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Bullying Roles and Moral Disengagement: The Influence of Demographic Variables Among University Students in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Several studies have reported a high prevalence of bullying among university students in Pakistan, ranging from 60-90%. However, detailed research on categorizing students into different bullying roles and examining differences in moral disengagement beliefs has been limited in the Pakistani context. Data were collected from 1,034 students across Pakistan, with the final analysis conducted on 964 (male=334, female=623, gender not revealed=7) students after outliers were removed using the boxplot technique. The questionnaires used were the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (ROBVQ) (Cronbach Alpha=0.926) and the Sohanjana Motivations Behind Bullying Questionnaire (SMBBQ) (Cronbach Alpha=0.895), with a construct validity of 55%. SPSS version 27 was employed for analysis, and differences were calculated using one-way ANOVA. Descriptive statistics revealed that 24% of students were victims of bullying, while 11.2% were classified as bully-victims, meaning they were both victims and perpetrators of bullying. Despite the varying prevalence of bullying roles, there were no significant differences in moral disengagement beliefs across the groups. Findings also revealed that although victimization rates were similar between male and female students, 15% of male students were classified as bully-victims compared to 9% of females. Additionally, males were nearly twice as likely to be classified as perpetrators or bullies compared to females. A significant decrease in the bully-victim role was observed with age, with 12% of students aged 18-25 classified as bully-victims, compared to 5% in the 26-33 age group and none in the 42-49 group, indicating a decline in bully-victim role with age. Significant regional differences in moral disengagement beliefs were also found, with students from Punjab showing higher moral disengagement than those from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. No significant differences were found based on education level or subject background.

Keywords: Moral Disengagement Beliefs, Bullying Roles, University Students, Demographics Impact, Pakistan