

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER DISCRIMINATION, GENDER STEREOTYPES AND BULLYING AFFECT AMONG TEENAGERS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine gender discrimination and gender stereotypes as predictors of bullying affect among teenagers. For this purpose, a sample comprised of 200 teenagers was collected by using the purposive sampling technique. The duration of this study was six months. Three self-report measures were used in the present research, including Perceived Gender Discrimination (Hang-Yue et al., 2006), Gender Stereotypical Roles (Moreau et al., 2021), and Forms of Bullying Scale (Shaw et al., 2013). SPSS (Version-26) was used for data analysis. Results revealed that gender discrimination and gender stereotypes significantly positively predicted the bullying effect among teenagers. Gender differences also revealed that female teenagers were higher on bullying affect and gender stereotypes, whereas results were non-significant on gender discrimination. The study has implications in an academic setting.

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been shown by prior research that students who participate in gender nonconforming displays of femininity or masculinity are bullied; nevertheless, the link between victimization and attitudes has received less attention. Nonetheless, children and teenagers are more likely to experience bullying if they voice opinions in favor of gender equality at workplace. Female victimization accounts for most of this effect relative to male students which provides evidence of a double-standard. Girls may be punished by peers for supporting equality while boys do not face the same risk. This shed light on the complicated picture of progress and stagnation in efforts towards gender equality in the world (Lehman, 2017). Ultimately, fostering a more inclusive and respectful environment for teenagers to be crucial for their holistic development and well-being (Reicher, 2010; Roffey, 2013). A study by Lehman (2017) examines gender differences in the extent to which highschool and college teenagers are bullied in connection with participation in and attitudes towards extracurricular activities. Even while the health effects of obesity have received a lot of attention, stigma, prejudice, and discrimination also have a harmful impact on fat children and teenagers, which is frequently overlooked. Because of their weight, obese people are usually stigmatized in many facets of everyday life. Numerous decades' worth of research has shown that stigmatization and weight prejudice are persistent issues in the media, schools, workplace, health care, and interpersonal interactions. Teenagers who are overweight or obese experience widespread victimization, taunting, and bullying as a result of the stigma attached to their weight (Pearl, 2018). Being subjected to weight stigmatization can have a number of negative effects, such as poor academic performance, decreased physical activity, anxiety, melancholy, low self-esteem, body dissatisfaction, suicidal thoughts, and avoidance of medical care. The nature and scope of weight stigmatization toward overweight and obese people are outlined in this review, along with the negative

effects these experiences have on the social, psychological, and physical health of the targeted children and adults (Puhl & Latner, 2007; Willer, 2024).

Obese children and teenagers are often the targets of stigmatization, bullying, and discrimination, which has negative effects on the targets. Millions of people are at risk since weight stigmatization has been repeatedly shown to occur in important spheres of life including work, healthcare, and education. According to research, stigma around weight can make people more susceptible to a variety of negative consequences, including psychological impairment in adults and children (Puhl & King, 2013). The relationship between bullying and prejudice has not received enough attention in the past. However, the scant literature to date points to three potential connections between these phenomena: (1) bullying and discrimination are driven by the same things; and (2) bullying is a kind of discriminatory action. In a study, Buttigieg et al. (2011) examined data gathered from interviews with male and female participants in the industrial, retail, and hospitality sectors. All of these workers have had negative experiences with bullying and discriminatory treatment. Based on our interpretation of the interview data, bullying and discrimination are frequently caused by a variety of similar factors, such as difference, power, and organizational traits. Furthermore, these two types of bad behavior have comparable outcomes. The study argues for shared theoretical underpinnings for these two types of undesired conduct and offers some recommendations for further research.

The significance of gender discrimination for women's experiences at work has been suggested by research on gender inequality. Prior research has indicated that prejudice may be facilitated by organizational variables and gender stereotypes (Castaño et al., 2019). However, it is unclear how these factors interact to promote gender discrimination in regular jobs. Through an analysis of 219 discrimination narratives derived from sex discrimination complaints presented before the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, this work advances our knowledge of these interactions. Through an examination of several real-world work environments, the research clarifies the structural and cultural foundations of discriminatory practices. The findings show how gender stereotypes predictably combine with the sex makeup of workplaces and organizational policies to produce discrimination, frequently through interactional dynamics of the deployment of discretionary policies. The findings also demonstrate the relevance of cultural, structural, and interactional variables on gender discrimination (Kleps, 2022). Snizek and Neil's (1992) study looks at the mechanisms behind gender discrimination in a research, when asked, 37 and 41 percent of the women said they had frequently encountered prejudice on the job or in day-to-day interactions. Evidence is offered in favor of a vested interest hypothesis as the most fitting explanation for promotional discrimination, as opposed to everyday discrimination, based on analyses of data gathered from 625 women and 512 males. These results emphasize how important it is to identify and address various types of gender discrimination in the workplace as discrete analytical categories. The purpose of studying the relationship between gender discrimination, gender stereotypes and bullying affects among teenagers is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how these interconnected factors contribute to experience and well-being of teenagers in their social and educational environments. This research seeks to inform educators, parents and communities about the importance of addressing issues proactively. By raising awareness and promoting gender equality, challenging stereotypes and implementing anti bullying initiatives, we can work together fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for teenagers to thrive and reach their potential regarding of their gender.

The relationship between gender discrimination, stereotypes, and bullying affect is complex and multifaceted. Gender discrimination provides fertile ground for the cultivation of stereotypes, which, in turn, serve as ammunition for bullying behaviors. Conversely, experiences of bullying can reinforce and exacerbate the effects of gender discrimination, amplifying feelings of alienation and marginalization (Sánchez-Sánchez & Puente, 2024). To address this intertwined issue effectively, concerted efforts are needed at multiple levels—within families, educational institutions, and broader society. Comprehensive sex education programs can challenge stereotypes, promote empathy, and foster inclusive attitudes among teenagers. School policies should prioritize zero-tolerance for bullying while providing support mechanisms for victims and perpetrators alike. Additionally, media literacy initiatives can empower teenagers to critically analyze and deconstruct gender stereotypes perpetuated by mainstream media. Therefore, this study helps to bridge these gaps.

II. METHOD

Participants

Correlation research design was used. This research design was used to assess the relationship between gender discrimination, gender stereotypes and bullying affect among teenagers. About 200 participants of the study were taken from different colleges of Gujranwala. Age range was 16 to 20 years. Both males and females were included. Students with any major psychological or mental illness were excluded. Age of above 20 years old participants were excluded. Purposive sampling technique was used for data collection.

Measures

Following measurement scales used for data collection. [1] Perceived Gender Discrimination (Hang-Yue et al., 2006) measure for perceived workplace gender discrimination and was used to assess overt and covert forms of discrimination among teenagers. This scale consists of 7-items. The scale demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = .97$). [2] Gender Stereotypical Roles (Moreau et al., 2021) measure the violence-related attitudes, behaviors, and influences among teenagers. This scale consists of 4-items. The scale demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = .85$). [3] Forms of Bullying Scale (Shaw et al., 2013). Was used to measure bullying perpetration among teenagers. This scale consists of 2-items. The scale demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = .73$ to $.90$).

Procedure

The research was conducted for finding the relationship between gender discrimination, gender stereotypes, and bullying affect among teenagers. First of all, permission from authors of the scales were taken to use their scales for research purpose. The official permission from Department of Psychology, Royal Group of Colleges was taken to conduct the study. The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the study. After the data collection from teenagers, the statistical analysis was conducted through SPSS (version-26). Descriptive analysis, linear regression, Pearson correlation analysis and t test were used to test the assumptions.

III. RESULTS

This research estimates the relationship between gender discrimination and gender stereotypes and bullying affect among teenagers. The findings of the entire study are presented in this section. SPSS (version-26) was used for the data analysis. Descriptive analysis followed by alpha reliability for the all study variables were conducted. Parametric statistics was used to test the study assumptions.

Table 1: Psychometric Properties and Pearson Correlation of the Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range	α	1	2	3
1. Gender Discrimination	8.26	2.32	3-15	.70	--	.36*	.23*
2. Gender Stereotypes	5.15	2.33	1-10	.72		--	.60**
3. Bullying Affect	11.86	4.16	5-25	.75			--

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 1 shows psychometric properties and Pearson correlation of the scales. Results show that all scales and subscales have satisfactory alpha reliability coefficients (range from 0.70 to 0.75). Results showed that gender discrimination has significant positive relationship with gender stereotypes $r(198) = .36, p < .01$, and bullying affect $r(198) = .23, p < .01$. Gender stereotypes has significant positive relationship with bullying affect $r(118) = .60, p < .01$.

Table 2: Gender Discrimination and Gender Stereotypes as a predictors of Bullying Affect among Teenagers

Predictors	B	β	SE
(Constant)	2.10		.73
Gender Discrimination	.42*	.23*	.16
Gender Stereotypes	.36*	.35*	.08
R^2	.132		

* $p < .01$

Table 2 shows gender discrimination and gender stereotypes as a predictors of bullying affect among teenagers. The R^2 values show 13.2% variance in the outcome variable by the predictors gender discrimination and gender stereotypes. Gender discrimination and gender stereotypes significantly positively predicted bullying effect among teenagers $F(2, 197) = 7.24, p < .01$.

Table 3

Gender Differences in Gender Discrimination, Gender Stereotypes and Bullying Affect among Teenagers

Variables	Men		Women		$t(118)$	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD		
Gender Stereotypes	4.33	2.22	6.05	2.13	4.31*	.67
Gender discrimination	8.523	2.54	7.98	2.03	1.27	.12
Bullying Affect	9.98	1.11	13.94	5.19	5.90*	.82

* $p < .01$

Table 3 shows gender differences in gender discrimination, gender stereotype and bullying affect among teenagers. Results show that women were higher on bullying affect $t(118) = 5.90, p < .01$, and gender stereotypes $t(118) = 4.31, p < .01$, whereas results were non-significant on gender discrimination $t(118) = 1.27, p < .01$.

IV.DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to investigate the connection between gender discrimination, gender stereotypes and bullying affect among teenagers. The study also revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between gender discrimination, gender stereotypes and bullying affect among teenagers. This suggests that gender discrimination and gender stereotypes are associated with an increased likelihood of teenagers being engaged in unhealthy relationship dynamics. The study also found a statistically significant predictive role gender discrimination and gender stereotypes in bullying affect among teenagers. This implies that as gender stereotypes increase, the tendency for teenagers to engage in unhealthy relationships decrease. Overall, the findings of this study provide insights into the complex interplay between gender discrimination, gender stereotypes, and their effects on teenagers' emotional experiences and relationship dynamics. Previous studies also suggest that gender discrimination is linked to both higher levels of bullying affect and increased likelihood of unhealthy relationships among teenagers (Zheng et al., 2024). Conversely, gender stereotypes appear to be associated with a reduced likelihood of unhealthy relationships (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). This finding can be attributed to the fact that adhering to rigid gender stereotypes can lead to unrealistic expectations and biased assumptions about individuals based on their gender. Such assumptions can hinder effective communication, mutual understanding, and empathy in relationships, ultimately contributing to unhealthy relationship dynamics. This suggests that those who experience higher levels of discrimination are more likely to internalize and perpetuate gender stereotypes. Teenager females experience more negative emotional effects related to bullying compared to their male counterpart (Gruber & Fineran, 2008). These findings are consistent with broader societal trends and previous research indicating that girls might be more sensitive to the emotional impact of bullying and societal expectations surrounding gender roles. This implies that both teenage boys and girls reported similar levels of perceived gender discrimination (Thomas et al., 2016).

Gender differences in gender discrimination, gender stereotypes, and bullying affect among teenagers were also examined. The findings indicate that there are indeed variations between boys and girls in terms of their experiences with bullying affect and gender stereotypes. However, the lack of significant gender differences in reported gender discrimination raises interesting questions about how discrimination is experienced and perceived by teenagers, regardless of gender. The confirmation of gender differences in bullying affect and gender stereotypes has important implications for understanding the unique challenges and experiences faced by teenage girls. The higher levels of bullying affect might reflect the heightened emotional impact of bullying on girls, underlining the need for targeted interventions and support systems to address these emotional consequences (Turner et al., 2013). Similarly, the greater influence of gender stereotypes on girls suggests the importance of promoting gender equality and challenging harmful stereotypes in educational and social settings. The finding of non-significant gender differences in reported gender discrimination warrants further investigation. It could indicate that discrimination experiences are prevalent across genders or that the perception of discrimination might be influenced by factors beyond gender alone. This aspect of the study could prompt researchers to explore the nuances of how discrimination is understood and internalized by teenagers of different genders. The study's results shed light on the gender-specific aspects of bullying affect, gender stereotypes, and their interaction. The discussion could be enriched with additional contextual information about the study's methodology, the population being studied, and implications for future research and practical interventions aimed at addressing the identified gender-related differences.

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to observe the relationship between gender discrimination, gender stereotypes and bullying affect among teenagers. It was found that gender discrimination and gender stereotypes significantly predicted bullying affect among teenagers. Gender differences revealed that female teenagers were higher on gender stereotypes and bullying effect as compared to male teenagers. Results were non-significant on gender discrimination. This research yield information and provide farther evidence to existing literature for relation among gender discrimination, gender stereotype and bullying affect among teenagers. Teenagers who experience or witness gender discrimination, whether in the form of unequal treatment, verbal abuse, or exclusion based on gender, are at a higher risk of developing mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. This discrimination can erode their sense of self-worth and belonging. Gender discrimination and stereotypes often go hand in hand. When teenagers are exposed to discriminatory behavior, it reinforces existing gender stereotypes and expectations. This can limit their understanding of gender diversity and restrict their opportunities to explore interests and roles that fall outside traditional gender norms.

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