The Concept of Bullying In the Figures of a Popular Cartoon: Doraemon

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ABSTRACT: *The concept of bullying has now been widely discussed since the accident happened in Pa-Te Junior High School.   The rapid development of Internet fosters the spread of bullying incidents through posting the video of bullying.   The MOE has set up a system to train the students to protect themselves when they encountered the situation of being bullied.   In reality, school bullying happens in every country around the world, and thousands of students wake up afraid of going to school. Internet and mess-media facilitate the spread of school bullying, especially in TV program.*
The development of mass-media descends the ages of starting watching TV programs for young children.   Children love to watch cartoons, no matter which country they are produced.   However, the plots of some cartoons reveal the concept of bullying through the behavior of the main figures. Doraemon, which is a very popular cartoon for children to watch, creates some figures that are violent and prefer bullying the main character: Nobita.   The existing documents and studies discuss various aspects of school bullying. This study intends to explore the concept of bullying in some popular figures and tries to find out solutions of this problem.   After examining the plots of the cartoons and analyzing the figures, this study concludes that bullying types existing in the figures of these cartoons are direct physical attack, indirect physical attack, direct verbal attack and social exclusion from normal group activities.   As for the solution for reducing the negative influence of these programs is to strengthen parents' and teachers' alert, accompany the children to watch the program, build up sense of empathy, integrate the concept of safety into the program.   Most important of all, parents have to help their children to develop their own judgment to judge what's right or wrong of these cartoon figures' behaviors.
Keywords: *school bullying, victim, cartoon figures*

I.   INTRODUCTION

        The concept of bullying has now been widely discussed since the accident happened in Pa-Te Junior High School.   More and more incidents concerning with school bullying has been reported and arouse the public's concern.   Studies have identified health problems associated with bullying victimization, including an increased feeling of depression, anxiety, and symptoms of physical illness (Roman and Tylor, 2013).   School bullying sometimes endangers and affects numerous children's lives.   "Research in Greece shows that approximately 7% to 15% of students have experienced victimization at school and that more than 5% of students have engaged in bullying behavior (Giannakopoulou et al., 2010; Kokkevi, Stavrou, Fotiou, & Kanavou, 2011; Konstantinou & Psalti, 2007; Pateraki & Houndoumadi, 2001; cited in Tsiantis, Beratis, Syngelaki, Stefanakou, and Asimopoulos, 2013).   More worse of all, some students posted the process of school bullying on the Internet just because of fun.   More than this, the rapid development of Internet fosters the spread of bullying incidents through posting the video of bullying.   School bullying exacerbates children's learning environment and defeats children's learning motivation to some extents.   Viewing the problems has turned more seriously; the MOE has established a system to train the students to protect themselves when they encountered the situation of being bullied.   In reality, school bullying happens in every country around the world, and thousands of students wake up afraid of going to school.   To make the matters worse, Internet and mess-media foster the spread of school bullying, especially in TV program.

        In Taiwan, the rapid development of media and the convenience to get information from the Internet facilitate the spread of school bullying.   The development of mass-media descends the ages of starting watching TV programs for young children.   Children love to watch cartoons, no matter which country they are produced.   However, the plots of some cartoons reveal the concept of bullying through the behavior of the main figures.   Doraemon, which is a very popular cartoon for children to watch, creates some figures that are violent and enjoy bullying the main character: Nobita.   The existing documents and studies discuss various aspects of school bullying.   Bullying is one form of these problem behaviors that concerns students, educators, and parents because of its potential

detriment to the students' well-being (Haynie, Nasel, Eitel, Crump, Saylor, Yu, et al, 2001; cited in Hsieh, 2009). For there's a wealth of studies concerning with discussions toward safe buildings and equipments of the campus, this study intends to explore the concept of bullying in some popular figures and tries to find out suggestions of solving this problem. Because of the limitation of time and expense, this study focuses on discussing a popular cartoon: "Doraemon".

II. DEFINITION OF SCHOOL BULLYING

Olweus (1994) was regarded as the West's leading authority on bullying for a plethora of research referring to school bullying in the world are based on the findings by him [9]. According to Olweus, definition of bullying includes three essential elements of bullying behavior: (1) the behavior is aggressive and negative; (2) the behavior is carried out repeatedly; and (3) the behavior occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power between the parties involved (Olwens, 1994; Jose, 2011). Thus, we agreed that bullying is a subset of aggression: namely aggression that involves repetition and imbalance of power. Olweus (1994) also identifies two subtypes of bullying that are used as the basis of this report: direct, physical aggression, and indirect behavior such as social exclusion or rejection. Direct bullying often takes the form of overt, physical contact in which the victim is openly attacked. Indirect bullying often takes the form of social isolation and intentional exclusion from activities (Mayoclinic, 2015).

To this extent, bullying is broadly defined as intentional and repeated acts that occur through direct verbal (e.g. threatening, name calling), direct physical (e.g. hitting, kicking), and indirect (e.g. spreading rumors, influencing relationships, cyber bullying) forms, and it typically occurs in situations where there is a power of status difference (Olweus, 1978; cited in Bradshaw, O'Brennah & Sawyer, 2008). In this case, bullying means repeated aggressive acts against someone who cannot easily defend themselves.

Many scholars define bullying from physical and psychological aspects. Farrington (1993) identifies bullying is repeated oppression of a less powerful person, physical or psychological, by a more powerful person (Farrington, 1993). Smith & Sharp (1994) emphasizes the systematic abuse of power (Smith &Sharp, 1994). As for Rigby (2002), bullying involves a desire to hurt, a harmful action, a power imbalance,(typically) repetition, an unjust use of power, and evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim.

As for Asian perspectives toward school bullying, Taki (2001) elucidates two of the most different points concerning with the situation of bullying in Japan. First is "it is the younger and weaker students who reported being most exposed" and "a considerable part of the bullying was carried out by older students" (p1.) Second is "It is important to have an adequate number of adults outside together with the students during break periods, and that the school provide good supervision of the students' activities" (Taki, 2001, p1).

Actually, bullying would happen in all areas of school at anytime, perhaps in nearly any part in or around the school building. Bullying takes place in all milieus where groups of individuals interact, including home, school, work settings, and community gathering. In school, the most possible places to occur bullying are in PE, recess, hallways, bathrooms, school buses and classes that require group work and/ or after school activities. Namely, when a person is "exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons," he would be bullied (Olweus, 1994). Bullying indicates an act of repeated aggressive behavior with an attempt to intentionally hurt another person, physically or mentally, and bullying is likewise characterized by an individual behavior in a certain way to gain power over another person (Hsieh, 2009)

III. TYPES OF BULLYING

USA National Center for Education Statistics suggests that bullying can be broken into two categories: Direct bullying, and indirect bullying which is also know as social aggression (Dilmac, 2009; Roman, 2012). Bullying takes a number of different forms: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber (Migliaccio, and Raskauskas, 2013; Owelves, 1994; Wong, 2009 cited in Litwiller and Broush, 2013).

3.1 Direct physical attack

The first type of bullying which happened constantly in the school is direct physical attack. According to Olweus, direct bullying often takes the form of overt, physical contact in which the victim is openly attacked (Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2002; cited in Tsiantis, et al, 2013). Ross (1998) identifies that direct bullying involves a great deal of physical aggression such as shoving and poking, throwing things, slapping, choking, punching and kicking, beating, stabbing, pulling hair, scratching,

biting, scraping and pinching (Ross, 1998) Moreover, it will cause health problems like depressions, low self-esteem, loneliness, anxiety and symptoms (Dilmac, 2009; Roman, 2012).

3.2 Indirect physical attack
　　　The second one which happened frequently in the school is indirect physical attack.　Indirect physical attack deprives the victim's personal belongings and property, not attack the victim's body directly.　Example as in the case happened in Taiwan recently, eight students spat in one student's lunchbox for more than two years.　These students didn't hit the victim directly; however, spitting in the lunchbox is kind of spiritual torture to the victim in this case.

3.3 Direct verbal attack
　　　Rose (1998) outlines other forms of indirect bullying which are more subtle and more likely to be verbal, including direct verbal bullying and indirect verbal bullying (Rigby, 2004, cited in Goethem, Scholte, and Wiers, 2013; Ross, 1998).　Direct verbal bullying encompasses threatening, name calling, letter, text, email, laughing at the victim, saying certain words that trigger a reaction from a past event, and mocking.

3.4 Indirect verbal attack
　　　Aside from direct verbal bullying, indirect verbal bullying includes spreading rumors, gossips, false gossips, taunting and racial slurs, malicious rumors, influencing relationships, and cyber bullying. It usually appears in rational aggression or psychological bullying. It typically occurs in situations where there is a power of status difference.

3.5 Social exclusion from normal group activities
　　　The next type of bullying relates to relational isolation.　This is characterized by threatening the victim into social isolation.　This isolation is achieved through a wide variety of techniques, including spreading gossip refusing to socialize with the victim, bullying other people who wish to socialize with the victim, and criticizing the victim's manner of dress and other social-significant markers, including the victim's race, religion, disability, etc (Ross, 1998) .　Some children bully because they have been isolated, and they have a deep need for belonging, but they do not possess the social skills to effectively keep friends.

3.6 Technological
　　　The last type of bullying is technological bullying which includes text-message harassment, online slam books or Web pages, and so forth.　Since the pervasive development of Internet, cyber bullying turns to be more seriously during the last decades.　"Cyber bullying has been defined as 'willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices" (Hinduja & Patchin, 2009, p.5; cited in O'Moore, 2012; Menesini, Nocentini, and Camodaca, 2013).

IV.　　THE TYPES OF BULLYING EXISTING IN THESE POPULAR CARTOON FIGURES
　　　After examining the figures of Doraemon and Crayon Shin-Can, this study concludes four bullying types existing in the figures of these cartoons:　they are direct physical attack, indirect physical attack, direct verbal attack and Social exclusion from normal group activities.　Further discussion would be in following paragraphs.

4.1 Direct physical attack
　　　The first type of bullying emerged in the plot of Doraemon is direct physical attack.　The most violent figure in Doraemon is Takeshi, who is a consummate bully, constantly bullies Nobita. Takeshi is usually known by the nickname "Gian" from English word "giant", is the big, strong, violent and bad-tempered local bully (Wikipedia, 2011).　He is known for his confidence in his terrible singing voice, though he considers himself a great singer. He also frequently steals other children's toys and books under the pretext of "borrowing" them, unless the toy is damaged.　This is how most fans considered Gian to be the antagonist of this show.　However, he does not hesitate to help Nobita and his friends when they are in real trouble, which often occurs in the movies.
　　　Another figure in this cartoon who always bullies Nobita with Takeshi is Suneo Honekawa. Suneo is often seen with Gian, being forced to bully Nobita with him, though deep down he fears and despises him as much as everyone else and actually feels sorry for Nobita.　Other figures in this

cartoon sometimes bully Nobita because of Takeshi's threat.   Nobita is the victim of bullying in this cartoon who is always crying for Doraemon's help after being bullied by Takeshi.   Direct physic attack is often seen in the plot when Takeshi appears with Suneo, and Nobita usually gets hurt or cries after he met Takeshi and Suneo.

4.2   Indirect physical attack
The second type of bullying appeared in the plot of Doraemon is indirect physical attack.   Indirect physical attack deprives the victim's personal belongings and property, not attack the victim's body directly.   In the cartoon, Takeshi frequently steals other children's toys or robs other kid's books under the pretext of "borrowing" them, unless the toy is damaged.   Some of the stories start with Suneo showing off some new video game or toy which evokes Nobita's envy.   Then, Nobita asks Doraemon to give him some props which are better than Suneo's.   It usually comes to the end by being robbed by Takeshi and loses the prop that Doraemon given him.   Depriving Nobita's (the victim's) personal belongings is usually seen in the plot when Takeshi and Suneo learn about the magic functions of Doraemon's props or see the newfangled toys of Nobita's.

4.3 Direct verbal attack
The third type of bullying in the cartoon is direct verbal attack.   Nobita is lazy, uncoordinated, dim-witted, frail, plain-looking, unlucky, and bad at sports. Nobita is usually portrayed as being cowardly, scoring zeros in his tests, getting lectured by his teacher, falling into curbside rain gutters, being chased by dogs, bad at sports, so he is usually been laughed by his classmates and friends.   Direct verbal attack is often utilized by Takeshi and Suneo to laugh at Nobita's cowardness and stupid behaviors.   Likewise, Nobita is the victim in this cartoon to be bullied by direct verbal attack.

4.4 Social exclusion from normal group activities
The forth type of bullying in this cartoon is social exclusion from normal group activities.   Suneo has the habit to invite Gian and Shizuka to something or someplace, but always leave Nobita out with one excuse or another.   In some episodes, Takeshi and other friend reject Nobita to join their group because of Nobita's bad sports.   Nobita is the victim who is exclusive from Takeshi and Suneo's group activities for many bad excuses.   In this case, Doraemon would give him gadgets to solve the problem.

V.   PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE BULLIED FIGURES
5.1 Showing off
Research claims that adults who bully have personalities that are authoritarian, combined with a strong need to control or dominate.   Many bullies share some common characteristics.   They like to dominate others and are generally focused on themselves.   They put other people down to make them feel more interesting or powerful.   While some bullies are arrogant and narcissistic, others can use bullying as a tool to conceal shame or anxiety or to boost self esteem   In this cartoon, Gian always feels empowered by demeaning other.   He is known for his confidence in his terrible singing voice, though he considers himself a great singer.   He usually forces other characters to attend his concert in order to show off his so-call new style and new songs.   Another case is Suneo.   Suneo usually shows off some new video game or toy to his friends.   In some scenes, Suneo is seen as a narcissist who loves to stare at himself in the mirror while telling him that he is the most handsome guy in the world.   In this case, he enjoys laughing at Nobita for his plain-looking, cowardness, and poor.   Most of the characters in the cartoon dare not to refuse Takeshi's invitation to join his concert, to this end; they are bullied by Takeshi when Takeshi wants to show off.

5.2 Emotion
Some studies have demonstrated that envy and resentment may be motives for bullying.   They may not perform well in the school.   Effect may manifest as increased levels of fear and anxiety, lower scores on tests of academic achievement, reduced levels of self-esteem, depression, and anger or rage.   Sometimes the anger, rage, and related psychological disturbances of the victim of bullying become so intense that they may even lead to the victim turning the aggression and violence back onto those he or she perceives as the ones responsible for the bullying (Kyther, n.d.)   The victim in this case becomes a bully to retaliate against individuals who initiated the bullying circle.   In the cartoon, Notiba borrows Doraemon's gadgets to fight back when he feels angry after Takeshi's bullied behaviors.   In some episode, Doraemon's gadgets created someone to fight with Takeshi and hurt

Takeshi eventually.   In this cartoon, emotion is a crucial factor for the characters when bullied events happened.

VI.   SUGGESTIONS FOR PREVENTING FROM BULLYING IN CARTOONS

Preventing school bullying requires cooperation among educators, parents, and society.   The following discussion may offer suggestions for preventing children from affected by the plot of cartoon to be bullied.

6.1 Strengthen parents' and teachers' alert

Both teachers and parents need to pay more attention to children's reactions when watching this kind of cartoons.   For the influence of cartoon is significant for those young children, especially their favorite figures.   Parents and teachers should correct their improper behavior when they figure out that their children are imitating the main character's wrong behavior.   Correct their misbehavior in time since their children are young and teach them to respect other people.   Being alert is very essential in order to prohibit from forming bullying behavior when children imitate misbehavior of the popular cartoon figures.

6.2 Encouraging empathy

Recently, psychologists and educators believe that bullying and other kinds of violence can indeed be reduced by encouraging empathy at an early age.   Over the past decade, research in empathy—the ability to put ourselves in another person's shoes—has suggested that it is key, if no the key, to all human social interaction and morality.

Without empathy, we would have no cohesive society, no trust and no reason not to murder, cheat, steal or lie.   At best, we would act only out of self-interest; at worst, we would be a collection of sociopaths.   The way to encourage empathy is to start by teaching children to understand their own behavior and feelings—it provides the basic tools for understanding the behavior and feelings of others. In the episode of Takeshi's birthday, after reflecting on one event, Takeshi thought of himself why he wasn't popular among his peers. After getting a lecture from Doraemon to see what an unruly character he is, Takeshi realizes that he should have been a better person and he begs Doraemon to give him another chance.   Trying to show his empathy to others, he became polite and tried not to attack others when they offended him.   However, things didn't go exactly as planned when his friends at school or at the streets mock him to see how weird Takeshi was acting and get kicked by Suneo after learning his attempt to become gentle to his peers. This led him to lose control of his temper and start attacking his friends again.   But nevertheless, empathy can help to avoid bullying behaviors to some extents.

6.3 Accompany the children to watch the program

In order to avoid the imitation of bullying behaviors, parents should accompany their children to watch TV programs, especially their favorite cartoons.   Many parents think cartoon is only for fun, so they let their children to watch cartoons when they want.   However, misbehaviors may form by imitating the cartoon figures' behavior.   The influence of imitating these violent characters can be serious for children don't have the ability to judge which is right or wrong.   If the parents can accompany the children to watch these cartoons and explain and teach the children what's right or wrong, it can help their children to develop a correct concept about the misbehavior of bullying others. In this case, accompanying children to watch cartoons is one way to reduce the influence of imitating these popular cartoon figures.

6.4 Integrate the concept of safety into cartoon program.

For children spent one thirds of a day in the school, the most effective way to help children away from school bullying is to integrate the concept of safety into programs, such as cartoons.   The authors may try to develop some figures relating to incidents regarding school bullying to remind the children how to avoid it.   Try to help the children be alert to find any signals about bullying and try to ask for help.   Trying to teach and train the children to protect themselves and construct concept of safety turn to be ways to prevent school bullying.   If we can integrate the concept of safety into their favorite cartoon, it may help them to build concept of safety through these cartoon figures.

VII.   CONCLUSION

Children love to watch cartoons no matter which country it produces.   The development of mass-media descends the ages of starting watching TV programs for young children.   Internet and mess-media foster the spread of school bullying, especially in TV program.   However, the plots of

some cartoons reveal the concept of bullying through the behavior of the main figures. Viewing the fatal injuries cases increased rapid recently, to help the children to construct a correct judgment of adopting right behavior and avoid the bad influence of these popular cartoon figures are very important for parents and teachers because children are young and are easily affected by the popular cartoon figures they like.

After examining the cartoons and analyzing the cartoon figures, this study concludes that bullying types existing in the figures of Doraemon are direct physical attack, indirect physical attack, direct verbal attack and social exclusion from normal group activities. To this extent, in order to keep the children away from school bullying and develop a safe concept to reduce the influence of these programs, people should strengthen parents' and teachers' alert, accompany the children to watch the cartoon program, build up sense of empathy, and integrate the concept of safety into the program. Most important of all, parents have to help their children to develop their own judgment to judge what's right or wrong of these cartoon figures' behaviors.

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