PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS FACED BY BULLIED STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract:

Parental experiences with bullying in Pakistan are a topic that has received very little attention. There is a knowledge gap on how parents perceive bullying that affects both academic research and the creation of programmes that effectively reduce bullying. In this study, data from responses to a series of open-ended questions on parents' perceptions of and experiences with bullying in the Punjab city of Okara are presented. Parents self-reported their degree of worry about bullying, their opinions on the causes of bullying, the scope of bullying at their children's schools, and their approaches to talking to their kids about bullying. Findings show that the majority of parents: 1) see bullying as a problem and are somewhat afraid of bullying harming their kid, 2) are sure their child is not informing them about every instance of bullying they encounter, and 3) are more than eager to speak with school administration when their children are being bullied. According to the findings, parents' concerns about bullying and its negative effects persist, and attempts to get kids to tell an adult about it don't always work. Greater parental participation with (and reinforcement of) bullying prevention techniques that kids learn in school will thus boost bullying prevention training. There is also discussion on the implications for research and policy.

Keywords: Bullying, Parental engagement, school students

1. Introduction:

Bullying is a permanent problem since the formation of schools. In 1530 first time the word bully is used. In 1857 Thomas Hughes's published a novel “Tom brown school days” that’s about school bullying. First scholarly journal article about school bullying have been written in 1897. Dan olweus is considered the pioneer in bullying research. Bullying has been defined as consecutive aggression that happens to powerless by the powerful. (Olweus 1993) Bullying has become one of the most significant issues concerning school children, resulting not only in school violence but lifelong impact on the victims. Bullying is an instance of aggressive behavior, which is conduct, intended to cause harm to another. While there isn't unanimous agreement on what constitutes bullying, there is some agreement that it involves aggressive behavior that also meets the following two criteria: (1) Repetition—it occurs more than once—and (2) A power imbalance makes it challenging for the victim to protect themselves (Olweus, 1999). The phrase "systematic misuse of power" provides a brief definition (Smith & Sharp, 1994). Therefore, to stop bullying in schools and assist the victims, study and policy-making are required. It has often been discovered that victimization has serious effects on kids. The environment of bullying causes the victims to feel fear and anxiety. When compared to other kids, they exhibit much lower attendance rates, avoidance behaviours, and school skipping. Additionally, they occasionally exhibit excessive hostility, such as carrying a weapon to school for protection or inflicting harm on the bullies as retaliation (Smokowski, & Kopasz, 2005). All of these things have a adverse effect on kids academic achievement (Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006). Additionally, victims have relational problems as well as internalizing and externalizing
problems. According to Reijntjes, Kamphuis, Prinzie, and Telch (2010), internalizing issues include anxiety disorders, depression, loneliness, withdrawal, and psychosomatic ailments (Sourander, et al., 2007). Provocative victims, who provoke and tease to get a reaction are likely to have externalizing problems, for instance, delinquency Relational problems faced by the victims include poor peer-support (as they have poor social and communication skills) and poor social problem-solving (Wolke, Woods, Bloomfield, & Karstad, 2000). Contrary to some common misconceptions, bullies are not anxious people or young people with extremely poor self-esteem. Instead, they are aggressively behaving kids and teenagers who frequently start conflicts it's thought that they lack empathy, have trouble controlling their impulses, and get pleasure from hurting others (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Bullies typically possess greater physical strength and size than their victims. Bullying is more than just dangerous, despite what everyone believes. As we can see, bullying is the primary reason why our world is becoming increasingly deadly. The goal of bullying is to take things and govern the school. Bullying in the classroom has a significant negative impact on instructors, particularly for the children who are participating. Since ancient times, bullying has been a problem in schools, often leading to catastrophic outcomes for the victims. Bullying has been the subject of various attempts to stop it, but the cycle still exists. This is due to the fact that the bully, who is the cause of the issue, needs to receive more attention.

2. Teachers' views on parents' involvement in raising children

In instruction to get a more complete image of the problem, peer pressure, school harmony, paternalism, and parent-child communication are all relevant and necessary components, according to research on bullying in schools. To develop home-school cooperation and lower the likelihood of bullying incidents, parents' discipline and their supportive role in raising children are among them the findings numerous studies also showed that parent-child relationships with bullied children were worse than those of their peers, including parent-child neglect (Abbas et al. 2016).

The victims were more likely to have difficulty talking to their parents about difficulties, believe that their family is not paying attention to them, and lack trust in their teacher or vice versa (Bjereld et al. 2017). But studies also shown that parents that use an authoritarian or rigid parenting approach have a positive effect on bullying (Lee & Wong, 2009). It is possible to hasten the effect by concentrating on effective child rearing (Bjerel et al. 2017)

Therefore, dealing with or preventing the occurrence of such incidents before they occur requires a fairly extensive understanding of teachers on bullying and the extent to which they contend that parental involvement in a child's life contributes to bullying at school (Glenn & Espelage, 2018). But it is also clear that one's perceptions are formed on the basis of one's understanding and beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). Teachers' understanding of and conviction that, as stated in Journal of Educational Research, Dept. of Education, IUB, Pakistan (Vol. 23 No. 1) 2020 25, teachers' perception of parents' roles in child rearing is directly related to school
bullying more than any other factor plays an important role in their ability to deal with bullying incidents.

In Pakistan bullying is least understood issue. Our schools are bullying factories where our children have to suffer physically, psychological and emotional. Children spend more time in schools than at home and don’t have choice and have to attend school. So it’s parent’s duty to address this problem positively. There is bullying and jeer in all places which compel adolescent and young children to self-murder. (Personal communication Anonymous high school teacher may 19, 2006)

Batsche and knoff 1994 investigated bullies do not have kindness they feel immense pleasure when they hurt victims. Bullies "browse" in order to deliberately decide who will be their next victim, according to Fried and Fried 1996.

3. Statement of the Problem

Bullying in schools is real issue for many children in Pakistan. Researcher has been observing this issue from school age. Many forms of bullying is happening in our schools such as criticizing, taunting, mocking, threatening, blaming, looking down upon, humiliating cited research investigates that parents who are incompatible, nonrestrictive and don’t have command dominance on their children encourage bullying behaviors. So its parent’s first and foremost duty to empower their children so they stop believing the bullies. In our society parents lack parenting skills they believe rigid and traditional parenting ways. Parents need to be able to spot the signs that children are being bullied.

No matter how strong a child is bullying can have many negative effects so parents must have back to their children. Researchers are advising parents more frequently to report bullying to the school and work cooperatively with the school to remedy the issue. Bullying occurrence varies from nation to nation and from school to school within nations. Bullying does, however, undoubtedly happen in all comprehensive schools, regardless of the grade level. Bullying is much common in schools so the problem is how parents address bullying when their kids are being bullied at school? . what strategies they use to cope this?

Thus, a wide range of subjects are still up for discussion from the parent's point of view. Only a small amount of study asks parents if they believe bullying is a problem, how afraid they are that their kid will be bullied, or what coping mechanisms they use with their children when they are bullied.

4. Objectives

- To investigates the nature of common bullying in schools.
- To explore the role of parents in addressing bullying faced by students.
5. Research Questions

1. Do parents worry about their kids being harassed at school?
2. Are parents concerned about bullying? What magnitude is the issue, if any?
3. Do parents think that all of the bullying that occurs in their children's lives is being reported?
4. What causes bullying in the eyes of parents?

6. Significance of the Study

In every country bullying exists in schools. The environment of schools is disturbed because of bullies. Schools train future generations one of the most important aim of school is to promote core values, ethics, and goodness in society. Our administrations, parents give least importance to this problem schools are turned into trauma centers researcher has served in a teaching sector and seen many bullying issues noticed teachers are also not professionals they humiliates children without knowing that it will affect their mental health. So this study will help the parents to understand the complexity and its root cause in schools.

7. Methodology

This study is based on qualitative method. Researcher conducted the interviews of parents of bullied students. Data is gathered on a certain topic of study as part of the qualitative research process known as induction, and from this data the researcher develops various thoughts and theories.

8. Data Collection

The researcher used interview as a tool for collection of data from parents. The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher and modified and verified by the supervisor. A well-constructed and interview based questionnaire titled “parental engagement in addressing the problems faced by bullied students in schools” was used to get the desired information. With the participants, a semi-structured interview was done with the goal of determining the nature of the problem, the causes of victimisation, and the effects on the participants.

9. Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size was taken on the basis of purposive sampling and the qualitative approach was utilized for this study.

10. Data Analysis

10.1. Finding 1

The majority of parents said that their kids didn't always notify them about bullying.
Participant 1 said “I am not concerned. My children are quite good at defending themselves.”

Parent 2 narrated ” I have permitted my kids that don’t complain manage at your own bully back to bullies”

10.1.1. Symptoms if child is being bullied

Participant 7 showed much concern I observed the symptoms that my daughter has problem with appetite, sleep and mood.

Parent 9 said “ my child came home depressed I inquired than he told me that his class fellows made fun of him because of his hieght and chubby face “Take a close look. Observe the emotional state of the children, while some people might not directly communicate their worries. Watch out for the following warning signs:

- Unknown bruises, fractures, Grazes are examples of physical marks Attempting to remain in the company of adults
- Not getting enough sleep and possibly experiencing nightmares
- Experiencing headaches, stomachaches, or other physical ailments
- Frequently feeling upset after using their phone or going online (without a valid reason)
- Developing an unusual level of secrecy, especially when it comes to their online activities
- Acting aggressively or displaying rage Fear of going to school or participating in school activities
- Being nervous, anxious, or overly cautious
- Loss or damage of clothing, gadgets, or other personal possessions; persistent requests for money;
- Poor academic performance
- Absence from school or contacting to obtain a leave of absence

10.1.2. Build Self Confidence

Parent 1 shared “Assist your youngster in developing self-esteem. Persuade your child to enroll in classes or participate in community activities that they enjoy. This will also help you gain confidence and make people with similar interests.”

Parent 1 said “I Talk to my daughter mostly , to boost her confidence and expand her own positive area of acceptance. “

Parent 6 told “I feel the best approach is to make your own kids stronger and to teach them that bullying does not make them weaker. Ignore bullies as much as possible since they are not worth worrying about"
Participant 1 told that her child is bullied from teacher. "Parents believe that their fees was not paid it pained me that why they punished a little soul he was only 8 years old I to be more compassionate and accountable for hurting childr

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son had not been subjected to physical violence but rather verbal abuse and social exclusion.

Parent 1 "it mostly happens [the school] did not take it seriously.

My experience is worst I complained many times but nobody responded Schools consider

the act of bullying worthless’’

Participant 6 raised a question “Why do schools care so much about mental health yet do little to address bullying issues? At least once a week, I learned from the mom that the school is doing nothing while the youngster kid is being bullied. and that the school is doing nothing to help. It's so horrible that they're thinking about moving just to get away from it. That should never be done to a youngster."

Parent 5 said "My child is doing perfectly fine so far, but I don't believe the school will be able to handle it until I make a scene and pursue the matter, such as getting a bully expelled from a class my son is in”

"Participant 1 told that her child is bullied from teacher. “Parents believe that their children are safe in schools. Some teachers, however, are more prejudiced and harsh toward children. Children frequently face problems similar to those she described but are afraid to share them with their parents. Any complaint makes the teacher even harsher. Teachers must be trained to be more compassionate and accountable for hurting children's sensitive feelings.”

Participant 2 also shared the problem ‘ my son was made to stand in the class because his fees was not paid it pained me that why they punished a little soul he was only 8 years old I urgently managed his fees because of this mean behavior of school management ‘

PARENT 4 said “I am scared Because my daughter is a calm, bashful young lady, I'm also worried that. She won't explain what's happening to me.’

10.1.3. Schools are Failed to Address Bullying

Most parents claimed that the instructors ignored them and seemed to take very little action, which increased the risk to their kid by enabling the bullying to continue. Due to these worries, parents frequently felt powerless to influence the situation and believed that barriers separated them from the school, which bred mistrust.

Anger stems from parents' accusations that the school did not always believe them when they said their child had been a victim or that the school did not think the circumstance was as dire as the parent imagined.

One parent said that her concerns were dismissed, and she thought this was because her son had not been subjected to physical violence but rather verbal abuse and social exclusion.

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10.1.4. Untrained teaching staff

Participant 6 shared the incident happened with her son ‘ my son was brightest student the class teachers daughter enrolled in his class. Every teacher gave her extra favor and she was selected in every activity . she bullied my son I didn’t respond on time and my son lost self-confidence ‘ she than added “I don’t know what is wrong with this generation they are bunch of privileged spoiled brats I swear. It’s disgusting how bullying is so easy acceptable in school and teachers can’t do much because of the parents. Please I urge you to take this matter seriously talk to the administration and talk to the teachers.” Parent 3 Said “ Changing school will teach children to escape. Talk to parents on parent teachers meeting. Talk to administration. Teach your children to answer bullies.”

Parent 9 told the horrible story “my daughter is not good in mathematics her teacher called him dumb, looser,’ it’s the teacher’s duty not to discourage children in front of other children. Teachers must be strict but nurture them up instead of letting them down” parent 1 shared views about

“Each youngster has potential; it simply has to be recognized and developed before they can shine! Every child is a topper in their specific skill, not in their numbers; seek for their skill and their grin, and your numbers will increase! The figures may not be the best, but they will be better than previously. I have always advised my pupils that they should never look at the grades of the following student; instead, they should look at their own scores from the day before and attempt to improve; nothing else counts.”

Parent 1 described “ instructors in our country are not trained in psychology, compassion, or love. They have merely graduated and nothing else. They enjoy judging students based on their heartfelt capacity rather than their particular quality, individual attractiveness, or individual personality. Bullying at school is therefore the first experience of mental trauma for all children, regardless of whether they are brilliant, average, or below average students.”

10.1.5. The harmful effects of bullying

Bullying may have a long-term negative impact on the psychology of those who are bullied. Bullying has a number of detrimental effects, such as harm to mental health, substance abuse, and suicide. It's crucial to speak with children to find out whether bullying or another issue is a worry.

What if the kid you tormented in school grew up to be the sole surgeon capable of saving your life? Mather, Lynette

10.2. Finding 2
Different parents' responses to bullying were seen. Six key topics were determined by the researcher after a thorough debate.

- Speak with the bully;
- Speak with children;
- Speak with management;
- Ignore/do nothing;
- Teach children about bullying;
- Speak with the instructor or school counsellor.

10.2.1. Speak With The School Councilor

Parent 5 promised to “Discuss with them (my child) the bully's likely intentions, make it clear that the bullying is the issue, and discuss with my kid about how to react." If the cyber bullying was extreme, I would speak with the school's administration or, if I knew them, the bully's parents. Child 3 responded, "After resolving the problem with my child, I would speak with the principal. I had a long discussion with the administration about this when it happened while he was in sixth grade. As a result, the school schedule for the next year underwent a number of changes.

Parent 1 said “my daughter was bullied by her teacher I directly contacted the principal’

Parent 9 said ‘realized that mothers don't give a damn until it affects their child. Go to the administrator. Make your child a strong person. The world is cruel, and we must prepare our children for what is to come. “

10.2.2. Educate the child about bullying

Educate your children on the subject of bullying. Your children will be able to spot bullying more quickly once they understand what it is, whether it is occurring to them or to someone else.

Parent 10 suggested I would like to ask all mothers to please teach their children that bullying is wrong, that it's not cool to be mean, that it's not nice to make fun of people, and that if you see someone who is alone or being bullied, stop your friends even if you're not directly involved, stand up for the child who is being bullied, give them moral support, and be friends with them. it's sad to see so many children go through this, and I realise I've always taught my daughter”

Parent 7 said “TEASING leaves scars, even if you say "I'm sorry," the pain is never erased, it is permanent! TEACH children the consequences of saying hurtful things and instead teach tolerance, love, and respect for others regardless of who they are or how they look.
We must teach our children to be more open and respectful of others. Only if parents educate themselves and explain it to their children will it be possible. Second, administrators/teachers should play an important role in this by enlightening students through role playing or storytelling.

10.2.3. Take Action

Participant 8 said this first concern as a parent is how to make your child feel safe at school and eager to return. Bullying should be combated with a zero tolerance policy that includes parents as well as school administration.

Parent 7 shared "I would, first and foremost, find the parents of that youngster and contact them to inform them that their child is bothering my child." It wouldn't be a fun conversation to have. If the situation persisted, the police would be called. "Parent 8 replied “order would summon the offender's parents and allow the school to hold a session,”

10.2.4. Speak to Children

Parent 8 suggested “I would like to REQUEST all mothers to PLEASE teach their children that bullying is wrong, that it's not cool to be mean, that it's not nice to make fun of people, and that if you see someone who is alone or being bullied, stop your friends even if you're not directly involved, stand up for the child who is being bullied, give them moral support, and be friends with them. It's sad to see so many children go through this, and I realize I've always taught my daughter”

10.2.5. Be a role model

For many parents, defending their child was a natural and essential part of being a parent. However, parents looked to be experiencing some dissonance since they constantly recognized themselves as excellent parents but were unable to fulfill the primary responsibility of a good parent (to protect their child). As a result, they experienced distress, resentment towards the bully, and frustration at their inability to exert control. Parent 8 said “realized that mothers don't give a damn until it affects their child. Go to the administrator. Make your child a strong person. The world is cruel, and we must prepare our children for what is to come. “Parent 9 said “parents every parent's ideal is to raise their children with discipline and strong moral principles via the use of positive parenting approaches. But it is not a simple task. Additionally, it is crucial to understand that the parent-child connection is a two-way street and that a parent and their kid are essentially in a partnership” than she added “if parents are wrong what example they set for their children “
11. Implications

Instructors, school officials, and educational psychologists still have a lot of work to do to address the messages that parents are given on bullying prevention, as Stives et al. (2019) and other researchers have highlighted. Particularly illustrative of this are parents' responses to inquiries on the causes of bullying and how to act in situations where their child is being bullied. Information on these topics is often accessible for parents to utilize. Teachers and school administrators still need to work harder to understand why parents are concerned that the school isn't doing enough to stop bullying and that school districts all around the country are using ineffective strategies.

Knowing the factors that influence the methods parents use to help their kids deal with bullying.

However, it's also critical that parents have faith in the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying initiatives. According to data from this study, some parents may be dissatisfied by what they view as the school's ineffectual answers and may be inclined to interact with other parents outside of the school environment or speak with the principle directly when their kid is being harassed.

Although it would need more work, more high school and middle school principals would choose the first parental strategy than the second. Therefore, it is important for parents to receive more information from schools and from parents about how to deal with cyber bullying on behalf of their kids. Families need to be more aware of the cues schools are giving their children about how to handle bullying. Before this occurs, there is still a lot of work to be done in the area of bullying prevention. Children may find bullying at school to be disturbing. Additionally, it is probably upsetting for their parents. Despite this, research on peer victimization and bullying at school has a tendency to ignore what parents go through when their child is tormented. This study examined bullying in schools from the standpoint of the parents.

12. Limitations

There are a number of restrictions on our study, despite the fact that we think it has significantly added to the body of knowledge about parental reactions to bullying. First off, the study's tiny sample of parents included some rather well-off individuals from a state in the southeast. The information provided here may not thus be relevant to parents in other areas of the country or from other population characteristics, even in the same surrounding area. Second, significantly more female families than male parents provided information for this study. Gender differences in parental reactions would be intriguing to analyze, but we were not able to do so since there were so few dads (just four) who provided information for this study.
We do, however, think that these results are nonetheless significant in terms of thoughtful how parents perceive bullying of their kids given the paucity of research on parental attitudes and experiences with bullying.

12. References


