THE EFFECT OF PARENTAL RELATIONS AND LONELINESS ON ADOLESCENTS BULLYING BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

Aggressive behavior in adolescence is a major problem that is common all over the world. It is mentioned that the most common type of aggressive behavior that adolescents are exposed to is bullying. There are several forms of bullying named as verbal, virtual, physical and indirect. When the long-term effects are examined, bullying behaviors cause negative consequences for both the exposed and the perpetrator. Adolescents who are bullied may experience psychological and social problems, and they are more likely to experience psychiatric problems and commit crimes in adulthood than individuals who do not engage in bullying behavior. The causes of bullying are varied and it is difficult to explain with a single reason. When the effect of parents on the child is examined, it is seen that parental relationships are a very important determining factor in perpetrating bullying behaviors and being exposed to bullying behaviors. Furthermore, it has been observed that loneliness has a great effect on bullying behavior during adolescence, and lonely adolescents have risk to be both bullies and victims. At this point; peer acceptance in adolescence, effective communication within the family, prevents loneliness and prevents the situation of being bully-victim. In this respect, it is important to develop interventions to reduce and prevent bullying and to ensure the contribution of parents for a healthy identity development.

Key words: Parental Relations, Loneliness, Adolescents, Bullying Behavior

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Background:
Bullying has many types. For instance; physical bullying includes; pushing, hitting and kicking and also verbal bullying includes; verbal threatening and insulting (Bandura,1978: 15). When the literature is examined bullying behavior is linked with many negative consequences such as depressive feelings, anxiety, decreased life satisfaction, sleep disturbances etc. In this context it is very important to assess the factors related with bullying in order to stop this uncontrolled rise within peer groups. In this study; it is aimed to investigate the impact of parental relations and loneliness on adolescents’ bullying behavior.

Research Purpose:
Bullying behaviors are carried out in a hostile and aggressive manner with the aim of harming the other person or persons (Campbell, 2015: 29). In order for a behavior to be called bullying, it must be repeated two or three times by the person being bullied (Solberg and Olweus, 2003: 245). Especially in adolescence, it is most risky times to show bullying and victimization behavior tendency (Eslea and Rees, 2001: 423). Furthermore bullies can cause verbal discomfort, loneliness of person, discriminate, make false rumors about the individual, disturb the belongings of the individual or engage in behaviors that will cause physical and sexual discomfort, and may also engage in harmful behaviors in electronic environments (Ayas and Pişkin, 2011: 15). Bullying can be affected by different factors such as physical, biological, psychological characteristics of the person, school and school environment, and family (Eslea and Rees 2001: 423).

Methodology:
In the writing phase of this review article, national and international indexed articles related to the subject were used. The literature search was conducted in the databases of Pubmed, Ovid, Cinahl, Wiley Interscience, Science Direct and Cochrane, Ulakbim Medical Database, Turk Medline, Turkish Psychiatry Index without year limitation. The screening was carried out in English and Turkish languages between March-April 2022. While scanning, the words "bullying", "peer bullying", "family relations", "loneliness" and "adolescent" were used as keywords.

Findings:
As a result of the literature review, it was determined that bullying behavior is a very common growing problem among adolescents. It was also illustrated that feeling of loneliness and family relationships has a great impact in the formation of the bullying behavior. Moreover it is known that peer acceptance in adolescence, effective communication within the family, prevents loneliness and prevents the situation of being bully-victim. If the parents are permissive and tolerant, they give their child to freedom and they do not excessively supervise his child and not impose restraints on their behavior; they are not coercive (Nickerson, et al., 2009: 395). Furthermore, to prevent bullying behavior it is important to the participation of the family into the interventions of bullying behavior programs.

Conclusion: It is thought that studies including family relations and peer support which prevents loneliness will be beneficial for finding peaceful solutions for both those who commit bullying behaviors and those who are victims of bullying behaviors. Lastly, bullying is an important growing problem worldwide, more cross-sectional and longitudinal studies needed for awareness and prevention of bullying behavior.

1.INTRODUCTION
Bullying behaviors are carried out in a hostile and aggressive manner with the aim of harming the other person or persons (Çelenk, 2019: 27). Bullies mostly have low academic success and negative attitudes and beliefs both about themselves and others (Rees et al., 2015: 790). Peers have a
significant role on adolescents' life and sometimes it may cause in adolescents' life in a negative way if they are bullied or rejected (Li et al., 2021: 11). On the other hand, peer victimization is also one of the veriest prevalent developmental problem between both children and adolescents around the world (Higgins et al., 2010: 117). Bullying has many types. For instance; physical bullying includes; pushing, hitting and kicking and also verbal bullying includes; verbal threatening and insulting (Bandura, 1978: 15).

Also in recent years, researchers revealed new types of bullying such as electronic (Bronfenbrenner,1994: 40) or cyberbullying (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 40). Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluave and Ruan (2004) examined the prevalence to be bully and victim and they revealed that status to be bully and victim showed differences between 9% to 54% in the world (Hong et al., 2012: 315). When studies on the prevalence of peer bullying are examined, it is stated that bullying generally varies between 5% and 15% (Mishna, 2003: 6). In a study conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2017: 826) with the participation of 100,000 young people in 18 different countries, it was determined that two-thirds of the participants were victims of bullying. Bullying is a common problem in Turkey. According to a study conducted on high school students, it was found that 44% of the students were exposed to verbal, 30% to physical, 18% to emotional and 9% to sexual bullying (Kepenekçi and Çingir, 2003: 240). Moreover, peer bullying is the deliberate or observable disturbance of one or more students, together with repetitive behaviors, on students that they find weaker than themselves and who do not have the self-confidence to defend themselves (Pişkin, 2002: 13). In order for a behavior to be called bullying, it must be repeated two or three times by the person being bullied (Solberg and Olweus, 2003: 245). Especially in adolescence, it is most risky times to show bullying and victimization behavior tendency (Eslea and Rees, 2001: 421). Furthermore bullies can cause verbal discomfort, loneliness of person, discriminate, make false rumors about the individual, disturb the belongings of the individual or engage in behaviors that will cause physical and sexual discomfort, and may also engage in harmful behaviors in electronic environments (Ayas and Pişkin, 2011: 16). Bullying can be affected by different factors such as physical, biological, psychological characteristics of the person, school and school environment, and family (Eslea and Rees, 2001: 421). The reasons for the emergence of bullying behavior arising from the person himself; intelligence below the normal level, anti-social personality structure, learning difficulties, hyperactivity and inattention problems, musculoskeletal structure being larger than their peers, and genetic structure of the person play a role (Mohseny and Tadjini, 2019: 211). The reasons for bullying behavior arising from the family are; the family may be weak socially and there may be feelings of jealousy of other students and not wanting them to be happy (Göklı, 2009: 112). Violence and aggression in the family and the punishment of the parents can also cause this. These behaviors can be seen more intensely in children who do not have family ties and are deprived of family love. Moreover, the fact that if the family accepts bullying as normal and the individual takes bullies as an example may also cause these behaviors to emerge (Dake et al., 2003: 176). The individual's involvement with violent television programs and computer games during and before adolescence may play a role in the emergence of bullying behavior. The failure of the individual in the lessons at school, not participating in the activities, the insecurity of the school and the school environment, and the indifference of the school officials can cause bullying (Kizmaz, 2006: 17). Bullying behavior is less common in schools that have a high school culture and attach great importance to success. The large number of students in the classroom, competition among peers, social comparison, teachers' attitudes towards bullying, frequent changes in teachers, and violence tendencies within the school can cause bullying. It is observed that bullying behaviors are increasing day by day and negative impacts of bullying among adolescents are obvious. When the literature is examined bullying behavior is linked with many negative consequences such as depressive feelings, anxiety, decreased life satisfaction, sleep disturbances etc. In this context it is
very important to assess the factors related with bullying in order to stop this uncontrolled rise within peer groups. In this study; it is aimed to investigate the impact of parental relations and loneliness on adolescents’ bullying behavior.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Bullying

Turner, Brown and Tajfel (1979), Hornsey et al. (2015) suggested that bullying was associated with Social Identity Theory among children and adolescents. This theory explained that individuals' thoughts, attitudes and behaviors were shaped according to their group norms which they were present to improve their own self-esteem in the group. Additionally, Primary Socialization Theory suggested that bullying behavior is learned from social environment and peers play take important role in social environment during adolescents (Higgin, 2010: 137), Bandura (1978), also examined Social Learning Theory and he suggested that this theory had affect on bullying behavior among children. According to this theory, children take role model when this model was strong. Furthermore, Ecological Systems Theory which was developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 may explain risk and protective factors which might be related with bullying behavior both among children and adolescents (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 40). The Ecological Systems Theory includes five level which provide to shape individual (micro, meso, exo, macro and chronosystem levels) (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 42). Microsystem had direct affect in bullying behavior because it is composed of people or groups of people within immediate places (school or home) (Hetherington and Elmore, 2003: 186). Mesosystem was related with inter-relations between two or more microsystem such as; parents-adolescents relationship or teachers-parents relationship. Additionally, according to Exosystem, events that's occurred in the settings which people were not present affect people's development. For instance; media (which includes aggression) and Macrosystem includes cultural norms, beliefs and values. Furthermore, the fifth level of Ecological Systems Theory which is Chronosystem contains life events of the people and their environment such as divorce or remarriage) (Hetherington and Elmore, 2003: 188). Based on the theoretical background of bullying, in the present study Ecological Systems Theory was taken into consideration and examination the effect of parental relations and loneliness on adolescents’ bullying behavior.

2.2. Parental Relations and Bullying

Parental involvement might play important role in bullying behavior. For instance; low level of parental warmth, low involvement with parents and low family cohesion or to have divorced parents was found to be positively related with bullying behavior (Flouri and Buchanan, 2003: 636). Social Learning Theory demonstrated that parents become important role models for their children (Monks et al., 2005: 149) and they may learn bullying behavior by observing and modeling their parents (Gallarin and Alanso, 2012: 1603). Additionally, authoritarian parenting which includes, hostility, corporal punishment, rejection and positive attitude toward aggression have an important role for developing bullying behaviors. In contrast, parents who have good communication with their children and who demonstrate love, warmth and support towards to children may decrease the risk of bullying behavior (Lee and Kim, 2016: 122). Compared with other groups, students who are victims of bullying and bullying are reported to have conflicting relationships with their parents and have lower parental support (Demaray and Malecki, 2003: 476). The fact that some parents pamper their children excessively, never admitting that their children can do wrong can also lead to bullying, and children who are excessively pampered by their parents can become chronic bullies (Elliot, 1997: 4). Gallarin and Alanso (2012) revealed that parents' characters (i.e. honesty, empathy, self-control etc.) also take important role on the development of their children and might
decrease the risk of bullying behavior. According to Bronfenbrenner’s multilevel model, child socio-emotional development is reason of interrelations with their ecological surroundings which includes microsystems, including relations with teachers, parents and peers, etc. (Bronfenbrenner, 1994: 38). Therefore, according to this model child-parent relation is the one of the important factor that affecting microsystems and shaping child psychological foundations for bullying involvement. In addition; Bowlby’s attachment theory suggested that the bond and the quality of parent-child relations affect the child’s interpersonal relations in whole life. Children who have a secure emotional bond with their parents who demonstrate worthy of love and support, relate positively with others. On the other hands; children with an insecure emotional bond with their parents disposed to experience difficulties in self-regulation and it is more risky that show antisocial and aggressive, behaviors in childhood and adolescence. Moreover, previous research demonstrated that parental monitoring behaviors which includes tracking kids’ whereabouts, activities and compliance play an important and affective role to decrease bullying behavior (Aksoy et al., 2008: 15; Aypay et al., 2016: 4; Stattin and Kerr 2000: 1076).

2.3. Loneliness and Bullying
Loneliness is an emotional situation that cause to dissatisfaction of social relationships among individuals and it cause to make themselves isolate from others (Cacioppo et al., 2010: 10). In the adolescence period, low physical attractiveness, competitive classifications, low level of athletic skills may be the factors of loneliness in adolescents who feel themselves insufficient. Therefore, this may cause to increase bullying behavior between adolescents (Campell, 2015: 55). Most of previous research suggested that there were significantly positive relationships between aggression, loneliness and bullying behavior in adolescents. Furthermore, lonely people may have interpersonal difficulties and also they may have negative peer beliefs (Russel et al., 1978: 293; Zongkui et al., 2006: 10). Therefore, they might develop negative attitudes against to peers because it was anticipated that they were more likely to demonstrate bullying behavior. The targets of bullies are generally children who are alone at school (Acquah et al., 2015: 326). Generally, children who have few friends and who are alone at school are at higher risk of being bullied. Individuals who have one or more friends who are not alone are not exposed to peer bullying much (Edery, 2016: 83). Children generally bully the child who is not have a friend and think that they will be avenged or ostracized by the victim child's friends because of their rude behavior. This is why they prefer to attack lonely children who do not have protective friends (Özen, 2006: 74; Jiaqi et al., 2020: 13). Individuals who are bullied have a lower self-esteem and fear of attachment to another individual, and their loneliness level is higher than other individuals. Children who are bullied have a constant fear of rejection and tend to devote themselves more to loneliness, fearing to communicate with their age group in adolescence (Baki and Yıldız 2014: 5). In addition to these, the victim of bullying may have many psychological and physiological problems such as failure in classes, absenteeism, stress, social adjustment disorders, long-term depression, anxiety and suicide, apart from loneliness (Ayas and Pişkin, 2011: 15). In general, the previous researches demonstrated that there was strong relationship among bullying and loneliness. In addition to this some research results also reveal that feeling of loneliness decreases self-esteem and triggers depressive mood among adolescents therefore they become more prone for bullying (Xiaoke et al., 2021: 13).

3. METHODOLOGY
In the writing phase of this review article, national and international indexed articles related to the subject were used. The literature search was conducted in the databases of Pubmed, Ovid, Cinahl, Wiley Interscience, Science Direct and Cochrane, Ulakbim Medical Database, Turk Medline, Turkish Psychiatry Index without year limitation. The screening was carried out in English and
Turkish languages between March-April 2022. While scanning, the words "bullying", "peer bullying", "family relations", "loneliness" and "adolescent" were used as keywords.

4. CONCLUSION

Bullying behavior plays an important role in adolescent. The domestic violence and witnessing or being exposed cause the child to take aggressive behavior as a model, and they can respond to various events with aggressive behavior. In addition, the lack of warmth of the parents, the disconnection between the single-parent family and family members cause bullying behavior or exposure to bullying (Florui and Buchanan, 2003: 37). In a family environment where the child feels valued and is accepted as an individual, parents establish a warm relationship with the child based on love; There is an egalitarian relationship between them. On the other hand, family members express their love for each other. In a family far from love for their child; the child is belittled, controlling, punishing, angry behavior and hostile attitudes are at the forefront and the child is rejected and the parents are indifferent to him. While the parents control their child, if they are controlling and restrictive, they are also strict in their behavior towards the child and always desires to control it and intervenes. They have an excessive relationship with the child and tries to make him/her dependent on himself/herself. It pressures him/her to be orderly and obedient, demands strict fulfillment of his wishes, and isolates the child from his environment. Furthermore, it has been observed that loneliness has a great effect on bullying behavior during adolescence, and lonely adolescents have risk to be both bullies and victims. Previous researches demonstrated that all types of victimization and bullying behavior in adolescence is related with loneliness (Cava et al., 2018: 13; Storch and Masia-Warner, 2004: 13). Additionally; peer support in adolescence play an important role on bullying behavior. For instance; adolescents who have low level of peer support, more likely to be lonely and being victim. In contrast; adolescents who have high level of peer support have not correlation with loneliness (Storch et al., 2003: 14). At this point; peer acceptance in adolescence, effective communication within the family, prevents loneliness and prevents the situation of being bully-victim. If the parents are permissive and tolerant, they give their child to freedom and they do not excessively supervise his child and not impose restraints on their behavior; they are not coercive (Nickerson et al., 2009: 10). Furthermore, to prevent bullying behavior it is important to the participation of the family into the interventions of bullying behavior programs. It is thought that studies including family relations and peer support which prevents loneliness will be beneficial for finding peaceful solutions for both those who commit bullying behaviors and those who are victims of bullying behaviors. Lastly, bullying is an important growing problem worldwide, more cross-sectional and longitudinal studies needed for awareness and prevention of bullying behavior.

REFERENCES


