Chapter 6
Antecedents and Consequences of Workplace Bullying in Primary Education:
An Exploratory Study

Muhammad Waseem Bari

 https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2329-3857
Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan

Faiza Baig
Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan

Irum Shahzadi
Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Primary education is the earliest level of formal education that serves as a center for developing young brains and providing the fundamentals of education. Workplace bullying is a ubiquitous issue that affects workers all over the world, including in the education sector. Educators, staff, and students may experience the negative effects of workplace bullying. Physical aggression, verbal abuse, and social isolation are just a few examples. Bullying can occur in a variety of contexts, including face-to-face interactions, online communication, and indirect forms such as gossip and rumor spreading, and it can make it harder for educationalists to provide a supportive learning environment for their students. It can have a negative impact on educators' well-being and job satisfaction and promotes stress, anxiety, burnout, or other deviant behaviors, which eventually impede students' education. Therefore, an exploratory study is vital that investigates the antecedents and consequences of workplace bullying in primary education.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Education psychologists are concerned about bullying in primary schools, as millions of children worldwide experience violence and bullying at school (Meehan et al., 2023). Bullying is linked to physical and psychological problems and poor academic outcomes (Zych, 2021). One must understand how bullying affects students' development to prevent and intervene. However, most studies have focused on bullying in urban schools in European-American contexts, leaving rural schools in underdeveloped nations unexplored (Cunningham, 2022). Workplace bullying is a ubiquitous issue affecting workers worldwide, including in the education sector (Cowan, 2012). In the context of primary education, workplace bullying can have similar harmful impacts on educators, staff, and students (Cruz et al., 2021).

Bullying is defined as "a pattern of repeated harmful behavior that involves a power imbalance between the perpetrator(s) and the victim(s). It can manifest in various ways, including physical aggression, verbal abuse, and social marginalization. Individuals or groups can perpetrate bullying. It can occur in various contexts, including face-to-face interactions, online communication, and indirect forms such as gossip and rumor spreading. Even though bullying occurs in workplaces and schools, it has not received much attention until recent years. Employers keep workplace bullying covert for fear of tarnishing their company's reputation and profitability.

Workplace bullying and harassment are distinct terms. Bullying is the repeated, unwanted exercise of physical, social, or emotional power against an individual, resulting in physical or emotional harm (Saunders et al., 2007). It is associated with adverse outcomes such as anger, aggression, violence, hyperactivity, and externalizing problems that further lead to delinquent and antisocial behaviors (D. Olweus, 1994). Harassment, on the other hand, includes unwanted and hurtful interactions specific to one's race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or national origin and affects one's working conditions or decisions related to one's job. Workplace harassment is studied using several terminologies, such as bullying, incivility, social undermining, and abusive supervision. Despite these differences, they all share a common feature of negative workplace interactions that cause harm to the target individual. "Bullying" is used instead of "harassment" for historical and cultural reasons. Bullying is commonly used in research, awareness campaigns, and interventions targeting such situations (Smith & Brain, 2000). Thus, "bullying" has gained increased public recognition.

Bullying is fundamentally an abuse of power not limited to physical violence but also includes verbal intimidation and professional undermining. This mistreatment can come from anyone, not necessarily a manager or superior. It can be linked to antisocial personality disorder and/or childhood abuse. Ostracism and excessive supervision are also common signs of bullying behavior. However, many fail to recognize these characteristics and view them as an inevitable personality clash that must be tolerated. Several factors, such as personality traits, organizational structure, and work environment, influence the prevalence of bullying in primary schools. Studies suggest that individuals with low self-esteem and high neuroticism are more likely to be bullied (Glambek et al., 2014). In addition, organizational factors, such as poor leadership, a lack of supportive policies and procedures, and a toxic organizational culture, can foster an environment conducive to bullying. Workplace bullying can be exacerbated by occupational characteristics such as a heavy workload and an uncomfortable working environment.

Bullying affects students' academic performance, social life, and mental health, increasing their risk of anxiety, depression, and other issues in adulthood. Students who frequently bully others are more likely to engage in criminal activities and have negative consequences. Despite anti-bullying laws and prevention programs, the problem of bullying persists. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive

Related Content

Meeting the Demand for Online Education: A Study of a State-Run Program Designed to Train Virtual K-12 Teachers
Jayme Nixon Lintonand Wayne Journell (2015). *Exploring the Effectiveness of Online Education in K-12 Environments (pp. 45-65).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/meeting-the-demand-for-online-education/116137

Computational Thinking and Young Children: Understanding the Potential of Tangible and Graphical Interfaces
Amanda Sullivanand Marina Umaschi Bers (2018). *Teaching Computational Thinking in Primary Education (pp. 123-137).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/computational-thinking-and-young-children/189868

Trauma and the Middle School Brain: Impacts and Instructional Strategies
Cheryl A. Robertsonand Chelsea L. Robertson (2021). *Promoting Positive Learning Experiences in Middle School Education (pp. 66-86).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/trauma-and-the-middle-school-brain/269216

Reification of Five Types of Modeling Pedagogies with Model-Based Inquiry (MBI) Modules for High School Science Classrooms
Todd Campbell, Phil Seok Ohand Drew Neilson (2014). *K-12 Education: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 401-421).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/reification-of-five-types-of-modeling-pedagogies-with-model-based-inquiry-mbi-modules-for-high-school-science-classrooms/88162

Technology-Based Literacy Approach for English Language Learners
Erin L. White (2014). *K-12 Education: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools, and Applications (pp. 723-740).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/technology-based-literacy-approach-for-english-language-learners/88181