

Bullying Behavior in School Children – Causes & Effect: An Overview

Naveen Kumar
VPO Dujana
Distt – Jhajjar (Haryana)

Abstract: W.H.O. characterize bullying as a threat or physical use of force, aiming at the individual, another person, a specific community or group which can result in injury, death, physical damage, some development disorders or deficiency. The concept of bullying at school is not new; however it has been increasing in recent years. There is a crucial increase in studies conducted and the number of news on bullying at school in mass media. Bullying in schools is an issue that continues to receive attention from researchers, educators, parents, and students. Despite the common assumption that bullying is a normal part of childhood and encompasses minor teasing and harassment, researchers increasingly find that bullying is a problem that can be detrimental to students' well-being. This research paper focuses not only on the prevalence of bullying, but also on those subsets of students who reported being the victims of direct, and indirect bullying, and both of them. Different types of bullying may affect different groups of students, occur in different types of schools, or affect student behavior in different ways. These distinctions allow readers to differentiate between students who were either physically (directly) or socially (indirectly) bullied, and also to identify those students who were bullied both physically and socially. Additional analysis describes the characteristics of students affected by these types of behavior and the characteristics of schools in which these behaviors occur. Because of prior research that suggests victims of bullying may resort to aggressive behaviors in response to being bullied, the extent to which reports of bullying are related to victim behaviors such as weapon carrying, physical fights, fear, and avoidance are explored. Finally, for educators, the academic success of students is of paramount importance. For this reason, self-reported academic performance of bullied students is also examined. The main aim of this research is to investigate the prevalence of bullying behaviour, its victims and the types of bullying and places of bullying among 14-17 year-old adolescents in a sample of school children. Bullying is a psychological and pedagogical problem connected with public health. It must be solved by various professionals immediately.

Keywords: WHO, Behavior Psychology, Bullying, Students, Mental Health.

Introduction:

There is no universal definition of bullying, however, it is widely agreed upon that bullying is a subcategory of aggressive behavior characterized by the following three minimum criteria: (1) hostile intent, (2) imbalance of power, and (3) repetition over a period of time. Bullying may thus be defined as the activity of repeated, aggressive behavior intended to hurt another individual, physically, mentally or emotionally. The Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus says bullying occurs when a person is "exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons". He says negative actions occur "when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways." Individual bullying is usually characterized by a person behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person. Research indicates that violence in the schools has become one of the prevalent issues in education. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development attest, through a study, approximately 1.7 million children in grades 6 through 10 admitted bullying their classmates.

Consequently, the victims who have endured school violence or bullying have experienced detrimental effects to their emotional, as well as social-well being. Experts in the field stated, "Even more than their perpetrators, the targets of peer hostility face numerous mental health challenges, and they are particularly at risk for social and emotional adjustment problems". Bullying is a serious issue that is continually affecting the lives of children. Consequently, it is not only the children who are suffering from this epidemic, everyone is. Unfortunately, bullying and violence in schools has been an ongoing issue for many years. However, often society is not aware of the impact and the significance school violence and bullying has on children until there is a horrific catastrophe. However, finding approaches that are most effective will be the hardest task for educators when trying to prevent harassment in the schools. Therefore, it is up to educators to be educated about bullying and school violence issues. In order to attempt to prevent victimization within the schools, educators must be able to recognize bullying. Because there are many forms of bullying, it is often hard to identify.

Common Causes of Bullying:

Although bullying has been around for ages, the up-tick in the number of kids committing suicide, going on shooting rampages and being harassed on social media has increased awareness of the issue. Parents are fighting like mad to protect their kids from bullying attacks. No parent wants their child to suffer day in and day out at the hands of someone who takes pleasure in hurting others. When bullying happens, the focus is always placed on the victims. After all, kids go to school to learn, not to be beat down or stuffed in a locker. Bullying behaviour is a complex issue and research in the area does not identify the supremacy of any one cause of bullying. Below is a summary overview of key factors that are considered to contribute in various ways, to the likelihood of bullying behaviours. The information below is not a complete list of all factors. They do represent major categories of focus with examples of predominant factors of influence within each.

School Influences

Bullying has been most studied in the school context, and the positive or negative climate of the school impacts the frequency of bullying and victimization. Higher levels of bullying and victimization

have been linked to in-appropriate teacher responses, lack of teacher support, and lack of engagement in school activities. Students are also less likely to report bullying if they see their school climate as negative. The relationship between school climate and bullying/victimization may be bidirectional, however, with poor school climate contributing to bullying and vice versa.

Community/Cultural Influences

Beyond families, peers, and schools, there is the influence of communities and the larger society, with higher levels of bullying linked to negative or unsafe neighborhoods, gang affiliation, and poverty. Research has also linked bullying perpetration to exposure to violent TV and video games. Generally, increased bullying and victimization are found in communities in which violence is modeled and/or condoned, although, again, the causal nature of these relationships remains unclear.

Individual Influences

In terms of individual factors, bullying perpetration has been associated with callous-unemotional traits, psychopathic tendencies), endorsement of masculine traits, conduct problems, anti-social personality traits, susceptibility to peer

pressure, anxiety, and depression. At least some students who bully their peers have been found to be higher in social intelligence and social status, with researchers distinguishing between socially integrated and socially marginalized bullies.

Being bullied by peers (victimization) has been linked with poor physical health and poor school adjustment, including being unhappy, feeling unsafe, being truant, performing poorly and, in some cases, dropping out of school. Victimization has also been associated with a host of internalizing and externalizing difficulties, including loneliness and withdrawal, anxiety and social avoidance, depression, and suicidal ideation, as well as hyperactivity, delinquency, and aggression. Victims are also less well liked, less accepted, and more rejected by peers. Unfortunately, the causal nature of these relationships is unclear. Given the multi-directionality of the social-ecological model and the principles of equi-finality and multi-finality, it is likely that context influences the extent to which these individual factors function as antecedents, contributing factors, or consequences of involvement in bullying. An aggressive youth diagnosed with conduct disorder might bully others because of a predisposing trait related to the diagnosis

of conduct disorder. Alternatively, youth who are “rewarded” for bullying behaviors (e.g., through enhanced status or popularity, access to goods) may continue bullying, develop further aggressive behaviors, and eventually meet criteria for a diagnosis of conduct disorder. Shy youth might appear more vulnerable, making them appealing targets of victimization. Alternatively, someone who is bullied may develop a shy and withdrawn, perhaps anxious, demeanor as a result of such treatment. Thus, our understanding of the psychology of bullying/victimization is much like the “chicken or egg” conundrum.

Family Influences

A number of family characteristics have been linked to bullying perpetration, including family members’ involvement in gangs, poor parental supervision, negative family environment, parental conflict, domestic violence, low parental communication, lack of parent emotional support, authoritarian parenting, inappropriate discipline, and parental abuse. Although such findings are consistent with arguments that aggressive modeling and poor parental supervision contribute to bullying, causal direction has not been clearly established and the impact of families after controlling for hereditary

influences remains unclear, as genetic factors have been shown to account for 61% of the variation in bullying behavior. Family influences on victimization have been more elusive, but include links to abuse, neglect, and overprotective parenting.

Peer Influences

Youth spend much of the day interacting with peers in schools, neighborhoods, communities, and through social media, and bullying behaviors almost always occur within the peer context. Bullying and victimization are more likely in classrooms characterized by peer norms that support bullying, and by high peer conflict. Affiliation with aggressive peers is also associated with greater bullying perpetration, as is peer victimization, and negative relationships with class-mates. Again, however, the correlational nature of these studies makes causal interpretation difficult, and several of these associations may simply reflect *homophily*, the tendency to affiliate with similar peers.

One of the most extensively researched peer influences on school bullying is that of bystanders. Observational studies have shown that, on average, two to four peers are present in the vast majority (85% to 88%) of bullying incidents. Bystanders,

however, often respond in ways that encourage rather than discourage bullying.

School Influences

Bullying has been most studied in the school context, and the positive or negative climate of the school impacts the frequency of bullying and victimization. Higher levels of bullying and victimization have been linked to inappropriate teacher responses, poor teacher–student relationships, lack of teacher support, and lack of engagement in school activities. Students are also less likely to report bullying if they see their school climate as negative. The relationship between school climate and bullying/victimization may be bidirectional, however, with poor school climate contributing to bullying and vice versa.

Community/Cultural Influences

Beyond families, peers, and schools, there is the influence of communities and the larger society, with higher levels of bullying linked to negative or unsafe neighborhoods, gang affiliation, and poverty. Research has also linked bullying perpetration to exposure to violent TV and video games. Generally, increased bullying and victimization are found in communities in which violence is modeled and/or condoned, although, again,

the causal nature of these relationships remains unclear.

Consequences of Bullying/Victimization

Although it is widely understood that involvement in bullying causes problems for victims, children and youth who bully are also at risk for many of the same problems. Studies addressing issues of causality have found that bullying perpetration often leads to anxiety and depression, social withdrawal and delinquent behavior, poor academic achievement, and adult diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder. Thus, bully perpetrators experience adverse psychosocial consequences, a result that does not garner much empathy, given the public's advocacy for suspension, expulsion, and incarceration for aggressive behavior. To understand how involvement in bullying/victimization can lead to such diverse outcomes, we consider a diathesis stress model, borrowed from developmental psychopathology, magnifying the social-ecological lens.

Understanding the Relationship Between Bullying & Victimization

Diathesis–stress models propose that psychopathology occurs as the result of the combination of individual cognitive or biological vulnerabilities and certain

environmental stressors. Further, these models posit that both negative life events and one's cognitions about those events contribute to the development of internalizing and externalizing psychopathology. In exploring the utility of a diathesis–stress model in understanding school bullying, we consider involvement in bullying, as either a victim or perpetrator, as a negative life event that, when mixed with certain cognitive, biological, and social vulnerabilities (i.e., diatheses), leads to the development of internalizing and externalizing psychopathology and impaired social relationships. Diathesis–stress models have received considerable empirical support and have contributed to our understanding of relational stressors and depressive symptoms peer exclusion and compulsive Internet use. We view bullying as a stressful life event that places vulnerable youth at risk for a host of negative outcomes regardless of type of involvement.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, a multidisciplinary approach involving affected children, their parents, school personnel, media, non-governmental organizations, and security units is required to achieve an effective approach for the prevention of violence

targeting children in schools as victims and/or perpetrators. In consideration of the impact of child's familial, and environmental cultural factors, and school ambiance on violence as well, educational efforts should be exerted both to eliminate potential adversities and also prevent bullying behaviours in schools. Stressful life events play a primary role in the development of depression and posttraumatic stress disorder. Major negative life events are related to the onset and maintenance of depressive symptoms that, in cyclical fashion, lead to additional negative life events and later depressive symptoms. Negative life events are also related to the onset and maintenance of anxiety disorders, with anxious individuals seeing the world as a threatening place, and interpreting events through a lens of worry and fear. As these findings suggest, bullying and victimization do not occur in isolation. Rather, bullying stems from complex interactions between individuals and the contexts in which they function, both proximal (i.e., family, peers, school climate) and distal (i.e., societal, cultural influences). Accordingly, multiple systems must be targeted in order for bullying prevention and intervention programs to be effective. Although demonstrations of causality remain an important task for future research, these findings begin to set

out a road map that guides prevention and intervention efforts, both in schools and communities.

References :

- Blanco, Jodee (2003). Please Stop Laughing at Me. One Woman's Inspirational Story. Adams Media, an F & W Publications Company.
- Buder, E. and S, and Gardner O. (2008). Letters To A Bullied Girl: Messages Of Healing and Hope. Harper Books. ISBN 9780661544620.
- Centrone, T. (2007). How Not to Be A Bully Target. Youth Light.
- Dellasega, C. and Nixon, C. (2003). Girl Wars: 12 Strategies That Will End Female Bullying. Simon and Schuster. NY.
- Garbarino, J.(2002). And Words Can Hurt Forever: How to Protect Adolescents from Bullying, Harassment and Emotional Violence. Victoria Sanders, NY.
- Greenfield, Patricia M.(2004)."Inadvertent exposure to pornography on the Internet: Implications of peer-to-peer file-sharing networks for child development and families" Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology 25(6): 741-750.

- Kalman, Izzy (2007). Bullies To Buddies: How to Turn Your Enemies Into Friends. Wisdom Pages. Staten Island, NY.
- Lewis, Keeta DeStefano, and Bear, Bonnie. (2009). 3rd. Manual of School Health: A Handbook For School Nurses, Educators, and Health Professionals. Ch. 7 Violence. Saunders/Elsevier, St. Louis, MO.
- McGraw, Jay (2008). Life Strategies for Dealing with Bullies, Aladdin, Children's Publishing Division of Simon and Schuster. NY.
- DiMarco, J.E. & Newman, M.K. (2011). When Your Child Is Being Bullied: Real Solutions for Parents, Educators & Other Professionals. Vivisphere Publishing.
- Simmons, R. (2011). Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls. Boston: Mariner Books.