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Bullying and its Effect on the Self Esteem and Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract: ***This study aims to identify the relationship between bullying and self esteem and psychological well-being . The aim of this study is to understand bullying in its totality and how it can lower the self esteem and psychological well being if it is not addressed properly. A sample of 100 adolescents were included in the study which comprised of 50 Males and 50 females aged between 13-18 . The bullying experiences were assessed through Gatehouse Bullying Scale which measured the occurrence of bullying in schools (Overt and Covert Bullying) and Self esteem through Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale and Psychological well being through 18 item scale developed by Ryff. Correlation Analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between the variables and Independent Sample T test was done to determine if significant differences exist between the variables. Results demonstrate that there was a significant negative correlation between bullying and psychological well being which indicates that Bullying experiences will have a direct and indirect effect on psychological well being . Findings also suggested that there was a direct relation between Bullying and Self esteem . This implies that bullying on a regular basis can hamper the self esteem if it is not addressed at the earliest.***

Keywords: Bullying, Self-Esteem, Psychological Well-Being, and Overt & Covert Bullying

I. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a pervasive social issue that affects millions of adolescents worldwide. It involves repeated acts of aggression, harassment, or intimidation, either physical or verbal, that are intended to harm or exert power over an individual who is perceived as weaker. Bullying can occur in various settings, such as schools, neighbourhoods, and online platforms, and can have detrimental effects on the victims, as well as the bullies themselves. Adolescents who are bullied frequently have difficulty in developing friendship relations and in maintaining them. It is observed that bullying have a social and emotional impact on them . As a result , it is self-esteem that gets affected and it is something which goes unnoticed. Adolescents who bully are either angry, envious, or bitter and those who get bullied might bunk their classes / school or resort to substance so that they might escape the pain . When the issue goes unaddressed and unnoticed it gets carried into adult life and it get extended beyond limit and thus there is inability to maintain and sustain healthy relationship continues and self esteem gets impaired again.

A. The Effects Of Bullying On Self-Esteem And Psychological Well-Being In Adolescents: A Comparative Study Between Bullied And Non-Bullied Individuals

Bullying has been widely recognized as a significant social issue that can have serious consequences on the mental health and well-being of adolescents. Numerous studies have documented the detrimental effects of bullying on self-esteem and psychological well-being in those who are targeted by bullies. Victims of bullying often experience decreased self-esteem, increased levels of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, as well as difficulties in social relationships and academic performance.

B. Exploring The Relationship Between Bullying And Self-Esteem In Adolescents: Differences And Impacts On Psychological Well-Being

Research has shown that there are differences in self-esteem between bullied and non-bullied adolescents. Victims of bullying often experience lower levels of self-esteem compared to their non-bullied peers. The persistent and repetitive nature of bullying can lead to a negative internalization of the bullying messages, resulting in a diminished sense of self-worth and self-confidence. Being constantly subjected to verbal, physical, or psychological abuse can erode an adolescent's self-esteem, leading to a negative impact on their psychological well-being. The relationship between bullying and self-esteem in adolescents has important implications for their overall psychological well-being. Low self-esteem resulting from bullying can lead to a cascade of negative outcomes, including increased risk of depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and even suicidal ideation. Additionally, adolescents with low self-esteem may also face challenges in forming and maintaining healthy relationships, academic performance, and overall quality of life.

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II. METHODOLOGY

A. Aim

The aim was to analyse bullying experiences and its effect on the self-esteem and psychological wellbeing in young adolescents.

B. Objectives

1) To analyse whether there is a significant difference in bullying , psychological well-being, and self esteem among adolescents.
2) To identify the relationship between bullying and psychological well-being.
3) To identify the relationship between self-esteem and psychological well-being.

C. Hypotheses

1) Bullied Adolescents will have a negative impact on the psychological well-being.
2) There will be no significant relationship between bullying and self-esteem.
3) There will be a significant relationship between psychological well-being and self-esteem.
4) There will be significant difference in bullying, self-esteem and psychological well-being.

D. Research Design

The Quantitative research design was adopted which will enable the researchers to systematically observe and collect data on the variables of interest, namely the relationship between bullying, self-esteem, and psychological well-being in adolescents. Questionnaires will be used to gather information from the participants, allowing for the collection of quantitative data that can be analysed to identify patterns and trends. The sample will be selected using probability sampling techniques, such as random sampling or stratified sampling.

E. Sample

For the current study , 100 adolescents were selected and the sample contained adolescents (50 male and 50 females) and the inclusion criteria were children who were of the age 13-18.

F. Procedure of Data Collection

The data collection process will follow ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, and adhering to ethical considerations related to working with adolescents. Data collection will be carried out systematically and diligently to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings.

G. Psychological Measures

1) Gatehouse Bullying Scale

Gatehouse Bullying Scale which was developed by Bond , Wolfe , Tollit , Butler and Patton (2007) and it had good to moderate test-retest reliability, and it measured the occurrence of bullying in schools, and it provides estimates of 2 covert and 2 overt types of bullying which can be used for schools to better plan interventions dealing with school bullying.

2) Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale is a 10-item scale which measures global self-worth, and it was developed by Rosenberg M. (1965), and it presented high ratings in reliability area and internal consistency was 0.77 . In other words, it had good predictive validity as well as internal consistency and test-retest reliability . It uses a scale of 0-30 where a score less than 15 may indicate problematic self-esteem.

3) Psychological Well-Being Scale

Psychological Well-being scale is a 18 item scale developed by Ryff which analyses positive relations with others and explores self-acceptance in individuals. The psychological well being scales are valid and reliable and are suitable for use in assessing the psychological well being of individuals.

H. Ethical Considerations

Some ethical considerations that will be addressed in this study include obtaining informed consent from participants and their parents/guardians, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of participants, protecting their rights and well-being, and complying with relevant ethical guidelines and regulations.

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III. RESULTS

		Bullying	Psw
Bullying	Pearson Correlation	1	-.166
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.099
	N	100	100
Psw	Pearson Correlation	-.166	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.099	
	N	100	100

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Bullying	10.3900	2.92980	100
Psw	87.7100	12.47243	100

TABLE 1 indicates that there is a significant negative correlation between bullying and psychological well-being . Significant at 0.01 level* . This indicates that if bullying increases there will be a deterioration in psychological well-being.

		Bullying	SE
Bullying	Pearson Correlation	1	.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.146
	N	100	100
SE	Pearson Correlation	.146	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.146	
	N	100	100

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Bullying	10.3900	2.92980	100
SE	21.0300	5.03414	100

TABLE 2 indicates the correlation analysis between bullying and self esteem and the table shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables.

Correlations

		PSW	SE
PSW	Pearson Correlation	1	-.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
SE	Pearson Correlation	-.675**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 3 indicates that there is a significant relationship between psychological well being and self-esteem .

A. Independent Sample T Test

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
SE	Equal variances assumed	1.234	.269	-.099	98	.921	-.10000	1.01190	-2.10808	1.90808
	Equal variances not assumed			-.099	96.678	.921	-.10000	1.01190	-2.10843	1.90843
PSW	Equal variances assumed	.108	.743	.168	98	.867	.42000	2.50682	-4.55471	5.39471
	Equal variances not assumed			.168	97.762	.867	.42000	2.50682	-4.55486	5.39486

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
PSW	Equal variances assumed	.108	.743	.168	98	.867	.42000	2.50682	-4.55471	5.39471
	Equal variances not assumed			.168	97.762	.867	.42000	2.50682	-4.55486	5.39486
Bullying	Equal variances assumed	1.253	.266	.105	98	.917	.06000	.57403	-1.07914	1.19914
	Equal variances not assumed			.105	93.401	.917	.06000	.57403	-1.07984	1.19984

Table 4 indicates that there is no significant difference between the variables among the adolescents .

IV. DISCUSSION AND DATA ANALYSIS

The aim was to examine the relationship between bullying and self-esteem and identify the relationship between bullying and psychological well-being . The tools that were used for the study are : Gatehouse Bullying Scale which was developed by Bond , Wolfe , Tollit , Butler and Patton (2007) and it had good to moderate test-retest reliability . Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale is a 10-item scale which measures global self-worth, and it was developed by Rosenberg M. (1965) and it presented high ratings in reliability area and internal consistency was 0.77. In other words, it had good predictive validity as well as internal consistency and test-retest reliability . Psychological Well being scale is a 18 item scale developed by Ryff which analyses positive relations with others and explores self-acceptance in individuals . The scales were administered to the adolescents and rapport was formed and instructions were given to the subjects . The study was focussed on examining the relationship between bullying and self esteem and its impact on the psychological well being . Bullying and Psychological well-being were regarded as independent variables and psychological well being as dependent variable and the study was limited to adolescents of age group 13-18 and a sample of 100 were selected for the study and random sampling was chosen so that the results could be fair and generalized .

Bullying as a phenomenon at the school level was examined at a broader level and it was observed that bullying can act as a catalyst and negatively impact the self esteem and psychological well being of adolescents. The reason as to why people engage in bullying is so that they can get attention and another reason that was identified was to cover up the low self esteem that they have . Research demonstrated that children who experienced bullying on a regular basis were unable to explain what they are going through to others . As a result they will have disrupted sleep patterns and lack self-belief in accomplishing tasks and it was observed that they will develop feelings of insecurity which will impact their cognition . There are chances that they might give excuses of illness so that they could avoid going to school and thus they would resort to avoidant mechanism. According to the study conducted by Arslan and Allen (2021) it was observed that Bullying in school had brought forth psycho-social problems and thus the study was focussed on victimization and perpetration experiences and its effect on the positive psychological orientation and subjective well-being . Findings demonstrate that both groups had less positive psychological orientation , low subjective well-being, and more emotional and behavioural problems . Thus, Bullying in Schools had negative effect on self esteem levels which had a impact on the psychological well-being.

Table 1 indicates the correlation analysis between bullying and psychological well being for which the number of samples are 100. The table shows that there is a significant negative correlation between bullying and psychological well being . **Hypothesis 1** states that bullied adolescents will have a negative impact on the psychological well being which happened to be true since the p value is 0.09 which is significant at 0.01 level*.

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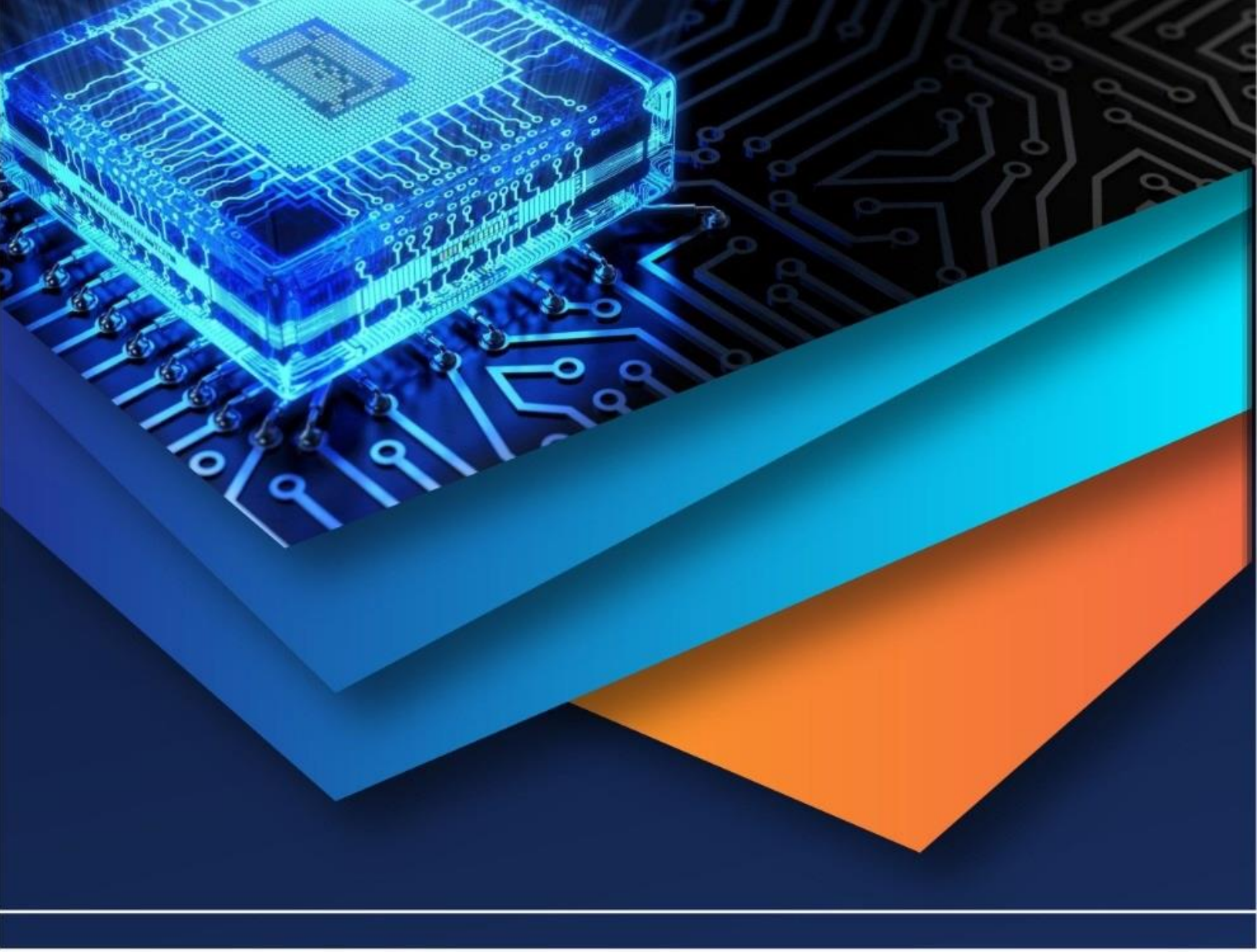
Table 2 indicates the correlation analysis between bullying and self esteem in which the p value is 0.146 which implies that there is a significant relationship between bullying and self esteem . Hypothesis 2 states that there will be no significant relationship between bullying and self esteem since the p value is 0.146 which is significant at 0.01 level . Thus the hypothesis is rejected .
Hypothesis 3 states that there will be a significant relationship between psychological well being and self esteem . As shown in table 3 the p value is (.00) which indicates that correlation is significant at 0.01 level . Thus the hypothesis of the study is accepted. From the above hypothesis and tables we can derive that there is a relationship between bullying and psychological well being and that bullying on a continuous level can disrupt the psychological well being . According to a study conducted by Naved and Waqas (2019) Bullying experiences were analysed and linked with depressive symptoms and it was found out that almost 35.8% experienced depressive symptoms and 4.2% experienced severe depressive symptoms . Individuals who experienced bullying also experienced emotional and social consequences and emotional distress. Bullying and Self Esteem were significantly negatively correlated . It was hypothesised that there will be no significant relationship but as per the result , it was observed that individuals who experienced bullying on a regular basis affected the level of self-esteem, and it was observed that they experienced helplessness and the inability to stand up for themselves as observed in one of the studies . Last Hypothesis of the study demonstrated that self-esteem and psychological well-being were significantly correlated and had significant relationship between the variable since it was significant at 0.01 level. The study observed that low self-esteem can contribute to overthinking , overanalysing and self-criticism which can bring forth feelings of nervousness , helplessness , guilt , anger, and shame which can negatively affect the psychological well-being. Table 4 Independent Sample t test was conducted to investigate whether there were any significant differences between the variables , as per the table there is no significant difference since the p value is more than 0.05 and this also indicates that there is no significant difference among male and females in the variables.

V. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

The findings regarding bullying and self esteem are consistent with the previous research which implies that bullying can have a negative impact on one's self esteem . It was highlighted that low self esteem observed in bullied adolescents was due to repeated exposure to negative and harmful experiences associated with bullying such as verbal/physical abuse , social exclusion, and humiliation . These experiences can erode the individual's sense of self worth which may contribute to lower self esteem . Furthermore the findings related to psychological well being is consistent with the hypothesis that bullied adolescents tend to have negative psychological well being since they portray feelings of helplessness , emotional distress and in severe cases suicidal thoughts . The prolonged exposure to bullying can lead to chronic stress and trauma which will affect the individual's psychological well-being.
The Suggestions were :
Intervention Programs: The findings highlight the need for effective intervention programs aimed at addressing the negative impact of bullying on self-esteem and psychological well-being among adolescents. These programs should be comprehensive and multifaceted, addressing both the individual and contextual factors that contribute to bullying. They should focus on promoting self-esteem, providing social support, and teaching adaptive coping strategies to help adolescents deal with the effects of bullying. Additionally, interventions should consider tailoring strategies to different genders, as the study suggests that gender may play a significant role in moderating the relationship between bullying and self-esteem.

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