The Prediction of Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, and Academic Achievement of Bullying in Elementary School

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to find the prediction of emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and academic achievement in bullying in elementary schools. A sample of (361) students from nine big private schools from grades (7-9) were randomly selected. Three instruments were used (Bully Scale for Students, Emotional Intelligence Inventory, and Self-esteem Inventory) to measure the study variable. The study results revealed that there was a significant effect of the emotional intelligence factors ---that is they had a negative impact on bullying activities, which means low emotional intelligence predict high level of bullying activities. Also, self-esteem had a significant prediction, low self-esteem predict more engagement in bullying activities. Furthermore, the academic performance has a negative relationship with bullying behavior. The study result was discussed according to the previous literature, and a number of recommendations were suggested.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, Bullies students

1. Introduction

Bullying is considered one of those negative behaviours that have sustained its prevalence among elementary schools students in Jordan. The estimated percentage of bullying in Jordanian schools is (18.9%) which is relatively high. Also, the research findings show that half of the children reported that at some point in their lives they were exposed to bullying at their respective schools (Qatami, Sarayreh, 2009). Also, being a target of bullying has been found to negatively impact a child's social and emotional wellbeing, academic performance and success later in life (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001).

Most concerning was that these children reported that they often remained silent about their experiences of being bullied from their parents due to feelings of shame and trying to avoid being labelled as "weak" from others. Children who engage in bullying can be described as having some general personality, psychological and behavioural characteristics. For example, many children who initialize bullying do so because they feel the need to prove themselves or that they want to establish their physical domination on other children who are of lesser physical strength. In addition, many children who demonstrate bullying face difficulty in abiding to rules and laws. Moreover, many bullies typically display their aggression in front of others and generally show a lack of empathy for their victims. These combined characteristics and qualities found in children involved in bullying others suggest that they have low levels of emotional intelligence among children who bully. Furthermore, adolescent bullying behaviours have been associated with low empathic responsiveness and reduced empathic concern for others (Gini et al., 2007).

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in helping individuals develop empathy skills, more specifically empathizing with the feelings and experiences of others such as another person's 'fear' or 'pain.' Hence, emotional intelligence is an important consideration that needs to be taken when assessing and understanding possible factors that contribute to the bullying behaviours of bullying amongst students. It is especially important to examine the role of emotional intelligence of children during the elementary school stage period, as this is the period where social and emotional intelligence develops. Also, there are some suggestions that the development of EI in school aged children would be beneficial for creating positive school environments. However, there are very few empirical investigations to support such claims (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). A study that explored the link between emotional skills and bullying found that individuals high in emotional skills perceived less bullying behaviour than their low emotional skill counterparts did (Lomas, Hansen, & Luke,2012).

Thus, understanding the role of emotional intelligence in bullying behaviour is crucial to designing intervention programs as well as directing future research in digging deep in emotional intelligence component that may contribute to bullying.

Also, the research tried to determine the relationship between self-esteem and bullying behaviour, the research result still inconsistence about self esteem and bullying activities, Mynard & Joseph, 1997; O'Moore, 1997, suggest that these adolescents show lower levels of self-esteem in comparison with those not involved in such behavioural problems,   while Rigby & Slee, 1992 confirm   that violent adolescents often obtain high scores on measures of this construct

Furthermore, academic achievement considers one of the predictions of bullies' behaviour. Glew et al, (2005) mentioned to bullies have lower achievement scores when they compared to non bullies groups, also Eisenberg and Neumark-Sztainer (2003) found that peer harassment, i.e. bullying, is negatively related to connection to school and academic achievement. The full picture of psychological and academic variables that may predict the bullies still not exist. In the current research, a number of psychological and academic variables will be incorporate together to depict the possibility relationship.

2. Literature Review:

There has been limited research conducted in Arab countries on the topic of bullying and for certain greater research is needed to better appreciate the situation of bullying in Arab societies. But in international literature many effort in different directions tried to find the correlation between psychological, social, and academic variables and bullying. A study conducted by Yank, Kim, Kim, Shin and Yoon (2006) helps in appreciating the commonality of bullying among students in social environments. Their respective research study in particular helps in being able to identify the prevalence of this phenomenon amongst various students. Other research studies such as the one undertaken by Seals and Young (2003) help shed light on those students who are more likely to become victims of bullying based on their self-concept and social development (Sheras, 2002).

In another study conducted by O'Moore & Kirkham (2001), the researchers examined and measured the relationship between self-esteem and bullying behaviour among a sample of children and adolescent bullies and victims of bullies, The results of this study showed that both child and adolescent victims and bullies respectively had lower self-esteem than their peers of the same age who were not categorized as being a bully or being a victim of bullying.

The study's outcomes also indicated that all children and adolescents who were victims of bullying were less popular and attractive and demonstrated more anxious behaviours when compared to non victim groups. The study also found those students whom were victims of bullying or who were themselves bullies typically had lower self-esteem in all ages.

Moreover, Salmon et al, (1998) conducted a study about self-esteem, anxiety and frustration among children who were bullies and their victims and compared them to a population of children who had healthy and positive socialization.   The results of the study indicated that there was no significant relationship between exposure to bullying and practice on the one hand and self-esteem on the other. However, the research findings also indicated that there was a relationship between the exposure to bullying, anxiety and lying and that this was unanticipated by those researchers involved in the study. The findings concluded that there was a significant relationship between the practice of bullying against others, anxiety, lying and frustration

Furthermore, another research study focused on examining the social aspect among bullied children. Lark & Beran (2006) initiated a research study to determine the relationship between bullying behaviours and social skills on a sample of male and female students. Researchers used teacher's assessment tools to evaluate bullies and students social skills.

 The results showed that students with lower scores on bullying have higher scores on social skills when comparing them to students with high scores on bullying. This study also looked at gender differences in bullying behaviour and social skills and came to the conclusion that the bullies who were female students scored higher on social skills when comparing to male students who were bullies.

Also, Kumpulainen et al, (1998) studied the self-esteem, gender, and mood among bullies. The results of the study indicated that males were five times more likely than females to become bullies. Moreover, the results revealed that bullies and the victims of bullying had low self-esteem compared to those who did not experience or engage in any form of bullying behaviours. The results also suggested that male victims of bullying suffered more from low esteem when comparing them to other groups. The bullying victims were also found to display more negative moods when comparing them with bullies and ordinary students. Results also indicated that the victims and bullies had a greater level of sadness, depression and frustration compared to students who did not engage or involve themselves in bullying behaviour

Camadeca, Goossens, Schuengel & Meerum, (2003) examined the way that bullies and victims of bullying and ordinary children handled social information among male and female students. The results of the study showed that both bullies and their victims had low social skills ability compared to student who did experience bullying or demonstrate bullying behaviours. In fact, those participants who had no experience nor engaged in bullying had better social skills.

Also, Warden & Mackinnon (2003) compared normal children (those children who were not bullies or victims of being bullied) with bullies and their victims in terms of social behaviour and social status, empathy and problem-solving strategies. The study used a new methodology to help identify and categorize normal children, bullies and victims. The purpose of this approach was to assess the social relations between the three different groups. In this study, students nominated their peers who were from their age group. More specifically, (131) children aged from ages nine to ten years old from the two schools nominated names of students who they identified as being bullies, victims of bullying, and those students they considered to be ordinary students. The findings indicated that there were three different categories for the children. In fact, the findings concluded that there were (21) normal children, (23) bullied children and (14) children who were victims of bullying. Interestingly, ordinary or normal children were found to be more popular than bullies and victims.

Importantly, bullies and victims were both rejected by peers in terms of social interactions. Ordinary or normal children also displayed greater sympathy than bullies and victims. Other findings also showed that ordinary children responded more

productively and positively to complex social situations when compared to children who were victims of bullying. Furthermore, children who were categorized as bullies were found to have less awareness about possible negative consequences than ordinary children.

Also Glew et al, (2005) studied the bulling behavioural during the primary stage and its relationship with some variables including academic achievement, sadness and safety. The study sample consisted of 3530 students from grades three, four, and five. The results of the study indicated that bullies and bully victims had lower grades when comparing those to ordinary students (those who have not experience any aspect of bullying) in academic achievement. The results also indicate that bullies and victims of bullying had a higher a sense of sadness and insecurity when comparing to ordinary students.

Lomas, Karen, Downey, (2012) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) of adolescents and bullying behaviours, among sample of (68) adolescents in the secondary schools in Australia. a self-report questionnaire was completed by the participants to assess their EI, and bullying behaviours. The funding revealed that the EI dimensions of Emotions significantly predicted the propensity of adolescents to be subjected to peer victimization. The understanding the emotions of others was found to be negatively related with bullying behaviours.

3. Study Problem

The psychological factor associated with bullying behaviours still needs further investigation, especially within the Arab cultural context. Most of the research previously conducted focused on the prevalence of bullying or concentrated on the differences of bullying behaviours as it related to some demographic variables such as gender, class, and age. The emotional factors associated with bullying still requires more attention and investigation, especially as it plays such a pivotal role in the formation of behaviours and reactions to others when being confronted with abnormal activities. Subsequently, this motivated the researcher to focus on emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Self-esteem is central to my research study as it is one of the primary aspects of human emotional development. Also, the academic performance of school adjustment indictors was included in this research for the purpose of determining the impact it has on bullying behaviour. Therefore, the problem of this study will focus on the emotional intelligence and self-esteem as predictors for bullying behaviour among student in elementary schools by answer the following research questions:

1. Are there predicting values for emotional intelligence factors in bullying behavior among students in elementary school?
2. Are there predicting values for self-esteem factors in bulling behaviors among students in elementary school?
3. Are there predicting values for the achievement level in bullying behavior among students in elementary school?

4. Research Methodology
4.1 Research Design

The researcher employed the descriptive correlation research design of the survey type. This plan of study is considered appropriate because it focuses on the observation and perception of the existing circumstance and situation.

4.2 Population

The population for the study is comprised of elementary school aged children in grades (7-9) who attend private schools in Amman city. During the second semester in the academic year 2012-2013, the study population was estimated to be approximately (25452) students.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Three hundred and sixty one children were selected for this study through the purposive sampling technique. Nine big private schools were randomly selected from a list of the private schools which included grades (7-9), table (1) shows that 222 (61.4%) of whom were females and 139 (38.6%) were males. Also, 113 (31.3%) students were from seventh grade, 107 students (29.7%) from eighth grade, and 141 students (39%) from the ninth grade. Also, the means of student academic achievement 75.12 with STD 3.57, and the means of the age 16.08 with STD 1.78.

4.5 Study Instruments

4.5.1 Bully Scale for Students:

A self report scale was used to measure bully activities of students which was developed by Qatami and Al-Sarayreh (2009).   This study was designed for students from the ages of 14 -17 years and the scale items were distributed on three dimensions (physical, verbal, emotional). The scale items were rated by a five point rating scale from (5 being 'always') to (1 being 'never'). The higher score indicates the student is engaging in more bullying activities.

To verify the scale validity, a group of experts holding doctoral degrees in educational psychology, counseling and mental health evaluated the scale item contents in terms of clarity and appropriateness of the item contents. In particular, this group of experts played a vital role in helping define the term "bullying." Of the group of experts, there was 80% agreement in defining the criteria that would be used in determining if an item was to be kept, modified, or deleted. After the experts provided the researcher their feedback, the researcher made the appropriate modification to the scale. Regarding the

reliability of the research study, the researchers applied test-retest procedures on (30) students outside the study sample. The scale application was repeated after two weeks from its first applications date. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between two applications. The Pearson correlation coefficient value was (0.82) which indicates that there was good scale reliability.

4.5.2 Emotional Intelligence Inventory

The Arabic version of the EQ-I Al-Shahrori, (2007) was administered during the research. The Emotional Intelligence Inventory used was comprised from (60) items with five -point Likert scale (1= "Very seldom or not true of me"; 5="Very often true of me"). The statements are clear and represent accurately the views of those who filled out the inventory.   The inventory covers four subscales (intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management). The higher score on the total scale or subscale indicate high level of emotional intelligence.

Mater (2004) conducted a factor analysis using the orthogonal rotation to verify the construct validity. This was done in order to determine the correlation coefficients between the item and total score. The results showed that four major factors were extracted and that there was 57.6% from the overall variance. In addition, the loading value was above 0.40 which refers to the appropriate level of correlation between the item and its domain.

For reliability, Mater (2004) applied test-retest procedures on (30) student outside the study sample. The scale application was repeated after two weeks from the first application date. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between two applications and the Pearson correlation coefficient values ranged from (0.78-0.86) for subscales, and (0.90) for the overall scale, which indicated that there was good scale reliability.

4.5.3 Self-esteem Inventory:

The inventory consists from (20) items designed to measure what the persons think at the present moment about him/her self. The best answer is what the person feels is true about themselves in their current situation. The responses on the scale was based on five point Likert scale while items 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 were reverse-scored. The total scores on the inventory equal the sum of the scores from all items and it keeps the scale as a continuous measure of state self esteem. The subcomponents are scored as follows:

1. Performance Self-esteem items: 1, 4, 5, 9, 14, 18, and 19.
2. Social Self-esteem items: 2, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20.
3. Appearance Self-esteem items: 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 16.

To verify the inventory validity the correlations between Self-Esteem measures and Outcome Measures, were calculated. The correlation between explicit self-esteem and preferences for initials was low, although statistically significant ($r = .21$, $p = .01$). Bosson et al. (2000) found a correlation of .13 which did not reach significance in their smaller sample. Explicit self-esteem was also marginally correlated with letter liking ($r = .15$, $p = .07$). After controlling for letter liking, the correlation between explicit self-esteem and preferences for initials was weaker but remained significant ($r = .17$, $p < .05$). In construct validation research, statistical significance is less important than the amount of shared variance. In this regard, our findings are consistent with previous studies that implicit and explicit measures share no more than 7% of variance (Bosson et al., 2000).

Due to the difference of the study population in this study compared to the original population that the Self-esteem Inventory had been developed for, the researcher conducted a pilot study for validity and reliability purpose. Self-esteem Inventory was verified by (10) experts in educational psychology in Jordanian universities for the validity purpose and the experts feedback suggested few changes needed to be understood but that the study population age group was appropriate for this study (which incorporated in the final version of the inventory). Also Cronback Alpha reliability coefficients were calculated among a pilot sample of (30) students for the overall scale and subscales. The reliability for the overall scale was 0.87, where it was ranged for the subscales (0.78-0.81).

4.6 Data Collection Procedure

In order to achieve study goals the following steps were used

1- Translate the study instrument into the Arabic language.
2- The back translation procedure was applied to study instruments in order to verify its translation validity.
3- Validity and reliability were conducted for the instrument to make sure that it had the appropriate psychometric indices.
4- Nine schools were randomly selected to administrate study instrument on it.
5- Study instrument was administrated to 458 school students in order that they complete it and the returned number of study instruments was (361).

4.7 Data Analysis Procedure

To analyze the study data, descriptive statistics such as a frequency and percentages was used. In addition, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to find out the prediction value of the independent variables (emotional intelligence, and self-esteem) of the dependent variable (bullying).

5. Study Results

Question One:

"Are there predicting values for the emotional intelligence factors in bullying behavior among students in elementary school?"

This study was embarked upon for the purpose of finding the predicting values for the emotional intelligence factors, self-esteem, and academic achievement in bullying behavior among students in elementary school. The outcome to question one: "Are there predicting values for the emotional intelligence factors in bullying behavior among students in elementary school?" were outlined in Table 1 that indicated the multiple R coefficients for emotional intelligence was relatively moderate. In others words, the findings imply that there is a significant effect of the predicting factors ---that is that they had a negative impact on bullying activities.

Table 1. Frequency and percentages for the sample characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Grade	Seventh	113	31.3
	Eighth	107	29.7
	Ninth	141	39
Gender	Male	139	61.4
	Female	222	38.6

As is noted in table (2), the multiple R coefficients for emotional intelligence factors is (.0.617), and the (F 54.59, D.F. 4 357, Prob ≤ 0.01), which indicates a significant effect of the predicting variables and dependent variables (emotional intelligence factors). The R2 value of .38 that part of the variance of bullying was explained by one or more emotional intelligence factors**.**

Table 2.Multiple regression result for study variables on the bullying behavior among students in elementary school

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig
emotional intelligence	.617a	.380	.373	54.59	.000
Self-esteem	.634a	.401	.396	79.820	.000
Academic performance	.144a	.021	.018	7.5625	0.006

Table 3. Standardized Coefficients for study variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
emotional intelligence	(Constant)	-12.691-	1.81		-7.012-	0.00
	intrapersonal	0.00	0.09	0.00	0.00	1.00
	interpersonal	0.46	0.09	-0.26	-5.35	0.00
	adaptability	0.61	0.13	-0.23	-4.70	0.00
	stress management	0.59	0.13	-0.30	-4.74	0.00
Self-esteem	(Constant)	36.95	7.46		4.95	0.00
	Performance Self-esteem	-.517-	0.08	-.375-	-6.860-	0.00
	Social Self-esteem	0.09	0.05	-0.10	-1.79	0.08
	Appearance Self-esteem	0.23	0.06	-0.25	-4.17	0.00
Academic performance	(Constant)	25.50	5.40		4.73	0.00
	Academic achievement	-.942-	0.34	-.144-	-2.759-	0.01

The result in table (3) shows that only four predictors of emotional intelligence factors had a significant impact on bullying. The first one was the 'interpersonal' (β = -0.264, t = -5.351, Prob ≤ 0.01). The second one was 'adaptability' (β = -0.232, t = -4.701, Prob ≤ 0.01). The third variable was 'stress management' (β = -0.30, t = -.30, Prob ≤ 0.01). Finally, all the predicting factors had a negative impact on bullying.

Question Two:

Are there predicting values for the self-esteem factors in bullying behavior among students in elementary school?

As is noted in table (2), the multiple R coefficients for self-esteem factors is).0.0.634), and the (F 79.82, D.F. 3 358, Prob ≤ 0.01), which indicates a significant effect of the predicting variables and dependent variables (self-esteem factors). The R2 value of .401 that part of the variance of bullying was explained by one or more self-esteem factors

The result in table (3) shows that only four predictors of self-esteem factors had a significant impact on bullying. The first one was the 'Performance Self-esteem' (β = --.375, t = -6.86, Prob ≤ 0.01). The second one was 'Appearance Self-esteem ' (β = -.248, t = -4.168, Prob ≤ 0.01).   Finally, each of the predicting factors had a negative impact on bullying.

Question Three:

Are there predicting values for the achievement level in bullying behavior among students in elementary school?

As is noted in table (2), the multiple R coefficients for academic performance factor is (0.14), and the (F 7.56, D.F. 1 360, Prob ≤ 0.01), which indicates a significant effect of the predicting variables and dependent variables (academic performance). The R2 value of .0.02 that part of the variance of bullying was explained by one or more academic performance factor.

The result in table (3) shows that predictors of academic performance factor had a significant impact on bullying, (β = -0.144, t = -2.75, Prob ≤ 0.01). The predicting factors had a negative impact on bullying.

6. Result Discussion:

There were three study questions that were tested in this study. The results from the first question revealed that there was a significant effect of the emotional intelligence factors ---that is that they had a negative impact on bullying activities. A possible explanation for this is that the students who were bullies may bully other students due to having limited interpersonal skills. Lark & Beran (2006) support this possible justification citing the result from their study confirms lower score on bullying was accompanied with having higher scores on social skills. Since the social interaction requires social cues interpretations, the students who were bullies might misinterpret the social cues and wrongfully perceive them as being threatening. Hence, the bullying can be seen as self defined reactions towards others within any given social situation. Camadeca, Goossens, Schuengel & Meerum, (2003) research findings also support the notion that self defining constructs of those children who are bullies determine or influence their negative behaviors towards other children.

Limited stress management skills for example, as it is one of the emotional intelligence components could help explain the high level of tension that bullies carry in their emotional states. As a result, bullies attacking other friends or peers may function in distracting themselves from the tension or serve in giving them a greater feeling of control and power. Warden & Mackinnon (2003) results also lend credibility to this research finding as long as sympathy is considered and accepted as being one aspect of emotional intelligence component. More specifically, Warden and Mackinnon found those students who were bullies had less sympathy when comparing them to the ordinary students.

Also, the result of this study found that self-esteem had a significant prediction in bullying activities and this finding is reinforced with the research completed by Kumpulainen et al,1998, O'Moore & Kirkham 2001. In their research, they found that bullies had low self-esteem. One possible explanation for this outcome could be that negative self-esteem leads to the students who are demonstrating bullying behaviors to act out aggressively and impulsively in order to prove themselves to others. Since these bullies do not have the capacity and skills to draw positive attention from others, they instead use negative behaviors to draw attention to themselves. Furthermore, the negative social image that is internalized among bullies may also function in facilitating their behavior and intension to harm other student. The lack of social acceptance amongst other peers also functions to further reinforce their negative and aggressive behavior---ultimately they are seeking some degree of social acknowledgement and acceptance.

Moreover, the academic performance has a negative relationship with bullying behavior. Lending further support to this finding is Eisenberg and Neumark-Sztainer (2003) who concluded from their research that peer harassment, i.e. bullying, is negatively related to connection to school and academic achievement. A possible explanation that helps explain this result is that students who are bullied are more likely to miss school which in turn adds to being disconnected and missing educational opportunities. Moreover, the students who are bullies per se may experience academic difficulties due to their lack of concentration on the academic task during the class as well as out of class.

The conclusion of the study results showed that there was a significant effect of the emotional intelligence factors -that is that they had a negative impact on bullying activities. Also, self-esteem displayed that it was a significant predictor in bullying activities. Furthermore, the academic performance has a negative relationship with bullying behavior.

7. Recommendation and Further research.

Based the study results, emotional intelligence training would be considered one of the possible intervention methods that could be used in dealing with bully students in the schools by the counselors. This approach could ideally be used by teachers as well with those identified students in the classroom setting. In summary, additional research is needed in this research area in order to get a better understanding for the psychological factors that contribute to bullying; such as early

attachment styles, and social anxiety among students who are bullies. The result of the study may be limited to the sample characteristic, and instruments that was used , as well as to period that the study took place during it.

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