Chapter 22
Peer Bullying

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ABSTRACT

Bullying makes an appearance in various manners starting from the first years of life. Regardless of whether it is direct or relational, bullying negatively affects the bullies and the victims. In addition, bullying has destructive effects on societies as well. In this respect, it is highly important to know what bullying, types of bullying, characteristics of bullies and victims, bullying statuses, factors that affect bullying, and the short and long-term effects of bullying are. In this sense, it can be seen that all kinds of studies, activities, and programs that might be effective against bullying are necessary. Within this scope, the concept of bullying is dealt with in a detailed manner in the related section.

INTRODUCTION

Although bullying has not always been referred to as bullying, it has made an appearance in various ways since the birth of humanity. However, the use of the concept of bullying as we know today has started to be used and dealt with in written sources only in the 1500's. The concept of bullying has first been referred to in Germany, in 1538 in its current meaning (Volk et al., 2014). In the 1960's, Konrad Lorenz studied animal behavior and observed that animals acted in a systematic and organized manner in groups against other animals. Konrad Lorenz has coined this emerging behavior as "mobbing". At this point, the concept of mobbing has been approached as the first version of bullying (Leymann, 1996). With the increase of bullying, studies have been done in many parts of the world on the subject and the causes and consequences of bullying have been researched. The studies carried out in Scandinavian countries, which have a high welfare and income level, on bullying have become the pioneering studies in this area (Berger, 2007). Although other studies have been done in various countries on bullying as well, the event which brought the concept of bullying to the world agenda has been the suicide of three children

aged 10-14 in Norway, as a result of the pressure of their peers. As a consequence of the suicide of the children, actions have started to be taken at a national level in Norway to prevent peer bullying. In 1970, Dan Olweus's research project carried out in North European schools has become the pioneer of these studies (Olweus et al., 1999).

Bullying is observed in the structure of all societies, cultures, school types and grade levels regardless of language, religion, and race (Levine & Tamburrino, 2014; McDougall, 1999). As a result of UNICEF's study involving 100.000 adolescents from 18 different countries, it has been seen that two thirds of the participating adolescents were victims of bullying (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017). In the report published by World Health Organization in 2012, it was indicated that the incidence rate of bullying ranges between 1% and 32% (Currie et al., 2012). In the report on adolescent period risks published in 2011 in the USA, it was seen that the rate of bullying between adolescents ranges between 20% and 56% (Eaton et al., 2012). As a result of a study carried out in Brazil, it was determined that 18% of adolescents aged 13-15 was bullies, 5.5% was victims and 2,7% was bullies-victims (Serra-Negra et al., 2015). In a study carried out in Turkey, it was determined that 40% of 4th and 5th grade primary school students have been subjected to verbal, physical or emotional peer bullying at least once (Kapçı, 2004). Yıldırım (2001) has stated that 16,4% of adolescents is in the bully group, 26,2% is in the victim group and 23,8% is in the bully-victim group. Smokowski and Evans (2019) have reported that 16% of girls and 26% of boys in Belgium; 17% of girls and 13% of boys in Canada; 12% of girls and 13% of boys in France and 11% of girls and boys in Switzerland aged 13 are victims of bullying. Although their results are different, studies have shown that about 15-20% of students are affected by peer bullying experienced in the school environment (Ayas & Pişkin, 2011; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Genç, 2007). In addition, there are studies which report that about 60-70% of adolescents experience bullying in daily life as well (Bradshaw et al., 2007; Rivers et al., 2009).

It can be seen that a majority of research done on bullying involve children/adolescents who are primary school, high-school and university students. However, it is known that peer bullying starts in the pre-school period. As a result of the study carried out by Gültekin-Akduman (2012), it was determined that the most frequently seen type of bullying among pre-school children is physical bullying and that verbal and relational bullying are also seen in this period. Metin-Aslan and Tuğrul (2013) have shown that children with higher relational bullying scores display more relational and physical bullying behaviors in their games. The results of the study showed that children with higher scores of physical bullying are subjected to more physical bullying. In addition, the researchers have found that pre-school children display bullying behaviors such as taking their friends' toys or belongings by force, pushing and threatening their friends, excluding them from their group/games, ignoring and being indifferent to them. It is expressed that children who are subjected to peer bullying in the pre-school period experience adaptation problems and psychological problems later in life (Szewczyk-Sokolowski et al, 2005). In addition, it is reported that children who display bullying behaviors and are victims in the first years of their lives have the potential to be bullies and victims in later years (Gillies-Rezo & Bosacki, 2003). This makes the pre-school period a risky period in terms of bullying behaviors which might be observed later in life.

Bullying acts appear in all age groups starting from the pre-school period and have been increasing all over the world. This affects individuals in the short-term and society as a whole in the long-term. It is considered that dealing with bullying which has destructive effects on individuals and societies is necessary and important. In this respect, the concept of bullying, bullying statuses, types of bullying, characteristics of bullies and victims, factors which affect bullying, and the short and long-term effects of bullying were given place to under the following headings.

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