

The Role of School Administration in Eliminating Bullying Phenomenon in Schools, Case of Jordanian Schools

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Abstract

The phenomenon of bullying in schools in Jordan is getting importance because number of incidents of bullying is increasing in the country. There are a number of studies on school bullying in western world but there is scarcity of such studies in the context of Arab world and Jordanian context. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to explain the phenomenon of bullying in Jordanian schools. However, there are a number of factors which affect the bullying phenomenon and schools administration has been taken as its role in this phenomenon. Correlation and regression have been used to calculate the relationship between the variables chosen for this study i.e. the role of school administration and eliminating bullying phenomenon in schools of Jordan and parents have been taken as the respondents. It has found that there is positive and strong relationship between the variables as more role of schools administration leads to higher rate of elimination of bullying phenomenon of school bullying in Jordan. Practical implications of this research are important to note that it would help to increase the satisfaction level of parents as they have been taken as the respondents for this study. Moreover, this paper helps to understand bullying phenomenon in the Jordanian context.

Key Words: School Bullying Phenomenon, School Administration, Jordan, Parents, Arab World.

Introduction

Bullying phenomenon in schools or schooling bullying is the subject which is increasing with time because of the increase in the number of cases in the Arab world. It is already accepted and acknowledged the subject of research and practices in European and the United States' schools that children in the schools are victimized by their peers. However, it is yet to be acknowledged too, that extent in the Arab world where some research studies and concerns of parents are indicating that this is a growing phenomenon, and it needs to be addressed. To be specific, this study has been conducted in Jordan which is one of the important countries in the Arab world, and its education system is one of the most effective systems in the region (Al-Bitar, Al-Omari, Sonbol, Al-Ahmad, and Cunningham, 2013). However, the bullying phenomenon is not the phenomenon which is concerned with one country only, but it is associated with the international case. Moreover, the case of bullying in schools should be viewed concerning the region where it should be considered

whether the whole region of the Arab world is under the effects of this phenomenon. To eliminate the menace of schools bullying phenomenon in Jordanian schools specifically, the role of school administration is very vital to highlight because they are immediate guardians to play their role.

The paper would review the literature on the bullying phenomenon from the perspective of the Arab world because studies conducted on the subject in connection with the bullying phenomenon are very important in the whole Arab world context. However, in the methodology section, the study population has been identified to be taken from Jordan. The results of correlation and regression have been collected for Jordan, and the discussion of the results and findings are related to Jordan only. In the end, conclusions and recommendations have been drawn so that future research can be conducted on the topic. Bullying phenomenon is observed to be rising in the Arab world, and there is enough evidence through research studies that school bullying is increasing.

Furthermore, to stop and eliminate this menace of school bullying, school administration comes at first because they are immediate guardians of children in schools. Therefore, their role has been stressed in this research paper. Moreover, the respondents chosen for this study are parents because they can better tell about the role of school administration in the phenomenon of school bullying in Jordan.

Objectives of the Study

- To find the role of the school administration to eliminate the bullying phenomenon in Jordanian schools
- To explain the phenomenon of bullying by school students in Jordanian schools
- To have the opinion of parents of students regarding the role of school administration

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the role of the school administration to eliminate the bullying phenomenon in the Jordanian Schools?

Research Question 2: What do parents think regarding the responsibility of bullying in schools of Jordan?

The significance of the Study

The study is significant in terms of its results because the trend of bullying in schools in Jordan has been increasing which is already more than average in the region. There is awareness of school bullying in western countries where a large number of studies have been done in this field. However, research is scarce in this field concerning the Arab world generally and concerning Jordan specifically. This study is significant in this sense that it fulfills the gap of research in the literature of school bullying in the Jordanian context. Moreover, it takes the perspective of parents as the study population consists of parents of schools students of Jordan. Thus, the study would help schools as it provides how parents are satisfied regarding this emerging phenomenon of school bullying in Jordan.

Literature Review

Bullying in schools has got a specific definition as it is considered a specific form of abuse and aggressive behavior. The bullying behavior is aggressive in which harm is caused in a repeated and intentional way. Certainly, in the case of the school setting, powerful and less powerful individuals are students. School bullying is different from school violence as it happens between students of comparable age (Aalsma and Brown, 2008). Under the schools bullying, the bully intends to cause harm to the bullied student, the cause of harm to the bullied by the bully is repetitive and consistent, and the bully and the bullied are not equal in terms of power (Craig, and Pepler, 2007). Although, both might be of the same age group, they are not equal in terms of power. Bully is more powerful than bullied. The cultural aspect might play in the context of school bullying because, in the European context, schools bullying is the phenomenon which occurs between older student and the weaker student. On the other hand, in Japan, bullying in schools is considered to be among the students of comparable age (Graham, 2012).

The prevalence of bullying phenomenon in schools has been studied by different research scholar those have indicated that the trend of bullying in schools is increasing. Peer victimization rate is considered as the scale through which the prevalence of bullying can be measured. It is found that peer victimization rate is not same for all countries, but it differs and this rate has been calculated for students between the ages of 11 to 15 (Roberts, Morgan, Smith, Settertobulte, Samdal, and Rasmussen, 2004). The peer victimization rate and bullying rates range from 8.6 percent to 45.2 percent. This wide difference in these rates is because of the difference in cultures and countries. It is found that the rate of victimization is higher for girls than boys while the rate of bullying among boys if the number is compared with girls. These rates decrease with age. There is also a cultural aspect of the prevalence of bullying and victimization as rates are lower in North European countries as compared to Baltic countries (Craig et al., 2009).

In contrast to western countries, there is little research in the Arab world for the phenomenon of bullying in schools is very rare. In one of such studies on the subject of (Fleming and Jacobsen, 2009) where low and medium income countries have been made part of the study in which the peer victimization has been studied in 19 countries. The average of victimization rate in these 19 countries has been 34.2 percent, but in Jordan, the rate is higher than average at 44.2 percent. The variance in schools bullying in the Arab world is similar when these rates have been compared with countries in Europe. However, scarcity of schools bullying studies in the context of the Arab world makes it difficult to have accurate and useful data regarding the topic.

There are different forms of bullying, and broadly, these forms can be direct or indirect bullying. Among the direct forms of bullying, physical, verbal, and cyber bullying are included. There is another form of bullying which is relational bullying, and it is an indirect form of bullying. Physical bullying is linked to the harmful and teasing acts to the body of a person; verbal bullying is done using the language offensive to another, and cyber bullying occurs through means of the internet (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, and Tippett, 2008).

The role of school administration in eliminating the bullying phenomenon in schools is very important, and there is a school perspective of a theoretical framework which focuses on the school's environment and school management as the most important in any action portrayed by students. The school perspective of bullying holds it responsible that school climate is the main

culprit of school bullying in which the social and physical climate of the school is equally responsible. This perspective stresses the role of the school environment and the management as well as administration of becoming a place which is not suitable for bullying and victimization (Elsaesser, Gorman-Smith, and Henry, 2013). If there is good maintenance of grounds in schools, there are student friendly rules in schools, the support for students is exemplary by schools, and there are positive relationships between student and teacher then such climate is not suitable for bullying. In such a situation, the school would not be able to lead to the bullying phenomenon (Johnson, 2009). Certainly, to ensure this climate in the schools, the administration plays a very important role.

There are other theories of bullying as well, which should be considered while studying the phenomenon of bullying in the school. For example, there is a personality perspective of bullying in which parenting style and parents are held responsible for shaping the personality of the student. Although, this aspect of bullying is not part of the paper topic, it should be included in the review of the literature. Under this perspective, the home environment shapes the minds of students. If a child does not get love from home, then he might develop bullying behavior.

Furthermore, there is a socio-cultural perspective which is related to the social and cultural aspect of bullying.

In contrast to the personality perspective which associates bullying behavior with family, this perspective associates bullying behavior with society and culture. Another perspective of bullying behavior is a group and peer pressure perspective in which a member of the groups bullies in the result of the dynamic of the group. It is the result of peer victimization. The formation of groups starts in secondary school and at this level; students realize their different individual needs and preferences. In the result, they exhibit different attitudes and behaviors, and they have to practice these attitudes and behaviors being a member of the group (Salmivalli, 2010).

The above literature review makes it clear that there is an increasing trend of bullying phenomenon in the schools of the Arab world and there is a higher rate than average for the bullying in Jordan which is 44 percent. However, there is a lack of academic attention on the phenomenon of bullying in the context of Jordan; therefore, there is a research gap regarding this topic. Among different theoretical perspectives, the school perspective of school bullying is very important where schools dynamics and environment are responsible for shaping the attitudes and behaviors of students. From this role of school, the importance of school administration can also be highlighted.

At the end of this literature review, the following hypotheses have been developed.

H1: School administration can eliminate the bullying phenomenon in schools in Jordan.

H0: School administration cannot eliminate the bullying phenomenon in schools in Jordan.

H2: Schools administration is solely responsible for eliminating the bullying phenomenon in schools in Jordan.

H0: Schools administration is not solely responsible for eliminating the bullying phenomenon in schools in Jordan.

Methodology

The phenomenon of bullying is going to be studied in this paper in Jordanian schools, and the role of school administration is being studied to study this phenomenon. There might be four main participants of the study to research this topic, i.e. students, teachers, school administration, and parents. However, the study participants in this paper are the only parents who have responded to the questions in the questionnaire, and they have given their perspective regarding the role of school administration in eliminating the bullying phenomenon in schools. There are 100 participants in this study, and all of them are parents. The study sample has been collected from the parents of school children in Jordan. Certainly, large cities of the country have been chosen for taking the respondents and their responses. The aim of the data collection method has been to get responses on the topic and then applying statistical tests of the obtained data. Convenience random sampling method has been adopted for data collection from respondents and correlation, and regression analyses have been applied to the obtained and collected data from respondents.

Parents have been communicated about the purposes and effectiveness of the research, and they have been communicated that it would help to make the school environment peaceful and pleasant for their children. It has been communicated to them that their responses would be kept confidential and the collected data has been committed that it would not be used other than the stated purposes of research. Their privacy would be honored. Moreover, schools have also been communicated that to let them know that parents of their school's students have been taking part in this study. These ethical considerations have been ensured so that there is no doubt in terms of ethical grounds. On the other hand, tests applied to the data are correlation and regression. Their reliability and validity have been tested, and they come up with the requirements of validity and reliability.

Results and Discussion

Results

The following results have been obtained from the collected data of parents of students of different schools in Jordan to know the role of school administration in eliminating the bullying phenomenon in schools of Jordan.

Correlation

Table 1

Summary of Inter correlation, Mean and Standard Deviation for Scores on the role of school administration and bullying in school students

| Variable | SA | B |
|-----------|-------|--------|
| SA | ---- | .40*** |
| B | | --- |
| <i>M</i> | 38.81 | 50.85 |
| <i>SD</i> | 6.14 | 6.16 |

Note., SA= school administration, B= bullying, M= mean, SD= standard deviation

This table has the values of the variables under the correlation test which are the role of administration and bullying in school students. The result shows the significant positive relation.40, $p < .001^{***}$ between the role of school administration and bullying in students, which means that the role of school administration is important to eliminate the bullying phenomena in schools. Correlation table has the values of mean and standard deviation in which the mean of school administration 38.81 and SD is 6.14; bullying has mean 50.85 and SD 6.16.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Table 2

Linear Regression Analysis of predictors of bullying phenomena in schools (N=100)

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | <i>B</i> |
|--------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Extroversion | .09 | .07 | .08(ns) |
| Neuroticism | .28 | .08 | .24** |
| R^2 | | .06 | |
| <i>F</i> | | 6.34** | |
| ΔR^2 | | .05 | |

Note. ** $p < .01$.

The table showed a linear regression analysis of predictors of bullying in schools. The results showed that the positive role of school administration was a significant positive predictor to eliminating the bullying phenomena in schools' students. The.06 % variance explained by a model comprising of two factor's role of school administration and bullying ($R^2 = .06$). The overall model was significant $F(2, 197) = 6.34, p < .01^{**}$ and the role of school administration ($\beta = 2.4, t(3.47), p < .01$) was significant positive predictor of guilt.

Discussion and Findings

The results of the study have been provided above in which the role of school administration has been taken as the independent variable, and the bullying phenomenon has been taken as the dependent variable. To find the relationship between the two variables, the correlation has been computed. Moreover, regression analysis has also been computed for the given variables in the model for this research. Results show that there is a strong positive relationship between the independent variable of school administration and the dependent variable of elimination of bullying phenomenon in schools of Jordan. The dependent variable should include the word of elimination which means that if the role of school administration increases and it takes an active part in the obligation of the administration then there would be the elimination of bullying phenomenon in school children. The results are significant, and the model is also related to each other through the strong association between the variables. The role of school administration is very important, but this should be considered that the study sample consists of parents of school children. It means that

parents think that the school administration has a vital role in eliminating the bullying phenomenon among school children in Jordan.

Through results, it should be noted that school administration is different from teachers. Teachers are not part of the administration, although; they teach students and impart education. Thus, making it focused on school administration has made the research specific to one aspect of schools, and it has given the impression that the school administration has the full capacity and authority to make or break things. However, it can be said that only the school administration has been taken in the study of its role and other factors and players in the school system have been ignored. Moreover, only parents have been taken as the study population, while there might be other notable groups as well. But, it is justified to research as it has been done through the argument that this research paper has covered one aspect regarding the bullying phenomenon and one aspect has been studied to get findings from the research. However, through these results and discussion over them, the findings have been developed.

This research finds that there is a significantly positive relationship between the school administration role and the elimination of bullying phenomenon in schools. It is found that the school administration can eliminate the phenomenon of bullying if it firmly aims to get rid of this. These findings of the study are aligned with the school perspective of theory which has been mentioned in the review of the literature. The school perspective holds schools administration and management responsibility for eliminating the bullying phenomenon and the environment of schools is stressed to be made friendlier for students (Elsaesser, Gorman-Smith, and Henry, 2013). There are other theoretical perspectives as well, which have not been covered in this paper. Ignoring other theoretical perspectives of bullying phenomenon in schools is the limitation of the study as more factors can be included in future research. In light of the findings, the hypothesis has been accepted that the school administration has a vital role in eliminating the bullying phenomenon in the schools of Jordan.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concludes that Jordan has an increasing rate of bullying in its schools and important stakeholders within the school include teachers, school administration, students, and their parents. These stakeholders are directly related to the environment within the school and parents have been asked for their responses know the role of school administration for elimination of bullying phenomenon in schools. There are some theoretical perspectives which hold different factors responsible for the phenomenon of bullying in schools. The school perspective holds the school environment and management responsible for the bullying phenomenon in schools. The results of the study have shown it that the role of school administration is strongly and positively correlated with bullying phenomenon which is rising in Jordanian schools. Thus, it is found in this research that greater and more role of school administration leads to a greater level of elimination of bullying phenomenon in the students in schools.

The research recommends that the role of school administration should be active and more considerable in the elimination of bullying phenomenon among students in schools in Jordan. The responsibility of the school administration is more than ever because Jordan has a higher rate of bullying and victimization which is above than average in the region. It is recommended that school

administration takes action to satisfy parents of school children because this study has developed findings based on parents of school children. Limitations of the study have been described in the findings as well, but they are rewritten here that more factors contributing to eliminating bullying phenomenon in students of schools should be studied. Thus, it is recommended to do further research on the topic as well, so that rising bullying phenomenon in schools of Jordan can be eliminated specifically and in the schools of the Arab world generally.

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