

Student's Perception of Cyberbullying: How Physical Intimidation Influences the Way People are bullied

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Abstract

Recognizing the negative outcomes associated with experiences in bullying at school, educational researchers, school officials, and policy-makers have called for more rigorous research on bullying in school. Research on bullying behavior in school has primarily been examined using quantitative methods. Mixed methods research in the field of education has gained ground in recent years. However, no systematic review of mixed methods studies on bullying and peer victimization has been conducted to date. The major focus of this study is to review qualitative studies on bullying in schools. In a particular study, we examine if physical intimidation is progressive to cyber bullying. The study found alarming percentages of victims of both cyber bullying and physical intimidation. In conclusion, the study found that it is important to have forums to discuss bullying more actively and provide solutions.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Physical intimidation, bully.

Introduction

Bullying is the habitual and repeated use of strength or influence to intimate another individual, threaten them or dominate them aggressively. Bullying has been in existence for as long as the societal structure has been in existence with 20 percent of students in schools having experienced bullying according to a report by the National Center for Educational Statistics. Analyzed statistics on cases of bullying show that the problem neither has no regard to gender, age, background nor region but stands out a global battle. However, bullying seems to be severe at some variables of age, gender and locality causing adverse effects on the life of the victims than in the life of other individuals. The result of constant bullying from peers has been as adverse as suicides among victims. While bullying adopts many forms, generally, there are four types of bullying namely; physical bullying, social bullying, verbal bullying and cyber bullying. The first three have been in existence for fairly long, however, cyber.

bullying seems to have been influenced by the advancement in technology and the availability of it. Cyber bullying seems to morph into the various technological advancements and appears to be an evolutionary substitute of physical, social and verbal bullying. As a result, researchers have noticed the developing issue leading to the need to conduct studies that analyze various aspects such as:

Physical intimidation forms that lead to direct bullying, the effects that bullying on the victim as well as the growing prevalence of physical intimidation. This particular study will establish how physical intimidation influences the way people are bullied and how it has motivated cyberbullying. The study will include research on the possible motivations for individuals who result in physical intimidations as well as the influence of physical intimidation on the form of bullying. The study will examine the different kinds of physical intimidations and the effects they have on the victims as well as find out the relationship between physical intimidation and cyber bullying.

Literature review

Physical Intimidation and bullying lead to feelings of humiliation and may lead to psychological or physical harm especially in the instances the act is deliberate or repetitive. Individuals and perpetrators are not necessarily born a bully but previous research has attributed bullying as a character that develops at an early age where the bully is exposed to situations that lead them to be untroubled by anxiety, lack pro-social behavior or gain minimal or no understanding of other people's feelings. Physical intimidation has

developed into a serious societal issue in the 21 centuries where the physical interaction of individuals has grown as a result of growth in the

number of children attending schools, work places as well as social and recreational spaces. However, of concern is that the above does not limit the spheres in which bullying can occur as a result of the growth of cyber bullying. Cyber bullying in definition is when people are harassed, embarrassed or threatened through the use of technology which is a common occurrence among the youth. There are several forms of cyber bullying with the most common being harassment by cyber stalking where an individual or group sends continuous rude and harassment messages, flaming; sending of harsh language messages, images via instant messaging platforms, chat rooms or email, exclusion; singling out an individual in an online group platform and not only directing insulting messages but leaving them out, outing; sharing of another person private images, videos and private details to the public intentionally, Masquerading; a bully creates a fake identity intended to harass someone anonymously or impersonate someone else profile with an aim to send malicious messages to a victim. Cyber bullying includes acts of posting remarks that can be claimed to be sexual, of personal information, driven towards hate speech, images aimed at intimidation, threats or rumors on the different public and social media platforms. Cyber bullying is not only a growing trend but one that is easy to spot and observe as a result of the fact the information is not only preserved in different forms but can be spread quickly over a large area or populous over a short period. Cyber bullying happens over the internet either on social media or the created online social communities. The main problem and worry presented by the issue of cyber bullying is that it is common with the young youth who are in every sense the future leaders and elders (Besag, 2010). Progressively, the practice leads to other negative results for both the victim and the perpetrator.

A high number of people who possess the greatest likelihood and potential of growing or turning into bullies are the individuals who display the character of defiance, are disruptive or have externalizing problems. The individuals may have experienced harsh parenting techniques and styles and therefore may have developed attitudes of acceptance to violence and other forms of aggression. On the other hand, individuals that have a high likelihood of being victims of physical intimidation that influences bullying are those with low self-esteem, have poor relationships with their peers or are perceived to be weak, quiet, or different by their peers. Physical intimidation is expressed in different forms such as violent contact, misdirected contact or use of force. Physical intimidation that may result in bullying also includes acts like the occupation of someone's space in a bit to seem threatening or make them uncomfortable as well as gestures that are meant to demean or insult a person. Victims who are bullied by their peers often display signs of being unhappy, lonely, have increased health problems, tend to be less sociable and have the feeling of discrimination, helplessness, signs of depression and anxiety compared to those who are less physically intimidated as children who are both bullies and are bullied may be at greater risk of psychological symptom (Staff, 1999). According to a study conducted by Kalle, the cases of suicide are higher in youths who are bullied in contrast to their peers who experience no life of intimidation. The study also found that females who had undergone intimidation had more suicidal thoughts compared to males. Physical intimidation influences the way people are bullied and the definition of bullying since it is an antisocial behavior that may be real even in the stages of adulthood (Kalle, 2016). Another study that correlates bullying in childhood and adulthood found that most students who were bullies in their college life were likely to commit a crime in their adulthood; as a matter of fact, 60% were found to have

been convicted in their late twenties while 40% had numerous convictions (Sund et al, 2017). Statistics show that more cases of bullying occurred in schools as the students named teasing, physical intimidation and bullying as their primary challenge in their studies in comparison to the public problems of racism, drugs, sexuality or AIDS. In brief, studies found bullying in schools to be based on physical stature, gossiping, hitting, pushing or gesture and utterances of comments that are offending (Bhatt et al, 2014). Recent reports have indicated that females are the likely targets of physical intimidation and they experience most types of bullying compared to males (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006). A survey conducted in 2013 proved that most students who are bullied in school do not report the matter to their teachers, a clear indication that most bully related offences may occur over an extended period of time without being put to a stop. Physical intimidation and cyber bullying if not dealt with in its early stages may be a trigger a severe form of continuous bullying that can have adverse effects on the life of the victim and perpetrator in the cases where the law is applied.

Methodology

The best method to acquire desired results of this study is the mixed-research method that involves use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Previously, quantitative research methods have been employed on matters related to the issue of bullying with the only result being large samples and primary statistical findings. Qualitative research brings more understanding of aspects of the bullying phenomenon since it focuses on elaborating the experiences of the bullies and victims in their own narration and words. The study targets the colleges, high schools, and universities for effective results where the focus groups collect at least 300 survey responses from 300 individuals in each sample strata. The target population contains

majorly individuals in the ages of 10 years to 24 years with a few individuals above that age gap.

Stratified random sampling method

The most effective technique to choose a sample population for this bullying research study is the probability sampling methods and specifically the stratified random sampling technique. A stratified random sample involves the use of existing population strata like the one above. The simple random sample method will then be used to draw a sample from each stratum. In simple random sampling, every subject has an equal chance of being selected for the study (Suresh et al, 2011)

It is recommended that 300 students are randomly picked equally from the list of a list of universities, colleges and high schools spread across a wide geographical region eventually achieving a target population sample of 900 individuals. The table below shows the criteria number for sampling.

Institution	Number of sample students
Universities	300
Colleges	300
High Schools	300

This method of sampling is the best way to reach out to people coming from different localities that experience bullying. Questionnaires with questions based on the physical aspect and experience of bullying and cyber bullying were issued to the sample population.

The research questions included;

1. What is your age?
2. Which institution of study are you currently in?
3. Have you experienced physical bullying? If yes, narrate the experience.
4. Have you participated in physical bullying? If yes, narrate the experience.
5. Have your friends experienced physical bullying?
6. In the cases of bullying, did you report to the authorities or did your friends report to the authorities?
7. Do you understand cyber bullying?
8. Have you experienced cyber bullying? If yes, name the platform and narrate the experience
9. Have you participated in cyber bullying? If yes, name the platform and narrate the experience
10. Have your friends participated or experienced cyber bullying? If yes, name the platform and narrate the experience
11. Has there been cases where bullying progressed from physical intimidation to cyber bullying
12. Can you identify a possible bully or friend going through bullying without catching them in the act?
13. What do measures do you think should be put in place to curb bullying?
14. The data was then collected and used to put together results to the research.

Results

Out of the sample questionnaires presented to the sample of 900 students, only 850 presented their results as shown in the table below;

Institution	Number of sample students
Universities	270
Colleges	290
High Schools	290

The number of respondents could be represented in percentages as 90 percent of sample University students, 96 of both sample college and high school students. All respondents from high school and college were in the age bracket of 10 to 24 years while only 5 percent of the university respondents were above the age of 24. Generally, 25 percent of the respondents had undergone physical form of intimidation while 60 percent knew of a friend that had such an experience with the famous of physical bullying shown in the table below in percentages of popularity.

Forms of bullying	Popularity percentages
Hitting and kicking	40
Tripping	35
Pinching	25

All the respondents understood cyber bullying; only 10 percent had experienced it but 18 percent had participated in it most only WhatsApp group chats, Facebook and twitter platforms. Results from the research show that 80 percent of the victims in physical bullying tended to be the same victims in cyber bullying therefore showing a progression from physical intimidation to cyber bullying. The common form of cyber bullying is exclusion with it taking 75 percent of the respondent cases.

Most respondents noted possible bullies as colleagues who had behaviors of alcohol and drug abuse, truancy and got into fights often as well as were involved in vandalizing school property. They also noted that their friends who were bullied often had signs of dropped school performance and declining self-esteem issues.

In the narrations, the study also found that repeated acts of physical intimidation depend on the availability or access of the victim; when there is an aggression towards a victim, there seems to be a perception that the bully has more power by being stronger, having more friends, being bigger or older resulting to real or perceived power imbalance. It was evident that Cyberbullying has been influenced by physical intimidation where the aggressor feels more secure to intimidate others through the internet. This study found out that although physical intimidation occurs across ages, most cases of bullying are experienced in school. Physical intimidation has been identified as a significant contributor to the way people are bullied. It might be the start of a long experience of bullying if the intimidation is not met with the opposition it requires.

Conclusion

Physical intimidation and bullying have adverse effects on the victims, bystanders, and bullies as well. The culture has greatly influenced this in the old days where bullying was tolerated and failed to rise and take action. With the findings of the

adverse effects that bullying has both to children and adults, there is need to overcome this perception and tackle the problem of intimidation head on. Parents should be aware of the effects that cyber bullying that most of their children practice will bring to their lives. Cyberbullying can lead to adverse consequences since it spreads more than any other form of bullying as a result of its unlimited nature. To solve the problem openness should be encouraged. Adults should be on the forefront to lead in public conversations on how to overcome intimidation and bullying by discussing its effects and measures. This will provide children with information on what is happening and build trust with the adults and open an avenue for them to feel free to share their grievances and ask for assistance. In most instances, children might not have their voice so adults should be that voice. Additional research on how to prevent physical intimidation is recommended to make great strides in finding out much more about the complexity of bullying that is influenced by physical intimidation. Further studies can also transparently serve the public on the effects of physical intimidation that is experienced by youth and how it would affect them in their adulthood. Some of the research questions that remain unexplored are: What are the best and most effective ways to prevent

bullying? It will help come up with ultimate solutions for the many prevention programs that have been tested in schools, fail to produce a better outcome.

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