

Campus Bullying Survey in Ordinary Universities in Hunan Province of China



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ABSTRACT: In China, about 10% of campus bullying cases occur in ordinary universities. This is a survey of campus bullying in ordinary universities in Hunan Province of China. Students in ordinary universities have different attitudes towards physical bullying and mental bullying whose harmfulness has not been given sufficient attention. In reality, Physical bullying and mental bullying often occur simultaneously in most cases. Females are the main victims of campus bullying. However, the anti-bullying education and bullying protection of female undergraduates in universities are not prominent. To prevent campus bullying, it is necessary to strengthen the safety management and the anti-bullying education of the universities.

KEYWORDS: Campus bullying, Physical bullying, Mental bullying

1 INTRODUCTION

Campus bullying refers to the violence that the bullies used to invade, bully or humiliate the victims physically or mentally in or in the vicinity of campus (Zhang Wei, 2017). In China, college education contains ordinary undergraduate education and higher vocational education (Li Ruohan, Gao Na, 2020). The former is conducted in ordinary universities, while the latter is conducted in higher ordinary colleges. As of 2023, there are a total of 47.6319 million college students in 3074 higher education institutions in the country, including 20.3469 million undergraduate students in 1242 ordinary universities (Yu Yang, Shi Xiaoqian, 2019). According to the data on China Judgments Online, from 2008 to 2023, out of a total 10023 cases relating to campus bullying, 1781 cases occurred in Henan Province (ranked the first); 873 cases occurred in Anhui Province (ranked the second); 612 cases occurred in Shandong Province (ranked the third); 604 cases occurred in Hunan Province (ranked the fourth). Due to the fact that the author's institution locates in Hunan Province, the author selects all 53 ordinary universities in Hunan Province as the research object.

2 OVERALL VIEWS OF RESPONDENTS ON CAMPUS BULLYING

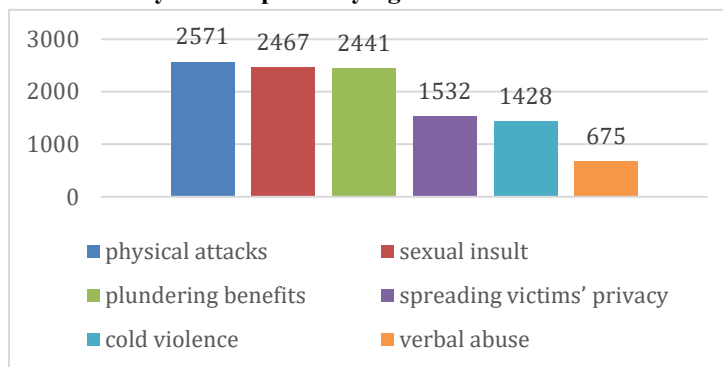
The author distributed 50 questionnaires to each ordinary university in Hunan Province. 2597 questionnaires collected are valid. The randomly chosen respondents are undergraduate students, aged between 17-22, with 1402 females (54%) and 1195 males (46%).

Out of 2597 respondents, 2545 students stated they knew or had heard of campus bullying, including 2036 students stated they couldn't distinguish the boundary between campus bullying and campus conflicts, and 509 students (20%) stated that they had a clear understanding of the meaning of campus bullying.

When asked about the ways of campus bullying. 2571 students (99%) chose physical attacks, such as beatings, slaps, body abuse; 2467 students (95%) chose sexual insult; 2441 students (94%) chose acts of plundering benefits, such as robbing, extorting, asking for protection fees; 1532 students (59%) chose spreading victims' privacy; 1428 students (55%) chose cold violence, such as isolate or marginalize someone; 675 students (26%) chose verbal abuse, such as cursing, slandering, ridiculing, or making up and spreading rumors. (shown in Table 1)

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Table 1: 2597 respondents' choice of the ways of campus bullying



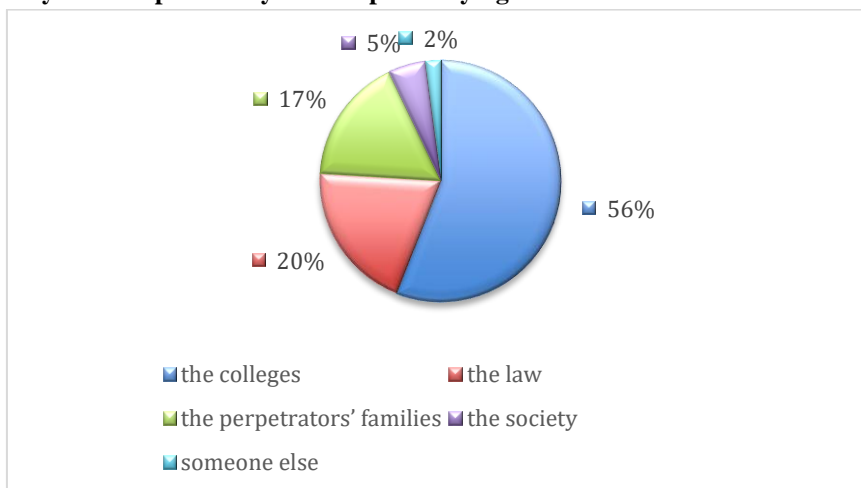
Among the 1532 students who believed that spreading victims' privacy was campus bullying, 781 students (51%) deemed that such behavior committed alone was not illegal. Among the 1428 respondents who considered cold violence as campus bullying, 957 students (67%) deemed that such behavior committed alone was not illegal. Among the 675 students who believed that verbal abuse was campus bullying, 587 students (87%) deemed that such behavior committed alone was not illegal. Overall, more than half of the respondents believed that only implementing mental bullying was not illegal.

In the survey, 1376 students (53%) stated they had heard of campus bullying happened in their university, but they were not witnesses; 961 students (37%) stated they never had heard of campus bullying around them; 260 students (10%) deemed that campus bullying indeed occurs and they used to be victims of campus bullying.

There are 2286 students (88%) stated that the bullies should be punished by the judiciary; 311 students (12%) stated that the bullies should be punished by the universities. But when the premise was changed to "campus bullying does not cause serious harms", 1272 students (49%) chose letting the universities solve the problem, 935 students (36%) still chose to resort to the judiciary; 390 students (15%) chose to forgive the bullies after warning and education. The respondents' attitude changes depending on whether campus bullying caused serious consequences or not.

When asked who should mostly bear responsibility for campus bullying without considering the bullies, 1454 respondents chose the universities; 519 students chose the law; 441 students chose the families of the bullies; 130 students chose the society; 53 students chose someone else.

Table 2: who should mostly bear responsibility for campus bullying



Among the 1454 respondents who chose the universities should bear the main responsibility for bullying, 393 students (27%) believed that the universities' punishment for the bullies was not strict enough; 364 students (25%) believed that the safety management in colleges was very poor; 320 students (22%) believed that the universities had not provided sufficient education on preventing bullying; 276 students (19%) believed that the universities failed to provide protection to victims in time; 101 students (7%) believed the universities had other managerial problems.

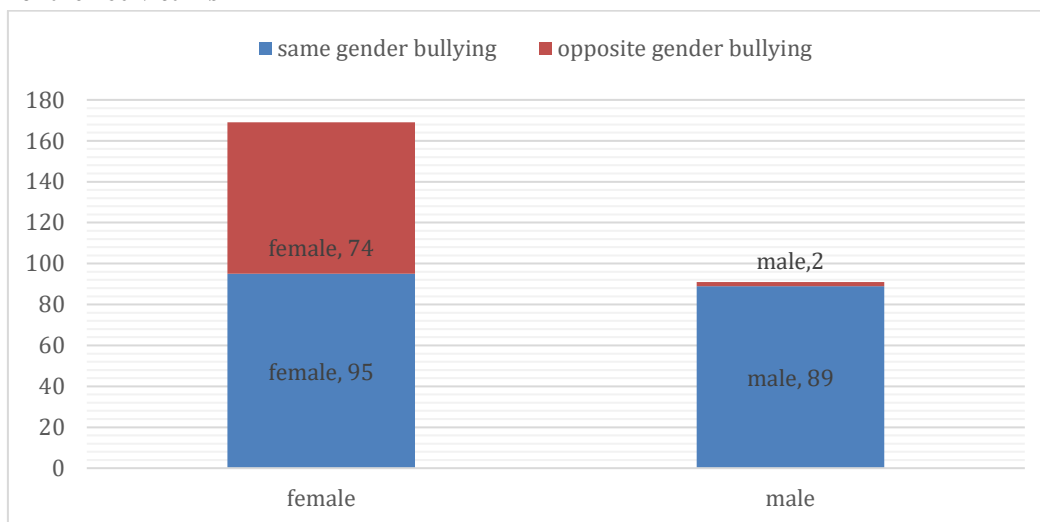
Among the 519 respondents who chose the law should bear the main responsibility for bullying, 202 students (39%) believed that the punishment for bullying by law was not quite severe; 161 students (31%) believed that the law was always leniency towards student bullies, especially for minors; 114 students (22%) believed that the law itself had flaws; 42 students (8%) believed that the law was powerless in face of mental bullying.

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3 BASIC SITUATION OF CAMPUS BULLYING IN HIGHER ORDINARY UNIVERSITIES

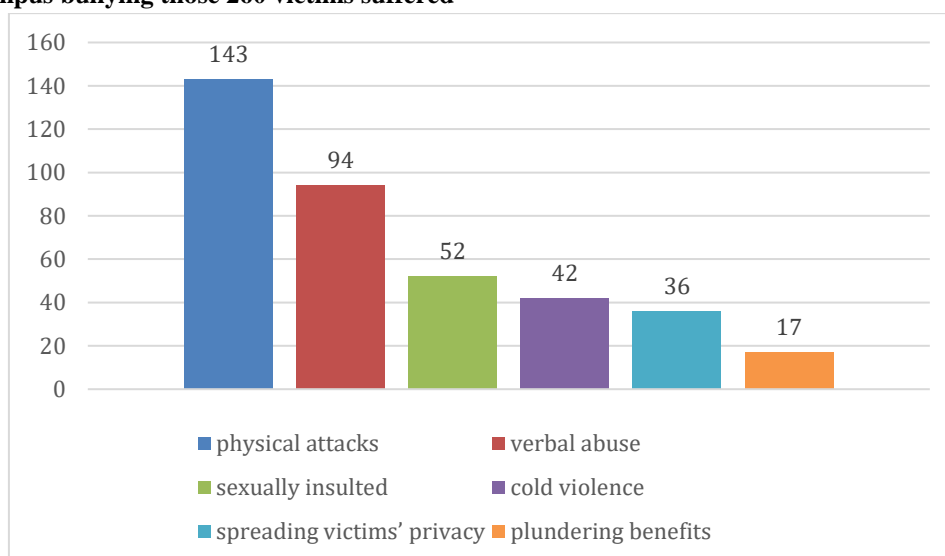
Among 260 respondents who have experienced campus bullying, 169 victims (65%) are females; 91 victims (35%) are males. 184 victims (71%) pointed out that they were bullied by bullies with the same gender. Out of 76 victims experienced opposite gender bullying, 74 victims are females. (shown in Table 3)

Table 3: gender of the 260 victims



Among the 260 victims, 143 victims (55%) experienced physical attacks; 94 victims were subjected to verbal abuse; 52 victims (20%) were sexually insulted; 42 victims (16%) were isolated or marginalized; 36 victims' (7%) privacy were spread; 17 victims (14%) were robbed or extorted. (shown in Table 4)

Table 4: types of campus bullying those 260 victims suffered

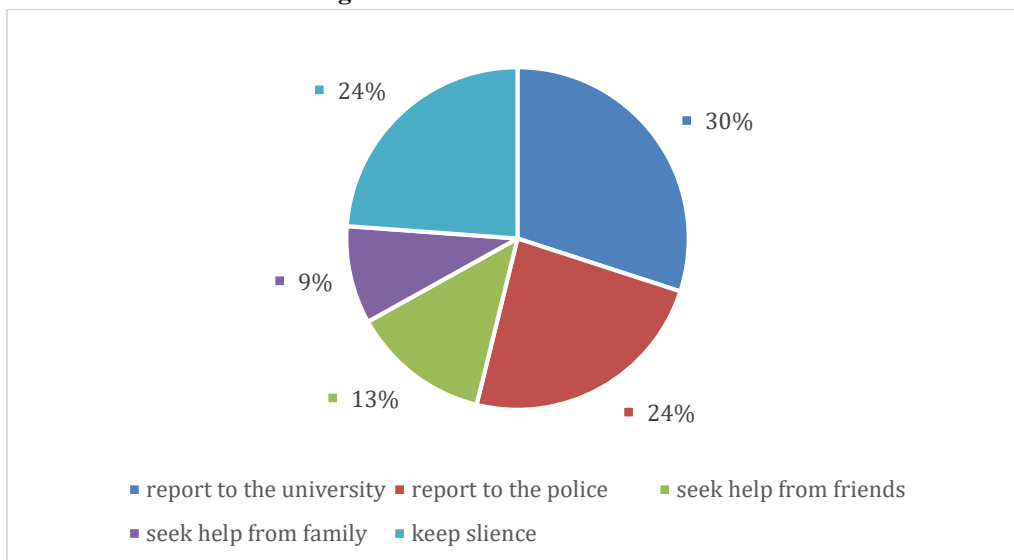


Totally, 235 victims (90%) reported they experienced physical bullying, 153 victims (59%) reported they experienced mental bullying. 128 victims (49%) stated that physical bullying and mental bullying occurred together. 103 victims (40%) reported they only suffered physical bullying; 25 victims (10%) reported they only suffered mental bullying.

62 victims (24%) chose to keep silence after being bullied, while 198 victims (76%) exposed the bullies after they were bullied. Among the latter, 78 victims (30%) chose to seek help from their college or teachers; 62 victims (24%) sought help from the police; 34 victims (13%) sought help from friends; 24 victims (9%) sought help from their families. (shown in Table 5)

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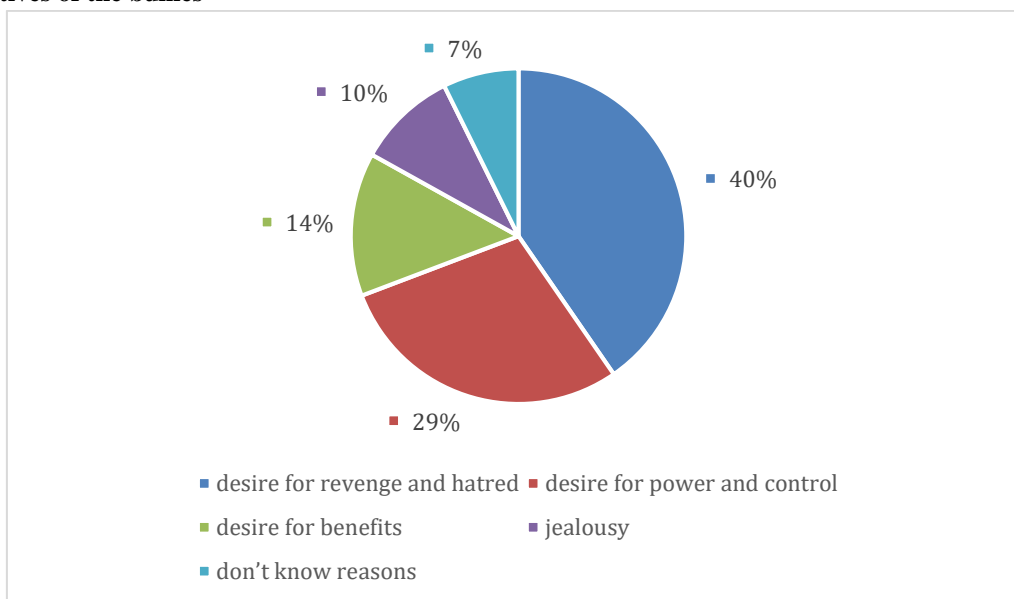
Table 5: the reaction of 260 victims after being bullied



Out of 198 victims exposed the bullies, 16 victims were bullied again afterwards, including 11 victims who had sought help from friends and 5 victims who had sought help from their families. Out of 62 victims who kept silence to bullying, 44 students were bullied again shortly afterwards.

When asked if they knew the reason of bullying, out of 260 victims, 105 victims (40%) stated that the bullies hated them or wanted to revenge; 75 victims (29%) stated that bullies wanted to achieve their desire for power or control through bullying ; 36 victims (14%) stated that the bullies wanted to despoil financial or material benefits; 25 victims (10%) stated that the bullies were jealous; 19 victims (7%) stated that they didn't know the reason of bullying. (shown in Table 6)

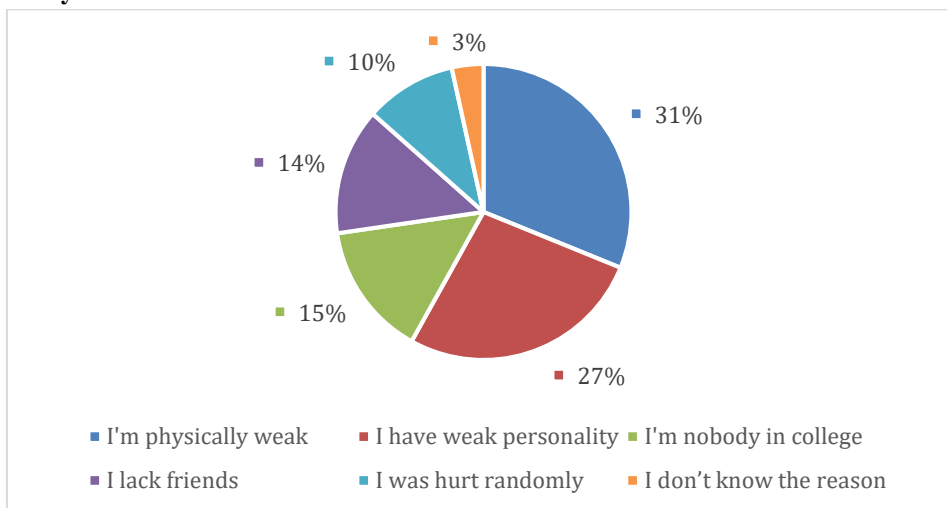
Table 6: the motives of the bullies



When asked why they were the victims, 81 victims (31%) stated that they were physically weak; 70 victims (27%) stated that they had weak personality; 38 victims (15%) stated that they were not valued by teachers or their college; 36 victims (14%) stated that they lacked of friends; 26 victims (10%) stated that they were randomly selected by the bullies; 9 victims (3%) believed that there must be some reason but they knew nothing about it. (shown in Table 7)

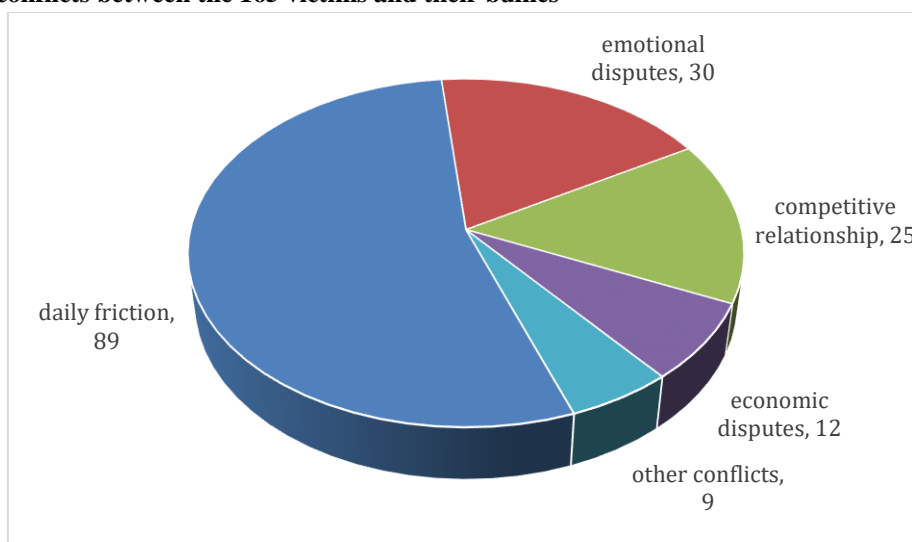
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Table 7: Why would they be victims



226 victims (87%) stated they knew the bullies before, 73% of them (165 students) stated that they had personal conflicts with the bullies before being bullied. When asked about what type of the conflict was, 89 students chose daily frictions; 30 students chose emotional disputes; 25 students chose competitive relationship; 12 students chose economic disputes; 9 students indicated other conflicts. (shown in Table 8)

Table 8: the type of conflicts between the 165 victims and their bullies



When asked about how to prevent campus bullying, 231 victims (89%) noted that the safety management of the universities should be strengthened; 221 victims (85%) noted that punishment for bullying should be more severe; 213 victims (82%) noted that the prevention education should be paid more attention; 151 victims (58%) noted that their physical and psychological quality needed to be improved; 143 victims (55%) noted that more social assistance should be provided; 133 victims (51%) mentioned that the family education for college students should also be strengthened.

4 CONCLUSION

Through the survey, following conclusions have been drawn:

No.1 The respondents' understanding of mental bullying is not as accurate as their understanding of physical bullying. More than 40% of the respondents don't know that mental bullying also belongs to campus bullying; more than half of the respondents believe that implementing mental bullying is not illegal, unless it is conducted with physical bullying, or leading to serious consequences. Therefore, universities should strengthen campus bullying prevention education, and pay more attention to popularizing relevant basic knowledges to improve students' awareness of preventing mental bullying.

No.2 Females are the main victims of campus bullying, accounting for 65% of the total number of victims. 44% of female victims have been suffered campus bullying conducted by male. Sexual insult has become the third most common form of campus

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bullying. Therefore, universities should strengthen the safety protection of female students, especially in terms of personal safety and sexual safety.

No.3 Physical attacks and verbal abuse are the most common forms of physical bullying and mental bullying. Therefore, the prevention education related to physical attacks and verbal abuse should be particularly emphasized.

No.4 More than half of the victims choose to seek help from universities and the police, with universities being their first choice. After bullying occurs, the likelihood of the victims who exposed the cases being bullied again is much lower than those victims who kept silence. Bullies are more afraid of police's intervention. So, in the prevention education, victims should be encouraged to expose bullies bravely.

In addition, the author also advocates for preventing campus bullying through enhancing campus safety management, strengthening the punishment severely, and strengthening prevention education.

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