



The Role of Social Institutions in Combating School Bullying

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Abstract:

The research aims to understand the role of social institutions in combating school bullying among elementary school students, in addition to proposing some recommendations that can be used to reduce bullying behavior.

The importance of this research lies in its highlighting the role of social institutions such as the family and school, as well as the efforts of the government, international organizations, and the media in combating the phenomenon of school bullying. Given that the prevalence of bullying behavior in the school community causes numerous problems for students and teachers, such studies are extremely important and add to efforts to address these problems.

The research reached several recommendations, including paying attention to families, especially those suffering from family disintegration, and allowing international organizations to contribute to combating the phenomenon of school bullying. Keywords: Social institutions, school bullying, sociology, coping.

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Introduction

School, as an educational institution, encompasses a wide range of social relationships among students. Social interaction can lead to some forms of undesirable behavior, most notably school bullying. Therefore, if a problem arises, appropriate solutions must be found to address it and attempt to eliminate it.

There are some social institutions that can contribute to reducing the spread of school bullying and addressing the effects it causes on students. The researcher selected examples of social institutions, including the family, the school, the government, the media, and international organizations.

1-The Research Problem

Improving the school environment contributes to the development of school-related aspects. The presence of problems at school can negatively impact children's moods, making them unable to work hard. This can lead many of them to hate school and studying, and some even drop out. Therefore, successful solutions must be developed for these problems or phenomena. The most important factor that annoys and harms students is the behavior of bullying. Cooperation between the home and the school and the support of government institutions helps reduce this harmful behavior.

2- The Importance of the Research

The topic of school bullying and its prevention is of great importance to social and psychological specialists, and educational professionals are also concerned with this issue. Iraqi society has undergone political, social, and economic changes, leading to the emergence of numerous negative phenomena that can only be addressed through adequate and well-thought-out plans to reduce them. School bullying behavior is among the most prominent of these problems.

3- Research Objectives

- To understand the role of social institutions in combating school bullying.
- To identify the most important entities that provide strategic plans to combat school bullying.
- To provide some recommendations that would contribute to combating school bullying.

4- Defining Concepts

4.1 Bullying

Bullying is the infliction of physical, emotional, or psychological harm, embarrassment, ridicule, or harassment by one bullying individual on another (Ahmed Fikry and Ramadan Ali, 2015: 8).

It is a complex phenomenon involving a strong desire to harm someone and place them under pressure. This phenomenon is physical, psychological, or verbal in nature. It usually occurs by one person or a group of people and may lead to tension and fear due to the threat of future attacks. Bullying is often directed against an individual unable to defend themselves and is subjected to repeated abuse (Muawia Mahmoud Abu Ghazal, 2011: 262). Hala Ismail provides a comprehensive definition, viewing it as a form of abuse against others used by an individual or group of victims in various forms, including physical, social, verbal, or psychological (Magdy Mohamed El-Dessouki, 2016: 12). Thus, bullying is any harmful behavior, whether physical, verbal, or psychological, repeated by a bullying individual or a group of bullies against another individual or group of others with the intent to harm or ridicule them.

4.2 Social Institutions

Social institutions are organized patterns of social behavior that perform specific functions in society and satisfy individuals' basic needs, such as family, school, religion, and the economy (Abdul Basit, 2003: 112). They are social organizations that arise spontaneously or are planned within society and are concerned with regulating social behavior for the purpose of maintaining social order and stability (Ahmed Zaki, 1998: 211).

5- Social Institutions and Their Role in Combating School Bullying

1- The family: As the individual's primary cradle, providing care from childhood and contributing to their guidance, the family certainly plans to protect its children from dangers, including bullying behavior, whether within the family or at school. Bullying behavior may begin to be learned within the family through what parents observe in the child's behavior and aggression toward family members. If signs of bullying appear, it is necessary for the family to modify their behavior before it is too late. The most important steps a family can take to combat bullying behavior are as follows:

A. Raising Children's Awareness

The family educates its children about religious, moral, and social teachings and how to

deal with others in a respectful manner, preserving rights, and refraining from violating property or any other form of harm (Ali Musa Al-Subhin and Muhammad Farhan Al-Qudah, 2013: 107). This comes through kind treatment, monitoring the child, being close to him, and guiding him gently and gently, without harshness or intimidation, while using encouragement to promote positive behavior and warning against undesirable negative behavior. One of the most important awareness strategies that parents offer their students is to make school more appealing to the student and change his perception of it if he has previously been negative. This removes frustration and fear, and he begins to adapt to his peers, which distances him from bullying (Jassim Muhammad Dawood, 2005: 29-30). This guidance is achieved through engaging programs for the child that make him likeable to school, as a method of reinforcement and reward, and by purchasing some toys, provided that his behavior in school is good and his grades are high. Preventing bullying begins with the family. Parents, in turn, raise their children on the principle of respect for others. They must also avoid discriminating between their children, such that one child is pampered at the expense of the other. This may lead the child to be spiteful toward their siblings, and this behavior may carry over to school, where they develop a tendency toward bullying. Among the most important psychological factors that contribute to preventing bullying behavior, which families provide to children, are (Kamel Ahmed Kamel, 1996: 160).

- (1)- Justice and equality among children in rights and duties.
- (2)- Respect and appreciation, which increases their self-confidence.
- (3)- Educating children about the environment around them.

B. Rehabilitating Children

One of the duties of families toward their children is to rehabilitate them, develop their abilities, and strengthen their character. When this stage is completed, the child will be safe from unhealthy behaviors. They will avoid bullying and know how to deal with it when exposed to it, and will not become easy prey or a ready victim. Shyness is a major problem for children in their early years. If shyness is within the limits of reasonable, voluntary modesty, it is a positive trait required by public morals and ethics. Excessive shyness, however, is problematic because it can lead a child to fall into the trap of bullies, making them a victim and an easy target for their reckless actions and behavior. The shy child feels inferior, which can lead to isolation, stagnation, and inactivity at school, making them unable to adapt to others (Jassim Muhammad Dawood, 2005: 35). The family of a shy child should strive to rehabilitate them according to targeted plans to eliminate shyness and enable them to develop a normal life. These plans help prevent them from becoming a victim of bullying. Among the steps taken by the family are the following (Ahmed Abdel Latif Abu Saad, 2020: 168).

- Continuously encourage the child, praising and commending even the simplest tasks they perform, to enhance their self-confidence and rid themselves of their shyness.
- Cooperate with the school and the sports teacher to involve the student in sports activities, to enhance their sense of importance.
- Assist with homework and provide ongoing support.
- Cooperate with the school administration to create an appropriate environment in which the student feels safe and confident.
- Discover the child's talents, even if they are simple, and encourage them to develop these talents through communication with the school.

2- The School's Role in Addressing School Bullying

School bullying occurs within or near the school, so direct action against this behavior

falls on the shoulders of the institution's staff. Accordingly, the school must confront bullying by developing specific strategies for this purpose, not simply relying on its traditional role or usual duties. Successful schools develop a specific approach to bullying to prevent it from occurring in the first place, not simply address it. These serious steps and well-thought-out programs include gathering sufficient information about bullying behavior, understanding its causes, the circumstances of the students who engage in bullying, and the victims who are affected by it (Suzan Al-Maqtran and Muhammad Jihad, 2010, p. 32). The most important steps taken by the school to address school bullying behavior can be identified as follows:

A. The Role of Parent-Teacher Councils in Addressing School Bullying

Parent-Teacher Councils are a cooperative supervisory activity that seeks to bring together parents and teachers to address issues concerning students, enabling mutual cooperation between home and school. Through these councils, the difficulties facing the school can be overcome for the benefit of the students (Mahmoud Taqash, 2004, p. 158). Parent-Teacher Councils contribute effectively to confronting and preventing bullying behavior, and they also work to establish effective mechanisms for addressing bullying within the school. The targeted plans to address school bullying, which the Parent-Teacher Council can implement through well-thought-out steps, are as follows (Emad Shaheen, 2009: 225).

B. The Role of School Administration in Addressing Bullying Behavior

There is no doubt that the success of any institution comes through effective and cooperative management with employees. As an educational institution, the school administration must provide plans and strategies to address school-related problems, including bullying. Accordingly, school administration has effective methods and steps it deems appropriate to reduce and prevent school bullying. The most important steps taken by school administration to address school bullying can be identified as follows (Louisa Foulkessis and Mohamed Riballah, 2021: 3-4).

- Implementing bullying laws: School administrations impose disciplinary measures on bullies. These are administrative decisions taken by the administration to curb bullying behavior in the school. These measures begin by summoning the student's guardian and may sometimes escalate to temporary or permanent suspension from school in severe cases, which serves as a deterrent to school bullying.
- Problem-solving strategies: These are a set of steps followed by the school administration in an effort to solve the problems facing students. The school administration, in coordination with the educational counselor, resolves these problems, most notably the problem of school bullying.
- Strategies for instilling moral and religious values: These measures contribute to developing the human spirit, instilling moral values, and strengthening religious teachings among students. This is achieved through coordination and cooperation with teachers, both male and female, and the Department of Moral Education and Religious Education.
- Preventive strategies: The school administration implements a set of methods aimed at preventing bullying behavior, including guidance programs and cultural activities, such as scientific seminars and other activities.

C. The role of the educational counselor in confronting school bullying

Educational counseling is based on the interactive relationship that develops between the educational counselor and the counselee, with the aim of guiding the individual to maximize their potential according to their needs, inclinations, and orientations (Yahya

Dawood Salman and Taghreed Khalil Ani, 2013: 3). The educational counselor develops plans and strategies that contribute to solving problems facing students and attempts to reduce undesirable behaviors, including school bullying. We will discuss the most important steps taken by the educational counselor in schools to combat bullying, as follows (Ahmed Abdel Latif Abu Asaad, 2020: 273-274).

- Positive reinforcement: This involves praising and commending normal and outstanding students with the aim of reinforcing, consolidating, and sustaining positive behavior.
- Negative reinforcement: This involves eliminating unhealthy behaviors from the student. Exclusion is also used when a student engages in undesirable behavior.
- Social skills training: This series of activities for a specific group of students teaches positive social communication and interaction skills, such as speaking appropriately, not rushing to judgment, and respecting and accepting opinions.
- Training students to control impulses and anger: This is achieved by teaching students problem-solving techniques, examining situations from multiple perspectives, and attempting to be patient and calm when faced with difficult situations.
- Training students to correct aggressive behavior toward peers: This is achieved by modifying students' self-concept, resolving conflicts between them, and eliminating tensions, which modifies behavior.

D. The Role of Special Needs Institutes in Combating School Bullying

Society is of great importance to people with special needs, as it contributes to the processes of social integration and exclusion of individuals. Many societies practice rejection, in its well-known sense (social stigma), whereby this social group is bullied as unsuitable for integration into society, which forces many of them to withdraw from society and fail to adapt to it (Nigel and Andy, 2009:8). Children with disabilities, whether physically or mentally, are more affected by bullying than others, and many drop out of school due to this behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to have special institutes for these children, both to protect them from bullying and to provide them with appropriate curricula and teachers. A child with a disability is not responsible for their delayed mental or physical development, and it is unfair to reject them, as they need help and understanding. They need patience, not grumbling or neglect. A child with special needs is a child first and foremost, possessing the same psychological, physiological, and social needs as other children. They need love and a sense of belonging, and they also need to learn, as this is a right of every individual (Jamal Al-Khatib, 2001: 60). Institutes for children with special needs work to rehabilitate, educate, and provide psychological and educational care for them, with the goal of integrating them into society and regular schools for those with mild to moderate disabilities (Awda Dalah and Nadine Farhan, 2021: 652). e- The Role of the Media in Combating School Bullying

The media disseminates the prevailing culture to the public, while also taking into account the educational and psychological aspects that stem from the societal culture accepted by the group. These media include television, radio, newspapers and magazines, cinema, theater, etc. These institutions are subject to state oversight and government monitoring through the Communications and Media Commission. This is the case in Iraq. There is no doubt that the media plays a significant role in raising the new generation (Nizar Abdul-Sada Al-Nassar, 2015: 265).

Through television, the government can combat school bullying through educational channels and awareness programs against bullying and warning of its dangers and harms. The importance of television in combating school bullying can be identified

through several points, the most important of which are the following (Nizar Abdul-Sada Al-Nassar, 2015: 297).

- Television contributes to the development of children's imagination, through which they shape their goals.
- It works to educate children about the importance of their role in life and how to play a positive and beneficial role for society.
- Television programs encourage respect and appreciation for others, such as parents, relatives, colleagues, etc.
- Educational programs contribute to warning against bullying and its harms to students, which works to raise students' awareness of these dangers.

6- Conclusion

1- Results

The researcher reached several conclusions, which he summarized as follows:

- A- The plans implemented by social institutions contribute to reducing school bullying behavior.
- B- These plans should be purposeful, well-thought-out, and implemented according to priority.
- C- Assisting students contributes to reducing bullying behavior.
- D- Social institutions have a significant role in combating school bullying.

2- Recommendations

- A- Attention should be paid to families and children through targeted care and awareness programs.
- B- The educational process should be supported and education workers should be trained to confront the phenomenon of school bullying.
- 3- Cooperate with international organizations for their effective role in supporting education.
- 4- Encourage educational researchers to conduct research on school bullying and develop the necessary solutions to address it.

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