

BULLYING IN SCHOOLS: DOES EMPATHY HELP

Amna Murad

Head of Home Economics Department,
Government College Samanabad, Lahore
amna1107@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Bullying is a universal problem, affecting students in schools all around the world. It makes life miserable for those who are bullied, and some victims have been so upset that they committed suicide. Bullying is an act of intentional harm, carried out repeatedly. It can take the form of physical, verbal, social or emotional and cyber bullying. The bullies are aggressive in nature and the emotion they harbor is anger. Their home environment is one of conflict, and lack of warmth. The victims of bullies are sensitive and lack social and problem-solving skills and easily fall prey to the bully. They are anxious, depressive and lonely. As a result of bullying, their school attendance falls, and academic results are low. To tackle the bullying problem in schools, many programs have been introduced which have reported to increase empathy in students, and consequently, reducing bullying. This article emphasizes the importance of bullying prevention programs in schools with empathy as a core component, because it is impossible to eradicate bullying by enforcing policies and rules only. The solution of bullying is to develop empathy which will help students to appreciate differences, and to develop a sense of community in students.

Keywords: Intervention Program, Reducing Bullying, Schoolchildren and Empathy

INTRODUCTION

Bullying refers to the verbal, physical or psychological behavior in a repetitive manner, perpetrated to intend harm or disturbance to a lesser powerful victim (Nansel et al., 2001). Bullying is an old phenomenon which has co-existed with humans throughout history. All people have never been equal, with power imbalance in status, income and power which when left unchecked leads intentional harm of the weaker group. This is termed as bullying and may happen anywhere at home, in schools or streets or workplace. Bullying among school students poses a serious threat, as the victim faces social, physical and, or emotional harm at the hand of bullies. Bullying behavior exists across races, societies and cultures; in schools, work and homes (Thomas et al., 2017).

Bullying is when someone tries to harm another person repeatedly and intentionally. It can be a physical act such as pushing, pulling, hitting, or a verbal one as name-calling or verbally abusing someone. Social or emotional bullying is excluding someone from the social group purposely and creating intentional barriers of re-entry for the victim. Lastly the newer form is cyber bullying which is done through the computer/internet. The intent of all type of bullying is to bring harm of some type to the victim who is at a disadvantage either socially or physically.

Bullying occurs at multiple life stages, due to the presence of such bullies in homes, schools, colleges as well as workplaces. Bullying is prevalent in many forms, across cultures and socioeconomic levels. In any bullying scenario, there are different characters. Firstly, the one who overruns others by his actions or words is the bully, whereas the one who is bullied is called the victim. He faces all the brunt of the bully. A third group is bully victims, they are bullied and are victims but when they get a chance, they themselves turn into bullies. A fourth category is of bystanders who do not participate in the bullying but are quiet spectators of the whole situation. A simple question arises as to why bullying incidences happen in schools, which are created to educate the next generation of students to become productive members of the society. Essentially there should be no bullying violence in schools because all the curriculum and environment are focused on education, teaching and training. Students are neither taught nor encouraged to behave as bullies and victims. Ethnicity, religious and socioeconomic family backgrounds of students in the classroom affect the probability of bullying victimization in school classrooms (Vitoroulis et al., 2015).

Another question also arises as to why students who are loving, innocent and adorable take up the role of bullies, making the lives of victims miserable. One reason could be that students come from diverse backgrounds and each has a different personality. This diversity sets the ground for bullying as

most students do not appreciate the difference among them. Most students who become victims are different in appearance, physique or personality. In schools, most of the bullying does not take place in the classrooms; therefore school teachers and administration are usually unaware of the bullying that is happening within the school campus.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bullying comprises harmful behavior in a repetitive pattern and is characterized by strong power disparities among bully and victim (Olweus, 1994). Bullying is a serious problem in schools which can have life-long effect on student's personalities. Bullying can happen anywhere within the school premises, including classrooms, playgrounds, hallways, cafeterias, washrooms, and others. Certain factors outside the school such as the home environment, broken homes, parenting style, personality types become risk factors of whether the child will be a bully, victim, bully victim or bystander. Bullies are very selective about their victims, because they never target their victims randomly (Juvonen and Graham, 2013). Students who are targeted by bullies are typically submissive, anxious, insecure or sensitive. Victims usually start crying or are too scared to face the bully and their behavior encourages the bully to further target them (Olweus, 1993).

In 1982, the bullying issue was brought into international focus. This happened after three school students in Norway committed suicide, as a consequence of being bullied in school. Their ages ranged from 10 – 14, and these suicide incidents took place within months of each other. These unfortunate students who were bullied in school, which made life unbearable for them and they decided to end the bullying problem by taking their life. The Ministry of Education in Norway commissioned Professor Dan Olweus who had been conducting research on bullying for the past decade. He conducted large-scale research and developed the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This has proved successful and has been expanded and evaluated with positive results in many large-scale projects in Norway, and United States, the United Kingdom and Germany.

Bullying has been studied across the globe, for example, in Australia (Rigby & Slee, 1993) and Pakistan (Shujja & Atta, 2011) among others, where studies show that however the degree of severity of bullying may vary yet it may occur in any school (Smith & Brain, 2000; Veenstra et al., 2005). The behavior of bullying originates with a desire or need for dominating the other by utilizing one's power, where there lies a difference in bully's and victim's power (Ttofi, David & Baldry, 2008).

In Pakistan, the number of studies on bullying behavior are not extraneous regarding the bullying amongst school-going students. This is so despite the high prevalence of this behavior reported, that is 41% (Ali, 2013). McFarlane et al. (2017) conducted a survey that showed the existence of bullying, victimization and violence towards peers. The reported percentages were 94% boys and 85% girls experienced victimization, while 85% boys and 66% girls perpetuated violence towards peers.

Types of Bullying

Bullying is any repetitive gestures or acts, physical, verbal, electronic or written, aimed at intentional physical or emotional harm towards the victim. The education process in schools is often disrupted when students who are bullies create an unfriendly environment for their victims. The bullied students are more often absent from school, because they want to avoid their bullies. As a result of their excessive absenteeism, their school grades are affected. If these students are not able to overcome the bullying dilemma successfully, there are chances they may be bullied through adulthood, at their workplace also. Four main types of bullying in schools include physical, verbal, social or emotional (relational), and cyber bullying (Brank, Hoetger & Hazen, 2012).

Physical bullying includes physical assault or intimidation of victims with threat of physical harm, hitting, pushing or pulling. Verbal bullying includes motive of causing fear or self-deprecation in the victim, by mock, verbal abuse, shame. In social or emotional (relational) bullying the motive is to bring harm to victim's social standing or reputation, by spreading harmful rumors or gossip. Cyberbullying is done by electronic media and includes written forms of verbal, social or emotional bullying. It uses text or instant messaging, smartphone applications, emails targeting victims using social networking.

Emotions associated with bullying

Bullying can affect the victims physically and psychologically, altering their mindset and physique. Students who are victims have low coherence, low self-esteem, low self-assessed position in school class. As a consequence of bullying, victims have a tendency to become obese, start stammering, lose interest in studies and extra-curricular activities tend to become less talkative or silent (Andersen et al,

2015). These students prefer to miss school or drop-out (Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, 2013) rather than be bullied, their school achievement is low due to victims being frequently absent from school (Nakamoto and Schwartz, 2009), and have higher levels of anxiety, depression and loneliness (Juvonen and Graham, 2014). In the social context, popularity level, school performance and economic status all impact on child's perceived low self-confidence, and if he is bullied in school. Bullied students have a greater chance to achieve lower grades than the ones who are non-bullied (Andersen et al, 2015). Negative outlook towards life and future experiences forms within them, affecting their social and problem-solving skills along with experiencing diminished quality-of-life well into later years, even up to age 50 (Takizawa, Maughan, & Arseneault, 2014).

In schools, bullies persecute and subjugate in an act of aggression, other students who are weaker than them in physical or social position. The presumption of being in a position of power brings in them the desire to abuse and overpower fellow students. Succumbing to the trauma of bullying, the incidents prove to be detrimental, casting a lifelong shadow upon future experiences and relationships. Those that are involved in bullying behaviors in childhood and adolescence face the negative results later in life, and anxiety problems are common in such individuals (Stapinski, 2014). Other kinds of lifelong impact include depression and self-harm (Zwierzynska et. al., 2014; Fisher et al., 2012), as well as antisocial behavior (Bender & Losel, 2011). Bullied students have attempted suicide as a result of the widespread bullying phenomenon (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Bond et al., 2001). Some bullying perpetrators even become substance abusers and have poor educational outcomes (Bond et al., 2007).

Bullies are also at a risk. They may become delinquents and adopt criminal behavior. From a younger age, bullies are aggressive in behavior and often disturb classroom sessions. They exhibit social withdrawal, depression and anxiety with increasing age. Bullies find it hard to resolve interpersonal conflicts, and their academic progress is hindered. As is the case with victims, bullies home environments are characteristic of violence, low parental interest, and conflict. Bullies harbor negative feelings towards school environments, themselves and may be susceptible to negative peer influence. The most dominant and commonly experienced emotion relating to bullying behavior is anger. Bullies contain a lot of anger within themselves whereas victims face depression.

Bully-victims are those students by others, and also who bully other students. Older students may be bullying a younger student and he may in turn bully younger ones. They have difficulty in social situations and gain negative influence from peers. Their perception of themselves as well as peers is usually negative. Bystanders are students who witness the bullying incidents, but neither intervenes to stop the bully, nor report to teachers or administration, to take required action. They are however impacted by bullying incidents in a negative manner and the psychological affect hinders social contact to an extent. Bullies and victims both experience anxiety, although it is felt more in the victims. Bullying affects victims in various degrees and emotions, breeding insecurity, anger, anxiety, confusion, distress, exclusion, low self-esteem and a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness, among others. Bullies, victims, bully-victims and bystanders all face negative consequences to various degrees (Wolke and Lereya, 2015).

Bullies come from families where parents use power or aggression to enforce their commands. Students coming from these families, especially boys use violence and usually become bullies in school. These parents do not take interest in their children's lives and do not overlook what activities their children are participating in, when at home, in school and any other activities whatsoever their child is doing. On the other hand, students who are victims of bullies at school were bullied at home by siblings too. These students do not develop social skills that can enable them to get out of the victim role.

Behavior showed by bullies of especially victimizing the lower socioeconomic status students, is widely practiced in schools across the globe, regardless of culture, region or religion. A multitude of stresses faced by such families already subdue the problem-solving capacity, esteem and confidence-levels in these students. Unemployment, illness, moving locations, divorce, enhance risks for students of becoming victims. Therefore, aggression and conflict at home contributes to students becoming bullies at school, as the same mindset and role models were carried forth, in their behavior. Students from lower socioeconomic status families are more liable to be bullied. Victims usually come from low socioeconomic status and have overprotective parents. Although bullying is harmful at all stages in life, yet when experienced during school years, it leaves an indelible mark upon the individual.

Empathy: the social emotion

Empathy is a prosocial emotion that links people and creates a bond between them. Empathy is the ability to see any situation from the point of view of another person, rather than their own. Simply, it is

putting one's self in another person's place and seeing the world from their lens. Empathy refers to building connections with other people by extending a non-judgmental and unbiased understanding. Empathy can be learnt with practice, and it can assist personal and professional success.

Empathy may be divided into three types, cognitive, emotional and compassionate. Cognitive empathy is, putting oneself in someone else's shoes, and seeing things from their perspective. It is 'empathy by thought' and understanding another person's view. Emotional empathy, also known as affective empathy, is the ability to feel with the other person as if experiencing the same emotions as the other. Empathy helps establish social connections, which provide emotional support, and may lead to greater wellbeing. Dealing with stress becomes easier and the risk of health problems reduced with a positive social support network and beneficial social relationships.

In the seemingly close-knit world of today, differences and distances have increased. The behavior and social contacts of young people have become increasingly superficial and materialistic. Garton and Gringart (2005) suggested positive outcome of empathic development in children. Empathy may facilitate effective collaborative problem solving. It develops in students an openness to address their own as well as other's problems in a cohesive and effective manner. Psychologists believe tangible links exist between empathy, sympathy and prosocial behavior (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987; Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger & Freifeld, 1995). Altruistic behavior has also been shown predominantly by those who display empathic and sympathetic attributes alongside (Batson, 1991).

How schools deal with bullying

In dealing with bullying, whole-school intervention programs are more effective in reducing bullying behavior. These programs are more complex and consist of targeting various components at different levels and include a variety of different methods. The students, parents and school are included in this program. The effectiveness of a program is dependent on the intensity and duration with which the program is carried out. This means that the number of hours for which it is implemented and the number of days for which it is carried out will affect its effectiveness.

The effectiveness of a program can be increased by enhancing bystander's awareness, increasing empathy, and self-efficacy in an attempt to support victimized students instead of reinforcing bullying behaviour. Making students responsible and giving them the role of educators which means developing empathy in them. Empathy has been found to be effective in reducing bullying not only in younger students but also adolescents (Palladino, Nocentini, and Menesini, 2016). Anti-bullying programs which are implemented in schools have been designed to boost the level of empathy in school students because increase in empathy is associated with reduction of bullying in school (Karna et al., 2011).

Harvard (research center) has recommended a few steps for schools to provide a conducive environment for learning in schools by reducing bullying by fostering empathy (Jones et.al, How to build empathy, 2018). Firstly, teachers should model empathy and also encourage their students to see the situation not only from their lens but others perspective also. Secondly, make students feel what they are learning is important and matters in their everyday life. Only when they feel their learning is important, they will retain it and apply it in their life. The third component is practice. To teach any skill, it has to be practiced and repeated till it becomes second nature. The next important component is setting clear ethical expectations, so the students know what is expected of them and they work towards achieving it. Lastly, the school culture and environment should be such that the students feel safe, respected and cared for. In such schools, students respect differences amongst them, hence creating a mutually beneficial environment, fostering learning.

The Olweus Program started in Norway in the early 1980s, to combat bullying within the school premises (Garandeau et al., 2021) focuses on long-term changes to create a safe, positive school climate. It is comprehensive approach including the whole school, classroom, individuals and community components, and is designed and evaluated for applicable use in elementary, middle, junior high and high schools. The program's goals are reducing and preventing bullying problems among school students and improving peer relations. The Olweus Program reduces bullying firstly by improving the social climate within the classrooms. Secondly, it reduces anti-social behaviours in the school such as vandalism and truancy. It is the oldest and longest running anti-bullying program which has yielded positive results and is now applied world over. To measure the level of empathy among students, they were asked how they felt or thought when they saw another student being bullied. After two years of implementation of the program, a significant increase in empathy for the victimized was observed in

students from grade 3 to 9 and after three years, for adolescents from grade 9 to 12. This shows that empathy was slow to develop but as it increased, bullying was reduced (Garandeau et. al, 2021).

KiVa, a well-known Finnish anti-bullying program has been applied nationwide (Salmivalli et al., 2013). The KiVa program was carried out in primary schools of Finland. The results showed an increase in affective empathy for the victims of bullying (Karna et al., 2011; Saarento et al., 2015). It helps the students to feel the emotions of another as if he/she was in their shoes. The program increased empathy by storytelling of past incidences of victimization and allowing the students to understand the perspective of other students. In this way, the program helped to increase the level of empathy and compassion by motivating students to help those who are victimized (Goetz et al., 2010). This leads to reducing bullying in schools. The KiVa program reduced bullying in students and identified affective empathy as an important predictor for both bullying and defending behavior (Garandeau et. al, 2021). Empathy as a positive emotion may help in reducing bullying behavior in schools.

The Roots of Empathy program, started in 2000, has been implemented in three continents yielding positive results. It has been evaluated in both comparative and randomized controlled studies designed to measure changes in the behavior of participating students. The results show that The Roots of Empathy Program increases prosocial behavior such as sharing and helping others and decreases aggression and reduces student's fighting by 50%. The Program is credited to increase social and emotional understanding among students and as the name indicates it increases the level of empathy among students. The program aimed to build prosocial behaviors in students, and lead to a significant decrease in aggression in bullying behavior in schools. When The Roots of Empathy program was carried out in Scotland schools, it demonstrated that an increase in empathy is directly related to an increase in prosocial behavior in schools. Another study supported the same findings but also showed that students who were taught through the Roots of Empathy program exhibited an increase in empathy throughout the school year. Research carried out by the University of British Columbia studied the effect of the program on different types of aggression, such as, physical, relational, reactive. All the results showed a significant decrease in all types of aggression when using Roots of Empathy program. Another longitudinal study carried out in Canada confirmed the long-term benefits of using this program. Aggression was decreased, and prosocial behavior increased, and at the same time, these benefits were maintained throughout the following years also (Gallese, 2003).

Reducing Bullying in Pakistan

In Hyderabad, Pakistan, The Right to Play's Positive Child and Youth program has been carried out in 40 schools in 2017. The Right to Play Program uses play as a transformative power to cultivate necessary vital life skills, increase retention in social tasks, and most importantly, prevent bullying in schools. As Maria Montessori said, play is a child's work. Students are fully committed to their play activities, taking them very seriously. Play helps to release the tension and frustration within students. It provides a positive outlet for their emotions and diverts their energy towards positive tasks rather than focusing on negative bullying behavior. The Right to Play is a whole-school approach and may be considered a good school intervention against bullying. Play has been used to build the social and emotional capacities in students, but it can also be used for bullying intervention. As students play, the game includes all the students in different activities providing them an opportunity to participate in the game and later they get together to discuss and contemplate on the game. The bullying statistics, at the start of the program, were alarmingly high, as 89% of the 6th graders attending public school, reported 75% peer victimization within the last month. The victimized students reported to have poor health and higher mortality in adulthood (McFarlane et. al, 2017). The schools in which the research was carried out, were located in very poor localities, lacking even the basic facilities, which could be a reason for higher bullying.

Another study was carried out in seven districts of Pakistan: Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Multan, Thatta and Nawab Shah. It was carried out in 2016-2017 in several public and private schools. More than half of the respondents reported that they have been bullied in the past and almost all of those became bullies. There was a high prevalence of verbal and physical abuse among his students. Approximately half (43%) showed signs of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Both the bullies and victims displayed distress in school and home activities and when with friends also. But victims showed greater stress and behavioural difficulties as compared to the bullies (Naveed et. al, 2020).

Research was conducted in secondary schools of six districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Shah, 2014). The districts from which schools were selected were Charsadda, Mardan Nowshera, Peshawar,

Malakand and Swabi. It was found that bullying incidents were common, and it was a matter of concern for principals, teachers and students. The study suggested that the school should be strict in their handling of bullies but should be careful and sympathetic at the same time. Students with good character should be given certificates so that they can be a role model for others. Bullies should not be excluded but should be asked reasons for their bullying behavior. The school administration, parents and students should work together to end bullying because victims suffer not only physical but psychological harm as well.

An intervention program (detailed in this article), to reduce bullying by enhancing empathy, was carried out in two public sector schools in Lahore, Pakistan (Murad et. al, 2019). I carried out this program on Class 6 and 7. Twenty-six interventions were applied on the experimental group consisting of 199 students. The empathy score of experimental groups increased as compared to control group and bullying decreased. The program comprised of qualitative and quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis consisted of another 6 interventions which included discussing stories and answering questions relating to the stories, after which the students were asked to explain what they had learnt after participating in the intervention program. As compared to boys, the girls had a more collective approach. Both boys and girls experienced more or less the same feelings after the adoption of empathy. The students were also asked, if the people around them, for example, their parents, siblings, friends, teachers, observed any change in their behavior and personality. Parents, teachers, siblings, peers and relatives noticed a change in behavior of both boys and girls. Parents were most observant in noticing the change in their boys, followed by siblings, teachers and then peers. But as compared to boys, change was observed more in girls. This change was observed most by their teachers, and siblings, parents and lastly by peers. Most boys felt good after displaying empathy, whereas girls felt happy, and this was attached to a feeling of kindness. Before the start of intervention, bullying scores were higher in boys as compared to girls. After the intervention program, the empathy level increased in both boys and girls, but in comparison girls became more empathetic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

David Kolb, Professor of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University, launched a learning theory in the early seventies. Kolb's Experiential Learning Model explains four learning styles which are distinct from each other and based on four-stage learning cycle. It has been influential because it takes into account, the individual's learning style. Kolb uses the term "experiential" which means relating to or resulting from experience while "experimental" means relating to or based on experiment. He has based his theory more on reflection of experience, while others have used experimental techniques that require learners to test hypothesis (experiment) about content knowledge. Kolb (1984) considers learning to be the process in which knowledge is created through change in the experience of the learner. Knowledge is the result of our ongoing experience and its transformation.

Application of Kolb's Experiential Model for Research

Concrete experience

Storytelling, perspective taking, role playing



Reflective observation

The discussion group participate in interactive discussions about the lesson(s) on empathy



Abstract Conceptualization

Re-thinking about the concepts discussed in the session and encouraging students to incorporate them in their daily lives.



Active Experimentation

Students engage in different activities (adapted from Caselman(2007), Shapiro(2008), and Breakstone et al., (2009), to foster development of empathy; For the purpose of incorporating empathy in the classroom, discouraging bullying among students

Application of Kolb's Experiential Model for Research

- Concrete experience (feeling): Narrating the story, the specific experiences within it are discussed relating to people, and developing sensitivity towards other's feelings. Some stories included role playing and acting out the story by the students.
- Reflective observation (watching): The students are encouraged to reflect before making a judgment. Helping them understand the views and perspectives of other students in the class, to look for meaning instead of making quick judgments.
- Abstract conceptualization (thinking): Encouraging students to think logically about their own ideas and feelings, as well as those of other students in the class, and discussing the importance of thinking before speaking and taking action.
- Active experimentation (doing): Developing the ability in students to act in such a way that they influence other students through their actions; this means helping them act empathetically so they are able to discourage themselves and others to act aggressively, in other ways to avert bullying.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in two public schools of Lahore, Pakistan. Each school had eight sections per class for the study. Two sections of class 6 and two sections of class 7 were taken from both schools. The schools were chosen due to willingness of the principals to carry out the study in their respective schools. The program comprised of two sessions per week done in two which spread over four months. This required readjustment in the timetable of these classes. Therefore, willingness of the principals was important in the selection of schools for the study.

The subjects of the research were students of classes 6 and 7 of the selected schools. Four sections of students were received treatment ($n = 199$). A Pre-Test and Two Post-Tests were given to group. A threat to internal was diffusion of treatment. The interaction between participants of the experimental group did not pose a threat to the experimental design. The school comprised of classes from Nursery to Matric with eight to ten sections of each class in both schools, with an average of 60 students. Therefore, the chances of diffusion of treatment did not pose a major threat.

To assess the level of empathy and bullying tendency in experimental group, 'A questionnaire to assess Cognitive and Affective Empathy in Children' by Carsten Zoll and Sibylle Enz (Zoll & Enz, 2010) and The Bullying Prevalence Questionnaire (BPQ) 'by Rigby and Phillips Slee (Rigby & Salee, 1993) were used. They were translated into Urdu, as the students were unable to grasp the concepts in English. Pretest was done to determine the level of empathy and bullying tendencies in both groups. The intervention program consisted of two phases. After completion of the intervention, posttest was conducted to check its effectiveness and to determine any change in the two constructs being studied. The intervention began with the teacher telling a story to the students, followed by group discussion, highlighting the different aspects of human feelings, emotions and behaviors, alongside encouraging students to give feedback. The students also discussed the reason for certain feelings and behaviors of the characters in the story. Then the students participated in activities focusing on developing empathy and reducing bullying. The intervention program took place twice a week and the focus were on developing empathy in an attempt to reduce bullying. To bring about a change in the feelings and emotions of students, they have to ask themselves why they think and believe certain things and develop an understanding that their fellow students can have different ways of thinking and behaving which may be considered normal. In this way, the teacher helps them appreciate differences among them and help them to build bridges not boundaries. All students were encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings freely and at the same time, have the patience to listen to what other students had to say. This was an attempt to help them understand that all people are different, with different ways of thinking and feeling, so that the students learn to celebrate their differences. The posttests were given at the end of intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Table No. 1 Contribution of Intervention program in reduction of bullying in students**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Phase 1 Total Pre Bullying	199	14	48	5577	28.03	7.606
Phase 1 Total Post Bullying	199	14	52	5275	26.51	8.920
Phase 2 Total Post Bullying	199	14	43	4966	24.95	7.415
Valid N (listwise)	199					

Table 1 demonstrates that the intervention program was successful in reducing bullying tendencies among Pakistani schoolchildren. The average pre-bullying score for students was 28.3, and it steadily decreased during the first phase of the intervention, Phase I Post Bullying (26.51), and the second phase of the intervention, Phase 2 Post Bullying (24.95).

Table No. 2 Contribution of Interventions in reduction of bullying in students in Phase I

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.407 ^a	.165	.107	8.431		
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2605.343	13	200.411	2.819	.001 ^b
	Residual	13150.396	185	71.083		
	Total	15755.739	198			
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	27.414	10.493		2.612	.010
	Phase 1 Intervention1M	.395	.204	.143	1.939	.054
1	Phase 1 Intervention2M	-.219	.150	-.110	-1.458	.147
	Phase 1 Intervention3M	-.220	.192	-.089	-1.147	.253
	Phase 1 Intervention4M	-.372	.213	-.125	-1.750	.082

Phase 1 Intervention5M	.021	.224	.006	.092	.927
Phase 1 Intervention6M	-.100	.129	-.057	-.770	.442
Phase 1 Intervention7M	1.673	1.252	.098	1.336	.183
Phase 1 Intervention8M	.231	.180	.087	1.283	.201
Phase 1 Intervention9M	-.555	.265	-.157	-2.094	.038
Phase 1 Intervention10M	.262	.225	.084	1.167	.245
Phase 1 Intervention11M	-.751	.458	-.120	-1.640	.103
Phase 1 Intervention12M	-.035	.246	-.010	-.143	.887
Phase 1 Intervention13M	-.079	.271	-.021	-.291	.772

a. Dependent Variable: **Phase 1 Total Post Bullying**

The first phase of the interventions used in Table 2's linear regression test significantly reduced bullying among Pakistani schoolchildren, $F(13, 185) = 2.819$, $P = .001$. All thirteen interventions reduced bullying tendencies by 16.5%. The interventions that contributed the most were interventions 2 (Beta = .143), 4 (Beta = -12.5), and 9 (Beta = -15.7).

Table No. 3 Contribution of Interventions in reduction of bullying in students in Phase II

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.531 ^a	.282	.232	6.500		
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3069.901	13	236.146	5.589	.000 ^b
	Residual	7816.692	185	42.252		
	Total	10886.593	198			
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		

Murad

	(Constant)	15.389	6.806		2.261	.025
	Phase 2 Intervention1M	.514	.178	.194	2.885	.004
	Phase 2 Intervention2M	.204	.132	.106	1.541	.125
	Phase 2 Intervention3M	-.513	.136	-.251	-3.771	.000
	Phase 2 Intervention4M	-.128	.287	-.042	-.447	.655
	Phase 2 Intervention5M	.212	.131	.111	1.626	.106
	Phase 2 Intervention6M	.138	.140	.064	.982	.327
1	Phase 2 Intervention7M	.043	.174	.019	.250	.803
	Phase 2 Intervention8M	.101	.279	.025	.362	.718
	Phase 2 Intervention9M	-.227	.157	-.103	-1.444	.151
	Phase 2 Intervention10M	.762	.423	.141	1.801	.073
	Phase 2 Intervention11M	-.841	.350	-.166	-2.403	.017
	Phase 2 Intervention12M	1.212	.426	.245	2.848	.005
	Phase 2 Intervention13M	-.540	.436	-.092	-1.240	.217

a. Dependent Variable: **Phase 2 Total Post Bullying**

According to Table 3's linear regression test, interventions used in the second phase significantly reduced bullying among schoolchildren in Pakistan, with a $F(13, 185) = 5.589$ and a P value of .000. All thirteen interventions reduced bullying tendencies by 28.2%. Intervention 2 (Beta = .106), Intervention 4 (Beta = -25.1), Intervention 10 (Beta = 14.1), Intervention 11 (Beta = -16.6), and Intervention 12 (Beta = 24.5) were the interventions that contributed the most.

The bullying tendencies decreased in the experimental group after the intervention. The students of the experimental group showed higher levels of empathy which may have led to reduction in bullying tendencies as well. Bullying was more prevalent in boys as compared to girls. Both girls and boys were responsive towards the intervention program and participated with interest. At the start of the intervention, the students were not able to understand the feelings of the characters of the story narrated to them. It took some prompting and encouragement for the students to put themselves in the shoes of the characters of the story. Once they were able to do this, they began to give reasons for the actions of characters, instead of jumping to conclusions on faulty assumptions without showing empathy for others. As the intervention program progressed, it opened new doors of understanding for the students. It helped them to understand their class fellows, and in doing so, developed a harmonious classroom atmosphere and reduced bullying tendencies among them.

Following are the limitations of the study:

1. Two schools of Lahore city and only students of two classes from each school were the participants of the research.
2. Quasi-experimental design had been used, because true experiment was not possible.

CONCLUSION

Bullying is a very old issue in schools; it has been brought to focus since the 1970s. The governments in many countries have developed anti-bullying policies for school and have taken measures to ensure that these policies are implemented. Even after the best of efforts, no country in the world has been successful in eradicating bullying from schools completely. Maslow stated that people can only function in society when their basic needs have been fulfilled (Maslow, 1954). One of the basic needs of students is safety, and an unprotected violent (bullying) environment in school will characteristically hinder their learning process. As studying at school is an important milestone for students, steps to endure their prioritization and focus on education are crucial. At an impressionable age, students absorb much of what goes on in their environments, at home and school. Their personalities and future lives are shaped during the schooling years. After the youth is bullied, he or she must seek ways of managing, coping, responding and considering what had happened to them (Renshaw et al., 2014).

Physical injuries may heal, yet psychological ones have a lifelong impact. Excessive crying, lack of will to study and participate, various kinds of antisocial behaviors, all occur as a result of the stress and trauma a victim of bullying goes through. Peers, parents or teachers are unable to read the signs or assuage the problem. To overcome this problem, schools should undertake to develop positive traits within their students, such as developing empathy and understanding among students to eradicate bullying from schools.

As mentioned in the article, bullying prevention programs have been carried out in school's world over. All of them have identified that the increase in empathy leads to lower level of bullying. Empathy is a core component of bullying prevention programs, because it is not impossible to eradicate bullying by enforcing policies, rules and restrictions only. Therefore, it can be suggested that the solution to end bullying, is to develop skills in students so that they understand other's perspective in nonjudgmental and unbiased way which means, to develop empathy in them. All human beings are different. Empathy helps to bring a realization that differences should not be the foundation for dispute, aggression, bullying and conflicts. On the contrary, the differences should be acknowledged, understood and appreciated. Empathy can help to create a globally harmonious community. The Roots of Empathy program, for example, has been found to lower bullying and its affect lasted for one to two years after the program ended.

In Pakistan, I conducted an intervention program in two public schools of Lahore, which reported that as empathy increased in students, bullying reduced (Murad et. al, 2019). The experimental group showed higher level of empathy and lower bullying as compared to the control group which received no treatment. The positive change was felt by students, both boys and girls, and also their teachers, parents, siblings, and peers, to varying degrees. Empathy is part of Pakistani culture, as people here are hospitable and caring towards others. This has been proved many times, at times of crises, when the whole nation comes forward to help their fellow citizens. However, as a consequence of global changes, including advancement in technology, economic burdens, social media, change in family and life styles, we are moving towards a more self-centered society. Therefore, cultivating empathy in school students is important not only for lowering bullying tendencies, but is also a valuable life skill. Empathy enables students to be happier, content and better human beings.

The solution of bullying is to develop empathy which will help them to appreciate differences, and to develop a sense of community in students. Once developed, this positive attitude from school can be carried forth in all their endeavors, and creating a harmonious, and peaceful world.

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