

# The Role of the Social Worker in the School Health Field

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## Abstracts

The current study aims to know the role of the school health social worker, what activities he carries out in the field of youth, adolescents and teaching staff, what is his role in caring for children with disabilities. A questionnaire was conducted via the Google Drive program and distributed via the social media network in the holy city of Mecca to men and women aged 25-55 years (500 questionnaires were distributed), and responses were from 490 (people). Received via email. It concluded that, social worker plays a very important role in providing psychological and social support to students.

**Keywords:** the role, of the social worker, in the school health field.

## Introduction

Social workers have a key role as partners with schools in guiding children and youth to their reach their potential intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Schools everywhere must include all children, whatever the challenges presented by children with different abilities, diverse backgrounds, and wide-ranging problems. Schools are also charged with preparing youth for life in an increasingly complex and changing world. This has been highlighted by the 2020/2021 pandemic, schools are finding it necessary to employ a more flexible approach. Schools must teach creative thinking, problem solving, social skills, communication skills, and decision-making skills in addition to the old core curriculum. These challenges increasingly require a team approach with support personnel bringing various expertise into schools so they can reach expanding educational goals. School social work is well established in many countries, and is being introduced in others to help schools handle barriers to education such as disabilities, physical and mental health problems, drug use, adolescent pregnancy, and learning problems; family problems including domestic violence, divorce, child abuse, homelessness, and family illnesses; and problems within the school system such as discrimination, bullying, and inappropriate discipline by staff <sup>(1)</sup>. School social workers can also join with communities to work on community-wide problems that negatively impact school performance such as violence,

crime, decaying neighborhoods, lack of community services, racism, and poverty. As they work on resolving the problems that interfere with learning and helping all to reach their potential, school social workers defend and advocate for the right to education that respects the dignity, worth and culture of the individual. 2021 is a moment in history when schools have been compelled to reset goals and strategies of education. In the process they can leapfrog old barriers and find new ways for children to learn and thrive. Rapid social change presents an array of ever-changing obstacles that prevent children from successfully completing their schooling, even for those pupils who are solidly in the social mainstream. These obstacles include personal and family challenges, systemic failures in schools and societal problems. Personal obstacles include physical and mental health problems, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy. Family problems, such as domestic violence, poverty, divorce, child abuse, homelessness and various family trauma affect large numbers of children in the course of their schooling. Systemic school problems, such as inadequate teaching, poor facilities, ineffective classroom management, bullying and prejudice also affect large numbers of children as some point in their education. Many of the problems that affect children's success are remarkably similar all over the world, and school systems are searching for ways to reduce the impact they have on children's learning. School social work brings knowledge, values and skills that are well suited to tackling the wide range of human problems that impede pupils' educational progress and support the goal of equal education for all. Social work skills are distinct from and complement those of other professions such as social pedagogy (a holistic child development profession that is well established in many European countries, where school social work is in many cases a later addition) and school counseling (common in the United States and functioning there alongside school social work). While school social work is distinct from other roles such as school counseling, there can be a blurring of roles in some cases. For example, in Germany school social work developed from social pedagogy and offers a blend of social work skills and skills derived from social pedagogy <sup>(2)</sup>. School social workers and other school professionals have many concerns in common and use such a wide range of skills that their roles may at times overlap. For example, a school counselor in the United States may do home visits on occasion, especially if there is no school social worker available. Some school social workers in the United States do preventive work in classrooms, a role that is more typical of school counselors. A variety of models for school social work are used, each having its advantages. For example, in the United States, Sweden and Finland, social work services are an integral part of the school staff and practitioners are typically part of a multidisciplinary school team <sup>(3)</sup>. In some countries, such as Hong Kong, the service is provided through non-governmental organizations <sup>(4)</sup>, while in others such as Germany, school social work is a collaboration between youth welfare agencies and the school system <sup>(5)</sup>. A major role for school social work in countries where widespread poverty and the accompanying child labor contributes to under-enrollment in school is to support Education for All targets by reaching out to families to enroll children, providing for basic needs such as school meals and maintaining school attendance. In countries where education is free and compulsory and children are not prevented Ideally school children will have easy access to a school social worker, so that problems can be resolved early before they become chronic. School social workers need to interpret their role to decision-makers in the school system so that their services are made available to the whole school population in ways consistent with social work values and standards. from attending school by the necessity of working, there are many issues in

schools that call for the expertise of social workers. Reducing absenteeism, whether caused by truancy, school phobia, dropping out, or poor health, is often a major part of the role. Other narrowly focused roles may be handed to school social workers depending on the current needs of the school system, source of funding, political pressure, or preference of the administration. However, the ideal role is broad and flexible, allowing the social worker to tackle any problem that interferes with school success and using a systems approach with school, family, and community to resolve problems. A toolkit of consultation with school staff, individual and group counseling, referral to agencies, advocacy and outreach to parents is the mainstay of school social work. Schools are charged not only with resolving the problems that interfere with learning, but also with developing preventive programs to address various social and health problems that affect the school population, such as child abuse, bullying (including cyber bullying), drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, and discrimination of all kinds. Preventive programs for developing cultural sensitivity, communication skills, decision-making, ethics, and conflict management are also needed to prepare students for fulfilled lives in a multi-cultural society. While the social work role is ideally suited to program development for these activities, practitioners are often steered toward solving immediate problems on a case-by-case basis with limited time spent on prevention. It is important for social workers to maintain control over the role definition and to be involved in policy making in order to balance intervention with preventive activities. Another role for school social work in the policy arena concerns joining with indigenous advocacy groups to foster education among the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and Africa who are still suffering from the after-effects of European imperialism. The Roma have experienced similar outcomes of culture loss and marginalization throughout their centuries of migration. Educational efforts are also needed to prevent loss of native cultures and languages resulting from colonization and globalization. School social workers can support development of educational programs that include indigenous world views and empower threatened cultures.

### **Material and Methods:**

This study started in (the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia), began writing the research and then recording the questionnaire in February 2024, and the study ended with data collection in July 2024. The researcher used the descriptive analytical approach that uses a quantitative or qualitative description of the social phenomenon (the role of the social worker in the school health field) the independent variable (the percentage of behavioral problems faced by the specialist among school students) and the dependent variable (the percentage of behavioral problems faced by children with disabilities) , this kind of study is characterized by analysis, reason, objectivity, and reality, as it is concerned with individuals and societies, as it studies the variables and their effects on the health of the individual, society, and consumer, the spread of diseases and their relationship to demographic variables such as age, gender, nationality, and marital status. Status, occupation <sup>(6)</sup>, And use the excel 2010 Office suite histogram to arrange the results using: frequency tables Percentages <sup>(7)</sup>. A questionnaire is a remarkable and helpful tool for collecting a huge amount of data, however, researchers were not able to personally interview participants on the online survey, the only answered the questionnaire electronically, because the questionnaire consisted of thirteen questions, all are closed.

## Results and discussion:

The approval rate for the questionnaire was 100%, and the ages of the male and female participants were as follows: 4.8% from 25-34 years old, and 45-55 years old from 35-44 years old, each 47.6%. As for the gender of the participants, they were 36.4% males and 63.6% females. As for their gender, it was as follows: Saudi men and women, 95.5%, while non-Saudis and men, 4.5%. As for marital status: married, 50%, single and divorced, both the same percentage, 18.2%, widower, 13.6%. As for the educational status, it was as follows: intermediate and secondary 0%, university 54.5%, Master's degree: 36.4%. As for their professions, they were government employee and male employee, 84.8%, businessman and housewife, both with the same percentage, 4.5%, businessman and student, 0%. As for us, the responses of the male and female participants to the questionnaire were as follows: The first question: The ability to identify problems related to youth and the ability to find a solution to them? Yes 90.9%, no 0%, and I don't know 9.1%. The second question: Can the specialist be able to take defensive measures in the field of youth problems? Yes 95.2%, no 0%, and I don't know 4.8%. Question Three: The social worker provides advice and social and psychological services to children and adolescents at school regarding every matter, both small and large? Yes, 95.5%, no, 4.5%, and I don't know, 0%. Question four: the social worker helps all students solve the problems they face inside the school by dealing with students and teachers? question five: does the social worker provide consultations, guidance, and advice on the various psychological and social issues that students may face? the same answer (yes 95.5%, no 4.5%, and I don't know 0%). Question Six: Does the social worker educate the school community about social, health, and psychological issues by organizing seminars, training courses, practical workshops, and other events? Yes 100%. Question Seven: Does the social worker provide psychological and social support to students only? Yes, 81.8%, No, 18.2%, and I don't know, 0%. Question eight: The social worker plans and coordinates with the school administration, teachers, parents, and the local community to organize events, activities, and programs? Yes, 90.9% and no, I don't know, the same percentage is 4.5%. Question nine: does the social worker work with students with special needs, by providing psychological and social support and guidance to them and their guardians? 100%. Question ten: The social worker plays an important role in primary, middle and secondary schools, where he works to provide emotional and social support and cooperate with teachers in developing educational programs. Participation in awareness and education programs and participation in committees and working groups? Yes 95.5%, No 4.5%, and I do not know 0%. Question eleven: the social worker plays a major role in caring for young people? Yes, 95.5%, no, 0%, and I don't know, 4.5%. Question 12: does the social worker play a major role with families of children with autism spectrum disorder? Yes, 86.4%, No, 4.5%, and I don't know, 9.1%. Last question: Social worker work tools: individual interviews, group sessions, recreational and educational activities, social and humanitarian programmes, educational resources, computer programs and applications? Yes, 95.5%, no, 0%, and I don't know 4.5%. (Table no.1)(Table.no.2)(Table.no.3)

Table.no.1: Participants' opinions: The role of the social worker in the school health field

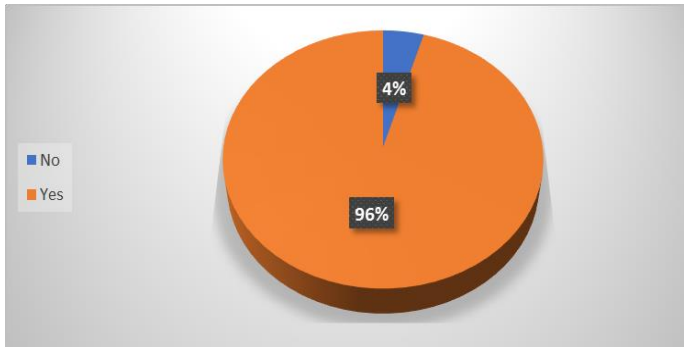


Table.No.2:percentage of males and females

Males	Females
36.4%	63.6%

Table.No.3: percentage of saudi and non-saudi

Saudi	Non-saudi
95.5%	4.5%

There is a global study entitled (A Global Picture of School Social Work in 2021) <sup>(8)</sup> , which studied the role of social workers and clarified the roles assigned to them.

### Conclusion:

The social worker plays a major role with families of children with autism spectrum disorder? 86.4%. The social worker plays an important role in primary, middle and secondary schools, where he works to provide emotional and social support and cooperate with teachers in developing educational programs, participating in awareness and education programmes, and participating in committees and working groups. by 95.5%. if found that Social workers have a key role as partners with schools in guiding children and youth to their reach their potential intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Schools everywhere must include all children.

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