Verbal abuse among boy students in the Secondary Schools of Najaf, Iraq

حيدر محمد سعدان محمد رضا الحساني

ماجستير لغة الإنكليزية، مدير ثانوية المتفوقين في النجف الاشرف، المديرية العامة للتربية في النجف الاشرف، النجف، العراق

Assist. Lecturer: Hayder M.Saadan M.Ridha

M.A. in English language and literature, Headmaster of Al-Mutafawqeen Secondary School in Najaf, General Directorate of Education in Najaf, Iraq.

haideralhassani1983@gmail.com

Abstract

The aim of the current research is to determine the degree of prevalence of verbal abuse among secondary school students in Najaf governorate, Iraq, explaining the causes of this phenomenon from the point of view of the researcher, and presenting a set of proposals to confront this phenomenon and reduce it. The researcher used the descriptive and analytical method for its relevance to this type of studies. A questionnaire was designed by the help of educational counselors. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 students from different secondary schools aged from 12 to 14 yrs. Data for the questionnaire were analyzed using statistical methods and frequencies.

The study reached results, the most important of which are: That the phenomenon of verbal bullying is widespread in secondary schools to a large extent, and that the most vital reason behind its spread is family interruption, the parent's cultural level, and the socialization style of the bullying student as for ways to confront this phenomenon, it is necessary to prepare a training and qualification program for students who are bullying and their participation in extra-curricular activities, and the need for continuous follow-up by the school administration, teachers, the educational counselor and the family to improve student performance and eliminate this phenomenon. The study recommended the necessity for the Ministry of Education to generalize the student mediation program and apply it on a wider scale in all academic levels up to universities, and to build educational programs to help students face the behavioral problems they live in.

The data analyses show that 79.5 % of the boy students demonstrated that their colleagues never abused them verbally. 9.75% of them showed that sometimes they are exposed to verbal attack by some boys. 8.3% stated that they are often exposed to verbal abuse while 2.35% showed that they are very often attacked verbally by their mates.

Keywords: verbal abuse, bullying, aggressive, phenomenon, violation, rumors, threatening, participants, etc.

الملخص

الهدف من البحث الحالي هو تحديد درجة انتشار الإساءة اللفظية بين طلاب المرحلة الثانوية في محافظة النجف في العراق، وشرح أسباب هذه الظاهرة من وجهة نظر الباحث، وتقديم مجموعة من المقترحات لمواجهة تلك الظاهرة والحد منها. استخدم الباحث الوصف والتحليل لارتباطه بهذا النوع من الدراسات. تم تصميم استبيان بمساعدة المرشدين التربويين. تم توزيع الاستبيان على ١٠٠ طالب وطالبة من مختلف المدارس الثانوية تتراوح أعمارهم بين ١٢ و١٤سنة. تم تحليل بيانات الاستبيان باستخدام الأساليب الإحصائية المتسلسلة.

توصلت الدراسة إلى نتائج أهمها: أن ظاهرة التنمر اللفظي منتشرة في المدارس الثانوية إلى حد كبير، وأن أهم سبب لانتشارها هو الانقطاع الأسري، والمستوى الثقافي للأبوين، وأسلوب التنشئة الاجتماعية لدى الطالب المتنمر أما عن سبل مواجهة هذه

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الظاهرة فلا بد من إعداد برنامج تدريب وتأهيل للطلاب الذين يتعرضون للتنمر ومشاركتهم في الأنشطة اللاصفية، وضرورة المتابعة المستمرة من قبل إدارة المدرسة والمعلمين. يقوم المرشد التربوي والأسرة بتحسين أداء الطالب والقضاء على هذه الظاهرة. وأوصت الدراسة بضرورة قيام وزارة التربية والتعليم بتعميم برنامج الوساطة الطلابية وتطبيقه على نطاق أوسع في جميع المستويات الأكاديمية حتى الجامعات، وبناء برامج تعليمية لمساعدة الطلاب على مواجهة المشكلات السلوكية التي يعيشونها.

تظهر تحليلات البيانات أن ٧٩,٥٪ من الطلاب الذكور أظهروا أن زملائهم لم يسيئوا إليهم لفظيًا أبدًا. أظهر ٩,٧٥٪ منهم تعرضهم أحيانًا للهجوم اللفظي من قبل بعض الأولاد. صرح ٨,٣٪ أنهم غالبًا ما يتعرضون للإساءة اللفظية بينما أظهر ٢,٣٥٪ أنهم كثيرًا ما يتعرضون للهجوم اللفظي من قبل زملائهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التنمر اللفظي، التنمر، العنف، ظاهرة، انتهاك، الاشاعات، التهديد، المشاركين.

1-Introduction

Verbal abuse is a form of aggressive, unbalanced behavior, and it occurs frequently among adolescent students in the school environment. This verbal abuse depends on control and submission between two parties, one of them is a bully, who is the one who assaults and the other is the victim. The verbal aggression is carried towards others, whether it is physical, verbal, psychological, social, or electronic is one of the problems that have many negative effects, whether on the bully or victim of bullying or the school environment. Throughout this research, we shed light on the concept of verbal bullying in secondary schools in Najaf, in order to find out the causes of this phenomenon, which has become widespread in our schools, and work to reduce it through some suggestions and recommendations.

1-1 Research Problem

Verbal abuse in secondary schools is one of the serious problems that threaten school safety as a whole because it harms students physically and psychologically and works to create chaos and delay the education process, although, there is little concentration in this problem in terms of its prevalence, causes, diagnostic tools, or managing methods to reduce it.

Hence the research problem can be formulated in the following main question:

The following sub-questions emerge:

1 - What is the fact of the phenomenon of verbal abuse in schools among secondary school students in Najaf governorate?

2-How common is the verbal bullying phenomenon among secondary school students?

3- What are the reasons that lead to the use of verbal abuse among students?

4- What are the ways to confront the phenomenon of verbal abuse among secondary school students?

1-2 Research aims

This research aims to:

1-Identifying the most prominent manifestations of verbal bullying among secondary school students.

2-Identify the reasons that lead to verbal bullying among students.

3-Providing recommendations that can contribute to eliminating the phenomenon of verbal bullying in schools.

1-3 Research limits

This study is restricted to the phenomenon of verbal abuse behavior among secondary school students in Najaf governorate, Iraq and ways of confrontation. The research was applied in the first semester of the 2020/2021 academic year. The researcher used the descriptive and analytical method for its relevance to this type of studies. The questionnaire was distributed to 100 students from different secondary schools aged from 12 to 14 yrs.

2- Literature Review
2-1 Bullying

It is the infliction of harm to one or more individuals, physically, psychologically, emotionally or **verbally**. It also includes the threat of physical or bodily harm with weapons, as well as the violation of civil rights. It also includes sexual harassment, and bullying is called intimidation, that is, the behavior that occurs from an imbalance of two individuals, the first is called the abusive and the other is called the victim, and bullying or intimidation is not similar to the conflict, so bullying occurs between two individuals who do not have the same physical or mental capabilities, so the victim is not expected to respond to the harm attached, while the conflict may be the two parties with the same physical or mental abilities. (Infante 1995 & Evans 1992: 1,6)

2-2 Verbal abuse

It is insulting, cursing, swearing, threatening, spreading false rumors, with unpopular titles and names about the victim, or giving an ethnic description.

2-3 Verbal pattern

This type of bullying is done through speaking, titles and names in the call, spreading rumors, threatening someone, and mocking others. (Davies & Harre 1990) All these forms are verbal bullying. Verbal abuse is one of the most common categories of bullying, so verbal oppression is considered the main weapon that bullies use in their voice against others in many cases, it is usually used by girls, boycott and social exclusion to control others, and boys impose control over other individuals and demonstrate their superiority and strength by using verbal

techniques to control, as they practice the use of words when they want to avoid the troubles that could be it comes with bullying physically hurting another person.(Casarjian2002p.38)

Verbal bullying occurs in many different forms among teens students with different levels of victimization, as it includes, giving nicknames to others, reprimanding, mocking, or indirect bullying such as ignoring or creating falsehoods, rumors, and others.(Besag,1989,p.10-29)

2-4 The most important causes of verbal Abuse

- The excessive way in which the children were brought up in the family since childhood.
- Using this behavior to deal with difficult situations at home, such as divorce and marginalization and anger.
- Some boys/girls believe that their behavior is due to the fact that they come from violent families.
- The pressure of the comrades group.
- The negative effects of the media and scenes of violence.
- Violent school environment. (Eliasson, M. A., Isaksson, K., & Laflamme, L. 2007)

2-5 Reasons of Verbal Abuse

psychologists attribute the verbal abuse behavior of students to a number of reasons, including:

- The abuse student's desire to gain attention.
- They don't feel safe.
- A way to express feelings of jealousy or to vent the frustration.
- Watching violent films.
- Encouraging the children's parents to respond verbally to those who assault them.
- The bully always chooses his victim among the students who are physically weak and who is easy to threaten or whoever he has no friends and struggles to fend for himself. (Robert. Fuller, 2013)

2-6 The Main features of Verbal Abuse

There are motivating opinions in verbal abuse such as the following points:

1- Verbal abuse actually harms the child's personality and abilities.

2- Verbal abuse may be implicit, such as hidden comments or brainwashing, or it may be explicit, such as insults, blame, and accusation.

3- Verbal abuse surreptitiously: this means that the person may insult others with his knowledge or consciousness.

4- Verbal abuse is not the result of an occasion: it is an issue in itself, any problem can be solved after a long dispute, but the issue of verbal abuse will remain long until it is resolved.

(John, Smith & Sutton,1999: 2)

2-7 Research Methodology

The researcher followed the descriptive and analytical method for its suitability like for this type of researches.

3- Research participants

Research participants were 100 students from 5 secondary schools in Najaf governorate.

3-1 Research Tools

which consisted of 20 statements to obtain the   The researcher designed a questionnaire information about the study. The questionnaire was presented to a group of secondary school

students in various parts of the governorate in Najaf (5 secondary schools,20 students per school). The number of students reached 100 students as the table below.

Table No. (1) shows the schools in which the study was applied

No.	Name of schools for boys	No. of students	students ages
1	Al-Mutafawqeen secondary school for boys	20	12-14
2	Al-Kindi secondary school for boys	20	12-14
3	Baneeqia secondary school for boys	20	12-14
4	Al-Rowad secondary school for boys	20	12-14
5	Al-Tahreer secondary school for boys	20	12-14

3-2 Statistical methods:

The research team used the statistical packages program, iterations, and the statistical equations program (Excel).

3-3 Data analysis and the results

❖ The answer of the first question in the study which states **"What is the fact of the phenomenon of verbal abuse in schools among secondary school students in Najaf governorate?"** is revealed in the questionnaire.

The answers of the boys in the questionnaire of verbal abuse.
**1/I am being criticized sharply by some of my colleagues.**

never
sometimes
often
very often

ent 1 shows that 77% of the students out of 100 are never criticized sharply by their colleagues, 10% of students are sometimes criticized sharply among others while 11% are often criticized but only 2% of the students shows that they are very often criticized sharply.

2/I hear obscene words from some of the students.

never
sometimes
often
very often

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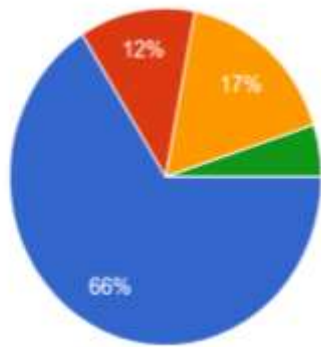
nt 2 shows that 66% of the students out of 100 are never heard obscene words by their colleagues, 12% of students are sometimes heard offensive words while 17% are often heard such words but 5% of the students shows that they are very often heard obscene words.

3/I am subjected to ridicule if I express an opinion.

never
sometimes
often
very often

e
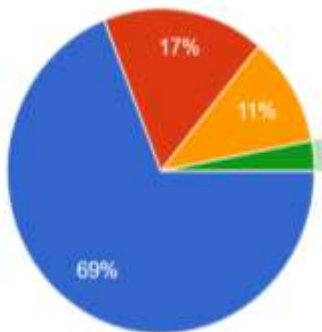
nt 3 shows that 69% of the students out of 100 are never subjected to ridicule if they express opinions before their colleagues, 17% are sometimes subjected to mockery while 11% are often subjected to such behaver but 3% of the students shows that they are very subjected to ridicule if they express their opinions.
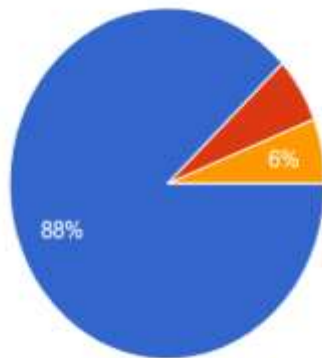
4/Some call me the titles I hate.
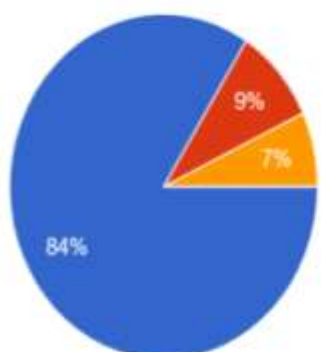
never
sometimes
often
very often

atement 4 shows that 84% of the students out of 100 are never heard their colleagues calling them with obscene titles, 9% are sometimes heard others calling them abuse titles while 7% of the participants are often heard such obscene titles.

5/Some call me harsh words in front of the students.

- never
- sometimes
- often
- very often

e

nt 5 shows that 88% of the students out of 100 are never heard harsh words by their colloquies in front of others, 5% are sometimes heard harsh words by others before the students while 6% are often heard such words.

6/Some try to detract my character in front of my colleagues.

- never
- sometimes
- often
- very often

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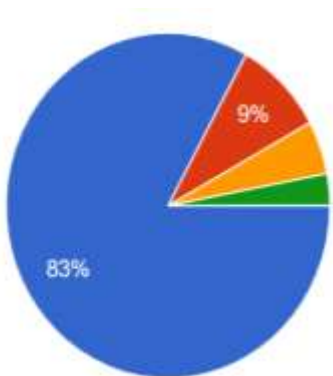
ent 6 shows that 66% of the students out of 100 are never detracted their personality before the students by some bully colleagues, 9% are sometimes detracted their characters by others while 5% are often heard such aggressive words but 3% of the students shows that they are very often heard others do so.

**7/I am exposed to rumors and false news.**

never
sometimes
often
very often

e nt 7 shows that 77% of the students out of 100 are never exposed to rumors by their colleagues, 11% are sometimes exposes to rumors while 8% are often heard rumors and lies, 5% of the students shows that they are very often exposed to rumors.

.8/ am subjected to offensive hints about my appearance

never
sometimes
often
very often

e nt 8 shows that 78% of the students out of 100 are never subjected to offensive hints about their appearance before other students, 8% are sometimes subjected to aggressive words and 10% of students are often subjected to such behaver while 4% of the students shows that they are very often subjected to offensive mentions about their appearance or personality.

9/Some students call me a failure.
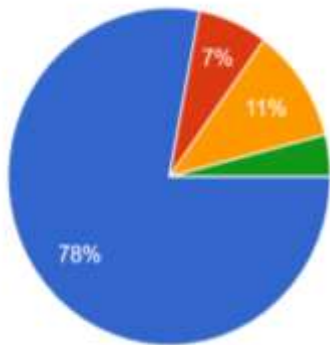
never
sometimes
often
very often
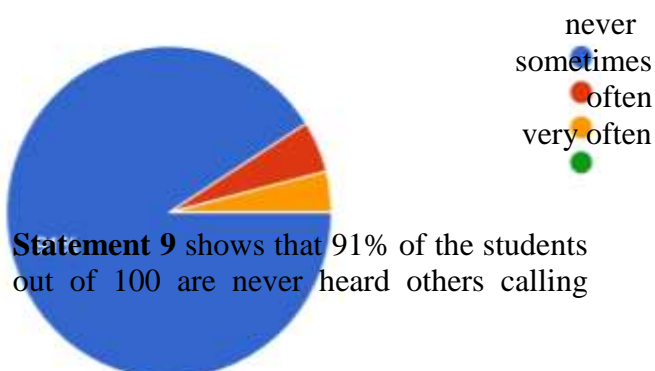
Statement 9 shows that 91% of the students out of 100 are never heard others calling

them failures before other students, 5% are sometimes heard some bullies calling them failures while 4% are often heard such words.

10/I am subjected to abusive and insulting words when I make jokes
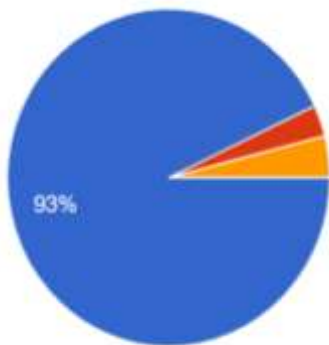
never
sometimes
often
very often

m ent 10 shows that 78% of the students out of 100 are never subjected to abusive and insulting words when they make jokes, 7% are sometimes subjected to such behaver,11% are often subjected to such verbal abuse when the make jokes while 4% of the students shows that they are very often subjected to offensive and insulting words by others when they do so.

11/Some threaten me when I tell the truth about a certain topic.

never
sometimes
often
very often

e nt 11 shows that 93% of the students out of 100 are never threaten by others when they tell the truth about a certain topic, 3% are sometimes threaten when they say the truth while 4% are often threaten by others when they do so.

.12/I am being mocked when I speak of my ambition for the future

never
sometimes
often
very often

ent 12 shows that 77% of the students out of 100 are never being mocked by others when they speak of their ambition for the future,15% are sometimes being mocked when they speak about that while 4% are often being mocked by others when they do so but only 4% of them state that they are very often being mocked before other students when they speak of their future ambitions.

13/Some make fun when I take part in the lesson.

never
sometimes
often
very often
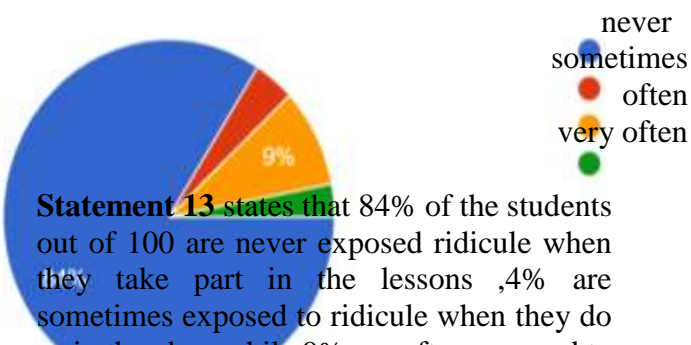
Statement 13 states that 84% of the students out of 100 are never exposed ridicule when they take part in the lessons ,4% are sometimes exposed to ridicule when they do so in the class while 9% are often exposed to such behavior, 3% of them state that they are very often sometimes exposed to ridicule when they do so.

14/Some bother me with sarcastic comments about my appearance, my weight, my height, or the way I speak

never
sometimes
often
very often

nt 14 shows that 76% of the students out of 100 are never exposed to sarcastic

comments about appearance, weight, height, or the way of speak ,9% are sometimes exposed to such behavior while 9% are often exposed to sarcastic comments, 6% of them state that they are very often exposed to such issues.
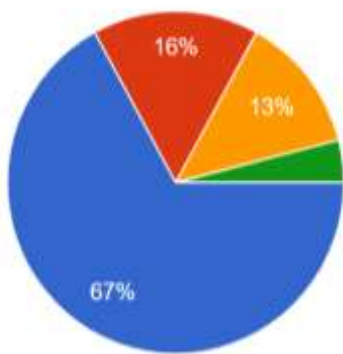
15/Some students are drawing others' attention for my mistakes.

never
sometimes
often
very often

e
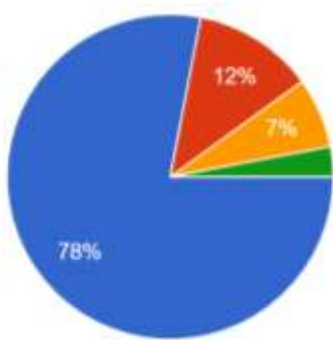
nt 15 shows that 78% of the students out of 100 are never exposed to bullies who draw others' attention for students' mistakes, 12% are sometimes exposed to such behaver while 7% are often sometimes confronted to such issue. 3% of them state that they are very often exposed to such attacks.

**16/Some of my colleagues ignore me and don't talk to me.**

never
sometimes
often
very often

e

nt 16 shows that 67% of the students out of 100 are never exposed to bully students who ignore and don't talk to them, 16% are sometimes exposed to such behaver while 13% are often exposed to such issue, 3% of them state that they are very often exposed to some students who ignore and don't talk to them.
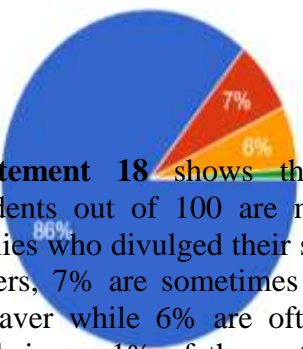
17/Some make fun when I try dissolve issues wrong in front of students.
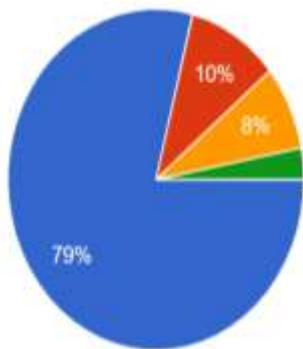
never
sometimes
often
very often

ent 17 shows that 79% of the students out of 100 are never exposed to bullies who make fun when students try dissolve issues wrong in the class, 10% are sometimes exposed to such behaver while 8% are often exposed to such issue, 3% of them state that they are very often exposed to bullies who make fun when students dissolve issues wrong in front of others.

18/Some divulge my secrets in front of others.

never
sometimes
often
very often

Statement 18 shows that 86% of the students out of 100 are never exposed to bullies who divulged their secrets in front of others, 7% are sometimes exposed to such behaver while 6% are often confronted to such issue, 1% of them state that they are very often encountered this behavior .

19/Some spread sedition and lies among students.
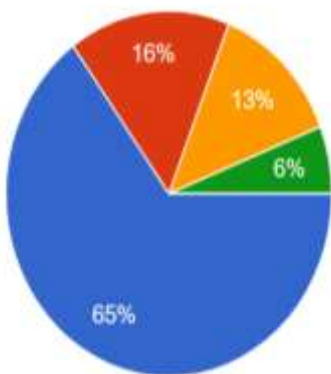
never
sometimes
often
very often

nt 19 shows that 65% of the students out of 100 are never exposed bullies who spread sedition and lies among students, 16% are sometimes exposed to such behaver while 13% are often confronted to such issue, 3%

of them state that they are very often confronted bullies who spread sedition and lies among students

20/Some imitate my voice in order to derogate or mock.

never
sometimes
often
very often

ment 20 shows that 85% of the students out of 100 are never exposed bullies who imitate students' voice in order to derogate or mock, 9% are sometimes exposed to such behaver while 3% are often confronted such issue, 3% of them state that they are very often confronted bullies who imitate their voices in order to derogate or mock.

❖ The answer of the second question in the study which states **"How common is the verbal bullying phenomenon among secondary school students?"** is demonstrated in the statistics below:

Table No. (2) shows students 'answers rates about verbal abuse in secondary schools in Najaf Governorate/Iraq.

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No.	Statements	never	sometimes	often	very often
1	I am being criticized sharply by some of my colleagues.	77%	10%	11%	2%
2	I hear obscene words from some of the students.	66%	12%	17%	5%
3	I am subjected to ridicule if I express an opinion.	69%	17%	11%	3%
4	Some call me the titles I hate.	84%	9%	7%	0%
5	Some call me harsh words in front of the students.	88%	6%	6%	0%
6	Some try to detract from my character in front of my colleagues.	83%	9%	5%	3%
7	I am exposed to rumors and false news.	77%	11%	8%	4%
8	.I am subjected to offensive hints about my appearance	78%	8%	10%	4%
9	Some students call me a failure.	91%	5%	4%	0%
10	I am subjected to abusive words and insulting when joking with my colleagues.	78%	7%	11%	4%
11	Some threaten me when I tell the truth about a certain topic.	93%	3%	4%	0%
12	I am being mocked when I speak of my ambition for the future.	77%	15%	4%	4%
13	Some make fun when I take part in the lesson.	84%	4%	9%	3%
14	Some bother me with sarcastic comments about my appearance, my weight, my height, or the way I speak	76%	9%	9%	6%
15	Some students are drawing others' attention for my mistakes.	78%	12%	7%	3%
16	Some of my colleagues ignore me and don't talk to me.	76%	16%	13%	3%
17	Some make fun when I dissolve issues wrong in front of students.	79%	10%	8%	3%
18	Some divulge my secrets in front of others.	86%	7%	6%	1%
19	Some spread sedition and lies among students.	65%	16%	13%	6%
20	Some imitate my voice in order to derogate and mock.	85%	9%	3%	3%

❖ The answer of the third question in the study which states **"What are the reasons beyond the use of verbal abuse among students?"** is explained in the following points depending on the results of the questionnaire.

1- Family breakdown has a big role in increasing the aggressive behavior of a bullying student.
2- Parents' educational and cultural level has an important impact on the bullying students.
3- The upbringing of a bullying student has a role in the emergence of this behavior.

❖ The answer of the fourth question in the study which states**" What are the ways to confront and treat the phenomenon of verbal abuse among secondary school students?"** is stated in the following points:

First: Tasks that the family is responsible for:

1- Development of educational awareness on the part of the family, and this is done by attending meetings, seminars and various educational courses.
2- Parents should visit the school regularly to see the behavior of their children and coordinate with the administration and the conductor to jointly work to diagnose the aggressive behavior of their children.
3- Family needs to identify bad social behavior that needs to be modified first.
4- The parents should train children to get rid of the deficiencies that may cause aggressive behavior in boys**.**
5- Not to be extravagant in the manner of verbal or physical punishment.

Second: Tasks that the school and teachers are responsible for

1- Identifying the psychological, social and basic needs of each age group and satisfy them with appropriate educational methods and programs.
2- Paying attention to extra activities and involving to prepare, implement and supervise students.
3- Adopting a good example in dealing with students and avoiding the abundance of advice and exchanging it by actions, not words.
4- Showing the positive side in the behavior of the bullying student and confirm his sense of potential power and make him involve in work that absorbs his energy and makes him feel important.
5- Effective application of school discipline and violence reduction law on all students.
6- Disseminating several banners to raise awareness of positive behaviors.

Third: The responsibility of educational counselors

1- Intensifying informational interviews for these students to find out the causes of the problem and try to avoid it.
2- Directing, guiding, and educating the students about the concept of bullying (its complications and its squads) in order to make them avoid behaviors that cause harm to others and train them to manage the aggressive behavior.
3- Training students to solve conflicts through dialogue and understanding, not through violence, in addition to activating the Student Mediation Program in Schools.
4- Reinforcing the moral aspects that guide the students to stop practicing aggressive behavior.
5- Holding awareness seminars for students to help them know the harm of bad companions.

6- Holding counseling seminars for parents to make them aware of the characteristics and stages of development for their children and to understand their requirements and their assistance in introducing their children how to choose friends and how to use appropriate educational methods in dealing with children's problems.

3-4 Research Application

In light of the results of the study, some of the following aaplications can be made:

1- Conducting training programs to reduce school verbal abuse among secondary school students.

2- Conducting training programs to educate high school teachers about school bullying and how to deal with them.

3- The Ministry of Education should popularize (the student mediation program) and applied it on a wider scale in all academic levels in Najaf, Iraq.

4- Building educational and counseling programs to help students face the behavioral problems.

3-5 Recommendations for Future Studies

The researcher recommends the following research ideas:

1- Studying the effectiveness of a counseling program to overcome the phenomenon of verbal abuse in Iraqi secondary schools among a sample of students.

2- Studying the reality of this phenomenon on schools and other samples.

CONCLUSION

According to the data analysis and the result, the following conclusions can be concluded:

1- Verbal abuse is a behavior that a bullying student learns at home, school, and society by observing and imitating aggressive and violent patterns from their parents, teachers, and colleagues. The data analyses in this research show that 79.5 % of the boy students demonstrated that their colleagues never abused them verbally, 9.75% of them showed that sometimes they are exposed to verbal abuse by some boys, 8.3% stated that they are often exposed to verbal abuse while 2.35% showed that they are very often attacked verbally by their mates.

2. The behavior of verbal abuse takes many forms, including insulting, cursing, swearing, threatening, spreading false rumors, using unpopular titles and names or giving an ethnic description, with the aim of reducing the status of the victims and imposing control over them by force.

3- The bullying student needs to have a safe, supportive and caring, educational, family and social environment to impose a culture of tolerance and dialogue in taking rights in a peaceful way.

4- Teen bullying students in intermediate school need the necessary help individually and collectively within the school environment to embrace them and try to integrate them with others and get along with them.

5- Paying attention to intermediate school students and following up their hostile, violent and bullying behaviors then working on amending them by adopting flexible and applicable methods at school, family and social environment.

6- Following the programs that include methods of modifying the bullying behaviors of students and the spectator student, directing the students in report bullying behaviors that occur in the school and deal with them in a way that uplift the student manners, provide psychological support, sense of value and status, and teach him / her social manage skills.

7 – The victims of bullying should learn how to defend themselves and do not allow bullying students to practice their bullying behaviors on them through dialogue and reporting the bullying by the school administration and the educational counselor without fear or hesitation.

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