

Is Bullying a Global Problem or Just in American? A Comparative Meta-Analysis of Research Findings

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Abstract

Bullying has become a growing serious problem today in America than in the past decades. Many states, school systems both private and public, and international organizations around the world have embarked on creating safe school environments that are free from bullying and aggressive violence behaviors as one of the national goals (Notar, Padgett, & Roden, 2013; Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015). The dream cannot come true unless the issue of bullying violence and victimization are addressed by systems that created it. Bullying occurs in all sectors of human endeavors such as businesses, schools, churches and all organizations. It has created a climate of fear; hatred, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, racism, sexism and religious fanaticism. Many of those who are bullied experience a technical knock-out effect throughout their life span. They are subjected to depression, difficulty with relationships, substance abuse, self inflicted suicide, and school dropout as a result. As people living in the free world, we should no longer welcome bullying. This article discusses whether bullying is a global issue, not just a U. S. problem. Educators, politicians, businesses and parents can help by becoming aware of the problem, enforcing standards of behavior, and watching for symptoms of bullying victims in our schools and workplace (Padgett, & Notar, 2013A/B; Mehta, et al., 2013; Vincze, et al., 2008; Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015).

Keywords: Aggressive behavior, Bullying, Individual international countries/bullying

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether bullying in education is only prevalent in America or if it's a worldwide problem? According to the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS, 2013), bullying is a problem in U. S. but just how much of a problem is unknown and that's the central focus of this paper. News about bullying epidemics around the world has brought unparalleled but unavoidable attention to the issue that has been prominent for centuries around the world (Notar & Padgett, 2013; Hertz, & Wright, 2013; Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015). The Biblical reference to violence in the world is rooted in the spirit of bullying. Literature in the 19th and 20th centuries depicted the social nature of bullying through the works of Hughes (1857) Tom Brown's Schooldays and Golding (1954) Lord of the Flies (Notar & Padgett, 2013A/B; Hertz, & Wright, 2013; Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015). In addition, bullying in the 21st century took a new twist in America. Modern era tragic incidences of bullying in America include the 1999 Columbine High School massacre, killed 12 students, 1 teacher, and wounded 23 students. In Luke Woodham Mississippi, 1997, killed his mother; went to school and killed 2 students, wounded seven. Victim of bullying stated he could not take it anymore. In November 2000, 14 years old hanged herself shortly after three teenage girls called her a lesbian. A suicide note indicated that she had been threatened by bullies and she believed the death was her best option to escape.

The hazing of a Florida A & M band student, the suicides of Phoebe Prince and Ryan Halligan, and most recently the Miami Dolphin's Richie Incognito incident all points to the existence of bullying. In 2003, an 8th grader, committed suicide after being bullied, lied to and about, and ridiculed via IM and text messages. In 2008, an 8-year-old student in (MD) supposedly hanged himself as a consequence of bullying. In Norway 1982, three boys committed suicide as a consequence of severe bullying by peers. In U. S. one out of 7 students is bullies or victims of bullying. One out of ten 8th graders is out of school once a week due to bullying incidents (UDHHS, 2013; Harper, 2015; Consalvo, 2012; Cowie & Jennifer, 2008; Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015).

American politicians, educators' parents, lobbyists, and stakeholders have been expressing concerns over the epidemic of bullying as a serious issue in today's schools. (Cheng, et al., 2011; Notar & Padgett, 2013). Despite the complexity of the relationship between bullying and suicide, there is no doubt that bullying involvement can have detrimental effects and prevention of bullying would improve physical, social, and mental health outcomes for many of our youth.

Several recent studies have found an association between bullying and depression, bullying and suicide-related behaviors and deaths, among young people who were victims of bullying (Olweus, 1993; Notar & Padgett, 2013; Hertz, & Wright, 2013). Psychosomatic and psychosocial problem development over a school year is significantly higher compared with children who were not bullied (deFrutos, 2013; Mehta, Cornell, Fan, & Gregory, 2013; (Cheng, Chen, Ho, & Cheng, 2011; Notar & Padgett, 2013A/B).

The long and short term of bullying is not only damaging to the people affected, but it may give rise to low-self-esteem, anomie, depression, isolation, psychosomatic symptoms, failure and dropout of school and suicide. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of publications on bullying worldwide, with an emphasis on how, when but not where it occurs around the world (deFrutos, 2013).

Bullying violence and aggression in schools affects anywhere from three to fifteen percent of adolescents from twelve to eighteen years of age in the United States (Olweus, 2013). Worldwide up to twenty percent of this population has been bullied (Olweus, 2013).

Bullying must stop!

Definition of Bullying

To focus on bullying we must first define and explain bullying. Scholars have defined bullying as any unwanted, aggressive behavior with the intent to harm that involves power imbalance over another and is repeated over a period of time (Olweus, 1993). It is a strategy to gain control or power at the expense of others. In this paper, bullying is defined as exclusion, ostracism, ridicule, and extortion. A person is being bullied or victimized when he/she is exposed repeatedly over time to negative actions on the part of one or more people. The bully exhibits behavior directed toward the victim that is designed to hurt, harm or damage the victim physically, emotionally, and/or socially. Bullying hurts, frightens, intimidates and persistent and repetitive over time. The following definitions of types of bullying come from a mix of several authors (Andreou, 2000; Cook, et al., 2010; Harvard Medical School Health, 2001; Olweus, (1991; Olweus, & Limber, 2010; Rigby, Smith, & Pepler, 2004; Sanders, 2004; Visser, et al., 2009; Will & Neufeld, 2003; Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015).

Types of Bullying

Physical Bullies: These are easiest to identify, observe and measure. They act out their anger in a physical way by hitting, kicking, pushing, choking, shoving, and punching their chosen target or by damaging their victim's property. The physical bully is the easiest to identify because his or her behavior is physically expressed.

Verbal Bullies: The most common and frequent form of bullying. They use words to hurt and humiliate their target, through name-calling, insults, or persistent, harsh teasing, threatening, taunting, rumoring, hate speech and put-downs.

Relationship Bullies: Relationship bullies take place between married and unmarried couples, boyfriends and girlfriends. These people are screamers, attackers, lovers of chaos, and usually unpredictable. Female can be bullies as well as men. They spread nasty rumors about their target. This behavior is predominantly adopted by female bullies.

Reactive Victims Bullies: Bully victims who turn into bullies themselves because someone has bullied him or her in the past. Reactive bully creates bullies out of it victims. This is the most difficult types of a bully to identify because they, at first glance, appear as targets for other bullies.

Sexual Bullying: This includes repeated, harmful and humiliating actions that target a person sexually. A primary example is a sexual name-calling, crude comments, vulgar gestures, uninvited touching, sexual proposition and pornographic materials. The sexual bully usually opens the door to sexual assaults. Females are usually the targets of sexual bullying. Sexing is considered a form of sexual bullying.

Prejudicial Bullying: Bullying behavior based on fear and dislike of a person or groups of people because they are different in one way or the other. This includes bullying behaviors towards the people from different ethnicity, religion, race, and sexual orientation. All different type of bullying behaviors falls into prejudicial bullying. Usually, this type of bullying is severe and can open the door to racial hatred or hate crimes. When a person is bullied because of his or her race, religion or sexual orientation it is called prejudicial bullying. In schools across America, Black Chinese, Jewish, Italian, and Spanish individuals are bullied. Prejudicial bullying includes all types listed above.

Where Does Bullying Occur

Bullying behaviors exist just about anywhere, the most common places are unsupervised areas such as school bus; playground; hallways restrooms; Between/around buildings; workplace; families; members of different faith; father; son; mother; supervisor; husband and wife (Allanson, Lester, & Notar, 2015).

As stated earlier the purpose of this paper is to investigate whether bullying is only prevalent in America or if it's a worldwide problem? The answer to the question: bullying is a worldwide problem. Table 1 presents the list of countries worldwide and dates of publication with bullying problems before and after the issue came to the forefront in education in the United States of America.

Table: 1 Countries of world dealing with bullying as a national problem in education

Countries	Article Proof
Algeria	Rudatskira, et al., 2014
Albania	Farina, & Belacchi, 2013
Australia	Beaty, & Alexeyev, 2008; Green, 2007; Mouttapa, Valente, & Gallaher, 2004; Rigby & Slee, 1991; Slee, 1993, 1994, 1995A, 1995B, 1995C; Smith & Brain, 2000; Nansel, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2007; Dowling, & Carey, 2013; Hurley, et al., 2016; Pepler, et al., 1994; Rigby, 2015;
Canada	Beaty, & Alexeyev, 2008; Boivin, 1998; Charach, Pepler, & Ziegler, 1995; Christie, 2005; Jiang, Walsh, & Augimeri, 2011; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Smith, 2010; Tritt, & Duncan, 1997; Ziegler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991; Holfeld, & Leadbeater, 2015; Dowling, & Carey, 2013; Holfeld, & Leadbeater, 2015; Pepler, D. J., Craig, W. M., Ziegler, S., & Charach, A. (1994); Pickett, 2009;
China:	Liu, Bullock, & Coplan, 2014; Abou-ezzeddine, et al., 2007;
Finland	Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, & Rantanen, 2000;
Germany	Moolenaar, 2011; Pfeiffer, & Pinguart, 2014.
Greece	Greenya, J. (2005).; Smith, Nika, & Papasideri, 2004; Floros, et al., 2013
Greenland	Nansel, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2007
India	Wright, Kamble, & Soudi, 2015
Indonesia	Safaria, 2016
Ireland	O'Moore & Hillery, 1989; McMahon, et al, 2012; Purdy, & Mc Guckin, 2014
Isreal	Lapidot-Lefler, & Dolev-Cohen, 2015
Italy	Menesini, et al., 2003; Vieno, 2015
Jamaica	Twemlow & Sacco 1996; Twemlow, & Sacco, 2013.
Japan	Green, 2007; Hilton, Kanetsuna, Smith, & Morita, 2006; Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002, 2006; Koki, 1999; Moolenaar, 2011; Mouttapa, Valente, & Gallaher, 2004; Morita 1996; National School Safety Center, 1988; Smith & Brain, 2000; Ando, Asakura, & Ando, 2007;
Korea, South	Green, 2007; Yang, et al., 2013; Nansel, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2007; Kim, 2015, 2015, 2016; You, et al., 2015; Ilhong, Yun., et al., 2016;

Malta	Borg, & Falzon, 1989; Borg, 1999
New Zealand	<u>Rees</u> , 2010; Denny, et al., 2015
Netherlands	Tolsma, et al., 2013; Fekkes, et al., 2016.
Nigeria	Fareo, 2015
Norway	Solberg, & Olweus, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 2007; <u>Beaty</u> , & <u>Alexeyev</u> , 2008; Green, 2007; Strom, et al, 2013; <u>Hutchinson</u> , 2012; <u>Koki</u> , 1999; <u>Nansel</u> , <u>Haynie</u> , & <u>Simons-Morton</u> , 2007; Kyriacou, 2013; Sigurdson, Wallander, & Sund, 2014.
Portugal	Moolenaar, 2011.
Singapore	Moolenaar, 2011; <u>Kwan</u> , & <u>Skoric</u> , 2013; Kwan, Chi & Skoric, 2013; Sim, & Tan, 2013, Tom, 2010;
Spain	Navarro, et al., 2013.
Sweden	Olweus, 1993, 1995, 2011; Green, 2007; Strom, et al, 2013; Thornberg, et al., 2013; <u>Flygare</u> , <u>Gill</u> , & <u>Johansson</u> , 2013.
Taiwan	Chen, Li-Ming, & Cheng, Ying-Yao, 2011, 2014; <u>Chang</u> , <u>Fong-Ching</u> , 2013; <u>Yen</u> , <u>Cheng-Fang</u> , 2013; <u>Huang</u> , <u>Yun-yin</u> ., & <u>Chou</u> , 2010, 2013.
Turkey	<u>Duy</u> , 2013.
United Kingdom	<u>Kumpulainen</u> , <u>Räsänen</u> , 2000; <u>Kumpulainen</u> , <u>Räsänen</u> , & Puura, 2001; Boulton & Underwood, 1993; Whitney, Nabuzoka, & Smith, 1992); <u>Srabstein</u> , 2008; <u>Lindsay</u> , <u>Dockrell</u> , & <u>Mackie</u> , 2008; <u>Koki</u> , 1999; Stephenson & Smith, 1987; Whitney & Smith, 1993; <u>Beaty</u> , & <u>Alexeyev</u> , 2008; <u>Nansel</u> , <u>Haynie</u> , & <u>Simons-Morton</u> , 2007; Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999; Boulton, et al., 2014; Fink, et al., 2015; Jamal, et al., 2015; Kyriacou, 2013, Oxtoby, 2014; Jiang, Walsh, & Augimeri, 2011; <u>Srabstein</u> , 2008;
Arab world	Kazarian, Ammar, & Kazarian, (2013).
Asian countries	Smith & Brain, 2000; Mouttapa, Valente, & Gallaher, 2004; <u>Horton</u> , <u>Kvist</u> & <u>Nguyen</u> , 2015; Lee, & Villonco, 2013; Moran, Smith, Thompson, & Whitney, 1993; Tom, Schwartz, Farver, Chang, & Xu, 2010;
European nations	Smith & Brain, 2000; Mouttapa, Valente, & Gallaher, 2004; Greenya, J. (2005). Schultze-Krumbholz, 2015; Raskauskas, 2013; Schultze-Krumbholz, et al., 2015;
Pacific Island	<u>Koki</u> , 1999; <u>Salleh</u> , & <u>Zainal</u> , 2014; <u>Lee</u> , & <u>Villonco</u> , 2013; <u>Stevens</u> , & <u>Hardy</u> , 2013; chultze-Krumbholz, et al., 2014; Stevens, & Hardy 2013;
Scandinavia	Raskauskas, 2013; Olweus, 1993, 1991; <u>Beaty</u> , & <u>Alexeyev</u> , 2008; <u>Baraldsnes</u> , 2015; Undheim, Wallander, & Sund, 2016;
South America	Casas, Del Rey, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2013; Jiménez-Barbero, et al., 2013.

Bullying behavior is prevalent in all schools at all age levels throughout the world. It is a common feature and a major concern in schools in America and all over the world. Bullying is a worrisome practice in schools because it infringes on the people's right to human dignity, dexterity, privacy, freedom and security (Visser, et al., 2009; Will & Neufeld, 2003). The physical, emotional and educational consequences of bullying behavior can never be underestimated (Aluede, et al., 2008). Bullying is considered as one of the most serious problems worldwide, especially in school settings and workplaces. Some are reported and documented and some are not depending on the country.

Bullying Outside the United States

In Norway, 14% of school-age children are either bullies or victims. In Japan, 15% of primary school children say that they are bullied, which in Australia and Spain, the problem prevails among 17% of students. In Britain, 1.3 million children are involved in bullying (National School Safety Center, 1988). In European countries bullying has received paramount attentions as it infringes on the people's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom and security (Aluede, et al., 2008; Nansel, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2007; Olweus, 1991, 1993, 1995). In Scandinavia, a serious action against bullying did not take place until three young adolescent boys from Norway had committed suicide because of severe bullying by peers (Olweus, 1993).

Additional groundbreaking research studies from Scandinavia countries that triggered national interest in bullying/victim problems prevention suggested that 15% of children in Norwegian schools were involved in bullying from time to time or more frequent (Olweus, 1991; 2013; Beaty, & Alexeyev, 2008).

In some European nations, and some Asian countries, including Japan (Smith & Brain, 200), bullying occurs based on cultural context (Tom, 2010; Abou-ezzeddine, Schwartz, & Chang, 2007). Similar studies from Japan, Singapore, Germany, Portugal, and the US show that “the association between media violence and aggression is same across cultures,” according to (Moolenaar, 2011).

School bullying is a serious problem for young people in the society and Nigeria at large (Fareo, 2015). Turkish and Moroccan minority groups bully significantly more than native Dutch (Tolsma, et. al., 2013). While peer victimization has been a preoccupation of Europeans and North Americans for many decades, interest in school bullying in the Arab world is a recent phenomenon (Kazarian, Ammar, & Kazarian, 2013). Bullying victimization is frequent among Algerian in-school adolescents. (Rudatskira, et. al., 2014).

Researchers agree that bullying is worldwide in scope and negatively impacts the general public, especially school culture, and students’ right to attend safe schools free from fear and harassment of any sort (Koki, 1999; Moolenaar, 2011).

Bullying Prevention

Many authorities have researched strategies to combat both bully and the victim all over the world (Schargel, 2005; Hodges, Finnegan, & Perry, 1997, 1999; Padgett, & Notar, 2013A/B; defutos, 2013). Apparently, none of these strategies worked to reduce bullying. To combat bullying and the victim of bullying in our school’s environment and workplaces, educators must recognize the important of professional development service, safe learning environments and school-community collaboration affords. Authorities must enlist all school teachers and staff including the school principal’s commitment and involvement in fighting bullying as an urgent priority. Three levels of intervention to combat bullying: 1) at the school level, 2) at the classroom level, and 3) at the individual level, 4) the bully and the victim (Padgett, & Notar, 2013A/B).

Community/School Level Intervention/Prevention. School administrators, grade level teachers, counselor, psychologist/nurses, parents/student representatives must coordinate and work together to combat bullying nightmare in schools. They must have regular meetings with parents and school staff to discuss bullying. Training of staff/students, effective supervision of all classroom school breaks before and after must put in place. The school must have in-service education about behaviors, responses, resources and increase supervision during school time. All adult must be aware and involve in designing of bullying prevention group (Padgett, & Notar, 2013A, 2013B).

Classroom Level. School and classroom rules and procedures regarding bullying must be taught to all students. School should enlarge curriculum to include anger management, conflict resolution, communication, cooperation, friendship, kindness, diversity (Olweus, 1993; 2013). Immediate consequences for aggressive behavior/rewards for inclusive behavior should be included in the school lesson plans. The school must have weekly communication with all students to clarify and reiterate the negative effect of bullying (Schargel, 2015; Olweus, 2003).

Individual Level. School administrators must have Individual meetings with bullies/victims and with parents of involved students (Olweus, 2003; Schargel, 2005; deFrutos, 2013;).

Individual Intervention. School experts must have serious private talks with bully/victim and serious talks with parents. Students must be taught non-aggressive and assertive behavior and role playing at school. Schools must promote facts, not myths, about bullying. Bullying is a significant and pervasive problem around the world and not only in America. Of course, fear has become a significant factor in the school behavior of many (20% to 30%) students. Behaviors such as truancy, avoidance of homework or school activities, peers pleasure, academic failures may lead to suicide as a result of bullying. School officials can dissimilate accurate information about bullying intervention and prevention at all levels by showing films and videos that are available for use with students and professional staff during professional development activities to promotes and facilitate bullying information to all students, staff, and school administrators at all levels (Schargel, 2005).

Families

While doing the research on bullying in the schools a large number of the articles cited families as a root cause of most bullying behavior in schools. Recently many researchers have been focusing on the family context of bullying and how and why family plays an important role in the healing process. Lots of family aspects context have been linked to peer victimization (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). Parenting supports, involvement, and responsibilities are associated with low levels of victimization, whereas child abuse, over-protectiveness (for boys), and threats of rejection (for girls) are all associated to a degree with greater victimization (Hodges, Finnegan, & Perry, 1999; Finnegan, Hodges, & Perry, 1997). Proper parenting behaviors contribute to how a child is attached to the parent, therefore if a child is not attached to the parent this would lead to insecure and finally to victimization (Finnegan, Hodges, & Perry, 1997; Troy & Sroufe, 1987). The presences of both parents in the family versus absence of the child's father or mother are also associated with victimization. Although children from families with a low socioeconomic status may have an increased risk of bullying behavior, it is unclear as to whether socioeconomic (SES) is correlated to bullying behavior associated with peer victimization (Card, & Hodges, 2008). In America society and also in New Zealand, there is a widespread perception or myth that sport is a positive character builder, hazing and bullying in sports makes bullying behavior more acceptable. These rituals legitimize this myth, providing "proof" of its longevity of bullying behaviors among athletics worldwide (Rees, 2010).

Other research studies in different countries around the world have found significant associations between familial characteristics and bullying behavior (Notar, & Padgett, 2013A/B; Olweus, 1980, 1993). These studies have found and documented the association between parenting styles, economics and family environment and bullying. Olweus (1980,1993) Scandinavian with youth concluded that families of boys who bullied were often described as lacking in warmth, used physical violence with the family, and failed to monitor children's activities outside the school. Bowers, Smith, and Binney (1994) added that family members of bullies had high needs for power).

WorkPlace

School bullying research not only led to the family but to the workplace bullying. Bullying is considered as one of the most serious problems worldwide, especially in school and workplace settings. (Lindsay, Dockrell, & Mackie, 2008). Many researchers report that workplace bullying has as an antecedent bullying in the schools. Workplace bullying also infringes on the people's right to human dignity, dexterity, privacy, freedom and security. The physical, emotional and educational consequences of bullying behavior can never be underestimated (Aluede, et al., 2008).

Conclusion: We know that bullying is a problem in the United States. The answer the question posed for this research is bullying is a global problem and not just in U.S. Evidence from current researchers supports this conclusion. Many promising proposals have been put forth in the past decades to address the issues surrounding intervention and prevention of bullying in schools. The available evidence indicates that the incidence of bullying is not decreasing and some evidence suggests that it is increasing and it may get worst. Bullying in the schools is bad enough but when the family and workplace are also involved the problem is astonishing in its complexity as a world problem. Everyone involvement in effective prevention and intervention of bullying behaviors can make a difference in making our schools and work place enjoyable for all of us.

We know that bullying is a problem in the United States. The answer to the posed question is bullying is a global problem and not just in U.S. Evidence from current researchers supports this conclusion. Many promising proposals have been put forth in the past decades to address the issues surrounding intervention and prevention of bullying in schools. The available evidence indicates that the incidence of bullying is not decreasing and some evidence suggests that it is increasing and it may get worst. Bullying in the schools is bad enough but when family and workplace bullying are involved the problem is astonishing in its complexity as a world problem. Everyone must be involvement to effect intervention and prevention of bullying in making our families, schools and work place safe.

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