

School, A Place to Learn Social and Antisocial Behavior

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Background: The main goal of sending children to school is to educate and teach them ethical conducts. But do they learn social behaviors out in these schools? Most of students after Entering School and facing new environment and not being monitored by their observant parents become exposed to antisocial behaviors and learn them from their peers. This trend is intensified and hard to control by forming peer groups.

Evidence Acquisition: The information and data gathered from library and internet searches. Most articles were searched via sciencedirect.com search engine. Keywords used to access hundreds of papers included antisocial behavior, school and crime, peer groups, age and crime, crime prevention, aggression and violence. The most related articles were selected after consulting and thoroughly reading the downloaded articles. Many articles were excluded owing to their simplistic content and repetitive information.

Results: Mounting evidence indicates that schooling can have large amount of unexpected negative effect on pupils. Students learn antisocial behavior from other students and sometimes from their own teachers. Perhaps remarkably, children's biological changes could manifestly affect their behaviors and turn them into aggressive characters.

Conclusions: To date, hundreds of researches have been carried out in order to identify antisocial behavior in schools. It is time to take one step further to minimize these adverse behavioral conducts and shape a moral personality. Therefore, the first step to create a social character during school years is to caution against factors leading to antisocial behaviors including peers. In the next step, implementing appropriate curricula can considerably affect children's behaviors.

Keywords: School; Antisocial Personality; Peer Group; Behavior Control

1. Introduction

School is a place where children are introduced to wide spectrum of the society while prior to school years; they were in contact with a very narrow range of society, mostly family environment. During school years children learn how to make contact with different races as well as regulations, courses and unchangeable principles (1). The school undoubtedly aims at expanding children's social behaviors. But in this regard, the school is also of harmful influences which may increase their behavioral problems. Over time, violent and angry behaviors are intensified in schools and become a common behavior among students (2). This issue is so notable that most people rarely believe that school is a suitable place for students to learn social behaviors. The students' characters are formed abnormally after receiving these behaviors and it is difficult to be altered and turned to a compatible social norm. This may be circumvented if we are able to properly identify undesirable effects of the school on children and ways of nurturing them and try to find solutions for the problem. Therefore, the activities of school authorities as well as sociologists and psychologist should be expanded to overcome the existing predicaments. Generally, the main goals of this article are discussing and

evaluating antisocial behavior in schools and through recognition of causes of those behaviors, offering approaches which could diminish the rate of antisocial personality. Thus, this investigation primarily attempts to identify major factors involved in developing antisocial character between ages 7 to 18 years, and to delve into intensifying elements including school (location), children regarding their environment and biology and also peer groups. Then, after discussing the results, relevant approaches should be considered in regard to managing antisocial personality (behavioral adjustment), namely the relationship between children and the school, behavior interfering with plans at school, peer groups' control over schools, as well as police and school.

1.1. Risk Factors

During ages from 7 to 18 years which are considered as schooling years, three main elements can contribute to shaping maladaptive personality, as discussed in the following section. Undoubtedly, other factor can affect characteristics as well; however, currently these three areas seem to be more critical than others.

1.2. School

Researchers consider school as a milieu which could make children sociable (3). Parsons believes that the school acts as a first link between the home and the society and second between childhood and adulthood (4). School prepares students for a prosperous society with specific regulations including clothing and expected uniformity in behavioral patterns shared by everyone, regardless of gender, race and social class (4). However, according to social learning theory, students learn, imitate and acquire antisocial behaviors targeting other students. Results indicate that classmates of unruly students lose their control more frequently (5). Problems related to school are the most provoking factors that lead to violent behaviors, addiction and crime commitment among boys (6). Violent and angry behaviors develop and increase over time (2), and unfortunately controlling these misconducts is challenged by numerous difficulties particularly in western societies, Children learn, imitate and exhibit abnormal behaviors in the school exacerbated by modern social media and easy access to the internet. The notable issue regarding the school is that families cannot directly monitor their children in schools. Different studies suggested that family surveillance can prevent antisocial personality of children and to some extent promote their self-control (7). Teachers and school staff do not have enough control over students because there are many students in a single school. The only place within which children are under full control is the home. However, in industrial societies long working hours keep family members apart for a long period in day time and minimize their time of being together. All in all, imitating other students in antisocial behaviors and shortage of supervision could be the main causes in schools that incline children to deviate from their right path. Children's environment and biology and peer groups are two more areas which can cause a child to manifest antisocial behavior.

1.3. Children's Environment and Biology

It is widely accepted by researchers that negative experiences during early ages of life can cast their adverse effects on children's behavior over a very long period. Creatures like human with large brain are generally more behaviorally flexible during childhood (8). In other words, the brain structure and consequently behavioral character would easily be changed by surrounding environment, which persist for a long time. It can be concluded that unpleasant atmosphere of school could lead to a sustainable misconduct in students. Generally, the age plays an undeniable role in nurturing. Familial factors are of high effects during childhood because child environment is influenced by their parents' desires and decisions. It is exactly then that peer groups play a major role in absence of family after this period and entering school (9). Students would choose those behaviors that

may be considered abnormal by society, if they were not controlled over school ages. With regard to biological changes, mounting evidence shows that variations in levels of Dopamine, Testosterone, Serotonin, and Norepinephrine in body by growing may be one of the major causes of this issue. For instance, boys develop violent behaviors in their maturity age since the level of Testosterone rises drastically and different studies have asserted a direct relationship between blood testosterone level and violent behaviors (10). Lack of considering this issue and dealing improperly with a child developing nasty behaviors, due to increasing testosterone level can result in more violent behaviors. Noticeably, Adolf Kitler examined crime rate increase or inclination in different ages for the first time in 1831. The crime age delinquency starts from childhood and continues until old age. But as statistics indicate this rate is higher during young ages (11). This indicates that during changes in biological elements and especially environment, school could be responsible for increase in committing crime.

1.4. Peer Groups

Peer groups are generally of the same age and gender and present a social class. A person entering these groups interacts with other members and enjoys when the group support his/her acts. Peer groups play a major role in sociability of young and will be more highlighted in modern societies where families play fewer roles. Youngsters highly incline to peers because they are in need of particular social relationships with others, being noticed, focus of attention by others, respected and admired. Actually, in cases where such needs are not satisfied by family and school, youngsters become attracted to peer groups (12). Peer groups can be formed by schoolmates or neighborhood children. But a strong relationship is generally formed during school years where there are considerable numbers of peers. A study on 269 people aged from 16 to 18 years, regarding risky behavior indicated that boys are most affected by their peers (13). Another study showed that young boys attempt to build up connections with students who are more likely to have antisocial personality. Also, boys with violent behaviors mostly seek friends with abnormal conducts. On the other hand, boys with low violent behaviors connect with friends who treat them properly in the society context (13). Therefore, social and antisocial behaviors may be predicted by the type of friends who are chosen by a child in the school. Peer groups have their own regulations and guidelines and members will be rejected if did not abide by their rules. Thus, children try to follow these commands which in most cases contain antisocial behaviors. It is through these groups that a child is encouraged to behave in certain ways that is prevented by family up until now. It is easier and less scary for a child to behave antisocially in support of other students in comparison to the moments which he/she is alone (14). Briefly, peer groups can considerably affect the prediction and devel-

opment of behavioral disorders particularly committing crime. In addition, most criminal acts are committed during young age. Therefore, families should control their children in school while having interaction with their peer groups (15).

2. Results

All these studies revealed how far schooling can negatively affect the students' behavior. School is considered as a positive and social place, which is undeniably associated with adverse situations such as lack of sufficient control and interaction with unruly students. In addition, due to children's biological changes, aggressive behaviors are more common during school period. For example, testosterone level rises usually at the age of 15 or puberty, which to a certain degree can increase child's violence. Moreover, owing to plasticity trait in mankind, environment could play a great role in shaping characteristic of children. In other words, the more negative atmosphere in the school the more antisocial behavior might be observed. The other disadvantage of school could be peers. Friends during school are not only playmates, but they can motivate antisocial behaviors and even in critical conditions induce others to commit crimes.

2.1. Behavioral Adjustment

After discussing negative factors of school and explaining how far schooling could adversely affect the personality of pupils, it would be critical to introduce approaches that prevent antisocial manners. Based on the foregoing sections, antisocial personality prevalent in schools leads to malformed character in children, a condition difficult to change considering the impact of biological and psychological properties. Most of sociologists consider the school as the most significant factor forming children's character. Harris is quoted as saying "you can change your children' fate and life only by selecting their school". This means that schooling can have a critical impact on individual' life and could be an ideal opportunity to bring up a person with desired social conduct and avoid antisocial behaviors (15). In this section, methods including four parts will be described to rear a child with sociable behavior.

2.2. The Relationship Between Children and the School

If we wish to fundamentally discuss the issue of behavioral disorders in school, at first we have to distinguish how the relationship between a child and the school affects his/her behavior. Hiroshi (1969), social control theorist, performed a study on Californian high school students and obtained the following items about the role of school in young's delinquency:

1) Students feeling more fixations for school are less likely to commit a crime.

2) Students who do not believe in school's formal norms are highly inclined to felonious behavior.

3) Students who do not like the school for certain reasons and do not actively participate in formal or voluntary plans are more susceptible to criminal behavior.

Therefore, children's violent and antisocial personality may be decreased significantly through making a close and appropriate relationship with the school (9). A child will be self-controlled, if the school makes him/her interested in study, a condition urging the child to develop a social character. Students who hit high achievements in their lessons are less likely to exhibit antisocial behaviors compared to those who were less active. This call to mind the principle that most people act the way they imagine themselves and what other people expect to find them. Children with normal character are much more tolerant and adapt themselves to social norms. A person with a desirable character adheres to ethical principles and wishes to be accepted by the society and tries to display conduct admired by other people. This can be iterated such that social behaviors turn to unchangeable habit.

2.3. Behavior Controlling Plans in School

Various plans have been set in place to socialize children in schools. For example, Conrod, Castellanos & Strang (2010) introduced a plan for children with high behavioral impulses and modernism, which settles most of children's educational and behavioral problems. After spending two years to solve educational issues and cognitive behaviors and comparing to the results from control group, it was concluded that the experiment group was less inclined to drug or at least if addicted was less likely to abuse new drugs (16, 17). Thus, a child with normative problems during early ages can be socialized through appropriate planning. Another instance about preventing crime in schools is good behavior game (GBG) that is for controlling students' behaviors in class. This program stresses socializing children playing student role and seeks goals of reducing early violence and antisocial behavior (18). Another approach considered as indirect method for controlling children in school is to train teachers. As social learning theory suggests, children learn behavior from those who control them. Therefore, children will undoubtedly repeat and imitate teachers and form characters in an appropriate style even unintentionally, if teachers avoid antisocial and violent behaviors and attempt to control their own behaviors (19). Also this training can be in line with standardization control methods. For instance, physical organization of the class to reduce conflicts, observing certain regulations, and socializing students to exhibit positive behavior are among these issues (20). Various programs have been devised for more serious problems to decrease crime rate and violence. For example, multi-systematic therapy (MST) is a program preventing from committing crime by treating youngsters who had previously committed a crime or nearly taken an illegal action (21). Unlike other programs, this measure

is identified as a multidimensional and comprehensive strategy and emphasizes on family, school, and the society systems associated with antisocial behavior (22). MST put the individual in a right path and tries to remove undesirable past experiences through correct identification of adolescents with previous criminal records and considering the roles of family, school and society systems. U.S. researchers have performed certain studies during 1996-1980 indicating that kindergarten mentors can succeed to promote children sociability and prevent them from committing crime by strengthening cooperation fields, group decision making and active learning. Teachers' applied methods in elementary schools can lead students to active participation. Class activities particularly cooperative learning approaches will promote intrapersonal communications development and positive impressions as well as sociability of students (23).

2.4. Peer Groups Control on Schools

We described peer groups and their negative effects in previous section. Families and schools must increasingly concentrate on type of friends whom their children choose. If families and schools failed to make a good connection with children and satisfy their emotional needs, then children will seek the help of their peers to satisfy those demands which cast in most cases negative effect on students' character and growth. The school plays an essential role in preventing those negative effects. The first stage controlling these groups in school includes classifying the students in a class and removing peer groups that mostly formed with criminal motivations. One should bear in mind that departing members of a constituted peer group is a difficult process. Therefore, they should directly be monitored in the class regarding their behaviors. Members of newly formed group with antisocial goals must be separated as soon as possible. A very simple way to control these groups is their classification by school staff. Students may be classified easily even by changing their chairs, provided that the school identifies their personality structure as quickly as possible.

2.5. Police and School

Although police mostly plays its role in relation to adult offenders, its relationship with schools is not a novel phenomenon. Police in most states have made a connection with schools over than half a century through different ways. Police roles have been confided to collect students escape from school, providing traffic security and preventing child abuse. Preventive measures include employing police forces wearing uniform whose aim are to control students especially after school (this also could be done by assigning secret agents). Preventive approaches may include training to prevent drug abuse or working closely with children at risk. Police may perform its tasks formally or informally. Attending with uniform that emphasizes police recognition and his tasks, and also without formal dress and casual re-

lationships with students or their families and participating in sport activities are among police functions preventing antisocial behaviors (24). Although these suggestions seem to be the main points in characterizing students; however, it must not be forgotten that each of these methods could be useless unless applied in line with structure of the school and existing culture of that area.

3. Conclusions

Today nearly all people receive school education. Therefore, it is highly important to concentrate on personality formation of the society members within this system. Most students who enter schools are inexperienced. But it does not take long before their characters start to shape undesirably, because of associating with peers having abnormal behaviors in relation to the school. However, it is feasible to put the pupils on the right path before they start to act unsociably. In this research, after introducing different causes of antisocial behavior, four different approaches are discussed which can suitably shape the personality of pupils. Each of these approaches has its own features. For instance, programs which focus on physical appearance of the class try to prevent physical interactions. Generally, it is possible that lack of profound attention to abnormal behaviors in schools may lead the society to chaos and unrest over time, because these students, when grown up, will have antisocial tendencies and constitute the future work force of a country.

Authors' Contributions

Armin Alimardany has designed the study; however both authors have equally written all parts of article and approved the final manuscript.

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