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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **The Problems of Bullying and Their Psychological Effects on Students in Iraqi Schools**

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**| ABSTRACT**

This study tries to illustrate kinds of bullying incidents, their causes, consequences or effects on Iraqi students especially the psychological ones, features of bullies and victims, settings and timings in which these incidents occur as well as possible solutions. Worth mentioning that the current study relies on the results of the practical study conducted by the researcher AL-Ghizy (2022) in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate entitled "Bullying Among Students of Intermediate Schools in Al-Najaf: A Societal Study" which is published in (2024) by GRIN publisher. Hence, the current study is a qualitative descriptive study that objectives the following: illustrating kinds of bullying occurred in Iraqi schools, clarifying causes of bullying among Iraqi students, giving the characteristics of bullies and victims in Iraqi intermediate schools, shedding the light on the consequences and problems of school bullying, explaining the settings and timings of bullying in Iraqi schools, and suggesting the possible solutions for these bullying incidents. However, this study reveals the following conclusions: kinds of bullying incidents that are mostly occurred in schools especially Iraqi Schools are either direct (verbal and physical), indirect or psychological. The consequences of bullying can be either psychological or internalizing, psychosomatic problems like school avoidance or hating school, externalizing problems, or school environmental problems. Bullying in general and school bullying specifically can be caused by the following factors: social factors, psychological, mental and individual factors, school environmental factors like dropping out school, and societal and cultural factors. The characteristics of bullies are: they often feel jealous, powerful, riotous, hate, grudge, chaotic, ironic and aggressive; while victims often feel anxiety, depression, worried, anger, stress, insecure, confused, annoyed, and anger. The settings and timings of bullying incidents occurred in Iraqi schools can be in the school before the teacher arrives the class and in the rests when students are gathering in the schools' yards, outside school when students are in their way to school, and when they come back homes or leave school. Finally, the suggested solutions include making anti-bullying policies clear; increasing the awareness of bullying; including bullying as part of the curriculum; giving the students awareness lectures; increasing the contact between the students' families and the school staff; monitoring the school yards especially in the breaks, etc.

**| KEYWORDS**

bullying, its types, causes, consequences, school bullying, characteristics of bullies/victims, prevention and intervention

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### **1. Introduction**

Despite the fact that bullying has been a significant issue for a long time, but it does not receive a considerable attention until the 1970s. Olweus is the first scholar who concentrates on this subject and contributes scientific data to the literature. He is regarded as a pioneer of the field and has elicited immense study interest from scholars across several countries and continents (Sanders, 2004). Bullying is a serious and expanding issue in several schools throughout the world. It is an intentional act intended to cause psychological and physical harm. It involves the deliberate, harmful behaviour of an someone or group

towards one or more persons and involves the intricate relationship between social position and power. "Bullying incorporates a wide range of aggressive and social behaviors such as name-calling, extortion, physical violence, slander, group exclusion, damage to property, and verbal intimidation" (Marsh et al., 2004, p. 64).

Students often describe bullying as "getting picked on" because of how prevalent it is in society. This way of thinking about bullying means that the issue affects more than just the one or two pupils or students who are constantly picked on by their classmates. While in other instances, the level of violence caused by peer harassment has reached a critical point, leading to significant injuries or even murder (Nishina, 2004, p. 36). Even if students do not act out as a bully, victim, or bully-victim, they may nonetheless be negatively impacted by school bullying. Researchers have discovered a negative correlation between high levels of peer victimization and a school's climate, which in turn leads to lower levels of student participation (Nishina, 2004).

## **2. What is Bullying**

There is no elusive, clear and precise definition can cover the word "bullying" from all sides. In this regard, the term bullying is still controversial for most scholars in this field. For Olweus (1993, p. 9) and Olweus (2010, p. 11) bullying is also known as "victimization", and several scholars adopt Olweus's view in that "a person is being bullied or victimized when he/she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he/she has difficulty defending himself/herself". Hence, Olweus refers to bullying as a "subset of aggressive behavior" (Olweus, 1993, p. 9), (Sanders, 2004, p. 3), (Olweus, 2010, p. 11) and (Donnerstein, 2011, p. 274). Olweus's focuses on negative and aggressive acts that are repeatedly occurred over time. On the other hand, (Gladden et al., 2014) cited in (Simon & Olson 2014, p. 10) define bullying as "any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm".

Accordingly, others like Sanders (2004, p. 4) who asserts that bullying is "a subset of aggressive behavior that involves an intention to hurt others". Whereas, Smith & Sharp (1994, p. 2) claim that bullying is "a systematic abuse of power". Their idea of bullying contains "an imbalance of power" and the repeated use of power. In his narrow view, Ma (2001, p. 352) refers to bullying as "a physical harassment". Additionally, Lohmann & Taylor (2013, p.1) state that bullying is a "form of abuse and a repetitive, aggressive behavior" that is intended to harm others. Furthermore, Rubin et al. (2006, p. 593) point out that bullying can refer to "acts of verbal and physical aggression on the part of an individual that are chronic and directed toward particular peers". Finally, Tattum & Tattum (1992) cited in Rigby (2002, p. 27) consider bullying as "a wilful conscious desire to hurt another and put him/her under stress", whereas, Krahé (2013, p. 148) asserts that bullying is defined by two characteristics: a. It entails "an imbalance of power" among the bully and the victim due to variations in physical strength or hierarchical standing, and b. it is executed consistently and over an extended period.

## **3. General Characteristics of Bullying**

As we mentioned earlier in that bullying and victimization are synonymous. Sometime, the two concepts "bullying and violence" can also be used synonymously. Thus, although bullying is undoubtedly an aggressive behaviour, "not all aggression is bullying", and "bullying is not always aggression" (Simon & Olson 2014, p. 11). Hence, (Olweus, 1993, pp. 9-10), (Holmes & Holmes-Longergan, 2004, pp. 113-4) and (Simon & Olson 2014, pp. 10-11) mention that bullying can be characterized by the following:

1. Bullying involves unwanted aggressive behavior. The aggressive behavior can be verbal, physical, or psychological, and it is often marked by hostility or aggression.
2. Bullying is the deliberate implementation of detrimental behaviours that are either threatened or actual with the aim to hurt or upset the victim emotionally, physically, or socially.
3. Bullying implies "an imbalance of power". Hence, there is often a perceived or real imbalance of power. This could be physical strength, social status, or access to information that can be used to harm the victim. Physical traits like size, age, or strength differences are just one example of the many characteristics that can define power differences. Other characteristics include popularity or demographic traits like belonging to "a majority or minority racial or ethnic group". Disparities in social, academic, or other talents or abilities; access to resources; the capacity to send messages or images online to a whole person body; etc. are further examples of power disparities.
4. Bullying is bullying a repetitive behavior. Bullying is typically repeated over time, creating ongoing patterns or actions of abuse.
5. Bullying can be committed by a group of people or by one bully. In addition, bullying victims can be a group, or a single person.

#### 4.Types of Bullying

Based on his definition of bullying, Olweus classifies aggression or negative actions of bullying into: a-verbal, including threatening language, derogatory name-calling, and other verbal harassment forms; b-physical, encompassing actions like "hitting, punching, and kicking"; and c-indirect, involving behaviours like "making faces, dirty gestures, social exclusion, and noncompliance with another individual's requests" Olweus (1993, p. 9) and Hanewinkel (2004, p. 84).

Accordingly, three categories of bullying or aggressiveness are distinguished by Rivers & Smith (1994) cited in Sanders (2004, p. 5): a-direct physical, which includes concrete actions like "kicking, pushing, and hitting"; b-direct verbal abuse, such as "threats and name-calling"; and the least recognized and hardest to prove is c-indirect, which includes actions like gossiping and storytelling. Additionally, Dodge (1991, p. 201) and Salmivalli & Peets (2009, p. 323) refer to two kinds of bullying or aggression which are "proactive and reactive". "Proactive bullying" or aggressiveness is defined by intentional, domineering, and coercive behaviours aimed at achieving specific objectives. Whereas, anger and defensive responses to frustration are a part of "reactive bullying" or aggression. They elucidate that an individual exhibiting proactive bullying is unfeeling and employs aggression to achieve objectives, whereas reactive individuals frequently misinterpret social signals and ascribe hostile intents to their counterparts.

Furthermore, Rigby et al. (2004, pp. 5-6) refer to five kinds of bullying which are "physical, verbal, sexual, racial harassment and indirect". They explain that "indirect bullying" contains deliberate exclusion and the dissemination of rumors with the intent to harm someone. Similarly, Ma (2004, p. 19) distinguishes five kinds of bullying: "physical", "verbal", "psychological" like "thicking out the tongue, eye-rolling and ignoring"; "social" like "manipulating friendship and ostracizing"; and "sexual bullying". Additionally, Salmivalli & Peets (2009, pp. 324-25) and Lohmann & Taylor (2013, p. 1) divide bullying into five kinds:

- *"Verbal:* such as name-calling, mocking, threatening, gossiping or spreading rumors".
- *"Physical:* such as hitting, punching, pushing, stealing personal property, or any other forms of physical aggressions".
- *"Social:* such as ignoring, isolating, or excluding peers from social activities".
- *"Psychological:* such as stalking, taunting, harassing or intimidating".
- *"Cyber:* such as electronic devices and internet which include texting, e-mailing, instant messaging, posting on social media, or uploading lewd or offensive pictures".

#### 5.School Bullying

Bullying can be regarded as a societal issue for centuries. Despite being a serious issue for millennia, it does not "receive attention until the 1970s", when the Swedish researcher Olweus concentrates on this important subject by providing scientific evidence in Scandinavia and stimulating considerable study interest (Smith & Morita, 1999, p. 2). Moreover, bullying has increased in frequency and volatility "in the 1990s and the current decade", and it now takes place in a variety of settings and manifestations. It happens in a variety of settings, including households, businesses, jails, schools, assisted living facilities, etc. (Smith & Sharp, 1994, p. 2).

However, the scientific investigation of the characteristics and incidence of school bullying commenced with Olweus's research in the 1970s in Scandinavia (Rigby et al., 2004). In this regard, Smith & Sharp (1994) declare that school bullying happens in a variety of educational contexts particularly boarding institutions. It impacts all individuals inside the school, including those who are victimized, the perpetrators, witnesses of the bullying, and students who see or hear about the incidents. It also fosters an atmosphere of fear and worry that serves as a hindrance to learning. Preschool is a common starting point for bullying which can continue into adulthood. This trait is worrisome because many adults, including school teachers, may face bullying at some point in their lives. It is also one of the most constant human behaviours (Ross, 2002).

School bullying can take different sorts such as "physical, verbal, relational, sexual and cyber". Consequently, instructors and their students are more likely to consider physical bullying as more harmful and destructive than other types of bullying. School bullying can be motivated by a variety of personal characteristics including "gender, sexual orientation, gender, race, and religion or culture, etc.". Furthermore, bullying can be regarded as an interaction of risk variables employed at four separate levels: "individual characteristics, interpersonal relationships, community contexts and wider society" (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008, pp. 21-2).

In this context, Smith & Sharp (1994, p. 6) elucidate that school bullying could be manifested as "direct and physical" like "hitting, tripping up, taking belongings"; or "direct and verbal" like "name-calling, taunting, race or disability"; or "indirect" like "passing nasty stories, rumors or excluding someone from social groups". In terms of gender, these distinctions have been perceived as "physical" (predominantly by boys) versus "verbal" (predominantly by girls). Furthermore, boys typically employ more direct ways, whereas girls favour more oblique approaches.

Several of latest studies that focus on school bullying like (Moffitt, 1993; Coie & Dodge, 1998; Loeber, Green, Lahey, & Kalb, 2000; and Boivin, Hymel, & Hodges, 2001) imply that “children and adolescents” who are aggressive may be vulnerable to a variety of detrimental consequences. These studies found that students who are rejected by their colleagues are at greater risk of engaging in bullying behaviors, often as a maladaptive attempt to gain social dominance or attention. Additional research indicates that bullying among students may result in enduring risks for various “psychological and social adjustment challenges”, such as “depression, social anxiety, low self-esteem, and peer rejection”. Other studies reveal that students who regularly encounter peer aggression are more likely than their more socially adept peers to report bodily symptoms, both psychosomatic and otherwise. Finally, there are “direct and indirect” correlations have been identified between bullying and markers of school performance, such as diminished school appreciation, reduced grade point averages, and heightened absenteeism (Nishina, 2004, p. 39).

## **6. Causes of School Bullying**

Scholars argue that many factors can cause or contribute to bullying, such as “social factors”. For instance, bullies' families often struggle with “financial and social problems, lack family structure (including parental conflict), and have a cold emotional environment, all of which isolate bullies from their parents”. Additionally, families of bullies are frequently strict, aggressive, and rejecting (Ma, 2004, p. 21). Psychological and individual factors also can lead to bullying for example, bullies and people with poor self-esteem attempt to centre their sense of self-worth around physical superiority, strength, and power. Additionally, students may engage in harmful behaviours to defend and strengthen their self-concept, which can become a means of validating “self-identity and compensating for frustration in other areas”. Hence, bullies may have low self-concepts which could encourage them to “engage in bullying behaviours” in order to improve some aspects of their self-concept. Moreover, empirical research suggests that people who are more aggressive may have either a high or low self-concept (Marsh et al., 2004, p. 72).

Mental factors such as worrying, depression, anger and frustration also can cause bullying (Ma, 2004). Furthermore, there are also school environmental factors such as lack of supervision, lack of monitoring, lack of guidance, academic stress and jealousy, etc. (Cowie, 2004). One of his studies about bullying in Norwegian schools, Dan Olweus found that the population and the size of class and school are assumed to be more exposed to problems and bullying (Olweus, 1993). Finally, there may be also societal and cultural factors like “societal norms, cultural attitudes like the desire to be aggressive toward others in one culture, but aggression may be met with disapproval in another, in addition to other differences in age, race, gender, religion, economic status, etc.” (Cowie, 2004, pp.146-7).

## **7. Characteristics of Bullies and Victims**

Lohmann & Taylor (2013, pp. 1-2) illustrate some characteristics of bullies like “they feel popular, jealous, powerful, threatened, insecure and they want to escape their problems”. Conversely, the impact of bullies on their victims might result in: “a-emotional problems such as (stress, anger, depression or anxiety), b-physical problems such as (headaches, stomach cramps, vomiting, loss of appetit or skin breakouts), c-retreating from friends and social activities, d-decline in schoolwork, and e-nightmares or poor sleep”.

According to Olweus (1999, pp. 16-17), aggressive behaviour towards peers is a defining feature of bullies. Some people, even bullies, view violence in a more positive light than others. They have an intense desire to dominate people and tend to act impulsively. They respond physically and show little empathy for victims. Moreover, “victims are anxious and insecure, and they are often cautious, sensitive and quiet, and when they are attacked by other students, they react by crying”. They experience “low self-esteem” and maintain a pessimistic perspective on their circumstances and themselves. They frequently perceive themselves as failures and experience feelings of stupidity, humiliation, and unattractiveness. Victims occasionally experience feelings of isolation and abandonment. They exhibit no aggressive or taunting behavior (Olweus, 1999, p.15). Accordingly, (Ma, 2004, pp. 21-23) gives some “individual characteristics of victims” like “academic characteristics”, such as inadequate academic performance in school and “inferior social intelligence, social cognition, and, in particular, mental skills” in comparison to bullies; social characteristics, such as the tendency for victims to maintain close relationships with their parents (particularly mothers in the case of passive male victims), whereas, families of bullies often suffer from financial and social difficulties, exhibit a lack of familial structure (including parental discord), and maintain a frigid emotional atmosphere, all of which alienate bullies from their parents; physical characteristics in that victims are “weak, disabled, overweight, or physically unattractive”; interpersonal characteristics in that victims are rarely initiated prosocial activities, they sometimes receive inadequate support to “develop effective interpersonal relationships”.

Furthermore, Olweus (1993, p. 32) mentions some characteristics of victims “students” at schools like: they exhibit greater anxiety and insecurity compared to their peers; they tend to be cautious, sensitive, and reserved; they frequently respond to peer aggression with tears and withdrawal. They experience diminished self-esteem and possess a pessimistic perception of themselves and their circumstances. They frequently perceive themselves as failures and experience feelings of stupidity, embarrassment, and unattractiveness; also, they feel isolated and neglected in school. As for bullies, Olweus (1993, p. 34)

mentions a distinctive feature of bullies which is their aggression toward others. Compared to other students, bullies show “a more positive attitude towards violence” and the employment of violent methods. Impulsivity and a strong desire to control people are some traits that define them. They frequently have a fairly positive opinion of themselves and show little empathy for victims. These traits are derived on research conducted by Olweus and others.

### 8. Consequences, Problems and Effects of Bullying

The effects of bullying contain not just the harm done to the victims but also the long-term implications for students who bully others, the impact on bystanders, the impact on the general school climate, and the costs to society (Simon & Olson, 2014). However, bullying can lead to some psychological consequences on victims such as “depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, peer rejection, anxiety, suicidal ideation and other psychosomatic complaints” (Cook et al., 2010, p. 66). Several studies like Copeland et al., 2013; Faris and Felmlee, 2011; and Tfofi et al., 2011 point out that being bullied can cause a range of problems such as “*internalizing problems*” including “depression, anxiety, agoraphobia, panic disorder, and low self-esteem”. Other studies like (Buhs et al., 2006, 2010; and Gini and Pozzoli, 2013) refer to “*psychosomatic problems*” including “headaches, stomach pain, sleeping problems, and poor appetite”; and “*school avoidance and lower academic performance*”. Other researchers like (Reijntjes et al., 2010) mention that bullying can lead to some *externalizing behaviors* including aggression, delinquency, and misconduct (Simon & Olson, 2014, p. 17).

Some other researchers like (Hertz et al., 2013) have come to the conclusion that bullying and behaviours associated to suicide are related, or they have investigated the causal relationships between bullying and subsequent suicidal thoughts, attempts, or suicide deaths. Despite the fact that there are several individual, interpersonal, social, and cultural elements that can raise one's risk of suicide, the causes of suicide are complicated. In addition, scholars like (Olweus, 1993) and (Sourander et al., 2007) have also reveal that “students who engage in bullying” during middle school four times more likely than their peers to have three or more criminal convictions in young adulthood. Furthermore, boys who frequently bullied others exhibited a heightened risk of future criminal behaviour, particularly when accompanied by significant psychiatric symptoms (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004, p. 160) and (Simon & Olson, 2014, pp. 17-18).

Additionally, studies indicate that bystanders may have serious consequences as a result of bullying. “Bystanders report feeling anxiety and insecurity”. Their feelings stem from fears of retaliation which often prevent bystanders from seeking help. Accordingly, Limber cited in (Simon & Olson, 2014, p. 18) reports that school climate may result from widespread bullying or bullying that is not sufficiently addressed in a school setting. *School climate* can be defined as “the quality and character of school life, including collective beliefs, values, and attitudes”. Hence, researchers like (Cohen et al., 2009) find that one of the four crucial aspects of “school climate” is safety which includes attitudes regarding bullying and violence (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004, p.160).

Additionally, the prevention of bullying in schools is linked to decreased bullying incidents and enhanced social climate within the institution. Finally, fear of being bullied can result in victims or students dropping out of school as well as bullying can have a significant negative impact on society. Individuals engaged in bullying are regarded as “overconsumers” of “societal health and social services” (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004, p. 160) and (Simon & Olson, 2014, p. 18).

### 9. Prevention and Intervention of School Bullying

Predetermined features of a school including “grade level, size of student enrollment, class size, racial and ethnic composition, and school location” are referred to as school context. Hence, to decrease and prevent bullying in the educational setting, one must first investigate the correlates and predictors of such incidents. Several studies have concentrated on the individual-level correlations between bullies and victims. More general studies on delinquency and school disorder, however, have emphasized some school-level variables, such as “school location and size, school social organization, and school norms and values” (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004, p. 161).

On the other hand, the majority of bullying interventions take a “whole school approach”, focusing on the entire school, while the majority of research on bullying “predictors and correlates” focuses on the individual (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004, p. 161) and (Dupper, 2013, p. 73). Components of these prevention programs encompass enhancing awareness of bullying, clarifying anti-bullying regulations, and integrating bullying into the school curriculum. Such interventions aim to enhance the school's environment by engaging all members to build and disseminate anti-bullying norms throughout the “entire school community”. Furthermore, such interventions are founded on the importance of student connection and communal school organization, first by establishing anti-bullying norms as a component of the school community's shared set of values. Through participation and involvement rise, relationships become more cooperative and helpful, and school members grow closer to the institution as they adopt these standards and strive to address the bullying issue. All of these adjustments improve a school's overall community organization and reduce bullying and other forms of disorder there (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004, p. 169).

However, numerous “bullying prevention programs” exist to mitigate bullying among children, enhance the social atmosphere of classrooms, and diminish antisocial behaviours. One of such programs is Olweus’s (1993) “bullying prevention program”. This prevention tool aims to “improve the climate” at schools. The program aims to create a school “environment characterized by warm, positive interest, and involvement from adults, ... firms limits to unacceptable behavior, ... [and], in cases of violations of limits and rules, nonhostile nonphysical sanctions”. The objective of this program is to mitigate victimization and bullying issues among primary and secondary pupils. Additionally, it is founded on four principles: Adults should exhibit warmth and genuine interest in their children; establish firm boundaries about inappropriate behaviour; implement consistent nonphysical negative consequences for rule violations; and serve as authoritative figures and positive role models (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004, p. 170) and (Dupper, 2013, pp. 83-4).

Moreover, Garandeau et al. (2010, p. 131) mention that effective interventions must include four key elements: 1. uphold a shared ideology developed by the school's members; 2. Try to bring about change through various aspects of the “school social ecology”, such as the “students' social network”, the “formal and informal relationships” between the school and its staff, the relationships between students and the community, and the liaisons between the school and the community; 3. Involve “administrators, teachers, students, and parents” in the implementation of thoughtful school policies and curriculum; and 4. Evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions by regularly measuring “students' perceptions of the school's social climate”, their social networks and social status, and their experiences with “bullying, sexual harassment, and ethnic relations”. Finally, there should be workshops in schools to guide and increase students' awareness to the risk of bullying and the problems it causes on their lives.

### **10. Bullying Among Students of Intermediate Schools in Iraq**

One of the societal practical studies that examined school bullying was conducted by the researcher Mohammed Jassim Dakhil Al-Ghizzy entitled “*Bullying Among Students of Intermediate Schools in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate*” in 2022 and it was published in 2024 by GRIN publisher. This study tried to discover types of bullying incidents occurred between students of “Intermediate Schools in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf Governorate”; characteristics of bullies and victims; and settings and timings of bullying. The method used in this study was a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected from (10) schools (5) for boys and (5) for girls. These schools located in different places some were located in rural and other in urban areas. The method of gathering data was face-to-face interviews by giving the students certain questions about types of bullying, features of bullies/victims, and the situations “time and place” in which bullying was happened. The researcher recorded the responses through observation. The overall number of participants was (2000) participants, (1000) boy and (1000) girls from various stages (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) intermediate classes. The researcher also interviewed the staff in each school to know their ideas and what they saw of bullying incidents in their schools. The results revealed the following: we will start from the staff interviews, the teachers answers discovered that there were daily incidents of bullying occurred in their schools ranges between (2-5) incidents every day and took forms of direct such as (hitting, pushing, name-calling, threats and kicking) and indirect like spreading rumors. The staff explained the reasons behind occurring such bullying incidents including parental neglect in monitoring their children, insufficient supervision in schoolyards, lower-achieving students attempting to disrupt others to compensate for their academic deficiencies, inadequate time allocated for orientation on the gravity of this issue, and the absence of qualified bullying instructors in certain Iraqi schools.

On the other hand, students' findings indicated that there were (1-3) bullying episodes occurred in the first and second classes of boys and girls, whereas, (1-2) incidents occurred in third classes. This suggests that bullying incidences are significantly influenced by the age and knowledge of the students. For both males and females, bullying was less common among older students than among younger ones. Boys' students assert that kinds of bullying that they exposed to are: “verbal” like “threatening, calling nasty names, and mocking”; “physical” like “hitting, pushing, and stealing personal properties of others”; and “psychological” like “stalking, eye-rolling, and intimidating”. Additionally, they claim that physical bullying is the most common kind of bullying that occurs among them. Male students also add that bullies often feel “powerful, riotous, jealous, aggressive, and chaotic”; whereas their victims usually feel “depression, anger, anxiety, stress, worried and insecure”. They also explain that those incidents are likely to occur “in the class before the teacher arrives, in their way to school when they came walking, in the breaks when they were grouping in the schools' yards, and after school when they came back homes”. Additionally, female students reveal that they also exposed to various kinds of verbal and indirect bullying incidents like “name-calling, gossiping, exclusion from a group, and rumors”. They add that the most common kinds are “name-calling and rumors”. Girls in all intermediate classes exhibited a greater tendency to be ironic than boys and typically endeavored to avoid all forms of physical bullying due to the conservative traditions of Iraqi society. The features of bullies in the schools of girls were “jealous, hate, grudge and ironic; whereas victims were often felt depression, anxiety, confused, annoyed, and anger”. Finally, bullying in girls' schools typically took place in the schoolyard and within the classroom, during breaks, particularly extended ones, and at the start and end of classes.

## 11. Conclusions

From what is previously mentioned, we conclude the following:

1. Types of bullying that are mostly occurred in schools especially Iraqi Schools are either *direct* with both its subtypes (*verbal and physical*) such as (hitting, pushing, name-calling, threats, mocking, kicking, and stealing personal properties of others); *indirect* like (spreading rumors, gossiping, making faces and dirty gestures); or *psychological* such as (stalking, eye-rolling, and intimidating).
2. The factors that can cause bullying broadly and school bullying specifically can be either *social factors* like (families did not follow up their sons and daughters, financial and social struggles or problems, and absence of familial structure "parental conflict"); *psychological, mental and individual factors* like (high or low-self-esteem, reaffirming self-identity, worrying, depression, anger and frustration); *school environmental factors* such as lack of supervision, the size of classes schools and the increased number of students in each class or school, lack of monitoring, lack of guidance, academic stress and jealousy, the absence of school yards monitoring; students who had lower academic levels attempt to create a muddle or mess in order to bridge the academic disparity; there is insufficient time to provide orientation lectures regarding the significance of this phenomenon; and there are not specialists instructors in most Iraqi schools; or *societal and cultural factors* like (societal norms, cultural attitudes) like the desire to act aggressively towards people in one society, yet in another, such behaviour may be frowned upon, in addition to other differences in age, race, gender, religion, economic status, etc.
3. Bullying is a serious societal problem especially in school context because of its further consequences and effects on students' life inside and outside the school. These consequences can be either *psychological or internalizing* problems like (depression, loneliness, anxiety, panic disorder, and low self-esteem); or *psychosomatic problems* like (headaches, stomach pain, sleeping problems, school avoidance, and lower academic achievement); *externalizing problems* like (aggression, delinquency, and misconduct); or *school environmental problems* like (school climate, dropping out school, fear, lack of concentration and school hating).
4. The characteristics of bullies and victims in Iraqi schools are as follows: "bullies often feel powerful, riotous, jealous, hate, grudge, ironic, aggressive, and chaotic"; whereas their victims usually feel "depression, anger, anxiety, stress, worried, insecure, confused, annoyed, and anger".
5. The settings and timings in which bullying is occurred in Iraqi schools can be in the school before the teacher arrives the class and in the rests when students are grouping in the schools yards, outside school when students are in their way to school and when they come back homes or leave school, as well as in the beginning and the end of lessons.
6. The suggested solutions for bullying incidents in Iraqi Schools include enhancing awareness of bullying; clarifying anti-bullying regulations; integrating bullying into the school curriculum; giving the students awareness lectures; enlist administrators, teachers, students, and parents to implement thoughtful school policies and classroom curriculum; increasing the contact between the students' parents and the school staff; monitoring the school yards especially in the breaks; advice and guidance the students to avoid this serious phenomenon; and finally, there should be workshops in schools to guide and increase students' awareness to the risk of bullying and the problems it causes on their further lives.

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