School Bullying

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Abstract

School bullying is defined as physical, verbal, psychological attack/intimidation in a physically/psychologically unequal environment perpetrated in an intentional, willing and systematic manner in intervals against less powerful peer without the element of incitement, aiming to cause fear and anxiety/harm in the victim. Accordingly, this study is considered to be important in terms of recognizing bullying behavior and contributing to the literature on school bullying.

School bullying can be seen in students at all levels of education, but the highest risk group is the adolescents aged 13-15. Bullying have typologies such as social exclusion, physical and verbal bullying. Since verbal and physical bullying is observable and visible, they are considered to be direct bullying, while social exclusion is considered to be indirect bullying as it occurs in a less visible manner. A number of different factors have been identified that contribute to the bullying, and thus school bullying, and are generally divided into three main groups: individual, family and school-related factors. School bullying greatly influences students' academic achievement, physical and psychological health, and these negativities can persist into their lives. For this reason, school bullying is an issue that health professionals such as school nurses, psychologists, psychological counselors and physicians should handle with care. Determining the causes of bullying in schools and implementing effective measures to prevent bullying should be ensured by an interdisciplinary team so that students cannot be harmed by bullying behaviors.

Keywords: School bullying, prevent, violence.

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Okul Zorbalığı

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Öz

Okul zorbalığı, kışkırtma unsuru olmaksızın aralarında fiziksel/psikolojik açıdan bir güç eşitsizliği olan çocuklardan güçlünün, karşı tarafa bilerek ve isteyerek, niyetli, kasıtlı, sistemli bir biçimde belli zaman aralıkları ile uyguladığı, mağdurda korku, endişe/zarar vermeyi amaçlayan fiziksel, sözel, psikolojik saldırı/yıldırmayı kapsaması olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda bu çalışmanın zorbalık davranışını tanıma ve okul zorbalığı hususundaki alan yazına katkı sağlaması açısından önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Okul zorbalığı, öğrenim gören her düzeydeki öğrencilerde görülebilmekle birlikte özellikle en yüksek risk grubunu erken adolesanlar (13-15 yaş) oluşturmaktadır. Sosyal dışlama, fiziksel zorbalık ve sözel zorbalık tipolojileri olan zorbalığın, sözel ve fiziksel zorbalık gözlenebilir olması sebebiyle doğrudan zorbalık olarak nitelendirilmiş, sosyal dışlama ise dolaylı zorbalık olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Doğrudan zorbalık itme, vurma, alay etme, tehdit etme gibi açık saldırılar şeklinde iken dolaylı zorbalık, zorba ve mağdurun doğrudan karşılaşmasını gerektirmeyen sosyal gruptan dışlama, dedikodu yayma, şeklinde kendini gösterebilmektedir. Zorbalık davranışlarının dolayısıyla okul zorbalığının meydana gelmesine katkıda bulunan çok sayıda farklı nedenler belirlenmiş olup bunlar genel olarak bireysel, ailesel ve okuldan kaynaklanan nedenler olmak üzere üç ana grupta toplanmıştır. Okul zorbalığı öğrencilerin akademik başarılarını, fiziksel ve psikolojik sağlıklarını ciddi boyutta olumsuz etkilemekte ve bu olumsuzluklar öğrencilerin yaşamları boyunca da devam edebilmektedir. Bu nedenle okul zorbalığı, okulda görevli okul hemşiresi, psikolog, psikolojik danışman, hekim gibi sağlık profesyonellerinin ilgilenmesi gereken bir konudur. Okullarda zorbalık nedenlerinin belirlenmesi ve etkili zorbalığı önleme girişimlerinin disiplinlerarası bir ekip tarafından uygulanması sağlanmalı, öğrencilerin zorbaca davranışlardan zarar görmesi önlenmelidir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Okul zorbalığı, önleme, şiddet.

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Introduction

School is an institution that provides the individual with social responsibilities, self-control and respect for other individuals as well as with education and training. Every child and young person has the right to get access to education in a safe school environment (Leach, 2005). However, children / young people can be deprived of these rights due to many reasons, and unwanted behaviors defined as bullying in schools can be encountered. Studies (Gökler, 2009; Hoşgörür and Orhan, 2017) show that bullying, one of the most important problems of schools, have spread, and that it is a problem preventing schools from being safe institutions.

Bullying can be defined as the aggressive behavior that a person applies systematically in order to harm to another person whom he sees as less powerful (Olweus, 2013). However, while some researchers define bullying as deliberate aggressive behavior against others, some researchers state that such behavior should be repeated regularly in order to qualify to be bullying. Therefore, a full consensus has not been reached among the researchers on the definition (Yaman, Eroğlu and Peker, 2011). The one put forward by Olweus (1993) is the most commonly used definition of bullying, and accordingly, bullying is "intentional, repeated, negative (unpleasant or hurtful) behavior by one or more persons directed against a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself."

Bullying can be observed in students at all levels of education. However, it is more common in early adolescent (13-15 years) children who reject family authority, share their problems, feelings, fears, concerns with peer groups, spend most of their time in school with their friends and think that acceptance and social status are very important in the group (Ashley and Foshee, 2005; Özdinçer Arslan and Savaşer, 2009). According to The United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) September 2018 report, half the students aged 13-15 (around 150 million) worldwide are bullied in and around the school (UNICEF, 2018).

According to the literature, bullying behaviors are reported to be different among girls and boys (Perkins and Montford, 2005), and children subjected to domestic violence are more likely to bully and be exposed to bullying (Grinberg, Dawkins, Dawkins and Fullilove, 2005). It is stated that boys typically perform direct bullying-type actions, while girls mostly use indirect bullying methods, but girls are less likely to be bullied by or bully others in comparison to boys in school (Gültan, 2019).

School bullying causes serious harm and psychological effects that both victims and bullies will be affected throughout their lives. It is inevitable that traumas will affect individuals in adolescence for the rest of their lives (UNICEF, 2018). It is stated that school bullying decreases children's attendance to school and causes the behavior of absenteeism, negatively affecting the physical and psychological health of the child. The fact that the results of school bullying are not limited to school life, but has negative consequences even leading to suicide, makes bullying a syndrome in schools (Yaman et al, 2011; Yelboğa and Koçak, 2019). Because of the increase in bullying incidents in schools in recent years in our country and cases resulting in death, bullying is a hot issue that institutions, especially the "Ministry of Education" and the media focus on, and research on bullying in Turkey is gaining momentum day by day (Kapcı, 2004; Uludağlı and Uçanok, 2005; Yelboğa and Koçak, 2019). Accordingly, this study is considered to be important in terms of recognizing bullying behavior and contributing to the literature on school bullying.

Definition and Scope of School Bullying

Bullying is a common and widespread problem all over the world that can affect all people in any setting, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, or socioeconomic status. The prevalence of bullying, which concerns all countries of the world, threatens the physical and psychosocial health of children and young people. It is accepted that the effects of bullying is a serious trauma for students (Due, Holstein and Lynch, 2005; Özdinçer Arslan and Savaşer, 2009), it is not limited to the school period, it lasts for life and negatively affects public health (Bullying Prevention Training Course, 2019).

Researchers report that bullying, perpetrated by one or more persons taking advantage of power imbalance, is one's long-term and systematic exposure to physical behaviors such as forging, hitting and kicking, and is the exposure of the individual to psychologically and verbally negative behaviors such as ridicule, mocking, name-calling, exclusion, isolation and slander (Burnukara and Uçonak, 2012;

Tatlılıoğlu, 2016; Yaman et al, 2011). School bullying, on the other hand, is 1) to physically, intentionally, willingly and continuously (kick, slap, push, pull, etc.) target the less powerful peer 2) to verbally taunt, tease, mock, name-call, rebuke and humiliate 3) to gossip and spread rumors and threaten to take money or other belongings from less powerful students, which is defined as a type of aggression that excludes the victims from the group of friends and leaves them to loneliness, resulting in discomfort where the victim is unable to protect herself (Gültan, 2019; Özdinçer Arslan and Savaşer, 2009; Yelboğa and Koçak, 2019). If school bullying is to be defined in general, it can be defined as physical, verbal, psychological attack/intimidation in a physically/psychologically unequal environment perpetrated deliberately, willingly and systematically in intervals by the strong against the less powerful peer without the element of incitement, aiming to cause fear and anxiety/harm in the victim (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld and Gould, 2007; Sülükçü and Altunkaya, 2018).

Bullying actually dates back to very ancient history (Olweus and Mona, 2003). The first studies on school bullying were initiated by Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus in the 1970s, and in later years he took part in commissions to create anti-bullying programs in Norway and other Scandinavian countries (Berger, 2007; Hughes, 2005). This subject, which was limited only to Scandinavia for a while, started to attract interest in countries such as the USA, England and Holland after 1990s (Uludağlı and Uçonak, 2005; Yıldırım, 2012;). The first researcher dealing with bullying, Heinemann (1973), used "group violence" for school bullying, and stated that the reaction shown by the group was based on defending the group against a deviant group/individual (Yaman et al, 2011). In the study of Berger (2007) evaluating research findings related to bullying, it is stated that 289 researches were published in databases only in PsycINFO for 10 years between 1990 and 2000, while this number reached 562 in four years between 2000 and 2004.

Types of School Bullying

Although there are different typologies, there are three types of bullying according to Olweus (1994), which are social exclusion, physical bullying and verbal bullying. Since the latter two can be observed, they are addressed as direct bullying while social exclusion is considered indirect bullying (Smith and Ananiadou, 2003; Smith, 2004).

While direct bullying takes the form of open attacks such as pushing, hitting, teasing, threatening, damaging the peer's possessions, indirect bullying can manifest itself in the form of exclusion from the social group, spreading gossip, embarrassment or cyberbullying, which does not require the direct encounter of the bully and victim (Li, 2006). Students are exposed to direct bullying in the classroom or in the school yard, indirect bullying often takes place at school and on and off school. Direct bullying incidents are reported to be more common among male students while girls are more likely to be exposed to indirect bullying (Berger, 2007; Hughes, 2005; Pepler et al, 2006; Rigby and Johnson, 2005).

General Characteristics of School Bullying

School bullying (Gültan, 2019; Hoşgörür and Orhan, 2017; Lee, 2004; Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan, 2004) varies according to country and cultural differences in the researches. When it comes to the general characteristics of school bullying;

- It is stated that according to the nature of bullying, it can be physical, emotional, social / psychological, and that bullying is not impulsive or accidental, rather than planned, systematic and calculated.
- While the number of bullying boys is higher than girls, there is an equal number in both sexes among victims. While boys are often driven by individual powers, girls as a group exclude the victim they choose.
- In the period between the ages of 8 and 16, the number of individuals who stated that they were bullied decreased regularly, while the number of those who stated that they were bullying did not decrease. With age, there is a transition from physical bullying to indirect and relational bullying.
- In most cases, the bullying student is in the same class / age group as the victim. Being bullied by a younger peer is very unlikely and the bully is more powerful than the victim.

- Bullying can be performed by a child / gang. It can be occasional and short-term / continuous and long-term. The majority, considering themselves victims, do not open up to their teachers / family members about bullying. The proportion of those who do not step forward increases as the age grows, which indicates that being a victim in older age groups is a more serious problem.
- Boys are bullied by other boys, but girls can be bullied by both sexes.
- Bullying usually takes place within public buildings, such as playgrounds, classrooms, or corridors. Although many school variables are factors in bullying incidents, it is seen that the socio-economic situation especially in the service areas has a tremendous impact.

Incidence of School Bullying

Since school bullying is a problem that concerns all nations, it has been studied in a variety of different countries and cultures since 1970s. There are also differences in the frequency of bullying in different cultures (Chatira and Nikolopoulos, 2019; Karaca, 2018; Melzer-Lange et al, 2005; Olweus, 1994; O'Moore and Minton, 2005; Öztuna, 2018; Pişkin, 2010; Plexousakis, Kourkoutas, Giovazolias, Yöndem and Totan, 2008; Sapouna, 2008; Theriot, Dulmus, Sowers and Johnson, 2005). Looking at some research results regarding the frequency of school bullying;

More than 130,000 Norwegian students participated in the first comprehensive school bullying study conducted by Olweus in 1993, of which 15% stated that they were involved in bullying or as a victim. Other research by other countries, such as Sweden, Finland, the UK, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, Ireland, Spain and Australia, shows that this problem exists with the same or more prevalence rates in other countries than Norway. (Olweus, 1994). In a study conducted by Theriot et al. (2005) reported that bullying prevalence was 21.9% in their study with primary and secondary school students, determining that 22.9% of them did not define themselves as victims while meeting the criteria of being victims. In a national survey involving a total of 20,442 students in 26 states of Ireland between 1993 and 1994, 31.3% of primary school students and 15.6% of secondary school students were victims of bullying in their final semesters, and 26.5% of primary school students and 14.9% of secondary school students stated that they bullied others (O'Moore and Minton, 2005). More than 13,000 students participated in the Bullying Project, which included sixty-three schools from four different school districts of Wisconsin, and 29% of these students reported they were bullied at school / on the way to school, 37% bullied other students at school (Melzer-Lange et al, 2005). According to the results of a study involving 1.758 students aged 10-14 in 20 schools in Thessaloniki, Greece in 2007, 8.2% of students were victims, 5.8% were bullies and 1.1% were both bullies and victims. It was observed that male and female students participated in bullying incidents in equal proportions and younger peers were more likely to be exposed to bullying (Sapouna, 2008). In their study conducted by Plexousakis et al. (2019) with 433 students aged 8 to 17 in Greece, 23.5% of the students reported that they were bullied in the academic year they were in, leading to the conclusion that male students were more likely to bully.

When the studies conducted in our country were examined, it was observed that 27.23% of 584 adolescents were somehow involved in bullying activities according to the research conducted by Yöndem and Totan (2008). In terms of gender, bullying was found to be close to each other in both sexes (girls 11.41% and boys 11.55%). In the study conducted by Pişkin (2010) in Ankara aiming to determine the prevalence of bullying among 1154 people, it was determined that 35.1% were victims, 30.2% were both bullies and victims, and 6% were just bullies. In the same study, 52% of the students are male, 48% are female, of whom 41.3% are victims, 25.4% are both bully and victim and 2.9% are just bully. 29.4% of male students were victims, 34.6% were both bully and victim, and 9% were just bully. These findings show that in comparison to girls, boys are more involved in bullying. Again, in the study of Karaca (2018) conducted to investigate the prevalence of peer bullying in secondary schools and the depression and anxiety levels of bully-victims, the bullying scores of the students were found to show a significant difference according to their gender, the type of school where they study, the grade level, the age and educational level of the mother, revealing that victim scores of the students showed significant difference according to gender and educational level of the mother. In the study of Öztuna (2018) with 350 participants including 9th and 10th grade students; it was found that boys were bullied

through intimidation, suppression or open attack, while the most common type of bullying among girls was relational attack and derogatory comments.

Factors in Bullying

Many a number of different factors have been found that contribute to bullying behaviors, and thus school bullying, and are generally grouped into three: individual, family, and school-related factors (Gültan, 2019; Kanık, 2010; Özdinçer Arslan and Savaşer, 2009; Yelboğa and Koçak, 2019).

Individual factors are about the nature of the child, that is, the main tendencies that cause the child to develop certain personality types and interpersonal behaviors. Boys, who are active and aggressive due to their nature and who are stronger than their peers, are more prone to bullying because of these characteristics, but still there are many of those children who never bully (Tutty and Este, 2005). Generally, bullies have an aggressive attitude towards their friends, often aggressive towards adults, too, and their need to be strong and dominant over others is obvious (Kanık, 2010).

Family factors, according to a research on bullying, are very important in the development of personalities of children who are bullying or victims of others. The attitudes and behaviors of families greatly affect the behavior of children in social life. Any negative attitude between either of the parents and the child, excessive punishment, physical discipline / inconsistent and loose control, using socially acceptable physical attack, negative relationship between the parents and the child, and the nature of the child are very important elements in terms of bullying (Kanık, 2010) . Moreover, overprotective behaviors of parents and their dependence on the family make the child a potential victim of bullying. The opposite of this which is to free the child, not to show love and attention, lack of emphaty, domestic violance and conflicts increase the likelihood to bully (Gökler, 2009).

School-related factors; social context and control in schools play an essential role in the frequency and severity of bullying problems. Supervision of students is very important as teachers and administrators can reduce the severity of bullying problems through appropriate supervision, intervention and climate at school (Özdinçer Arslan and Savaşer, 2009). Bullying actions increase for a certain number of reasons such as insufficient controls of principals, vice principals and teachers over students in schools, difficulties in control in crowded schools, ignorance of bullying problems by the school board, not giving due importance to the issue and even toleration to such bullying behaviors in some schools (Kanık, 2010).

Prevention of School Bullying

Failure to respond to it appropriately increases the risk of recurrence when bullying occurs in any form. In order for students to feel safe in the school setting, they need to know that school management follows a zero tolerance approach against bullying (Grene, 2006,).

To prevent school bullying; (Gültan, 2019; Özdinçer Arslan and Savaşer, 2009; Rigby and Johnson, 2004; Sidelinger, Guerrero, Rodríguez-Frau and Mirabal-Colón, 2005; Yelboğa, 2018):

- children should be equipped with positive behavior and habits at an early age,
- risky groups that can bully / be bullied should be identified,
- anti-bullying programs in schools should be developed and implemented, which should be followed up by school administrators, employees, teachers and parents,
- workshops to break the bully cycle of bullies, victims and audiences should be established,
- the approaches to developing human rights, life skills and positive communication skills in schools should be taught, and training to increase these skills should be made available,
- anti-bullying programs should be established and implemented. While creating these programs, theoretical views (individual differences between students, as a developmental phase and a socio-cultural phenomenon, a reaction against the peer pressure seen in the school and serving as a kind of restorative justice) should be taken as basis. The effects of these theoretical views are very important in determining what schools should and should not do when developing and implementing anti-bullying policies.
- when implementing anti-bullying initiatives, these practices should not be of the type that will cause negative perceptions by students (expulsion from school, etc.),

- families should be ensured to participate in the anti-bullying program
- since bullying is a combination of many factors, a multidisciplinary team of school administrators, school guidance service, teachers, school nurse and physician should work in coordination when needed.
- an active role and responsibility in implementing the anti-bullying program fall on to school nurses as well as other school staff, which requires the expansion and empowerment of school nursing.

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