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BULLYING EXPERIENCES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: AN
OBSERVATION

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Keyword: bullying, experiences, student, university, victim

1. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a term often described as aggressive intentional actions or behaviours performed by a group or individual repeatedly from time to time against victims who are unable to defend themselves easily or himself (Olweus, 1994). There are many types of bullying that can be experienced by university students, some can be seen clearly while others can be more subtle. The types that can be categorized as bullying are physical bullying, verbal bullying, mental bullying and cyberbullying. Studies from within and outside the country show that direct bullying such as physical bullying and verbal bullying are most often reported to occur in universities. Often the symptoms of bullying start with verbal bullying done through ridicule, name calling and ridicule. As for physical type bullying, it involves acts such as beating, biting, kicking, pinching, kicking and slapping. Uncontrolled physical bullying will result in the death of the victim of bullying.

The category of indirect bullying that is sometimes difficult to detect is mental bullying or also known as psychological bullying. This type of bullying is a form of psychological attack, namely through acts such as spreading slander, boycotting, isolation and flying letters. In addition, gestures such as squinting, cynical smiles and squealing also fall under the category of psychological bullying. Often, psychologically bullied students experience stress and loss of self-esteem as a result of spreading stories and gossip about themselves in public. Cyber bullying is the abuse of technological devices such as mobile phones and computers. Examples of cyber bullying include the spread of defamation through electronic mail and social media, text messages of threatening or abusive language, and the dissemination of videos of requests to bring down the dignity of the victim.

Cyber bullying is bullying that is very difficult to control because of the dissemination of information around the world and accessible to people only. In addition to being easy and fast, sharing is also not limited in terms of distance and time associated with criminal activity. The act of bullying was found to have a serious and lasting effect not only on the victim of bullying but also on the observer (witness) and the bully himself. Among the effects of bullying on victims are declining academic performance due to loss of interest in learning, skipping classes and skipping university due to fear, self-blame, and lack of confidence in one's abilities and potential.

The effects of bullying on bullies include engaging in vandalism or damaging university property, possibly injuring or killing the victim, and engaging in crime as an adult. As for the witnesses of the bullying incident, they also received the implication of a string of witnesses to the act. Among the negative effects that may be experienced include feelings of anxiety if also bullied, guilt for not being able to help the victim, and fear of sharing the experience of witnessing incidents of bullying with others (Noran Fauziah, 2006).

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Bullying is not an unfamiliar thing that has been occurring in university because there are so many cases of bullying that involve university students such as what had happened to one of the students in Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM) where he is been bullied by his friends to the point of causing his death. This case has shocked many parties where this case is very heart-breaking for a university student, so in order to prevent this issue from happening again, all parties must play their respective roles in preventing this from happening. The reason why this issue occurs is because due to their age where they are young adults rather than children, so they tend to show their bad behavior so that it can make them look strong and great, then other students can sense dread with them. The fact that bullying cases are becoming more prevalent among university students is very worrying because this can give a negative effect to the students who are being a target of such bullying behaviours where the experience is unpleasant which can lead to bad mental health and also can affect their academic studies. Besides, the issue of this cases of bullying has been a great concern among university part and responsible parties, but most of the residents of university are not take seriously about this issue and they also not fully aware of the fact that this bullying cases can give a negative effect of student life. In addition, this study aims to create awareness among students in UiTM Machang so that they are more concerned about this bullying issue.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate and identify bullying experiences that were faced by university students. This study suggests several research objectives that need to be attained such as:

- 3.1. To disclose the ways of bullying that the university students experience.
- 3.2. To find out the level of awareness of university students on cases of bullying around them such as bystander intervention.
- 3.3. To figure out the effects of bullying against university students such as depression, dropping out, changing university, traumatic and more.
- 3.4. To find out who the university students prefer to seek help from such as family, lecturer or friends when they face bullying cases.

4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings significance of the study is a gap in the literature in relation to university students, there is limited research to guide stakeholders as to factors that are associated with bullying in campus. Some variables of interest include, whether students live with their parents, in hostels or independently, their age, year of study, and type of college they attend such science and technology, education, health sciences, business studies, and natural resources. Education universities are of interest as they train knowledgeable students, who could perpetuate bullying in their campus. It is important that the staff and lecturer have some knowledge about bullying direct or indirect and undergo meaningful and constructive experiences.

5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are several limitations of the study. According (Maili Porhola, 2020) as a typical of most surveys, also in this study male students were underrepresented to some extent in all countries except for Argentina. Further, due to different higher education structures, the average age of the respondents varied from 21.7 years in Argentina to 25.5 years in Estonia. Hence, the results may reflect better the experiences of female than male students and of slightly different age groups in the countries compared. However, the differences in data collection methods between countries, such as using paper-and-pencil versus online questionnaire to be completed in a facility of own choice versus university facilities, could have had some effect, for example, on response rates, the representativeness of the student population, as well as on which students chose to complete the survey. Finally, it is different from UiTM because it uses only one method to find out if a student has a bullying problem at university, namely e-questionnaire.

6. PREVIOUS STUDIES

6.1 Types of bully

(Rosen & Nofziger, 2019) stated that there are a few types of bullying that can be seen. First is physical bullying, which can vary from the mistreatment of the victim to attack toward the victim's personal ownings, extortion of finance, and material resources. The second type is verbal bullying, which is the use of verbal interactions to bully the victim. Intimidation, threats, and teasing are commonly used to attack the victim's gender and physical aspect. The third bullying is relational bullying, which is done by taking advantage of a victim's social exclusion and isolation to bully the victim. This is done by the way of spreading rumours and spreading the victim's personal information without permission. In another bullying related study, (Marraccini, Brick, & Weyandt, 2018) studied bullying problems in a university located in the northeast region of the United States (US) and revealed a few types of bullying that exist as a norm today in the university setting which are: non-involved bullying, Instructor victim, peer bully-victim and peer bully-victim/ Instructor victim. It is noted in the study that while it is believed that bullying behaviors persist into college settings, very little attention has been given to bullying among college students.

6.2 Level of awareness

According to (Burk, DiRenzo, & Fuller, 2019), the emergence of bullying issues has led to the widespread public concern because it has a significant impact on healthy youth development. This is a problem because based on the study, young people and parents did not consider all negative interactions between people as bullying. The problem of addressing the bullying problem awareness is that it is to address and define the term bullying without leading to a mass confusion among parents and youths. (Cismaru & Cismaru, 2018) found that the bullying of students has been regarded as a huge problem among schools today. Although the students' bullying and harassment problem in middle school has started to be addressed, it is believed that the bullying problems of university students is more important.

6.3 Effects of bullying

(Rosen & Nofziger, 2019) mentioned that the effects of bullying toward victims is serious and problematic as it affects the victims, whether in short term and long term. It is also mentioned that a few examples of effects of bullying toward victims are feeling unsafe, suffering from physical and mental effects, as well as suicide and criminal behaviors. (Jodi Berger, Szlyk, Goldbach, Swank, & Zvolensky, 2018) stated that among the direct effects of bullying, is bullying, alcohol consumption and cannabis usage. Bullying victims are also significantly associated with depression problems, which eventually leads to bigger effects such as suicidal ideation, alcohol use, and illicit drug use. It is also stated that depression may be utilized by the victims as a defense mechanism due to bullying problems.

6.4 Channel of seeking help

(Cismaru & Cismaru, 2018) stated that the utilization of a multi-front approach by campus may help students that are facing bullying problems. This can be done by the inclusion of resources such as counselors and advisors to help the students that needed help. The effectiveness of this measure can help students to have a safe place where they can learn and grow without any bullying problems. (Bradbury, Dubow, & Domoff, 2018) found that it is important for parents, school staff, or school faculty to be understanding in the types of coping strategies of bullying victims. The study highlighted the methods that can be applied by peers, parents, and school staff to deal with the negative effect of cyber bullying. By understanding the situation of the victims, it is possible for the peers and parents to help the victims and offer them the necessary moral support and help.

7. METHODOLOGY

This study will be conducted between December 2020 and January 2021 on social media platforms that are where most UiTM Machang students use such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, etc. The subjects of this study will be open for all students in UiTM Machang from Diploma, Degree, Master, and PhD including an alumnus as well. They will receive an E-questionnaire via Google Form consisting of multiple choice, linear scale and open-ended questions. The survey consists of five sections. The first section collected students' demographic profiles. The second section examined student's experiences of bullying from victims which is the ways of bullying, the data will chart with an inductive method which systemized it so that no information was missed. All descriptions of bullying were scrutinized, and 38 different kinds of bullying were found (Sinkkonen et al., 2012). Also, the bystanders section included their role and awareness on cases of bullying around them; bystander behavior and its behavioural determinants among adolescents referred to some bystander behavior as considered 'brave' or 'cowardly' (DeSmet et al, 2018). In the last open-ended question, the respondents had the opportunity to suggest how bullying could be prevented from the university. The fourth section of the survey examined effects of bullying from victims of bullying and it uses 5-point Likert-type scales with choices ranging from "very affected" to "very unaffected". This instrument was designed to measure the level of affect by these bullying. Last section focused on victims' preferences of seeking help from whom to find out the extent to which students were willing to seek help from people (Jones, 2013). In this entirety, the questionnaires included 19 questions; 15 multiple choice, one linear scale and three open-ended questions.

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