MEASURING THE ROLE OF PEERS IN CONTROLLING SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AMONG STUDENTS OF THE LOWER BASIC STAGE IN JORDAN

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ABSTRACT: *The current study aimed to measure the role of peers in controlling social behavior among students of lower basic stage in Jordan. To achieve the study objectives the researcher applied the descriptive analytical approach. The study sample was made of (100) students of the whole study population (2469). After applying the study tool, the researcher concluded that there is an effective role for peers in controlling social behavior, and that this role is high and of great impact on children's behavior and raising them up. In the end, the researcher recommended the importance of focusing on providing good environment for children through adopting Islamic education methods.*

KEYWORDS: Peers, Children, Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of peers emerged from their role in shaping individuals values along with social changes in recent decades, which have resulted in weak social ties between parents and children and the emergence of the so-called generational conflict among members of the same family regarding their attitude toward different values found in the society culture.

Life rapid pace has changed many of the dominant social values and relationships; consequently there has been a change in the social structure in all its dimensions, and the functions of some dimensions such as family and education have changed, and other social institutions have performed these functions. (Abu As'ad, 2012)

In this context, the group of peers occupies an important position in individuals' lives. Its importance is attributed to the fact that it teaches a child how to choose his friends and how to interact with them on the basis of a kind of equality between him and the members of this group. (Dasouki, 2000)

This group is engaged in discussions about various things, in which ideas and opinions are exchanged, through which a student can learn how to behave among individuals within a group and thus acquire a very important notion of social satisfaction that can be achieved within the social framework of friends and colleagues. (Dandesh, 2002)

As for the group of peers has a great importance in children's lives, it was necessary to identify and measure its role in controlling the social behavior of students in the lower basic stage.

Study problem

When a child enters school, his relationships become wider and they exceed the limit of his own family, he makes friends outside home, through which he tries to fulfill his desires, he trusts them and he expresses himself in front of them. Thus, a group of peers plays the biggest

role in the child's social development and become his own project that directs him socially, emotionally and behaviorally. It also participates in controlling or deviating his behavior. (Al-Rimi, 2005)

With this, we can summarize the study problem in measuring the role of the peers in controlling the social behavior among students of the lower basic stage in Jordan.

The study main question:

What is the role that a group of peers plays in controlling students' social behavior in the lower basic stage in Jordan?

Study hypotheses:

There is a role of statistical significance at sig. (α=0.05) for the group of peers in controlling students' social behavior in the lower basic stage in Jordan.

The study importance:

The importance of the study lies in dealing with a wide segment that represents a large percentage of the population in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; that is the category of children who are our country's future leaders. Besides, childhood is a fertile basis for other stages, in which a child witnesses several psychological, emotional and physiological changes that affect children's behavior, interaction and their relationships with their family and peers.

Study objectives:

The current study has several objectives that can be presented as follows:

1. Identifying the concept of peers.

2. Identifying the role that a group of peers plays in children's lives (the lower basic stage).

3. Measuring the role of peers in controlling the social behavior of the lower basic stage students in Jordan.

4. Identifying the function of peers in the children's social upbringing.

Study terminology:

1. **Peers**: are the student's school colleagues who have the same tendency, desires, goals and form a group of not less than two members. (Al-Sarhani, 2010)

2. **Lower basic stage**: is the stage from the first grade till the sixth grade in schools subject to the Ministry of Education in Jordan. (The Ministry of Education in Jordan)

3. **Social behavior**: means the daily events and activities that an individual does and interacts with a group of members who interact with him in return. It is of two types; visible that can be noticed, and internal like thinking and remembering. (Dasouqi, 2000)

Study theoretical framework:

A group of peers is identified as: the group of friends and colleagues that surrounds an individual at home, school, street, or external surrounding environment. Friendship is

established among children or teenagers of the same age, sex and neighborhood. Each member of this group feels the submission, belonging and loyalty toward this group. These connections and emotions are common social aspects in this age. (Al-Sameeh, 2004)

An individual; a child, a teenager, or an adult, feels the need to connect himself with others similar to him. When he binds himself to them, he feels the strength and a desire to fortify himself and to have his own position in the world of adults. Data and results confirm that the effect of peers in shaping children's social behavior is often greater than the effect of the teacher or the school in this. (Al-Shnoot, 2005)

In this regard, F.Elkin sees that a group of peers do some tasks that other institutions cannot, especially in the periods of social changes that the society goes through. (Schaefer, 1995)

The effect of peers on individuals, which differs from the role of the family or school is illustrated in two basic dimensions:

A- The relation of dominance within a family or school is governed by the concept of control and submission, whereas within a group of peers it is governed by the values of similarity and democracy.

B- A group of peers provides its members with a wider space of adaptation to the social and cultural environment, unlike family and school.

The researcher indicates that there might be a discrepancy between values, attitudes and behavior that prevail the group of peers, and those values and attitudes that prevail the school or family. In this context, the so-called adolescent culture has become popular. It is described as irrational, its patterns are not bind with work and production values but with enjoyment and consumption, and is therefore fought by adults because they consider it a threat to the values they maintain. This is due to the different cultural determinants that guide their ideas and values, which often result in the phenomenon of generational conflict (Ali, 2005)

When speaking about the role of peers and their function in the process of social education, this role can be determined in the following:

1. The group of peers helps the child to grow and nurture his personality, as it provides a social environment that provides the child with the group behavioral patterns and values such as the spirit, behavior and value of a group.

2. Through the group of peers, an important aspect of social attitudes and values, as well as skills that help to succeed in subsequent stages of life, are formed.

3. The group of peers pushes the individual to modify many of the values and standards he acquired from the family, as required by this group.

4. The group of peers gives an individual the opportunity to deal with equal and similar individuals, thus he experience the different types of equal relations and transactions that neither the family nor the school provides.

5. It helps the child to reach levels of personal independence from parents and other authority representatives.

6. It corrects the behavioral extremism or deviation among its members. It does so by exerting pressure on its members, that is stronger than the pressure of any individual from outside the group.

7. The group of peers has a valuable function in helping to transfer responsibility to the adolescent; as for at home, parents' care for children is authoritarian. At school, an adolescent behavior must be restricted by teachers and managers, but in the group of peers, each individual can assert himself in a way that may not be available elsewhere. (Al-Kandari, 2005)

In spite of the importance of the role played by the group of peers in the life of its members, which is the only place where a person may find himself, fulfill his demands, and satisfy his wishes without being subjected to the pressure of authority he may have in other institutions.; However, there are disadvantages that an individual may face in this group. Like when a teenager join a group without knowing its goals or the group of peers is made of frustrating members, this might destroy the individual who joins this group by practicing issues that are unacceptable by the society, especially with the absence of the family and the school supervision. (Tracg and Shelleg, 2006)

The most important social and psychological methods that a group of peers follows in the process of upbringing:

1. Social reward and acceptance: When a member's behavior agrees with the community's standards and values, which reinforce this behavior and support it.

2. Punishment, denial and social rejection: In the case of a member violating with his behavior the standards of the group, which will result in stopping this behavior.

3. Provide behavioral models with which some members unite: a member of this group, for one reason or another, may become of value and importance which will make him an example and a model to be followed and unite with him the rest of the members of the group or some of them.

4. Participation in play (Braldry and others, 2001)

In general, the influence of the group of peers in the process of socialization is determined by the convergence of social roles, the clarity of behavioral standards, and the existence of general attitudes and values, where individuals meet and work to achieve them, and to follow in their behaviors. The importance of the role played by peers in the process of controlling the social behavior of children is therefore clear. (Jeremy, 2010)

The concept of social behavior:

Behavior means the daily events in an individual's life, the activities he does and his interaction toward a group of members and their interaction toward him. A behavior includes:

A- The apparent behavior: which can be observed objectively and appear in the form of verbal or non-verbal expressions and there are differences in some non-verbal expressions, especially signals as is common in people's culture, for example the way of greeting which vary from one society to another.

B- Internal behavior: any mental process followed by the individual such as thinking, recalling, perception and imagination or else. This cannot be directly noticed but we can infer is occurrence by preserving its consequences, and in accordance to the individuals conduct whether apparent behavior or as result to mental processors when it is an internal behavior produced by the individual when it is said to be social behavior. (Pamela and Norland, 1981)

Social behavior elements:

Social behavior includes a set of elements which can be determined as follows:

First: Personality: The individual responses to different situations are not mere isolated conditional reflective actions as was previously perceived. The recognition of the personal individual characteristics and the nature of the attitude lead to a differentiation of behavior as a result to the situation itself. As an individual may respond through a harmonized manner of intelligence, inactivity or tension, but the individual personality is defined through social interaction with others and through the current human relations which have specific pattern as such relations through their shadows on human personality.

Second: Motives and needs: motivations or the driving forces of the social conduct are one of the public issues the reality of behavior is determined by its courses. Conduct is the outcome of an operation where the biological factors and the social influences interact, as the biological factors come within the individual while the social influences come from the behavior of the people encountered by the individual which activate its motivation as there is no behavior without motivation.

Third: positive interactive behavior: each person has their own method of interaction where they hope to extract the desired responses of other people. As an example of the interactive behavior is the fast dialogue with other people through which the individual learn the various behavior patterns that shape their tendencies and organize their relationship with their conversers within a frame of the agreed values, culture and social traditions. (Abu As'ad, 2012)

Methodology and procedures:

Study sample and population: the study population was made of the sixth grade students for the academic year (2017/2018) in the schools subject to the Directorate of Education in Jerash (the center), (2469) students. The study sample was made of (100) students of the sixth grade, have been chosen through the random cluster method representing (0.04) of the local society. The study sample was embodied in three classes of the chosen school through the purposive method (the basic eastern Wad Al-Dair School for boys). The study tool was applied after which data was collected and tabulated to be examined later through the statistical program (SPSS).

The study tool:

The researcher prepared one main research tool which is a questioner directed to the students to identify the effect of peers in controlling the social behavior. The tool consisted of (15) items which were prepared by referring to the theoretical literature and the appropriate previous studies. (abu As'ad, 2012, Dndash, 2002, Al-Sarhani, 2010)

Statistical treatment:

The data of the study was treated according to the following methods:

1. Using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to identify the reliability of the tool.

2. Arithmetic means and standard deviations.

3. (T-test) One-Sample Statistics.

Reliability of the study tool:

The researcher used the internal consistency reliability equation (split-half) to determine and correct the study tool through Spearman Brown equation and the following table shows the value of the split-half reliability and the corrected reliability value.

The split-half reliability coefficient of the study tool reached at (0.79) while the corrected reliability coefficient was (0.08) which is an acceptable ratio in this type of human studies. View table no.(1)

Table (1) the reliability coefficient of the study tool

Split-half coefficient	Corrected reliability coefficient
0.79	0.88

Corrected reliability equation = 2* split-half coefficient / 1^+ split-half coefficient

Standard reference of the study:

Table (2) Standard of comparison

No.	Range	Role
1	15 – 34.5	Low
2	35 – 54.5	Medium
3	55 – 75	High

Analysis data and testing the hypotheses of the study:

First main hypothesis: There is a statistically significant role at (α=0.05) of the peers in controlling the social behavior among the lower basic stage students in Jordan.

Table (3) The arithmetic means, standard deviation and T-value of the study samples individual responses to the study tool.

Number	Arithmetic means	Standard deviation	T	df	sig
100	63.00	0.65	8.78	99	0.00

From the previous table we see that there is a statistical significance for the effect of peers on controlling the social behavior of the lower basic stage students, where the value of Alpha is less than the value of sig. in this study (0.05), accordingly; we accept the alternative hypothesis and eject the null hypothesis. In order to measure the range of this effect, the researcher resorted to the general arithmetic mean of the study tool which was (63), and by comparing it to the referential standard of the study we find that the value of this effect is within high grade. This indicates the big influence of peers upraising and controlling their social behavior.

Study results:

1. There is a statistically significant effect of the peers in controlling the social behavior of the lower basic stage students in Jordan.

2. The peers play a high role in controlling the social behavior of the lower basic stage students in Jordan.

Recommendations:

1. The necessity of focusing on providing good environment to the children through adopting the Islamic education methods.

2. The necessity of parents to give care to the quality of the peers with whom their children interact.

3. Following up the children and observing their behavioral changes periodically.

4. Establishing positive relationships with the children by the parents to become more influential in their social behavior.

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