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Bullies, Victims, and Animal Abusers: Do They Exhibit Similar Behavioral Difficulties?



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Abstract Two hundred forty-four male undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology class completed surveys assessing animal abuse tendencies, bullying behaviors, and victimization by bullying during their K-12 school experience. Participants also completed the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, which evaluated their behavioral difficulties. Results revealed a significant relationship between animal abuse and bullying and victimization experiences. Moreover, animal abusers, bullies, and victims of bullying displayed significantly more behavioral problems when compared to nonabusers, nonbullies, and nonvictims. Multivariate analysis revealed a complex pattern of main effects for animal abuse, bullying, and victimization on the SDQ subscales. In addition, a three-way interaction between animal abuse, bullying, and victimization was identified for the SDQ Conduct Problems subscale. These results can be utilized to help identify areas of psychological functioning that may be of concern for this population.

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