

The Status of bullying School **_ A Field Study of the Middle School Students in Blida Province.**

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Abstract: This study aimed to identify the reality of school bullying. The study sample consisted of 100 students from the first and second years of middle school (56 males and 44 females), selected through simple random sampling from Ahmed Bouda Middle School. The descriptive analytical method was adopted for this study, and data were collected using the School Bullying Scale developed by Al-Subheen and Al-Qudah (2013) was used after examining its psychometric properties. Following statistical analysis and hypothesis testing, the results indicated level of bullying among students was average. The findings also indicated statistically significant differences in the ranking of bullying dimensions in favor of verbal bullying, physical bullying, social bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying against property, respectively. The results further showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying attributable to the gender variable, whereas there were statistically significant differences attributable to the grade level variable in favor of first-year middle school students.

Keywords: School bullying; dimensions of school bullying; middle school; student.

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1 – Introduction

School bullying is a serious social phenomenon that significantly affects students and schools. Attention to it began in the 1970s, but it is an age-old phenomenon present in all developed societies as well as developing ones.

According to Dickerson (2005), bullying behavior begins to appear in early childhood, as the child starts to form an initial concept of intimidation. It continues until it reaches its peak in middle school (grades 4, 5, and 6), then persists in upper elementary school, before beginning to decline in high school and university

Bullying is considered a psychological, verbal, and physical attack, encompassing multiple negative actions by one or more students to harm another student. This aggression is repeated over a prolonged period and can involve physical contact such as hitting, pushing, and kicking, as well as gestures and expressions like making faces. All these actions are intentional and deliberate, aimed at isolating the student from the group or refusing to respond to their demands (Al-Qahtani, 2012, p. 117).

Bullying behavior deteriorates the educational environment and negatively impacts students' psychological and social well-being. It affects their emotional balance, relationships, and adjustment within the school environment, sometimes leading to serious consequences such as depression, social isolation, and even suicide. This was demonstrated in a survey by Erling, titled "Bullying: Depressive Symptoms and Suicidal Ideation," conducted on 2,088 Norwegian students. The results of this study showed that both bullies and their victims scored high on a scale measuring suicidal ideation. (Saihi, 2019)

It should be noted that the prevalence of school bullying is steadily increasing, as indicated by both foreign and local studies. In the United States, experts have indicated that 3.7 million children are bullied in lower or middle schools, and that approximately 25% suffer long-term psychological, psychosomatic, and suicidal effects as a result of bullying. Furthermore, 30% of school-aged students in America are affected by bullying. It is also prevalent in Japan (15%), Australia (18%), Scandinavia (10%), and England (20%), as well as among elementary school students (Farafa, 2004, cited in Abib and Laloush, 2023, p. 212).

Sarzen (2002) studied bullies and their victims, reviewing previous studies from 1992 to 2002. These studies showed that bullies need to bully to appear strong, and that there is no single reason why a child becomes a bully. Rather, environmental factors can develop bullying behavior. The results also indicated that middle school children are the most frequent bullies, and that the most common form of bullying is provocation, followed by physical bullying among boys and social exclusion among girls (Al-Subhein & Al-Qudah, 2013, p. 39).

As for the level of spread of the bullying phenomenon in Algeria, the study by Chetibi and Boutaf in 2014 revealed that the bullying phenomenon in Algeria is widespread in the school environment, which led to the emergence of many behavioral and moral problems. It was also a source of spreading fear and anxiety and creating more bullies. The results of the study also confirmed that bullying behaviors spread in different forms in the middle school stage, but the most

acknowledged by the research sample was verbal bullying at a rate of (75-83.8)% and physical bullying at a rate ranging between (58.3-75)% (Chetibi and Boutaf, 2014, p. 36). In the same vein, a 2021 study by Amitouche, which aimed to determine the level of school bullying among middle school students in Algeria, revealed that the level of bullying among middle school students was moderate. The study found that bullying manifested itself in several forms among the sample, with physical bullying being the most prevalent, followed by verbal bullying, then social bullying, then property bullying, and finally sexual bullying. The study also found no statistically significant differences between males and females in the level of school bullying (Amitouche, 2026, p. 122).

After reviewing previous studies and recognizing the seriousness of the phenomenon of school bullying and the importance of addressing it, this study aims to investigate the level of school bullying by grade level, gender, and class, as well as to identify its forms. This will be achieved by answering the following question:

What is the status of school bullying among students at Ahmed Bouda Middle School?

1.1- Study Hypotheses

- The level of school bullying is average among students.
- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the dimensions of bullying (social, verbal, physical, sexual, and property bullying).
- There are statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying attributable to the gender variable
- There are statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying attributable to the grade level variable

1.2- Study Procedural Concepts

-The Concept of School Bullying

It is the level of students engaging in socially undesirable behaviors such as verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual harassment, vandalism of school property, and isolation of the victim. This study is measured by the student's score on the School Bullying Scale developed by Al-Subhi and Al-Qudah in 2013.

- Dimensions of School Bullying

According to Al-Subhi and Al-Qudah, there are five forms of bullying, as follows:

- Verbal Bullying: This involves an individual directing insults, and shouting at others, spreading rumors, mockery, obscene language, and using derogatory nicknames
- Physical bullying: This includes hitting, pinching, pulling hair or ears, tripping, pushing, and using sharp objects.
- Social bullying: This includes harassment, exclusion, jealousy of others' success, defamation, humiliation, and the desire to control them.
- Property bullying: This means forcibly taking, vandalizing, damaging, or stealing someone's property and then denying taking it.

- Sexual bullying: This includes using sexual nicknames, touching inappropriately, sexual harassment, and forcing someone to talk about sexual matters.
- **Middle school**

This is an educational stage between primary and secondary education. It lasts four years and is attended by most students who have completed the five-year primary stage.

- **The student**

The student is the focus of the educational process, as attention must be paid to him to acquire knowledge and refine his behavior. the students concerned in this study are middle school students.

2- Method and Tools:

- Methodology of the Study

❖ Pilot Study

The pilot study is considered as an important step at the beginning of any research, allowing us to anticipate all matters of importance concerning the study topic and identify the empirical steps for implementing the main study. The pilot study we conducted aimed to :

- Familiarize ourselves with the research field to avoid difficulties in implementing the main study.
- Select the appropriate tool and methodology for the study.
- Ensure clarity of school bullying scale items for students.
- Determine the time required to complete the scales.
- Gain experience in implementation and skills in data collection and analysis.

Examine the psychometric properties of the scales using a pilot sample of 30 fourth-year middle school students (17 females and 13 males) from Ahmed Bouda Institution. These students were subsequently excluded from the main study.

❖ Main Study

- Main Study Methodology: a methodology, in general, is a set of procedures established and followed to arrive at the truth and answer hypotheses. The researcher used the descriptive-analytical method because it was suitable for the nature and objectives of the study, which aimed to identify the level of school bullying among middle school students.
- Main Study boundaries:

- Human boundaries: The study sample consisted of first and second-year middle school students.

- Spatial boundaries: This study conducted at Ahmed Bouda Middle School in the Blida Province.

-Temporal boundaries: This study was conducted during the second semester of the 2024 academic year.

- Study Sample and Characteristics: The study sample consisted of 100 students (53 from the first year of middle school and 47 from the second year of middle school; 56 males and 44 females), selected using stratified random sampling. This is detailed in the following table:

Table(1) :Sample distribution by gender and educational level

Sample	M	%	F	%	T
First year	37	69.81	16	30.19	53
Sd year	19	40.4	28	59.68	47
Total	56	56	44	44	100

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The table shows that the distribution of males is higher than that of females, estimated at 56% and 44% respectively, and that the percentage of first-year students is higher than that of second-year students, estimated at 53% and 47% respectively

- Research Tools in the Main Study: We used the School Bullying Scale to collect data in our study, which we will explain below:

*School Bullying Scale Description: To identify the level of school bullying, we relied on the School Bullying Scale by Al-Subhiyeen and Al-Qudah(2013), which consists of 45 items distributed across five dimensions: verbal bullying, social bullying, physical bullying, sexual bullying, and property bullying. The School Bullying Scale consists of (45) statements and has five alternatives, with scores ranging from (45-225) points. The questionnaire response is divided into five-point Likert scale (always, often, sometimes, rarely, never).

***Validity** and Reliability (Psychometric Properties) of the School Bullying Scale: Initial verification of reliability and validity results for this scale was conducted, yielding the following results:

- Reliability: Internal Consistency (Cronbach's Alpha): The reliability of this scale was calculated using the internal consistency method with Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which is based on estimating the average variance between items for each dimension individually and for the scale as a whole, as shown in the following table:

Tables(2):chool bullying scale reliability via Cronbach's alpha

Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Number of items
social bullying	0.86	14
verbal bullying	0.86	10

sexual bullying	0.88	6
physical bullying	0.83	9
bullying property	0.84	6
bullying overall	0.96	45

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Based on the table above and considering the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for the dimensions, which ranged from (0.80) for the sexual bullying dimension to (0.92) for the physical bullying dimension (the highest value), while it reached (0.94) for the overall scale, it can be concluded that this scale possesses high reliability.

-Validity: Internal Consistency Method: The validity of this scale was calculated by estimating the correlations between the score of each dimension and the total score of the scale as a whole, as follows:

Table(3):Correlation Matrix of school bullying Scale Dimensions with Its total score

Dimensions	The scale overall	correlation
social bullying	0.94	
verbal bullying	0.93	
sexual bullying	0.63	sig
physical bullying	0.92	0.01
bullying property	0.84	

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From the table above, and considering the Pearson correlation coefficient values, we observe that they were all statistically significant at the significance level of ($\alpha=0.01$).

The Pearson correlation coefficient was estimated between the total score for the social bullying dimension, which was the highest score (0.94), and the sexual bullying dimension, which was the lowest value (0.63). Generally, it can be said that this scale is valid because all its dimensions are consistent with each other and with the scale as a whole.

- Statistical Methods Used in the Main Study:

To analyse the field study results, the following statistical methods were employed:

- Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure scale reliability.
- The One-Sample T-Test and The Independent Sample Test was used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences.
- Friedmans test for ranking the dimensions of school bullying.
- Pearson correlation coefficient for internal consistency.

3- Results and Discussion

- **Presentation and Discussion of First Hypothesis Results:**

The first hypothesis of this study stated that: "The level of school bullying is average among students."

To verify this hypothesis, a statistical significance test (T-test) was used for a single sample to determine the level of school bullying among students. Three levels were defined for the school bullying scale, based on the scores obtained by the sample members: low (45-105), moderate (105-165), and high (165-225). After statistical processing, the result shown in the following table was obtained:

Table(4) :the level of school bullying among students

N	μ	X	SD	Df	T	A
100	135	141.54	40.33	99	35	0.01

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From table (4), we observe that the mean score of the study sample on the overall scale, which reached (141.540), is higher than the theoretical mean of 135. Furthermore, the mean falls within the middle range (105-165). Therefore, the level of bullying among students in schools is moderate. This is confirmed by the t-value of (35.099), which is positive and statistically significant at the alpha level (0.01). This indicates that the differences favor the students' mean score. Consequently, this result supports the study's hypothesis that "the level of bullying among students in schools is moderate." The degree of certainty for this result is 99%, with a margin of error of 1%.

The results of the first hypothesis agreed with the findings of the study (Amitouche, 2021) on the level of bullying among middle school students in the Tizi Ouzou province, which concluded that the level of school bullying among students was moderate, with the overall rate of bullying in the study sample reaching 33.06%. These results also agreed with the findings of the Al-Qahtani study in 2007, which concluded that the prevalence of school bullying was moderate among students (Ben Zine & Amira, 2022, p. 965). However, the results of the first hypothesis did not agree with the findings of the study (Abeeb & Lachouche, 2023, p. 119) on the level of school bullying among middle school students in Algiers schools, which concluded that the level of school bullying among middle school students was low. The results of this hypothesis also differed from those of the 2022 study by Ben Zine and Amira, which aimed to identify the relationship between family climate and school bullying among middle school students. Their study concluded that the level of school bullying was high (Ben Zine & Amira, 2022, p. 953).

The researcher believes that these results can be explained by referring to the psychological and social factors contributing to bullying behavior. In the same vein, social learning theory indicates that bullying is learned. Individuals practice it because they have learned such behavior from their surrounding environment through observation and imitation of specific aggressive and domineering models, whether from the family, school, or peer group.

- Presentation and Discussion of second Hypothesis Results:

The second hypothesis of this study stated that: “There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the dimensions of bullying (social, verbal, physical, sexual, and property bullying).” To verify this hypothesis, Friedman’s ordinal coefficient was used to rank the dimensions of school bullying measured by the scale. The results are shown in the following table:

Table(5) :Friedman’s test ranking of school bullying dimensions

Dimensions	MR	Khi-deux	Df	A
Verbal bullying	3.87			
Physicalbullying	3.62			
Social bullying	2.34	792 .62	4	0.01
Sexual bullying	2.07			
Bullyingproperty	1.00			

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From table (5), and according to the average ranks generated by the Friedman rank correlation coefficient for the dimensions of the (School Bullying) scale, verbal bullying ranked first with an average rank of 3.87, physical bullying ranked second with an average rank of 3.62, social bullying ranked third with an average rank of 2.34, sexual bullying ranked fourth with an average rank of 2.07, and property bullying ranked fifth with an average rank of 1.00. Based on the chi-square value of 792.61, which is statistically significant at the $\alpha=0.01$ level. This finding indicates the presence of statistically significant differences among the ranking of school bullying dimensions. This leads us to conclude that this result supports the initial study hypothesis, which states that “there is a difference in the ranking of school bullying dimensions among students.” This difference favors verbal bullying. The confidence level for this result is 99%, with a margin of error of 1%.

The results of this hypothesis were consistent with the results of the study by (Chetibi and Boutaf, 2014) on the reality of school bullying in middle school education in Algeria, which showed that bullying behaviors spread in different forms in this phase, but the most acknowledged in the research sample was verbal bullying, with a percentage ranging from (75-83.3%), followed by physical bullying, with a percentage ranging from (58.3-75%). In the same vein, the results of a study by Kilpatrick and Kerres (2003) on the perceptions of children categorized as bullies or victims of bullying among sixth and eighth-grade students at a middle school in rural Spain revealed that direct and indirect verbal bullying was the most common, including insults, mockery, profanity, and gossip. (Al-Subhein and Al-Qudah, 2013, p. 62).

While the results of this hypothesis did not align with those of the study by Amitouche (2021), which resulted that physical bullying ranked first, followed by verbal bullying, then social bullying, then property bullying, and finally sexual bullying.

It is observed through the results of the hypothesis and previous studies that the arrangement of the dimensions of bullying differs from one sample to another, from one school environment to another, which allows us to confirm the effect of

the adolescent bully's social background on his behavior. Particularly negative peer groups within the school environment, which play a significant role in the development of bullying behavior and different forms. In this context, the results of a study by Chetibi and Boutaf (2014) indicated that bullying behaviors are perpetrated by a group of students (males, females, or both genders) and are rarely committed by a single individual.

- Presentation and Discussion of third Hypothesis Results: The third hypothesis of this study stated that: "There are statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying attributable to the gender variable. "

To verify this hypothesis, a statistical significance test (T-test) was used for two samples. After statistical processing, the result shown in the following table was obtained:

Table(6) :Gender Differences in the level of school bullying

Gender	N	X	SD	Df	T	A
Males	56	145	40.1	98	0.5	N . Sig
Females	44	137	40.6			

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From table (6) The t-test value was 0.553 which is not statistically significant, indicating that there are no differences in the level of schools bullying attributable to the gender variable.

The results of the hypothesis are consistent with the findings of the study by (Maryam and Amira, 2018), which aimed to examine the family climate and its relationship to school bullying among a sample of middle school students in the state of Touggourt. The results of that study showed no statistically significant differences attributable to the gender variable. These results also align with those of the study by (Amitouche, 2021), which also found no statistically significant differences in school bullying attributable to the gender variable. The results of this hypothesis also differed from the findings of several studies, such as Qatami and Al-Sarairah (2009), which concluded that bullying is prevalent among both males and females, but more so among males (Qatami & Al-Sarairah, 2009, p. 16). Similarly, Shiraz's 2002 study found that males are four to five times more likely to bully females (Al-Subhein & Al-Qudah, 2013, p. 60).

The researcher believes these results stem from the fact that both genders (male and female) are in the same developmental stage, namely adolescence. During this stage, adolescents experience numerous changes, particularly emotional ones, along with the emergence of psychological and social needs that require fulfillment, such as the desire for adventure and self-affirmation, which can manifest in various ways, including bullying behavior. This result can also be explained by a set of changes occurring in socialization, such as the family's exposure to Western lifestyles through media and the failure to utilize its content positively. Furthermore, the policies of globalization, which developing countries have imitated and followed, have altered the status of women, their behavior, and their social roles, leading to the adoption of masculine behaviors such as bullying.

Similarly, the results of the study by (Chetibi and Boutaf, 2014) showed that bullying behavior originated from male and mixed groups at a rate of 33.3%.

-Presentation and Discussion of fourth Hypothesis Results:

The hypothesis of this study stated that: “There are statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying attributable to the grade level variable.” To verify this hypothesis, a statistical significance test (T-test) was used for two simples. After statistical processing, the result shown in the following table was obtained:

Table(7) :The grade level variable differences in the level of bullying in the school environment

Gender	N	X	SD	D f	T	α
2 nd	5	142	35.		0.0	.
year	3	.7	49	9	63	Si
3 rd year	4	140	45.	8		g
	7	.23	59			

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Table (7) shows that the mean score for the first grade was 142.698, compared to the mean score for the second grade, which was 140.234 and the t-test value was 0.063 which is statistically significant,

Therefore, it can be concluded that the differences between the second and third years of middle school in terms of bullying levels are significant, indicating that there are differences in bullying levels within the school environment attributable to the grade level variable, favoring the second year of middle school.

The results of the fourth hypothesis differ from the findings of the 2018 study by Ben Zine and Amira. Their study concluded that there were no statistically significant differences in bullying among the study sample attributable to the grade level variable (Ben Zine & Amira, 2022, p. 953). This also differs from the results of the study by Abib and Lallouche (2023) which concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between the average scores of middle school students on the school bullying scale attributable to the grade level variable (Abib & Lallouche, 2023, p. 119). However, the results of hypothesis four agree with the findings of the study by Sells and Young (2022), which revealed differences in the level of school bullying between the seventh and eighth grades, favoring the seventh grade (Hayawi & Ben Salem, 2022, p. 710). In the same vein, Dickerson (2005) indicates that, according to some researchers, bullying behavior begins in early childhood. It peaks in middle school (grades 4, 5, and 6), continues through upper elementary school, and then begins to decline in high school, and in university. There for, bulling behavior appears to be higher among younger students.

According to the researcher, these differences in the level of bullying, attributed to the grade level variable, stem from multiple factors and causes, both individual and social. These can be explained by considering adolescence and its associated behavioral disturbances and reactions that vary from one age to another. They can

also be attributed to the family environment in which the student lives, especially since both first and second-year middle school students study in the same school environment.

4- Conclusion

The topic of school bullying is one of the most important issues that has garnered the attention of researchers due to its prevalence. It is considered a serious educational and social problem, an aggressive behavior aimed at harming others, and a form of aggression perpetrated by a specific group of students against a weaker group, which makes them feel powerful. This often occurs in educational institutions. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of the student and try to understand them and their negative behaviors in order to address them, whether by the family or the educational institution by drawing on the findings of previous studies, especially our study, which revealed that the level of bullying among students in schools is moderate. Furthermore, there are statistically significant differences in the ranking of the dimensions of school bullying from the students' perspective. We observed that verbal bullying ranked first, followed by physical bullying in second place, and social bullying in third. Sexual bullying ranked fourth, while bullying of property ranked last. The study also revealed the absence of Differences in the level of bullying in schools were attributed to the gender variable. However, differences in the level of bullying in schools were also attributed to the grade level variable, favoring second-year middle school students.

To prevent the spread of this behavior, we propose a set of recommendations:

- Strengthening family counseling to create a healthy family environment that helps children develop a well-adjusted personality.

- Early detection of bullies and their victims to address behavioral problems in both groups.

- Activating cooperation between families and school psychologists to address bullying behavior among students.

- The need to develop guidance and treatment programs and conduct studies with an integrated perspective to reduce the phenomenon of bullying in all its forms and for all its victim

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