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The Relationship between Bullying, Family Functions and Perceived Social Support Among High School Students

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the relationship between bullying attitude, family functions and perceived social support. The sample of study is composed of 683 high school students. Data were collected by using Students Relations Attitude Scale, Family Assessment Device and Perceived Social Support Scale. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient, ANOVA and Independent Samples t Test were used in data analysing. According to the results of the study, there is a statistically significant relationship between Students Relations Attitude's subscales which is "bully personality" and all of the subscales of Family Assessment Device and Perceived Social Support. Students Relations Attitude's subscales which are self-confidence" and "avoidance of bullying" are related to all of the subscales of Family Assessment Device except "affective involvement" and all of the subscales of Perceived Social Support. It was found that, students who stated that they bully others, have high level of bully personality, family dysfunction and low level of avoidance of bullying, family and teacher support. Moreover, students who stated that they are bullied, have high level of bully personality, family dysfunction (except behavior control) and low level of family, teacher and peer support.

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1. Introduction

Bullying, one of the sub-dimension of aggressive behavior that affect negatively the academic, social, emotional and psychological development, is an important problem especially during childhood and adolescence. Olweus (1995) defines bullying as the repeated, intentional and harmful behaviors of one or more students against to weaker students.

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Researches related with effect of bullying showed that bullying affected negatively physical, social and psychological life and built up risk for future life. The relationship between bullying and depression, suicide, social anxiety, loneliness, peer rejection, low self-esteem, delinquency, psychological stress, substance abuse, academic failure and school drop-out was found in many studies (Baldry, & Farrington, 2000; Davidson, & Demaray, 2007; Estevez, Musitu, & Herrero, 2005; Friedman, Koeske, Silvestre, Korr, & Sites, 2006; Kapçı, 2004; Kuntsche, Knibbe, Engels, & Gmel, 2007; Marini, Dane, Bosacki, & Cura 2006; Pişkin, 2002; Rigby, 2000; Tutura, Green, Karver, & Gesten, 2008).

Familial factors have an important role both occurrence of bullying behavior and prevention of bullying. Researches indicated that families of children who bully other have insufficient family relationship, inconsistent discipline, unsecure attachment between parent and child, inadequate familial activity and ineffective parental supervision. Also it was found that they use psychical punishment and don't let to their children to express themselves. Moreover child rejection and child maltreatment could be seen in this families (Akgün, 2005; Coie, & Lynam, 2006; Curtner-Smith, 2000; Dekovic, Janssens, & Van, 2003; Dodge, Coie, & Lynam, 2006; Idsoe, Solli, & Cosmovici, 2008; Kim, Hetherington, & Reiss, 1999; Reid, Patterson, & Snyder, 2002; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Van Oost, 2002; Sarıbeyoğlu, 2007; Turgut, 2005). In sum, it could be said that, bullying behavior related with parent attitudes, familial relationship, and violence in family, parental supervision, discipline methods and behavior control.

Another factor related with bullying and negative outcomes of bullying is perceived social support. Social support is a knowledge and feeling that a person is cared for, is respected and belongs to social network of concerned people (Davidson and Demaray, 2007). The availability of ones who provide psychical, social and psychological support and knowledge in times of crisis ensure positive effects such as feeling of security and self-worth. In addition to main positive effect, social support has a "buffering effect" which can buffer the negative effect of stress and problematic situation. In other words, social support can improve the coping ability and reduce the harmful consequences of stressful events like bullying (Cohen, Underwood and Gottlieb, 2000; Holt and Espelage, 2007).

As a reason of providing a basis for intervention and prevention program this study aims to investigate the relationship among bullying, family functions and perceived social support.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The study group consisted of 683 high school students, 355 (52%) female and 328 (48%) male, from 6 different school of randomly selected 6 different district of Istanbul. Of the students, 215 (31,5%) were from 9th grade, 243 (35,6%) were from 10th grade and 225 (32,9%) were from 11th grade.

2.2. Measures

Personal Information Form included questions aim to acquire demographic information and bullying behavior in school.

Student Relationship Attitude Scale (SRAS) developed by Koç (2006) is comprised 21 items and 3 subscales which are "bullying personality", "self-confidence" and "avoidance from bullying". High score of subscale means that one has bullying personality, one has self-confidence and one can avoid from bullying. Result of factor analysis showed that the scale explained the 43% of total variance. Cronbach alpha for internal consistency was .86 for bullying personality, .69 for self-confidence, .57 for avoiding from bullying and .82 for total of scale.

Family Assessment Device (FAD) developed by Epstein, Baldwin and Bishop (1983) is made of 60 items and 7 subscales which measure Problem Solving, Communication, Roles, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement, Behavior Control and General Functioning. High scores of scale show that family dysfunctions. Family Assessment Device was adapted to Turkish culture by Bulut (1990). The internal consistency of subscale varied between .72 and .92. The Turkish version of Family Assessment Device's internal consistency was found as .38 and .86, test-retest reliability was found as .62 and .90.

Perceived Social Support Scale-Revised (PSSS-R) was developed and revised by Yıldırım (2004). It is composed

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