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The Relationship between Aggression, Bulling Behavior, Suicidal Ideation and Academic Achievement among University Students

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ABSTRACT

Universities are regarded as scientific and intellectual institutions where tools for advancement are created by allowing students to pursue and deepen their knowledge. Bullying in academic institutions is a substantial educational and social issue. It has a detrimental impact on educational events and activities that lowers the academic achievement. The aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between aggression, bullying behavior, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement among university students. The sample was comprised of 200 participants (i.e., 100 Males and 100 Females) from the University of Sindh. The age range of the participants was 18 to 25 years. Both genders were given equal representation. Three instruments were used respectively: 1. Aggression scale, 2. Bullying scale, and 3. Beck's suicidal ideation. To analyze the results, a correlation coefficient was used to see the relationship among aggression, bullying, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement, and t-test was used to see the difference in genders. Results indicated that the students who suffered from bullying behavior showed a higher rate of involvement in aggression and suicidal ideation and a lower rate of involvement in academic achievement. The Descriptive Statistics show that males have higher scores on the Aggression and Bullying scale, whereas comparatively, females have higher scores on Suicidal Ideation and Academic Achievement. Results also indicated that Males are much more involved in bullying as compared to females. This study must be applied in universities and other government and private institutions with the help of University authorities, various organizations, and agencies. Also, Psychotherapy and counseling is suggested and other healthy activities should be carried out to help increase students' psychological and physical positive behavior.

Introduction

Bullying is a persistent, deliberate act of aggression between bullies and victims who are typical of different power levels. Physical characteristics and social standing seem to provide aggressors more authority to victimize other people (Devis et al., 2015). Bullying can be verbal, like labeling someone's name, harassing them, snatching money, or passing insulting comments, or physical threats like hitting and pushing. It could be direct or indirect, rational or irrational, including social exclusion or rumor-mongering against the victims (Carlyle et al., 2022). A new type of bullying that extends traditional bullying evolved: cyber bullying; this is a more powerful and dangerous type of behavior (Hinduja, 2010).

Research on bullying has shown a very harmful impact on young students. Males who are actively involved in bullying behavior frequently engage in direct, conventional bullying, whereas female bullies typically engage in indirect types of bullying. Despite this, both males and females feel violated equally (Chapel, et al., 2004).

Suicidal behavior is getting suicidal ideation, which means having a thought about killing oneself, and attempts suicide, that involves from self-injurious behavior to death. Suicide is a risks factor that leading cause of injury among oneself and worldwide (Nock MK et al., 2008). Suicidal ideation and suicide attempts are more common than suicide death and these considered as risk factors for suicide death (Cluver L, Orkin M, Boyes ME, Sherr L., 2015).

Universities are regarded as intellectual and scientific institutions all around the world. They are also regarded as one of the most significant institutions where tools for advancement and growth are created by allowing students to study and advance their education (Pepler, et al., 2008). It strengthens the freedom, communication, and tolerance values that make them capable of interacting with people successfully in various contexts. Faculty and University students can develop their ideas and unleash their creativity when they experience justice, patience, and academic freedom (Moore, 2005). Regarding University life, we have discovered that faculty members are the key driving force as they inspire students and give them a sense of excitement, joy, tolerance, recognition, and respect. It has been found that certain University professors engage in behavior that is contradictory to teaching manners. They intentionally abuse their position of power and authority to push their personal beliefs on the kids (Shehata, et al., 2000). One of the things that impacts students' performance is bullying behavior by their teachers. The student finds themselves in a setting with intimidation, menace, and an inferiority complex. This circumstance could result in behavioral issues and harmful attitudes about oneself and other people (Mayhew et al., 2015). It has been discovered that there are occurrences of suicide among adolescents who have experienced bullying, in addition to the impulsive and depressive symptoms that those individuals experience (Staurt, et al., 2011).

Student life at a University entails various activities, such as regular academic obligations, social connections with peers, separation from family and friends, and changes in financial circumstances. Suicidal thoughts and aggression are both prevalent mental health issues that, alone or together, may have adverse effects on one's mental, physical, or socioeconomic health (Hamish & Coates, 2005).

At all educational levels, bullying causes a variety of issues, such as poor academic performance, suicidal thoughts, and violent and fatal acts (Chibbaro et al., 2013). Numerous researches have looked into the connection between bullying and suicidal behavior and thoughts (Hollis, 2019; Duan, et al. 2020).

The first place of learning begins from the family and any bulling at home impacts the person's anger, endangering their academic performance in any learning institution (Huitsing &Veenstra., 2012). Other forms of bullying that a person can pick up from home and use in educational institutions include physical abuse, authoritarian parenting, and aggressive behaviors. These types of bullying hurt academic performance or achievements (Bond, et al., 2009). This research is especially significant in addressing bullying in universities. The study aims to clarify how various aspects of academic bullying relate to one another (verbal bullying, teaching bullying, and reactive bullying). It also explains the scope of suicide ideation among University students. The study's precise aims were to evaluate the lifetime and current frequency of bulling, violence, and suicidal ideation or suicidal attempt as well as to identify the risks and defensive factors that may be present. It illustrates the distinctions between them based on gender (Bond, et al., 2009).

Objectives:

- To observe the association between aggression, bulling, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement among university students.
- To measure the prevalence of bulling and suicidal ideation among University students.
- To measure the differences in levels among aggression, Bulling behavior, Suicidal Ideation, and academic achievement between male and female university students.

Hypothesis:

1. There would be a significant relationship among aggression, bulling behavior, suicidal ideation and academic achievement in university students.
2. The participants will obtain high score on bulling behavior will also obtain high score on the aggression scale.
3. The participants will obtain high score on bulling behavior will obtain high score on suicidal ideation.
4. The participants will obtain high score on bulling behavior will obtain lower level of academic achievement.
5. There would be a significant gender differences among the scores of aggression, bulling behavior, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement of university students.

Literature Review

Bullying has a negative effect on the environment of teaching and learning in both schools and universities. Harassment /bullying are continuous physical and psychological abuse by a stronger person to the weaker one. According to previous studies, it is observed that those persons who bully others are more likely to experience depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts (Yesilova, et al., 2018). Bullying victimization is known to put University students at risk for social, physical, and psychological issues. The rate of bullying has increased, which has a negative effect on the students' quality of life and academic achievement. (Unicef, 2007). Many studies confirm that bullying victimization is defined as continuously facing aggressive behavior or planned harm. Bullying generally has a harmful impact on academic performance, attendance at universities, and relationships with others. Also, it has a negative effect on physical injury, depression, and academic motivation (Chaux, et al., 2012). According to economic research, bullying is negatively associated with achievement and students' examination results. Bullying is a behavior that is not only physical harm but also it is some kind of aggression, such as; verbal abuse, social isolation, and online annoyance. It is most common among young people, particularly in academic settings (Carney et al., 2000). Bullying is a planned act of aggression that is performed repeatedly in which victims and perpetrators are at different levels. Some factors that are strengthen attackers to attack

others like physical strength and socioeconomic status (Nansel et al., 2004). Traditional face-to-face bullying is a physical as well as verbal type of aggression that involves name-calling, threatening, blackmailing, and making insulting remarks. However, it can be direct or psychological, such as excluding victims from social environments or making up lies (Carlyle & Steinman et al., 2007; Liang et al., 2007). Previous studies also support the idea that bullying victims face aggressive behavior or targeted damage continuously over time. Students are increasingly more likely to participate in suicidal behavior (Hong L, Guo L, Wu H, et al., 2016). Bullying and suicidal ideation have a complex relationship, which is commonly facilitated by the combination of other variables like depression, low self-esteem, isolation, anxiety, and poor academic performance (Elgin et al., 2014). Previous research on bullying in education confirmed that a variation of mental health problems appears to be connected to bullying or victimization (Bhatta et al. S, Jefferis E., 2014). Aggression is thought to be a significant additional factor that leads to bullying among students (Kann L., 2012). One of the previous study observe how much cyber bullying, social harassment, is related to teenage suicidal thoughts (Kann L., 2012). In contrast to those who are not involved in social valances and those who had experienced typical bullying, as either an offender or a victim, had more suicidal ideation and was more likely to attempt suicide (Hinduja S, Patchin JW., 2010). Moreover, persecution is more correlated with depressed actions and thoughts as compare to misbehaving (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997).

Methodology

Research Design

This is a quantitative correlational study to examine the "Relationship between Aggression, Bullying, Suicidal Ideation and Academic Achievement among University Students." The population for the current research was University students from various departments. Data was gathered mainly from the universities of Sindh to conduct the current research. Pearson correlation and t-test were used after getting the data. The interpretation of data was done using SPSS version 25.00.

Sample

The sample of 200 University students was taken from different universities in Jamshoro, which included 100 males and 100 females, i.e., N = 200 (Male = 100, female = 100). All the participants were 18-25 years old and a minimum qualification of 16 years. A stratified sampling technique was used to the collect the data.

Instruments

Three instruments were used for this study: the Bullying Scale, the Aggression Scale, and the Beck Suicidal Ideation Scale for the measurement of Bullying, Aggression, and Suicidal Ideation, respectively, Whereas Academic Achievement is measured through grading.

Demographic data form

In the demographic form, a few required details were taken from the participants after giving informed consent and permission to participate in the research. Demographic information includes Name (Optional), Age, Gender, Family Type, Current Academic Class/Qualification, Grade/CGPA, and the name of their respective departments or institutes.

Scoring and Evaluation

Each scale was scored according to the criteria given in the scales.

Aggression Scale

Buss-Perry Scale 1992 developed the AG scale, which consists of 25 items used to measure students' aggressive tendencies; it is a five-point Likert scale that ranges from always to never. The scale reliability is r = 0.86, indicating its reliable status.

Bullying Scale

Espalage and Dorothy developed this scale in 1994. The scale consists of 20 items ranging from very true to never; this scale is reliable r=.89 to assess the bullying behavior of students.

Beck Scale of Suicidal Ideation

This scale, developed by Dozois & Coven in 2004, is self-report is a self-report instrument based on semi-structured interviews with 21 items, which covers all aspects of suicidal ideation. Scale reliability status is.85, showing its reliable status.

Procedure

First, informed consent was given to the participants, and detailed information was given about the research, its rationale, and its purposes. They were also informed about the study and told their participation was voluntary. Participants were requested to fill out the research questionnaire. A stratified sampling technique was used. Then, a demographic form was used to seek some personal information, including name (optional), age, gender, family type, current academic class/qualification, grade/CGPA, and the name of their respective departments or institutes. The questionnaires were given out and instructed to ensure privacy. Participants were told to fill out the scales in their given order. All the participants of the study were well educated, and they can fully understand the English language. Terminologies like Aggression, Bullying, Suicidal Ideation, and Academic Achievement were thought to be easily understood by the participants. The participants were thanked a lot for their cooperation and precious time.

Results

To interpret the results, Descriptive Statistics, Correlation Coefficient, and t-test were applied using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Vol. 25. Correlation Coefficient was used to see the relationship between Aggression, Bulling, Suicidal Ideation, and Academic Achievement. T-test was used to see the difference between genders.

Table 1: Age of Respondent

Age	Frequency	Percent
18	14	7.0
19	25	12.5
20	32	16.0
21	41	20.5
22	42	21.0
23	23	11.5
24	17	8.5
25	6	3.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Aggression	21.1050	9.25050
Bullying	27.2000	8.52310

BSIS	8.4600	6.73686
Academic Achievement	2.8155	.31672

BSIS = Beck Suicidal Ideation Scale

Table 2 shows the Mean and Standard deviation of aggression, bullying, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement. The mean of aggression is 21.10 with a Standard deviation of 9.25, the mean of bullying behavior is 27.20 with a Standard deviation of 8.52, The Mean of suicidal ideation is 8.46, and its Standard deviation is 6.73, and the Mean of academic achievement is 2.81, and its Standard deviation is .316.

Table 3: Correlation Table of Aggression, Bullying, Suicidal Ideation, and Academic Achievement

Variables	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Aggression	1			
2. Bullying	.630**	1		
3. BSIS	.283**	.370**	1	
4. Academic Achievement	-.707**	-.729**	-.601**	1

BSIS = Beck Suicidal Ideation Scale

Table 3 shows the output of the SPSS of Pearson correlation between aggression, bullying, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement. There is a significant relationship between aggression, bullying, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement. Correlation Coefficient of Aggression with Bullying = 0.63, Correlation Coefficient of Aggression with Suicidal Ideation = 0.28. Whereas the Correlation Coefficient between Aggression and Academic Achievement = - 0.70. Hence, the hypothesis is proved with the above results that there is a significant relationship between aggression, bullying, suicidal ideation, and academic achievement.

T-Test

Table 4: Showing Average Score of Male and Female Participants

	Gender	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Aggression	Male	100	22.4200	9.78164
	Female	100	19.7900	8.53430
Bullying	Male	100	28.7200	9.18506
	Female	100	25.6800	7.54900
BSIS	Male	100	7.5900	6.68497
	Female	100	9.3300	6.70904
Academic Achievement	Male	100	2.8090	.34233
	Female	100	2.8220	.29045

BSIS = Beck Suicidal Ideation Scale

Table 4 shows mean and standard deviation of male and female participants on the scales of Aggression, Bullying, Suicidal Ideation, and Academic Achievement. The mean value of Aggression in Male Students = 22.42 and Female Students = 19.79. The Mean Bullying scale for Males = 28.72 and Females = 25.68. The Mean of Suicidal Ideation scale for Males = 7.59 and Males = 9.33. While the Mean of Academic Achievement for Males = 2.80 and Females = 2.82.
The Descriptive Statistics show that Males have higher scores on Aggression and Bullying, whereas comparatively, Females have higher scores on Suicidal Ideation and Academic Achievement.

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test for Aggression, Bullying, and Suicidal Ideation

	F	Sig.	t
Aggression	9.199	.003	2.026
Bullying	10.826	.001	2.557
BSIS	.002	.969	-1.837
Academic Achievement	3.671	.057	-.290

BSIS = Beck Suicidal Ideation Scale

Table 5 shows there is a significant deference level between male and female participants on the aggression and bulling scale. At the same time, there is no difference between male and female participants on the scales of suicidal ideation and academic achievement.

Discussion

In this research there is a association between aggression, bullying, suicidal ideation, and academic accomplishment" was evaluated. Bullying causes a variety of issues, such as poor academic performance, suicidal thoughts, and violent and fatal acts at all educational levels (Chibbaro et al., 2013). Common psychological issues like aggression and suicidal ideation can have opposing effects on a person's mental and physical \health. Certainly, suicidal ideation among university students is a multifaceted occurrence with extensively recognized damaging effects on families and friends. The present study will help us understand the different concepts and the relationship of all variables and focus on gender differences.

The first hypothesis was "There would be a significant relationship among aggression, bullying behavior, and suicidal ideation among University students." after analyzing the data, it was found that the correlation was positively significant at level 0.05, which shows the hypothesis is proved. The previous studies also suggested the result, which states that research data indicate that youth victimized by bullying are nearly six times more likely to engage in aggression as well as suicidal ideations/behaviors (Li & Shi, 2018).

The second hypothesis was "The participants who score high on bullying behavior will score high on the aggression scale and vice versa." Pearson Correlation tested this hypothesis, which was also significantly proved. The previous studies also suggested this result, which states that bullying is an intentional aggressive behavior that is carried out repeatedly and commonly occurs between offenders and victims who are unequal in power. Factors such as physical size and social status empower aggressors to victimize different individuals (Nansel et al., 2004).

The third hypothesis was "The participants who score high on bullying behavior will score high on suicidal ideation; the results are significant; therefore, this hypothesis is also proved. The previous studies also suggested this result, which states that the individuals who are involved in the bullying cycle have a higher rate of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation. Being bullied increases the suicidal ratio (Yesilova et al., 2018).

The fourth hypothesis was that "the participants who score high on bullying behavior will have a lower level of academic achievement and vice versa." The results were found to be significant; therefore, this hypothesis is also proved.

The fifth hypothesis was "There would be a significant difference in the scores of males and females." The Descriptive Statistics show the mean scores and standard deviation of Male and Female participants on the scales of Aggression, Bullying, Suicidal Ideation, and Academic

Achievement. The mean value of Aggression in Male Students = 22.42 and Female Students = 19.79. The Mean Bullying scale for Males = 28.72 and Females = 25.68. The Mean of Suicidal Ideation scale for Males = 7.59 and Males = 9.33. While the Mean of Academic Achievement for Males = 2.80 and Females = 2.82. The Descriptive Statistics show that Males have higher scores on Aggression and Bullying, whereas comparatively, Females have higher scores on Suicidal Ideation and Academic Achievement.

The scope of this study refers to a vital range of implications in faculties and other educational institutes. Our study can also help alert the government, universities, and parents to the prevalence of bullying among University students. This study will also help people to cope with difficult situations.

Conclusion

This study aims to see the relationship between aggression, bulling, and suicidal ideation among university students. In short, bullying is an act of aggression that can lead to aggressive behavior, weaken academic achievement, and increase the probability of suicidal ideation. Moreover, compared to the males and females, the results indicate that males have higher scores on Aggression and Bullying. In contrast, comparatively, females have higher scores on Suicidal Ideation and Academic Achievement. So there is a strong relationship was found between bullying behavior and aggression, demonstrating the need to make valuable strategies to overcome this issue.

Educational institutions like universities, heads of departments, teachers, and NGOs must design effective strategies to minimize this hazardous problem for youngsters and prevent them from committing suicide. Moreover, these findings are also very essential for the families, schools, and communities who strive to support those students who have been bullied or involved in bullying behavior.

Recommendations/Suggestions for Future Research

- In the future, researchers should compare the relationship between aggression, bullying, and suicidal ideation among schools and colleges and in other professional settings rather than only in universities.
- Understanding more about cyberbullying so parents and teachers can check the difference between bullying and cyberbullying in order to see the highest impact on students from both of these variables.
- It is suggested that counseling and training programs for bullies and victims of bullying be launched. It is essential to get accurate insight into their behaviors, alter them, and rectify their misinterpretations using cognitive and behavioral models.
- In the future, the authority should hire teachers who may help with the self-regulation and self-control of the students.

Limitations of the Study

- Research was only based on University students. Such studies can also be undertaken on secondary, higher secondary, and college students.
- Data was taken from various universities of Sindh province. It can be taken from other provinces as well.

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