

The Influence of Bullying on the Level of Anxiety in Youth

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Abstract

The present study explores the connection between bullying and anxiety among university students aged 18 to 22. Utilizing a convenience sample of one hundred students, the intensity of bullying and anxiety levels were measured using the Perception of Teasing Scale (POTS) and the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A), respectively. Using correlation and regression analyses to decipher the data, it was discovered that bullying significantly predicts anxiety among this demographic. Notably, the study also revealed that female university students experience higher levels of anxiety related to bullying compared to their male counterparts. Further research is recommended to explore interventions and strategies to counteract bullying and its associated anxiety within university settings.

Keywords: Bullying, Anxiety, Depression, Youth, Victims

Introduction

Bullying is a pervasive and destructive behavior that can have serious consequences for those who experience it. It involves using power or aggression to threaten, harass, or hurt another person, often repeated over some time. Victims of bullying often suffer a variety of negative effects, including low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and difficulty forming healthy relationships with others. They may also have problems at school, struggle with substance abuse, and in extreme cases may even contemplate or attempt suicide. It is important to create a safe and supportive environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Effective prevention and intervention efforts include implementing anti-bullying policies and procedures such as B. Anonymous Reporting System and Disciplinary Actions for Violators. It is also important to address the underlying causes of bullying, such as: Providing support and resources to address social isolation, peer pressure, and mental health issues, and help those affected by bullying to heal and recover. Individuals, communities, and institutions must work together to prevent and address the harmful impact of bullying. The impact of bullying extends beyond the immediate victims and perpetrators. It affects bystanders, witnesses, and the overall school climate. Furthermore, research studies show that bullying not only has detrimental effects on the mental and emotional well-being of victims, but it also negatively impacts academic achievements and can hinder the learning environment for all students involved. To fully understand the effects of bullying on individuals, it is important to consider multiple sources. Thus, bullying is not only an individual behavior but also a result of a dynamic interaction among different factors from an ecological perspective. Bullying prevention and intervention efforts should involve a multi-faceted approach that addresses the various underlying causes and consequences of bullying. Creating a culture of respect and compassion within schools and communities is essential to combatting bullying. This can be achieved through promoting empathy, teaching conflict resolution skills,

and fostering positive relationships among peers. In addition to implementing and enforcing anti-bullying policies, it is crucial to provide support and resources for both the victims and the perpetrators. Victims of bullying need avenues for seeking help and healing, while those who engage in bullying behavior require interventions to address the root causes of their actions and guide them toward more positive interactions. Moreover, involving the broader community and engaging bystanders as proactive allies in preventing bullying is vital. Educational programs and awareness campaigns can empower students, parents, and educators to recognize and address bullying effectively. By promoting a culture of inclusivity and empathy, individuals and institutions can work together to create a safer and more supportive environment for everyone. It is also important to continue researching and understanding the complex dynamics of bullying, including its impact on mental health, academic performance, and the overall well-being of individuals (Farrington & Baldry, 2010). By recognizing the interconnectedness of various factors contributing to bullying, efforts to prevent and address this behavior can be more comprehensive and effective. Furthermore, it is essential to develop and utilize reliable measurement tools to accurately assess the extent of bullying and effectively evaluate intervention programs. Overall, addressing bullying requires a collaborative and comprehensive approach that considers the social context, individual factors, and the broader community. University students aged 18 to 22 are particularly vulnerable to bullying and its associated anxiety.

Review Of Literature

S. S. Khliestova and V. V. Chorna (2020). The article provides a look back at the phenomena of bullying. The chronology of scientific advances and human violence studies has been generalised and systematised. Theoretical perspectives on the billing of foreign and domestic scientists are discussed. Bullying among student youth in educational institutions is examined in terms of its causes and repercussions. The materials from an experimental research of bullying and the level of violence among students in educational institutions are given. The frequency of bullying in Ukraine, its causes, and prevention methods are examined. The psychologist's role in resolving the student bullying problem the environment is supported. The specificity of diagnosing and delivering the initial emergency medical and psychological treatment to bullying victims is supported.

Maria P., Maria C., Roberto A., Francesco D., Prisca G., et al.(2018) Background: Several research in the literature have suggested that children and adolescents with social anxiety have previously been victimised by peers and siblings. The purpose of this study was to help update new data on the association between peer victimisation and the emergence of social anxiety in children and adolescents. Methods: A review of the literature on Social Anxiety Disorder in children and adolescents who experienced peer victimisation during childhood and adolescence published between 2011 and 2018. There are seventeen investigations in total. All studies found that peer victimisation is associated with the existence of social anxiety. Furthermore, peer victimisation may lead to the maintenance and worsening of social anxiety symptoms. Conclusions: It is crucial to initially assess the occurrence of peer victimisation events in children and adolescents with Social Anxiety Disorder. Following that, treatment programmes aimed at enhancing these experiences and reducing the anticipatory anxiety and avoidance that characterised these children and adolescents can be recommended.

Emmanuel A., Pamela T., Michael W., Niina J., and Pälvi N. (2015) The links between social loneliness, emotional loneliness, social anxiety, and peer victimisation were investigated in this study of 390 seventh-through ninth-grade secondary students. The information was gathered in the autumn and spring of the

school year. Path analyses found that emotions of loneliness (both social and emotional) exacerbated adolescents' peer victimisation experiences; however, in seventh and eighth grade, social loneliness was related with higher levels of peer victimisation than emotional loneliness. Early encounters with social anxiety predicted bullying victimisation considerably.

Safaria T. and Yunita A. (2014) Anxiety is one of the unpleasant repercussions that bullying victims experience. The art therapy intervention was carried out in five sessions spread over two weeks. The participants in this study were ten students who had moderate levels of anxiety. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the effects of art therapy in the experimental and control groups. The end result The results of the study revealed that the degree of anxiety in the experimental group was lowered. The current study found that art therapy reduced anxiety in the experimental group. The study's ramifications are examined.

Sandra Graham and Jaana Juvonen (2014) *Bullying in Schools: The Power of Bullies and Victims*. Bullying is a widespread issue that affects school-aged children. They explore future directions that emphasise the need of treating victimisation as a social stigma, conducting longitudinal research on protective variables, identifying school environment factors that affect victimisation experiences, and taking a more nuanced approach to school-based solutions.

Tania D., Rachel L., and Judith A. (2013) *Bullying of Youth* is recognised as a serious public physical and mental health issue, affecting around 20% of present time youth. Bullying has received more attention in the recent decade, and the scientific knowledge base important to practitioners who treat teenagers, investigate their difficulties, and develop policy has grown. The goal of this review is to highlight major breakthroughs in the health implications of bullying, treatments to reduce bullying behaviours, bullying measurement, and nursing's disciplinary reaction to this problem. A call to action is issued for nurses who work with youths in a variety of contexts and responsibilities, as well as strategic activities for nursing professionals.

Rationale of Study

The purpose of research on the effect of bullying on anxiety is to deepen our understanding of the relationship between these two phenomena and to shed light on the potential consequences of bullying on individuals' mental health. Here are some specific reasons why studying the effect of bullying on anxiety is important. Identify Risk Factors: Research helps identify risk factors associated with bullying and anxiety. By examining various factors such as the frequency, duration, and intensity of bullying, as well as individual and contextual variables, researchers can better understand which individuals are more susceptible to developing anxiety as a result of bullying. This knowledge can inform prevention and intervention efforts. Inform Prevention and Intervention Strategies: Understanding the impact of bullying on anxiety can guide the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies. Research findings can help identify the most vulnerable groups and inform targeted interventions to mitigate the negative effects of bullying. By addressing bullying early on, we can reduce the likelihood of anxiety disorders and promote better mental health outcomes. Enhance Awareness and Advocacy: Research on the relationship between bullying and anxiety can raise awareness about the serious and long-lasting consequences of bullying. It can help educate the public, parents, educators, and policymakers about the detrimental effects of bullying on mental health, emphasizing the importance of prevention and intervention efforts. This research can also support advocacy for anti-bullying initiatives and policies. Improve Mental Health Support: Studying the effect of bullying on anxiety contributes to our

understanding of the mental health needs of individuals who have experienced bullying. This research can help healthcare professionals, therapists, and counsellors develop more tailored and effective treatment approaches for individuals dealing with anxiety resulting from bullying. It highlights the importance of providing appropriate support and resources to those affected. Contribute to Scientific Knowledge: Research on the effect of bullying on anxiety contributes to the broader body of scientific knowledge on mental health. It adds to our understanding of the complex interplay between social factors and psychological well-being. By expanding our knowledge base, we can continue to refine theories and interventions related to bullying, anxiety, and mental health in general. Overall, research on the effect of bullying on anxiety plays a crucial role in informing prevention efforts, guiding interventions, and improving the well-being of individuals who have experienced bullying. It helps us understand the impact of bullying and highlights the importance of addressing this issue to promote mental health and well-being for everyone.

Methodology

Aim of the Study

To study the relationship between Bullying and Anxiety in youth.

Objective of the Study

To find the relationship between Bullying and Anxiety.

To understand the effect of bullying on the level of anxiety.

Hypothesis

There will be a significant relationship between Bullying and Anxiety among youth.

Bullying will significantly predict anxiety among youth.

Variables

Independent variable: Bullying

Dependent variables: Level of Anxiety

Sample Design

Description of the tools used:

1. J. Kevin Thompson, PhD created the Perception of Teasing Scale (POTS). The following questions should be answered in relation to the time period while you were growing up (ages 5 to 16). First, rate how frequently you believe you have been the target of such behavior (using the scale provided, never to very frequently). Second, unless you never responded to a specific question, rate how upset you were by the teasing (from not upset to very unhappy). This tool includes a subscale for Weight Related Teasing (Items 1-6) and a subscale for Competency-Related Teasing (Items 7-11). The subscales are added together and graded separately. The Weight-Related Teasing subscale has a score range of 6-30, and the Competency-Related Teasing subscale has a score range of 5-25. Higher scores indicate more victims of bullying/teasing. Its validity is ranging from 0.89 to 0.95 & reliability is 0.86 and 0.76.
2. Max R Hamilton created the Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A). The HAM-A was one of the first rating scales established to assess the severity of anxiety symptoms, and it is still widely used in clinical and research contexts today. The scale has 14 items, each characterized by a set of symptoms, and it assesses both psychic anxiety (mental agitation and psychological discomfort) and somatic anxiety (physical ailments associated to anxiety). Although the HAM-A is still extensively used as

a clinical trial outcome measure, it has been criticized for its often-inadequate capacity to distinguish between anxiolytic and antidepressant effects, as well as somatic anxiety versus somatic side effects. There are no standardized probe questions on the HAM-A. Despite this, the claimed levels of inter-rater reliability. Its validity is 0.77 to 0.92 & reliability is 97.

Participants: The sample for this study consisted of 100 College students. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling. To be eligible for participation, participants had to be at least 18 years old.

Demographics: Of the 100 participants, 50% were female and 50% were male. The average age of participants were 20 years, with a range of 18 to 22 years.

Procedure: Participants were asked to complete the survey that assessed their level of bullying and anxiety. The survey consisted of several validated measures, including Perception of Teasing Scale (POTS) and Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A). Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and confidential, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics were calculated for all study variables. Correlational and regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between bullying and anxiety among youth.

Ethical Considerations: Prior to their involvement in the study, all individuals gave their informed consent. Participants were given the assurance that their answers would be kept private and that taking part in the survey would have no bearing on their privacy. Additionally, participants were made aware of their freedom to leave the study at any moment and without consequence.

Result

The study has attempted to explore the relationship between two variables – Bullying and Anxiety. In the following table the mean and SD of these variables are reported.

Table – Descriptive Statistics of the data collected for Bullying and Anxiety.

Variables	N	Mean	SD
Bullying	100	75.55	7.83
Anxiety	100	33.12	6.86

A high score on these scales represents a higher degree of presence of the construct in the individual. In the above table the mean and SD of the respondent can be found. Bullying was measured through the bullying scale which consists of 22 items and the range of possible scores is 0 to 55. The obtained mean and standard deviation are 75.55 and 7.83, this implies that the sample had a high level of bullying. Anxiety was measured through the Anxiety scale which consists of 14 items, and the possible score range lies between 0 to 56. The obtained mean is 33.12 and the standard deviation stands to be 6.86 implying that the sample had a severe level of anxiety.

Table- Correlation between Bullying and Anxiety among youth.

Variables	1	2
Bullying	.016	.907**

Anxiety	.375**	.007
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** <0.01

* <0.05

Results indicated that there is a **significant large positive relationship** between Bullying and Anxiety, ($r = .536, N=100, p < .001$) (two-tailed).

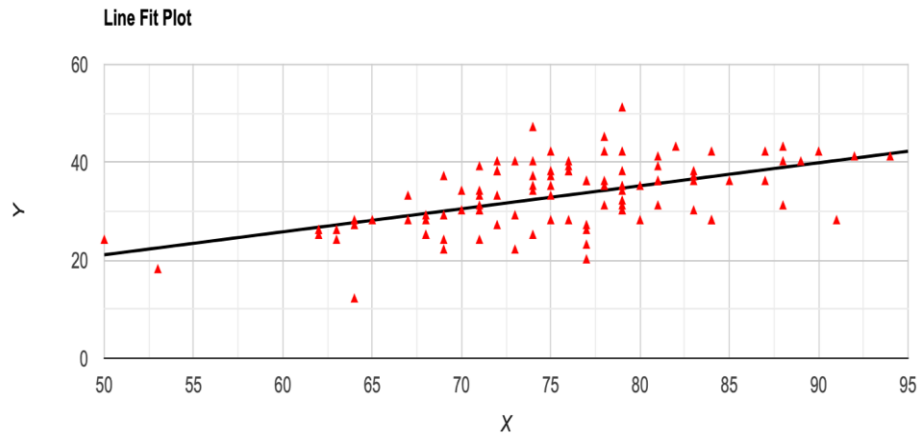


Table- Regression analyses predicting value of Anxiety from Bullying among youth.

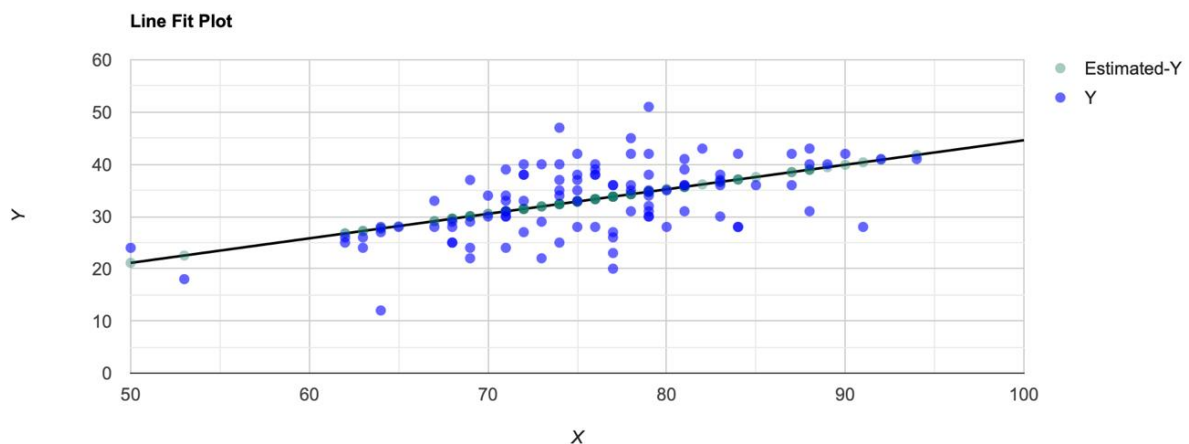
Predictor	β	SeB	p
Bullying**	0.47	0.07	0.00

** <0.01

* <0.05

In the above table Anxiety is put as the criterion variable and Bullying is put as predictor variables. Regression is performed on the whole data of 100 respondents. The β value calculated for Bullying was 0.47 which was significant at .01 level. Using the step-wise method, a significant model emerged: $F(1,98) = 39.58, p < .001$. The model explains 28.8% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.29$).

This means that there is a **moderate direct relationship** between X and Y.



Discussion

This research supports both hypotheses put forward: that there is a significant relationship between bullying and anxiety among youth, and that bullying is a significant predictor of anxiety in this population.

Bullying inflicts feelings of dread, shame, and powerlessness in those affected, leading to anxiety. This anxiety can take multiple forms such as social anxiety, characterized by heightened fear and self-consciousness in social situations, and generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), which presents as excessive worry and dread extending to every aspect of daily life. Bullying can also trigger post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a severe condition with symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares, and anxiety, hindering normal function. Physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomachaches, may also emerge. While these effects are detrimental, it is crucial to note that there are ways to manage anxiety caused by bullying. Seeking professional assistance through therapy can equip individuals with coping mechanisms and anxiety management techniques. Utilizing pharmacological interventions may also be beneficial. The research highlights the importance of addressing bullying in youth to prevent the onset of associated anxiety disorders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides significant insight into the close relationship between bullying and anxiety among university students between the ages of 18 and 22. The findings reveal the significant effects of bullying on an individual's mental health, increasing anxiety levels notably. This crucial connection calls for systematic intervention and response initiatives to alleviate the impacts of bullying, hence reducing the prevalence of anxiety. Furthermore, this study indicates gender differences in the experience of anxiety due to bullying, showing higher anxiety levels among female students. This underlines the need for gender-tailored approaches within bullying intervention strategies to meet the diverse needs of university students. Future research should continue to investigate this intersection between bullying and anxiety, focusing on other factors that may intensify or mitigate this relationship, such as social support, coping mechanisms, and resilience. The importance of supportive and safe learning environments for students cannot be understated. Combatting bullying and the resultant anxiety therefore remains paramount in promoting the wellbeing and academic success of university students. Because addressing bullying requires a multifaceted approach that targets the social context and underlying factors contributing to bullying. Bullying remains a significant concern in today's society. The impact of bullying extends far beyond the immediate individuals involved, affecting the overall well-being of the community and the learning environment. By addressing bullying in a comprehensive manner, we can work towards building a society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

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