

Bullying with Neurodiverse Students and Education Policy Reform

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Abstract : Studies show that there is a certain group of students who are more vulnerable to bullying due to their physical appearance, disability, sexual preference, race, and lack of social and behavioral skills. Students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are one of the most vulnerable groups among these at-risk groups. Researchers suggest that focusing on vulnerable groups of students who can be the target of bullying helps to understand the causes and patterns of aggression, which ultimately helps in structuring intervention programs to reduce bullying. Since Australia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, it has been committed to providing an inclusive, safe, and effective learning environment for all children. In addition, the 2005 Disability Standards for Education seeks to ensure that students with disabilities can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students, covering all aspects of education, including harassment and victimization. However, bullying hinders students' ability to fully participate in schooling. The proposed study aims to synthesize the notions of traditional bullying and cyberbullying and attempts to understand the experiences of students with ASD who are experiencing bullying in their schools. The proposed study will primarily focus on identifying the gaps between policy and practice related to bullying, and it will also attempt to understand the experiences of parents of students with ASD and professionals who have experience dealing with bullying at the school level in Australia. This study is expected to contribute to the theoretical knowledge of the bullying phenomenon and provide a reference for advocacy at the school, organization, and government levels.

Keywords : education policy, bullying, Australia, neurodiversity

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