Verbal bullying 101: Words that wound in the discourse of bullying according to Dhar Mann's videos

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Abstract
This paper analyses media portrayals of verbal bullying, including its definition, types, and its negative consequences on both the victims and perpetrators, through the lens of Dhar Mann videos. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or relational, and is usually repetitive and involves a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim. This paper highlights that the media plays a significant role in shaping the public perception of bullying, and the issue has gained traction through mass media platforms such as YouTube. YouTube has become one of the most famous platforms for establishing current news, entertainment, and educational materials. This paper analyzes the videos that were uploaded to the Dhar Mann YouTube channel, a well-known channel which posts inspirational videos that aim to teach moral lessons. This study reveals that Dhar Mann's videos exhibited different types of verbal bullying and how they occur. Six Dhar Mann videos were chosen and were analysed using a qualitative analysis involving code-scheming and narrative analysis using Krippendorff's (2018) content analysis framework. It can be concluded that verbal bullying can be classified into taunting, insulting, threatening, blaming, and name-calling. This analysis is expected to establish the foundation for future studies on verbal bullying discourse.

Keywords
verbal bullying; Dhar Mann; content analysis; YouTube; media

INTRODUCTION

Bullying has become a prevalent and salient topic of conversation among many parents, adolescents, teachers, and researchers. In the modern era, bullying can occur indirectly through technology, and this is called cyberbullying, so it is no wonder that bullying has also become a prevalent topic in the media. Bullying can be defined as unwanted intentional behaviour, both verbal and physical, done by a person or group of people that inflict harm or distress, usually based on one's socioeconomic status, age, race, gender, appearance, disability, mannerism, and so on (Gladden et al., 2014; Kolstrein & Jofré, 2013). While there is no universally agreed definition of bullying, it can be expected that bullying (1) is repetitive and occurs over time, (2) features a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim or an abuse of power, and (3) can occur in different stages of life such as childhood, adolescence, and adulthood (Smith, 2016). In previous studies, it has also been found that being involved in the act of bullying, whether as the perpetrator, the victim, or a bystander, is linked to low levels of self-esteem, insecurities, anxiety, and depression (Bazelon, 2014). Bullying can also have other negative consequences such as a decline in academic performance, substance abuse, unemployment, and other behavioural issues (Clarke, 2017).

Perpetrators of bullying or bullies usually target people who are different or do not fit into the norm. People who are marginalised or otherwise possess elements of otherness such as low

socioeconomic status, physical disabilities, or stigmatised appearance are often targeted by these bullies (Clarke, 2017). Victims are also usually defenceless, insecure, anxious, physically weak, lonesome, and in need of others' protection or help (Ma et al., 2001). On the other hand, bullies are often considered people who, rather abusively, strengthen social norms by forcefully shaping their victims to behave or become a certain way. Thus, bullies are usually wealthy, domineering, manipulating, forceful, physically strong, and violent. Bullies also usually come from families or friendship groups that are turbulent, inconsistent, authoritarian, cold, and punishing, which then shapes them to become the people they grow up with or associate themselves with.

There are also different types of bullying such as physical, verbal, and relational bullying. Physical bullying is a form of bullying that involves the use of physical aggression or violence to intimidate, harm, or control others (Smith, 2016). This can include actions such as hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, tripping, or damaging property. Physical bullying can cause physical harm, such as bruises, cuts, or broken bones, as well as emotional harm, such as fear, humiliation, or anxiety. Verbal bullying is a type of bullying that refers to the use of language or words to cause harm, distress, or humiliation to others (Cho & Lee, 2018; Smith, 2016). It may include name-calling, teasing, taunting, threatening, or spreading rumours. This form of bullying can be either direct or indirect, and it can occur in person or through electronic means. Verbal bullying can cause significant emotional harm to victims, including anxiety, depression, and decreased self-esteem. Relational bullying is a form of bullying that harms others through the manipulation of social relationships (Brock et al., 2014; Cho & Lee, 2018). It can include actions such as spreading rumours, excluding individuals from a group, or using social status to control or intimidate others.

The media plays a significant role in shaping what the public sees or perceives regarding bullying. The media plays a role in shaping the public eye itself (Conrad, 1997). One of the ways that the issue of bullying has gained traction is through mass media platforms (Clarke, 2017). There are countless media-sharing platforms on the internet, but one of the most famous platforms is YouTube. YouTube is a video-sharing platform that has grown exponentially and becomes the most used and well-known platform for accessing and publishing current news, entertainment, and even educational materials suitable for classroom or pedagogical purposes (Jones & Cuthrell, 2011; Zhou et al., 2016). Many people turn to YouTube for learning purposes because YouTube has an unparalleled library of videos created as learning and teaching tools in different settings, such as community learning sessions, school classrooms, and even university classrooms (Moghavvemi et al., 2018; Tan, 2013).

However, YouTube as a learning tool goes beyond academic subjects as YouTube is utilised by many content creators to share non-academic instructional videos, even inspirational or motivational videos, which are videos that are scripted and made for teaching or sharing moral messages. One of the most popular 'motivational' channels on the platform is Dhar Mann. As of April 2023, Dhar Mann is a YouTube channel with about 17.8 million subscribers and 800 videos that posts inspirational videos that aim to teach different moral lessons in each. Each Dhar Mann videos are formulaic and predictable because there is a dichotomy that is usually clearly portrayed between the protagonist (good guy) and the antagonist (bad guy) (Gooden, 2021). In other words, the characters are normally black-and-white in terms of their characters and morals, and this can be seen from their dialogues and monologues. Regardless of the theme or storyline featured in the video, the antagonist typically either regret their past actions and repents from their old ways, or the antagonist would receive the negative repercussions of their actions or choices. Meanwhile, the protagonist would be duly rewarded for their good deeds. Dhar Mann videos are also usually rich in narration, dialogue, and monologue.

One of the most used themes featured in Dhar Mann's videos is bullying. In the Dhar Mann official channel's playlists tab, the playlist titled "KIDS GET BULLIED IN SCHOOL" contained a total of 57 videos with school bullying as the main theme. This playlist does not include the countless other videos on the Dhar Mann channel that contain themes of bullying involving older characters in different circumstances or environments outside of a school or classroom. This study aims to explore how Dhar Mann videos define bullying because according to Youtube Stats & Analytics for Dhar Mann (@DharMann) (2023), each Dhar Mann video has a substantial number of approximately 3.2

million views, and therefore should possess a significant impact on shaping the attitudes of their intended audience towards bullying and those affected by it. This study seeks to provide insight into the representation of verbal bullying in Dhar Mann videos and how it may affect public perception of the issue. The novelty of this study is that it will analyse the portrayal of different types of especially verbal bullying, specifically through the lens of Dhar Mann Videos. This is because Dhar Mann videos gain a considerably amount of traction while being presented as fully scripted and acted short films. Additionally, Dhar Mann's videos have gained significant popularity on social media, particularly among younger audiences, making them a relevant and timely subject of study. Thus, Dhar Mann videos can provide knowledge on specific types of bullying and how they are depicted in popular media which its narrative, dialogues, and monologues shall be minutely analysed further in this analysis.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study examined Dhar Mann videos as the data source. A search was made with the keyword "bullying" in the search feature on the Dhar Mann YouTube channel. The first few videos that appeared in the search results were selected, provided they were published between 2022 and 2023, to ensure that the content reflected current trends and issues and thus provided a more accurate portrayal of what verbal bullying most likely looks like today. In the end, a total of 6 videos were used as the data source because preliminary screening suggested that data saturation was achieved with these few videos. The selected videos were rewatched, and all transcripts of the dialogues, monologues, and narrations were downloaded using an online tool called Downsub. Downsub is an online website that provides downloadable transcripts or subtitles for any YouTube video. Next, the transcripts were then re-read so the researcher could familiarise themselves with the content and context.

To analyse the data, the researchers used a derivative of the content analysis framework proposed by Krippendorff (2018), which is a mix of code-scheming and narrative analysis. Code schemes were created to classify the instances of verbal bullying that occur throughout the videos. Utterances that constitute bullying are all utterances done by a person or group of people that inflict harm or distress, usually based on one's identity such as socioeconomic status, age, race, gender, appearance, disability, mannerism, and so on. Other than that, utterances were also tagged as bullying when the unwanted utterances are repeated, featuring a power imbalance between the two sides, especially targeted to one person or group, or threatening in nature. Each occurrence of verbal bullying was then coded appropriately according to the code schemes. Lastly, the findings were interpreted, which includes looking at the results of the analysis, identifying patterns, themes, and relationships between the different variables, and drawing conclusions based on the evidence found.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data, verbal bullying as portrayed in the selected Dhar Mann videos can be categorised into insulting, taunting, name-calling, and threatening. Each excerpt or example of verbal bullying can be classified into one or more of the aforementioned categories because they are not necessarily mutually exclusive and can overlap.

Name-Calling

Name-calling is one of the most common forms of verbal bullying that involves using derogatory or offensive language to attack a person's identity, appearance, or other personal characteristics (Evans & Chapman, 2014; Gan et al., 2014; Slaatten et al., 2015; Swigonski et al., 2014). Name-calling can be directed at someone's race, gender, sexuality, religion, or physical traits. A few examples of verbal bullying in the form of name-calling in the examined Dhar Mann videos are as follows:

"This punk thinks he's real hot stuff, huh?" [Teen MAKES FUN OF DEAF KID In School, What Happens Next Is Shocking]

"Weirdo." [Teen MAKES FUN OF DEAF KID In School, What Happens Next Is Shocking]

"Well, if he wasn't tapping his pencil like a moron…" [Kid SHAMED For LEARNING DISABILITY, What Happens Next Will Shock You]

The instance of name-calling is present 9 times throughout the 6 videos which make up to 6.21% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying. Based on these excerpts of name-calling found in the Dhar Mann videos, it can be understood that the slurs or derogatory words that are used normally imply that the victim does not fit into society's norm in some way. For example, the word 'weirdo' is defined as a person who is odd and unfitting ("Weirdo," n.d.), and the word 'moron' is a derogatory way of expressing that someone is unintelligent ("Moron," n.d.). Additionally, names or slurs that have negative implications on one's intelligence or ability to present as a normal person seem to be used more often in verbal bullying that occurs in a school environment, and this can have negative consequences on the victim's mental health and academic performance. According to (Evans & Chapman, 2014), research suggests that verbal bullying in the form of name-calling in a school environment is linked to high levels of depression and more negative perceptions of school.

In these cases, some of these examples of name-calling can also overlap with other types of verbal bullying such as insulting. Insulting and name-calling often go together because the derogatory language or names that are used would usually have negative implications on the victim's traits or characteristics in addition to being hurtful.

Threatening

Threatening is a type of verbal bullying that involves intimidation using language that suggests or implies potential harm or danger to a person or their property (Chirilă & Constantin, 2013; Espelage et al., 2013; Shetgiri, 2013). This can include physical or property threats, emotional threats, or threats to reveal embarrassing information. According to Shetgiri (2013), 21.4% of children in the United States that have experienced cyberbullying have experienced being threatened by their bullies.

"You wake up me or my son again and I'm calling the cops, got it?" [EVIL KAREN Calls Cops On BIKERS (Regrets It!)]

"Look buddy, you want to live here? Then get with the program." [EVIL KAREN Calls Cops On BIKERS (Regrets It!)]

"If you pay attention next time, you might not make yourself look so dumb." [Kid SHAMED For LEARNING DISABILITY, What Happens Next Will Shock You]

Instances of verbal bullying containing threats are found 6 times throughout the 6 videos which make up 4.14% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying. Based on these examples of verbal bullying in the form of threats as depicted in the Dhar Mann videos, it can be understood that threats are used when the perpetrators are in a position of power to bring harm to the victim in some way. For example, in the first and second excerpts, it can be assumed that the perpetrator has the power to potentially interfere with the victim's activities and livelihood. The language utilised in these threats also does not always have to include any slurs or derogatory words as long as harm or a negative consequence toward the victim is implied.

Threats can also overlap with other types of verbal bullying such as blaming. This means that in addition to suggesting potential harm toward the victim, the victim can also be blamed for something negative that the perpetrator has experienced. For example, in the first and third excerpts, the perpetrator implies that whatever negative consequence or harm will come the victim's way will be solely the victim's fault.

Insulting

The other means of bullying can be realised by insulting. There are several definitions of insulting, however, on consensus, most of them more or less define it as words, utterances, or actions to cause emotional damage to someone (Olúmúyìwá, 2016). It can be said that insults are conveyed through derogatory and offensive words to not only cause emotional damage to the person being targeted but also to influence others to regard said targeted person as being low in reputation (Struiksma et al., 2022). Being born with the natural urge to cooperate and be social that humans are, the such encounter will evoke emotional turmoil within one's mind. It is regarded and also proven that people find it harder to forget and thus bothered about the one insult they received, whereas they tend to brush off compliments they received, which if said insults are repeated detrimental effects are thus deepening (Struiksma et al., 2022). Such effects can be realised through the aforementioned derogatory, offensive, and belittling words and utterances which can be seen in the examined Dhar Mann videos as follows:

> "He belongs in special ed or something, not here" [Teen MAKES FUN OF DEAF KID In School, What Happens Next Is Shocking]
> "Here we go again my five-year-old sister writes better than you" [Kid SHAMED For LEARNING DISABILITY, What Happens Next Will Shock You]
> "Unlike you, I'm trying to get ahead in life" [Passenger FAT SHAMED On AIRPLANE, What Happens Next Is Shocking]

Verbal bullying in the form of insults is present 73 times throughout the 6 videos which make up 50.35% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying. In those excerpts, it can be seen that derogatory and condescending words are utilized to pinpoint the targeted individual as unfitting to society and also to belittle one's ability and value. It can be seen from the first instance that the speaker regards the person being targeted does not deserve to be in the regular school due to his disability. This further indicates that the speaker deems the targeted person as not qualified enough to attend regular school due to the aforementioned indication. Elements of belittlement can also be found in the second instance, in which the speaker is making fun of the targeted person for having worse handwriting than his sister given his age that is considered old enough to write eloquently and in auto-pilot, without considering the boy's disability. The same case is found within the third instance in which the speaker deems the targeted person as someone who is behind in life due to her body figure, assuming the girl is in that state as a result of her laziness. It can be seen from these instances the consensus of the reason the speaker utters such utterances are due to their perceived greater individual than the ones being insulted, and also them not considering the conditions the targeted people suffer.

Insulting can also overlap with name-calling, taunting, blaming, and other types of verbal bullying as insulting is more or less the foundation of verbal bullying which is uttering words to hurt other people's feelings. Therefore, it can be said that insulting is the underlying intention of the doer to hurt and further bully the victims of verbal bullying. In doing taunting, name-calling, and blaming, the doer often incorporates words that are hurtful to the victims which makes it resides under the term insulting as well; which further means the effects are fundamentally the same to the said victims.

Blaming

Blaming is the one mean of bullying that is overlooked and overshadowed by the other means mentioned above. Blaming is the act done to judge someone that is deemed blameworthy (i.e., deemed to commit certain misconduct), and put the wrong in the person being targeted whether in their bad character or actions (Hansson et al., 2022; Werkmäster, 2022). Blame is also utilised to negatively evaluate the targeted person for them to apologize for their committed wrongdoings (Werkmäster, 2022). In the bullying scheme, blaming is utilised to shift the responsibility and to put the wrong in the victims. It is also used to persuade other people to believe their blunt judgements, to paint the perpetrators as innocent ones, and to corner the victims. The act of blaming is utilized as a way for them to explain that it is not their fault to fault and condemn the victims if they didn't do

the things that suit society's norms or suit the perpetrators' wishes. The act of blaming can be vividly seen in the examined Dhar Mann videos as follows:

> "I mean, it's not my fault she embarrassed herself because she thinks she's a real Disney princess" [GIRL SHAMED For LIKING PRINCESSES, What Happens Next Is Shocking]
> "You can't blame me for not wanting to sit next to her, I'm not trying to get suffocated" [Passenger FAT SHAMED On AIRPLANE, What Happens Next Is Shocking]
> "Well then maybe next time you should buy two seats instead of one, so you don't have to inconvenience the person next to you" [Passenger FAT SHAMED On AIRPLANE, What Happens Next Is Shocking]

Verbal bullying in the form of blaming is found 23 times throughout the 6 videos, which makes up 15.87% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying. Based on the above examples, the theme of blaming is vividly present. For instance, in the first example, the perpetrator blames the victim for mistakenly dressing up as a Disney princess at her party, when the perpetrator purposefully told her to dress as one to embarrass her in front of her friends. It can be seen that the wrong is actually on the perpetrator for lying to the victim, saying that the theme of the party is Disney Princess when it isn't. However, the perpetrator shifts the blame to the victim as a justification for her actions. The element of persuasion to other people is present within this example as a way for the perpetrator to paint her actions as justifiable. The same case can also be found in the second and third examples as the perpetrator points the source of the problem at the victim which made her not want to sit next to her due to her body figure.

Blaming can also overlap with insulting, name-calling, threatening, taunting, and any other means of bullying. Blaming is incorporated in insulting, name-calling, and others when it is usually done in front of other people to gather followers and to persuade other people than the victim that the perpetrator is the innocent one. It can be said that the other forms of bullying that are already mentioned are addressed to the victims whereas blaming can also be addressed, and usually addressed to other people; which requires the third party to testify.

Taunting
Taunting is the other means of verbal bullying that is essentially meant to hurt others only it in nature is provocative (Hanoon & Faisal, 2021). Taunting is often utilised directly and sometimes disguised in humour or sarcasm (Kraus et al., 2014). It is said that through taunting, the victims of this mean of bullying is expected to suffer a distraction or disruption from which the doer or speaker might take advantage of them to achieve what they aim (Purnomo et al., 2022). In sum, it can be said that taunting is utilised to provoke the targeted person's emotions, which requires the targeted person to respond to the speaker out of negative emotions. Therefore, taunting is regarded as a more aggressive form of insulting that its underlying motive is to provoke the targeted person, to evoke a larger and deeper response from the targeted person than the means of verbal bullying that are laid out above. This means of verbal bullying can be seen in the examined Dhar Mann videos as follows:

> "Take my advice try a protein bar like me maybe if you did you wouldn't look like that." [Passenger FAT SHAMED On AIRPLANE, What Happens Next Is Shocking]
> "I mean come on isn't it obvious? People like you are lazy and don't get anywhere in life." [Passenger FAT SHAMED On AIRPLANE, What Happens Next Is Shocking]
> "If you wanna stoop down to her level and be a loser, then go for it." [GIRL SHAMED For LIKING PRINCESSES, What Happens Next Is Shocking]

Verbal bullying in the form of taunting is found 34 times throughout the entire video which makes up 23.45% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying. As can be seen in the above excerpts, the words uttered are meant to hurt the targeted person to the point that it evokes a certain emotional response in return. For instance, in the last example, the speaker belittles the targeted person by addressing the said person as a 'loser', and from this utterance, the speaker is presumed to challenge

the targeted person to not go to the party, otherwise, she can be regarded as a 'loser'. An element of challenge presents in taunting as the primary purpose of taunting is to evoke some kind of emotional response which can be realized through the doer challenging the targeted person to evoke a response to prove the speaker wrong and to testify their value and ability.

Taunting can also overlap with insulting, blaming, and name-calling in which the insulting, blaming, and name-calling are utilised in an attempt to evoke an emotionally motivated response out of the targeted person. Therefore, this means of bullying lies in the expectation of the doer to the targeted person to engage in the provocation, be it in the form of blaming, name-calling, and any other form. For example, taunting can be inserted in a blaming statement not only to persuade the other people to put the wrong in the targeted person but also to make the said person more or less 'prove' that they're in the wrong by reacting emotionally to them.

Verbal bullying is a prevalent form of bullying involving derogatory or offensive language to attack a person's identity, appearance, or other personal characteristics. In the selected Dhar Mann videos, verbal bullying is portrayed in the form of insulting, taunting, name-calling, and threatening. These categories of verbal bullying are not mutually exclusive and can overlap. Instance of name-calling makes up 6.21% of all occurrences of verbal bullying. This means of bullying in these videos are used to derogate someone's identity and conditions, namely disability, appearance, and personal background. Verbal bullying in the form of insults makes up 50.35% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying, making it the most commonly occurring type of verbal bullying in the selected videos. Verbal bullying in the form of blaming makes up 15.87% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying. Blaming involves assigning responsibility or fault for a particular situation or problem to someone else, rather than taking responsibility. Instances of verbal bullying containing threats make up 4.14% of all occurrences of verbal bullying. Threatening can include physical or property threats, emotional threats, or threats to reveal embarrassing information. Threatening is used when the perpetrator is in a position of power to bring harm to the victim in some way. The last type of verbal bullying, taunting, which involves mocking or teasing someone in a cruel or hurtful way, makes up 23.45% of all the occurrences of verbal bullying. Therefore, the most utilised type of verbal bullying is insulting, and the least utilised type is threatening. The traits that are mostly pointed out to ridicule are appearance, special conditions (i.e., disabilities), and personal backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, the media representation of bullying, specifically verbal bullying, is dissected, further excavating the elements of bullying concerning its types and how they're performed. To dissect this phenomenon, several videos were chosen from the YouTube channel called Dhar Mann which provides educational videos full of moral values which few were selected that contain bullying phenomenon, specifically verbal bullying that was released recently, specifically in the year 2022-2023 that are deemed portraying bullying phenomenon in this era. The transcriptions of the videos were then gathered using an online tool called Downsub. The data were then analysed using the content analysis framework proposed by Krippendorff (2018) to classify the instances of verbal bullying occurring in the videos. The findings of this study suggest that the Dhar Mann videos contain examples of different types of verbal bullying, including name-calling, threatening, insulting, blaming, and taunting. It is crucial to educate children about the harmful effects of verbal bullying and teach them appropriate responses. Parents should also monitor their children's everyday behaviour and online activities to prevent involvement in bullying. Educators can incorporate lessons on different types of bullying and its effects into their curriculum, equipping students with strategies to recognise and respond to it.

This study was conducted using a limited amount of Dhar Mann videos as the source of data. This set of videos is only a small part of the Dhar Mann YouTube channel, so the data that was analysed for this study was also limited. Further research on bullying, especially verbal bullying, using Dhar Mann videos can be done with a bigger sample size to achieve results that can more accurately represent the content of the Dhar Mann YouTube channel. Additionally, it should also be noted that this study was done in a limited context: verbal bullying, as portrayed in the selected Dhar Mann videos. To gain broader insight, further studies can be done in the context of other types of

bullying such as physical bullying and relational bullying. Other data sources can be used to gain information on bullyings, such as films, literature, documentaries, and even YouTube videos from other channels. Further studies can also be conducted in a different socio-cultural or language context since this study is focused on verbal bullying that occurs using the English language. Overall, other researchers can further deepen their understanding in the area of bullying by conducting their studies in different contexts and using bigger sample sizes, while still using this study as a foundation.

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