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	Psychological and Sociological Approaches on the Phenomenon of Bullying in Societies	
		
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Abstract Bullying, as a behavioral phenomenon, is as old as humanity itself, yet it continues to evolve in response to shifting cultural and societal norms. Despite its enduring presence across civilizations, academic inquiry into bullying began relatively recently in the 1970s. Today, bullying is recognized as a pervasive and deeply entrenched issue with the capacity to undermine the psychological and social stability of both individuals and communities, transcending barriers of race, religion, language, and social class. Its alarming prevalence in familial, educational, professional, and social settings has drawn the attention of governments, international organizations, media outlets, and scholars alike. This intensified focus reflects growing awareness of its profound psychological, social, and economic consequences—many of which persist well into adulthood. Against this backdrop, researchers have endeavored to analyze the phenomenon through various theoretical lenses, with interpretations shaped by distinct disciplinary, cultural, and epistemological paradigms. This paper examines the psychological and sociological approaches that underpin our understanding of bullying, delving into its conceptualization, manifestations, antecedents, and repercussions.		
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Introduction

Bullying, a behavior intricately tied to power dynamics and social structures, has been a constant in human societies. It emerges under specific conditions, reflecting an interplay of individual traits, environmental stimuli, and cultural norms. While its existence can be traced to ancient times, the systematic study of bullying remains a relatively modern endeavor. At its core, bullying encompasses acts of intentional aggression—whether

psychological, verbal, or physical—targeting individuals who are unable to adequately defend themselves. These acts are typically characterized by repetition and an inherent imbalance of power⁽¹⁾.

In recent decades, bullying has garnered significant scholarly and public attention due to its detrimental impact on mental health and social cohesion. It is widely understood as a complex phenomenon shaped by the interaction of individual dispositions and environmental influences, including familial dynamics, peer relationships, educational settings, and societal structures. The notion that human behavior is shaped by environmental contingencies is hardly novel. However, the intricate interdependence among these variables—particularly in bullying scenarios—underscores the need for an integrative approach. Such an approach elucidates the roles played by perpetrators, victims, and bystanders within broader social ecosystems⁽²⁾.

Bullying does not occur in isolation. It reflects and reproduces the values, norms, and power relations embedded within its sociocultural context. Familial patterns, such as exposure to aggressive role models, can perpetuate bullying behavior. Similarly, school climates and peer networks can either reinforce or mitigate its occurrence, depending on the prevailing attitudes and interactions within these environments. At a macro level, cultural ideologies and societal values further shape how bullying is expressed and perceived⁽³⁾.

1. Theoretical and Conceptual Definitions of Bullying

Bullying, as a term, has been subject to varied interpretations across languages and disciplines. A review of Dessoqi (2016) highlights the multiplicity of translations for the term, each capturing distinct nuances of the phenomenon. Common translations include:

- **Bullying:** Reflecting intentional aggression and dominance.
- **Harassment:** Emphasizing repetitive and unwanted behaviors.
- **Intimidation:** Denoting the use of fear to control or manipulate others.
- **Tyranny:** Highlighting systemic or hierarchical power imbalances.

1.1- Etymology of the Term Bully

The English term *bullying* has its roots in the word *bully*, which originally appeared in the 16th century as a term of endearment, meaning "sweetheart" or "lover," applicable to both genders. This early usage is derived from the Middle Dutch *boel*, meaning "lover" or "brother," which itself may trace back to *broeder* (brother)⁽⁴⁾.

By the late 17th century, the meaning of *bully* shifted significantly, evolving into a term associated with aggression and dominance. During this period, it came to describe a "blusterer" or "harasser of the weak," reflecting behaviors of intimidation and coercion. This semantic transition was further influenced by its application to those acting as "protectors of prostitutes," a usage documented by the early 18th century⁽⁵⁾.

The verb form, "to bully," emerged around 1710, meaning "to overbear with bluster or menaces," solidifying the term's modern association with aggressive and oppressive behaviors⁽⁶⁾. The transformation of *bully* over centuries underscores shifting societal perceptions of interpersonal power dynamics and behaviors linked to dominance.

1.2- Terminological Definition

In psychological and sociological discourse, *bullying* is conceptually defined as a deliberate and systematic pattern of aggression, characterized by repetition over time and a significant power imbalance between the aggressor and the victim. This behavior often involves physical, verbal, relational, or psychological harm, wherein the perpetrator seeks to assert dominance and control, while the victim typically lacks the resources or ability to retaliate effectively⁽⁷⁾.

1.3- Conceptual Definition

Always Bullying, as a phenomenon, is characterized by intentional aggression perpetrated by an individual or group wielding greater power or dominance over a weaker or more vulnerable target. This deliberate

¹ Dessoki, Majdy. The Bullying Behavior Management Scale (Miqyas Al-Ta'amul Ma'a -Suluk Al-Tanammur). Amman: Dar Jouna for Publishing and Distribution, 2016. P, 5.

² Saleh, Ikram. Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqln). Cairo: Dar Rawabit for Publishing and Information Technology, 2020. P, 13.

³ Ibid.P, 14

⁴ Etymonline. (n.d.). Bully. Retrieved from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/bully>

⁵ Etymonline. (n.d.). Bully. Retrieved from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/bully>

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Olweus, D. (1993). Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. Blackwell Publishing.

behavior often involves deriving pleasure from witnessing the victim's distress and inflicting physical, emotional, or psychological harm ⁽¹⁾.

Melhem (2004) elaborates on this definition, describing bullying as an aggressive act aimed explicitly at causing harm to another, driven by the perpetrator's gratification in observing the victim's suffering.

Bullying manifests in multifaceted ways, encompassing physical, emotional, and verbal aggression, alongside social exclusion and intimidation. It may escalate into acts of extortion, threats of violence, and violations of personal or civil rights. In severe cases, bullying involves organized group aggression, sexual harassment, or even attempts to inflict life-threatening harm. Juvonen, Graham, and Schuster emphasize that bullying behavior arises from an imbalance of power, where the aggressor exerts control over the victim. This imbalance may be expressed through physical harm, verbal humiliation, or indirect forms of aggression such as ostracism, rumor-spreading, and social rejection ⁽²⁾.

Millor (1997) provides further insight, defining bullying as a sustained and targeted form of violence inflicted by an individual or group upon a person incapable of self-defense ⁽³⁾.

- From the various conceptualizations outlined above, bullying can be distilled into several defining features:
- Bullying is not accidental or impulsive; it is a calculated and purposeful act aimed at inflicting harm.
- It represents a specific subset of negative behavior, characterized by hostility and malice, most prevalent during childhood and adolescence.
- A hallmark of bullying is the unequal distribution of power, whether physical, social, or psychological, between the bully and the victim.
- Bullying may manifest verbally, physically, psychologically, or socially, reflecting the diverse strategies employed by aggressors to assert control.
- Victims typically do not provoke the aggression, highlighting the unilateral and unjustified nature of bullying.
- Victims often lack the means to counteract or neutralize the bully's dominance, further reinforcing the power imbalance.
- Bullies frequently derive satisfaction, empowerment, or even enjoyment from their ability to dominate or humiliate others.
- Bullying is marked by its persistence with repeated incidents over time ⁽⁴⁾.

2. Forms of Bullying

Bullying manifests in various forms, each distinguished by its mode of expression, impact, and visibility. Among these, physical bullying stands out as one of the most overt and easily recognizable types. It involves deliberate acts of aggression, such as hitting, kicking, shoving, tripping, or intentionally damaging the victim's personal belongings. The conspicuous nature of physical bullying often makes it more accessible to detection and intervention. However, its implications extend beyond the physical, leaving deep psychological imprints on the victim's sense of safety and self-worth.

In comparison, verbal bullying operates on a spectrum of direct and indirect behaviors, each with its unique dynamics. Direct verbal bullying involves face-to-face confrontations, where the perpetrator employs insults, mockery, belittlement, or offensive remarks aimed at publicly humiliating or emotionally wounding the victim. Such encounters are often characterized by their immediate and personal nature, amplifying the victim's feelings of distress and vulnerability.

¹ Al-Bilawi, Ihab, and Suleiman, Abdul Rahman. *Aggressiveness in Children (Al-'Udwaniyya Ladā Al-Abnā')*. Cairo: Zahraa Publishing House, 2010. P, 101.

² Al-Subhiyeen, Ali, and Al-Qudah, Mohammed. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Af'al wa Al-Murahiqa)*. Riyadh: Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2013. P, 8.

³ Al-Sufi, Osama, and Al-Maliki, Fatima. "Bullying in Children and Its Relationship with Parental Treatment Styles (Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Af'al wa 'Alaqatuhu bi Asalib Al-Mu'amala Al-Walidiya)." *Journal of Educational and Psychological Research*, No. 35, 2012, pp. 146-183.

⁴ Dessoki, Majdy. *The Bullying Behavior Management Scale (Miqyas Al-Ta'amul Ma'a -Suluk Al-Tanammur)*. Amman: Dar Jouna for Publishing and Distribution, 2016. P, 14.

Indirect verbal bullying, by contrast, is more covert and insidious, making it harder to identify and address. It encompasses actions such as spreading malicious rumors, posting disparaging comments about the victim in shared spaces, or socially ostracizing the individual through calculated gestures or expressions. Unlike its direct counterpart, indirect verbal bullying often operates anonymously or through group dynamics, which intensifies the victim's sense of isolation and powerlessness. The concealed nature of these actions not only complicates efforts to hold aggressors accountable but also exacerbates the emotional and psychological toll on the victim ⁽¹⁾.

– **Physical Bullying**

Physical bullying entails direct physical aggression, such as hitting, kicking, shoving, tripping, or deliberate destruction of personal belongings. This form is characterized by its overt nature, making it relatively easier to detect compared to other types. While the immediate physical harm may range in severity, its psychological ramifications often extend far beyond the surface injuries, profoundly affecting the victim's sense of safety and agency. Notably, physical bullying is observed less frequently among females, suggesting gendered variations in its manifestation ⁽²⁾.

– **Verbal Bullying**

Verbal bullying is the most pervasive form, transcending age groups and educational settings. It encompasses a spectrum of behaviors, including insults, derogatory remarks, threats, and public humiliation. This form often targets social identities such as gender, race, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status, exploiting these vulnerabilities to demean the victim and undermine their self-worth. Verbal bullying's potency lies in its ability to inflict profound psychological harm while often leaving no visible trace, complicating its detection and mitigation. Additionally, its public nature amplifies the humiliation, creating a ripple effect within peer groups ⁽³⁾.

– **Relational or Social Bullying**

Relational bullying, also referred to as indirect aggression, manipulates social relationships to isolate or ostracize the victim. This form manifests through exclusion from groups, rumor-mongering, and intentional social sabotage. It reflects an assertion of dominance within hierarchical social structures, where the perpetrator wields relational power to marginalize the victim. The long-term effects of relational bullying often include social withdrawal, reduced self-esteem, and difficulty forming healthy relationships. Addressing this form requires early and consistent intervention to disrupt the patterns of social control that sustain it ⁽⁴⁾.

– **Sexual Bullying**

Sexual bullying involves unwanted sexual advances, inappropriate jokes, rumors, or coercive behaviors that target the victim's sexual identity or autonomy. This form of bullying not only infringes upon personal boundaries but also perpetuates gendered power imbalances and societal stigmas ⁽⁵⁾.

– **Emotional Bullying**

Emotional bullying, often termed psychological or moral bullying, targets the victim's emotional resilience and sense of self-worth. Behaviors include social exclusion, persistent ridicule, hostile nonverbal cues, and undermining the victim's confidence. This form is particularly insidious, as it frequently goes unnoticed by adults and authority figures. Emotional bullying erodes the victim's psychological well-being over time, leaving scars that are difficult to heal. Its subtlety and long-term impact make it one of the most destructive forms of bullying ⁽⁶⁾.

– **Racial Bullying**

Racial bullying is motivated by prejudice and discriminatory attitudes, targeting individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, or cultural background. It manifests through ridicule, stereotyping, exclusion, or even physical aggression. The compounded impact of racial bullying extends beyond personal harm to

¹ Abu Al-Diyar, Masad. *The Psychology of Bullying: Between Theory and Practice* (Sikulujiyyat Al-Tanammur Bayn Al-Nazariyya wa Al-Tatbiq). Kuwait: Kuwait National Library, 2013.P, 57.

² Abu Al-Diyar, Masad. *The Psychology of Bullying: Between Theory and Practice* (Sikulujiyyat Al-Tanammur Bayn Al-Nazariyya wa Al-Tatbiq). Kuwait: Kuwait National Library, 2013.P, 57.

³ Ibid.P, 58.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. P, 59

⁶ Ibid.

systemic marginalization, as victims often perceive their identity as being under attack. Research underscores the disproportionate vulnerability of racial minorities to this form of bullying, particularly in environments where systemic inequalities persist ⁽¹⁾.

– Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying leverages digital technologies to inflict harm, exploiting the anonymity and pervasive reach of online platforms. It encompasses behaviors such as spreading defamatory content, issuing threats, and orchestrating targeted harassment campaigns. Particularly prevalent among adolescents, cyberbullying is associated with severe mental health outcomes, including heightened anxiety, depression, self-harm, substance abuse, and even suicidal ideation and suicide ⁽²⁾.

3. Participants in Bullying

Bullying, as a social and psychological phenomenon, unfolds within a multifaceted web of interactions involving distinct roles. They can be categorized as follows:

A. The Bullies

Bullies assert their dominance through deliberate acts of intimidation, threats, and harm, exploiting perceived power imbalances to control their targets. Their behavior, however, is not monolithic and can be categorized into two principal subtypes, each with distinct psychological underpinnings:

1. The Instigator (Provocative Bully)

Instigators are characterized by emotional dysregulation and a deep-seated need to project dominance. Their aggression is often premeditated, driven by internal insecurities that manifest as a compulsive need to subjugate others. Lacking empathy for their victims.

2. The Reactive Bully

Reactive bullies, by contrast, are impulsive and hypersensitive to perceived threats. They interpret benign social cues as provocations, misjudging the intentions of others and responding with disproportionate aggression. In their minds, their behavior is justified as self-defense or preemptive retaliation. This type of bully operates under cognitive distortions, such as the belief that projecting dominance is essential to preserving personal security or respect.

B. The Victims:

Victims of bullying are children whose perceived weaknesses or vulnerabilities render them susceptible to targeted aggression. Their characteristics often align with specific psychological and social markers, which position them as easy targets within hierarchical structures. These include:

- Limited social competence: Difficulty navigating peer dynamics and asserting themselves effectively.
- Physical or emotional vulnerability: Traits such as smaller stature, introversion, heightened anxiety, or impulsivity.
- Social isolation: A lack of popularity or meaningful peer connections, which exacerbates their exposure to bullying.
- Compliance and passivity: A tendency to acquiesce to the bully's demands, whether through material concessions or emotional submission, further reinforcing the power imbalance.

C. The Bystanders:

Bystanders, though ostensibly passive, occupy a critical role in the ecosystem of bullying. Their presence—and their inaction—can tacitly validate the bully's behavior, contributing to the normalization of aggression. The psychological profile of bystanders is marked by a complex interplay of emotions and internal conflicts:

- Guilt and moral conflict: A profound awareness of the injustice unfolding before them, coupled with a sense of failure for not intervening.
- Fear of retaliation: A pervasive anxiety that stepping in could make them the bully's next target.
- Cognitive dissonance: Confusion over moral obligations versus self-preservation, often leading to paralysis.

¹ Abu Al-Diyar, Masad. *The Psychology of Bullying: Between Theory and Practice* (Sikulujiyyat Al-Tanammur Bayn Al-Nazariyya wa Al-Tatbiq). Kuwait: Kuwait National Library, 2013.P, 60.

² Saleh, Ikram. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents* (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqln). Cairo: Dar Rawabit for Publishing and Information Technology, 2020.P, 16

- Rationalized inaction: A belief that avoidance is the safest course of action, rooted in a desire for personal security.

4. Factors Contributing to Bullying

Bullying arises from an interplay factors, summarized as follows:

4.1- Psychological Factors

Psychological dimensions play a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of bullying, as they illuminate the internal drives and vulnerabilities of both perpetrators and victims. Among bullies, certain psychological characteristics fuel aggressive tendencies. These individuals often exhibit a profound need for self-affirmation, which they achieve by asserting dominance over others. Their behaviors are marked by a strong inclination toward control and coercion, a predisposition to view violence favorably, and a striking lack of empathy for their victims. These traits not only sustain bullying behavior but also embolden the bully to continue inflicting harm⁽¹⁾.

Equally significant are the psychological traits of the victims, which often render them particularly susceptible to ongoing bullying. Victims tend to exhibit patterns of withdrawal, submission, and conflict avoidance. They may shy away from confrontation, opting instead for behaviors such as crying or passive compliance, which inadvertently reinforce the bully's sense of control and perpetuate the cycle of aggression.

Self-concept and self-esteem are pivotal factors in the bullying dynamic. As Omori and Kirkham (2001) assert, diminished self-esteem can predispose individuals to occupy the roles of either bully or victim, depending on how this internal deficit manifests. Victims, in particular, often exhibit high levels of anxiety, emotional fragility, and an external locus of control. They perceive their circumstances as dictated by forces beyond their control, a cognitive distortion that fosters feelings of helplessness and passivity.

Muawiya Abu Ghazal (2009) highlights that student victims of bullying are often characterized by shy or fragile temperaments, elevated levels of stress, and a pervasive sense of inadequacy. These individuals are typically quiet, emotionally reactive to trivial stimuli, and exhibit an external locus of control, perceiving their lives as governed by external forces beyond their influence⁽²⁾.

Seligman's concept of learned helplessness offers further insight into the psychological state of victims. This phenomenon occurs when individuals, repeatedly subjected to adverse situations they cannot escape or influence, develop a pervasive sense of powerlessness. Victims of bullying often exhibit this learned response, reacting to aggression with tears (particularly among younger children) or withdrawal, behaviors that inadvertently signal vulnerability to aggressors.

Qatami and Al-Sarayra (2009) highlight several defining psychological traits common among victims of bullying. These include:

- Social Reticence: A tendency to withdraw from peer interactions, which isolates them and increases their vulnerability.
- Emotional Sensitivity: Pronounced reactivity to minor provocations, which bullies exploit to escalate aggression.
- Externalized Attribution of Control: A belief that external forces, rather than personal agency, govern their experiences, further entrenching feelings of powerlessness.
- Depressive Symptoms: Persistent feelings of inadequacy, low self-worth, and sadness, which exacerbate their susceptibility to victimization.

These characteristics create a psychological profile that perpetuates a cycle of victimization, as their responses—whether crying, withdrawing, or acquiescing—reinforce the bully's perception of power and control⁽³⁾.

4.2-Personal Factors

¹ Al-Qar'aan, Ahmed Khalil. *Early Childhood: Characteristics, Problems, and Solutions* (Al-Tufula Al-Mubakkira: Khasaisuha, Mushkilatuha, Hululuha). Amman: Dar Al-Israa for Publishing and Distribution, 2004.

² Abu Ghazal, Muawiya. "Bullying and Its Relationship with Feelings of Loneliness and Social Support (Al-Istaqwa' wa 'Alaqatuha bi Al-Shu'ur bi Al-Wihda wa Al-Da'm Al-Ijtima'i)." *Jordanian Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2009, pp. 89-113.

³ Qatami, Naifa, and Al-Sarayra, Mona. *The Bullying Child* (Al-Tifl Al-Mutanamir). Amman: Dar Al-Maisara for Publishing and Distribution, 2009. P, 83.

Bullying behavior is often underpinned by diverse personal motivations, reflecting a spectrum of psychological and emotional dynamics. In some cases, it arises from impulsivity or thoughtlessness, manifesting as reckless actions without deliberate intent. For others, bullying may serve as a response to boredom, driven by a need for stimulation or excitement.

A significant contributing factor lies in the bully's lack of awareness regarding the harm inflicted by their actions. Perpetrators may fail to perceive their behavior as morally or socially unacceptable, rationalizing it as inconsequential or justified. This distorted perception can lead them to believe that their targets deserve such treatment, often reinforcing aggressive tendencies.

Furthermore, bullying may be symptomatic of deeper emotional distress. For some children, it reflects underlying anxiety or dissatisfaction within the family environment, while for others, it serves as a maladaptive coping mechanism to process their own experiences of victimization. Children who have previously endured bullying are more likely to adopt aggressive roles as a means of regaining a sense of power and control.

Victims' emotional and social vulnerabilities also play a critical role in perpetuating the cycle of bullying. Traits such as excessive shyness, poor social skills, and limited peer connections often position individuals as easy targets. A lack of meaningful friendships and emotional resilience can exacerbate their susceptibility, creating conditions that facilitate continued victimization ⁽¹⁾.

4.3- Familial Factors

The family environment plays an instrumental role in shaping children's behavioral tendencies, particularly with regard to bullying. When aggressive behaviors in children are not met with effective and consistent non-physical disciplinary measures, such behaviors may be inadvertently reinforced. Additionally, children who witness bullying within the family—whether through observing parents or siblings engaging in aggression, or through familial victimization—are more likely to replicate similar patterns in their own interactions.

The use of punitive parenting methods, especially physical punishment, significantly contributes to the development of bullying behavior. Such practices instill a sense of dominance and control in children, leading them to associate aggression with power and self-worth. For these children, bullying becomes a means of asserting their presence and influence, often in response to feelings of insecurity or inadequacy ⁽²⁾ (Mohamed, 2000, p. 37).

The role of the family in shaping a child's character is unparalleled, as encapsulated in the prophetic saying: *"No child is born except upon the natural disposition; it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian."* The parental approach to discipline and the overall familial atmosphere profoundly impacts the likelihood of bullying behaviors. Evidence suggests that both bullies and victims often emerge from family contexts marked by harsh discipline, neglect, or emotional detachment. Bullies frequently report an absence of parental warmth and emotional support, while victims often endure overprotection or excessive parental control, which undermines their autonomy and resilience.

Numerous researchers underscore the significance of parental modeling and supervision in either curbing or exacerbating bullying behavior. Exposure to aggressive role models within the home, coupled with weak parental oversight, dramatically increases the probability of children adopting bullying as a behavioral strategy. Households dominated by physical punishment, authoritarian control, or emotional abuse produce children who internalize aggression as an effective means of establishing dominance and ensuring their survival in social settings.

Hesham El-Khouly (2004) identified parental rejection as one of the most significant predictors of bullying behavior, particularly among high school students. Similarly, harsh disciplinary practices and parental rejection are strong predictors of bullying tendencies in middle school children ⁽³⁾.

4.4- Social Factors

¹ Al-Subhiyeen, Ali, and Al-Qudah, Mohammed. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents* (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqa). Riyadh: Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2013.

² Mohamed, Adel Abdullah. *Behavioral Disorders in Children and Adolescents* (Al-Idtirabat Al-Sulukiyya Ladā Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqa). Cairo: Dar Al-Rashad, 2000. P. 37.

³ Dessoki, Majdy. *The Bullying Behavior Management Scale* (Miqyas Al-Ta'amul Ma'a -Suluk Al-Tanammur). Amman: Dar Jouna for Publishing and Distribution, 2016. P. 24.

Social factors represent a constellation of external influences that shape individual behavior, encompassing familial relationships, neighborhood dynamics, community interactions, peer group affiliations, media exposure, and the school environment. Within the familial context, parental treatment often oscillates between two extremes: excessive harshness, sometimes escalating to psychological terror, and overindulgence, where boundaries and discipline are virtually nonexistent. Violence within the family tends to perpetuate itself, creating a cyclical pattern that fosters aggression. Additional stressors, such as the absence of a father figure, domestic violence, maternal depression, and the psychological repercussions of parental divorce, can cultivate an environment ripe for the development of aggressive and bullying behaviors in children.

The interplay between home and school environments further compounds this issue. A culture of violence within the broader community frequently seeps into the school setting, normalizing aggressive behaviors among students. This phenomenon underscores the significant influence of three external components on students' socialization: family, community, and media ⁽¹⁾.

Economic and social conditions exacerbate this dynamic. Factors such as low family income, parental illiteracy, psychological deprivation, and chronic frustration can render students vulnerable to maladaptive coping mechanisms, including bullying. These conditions often alienate students, fostering a sense of disconnection from their external environment and driving them toward aggressive behaviors as an outlet for their frustration and discontent.

Media serves as a powerful conduit for social influence, often reinforcing or perpetuating aggressive behaviors. Krousi (2005) highlights how media platforms, when exploited for commercial or personal gain without regard for their societal impact, contribute significantly to the normalization of violence and bullying. Television programs, films, and other media content—whether directed at children or adolescents—wield a profound influence over young viewers' social behaviors. By stimulating the imagination, such content often encourages identification with characters, particularly those involved in action, adventure, or violence. In some instances, this identification evolves into mimicry, as youth emulate the behaviors of these characters, reinforcing the cycle of aggression and dominance ⁽²⁾.

4.5- School Factors

The school environment plays a critical role in shaping student behavior and can either mitigate or exacerbate bullying tendencies. Key influences include the school's overall culture, its physical environment, peer relationships, the role of teachers, and the absence of specialized committees to address behavioral issues. When teachers resort to violence against students—irrespective of the form it takes—the effects extend far beyond temporary compliance. Such compliance is often superficial, masking deep-seated resentment that can spread among classmates and, over time, across the broader student body. This shared hostility may escalate into overt acts of bullying, particularly when unchecked.

Additional factors that contribute to bullying within the school context include inappropriate or provocative behavior by certain teachers, low academic performance among students, and the negative influence of peer groups. Psychological instability, weak connections between the school and students' families, unfavorable socioeconomic conditions, and the teacher's lack of authority or inadequate subject knowledge further compound the issue. Together, these elements create an environment ripe for the emergence and persistence of bullying behaviors ⁽³⁾.

4.6- Personal Factors of the Bully

A variety of personal and contextual factors can predispose children to adopt bullying behaviors. These include:

- Inadequate self-confidence and poor interpersonal skills hinder healthy social interactions.
- Emotional distress often manifests in aggressive behavior as a coping mechanism.
- Children who experience mistreatment at home may channel their anger into bullying weaker peers.

¹ Abu Ghazal, Muawiya. "Bullying and Its Relationship with Feelings of Loneliness and Social Support (Al-Istaqwa' wa 'Alaqatuhu bi Al-Shu'ur bi Al-Wihda wa Al-Da'm Al-Ijima'i)." *Jordanian Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2009, pp. 89-113.

² Al-Subhiyeen, Ali, and Al-Qudah, Mohammed. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqa)*. Riyadh: Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2013. P, 45.

³ Ziad, Ahmed Rashid. *Clinical Psychology (Ilm Al-Nafs Al-'Iyad)*. Amman: Al-Warraq for Publishing and Distribution, 2014. P, 123.

- A lack of guidance within the home environment deprives children of examples of appropriate behavior.
- Beliefs that harshness and rigidity are essential for achieving social status among peers.
- Deep-seated mistrust of others, coupled with a desire for retribution and self-aggrandizement.
- Emotional dysregulation often leads bullies to externalize their frustrations, blaming others for their mistakes.
- Observing peers engage in bullying without consequences reinforces aggressive actions as socially acceptable.
- Exposure to television programs that glorify negative role models can inspire children to emulate such characters.
- The absence of clear rules or supervision allows bullying behaviors to flourish.⁽¹⁾

5. Bullying Through the Lens of Psychological and Sociological Theories: Interpretive Insights

The phenomenon of bullying has long captured the attention of psychologists and sociologists, who have sought to unpack its complexities through diverse theoretical lenses. Despite the shared objective of understanding aggression, interpretations of bullying vary widely, reflecting the distinct epistemological foundations of different schools of thought.

5.1- Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory, as articulated by Sigmund Freud, offers a profound framework for understanding aggression and bullying. Freud's conceptualization of human psychology revolves around two primary instincts: the life instincts (Eros), which drive love, creativity, and construction, and the death instincts (Thanatos), which underpin destruction, aggression, and violent impulses. Bullying, from this perspective, emerges as an external expression of the death instinct, manifesting in an individual's destructive urges directed either inward toward the self or outward toward others.

Freud posited that children are born with inherent aggressive drives that are instinctual in nature. Aggression and bullying, therefore, are interpreted as natural extensions of these primal urges. Additionally, Freud linked such behaviors to stages of psychosexual development, suggesting that aggression is especially pronounced during the oral, anal, and phallic stages. It is within the phallic stage, dominated by the Oedipal complex, that bullying tendencies often become most evident. Psychoanalysts widely agree that unresolved conflicts during this stage significantly contribute to the emergence and consolidation of aggressive and bullying behaviors in children.

Freud emphasized the critical role of the superego (*über-ich*)—the component of the psyche responsible for regulating morality and ethical behavior. Children raised in environments lacking consistent moral guidance are prone to developing weak or dysfunctional superegos. This deficiency often results in an impaired sense of guilt and moral accountability, leading them to perceive deviant or aggressive actions, including bullying, as socially acceptable or even admirable. For such individuals, bullying becomes a means of asserting power, which they might equate with heroism.

Freud further explored how repressed emotions and unmet instinctual needs contribute to the formation of aggressive tendencies. When societal or familial structures suppress a child's innate drives, the resulting frustration is often displaced, manifesting as aggression. While some bullying behaviors are spontaneous expressions of the *id*, others arise as reactions to unmet needs, such as deprivation or rejection. Emotional bonds within the individual's environment, however, can act as buffers, redirecting aggressive impulses outward rather than inward.

Psychoanalytic theory also highlights symbolic displacement, wherein aggressive energy is projected onto a surrogate target. Freud likened this process to primitive rituals, such as piercing a wax effigy to symbolically harm an adversary. Similarly, individuals channel their aggression toward substitute victims, externalizing their inner turmoil in ways that may feel cathartic yet perpetuate harm.⁽²⁾

5.2- Physiological Theory

¹ Dessoki, Majdy. The Bullying Behavior Management Scale (Miqyas Al-Ta'amul Ma'a -Suluk Al-Tanammur). Anman: Dar Jouna for Publishing and Distribution, 2016. P, 26.

² Saleh, Ikram. Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqln). Cairo: Dar Rawabit for Publishing and Information Technology, 2020.pp. 39-40.

Advocates of the physiological perspective contend that bullying behavior is markedly more prevalent among individuals with neurological impairments, particularly those involving brain damage. Such impairments are believed to disrupt the neurological systems responsible for regulating aggression and impulse control.

Additionally, some researchers within this framework attribute bullying to hormonal influences, particularly elevated levels of testosterone. Empirical studies suggest a positive correlation between increased testosterone concentrations in the bloodstream and heightened tendencies toward aggressive behaviors ⁽¹⁾.

5.3- Biological Theory

The biological perspective frames bullying as a behavior rooted in intrinsic physiological and neurological factors. Central to this theory is the role of the brain's frontal lobe, which governs emotional regulation and aggression. Research indicates that severing specific neural pathways in this region can diminish feelings of anger, tension, and predispositions toward violence, further highlighting its significance in controlling aggressive tendencies in children.

Beyond neural structures, biological theorists point to physical conditions such as fatigue, hunger, or the presence of physical pain as triggers for aggressive or bullying behaviors. These factors exacerbate emotional dysregulation, making individuals more prone to lash out.

Moreover, some researchers argue that aggression, including bullying and violent tendencies, is inherently instinctual. From this viewpoint, such behaviors are integral to an evolutionary survival mechanism, embedded within the biological makeup of humans. Aggression is perceived as a means to fulfill innate drives, particularly those related to possession, dominance, and the assertion of control ⁽²⁾.

5.4 Behavioral Theory

Behavioral theory posits that human behavior, including bullying, is shaped not by internal emotions or subjective experiences but by observable external actions governed by the principles of stimuli and responses. Within this framework, aggression is viewed as a learned behavior, acquired and reinforced through environmental interactions. Behavioral theorists emphasize that the entirety of human conduct, including aggressive tendencies, is shaped by external influences. Aggression becomes embedded in an individual's behavioral repertoire when reinforced by circumstances that reward such actions, particularly in contexts of frustration or unmet expectations ⁽³⁾.

In the specific context of bullying, the behavior tends to recur when positively reinforced. For example, if a child uses physical aggression, such as hitting, and successfully achieves their desired outcome—whether attention, compliance, or material gain—they are likely to replicate the behavior. In contrast, behaviors that do not receive reinforcement gradually fade, aligning with Thorndike's *Law of Effect*. This principle asserts that actions yielding satisfying or rewarding outcomes are more likely to be repeated, while those that do not are extinguished.

The reinforcement process plays a pivotal role in perpetuating bullying behavior. A bully often derives reinforcement from several sources, including peers who condone or encourage their actions and the reactions of their victims. For instance, in primary school settings, when a victim responds to bullying with visible signs of distress, such as crying, the bully experiences positive reinforcement, solidifying their perception of aggression as an effective strategy for achieving dominance or fulfilling their goals.

In rare instances, when a victim retaliates or defends themselves, the bully might experience negative reinforcement, which can discourage further aggressive actions. However, this scenario is uncommon. More frequently, the bully is emboldened by the implicit or explicit approval of peers, who often bolster the bully's self-perception of superiority. This external validation not only reinforces the aggressive behavior but also motivates the bully to construct additional scenarios where they can exert dominance over others. The

¹ Al-Subhiyeen, Ali, and Al-Qudah, Mohammed. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents* (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqa). Riyadh: Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2013. P, 50.

² Saleh, Ikram. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents* (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqa). Cairo: Dar Rawabit for Publishing and Information Technology, 2020.p, 40.

³ Radwan, Samer. *Mental Health* (Al-Sihha Al-Nafsiyya). Amman: Dar Al-Maisara for Publishing, Distribution, and Printing, 2007.P, 277.

reinforcement of their actions, whether through social validation or the successful attainment of their goals, sustains the cycle of bullying and further ingrains the behavior into their social interactions ⁽¹⁾.

5. Frustration-Aggression Theory

The frustration-aggression theory conceptualizes frustration as the psychological state experienced when an individual perceives an obstacle that prevents them from fulfilling their needs or achieving their goals, or when they anticipate the presence of such an obstacle in the future ⁽²⁾ (Abu Saad, 2015, p. 253).

Prominent theorists such as Neal Miller, Robert Sears, John Dollard, and Clark L. Hull have extensively explored this paradigm, focusing on the social dimensions of human behavior. At its core, the theory posits that frustration acts as a stimulus that inherently provokes aggression as a natural response. The intensity and persistence of this aggression are directly proportional to the degree and recurrence of the frustration experienced. When individuals are obstructed from attaining vital goals, they are likely to experience heightened frustration. This frustration can manifest in direct aggression against the source of the impediment if the individual feels confident enough to confront it, or in indirect aggression if fear of retaliation inhibits direct confrontation.

The theory further argues that frustration generates an aggressive drive, which seeks resolution through actions aimed at causing harm. This drive diminishes progressively after the aggressive act is carried out, a process referred to as *catharsis* or emotional release. Frustration elicits feelings of anger and injustice, creating a psychological predisposition toward aggressive behavior.

This dynamic is particularly evident in early childhood interactions, where most conflicts among preschool-aged children arise from competition over possessions or toys. When their biological or emotional desires are unmet, children often experience frustration, which frequently translates into aggressive responses. These behaviors highlight the role of frustration in precipitating acts of aggression as a means of resolving the tension caused by unfulfilled needs ⁽³⁾.

5.6- Humanistic Theory

The humanistic theory emphasizes guiding individuals toward self-actualization, focusing on the fulfillment of their potential and personal growth. Within this framework, the emergence of bullying behaviors is linked to unmet fundamental needs during childhood or adolescence, including biological necessities such as food, water, and basic security. The deprivation of these essential needs often results in feelings of insecurity, leading to weakened connections with peer groups and a diminished sense of belonging. This lack of social integration can significantly lower self-esteem, which, in turn, may manifest in maladaptive behaviors such as aggression and bullying as a means of compensating for unmet emotional and psychological needs ⁽⁴⁾.

5.7- Social Cognitive Theory (Social Learning)

Social cognitive theory, often referred to as social learning theory, posits that bullying behaviors are acquired through observational learning. Children model aggressive behaviors displayed by significant figures in their lives, such as parents, teachers, peers, or even characters in media like television programs. The likelihood of engaging in such behaviors increases when opportunities to replicate them arise.

The theory further argues that the consequences of observed behaviors play a critical role in determining whether aggression will be repeated. If a child receives punishment for imitating aggressive acts, they are less likely to replicate such actions. Conversely, if the behavior is rewarded—either materially, socially, or through achieved dominance—the child is more inclined to repeat it.

This theoretical approach highlights the importance of prior experiences and the motivational impact of learned outcomes. Research robustly supports the role of imitation and modeling in the acquisition of

¹ Dessoki, Majdy. The Bullying Behavior Management Scale (Miqyas Al-Ta'amul Ma'a -Suluk Al-Tanammur). Amman: Dar Jouna for Publishing and Distribution, 2016. P, 32.

² Abu Saad, Ahmed. Mental Health: A New Perspective (Al-Sihha Al-Nafsiyya: Manzur Jadid). Amman: Dar Al-Maisara for Publishing and Distribution, 2015.

³ Dessoki, Majdy. The Bullying Behavior Management Scale (Miqyas Al-Ta'amul Ma'a -Suluk Al-Tanammur). Amman: Dar Jouna for Publishing and Distribution, 2016. P, 34.

⁴ Saleh, Ikram. Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqln). Cairo: Dar Rawabit for Publishing and Information Technology, 2020.p, 44.

aggressive behaviors, demonstrating that children may exhibit bullying tendencies even in the absence of frustration or direct provocation ⁽¹⁾(Al-Subhiyeen & Al-Qudah, 2013, p. 51).

5.8- Cognitive Theory

Cognitive theory emphasizes the distinct differences in thought processes and cognitive patterns between bullies and their victims. Bullies tend to perceive themselves as having control over their environments and often frame their behaviors in a self-centered manner. They frequently justify their aggressive actions by claiming that their victims "deserve" the treatment, effectively normalizing their bullying behavior.

Dodge and Coie (1987) suggest that cognitive distortions are central to the mindset of bullies. These distortions often lead bullies to misinterpret others' intentions, erroneously perceiving them as hostile. Such flawed perceptions result in a heightened propensity for aggression. Additionally, bullies often display immature cognitive development, favoring one-dimensional thinking and maintaining overly positive attitudes toward violence.

Bullying behaviors are also tied to deficiencies in cognitive functioning. These include:

- Impairments in information processing.
- Difficulty maintaining attention and focus.
- Poor academic performance and achievement.
- Lack of sustained task engagement.
- Inefficient utilization of learning capacities.
- Deficiencies in memory retrieval and feedback mechanisms.
- Challenges in mental organization and strategic planning.
- Absence of foundational study and learning skills ⁽²⁾.

5.9- Rational Emotive Theory

Rational emotive theory emphasizes addressing the irrational beliefs and misconceptions held by students that underpin their bullying behavior. It posits that such behaviors stem from deeply ingrained yet flawed convictions, which must be identified, challenged, and replaced with logical, rational alternatives. Counselors employing this approach guide students to recognize that their harmful actions toward others are driven by erroneous thought patterns. Furthermore, they aim to help students internalize the understanding that exerting control and dominance over others does not equate to genuine strength or power; rather, it fosters resentment and alienation among peers.

As part of the counseling process, a significant focus is placed on transforming negative self-talk—internal monologues and beliefs that reinforce aggressive behavior. For instance, thoughts like, *"I must be the strongest and dominate others," "If I don't hit others, they will hit me,"* or *"Hurt the weak so the strong will fear you,"* are systematically replaced with constructive alternatives, such as: *"I will gain respect and recognition by helping others and refraining from harm, making me a valued and admired individual."*

Students are encouraged to engage in reflective exercises that involve articulating their internal thoughts when confronted with situations that trigger the desire to bully. By voicing these thoughts, they become more aware of their underlying motivations and their responsibility for their actions. For example, a student might express, *"This student is smaller than I am, and I am stronger."* Counselors then work to dismantle such reasoning, emphasizing that logical and ethical frameworks do not condone stronger individuals overpowering weaker ones. They also highlight that strength is finite and relative, underscoring the futility of aggressive dominance as a sustainable approach to interpersonal interactions.

Counselors further challenge students to consider the irrationality of their beliefs, focusing on key principles such as:

- **Happiness:** A person's happiness is directly linked to their thoughts and actions. Rational, positive thinking fosters emotional well-being and a sense of security, while irrational thought patterns often result in psychological distress and dissatisfaction.

¹ Al-Subhiyeen, Ali, and Al-Qudah, Mohammed. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents* (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqln). Riyadh: Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, 2013. P, 51.

² Abu Al-Diyar, Masad. *The Psychology of Bullying: Between Theory and Practice* (Sikulujiyyat Al-Tanammur Bayn Al-Nazariyya wa Al-Tatbiq). Kuwait: Kuwait National Library, 2013. P,81.

- **Unhappiness and social rejection:** Negative thinking and internalized self-talk lead to poor behavior toward others, which in turn causes feelings of unhappiness and social isolation.

Corey (1996) asserts that rational emotive theory equips individuals with the skills and tools necessary to identify irrational thoughts and replace them with constructive, rational ones. This cognitive restructuring allows individuals to modify their emotional responses to challenging situations, fostering healthier interpersonal dynamics.⁽¹⁾

6. Psychological and Social Impacts

The ramifications of bullying are profoundly serious, with the potential to escalate to life-threatening consequences. Qmoore, from the Anti-Bullying Center at Trinity College Dublin, highlights an expanding body of research demonstrating that psychologically healthy individuals—whether children or adults—who experience bullying are significantly more susceptible to developing stress-induced disorders. In severe cases, this vulnerability can culminate in suicidal ideation or attempts. Victims of bullying often bear emotional and psychological scars that endure throughout their lives, and in extreme instances, they may contemplate ending their lives as a form of rejecting societal norms, condemning perceived injustices, or expressing despair regarding their future. This form of psychological distress can result from social oppression, acute alienation, and the absence of adequate emotional support. Some individuals may even view suicide as a means of retaliating against both themselves and their environment. Alarming statistics reveal that in the United Kingdom alone, between 15 and 25 children die by suicide each year due to bullying.

In school environments, victims of bullying often endure chronic anxiety, sadness, and an overarching fear of their aggressors. Their thoughts are frequently consumed by anticipation of future encounters with bullies. Such students may also report physical symptoms resulting from direct assaults, such as hitting or kicking. Fear of repeated victimization drives many to avoid participating in school activities or frequenting spaces like playgrounds and restrooms, where they feel most vulnerable. This avoidance deprives them of valuable social and educational opportunities, leading to long-term developmental deficits. Even when present in the classroom, their ability to concentrate on academic tasks is compromised, with severe consequences for their overall educational outcomes. Over time, some victims may develop risk-taking tendencies or exhibit violent behaviors as maladaptive coping mechanisms.

Prolonged exposure to bullying exacerbates symptoms of anxiety and depression, significantly impairing victims' social relationships. Consequently, bullied individuals often withdraw from social interactions, exhibit uncooperative behavior, and struggle to form or maintain friendships. Their isolation is compounded by the avoidance of peers, who may stigmatize them, further amplifying their emotional pain, social rejection, and diminished self-worth. These factors contribute to a sense of exclusion and lower their perceived social standing, which may further impede their psychological and emotional recovery.

Academically, bullying has a pronounced negative impact on victims' performance. Frequent mockery and rejection—stemming from their inability to defend themselves against aggressors—often result in feelings of humiliation and resignation. Victims expend considerable mental energy worrying about how to avoid future incidents, leaving little capacity for academic focus or engagement. Their preoccupation with self-protection frequently leads to disengagement from educational activities, particularly among those already struggling academically.⁽²⁾

Conclusion:

Bullying has emerged as a critical behavioral phenomenon, drawing increasing attention from scholars and practitioners over the past two decades. This intensified focus reflects the pervasive nature of bullying across various domains of life, underscoring its profound implications for both individuals and broader social structures. As a multifaceted issue, bullying manifests in diverse forms and degrees, shaped by historical, cultural, and societal contexts. Alarming, its impact has escalated in recent years, posing significant challenges to numerous communities worldwide.

¹ Saleh, Ikram. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqln)*. Cairo: Dar Rawabit for Publishing and Information Technology, 2020.pp, 41-42.

² Saleh, Ikram. *Bullying Behavior in Children and Adolescents (Suluk Al-Tanammur 'Ind Al-Atfal wa Al-Murahiqln)*. Cairo: Dar Rawabit for Publishing and Information Technology, 2020.pp, 20-21.

What amplifies the severity of this issue is its disproportionate prevalence among children and adolescents—demographics widely regarded as the bedrock of any society's progress and development. The rise in violent behaviors within these groups threatens not only their personal well-being but also the broader social fabric. This alarming trend has necessitated rigorous academic inquiry across various disciplines, despite the relatively recent emergence of systematic research on bullying.

Scholars from diverse fields, including psychology, sociology, and medicine, have undertaken the critical task of deciphering the underlying causes and mechanisms of bullying. While theoretical frameworks and cultural perspectives vary, these disciplines converge in their commitment to unraveling the phenomenon's psychological, social, and economic dimensions. Through comprehensive analysis, researchers have developed robust scientific approaches to elucidate the dynamics of bullying, evaluate its long-term repercussions, and propose evidence-based interventions.

The collective efforts of these academic endeavors have yielded valuable strategies for mitigating the prevalence and severity of bullying. By addressing its root causes, fostering preventive measures, and promoting practical solutions, societies can safeguard vulnerable populations while nurturing environments conducive to healthy interpersonal and social development. Such insights serve as a foundation for building resilient communities and ensuring sustainable progress in the face of this persistent challenge.

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