

AN INVESTIGATION INTO AWARENESS ABOUT BULLYING AMONG TEACHER TRAINEES WITH RESPECT TO THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate into awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with respect to their demographic variables. Descriptive survey method was used in this study. The study was conducted on a stratified random sample of 100 teacher trainees from teacher education Institutions affiliated to Panjab University, Chandigarh and Punjabi University, Patiala. Sample was stratified at the level of gender, rural/urban background and type of school education. Self made scale was used for the study. For the purpose of drawing out the results the investigator used statistical techniques like correlation, mean, standard deviation and t-tests. The conclusions of this study are that there exists no significant difference in the awareness of male and female teacher trainees about bullying. There exists a significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with rural and urban background. There exists no significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with government or private school education.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty first century is characterized by the emergence of multiculturalism due to industrialization, urbanization, globalization and disintegration in the family system. Since education is viewed as an instrument to develop the cognitive qualities, tolerance and understanding of people, it should prepare the younger generation to understand and face the realities of globalization. Future lies in the hands of children, so it is essential to infuse certain traits and qualities in them. In this context, the schools and the teachers have more responsibilities in molding the character of the students. The role of the teacher

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in the society today is diversified and challenging.

The present times have thrown up number of psychosocial challenges for the teachers as they carry out various institutional and educational functions. Classrooms offer complex environment and diverse behaviors to learn from, of which, all are not desirable. Bullying, a form of violence among children, is common on school playgrounds, in neighborhoods, and in homes throughout the world in all the societies. It often occurs out in the presence of adults or in front of adults who fail to intervene. Bullying has long been considered as inevitable and, in some ways, uncontrollable part of growing up. School bullying has come under intense public and media scrutiny recently as it have been thought of as a contributing factor in shooting incidents among adolescents in schools or outside at different places in the world.

Case 1:

India's first reported shooting in school took place in early December, 2007 in an elite school named Euro International School at Gurgaon where Abhishek Tyagi, a 8th class student was shot from point black range by two of his schoolmates. This incidence was a planned murder provoked by bullying of the victim. The Gurgaon Police Commissioner, Mohinder Lal said that " the two boys allegedly killed Abhishek Tyagi as he was physically stronger than both and been beating them up for the past two months, and the two carried a grouse against Abhishek as he used to tease them at every opportunity so they decided to take revenge (TOI, Dec 2007).)

In schools, bullying occurs in all areas. It can occur in nearly any part in or around the school building, though it more often occurs during Physical Education, in recess, hallways, bathrooms, on school buses and waiting for buses, classes that require group work and/or after school activities. Bullying in school sometimes consists of a group of students taking advantage of or isolating one student in particular and gaining the loyalty of bystanders who want to avoid becoming the next victim. These bullies taunt and tease their target before physically bullying the target.

Bullying is the general term applied to a pattern of behavior whereby one person with a lot of internal anger, resentment and aggression and lacking

interpersonal skills chooses to displace their aggression onto another person, chosen for their vulnerability with respect to the bully, using tactics of constant criticism, nit-picking, exclusion, isolation, teasing etc., with verbal, psychological, emotional and physical violence. In other words, bullying is when someone repeatedly uses power to hurt or scare others. It can be done individually or in a group. It can be carried out physically, emotionally or verbally.

Rigby (1996) defined bullying as the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It (a) occurs between children of unequal strength or power, as opposed to aggressive behavior or fighting between children of equal power; (b) begins with a desire to hurt someone and that desire is acted upon; (c) is a repetitive action targeted at a specific victim; (d) physical bullying includes hitting, beating, kicking, pushing or any physical contact; (e) psychological bullying includes verbal abuse, name calling, threatening gestures, stalking behavior, malicious phone calls, hiding belongings, excluding others, spreading malicious rumors and sexual harassment; and (f) can be direct or indirect. Direct bullying includes relatively open attacks on victims. Indirect bullying is more covert. Three critical points important in this definition are power: acquiring power through various means: physical size and strength; status within a peer group; and recruitment within the peer group so as to exclude others; frequency: it is repetitive in nature and the children who are bullied not only have to survive the humiliation of the attack itself but live in constant fear of its re-occurrence; and finally intent to harm: it not always fully conscious to the child who bullies, causing physical, psychological and emotional harm is a deliberate act. Dan Olweus (1993) defined bullying as negative behavior by which he meant behavior intended to inflict injury or discomfort.

Smith & Sharp (1994) stated that a student is being bullied or picked on when another student says nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, and when no one ever talks to him.

Review of Related Literature

Hazler (1994) found that petty teasing, joking, and bullying at school can have

devastating effects on students, leading to violent and disastrous consequences for both perpetrators and victims.

Trautman (2003) gave twenty suggestions for teachers to address ways to identify and reduce bullying in the school setting. Examples include knowing the definition of bullying, watching for warning signs, having good communication with students' parents, creating a support team for the bullied child, taking a proactive preventive approach, using buddies to deter bullying, and teaching about bullying through role play.

Ellis and Shute (2007) found that teachers' moral orientation does impact upon the kinds of responses to bullying they choose, seriousness of the incident is more important.

Brewer and Harlin (2008) found that bullying and victimization in schools have become major concerns for parents, teachers, and school psychologists. Elementary and middle school teachers are likely to have seen students bully each other, so it is important that they notice the characteristics associated with being bullied and recognize bullying in all its forms: physical, verbal, and psychological. This knowledge will help teachers take action in bullying situations and resolve these conflicts.

Shore (2009) found that in recent years, bullying seems to have become more serious and more pervasive. Research indicates that 15% to 20% of all students are victimized by bullies at some point in their school careers. Clearly, bullying is a problem that schools must recognize and address. Teachers are at the core of any bullying prevention program, and many of the lessons students need to learn that discourage bullying must come from the teacher--through guidance to individual students or through instruction to the whole class by integrating anti-bullying lessons into the curriculum. The most effective way to deal with bullying is to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Gleason and Katherine (2011) found that bullying behaviors are more prevalent in the schools but in new behaviors that teachers are ill equipped to manage. It is clear that bullying behavior is on the increase and more needs to be done to teach the high school faculty and staff how to identify and deal with bullying behavior among students.

Significance of the problem

Bullying, a form of violence among children, is common on school playgrounds, in neighborhoods, and in homes throughout the world. It cannot be stopped as long as it is considered an inevitable and uncontrollable part of growing up. Bullying can affect the social environment of a school, creating a climate of fear among students, inhibiting their ability to learn, and leading to other antisocial behavior. Bullying is rampant in Indian schools. Truly school bullying not only gives rise to mentality of ragging in higher educational institutions, it also changes a child into a hard core criminal which is evident from the incidents happening daily in the schools.

Case 2

The Times of India 2005 reported some cases of school vandalism which amounted to simple bullying or teasing words in some elite schools in Calcutta (Banerjee, 2005).

Case 3

On 3rd January, 2008 a student of VIIIth standard was shot dead by an Xth standard student in Chorbari village, Satna district of Madhya Pradesh. They both had heated arguments and bullied each other. The elder student had shot the junior in a spate of anger (Staff Correspondent, The Hindu, Jan, 04, 2008.)

In the understanding of bullying behavior, it has been found that majority of incidents would not have occurred if bystanders would have intervened. Due to the low number of students who actually report incidents of bullying, due recognition from the teachers, educationists, medical and health professionals and parents as well is required. Teachers need to have a certain level of awareness that will thwart potential problems. This awareness starts with understanding bullying. The role of teacher in reducing the problem is great because if school initiates the anti bullying practices in the school, it is the teachers, who should be first aware of what can constitute bullying. If this knowledge is there with the teacher trainees then bullying can be better dealt with when they join as regular teachers to teach in schools. Presently no study has been conducted on these lines in India. Neither, the problem is being

recognized as serious in the country. The present study intends to assess the awareness of teacher trainees towards bullying behavior. Such a descriptive study on teacher trainees would result in further designing curricular inputs for both pre service and in-service courses to enhance teachers' abilities in dealing with the phenomenon of bullying.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study and compare the awareness of male and female teacher trainees about bullying.
2. To study and compare the awareness of teacher trainees with rural and urban background about bullying.
3. To study and compare the awareness of teacher trainees with government or private school education about bullying.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference in the awareness of male and female teacher trainees about bullying.
2. There will be no significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with rural and urban background.
3. There will be no significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with government or private school education.

Method and Procedure

The descriptive survey method was used to conduct the study. The focus was to survey awareness amongst teacher trainees about the existence of bullying in educational institutions by using self constructed scale.

Sample

The study was conducted on a stratified random sample of 100 Teacher Trainees from Teacher Education Institutions affiliated to Panjab University, Chandigarh and Punjabi University, Patiala. Sample was stratified at the level of gender, rural/urban background and type of school education (private or government).

Tool Used

A self prepared scale on awareness of bullying was used for collection of data.

Face validity and content validity of the scale was ensured through consultation with faculty members from Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh and Lovely Professional University, Phagwara. Reliability for the scale was calculated by using the split half method. It came out to be 0.84.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATIONS

Mean and standard deviation was used to understand the nature of the data and t- ratios were calculated to find out the significance of difference between means.

Table showing cases of Teacher Trainees having different levels of awareness

Category	High awareness	Average	Low awareness
Male	28%	44%	28%
Female	30%	44%	26%
Urban Background	34%	37%	29%
Rural Background	25%	48%	27%
Government School Education	27%	43%	30%
Private School Education	25%	47%	28%

From the above table it can be concluded that 44% of female and 44% of male are having moderate level of awareness of bullying and 28% of male and 26% of female are having low awareness of bullying. 29% of teacher trainees from urban and 27% from rural area is still ignorant about bullying in this era when so many crimes are taking place in the society. 30% of teacher trainees from government and 28% from private school education are still not acquainted to the concept of bullying. From the above table it is clear that still a major chunk of teacher trainees is not very well aware of bullying when there is dire need to protect students from such kinds of crimes.

Null Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference in the awareness of male and female teacher trainees about bullying.

Table 1

Showing results of t- test on significant difference in the awareness of male and female teacher trainees about bullying.

Teacher trainees	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Male	50	211.72	33.34	1.08*
Female	50	218.16	25.10	

(*Not significant at 0.05 level)

Table 1 shows t- value is found to be 1.08 where as table value is 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance, it means our calculated t- value is less than table value which signifies that there exists no significant difference in awareness of male and female teacher trainees about bullying, therefore hypothesis is accepted. It is assumed that these days' boys and girls are equally aware of what is happening in the social environment as they are equally contributing towards society. Not only boys but girls are also indulged in this manipulative series of activities which is known as bullying. It can be the reason for no significant difference in the awareness of male and female teacher trainees.

Null Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with rural and urban background.

Table 2

Showing results of t- test on significant difference in awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with rural and urban background.

Teacher trainees	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Rural background	59	208.32	31.62	2.91*
Urban background	41	224.41	23.56	

(*Significant at 0.01 level of significance)

Table 2 shows that t- value is found to be 2.91 where as table value is 2.63 at 0.01 level of significance, it means our calculated t- value is more than table value which signifies that there exists a significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with rural and urban background. Therefore second hypothesis is not accepted. The reason behind this difference may be that the urban people have more exposure of external world and by this they are able to acquire more knowledge about this concept and consequences created by it.

Null Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with government or private school education.

Table 3

Results of t-test on significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with government or private school education.

Teacher trainees	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio
Government school education	60	211.80	30.54	1.32*
Private school education	40	219.60	27.72	

(*Not significant at 0.05 level)

Table 3 shows that t- value is found to be 1.32 where as table value is 1.98 at 0.05 level of significance, it means our calculated t- value is less than table value which signifies that there exists no significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with government or private school education. Therefore third hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusions:

- There exists no significant difference in the awareness of male and female teacher trainees about bullying.
- There exists a significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with rural and urban background.

- There exists no significant difference in the awareness about bullying among teacher trainees with government or private school educational background.

Educational Implications

Awareness about psycho social menace of bullying among serving teachers needs to be evaluated, analyzed and increased as a component of in service trainings. Aware and alert teachers will be able to contain escalation of violence stemming from bullying in educational institutions. Influence of home environment on behavior of students in school also requires teachers' alert intervention.

A school –wide bullying policy can be made for increasing engagement of teachers and administrators in checking it. Teacher trainees should be given proper training during B.Ed about the concept of bullying and the intervention techniques for helping out the students from critical situations. Lectures and seminars can be arranged for acquainting the teacher trainees with the effects of bullying and coping strategies.

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