

A Research on the Assessment and Effective Intervention of School Bullying in Primary and Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Social Work

Congde Xu, Ming Qu*, Yiwei Bi

Law School, Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: In recent years, bullying in schools has become a frequent occurrence, which has attracted widespread attention because it is easy to occur and the harm is not easy to be detected in time, which adversely affects students' studies and lives. This study conducted an in-depth analysis of school bullying among primary and secondary school students in Shandong Province, and found that students have a one-sided understanding of bullying, a lack of relevant education and an urgent need for education. the study proposes countermeasures from the perspectives of the school, the family, and the bullies and the bullied: the government suggests the establishment of a multi-party mechanism and a sound system of laws and regulations; the school suggests the strengthening of emotional management learning, empathy training, and the development of interpersonal skills, as well as the establishment of a school social worker station; and the social worker suggests the recovery of the bully, the corrective treatment of the bully, and the attention to the issue of the family of origin's education. These comprehensive measures are aimed at ensuring students' safety and mental health in schools, and are of great practical and theoretical significance.

Keywords: School Bullying; Children's Social Work; Youth Social Work

1. Background And Significance of the Study

1.1 Background of the Study

The increase and severity of bullying in schools has become a serious social problem, manifesting itself in under-ageing, violence,

collectivization and diversification. Bullying behaviors are diverse, including physical attacks, verbal insults, social disruptions and cyber harassment, which have a serious impact on the physical and mental health of the victims as well as school harmony. the causes of bullying involve individual characteristics, family environment, school culture and social atmosphere, with the introverted character or special appearance of individuals, inappropriate education in the family, intense competition and peer pressure at school, and the wrongful glorification of violence in society all being contributing factors.

The State strictly prohibits bullying in schools through the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Minors and other laws, emphasizing prevention and protection, reflecting the importance it attaches to the rights and interests of minors. Against this background, this paper focuses on identifying and addressing bullying in schools, exploring the interactions at the individual, family, school and social levels, and examining how the government, schools, and social workers can work together to achieve effective prevention and intervention and comprehensively protect the rights and interests of minors.

1.2 Research Significance

1.2.1 theoretical significance

The theoretical significance of this study lies in the integration of the strengths perspective and group dynamics theory for individual development and group interaction. the strengths perspective helps victims regain self-confidence and social functioning by tapping into individual strengths resources, enhancing competence, and building positive self-perceptions, while reducing bullies' aggressive behavior. the group dynamics theory, on the

other hand, explains the group interaction model and emphasizes the role of collective strengths in promoting mutual support and growth among members. Combining these two theories, the study aims to comprehensively assess the psychological mechanisms of bullying behavior, design scientific interventions, and provide empirical support for the development of effective public policies.

1.2.2 Practical implications

This study applies professional social work intervention methods to the prevention and intervention of bullying behaviors in primary and secondary schools, which has multiple practical implications. First, it safeguards the safety of minors during school, promotes their physical and mental health, and effectively prevents all kinds of bullying behaviors. Secondly, it promotes a more standardized and institutionalized responsibility for protection and management in schools and other educational institutions. Finally, by alleviating and eliminating bullying in schools, it can significantly reduce conflicts and build a civilized, harmonious and friendly school environment. In conclusion, this comprehensive social work intervention model not only provides a systematic solution to the problem of school bullying, but also provides solid empirical support for the all-round protection of minors' rights and interests and the promotion of the formation of a healthy and harmonious school culture.

2. Literature Review

Current status of foreign research

Bullying in schools has received widespread international attention since the 1970s. the Orvis Bullying Prevention Program in Schools (OBPP) is a comprehensive school-wide program that aims to reduce bullying in schools and improve peer relationships among students in elementary, middle and junior high schools [1], the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and other countries and regions have also attached great importance to this issue.

2.1 Causes of bullying behavior in schools

2.1.1 Macro level

Smith et al. (2008) showed that socio-cultural tendencies toward violence and perceptions of inequality increase the risk of bullying in schools; Olweus (1993) noted that the lack of

clear anti-bullying policies and social support systems leads to a greater prevalence of bullying; and Nansel et al. (2001) found that areas of greater economic inequality and social stress have higher school bullying incidence is higher.

2.1.2 Meso level

Holt et al. (2007) emphasized that school management style, teacher-student relationships, and school culture have a significant impact on bullying behavior, and that schools with loose management and insufficient teacher supervision are more likely to experience bullying. Espelage and Swearer (2003) argued that community resource richness, parental involvement, and the strength of support from community-based organizations also influence the occurrence of bullying in schools; Rigby (2002), on the other hand, states that school-community partnerships can be effective in reducing bullying incidents.

2.1.3 Micro level

Farrington (2011), through a study of 411 males, found that bullying behavior at age 14 significantly predicted violent offending between the ages of 15 and 20. Salmivalli and Voeten (2004) further suggest that poor family relationships, parental neglect, or overprotectiveness increase a child's chances of becoming a bully or victim. In addition, Pepler and Craig (1995) suggested that peer group support and approval reinforces bullying behavior and that positive peer interventions help reduce bullying.

2.2 Interventions for Bullying Behavior in Schools

The United States, the United Kingdom and Japan have established school-based bullying intervention systems. In the United States, schools are required through federal and state legislation to develop anti-bullying policies, and teachers are encouraged to conduct psychological counseling. In the UK, primary and secondary schools have developed detailed anti-bullying policies, and staff and students receive anti-bullying training. Japan has implemented a "zero tolerance" policy through the School Bullying Prevention and Countermeasures Promotion Act, building a diversified prevention and control system, and setting up "bullying response committees" and psychological counseling rooms in schools.

These countries have formed comprehensive prevention and control systems by regulating and guiding prevention and control measures through legal means and encouraging society as a whole to participate in prevention and control efforts.

2.3 Current Status of Domestic Research

2.3.1 Causes of bullying behavior in schools

A. Macro level

Li Feng and Shi Dongfang (2021) pointed out that the social and cultural environment has a profound impact on school bullying, including tolerance of violence, gender stereotypes and exclusion of vulnerable groups [2]. Chen Xi (2018) analyzed through a multidisciplinary perspective that an imperfect or poorly implemented legal system is also an important reason for the frequent occurrence of bullying in schools, and suggested the establishment of a multi-level and multi-channel governance mechanism [3]. Zhang Guirong and Gu Ni's (2022) study showed that socioeconomic conditions such as poor family economic conditions may also increase the risk of bullying [4].

B. Meso level

He Huaijin and other scholars (2017) found that the nurturing cultural environment within the school, teacher ethics and lack of management are the direct causes of school bullying [5]. Undesirable peer influences, teacher pressure and peer group influences are also important meso-factors. In addition, overemphasis on intellectual education at the expense of moral education, as well as poor teacher behavior, are also key factors that induce bullying in schools.

C. Micro level

Liu Cheng (2020) showed that personal traits such as immature personality, poor behavioral habits and poorer academic performance are the key micro-factors triggering school bullying [6]. Family environment factors, such as lack of family education, inappropriate education due to lack of parental roles, and lower educational level of parents, likewise have a significant impact on school bullying behavior.

2.3.2 Intervention Studies on Bullying Behavior in Schools

In recent years, intervention research on bullying behavior in schools in China has focused on both prevention and solution. On

the prevention side, researchers have proposed a variety of strategies and measures from multiple perspectives. On the solution side, it focuses on disciplining and educating school bullying.

A. Prevention of bullying in schools

Domestic scholars have proposed comprehensive preventive measures from the four levels of students, families, schools and society. Yu Yang and Shi Xiaoqian (2019) pointed out that comprehensive social preventive countermeasures should be taken, such as destroying the criminal environment by means of "noise interference" and purifying the social soil that breeds bullying through the study of 50 typical cases of bullying in schools [7]. From the perspective of mental health, Bu and other scholars (2017) believe that it is crucial to improve the mental health quality of students and establish a psychological support system, while advocating appropriate family upbringing to create a harmonious family atmosphere [8]. Liu Xu (2019) emphasizes the importance of legal prevention and control and suggests accelerating the legislative process of the Anti-School Bullying Law, enhancing the legal concept of primary and secondary school students, and cultivating their habit of obeying the law [9].

B. Response to bullying in schools

In terms of solving the problem of bullying in schools, researchers have proposed a series of measures. At the school level, schools should establish a sound mechanism to prevent and intervene in school bullying, strictly follow the requirements of relevant national laws and regulations, actively carry out special control work, and enhance students' awareness of self-protection through educational programs, so as to build a safe and harmonious learning environment. At the family level, parents need to update their education concepts, emphasize their children's moral development and mental health education, and promote their all-round development; strengthen their awareness of parental responsibility, and clarify the positive role of parents in their children's growth through family education legislation. At the social level, a diversified social support system should be built to strengthen public opinion guidance and social and cultural prevention and control; the government, the media, professional organizations and other parties should work together to create a social

atmosphere against bullying and provide a healthy and positive environment for young people to grow up in.

2.4 Research Reviews

Bullying in schools is a multidimensional, cross-level and complex phenomenon, and its causes involve the macro, meso and micro levels. At the macro level, social culture, policy environment and economic factors have a significant impact on bullying in schools. Sound laws and regulations and social support systems can effectively manage and prevent bullying in schools. At the meso level, school management and community support play a key role in preventing bullying in schools. Well-managed schools with a positive atmosphere and harmonious teacher-student relationships can provide a safe learning environment and reduce bullying behavior; community support and participation are also important preventive forces. At the micro level, individual characteristics and family environment are key determinants of bullying behavior. Students' mental health status and social cognitive ability, as well as family dysfunction and inappropriate educational practices, increase the risk of bullying.

At present, bullying in schools is showing a new trend towards networking, and cyberbullying poses a new test for traditional prevention and treatment efforts. At the same time, there is still a lack of understanding of the long-term psychological impact on victims, and the effectiveness and sustainability of existing interventions are also facing challenges. Against this background, the intervention of social workers is particularly important. They are able to provide professional assistance and intervention to help victims deal with psychological trauma and behavioral modification to perpetrators, thus creating a safer and more harmonious school atmosphere.

In conclusion, the problem of bullying in schools requires comprehensive management at multiple levels, combined with the professional support of social work, in order to prevent and respond to this complex social problem more effectively.

3. Definition Of Relevant Concepts

3.1 Bullying in Schools

School bullying is defined as a specific type of aggressive behavior characterized by intent to harm or disrupt, repetitive nature of the behavior, and power imbalance. This power imbalance may be physical or psychological, and bullying can be verbal (e. g., name-calling, threats), physical (e. g., striking), or psychological (e. g., spreading rumors, exclusion/exclusion).

3.2 The role of Bullying in Schools

3.2.1 Bullies

School bullies who persistently victimize others, either physically or psychologically, are mainly categorized as proactive and reactive. Proactive bullies initiate bullying without being provoked, while reactive bullies bully others only after being provoked. In terms of gender differences, boys tend to use physical bullying, while girls tend to use social tactics such as ostracizing and spreading rumors. Bullies can also be categorized as anxious and assertive: anxious bullies come from stressful family environments and are emotionally repressed and insecure; assertive bullies have high levels of self-acceptance, are popular among their peers, and may be in a leadership position.

3.2.2 The bullied

Those who are bullied are often weak, inarticulate and lack self-confidence, and are at a disadvantage in their peer groups, partly due to personality reasons or family problems of origin. After being oppressed for a long time, the bullied may also turn into bullies and develop bullying behaviors.

3.2.3 Bystanders

Bystanders play a variety of roles in school bullying: co-bullies directly participate in the bullying and exacerbate its severity; instigators encourage the bullies through words or behavior; detractors remain neutral, and their silence may be perceived as acquiescence; and protectors are active in consoling and assisting the victim and working to stop the bullying. Bystander behavior is influenced by factors such as gender, grade level, and peer status, and their actions or inactions have a significant impact on bullying dynamics.

3.3 Social Work with Children and Adolescents

The common goal of social work with children and social work with adolescents is to promote

the healthy growth and all-round development of service recipients. These professional services are individual-centered, focusing on their rights to survival, development, protection and participation. Through the provision of support services, family support and the dissemination of health concepts, and the use of methods such as case conferences, group work and community intervention, problems in the socialization process are solved, social skills and psychological resilience are enhanced, and resilience is improved, so as to lay a solid foundation for their all-round development.

4. Recommendations For Countermeasures

4.1 Government Level

4.1.1 Establishment of a multi-party linkage mechanism

In view of the immature development of social work in China, it is recommended that a multi-party linkage mechanism be established among non-governmental organizations, schools and the Government. Services will be purchased by the government, private social work organizations will undertake projects, professional schools will provide social work services, and schools will actively cooperate. This extra-institutional service model can make up for the problems of limited resource linkage and lack of self-development momentum in school social work under the university system.

4.1.2 Improvement of the legal and regulatory system

Despite the fact that the relevant authorities have issued guidelines and comprehensive management plans on bullying in schools, the problem of bullying in schools has not yet been effectively addressed due to a lack of social attention and inadequate policies. Many incidents are mistaken for playfulness among students and do not attract attention until they have had an adverse impact. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the definition of bullying in schools and the responsible parties from a legislative perspective, and to improve the relevant laws and regulations. For example, the law on family education should be revised and improved to legally protect the rights of young people in the family and avoid bullying behaviors caused by improper or lack of family education. Through these measures, bullying in

schools can be prevented and controlled more effectively.

4.2 School Level

4.2.1 Daily emotional management learning

A visit to the survey revealed that almost all students have emotional problems. Psychologist Ellis' Rational Emotion Therapy model states that emotional problems are influenced by irrational beliefs. School bullying partly stems from the imbalance of the bullies' own emotional management. Therefore, schools should encourage students to express and share their emotions in a timely and rational manner, while improving service mechanisms such as psychological counseling rooms to provide counseling services and assistance to students in need.

4.2.2 Empathy training for students

Empathy is the ability to understand and empathize with the emotions of others as individuals experience similar emotions when feeling the emotions of others. Empathy training helps students understand and empathize with the emotional experiences of others through storytelling, role-playing and daily conversations. Bullying in schools is mostly in the form of cold violence, which is hidden and undetectable and brings serious psychological trauma to the victims. Social work professional tools can prevent and control school bullying through empathy training. Through role-playing, students experience the roles of bullies and bullied respectively to achieve empathy. This kind of training not only helps students understand the feelings of others, but also influences their cognition, thus preventing and reducing school bullying to a certain extent.

4.2.3 Fostering students' interpersonal skills

Bullying behavior is often bred from subtle friction in interpersonal relationships. Due to improper handling at the initial stage, conflicts gradually intensify and eventually lead to bullying in schools. In addition to intellectual education, schools should emphasize the development of students' interpersonal skills and teach them reasonable ways to deal with problems and conflicts.

4.2.4 Establishment of school social work stations

School social work stations have been established, and professional social workers have been brought in to provide professional

services in areas such as students' mental health. the focus is on psychological and emotional guidance for students, learning motivation and capacity building, and family parenting education, helping to consolidate a multi-party educational support network. We gather professional and social forces for the protection of minors, promote communication and cooperation between home and school and the community, and create a favorable school atmosphere for the healthy growth of minors. Schools are not only a place for imparting knowledge, but also an important place for ensuring the physical and mental health of students and fostering positive values, and the establishment of social work stations helps to perfect these functions.

4.3 Social Worker Level

4.3.1 Giving support to the bullied

Social workers should first assess the psychological and physical condition of the bullied person, try to establish a relationship of trust, and encourage him/her to tell the truth about the incident. Throughout the process, protect the privacy of the bullied person, respect his/her wishes, safeguard his/her emotions and provide emotional support. At the same time, cooperate with the school and relevant departments in mediation and aftercare of the incident, so as to restore the interpersonal relationship of the bullied person as soon as possible.

4.3.2 Corrective treatment for bullies

In group work, social workers incorporate bullies into the group and clarify the duties and responsibilities of social workers, and work with members to formulate a group convention. the needs of group members are assessed, goals are set before each activity, and game sessions are carefully designed to make bullies aware of the seriousness and danger of their behaviors through role-playing and empathy, ultimately achieving the goal of reducing and eliminating transgressive behaviors.

4.3.3 Focus on education within the family of origin

Incidents of bullying in schools are often closely related to the background of family upbringing. Through intervening in students' families, social workers improve parent-child relationship and parents' ability to educate their families, explore support networks inside and outside the family, integrate social resources,

and intervene in various aspects in order to solve the problem properly.

5. Conclusion

Child and youth social work plays an important role in school bullying intervention. Social workers advocate relevant policies and raise social concern at the government level; at the school level, they organize activities to enhance students' interpersonal skills, provide psychological counselling services to alleviate emotional problems, and provide psychological counselling and education to bullies, bullied and bystanders. They promote stricter regulations and policies to build a comprehensive prevention and control system. Through individual counseling and group discussions, they guide bullies to correct their behavior and educate bystanders to respond positively. Ultimately, the professional intervention of social workers effectively relieves the psychological trauma of the bullied, helps them better integrate into school life, and ensures that young people grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

Acknowledgements

The Key Project of Shandong Provincial 13th Five-Year Plan for Educational Science: Research on the Assessment and Effective Intervention of School Bullying in Primary and Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Social Work (Project No. ZZ2019056).

References

- [1] Olweus Dan & Limber Susan P. (2010). Bullying in school: evaluation and dissemination of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The American journal of orthopsychiatry(1), 124-34.
- [2] Li, Feng & Shi, Dongfang. (2021). Explaining the causes of bullying in schools - Based on the theoretical perspective of cultural sociology. Research in Education Science (01), 73-78.
- [3] Chen Xi. (2018). Research on the Causes and Countermeasures of School Bullying under Multidisciplinary Perspective. Contemporary Educational Science (05), 36-41.
- [4] Zhang Guirong & Gu Ni. (2022). A meta-analysis of factors associated with school bullying among Chinese primary and secondary school students. Chinese

- Journal of Mental Health (01), 37-43.
- [5] He Huaijin, Zhong Dongmei & Gong Chunyan. (2017). Analysis of the Harm and Causes of School Bullying in Junior High Schools. Journal of Chongqing Three Gorges College (05), 116-123. doi:10.13743/j.cnki.issn.1009-8135.2017.05.019.
- [6] Cheng Liu. (2020). Bullying Behavior and Its Influencing Factors in Elementary and Middle Schools. Youth Research (06), 24-33+91-92.
- [7] Yu Yang & Shi Xiaoqian. (2019). Research on Behavioral Characteristics and Social Preventive Countermeasures of School Bullying - Based on the Analysis of 50 Typical Cases of School Bullying. Problems of juvenile delinquency (05), 5-15.
- [8] Bu, J., Pan, Y. M. & Zhang, Z. W. (2017). Research on School Bullying Phenomenon and Students' Behavioral Psychological Analysis and Countermeasures. China Adult Education(23), 94-98.
- [9] Liu X. (2019). Comprehensive prevention and control strategy of bullying in primary and secondary schools in China. Shanxi Youth (07), 123-124.