The Devil in the Classroom:
School Bullying

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I. Introduction

1.1 Motivation of the study

Have you ever been called “sissy?” Have you been punched on the back and felt uncomfortable? If so, it would turn out be a kind of bullying. There are a lot of behaviors similar to the bullying in our daily life, which we have never noticed. The TV news says, “In certain high school or elementary school, the bullying did happen. However, to everyone’s surprise, victim’s teacher and parents were unaware of it.” Such news is continuously breaking out. That has aroused our curiosity and doubt about the bullying. Besides, some of our teammates also personally have experienced the kind of trauma and despair because of the bullying. This suffering is deeply branded on the victims’ heart. As Limber points out, “Not only does bullying harm both its intended victims and the perpetrators, it also may affect the climate of schools and, indirectly, the ability of all students to learn to the best of their abilities” (Limber, 2002). As a result, in the study, we decide to pay great attention to the bullying, and we will exactly disclose about what is the bullying and the methods of dealing with it.

1.2 Purpose of the study

In the study, we will discuss the factors that put children at the risk of bullying. Do students’ jokes on classmates easily become a kind of bullying? If it does, how many kinds of bullying are there? Does students’ condition of relationship in the classroom put them at the risk of becoming victims? Then, what action do the victims take when bullied? Or, are they too shy or ashamed of telling the truth to the adults? On the other hand, do parent take enough care of their children to be aware of some signs in bullying? Besides, we want to know what we can do to reduce the bullying climate in classroom. Exploring these questions is the purpose of this study. We will first conduct the survey on a group of high school students in southern Taiwan to further investigate how students view the bullying.

To understand more about the opinions on the bullying, the research questions proposed in this study are presented as follows.

RQ1. The definition and the types of the bullying
RQ2. The interpersonal relationship of the victims in bullying
RQ3. The methods of reacting to and dealing with the bulling

II. Thesis
1. Methods

Our study aims to investigate the bullying in school. First, the participants are introduced, and then the instruments are presented as follows.

1.1 Participants

There were 296 participants taking part in this questionnaire survey. They were the high school students randomly selected from Shin-Hua Industrial Vocational High School. Their age ranged from 16 to 18.

1.2 Instruments

A quantitative method was mainly used in this study. The instrument was a questionnaire survey used to assess the participants’ perspective of on the bullying. There are three main parts containing 23 items in total. The questions listed in Part I are used to know the background information about the participants, such as the domestic condition and the interpersonal relationship condition in class. Then, Part II consists of three questions designed to know the reaction of that participants have had after they met or seen the bullying. And, the participants are asked about the best way to reduce the bullying climate in the classroom. Finally, Part III was composed of 6 questions investigating the victims’ bullying circumstances and reaction after being bullied.

2. Analysis and Discussion

2.1 Results of Data Analysis

In our study, there were 46 participants who were faced with the bullying, 27 participants experienced verbal bullying, 8 participants physical bullying, 7 participants relationship bullying, 3 participants experienced retaliatory bullying, and 1 participants experienced sexual bullying, as shown in Figure 1.
The bullying types that victims have suffered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullying Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Bullying</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Bullying</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Bullying</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retaliatory Bullying</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Bullying</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber Bullying</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Figure 1. The types of the bullying that victims have suffered

The pie charts inquire the participants’ interpersonal relationship in the class. The first pie chart is about people who are bullied while the second one is who are not bullied. In the second pie chart, 34% participants have good interpersonal relationship in their class, while 7% participants have bad interpersonal relationship in their class. In the second pie chart, 41% participants have good interpersonal relationship in their class, while 1% participants have bad interpersonal relationship in their class, as shown in Figure 2.

![Pie chart showing interpersonal relationship in the class](image1)

Figure 2. The interpersonal relationship in the class

The pie charts investigate the participants’ conditions of group life in their class. The first pie chart is about people who are bullied while the right one is who are not bullied. In the second pie chart, 14% of participants tend to be alone in their class while in the second pie chart, only 5% of participants tend to be alone in their class, as shown in Figure 3.

![Pie chart showing group life conditions in the class](image2)
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The pie charts investigate the participants’ reaction to the bullying they have seen or met. The first pie chart is about people who are bullied while the second one is who are not bullied. Most participants would inform the teachers when encountering the bullying. In the first pie chart, 35% participants pretend to see nothing when they encounter the bullying. However, in the second pie chart, only 19% participants pretend to see nothing and 56% would inform the teachers, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure3. The Participants’ condition in their class

Figure4. The reaction to the bullying
The pie charts survey that what is the best way to solve bully problem. The first pie chart is about people who are bullied while the second one is who are not bullied. In the first pie chart, 46% participants consider that the best way to solve bully problem is informing teachers. In the second pie chart, 74% participants consider that the best way to solve bully problem is noticing teachers, as shown in Figure 5.

![Pie Chart 1: The most effective way dealing with bullying(Victims)](image1)

![Pie Chart 2: The most effective way dealing with bullying(Participants)](image2)

Figure 5. The Participants’ opinions about the best way in dealing with bullying

2.2. Discussion of the Research Question

2.2.1 The definition of bullying type

Dan Olweus, the founder of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, provides us with the commonly accepted definition for bullying in his book, *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. He writes that "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself" (Olweus, 1993).

The definition of the bullying includes three important components:

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength

Bullying can take on many forms which are suggested on Dan Olweus’ web.

1. Physical bullying, such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
2. Verbal bullying, like derogatory comments and bad names.
3. Bullying through lies and false rumors
4. Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
5. Retaliatory bullying
6. Sexual bullying
7. Cyber bullying (via cell phone or Internet)

First of all, physical bullying includes using something harmful like weapon, doing inappropriate touching on purpose, or fighting others unfriendly. Second, “verbal bullying means doing something harmful without taking actual actions, such as punishing other people in a slanderous way, or commenting negatively on someone’s looks, clothes, body, etc.” (Wikipedia, school bullying). A commonly example is teasing girls by calling them “Bitch” in a rude manner. Thirdly and fourthly, isolating victims out of a group to hurt them by spreading lies and rumors is as serious as hitting, kicking or laughing them.

It’s interesting that the ways of the boys to bully other people vary from those of the girls. Despite the fact that bullies are often described as big and tough figures in movies and novels, they, in fact, come in all shapes and sizes. Although both boys and girls might be involved in the bullying, the methods they use to bully are different. “Boys are more likely to engage in aggressive, physical bullying, such as using threats or violence to keep victims feeling intimidated. Girls, on the other hand, rarely resort to physical abuse” (Grace, 2010). Girls tend to bully others through social exclusion and isolation, as listed in the fourth kind. They may choose a victim and then isolate her from others by ignoring her, calling her names ungracefully, and even spreading false rumors about her.

As for the retaliatory bullying, victims are fed up with wicked treatment for a long time. The worst situation is that they start to hurt others by doing what they have been treated. Sexual bullying is based on a person’s sexuality or gender and it is familiar with sexual harassment. Laughing at boys by calling them “sissy” is also a type of bullying. What’s more, criticizing somebody on the public website blog, or using technology products is also classified bullying. All kinds of bullying can be conducted through the Internet, expect physical bullying.

From Figure 1, we found, in high school, the bullied have more chances to experience verbal bullying and then physical bullying. Olweus and Nansel also suggest in their study that verbal bullying is the most frequent form of bullying experienced by both boys and girls. It seems that using negative or dirty words is the easiest way to harm other people. To our pity, it is also the easiest to be ignored among all kinds of bullying.

2.2.2 The interpersonal relationship of the victims in bullying

In order to clearly understand more about the interpersonal relationship of the victims in
bullying, we analyze 46 participants in total who have encountered the bullying in person. According to our results, we found that the interpersonal relationship of the bullied is worse than the participants who have not been bullied (Figure 2). People having good interpersonal relationship have less chance to be bullied. That is, peer groups play a vital role for high school students. With peer’s companion and protection, they can be kept from being a target of being bullied. Talking about the impact of the peers in bullying, from our study, it shows that the bullied are lonelier than the participants who have not been bullied (Figure 3). Generally speaking, victims tend to be not good at making friends. It indicates that being alone and having no peers’ protection makes it more possible to be bullied. With peers’ support and protection, other people would be afraid of doing something bad to the victims. That is, if not under peers’ protection, they will be at the risk of becoming the target, being shoved and bullied step by step.

2.2.3 The methods of reacting to and dealing with the bulling

According to our survey, the bullied are more likely to pretend to see nothing rather than inform teachers (Figure 4). Victims don’t have as much courage as the ordinary people. Even though they have been bullied and they realize the trauma, they still are too timid to inform teachers or other people of the bullying. Similarly, according to Children Organization, there are 15.8% participants pretend to see nothing when they encountered the bullying. However, there are mere 7.2% participants assisting and comforting victim spontaneously. In further report, they investigate the reason why they tend to pretend to see nothing when encountering the bullying. In their report, 34.2% participants think that there is nothing to do with me, 23.7% participants are fear of getting into the trouble, and 23.7% participants think that victims who are bullied are deserved. Other reason is that they have put victims out of groups. It’s a pity that most of the time many people who are not bullied have become the assistants of bullying.

For people who participate in our study, most of the participants think that informing teachers is the best way to solve bullying (Figure 5). It means students view teachers as an important role in stopping bullying. In fact, teachers indeed play a necessary part in addressing bullying. Unluckily, “teachers typically underestimate the level of bullying/victimization in their school” (Swearer & Espelage & Napolitano, 2009). As a result, it is urgent that teachers have to be aware of their students’ dangerous situation. If they cope with the bullying in an inappropriate way, it is possible to increase the chance for victims to undergo more serious damage. In other words, the possibility for undergoing a bullying again will decrease if the teachers deal with the bullying appropriately. According to a report, 62% participants turn to their best friends when bullied. Hence, educational organizations should
think that how participants feel relieved when they encounter bullying and turn to their teachers. In addition, educational organizations should teach teenagers appropriate methods to deal with bullying.

III. Conclusion

In this study, the aim is to figure out some aspects of bullying. As shown in the previous discussion, we achieve some significant findings as follows.

1. In our society, the prevalence of the bullying has caused the public’s alarm and concern. It is vital that everyone get closer understanding not only of the bullying but of the victims. Since victims are quiet and passive with few friends, people around them need to pay more attention to the dangerous situation. Victims would be too ashamed to tell parents, teachers and peers about their danger. They tend to think that it is no use telling adults they had been bullied. What’s more, victims also think that if they let anyone know they had been bullied, it is likely that victims will be under much more serious hazard. On the other hand, enhancing the victim’s relationship with others could be another useful way to prevent the bullying.

2. In addition to noticing the occurrence of the bullying, we still have to make efforts to reduce the bullying. Producing joyful atmosphere in classroom has been proved to successfully change the climate of bullying. Actually, results find that bullying tends to be less prevalent in classroom in which most children are involved in activities, and teachers display warmth and responsiveness to children.

3. Parents should always be aware of their children’s behavior in school and after-school. If parents all have to work, they should observe children’s emotional expression after school. Banks described the victims of bullying as “typically anxious, insecure, cautious, and suffer from low self-esteem, rarely defending themselves or retaliating when confronted by students who bully them” (Banks, 1997). Hence, to make the classroom a paradise for students to learn and have fun, the teachers and parents must make correct, appropriate, and timely observation, and then also give timely and effective assistance.

IV. References


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V. Appendix

Survey on Senior High Students’ Viewpoints of Bullying

Hello every students,
We are National Hsin Hua Industrial Vocational High School’s students. Thank you for spending time filling out our questionnaire. This questionnaire is to survey how much students know about the bullying and what they think regarding it. We hope everyone must fill this out seriously and this questionnaire is only used to make the data analysis. Finally all of questionnaire will be ruined after the event.
Thanks for your cooperation!

Research students
Andy, Sarlin, Gina

The definition of every sorts of the bullying (please read the following definitions of bullying
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The kinds of bullying | Definition | Examples
---|---|---
Physical bullying | Including punching, pushing, kicking, etc. | Because of spite, Andy belabors Shel everyday in the toilet.
Verbal bullying | Verbal bullying is any slanderous statements or accusations causing the victim emotional distress | John said to Amy, "You are asshole." Mary said to Jimmy, "You are sons of bitch."
Relationship bullying | Bullies may single out a victim and then purposefully isolate her from others by ignoring victims, calling her names, spreading false rumors about her. | Maggie hates Rose, and she incites her classmates that they don’t talk with Rose, putting Rose out from a group.
Retaliatory bullying | The reciprocal actions after other people's long-term bullying and oppression | After being bullied for few months, Tom started to bully others who are more disadvantaged than him.
Sexual bullying | Sexual bullying is any bullying behavior, whether physical or non-physical, that is based on a person’s sexuality or gender. | Alex is called "sissy" by his classmates. Laughing at girls, calling them “cleavage-displaying girls”, who has big breast.
Cyber-bullying | Cyber-bullying is done through the use of Internet technology. The above varieties of bully can be done via this except for physical bullying. | You use improper words or sentences to criticize someone you don't like publicly in the on-line chat room.

(There is only answer to every question)

1. Personal information
Q1. Gender □ (1) man □ (2) woman
Q2. Grade □ (1) freshman □ (2) junior □ (3) senior
Q3. Department □ (1) Vocational department □ (2) Comprehensive high school

2. Family ※ Please answer questions according to your real family conditions.
Q4. The type of your family □ (1) Two-parent families □ (2) Single-parent families □ (3) Grandparents-breeding family □ (4) Reformed family
Q5. What is the way your parents discipline you? □ (1) Autocracy □ (2) Democracy □ (3) Indulgence
Q6. How is your family's economic situation? □ (1) Handsome income □ (2) Decent income □ (3) Modest income □ (4) Earn peanuts
Q7. How is the situation of interaction between you and your family?
□ (1) Very good □ (2) So-so, you have a quarrel with them occasionally □ (3) You quarrel with them very often □ (4) Indifferent
Q8. How do your parents treat you? □ (1) Strict □ (2) Parents give their child what they want. □ (3) Parents treat their child like friends. □ (4) Without interaction
Q9. Whether the domestic violence happened to you or not? □ (1) Yes □ (2) No
Q10. What do you think about whether the school bullying is influenced by the domestic violence?
□ (1) Yes □ (2) No

Interaction with your peers
Q11. How is your interpersonal relationship in your class? □ (1) Well □ (2) Ordinary □ (3) Bad
Q12. How is the group living condition in your class?
□ (1) Alone □ (2) Participants don’t belong to certain group but get along well with other classmates
□ (3) Participants belong to certain group but get along well with other groups
□ (4) Participants belong to certain group but don’t have any interaction with other groups.
Q13. How is your schoolwork stress?
□ (1) Stressful □ (2) Acceptable □ (3) Stress less
Q14. How is the atmosphere of your class?
□ (1) Harmony □ (2) Unity □ (3) Intrigue □ (4) Indifference

II.
Q15. What do you do when you see the bully? □ (1) Stopping immediately □ (2) Asking the help for teachers □ (3) Ignorance
Q16. What do you think which is the best way to solve the bullying problem?
□ (1) Stopping immediately □ (2) Asking the help for teachers □ (3) Dealing with bullies □ (4) Consoling the victims
Q17. What do you think which is the best way to decrease the bullying problem?
□ (1) Don’t put others out from a group □ (2) Making a joyful atmosphere in class
□ (3) Asking the help for teachers □ (4) Taking care of the classmates

III.
Q18. Have you ever been bullied? □ (1) Yes □ (2) No
Q19. How long have you been bullied? □(1) Less than half a month □(2) Approximate a month □(3) More than a month □(4) Others

Q20. What kinds of bullying action did you often encounter?
□(1) physical bullying □(2) verbal bullying □(3) relationship bullying □(4) retaliatory bullying □(5) sexual bullying

Q21. What is your attitude toward the occurrence of bullying?
□(1) Asking the help for teachers
□(2) Asking the help for parents
□(3) An eye to an eye and a tooth to a tooth
□(4) Asking the help for classmates or friends
□(5) Silence

Q22. What response do you get when you take this attitude?
□(1) Asking the help for teachers, and problems are improved.
□(2) Asking the help for teachers, and the problems still exist.
□(3) Teachers didn’t take action.
□(4) The conflicts are more serious.
□(5) The problems are still in the same situation

Q23. What is the greatest effect on you after you are bullied? □(1) In a bad mood □(2) Be afraid of going to school. □(3) Be afraid of getting along with people. □(4) Learning effects become poor □(5) Face the problems in optimistic way. □(6) Does not matter □(7) Others