

Causes of Bullying: A Comparison of Teacher and Student Perspectives

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine any variances between teacher and student perspectives of bullying's causes. This study indicated that the perspectives of teachers and students were consistent regarding that victims' negative behaviors are the main cause of school bullying; hence, all participants tended to blame the victims. These findings have several implications. Firstly, for those who bully others for fun, teachers should enhance the definition of school bullying and ensure that students understand body boundaries. Students may be ignorant of their bullying behavior and view it as a game. Second, when relational issues cause bullying, teachers should intervene and determine the reasons for the bullying. They should also assist not only victims but bullies to improve their interpersonal relationship skills, including teaching bullies how to get along with peers that they dislike and how to deal with conflicts without violence. They should tutor victims on proper hygienic habits, the way they interact with others, etc. Increasing general awareness and bettering the bullies' and victims' negative actions will help prevent school bullying.

Keywords: school bullying, different perspectives, bullying prevention

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Introduction

School bullying is a pervasive problem in many countries (e. g., Borotrager, Davis, Bernstein, & Gorman, 2009). Based on the findings of HBSC survey, 9% of young people have been bullied at least two or three times a month at school. (Currie et al., 2011). Students suffer from mental or physical problems due to school bullying. Thus, preventing school bullying could be an urgent matter.

Researchers around the world have devoted themselves studying the issue. In the previous studies, the majority of them put emphasis on exploring and investigating the influences on bullies and victims, the roles of bullying, the association between school climate and school bullying, teachers' attitudes toward bullying (Forsberg, Samuelsson, & Thornberg, 2014; Graham, Juvonen, 2014; Thornberg, 2010; Huitsing, Lindenberg, Sainio, & Veenstra, 2014). The ones related to causes of bullying were comparatively the minority. However, understanding bullying causes could be beneficial to prevent school bullying. First, it assists teachers to notice at-risk students so that teachers would be able to prevent the bullies' action in advance. Further, it assists teachers to figure out and protect the potential victims to create a safe and peaceful learning environment. Second, the findings of the present study could be resource in pedagogical. For instance, teachers could take advantage of the findings to instruct the students to learn how to avoid involving in bullying via discussion and situational exercise. Thus, understanding the causes of school bullying is essential for bullying prevention.

According to a previous study, teenagers attributed school bullying to seven dimensions: Reaction to deviance, social positioning, work of disturbed bully, revengeful action, an amusing game, social contamination and thoughtless happening (Thornberg, 2010). Other studies related to bullying causes indicated that students viewed the appearance, weird behavior and specific characteristics such as costumes, skin color, weird speech, and being stupid or odd, as the primary reasons to be bullied. (Knutsen & Thornberg, 2011)

Compared to the previous studies, researchers mostly discussed bully causes from students' perspectives (Guerra, Sadek, & Williamson, 2012 ; Knutsen & Thornberg, 2011; Thornberg, 2010). The ones from teachers' perspectives are relatively insufficient. To eliminate the gap and expand the findings, studying the causes from teachers' perspectives could be important. Moreover, to compare the different perspective of bullying causes could be beneficial to clarify the gray area of bully that teachers ignored. Consequently, it assists teachers to use more proper strategies to deal with school bullying. Once we realized more about bullying causes, it's expected that the workshop held at school would no longer be "an introduction to bullying". That is, the content of the workshop could talk more about the approaches to deal with school bullying according to specific causes. In summary, the present study aimed to investigate the different perspectives from teachers and students and explore the most common bullying causes so as to extend the findings. Second, providing some suggestions to deal with school bullying according to the most common bullying causes.

Conclusion

The result of ABCS was showed as Table 1 in terms of teachers and students. Based on Table 5, it revealed that most teachers view “*revengeful action*” as the dominant cause ($D = -0.72$). The victims may offend the friends of bullies; consequently, bullies bully others for their friends. The following was “*disliking the victims’ behavior*” ($D = -0.69$). The behavior could attribute to the bad habits of victims. For instance, they may have such bad personal hygiene as making their seats messy, being sloppy, smelling bad, and so on. Besides, negative personality, such as being awkward, dumb or weird were included as well. (Erginoz, Alikasifoglu, Ercan et al, 2013; Thornberg, Rosenqvist, & Johansson, 2012; Thornberg, 2010; Thornberg & Knutsen, 2011) The third dominant bullying cause was “*bullying others for fun*” ($D = -0.55$). On the other hand, teachers would be less likely to view “*extorting for money and stuff*” ($D = 2.18$), “*feeling stressful*” ($D = 1.12$) and “*have something on the victims*” ($D = 0.87$) as the causes leading to school bullying. In terms of students, the top 3 dominant bully causes were “*the victims have offended the bullies*” ($D = -0.61$), “*disliking the victims’ behavior*” ($D = -0.48$), and “*bullying others for fun*” ($D = -0.46$). On the contrary, “*feeling stressful*” ($D = 0.80$), “*imitating others*” ($D = 0.51$) and “*extorting for money and stuff*” ($D = 0.44$) were the on the bottom of the rank.

Table 1. The difficulty(D) of ABCS

item	teachers	students
1. imitating others	-0.153	0.514
2. enhancing bullies' power and status	-0.072	0.074
3. extorting for money or stuff	1.282	0.442
4. bullying others for fun	-0.551	-0.463
5. love issues	0.433	-0.044
6. feeling jealous	0.234	-0.155
7. revengeful actions	-0.720	-0.150
8. finding a vent	-0.374	-0.095
9. self-protect/ don't want to be bullied	-0.246	-0.039
10. feeling stressful	1.123	0.797
11. disliking the victims' behavior	-0.690	-0.475
12. unsociable victims do not fit in with classes and/or groups well	-0.327	0.123
13. the victims have offended the bullies	-0.414	-0.612
14. have something on the victims	0.865	0.353
15. unsolved relational issues or problems between bullies and victims	-0.390	-0.272

According to the results, both teachers and students had consistent opinion to recognize “*bullying others for fun*” as well as “*disliking the victims' behavior*” as the dominant bullying causes. Nevertheless, there was one difference among them. When teachers were dealing with the conflicts among students, they found that students would stand out when their friends were picked on. Hence, it could be easier for teachers to notice the causal relationship so as to viewed “*revengeful action*” as one of the major cause. In terms of students, they involved and witnessed the process, so they may have a clearer image of the context. Therefore, they tend viewed “*the victims have offended the bullies*” as the dominant bullying causes.

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