

Impact of Bullying on Students' Behavioral Engagement

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Abstract

Bullying is a social phenomenon that has seen across the world and the behavioral engagement refers to a large range of student behaviors. The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of Teacher Bullying (TB) and Peer Bullying (PB) on student's Behavioral Engagement (BE) and to make out the comparison between the public and private university students in Islamabad, Pakistan. A quantitative approach and convenient sampling has been used in this study. Questionnaire was distributed among the 400 University students. With the help of SPSS, linear regression analysis and independent two sample t-tests have been used and results indicated that TB and PB significantly affect the students' BE. In addition, there was a significant mean difference between Public and Private University students and the impact was high in Public universities as compared to Private. Hence the findings included that due to bullying students did not participate in the class and did not follow the teachers' instruction. The originality of the study is that it focused on the behavioral aspect regarding bullying that was not very much investigated among the University students in Pakistan because the previous studies were focused on the moral and psychological effects among the schools and colleges students. This study is limited regarding the two dimensions of the behavioral engagement. Implications regarding the bullying influence on behavioral engagement have been discussed. Further research can be possible by including the other dimensions of behavioral engagement, giving the preventive measure and by increasing the sample size of the study.

Keywords: Teacher bullying; Peer bullying; Behavioral engagement; Regression analysis; Independent two sample t-test

Introduction

Bullying is a social phenomenon that has seen in schools, colleges and workplace across the world. This is an unwanted aggressive behavior of someone towards the other one. Bullying behavior involves the perceived power imbalance that has been found harmful on the targeted person and this is frequent aggressive behavior that is less favorable for the victims [1]. This harm can be seen in form of physical, verbal, psychological, mentally, social and educational harm [2]. The aggressive behavior also denotes the bullying behavior that may be repeated on the victim. Bullying has been received a great deal of attention that highlights the effects of bullying behavior on academic, social and emotional outcomes [3]. The teacher bullying is humiliation form that degrades the students in front of other. The aggressive behavior of teacher actually harms the students [4,5].

The quality of student-teacher relationships has been documented a strong positive impact on student's behaviors [6,7] and on peer relationships [8,9]. While on the other side, conflictual student-teacher relationships have been associated with higher levels of peer victimization [10]. Peer relationship has the capability to influence student's aggressive behaviors. Students who experience rejection or being bullied by peers usually show more aggressive behaviors [11] and in turn strong disconnect from the class and them experience low levels of social preference [12].

The teacher bullying behavior refers to any form of overt communication intended to psychologically damage a student who is motivated to avoid such treatment, including verbal or nonverbal attacks on the self-concept of a student. In other words, bullying behavior actually disturbs the students learning ability. Student and teacher relationships are meaningful and there is emotional and relational connection between them [13]. Stuhlman et al. [14] had found that this type of relationship has the ability to influence each other. An increasing number of literatures have been found in case of student-teacher relationships [9,13,15].

The bullying behavior of the teacher has been found in terms of abuse of power that is very chronic situation for the students [16]. When the students are bullied from their teachers then this thing compels them to distract from their work. The bullying behavior of teacher influences the communication pattern between the students and the teachers. The disengagement factor leads to the student resistance and participation in the class room. Due to aggressive behavior of the teacher the student remains silent. Resultantly, a communication gap exists between the teacher and the students due to bullying behavior of the teacher. Student disengagement due to bullying behavior has been little addressed in communication research. Research studies have been done regarding the effects and consequences of student-teacher relationships on bullying. Roth et al. [17] found that there is long lasting impact of teacher behavior on the students' academic involvement and success [18]. The classroom environment is best option for the study of bullying behavior because this is important part of student's life where a lot of time has been spent on networking with teachers and students [19,20]. Hence from previous studies a problem has been identified that bullying behavior of the teacher and peers affect the student's class activities that is need to address in this current study.

Need of the study

Mostly in previous studies it has to be seen that bullying directly or indirectly affect the student's psychological and moral conditions while this study considers about the behavioral engagement that is not very much investigated in context of Pakistan. And the second thing is that there is an intense need to know about the different bullying impact in

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public and private Universities in Pakistan because in previous studies bullying has to be found in schools and colleges and at the workplace, while on the other side bullying is also doing in the universities as well. Hence there is rationale behind doing this study.

Problem statement

Bullying behavior phenomena has very detrimental effects on the victims. This type of behavior badly affects the student, teacher, peers relationship, moral and psychological conditions hence there is utmost need to find out the impact of bullying on student's behavioral engagement.

Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to find out the impact of bullying on the student's behavioral engagement in case of University students in Pakistan and the secondary purpose is to make a comparison between the public and private university students. The bullying behavior is actually the aggressive behavior of the teacher and peers towards the students that affects the student's study activities.

Research question

Following are the research questions of this study.

- Does teacher bullying affect the student's behavioral engagement?
- Does peer bullying affect the student's behavioral engagement?
- Is there is a difference between public and private student's behavioral engagement?

Research objective

Following are the research objectives of this study.

- To investigate the impact of teacher bullying on student's behavioral engagement,
- To investigate the impact of peer bullying on student's behavioral engagement,
- To investigate the difference between public and private student's behavioral engagement.

Definition of the term

Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior that is used by one person upon another person in order to harm the victim [21]. Verbal Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior where the bully intends to use name calling, verbal assaults and gossiping in order to separate the victim from the group of friends [22].

Behavioral Engagement is actually the student's participation in the class related activities, interest in their academic task and to follow the teacher's instruction [23,24].

Limitations

This study is limited in case of two dimensions of the behavioral engagement that is student participation in the class and to follow the teacher's instructions.

Significance of the study

Theoretically, this study is imperative in this way that it will add the knowledge in the literature because this study will address the relationship between the bullying of the teacher and peers towards the student's behavioral engagement which resultantly creates the huge

communication gap between the teacher, students and the peer as well as disturbs the student's struggle toward the studies. First significant point is that behavioral engagement is actually the gap in the literature because many researches have been done in case of moral and cognitive engagement with respect to bullying but this aspect is not pretty much investigated in Pakistan. And the second contribution is that mostly the bullying aspect has been seen in schools, colleges and at the workplace but the present study is done on the University students and it will make the comparison between the public and private universities in Pakistan and this is main contribution of doing this study.

Basic assumptions

It is assumed that participants will respond the survey very truthfully and seriously because many students are facing bullying in their universities that actually disturbs their psychological conditions as well as their behavioral aspects. And the other assumption is that bullying impact is very high in public universities as compared to private sector which may be true or not, depends on the study findings.

Literature Review

Bullying remained a problematic behavior among the school students in USA [22] and it disturbs the student-teacher relationship.

Bullying

Bullying is an intentional aggressive type of behavior that is used by one person towards the other person in order to harm the victim [21]. It may be physical or verbal. Verbal Bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior where the bully intends to use name calling, verbal assaults and gossiping in order to separate the victim from the group of friends [22] (Figure 1). While the physical bullying is that type of behavior in which the bully physically threatens by pushing or hitting them [25].

Teacher bullying: Teacher bullying is a main practice of proactive aggression that is described as imbalance of power between the teacher and the student [26,27]. It is dynamic in nature in which the teacher intentionally adopts an unsuitable and unfavorable social behavior to get the valued goals and desired outcomes such as dominance in the students [28]. Student-teacher relationship had been found to influence the bullying related behavior [10,13,29]. It means this type of relationship is very critical and disturbs due to bullying. Bullying behavior of the teacher has been reported significantly [30]. Almost 15% to 30% of the students are being bullied from their teachers which may be physically, verbally or emotionally. The teachers hurt the feelings of the students which results in resistance and lack of participation in the student's behavior. Many include that the impact of bullying is extensive, that not only disturbs the psychological position but also prove harmful forth educational process, school environment and the public at large [31]. A study of 3,124 students from 34 randomly selected students from schools in Jamaica had found that 60.8% reported witnessing violence by the teacher at school [32]. Teacher aggression is harmful to the learning process because it leads to task distraction [33-35]. Ultimately this exerts a negative pressure on students.

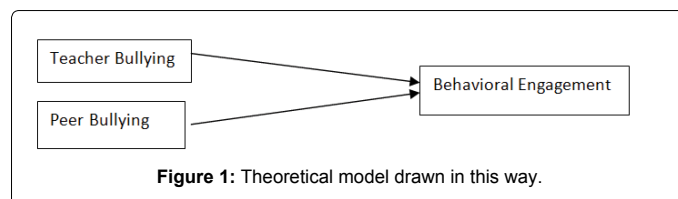


Figure 1: Theoretical model drawn in this way.

A research study had been done in this perspective that teacher aggressive behavior leads to fear and oppression in the students [36]. This exerts the pressure on their mental condition. Research has shown that participation in bullying carries out many problems like academic difficulties, depressive symptoms, anxiety, low self-esteem and communication pattern [37-40]. Moreover, climate factors such as class room decorum in case of student-teacher relationships have been found to influence bullying behaviors. School norms and culture also exerts the pressure on the teacher behavior and due to this reason the teacher aggressive behavior carries out the resistance factor in students [41]. These culture dimensions include power distance, individualism, and ethnicity [42]. Mostly it has to see that students are verbally bullied by their teachers which strongly impacts on their learning skills, academic career and communication pattern [43]. In context of bullying behaviors, a lot of research studies had found when students are morally disengaged with the teacher then it is likely to involve in the bullying which indirectly disturbs their academic position [44,45]. In other words this can be said that due to negative behavior of the teacher, students are also get involved in aggression. Previous research proposed that moral disengagement is positively linked with the manifestation of aggressive behaviors [8].

Peer bullying: Peers are very important in students' life. They exert positive as well as negative pressure towards their other peers. Peers play in promoting bullying and victimization by either reinforcing the aggressor or affiliating with students who bully. During early adolescence the function and importance of the peer group changes dramatically [46,47]. Adolescents seeking autonomy from their parents, turn to their peers to discuss problems, feelings, fears and doubts, thereby increasing the salience of time spent with friends [48,49]. However, this dependence on peers for social support is together with growing pressures in order to get the social status [50]. International research with elementary school children supports the role of peer group members in reinforcing and maintaining bullying [51,52]. Hence through the previous studies this also showed that peers play very significant role in the students' life.

Behavioral engagement

Engagement is a broad concept that has three dimensions cognitive, emotional and behavioral engagement [23,53]. These dimensions highlight the complexity of the student engagement. Cognitive engagement related with student's inner psychological and non-visible traits towards the learning process [54]. Emotional engagement focuses on the student's feelings, belongings and value towards their study, teachers, peers and classroom environment [55]. Behavioral engagement included student conduct in the class, student participation in class related activities, student interest, follow the teacher instruction, disruptive behavior and absenteeism [24]. The focus of the present study is on behavioral engagement. Behavioral engagement is associated with teachers, peers and the class rooms conduct [56]. Student-teacher relationship is very important and critical factor for affecting the behavioral engagement [23]. So this factor is also related with student-teacher relationship.

Now move towards the peers and behavioral engagement. Student's interactions with their peers are also play very important role in behavioral engagement [57]. It means where teachers' behavior influence the students' engagement same as peers also affect their engagement level. Higher levels of teacher aggressive behavior had a stronger influence on the disengagement [36]. Bullying behavior of the teacher causes students to feel disconnected from the learning process [58] and results in form of disengagement with the teacher. Highest

levels of teacher aggressive tendencies caused fear in the students regarding the teacher which indirectly creates the disconnection. Some studies had found that this relationship is not associated with the bullying behavior and has no effect on the student communication, engagement and interest [59-62]. While in other studies like Wang et al. [63] had found that students are more engaged with the teacher when they are not being bullied by teachers and the peers. When teacher behavior with the students is not affective or it may be found in a more threaten way then the students learning as well as the motivation to communicate the things also reduced [64]. The results of another study indicated that teacher positive behavior actually results in more students' learning and interest [65]. So the teacher and peer behavior towards the students causes many changes in students' life. The previous researches talked about mental, moral and psychological conditions while the present study considers about the behavioral aspect regarding the bullying.

Literature review has been organized according to thematic style. The whole part revolves around the bullying and engagement and then specifically it has been divided into those concepts that are main part of the current study like teacher bullying, peer bullying and behavioral engagement. At the end a link has been developed among these three factors. On the other side some theoretical background also complements this type of study.

Theoretical foundation

Although there are various theoretical models that influence the teacher-student relationship within the classroom [66,67]. Titsworth et al. [68] had found that teacher behaviors influence the overall student academic activities. Instructional communication theory has described the communication apprehension [69,70] that actually leading to the learning outcomes [71,72]. Mottet et al. [73] proposed emotional response theory as a holistic way of combining instructional communication research linking classroom communication, student learning and engagement. A social theory related to bullying behavior [74] is social ecological theory. Bronfenbrenner had given the social ecological theory in 1979 that describes the complex factors in human development which influence the student behavior. This approach constitutes a theoretical framework that describes the bullying behavior with the peers [75,76] and negative teacher-student relationships including teacher aggressive behavior and unfairness [77]. Hence there is need to know about that how bullying affects the student's behavioral aspects due to which he/she ultimately did not perform their work activities, participate in the class and follow the teacher's instructions.

Hence based upon the above literature discussion, following hypotheses are made:

H:1 The teacher bullying has negative relationship with the student's behavioral engagement.

H:2 The peer bullying has negative relationship with the student's behavioral engagement.

H:3 There is a difference between public and private student's behavioral engagement.

Methodology

Research design

The present research tries to determine the views of university students on the bullying behavior of the teacher and peers towards them. This study is explanatory since it is aimed to investigate the

bullying impact on the student's behavioral engagement that how he/she disconnect from the class activities and does not follow the teacher instructions. A convenient sampling strategy was used in this study and a comparison was made in perspective of public and private university in Pakistan.

Sample size

The population of this research was university students. Data was collected from 2 public and 2 private universities in Islamabad, Pakistan. Out of 410 questionnaires, 10 students did not fill the questionnaire so they were not evaluated and sample of the population was comprised of 400 students.

Quantitative approach

A quantitative approach was used in this study because this type of research is quantitative in nature. As more and more student's views about the bullying can be getting through quantitative method.

Measures

Self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. There were 2 sections in questionnaire. First section was about respondent demographics which include gender, age and class. Second section comprised of items measured teacher bullying, peer bullying and behavioral engagement. Questionnaire was taken from different studies [78-80] with minor changes due to present study perspective. Out of nineteen items, nine items on the teacher bullying and five, five items were on the peer bullying and behavioral engagement. Five item likert scale has been used in this study ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Statistical Analysis and Results

Statistical analysis has been done with the help of SPSS version 21. The demographics analysis showed that in this study there were 203 male, 197 female, 179 undergraduate, 100 graduate and 121 post-graduate students. This also showed that 250 students were those whose age range was 18 to 23, 114 students were in 24 to 27 age range, while in 28-35 age range, there were 36 students. Out of 400, 200 students were from public and 200 students were from the private University.

Descriptive statistics

With the help of descriptive statistics, maximum, minimum, mean and standard deviation values of the demographic variables as well as study variables are given in Table 1 The demographic variables have minimum and maximum values that lie between 0 and 3 while the study variables like teacher bullying, peer bullying and behavioral engagement have minimum value is 1 and maximum is 5 because this is measured through 5 point likert scale.

Reliability analysis

The inter-item reliability analysis was used through Cronbach's alpha. Inter-item reliability is used to measure the consistency among items of one constructs (Table 2).

Regression analysis

Regression analysis is done to check out the impact of bullying on student's behavioral engagement. This tells that alteration in independent variable causes the change in dependent variable.

Teacher bullying and behavioral engagement: This analysis part is explained through model summary, ANOVA (analysis of variance)

and coefficient table.

In Table 3 the value of R is 0.577 while R square is 0.333 that is coefficient of determination. This shows that 33% variation in student's behavioral engagement occurs due to teacher bullying. And Durbin Watson value is 1.731 that is less than 2.

In Table 4 the sum of squares of regression and residual are given. The F value is 198.530 and results are significant in this case.

In Table 5 the beta value and t values are given. Following equation made due to coefficient analysis, Behavioral Engagement=1.094+0.641(Teacher Bullying), this shows that one unit change in TB results in 0.64 units change in BE and the results are significant (0.00) in this case. The analysis also showed that $t > 2$, hence the hypothesis one (H1) is accepted and concludes that due to teacher bullying, behavioral engagement of the students badly affected.

Peer bullying and behavioral engagement: In this part model summary, ANOVA and coefficient table are presented. In Table 6 the value of R is 0.587 while R square is 0.345 which shows that 34% changes in the behavioral engagement occurs due to peer bullying. The Durbin Watson value is 1.754 which is less than 2.

In Table 7 ANOVA analysis shows that value of F is 209.666 and results are significant in this case. The coefficient Table 8 gives the beta value and t value. The following equation made, Behavioral Engagement=1.099+0.618 (Peer Bullying), this shows that one unit change in PB causes 0.62 units change in BE and the results are significant (0.00) in this case. In this study $t > 2$, hence the hypothesis two (H2) is accepted and concludes that peer bullying badly affects the student's behavioral engagement.

Correlation

This analysis tells the relationship between the one variable to other variable. The relationship of variable with own itself is equal to 1 which is known as Pearson correlation.

The Correlation Table 9 shows that TB and BE are significantly correlated with each other and value is 0.577** ($p < 0.01$). On the other hand PB and BE are also significantly correlated with each other and value is 0.587** ($p < 0.01$).

Independent two sample t-test

This test was used in this study to check out the third hypothesis. This test is used to compare the mean of two different samples in order

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	400	0	1	0.49	0.501
Age	400	1	3	1.47	0.656
Class	400	1	3	1.86	0.855
Sector	400	1	2	1.5	0.501
TB	400	1	5	2.8422	1.08644
PB	400	1	5	2.9375	1.14694
BE	400	1	5	2.9156	1.20732
Valid N (List wise)	400				

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics.

Variable Name	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Teacher Bullying (TB)	0.917
Peer Bullying (PB)	0.881
Behavioral Engagement (BE)	0.887

Table 2: Reliability Test.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	0.577	0.333	0.331	0.9874	0.333	198.53	1	398	0	1.731

Table 3: Model Summary.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	193.558	1	193.558	198.53	0
	Residual	388.032	398	0.975		
	Total	581.59	399			

Table 4: ANOVA.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.094	0.138		7.9	0	0.821	1.366
	TB	0.641	0.045	0.577	14.09	0	0.552	0.731

Table 5: Coefficients.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	0.587	0.345	0.343	0.97831	0.345	209.666	1	398	0	1.754

Table 6: Model Summary.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	200.669	1	200.669	209.666	0
	Residual	380.921	398	0.957		
	Total	581.59	399			

Table 7: ANOVA.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.099	0.135		8.165	0	0.835	1.364
	PB	0.618	0.043	0.587	14.48	0	0.534	0.702

Table 8: Coefficients.

		TB	PB	BE
TB	Pearson Correlation	1	0.588**	0.577**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0
	N	400	400	400
PB	Pearson Correlation	0.588**	1	0.587**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0
	N	400	400	400
BE	Pearson Correlation	0.577**	0.587**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	
	N	400	400	400

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9: Correlations.

Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
BE	Public	200	3.0963	1.28033	0.09053
	Private	200	2.735	1.10351	0.07803

Table 10: Group Statistics.

to determine the statistical evidence that both associated samples are significantly different.

Table 10 provides the basic information about the group comparison including the sample size, mean, standard deviation and standard error mean for behavioral engagement by public and private

sector separately. In this study, 200 students were from public and 200 students were from the private university. The BE mean for the public side is 3.0963 while for the private sector is 2.7350.

Table 11 has two parts one is Levene's Test for Equality of Variances and second is t-test for Equality of Means. The p value for the Levene's test is 0.000 which is very small. Hence the results reject the null of Levene's test and conclude that the variance in behavioral engagement of public students is significantly different than that of private students. It means now the focus is on the "Equal variances not assumed" row for the t-test and corresponding confidence interval results. Now move toward the second part that is t-test for the equality of means.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
BE	Equal variances assumed	12.995	0	3.023	398	0.003	0.36125	0.11952	0.12628	0.59622
	Equal variances not assumed			3.023	389.521	0.003	0.36125	0.11952	0.12627	0.59623

Table 11: Independent Samples Test.

The t value is 3.023 ($p < 0.003$). The mean difference is calculated by subtracting the mean of the private group from the mean of the public group ($3.0963 - 2.7350 = 0.36125$). The sign of the mean difference corresponds to the sign of the t value. The positive t value indicates that the mean for the public group is significantly greater than the mean for the private group. The confidence interval of the difference complements the significance test results. If the confidence interval for the mean difference contains 0, the results are not significant at the chosen significance level. In this study, the 95% confidence interval is 0.12627 and 0.59623. Hence this agrees with the small p-value of the significance test. Hence third hypothesis (H3) of this study is accepted in this case.

Conclusion

The study findings conclude that teacher bullying and peer bullying significantly impact the student's behavioral engagement. Due to bullying in the classroom the students can't fully concentrate on their work activities, did not take part in class participation and did not follow the teacher's instructions and ultimately disconnect from the studies. On the other hand the findings also showed that there is significant difference in public and private university student's behavioral engagement ($t_{389.521} = 3.023, p < 0.003$). And comparatively the average behavioral engagement in public students was 0.36125 higher than the private university students.

Implications of the Study

On the theoretically side, the study findings constitutes with the instructional communication theory that how instructor communication influence the student behavior. Because this theory links the instructor communication, classroom environment and student's learning as well as engagement [81-84]. While on the practical side, through study findings it can be figure out that bullying is happening in both sides mean in public and private universities. There is significant difference among these two sectors and this impact is high in Public University students.

Recommendations for the Future Research

The further research can be possible in this perspective by taking out the other dimensions of behavioral engagement like withdrawal, disruptive behavior and absenteeism rate of the students due to bullying. The further research can be possible by increasing the sample size and developing the framework to overcome the bullying so that students can perform their work activities in an efficient way.

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