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Influence of bullied status on Self-esteem of higher primary students

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Abstract

Bullying is usually a form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or another child who is perceived as being unable to defend himself or herself. Bullying represents a significant problem in schools. The aim of this study was to assess the influence of bullying on self-esteem of higher primary school students. The study sampled 240 students from 47 higher primary English medium private schools in Dharwad, and 12 higher primary English medium private school in Mudhol. 60 students from two schools studying in 5-7th class in Dharwad and Mudhol of Karnataka were selected. The tools used were self-structured questionnaire and The Olweus bully/victim questionnaire (OBVQ) Dan A. Olweus (1996) was used to assess bullied status and Rosenberg self-esteem scale was used to assess the self-esteem. The results revealed that Majority of the students were in not and moderate bullied status (35) in Dharwad and majority of the students were in severe bullied status (36.7) among Mudhol. Majority of the students were in high self-esteem (89.1) in Dharwad and similar results was found in Mudhol (87.5). With respect to self-esteem who were having low self-esteem were in severe bullied status and students who were having high self-esteem were in not bullied status. Similar results were found among Mudhol students. The students with low self-esteem may appear less confident and more susceptible to bullying, making them more attractive targets for bullies. Students with low self-esteem may have difficulty standing up for themselves or asserting their boundaries, which can make them less effective at deterring bullies.

Keywords: Bullying, self-esteem, primary school students, victimization, psychological impact

Introduction

Bullying is usually defined as a form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or disturb another child who is perceived as being unable to defend himself or herself (Glew, 2000) ^[21]. Bullying represents a significant problem in schools. The National School Safety Center (NSSC) called bullying the most enduring and underrated problem in U.S. schools (Beale, 2001) ^[22].

Bullying is a problem that affects all students, either the person the bully, the victims, and those who witnesses. Bullying may include verbal, physical assaults, threats, jokes or language, mockery and criticizing, insulting behavior and facial expressions. All of such factors work either individually, or collectively, for contributing in students' likelihood of bullying.

William James (1890) introduced self-esteem to psychology as a major focus of study. He defined self-esteem as the feeling of self-worth that results from consistently meeting expectations for personally valued activities.

Self-esteem is widely used construct in social psychology, as well as in everyday life. It corresponds with an overall view of the self as worthy or unworthy and is the evaluative aspect of the self-concept. (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) ^[23]

The relationship between bullying and self-esteem has primarily focused on the self-esteem of victims, and results consistently indicate that children who are victimized have significantly lower self-esteem than those who are not victimized (Hawker & Boulton, 2000) ^[24].

Therefore, such situation makes bullied students unable to

follow or to pay attention for their study and even they might do not like to go to school. Moreover, they miss opportunities to participate with their colleagues or even enjoy school activities and they lose their abilities and self-respect.

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Material and methodology

The population for the study comprised of higher primary school children in age group of 11 - 13 years studying in 5th - 7th standard studying in schools of Dharwad and Mudhol Karnataka state.

The sample for the present study consisted of from Block Education Officer, the study sampled 240 students from 47 higher primary English medium private schools in Dharwad, and 12 higher primary English medium private school in

Mudhol. 60 students from two schools studying in 5-7th class in Dharwad and Mudhol of Karnataka were selected. After informed consent, data were collected through self-structured questionnaire and The Olweus bully/victim questionnaire (OBVQ) Dan A. Olweus (1996) [25] was used to assess bullied status and academic achievement was assessed using previous grades. SPSS version 26 was used to analyse the data.

Result and discussion

Table 1 presents the individual characteristics of Dharwad and Mudhol students. With respect to gender 25 percent were males and 25 per cent were females in Dharwad. Similar results were found in Mudhol.

With respect to class 16.70 per cent belonged to 5th class, 16.70 per cent belonged to 6th class and 16.70 per cent belonged to 7th class. Similar results were found in Mudhol.

Table 1: Distribution of students by Individual characteristics of Dharwad and Mudhol students (N=240)

Characteristics	Category	Dharwad (n=120)	Mudhol (n=120)
Gender	Male	60 (25.0)	60 (25.0)
	Female	60 (25.0)	60 (25.0)
Class	5 th std	40 (16.7)	40 (16.7)
	6 th std	40 (16.7)	40 (16.7)
	7 th std	40 (16.7)	40 (16.7)

Table 2 presents the parental characteristics of Dharwad and Mudhol students. In Dharwad with regard to mother’s education most of them were graduation and post-graduation (18.80%) followed by professional qualification with technical degree (15.10%), 10th class pass but < than graduation (11.70%) and last illiterate and < 10th pass (4.60%).

In Mudhol with regard to student’s mother’s education most of them were professional qualified with technical degree (14.60%) followed by graduation and post-graduation (14.2%), illiterate and < 10th pass (11.30%) and last 10th class pass but < than graduation (10%).

Identical results was observed by Fadia *et al.* (2016) [26] that mother’s education level had associations with both bullying and physical violence. Parents with higher levels of education may be more engaged in their child’s education and better equipped to address bullying issues. Parents with higher education levels may serve as positive role models for their children, demonstrating problem-solving skills, conflict resolution strategies, and emotional intelligence, which can help children navigate bullying incidents more effectively.

With regard to the student’s education of father in Dharwad most of them were professionals with technical degree (14.60%) followed by graduation and post-graduation (14.20%), illiterate and < 10th pass (11.30%) and last 10th class pass but < than graduation (10%).

With regard of education of father in Mudhol most of them were graduates and post graduates (18.80%) followed by professional qualification with technical degree (15.0%), 10th class pass but < than graduation (11.70%) and last illiterate and < 10th pass (4.60%).

Identical results was observed by Nandoli *et al.* (2016) [27] that low fathers education levels were a significant predictor of a child’s bullying status. Lower levels of parental education can sometimes be associated with limited parental involvement in a child’s education and school life. This lack of involvement may result in students feeling less supported or protected.

With regards to student’s occupation of mother in Dharwad most of them were doing service in private sector or independent business (11.70%) followed by service in central/state/public sector (10.8%), self-employed with income >5000 (10.80%), service at shops transport, own cultivation of land (9.60%), and last income <5000 (7.10%). With regards to student’s occupation of mother in Mudhol most of them were doing service at shops transport, own cultivation of land (11.30%), self-employed with income >5000 (11.30%), service in private sector or independent business (10.40%), service in central/state/public sector (9.60%), and last income < 5000 (7.10%).

Table 2: Distribution of students by Parental characteristics of Dharwad and Mudhol (N=240)

Variables	Categories	Dharwad (n= 120)	Mudhol (n = 120)
Education of mother	Illiterate and < 10th pass	11(4.6)	27(11.3)
	10th class pass but < Graduation	28(11.7)	24(10.0)
	Graduation and Post-graduation	45(18.8)	34(14.2)
	Professional qualification with technical degree or diploma (e.g. Doctor, Eng., CA, MBA)	36(15.0)	35(14.6)
Education of father	Illiterate and < 10th pass	27(11.3)	11(4.6)
	10th class pass but < Graduation	24(10.0)	28(11.7)
	Graduation and Post-graduation	34(14.2)	45(18.8)
	Professional qualification with technical degree or diploma (e.g. Doctor, Eng, CA, MBA)	35(14.6)	36(15.0)
Occupation of mother	Income < Rs. 5,000 (laborer, housewife)	17(7.1)	17(7.1)
	Self-employed with income > Rs. 5,000 (shops, petty business)	26(10.8)	27(11.3)
	Service at shops transport, own cultivation of land	23(9.6)	28(11.7)
	Service in private sector or independent business (employing 2-20 persons)	28(11.7)	25(10.4)
	Service in central/state/public sector	26(10.8)	23(9.6)
Occupation of father	Income < Rs. 5,000 (labourer, housewife)	17(7.1)	17(7.1)
	Self-employed with income > Rs. 5,000 (shops, petty business)	28(11.7)	25(10.4)

Table 3 presents the familial characteristics of Dharwad and Mudhol students. In Dharwad with regard to family type most of them belonged to nuclear family (28.0%) followed by joint family (22.0%).

- In Mudhol with regard to family type most of them belonged to joint family (26.30%) followed by nuclear family (23.80%).
- With regard to SES in Dharwad most of them belonged to high Socio-economic status (22.0%) followed by middle (19.10%) and last poor (9.10%).
- In Mudhol with regard to SES most of them belonged to middle socio-economic status (20.80%) followed by high (18.80%) and last poor (10.40%).
- Similar result was given by Neil *et al* (2014) that victims and bully-victims were more likely to come from low SES households, while bullies and victims were slightly less likely to come from high SES backgrounds. Reason may be differences in clothing, possessions, and overall lifestyle associated with SES can make students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds stand out or be perceived as different. Bullies may exploit these differences to target and stigmatize their peers.

Table 3: Distribution of students by family characteristics of Dharwad and Mudhol (N=240)

Variables	Categories	Dharwad (n= 120)	Mudhol (n = 120)
Family type	Joint	55(22.0)	63(26.3)
	Nuclear	67(28.0)	57(23.8)
Socio economic status	High	52(22.0)	45(18.8)
	Middle	46(19.1)	50(20.8)
	Poor	22(9.1)	25(10.4)

Table 4 presents the distribution of bullied status among Dharwad and Mudhol. In Dharwad most of the students belonged to not bullied and moderate bullied status (35%) followed by severe bullied status (30%). In Mudhol most of the students belong to severe bullied status with (36.7%) followed by not and moderate bullied status with (31.70%).

Table 4: Distribution of students by Bullied Status of Dharwad and Mudhol (N=240)

Locality	Bullied status			Total
	Not	Moderate	Severe	
Dharwad	42(35)	42(35)	36(30)	120(100)
Mudhol	38(31.7)	38(31.7)	44(36.7)	120(100)

Table 5 presents the distribution of students of Dharwad and Mudhol students by self-esteem. In Dharwad, most of the

students belonged to high self-esteem (89.10%) followed by low self-esteem (10.80%). In Mudhol most of the students belonged to high self-esteem (87.50%) followed by low self-esteem (12.50%).

Table 5: Distribution of students of Dharwad and Mudhol by Self-esteem (N=240)

Locality	Self-esteem		
	High Self-esteem	Low Self-esteem	Total
Dharwad	107(89.1)	13(10.8)	120(100)
Mudhol	105(87.5)	15(12.5)	120(100)

Table 6 depicts the association and comparison of self-esteem and bullied status of higher primary students. In Dharwad with regard to self-esteem and bullied status, the students who were having low self-esteem were more in severe bullied with 36.40 per cent followed by 33.60 per cent were in moderate bullied and 29.90 per cent were in not bullied status. The students who were having high self-esteem were more in not bullied status with 46.20 per cent followed by 38.50 per cent were in severe bullied status and 15.40 per cent were in moderate bullied status. Significant association was observed ($\chi^2=2.20$) between bullied status and self-esteem and there is significant difference was also found as the mean score (83.52) indicates that the students who were having low self-esteem were having more bullied status compared to high self-esteem students.

In Mudhol, with regard to self-esteem and bullied status, the students who were having low self-esteem were more in severe bullied with 35.2 per cent followed by 32.4 per cent were in moderate and not bullied status. The students who were having high self-esteem were more in not bullied status with 53.3 per cent followed by 33.3 per cent were in moderate bullied status and 13.3 per cent were in severe bullied status. Significant association was observed ($\chi^2=3.24$) between bullied status and self-esteem and significant difference was also found as the mean score (79.58) indicates that the students who were having low self-esteem were having more bullied status compared to high self-esteem students. Similar results was observed by Julie *et al* (2007) that, as bullying behaviours increased, levels of self-esteem decreased. Additionally, lower self-esteem was associated with an increase in bullying behaviours. The reason may be students with low self-esteem may appear less confident and more susceptible to bullying, making them more attractive targets for bullies. Students with low self-esteem may have difficulty standing up for themselves or asserting their boundaries, which can make them less effective at deterring bullies.

Table 6: Association and comparison of students by self-esteem and bullied status among Dharwad and Mudhol (N=240)

Locality	Self-esteem	Bullied status			Total	χ^2 value	Mean± SD	F -value
		Not Bullied	Moderate Bullied	Severe Bullied				
Dharwad	Low self-esteem	32(29.90)	36(33.60)	39(36.40)	107(100.0)	2.200*	83.52±24.582	0.35*
	High self-esteem	6(46.20)	2 (15.40)	5(38.50)	13(100.0)		77.15±27.120	
Mudhol	Low self-esteem	34(32.40)	34(32.40)	37(35.20)	105(100.0)	3.247*	79.58±26.997	0.40*
	High self-esteem	8 (53.30)	5 (33.30)	2 (13.30)	15 (100.0)		74.87±25.207	

Table 7 focuses on the predictor variables of self-esteem of higher primary school students. They are individual factors (Model-1), individual & parental factors (Model-2) and individual, parental factors and familial factors (Model-3). To predict self-esteem of students, hierarchal multiple regression analysis was performed.

- In Model-1, individual factors such as class, gender were taken which was found to be statistically significant (F=3.98). Gender (t-value=2.99) and class (t-value=4.18) were found to be the main predictors of self-esteem and combined effect of individual factors accounted for 57 per cent of variance in self-esteem of higher primary students. (R²=.57).
- In Model-2, parental factors such as parent’s education and occupation were included along with individual factors which was found to be statistically significant

(F=6.12). Gender (t-value=2.89) and class (t-value=2.80) were found to be the main predictors of self-esteem and combined effect of individual and parental factors accounted for 62 per cent variance in self-esteem of higher primary students. (R²=.62).

- In Model-3, familial factors such as family type and SES were included along with individual and parental factors which was found to be statistically significant (F=11.88). Gender (t-value=4.60) and class (t-value=2.07) and SES (t-value=4.18) were found to be the main predictors of self-esteem and combined effect of individual, parental and familial factors accounted for 77 per cent of variance in self-esteem of higher primary students. (R²=.77).

Table 7: Predictors variables of self-esteem of Dharwad higher primary school students

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Beta	t- value	sig	Beta	t- value	sig	Beta	t- value	sig
Individual factors									
Gender	1.335	2.994	.007	2.435	2.892	.016	2.371	4.608	.052
Class	2.130	4.183	.000	.430	2.802	.015	1.309	2.078	.006
Parental factors									
Education of mother				-1.35	-1.149	.212	.182	-1.196	.182
Education of father				2.497	.049	.260	.694	-0.14	-.761
Occupation of mother				.131	-.982	.260	.080	3.690	-.140
Occupation of father				2.497	1.275	.478	.453	-1.703	.212
Occupation of mother				-1.084	.719	.334	.890	-1.255	.961
Familial factors									
Type of family							.048	.551	.586
SES							1.901	4.188	.001
F - value	3.98*			6.12*			11.88*		
R - value	.758			.792			.758		
R ² value	0.574			0.622			0.779		

Table 8 focuses on the predictor variables of self-esteem of Mudhol higher primary school students. They are individual factors (Model-1), individual & parental factors (Model-2) and individual, parental factors and familial factors (Model-3). To predict self-esteem of students, hierarchal multiple regression analysis was performed.

- In Model-1, individual factors such as class, gender were taken which was found to be statistically significant (F=6.48). Gender (t-value=3.42) was found to be the main predictors of self-esteem and combined effect of individual factors accounted for 26 per cent of variance in self-esteem of higher primary students. (R²=.26).
- In Model-2, parental factors such as parent’s education and occupation were included along with individual factors which was found to be statistically significant

(F=4.21). Gender (t-value=3.14) was found to be the main predictors of self-esteem and combined effect of individual and parental factors accounted for 58 per cent variance in self-esteem of higher primary students. (R²=.58).

- In Model-3, familial factors such as family type and SES were included along with individual and parental factors which was found to be statistically significant (F=3.48). Gender (t-value=4.20) and SES (t-value=2.87) were found to be the main predictors of self-esteem and combined effect of individual, parental and familial factors accounted for 65 per cent of variance in self-esteem of higher primary students. (R²=.65).

Table 8: Predictors variables of self-esteem of Mudhol higher primary school students

Predictors	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Beta	t- value	Sig.	Beta	t-value	Sig.	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Individual characteristics									
Gender	.179	3.421	.006	.263	3.145	.006	.291	4.205	.001
Class	2.538	1.206	.654	3.628	1.051	.000	.405	1.340	.003
Parental factors									
Education of mother				.210	1.380	2.511	.323	2.005	.457
Education of father				.054	-1.507	.655	4.812	.249	.218

Occupation of father				.344	1.393	.307	-1.458	4.020	.878
Occupation of mother				.708	.172	-.960	.155	1.038	4.410
Familial factors									
Type of family							.798	.661	.007
SES							.071	2.879	.012
F - value	6.483**			4.217**			3.487**		
R - value	0.570			.734			.817		
R ² value	0.268			0.585			0.654		

Conclusion

Majority of the students were in not and moderate bullied status (35) in Dharwad and majority of the students were in severe bullied status (36.7) among Mudhol. Majority of the students were in high self-esteem (89.1) in Dharwad and similar results was found in Mudhol (87.5). Majority of students who were having low self-esteem were in severe bullied status and students who were having high self-esteem were in not bullied status. Similar results were found among Mudhol students with respect to self-esteem. Gender, class and SES were predicting self-esteem significantly and the combined effect of personal, parental and familial factors accounted for 77 per cent variance in self-esteem among Dharwad students. Gender and SES were predicting self-esteem significantly and the combined effect of personal, parental and familial factors accounted for 65 per cent variance in self-esteem of Mudhol students.

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