

Effects of Childhood Trauma – Being Bullied or Bullied – On Behaviors in Adulthood

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Abstract. Bullying is a big issue, and there are few policies based on this and few analyses about people's mental health. However, with social media and more reports to expose bullying issues to the public, people have begun to speak about the bullying severity. This research focuses on people's mental health, future development, and personal characteristics involved in school bullying and cyberbullying. Multiple articles have discussed this topic in various ways, from genetic influences environmental factors and personalities. Through this professional literature, it is possible to see the internal factors of bullies and external factors of victims and bullies, including social influences, parents' influences, and peer groups. Future research and directions can deliberate more upon how personal characteristics affect their behaviors on bullying and indifference, how afterward involvements create children's future development, and how children themselves and other people treat bullying events or consider this behavior. In sum, in-person and outside factors are significant for researchers and societies to focus on bullying events that can be prevented earlier before finding more people suicide.

Keywords: Trauma, Childhood, Bully, Mental disorders.

1. Introduction

This research mainly focuses on people's behaviors in adulthood by analyzing their treatments – bullied or being bullied – in their childhood. With the development of society nowadays, people pay attention to mental health and how different factors influence it. Bullying behaviors have many severe issues and cause severe consequences for persons who are being bullied. Bullying would induce people to perform poorly or fear socializing with others [1].

It is essential to analyze how bullying actions occur and how the bully chooses their targets. Both bullies and victims have similar family situations, including interparental violence and parental mistreatment or abuse [2]. Based on this, it is clear to analyze the connections between the bullies and victims that the bullies might be aggressive, a little insecure, and have higher self-esteem. In comparison, victims are perceived as having lower self-esteem, more anxious, and more sensitive than ordinary people [2]. Moreover, the motivations of the bullies and targets they would choose are worthy to expand because they are part of the internal factors not only on victims but also on bullies.

Besides family functioning, peer groups are essential to viewing bullying issues. When children refuse to fight for the victims and against the bullies, the victims might feel more insecure and act negatively with no support from the children's peer groups. Children who witness the bullying process but remain silent are afraid of reprisals [1]. All these environments will negatively nurture the bullying events, and parents with irresponsibility or timid students will choose to ignore or swallow this insult in silence.

In short, this paper aims to analyze, but not just, how these behaviors in childhood potentially or actively influence the future in adulthood. It is inevitable to discuss why the bullies choose to violate, why the victims are chosen, and how these behaviors are. Since childhood bullying would bring many serious consequences with severe abusive behaviors and children would be less likely to tell their physicians about their bullying experiences or being bullied [1], it is more important to get more knowledge from this range to care for children's mental health at a very young age and focus on their future development or criminal inclination which probably have causality based on traditional bullying experiences or cyberbullying.

2. Literature review

2.1 Connotation

2.1.1 Definition

Getting deeply about the bullying topic to understand the terms is especially important. Bullying is aggressive behavior that continuously hurts others [3]. Based on the consensus about definitions of bullying, there are two criteria to be satisfied: bullying behaviors usually occur multiple times, and the power between the bullies and victims is not balanced enough for victims to protect themselves [4]. Moreover, there are more perspectives regarding bullying, and many teenagers categorize bullying into verbal and emotional attacks [5].

The types of bullying are meaningful to analyze, including the victim, the bully, or the bully-victim. The victim is usually the one who is being bullied by others, the bully is the perpetrator, and the bully-victim is the perpetrator while the victim is the victim [6]. Victims and bullies have more authority and power than victims, who are less likely to defend themselves via their low self-esteem and vulnerable sensitivity [6].

Victims of bullying issues can reflect as high sensitivity while bullies are often reflected as antisocial behaviors and impulsivity; bully victims are similar to bullies because they both act more aggressively than average students [2].

2.1.2 Formats of bullying

Under bullying, there are multiple branches of bullying issues that are affecting people's development. Cyberbullying is the most general topic nowadays because more and more people are suffering from cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has different versions but generally includes the internet words or disguised information to bully others [7] repeatedly. Different periods exist as – cyberbullying is defined as a harmful attack through the electronics including computers and phones [8], or cyberbullying is when people use online technologies to bully others and show their dissatisfaction [9].

School bullying is another prevailing format of bullying. It is hard to define bullying in schools, but it is possible to analyze the factors of school bullying. More specifically, school climate is essential because the related policies and anti-bullying recognitions can be operated. The study regarding this states that bullying rates relate to (poor or good) school climate [10]; that is, peers' perspectives and choices upon bullying would increase the danger of bullying issues or decrease the cases in a bullying environment.

2.2 Impacts

2.2.1. Internal Factors

Being bullied will definitely affect a person's growth and the bullies. Children who are exposed to bullying will be predicted to have higher rates of self-harm. It is more obvious to see in twins that victimized twins have higher tendencies to self-harm than their co-twin who are not victimized [10]. These two conclusions make the relationship between victimization and self-harm, or suicide, tenable and significant.

Children who are bullies will get diagnosed with depression and offenses in the future [10]. Also, these children involved in the bullying side would have less empathy and a lack of recognition of others' feelings. These children initially show as aggressive and impulsive when interacting with others [10].

Conversely, children being bullied show low-income family functioning and low self-personality perceptions. It is necessary to analyze bullies' and victims' psychopathology, suicidal thoughts, and criminal trends, which are risks later in life [11]. Many students who reported being bullied would report physical and mental health which, through much research, show the relationship between the intensity and frequency of bullying experiences and the rigorousness of consequential health [3].

Moreover, victims' children would develop more introverted personalities than others [10], as well as deficits in cognitive recognition and emotional regulation [5].

According to the study, students who perform advanced would be teased by the students who perform challenged in academics usually, as well as homosexual and transgender students who are at risk of being bullied by others [1]. And the bullies who have higher power will utilize other students' sensitivity and secrets to attack them in physical and verbal ways with direct and indirect acts. For example, the bullies will kick or slap other students and racist or insult them for the direct attack while isolating victims or disseminating rumors as verbal bullying [1].

Research on cyberbullying shows that over 30% of the students involved in cyberbullying are more likely to violate other students and use the internet more times a day than others [12]. Bullies would show antisocial attitudes and be more professional on the internet using. Bullies tend to expand school bullying to the online world because it will make it easier to bully others. After all, cyberbullying is less risky and less guilty [12]. According to the study, Agnew esteems that motivations in crime mostly come from overstocking chronic stress and that peer relationships and interactions can induce this stress [13]. Among students, this relationship involves stress and crime will cause abuse and bullying because students who suffer from this challenging relationship need to find mechanisms to cope with their psychological balance. They probably will do things to hurt themselves or have antisocial behaviors [13].

Based on the analysis above, it is clear that victims or bullies who are in cyberspace or school are rarely different because victims of cyberbullying and school bullying are relatively more sensitive and insecure, or sometimes more excellent than peers, while bullies in cyberbullying and school bullying are relatively arrogant and stressful.

2.2.2. External Factors

Except for personal factors, social and parenting factors are worth discussing. According to the study about environmental influences, there are 1116 families involved in this research, and the design is to examine how genetics and environments influence victims and bullies. The results show that the environmental factors will be shared among twins while the genetic factors are distributed 74% in victimization and 61% in bullying [14]. Parents' anxious genetics will create an environment in which children grow up, which could make children insecure and anxious, especially after children are bullied or bullied [14]. The genetic influences will influence the environment forming children's growth when the hereditary influences interact with internal personality and growing external atmosphere.

Social factors are essential not only for small social groups but also for a great traditional cultural atmosphere. According to the findings, Japan has more school bullying issues than western countries because Japan mainly emphasizes classism and group polarization. As well as in South Korea, school bullying is not a rare issue to explore [15]. Peer groups are also social factors because peer groups can be the determinant once people choose to ignore and remain silent about bullying issues; others will "mimic" or follow those behaviors so that no one will speak for victims and the unhealthy conditions [1].

In cyberbullying environment, bullies would continue to violate behaviors at school on the internet, so people who are bullies at school usually will be bullies online. Moreover, victims at school usually will be bullied online as well, and the bullies would be the ones who bully victims at school [12], according to the study, including 2186 students from middle school and high school who participated in the study with completing the questionnaires in class about self-behaviors of bullies.

3. Future Implications

In the future, the ways to prevent bullying should be developed more because even though there are multiple analyses and research about bullying, it is still difficult to figure out the best approaches to prevent it. Thus, there are some variables that future studies can pay attention to.

First, studies can concentrate more on the definitions of children to see their perspectives regarding bullying issues. This is important because, nowadays, peer groups choose to be silent even though they witness the processes of bullying. We need to know their thoughts and why they choose not to defend themselves. It is also essential to analyze the difficulties of social internet networks controlling that investigating bullying, school environment, or cyberbullying can determine depression and suicide [13].

Secondly, it is significant to focus on the afterward involvement in bullying because the schools' and parents' involvement will impact children's growth. For example, suppose others bully a kid, but their families and schools minimize the severity of the incidents. In that case, this kid will grow up with an unhealthy personality and have lower self-esteem than others in adulthood. However, if the schools and parents get involved immediately and defend their kids, the kids will not be influenced by the bullying.

Thirdly, gender differences involved in similar studies are needed to be considered. According to the study on relationships between cyberbullying and suicides, boys are significantly more robust due to the relationships between cyberbullying and suicidal motivation. At the same time, girls are significantly more robust due to relationships between depression and suicide motivation or self-harm [16]. This study is representative, but it is still lacking tenable evidence when they go through this study because researchers do not pay more attention to the gender influences on bullying issues. So, it is indispensable to focus more on this topic to prevent bullying events.

Last but not least, studying directions on characteristics of victimizations is essential because it is possible to prevent bullying events or protect more victims. Young people define victims in bullying events who seem more different, quiet, or marginalized. Also, it is possible and necessary to compare the victims in cyber and traditional bullying environments, mainly focusing on the group of victimized children who will face more severe problems in offline life than online space [12]. These characteristics can let schools and families pay more attention to the mental health of those kids rather than focusing on academic performances blindly.

4. Conclusions

This research mainly talks about analyzing the characteristics of bullies and victims in cyber and school bullying environments to see if these behaviors and experiences would affect them in the future. Even though this research has several limitations, such as lacking analysis about bullies and fewer findings about future development of bullies and victims, it is still a meaningful topic to introduce and consider with caution.

With more interventions against school bullying, children are becoming more confident and safer to live and grow in school and society. Cyberbullying is also needed to focus on because there are more people suicide due to attacking words and personal blames online. Once people pay more attention to these types of bullying, it is a big step toward preventing more suicides among adolescents or teenagers. The bullies, to some extent, are more important to be analyzed than victims because much literature talks about how their future will be, how their growth will be influenced, or whether they will commit or not. But there is rare literature about bullies; less literature analyzes bullies about their psychological activity, their growing environment, or why they choose to be bullies. However, it is the most direct and effective way to prevent bullying issues by analyzing bullies' motivations and the external and internal factors contributing to bullying events.

Moreover, children's mental health and past experiences are very important because the best ways to prevent future self-harm and criminal cases are that school health and educational departments need to care more about children's psychological problems and effective afterward solutions about bullying events. More and more parents and schools assert that they put children's health first and their academic performances later. The in-personal and internet environments are needed to be considered as well. People should stop bullying others no matter in school, at work, or on the network, because it is possible to cause others to suicide or be depressed.

This research concludes with various reviews about bullying events, including the characteristics of bullies and victims, the perspectives about bullying issues, and the possible prevention of this violent behavior.

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