

School Bullying and Learning Motivation Among Primary School Pupils

التّنمر المدرسي ودافعية التّعلّم عند تلاميذ الطّور الابتدائي

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Abstract:

Bullying is considered one of the most widespread school problems in recent times.

It is a type of violence that negatively affects students' personalities and the overall study environment, hindering the learning and teaching process. The current study aims to examine the relationship between school bullying and learning motivation, which is a fundamental condition for learning and academic success. It is the latent energy that drives students' thoughts and knowledge, encouraging them to choose a school activity and persist in it to achieve a specific goal.

Keywords: school bullying, learning motivation, primary stage.

ملخص:

يعتبر التّنمر من أكثر المشكلات المدرسيّة انتشارا في الآونة الأخيرة . وهو نوع من أنواع العنف يؤثّر سلبا على شخصيّة التّلاميذ و على المناخ العام للدراسة و يعرقل عمليّة التّعلّم والتعليم.

وتهدف الدّراسة الحاليّة إلى دراسة علاقة التّنمر المدرسي بدافعية التّعلّم التي تعدّ شرطا أساسيا من شروط التّعلّم والنّجاح المدرسي . و هي تلك الطّاقة الكامنة التي تحرّك أفكار ومعارف التّلميذ وتحثّه على اختيار نشاط مدرسي و الاستمرار فيه من أجل تحقيق هدف معيّن .
كلمات مفتاحية: التّنمر المدرسي، الدّافعية للتّعلّم، الطّور الابتدائي .

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1. Research Problem:

The school is an educational and social institution aimed at learning, acquiring knowledge, and developing mental and motor skills. The student in school has social relationships with others, especially friendships with peers, and interacts with them positively or negatively.

This interaction may lead to unacceptable behavioral problems in educational, social, and school contexts, such as the phenomenon of bullying, which is a serious educational and social issue that negatively affects the school environment and the cognitive and emotional development of the student. School bullying is defined as a form of incorrect and abnormal social interaction, whether by the one committing the act of bullying (the bully) or by the one being bullied (the victim) in various verbal or physical forms, as it is based on negative and incorrect social control or dominance, which adversely affects the educational process. Many studies have shown that schools should be safe supportive environments for students that help them grow educationally, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally; however, they have become the opposite due to aggressive actions and behaviors, whether verbal, physical, or others (Hashem Qasim, 2012).

School bullying is one of the problems faced by educational institutions of all types and stages, as it is not limited to one educational stage or system (Bro, 2013). A study (2007) by Story proved that bullying is a behavioral problem with serious effects on the student; when a student becomes a victim of bullying, they will suffer from behavioral and psychological problems.

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And school-related factors such as anxiety, fear, low self-esteem, and decreased academic achievement (Bensawy, 2015). Thus, the prevailing positive psychological educational climate in the school works to equip students with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and appropriate behavioral patterns, which positively reflects on academic achievement in particular and the educational process in general.

One of the factors for the success of the learning process is the availability of motivation in the learner to achieve their goals, which are internal forces that drive the learner to behave in a certain way and exert effort to achieve their aims, or it is an internal stimulation that motivates the learner to utilize all their energy in every educational situation they participate in to satisfy their cognitive motives and achieve their self-actualization.

(Viau, 1997) believes that motivation for learning is an internal state that activates the thoughts and knowledge of the learner, their awareness, and attention, and urges them to continue performing to reach a state of cognitive balance. The social cognitive theory explains motivation based on the interaction between the learner's behavior, their individual characteristics (personality), and the environment in which they grow and develop. (Bandura, 1986) is considered one of the pioneers who established this theory and explained the ongoing influence between social, personal, and behavioral factors.

Based on the above, the following question can be posed: Is there a correlational relationship between school bullying and the absence of learning motivation among primary school students?

2/ Definition of School Bullying :

Many researchers have focused on studying the phenomenon of bullying as one of the most widespread problems in primary schools. Bullying is a type of violence that negatively affects the personality of students and the overall study climate, hindering the learning and teaching process.

School bullying is defined (Abdul Majid et al., 2017) as a form of aggressive behavior directed intentionally and repeatedly towards an individual or group, either verbally, physically, socially, psychologically, electronically, or sexually. The bully is usually stronger and holds more power than the victim.

School bullying is also defined as aggressive behavior that involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim, occurring repeatedly over time. It takes many forms, including physical assault, verbal insults, and non-verbal threats that are indirect, such as sending written threatening messages (Al-Sufi et al., 2012).

Thus, school bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that is repeatedly exhibited by one student or a group of students with the intent to harm the victim, whether verbally, physically, symbolically, psychologically, socially, sexually, or electronically in the classroom or school environment. The element of power imbalance between the bully and the victim is usually absent.

3/ Concepts Related to Bullying :

1. Bullying and Aggression : Bullying is less intense than aggression. Aggression is behavior that comes from one person towards another, which can be verbal, physical, or symbolic. It may be direct or indirect and leads

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to harm to the other party. Therefore, aggression is more general than bullying, which is usually practiced by a bully who is stronger than the victim, indicating a lack of balance in power.

2. Bullying and Conflict: Bullying differs from conflict in that bullying occurs between individuals who are different and unequal in physical or psychological power. Bullies are typically...

The physically strong and the victims are physically weak and unable to protect themselves, and bullying occurs repeatedly with the aim of domination and control, while conflict may occur sometimes and may happen unintentionally and does not aim at authority or control, but rather occurs as a result of differences between the parties.

3. Bullying and violence: Violence uses threats and promises of all kinds and may sometimes reach the use of weapons and threats of murder or murder itself. As for bullying, it is less severe than violence in terms of practice; it involves mild physical violence and verbal violence aimed at showcasing power and control and the desire to dominate and control others among peers and colleagues, and bullying may sometimes lead to violence.

4. Forms of school bullying: School bullying occurs in various and multiple forms and at different levels in terms of the type and severity of harm, and it can be direct or indirect. School bullying can be classified into the following types:

- **Physical bullying:** This includes hitting, kicking, slapping, throwing to the ground, pulling, or kicking, etc.

- **Verbal bullying:** Insulting, cursing, swearing, threatening, or comparing to animals, spreading false rumors, or giving annoying nicknames or ethnic labels to an individual.

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- **Sexual bullying:** Using obscene language and sexual names or touching or threatening with sexual acts.

- **Psychological bullying:** Harassment, threats, intimidation, humiliation, mockery, ridicule, and rejection from the group.

- **Bullying in social relationships:** preventing some students from engaging in certain activities by excluding them, rejecting their friendship, or spreading rumors about others.

- **Bullying of property:** seizing school supplies and belongings of others or damaging them.

5/ Causes of school bullying: It can be said that the causes of school bullying can be traced back to the interaction of a number of factors: psychological, personal, social, familial, and school-related. The causes of school bullying can be attributed to the personality of the bully, who is usually strong-willed and does not fear the consequences of their actions, and may have experienced frustrations from others. It can also relate to the family, which sometimes serves as a living model for aggressive behaviors and encourages them, or the existence of family problems, in addition to school factors that cannot be overlooked in the occurrence of school bullying. The causes of violence can be summarized as follows (as mentioned by Benshawi and Ramadan, 2015).

5-1. Psychological causes:

These involve the student being subjected to continuous humiliation and mockery, leading to frustration, negative self-esteem, and feelings of inferiority, resulting in the student's behavior manifesting as anger, tension, and school bullying against others, which is a projection of the issues they

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suffer from onto their peers and a release of pressures in the form of bullying. Additionally, the student may experience neglect and lack of attention, whether at home or in school.

5-2. Family causes:

Domestic violence is considered one of the most important causes of bullying. A student who grows up in a family environment dominated by violence, whether between spouses or directed towards children, is likely to learn violence.

Through observation and imitation of others, the bully believes that violence is a sign of strength and a means to achieve a specific goal, especially if supported by approval and admiration from parents, which reinforces the child's behavior by repeating the same actions later. Consequently, a child who lives in a family dominated by violence and psychological pressures becomes aggressive and transfers this aggression to school, tending to bully weaker students.

5-3. School-related causes:

These include educational policies, school culture, overcrowded classrooms, the length and difficulty of the curriculum, sudden changes in the school environment, and the authoritarian teaching style. The violence exercised by teachers against their students leads to hatred and counter-violence, as well as the spread of school bullying, in addition to discrimination among students and the teacher's lack of familiarity with the subject matter, while the absence of the principal's authority helps to strengthen and display bullying behavior by some students.

Sometimes, bullying is directed against diligent students because society values the hard-working, successful student and does not give

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importance to the academically failing student, who feels frustration and helplessness.

5-4. Causes related to media and electronic games:

Electronic games typically rely on concepts that inherently contain violence, such as superpowers, crushing opponents, and fierce competition to achieve victory. Since school life is an extension of family and social life, we find that students carry these aggressive ideas to school and engage in bullying others, in addition to being influenced by the media and the programs it broadcasts.

Encourages the practice of violence against others and spending a long time in front of television screens, consuming and mimicking what they see in films of killing, beating, and disdain for others.

6/ Effects of school bullying:

There are three parties involved in school bullying behavior:

- Bullies
- Victims of bullying
- Bystanders

The effects of school bullying directly impact the student victims who are characterized by weakness, fear, and an inability to defend themselves. There are psychological, health, and social academic effects of bullying, including:

- Increased rates of depression, anxiety, suicide, and other psychological disorders among victims.
- Attempts to bring weapons to school for self-defense.
- Frustration due to mockery and ridicule from others.
- Negative self-esteem and feelings of inferiority.

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- Inability to control oneself when angry, leading to self-destructive behavior.
- Likelihood of experiencing certain physical symptoms such as headaches and stomach pains.
- Failure to establish social relationships with others and feelings of isolation.
- Absenteeism from school and, in some cases, partial or complete school dropout.
- Poor academic performance due to fear and a sense of insecurity.
- Lack of academic motivation.

7/School bullying and the absence of learning motivation :

Learning motivation is everything that drives a learner's behavior towards achieving a specific goal or purpose, knowing that the source of that movement can be internal or external. Additionally, motivation is also a result of the perception that the student has about school goals and the value of the activities that the student engages in regarding the subject and the educational environment in general (Tardif, 1992). Viau (1997) believes that motivation for learning is an internal state that drives the learner's thoughts, knowledge, awareness, attention, and their search for continued performance to reach a state of cognitive balance.

It can be said that motivation for learning encompasses all the perceptions that a student holds about themselves, the educational material, and their school and family environment.

Motivation has become comparable to intelligence and is considered one of the most important conditions for learning and academic success. However, recently, there has been a significant decline in motivation and a

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lack of perseverance and diligence, one of the contributing factors to this being the prevalence of school bullying among students.

When conducting interviews with students and teachers about school bullying and disengagement from studies, teachers unanimously agreed that students who are victims of bullying experience frustration, fear, and anxiety, and are unable to concentrate in class due to being bullied. They gradually drop out of school, and sometimes permanently, losing the desire to study and perceiving school as a place for bullying and the practice of violent behaviors, lacking safety and a sense of comfort.

As mentioned in Maslow's theory, the need for security is one of the most important basic needs of students. The lack of security leads to a absence of motivation to learn, and bullying in schools eliminates the positive climate necessary for the learning process. As stated in Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986), which explains the motivation to learn, the external environment is important in stimulating students' motivation. An educational environment equipped with various resources allows students to engage in different educational activities. Observing others stimulates the motivation to learn, while negative behaviors observed can cause students to become disengaged from lessons and diminish their motivation (Dougha et al., 2009).

Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2011), which explains the motivation to learn, states that students have psychological and social needs they seek to fulfill, regardless of their living environment. These needs are represented by:

1. The need to feel autonomous.
2. The need to feel capable of forming social relationships with peers.

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3. The need to feel self-efficacious.

Through the three psychological needs outlined in the Self-Determination Theory regarding motivation to learn, a school environment characterized by bullying is unable to provide students with appropriate opportunities to establish social relationships with teachers and peers. Such an environment fails to foster self-confidence and autonomy in choosing school activities freely without relying on others for assistance.

We also find that the student needs to trust in their abilities; they have a strong need for a teacher who can foster self-confidence, shield them from negative feedback, and protect them from all forms of bullying that undermine their motivation. Additionally, when the school becomes a source of pressure due to a lack of a playground or a spacious yard, it turns into a closed space that restricts the student's freedom to play, move, practice sports, and release pent-up emotions and energies in a healthy way. Therefore, school bullying leads to a lack of motivation to learn and failure, and school dropout becomes an inevitable consequence.

Conclusion :

School bullying is considered one of the most widespread issues in schools at all educational stages. Bullying is a form of violence that negatively affects students' mental health and the overall atmosphere of the school, hindering the educational process. Among its negative effects is the lack of motivation to learn among students, which is a fundamental condition for the learning process due to the absence of a positive, safe, and supportive environment. Therefore, it has become essential to combine efforts to reduce this serious phenomenon by addressing the causes of bullying, starting from the family to the school environment:

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- Opening communication channels between the family and the school and promoting positive dialogue.
- Teachers should possess a flexible personality that is not authoritarian.
- Assisting bullying students and engaging them in various activities such as sports and music.
- Teachers should adopt diverse assessment methods that consider the individual differences of students.
- Monitoring bullies by a psychological specialist.
- Providing pedagogical support to students and trying to listen to their problems and teach them coping strategies.

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