

Analysis of the Current Situation, Causes and Countermeasures of Bullying in Secondary Schools

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Abstract. In secondary schools, school bullying occurs frequently and has a negative impact on the physical and mental health development of students. This study analyzes the occurrence of bullying in secondary schools in terms of location, time, subject, and manifestation, and finds that its causes lie in four aspects: individual, family, school, and society. As a result, this study proposes specific countermeasures: family plays a central role and parents set up the power of role models; the main responsibility of the school should be clarified to prevent and reduce school bullying; and the environment of online violence should be reduced to build a harmonious social environment.

Keywords: secondary school, school bullying, countermeasure analysis.

1. Introduction

Starting with the 2004 tragedy of the University dormitory murder case, China mainstream news media gradually shifted their focus to the problem of bullying among students^[1]. The problem of bullying in schools has gradually emerged through a large number of mainstream and new media investigations and reports. Among them, the phenomenon of school bullying among youths at the secondary school level is of particular concern. In Longxi County, Gansu Province, a 14-year-old was beaten to death by five students. A junior high school student in Jiading, Shanghai, committed suicide by taking pesticide at home, muttering "someone is bullying me" all the time. The preliminary investigation was caused by long-term verbal bullying by classmates, resulting in a mental breakdown that was too much for him to bear and eventually chose to drink pesticide. After entering the secondary school level, adolescents are faced with academic pressure and are prone to be frustrated because of their poor performance ranking. Not only that, teenagers are also deeply influenced by the social environment, especially from the induction of the culture of online violence. They are prone to realize their self-worth through various forms of violence. The frequent occurrence of incidents related to school bullying has caused widespread concern in the community.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to bullying in schools. In response to bullying in secondary schools, the Chinese government has issued relevant policies or taken relevant intervention measures. In May 2016, the Office of the State Council Education Supervisory Committee issued a notice on specific school bullying to strengthen the prevention and treatment of school bullying in primary and secondary schools (including secondary vocational schools) nationwide. It also made clear provisions on the purpose of governance, governance arrangements and specific requirements. The importance and attention paid to the problem of school bullying can be seen from the scale of governance and the proposed means of supervision. Later in 2018, the Chinese government issued the Circular on the Implementation of the Year of Bullying Prevention and Control in Primary and Secondary Schools. This notice sets out work requirements for all relevant departments, including government, society and schools. It emphasizes the need to form a long-term mechanism for the prevention and control of bullying among students through the implementation of a series of supervisory means to effectively curb the occurrence of bullying among students. These measures are enough to show the government's concern and importance to the problem of bullying in schools. The damage caused by school bullying to students is incalculable, and it continues to challenge us as a worldwide problem and an issue of the times.

The problem of bullying in China's secondary schools needs to be addressed urgently. So what exactly is the current status of bullying in Chinese secondary schools and what are the causes of it?

This study explores the current situation and causes of bullying in secondary schools, and proposes strategies to address the causes.

2. Literature Review

At present, there is no unified view on the definition of school bullying in domestic and international academic circles. The earliest research and definition of school bullying was made by Norwegian scholar Ovis, who first proposed "school bullying" in "Aggression in School: Bullies and Scapegoats"[2], arguing that school bullying is a behavior in which the bully treats the person being bullied as the person being bullied or harassed, and that the behavior is characterized by a long-term, recurrent nature, repetitive in nature, and the subject may be one or more people. According to Orvis, this negative behavior includes three aspects: first, physical hitting, punching, pushing and kicking; second, intentional damage to other people's property and extortion and blackmail; and third, verbal attacks, such as verbal insults, name-calling and taunting. According to the U.S. Department of Education, school bullying is a coercive and aggressive act committed by a student or a group of students against another individual student or group of students, which can produce physical and psychological harm to the target of the bullying.[3] In 2016, China's Ministry of Education defined school bullying as an incident that occurs when students deliberately or maliciously bully or humiliate each other through physical, verbal and online means, causing harm and damaging the physical and psychological health of students. In summary, school bullying includes the following elements: first, the subject of occurrence is the student, not the teacher; second, the purpose is malicious and intentional; third, the form of bullying includes physical bullying, verbal bullying, relationship bullying and online bullying; and fourth produces the result of causing physical, psychological and spiritual harm to fellow students. And secondary school bullying means that school bullying occurs at the secondary school level, including both middle school and high school.

3. Current Situation of Bullying in Secondary Schools

School bullying exists in different degrees in both domestic and foreign countries. The current situation of bullying in secondary schools is analyzed according to the location, time, subject and manifestation of bullying in secondary schools. First, secondary school bullying is concealed in terms of location, mainly in places where it is not easily detected, such as toilets, hallways, playground corners, and dormitories. In terms of geography, there are obvious geographical differences in the occurrence of school bullying in China, with the central region having the highest incidence of school bullying, accounting for about half of the country, and the overall distribution being significantly greater in the central and western regions than in the eastern and northeastern regions[4]. Second, bullying in secondary schools is random in time. Any little inadvertent thing may stimulate the emotions and desire for performance of secondary school students, and when a random event occurs, an inadvertent collision between two students may be magnified due to strong self-awareness, resulting in bullying behavior. Third, school bullying is universal in terms of the subject of occurrence. The 2018 UNESCO article School Violence and Bullying: Global Status and Trends, Drivers and Consequences shows that about thirty percent of the world's In general, boys experience bullying. Overall, bullying is more prevalent among boys, but girls are more likely to be bullied in countries with high rates of bullying. According to data from the 2016 China Education Tracking Survey, more than half of junior high school students in China have been subjected to school bullying. Fourth, according to the behavioral manifestations of both subjects of school bullying, school bullying can be divided into two categories: direct bullying and indirect bullying. For the specific behavioral types of direct bullying and indirect bullying, bullying can be divided into four manifestations: verbal bullying, relational bullying, physical bullying, and online bullying. In China, the article "Survey Report on School Bullying in China" jointly published by the Social Risk and Crisis Management Research Center of Nanjing University and the Social Risk Research Center of Central South

University in 2017 points out that the main form of school bullying is verbal bullying, the incidence of which is about one-fifth.

4. Analysis of causes

4.1 Analysis of individual factors

Secondary school students are in a special period of development. The secondary school stage basically overlaps with the adolescent stage, and secondary school students have a strong sensitivity. The self-identity of adolescent students is more obvious, and it is easy to magnify their own strengths and weaknesses; secondary school students are undergoing great changes in physiological and psychological aspects, and with the increase of academic pressure, students in secondary school are very prone to misbehavior. At the same time, secondary school students are more curious about the outside world, but due to their immature psychological and value development, they are extremely susceptible to the influence of outside bad customs. At the same time, their emotions change more strongly and they are prone to extreme emotions such as self-righteousness and depression. When faced with new situations that are stressful, middle school students are prone to low self-esteem, arrogance and other paranoid attitudes, which may even lead to school bullying.

Secondly, middle school students are usually immature, socially conscious, and not well aware of the law, so their legal awareness is weak. Wang Huaqiang and Yao Zhen conducted an empirical study on the legal awareness of middle school students and found that the low awareness of the rule of law among middle school students has become a problem that cannot be ignored[5]. At the present stage of China's education system, the popularity of legal knowledge is seriously inadequate, and young people lack legal knowledge in their daily study, and lack the fear of life and respect for the law. The law on the protection of minors does not provide sufficient punishment for juvenile offenders. In particular, there is no precise enforcement standard for school bullying. The impulsive character and weak legal awareness of middle school students lead to the occurrence of bullying in schools.

4.2 Analysis of family factors

The family is the main activity place of junior high school students and has a decisive influence on their personality and character. On the one hand, the wrong way of family parenting will have many negative effects on children's heart. Parents' domestic violence behaviors are extremely easy to be imitated by their children. Some parents have an imbalance of discipline and overindulge their children, which leads to the lack of basic legal awareness of children[6]. During the growth of the child, some parents lack the company of their children, resulting in a lack of security and a more sensitive and impulsive child emotionally. There are also families where fathers and mothers do not share the same philosophy and approach to family education, which can easily lead to students' confusion in conflicts and even bullying behavior.

On the other hand, in a utilitarian social environment, parents focus too much on academic rankings and crack down on all other aspects of students' lives to suppress them. Chinese parents often stand as elders in a rational way to raise their students and do not understand their behavior from the students' point of view. This situation makes the family environment more repressive. At the same time, there is less family communication, which focuses on a single aspect of learning and does not meet the students' psychological and emotional needs. For behavioral repression and emotional neglect, students are prone to develop a paranoid personality and are more inclined to break away from the confines of the family and the expectations of society for secondary school students. Students are more likely to have impulsive emotions and adverse emotional experiences, and to express their dissatisfaction in the form of "revenge" against their families and society.

4.3 Analysis of school factors

The campus is an important learning place for students. In terms of teachers, some teachers fail to update their teaching concepts in time and only pay attention to the instillation of teaching contents in classroom teaching. Some teachers' explanations are too written, which makes students lose interest in learning and leads to students' incomplete cognition of ideology and morality as well as legal knowledge. Some teachers teach in a single way and do not pay attention to the guidance and education of practical activities for students. There are also some teachers who express excessive preference for some students while alienating some students due to the receipt of gifts and personal favoritism, which leads to changes in the class culture. In terms of school ethos, some schools focus on promotion rates as a propaganda priority to attract students, making teaching biased towards knowledge delivery. Only the intellectual content of the chapters in the textbook is emphasized, and the moral content they embody is usually briefly explained. After-school learning only consolidates the intellectual content, but does not guide students to put into practice the humanistic content of the chapters, and students' ideological and moral qualities are not improved. Due to the utilitarian evaluation measures in schools, students are also evaluated on this basis. Students with poor academic performance are more likely to be rejected by teachers and peers, leaving many students in a psychologically marginalized position, with excessive negative evaluations of themselves and school bullying behaviors.

4.4 Analysis of social factors

Middle school students have a strong ability to imitate but a relatively weak ability to discern what is going on around them, and are therefore vulnerable to socially undesirable culture, such as the violent elements contained in certain advertisements, online games, and movies and dramas[7]. When students are influenced by these negative elements, they may adopt the same coping strategies when faced with the same or similar scenarios, which may lead to bullying in school.

5. Analysis of Countermeasures

The problem of bullying in secondary schools is a complex social problem. Based on the analysis of the above causes, this study considers countermeasures for school bullying from three aspects: family, school, and society. We should play the core position of family and establish the power of role model; clarify the main responsibility of school to prevent and reduce school bullying; reduce the environment of online violence and build a harmonious social environment.

5.1 Family plays a central role and parents set up the power of role models

Parents are the first teachers of students, and they have a key role in influencing the character and psychological growth of secondary school students. As the closest and most trusted person to students, parents' own modeling role in words and actions can guide students' life, language, behavior and psychological growth changes to the greatest extent possible. Parents' moderate and reasonable expressions of emotion and understanding allow students to have higher self-perceptions and self-evaluations, to be more willing to work in the direction expected by their parents and society, and to form correct values more easily. First, parents should fully recognize the psychological changes of students, change the original way of education of doing everything, reduce students' depression, form a healthy psychological defense mechanism, and cope with frustration positively. Secondly, improve parents' role awareness and set up family role models. Parents should constantly improve their own way of thinking and behavior and set up a correct image of role model. Give full play to their own role characteristics, and while making their children feel cared for, establish a sense of rules and discipline and improve self-control. Liberating parents, after which students can be liberated, and helping parents learn to handle their own family life is the most idealized harvest of education.

5.2 Clarify the main responsibility of schools to prevent and reduce bullying in schools

In the face of school bullying, schools should play a nurturing function and take multiple measures to comprehensively promote the development of a sound personality of students. First, schools should pay attention to students' legal education. Secondary school classrooms should incorporate legal education into the syllabus and regularly conduct legal awareness and legal lectures. In particular, legal lectures should be conducted around campus bullying to enhance secondary school students' awareness of the legal system. At the same time, secondary schools should revise and improve campus management regulations for secondary school students in accordance with new laws and regulations and new educational practices. Schools should achieve strict enforcement, and should oppose all forms of campus bullying with the spirit of the law, the system of the law and the action of the law. Second, schools should be to do a good job of student psychological counseling. Secondary schools should set up special counseling rooms with special counselors and clear psychological counseling methods, and make every effort to support and guarantee the work of counselors. Counselors should also often go deep into the students and talk to them, to gain insight into those trivial matters, early detection of problems and timely psychological guidance. Third, schools need to be more sensitive in detecting bullying on campus. In addition to strengthening the efforts to ensure campus safety management, some soft measures can be taken to assist from the side. For example, some anonymous reporting channels can be set up to allow students to anonymously contribute or report bullying behaviors they have suffered or witnessed themselves, so that students can overcome their fear of retaliation and improve the school's initiative in detecting bullying on school campuses.

5.3 Reduce the environment of online violence and build a harmonic social environment .

The relevant social supervision agencies should strengthen the supervision of the network environment and remove the bad information and other information on the network. The mass media itself should regulate the network information and take self-control measures for purifying the network environment actively. For example, the media can cooperate with government departments to take relevant management initiatives to reduce the spread of the culture of violence, clarify the correct value orientation[8], and help the public to correctly understand school bullying.

The government can also officially add websites that are suitable for youth learning with columns that enrich the way of school entertainment, and control the channels and ways of accessing the Internet for the student population. This will contribute to the improvement of students' moral standards and good physical and mental development, create a healthy living environment for students, and reduce the occurrence of bullying in schools.

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