BULLYING AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract: Bullying is primarily the use of abuse, blackmail, force or aggressively foreboding someone by others to harm other individuality by mentally, physically or emotionally. There can be different kinds of bullying like physical bullying which includes fighting, teasing, pranking, kicking, headlocks, hazing, pushing and so on, emotional bullying which includes spreading rumors, ignoring consciously, making fun etc., verbal bullying which includes harassing, threatening, mocking etc. Bullying is found to be existing among many school students. Bullying mainly occurs within the school that is, in playground, classroom, between classes, while commuting to and from school and is specially observed in primary school level. The study was conducted among school children in Kerala, South India using the Peer Relations Questionnaire (PRQ). The study came up with the result that aggression, self-esteem and extra-curricular activities has an influence on bullying behavior and also on the academic performance of the student.

Keywords- Bullying, school bullying, academic performance, gender, peer relationship, self-esteem.
1. Introduction

Despite the fact that bullying is not a contemporary aspect in schooling, only in recent times has it acquired substantial research and social attention. The main reason for this problem is its multidimensional character which has actually lifted a variety of constraints in the definition and measurement. There is no lawful or contractual definition of bullying. Bullying without a comprehensive definition can include sexual, verbal, physical or emotional in nature. The effects of bullying may come to depression, anxiousness, anger, stress, helplessness that can result in committing suicide, poor performance in academic and non-academic field, feeling insecure, lack of trust and so on. The underlying causes of bullying can consist of social norms, structural factors, gender etc. There can be different kinds of bullying like physical bullying which includes fighting, teasing, pranking, kicking, headlocks, hazing, pushing and so on, emotional bullying which includes spreading rumors, ignoring consciously, making fun etc., verbal bullying which includes harassing, threatening, mocking etc. The signs that a student is being bullied consist of self-injury, suicidal tendencies, expressing anxiety, low grades etc. The signs that the student has witnessed bullying comprises depression, emotional disturbance and poor behavior. Bullying mainly occurs within the school that is, in playground, classroom, between classes, while commuting to and from school and is specially observed in primary school level. Bullying happens between large numbers of children when gathered together and tends to arise mainly when there is least supervision. Bullying occurs in almost every community and society. As far as bullying among school children is concerned, the areas that bullying may surface in high risk are spaces where there are large trees, gardens, boys’ and girls’ lavatory, bike sheds, water tank etc. School bullying could involve physical or emotional torture to the victim or to the sufferer and this could in turn be connected to education. It can take place either inside or outside the school. The main focus of bullying is not only in the form of physical violence but also mainly involves psychological suffering. There are different forms of bullying in schools like direct bullying, indirect bulling and cyber bullying. Direct bullying can include physical abuse or verbal attack on the victim whereas indirect bullying is more in the verbal and may happen in the social circles. Boys are seen to experience more of physical bullying and girls mostly experiences sexual comments, rumor spreading etc. Intimidation may be the ultimate objective of such bullying. The act of bullying can lead the victim to think of
resorting to extreme steps because of the torture and the suffering caused to them. The factors that influence bullying behavior are attitudes, cultural and environment, family and self-perspective.

Generally, the act of bullying also impacts the academic performance of the students. Students feel lonely, depressed, and sad, and display a lack of interest in everything. This may have an impact on the academic performance of the students.

2. Motivation for the study

Bullying is found to be present among many school students. In this age of the internet, when many children are found to lack open communication with their own families, they are often left to tackle interferences such as bullying on their own. Often, they are even found to fail miserably. Many cases of ragging, cyber bullying, physical and mental torture of school and college students and their unfortunate consequences are being discussed by the media lately. Therefore the researchers were curious to understand whether bullying surfaces in childhood and whether it affects academic performance. Thus, this study was conducted among the school going students. The study also considered the effect of many other factors such as gender, peer relationship and self-esteem components on bullying to give effective support to the study. Through this study it would help the schools to counsel their students and also help in assessing the performance of the students. Beyond the learning disabilities these factors can also be the major reason affecting their performance. It also helps the school to take corrective actions and improve the performance. The school authorities can probably take action to reduce the rate of bullying. The study can be used to make the impact and aftereffects while engaging in bullying and while being victimized.

3. Theoretical background

3.1 Bullying

Bullying is mainly the use of blackmail, abuse, force or aggressively foreboding someone by others to harm other individuality by mentally, physically or emotionally. Bullying is a case in which one individual is picked as the target of repeat aggression by one or others. Bullying can also result in lack of trust, suicidal tendency and stress. It is not necessary that bullying can occur only once, or likely to happen only for one time. It can happen repeatedly with the same person also. The places where bullying can develop can be playing field, transport vehicles, lunch counters. It can appear while the victim happens to travel to school or while coming back. Barboza et al. (2009) examined
the risk elements and factors combined with bullying behaviors in dispersion through representative constituents of adolescents aged between 11-14. The findings theorized that bullying develops in those children who are very much addicted to television and watched it very frequently, lacked teacher support and groundwork. Another study was by Donegan (2012) that tried to throw some light on bullying and cyberbullying and the measures to prevent it through the study of distinctive case studies, statistical experimentation, and case laws along with news articles. The paper touched upon the ongoing legal struggles, clinical hypothesis together with possible protective and preventive measures for cyber bullying and also bullying.

3.2 Bullying in schools

School bullying is a category that comes under bullying that are specific to educational framework. Bullying has started with school kids fighting with each other or can be teachers believing that hurting or shouting their students can make them more disciplined. There have been many reported cases of bullying in schools which has resulted in many suicides among school children. The bullying issues taking place in school will not be communicated to their parents which will result in more issues. Such cases are reported in scenarios where taller & stronger people overpower weak people who cannot react back. Goodboy, Martin & Goldman (2016) examined if bullying in high school affected the performance of students in their first semester of college. The study revealed that there is relation between both. Malik and Mehta (2016) in their research concentrated mainly on the understanding of bullying in schools and the effect of gender differences. The study finds out that boys are the ones who involve themselves more in bullying activity.

3.3 Academic performance of students

The academic performance of students is proportionally affected when bullying takes place. Studies show that bullying affects the bullied person as he does not concentrate in the class and they also feel afraid to attend classes because of this very same reason. It also affects their motivation levels and their interest in being attentive in class. Faryadi (2011) investigated the emotional and physiological effects of cyber bullying on the university students. The investigation was carried on with the objective of identifying the victims of cyber bullying and analyzing their state of mind in order to provide them with a feasible intervention to fight bullying. The study was carried out through a triangulation research method (quantitative, qualitative and descriptive).
3.4 Gender and bullying

The act of bullying involves a huge mix of responses and behaviors which differs from person to person. There are many notable distinctness between the bullying of boys and girls. Bullying can begin about in any time of age and also can extend over senior high grade. Identifying the bullying between boys and girls are comparatively easy to find out. The act of boys tend to give physical suffering like kicking, beating, punching the victim and the act of girls bullying mainly involve emotional torture. Girls mainly take advantage of their prevalence to buck up their teen to bully the victim. Majority of the girls bully only the female while the boys tend to bully both the male and the female genders. Wimmer (2009) through his research provided the understanding on the effect of gender difference in bullying. The study came up with some interesting conclusions. It found that the females are more bullied than the males; females are bullies and are being bullied equally by both the genders; males are more bullied than female. It also observed that primarily the females are being bullied by way of emotional and verbal channels and bullying declines with age.

3.5 Peer relationship and bullying

School aged children are the most who suffers the act of bullying and they suffer from their own peer fellow mates. Most of the students who are offensive and aggressive in nature have the major tendency to bully. The students who are into bullying are mainly low compassionate, uncooperative, unsociable and unfriendly. The students who are into bullying have high leadership skills that other students. Bullying usually occur in their adolescence age and they also take advantage to frame relationship and faith with other peer and make them to follow bullying. The main aspect of bullying is the factor of sexuality and gender. Dijkstra, Lindenberg and Veenstra in their 2008 study examined the bullying behavior of adolescents and checked how it affects the acceptance or rejection by peers associated with this behavior. Their observation was that bullying has an effect on peer acceptance and peer rejection. Lodge, Frydenberg (2005) examined the effects of bullying on both the bully and the victim. Their study suggested that teaching peers to handle situations would somewhat help in countering bullying. Dunne, Sabates, Bosumtwi-Sam
& Owusu (2013) focused on bullying happening among school students and how that affects their attendance. They checked how school attendance and bullying are related to each other.

Rigby (2016) undertook an exploratory study of 25 Australian government schools to understand the strategies being implemented there against bullying of students. The study also looked into the strengths and limitations of teacher diverted activities and compares it with anti-bullying strategies implemented in schools.

### 3.6 Self-esteem and bullying

It is observed that the problems which are caused to the peer relationship is mainly due to the factor of low-esteem of the children. The children who conduct the act of bullying are mainly who are very much popular in their society. The main reason why these children do the act of bullying is to lift up their social dignity and their status. The people who are bold, brave, courageous, positive and high in their self-esteem are generally fend off. Those people can stand up and has the potential to protect themselves from bullying and doesn’t require any help from anyone to guide them or to protect them. They are confident enough to protect and help themselves from any circumstances. Many studies exhibits that bullies have high self-esteem. (Rigby and Slee, 1991). In the survey (Olweus, 1991a, 1993, 1994; Rigby and Slee, 1991) elucidated that bullying practices are not a delayed consequence of low insightful execution among school understudies. Branden (1992) has described self-see as one's ability to think and to have the quality to defy the principal troubles of life. Olweus (1993) consider exhibit that harassers have high to the degree self-respect. In the audit (Camila C. Brito, Marluce T. Oliveira, 2013) parts of bothering are connected with self-respect in association with gender, it was watched that in the social occasion of setbacks/aggressors and aggressors folks had higher quantifiably important self-respect scores when diverged from females. Spook setbacks as a rule have a negative character which resembles harassers (Sonia Raquel Seixas, Joaquim Pinto Coelho and Gustave Nicolas-Fischer, 2013). Weisel (2016) examined the concept of workplace bullying and how this could be combated. Even though it takes place quite often in the society, the legal framework played a role in restricting it. Samnani and Singh (2015) examined workplace bullying and brought forward a conceptual model of workplace bullying factors at the individual, group and organizational levels. Kyobe, Oosterwyk and Kabiawu (2016) looked at cyber bullying and its effects. The study talked about the role of mobile phones in cyberbullying in secondary school. The study found out that the use of digital phones has led to
more cyber bullying consequences than any other alternative electronic gadgets. Labadie, Lieberman, Vargo and Flamion (2012) have articulated on bullying through examination of the factors that teachers believe would be the reasons for bullying in dispersion through the youth and their response strategies.

4. The study
The aim of the study is to find out from the sample those students who are being bullied and the students who are bullies, and to find out the effect of bullying on the academic and non-academic performance of the students. Peer relationships, aggression, and self-esteem are the indicators of bullying and here, their influence on academic performance has been studied. Additionally we have tried to look at the impact of gender on the academic performance. Participation in extra-curricular activities has been taken as a moderating variable.

4.1 Data collection
Questionnaires were distributed to 300 respondents from which around 200 responses were received. From that only 161 responses were fit for the analysis because the others were incomplete. The study was conducted in two schools in Kerala, South India. Students from class 8-9 were considered as the sample group for the study and their age was between 12 and 14 years. The data collection was primarily based on the 12-item Peer Relations Questionnaire-PRQ (Rigby & Slee, 1993).

Hypothesis 1: Peer relationship has an influence on the academic performance of a student.
Hypothesis 2: Aggression has an influence on the academic performance of a student.
Hypothesis 3: Gender has an influence on the academic performance of a student.
Hypothesis 4: Self-esteem has an influence on the academic performance of a student.
Hypothesis 5: Extra-curricular activities has an influence on the academic performance of a student.
Figure 1 Influence on academics (a)

Figure 2 Influence on academics with the moderation of extra curricular activities.
4.2 Data analysis

Regression was used to analyze the interrelationship between the independent variables along with dependent variable. The results generated from Warp PLS is shown in the table below. Two of the independent variables, being bullied and self-esteem, with beta values 0.24 and -0.17 have got a significant relationship with the dependent variable. This shows that these variables can influence the academic performance of students (refer Figure 1). Students who have been bullied have less self-esteem and that has a disallowing impact over the academic fulfillment of the students. In the model with extra-curricular as the moderating variable then it shows an interesting result (refer figure 3). The children who are being bullied show a better academic performance when they are involved in extracurricular activities. It is found that children who involved in extra-curricular activities can improve up to 20% in their academic performance as in Tables 1 and 2.

![Figure 3 Influence on academics (b)]](image)

**Table 1 - Model fit and quality indices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average path coefficient (APC)</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average R-squared (ARS)</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)</td>
<td>0.153</td>
<td>0.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average block VIF (AVIF)=1.464, acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)=2.786, acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)=0.365, small => 0.1, medium => 0.25, large => 0.36
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)=1.000, acceptable if >= 0.7, ideally = 1
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)=1.000, acceptable if >= 0.9, ideally = 1
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)=1.000, acceptable if >= 0.7
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)=0.400, acceptable if >= 0.7

**Table 2 - Model fit and quality indices extra-curricular**

Average path coefficient (APC)=0.128, P=0.024
Average R-squared (ARS)=0.211, P=0.001
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)=0.181, P=0.005
Average block VIF (AVIF)=1.418, acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)=2.666, acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)=0.385, small => 0.1, medium => 0.25, large => 0.36
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)=1.000, acceptable if >= 0.7, ideally = 1
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)=1.000, acceptable if >= 0.9, ideally = 1
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)=1.000, acceptable if >= 0.7
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)=0.333, acceptable if >= 0.7

**Model 2: Academics**

The results generated from WarpPLS are shown in the table below. Two of the independent variables acquire a significant relationship with the dependent variable who bully and aggression with beta values 0.35 and 0.20, which shows, the amount of variations to these variables can hold an expressing impact on the academic achievement of the children are shown in table 3. Students who bully have high aggression. Unlike the victims, bullies have an absolute and positive impact on the academic achievement of the children (refer figure 2).

**Table 3 - Model fit and quality indices**

Average path coefficient (APC)=0.136, P=0.019
Average R-squared (ARS)=0.216, P=0.001
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)=0.191, P=0.003
Average block VIF (AVIF)=1.405, acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)=1.509, acceptable if <= 5, ideally <= 3.3
5. Discussion and conclusion

Based on the results generated from the data collected, it is evident that the academic performance of a student is influenced by bullying behavior, victim behavior, extracurricular activity, aggression and self-esteem. The first model shows that the academic performance of the victims are negatively affected. Those students usually have less self-esteem. When these students are involved in extracurricular activities, the result shows that this could improve their academic performance. The result from the second model shows that the students who bully other students show excellent academic performance. These students are more aggressive compared to other students as shown in table 4.

Table 4. Hypotheses validation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Peer relationship has an influence on the academic performance of a student.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Aggression has an influence on the academic performance of a student.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Gender has an influence on the academic performance of a student.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Self-esteem has an influence on the academic performance of a student.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Extra-curricular activities has an influence on the academic performance of a student.</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the data from table 4, on comparing the victims and the bullies, the victims bear a negative effect on the academic achievement and the bullies have a positive effect on the academic achievement. Students who are excellent in their studies are likely to be bullies. Involvement in the extracurricular activity of the students can improve the academic achievement of the children by downsizing the negative issue of bulling. Since extra-curricular achievements
has a positive issue on academic performance, parents and teachers should encourage their wards to participate more in extra-curricular activities. Schools should also provide ample facilities that are required for the students to engage in these activities.

6. Limitations

The study had many limitations due to the factors concerning the data collected because of the study was The study was limited to a particular geographical location in South India, Kerala and also since the student sample selected were of young age it was very difficult to make them understand on how to go about responding to the questionnaire. Since this is a sensitive topic, the subjects need not necessarily answer the questions properly.

References


