RESEARCH PAPER

Empowering Resilience: Unveiling the Nexus of Bullying and Self-Esteem among the Students of University of Sargodha

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the relationship between experiencing bullying and self-esteem among students at the University of Sargodha. The primary objective was to assess how bullying behavior affects various dimensions of students' self-esteem, including satisfaction with self-image, confidence levels, and self-motivation. Given that self-esteem is a critical predictor of behavior, the research was grounded in the Looking Glass Self-Theory to understand the psychological impact of bullying. A quantitative, descriptive research design was employed, with data collected from 208 students within the Faculty of Social Sciences through a structured online questionnaire. The sample was drawn using multistage and convenient sampling techniques. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between experiencing bullying and self-esteem, indicating that increased bullying experiences lead to lower self-esteem. Based on these results, it is recommended that anti-bullying interventions be implemented to enhance student well-being and support their self-esteem.

| **KEYWORDS** | Behavioral Adaptability, Bullying, Labeling, Self-esteem, Victimization |

Introduction

In an ideal world, to receive education in a safe environment, students would come to educational institutions where unity and harmony thrive with a love for learning. An aura of positivism would enclose student self-esteem and an absolute respect for others would govern student demeanour. (Spade, 2007). In adolescence, the concept of self-esteem has been studied and considered as one of the important indicator of mental health. (Bandeira & Hutz., 2010). Since self-esteem is a function of such status within the peer group, the position that students occupy among their peers is very important. (Bandeira & Hutz., 2010). Peer group influence and peer group pressure also plays a part in the growth of self-esteem.

Bullying is a global problem that can now be observed in any school or educational institution. It is not just limited to one type of institution either public or private, primary or secondary, urban or rural. (Almeida.etal, 2009). Research on bullying increased dramatically on global level, from just 62 citations in PsycINFO in span of 1900–1990, to 289 in the 1990s, to 562 in span of 2000–2004. Bullying took many forms like physical, verbal and rational with long term consequences and much has been learned that it is prevalent in every school institution. (Kathleen S. B., 2007). Bullying thus can be defined as: An ongoing and deliberate misuse of power through repeated verbal, physical or social behaviour to become dominant over one or more persons who feel helpless to respond. The behaviour is often repeated and habitual; to say or call mean

and hurtful things or names, making fun (Spade, 2007), using abusive language, frightening or threating someone, repeatedly and intentionally, and often forcing them to do unwanted things–Verbal and Social Bullying which leads to Psychological Bullying; Hitting, kicking, pushing, punching, or locking someone inside a room-Physical Bullying.

Self-esteem refers to grown-up attitude about an individual's personality (Kaya & Sackes, 2004) and is a significant factor in directing the behaviour of an individual throughout the various aspects of life (Hamarta, 2004). Self-esteem is an "individual's evaluations of their own self-concept, that is, to which extent they view themselves as good, competent and decent". (Aronson, Wilson, Akert & Fehr, 2001, p. 19)h. During adolescence, social support is an important factor in the formation of self-esteem. The relationship of parents and peer group with the adolescent also supports the development of self-esteem. (Hoffman, Levy-Shiff & Ushpiz, 1988; Kulaksizoglu, 2001).

Camila & Marluce (2013) aimed to explore and describe bullying experiences and self-esteem, and their frequencies. It was found out in the study that as a common occurrence on different levels, this phenomenon is representing a fact which is observable in all educational institutions. A research study examined the relationship between bullying and self-esteem. It primarily focused on the self-esteem of victims and the results indicated that students who were victimized had significantly lower self-esteem than those who were not victimized. (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). There were studies which also found out that the students who bully had higher self-esteem than those who do not bully. (Kaukiainen et al., 2002). According to Rosenberg M (1989), students with low self-esteem get involved in delinquent behaviours as a form of revenge against the society that contempt them and also as a way to obtain self-esteem. Olweus and Farrington conducted psychological tests on victims who experienced bullying into their twenties and their thirties. Olweus found out that those children who were bullied during their years in secondary school had higher levels of depression and lower levels of self- esteem in their early twenties even though they were no longer being victimized. These studies showed that the self-esteem of individuals victimized during their school years tends to remain relatively low into their adulthood years. (Boyle, 2003)

Literature Review

Bullying is an ongoing problem and now has become a part of modern society. In today's world, numbers of students being bullied are alarmingly increasing. Bullying not only affects the students being bullied but also has a negative impact on their self-esteem. Bullying stress on the body of victim which results in a variety of health issues having long term adverse effects on behaviour of students. (Copeland, 2013). Sapouna & Wolke (2013) stated that self- esteem and social connections are related to emotional and behavioral adaptability in victims of bullying. Due to bullying experiencing, the victims of bullying limit themselves and try to avoid being social. In addition, this affects their emotions. The victims of bullying tend to experience a wide range of emotions, feeling like frustrated, helpless, vulnerable, low energy levels, angry, lonely, and isolated from their family and peers. Students who were victims of frequent bullying often experience poor psychological outcomes at midlife, including depression, mood swings, and anxiety disorders. Each of these outcomes consecutively weakens their self-esteem day by day. This low self-esteem is specified by low confidence level, low class performance resulting in poor academic records, relationship difficulties, low satisfaction with self-image and helplessness. (Spade, 2007) As a result, family and other relationships are also likely to deteriorate. (Selekman & Vessey, 2004).

Many researches have discussed the link between bullying and self-esteem across different educational settings. For instance, in the survey conducted by Tsaousis and

Zavogiannis in 2020, the participants who got bullied online had lower self-esteem compared to the participants who did not experience cyberbullying. Likewise, Kowalski et al (2019) conducted a study to determine that victims of bullying in school stake experience low self-esteem and these extend to adulthood. Thus, in the university environment, Lemkin and Moeller's (2021) study showed that bullying experiences during college are linked to declines in self-esteem and higher levels of psychological distress. Therefore it can be concluded that bullying should be considered as a massive factor that affects self esteem of the students.

Consequently, as with many other effects of bullying, it should be noted that this factor varies depending on certain aspects, such as, for instance, the type of bullying experienced, personal characteristics, and available social support. For instance, theCognitive Interpretation Theory posits that; increased self-esteem could mean that the effects of bullying may vary depending on the level of social support of the bullied persons for instance, the bullied persons could be comfortable with a lot of social support hence; no much psychological risk to their self-esteem. On the other hand, internally less supported students can be said to be at the heartbeat of getting a raw deal from bullying. Also, the manner in which people manage to attenuate bullying also dictate its effects on the self-esteem levels. Thus, the strategies, including seeking social support, engaging in problem solving, positive reframing can help to minimise the negative effects of bullying and safeguard self esteem (Prabu et al. , 2020).

In the modern world, there is an increasing focus on the protective factors that would help the victim and prevent him/her from getting worse after the bullying. Depression is a condition where one is preoccupied with hopelessness, a feeling that has the opposite of what is regarded, nowadays, as an important aspect of mental health: that is, resilience. According to the previous studies, it has been revealed that resilience can moderate the effects of bullying by having a direct effect in the bullying and victim impacts self-esteem level by the revealing that the high level of resilience minimizes the impacts of self-esteem among the bullying victims (Reed et al. , 2021). Supportive and resilience-based approaches, including the promotion of coping strategies, positive self-images, as well as the maintenance of healthy friendships are also crucial for mitigating the deleterious effects of bullying on self-esteem (Donnelly & Myhill, 2020). Thus, the university environment can be viewed as the setting where resilience may be developed and enhanced among students. In this capacity, it can be concluded that universities have the potential to perform a prophylactic function in the process of the consolidation of resilience, as well as to establish supportive conditions for the development of students without the encouragement of precluded negative behaviors or bullying. These could include attempts that will discourage bullying in schools such as anti-bullying campaigns that are supported by friendly programs from peers and counseling services, which may facilitate change in perception to other people thus decreasing the proportion of bullying instances and the general detrimentary effects on self-esteem. Additionally, the University should try and ensure that the programs for building up resilience are included in the curriculum as this prepares students on how to handle university life and also, helps to shield their self-esteem from bullying (Cowie & Myers, 2022)

Theoretical Framework

Many of the popular concepts and theories about self-esteem are based on the theory called the "Looking Glass Self Theory". At the beginning of 20th century, this theory was proposed by Charles Horton Cooley which states that the individual and society do not exist separately but that one is the product of the other. The theory asserts that individuals discover their appearance through their reflection in the mirror, that is, view themselves from the perspective of others. They learn about their personality by

looking at the reaction of others and integrate these perceptions into their existing self-concept. (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). If several people surrounds them, individuals believe that they're famous, in other words, how they see themselves is strongly influenced by how others see them. (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Therefore, this is important because the amount of perceived acceptance acquired from others may be integrated into an individual's personal feelings of self-worth and self-esteem (Murray, Holmes & Griffin, 2000). The present research study, hence, aimed to explore the relationship between experiencing bullying and level of self-esteem of students and to describe the possible long-term effects of experiencing bullying on victim's self-esteem during student life at university. The main aim of this study was to determine that if there is a relationship between experiencing bullying and degree of self-esteem in the university students. The independent variable was the degree of bullying experiences, which includes the frequency rate at which a student was bullied and the level of those bullying experiences that happened to the student while being at university. The dependent variable was the level of self-esteem for the student, how it get affected by experiencing bullying and how the degree of bullying experiences differ by gender and different variables.

Hypothesis

Ho: Bullying and Self Esteem of students are not significantly associated

H1: Bullying and Self Esteem of students are significantly associated

Material and Methods

This study used a quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design and a cross-sectional survey method to assess the relationship between variables. The population comprised of the 4,632 students studying in the Faculty of Social Sciences in the University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan. A sample size of 208 respondents, constituting 18% of the entire population was arrived at by using a sample size calculator. For data collection, Non-Probability Purposive Sampling was used to conduct this research with Convenience Sampling implemented because of changes to the mode of delivery due to Covid-19 among learning institutions. Multistage sampling was used to reduce Bias while forming the Clusters of Social Sciences Departments. Closed ended questionnaires were employed, and the tool was pre-tested to ensure that the questions were well understood. Expert review and pilot testing were used in this study to determine the validity of the questionnaire while SPSS 23 was used to determine the reliability of the of the data by calculating Cronbach's Alpha. The statistical analysis of the data was carried out using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 23 and involved the usage of both descriptive and inferential analysis. The principles of respect for the participants' rights were observed; ethical approval was received, and informed consent was obtained with the promise of anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' data and their right to withdraw at any stage of the research process if they wished to do so. Data was secluded and only utilized in, and for, the study regarding the case.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Background Variables

Sr#	Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	**Age**		
	18-21	76	36.5
	22-25	110	52.9
	26-29	18	8.7

	30-33	4	1.9
2	**Gender**		
	Male	132	63.5
	Female	76	36.5
3	**Education**		
	Bachelors	131	63.0
	Masters	61	29.3
	M.Phil.	15	7.2
	PHD.	01	0.5
4	**Family Type**		
	Nuclear	127	61.1
	Joint	75	36.1
	Extended	06	2.9
5	**Area of Living**		
	Urban	97	53.4
	Rural	111	46.6

Table 1 is about the frequency and percentage of background variables. It depicts that majority 52.9% respondents belongs to age group 22-25, second majority 36.5% respondents belongs to age group 18-21 while 8.7% respondents belongs to age group 26-29, only 1.9% respondents were in the age group of 33-35. Out of 208 respondents, 63.5% were male while 36.5% were female. Education wise division of the respondents told us that 63.0% respondents were doing Bachelor's degree, 29.3% were doing Masters, and 7.2% respondents were M.Phil. While only 0.5% respondents have PH.D. Respondents belonged to 3 types of families, i.e. from Nuclear family (61.1%), Joint family (36.1%) and Extended family (2.9%). 53.4% respondents were from urban area and 46.4% respondents were living in rural area.

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Self Esteem Items

Sr. No.	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
1.	I feel confident about my abilities.		
	Not At All	6	2.9
	A Little Bit	9	4.3
	Somewhat	52	25.0
	Very Much	79	38.0
	Extremely	62	29.8
2.	I am worried about whether I am regarded as a success or failure.		
	Not At All	15	7.2
	A Little Bit	32	15.4
	Somewhat	88	42.3
	Very Much	48	23.1
	Extremely	25	12.0
3.	I feel satisfied with the way my body looks right now.		
	Not At All	27	13.0
	A Little Bit	18	8.7
	Somewhat	46	22.1
	Very Much	59	28.4
	Extremely	58	27.9
4.	I feel frustrated about my performance.		

	Not At All	31	14.9
	A Little Bit	30	14.4
	Somewhat	65	31.3
	Very Much	39	18.8
	Extremely	43	20.6
5.	I feel that I am having trouble understanding things that I read.		
	Not At All	19	9.1
	A Little Bit	50	24.0
	Somewhat	59	28.4
	Very Much	46	22.1
	Extremely	34	16.3
6.	I feel that others respect and admire me.		
	Not At All	21	10.1
	A Little Bit	24	11.5
	Somewhat	44	21.2
	Very Much	76	36.5
	Extremely	43	20.7
7.	I am dissatisfied with my weight.		
	Not At All	46	22.1
	A Little Bit	44	21.2
	Somewhat	54	26.0
	Very Much	33	15.9
	Extremely	31	14.9
8.	I feel self-conscious.		
	Not At All	29	13.9
	A Little Bit	26	12.5
	Somewhat	77	37.0
	Very Much	53	25.5
	Extremely	23	11.1
9.	I feel as smart as others.		
	Not At All	38	18.3
	A Little Bit	32	15.4
	Somewhat	64	30.8
	Very Much	53	25.5
	Extremely	21	10.1
10.	I feel displeased with myself.		
	Not At All	63	30.3
	A Little Bit	49	23.5
	Somewhat	47	22.5
	Very Much	39	18.8
	Extremely	10	4.8
11.	I feel good about myself.		
	Not At All	9	4.3
	A Little Bit	17	8.2
	Somewhat	61	29.3
	Very Much	75	36.1
	Extremely	46	22.1
12.	I am pleased with my appearance right now.		

	Not At All	26	12.5
	A Little Bit	18	8.7
	Somewhat	48	23.1
	Very Much	68	32.7
	Extremely	48	23.1
13.	I am worried about what other people think of me.		
	Not At All	58	27.9
	A Little Bit	45	21.6
	Somewhat	47	22.6
	Very Much	36	17.3
	Extremely	22	10.6
14.	I feel confident that I understand things.		
	Not At All	26	12.5
	A Little Bit	26	12.5
	Somewhat	39	18.8
	Very Much	83	39.9
	Extremely	34	16.3
15.	I feel inferior to others at this moment.		
	Not At All	59	28.4
	A Little Bit	36	17.3
	Somewhat	65	31.3
	Very Much	32	15.4
	Extremely	16	7.7
16.	I feel unattractive.		
	Not At All	74	35.6
	A Little Bit	51	24.5
	Somewhat	39	18.8
	Very Much	36	17.3
	Extremely	8	3.8
17.	I feel concerned about the impression I am making.		
	Not At All	28	13.5
	A Little Bit	28	13.5
	Somewhat	84	40.4
	Very Much	50	24.0
	Extremely	18	8.7
18.	I feel that I have less scholastic ability right now than others.		
	Not At All	20	9.6
	A Little Bit	58	27.9
	Somewhat	70	33.7
	Very Much	39	18.8
	Extremely	21	10.1
19.	I feel like I'm not doing well.		
	Not At All	35	16.8
	A Little Bit	50	24.0
	Somewhat	60	28.8
	Very Much	46	22.1
	Extremely	17	8.2

20.	I am worried about looking foolish.		
	Not At All	66	31.7
	A Little Bit	32	15.4
	Somewhat	56	26.9
	Very Much	37	17.8
	Extremely	17	8.2

The table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents' self-perceptions regarding confidence, concerns about success or failure, and body satisfaction. A significant portion of respondents feel confident about their abilities, with the majority reporting feeling "Very Much" (38.0%) or "Extremely" (29.8%) confident. Only a small percentage feel "Not At All" (2.9%) or "A Little Bit" (4.3%) confident, indicating a generally high level of self-confidence among the participants. In contrast, concerns about being regarded as a success or failure are more evenly distributed. While a combined 42.3% feel "Somewhat" worried, a notable 23.1% feel "Very Much" worried, and 12.0% feel "Extremely" worried. This indicates that a considerable number of respondents experience significant anxiety about their success or failure. Regarding body satisfaction, a large portion of respondents feel positive, with 28.4% feeling "Very Much" and 27.9% feeling "Extremely" satisfied. However, 13.0% feel "Not At All" satisfied, highlighting a disparity in body image perceptions among the group.

Table 3
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Bullying Items

Sr.	Statement	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Do You feel safe going to university?		
	Yes	195	93.8
	No	13	6.3
2.	Have You observed or witnessed bullying in your university?		
	Yes	92	44.2
	No	116	55.8
3.	Have you ever heard about bullying in your circle?		
	Yes	112	56.8
	no	96	46.2
4.	Have you ever experienced bullying?		
	Yes	72	35.6
	No	136	65.4
5.	Have you been teased inside of university?		
	yes	72	35.6
	No	136	65.4
6.	Have you been teased about what you look like?		
	Yes	68	32.7
	No	140	67.3
7.	Does anyone ever laughed at what you're wearing		
	Yes	57	27.4
	No	151	72.6
8.	Has anyone called you with bad or rough names?		
	Yes	80	38.5
	No	128	61.5

9.	Has anyone humiliated you with abusive language?		
	Yes	63	30.3
	No	145	69.7
10	Does anyone Told you that they don't want to be your friend?		
	Yes	48	23.1
	No	160	76.9
11.	Do you feel not included by fellows in groups?		
	Yes	55	26.4
	No	153	73.6
12.	Have you been kicked, pushed, or punched, by someone on purpose?		
	Yes	41	19.7
	No	167	80.3
13.	Have you been locked in room by someone on purpose?		
	Yes	30	14.4
	No	178	85.6
14.	Have you been threatened in any way?		
	Yes	49	23.6
	No	159	76.4
15.	Are you afraid to go to university because of bullying?		
	Yes	41	19.7
	No	167	80.3

The table 3 provides a frequency and percentage distribution of responses to various bullying-related items among university students. The majority of students (93.8%) feel safe going to university, suggesting a generally secure environment. However, 44.2% have observed or witnessed bullying, and 56.8% have heard about bullying in their circle, indicating that bullying is a significant concern. Despite the high perception of safety, 35.6% of students have personally experienced bullying, and an equal percentage have been teased inside the university, highlighting the prevalence of bullying behaviors. Specific forms of bullying, such as teasing about appearance (32.7%), being laughed at for clothing (27.4%), and being called bad names (38.5%), affect a notable portion of students. Physical bullying, such as being kicked, pushed, or punched, was reported by 19.7% of respondents, while 14.4% have been locked in a room on purpose, and 23.6% have faced threats. Additionally, 19.7% of students fear going to university because of bullying. These findings underscore the need for enhanced anti-bullying measures and support systems within the university to address both verbal and physical bullying.

Table 4
Hypotheses Testing

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
PearsonChi-Square	820.962a	588	.000
Likelihood Ratio	438.336	588	1.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.266	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	208		

Critical value (605.667), Level of Significance (0.05)

Table 4 contained the results of hypothesis testing by using non parametric Chi square test. Before applying Chi square test all items related to Bullying and Self-Esteem were computed and then calculated through chi square test. From the above results we can reject our Null hypothesis on the basis of P-Value (0.000) as it is less than level of significance i.e. 0.05. Null hypothesis can also be rejected through test statistics (820.962) because it is greater than tabulated value i.e. 605.667. Hence, we can concluded that both Bullying and Self-Esteem of students were strongly associated. Bullying significantly lower the self-esteem of the students, which resulted into poor confidence and lower academic performance.

Discussions

The current research study examined the research objectives concerning the impact of experiencing bullying upon student's self-esteem. Research has displayed that student experiencing bullying do have a significant impact on a student's self-esteem and their psychosocial adjustment.(Cannon et al., 2001; Corsaro & Eder, 1993; and Nansel et al., 2001). In the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland and Australia, majority of research pertaining to student bullying behaviours on student self-perception and self-concept (Austin & Joseph, 1996; Johnson & Lewis, 1999; Neary & Joseph, 1994; O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001; and Rigby & Slee, 1999) has been conducted. This research was conducted primarily on students in the university level. Minimal research has been conducted on the impact of student experiencing bullying in university and their self-esteem. More recent researches has started to be conducted on university level due to the increase of school violence across the nation since the turn of the century, but this research has focused primarily on the impact of student experiencing bullying and to test the evidence within previously unstudied specified area. The literature has shown that student-bullying behaviours affect student psychological adjustments such as self- perception, self-concept, self-worth and self-esteem. From the perspective of a victim of bullying experiences, during this study, it was found out that bullying behaviours have demonstrated a negative impact on student self-esteem (Cannon et al., 2001, and O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001).

Literature was found on the study of adults who had experienced bullying behaviours as a child (Tritt & Duncan, 1997). This research found that those adults who had experienced bullying behaviours in their childhood, either as the bully or as the victim, were lonelier than those who had not experienced any bullying behaviours. In relation to these studies previously mentioned, the present study focused on finding the frequency of bullying experiences including the kinds of bullying most frequently experienced, the location of the bullying experiences, how long the bullying lasted, and by how many students it was done. However, this study also tried to find a relation between students who experienced greater bullying experiences and the levels of their self-esteem. O'Moore and Kirkham (2001) attempted to answer this question as well when they conducted a massive study on school students in Ireland using a modified version of the Olweus BVQ and the Piers-Harris Self Concept Scale. While the study of O'Moore and Kirham (2001) most closely resembles the present study. As a result, this study provided evidence that the relation between student bullying behaviors and self-esteem among university students would be worthy of further exploration.

The purpose of the present study was similar to O'Moore and Kirkham's (2001) in that it attempted to narrow down the concept of bullying, and linking it specifically to self-esteem of students. This study was also an attempt to investigate whether or not university students and staff were taking action against bullying, if occurred, and if students felt safe to go to university. Due to the increased awareness of violence and bullying in universities, it is important to know if bullying is an issue of concern that

might bring about future violence within the university impede student learning in unsafe environments that create fear and intimidation. Consequently, the educational-learning environment significantly impacts student self-esteem and his or her overall performance at university. Students cannot be expected to perform effectively when they feel threatened or unsafe, and are afraid of humiliation and degradation. They must know that university is a safe place to be in order to learn. For this reason, it was imperative to expand the body of literature that existed on student bullying behaviours and self- esteem, giving evidence that supported a relationship that might co-exist between experiencing bullying behaviours and selfesteem and explore ways to improve the overall education-learning environment.

Conclusion

Experiencing bullying constitutes lower level of self-esteem among students. Bullying not only affects their self-esteem but also have negative effects on their health and well-being. In addition to poor health, they go through isolation, depression and anxiety disorders. Bullying also affects students' academic performance because they are not able to pay much attention towards studies and are unable to maintain their grades due to continues bullying. It also affects their confidence level, lowers the level of self-satisfaction and low self-esteem. Bullying not only affects the individual being bullied but also has a negative impact on the people living in same environment. People live in fear that they will be the next victims of this horrific act. The viewpoint that everyone goes through it at some point in their life and treating bullying as an accepted norm, has only aided in the continued rise of bullying among individuals. Bullying is a serious issue that has various causes and leave severe effects. Most students targeted by bullies can overcome bullying if provided with proper support and intervention and things can get back to normal. However, if bullying is left unchecked, the victims have to pay a high cost in long-term consequences. An increased level of bullying behaviours leads to lower levels of self-esteem of students. For a better understanding of bullying and its relationship with student's self-esteem, there is a need for additional research work on the family dynamics of students and other situations of vulnerability. (Camila & Marluce, 2013). According to Lopes (2005), reducing the prevalence of bullying in educational institutions can be the most effective public health measure for the 21st century. It is recommended that the university should address bullying behaviors in order to bring a positive, safe and secure educational environment where students can thrive for learning and respect for others abounds. Different policies and numerous programs regarding bullying can be implemented to address bullying behaviors. For a better understanding of bullying and its relationship with student's self-esteem, there is a need for additional research work on the family dynamics of students and other situations of vulnerability (Camila C. B., & Marluce T.O., 2013). According to Lopes (2005), reducing the prevalence of bullying in educational institutions can be the most effective public health measure for the 21st century. Some appropriate solutions includes the implementation of character education and student mediation programs, improvement of security measures and supervisions, promotion of parental awareness and involvement. The main limitation was that institutions were shifted to online mode, due to which it was a critical challenge to approach respondents.

Recommendations

- Implement targeted anti-bullying programs within university settings to address the specific needs of students in Social Sciences.

- Increase mental health support services for students who have experienced bullying to enhance their self-esteem and overall well-being.

- Integrate resilience-building workshops into the university curriculum to help students cope with the psychological impacts of bullying.

- The convenience sampling method limits the generalizability of the findings to the broader student population.

- The study was conducted within a single university, which may not represent the experiences of students in other institutions.

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