



# Impact of Bullying on Body Image and Life Satisfaction

## Among Male School Aged Children

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### ABSTRACT

Bullying, specifically nonphysical bullying, can greatly impact the way a student perceives their body image and their overall life satisfaction. The present study aimed to examine how nonphysical bullying impacts male students' perception of body image and life satisfaction. The study is a secondary analysis of the survey data gathered by Health Behavior in School Aged Children. The study utilized the data collected from 2009 to 2010 which composed of a total sample size of 12,642 students. A subsample of males only was created which was composed of 6,502 participants. To determine the relationship between the independent variables of frequency of bullying, nonphysical (i.e teasing and sexual jokes), and the dependent variables of body image and life satisfaction among male school aged children, a Spearman rho correlation analyses was computed. The results gathered indicated that there is a negative significant relationship between the frequency and the forms of nonphysical bullying with body image and life satisfaction. The negative association indicated that participants who experience nonphysical bullying, specifically teasing and sexual jokes, have a negative perception of body image and a lower life satisfaction. These findings demonstrate the importance of developing appropriate treatment plans for victims of bullying and implementing student support and mental health services in schools.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Significance of the Study

- Despite the growth in bullying research, the effects of sexual jokes and teasing has largely been focused specifically on female students, with limited research looking at the effects of nonphysical bullying on males.

#### Purpose of the Research

- The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between experiencing teasing and sexual jokes and the perception of body image and life satisfaction among male school aged children.

#### Research Question

- “What is the relationship between experiencing teasing and sexual jokes (i.e. nonphysical bullying) and the perception of body image and life satisfaction among male school aged children?”

#### Hypothesis

- Male students who experience bullying, specifically teasing and sexual jokes, are more likely to have concerns with their body image and experience lower levels of life satisfaction.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

- Sexual jokes seen as a form of sexual harassment within schools, can cause the student severe distress, limit their ability to participate in educational programs, and can create a hostile educational environment for the student that is affected (Gruber & Fineran, 2007).
- Nonphysical bullying related to teasing and sexual jokes on a child's appearance can impact the way they perceive their own body and their ability to maintain a positive self worth (Kostanski & Gullone, 2007).
- Researchers have found that females who experience nonphysical bullying within the school setting, experience high levels of anxiety, depression, and loneliness (Graham, 2016).
- Students who are victims of nonphysical bullying are more likely to have difficulty maintaining feelings of happiness and meeting their needs in various domains of their life including school, home, and friendships (Bilie, Flander, & Rafajac, 2014).

### METHODS

#### Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

- The current study is a second data analysis of data collected by the Health Behavior in School Aged Children (HBSC), sponsored by the World Health Organization.
- Though HBSC was an international study, the current study only uses data collected within the United States from 2009 to 2010.
- HBSC created a survey to administer to the students that were based on subjects related to various behavioral habits.
- The survey was administered in a classroom setting to students who were given consent to complete the survey and took forty-five minutes to complete.

#### Sample and Sampling Method

- The Health Behaviors in School Aged Children sampling was conducted over three stages. In the first stage, the primary sampling units consisted of public schools classified as urban or rural which was received from the Quality Education Data Inc.
- In the second stage of the school selection process, schools were chosen at random based on their districts and in the third stage, classes within the schools selected to participate were chosen to complete the survey.
- The students who were administered the survey were in 5th grade to 10th grade level and classes were chosen at random.
- The overall sample size of the original Healthy Behaviors in School Aged Children study consisted of 12,642 respondents.
- For the purpose of this present study, a subsample of males only was created which consisted of 6,502 participants.

#### Measures

##### Independent Variable: Nonphysical Bullying

For all three variables students were asked to choose between five statements on how often they experienced all three variables.

- Frequency of Bullying
- Teasing
- Sexual Jokes

##### Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction and Body Image

- One dependent variable of interest was made for body image and students were asked if they agreed or disagreed with each statement given.

- The Cantril ladder was used to measure life satisfaction which ranged from 0, which represented worst possible life, to 10, which represented best possible life.

Variables	n	%
<i>Independent Variables</i>		
Frequency of Bullying		
Have not been bullied	4,441	72.0
Once or Twice	985	16.0
2 or 3 times a month	285	4.6
Once a week	182	3.0
Several times a week	278	4.6
Non-Physical Bullying: Teasing		
Have not been bullied	4,212	70.2
Once or Twice	994	16.6
2 or 3 times a month	196	3.3
Once a week	207	3.5
Several times a week	391	6.5
Non-Physical Bullying: Sexual Jokes		
Have not been bullied	4,856	81.8
Once or Twice	488	8.2
2 or 3 times a month	188	3.2
Once a week	170	2.9
Several times a week	234	3.9
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Body Image	M = 12.08	SD = 2.71
Life Satisfaction	M = 7.56	SD = 2.00

### RESULTS

- A Spearman rho correlation was computed to determine the relationship between all three variables with the dependent variable body image and life satisfaction.
- Negative statistically significant association between frequency of bullying and body image rating,  $rs(5651) = -.204, p < .001$ .
- Negative statistically association between teasing and body image,  $rs(5569) = -.203, p < .001$ .
- Negative statically significant association between experiencing sexual jokes and body image rating,  $rs(5533) = -.196, p < .001$ .

#### Correlations Analysis of Nonphysical Bullying and Body Image

Independent and Dependent Variables	r <sub>s</sub>	df	p
Frequency of Bullying and Body Image	-.204	5651	.000
Nonphysical Bullying: Teasing and Body Image	-.203	5569	.000
Nonphysical Bullying: Sexual Jokes and Body Image	-.196	5533	.000

- Negative statistically significant association between frequency of bullying and life satisfaction rating,  $rs(5870) = -.119, p < .001$ .
- Negative statistically significant relationship between teasing and life satisfaction rating,  $rs(5927) = -.140, p < .001$ .
- Negative statistically significant relationship between sexual jokes and life satisfaction rating,  $rs(5870) = -.119, p < .001$ .

#### Correlations Analysis of Nonphysical Bullying and Life Satisfaction

Independent and Dependent Variables	r <sub>s</sub>	df	p
Frequency of Bullying and Life Satisfaction	-.119	5870	.000
Nonphysical Bullying: Teasing and Life Satisfaction	-.140	5927	.000
Nonphysical Bullying: Sexual Jokes and Life Satisfaction	-.119	5870	.000

### DISCUSSION

#### Summary of Findings

- The inferential analyses revealed significant results regarding the relationship between nonphysical bullying and body image.
- Consistent with the current study's hypothesis, male students who experienced teasing and sexual jokes as a form of nonphysical bullying had a negative significant association with body image and low levels of life satisfaction.

#### Implications for Research and Practice

- The study findings provided insight on the importance of implementing effective treatment practices for victims of nonphysical bullying and the formation of programs and policy initiatives directed on prevention.

#### Strengths and Limitations

- The research examined only two forms of nonphysical bullying.
- The study utilized a large sample size

### REFERENCES

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