Abstract

During the last decade, there has been a change in peer harassment research from a focus on the characteristics of the Aggressor-Victim dyad to the recognition of peer harassment as a whole group process, with most of children playing some kind of role. This study uses a shortened adaptation of the Participant-Role Questionnaire approach to identify these roles in 2,050 Spanish children aged 8 to 13 years. These Participant Roles were related to belonging to one of the five sociometric status groups. Factor analysis revealed four different roles, indicating that the adapted scale remains a reliable way of distinguishing the Aggressor, Victim, Defender of the victim, and Outsider roles. Boys played the roles of Aggressor and Victim significantly more frequently. The children's Participant Role was found to be related to their sociometric status. Progress in the measurement of peer harassment as a group process and the success of intervention strategies may depend on finding clearer distinctions among the different peer roles, mobilizing peer pressure, and isolating aggressors from their social support.