
BULLYING: PSYCHO-ACADEMIC INFLUENCE ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

For the reason bullying affects victims' emotional well-being and capacity to function in social and academic settings, bullying among children is a growing public health concern. Bullying persists as a major issue in our community, particularly in schools. In actuality, the number of students experiencing bullying at school is rising annually. Bullies and those who are bullied are the primary subjects of this study. The purpose of this study is to determine what the prevalence of bullying is among school-age children. This study primarily focused particularly on the negative effects of bullying on students' psychological well-being and academic performance. The study sample size consists of 60 respondents from secondary schools in District Karachi East, Karachi, Pakistan. The targeted population data was gathered using snowball sampling and convenience sampling methods. The primary results of the research show that most of the children experience bullying at school and on the playground and that most of the bullying occurs between fellow students and senior members of the educational institution. Furthermore, it was discovered that students who were subjected to bullying undergo depression, anxiety, loneliness, lack of motivation, and disinterest in their usual activities. It continued to highlight that victims are having trouble academically and try to avoid attending school to stay victims.

KEYWORDS

Bullying, Victim, Persists, Prevalence, Academic Performance, Psychological, Depression.

INTRODUCTION

A child has certain natural skills from birth and grab knowledge from their caregivers, society, family, and the environment including the internet, television, phone, and social media—as they grow older. A child acquires a lot of knowledge from his teachers, friends, and the educational program when he attends school. In order to learn more and interact with others, he or she also applies what they have already learned. It's normal for Children to study, play, eat, and fight with one another in schools as regular activities, However, it is not considered normal behavior for a child or group of children to purposefully and constantly injure another child; this kind of conduct is known as bullying. (Singh, 2023, Nazir, 2017) Bullying can be understood in a variety of ways; occasionally, it is seen as an aggressive act intended to injure another individual and establish a power differential between the bully and the victim. (Rivers et al., 2009) Bullying is defined as "repeated aggressive behavior, either direct or indirect, commanded at a person who is unable to protect themselves." (Smith, 2016; Baren & Shapiro, 2005). "Bullying is defined as harmful behaviors that involve an imbalance of power, can be verbal or physical, have hostile intent, repeat over time, and involve one or more perpetrators and recipients". (O'Connell, Pepler & Craig, 1999) Menesini & Salmivalli (2017), described bullying as a dynamic exchange in which the attacker gains power and the victim loses power between the two parties. As their power diminishes, the victims are unable to respond to the situation or handle it. Veenstra et al. (2005) define bullying as "a pattern of repeated aggression in which one or more individuals strive to injure another person physically, verbally, or psychologically".

Bullying in educational institutions is defined as a form of violence that harms other people. It occurs in educational environments or during extracurricular activities when an individual or group of individuals uses their strength to cause harm to other individuals or groups. A bully's strength can come from their physical strength, age, social status, financial status, or technological expertise. Bullying in schools is recognized as violent conduct that usually develops over time and usually occurs when there is no power or generosity between the bully and the victim. (Quiroz et al., 2006; Eriksen et al., 2014; Omoteso, 2010; Ndibalema, 2013) DeRosier (2004) states that bullying in schools is a serious problem that impacts a large number of elementary school students. Bullying not only affects the victim's academic performance but also causes emotional, social, and developmental problems for them. Bullying can also occur when a student receives offensive mocks on a regular basis. Bullying is regarded as a pervasive and expanding problem in both educational institutions and society as a whole. The social, emotional, and intellectual development of students is negatively impacted by bullying, which can occur at any time and has disastrous consequences. (Omoteo, 2010; Al-Raqqad et al., 2017) According to Cole, Cornell, and Sheras (2006), school bullying has gotten more intense as a result of the media's increased

portrayal of school shootings as the result of bullied students.

Bullying is a common form of violence that numerous children encounter in school. Yelling, threatening, name-calling, humiliating, mocking, using humor, looking lower on, rejecting opinions, slandering, criticizing, insulting, blaming, mocking, treating with disapproval, trivializing desires, and ridiculing others are common forms of bullying in schools. Children are frequently affected by it in their communities, schools, homes, and playgrounds, either directly or indirectly. They frequently feel helpless and unable to take revenge. Children between the ages of 11 to 15 have been impacted by peer bullying all over the world. (SPARC, 2020) Bullying in schools is a severe issue that countless children encounter at some point in their lives, either as victims, witnesses, or bullies of others. Bullying is commonly characterized as the deliberate and meticulous mistreatment of individuals (Olweus, 2010). Bullies are stronger than their victims, either physically or socially, which makes it harder for the victims to protect themselves. This power imbalance is a key component of bullying. Bullying can take many different forms. These include physical bullying, including actions like hitting, slapping, or kicking; verbal bullying, which includes berating, frightening, slanderous remarks, racial labeling, insulting, or name-calling; psychological bullying, which includes coercion, disgrace, or harassment; social bullying, which involves spreading fabricated gossip or being dismissed; material bullying, which involves damaging or taking away property; and cyberbullying, which involves negative messages posted on social media.

Bullying affects from 15 to 25 percent of students in primary and secondary schools. Bullying is more common between the ages of 6 to 14 in middle childhood and early adolescence. (Kshirsagar, Agarwal & Bavdekar, 2007; Nazir, 2017) Al-Raqqad et al. (2017) state that bullying is regarded as a serious issue in educational institutions worldwide. They discovered that bullying had a detrimental effect on academic achievement. The negative impact of bullying was greater on women than on men. Bullying is a complicated problem in the lives of school-aged children. All children are impacted by this issue, including those who have witnessed bullying and victimization as well as those who have bullied others.

Numerous studies have shown that bullying can have detrimental effects on the present and long-term well-being of individuals who are bullied, those who witness bullying, and even bullies themselves. (Boswell, 2016) Shahid et al. (2022) state that bullying is a problem that impacts school-age children's emotional, social, and physical wellness on a global scale. Negative psychological and emotional effects, such as depression, anxiety, low self-confidence, dependency on drugs and alcohol, anger, delinquent behavior self-harm (especially in girls), and violent or criminal behavior (especially in boys), are more common in children and adolescents who experience

bullying. Research has indicated that individuals who experience severe bullying are also at a higher risk of attempting or completing suicide and that bully victims are particularly prone to suicidal thoughts. Bullying can worsen mental health conditions in young people who already have them, as well as cause mental health problems in victims who did not previously have any. Additionally, studies have demonstrated that victims of bullying typically notice falls in their academic achievement. (Parveen & Tehreem, 2023; Kowalski, 2018; Subedi, 2020)

Apart from the potential harm resulting from a bully's physical assault, victims might also endure physical symptoms like insomnia, persistent pain, and headaches, as well as psychosomatic symptoms like heart palpitations, headache, feeling sick, nausea, and dizziness. In addition, victims of bullying often have increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol in their bodies, which can disrupt regular brain activity. Many behavioral problems linked to victimization, like acting out and being aggressive toward parents, siblings, or peers, are thought to be caused by elevated cortisol levels. Bullying in schools affects children's mental, intellectual, and professional growth. (Al-Raqqaq et al., 2017)

LITERATURE REVIEW

The reality for many schoolchildren is very different when it comes to the worldwide demand for safe learning environments. Bullying and various forms of violence are faced by many students on a daily basis in schools. These incidents can negatively impact children's formal education and their capacity to fully utilize their opportunities. In order to better understand how bullying affects adolescents' academic performance and self-esteem from a gender perspective, Parveen & Tehreem (2023) conducted a study. The findings showed that most respondents were in agreement that traditional bullying has an effect on teenagers. The findings showed a moderate correlation between academic achievement and self-esteem and traditional bullying. The results showed a significant distinction in traditional bullying between male and female students. Compared to male students, female students seem to have stronger opinions about traditional bullying. Another study conducted by Esquivel, Lopez, and Benavides (2023) revealed that bullying, including cyberbullying, has a profound emotional effect on students. It can lead to negative perceptions and negatively impact their overall well-being. Numerous negative emotions, such as anxiety, fear, sadness, and depression, are experienced by victims. Their perceptions of the circumstances and the unfavorable outcomes they encounter lead to effects in multiple areas of their lives, such as low self-esteem, trouble forming interpersonal relationships, and difficulties in the classroom.

The primary objective of Nadeem & Usman's (2022) study was to examine the connection between university students' academic achievement and mental health and

bullying behavior. Significant results indicated that students' mental health and academic performance were negatively and significantly impacted by bullying behavior. Bokhari et al. (2022) asserted in another study that traditional bullying is prevalent in Pakistan and that it has a positive association with depression and a decreased degree of satisfaction with life. There is a correlation between various types of conventional bullying and an increased risk of mental health issues. It also stated that Pakistani educational institutions' administrative faculty gives this important issue little thought. According to the results of the Ahmed, Ahmed, and Hiramoni (2021) study, bullying among students is regarded as the most terrible form of anti-social conduct. It went on to say that being teased, pushed, or shoving, and having rumors spread were the most typical forms of bullying that victim encountered. Bullying victimization rates were significantly higher among male students attending public schools in cities. Furthermore, Kowalski's (2018) study discovered that students who were bullied experienced greater degrees of loneliness and low self-esteem.

A study conducted by Al-Raqad et al. (2017) with the goal of examining the effects of school bullying on students' academic achievement from the viewpoint of the teachers in the classroom. The findings of the study showed that bullying in schools occurs in both public and private institutions. The study also found that bullying at school has an impact on student's academic performance, regardless of who is bullying them. Furthermore, Ahmad, Kalim, & Kaleem (2017) look into how academics perceive bullying at work. The study indicates that workplace bullying is widespread among students in Pakistan, with up to half of them reporting regular tasks like overwork, diminished talents, non-recognition of work participation, and delay of work-related issues. According to a study by Safaria (2016) on the prevalence and effects of cyberbullying, bullying is a significant issue. According to the study's findings, students who experience peer aggression perform worse in both mathematics and reading than their non-aggressive peers, and students who attend classes where there is a higher level of physical or verbal violence tend to perform worse overall. In a study, Jan & Hussain (2015) examined the causes and effects of bullying on primary school students. They discovered that when students perceive bullying as a common occurrence at their school, they feel unsafe, which has a negative impact on their level of engagement with the school society. As a result, they lack the drive to perform well academically and do not engage in extracurricular activities. Academic achievement is negatively affected by bullying in a number of ways for students.

According to Cross et al. (2015), students report feeling unsafe when bullying is acknowledged as a problem in the school, which negatively impacts their relationships with other students. As a result, they lack motivation to do well in school and don't take part in its activities. Bullying could result in a variety of detrimental impacts on children's educational performance. Bullying has a negative impact on students'

academic performance both now and in the future. Hertz et al. (2015) state that bullying victims may exhibit signs of post-traumatic stress disorder, stress, and depression. Both their general well-being and their performance in school may be hindered by these emotional effects.

Shah (2014) examined bullying as a social problem in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's secondary schools for his doctoral dissertation. The aim of this research was to examine bullying as a social issue in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's secondary schools. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the majority of respondents had grave concerns regarding bullying in secondary schools. Bullying occurs everywhere when teachers are not present, including physical, verbal, and social bullying. Nevertheless, the school canteen, restrooms, school bus, and field trips were the bullies' favorite locations. Bullying occurs against handsome, gregarious, intelligent, slow learners, and physically disabled students. The victims attempt to flee from school, regularly alter their routes to and from school, show little interest in learning, and deteriorate academically. Additionally, he said, there has been a sharp rise in students skipping classes, failing exams, and bidding the institution farewell forever. Under certain extreme circumstances, the child eventually commits suicide after losing confidence and feeling stressed. According to Block's (2014) research, bullying experiences have a direct and indirect impact on victims' performance in school. Therefore, a student who is being bullied by his peers may stop participating in class or find it difficult to focus on his schoolwork out of fear of being teased. It also mentioned lower academic performance and declined school participation of students who experience peer bullying frequently. According to Brank et al. (2012), people who are bullied tend to be timid, weak, and nervous. It went on to say that victims do poorly academically and try to avoid going to school in order to avoid becoming victims. Victimization experiences can result in poor academic work and absenteeism. Konishi et al. (2010) found that interpersonal connections in the school environment have an impact on academic achievement.

Curelaru, Lacob, and Abalasei (2009) state that students who are bullied may find it difficult to build enduring friendships and relationships based on trust. They might also experience feelings of exclusion and loneliness, which could hinder their ability to integrate socially into the educational setting. Subrahmanyam & Greenfield (2008) observed that students who are bullied do worse academically and that bullying has more detrimental effects the more severe it is. The study conducted by Shahid et al. (2002) aimed to investigate the impact of bullying behavior on the mental health and quality of life of adolescents as well as pre-adolescents. The study came to the conclusion that bullying behavior significantly affects children's and adolescents' mental health and quality of life. Bullying victimization has a detrimental impact on mental health during the pre-adolescent years and can cause serious abnormalities later

in life. It impacts not just at the beginning but also during adolescence, impacting social, psychological, and personal well-being.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Humiliation

The theory of humiliation is attributed to German-Norwegian physician, psychologist, author, and transdisciplinary scholar Evelin Gerda Lindner. The global aspect of humiliation is covered by Lindner's theory of humiliation. She defines humiliation as acting in a way that belittles or embarrasses other people. It generally occurs if someone in a position of authority makes a weak person's weakness known to the public. Therefore, understanding humiliation is essential since it has a negative impact on both the victim and those around them. Victims of humiliation may experience depression. The bond between people is diminished by it. Nonetheless, this theory can also be used to explain how bullying hinders the development of a calm and supportive school environment, as well as the role humiliation plays in the outcomes of victims and bullies/victims. The entire school environment gets worse as a result. In fact, humiliation is so potent that it consists of bringing down the self-esteem of others. In actuality, humiliation goes against the basic human right to be treated with respect or dignity. (Linder, 2001; Linder, 2003; Linder, 2006; Evans & Smokowski, 2016; Subedi, 2020)

Social Dominance Theory

Researchers in social psychology Jim Sidanius, Erik Devereux, and Felicia Pratto first put forth the social dominance theory in 1992. (Pratto & Sidanius, 2001) The theory of social dominance provides a broad explanation for how societies uphold group-based domination. A social group, usually one that is ethnic, religious, national, or racial, holds disproportionate power and benefits from special privileges against subordinate groups in nearly all stable societies, which are referred to as group-based dominance hierarchies. (Nocentini, Menesini, & Salmivalli, 2013; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001) The social dominance theory sheds light on the dynamics of bullying. According to this theory, young people bully one another in an effort to achieve social dominance on both an individual and a group level. They then continue to bully one another in order to maintain their social standing. (Long & Pellegrini, 2003; Evans & Smokowski, 2016) Bullying occurs when people want to rise in social standing, have access to resources, and be well-liked by others. For example, some students may act bossy in the classroom in the hopes that others will look up to them. In these situations, they usually form an alliance, with the bullies serving as their leaders. Additionally, these groups have the potential to start bullying weaker students or groups. People with leadership qualities occasionally use their charm and ability to control others as a means of elevating their social standing and establishing dominance. (Subedi, 2020; Salmivalli, 2014; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999)

Social learning Theory

Albert Bandura originally put forward the social learning theory in the 1960s. According to this theory, everyone picks up knowledge by watching and copying the actions of others. (Bandura, 1971). The Social Learning theory provides a useful framework for analyzing bullying. This indicates that the bullying behavior was picked up through imitation of another person or group of people. Berger (2003) claims that social learning theory, additionally referred to as social cognitive theory, can be used to clarify aggressive bullying actions. For instance, children who witness domestic violence in their homes are more likely to bully others than children who do not witness domestic violence, and children who interact with aggressive peers are also more likely to behave aggressively toward others. It's clear that students who bully others do so as a reaction to what they witness or experience. As a result of witnessing violence in their homes, among their peers, or both, they are in pain, and the cause is unresolved emotional issues. (Saracho, 2017; McCarra & Forrester, 2013)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about the prevalence of bullying among children attending school.
2. To figure out what kinds of bullying are common among school-age children.
3. To emphasize the detrimental effects that bullying has on students' academic performance.
4. To determine the psychological effects of bullying on students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Where do students usually get bullied?
2. Who bullied the students?
3. What are the reactions of students while getting bullied?
4. Have the student's complaint at any forum?
5. What are the psychological effects experienced by the students?
6. How do these situations affect them academically?
7. What are their coping strategies?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative methodology was applied for this Descriptive research study. The District East of Karachi city was selected as the universe for this study while the population consisted of Secondary school students who had encountered bullying in any manner. The sample size comprised 60 respondents which were selected by applying purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The study used a tailor-made questionnaire to gather the primary data. Lastly, the data was tabulated and the analysis was made in the light of the stated results.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Gender	<i>f</i>	Percentage
Male	32	53%
Female	28	47%
Total	60	100%
Age		
10-11 years	6	10%
12-13 years	3	5%
14-15 years	19	32%
16-17 years	32	53%
Total	60	100%
Grades		
6 th	6	10%
7 th	3	5%
8 th	3	5%
9 th	26	43%
10 th	22	37%
Total	60	100%
Were you aware of bullying by term?		
Yes	57	95%
No	3	5%
Total	60	100%
What kind of bullying did you experience?		
Verbal bullying	44	73%
psychological bullying	8	14%
Physical bullying	5	8%
Social bullying	3	5%
Total	60	100%
Where did you get bullied?		
At school	22	42%
Play ground	19	37%
At family	10	19%
Other	1	2%
Total	52	100%

Who was the bully in your case?		
Classmates	25	42%
Seniors	15	25%
Others	11	18%
Cousins	9	15%
Total	60	100%
Did you experience fear of being bullied at school after witnessing or experiencing it yourself?		
Yes	48	80%
No	12	20%
Total	60	100%
Have you ever been afraid of bullying and missed school?		
Yes	45	75%
No	15	25%
Total	60	100%
When you were being bullied, how did you respond?		
Low self esteem	28	47%
Feel depressed	14	23%
Loneliness	10	17%
Attempted self-harm	5	8%
Demotivated	3	5%
Total	60	100%
Do you take part in activities in the classroom?		
Yes	13	22%
No	47	78%
Total	60	100%
Do you get nervous during class discussions?		
Yes	28	47%
No	17	28%
Sometime	15	25%
Total	60	100%

Did bullying affect your academic standing?		
Yes	31	52%
No	29	48%
Total	60	100%
Have you complained of being bullied at school?		
Yes	24	40%
No	36	60%
Total	60	100%
Did the school's administration respond to the complaint?		
Yes	21	88%
No	3	12%
Total	24	100%
Whom you encountered bullying?		
Parents	15	40%
Teachers	11	30%
Friends	8	22%
Siblings	3	8%
Total	37	100%
Type of bullying exists in your school		
Verbal bullying	51	85%
Social bullying	6	10%
Physical bullying	3	5%
Total	60	100%

The table that comes with the survey shows that 53% of respondents were male and 47% of respondents were female students. It also reveals that 53% of respondents were between the ages of 16 and 17, 32% were between the ages of 14 and 15, 10% were between the ages of 10 and 11, and only 5% were between the ages of 12 and 13. The data further reveals that 43% of students were in the ninth grade, 37% in the tenth, 10% in the sixth, 5% in the eighth, and 5% in the seventh grade.

The study's findings show that 95% of participants were aware of the term bullying, while 5% were not. Furthermore, data indicates that 73% of participants experienced verbal bullying, 14% psychological bullying, 8% physical bullying, and 5% social

bullying. In accordance with the report, 42% of respondents reported being bullied at school, 37% on the playground, 19% at home, and 2% in other locations. Furthermore, it indicates that 42% of respondents reported being bullied by fellow students, 25% by seniors, 18% by other individuals, and 15% by their cousins. As a result of seeing or experiencing bullying firsthand, 80% of survey participants said they were afraid of being bullied at school, while 20% said they were not. Plus, out of the respondents, 75% skipped classes and missed school because they were afraid of bullying, while 25% didn't. Also, 47% of the respondents claimed that as a result of bullying, they have low self-esteem, 23% suffer from depression, 17% are lonely, 8% attempt self-harm, and 5% lose motivation. It additionally demonstrates that 22% of respondents said they participated in the classroom activities, compared to 47% of respondents who said they didn't. Additionally, it reveals that 47% of respondents reported feeling nervous during class discussions, 25% reported feeling nervous occasionally, and 27% reported not feeling nervous at all. Furthermore, 53% of respondents agreed that bullying has an impact on their academic performance, while 48% disagreed. Apart from that, it discloses that 60% of respondents did report being bullied at school, while 40% of respondents did not. Meanwhile, it shows that 88% of respondents said the school administration acted on complaints of bullying, while 12% disagreed. Moreover, the table displays that 40% of the respondents reported being bullied by their parents, 30% by their teachers, 22% by their friends, and 8% by their siblings. Finally, it presents that 85% of respondents stated that verbal bullying, 10% said social bullying and 5% said physical bullying was frequent at their school.

DISCUSSION

Bullying is undoubtedly common and affects children's lives everywhere. In light of the current results, it is determined that the prevalence of victimization, bullying, and fighting behavior among students at schools is a major concern. Bullying victims frequently experience long-lasting, negative peer interactions, which can be harmful to their mental health and lead to behaviors such as self-destruction, depression, anxiety, fear, hopelessness, tension, and a lack of confidence and self-esteem. It is one of the primary reasons for students' low attendance, repeated dropouts, decline in their academic standing, loss of enthusiasm for their studies, and exam failure. It was determined that boys were more likely than girls to engage in fight levels, be the targets of bullying, and undergo bullying itself. Bullies feel like they are strong, while their victims suffer physical suffering and pain. Furthermore, it was discovered that most survey respondents indicated they were terrified of being bullied at school, skipped class out of that fear, and showed no interest in participating in extracurricular activities. This was despite having witnessed or experienced bullying firsthand. The survey also showed that verbal bullying, which includes name-calling, threats, teasing, insults, inappropriate sexual remarks, and discriminatory remarks, was experienced by the majority of participants. Additionally, the majority of respondents stated that

they had experienced bullying at school and on the playground. It also found that there is a strong association between bullying and students' academic downfall achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's findings suggest that bullying is a social issue, particularly in school environments, thus bullies and witnesses should be made aware that their actions are considered offensive by everyone and will always be seen as a weakness in their character and it should be prevented by present social education that promotes compassion and respect for others' feelings.

Teachers and school authorities need to adopt diverse initiatives to lessen the extent of bullying. Teachers should also talk to children who are being bullied, look closely at each student's work, and pay close attention to classroom management. To ensure that students' energy is used effectively, the administration should also plan beneficial extracurricular activities according to their physical and mental capacities. Furthermore, additional training sessions for teachers should be provided to educate them about bullying, as they are the key participants in the fight against bullying.

Parents, teachers, and administration should communicate and work together closely. Consequently, to end bullying, there should be close communication between the home and the school. It is important for parents to ask their children about their everyday activities and to find out the why, when, and how of any negative experiences they may have had. They should pay close attention to what their children say, express love and sympathy, and empower them to handle these circumstances with courage.

The public should be aware of anti-bullying initiatives in schools and through seminars, talks, lectures, and print and electronic media. Thus, the media and schools should fulfill their essential roles in reducing bullying.

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