$) or age differences (χ^2 (d.f.:1) = 0.590; $p = 0.445$) in the victims’ frequency. The distribution of the participants according to gender and age group in the victim and non-victim groups is reported in Table 1. Regarding the type of bullying, 41 (3.9%) of the participants were victims of traditional bullying, 12 (1.1%) of the participants were victims of cyberbullying, and 12 (1.1%) of the participants were victims of both traditional bullying and cyberbullying.

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants by victimization status.

	Not Victimized % (n)	Victimized % (n)
Overall	93.8 (979)	6.2 (65)
Adolescent’s gender		
Male	94.3 (448)	5.7 (27)
Female	93.3 (531)	6.7 (38)
Student’s age		
12–14 years old	50.8 (530)	3.1 (32)
15–17 years old	43 (449)	3.2 (33)

Note: Values represent the percentages of adolescents with the number of adolescents in parentheses.

Overall, 22.3% of the parents indicated that their child had been bullied. When considering the agreement rates for the entire sample (see Table 2), the results indicated that approximately 1.6% of the sample, both the child and their parents, reported bullying involvement, and for rest of the 73% of the sample, both the child and the parents did not report bullying involvement. In only approximately 4.5% of the sample did a child report being bullied when their parents did not report that the child had been bullied. However, there was a tendency for parents to think that their child had been bullied when the child did not report this (20.7%).

Table 2. Agreement between the student reports of being bullied and the parents’ awareness of their child being bullied.

	Parents’ Awareness	
	Parents believe their child had been bullied (n = 233)	Parents believe their child had not been bullied (n = 811)
Adolescents reported being bullied (n = 65)	17 (1.6%)	48 (4.6%)
Adolescents reported not being bullied (n = 979)	216 (20.7%)	763 (73.1%)

3.3. Characteristics of Parents’ Responses

The percentages of parents who endorsed each possible response to bullying were first examined (see Table 3). The most common response was contacting a teacher/administrator from the schools, followed by controlling internet access and talking to the bully’s parents. The least common response was encouraging their child to defend herself/himself.

Table 3. Parents’ responses to bullying victimization.

Response	Total % (n)
Defends herself/himself	15.7% (164)
Ignore/do nothing	30.7% (320)
Contact the school	75.7% (790)
Control internet access and cellphone use	55.5% (579)
Talk to bully	17.2% (180)
Talk to the bully’s parents	54.4% (568)

Note: The data represents the percentage and numbers of parents who endorsed the response (i.e., answered “Yes”).

Second, differences in each parents’ response according to the adolescents’ self-reported victimization and the parents’ awareness of their child’s victimization status were examined (see Tables 4 and 5). Regarding the parents’ awareness, as indicated in Table 4, the parents who believed

that their child had not been bullied were more likely to indicate that they would use any of the responses significantly more frequently than the parents who believed that their child had been bullied.

Table 4. Percentages of the parents' responses according to the parents' awareness of bullying involvement.

Response	Parents Believe Their Child Had Been Bullied (<i>n</i> = 233)	Parents Believe Their Child Had Not Been Bullied (<i>n</i> = 811)
Defends herself/himself	30 (2.9%)	134 (12.8%) ***
Ignore/do nothing	73 (7.0%)	247 (23.7%) ***
Contact the school	184 (17.6%)	606 (58.0%) ***
Control internet access and cell-phone use	146 (14.0%)	433 (41.5%) ***
Talk to bully	41 (3.9%)	139 (13.3%) ***
Talk to bully's parents	123 (11.8%)	445 (42.6%) ***

Note: only includes the parents who reported that they used or would use any of the responses. *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 5. Percentages of the parents' responses according to the adolescents' self-reported victimization.

Response	Not Victimized (<i>n</i> = 979)	Victimized (<i>n</i> = 65)
Defends herself/himself	145 (13.9%) ***	18 (1.8%)
Ignore/do nothing	306 (29.3%) ***	14 (1.3%)
Contact the school	737 (70.6%) ***	53 (1.4%)
Control internet access and cellphone use	541 (51.8%) ***	38 (3.6%)
Talk to bully	162 (15.5%) ***	18 (1.7%)
Talk to the bully's parents	538 (51.5%) ***	30 (2.9%)

Note: only includes the parents who reported using or would use any of the responses. *** $p < 0.001$.

With respect to the adolescents' self-reported victimization, as shown in Table 5, the parents of those who were not bullied would use any of the responses significantly more frequently than the parents of those who were actually bullied.

3.4. Relationships Linking Parents' Awareness, Adolescents' Self-Reported Victimization, and Parents' Coping Strategies

Table 6 provides the results of the odds ratios (OR) for each examined factor in the logistic regression analysis. The data indicated that gender only increased the likelihood of the "ignore/do nothing" response. That is, parents were more likely to tell their children to ignore the problem or do nothing when children were female. Regarding age, the data showed that age increased the likelihood of the "contact the school" and "control internet access" responses but decreased the likelihood of the "defends himself/herself" and "talk to bully" responses. That is, when children were younger, parents were more likely to contact a teacher/administrator at school or control internet access or cellphone use. However, when children were older, their parents were more likely to encourage them to defend themselves or talk to the bully.

Table 6. Logistic regression model predicting the associations among the parents' responses, gender, age, the parent's awareness of bullying involvement, and self-reported victimization. OR: odds ratio.

Independent Variable	Defend			Ignore			School		
	B	OR	95% CI	B	OR	95% CI	B	OR	95% CI
Gender	0.10	1.12	(0.79–1.56)	0.27	1.32 *	(1.01–1.72)	0.05	1.05	(0.79–1.40)
Age	−0.37	0.68 *	(0.49–0.96)	0.02	1.02	(0.94–1.11)	0.33	1.39 *	(0.82–0.97)
Parent believes child has been bullied	0.30	1.34	(0.84–2.06)	−0.05	0.94	(0.68–1.29)	−0.27	0.79	(0.56–1.13)
Self-reported victimization	−0.87	0.41 **	(0.23–0.73)	0.50	1.64	(0.89–3.02)	−0.38	0.68	(0.36–1.30)
Independent variable	Internet			Bully			Bully's Parents		
	B	OR	95% CI	B	OR	95% CI	B	OR	95% CI
Gender	−0.19	0.82	(0.64–1.05)	−0.17	0.84	(0.60–1.17)	−0.19	0.82	(0.64–1.05)
Age	0.24	1.27 *	(0.99–1.63)	−0.34	0.71 *	(0.51–0.98)	0.06	1.06	(0.98–1.14)
Parent believes child has been bullied	−0.01	0.97	(0.66–1.43)	−0.37	0.69 *	(0.51–0.93)	0.08	1.08	(0.80–1.45)
Self-reported victimization	0.11	0.65	(0.53–1.48)	−0.63	0.52 *	(0.29–0.92)	0.36	1.44	(0.86–2.38)

Note: Gender was coded as girls = 1. Age was coded as 12–14 = 1. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$.

Regarding the parents' awareness of bullying involvement, the parents' perceptions only lowered the likelihood of the "talk to bully" response. The parents who believe their child had been bullied were less likely to encourage their children to talk with the bully. Regarding self-reported victimization, actual bullying lowered the likelihood of the "defends herself/himself" and "talk to bully" responses. That is, when children were victimized, it was less likely that their parents would encourage them to defend themselves or talk with the bully.

4. Discussion

The present study examined adolescents' self-reported victimization and parents' awareness of and their responses to bullying victimization. Contrary to what was expected, the parents' reported bullying victimization rates were higher than those informed by the adolescents. Moreover, the parents' awareness of bullying and the adolescents' self-reported victimization were not related with the six parents' examined responses.

4.1. Degree of Agreement between Child's and Parents' Reports of Bullying Victimization

Consistently with the hypothesis, a low degree of concordance between the child's and the parents' reports of bullying was found. Specifically, among the adolescents who reported being bullied, approximately 2% of the parents reported this same problem, whereas approximately 5% of the parents did not report that their child had been victimized. Contrary to previous research, the parents reported higher bullying victimization rates than did their children (Holt et al. 2008). It is likely that parents are more inclined to consider bullying to be present in mild or moderate cases of peer victimization, whereas adolescents may be reluctant to inform adults about their bullying experiences, consider some aggressive events to not be serious enough, or only consider bullying to be present in cases where peer victimization is more intense. However, in line with previous research, the results showed that the parents tend to think that their child had been bullied when the child did not reported this (Holt et al. 2008). Future studies should address how parent/child differences in defining bullying may affect parent/child concordance about bullying victimization rates.

4.2. Parents Responses to Victimization

The majority of parents reported responding to their child's victimization by contacting a teacher/administrator from the school, followed by controlling internet access and cellphone use. This last response may be related with parents' growing concern about cyberbullying, an evolved manifestation of traditional bullying performed through electronic and digital media (Wright 2018). Nevertheless, a high percentage of parents also recommended maladaptive strategies for coping or

responding to bullying, such as ignoring bullying or encouraging their child to defend herself/himself. Researchers have shown that talking to children about victimization and contacting the school are more appropriate responses than ignoring the problem or contacting the bully, as these responses can have negative corollaries for the victimized child (Garnett et al. 2015; Navarro et al. 2018). Indeed, system theories suggest that family responses are likely to influence children's responses. This theoretical framework is useful when considering how family responses to bullying can contribute to mitigate the problem or to make the problem worse. Concretely, the family system theory suggests that a youth's strategies for coping with bullying are likely to be shaped by the way their family system has coped with the problem (Cross and Barnes 2014). If the family is unable to cope adaptively with bullying, this may further reinforce the use of maladaptive behaviors among young people experiencing difficulty in coping with bullying. For example, parental overprotective or permissive responses have been linked with bullying victimization (Georgiou and Stavrinides 2013).

It was hypothesized that the parents' responses would vary according to the parents' awareness of bullying and the adolescent's self-reported victimization. Contrary to our expectations, parents reporting that their children had been victimized and parents whose children reported being victimized reported a lower use of any of the coping responses than parents who did not report that their child had been victimized and those whose children reported not being victimized. This difference may be related to the fact that the number of non-victimized adolescents and the number of parents not reporting bullying victimization is much larger than the victimized adolescents and the parents reporting bullying victimization. However, parents whose children had not been victimized might have indicated a great number of coping responses guided by a social desirability bias according to which parents ought to cope with bullying in any possible way to show that they are always responsive to their children's needs (Hale et al. 2017). Another possibility is that the parents with non-victimized children are not sure how to suitably respond to bullying, and they have difficulties selecting the most effective strategy to protect their children (Harcourt et al. 2014). Conversely, the parents whose children are victimized could have acquired previous experience from coping with bullying and are more selective with the used coping responses, or alternatively, they believe that the offered responses in the study are not effective in stopping bullying. Further research should explore how previous experiences dealing with bullying may impact parents' responses to bullying victimization.

The primary aim of this study was to explore the association between adolescents/parents' bullying reports and parents' responses to their children's victimization. Contrary to what was expected, the parents' awareness of bullying victimization was related only with the parents' likelihood of opting for the "talk with the bully" response. The parents with victimized children were not as likely to encourage their child to talk with their bully. In the same way, the adolescents' reports of bullying victimization lowered the likelihood of the parents encouraging their children to defend themselves. This suggests that parents of victimized youth may feel that talking with the bully is not an effective response to stop the bullying and may believe that this response could make the victimization worse (Mishna et al. 2006). Prior research has indicated that parents' attitudes to bullying and their perception of school might be more associated with parents' responses to bullying than their awareness of victimization (Waasdorp et al. 2011).

Some variation in the parents' responses to bullying was found according to the students' demographic factors. Specifically, the findings suggest that there may be some developmental differences in the parents' responses (e.g., parents with younger children are not likely to encourage their children to defend themselves or talk to bullies but would more probably contact schools and control internet access). Consistent with previous research (Waasdorp et al. 2011), parents with younger children were more likely to more directly intervene in response to their children's victimization by contacting schools or restricting the use of technology to deal with bullying, whereas parents with older children may encourage their child to solve the bullying themselves. The parents were also more likely to tell their female children to ignore the problem or do nothing about it. This last result may be related to parents still holding gender stereotypes, which means that they may see males as being

more aggressive, courageous, independent, and assertive and females as more emotional, sensitive, people-oriented, and reliant. Accordingly, the parents who hold these views may believe that females will not be prepared to deal with bullying (Morales et al. 2016). The parents might also view female bullying as being less serious because females do not normally engage as much in physical bullying as males (Stubbs-Richardson et al. 2018). Further research should inquire how the internalization of specific feminine or masculine stereotypical traits could differently affect parents' responses to bullying victimization.

4.3. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the analyses in this study are cross-sectional and correlational and, therefore, inferences cannot be made about causality or directionality. Second, this study collected only self-reported data, and the relationships that we observed here could be influenced by a response bias. Third, our study sample comprised adolescents and their parents from a given region in Spain. The associations in other samples could differ. Moreover, it might be that the parents who completed surveys were different from the parents who did not complete surveys in ways that could have influenced the study findings. Fourth, the time frame used for the adolescents' and parents' reports of bullying victimization was different. The students were asked about their bullying experiences during the last month, whereas the parents were asked one open question without a specific time frame. This may explain the differences in parents and student ratings of bullying. Fifth, different types of bullying were analyzed together, and the parents' responses could vary according with the bullying nature: physical, verbal, social, or cyber. Further studies should analyze differences in parents' responses according to the type of bullying. Finally, we analyzed only parents' awareness and their responses to bullying victimization. Further research should examine parents' awareness and responses to bullying perpetration.

4.4. Practical Implications

The results of this study highlight the importance of cultivating parent–adolescent relationships to deal with bullying victimization processes. Previous research has documented that parents play a key role providing support and listening about children's worries and problems, but also guiding their children to prevent or stop the bullying. The present findings point out that it is crucial to promote open communication between parents and children to disclose victimization and to offer social support (Larrañaga et al. 2016; Scott et al. 2016). Parents should be aware about the negative effects of maintaining a poor relationship with their children and learn how a relationship based on affection and open communication can help to offer support and emotional security when children face any problem. Moreover, given that many adolescents do not report bullying to their parents, practitioners should encourage parents to talk with their children about bullying and cyberbullying victimization to make children aware that they are there to listen and help cope with problems. Research has shown that parents providing emotional warmth facilitate adolescents' disclosure of bullying involvement (Elsaesser et al. 2017).

Previous studies emphasize the importance of parents actively participating in bullying prevention and intervention programs in order to be most effective (Gradinger et al. 2017). The present results have shown that the parents seem to have high pro-bullying coping intentions. Indeed, the majority of the parents indicated that they would contact the school in order to deal with bullying. School administrators and teachers should use these intentions to foster the willingness to participate in a whole-school prevention program. Along the same lines, parents should be encouraged not only to talk with their children about bullying but also to notify schools about bullying and to work collaboratively with teachers to cope with bullying situations.

5. Conclusions

This study analyzed the associations among parents' awareness of bullying victimization, their responses to their child's victimization, and adolescents' self-reported victimization. The findings highlight how relevant it is to improve parent–child relationships and communication about bullying and to continue reinforcing parents' role in intervening in bullying situations and preventing them.

Author Contributions: Data curation, E.L.; Formal analysis, E.L. and R.N.; Funding acquisition, E.L. and S.Y.; Methodology, E.L. and R.N.; Project administration, S.Y.; Resources, S.Y.; Writing—Original Draft, R.N.; Writing—Review & Editing, E.L., S.Y. and R.N.

Funding: This research was financed by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness under the National Program of Research and Innovation (I + D + i 2015): PSI2015-70822-R

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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