Investigation of Bullying Controlling Strategies by Primary School Teachers at District Haripur

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The current study was conducted to investigate the use of bullying strategies by the primary school teachers at District Haripur. The aim of this study was to identify the most frequently used bullying strategies as well as the least used bullying prevention strategies by the primary school teachers at District Haripur. Survey research design was used to conduct the study. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect the required information about the bullying controlling strategies from a sample of fifty primary school teachers. A questionnaire comprising of twelve (12) items was used to collecting the required information which was validated by experts. Percentage was used for the purpose of analyse of data. Results indicated that teachers make sure that there is safe physical environment so that there is no bullying in the class followed by clear instructions to the students before the start of any activity. They are provided awareness creation program available for the teachers.

Keywords: education, bullying, teachers and primary schools

Education is a powerful tool that connects to the rest of the world playing a significant role in the development of an individual and the nation as a whole (Govt. of Pakistan, 1947). According to Lynd (2007) overall literacy rate in Pakistan is 48.7% with rough estimate of 6.6 million children do not receive basic education. These figures indicate that a large number of school going children are not enrolled in the school. One of the main reasons of low enrolment is that students experience bullying due to which they are afraid of attending schools (Elinoff, Chafouleas & Sassu, 2004). This bullying experience can take the forms like harassment, teasing, and physical attack (Cohn & Canter,

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2003). Younger as well as older students experiences bullying at physical and social level. Bullying includes verbal insulting behavior, disrespect and social deprivation (Smith, Cowie-Olafsson, & Liefooghe, 2002).

Bullying is considered against social norms as it damages the social status of the students as the "Bully" frightens or hurts the weaker people through the use of strength or power (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2013). A considerable portion of school going students is either bullies themselves or victims. Bullying is the combination of many aggressive behaviors which can cause most disturbing situations in schools like suicide attempts, absenteeism, low academic achievement on behalf of the students (Feinberg, 2003). The victim of bullying behaviour cannot defend themselves being the members of the same group. The weaker is exploited via aggression. The bullies are more socially influential than victims. Similarly described in Delwyn and Tattum (1989) bullying as violence on behalf of a group or individual where the victim is unable to secure.

Forms of Bullying

Different forms of bullying have been identified by researchers. For example, Whitney & Smith (1993) and Owens et al., (2000) have enlisted insults, direct aggression, theft, threats, social exclusion, nicknames as the forms of bullying. Furthermore, hitting, verbal abuse, threats, and destruction of property are regarded as bullying (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Verbal bullying includes putting down, name calling, and exclusion from play (Owens et al., 2005; Smith, 2004).Moreover, relational and physical bullying includes in the school includes verbal abuse, dating violence, and sexual harassment (Tapper & Bolton, 2005; Pepler et al., 2008).

Strategies to control bullying

Students usually do not want to report teachers or administrators of school about being bullied due to fear and lack of confidence (McCartney, 2005). Therefore, researchers suggest some strategies to control bullying in the schools. For example, the Northwest Regional Educational laboratory (2001) laid emphasis upon encouraging the student to boldly report bullying to the personnel in school. On the other side, Harris and Willoughby (2003) advocated an atmosphere of cooperation and support on behalf of the teachers for students.

Farrington (2010) as a result of review of literature on bullying pointed out some useful strategies such as students' supervision, establishment of school rules and policies against bullying and promotion of collaboration and support among personnel as well as parents. In the same way American Federation of Teachers (2000) devised Olweus Bullying Prevention Program which is to bring awareness about the problem of bullying. The program applies strategies like improving relations among peers, rules against bullying attitude, early bullying interruption, and protection of the victims, and a program that encounters issues related to bullying prevention via positive involvement of adults (Cohn and Canter; Starr, 2000). Similarly, Secure and safe surroundings should be provided to the children where the older take care of younger. Pirozzi (2001) went ahead and proposed the inclusion of anti bullying topics in curriculum coupled with combined efforts of parents, school personnel, and students to reinforce the anti-bullying policies of schools (US Department of Justice, 2004).

Cohn and Canter (2003) suggested early intervention because problem is more evident at early grades. The school can then easily decide about the most and least important aspect of bullying and can take action in the right direction to control it. Findings from the survey of Shellard, (2002) that the school head can play a significant role in preventing bulling by promoting anti-bullying attitude and educating teachers in tackling or controlling the problem of bullying in school (Garrity et al., 1996). They can provide training to teachers in terms of understanding bullying, conflict, behavior, content based upon bullying and strategies to control it (Cohn and Canter, 2003; Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001). Shellard (2002) expressed content must highly relate to important aspects of bulling in the form of training. The responsibility of school personnel is to make sure rules are understood and followed (Shellard, 2002). emphasized the role of teacher in controlling the problem of bullying in schools. The fact has been verified via research that integrated bullying policy in curriculum help both teachers and students to cope with bullying.

As a strategy, NREL (2001) suggested staff members to intervene early in matters of bullying. Another is to avoid labelling a student in terms of bully which will cause the student hard to escape the role of bully. The students who bully actually long for power. This behaviour can be directed positively when they are put in the role of leaders. The energies are channelled in the right direction. Pointed in

Shellard (2002) is the fact that students need training, guidance and counselling in order to become more efficient in academic achievement, social skills and improving their self-esteem.

US Department of Justice (2004) suggested schools to assign tasks to bullies. It will create distance between victims and bullies. NREL (2001) and Shellard (2002) added students need to be provided with stress management and individual counselling. Shellard (2002) supported bullying control programs where the students are taught to cope with different situations in bullying. A child standing alone can be invited to play who will have lesser chances of becoming victim. Similarly, there is a need of a power balancing. Once the silent students have power would take stand against bullies by conveying them clear messages of intolerance for the acts of bullying (Garrity*et al*., 1996).

U.S. Department of Justice (2004), Shellard and Turner (2004), and Shellard (2002) suggested to increase adult supervision on suspected locations where the bully can isolate the victim. It must be ensured by the school personnel. US Department of Justice (2004) presented a suggestion to school personnel as a strategy. It is to reduce time of less likely observed times and locations like recesses, breaks, transition times and to reduce the time spare time of students. This way, the bullies can easily be identified.

US Department of Justice (2004) and Shellard (2002) favored to develop a system that records bullying incidence. In this respect, the students must be encouraged to report such kind of happenings. Another such strategy is to manage a 'bully box' where the students drop notes reporting bullying incidences to the school administration.

For controlling bullying problem properly in schools, parents should be involved (US Department of Justice, 2004). Shellard (2002) furthered bullying is detrimental to child's self-esteem and academic success. For this sake, parents must be kept in circle by training and cooperating with them. Cohn and Canter (2003) suggested school staff to provide guidance and counselling to the parents in order to make them efficient in developing positive patterns in behaviour of their children.

The current research endeavour is expected to come up with several potential benefits for all those concerned in some way to the system of education directly or indirectly in any context, way, shape or form. Teachers play a vital role in the development of a nation and hence teacher training programs especially in bullying control strategies may be devised. These training sessions may be made rewarding for the

participant teachers and for this sake, highly trained and knowledgeable people must be called as resource persons. Besides, the policy makers may get more insights and awareness regarding this crucial problem which is, to a greater extent the cause of dropouts. The policy initiations may follow the awareness and may lead to include ideas around the themes of bullying and their subsequent controlling strategies. Media may also be used in this connection to arrive at more wide-spread awareness movement. They may play their role in a positive manner as well. The local community may easily be guided by these media initiatives. The problem should be taken into consideration by the law making bodies in the country in order to save the future of Pakistan. With large scale movement, media may use the results of the study to spread the message of hope among teachers, students and the parents.

Research questions

The following research questions were posed in order to achieve the objectives set out for the current study

i.   What are the bullying control strategies applied by primary school teachers?
ii.   What are the most frequently and the least used set of bullying control strategies applied by primary school teachers?

Method

Sample

The sample was drawn by applying the convenient sampling technique upon the available population. In this connection, 25 girls primary teachers and 25 boys' primary school teachers were selected on the bases of easy access.

Instrument

The research study was survey in nature and thus questionnaire was used to collect the data. It was constructed on three points Likert Scale based upon various documents elaborating bullying control strategies. They were; 'often', 'sometimes' and 'never'. The tool was validated by the opinions of the supervisor and other experts easily

available at the university. The tool was made reliable by pilot testing upon 10 teachers from other localities outside Haripur.

Procedure

The data was collected by administering the questionnaires to the primary school teachers, 25 each from male and female school. The gathered data were then computerized by using MS Excel spread sheets. The researcher distributed and collected the filled questionnaires from the respondents.

Results

Table 1

Strategies used by the Primary School Students to Control Bullying

S.No	Bullying Controlling Strategies	Never	Sometimes	Often
1	Creating a safe physical environment	1(2%)	2(4%)	47(94%)
2	Instructing the Students before Activities	0(0%)	8(16%)	43(86%)
3	Training Students in Conflict Resolution	5(10%)	4(8%)	41(82%)
4	Bullying prevention awareness for Staff	0(0%)	10(20%)	40(80%)
5	Early intervention	2(4%)	9(18%)	39(78%)
6	Involving and Educating Parents	4(8%)	11(22%)	35(70%)
7	Assessing the Extent of the Problem	3(6%)	12(24%)	35(70%)
8	Awareness of Students about school rules	1(2%)	14(28%)	35(70%)
9	Increasing adult supervision	7(14%)	13(26%)	30(60%)
10	Implementing reactive measures	6(12%)	15(30%)	29(58%)
11	Students' encouragement to report bullying	20(40%)	12(24%)	18(36%)
12	Reducing spare time of students	20(40%)	16(32%)	14(28%)

The results in table indicate the highest and least strategies used by the teachers to control bullying. The results highlight that majority of the teachers (94%) creation of safe physical environment as a strategy to control bullying in the school. Further, they convey clear instructions to the students before any activity. Yet majority of the teachers 41 (82%) train the students to resolve conflicts and thus ensure that there is no bullying in the school. In case of any bullying, majority of the teachers intervene early so that bullying doesn't erupt while majority of the teachers 35 (70%) educate parents about the problem of bullying and educate them how to make their children safe from this problem. In the

same way they create awareness among the students about the rules of the school to be followed.

On the other hand, encouragement of the students to report the bullying cases as a bullying controlling strategy is least used (only by 18 i.e 36% teachers). In the same way reducing the spare time of students is the least used strategy (28%) by the teachers to control the bullying.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that majority of the teachers adopt the strategy of providing safe physical environment to control the problem of bullying. These results are in line with results of Shellard, (2002) who opine that a safe physical environment ensures the reduction of bullying. One way of ensuring the safe physical environment is to reduce the spare time of the students where there is less supervision such as recess, lunch break, and transition time (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004).

This study also highlight that majority of the teachers involve parents and educate them about the problem of bullying. These results are in line with the results of Shellard, (2002). Similarly, Cohn, and Canter, (2003) suggested the training of parents to develop appropriate social behaviour to strengthen children. This study found that teachers

Rigby (2017) found that students are instructed by the schools to report bullying incidents to respective teachers but majority of the students normally do not report. Similar results are produced by the current research. The results of this study shows to provide more training to the students in dealing with bullying situations. Study by Rigby (2017) supports the evidence to train students in tackling cases of actual bullying. Similar views are given in Zapf and Gross (2001) that individuals who successfully cope with bullying differ from others in managing and resolving the conflict.

The results of this study support the idea to bring awareness among students about the rules of the school. Similar findings have been shared in Smith and Ananiadou (2003) advocating interventions at multiple levels in a school environment in the form of well-defined position of school in preventing bullying.

Conclusion

The foremost strategy applied by the teachers for the control bullying is the provision of physically safe environment followed by making clear instructions to the students before initiating any activity in the classroom. It implies that the teachers make sure that classroom environment is physically safe so that there is no danger of any physical damage and there is no ambiguity in the communication of teachers. Teachers also train students in the resolution of their difference by using the process of mediation followed by early intervention in case of bullying.

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