Intellectual Bullying among University Teachers: Motives and Reactions

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Abstract:

It seems, at first glance, that the term bullying has to do with reckless, grumpy, young, disrespectful persons who want to tease and mock others who are weak or unsecure. However, there is another insidious type of bullying which is called intellectual bullying; it occurs among intellects that are knowledgeable, smart, and successful in specific field. The worst is that such bullying is perpetrated with colleagues and friends. Though intellects represent the cornerstone in a various political, social, economic, religious, and academic realms, they are not active any more. The present paper is done at Mila University Centre; it seeks to collect data about teachers' perspectives about bullying behavior among them, its motives, and how should the bullying intellects react towards such harassment? A teachers' questionnaire is the means used for collecting data. The data are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively, implications of findings about bullying in academic settings are drawn, and suggestions for further research are provided.

Keywords: Intellectual bullying; Motives; Reactions.

Introduction

Academic bullying is a form of bullying that occurs between intellectuals, Mila University Center Professors are the main concern of such paper. People assume that teachers are noble, honest, and faithful since knowledge gives them a sense of dignity, solemnity, and respect. They believe that the university is a symbol of wisdom and prudence. They do not know that such place became a spot for competition, promotion, and wealth. Therefore, some teachers abandon their morals and follow their endless dispute. This article is about bullying with special focus on academic bullying. based on what is written in literature, a set of motives are highlighted as major causes behind academic bullying

which in turn have severe consequences on persons and institutions. Then some possible actions for prevention and management of bullying in higher education settings are discussed. The paper finishes with the analysis of the questionnaire, interpretation of findings, implications, and suggestions for further research.

1. Definition of Academic Bullying

Academic bullying is a sort of bulling among a set of types, but before defining it, a clarification for what does the term bullying mean is necessary? Harris and Petrie (2003) clarify that bullying has to do with mobbing. It emerged in Sweden in the late of 1960s and early 1970s.

"Bully/victim" and "whipping boy" are among the terms used by Daniel Olwens, a Scandinavian researcher, is a pioneer in such type of studies. Nowadays, bullying is called "peer abuse" or "peer harassment" because of the abusive nature of bullying. He asserts that there is no clear definition for that term, but he defines it as "an extreme behavior that is intentionally harmful and aggressive of more powerful persons or group of people directed repeatedly towards a less powerful person, usually without provocation (p.2)".

Von Bergen (2006) asserts that there is no clear definition for the term bullying because there are a lot of terminologies used to describe the behavior associated with such term like interpersonal mistreatment, psychological harassment, psychological violence, abusive work place conduct, antisocial employee behavior, escalated incivility, and psychological aggression. He defines the term as harassment that inflicts a hostile work environment upon an employee by a coworker or coworkers typically through combination of repeated, inappropriate, and unwelcome verbal, non-verbal , and/ or low level physical behaviors that a reasonable person would find threatening, intimidating, harassing, degrading, or offensive. Harvey et al (2007) assert that the bullying behavior definition contains three reoccurring elements: (1) The persistent nature of the action. (2) The effect suffered by the bullied individuals. (3) The potentially devastating effects of the bullying activity on the bullied individual.

Harris (2003) clarifies that bullying is not always obvious like hitting or verbal teasing; it can be subtle like excluding victims from activities. This typing of bully may be insidious as the victims do not realize that they are bullied. Therefore, there are two types of bullying direct and indirect. The former may include taunting, teasing, calling names, verbally criticizing, unfairly threatening/ obscene gestures, menacing stars, hitting using a weapon or threatening to use one, stealing or hiding others´ belongings. Some examples of indirect bullying are: influencing others to taunt or tease, influencing others to call others' names, influence others to criticize unfairly, spreading rumors about others, making phone calls, ignoring others intentionally, influencing others to physically hurt someone, excluding others on purpose.

Frazier (2011) defines academic bullying as an aggressive behavior that occurs in systematic long term. It occurs in academic settings in overt or covert forms. Cassell (2011) argues that bullying and mobbing in academe is prevalent. It may be found at every university with any department because many professors continue to express bullying by members of the administration. Cassell (2011) states that, in higher education, bullying is not new phenomenon. In academe as in any other context, bullying is low in intensity with less significance than other forms of harassment or discriminate. However, still members of professorate experience deliberate and relentless actions like rudeness, intimidation, humiliation, exclusion, or any similar behavior perpetuated by administrators. Based on literature review, Cassell (2011) classifies bullying into three categories: inaction, subtle action, and action. Inaction bullying can be silent treatment, withholding praise,

withholding feedback, withholding information, and delaying action of importance. Subtle action includes glaring in hostile manner, eye rolling, interrupting during meetings, and exclusion from conversation. Action bullying can be practical jokes, excessive monitoring, rude/ disrespectful behavior, interferences with work, differential treatment, swearing, shouting, humiliating, name calling, lying, blaming without justification, invalid criticism, undermining credibility, and sabotage.

2. Causes of Bullying

Conn (2004) clarifies that among the reasons of bullying are: (1) monitoring, many researchers insist on monitoring as a key for faculties' success, but it may lead to bullying. (2) Institute climate and lack of personal time, toxic climate can affect attitudes and believes, some students need more time and guidance than others. (3) Promotion in the sense that some faculties experience a marginalization of research efforts as an obstacle for achieving tenure and promotion. (4) Collegiality and racism, the former refers to the relationship that exists between colleagues and university settings. Collegiality can be a tool of racism and discrimination that influences the work place environment. Contemporary racism is subtle form of racial bias that is expressed in attitudes, beliefs, and behavior.

Keashly and Neuman (2010) talk about social and situational causes of workplace bullying. Those causes include unjust situations that (1) violate norms, (2) produce frustration and stress, and (3) introduce negative effects. Unfair or provocative treatment by others may be a source of anger and aggression and may result in bullying. Furthermore, there are daily justice judgments as promotion decision, office assignments, and merit pay that lead to frustration and stress. Using objective or ambiguous criteria in reviews of scholarly / intellectual contributions, department and college- wide service, continuing growth, and community service, such judgements lead to perceptions of distributive injustice. Another social cause is norm violation. The latter results in high level of direct aggression and bullying on the part of senior who in turn direct their attention untenured faculty members who are lower in rank as students or staff, or they may engage in indirect forms of aggression against colleagues of equal rank, department chairs and other senior administrators. A further social cause is elicitation of frustration and stress because of the feeling that someone is preventing you from some desired goals, this may lead to bullying. situational causes like cost-cutting measures as lowering thermostats in winter to conserve energy costs, restricted access to office and computer supplies and reduced funding for building maintenance, those may have negative effects and unpleasant psychological arousal. A further cause is the organization culture and climate. Though academy is a place of collegiality and civility, values of academic freedom and autonomy, it is exposed to hostile and aggressive behavior. In addition, persons who do not have legitimate authority have less motivation to handle issues with colleagues, this results in toxic climate because norms are preventing actions to address what faculty views as problematic behavior that creates a climate

of non-collegiality, hostility, and incivility, such matters increase the likelihood for bullying and mobbing. Jan and Husain (2015) concluded in one of their studies that the powerfulness is the first cause of bullying followed with revenge because those who were bullied work as bullies at other instants, and gender difference because women show absentees than men.

3. Consequences of Academic Bullying

Keashly and Neuman (2010) assert that the consequences of bullying are damaging to individuals and groups because of its destructive political behavior, lack of cooperation, and interpersonal aggression. It has physical, psychological, and emotional effects. Bullying has a further effect on the organization through the organizational withdrawal behavior, theft, lowered organizational commitment, and sabotage. Another impact is job satisfaction, productivity, performance, turn over and abrasive interaction with students. Bullying reduces their efforts in scholarship not only for tenure, promotion, or merit, but also their ability to mentor graduate students. It reduces their investment in teaching, reduces the quality of the work necessary to keep the institution moving forward. In brief, workplace bullying and mobbing are part of academic landscape and their effects are not only on the targets or bystanders but also the environment and the institution itself. Similarly, Cassell (2011) argues that bullying has physical, mental, and emotional consequences which affect the department and the university on a large scale. He clarifies that professors can suffer from stress, depression, suicidal thoughts,

reduced self-esteem, self-blame, phobias, sleep disturbance, digestive problems, social isolation, family problems and post-traumatic stress disorders. Bullying results on several consequences on the department such as: inability to attract new hires, dysfunctional work environment, decreased productivity, decreased employees morals, decreased loyalty, acts of sabotage and revenge, absenteeism, and lawsuits.

Jan and Husein (2015) clarify that bullying creates barriers with negative outcomes on the part of students. It does not decrease their academic performance but it leads to mental health problems and physical injuries.

4. Prevention from Bullying

Keashly and Neuman (2011) insist on early action because it prevents the situation from getting worse. There should be clear mechanisms and procedures to address such causes and prevent them from arising through establishing clear policies and standards for promotion, tenure and merit review. The faculty can be taught about conflicts' management processes and specific skills involved in problem identification, solution development and selection, implementation and evaluation of the solution. Among the suggested skills, there are: active listening, assertion, differentiating between "advocacy" and "inquiry" and problem solving. Mediation is another solution that involves a third party who facilitates a constructive discussion between parties in dispute. One more solution is developing a shared sense of appropriate behavior which is the department communication protocol which

is designed to address conflicts in the department and toxic places. A final solution is an institutional resource.

Holland (2019) introduces a set of procedures to fight bullying in workplace in general, and it helps at the university context. First employees voice, it is a way of communication between employees and employers. Voice provides stable structure where information flows between parties for better decision making. Another point is trust and voice. Trust, from a psychological point of view, is willingness to show vulnerability through imprecise relationship based upon reciprocal cooperation. Trust helps in the management, and employees engage in mutually cooperative relationships. Ethical leadership clarifies traits and behaviors that ethical leaders work by and encourage employees to follow. Thus, developing an organizational climate based on ethical leadership ensures that moral standards play important role in organizational decision making. The organizational climate is described as a characteristic atmosphere in the organization as perceived by organizational members. Management that develops the organizational structure, policies, and practices can structure or institutionalize voice or governance mechanisms and leadership. Cassell (2011) argues that providing professors with caring, respectful and safe environment helps them to engage in their teaching scholarship, and services.

5. Objectives of the Study

The aims behind this study are three folds:

(1) Reviewing the nature of bullying in academic setting.

(2) Reviewing the main effects of academic bullying.

(3) Suggesting remedies to such phenomenon.

6. Research Questions

1. What are the major motives of academic bullying?
2. What are the possible impacts of such behavior?
3. What are the possible reactions that may be used to face such activity?

7. Methodology

This dissertation investigates bullying among university teachers using a quantitative method. The data were collected through a questionnaire which is composed of twenty three questions that are grouped into four parts.

7.1. Population and Sampling

The questionnaire of this article is addressed to Mila University Teachers. The questionnaire was distributed via their e-mails.

7.2. Tools of Research

Tools are instruments for data collection; in this study, a self- developed questionnaire was designed for university intellects. The questionnaire contains twenty- three questions, and it is divided into five sections. The first section is devoted for teachers general information, the second is for teachers' perceptions about bullying, if it really exists in Mila University, if professors face it, and if so, the frequency and type where inquired. The

third section is about causes of bullying among university teachers. Followed with a section about the effects that may bullying have, then a section about some suggested remedies. Finally the questionnaire ends with teachers' suggestions about the topic.

8. Results

8.1. Response Rate and Analysis of Biographical Information

The analysis revealed that the response rate of participants was very weak only 13 teachers replied out of 200 teachers, may be because the questionnaire was not administered face to face. Table 01 is about teachers' general information: their degree, gender, and number of teaching years.

Table 1. General Information

Variables	Category	Percentage
Degree	doctorate	80%
	magister	20%
Gender	male	46,7%
	female	53,3%

	3	6,7%
	5	6,7%
	6	6,7%
	7	6,7%
Number of teaching years	10	26,7%
	12	6,7%
	13	6,7%
	14	6,7%
	15	6,7%
	18	6,7%
	20	6,7%

Figures in table 1 shows an amalgamation of degrees, gender, and teaching years that give comprehensive results and perception, unless the number of participants is low. Teachers refusal to respond may be considered as academic bullying since it effects the results, and does not meet the research aims which are causes, effects, and remedies for such immoral activities.

Table 2 Teachers Perceptions' about Academic Bullying

Variables	Categories		%
Bullying existence at the university	yes		57,1%
	no		42,9%
Teachers' experience with	yes		60%
	no		40%
Frequency	rarely		57,1%
	sometimes		28,6%
	often		0%
			14,3%
Kind of bullying	inaction	silent treatment	33,3%
		withholding information	11,1%

		withholding praise	**11,1%**
		withholding feedback	**11,1%**
		delaying action of importance	**33,3%**
	subtle action	glaring in hostile manner	**12,5%**
		eye rolling	**37,5%**
		interruption during meetings	**25%**
		exclusion from conversation	**25%**
	action	target of practical jokes	**12,5%**
		lying	**0%**
		shouting	**12,5%**
		invalid criticism	**12,5%**
		blaming without justification	**25%**
		excessive monitoring	**25%**
		swearing	**0%**
		humiliating	**0%**
		sabotage	**0%**
		Differential treatment	**12,5%**

Though the number of respondents is low, 57,1 % of those who participate assert that academic bullying is prevalent. The majority again (60%) experience such phenomenon in their universities. All of them face at least one sort of bullying; inaction bullying comes in the first position with 42,9%, followed with both subtle action and action bullying with 28,6% each. In inaction bullying, silent treatment and delaying the action of importance come in the first position with 33,3% followed with withholding information, feedback, and praise. The indirect kind of bullying dominates may be because bullies do not have courage to face the bullied ones but normally in a Muslim Society in general and in precise climate such as the university, those activities seem to be shameful.

Table 3 Teachers Perceptions' about Academic Bullying Causes

Variables	Categories		Percentage
Bullying's motives	Social	injustice and aggression	33,3%
		authoritarian leadership	25%

		personal decisions		25%
		frustration		16,7%
		norms violation		8,3%
	Culture		competition	11,1%
			autocratic leadership	0%
			adversary	22,2%
Situational			absence of legitimate authority	33,3%
			collegiality	11,1%
			autonomy	11,1%
	Climate		non-collegiality	20%
			hostility	10%
			incivility	70%

The majority of participants (84,6%) agreed that there are several motives for bullying social and situational. Injustice and aggression, in social causes, comes in the first position with 33,3%, followed with authoritarian leadership and personal decision with 25% each, then frustration with 16,7%, and finally norms violation with 8,3%. In situational reasons, there are university culture and climate. The absence of legitimate authority comes first with 33,3%, then adversary with 22,2%, then competition, collegiality, and autonomy with 11,1% each. Again teachers' morals are severely affected because all the suggested causes have to do with morals. The absence of morals in the Algerian mentality and society is related to the weakness of their beliefs and ethics. Every simple mattered is clarified and explained in the Holly Quran and Sunnah, but intellects are in hurry for promotions and success using immoral acts.

Table 4. Teachers Perceptions' about Academic Bullying Effects

Variables	Categories		%
Bullying Effects	teacher	stress	50%
		reduced self esteem	8,3%
		sleep disturbances	0%
		depression	25%
		Self- blame	8,3%
		post traumatic	0%
		stress disorder	0%

		suicidal thoughts	0%
		digestive problems	0%
		phobias	0%
		social isolation	8,3%
		family problems	0%
	university	inability to attract new hires	8,3%
		dysfunctional work environment	33,3%
		acts of sabotage	0
		decreased productivity	58,3%
		decreased employee morals	0%
		decreased loyalty	0%
		absenteeism	0%
		lawsuits	0%

All the participants agreed on the destructive effects of bullying. They agree on the physical, mental, and emotional consequences on intellects. To them, stress is the major effect with (50%), followed with depression (25%), then reduced self-esteem, self-blame, and social isolation (8,3%). Teachers didn't opt for sleep disturbance, post-traumatic, stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, digestive problems, phobias, and family problems. Teachers opted for decreased productivity as a first option 58.3%, dysfunctional work environment with 33.3%, and inability to attract new hires 8,3% while they didn't opt

for acts of sabotage, decreased employee morals, decreased loyalty, absenteeism, and lawsuits. The teachers' answers contain a paradox because teachers opted for stress but they did not opt for stress disorder, sleep disturbance, post-traumatic, stress disorder, stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, digestive problems, phobias, and family problems though their original reason is stress.

Table 5. Bullying's Preventions

Variables	Categories	%
Possible Reactions	seek consultation	0%
	review and develop policies	30,8%
	raise awareness	23,1%
	communicate	7,7%
	appoint ombudsman	0%
	enforce policies and procs	23,1%
	build commitment	15,4%
	monitor and evaluate	0%

The prevention of academic bullying, according to teachers, can be done through reviewing and developing policies (30,8%), followed with enforce policies and procs, and raising awareness with (23,1%) each. They opted for building commitment with (15,4%), and communicate with (7,7%), in the final position come seeking consultation, appoint ombudsman, and monitor and evaluate with 0%. It is important for university teachers to know their rights, duties, and different policies and procs in order to know how to react in case there is any sort of bullying.

- **Further Suggestions**

The following are what the teachers' suggestion about the our topic "bullying among university teachers":

- It should be eradicated by any means
- Applying strict procedures, activating the role of the Professional Ethics Committee, and applying the due punishment
- Spreading a culture of respect, knowing the rights and duties of all parties, and separating administrative work from the pedagogical side
- Bullying among university teachers can affect negatively, our life in general and mental and physical health. The solution depends on ethics and character of a Moslem.

8.2. Discussion of Result

This article is about academic bullying at Mila University Center. Its main objectives is finding motives that push intellectuals to bully, the possible effects of academic bullying, and the suggested solution that may help in minimizing or eradicate bullying in academic settings.

A questionnaire is used as means for collecting data, it was sent to Mila University Teachers via emails and it was posted in Facebook groups, thinking that none doesn't have a Facebook account, also social media is the place where teachers from different places inside or outside Algeria discuss and share ideas, experiences, and advice, but nobody answered.

The analysis revealed that the response rate of participants was very weak because the questionnaire was not administered face to face. Based on the obtained results, the majority of teachers (75%) admitted that different kinds of academic bullying exist at the university, and 60% of the respondents experience at least one. In the first position comes inaction bullying, followed with subtle and action bullying with a rate of (28,6%). Among inaction behavior teachers face are: silent treatment and delay action of importance which come first with a rate of (33,3%) each, then come withholding praise, feedback and information with (11,1%) each. In subtle bullying, eye rolling comes in the first position with 37,5% followed with both interrupting during meetings and excluding from conversation with 25%, and finally glaring in a hostile manner with 12,5%. For action bullying, teachers opted for excessive monitoring and blaming without justification with (25%) each. Then come different treatment, target of practical jokes, shouting, and invalid criticism with (12, 5%) each.

Furthermore, 84,6% of the respondents agreed that there are social and situational reasons for academic bullying. The major cause, in the social side, is injustice and aggression with (33,3%), the second cause is personal decisions with (25%), the third causes are frustration and authoritarian leadership, and in the fourth position comes norms violation with (8,3%). The situational reasons have to do with the university culture and climate. For the cultural causes, teachers opted for absence of legitimate authority with 33,3%, second adversary (25%), then competition, autonomy, autocratic leadership, and collegiality with (11,1%) each. For climatic causes, the major reason is incivility with

(70%), then non-collegiality with (20%), and finally hostility with (10%).

All the teachers confirmed that intellectual bullying had destructive effects not only on the individuals, but on the university also. Bullying leads to physical, mental, and emotional problems. 50% opted for stress as a major consequence followed with depression (25%), then self-blame, reduced self-esteem, and social isolation. Bullying affects teachers' productivity and creativity which in turn affect the university in general. Bad reputation of specific place creates a dysfunctional work place; therefore, the university fails to attract new hires in the future.

In short, there are a lot of motives for bullying in general and academic bullying in specific, the major reason is distance from Islam. Islam is a holy constitution that tackles each aspect in people's life. It is way of life that is appropriate for every place at any period of time. The Quran and Sunnah clarified Muslims morals such honesty against treason and modesty against arrogance, altruism against selfishness, kindness against cruelty, justice against oppression, bashfulness against decay, compassion against recklessness, and the list is long. If bullies are true Muslims with true morals they will not bully for sure. The results show that stress and depression are the major causes of bullying, and if intellects repudiate from their principles and bully, the bullied must believe in faith and try not to give up. Send the matter to Allah almighty and watch the divine justice taking place sooner or later. Stress is the source of all sorts of illnesses psychological or physical and it is spiritual vacuum that should be filled with religious practices. In other words, persons in general and intellectuals in specific should come back to the true Islam because it is the only solution. Bullies will never ever stay in peace, their personal and even professional will turn upside-down, they will live in grief, sadness, ingratitude, etc. their evil will be reflected in their faces, and people will try to avoid dealing with them. Those people must learn how to control the wicked side of soul because it always tries to convince people that the bad behavior is acceptable and possible.

8.3. Recommendations

Some recommendations of the findings of this study are suggested for researchers who want to work on such topic. It is highly recommended that:

- Intellectuals should comeback to true Islam where all the morals ethics are explained and clarified. They should search, read, investigate, listen, and negotiate to get knowledge about a religion that becomes odd. Doing this helps in training the wicked side of the soul and preventing the demon from controlling individuals' behavior towards shameful acts.
- Teachers, professionals, and authorities should develop a system of regularly monitor the cause of academic bullying.
- Training should be managed by responsible for all persons in order to know how to recognize bullying to intervene effectively and reinforce bullying prevention and react in and out door settings.

- Such type of studies must be encouraged to reveal rates, facts, and statistics.
- Universities and work places should be encouraged to establish some supporting systems for bullies with the help of educationalists, psychologists, and other professionals.

Conclusion

Bullying in general and academic bullying in specific should be eradicated because it is a symbol of ignorance, illiteracy, and carelessness. The results revealed that the majority of participants admitted that there are a lot of types of bullying do exist at Mila University Centre mainly inaction bullying. Participants confirm the existence of social and situational motives behind academic bullying. Within situational bullying comes injustice and aggression in the first position, followed with authoritarian leadership and personal decision as well as frustration and norm violation. Adversary, competition, absence of legitimate authority, collegiality, autonomy, incivility, hostility, non-collegiality are the major causes within situational context. Those motives affect negatively both teachers and university. Teachers, on the one hand, suffer from stress, depression, reduced self-esteem, self-blame, and social isolation. University, on the other hand, becomes a dysfunctional work environment with decreased productivity and inability to attract new hires. Therefore, there should be a review and develop of policies, raise of awareness, enforcement of policies and procs, and commitment building.

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