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## Bullying impact on teenage girls: A study of Mean girls

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### Abstract

Bullying has become a general and daily phenomenon experienced by all members of society due to the conditions of wars and economic crises, to which society has been exposed for decades and is continuing to this day. This phenomenon has extended to young and old individuals and groups. School bullying is sometimes considered a continuation of domestic violence, and the exposure of primary, middle, and secondary school students to school violence in its various forms affects their personalities, especially in psychological aspects. The student's lack of attention and preoccupation with disturbing, disruptive behaviors inside the classroom cause a lot of learning time to be lost during the class. The teacher's preoccupation with curbing this work using methods that harm the progress of the educational process can lead to distorted forms of relationships and behaviors and produce patterns of psychologically and emotionally disturbed personalities. It leads to bullying, whether at school or in other social institutions. Bullying is such a fundamental problem in

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our schools and society because it impacts a large number of students of all races, genders, and socioeconomic statuses. Here, the researcher identified types of bullying and described the impacts of bullying in the "Mean Girls" movie.

**Keywords:** School Bullying, Types of Bullying, Treating Bullying, Bullying Teenage Girls.

## تأثير التنمر على الفتيات المراهقات: دراسة للفتيات المتوسطات

زينة يونس خلف

مديرة تربية صلاح الدين

### المستخلص

أصبح التنمر ظاهرة عامة يومية يعيشها كافة أفراد المجتمع نتيجة ظروف الحروب والأزمات الاقتصادية، والتي تعرض لها المجتمع منذ عقود ومازال مستمراً حتى يومنا هذا، وقد امتدت هذه الظاهرة إلى الصغار والكبار، الأفراد والجماعات. يعتبر التنمر المدرسي في بعض الأحيان استمراراً للعنف الأسري، كما أن تعرض طلاب المدارس الابتدائية والمتوسطة والثانوية للعنف المدرسي بأشكاله المختلفة يؤثر على شخصياتهم، خاصة في الجوانب النفسية. يؤدي عدم اهتمام الطلاب وانشغالهم بالسلوكيات المزعجة داخل الفصل الدراسي إلى ضياع الكثير من وقت التعلم أثناء الفصل، كما أن انشغال المعلم بكبح هذا العمل باستخدام أساليب تضر بسير العملية التعليمية يمكن أن يؤدي إلى تشويبه. أشكال العلاقات والسلوكيات وتنتج أنماطاً من الشخصيات المضطربة نفسياً وعاطفياً. وهذا يؤدي إلى التنمر سواء في المدرسة أو في المؤسسات الاجتماعية الأخرى. يعد التنمر مشكلة رئيسية في مدارسنا ومجتمعنا لأنه يؤثر على عدد كبير من الطلاب من جميع الأجناس والأصناف والحالات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية. وهنا قامت الباحثة بالتعرف على أنواع التنمر ووصف آثار التنمر في فيلم "الفتيات اللثيمات".

## **1. Introduction**

Bullying is very common matter nowadays. It is dangerous and harmful for the individual and the society. In their research, *Bullying Concept in Richard III and Kawakami's Haven*, Mohammed and Abdullah (2023) claim that:

Bullying has been linked to a variety of significant issues. Teens who harass are more likely to engage in delinquent activities. Vandalism and violence are both in and out of school. They are also at risk of abusing substances and dropping out. Bullies and victims of Bullying are more likely to suffer from depression than their peers who have not been bullied. (378)

The research, because of the importance of this issue, deals with the phenomenon of bullying in schools, and choosing this topic and paying attention to it is to draw attention to the weakness of our educational institutions in dealing with school bullying incidents—through stories conveyed by children about bullying incidents they witnessed here and there in their schools. It is an important topic from the point of view because of its connection to the institution. One of the most important institutions of society is the educational institution and its devastating effects - if neglected - on the entire educational process, and the impact may extend to society.

Bullying is a phenomenon that is made worse by ignoring it and keeping quiet about it, which also hurts society. To eradicate bullying in schools, a secure, encouraging, and socially nurturing atmosphere must be established. A strong, educated, balanced family is the fortress and first line of defense for the child against the evils of this phenomenon—after God. While opinions on bullying differ, bullying in schools seems to be an issue that affects everyone. Bullying affects millions of schoolchildren annually. Cornell (2011, 12) explained that when those responsible for the three primary, middle, and secondary levels in the United States of America, specifically in Virginia, conducted an annual survey, they discovered that bullying comes in first place in that it is one of the topics that most attract attention among students. More than 81% of primary and middle schools and 62% of secondary schools reported having deterrent programs for school bullying. McCrom (2004, 6) pointed out that bullying is not linked to a specific age or the type of bully, male or female, but it reaches its peak in the middle and high school levels. He added that the danger of bullying lies, whether in the bully himself or in the victim in the future, and that about 60% of those who committed crimes at the age of 24 were described as having practiced bullying around the time of middle school.

Bullying at schools is now a widespread phenomenon worldwide. When bullying occurs, a student or a collection of students may repeatedly act aggressively toward a victim or victims who are unable to protect themselves. One can begin implementing anti-bullying tactics once one has a basic understanding of bullying. However, because bullying is a

complex idea in and of itself, it requires a thorough understanding of its underlying theories for it to be well understood. Hence, the consensus theoretical understanding is that some specific theoretical concepts of bullying in schools should be explored (Paudel Subedi 1). The concept of bullying is considered one of the relatively recent concepts, and this may be due to the recent recognition of it as a type of violence. Few studies deal with this concept in general, and it is difficult to refer to an accurate measure to determine the behaviors that can be considered bullying and distinguish them from the behaviors that occur transiently. However, all studies that dealt with the concept of bullying agree that it is an abuse of power or force to practice aggressive behaviors from a student or a group of students towards another student who is less in strength and ability. These practices are characterized by repetition, so what happens once cannot be considered bullying in light of the concept of bullying (Sayhi 77). The topic of bullying is one of the recurring topics, as it is present continuously in the school and community environment, but in different forms and shapes as it differs according to the place, time, and individual differences between individuals and their physical and physical health, and the way they are bullied or subjected to school bullying. The topic of school bullying has also received the attention of researchers in the field of psychology, especially those interested in studying peer relationships, each according to his interest and logic of thinking. For this reason, there are different and multiple visions regarding this behavior. A team of researchers believes that school bullying is only a description of all the problems that occur among schoolchildren, which is practiced by one of them against another who is helpless and unable to confront or defend himself, and that this behavior that the bully directs against another may take multiple forms, physical, emotional, verbal, direct, or indirect (Khoj 191).

### **1.1. Methodology:**

In our study, we relied on the theoretical reality of bullying, guided by theoretical methods based on school bullying and its negative effects on the psychological and social health of students, whether they are bullies or victims of bullying. School bullying is a behavioral problem that has serious effects on people. When a child falls victim to school bullying, we find him suffering from many problems. Multiple psychological and social problems such as social isolation, low self-esteem, absence from school, decline in academic achievement, etc. As for the victim of bullying, he suffers from anxiety, low self-esteem, and sadness, feels unsupported by others, withdraws from social engagements, and lacks social interaction in various social situations because the grounded theory approach explicitly focuses on interaction, meaning, and social processes (Charmaz 2006). According to Mishna, Saini, and Solomon (2009), theory-based qualitative research on bullying provides an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of collective implications in bullying as well as participants' perspectives on peer harassment. He is "able to detect important discourses and nuances" (1222) of bullying that may be less evident in large-scale studies. Victims of school bullying have a particularly well-established theory. Types

of bullying are reflected in the movie characters of the mean teenage girls (Rogina and Cady), such as verbal, social, and psychological.

## **2. Definition: The Concept of Bullying**

Bullying: It is a form of violence by a strong person repeatedly towards another person who is weaker than him. This is to get what he wants from the people around him. Sometimes, it appears in the form of comparison and calibration. It is a form of harm directed for psychological harm. "Abuse is often verbal, but sometimes it may be accompanied by some physical exposure, display or attack, directed at psychological abuse by an individual or group towards another individual or group who often have weaker capabilities to defend themselves ."Bullying may come in different forms: School and electronic verbal, physical or even gestures, or other more subtle methods of coercion such as manipulation. It should be noted that the Islamic religion forbids bullying, and many verses and hadiths confirm this. It is worth noting that bullying is not limited to adults but rather occurs among children. Fortunately, there are ways to treat it, and most countries have included a law related to bullying and punishment for it to limit its spread (Mohamed 10)

Salmivalli (1268) indicated that the first beginning of the term bullying was in the late seventies in promotion and Sweden. Olweus was the central figure, and the first program to stop bullying began in Norway in 1983 as a result of the many cases of suicide among students who were victims of bullying. Moreover, since then, Researchers in many countries have studied the nature and spread of bullying among schoolchildren, and the first term that appeared for bullying, which is the criminal gang, mobbing, has been rejected, a word that refers to a group attack on a person from another group, so this term has been changed to bullying, which is the dominant term in most research. Olweus (1996 p.134) defines it as the child's repeated exposure to adverse events from one or more people, and the adverse events take place through physical contact, words, or other ways. Bullying, as defined by Olweus, a pioneer within the field, is a term that is widely used. Bullying is the repeated showing of negative behavior by a person toward a specific individual or group of people to cause harm to them (Olweus 1994, p.1173). Bullying is simply defined as a pattern of repeated aggressive behavior between the bully and their victim and also includes abuse of authority. It is a subcategory of violent behavior that includes victim-harmed intent. Bullying does have three main characteristics: the desire to cause harm, the frequency with which it occurs, and the unequal power relationships between the bullies and the victims. Five components make up bullying: a premeditated intent to hurt, a bad result, the use of direct or indirect force, repetition, and uneven power (James 4).

Bullying at schools seems to be a worldwide problem. Bullying affects millions of schoolchildren each year. According to a study, the harassment of school children by their peers has had adverse effects on their health as well as their academic performance as well as has various long-lasting consequences. Children who are bullied or their victims are susceptible to mental illness as well as low self-esteem. According to studies, suicide is the third leading cause of death for children under the age of 14. Similar to this, bullying and suicide have a high correlation. Compared to nonbullies, teenagers who engage in bullying are at greater risk for criminal and cruel acts in adulthood. Compared to non-bullied children, bullied kids have more excellent rates of occurrence and prevalence of anticipatory anxiety, depression, drug usage, as well as substance abuse (Klomek 286).

### **3. Manifestations of school bullying**

During early adolescence, the function and importance of the peer group can change dramatically. Adolescents who seek autonomy and independence from their parents shift and join their peers to discuss problems, feelings, fears, and doubts, increasing the importance of time spent with friends. Other peers for social support are associated with increasing pressure to reach social status. In adolescence, peer groups become stratified, and issues of acceptance and popularity become increasingly important. Bullying behavior manifests itself in various forms that are characterized by control and imposition on others, directing hostility towards them directly and indirectly, and harming them in several ways, including beating, harshness, sarcasm, cursing with words, using offensive words, or looking at the other in the way of contempt and directing insults that make the other feel belittled. It may be individual or collective aggression, which is a behavior by which a person or a group of people tends to cause harm to other individuals, groups, or things. (Al-Saleh 24).

#### **3.1. Types of bullying**

Several forms of bullying can be summarized as follows:

**Physical bullying:** It means using physical force against the victim, such as hitting, slapping, kicking, knocking on the ground, dragging or forcing him to do something, kicking, attacking the victim, and destroying private property. (Massad 58)

**Verbal bullying:** It is the verbal abuse with which the bully attacks the person being bullied. As words call it, most of the time, they do not apply to the victim in reality, and he may describe himself with qualities that do not exist in him. To influence the victim and make him feel bad, and at this stage, the bully tries to convince the victim that he is the wrong person, such as mocking the victim in terms of his taste in the music he listens to. This reduces the victim's self-respect and taste. The bully tries to convince the victim that his choices are wrong and inappropriate, but unfortunately, most of the time, verbal bullying is not dealt with seriously. Such as physical abuse, although it is a problem that

may cause them psychological suffering that will last with them for the rest of their lives. Verbal bullying is divided into several parts, namely: Such as cursing, cursing, threats, violence, false rumors, giving titles and names to an individual, giving an ethnic designation, and destructive criticism. (Ibid 58)

**School bullying:** It is the bullying that the student is exposed to repeatedly, and it may be verbal bullying, or the student may be subjected to physical violence and beating by another student, and usually the bully who is characterized by physical strength attacks another person who is characterized by physical weakness and psychological weakness, which affects him psychologically in the long run (Khoj 192)

**Emotional and psychological bullying:** The bully seeks to belittle the victim by ignoring, Isolating, sarcasm, contempt of the victim, alienating from peers, and aggressively staring at him. ( Massad 57)

**Cyberbullying** is bullying that takes place online on social networking sites. It can also happen more frequently these days thanks to increasingly advanced technologies like the Internet, gaming consoles, and cellphones, such as spreading rumors online, making threats or statements, disseminating false information or embarrassing images, posing as someone else, and contacting someone over text message or phone in an attempt to embarrass them (Pearl Ben 1).

#### **4. Axes for Treating Bullying**

Below, we will present three axes for treating school bullying. The first relates to the school, the second to the family, and the third to the role of the victim.

##### **4.1. The First Axis - the School**

One of the most critical steps that the school must follow as an educational institution is to inform students of what bullying is, the reasons for preventing it, and the school's anti-bullying policy by arranging meetings with students in the classroom and seeking the assistance of the most qualified school psychologists and social specialists, concerning clarifying the punishment. Which will fall on anyone who violates the rules specified in the school, mentioning how they will be used and the necessity of adhering to that, and affirming the announcement of the right of school members to be completely free from falling under the penalty of bullying, while employing the principles of religious education and promoting the peaceful spiritual aspect, and trying to integrate students. In positive activities with each other, placing a group of teachers as observers in places where bullying appears so as not to allow any unacceptable behaviors to appear, and trying to create a positive school climate in which a feeling of safety, respect, and trust prevails, which increases students' interconnection with each other and their sense of belonging. To the school, as well as consolidating good relations between teachers and students based on

respect and mutual trust, which in turn encourages students to achieve academic achievement efficiently (Mahmoud 3)

#### **4.2. The Second Axis - the Family**

Parents must participate with the school and work together in addressing bullying behavior, as the family must play its role in sound education without resorting to violence or severe beating in order to achieve this, and be careful to follow up on children in the different stages of their lives, and develop A clear and strict punishment in the event of repetition of any unacceptable behavior may consist of depriving children of the things they love, constant talking and communicating with them on several levels, educating them and participating in daily life activities, in addition to unifying the way the parents deal with the child so that neither of them imposes the punishment. The other devotes himself to pampering and redirecting the child, if he is a bully, to behave in a manner that is appropriate and socially and religiously acceptable. There is no harm in calling parents to school to reach an effective alliance on how to best deal with both the bully child and the victim alike (Sayhi 90)

#### **4.3. The third Axis - the Role of the Victim in Treating Bullying**

The remedial measures carried out by the school psychologist, with the participation of the family, are to raise the victim's morale, enhance his ability to confront the bully and train him not to respond to the bully because when he is exposed to neglect, he may lose the desire to continue his bullying. The victim must never initiate quarrels and must demonstrate self-confidence through implemented programs aimed at developing that confidence or learning how to respond firmly when any of her peers seek to bully her. Here, it is worth noting that the victim should be encouraged to disclose the bullying behavior that may occur to him without shame, fear, or hesitation because sometimes being subjected to bullying may negatively affect their academic achievement and cause them to lose the desire to go to school as a form of escape. In this regard as well, parents must educate their children who are bystanders about the necessity of reporting any bullying incident they witness and not condoning it or reacting to it with damaging silence, denial, concealment, laughter, or responding with violence or fanaticism and fueling the desire for revenge (Mahmoud 4)

### **5. Discussion**

As hypothesized, the results indicate that female characters (teenage girls) are more likely to engage in aggressive and bullying behaviors compared to male characters in teen films. This depiction and objectification of teenage girls in teen films tend to play into the stereotype of "teenage" girls as "Mean girls." Girls' bullying differs in style and tools from boys' bullying, as boys tend to use physical violence. In contrast, girls tend to exclude and isolate the victim, which is called relational aggression (a type of aggression in which



damage occurs to someone's relationship or social status), even though both genders can use both methods in different proportions. Girls tend to bully other girls indirectly or by using relational aggression through verbal assault, such as name-calling, spreading rumors, gossip, ostracism, or exclusion from the group. Girls also hide their bullying, claiming to be kind, which makes it challenging to detect girl-on-girl bullying. Like boys, girls also gather around a leader who is the driver and guide of bullying. However, the group of girls is unlike the group of boys, where the leader is exposed to competition and displacement in the event of displaying inappropriate behavior, so they do not trust each other within the group of bullies, not for a moment. As a result, the girl controlling the bullying ring feels anxious. From losing to another girl within the same group! The group will then rally around the new bully leader, and the term "mean girls" was coined to define the group of female bullies who gather around a leader. Girls are also exposed to sexual bullying by others, such as falling victim to sexual rumors or being exposed to insulting and sexual messages. Girls tend to work according to well-thought-out plans in their bullying! They do not act individually but rather gather in aggressive bullying groups, while bullying among boys may be a spur of the moment (Gordon 1).

According to a British government study published in 2018, Girls are more vulnerable to bullying than boys in schools. They fall victim to school bullying twice as much as boys may face by receiving cyberbullying and social exclusion. Although the results revealed that bullying in general has decreased, this has not been reflected in school bullying against girls, as it is difficult to detect. It is also difficult for supervisors to monitor and limit it, and while bullying in the form of physical aggression has declined, relational bullying has continued to increase in the form of name-calling and social exclusion (Adams 3)

This section includes an analysis and study of bullying among schoolgirls, especially teenage girls, and its effect on their personalities in the movie "Mean Girls."

**"Karen: Do you wanna do something fun? Wanna go to Taco Bell?"**

**Regina: I can't go to taco bell, I'm on an cab-protein diet. GOD Karen you're so stupid!" (Fey 64)**

From the above text, Karen asks Regina, "wanna do something fun? You wanna go to Taco Bell?" However, Regina replied, with harsh words and inappropriate language, "God, Karen, you are so stupid." Because of Regina, Karen felt very sad, but Regina thought Karen was very stupid at that time. Including the word stupidity in verbal bullying means that this assault is verbal abuse because it makes her sad. One of the impacts of bullying is sadness. Sadness itself is a sign of poor psychological health. Low psychological well-being in and of itself encompasses what is generally considered to be unpleasant mental states.

**"Aaron : Oh, come on.**

**Regina : Well, who can blame her?**

**I mean, you're gorgeous.**

**And OK, look, I'm not**

**saying**

**she's a stalker, but she**

**saved this Kleenex you**

**used and she said she's**

**gonna do some kind of**

**African voodoo with it to make you like her.**

**Aaron : What?" (Fey 39)**

In the above conversation about Regina and Aaron talking about Cady, this text shows one of the types of social bullying: lying, spreading false rumors, and spreading gossip. Regina claimed that Cady had saved the Kleenex that Aaron had used and planned to use it in some form of African voodoo to win Aaron's favor. Cady, though, never mentioned it. In the statement, "She's a stalker, but she saved this Kleenex you used, and she said she's gonna do some kind of African voodoo with it to make you like her," As a result of Regina spreading false information about Cady, it also included social bullying. Regina made such a statement because she didn't want to have any rivals, and she didn't want to lose or break Aaron's heart. After that, Aaron began to believe all of Regina's claims. Cady was devastated and very sad hearing and seeing about it. Feeling sad is one of the effects of bullying and leads to a decrease in mental health.

**"Gretchen: Regina, we have to talk to you.**

**Regina: Is butter a carb?**

**Cady: Yes.**

**Gretchen: Regina, you're wearing sweatpants. It's Monday.**

**Regina: So...?**

**Karen: So that's against the rules, and you can't sit with us.**

**Regina: Whatever. Those rules aren't real.**

**Karen: They were real that day I wore a vest!**

**Regina: Because that vest was disgusting!" (Fey 71)**

In this scene, Regina is insulting Karen's clothing. "According to Mean Girls, the Plastics observe a rigid clothing code inside their group, and the punishment for breaking it is being barred from sitting with them for lunch ."As Regina begins to gain excessive weight due to Cady's Canteen bars, she can only wear sweatpants; nothing else fits. However, on that particular Monday, sweatpants are not permitted, and chaos spreads when Karen calls her out on it during lunch; turmoil ensues, leading to one of the most famous Regina George quotes, which is unforgettable. The rules "aren't real," Regina says, but Karen points out that she was expelled for donning a vest. Regina replies sarcastically, "Because that vest was disgusting!" It is one of the types of psychological bullying, such as bad looks, stalking, manipulation, and telling the victim that the bullying is his imagination. In this dialogue, insulting comments about clothes, weight, and appearance are used. Here, Regina is manipulated and deceived by eating Calteen bars to become a person who is being bullied because of her weight gain.

**“ Regina: Oh my God, I love your skirt! Where did you get it?**

**Lea Edwards: It was my mom's in the '80s.**

**Regina: Vintage, so adorable.**

**Lea Edwards: Thanks!**

**Regina: That Is The Ugliest Effing Skirt I've Ever Seen"**

**Regina Showing Her True Colors" (Fey 48)**

In this conversation, Regina shows her true colors. It is one of the types of school bullying among teenage students and the use of inappropriate methods and phrases due to jealousy and hatred. A sign of absolute evil and corruption is a person who can easily say one thing to someone's face and then say something entirely different behind their back without any remorse. In an early "Mean Girls" scene, Regina supplements Cady's bracelet, but Cady later realizes that perhaps Regina was lying. One of Regina George's snarkiest quotes follows her praise of a schoolgirl's skirt, calling it vintage, charming, and adorable. After the girl has left, she turns to "Cady" for a brief moment and says, "That is the ugliest effing skirt I have ever seen." Cady remembers the incident at that moment with her bracelet, and Regina invents one of the best-known "Mean Girls" idioms.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In all schools, bullying is a realistic and widespread phenomenon, with many adverse effects on the general climate of the school, as it is controlled by many factors, including

the family factor, when manifestations of violence and bullying prevail in the family. The school factor also has a significant impact through abusing and neglecting students, in addition to other factors such as means of The media and the community of comrades.

Although perceptions of bullying vary from person to person, bullying in schools appears to be a universal problem. Millions of schoolchildren are victims of bullying every year. Therefore, efforts must be intensified and combined in order to create a healthy learning and pedagogical environment, which would contribute to increasing the educational return of the school on the one hand and provide a general and healthy atmosphere and climate for the students inside the school, which increases the degree of their enthusiasm and desire for academic achievement on the one hand, and within the family and the general environment by providing all Conditions for a sense of security and reassurance for all children, as this would reflect positively on all of society.

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