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Phenomenon of Bullying:
A Case Study of Jordanian Schools at
Tafila

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Phenomenon of Bullying: A Case Study of Jordanian Schools at Tafila

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring the relationship between bullying behavior with assimilation of social values, feeling of inferiority and awakeness of conscience by a group of bulliers students at the higher primary stage in the schools of Tafila. That bullying has become a very heated subject; the researcher decided to survey this phenomenon in a very conservative city that takes religion as a top priority. The phenomenon of bullying is very noticeable in this city, yet taking different forms. In Tafila, it is found that the consequences of bullying could be fatal in that the bullyer is trying to conceal his academic failure by drawing people's attention on his victims, the bullied ones. Further, the negative role of the Ministry of education has proved to be very contradicting in presenting a set of ambivalent instructions. I come up with some of the suggestions that might alleviate and fight this spreading phenomenon. I hope this kind of topic will be a good contribution in the field of Special Education and will come up with promising consequences.

Keywords: Bullying, victimized and bullied, bullyer, adolescence bullying, school bullying.

Introduction

The concept of bullying has become one of the most important and attracting topics in many countries, especially after conducting the studies by Olweus in both Sweden and Norway. They conducted many research on students at basic stages in Sweden and Norway, where they built a measure to estimate and evaluate the school bullying. This research is prominent and important in such topic. The results of his research indicated that male students were more likely to participate in bullying than female students; 60% of female students were victims of bullying in 5th, 6th and 7th grades, and 15-20% of them were subject to bullying (Limper, 2004)

Bullying is considered an expanded phenomenon and an educational, social and personal critical problem, as well as being negatively affecting the school environment in general, and the cognitive, emotional and social ground of the student, which affect his/her right to learn within a proper safe class environment. The effective learning can not be achieved but in a state environment that provides students with psychological safety (security) and protection against violence, risk and threat (Yabko, 2008).

The phenomenon of bullying has gained a great attention by scholars and educators in many countries due to its severe results on the adaptation and psychic health of the students besides the effect on the school environment, in general. Bullying is one of the forms of abusing children, which in turn has become a crisis that encounters schools on daily basis (Rigby, 2010). This phenomenon is common among children and adolescent students. It is a general phenomenon in many schools and societies. It is considered a source of emotional disorder like anxiety, and devaluation of one's self. It further affects the life of the students in early stages especially like anxiety, devaluation of self. It affects the life of the students in early stages especially if accompanied by sexual harassment of financial abuse. The victims of bullying suffer from feeling of unhappiness and sadness in addition to hatred of social environment, which in turn lead to isolation, autism, anxiety, tension and depression, besides some somatic disorders, sleep disorders, nervous hysteria and frequent crying (King, 2008).

Bullying at schools is a worldwide problem at different age segments (Ginne, 2006). The view of child beaters and his clothes worn and books thrown away has become normal in front of school walls. The most dangerous in this case is that behavior of bullying is covered by secrecy by the victims so as to avoid more abuse by other students, or they believe they will be isolated from others if they declare their case. They also believe that bullying action might be reduced if the victim stays silent. The victim may hide any abuse action to teachers and principal because he/she knows that no punishment procedures will be taken against the bullyer. They are also afraid that their families will become more anxious about him if they know the case (Abu Ghazal, 2009-A).

Problem of the Study

The problem of school bullying has expended increasingly recently. Alsobheen (2007) indicated that there is an increasing trend of this problem in Irbid schools to the extent that there are increasing numbers of bullyers despite the penalties made against them. Sometimes children complain of a usual phenomenon of some diseases or problems or mental retardation, but in fact these are symptoms of the hidden problem that makes the life of the child very bad. Child may say "I don't like school and today I will not go" or "I have no friends". These expressions are dangerous and families should pay attention to them. Here the bullying problem arises, where a students may become a victim for another burlier in the school who deals with him in aggressive manners, especially in front of other students, or may be some bulliers against one victim who can not defend himself or even inform teachers, councilor or parents under the pressure of being described as coward, or looking at him as a weak human. Since the victim may cover his feelings in secrecy, councilor and family should pay attention to this problem. Therefore, this study has been initiated to discuss the dangerous effects on victims and the security of school environment, and to understand the psycho-social dimensions, through recognizing the degree of contribution of embodying the social values, feeling inferiority and strength of inner feeling of bullyers who try to compensate some difficulties and get social and psychic giants.

Importance of the Study

- It investigates social and school phenomena that have dangerous impacts on the educational and pedagogical process besides afflicting the attitudes of students towards the normal life, and their adaptation and psycho health, as well as affecting all dimensions of victim life like achievement and socialization.
- 2. The study focuses on a vital growth period (adolescence) where population is the 8th, 9th and 10th grade students. This stage has important role in determining the life tracks of the student. The students who show bullying behavior in early adolescence will show later un adaptation behavior.
- 3. The study attempts to attract the attention of educators, teachers, psychiatrists, and psycho advisors and administration of school to focus on this dangerous problem. It also attempts to guide their interfere to prevent and halt bullying where the best approach to recovery is the understanding of motives that stimulate the bullyers and set the plans suitable to deal with this problem.
- 4. The study is stemmed from real situations expensed by the researcher as educator of such bullying behaviors.
- 5. Lack of related studies in local and Arab research compared to foreign references, which means that this phenomenon is greater in western societies, but it is important to be aware of this problem in Jordan. Such

study may contribute to the solution of the problem.

Objectives and Questions of the Study:

This study aims at investigating the relationship between bullying behavior represented by embodiment of social values and feeling of humility and inner strength of a group of students among the bulliers in higher basic stage, in order to recognize the differences of bullying level between male and female students and level of grade.

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1. Is there a stochastic ability of assimilation of social values, conscience, awake feeling inferior, and gender with bullying of students at higher basic stage at schools of Tafila?
- 2. Are there statistically significant differences (α = 0.05) in bullying between value assimilation, conscience awakening, felling inferiority attributed to the gender?
- 3. Are there statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in bullying between values assimilation, conscience awakening, feeling inferiority attributed to the grade level of the student?

Conceptual and Procedural Definitions:

1. **Bullying**: it is the negative action(s) that are imposed on the child and make him/her feel pain due to imbalance of forces between two parties, the first in the bullyers and the other is the victim (Olweus, 1993). This definition has its specifity which differs than abuse by parents or custodian who is considered trusted by the child, which harm his body or spirit and doesn't include the peers (Salmivalli, 2010). There is difference between bullying and aggression, where bullying is an organized and planned behavior. The victim may contribute to this case in stimulating the burlier. The behavior of bullying is accompanied by satisfaction, pleasure, vanity unlike the aggression which may accompany anger, strain and anxiety.

For the purposes of this study, bullying is defined as the degree obtained by bullyers on the bullying measure prepared for this study.

- 2. **Bullyer**: is any student who practices the bullying five times at less during thirty days prior to applying the study teals. The behaviors of bullyer, specified for this study, are:
 - a. Physical bulling represented by beating, kicking, biting, hair pulling, pinching, and knocking down.
 - b. Verbal bullying: calling by titles, insulting, and satire on form, shape, and size or making lies against the victims.
 - c. Social (emotional) bullying: making gestures, laughs, incitement, planning to isolate and threat the victim, and taking

his/her money by force, and coercion the victim to do unwanted acts, intimidation, damage of properties, ignorance, prevention him from participating in playing, or sport activities besides abasement and disclosure of secrets.

3. **Social Values**: They are the consistency of individual's behavior with what expected according to the prevailing culture and commitment to help the individuals go along with (Fessor, 2007). It is also defined as organizing the reasoning and emotional judgments towards others, and divisions of activities that guide our desires and attitudes. The criteria here are the society and culture (Brownstein, 2004). It is procedurally defined as the sum of person performance or the measure of social values prepared for this study.

Literature Review

Dake et al (2003) study aimed at investigating the role of teachers in facing the bullying behavior. The sample consisted of 700 teachers throughout USA schools. Results showed that 86% of teachers communicated seriously with bullyers and their parents, and less than 31% of teachers allocate time to discuss the bullying inside the class, besides the low role of teachers in controlling the bullying behaviors, and the teachers' needs to develop their skills to handle this problem.

Ivarsson (2005) study investigated the effect of bullying behavior on the suicide attitudes and some socio-psychic problems of adolescents in the high schools in California. Sample consisted of 800 male and female students. Results indicated that victims have great attitudes towards committing suicide besides having problems in concentration and awareness, and unsatisfying social performance.

Naylor et al (2006) study aimed to explore the types of bullying and characteristics of bullyers in a sample of 225 teachers and 1820 female and male students between 9-14 years old in 51 schools in UK. The results of the most common types are the verbal and physical while the least common type is the social slavery. The verbal bullying was more common among female students while the physical bullying was the most common among male students. The results showed that 40% of bullyers developed anxiety and stress, anger and bad mood.

Khoury (2007) study aimed at exploring the relationship between bad treatment of students by the employees of schools and the increase of bullying. The study was applied on a sample of 16604 male and female students in 7th-11th grades at 324 schools in Israel. The results also showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between suffering the emotional abuse male students by school staff and practicing the bullying behavior, while it indicated the suffer of male students from bullying more than female students and between Arab students than Jewish students.

Yabko and Hokude (2008) study aimed at exploring the relationship between bullying and both depression and strict parental authority. The sample consisted of 242 adolescent in the higher basic schools in Mexico. The results showed that there was statistically significant and positive relationship between bullying and both depression and strict parental authority.

Kaikkonen (2008) study in Finland aimed at exploring the bullying within the framework of cultural and social rules and values. The sample consisted of 876 male and female students between 13-15 years old for different schools in Finland. The results indicated that bullying is a vehicle to acquire the authority and achieve a position among students through threatening. Results also found that bullying has a role in creating cultural values an criteria to enhance such behavior, besides there was a negative and strong correlation between bullying and both feeling guilty and awakeness of conscience.

Hixon (2009) study aimed at recognizing the relationship between some psychological processes such as feeling inferior and feeling low-reputation with bullying. The sample consisted of 650 male and female students in the school of Philadelphia. The results showed a strong and positive correlation between acting the bullying behavior and feeling inferior by bullyers.

Display and Discussion of Results

This study aimed at exploring the relationship between bullying behavior with assimilation of social values, feeling of inferiority and awakeness of conscience by a group of bullyers students at the higher primary stage in the schools of Tafila. It aimed also at recognizing the differences in bullying degrees according to gender and class level. Results were displayed upon the questionnaire items.

Study Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all bullyers students at the high-primary stage at the school of Tafila in the academic year 2009/2010 their number was 300 male and female students in the 8th, 9th and 10th grades, distributed on 49 schools. These students met the criteria of bullying, which says, "bullyers should have practiced five bullying behaviors within the last thirty days prior to application. The behaviors of bullying specified for the purposes of this study were physical bullying through beating kicking, biting, hair pulling, pinching, and knocking down. Verbal bullying includes calling by bad titles, insulting, satire on shape, form, or size and spreading rumors. The social (emotional) bullying is embodied by gestures, laughing, incitement and planning to isolate the victim and threatening besides taking his money by force and oblige the victim to do unwanted actions, fearing, damage of properties, ignorance, prevention from participating in play or sport activities, disclosure of secrets and abasement.

The researcher depended on the nominations by advisors, class heads while the sample was the population itself. After retrieving the responses, the

researcher excepted (11) forms for incomplete responses, therefore the sample which was analyzed consisted of 2.89 male and female students as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of the Study Sample according to Gender and Grad	le
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Gender	8 th	9 th	10 th	Total
Male	63	55	48	166
Female	43	41	39	123
Total	106	96	87	289

First: Results related to first questions "Is there a stochastic ability for assimilation of social values, awakeness of consciences, feeling inferior and gender with bullying by bullyers students at the high-primary stage at Tafila Governments Schools"?

Before answering such question, it is important to note that the total mean of the sample members in bullying was 88.46011% while the mean of male students was 92.3072% and female students was 83.2683%. to answer this question the researcher conducted the stepwise multi regression analysis as shown in Table 2.

Table 1 shows that feeling inferior explained 40.1% of explained variance of bullying, then followed by the awakeness of bullying, and then followed by the awakeness of conscience which explained 0.57% while social values explained .008% of variant. The gender was not included as a factor of forecasting. The variant of feeling inferior was the most factor for forecasting the bullying where its standard regression coefficient value was 0.514 while social values obtained a value of standard regression coefficient by (-0.114).

The percentage of variance explained by the above-mentioned variables was 0.466 which is statistically significant of (α = 0.05) which means that we can depend on feeling inferior, awakeness of conscience and social values to forecast bullying.

This result is consistent with Macdonald study (2004) in terms of strong correlation between both the cultural background and values and the bulling inversely. The result is also consistent with Kaikkonen (2008) in terms of low awakeness of conscience and self blame by bullyers, and Hixon (2009) which indicated the forecasting ability of feel inferior and bullying. It is possible to explain the result related to that, the variable of feel inferior is the most forecast able one in terms of bullying. The feeling of inferiority is a strong motif for bullyers to show his power and control on peers. He seeks to compensate these feelings and attract attention a hat supports this argument is that bullying behavior are made in front of peers while the bullyers is proud of it. Some bullyers justify their deeds in that victims may satire for them or victims are academically excellent. The bullying is a form of escape to get rid the feeling of inferiority which is proving to self that bullyer is ale and proficient. Acting the bullying deeds is only a confession by bullyers than he feels inefficient in one topic or more, and he/she fears to be clear in front of

his/her pears so he/she initials the bullying as a means to defeat the victim to change the position. The normal personality seeks to get the positive compensation while the unadaptive personality may compensate the feelings of inferiority through negative behavior, such as bullying. The bullying here is organizing the relationship between Ego which feels inferior and the surrounding world.

The second variable is the awakeness of conscience was found to have negative relationship with bullying. We can explain this result in that low awakeness of conscience; self blame and feel guilty have no place in the mind of the bullyers when he/she causes pain, harm and injury to the victim, proven in the frequent deeds of bullying. Awakeness of conscience is associated with organizing the behavior and the balancing between self desires and the desires of others.

In terms of the third variable of social values, the regression analysis results showed a negative relationship with bullying, since the social values indicate integrated ethical system that includes cooperation, appeasement, and diffusion with others, which we don't find in the psychology of bullyers who refuses cooperation and help with others since he/she lives in inner isolation which stimulates him/her to cause harm and pain to pears. The ethical system of the sample is still under formation and change through life experience. In this period the values are featured by privacy. We may find another trend of explain through wrong social values that grow with individual during growth and education period, by creating a positive image for the offender associated with power, ability and control. Therefore, such encouragement of wrong deeds by family may enhance the positive perspective to the bullyers, while the weak and coward member is hated by the family.

Table 2. Analysis of Multi Regression of the Stochastic Ability for the Feeling Inferior, Awakness of Conscience and Social Values with Bullying

Variables included	R Cor. Coef.	\mathbb{R}^2	Explained Var	F Value	Sig Value	Change in exp. var	F value for testing change R ²	Sig des	Beta Co of B	Regression Co of b
Felling inferior	0.633	0.401	0.401	192.303	0.00	4.01	192.303	0.00	0.514	0.483
Awakeness of conscience	0.677	0.458	0.458	120.801	0.00	0.57	29.920	0.00	- 0.250	- 0.280
Social values	0.603	0.466	0.466	83.043	0.00	.008	4.538	0.34	- 0.1	- 0.306

Second: Results of the Second Question:

Are there statistically significant differences (a= 0.05) in bullying, value assimilation, awakeness of conscience and feeling inferior attributed to the gender?

To answer this question the researcher applied T test to compare among the arithmetical means of the performance of male and female students as shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Variable	Group	Arrhythmic mean	Std. Dev.	T Value	Deg. Of freedom	Sig level
D 11 '	Male	92.3072	22.2277	3.945	287	.000
Bullying	Female	83.2683	14.2961			
Social Values	Male	54.9398	8.0767	1.552	287	.122
	Female	56.2927	6.1760			
Feel Inferior	Male	106.6687	22.1166	4.034	287	.000
	Female	96.8618	17.9143			
Awakeness of	Male	72.7651	15.6104	- 1.613	287	.108
consciences	Female	75.5285	12.5831			

Table 3 shows statistically significant differences (a= 0.05) among male and female students in bullying where T= 3.945 and significance degree= 0.000. The arithmetic mean of male students was 92.3072 against 83.2683 for female students. This means that male students are more practiced in bullying than female students.

This result agrees with the study of Righy & Slee (1991) and Seals & Young (2003). This is a attributed to the hormone and biological creation of male students which stimulates them to show power, violence and control; with linking the physical power and offending with male gender, especially in the oriental societies which stimulate the show of male power. We cannot ignore the role of specified social expectations for male and female students through preparing male individuals for more aggressive activities than female persons. The interaction of biological factors with stimulations and urging determines the nature of behavior. The society requests the female to be more kind and polite with no violence. In the conservative societies the female individuals should not violate the society laws and expectations, besides that the school environment in male students tend to ignore the aggression of children against each others, the absence of advisors roles, using the beating and insults and react against beating without respecting the authority of school.

The results showed no statistically significant differences (α = 0.05) among male and female students in social values, when T value was (-1: 552) and sig. level was (0.122). The explanation is that both genders belong to the same environment and that values acquired from the environment have the same sources.

The results also indicated statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$)

between male and female students in feeling inferior where T=(4.034) with significance levels = 0.000. The arithmetic mean of male students was 106.6687 compared to 96.8618 for female students. This means that male students feel interior more than female students due to the competition among male students do to prove themselves which may show some differentiation among them that leads to feeling inferior by some. The oriental societies focus on the male features of power, control and comparison among peers, as well as letting them bear the burdens. This case creates some feeling by male member if he can't meet these criteria and begins feel inferior and unable to protect himself never to say protected others. This result agrees with the result of the first question bullying and feeling of inferiority.

Results showed no statistically significant differences (α = 0.05) among male and female students in awakeness of conscience. T test was (- 11.613) and significance level of (.108). This is attributed to that the awakeness of conscience as a level of ethical development is tied to the society norms and values. The society itself and surrounding environment are proximate besides that awakeness of conscience is subject to human nature, and the religious growth is not specific to one gender.

Third: Results of Third Question:

"Are there statistically significant differences (α = 0.05) in bullying, values assimilation, awakeness of conscience and feeling interiority attributed to the class level of the student?"

To answer this question, we calculated the arithmetic means and standard deviate for the performance of sample members on the four measures as shown in table 4.

Table 4	Arithmetic	Means and	l Standard	Deviations	on Four Measures

Variable	Class Level	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Dev.
	8 th	91.2642	17.3635
Dullring	9 th	89.5625	17.7609
Bullying	10 th	83.8276	23.5724
	11th	88.4602	19.7403
C 1 X7 . 1	8 th	54.9528	6.6724
	9 th	54.9375	7.3582
Social Value	10 th	56.8391	8.0042
	11th	55.5156	7.3471
	8 th	103.1415	21.7008
Inferior	9 th	103.7083	18.8467
IIIICHOI	10 th	100.3678	22.3311
	11th	102.4948	20.9709
	8 th	74.1887	13.7405
Awakeness	9 th	73.1771	13.7105
	10 th	74.4828	16.1006
	11th	73.9412	14.4415

 Table 5. ANOVA Analysis for Means of the Sample Members' Performance in

Bullying on four Measures

Dependent	Source of	Sum of	Freedom	Mean of	F	Sign
Variable	variance	Squares	deg.	squares	value	
	Class			_		
	(among	2817.150	2	1408.575	3.682	.026
	groups)					
Bullying	Error					
	(within	109410.643	286	382.555		
	groups)					
	Total	112227.792	288			
Values	Class	210.011		100.000	2 02 4	100
	(among	218.044	2	109.022	2.034	.133
	groups)					
	Error	15220 126	206	52.505		
	(within	15328.136	286	53.595		
	groups) Total	15546,180	288			
	Class	15540.160	200			
		579.302	2	289.651	.657	.519
	(among groups)	379.302	2	209.031	.037	.319
Feeling	Error					
Inferior	(within	126076.941	286	440.828		
	groups)	120070.541	200	440.020		
	Total	126656.242	288			
	Class					
	(among	88.060	2	44.030	.210	.811
	groups)					
Awakeness of	Error					
conscience	(within	59975.940	286	209.706		
	groups)					
	Total	60064.000	288			

Table 5 indicates statistically significant differences among the means of students performance in $(8^{th}-10^{th} \text{ grades})$ in bullying only, where F= 3.682 and significance level= 0.26. There were no statistically significant differences among the three levels of grades in social values, feeling interior and awakens of conscience.

To determine the trend of these differences in bullying, Chaffee test was used as shown in

Table 6.

Grade	8 th		9	th	10 th		
Level	Mean= 91.2642		Mean= 89.5625		Mean: 83.8276		
Level	Mean	Sig. level	Mean	Sig. level	Mean	Sig. level	
8 th Mean= 91.2642	-	-	1.70	.827	7.44	0.33	
9 th Mean= 89.5625	-	-	-	-	5.72	0.142	

Table 6 shows that the arithmetic means of the 8th grade performance was

greater than that of 10^{th} grade where significance level was 0.33, where there were no statistically significant differences between 9^{th} and 10^{th} grades, and between means of 8^{th} and 9^{th} grades in bullying.

This result agrees with Espelage and Holt (2001). This can be explained through that the features of adolescence begin to get clear with trend to independency and trying to prove the self. The changes happen to the adolescent in 8th grade contribute to the emotional anxiety and miss explaining the facts, which makes him more direful. He does not have enough experience in social life's and friendships as shown in 9th and 10th grade. So he seeks to achieve self needs away the interests of others besides that the emotional adultery of 8th grade is lower than 9th and 10th grade students.

Recommendations

- 1. Prepare qualifying and training programs for education advisors especially the new recruited in schools and child care institutions so as to get the necessary information on bullying and how to deal with bullyers.
- 2. Hold lectures and seminars and prepare specialized flyers to face the bullying and communicate with parents as a preventive procedure.
- 3. Imply the children stories and magazines with real situations of child life to dedicate these stories for bullying, besides focusing on implanting the right values and growing children to understand the cooperation, help and animation instead of other stories that are full of myths and fables which don't contribute to solving the problems of the children.
- 4. Conduct studies on bullying focusing on several aspects such as the relationship of bullying with family pedagogy; the bullying and academic achievement; bullying and support by teachers and parents ...etc.

Recommendations Based on the Study Results

- 1. Prepare counseling program to enhance self-confidence of the bullyers.
- 2. Intensity the conically programs to reduce the bullying behaviors of 8th grade students.
- 3. Conduct more research on the variables of this study.

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