

TEENAGERS’ MOBBING TENDENCY

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ABSTRACT. HARASSING IS A PAINFUL EXPERIENCE, THAT LEADS TO A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL AND SELF-IMAGE DURING CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE. CHILDREN CONTINUALLY BECOME VICTIMS. DURING FIRST SCHOOL YEARS, THEY HAVE THE TENDENCY TO SEE THE SCHOOL SPACE AS DANGEROUS, THEY DO NOT FEEL THE TEACHERS’ SUPPORT, AND THEY ARE FREQUENTLY ABSENT TO AVOID SCHOOL. IT LOOKS THAT TEENAGERS ARE PRINCIPALLY SUPPORTED TO FACE THE AGGRESSION IMPACT, PAYING ATTENTION TO PROTECTION FACTORS TO CONSOLIDATE SELF-ESTEEM AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES. INTERVENTION PROGRAMS ON AGGRESSION CANNOT BE APART FROM THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE EDUCATIONAL FIELD AND SOCIAL CONTEXT THEY FROM PART OF.

KEY WORDS: MOBBING, SCHOOL, HARASSING, AGGRESSION.

The American Psychologist published a dedicated issue of bullying research conducted over the past 40 years: the research represents the gained knowledge, identifying evidence found and statements for which there is currently validated in longitudinal studies. The outstanding contributions of Patricia McDougall and Tracy Vaillancourt, Canadian researchers, are valuable in testing long term effects of aggression during school years.

Harassing is a painful experience, that leads to a negative impact on academic performance, physical and mental health, social and self-image during childhood and adolescence.

Children continually become victims. During first school years, they have the tendency to see the school space as dangerous, they do not feel the teachers’ support, and they are frequently absent to avoid school.

There are consequences on health plans, marked by appetite issues. These children also practise sports less and have frequent headaches. From the first school years to the end of elementary level, the victim effects are solitude, discomfort and emotional problems, leading to anxiety and depression or worse, to psychosis. The young that were victims of aggression during school present a greater degree of behaviour dysfunctions later.

These painful experiences have very negative effects during the whole life as a human being. Studies show a big connection between such childhood problems and skills development during life.

But, fortunately, not all children are aggressed. Studies have shown the critic variables that can explain boys' development:

- individual factors that show social and group abilities;
- stability and positive relationships in family;
- social support and friendship.

These can be factors to stop aggression in school and personal difficulties later in life. For example, it was estimated that in secondary school, the presence of aggression is lower if there are more groups of friends. Generally, it is very important the support given by the classmates, teachers and parents. Family factors (structure, relationships, and context) can be more important to the little children, whereas the social support given by friends and teachers is more important later.

It looks that teenagers are principally supported to face the aggression impact, paying attention to protection factors to consolidate self-esteem and create opportunities for positive experiences.

Aggression forms of manifestation

Excitability: it is given by central nervous system state, characterised by a sensibility to the external or internal medium.

During adolescence, the persistence of an increased excitability can hide an acute periodical psychosis. Hyper-excitability is characterised by: anxious gestures, loud and nervous voice tone, high level of vivacity, emotional liability, inhibition and aggressiveness.

Impulsiveness: when children act by impulse.

These impulses are result of involuntary reaction, harsh, uncontrolled and violent.

Lafon defines impulsiveness as “an immediate and incoercible discharge of an emotional tensed state in an action or behaviour.”

Propulsiveness: is the initiation of aggressiveness due to an internal spring. It appears automatically, forced, without being controlled. It is signalled by moving the head or an extremity.

The aggressive behaviour is on top of delinquency manifestation.

There are several sources related to mobbing origins:

Native impulse

Freud claims that at the origin of mobbing there is a native instinct.

Lorenz, in “On aggression”, emphasises the biologic - instinctual nature of aggressiveness, which gives chances to survival and procreation because it ensures greater access to food and possibility to control new resources.

Mental disabled people have a mean aggressiveness with instinct disturbances. Fromm makes a connection between this form of aggressiveness and sadism, showing pleasure for abuse, causing suffering, deformation that has origin in sexual instinct disturbances.

Ethologists admit there are social and cultural factors that limit the aggressive instinct but claim that man has not the native instinct to temperate this.

The influence of biologic factors upon aggressive reactions cannot be ignored. There are several types of influences:

- hormonal influences: males are more aggressive than females;

- bio-chemical influences: the increase of alcohol in blood and glycaemia decrease can intensify mobbing.

The arguments brought against the instinctive nature theory are results of research that show competitive behaviours are flexible and, mostly, learnt.

Mobbing as response to frustration

This theory was issued by Dollard and emphasises the external conditions that determine aggressiveness. He tries to explain the aggressiveness mechanism by frustrations:

- mobbing is always a frustration consequence;
- frustration always leads to a certain form of aggressiveness.

The blocking that appears when having an aim is produced by frustrations that become sources of aggressiveness, but not always a frustration becomes aggressiveness.

In stress relief trajectory may appear a block to another more accessible aim for aggressive manifestation. Myers (1990) stated a concluding example with the man who, scolded by his chief, goes home and has a violent behaviour against his wife who, at her turn, was yelling at the child. The child hits the dog and the dog bites the postman.

Dollard's theory was later revised and Berkowitz who states the exaggeration of aggressiveness-frustration relation, claiming that frustration can lead to irritation, typical for aggressors.

Mobbing as acquired feature

Mobbing, as other types of social behaviour, is acquired by social learning. The aggressive answers are acquired by direct learning, through rewarding or punishments, or by observing and imitation of others' consequences and behaviours.

Bandura talks about the theory of social aggressiveness learning, demonstrating the adult's role of a model to aggressiveness for the children. He did an experiment: an actor performed into a kindergarten. During the show, he behaved violently, harassing a big plastic doll. The children were then asked to play with different toys, also that specific doll. They also behaved aggressively, compared to the children that did not take part in the show. Moreover, it was signalled that mobbing increased when rewarding was applied. Thus, even if the children are not exposed to violence, they learn from their own experience following significant or authoritative persons. This can be explained by aggressiveness transfer or the theory of aggressive model. (Bandura, 1968, Ranschburg, 1971).

The most frequent aggressive models can be found in:

- Social environment;
- Mass-media: especially television by daily aggressive programs and language.

Taken as an acquired behaviour dimension, mobbing has an optimistic part (Baron & Bryne) in the fact that, once learnt and not innate, it can be easily controlled and prevented. Moreover, some researchers have given other dimensions to this phenomenon. For instance, Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1998) underline the biological, social and psychological multiple determination of it. It has not been discovered yet an innate factor of aggressiveness.

Mobbing is characterised by harsh reactions, intimidation of others by attacking them verbally, cursing, injuring. "Mobbing does not suppose only one cause; it is the result of some complex interactions between some circumstances and the physiologic and psychological

determinations: brain injuries, metabolic disorders, male sex, CNS disorders, free access to guns, violence exposure, etc. (Eleanor Guetzloe, 1997).

The same author suggests five conditions that favour aggressiveness learning and manifestation:

1. The child has numerous occasions to see violence actions around him.
2. The child is the subject of aggression;
3. The child is given few occasions to develop positive socio-affective links with others;
4. The child is prepared for his own aggression. In the high-industrialised countries the high level layers are ready for defence, while the lower class is subject to aggression and later they will become the aggressors themselves.
5. There are many malicious children associations (the so-called “gangs”)

The psychoanalytical point of view

As Freud claimed about the two categories of instincts, we must make a difference between two periods in the aggressive effects genesis. In the first period called archaic, only the conservation instincts are activated. As concerning the new-born child, there is a primitive dependence, which once broken, it turns into violent manifestations interpreted as aggressive.

J. Bergeret, the author of fundamental violence concept considers it should be made a difference inside the relation mother –child in what concerns the aggressiveness as a mixture of love and hate and what concerns the “fundamental violence”, basic instinct of life defence that does not express the capacity of love and hate.

The return to the archaic model is anytime possible. The competitive mobbing can transform into archaic violence at the first little tune-up mechanisms breakage.

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