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Revista de Antropología, Ciencias de la Comunicación y de la Información, Filosofía,
Linguística y Semiótica, Problemas del Desarrollo, la Ciencia y la Tecnología

Año 36, abril 2020 N°

91

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

ISSN 1012-1537 ISSNc: 2477-9385

Depósito Legal pp 1984022U45



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The Risk of Bullying as a Result of COVID-19 among University Students

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Abstract

This Article is aimed to reveal the types and levels of bullying to which undergraduate Asian students are exposed to because of the COVID-19 pandemic. By applying the Multidimensional Bullying Victimization Scale to (202) students of Asian nationalities (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Filipino, Chinese) who are pursuing their university education in Governmental universities. The results found that Asian male and female students have encountered four types of bullying: Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying. Cyber bullying was the most common type of bullying among students. The results also revealed that the Chinese students are the students who faced most bullying, followed by the Indonesian students, respectively, while the Filipino students are the students experience the least bullying as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key words: Bullying; COVID-19; Bullying Victims; University Students; Jordan.

El riesgo de intimidación como resultado de COVID-19 entre estudiantes universitarios

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo revelar los tipos y niveles de intimidación a los que están expuestos los estudiantes asiáticos de

pregrado debido a la pandemia de COVID-19. Al aplicar la Escala de victimización por acoso multidimensional a (202) estudiantes de nacionalidades asiáticas (indonesias, uzbecas, tailandesas, filipinas, chinas) que cursan estudios universitarios en universidades gubernamentales. Los resultados encontraron que los estudiantes asiáticos masculinos y femeninos han encontrado cuatro tipos de acoso escolar: acoso relacional, acoso cibernético, acoso físico y acoso basado en la raza y la cultura. El acoso cibernético fue el tipo más común de acoso escolar entre los estudiantes. Los resultados también revelaron que los estudiantes chinos son los que enfrentaron la mayor parte de la intimidación, seguidos por los estudiantes indonesios, respectivamente, mientras que los estudiantes filipinos son los que experimentan la menor intimidación como resultado de la pandemia de COVID-19.

Palabras clave: bullying; COVID-19; Víctimas de acoso escolar; Estudiantes universitarios; Jordán.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the spread of the Coronavirus in China, citizens have experienced a state of terror and inability to understand what is going on, in particular the teenagers and university students who committed some abnormal behaviors, most notably bullying. As a result of this many Arab countries have suffered, countries such as; "Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Jordan" have suffered from the spread of the bullying phenomena against the persons infected with the Coronavirus. Examples of this is , refusing to bury persons who died as a result of the pandemic for fear of the virus infection, and the increasing cyber bullying against the corona infected people through verbal abuse on social media, designing ridiculous and

taunting videos, and making jokes and anecdotes against them. Their infection with the corona virus turned in a stigma allowing to disparage them and call to avoid and discard them, turning them into a bad psychological state unable to recover and making them frustrated and surrendered to the disease. Some websites also contributed to the circulation of the names of the persons infected with Coronavirus and their social and economic details for the purpose of defamation and that they are a confirmed as a danger source that must be avoided. Bullying took its worse shape as the Asian complexions became a main reason for the infected person to be bullied, especially in the Arab countries as the Asian regions are the first areas where the virus spread where the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (2020) warned from the spread of the bullying phenomenon due to the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), and that it expands and takes its worst forms when it mixes with racism and ignorance so that entire countries or nations are considered a source of the virus or named after it.

Bullying as a serious widespread social phenomenon occurs wherever individuals interact (Eriksen et al, 2012), including universities, where students practice bullying against each other, especially cyber bullying., The Coronavirus made students of Asian complexions a target for the bullies to make fun of and jokes, or as a result of panic and blaming them as a reason for the spread of the disease in Jordan. The social media activists posted videos and images mocking Asians in malls and public places in a manner that provoked the Jordanian press to write newspaper articles to criticize this

phenomenon and demanded this to stop and punish those who practice bullying. Chinese, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Korean students at Jordanian public universities also complained of constant harassment, mocking and verbal and physical abuse. The Chinese students indicated that they are more likely to be bullied than their fellow students and that this occurred with them for the first time despite their stay in Jordan for many years. It is worth noting that there are approximately 500 Chinese students studying in the Jordanian universities, most of whom study Arabic. Therefore, the present study aims to reveal the bullying phenomenon against Asian students in Jordan, and prevalence of bullying and the influence of specific variables like age and gender.

1.1. Bullying: Definition and Consequences

Bullying is identified as a specific conduct of aggressive behavior (Benítez & Justicia, 2006; Hinduja & Patchin, 2015). According to Merriam Webster, Bullying is often repeated or habitual because consider it as abuse and mistreatment of someone vulnerable by someone stronger, more powerful with the intent to hurt physically, mentally, or emotionally. Dorey (2012) defined bullying as a repeated act carried out with the intent to harm another, because the bully seeking an increase in self-worth and to feel better about themselves by making others feel worse. Also, it causes an imbalance of power, either real or perceived, between the perpetrator and the victim. While wolke & Lereya (2015) and Hart (1993) indicate that bullying is the

systematic abuse of power and defined as aggressive behavior or intentional harm done by peers that is carried out repeatedly, and involves an imbalance of power between the victim and the bully.

There are many different types of bullying that can be experienced by children and adults alike; Face-to-face bullying involves physical bullying such as punching, kicking, punching, and usage of weapons. Direct verbal bullying such as name-calling, taunting, insulting, mocking, teasing, and using derogatory terms. Emotional bullying affects a victim's emotional state negatively. It includes provoking others, belittling, and spreading rumors. While the Second type is covert bullying such as excluding people from groups or spreading lies or rumours, These aggressions seek to socially discredit the victims, provoking their isolation from the peer group and a progressive social exclusion (Griffin & Gross, 2004; National Safe Schools Framework, 2011). The last type is Cyberbullying which occurs through the use of information or communication technologies via computers or cellphones, over the internet such Instant Messaging or chat, text messages, email and social networking sites or forums (National Safe Schools Framework, 2011). The Cyber Bullying Research Centre (2016) defines cyber bullying as Intentional and repeated harm inflicted using computers, phones, and other electronic devices. Willard (2005) indicate to different types of cyberbullying; such as; Harassment via Repeatedly sending offensive messages; Denigration – Posting untrue or cruel statements; Trickery via Posting material that contains sensitive, private information about another person and intentionally excluding a person from an online group.

Bullying has negative short and long-term effects on both the bully and the victim (males and females) where they are vulnerable to emotional and social problems and mental disorders (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009). The American Medical Association (2010) indicated that bullying victims develop depression, anxiety, and physical pain such as headache, abdominal pain, and sleep disorders, and they suffer from low self-esteem, they are more likely to be addicted to alcohol and develop antisocial personality disorders. Victims may show a high level of neurosis (Kodžopeljić et al, 2014)

Those who are bullied experience a mixed set of feelings that have a negative impact on their mental health, especially those who respond to bullying behavior with a high degree of emotion such as; intense fear, anger, hostility, frustration, shyness (Vie, 2012), and they may be more vulnerable to a tendency to social isolation (Huang, 2013) and post-traumatic stress (Tehrani, 2009), unlike victims who face bullying with indifference, which may avoid them being exposed for bullying again (Cooper, 2013; Garner, 2010)

Plexousakis et al (2019) study suggests that bullying may hinder psychosocial biological development, especially in children. There are also extraordinarily strong correlations between exposure to bullying and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Idsoe et al, 2015). The results of the Wolke & Lereya (2015) study showed that bullying victims had problems in making or maintaining friendships and were less likely to live with a partner and obtain social support. (Rigby, 2003) study indicated that studies investigating the consequences of bullying on victims suggest that four categories of

negative health conditions can be identified: Low psychological well-being, Poor social adjustment, Physical unwellness and Psychological distress. Low psychological well-being, Poor social adjustment, Physical unwellness and Psychological distress. while those who practice bullying suffer from social problems such as their inability to maintain their personal relationships and affiliation with the anti-social groups (Cooper, 2013), and they have higher levels of suicide thinking and possible PTSD symptoms (Klomek et al, 2007; Veenstra, 2005; Hinduja & Patchin , 2010). The bullies may not be able to express their emotions or show compassion because bullying has high in callous and unemotional traits (CU). (CU) increased the risk of direct and indirect bullying behaviors, specially is associated with lack of empathy in direct bullying (Viding et al, 2009). The bullies may also face difficulty adapting to their educational environment, poor academic achievement, poor self-image, and negative feelings; like jealousy, depression, and anxiety (Dorey, 2012).

Bullies tend to have a higher risk of abusing drugs as adults and are likely to have criminal convictions (Tsai & Gomba, 2012). There is a strong association between involvement in bullying behaviors and suicide-related behaviors, where suicidal ideation and attempts were significantly more prevalent among bully-victims and perpetrators bully (Hertz et al, 2016).

1.2. Bullying in Universities

Bullying is a serious problem and common in the education sector (Glasner, 2010) and can affect the whole university environment

as a result. Bullying in universities is a form of workplace bullying, which is a growing concern. It may vary in severity from insults, snubs, or invasions of privacy (Mahmoudi, 2019). Bullying behavior amongst university students is a pervasive problem that is exacerbated by the rapid advances in electronic communication (Cowie & Myers, 2016a). Today, the most common form of bullying among college students is cyberbullying, where study Xiao & Wong (2013) revealed that social norms, as well as personal factors such as Internet self-efficacy, motivations, and cyber-victimization experience, are strong predictors of university students' cyber-bullying behavior.

Bullying in universities includes many behaviors, some of these behaviors can be considered a hate crime, such as: spreading nasty rumours on the grounds of race, disability, gender, religion and sexual orientation; ridiculing or demeaning a person; social exclusion; unwelcome sexual advances; stalking; threatening someone, either directly or online; revealing personal information about a person that was shared in confidence (Khine et al, 2020; Myers & Cowie, 2016b; Faucher et al, 2014). Furthermore, most cases in university bullying the bully is another student. University students may be exposed to either indirect public bullying or direct verbal bullying on campus. Bullied students respond to unpleasant situations they encounter through active responses such as the interruption of studies or avoiding situations in which bullying occurred. or via passive responses such as weakening of capacity, motivation, and self-confidence, low spirits, and depression (Sinkkonen et al, 2012). In the same context, study findings of Pörhölä et al (2019) revealed that bullied victims in the

university learning contexts reported more of having current diagnosis of anxiety syndrome and higher levels of context-specific social anxiety.

1.3. Research Question

Q1: What level of bullying are Asian students at universities exposed to due to the COVID-19 virus?

Q2. What types of bullying are Asian students exposed to at universities due to the COVID-19 virus?

Q3: What types of bullying do Asian students face at universities due to the COVID-19 virus?

Q4: Is there a difference in bullying levels according to (Sex, Race)?

1.4. Hypothesis

H₀1: There is not a statistically significant difference in Relational Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₁1: There is a statistically significant difference in Relational Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₀2: There is not a statistically significant difference in Cyber Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₁2: There is a statistically significant difference in Cyber Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₀3: There is not a statistically significant difference in Physical Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₁3: There is a statistically significant difference in Physical Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₀4: There is not a statistically significant difference in Race and Culture-based Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₁4: There is a statistically significant difference in Race and Culture-based Bullying based on Sex (Male, Female)

H₀5: There is not statistically a significant difference in scores on the all four levels of bullying (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) as dependent variable for different categories of Race (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Chinese, and Filipino) as independent variable.

H₁5: There is statistically significant difference in scores on the all four levels of bullying (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) as dependent variable for different categories of Race (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Chinese, and Filipino) as independent variable.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Participants

The participants in this study were male and female students from the university of Jordan B.A students aged 18 years and older, during the 2019–2020 academic year. The total number of Asian

students attending the 2019-2020 academic year at the university was 347. Among them, 210 Chinese students, 211 students gave their consent to participate in this study. After data cleaning, 9 participants were excluded from the dataset due to incomplete data. Finally, 202 students were included in the data analysis. There were two demographic variables in our study as sex ($M= 1.40$, $SD=.491$) and race ($M= 3.50$, $SD=1.275$) of participants. There were 59.9% male participants and 40.1% female participants. As for the Race of participants is concerned there were highest number of Chines say 43.6%, than came Filipino with 20.3, %, followed by Thai with 14.9%, Indonesian with 13.4% of total 202 participants. The least number of participants were Uzbek with 7.9%. And there was not a single Malaysian participant. See table (1,2).

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variables

Variable	N	%
Sex		
Male	121	59.9
Female	81	40.1
Race		
Indonesian	27	13.4
Uzbek	16	7.9
Thai	30	14.9
Chinese	88	43.6
Filipino	41	20.3

Variable	N	%
Malaysian	00	00

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic variables

Demographic Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sex	1.40	.491
Race	3.50	1.275

2.2. Measure

Multidimensional Bullying Victimization Scale (MBVS; pilot version). Participants completed the pilot version of the MBVS, which was generated in Phase I consisting of 74 items. Items were rated on a 4-point scale, ranging from 0 = “never” to 3 = “very often,” indicating how often each item is true of the individual. The MBVS pilot measure is comprised of 15 items assessing physical bullying, 17 items assessing relational, 23 assessing cyberbullying, and 19 assessing race-based bullying.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Scoring & Statistical Analysis

This study was undertaken by the utilization of IBM SPSS-22 version for statistical analysis purpose. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the scale and scales. The nature of

data was determined by the usage of frequency distribution and Descriptive statistics and for inferential purpose the hypotheses testing was conducted. And to check the first four hypotheses we use Independent T-test, and for hypothesis 5 One Way MANOVA was used.

3.2. Statistical Analysis

3.2.1. Reliability Analyses

Reliability of Multidimensional Bullying Victimization Scale and its four subscales (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) obtained through Cronbach's alpha coefficient conducting internal consistency analyses using IBM SPSS. Multidimensional Bullying Victimization Scale shows a good internal estimates ($\alpha = .876$). Consequently, all four factors/subscales also exhibits a good values of internal consistency estimates as Relational Bullying ($\alpha = .661$), Cyber Bullying ($\alpha = .684$), Physical Bullying ($\alpha = .967$) and, Race and Culture-based Bullying ($\alpha = .589$). See table (3, 4).

Table 3: Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha) for Scale and Subscale Variables

Variables	Cronbac h's Alpha	N of Items
Multidimensional Bullying	.876	73

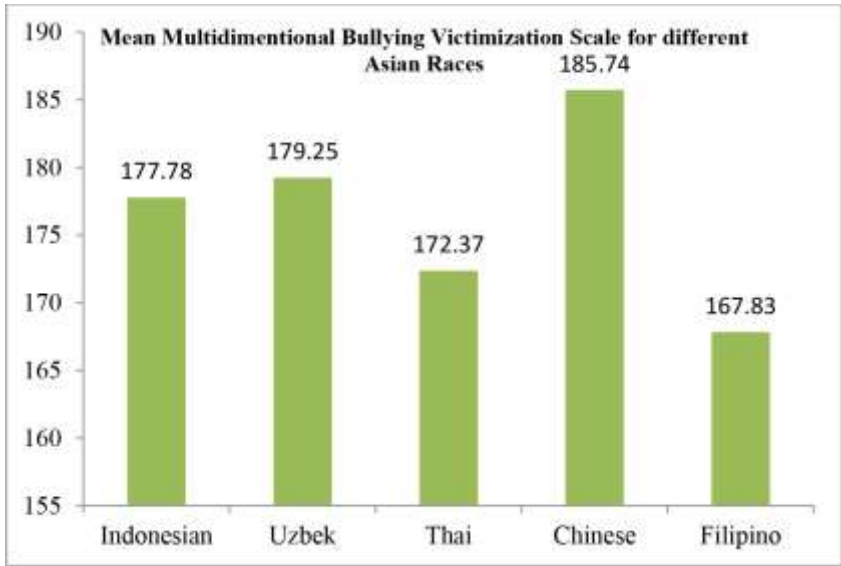
Variables	Cronbac h's Alpha	N of Items
Victimization Scale		
Relational Bullying	.661	17
Cyber Bullying	.684	23
Physical Bullying	.967	14
Race and Culture-based Bullying	.589	19

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of MBVS Scale and Subscales

Scale/Subscales	M ean	Std. Deviation
Multidimensional Bullying	17	17.187
Victimization Scale	8.5396	90
Relational Bullying	43	3.9078
	.7723	5
Cyber Bullying	59	4.6779
	.4010	5
Physical Bullying	25	14.462
	.6535	81
Race and Culture-based Bullying	49	3.6250
	.7129	6

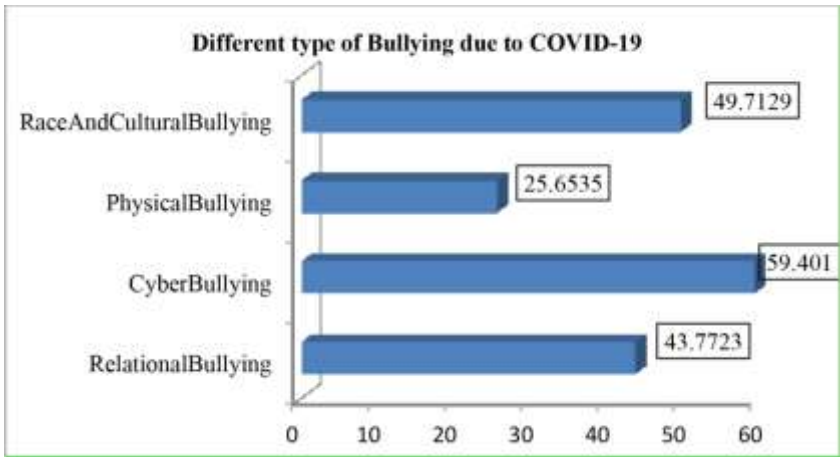
3.2.2. Answers Research Question

Q1: What level of bullying do Asian students at the university have due to the COVID-19 virus?



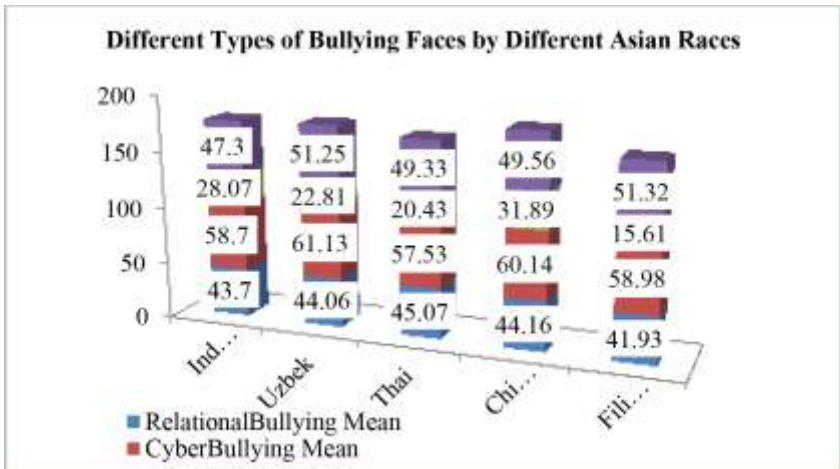
We found by hypothesis six that Chinese faces more bullying, than Uzbek students face followed by Indonesian student faces bullying due to COVID-19. The Filipino students was those who faces extraordinarily little bullying after COVID-19.

Q2. What types of bullying are Asian students exposed to at university due to the COVID-19 virus?



We found that Asian Races face all type of Bullying but most of the time they face Cyber Bullying as shown in this graph.

Q3: What types of bullying do Asian students face at university because of the COVID-19 virus?



Asian students face all type of bullying in university and we see the types of bullying vary from Race to Race.

Q4: Is there a difference in bullying levels according to (Sex, Race)?

According to the Hypothesis 1-4 we found that there is not any difference four bullying level for male and female. And through Hypothesis 5 we found that there is statistically significant difference in scores on the all four levels of bullying (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) according to the Race (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Chinese, and Filipino). We found by hypothesis six that Chinese faces more bullying, than Uzbek students face followed by Indonesian student faces bullying due to COVID-19. The Filipino students was those who faces extraordinarily little bullying after COVID-19.

3.3. Hypothesis Testing

3.3.1. Hypothesis 1-4

To test the hypothesis there is a statistically significant difference in Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying for Male and Female participants as independent variable. And our dependent variables are Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying. We used Independent Samples Test to check the hypothesis.

We found that Male participant's (43.9752 \pm 3.38984) faces the same Relational Bullying as Female participants (43.4691 \pm 4.58008), $t(137.136) = .851, p=0.396$. So as for as Cyber Bullying There is not a statistically significant difference in Male participant's Cyber Bullying (58.8760 \pm 4.75144) Female participants Cyber Bullying (60.1852 \pm 4.48082), $t(200) = -1.963, p=.051$. So is the case for Physical Bullying, Male participant's (26.3636 \pm 15.03551) faces the same Physical Bullying as Female participants (24.5926 \pm 13.58471), $t(200) = .852, p=0.395$. Amazingly same was the case of Race and Culture-based Bullying there was not a statistically significant difference in Race and Culture-based Bullying. And Male participant's (49.7107 \pm 3.76040) faces same mean Race and Culture-based Bullying as Female (49.7160 \pm 3.43597), $t(200) = -.010, p=.992$

3.3.2. Hypothesis 5

Now to deal with our main question, is there any difference in scores on all four levels of bullying (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) as dependent variable for different categories of Race as independent variable.

3.3.3. Hypothesis Testing

“A one-way MANOVA showed a significant multivariate main effect for Race, Wilks' $\lambda = .622, F(16, 593.317) = 6.240, p < .001$,

partial eta squared = .112. Power =1.000. So, we could find sufficient evidence to reject Null hypothesis. Thus hypothesis 1 is confirmed that there is statistically significant difference in scores on the all four levels of bullying (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) as dependent variable for different categories of Race (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Chinese, and Filipino) as independent variable.”

3.3.4. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

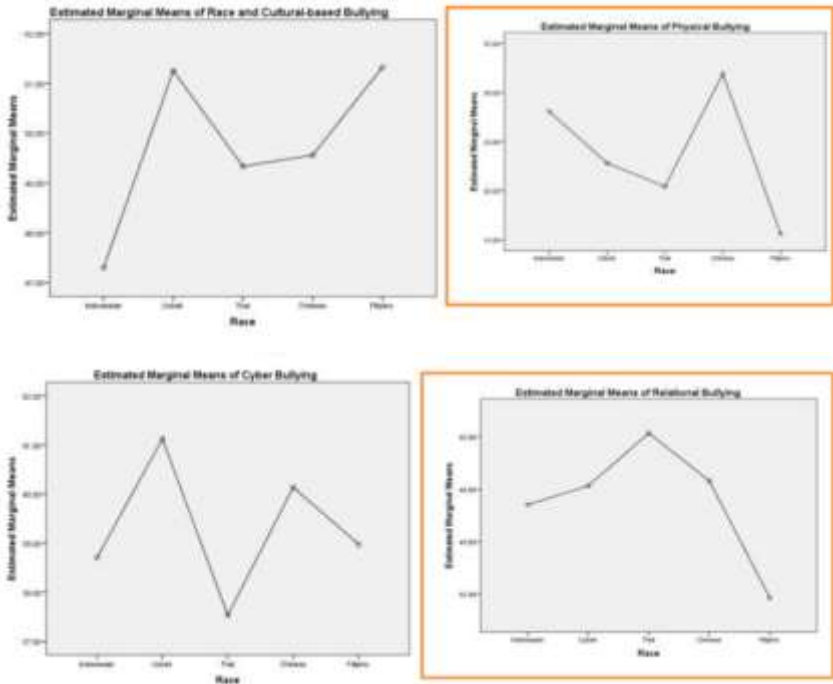
Now to test homogeneity we used Box's M test which is similar to Levene's test for the ANOVA case. It tests the hypothesis that the covariance matrices of the dependent variables (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) are significantly different across levels (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Chinese, and Filipino) of the independent variable Race. The Box's M test is significant is a significant difference among the Races (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Chinese, and Filipino) in the covariance matrices.

Univariate ANOVA tests of Four Dependent Variables (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying)

“As it is stated above that our multivariate main effect is significance, so further univariate main effects were examined. Significant univariate main effects for Race were obtained for Relational Bullying, $F(4,197) = 3.516$, $p < .008$, partial eta square = .067, power = .859; Cyber Bullying, $F(4,197) = 2.597$, $p < .038$, partial eta square = .050, power = .723; Physical Bullying, $F(4,197) = 12.775$, $p < .000$, partial eta square = .206, power = 1.000; and Race And Cultural-based Bullying, $F(4,197) = 6.488$, $p < .000$, partial eta square = .116, power = .990”.

3.3.5. Post-hoc test (Tukey HSD)

Significant Race pairwise differences were obtained in Relational Bullying between the Filipino and Thai ($p=0.007$), and Filipino and Chinese ($p=0.019$); the Mean Physical Bullying scores were statistically significantly different between Chinese and Thai ($p=.000$), Chinese and Filipino ($p=.000$), and between Filipino and Indonesian ($p=.001$). There is a statistically significant difference in mean Race and Cultural-based Bullying between Indonesian and Uzbek ($p=0.003$), and Indonesian and Chinese ($p=0.026$)”. See the following figures.



4. DISCUSSION

After distributing the Multidimensional Bullying Victimization Scale on a sample of (202) students both male and female at the university of Jordan, B.A students aged 18 - 21 years, during the 2019–2020 academic year, it was found that male and female participant’s faces the same Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Physical Bullying. Amazingly the same was the case of Race and Culture-based Bullying there was not a statistically significant difference in Race and Culture-based Bullying, where male and female

participant's faces the same means of Race and Culture-based Bullying. it can also be said that there is a statistically significant difference in scores on all four levels of bullying (Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) as dependent variable for different categories of Race (Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, Chinese, and Filipino) as independent variable."

The results also revealed Significant Race pairwise differences were obtained in Relational Bullying between the Filipino and Thai ($p=0.007$), and Filipino and Chinese ($p=0.019$); the Mean Physical Bullying scores were statistically significantly different between Chinese and Thai ($p=.000$), Chinese and Filipino ($p=.000$), and between Filipino and Indonesian ($p=.001$). And there is a statistically significant difference in mean Race and Cultural-based Bullying between Indonesian and Uzbek ($p=0.003$), and Indonesian and Chinese ($p=0.026$). Additionally, the results found that Chinese faces more bullying, than Uzbek students face followed by Indonesian student faces bullying due to COVID-19. The Filipino students was those who faces extraordinarily little bullying after COVID-19. Also, Asian students face all type of bullying in university and we see the types of bullying vary from Race to Race.

Youths are the most interactive on the Internet and the most users of social media. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that cyber bullying is the most prevalent form of bullying among university students. Today we live in the era of the digital revolution and the widespread use of digital logic that the youth generation totally relies

on now to express their secrets and opinions and in education and quick earning. The beginning of The COVID -19 pandemic in China made Chinese students the most bullied victims among students of Asian complexions. It is natural for those who have complexions similar to their features to be bullied because they are considered the cause of spreading this virus. It is worth noting that Arab students cannot differentiate the nationalities of Asian complexions due to their great similarity. So, we find that students from the following regions: Indonesian, Uzbek, Thai, and Filipino are also subject to bullying. Students showed the reason for bullying is to make fun and jokes as the main objective behind bullying, meaning that bullying was not in itself an end as a result of the epidemic spread and was not the primary goal of students. Therefore, we find that there are many types of bullying speared among students, they are:(Relational Bullying, Cyber Bullying, Physical Bullying and Race and Culture-based Bullying) which occurs at varying degrees among students, and both male and female Asian students were exposed to it.

Therefore, university officials and the faculties should have an active and prominent role in educating students on their behavior patterns so that they realize that their behavior is considered as abuse and bullying even if they see it as humor, and to spread a culture of social solidarity and how to gather their efforts to support Asian students due to their alienation from their homeland and families, and raise their spirits.

Acknowledgments

We thank Professor Doukhi Hunaity at the University of Jordan, for the review and audit of the statistical analysis. We would also like to show our gratitude to the Mr. Develin Greeff for English language editing.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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**UNIVERSIDAD
DEL ZULIA**

opción

Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales

Año 36, N° 91, (2020)

Esta revista fue editada en formato digital por el personal de la Oficina de Publicaciones Científicas de la Facultad Experimental de Ciencias, Universidad del Zulia.

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