

Research Article

Relationships of School Performance and Responsibility-sharing with Bully Activities in Indian Schools

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24321/2394.6539.202105>

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How to cite this article:

Mishra B, Patidar S, Sinha ND, Mishra B, Mishra G. Relationships of School Performance and Responsibility-sharing with Bully Activities in Indian Schools. J Adv Res Med Sci Tech. 2021; 8(2):7-11.

Date of Submission: 2021-03-21

Date of Acceptance: 2021-06-21

A B S T R A C T

Background: The coexistence of schools and school bullying are time contextual. Though its components are explored to different lengths at different geography the relationship with school performance and responsibility-sharing for Indian subcontinents are far and few.

Aim and Objectives: The study took cognizance of this knowledge gap and tried to explore the existence of any relations between academic performance and responsibility-sharing with school bullying.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in 6 randomly selected schools (3 urban and 3 rural) in a district of Madhya Pradesh, India. The participants from the 6th to 10th standard were selected by systematic random sampling and 96 participants per class were enrolled. The tools used were back-translated and pilot tested. They are the Bullying Prevalence Questionnaire (BPQ) and the Rosenberg Self-esteem questionnaire. School performance and responsibility-sharing information were collected from concerned school records.

Results: From 480 participants, 48.3% were involved in some form of school bully activities. Students' academic grade ($\chi^2 - 0.20$) and school attendance ($\chi^2 - 0.75$) were not associated with school bully behaviors, but their non-cocurricular recognition and lack of responsibility-sharing made them vulnerable to bullying (χ^2 and ANOVA $p = 0.02$ each) and victimized (ANOVA $p = 0.03$). Participants who shared school responsibilities and received acclaim were prosocial (ANOVA $p = 0.00$) and immune to bullying.

Conclusion: Schools are places where the pupils are groomed to be responsible and productive. The results established these points.

Keywords: School Bullying, Co-Curricular Performance, Responsibility Sharing

Introduction

It must be the gone days for misconceptualized dictums like ‘Kids will be kids’ and ‘kids need to toughen up’ which have perpetually been employed both by parents and school administrations as an effective coverup to give ‘school bullying’ a rightful escape. The credit of identifying school bullying as an aberrant psychosocial phenomenon in modern days goes to Olweus. His groundbreaking works in the early 1970s have led to recognize this act as a psychosocial evil that has many players and multidomain impact.¹⁻⁵ Students who are a party to this unruly act suffer immensely at physical, mental, and social front in the form of injuries, depression, anxiety, fear, and low self-esteem just to name a few. Even reports of suicide are in a common record. In the last half-century, the world commune has not only taken note of this but acted swiftly through policy development and ensuring its implementation at the global level to ensure the children feel safe in their learning environment and become successful. One such noteworthy effort is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which is a legally binding international framework that has set out rights of every child in the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural realm, regardless of their racial, religious, and other abilities.⁶ Despite all the good work bullying at school has not staggered. The traditional power imbalance equation among pupils while still holds its old ground, the new domains like school grades, attendance, proclaims, responsibility sharing’s are the least explored areas especially in low- and middle-income countries.⁷ This study has analyzed these aspects from the Indian point of view.

Methodology

Hypothesis: Improved school performance and responsibility sharing are antagonists to school bullying. Participants from 6 schools that cater education for 6th to 10th standards

were selected on a random basis (by computer-generated number) from the list of schools provided by the district education office. To establish rural-urban equanimity, 3 each was picked from rural and urban areas. The sampling was further harnessed to ensure the equal presentation of schools based on gender catered, i.e., boys’, coed and girls’ schools by selecting one each of them from both rural and urban settings. A further equal number of participants were selected from each grade to ensure sound comparative analysis.

The sample size was calculated by the formula $n=4pq/l^2$ where p (prevalence) was 31.4%.⁸ This figure was enhanced by accommodating a 10% dropout number and upscale roundup technique. The final figure so reached was 480.

Only consenting participants without gross phycological morbidities were studied. The study was cleared by IEC (institutional Ethical Committee) of R D Gardi Medical college by version no. 225 and the district education officer along with the participating schools’ principals.

Tools used were the back-translated and pilot tested Bullying prevalence questionnaire (BPQ), and Rosenberg Self-esteem questionnaire.^{1,2} School performance and responsibility-sharing information were collected from concerned school records for the last 6 months.

Result

The independent variables like academic performances in the form of grades achieved and school attendance were not associated with bully activities in studied schools. Cocurricular success in terms of numbers of certificates achieved and responsibility and leadership qualities like being class monitors and group/house leader had a significant association with bully, victim, bully-victim and bystander (non-involvers in our case). The χ^2 result in its support is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Chi-square test (χ^2) to Demonstrate the Association of School Performances of Studied Pupils with their Involvement in Different types of Bully Behaviors

Variable	Bully	Victim	Bully-Victim	Bystander/ Not involved	p-value (χ^2) Total (%)
Grades at Exam					(p - 0.2)
A	13 (9)	31 (21.4)	20 (13.80)	81 (55.9)	145 (100)
B	26 (11.8)	41 (18.6)	35 (15.9)	118 (53.6)	220 (100)
C or less	21 (18.3)	25 (21.7)	20 (17.4)	49 (42.6)	115 (100)
Certificate Achieved					(p - 0.02)
Zero	41 (14.4)	53 (18.6)	54 (18.9)	137 (48.1)	285 (100)
1	10 (8.5)	29 (24.8)	11 (9.4)	67 (57.3)	117 (100)
2	3 (7)	13 (30.2)	5 (11.6)	22 (51.2)	43 (100)
≥3	6 (17.1)	2 (5.7)	5 (14.3)	22 (62.9)	35 (100)
Attendance					(p - 0.75)

Poor < ±1SD	12 (17.4)	14 (20.3)	11 (15.9)	32 (46.4)	69 (100)
Average ±1SD	37 (11.4)	64 (19.8)	54 (16.7)	169 (52.2)	324 (100)
Good >±1SD	11 (12.6)	19 (21.8)	10 (11.5)	47 (54)	87 (100)
Responsibility Sharing					(p - 0.02)
Class Monitor	4 (5.7)	11 (15.7)	6 (8.6)	49 (70)	70 (100)
Group leader	9 (14.1)	14 (21.9)	6 (9.4)	35 (54.7)	64 (100)
None	47 (13.6)	72 (20.8)	63 (18.2)	164 (47.4)	346 (100)

Source: *Chi-square test was applied after merging the rows. Figures in parentheses indicate %

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation between the Bully and other Scores Concerning Exploratory School Performance Variables among Participants

Variable	Number	Victim Score		Pro-social Score		Self-esteem Score	
		R	p	r	p	r	p
Cocurricular Certificates Achieved							
Zero	285	0.268**	0.000	-0.180**	0.002	-0.051	0.392
One	117	0.162	0.082	-0.190*	0.040	-0.025	0.791
Two	43	0.224	0.148	0.167	0.284	0.052	0.741
Three or more	35	0.483**	0.003	-0.155	0.373	-0.178	0.307
Sharing of Responsibility							
Class Monitor	70	0.344**	0.004	0.031	0.801	-0.014	0.910
Group leader	64	0.334**	0.007	-0.151	0.234	0.038	0.763
None	346	0.232**	0.000	-0.144**	0.007	-0.054	0.319

Source: r = correlation coefficient; * significant at p - 0.05; ** significant at p - 0.000 level

Table 3. One way "ANOVA test" Demonstrating the Existence of a Relationship between School Bullying and School Performances

Bully score						
Study Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Certificate achieved	Between Groups	37.683	3	12.561	3.233	0.022
	Within Groups	1849.215	476	3.885		
	Total	1886.898	479			
Responsibility shared	Between Groups	49.565	2	24.782	6.434	0.002
	Within Groups	1837.333	477	3.852		
	Total	1886.898	479			
Victimization						
Study Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Certificate achieved	Between Groups	23.256	3	7.752	1.015	0.386
	Within Groups	3633.669	476	7.634		
	Total	3656.925	479			
Responsibility	Between Groups	53.137	2	26.569	3.517	0.03
Sharing status	Within Groups	3603.788	477	7.555		
	Total	3656.925	479			
Prosocial Score						
Study Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Responsibility	Between Groups	80.509	2	40.255	6.726	.001

Sharing status	Within Groups	2854.639	477	5.985		
	Total	2935.148	479			
Non-involvement in bullying	Between Groups	132.916	3	44.305	7.526	.000
	Within Groups	2802.232	476	5.887		
	Total	2935.148	479			

Bully and victim scores were positively correlated for non- and high-cocurricular achievers whereas prosocial scores of non- and low-cocurricular achievers was negatively correlated with the bully score.

In terms of responsibility-sharing bully and victim, scores demonstrated positive relations across all strata, whereas prosocial score was negatively related to bullying in the non-sharing group. These observations are elaborated on in above Table 2.

Cocurricular Certificate achievers and responsibility partakers were less often bullied, responsibility partakers were less often victimized, and prosocial children/students were seen mostly as responsibility partakers and non-bullies. These observations are elaborated in above Table 3 by one way ANOVA.

Discussion

There is a divergent opinion on school performance and exposure or involvement in bullying at schools. While some researchers support the negative impact of school bullying on academic grades and school attendance of students' others found no such definitive associations or correlations. What we observed is that the researchers attributed academic achievements to grades achieved at examinations. Hardly any study considered co-curricular and responsibility sharing as parameters for academic, social and leadership excellence - a holistic developmental package for the child.

We observed no association of school bullying of any nature (bully, victims, bully-victims) with the grades and school attendance of the participating students over 6 months. Kochenderfer and Ladd (1996), Rueger and Jenkins (2014), and Feldman and colleagues (2014) also found no relation between being bullied and subsequent academic achievement in their longitudinal study involving participants from differing age groups ranging from 1 to 5 years.¹⁰⁻¹²

Our observations of associations of school bullying with low co-curricular achievements and responsibility sharing as class monitors and group/ house leaders, captains, school cabinet members etc. may act as antagonists to effective learning and future skill development of pupils. (Kochenderfer and Ladd, 1996; Schwartz et al., 2005), Espinoza and colleagues (2015), and Juvonen and colleagues (2011) have opined on the same line through

their observations that school grades, performances in quizzes and other such activities and teacher-reported engagements were low in students exposed to bullying, victimization, and involvement in bully-victim activities.^{10,13-16}

Students Prosocial score and bullying were negatively correlated even for nonachievers (cocurricular certificate bearers) and non-partakers (responsibility sharing). Authors voicing similar concerns are Xiong et al., (2020), Shirin (2020) and Al-Ali and Shattnawi (2018).¹⁷⁻¹⁹

Conclusion

Though conventional academic performances like grades in examinations are studied to some length about school bullying the impact of different bully activities on co-curricular achievements and responsibility-sharing of different natures at the school level are least explored.

School, the 'dome of learning,' has a greater role to play. Ensuring multidomain development of the child is their prime responsibility. The negative impact of school bullying on the holistic development of the child should be given prime importance and reforms initiated to produce better human resources for future nation-building.

Highlights

- The negative impact of school bullying on cocurricular and responsibility sharing by students in all probability was studied for the first time.
- Prosociality as a protective associate for non-achievers (cocurricular) and no partakers (responsibility sharers) against school bullying was also a first-time observation reported by this study.

Strength and Limitation of the Study: The well-designed scientifically sound sample selection procedure and pre-testing of reversed translated tools were its' main strengths. The employment of a pre-trained qualified unit of doctors was detrimental to accurate information retrieval. Blinded data coding and analysis were adopted to minimize bias. The limitation was the observational nature of the study design which despite all possible sound researching techniques produces noncausal evidence.

Acknowledgement

Our sincere thanks to all the parents, school managements and district educational officer for their kind permission and active support.

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: None

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