

# Enhancing School Children's Knowledge and Awareness on Bullying Through the 2Bs Program

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**Abstract.** Statistical data shows there is an increasing number in the case of bullying among school children in this country. As a reaction to this development, an awareness program on bullying has been initiated. The main objective of this program which is named 2Bs Program: I'm a buddy not a bully is to enhance students' knowledge on bullying. Having a concrete knowledge on bullying, the students are expected to be more aware of any bullying activities that might occur in their schools and thus able to react accordingly. A study is then conducted to evaluate the effects on this program on the participants. Thus, the objective of this study is to identify the effectiveness of the 2Bs programme in enhancing school children's knowledge and awareness on bullying behaviour. A total of 240 students from three different schools orientation (academic, religious and sports) who participated in the program were selected as the respondents of this study. Questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection. Findings demonstrated improvements in knowledge and awareness of the bullying behaviour among students who join the program. The 2Bs program is reported as a contributing element in helping students to have better understanding on the concept of bullying and the role of buddy and bystander. By emphasizing the role of buddy, the incidence of bullying in schools in this country is expected to be controlled.

**Keywords:** Bully Behaviour, Level of Knowledge on Bully Behaviour, Awareness on Bully Behaviour, Hostel'S Students, 2Bs Program.

## 1. Introduction

Schools, may they be a daily schools or a boarding schools; are supposed to be places where students learn, play and socialize among themselves. An important element that should be observed in school is the element of safety. Schools not only should be safe for students and teachers, but should also be seen as safe. Thus, the issue of safety in school is not that an issue that could be compromised.

Unfortunately, increasing reports from the mass media on cases of bullying in schools create speculation on the safety issue in schools. In worse scenario, within 2004 to 2010, two death cases of students have been reported as a result of being bullied by their peers in schools. Number of studies at local and international level found that factors such as peer groups, social status, family conflict and the culture of the school itself has a significant correlation with bullying behavior amongst the students in school.

Another important factor that caused bullying as proposed by Jamalsafri (2009) is the lack of knowledge and awareness among students on the behavior of bullying. According to Jamalsafri (2009) having too little knowledge on bullying caused students to have incorrect perceptions about bullying. Students might perform certain acts that are actually classified as bullying behavior without them realizing what they are doing. Jamalsafri (2009) also contended that there is a significant correlation (negative) between the level knowledge of bullying with the level of bullying among the students. Thus, students with high level knowledge on bullying tend to have low level of bullying behavior whereas students with low level knowledge on bullying tend to have high level of bullying behavior.

## 2. The 2Bs Program

### 2.1. The Program in Brief

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In 2010, the 2Bs program was designed to upgrade the level of knowledge about bullying among students. This program was funded by Division of Industry and Community Network Grant, Universiti Sains Malaysia, within one year. As an experiment, this program has been implemented in three boarding schools in Malaysia. Each school is from different orientation.

The main objective of 2Bs program is to enhance knowledge and awareness on bullying. This program was also aimed at educating and training students to become intellectually bullying conflict-solver and to be positive-thinking bystanders to help victims of bullying. It was also the objective of the program to help the management and administrative persons in schools in dealing with bullying problem by establishing a bullying prevention operating room.

The 2Bs program came in three major phases. The aim at increasing knowledge and awareness of the bullying problems among students fell into the first phase. In the first phase, several activities were conducted including organizing talks and games using the creative and fun pedagogy approaches as well as the execution of the 'I'm a Buddy, Not a Bully' campaign.

## 2.2. Methodology of Program

This study is a experimental quantitative study. Questionnaires were used as instruments to gather data. The constructs measured in the questionnaires are knowledge on bully and awareness on bully. These constructs were measured using 25 items. Two sets of questionnaires; pre test questionnaires and post test questionnaires were distributed in the study. The score of the test were classified into five levels that are excellent level, moderate high level, moderate level, moderate low level and low level.

A total of 240 students aged 16 years old were identified as respondents of this study. Respondents of the study were the participants of the 2Bs first phase program. The participants of the 2Bs program were chosen from students who live in boarding schools. These students were varies in nature. They might be students who have been involved in bullying activities as bullies, victims of bully, bystanders, or member of the Peer Mentor Club (PRS). They might also simply ordinary students who exercise usual student's life.

Students who are identified as bullies and victims were chosen because bullying gave severe impact on them. Noran et al (2009), found that children who are victims of bullying tend to be involved with truancy, low self-esteem, high anxiety, depression and eventually there is the attempt to commit suicide. As for bullies, they were reported as being affected by psychological disorders. School student leaders and members of the PRS were chosen since they will be trained to act accordingly and wisely in any occurrence of bullying. Other category of students who normally would be a bystander when bullying occurs will be educated with positive thinking to help victims of bullying. To ensure the sustainability and continuity of education, the selection of these students as a target group for the 2Bs program is relevant and justified.

## 2.3. Findings and Discussion

Experimental methods were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Findings from the pre test questionnaires showed that the mean score of the students on knowledge and awareness of bullying is in the moderate level (Mean=49.66). After undergoing the 2Bs program, the students mean score of the post tests questionnaires increased to the moderate high level (Mean=72.77).

Table 1: Paired Samples Statistics

		<b>N</b>	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Pair 1	Test 1 & Test 2	118	.567	.001

Analysis from Paired Samples Correlations showed that there is a significant correlation between the pre test and the post test ( $p < .001$ ). These findings indicated that enhancement of knowledge and awareness on bullying involved all participants in the study.

Table 2: Paired Samples Correlations

		<b>Mean</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
Pair 1	Test 1	49.6610	118	13.57047	1.24926
	Test 2	72.7797	118	9.73507	.89619

T-test statistical results below showed a significant difference ( $t = -22.106$ ,  $df = 117$ ,  $p > .01$ ). The test results showed that the 2Bs program has influenced the performance of students to answer the questions related to knowledge and awareness of bullying. The different mean score value for both tests is high. These findings indicate that this 2Bs program has managed to increase knowledge and awareness of bullying among students who live in boarding schools.

Table 3: Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Paired Differences		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1								
Test 1 – Test 2	-23.11864	11.36058	1.04583	-25.18985	-21.04744	-22.106	117	.001

### 3. Acknowledgements

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