

STUDY ON SCHOOL BULLYING AND SCHOOL CLIMATE AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

School age is a vulnerable phase when developmental needs are changing. Peer groups become more important and increase in social interaction among school students possibly having a detrimental effect on wellbeing. Adolescents who were bullied tended to report having low levels of self-esteem, feeling less connected to their peers, teachers, and schools, and being less motivated to perform well at school. The study followed descriptive research design. The study was conducted among school students in different school of South India. The tools used for the study were Survey of school bullying scale with 16 statements development by Espelage & Holtz (2001), and school climate inventory with 23 statements by Marjorie Beld, Jesse & Roest (2015). Product moment correlation, t test and measures of the central tendency were used for data analysis. The results show that there is a negatively significant difference between school bullying and school climate. Bullying is a serious problem in many schools and there seems to be no one single solution. However, that the social context and supervision of the school play a major role in the frequency and severity of bullying problems. Bullying can be significantly reduced through comprehensive, school-wide programs designed to change group norms and improve school climate.

School bullying is a type of bullying that occurs in any educational setting. For an act to be considered bullying it must meet certain criteria. This includes hostile intent, imbalance of power, repetition, distress, and provocation. Bullying can have a wide spectrum of effects on a student including anger, depression, stress and suicide. Additionally, the bully can develop different social disorders or have a higher chance of engaging in criminal activity. If there is suspicion that a child is being bullied or is a bully, there are warning signs in their behavior. There are many programs and organizations worldwide which provide bullying prevention services or information on how children can cope if they have been bullied. The underlying causes of school violence and bullying include gender and social norms and wider contextual and structural factors. Discriminatory gender norms that shape the dominance of men and the subservience of women and the perpetuation of these norms through violence are found in some form in many cultures. Gender inequality and the prevalence of violence against women in society exacerbate the problem. Similarly, social norms that support the

authority of teachers over children may legitimize the use of violence to maintain discipline and control. Schools themselves can "teach" children to be violent through discriminatory practices, curricula and textbooks. If unchecked, gender discrimination and power imbalances in schools can encourage attitudes and practices that subjugate children, uphold unequal gender norms and tolerate violence, including corporal punishment. To prevent it, they are to communicate, mediate and seek help. Training school staff and students to prevent and address bullying can help sustain bullying prevention efforts over time. There are no federal mandates for bullying curricula or staff training. In addition to addressing bullying before it occurs, a great prevention strategy is to educate the students on bullying.

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. It has been described as "the heart and soul of the school that essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, and an administrator to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day." A positive school climate helps people feel socially, emotionally and physically safe in schools. It includes students', parents' and school personnel's norms, beliefs, relationships, teaching and learning practices, as well as organizational and structural features of the school. According to the National School Climate Council, a sustainable, positive school climate promotes students' academic and social development.

Many factors can affect the quality and character of school life. There is no consensus on the definition or dimensions of school climate. However, the factors that shape school climate are often grouped into four main dimensions. These dimensions are: safety, teaching and learning (academic climate), relationships (community climate), and the environment. Each dimension is discussed in detail below. Positive school climate is related to many positive student outcomes. For example, positive school climate is associated to higher academic performance, better mental health, and less bullying. Improving school climate can be used as a preventative approach to reduce disruptive behavior and improve attendance, achievement, and student and parent satisfaction with school. Many assessment tools and interventions have therefore been developed to help school in the climate improve process.

School age is a vulnerable phase when developmental needs are changing. Peer groups become more important and increase in social interaction among school students possibly having a detrimental effect on wellbeing. According to Jason, and Trilochan, 2005, the influence of bullying on sense of school connectedness, motivation and self-esteem. Adolescents who were bullied tended to report having low levels of self-esteem, feeling less connected to their peers, teachers, and schools, and being less motivated to perform well at school. Students in the lower year levels of high school reported being bullied more frequently than students in high year levels. Findings supported predictions that students who were bullied by their peers at school tended to report having lower levels of self-esteem, feeling less connected to their peers, teachers and school, and being less motivated to perform well at school. These results may have implications for school-based intervention programs that are designed to reduce bullying

behaviors. On the above grounds the present research is aimed to find the influence factors of bullying among school children.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

The aim of the study is to understand the relationship between School bullying and School Climate among school students. Further it was attempted to explore the effect of gender in school bullying and school climate among school students.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows;

1. To identify the level of school bullying among school children.
2. To identify the level of school climate among school children.
3. To find the relationship between school bullying and school climate among the school children.
4. To find out the effect of gender among school bullying and school climate

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant relationship between school bullying and school climate.
2. School students do not differ in school bullying on basis of the gender.
3. School students do not differ in school climate on basis of the gender.

Tools Used

In order to test the spelt-out hypotheses, a number of questionnaires were used to assess School bullying and school climate. The questionnaires are attached in Appendix. The following standardized questionnaires were used in along with the personal data sheet which explores the demographic variables of the participants.

1. **School bullying scale:** This scale was developed by Espelage, D.L., &Holt, M. (2001). And adapted with permission from the Illinois Bully scale.
2. **School climate:** school climate inventory developed by Ferdi Bekken, Marjorie Beld, Jesse Roest (2015).

Illinois bully scale:

The Illinois bully scale is a research validated tool that can be used to measure bullying and victimization through directly surveying students. The survey instructs students to report on what has happened at school within the last 30 days. And the response will be “never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times” There are no norms available to allow schools

to use this survey to compare the level of bullying in their school to other schools or to other schools or to determine what is “good” or “bad” level of bullying.

School climate inventory:

The questionnaire was adapted for specific use at a low cognitive level, for use with students with a mild intellectual disability and extreme disruptive behavior. The manual of the school climate inventory contains a theoretical background and tips for practical use. The introduction describes the starting points and the foundation for the development of this questionnaire. This questionnaire is developed by Ferdi Bekken, Marjorie Beld, Jesse Roest (2015). The response is “I do not agree, I partially disagree, I neither agree nor disagree, I partially agree, I agree”.

Sample

A sample of 65 school students from the both public and private schools of Coimbatore were taken for the study. School students of both gender (male and female) studying 7th, 8th, and 9th classes of age from 13 to 15 years were selected. The total sample surveyed for the current study was 65. Among the participants, 30 were boys and 35 were girls. Stratified random sampling technique was employed for selecting the samples. Totally 65 questionnaires were distributed to the school students, all the questionnaire were found complete and taken for final analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: The relationship between school bullying and school climate among school children.

| Variables | School bullying | School climate |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| School bullying | - | |
| School climate | -.318** | - |

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

The table 1 shows that there is a negative correlation between school bullying and school climate ($r = -0.318$, $p < 0.01$) and therefore is a negative relation between school bullying and school climate. Hence the hypothesis is not accepted. A study conducted by Jennifer Klein, Dewey Cornell and Timothy Konold, (2012), is the relationship between bullying, school climate, and students risk behaviors. This study explains that, the relationship between school bullying and school climate by the methods of surveys and questionnaires. This study results in

there was a negative significant relationship between school bullying and school climate. If there is protective and more secured environment or atmosphere in school setting and there will no other risk behaviors of students.

Table 2: Showing the mean, SD and t- value for school bullying on basis of gender among school students.

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t- value |
|--------|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|----------|
| Male | 30 | 20.33 | 2.249 | .411 | 1.693NS |
| Female | 35 | 21.26 | 2.133 | .361 | |

NS-not significant

Ho:Secondary school students do not differ in school bullying on basis of gender.

The Mean, SD and t-value for school bullying scores of school students on the basis of gender is 1.693. It is observed from the above table that the mean school bullying value of student is 21.26, their standard deviation value is 2.133 and 2.249 respectively. The calculated 't'-value is found 1.693, which is not significant. Therefore, it is concluded that school students not differ in school bullying in basis of gender. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. According to Melanie, (2016), a gender difference in bullying and perceptions of bullying in schools is an important factor in bullying research is the influence of gender on one's overall bullying experience. And this study results in there is a gender difference in bullying in school. Over all, understanding gender difference within bullying assist in the effort to create effective anti-bullying interventions to be used in schools.

Table 3: Showing the mean, SD and t- value for school climate on basis of gender among school students.

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | t- test |
|--------|----|-------|----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Male | 30 | 74.67 | 5.785 | 1.056 | 2.337* |
| Female | 35 | 71.23 | 6.020 | 1.018 | |

*Significant at 0.05 level

Ho: School students do not differ in school climate on basis of gender.

The Mean, SD and t-value for school climate scores of school students on the basis of gender is 71.23 and 74.67. It is observed from the above table that the mean school climate value of student is 6.020, their standard deviation value is 5.785 and 6.020 respectively. The calculated 't'-value is found 2.337, which is significant. Therefore, it is concluded that school students differ in school climate in basis of gender. Hence, the hypothesis is not accepted. According to Lee and Valerie, (2006), he conducted a study on Influence of School Climate in Gender Differences. He explains that gender differences were small to moderate, for favoring girls as well as boys. Climate effects are stronger for effectiveness than for equity. Not all climate elements that positively influence effectiveness and also induce gender equity

CONCLUSION

- There is a significant difference between the school bullying and school climate.
- There is no significant difference in school bullying on basis of gender.
- There is a significant difference in school climate on basis of gender.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study restricted to a smaller sample size of 65 students, it won't be enough to generalize outcomes of this research to the entire populations. Therefore, it would be more accurate and informative if future researchers could examine a large sample. This survey indicates that some of the demographic variables included in this study influence school bullying and school climate. Hence, the role of other demographic variables excluded in this investigation can be observed through future researchers. It would be an interesting comparison to assess adolescent school bullying and school climate amongst sample of different schools from south and north India. Future researchers could develop new surveys and/or focus groups to assess the school bullying methods and existence that is concurrent with future technological developments. Other suggestions for future studies are more qualitative and longitudinal studies to be conducted. In addition, a large sample size needs to be assessed representing various students from different school in order to gain more valuable evidences.

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