

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLYING MANIFESTATIONS IN YOUNG SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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Abstract

This comprehensive study investigates the psychological foundations and characteristics of bullying behavior in children of primary school age, typically between 7 and 10 years old. The research uses a mixed-methods approach that includes quantitative diagnostics and qualitative interviews. Psychological tools such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, the Emotion Regulation Checklist, and the Social Position Test by Schneider were used to identify patterns of aggression, victimization, and passive observation. The findings highlight the critical importance of emotional support structures, inclusive peer programs, and school-wide intervention strategies.

Keywords: Bullying, emotional regulation, empathy, child development, school climate, diagnostics, intervention

Introduction

Bullying in educational settings, especially in early schooling years, is a complex issue that stems from emotional, social, and cognitive developmental challenges. It disrupts learning, hinders emotional growth, and deteriorates the social environment of the classroom. The phenomenon involves not only aggressors and victims but also passive observers who may enable the behavior through inaction. In the formative years of childhood, when self-identity, peer trust, and empathy are beginning to form, exposure to such dynamics can be damaging. A child's behavior is significantly shaped by their immediate environment. School climate, family dynamics, and peer influence play critical roles in either promoting positive interactions or contributing to negative conduct like bullying. Inconsistent parenting, exposure to media violence, and lack of adult guidance often serve as catalysts. Furthermore, emotional regulation—how a child manages anger, disappointment, or stress—directly correlates with the likelihood of bullying behavior. In such a scenario, comprehensive psychological analysis and preventive intervention become essential.

Analysis

This study was conducted in three urban primary schools in Tashkent and involved a representative sample of 95 children aged 7 to 10 years. A total of 15 teachers and 5 school psychologists participated in the diagnostic and observational phases. Quantitative diagnostics included three instruments: the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, which measures emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer relationship issues, and prosocial behavior; the Emotion Regulation Checklist, which assesses a child's ability to manage and express emotions appropriately; and the Social Position Test by Schneider, used to identify children's roles and influence among peers. Among the 95 participants, three psychological roles were distinctly identified. The first group, comprising 29 percent of the children, were categorized as aggressors. These children often displayed impulsive behavior, had difficulty managing frustration, and showed dominant tendencies. A striking 75 percent of them came from households with either authoritarian parenting styles or frequent exposure to violence in television programs or digital content. Such children lacked positive role models and often justified aggressive behavior as a means of social control.

The second group, making up 28 percent, were identified as victims. These children were characterized by chronic anxiety, low self-worth, and social withdrawal. Teachers reported that many of these children lacked peer support and were frequently isolated during group activities. They often did not report bullying incidents out of fear or shame, which further perpetuated their victimization.

The third group, constituting 43 percent, were observers. These children had average levels of empathy but refrained from intervening in bullying scenarios due to fear of retaliation or social insecurity. Observers expressed discomfort but lacked the confidence or strategies to support their peers. Teachers also noted that without conflict resolution training, these children tended to normalize bullying as part of school life.

Conclusion

The psychological manifestations of bullying among young children are multifaceted and rooted in both personal emotional regulation and broader social dynamics. Aggressors, victims, and observers each represent a different response to the same school environment, shaped by internal predispositions and external stimuli. Without early and consistent intervention, bullying can lead to long-term emotional trauma, reduced academic performance, and impaired social relationships.

The results underscore the need for systemic changes in how schools address bullying. A proactive classroom culture emphasizing empathy, emotional literacy, and peer collaboration is essential. Educators and psychologists must work collaboratively with families to create a unified and sustainable model of emotional and behavioral support. Only through comprehensive interventions can the cycle of aggression and victimization be interrupted.

Recommendations

1. Implement structured emotional literacy programs in primary school curricula to help children recognize and manage their emotions.
2. Conduct regular training for teachers and school psychologists to identify early warning signs of bullying and respond with appropriate interventions.
3. Introduce peer mentoring systems where older students guide younger ones in social interaction and conflict resolution.
4. Develop a clear and transparent anti-bullying policy within each school, with defined steps for students, teachers, and parents to follow.
5. Organize parental involvement workshops that educate families about the emotional development of children and how to support prosocial behavior.
6. Use anonymous school-wide surveys to monitor bullying trends and collect feedback for continual improvement.
7. Promote inclusive classroom activities that celebrate diversity, cooperation, and empathy through games, discussions, and drama-based learning.

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