SITUATIONS OF BULLYING IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT STUDIES

Research article

Bobrovnikova N.S.¹, Trufanov G.A.²*, Tomin V.V.¹, Yevstafev A.V.⁴

¹ORCID : 0000-0001-5192-3882;
²ORCID : 0000-0002-3537-9589;
³ORCID : 0000-0002-7679-843X;
⁴ORCID : 0000-0001-9435-6005;

¹Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University, Tula, Russian Federation
²University of Donja Gorica, Podgorica, Montenegro
³Orenburg state university, Orenburg, Russian Federation
⁴Saint-Petersburg polytechnic university named after Peter the Great, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation

* Corresponding author (valentinothedoctor123[at]gmail.com)

Abstract

Any community of people is characterized by communication and the type of such communication. Communication and interaction in the planning of community activities and the realization of intended goals. Communication skills play a key role in productivity in interaction between actors. The inability to express their needs, outline the circle of interests, and set boundaries inevitably leads to an imbalance in the process of interaction of subjects, and the imbalance itself can contribute to the emergence of situations of fixation and assignment of certain attributes-markers that are assigned to certain participants of communities, which inevitably leads to the emergence of contradictions between members of the community. Contradictions can have inter-individual and intergroup character (dividing the community into fractions). Such contradictions are characterized by the presence of mutually exclusive and incompatible interests and the desire of one actor to realize his interest at the expense of another actor. In such cases, related to contradictions and interaction of actors-carriers of incompatible interests, as well as in the presence of active actions of actors expressed in confrontation, we can talk about the presence of conflict. The authors of the article attempted to consider situations of bullying at school as a form of conflict within the educational process. The study outlines the authors’ view on the place of modern conflictology in the work with bullying and considers the role of the conflictologist in the framework of conflict resolution in the educational environment.

Keywords: conflict, school, conflict resolution, mediation, educational process.

СИТУАЦИИ БУЛЛИНГА В КОНТЕКСТЕ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ КОНФЛИКТОЛОГИИ

Научная статья

Бобровникова Н.С.¹, Труфанов Г.А.²*, Томин В.В.¹, Евстафьев А.В.⁴

¹ORCID : 0000-0001-5192-3882;
²ORCID : 0000-0002-3537-9589;
³ORCID : 0000-0002-7679-843X;
⁴ORCID : 0000-0001-9435-6005;

¹Тульский государственный педагогический университет им. Л.Н. Толстого, Тула, Российская Федерация
²Университет Донья-Горица, Подгорица, Черногория
³Оренбургский государственный университет, Оренбург, Российская Федерация
⁴Санкт-Петербургский Политехнический университет имени Петра Великого, Санкт-Петербург, Российская Федерация

* Корреспондирующий автор (valentinothedoctor123[at]gmail.com)

Аннотация

Любое сообщество людей характеризуется через способность выстроить коммуникацию и типом такой формы общения. Общение и взаимодействие способствуют планированию деятельности сообщества и реализации намеченных целей. Коммуникативные навыки играют ключевую роль в продуктивности взаимодействия между участниками. Неумение выразить свои потребности, очертить круг интересов, установить границы неизбежно приводит к дисбалансу в процессе взаимодействия субъектов, а сам дисбаланс может способствовать возникновению ситуаций фиксации и присвоения определенных атрибутов-маркеров, которые закрепляются за определенными участниками сообществ, что неизбежно приводит к возникновению противоречий между членами сообщества. Противоречия могут носить как межиндивидидуальный, так и межгрупповой характер (деление сообщества на фракции). Такие противоречия характеризуются наличием взаимоисключающих и несовместимых интересов и стремлением одного актора реализовать свой интерес за счет интереса другого актора. В таких случаях, связанных с противоречиями и взаимодействием акторов-носителей несовместимых интересов, а также при наличии активных действий акторов, выражающихся в противостоянии, можно говорить о наличии конфликта. Авторы статьи предприняли попытку рассмотрения ситуаций буллинга в школе, как формы конфликта в рамках образовательного процесса. В исследовании изложен взгляд авторов на место современной конфликтологии в рамках работы с буллингом, рассмотрена роль конфликтолога в рамках урегулирования конфликта в образовательной среде.
Introduction

Any community of people is characterized by communication and the type of such communication. Communication and interaction in the planning of community activities and the realization of intended goals. Communication skills play a key role in productivity in interaction between actors. The inability to express their needs, outline the circle of interests, and set boundaries inevitably leads to an imbalance in the process of interaction of subjects, and the imbalance itself can contribute to the emergence of situations of fixation and assignment of certain attributes-markers that are assigned to certain participants of communities, which inevitably leads to the emergence of contradictions between members of the community. Contradictions can have inter-individual and intergroup character (dividing the community into fractions). Such contradictions are characterized by the presence of mutually exclusive and incompatible interests and the desire of one actor to realize his interest at the expense of another actor. In such cases, related to contradictions and interaction of actors-carriers of incompatible interests, as well as in the presence of active actions of actors expressed in confrontation, we can talk about the presence of conflict.


Main results

The authors of this research paper are adherents of the functional theory of conflict and R. Darendolph's conflict model of society. Therefore, the theories of L. Koser and R. Darendorf were chosen as the most operational and corresponding to the problems and methodology of the study. Thus, under the conflict the authors of the study propose to understand: the confrontation of social subjects (social groups, individuals), which arises due to the deficit of power, status, and resources, this process is accompanied by actions to neutralize the opponent [1]. For Lewis Kozer, conflict is the norm for society, it is a natural form of life in society, and conflict is a condition for the resolution of contradictions and further development of social groups [1]. Ralph Darendorf repeatedly noted that the state of conflict is normal for society. Social groups and individuals are at different levels in the system of domination and subordination, the existence of antagonistic interests between satisfied groups and unsatisfied groups is inevitable [2]. Thus, the authors of the article conclude the normality of the existence in society of objective preconditions for conflict. These prerequisites arise from the contradictions that reveal themselves in all spheres of life in society, due to limited resources, the aspiration of individuals and groups to seize, retain, and exercise power, the difference, and the fact of non-acceptance of values. The authors emphasize the conflict as a moment of contradiction resolution, a situation that stimulates groups and individuals to develop new norms and agreements within the framework of creating a basis for the formation of dialog space. It should be noted that it is impossible to move in the direction of progress while having a significant amount of contradictions as markers of dysfunction of the current system of relations, and its ability to meet the interests and needs of community members [3].

Conflict in an educational organization, and in particular in a school, is an invariably topical and relevant topic in domestic and foreign conflictology. In one of his previous studies devoted to the problem of bullying at school, G.A. Trufanov noted the importance of constructive intervention in the conflict by specialists in school mediation and reconciliation services [4]. The educational process is a complex system of participation, which has its peculiarities. Under the educational process as a system of relations and exchange, the authors of this article suggest understanding: the totality of formal and informal interactions of subjects of the educational process, both in the field of education and outside it. The key parameter here is the factor of conditionality of the subjects' relations, originating from their inclusion in the educational process itself. It should be noted that situations of bullying as a conflict are complicated by the presence of a strong emotional component, and also significantly conditioned by the subjective perception of the object of bullying as a carrier of undesirable and unacceptable characteristics [5], [6]. It is the subjective component that plays a significant role in the further construction of the discourse of "strangers" about the object of bullying.

The authors of the study place special emphasis on the nature of bullying as a conflict and its key characteristics, as well as provide an operational definition that reveals the main characteristics of bullying as a situation of negative and destructive interaction-interaction of subject-object nature: bullying as a conflict is a form of destructive interaction, which includes many types and subtypes of aggressive behavior, is characterized by two essential features – the imbalance of power of opponents, as well as the constancy of conflict situations. Bullying is a set of episodes of pressure, alienation, humiliation, etc., which is based on the unequal power of opponents in terms of access to power, leadership, symbolic capital, and material resources. Bullying as a conflict is always a marker of a critical state in the system of distribution of benefits between community members [7].

Bullying is a significant problem for a modern educational organization. It is necessary to emphasize the fact that the environment of children's interaction, due to its dynamism and tendency to single out leaders, often tends to reproduce negative labels of alienating nature and properties in the direction of certain members of children's communities. This kind of alienation translates into bullying. It should be noted that in the age of digital technology, bullying has gained new opportunities to be widespread among social media users, which brings negative and destructive interaction to a whole new level due to the permanence of the bullying process [8], [9], [10]. Bullying can critically affect the mental health of children of all ages and social groups, contribute to the development of complexes, and can also lead to problems in the processes of communication and further socialization [11], [12].

Discussion

It is necessary to emphasize the importance and role of media as a mediating structure in the dissemination of patterns of hostility language in textual and non-textual forms in social networks, as an interactive space of interaction between subjects.
involved in the educational process. Media as a mediator plays a key role in creating a certain impenetrable "vacuum" of hostility around the victim of bullying. The "vacuum" of hostility in this case should be understood as a social space of conflict, where the weakest opponent is subjected to a widespread, constant, and systematic negative impact of the strongest opponent, which is almost impossible to avoid.

Bullying in school as a complex conflict. It is a long-term process of confrontation of the parties in an aggressive-negative realization of incompatible and mutually exclusive interests of the leadership of individuals or groups, through causing suffering to the victim of bullying. Bullying is a long-term conflict, which tends to develop according to the extensive scenario due to the involvement of new participants in the conflict. Also, bullying is characterized by the features of an irrational-hostile attitude towards the representatives of its species-species. From the point of view of the aggressor party, bullying is an example of negative leadership. Bullying is always a process of disintegration and alienation, alienation of the victim from the normal social environment.

What makes the role of the participants in this conflict different? Some researchers believe that bullying comes from the behavioral patterns of the victim and the aggressor, as archetypes [13]. This reduction in the complexity and ambiguity of behavioral patterns cannot reflect all the diversity of positions taken by parties to the conflict in the conflict process itself. A conflict is a clash of mutually exclusive interests that each of the participants may have. The second group of researchers emphasizes that the school environment managed by the teacher has a key impact on bullying processes. It is he who forms the perception and connotation of the conflict itself in the minds of students. If the teacher does not attach importance to bullying in the process of education, then he allows the situation to get out of control, finally [14]. Moreover, it gives the aggressors full freedom of action and guarantees inviolability. This moment allows the aggressors to freely realize their interests. A teacher's indifference to the bullying process is equivalent to the indulgence given to the aggressor. Communication is a key to many problems connected to bullying as a whole concept of dysfunction in interaction in education as a process. Many researchers noted the fact that competence in the representation of needs in interaction in the context of education is essential and teachers should pay extra attention to this problem [15].

Now, we have to delve into the classification of roles in bullying as a specific type of conflict inside the framework of education as a process.

In this article, we will adhere to the following concept, most fully reflecting the extensive nature of involving new participants in the school's bullying process, developed by Roland E:

1) pursuers (aggressors, bulls);
2) the support group of pursuers (laugh with the aggressor, stand next to the moment of harassment, come up with ways of harassment...);
3) victims;
4) victim support group (who actively tries to resist harassment of another person);
5) neutral – they are directly involved in the conflict and are removed from it (although they don’t want to tolerate violating the educational process, disrupting lessons, scandals in the lesson and change, etc.);
6) provocateurs – those who themselves do not use aggression, but provoke violence and harassment between others in their own interests (bet on the winner, shoot on video and upload on the Internet, etc.);
7) sympathizers (disagreeing with what is happening, but usually silent). They do not like what is happening in the classroom, but they try not to intervene (perhaps out of fear of swapping places with the victim), as a result, this raises indifference in them, or they, feeling powerless, become "indirect" victims of harassment.

When we talk about the density and frequency of contact between the aggressor and the victim in the educational process, the less often they are, the better for the bullying victim [4]. However, in such a situation, there is a risk of uncertainty about the intentions of the opposite party. Does the student know the intentions of the aggressor? What should he do? What's his next step? Here is an incomplete list of questions that can come to the victim's head, only worsening the emotional state. In this case, the lack of information triggers a mechanism for exaggerating and unnecessarily demonizing the other side, attributing unnatural abilities to it. We begin to come up with scenarios, and fear, and experience outbreaks of latent aggression. All this leads to excessive nervous overvoltage, the manifestation of nervous tics, sleep disorders, etc. In this case, mental health is at risk. The victim should not seek and seek meetings and contacts with the aggressor on purpose, but use each existing and happened contact for their good to collect information. The victim should analyze the details, and try to find out the motives. It should be noted that such tactics of behavior in bullying situations should not be the natural behavior of the victim behavior, it will only help the victim for the first time, which is necessary to realize the situation of incompatibility between the interests of the aggressor and the victim, as an unambiguous and requiring the intervention of a school conflict specialist, reconciliation service, mediation [16], [17].

Conclusion

To establish the tolerance behavior models in the school environment, it is necessary to conduct special training pieces of training and seminars for teachers aimed at explaining the principles of tolerance and corporation ethics for professionals working in this field. It is also necessary to implement and improve expert control, based on an interdisciplinary approach, in this area by conflict specialists, who will be called upon to carry out control within the framework of school reconciliation services [18], [19], [20]. Manipulation with different discourses in conflict situations may cause serious damage to any constructive strategy of conflict regulation implementation [21], [22].

In this case, it is necessary to emphasize that it is conflict scientists who should become an integral part of any school reconciliation service.

In previous research, Gleb Trufanov highlighted the essence of the role of professional conflictologists in the context of conflict regulation procedures in school [4]. The lack of motivated and dedicated specialists is a big problem in the way of effective and integral education based on mental health and emotional stability.

This need for the choice of conflictologists for school reconciliation services is dictated by
1. The need for a comprehensive understanding and analysis of each case of bullying at school.
2. Systematization of conflictological knowledge of bullying as a complex and conflict genesis phenomenon.
3. Development and typologization of models of effective interaction of the parties in the framework of bullying situations at school.
4. The need for counseling of teachers and schoolchildren to overcome the fact of nihilism and lack of conflict behavior culture.
5. Modern university graduates with a degree in conflictology have a wide and relevant interdisciplinary scientific toolkit.
6. The need to analyze the school environment, and make observations and monitoring of schoolchildren, which allows to identify the fact of existence of contradictions between children at an early stage.
7. Mediation sessions implementation.

The core idea of modern conflict science, which adheres to the positively functional theory of conflict, is the understanding that conflict is not only a source of destruction but also a basis for creation, the resolution of existing contradictions allows the whole to develop further.
1. An interdisciplinary approach can contribute to a fruitful and non-standard solution to many scientific problems. It allows you to explore the object of study as a holistic and unified structure while using data obtained by researchers from different fields of knowledge. The diversity of interdisciplinary tools provides new concepts to enhance existing knowledge.
2. The versatility of interdisciplinary instrumentation is the reason for its versatility and ability to be applied to the study and resolution of almost any scientific task.
3. The synthesis of knowledge is one of the fundamental foundations for integration. This aspect may find itself in expanding opportunities for collaboration between researchers from different fields.
4. The orientation of an interdisciplinary approach to solving the problem leads to the emergence of new scientific paradigms at the junction of different scientific fields, which leads to the enrichment of scientific knowledge in general.
5. A specialist using an interdisciplinary approach uses a special type of scientific language, which is a synthesis of the terminological apparatus of many scientific fields.

Main functions of conflict scientists in the framework of school reconciliation services
1. Expert assessment of individual cases of relationships of children in the school environment on the element of speech aggression, scientific analytics of the genesis of the language of enmity in the school environment. Early detection of bullying.
2. Demonstrating to the general public the inhumanity of the nature of extremism and harassment.
3. Promotion and development of a dialogic model of interaction in school, based on the principles of equal rights in the interaction of subjects.
4. Settlement of conflicts between parties to conflicts.
5. Formation and promotion of a culture of tolerant behavior.
6. Development and conduct of training and seminars for teachers and parents aimed at the formation of a scientific understanding of the conflict, its nature, and social significance for the progress of society, as well as training aimed at the formation of a culture of constructive conflict interaction.
7. Study of the current legislation in the field of education and other related areas and identification of "gaps" in the legislation, making proposals for its improvement. Establishment of constructive dialogue with legislators and teachers, parents, promotion of mediation model.
8. Providing a constructive and continuous operation with bullying as a conflict.
9. Here we come to an innovative method developed and promoted by Gleb Trufanov- Agora session. This is a special type of interactive event-negotiations between group members based on equality, respect, integrity, and rules of speaking based on exact problems. People can speak only one by one at a time, and the headliner (teacher) watches the discipline in the negotiation process. The key aspect is that neither the teacher nor school leadership decides on certain problems inside a group of children, but the kids themselves. This makes sense because kids know the problem and the teacher is there to assist them in clarifying of the problem, choosing a way of regulating of the problem, and implementing the regulation. The burden of responsibility of deciding on a problem is on kids.

Holding sessions of open discussion of problems regarding bullying cases. Here is an example of questions for a discussion on a bullying-related case.

A. Who was harmed in all bullying events?
B. What consequences did this have?
C. Who, and how can their participants correct these consequences?
D. How to strengthen positive trends, outcomes, and agreements?
10. Demonstration and training in effective communication and cooperative behavior.
11. Holding meetings of classes and schools on the principle of agora. Inclusion and integrative-key to preventing bullying. An open discussion will make it impossible to conceal the fact of bullying in the team, and its public demonstration will transfer responsibility for the aggressor to the entire team, which should become a factor in deterring aggressors in the team.

Conflict of Interest
None declared.

Review
All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.