

Prevalence of Direct Peer Bullying among Primary Schools' Children in Holly Karbala Center

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Abstract

Background: Bullying among schoolchildren is certainly a very old phenomenon. The fact that some children are frequently and systematically harassed and attacked by other children has been described in literary works, and many adults have personal experience of it from their own school days.

Subjects and Method: This cross-sectional study carried out on randomly selected 450 elementary schools' students in 5th and 6th classes 222 males, 228 females in holly Karbala city, province in academic year 2015 - 2016. Data were collected by using a standardized questionnaire.

Result: Overall prevalence rate of peer bullying was 33.8% and the prevalence of victims was 25.3%. Results of current study show that there is statistical significant association between bullying and gender, the bullying is more common in males students 38.7% than female 28.89%, while 19.8 % males, 30.7% females were victims of this behavior, this difference is statically significant also the study revealed that bullying was prevalent in poor families.

Conclusion: Peerbullying is highly prevalent in primary schools in holly Karbala city, Iraq, compared to many countries, there were positive association between bullying and male students,poverty, low school achievement.

Keywords: *Peer bullying; old phenomenon; primary schools' children; Karbala center.*

Introduction

Bullying among schoolchildren is certainly a very old phenomenon. The fact that some children are frequently and systematically harassed and attacked by other children has been described in literary works, and many adults have personal experience of it from their own school days⁽¹⁾.

Evidence suggests that bullying has acute consequences that range from suicide, murder and absenteeism at school to medical conditions such as fits, faints, vomiting, headaches and long-term psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, loneliness and hysteria⁽²⁾.

Given that bullying in schools is a prevalent and concerning issue, there has been an apparent increase in bullying studies at the national and international levels⁽³⁾.

The accurate assessment of bullying provides an opportunity to examine the dimensions of the construct, seriousness of the bullying in schools, and utilization of precise intervention strategies based on that information⁽⁴⁾.

Bullying is one type of violence that threatens a youth's well-being in schools and neighborhoods⁽⁵⁾. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth (including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm⁽⁶⁾). A young person can be a perpetrator, a victim, or both (also known as "bully/victim")⁽⁷⁾.

Youth who bully others are at increased risk for substance use, academic problems, and violence later in adolescence and adulthood⁽⁸⁾.

Compared to youth who only bully, or who are only victims, bully-victims suffer the most serious

consequences and are at greater risk for both mental health and behavior problems⁽⁹⁾.

Objectives: To measure prevalence of bullying among samples of students in primary schools in fifth and sixth class levels and to evaluate the relationship between direct bullying and different variables (gender, grade level, socioeconomic status, parental status,)

Research on bullying was began in Europe in 1970 lead by Dan Olweus, Norwegian researcher began to study this matter⁽¹⁰⁾.

Meaning there is imbalance of power between perpetrators (bullies) and victims.

(\$ subjects and merods)^(12 & 13).

Subjects and Method

This study was carried out in the Holly Karbala city Centre, in which there are 177 elementary schools this is school - based cross - sectional study. duration continued from mid of January 2016 to the end of July 2016, the work of data collection took 4 days during the week. Out of (177)primary school in Karbala city, 16 primery school have been selected by simple random sampling method using computer available in planning department in Karbala Director of Education From these 16 primary schools, the students of the 5th and 6th classes have been selected . Out of these classes study sample have been selected by using systemic sampling method student. The total number in 5th and 6th classes in these schools which is C 2162), the sample size is 450.

Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire was prepared by researcher that was adopted from a questionnaire of Dan - Olweus standardized questionnaire

developed as a part of bullying survey for students in 2006⁽¹⁴⁾. zce’s go (Cronbach alpha interior consistency of bully scale 0.88 and for victimization scale 0.87 for this questionnaire).

The questionnaire translated to Arabic by an expert with minor modification . the questionnaire was designed to measure several aspects of bullying behavior in last 2 months .

Several sub scales were used in the questionnaire: 1. It contain 27 items about direct bullying (physical, verbal), victims. 2. Questions about gender, class level, order of birth. 3. Questions about academic level (average, below average, good) using grade point average as indicator of academic achievement. Most of primary, middle, high school in Iraq grade out of 100 percent with a passing 50 percent so the grade point average is out of 100 as described below⁽¹⁵⁾.

Grade percentage: excellent 90 –100;very good 80 –89;good 70 – 79;acceptable 50 – 59;weak 0 – 40

Score Instruction: Never occur = 0;Once or twice = 1;Two or three times in a month = 2;One time in a week = 4;Six items about victimization from 12 – 17;Three items for physical victimization 19, 21, 22;Two items for verbal victimization 20,23;Statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS version 22.

Results

A total of 450 primary school students were enrolled in this study, of them 230 (51.1%) of 5th class and the remaining 220 (48.9%) of the 6th class moreover, males were 222 (49.3%) while females were 228 (50.7%). Other characteristics of the studied group are shown in (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency distribution of students according to socio-demographic characteristics (N = 450)

Variable		Frequency	%
Class level	5th	230	51.1%
	6th	220	48.90%
Gender	Male	222	49.30%
	Female	228	50.70%
Order of birth	First	109	24.20%
	Second	122	27.1%
	Third or more	219	48.7%

Variable		Frequency	%
Student's father status	Alive	422	93.80%
	Dead	28	6.20%
Student's parents live together	Yes	395	87.8%
	No	55	12.20%
Family income	Not enough	292	64.90%
	Enough	158	35.1%
Student's school performance	Good	152	33.8%
	Acceptable	224	49.8%
	Weak	74	16.4%
Father encourage this behavior	Yes	206	45.8%
	No	244	54.2%
Mother encourage this behavior	Yes	195	43.3%
	No	255	56.7%

Table 2. Frequency distribution of the types of bullying

Bullying type	Frequency	%
Verbal Bullying only	69	45.4
Physical Bullying only	45	29.6
Both types	38	25.0
Total	152	100.0

Table 3. Frequency distribution of the types of victim

Victim type	Frequency	%
Verbal	56	49.1
Physical	35	30.7
Both types	23	20.2
Total	114	100.0

Table 4: Results of the Binomial logistic regression analysis for significantly associated variables with bullying

	B	S.E	P.value	Odds ratio (OR)	95% C.I. for OR	
					Lower	Upper
Gender	0.398	0.24	0.03	1.48	1.12	2.36
Orders	0.26	0.27	0.34	1.30	0.76	2.23
Student's parents live together	-2.72	0.50	0.00	0.07	0.02	0.17
Family income not enough	0.52	0.24	0.002	1.68	1.05	2.68
Student's school performance good	-1.17	0.19	0.00	0.31	0.21	0.46
Constant	5.444	0.946	0.00	231.403		

Note: Variable(s) entered on step 1: Gender, Child order,, Student's parents live together, Family income, Student's school performance

Table 5: Results of the Binomial logistic regression analysis for significantly associated variables with victimizations

Variable	B	S.E	P.value	Odds ratio (OR)	95% C.I. for OR	
					Lower	Upper
Gender	0.55	0.28	0.047	1.73	1.01	2.98
Student's Father status (alive)	-2.36	0.53	< 0.001	0.09	0.03	0.27
Student's parents live together (yes)	-3.41	0.48	< 0.001	0.03	0.01	0.09
Student's school performance	-2.31	0.27	< 0.001	0.10	0.06	0.17
Constant	12.87	1.34	0			

Discussion

In this analysis of 450 elementary school students the results of study demonstrated that 33.8% of elementary level students reported that they were bullied another students and 25.3% of students were victims during the last two months . It is lower than the study in north Africa countries in 2008 found that 60 % of students in Egypt and one third of students in Libya, morocco, and Tunisia reported having been bullied(11) . This rate is considerably higher when compare to other studies in other contraries, for instance in Canada in 2010 an average of 26000 were surveyed the percentage was 12 % of students reported being bullies once or times in last two months and percentage of victims was 22 %⁽¹⁶⁾.

In another study in Turkey in 2009 the ratio estimated of victimization was 15 - 20 % and percentage of bullies was 22%⁽¹⁷⁾. In this study according to the comparisons made between gender variables, it was understood that the male students bullying behaviour“ bullies” were higher than in the female students . Females were found to be exposed to be victims more than males . This finding is consistence with other studies carried out in different countries^(18 & 19).

Even in some culture environments, male students' aggressive behaviour are appreciated by society and this finding agree with other study. This variable was significantly associated with being a victim status; was being a female students.[20]

In current study, there were insignificantly associated with bullying, may be the students were nearly had the same age . so, there was no relationship between bullying and order of birth . While in some studies the order of birth play role in developing bullies children ⁽²¹⁾.

Students who saw themselves as members of low

socioeconomic families tended to exhibit more bullying behavior than those with high socioeconomic class families . Bullying was significantly associated with not enough family income. This finding is similar to the finding of other studies .based up on various research findings, the present study claimed that, if their needs for love, care, respect and social interaction are not met, students from low socioeconomic class families tend to develop more bullying attitudes in order to attract attention and to prove their identity⁽²²⁾.

The other significant factor associated with bullying was student's school performance, where it had been significantly found that bullying was inversely associated with the student performance, the lower proportion of bullying was reported among the students with good school performance, (19.1%), followed by those with acceptable level, (32.1%) while the higher proportion was reported among those with weak performance, (P< 0.001). The students with weak school performance were more likely to be victims than other students.

This assesses the educational harm experienced as a result of being bullied during a specified time period. Educational harm is defined as decreases in academic performance (e.g., lower grades), diminished school engagement (e.g., poor attendance or dropping out of school), missed educational opportunities (e.g., the youth is scared to go to tutoring program or class), negative perceptions of school or other educational activities (e.g., the youth is afraid to go to school, hates school, or does not trust adults in the school), or decreased participation in school-sponsored extracurricular activities such as band, team sports, theatre, and school clubs.

The school yard was the most frequent site for bullying to occur, followed by class room, this result is like other study⁽¹⁵⁾.

This could be explained that the bullies can do their aggressive behavior freely, where there is no teachers or other adults that may stop them. Father encourage this behavior and mother encourage this behavior were insignificantly associated with bullying, these variables, ($P>0.05$), Students of parents who live together were less likely to be bullies compared to those of separated parents, 29.6% vs. 63.6%, respectively, ($P< 0.001$). student whose father was dead, student whose father not live together, are likely to be victims.

Conclusions

1. Peer bullying is highly prevalent in primary schools in Holly Karbala city/Iraq compared to other countries and it lower than north Africa countries.
2. Peer bullying was higher in males than females' students and Peer victimization was higher in females' students than males' students. So, Peer bullying and victimization were significantly high among students from families with low socioeconomic class and separated parents and student whose father was dead, student whose parents not live together, exhibition to be victims. And not enough family income was the more predictor factor for bullying.

Conflict of Interest: None

Source of Findings: Self-findings.

Ethical Clearance: None

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