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ARTÍCULO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Conocimientos y opiniones de las familias y docentes sobre el acoso escolar entre iguales

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Resumen. El artículo describe comparativamente los conocimientos y opiniones de los docentes (41), que trabajan en diversas escuelas en la República Turca del Norte de Chipre (RTNC), y de las familias (41) cuyos hijos asisten a dichas escuelas, con respecto al acoso escolar entre iguales, y ofrecer sugerencias para solucionar el problema. Se utilizó un enfoque mixto y se preparó un formulario de entrevista. Se utilizaron formularios estructurados para recopilar datos cuantitativos, y se aplicaron estadísticas descriptivas para analizarlos. El análisis estadístico de los datos cuantitativos se realizó mediante el software de análisis SPSS 24.0, y los hallazgos se presentaron en tablas e interpretaron. En la parte cualitativa del estudio, se recopilaron datos mediante entrevistas en profundidad con docentes basadas en la pregunta semiestructurada. Los hallazgos confirman que, tanto los docentes como las familias perciben el acoso escolar entre iguales como un problema grave que debe abordarse. Los docentes participantes creen en general que el acoso se origina en problemas familiares. Los resultados constatan que el acoso entre iguales representa una amenaza seria en las escuelas de la RTNC y que, aunque los docentes y las familias poseen un conocimiento suficiente sobre el tema, no logran prevenir el problema. El acoso, que hoy afecta gravemente a nuestra sociedad y representa una amenaza para el futuro, debe abordarse desde la familia, que es el pilar fundamental de la sociedad. Deben realizarse esfuerzos de apoyo en diversas áreas de la sociedad en relación con este problema.

Palabras clave: acoso escolar entre iguales, RTNC, familia, docente, niño.

Families' and teachers' knowledge and views on peer bullying in schools

Abstract. The article comparatively describes the knowledge and opinions of teachers (41), working in various schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), and families (41) whose children attend these schools, regarding peer bullying, and offers suggestions to address the issue. A mixed-method approach was used, and an interview form was prepared. Structured forms were used to collect quantitative data, and descriptive statistics were applied to analyze them. Statistical analysis of the quantitative data was conducted using SPSS 24.0 software, and the findings were presented in tables and interpreted. In the qualitative part of the study, data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers based on a semi-structured question. The findings confirm that both teachers and families perceive peer bullying as a serious problem that must be addressed. The participating teachers generally believe that bullying originates from family-related issues. The results confirm that peer bullying represents a serious threat in schools in the TRNC and that, although teachers and families possess sufficient knowledge on the subject, they fail to prevent the problem. Bullying, which today seriously affects our society and poses a threat to the future, must be addressed starting from the family, which is the fundamental pillar of society. Support efforts must be made in various areas of society in relation to this issue.

Keywords: peer bullying, TRNC, family, teacher, child.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, peer bullying is a behaviour that involves both physical and psychological violence and unfortunately it is very common in primary schools, secondary schools, and universities. Individuals who engage in physical bullying harm others through violence, whereas those who engage in psychological bullying aim to distress and cause pain to individuals through hurtful words or behaviours. Today, physical bullying among boys in schools has shown a significant increase, while girls are more exposed to psychological bullying. In addition, another type of bullying that has been on the rise in schools today, especially through social media and digital platforms, is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is also known as a repeatedly occurring behaviour that aims to intimidate and disturb the other individuals, following a similar pattern to other forms of bullying. In schools today, children from poor families, children with disabilities, and refugee children, who are more vulnerable and marginalized in society, are observed to be more frequently exposed to bullying. Peer bullying has many reasons, but the most common ones are as followed; the bullying children see themselves as superior to their peers, they do not get enough attention from their families, and they have difficulties in communicating with their friends. In a study, school principals and guidance counsellors identified the main causes of bullying as students' lack of communication skills, their limited access to sufficient social activities at school to express themselves, their lack of problem-solving abilities, and the lack of interest from their families (Genç, 2007). Similarly,

in a study conducted in 2010, Keskin stated that in situations where family relationships are weakened and individuals fail to fulfill their responsibilities within the family, children tend to exhibit aggressive behaviours and are more prone to criminal activities (Keskin, 2010).

If not addressed, peer bullying can lead to lasting damage both on an individual and societal level. Bullied children often begin to show signs of reluctance toward school, loss of self-confidence, and psychological issues such as depression and anxiety. Among the leading factors that negatively affect the school environment are vandalism, violence, technology and internet addiction, bullying, peer bullying, and cyber peer bullying. These incidents, which disrupt the school environment and create feelings of fear and anxiety among students, can lead to behaviours such as absenteeism, alienation from school, and even dropping out in later years (Hamurcu, 2020). In addition, students who engage in bullying also exhibit serious behavioural problems. Peer bullying behaviours experienced in the preschool period are a very important issue in terms of having long-term developmental effects not only on bullied children but also on the bully children (Gün & Akduman, 2022). As a result of such behaviours that seriously threaten individuals' physical and psychological health, the country's education system is harmed, leading to societal desensitization toward violence and an increase in crime rates. In many countries today, violent and aggressive behaviours among children and adolescents are a widespread public health issue that causes significant social consequences in long term (Polat & Sohbet, 2020).

Today, even in developed countries, peer bullying is considered a serious issue, and preventing it requires collective action from the whole society. Findings indicating that behaviours related to peer bullying in schools have been increasing in recent years highlight the need for the development of local and national policies to address the issue (Doğan & Keleş, 2023). It should not be forgotten that peer bullying is not only a form of behaviour that threatens individuals and reduces their quality of life, it is a much more comprehensive problem that threatens the safety of society in general. Therefore, it is important to conduct scientific studies on peer bullying from various perspectives and offer solutions to this problem, in order to raise societal awareness, support healthy child development, and create school environments where children feel safe. In line with this purpose, the present study aims to comparatively determine the knowledge and opinions of teachers working in various schools in the TRNC and of parents whose children attend these schools regarding peer bullying, which is an increasingly prevalent issue, and to propose solutions based on the findings obtained. In this context, answers to the following questions were sought:

RQ1- What is the level of knowledge and views of teachers in TRNC regarding peer bullying?

RQ2- What is the level of knowledge and views of families in TRNC regarding peer bullying?

RQ3- What should be done to eliminate peer bullying in schools?

Limitations

This study is limited to 41 teachers working in different schools in Northern Cyprus and 41 families whose children attend different schools.

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

A mixed-method was used in the study. The purpose of this was to use both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to diversify, compare, and integrate the data obtained, and

also to collect different types of data that are directly related to the research questions. In this design, the aim is to compensate for the weaknesses of one method (quantitative or qualitative) with the strengths of the other (Morse, 2003; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, 355; Fetters, 2013; Creswell & Calrk, 2017). In this study, data were collected through 10 quantitative and 1 qualitative question.

Sample and Sampling Method

The sample of the study consists of 41 teachers working in different schools and 41 families whose children attend in various schools in Northern Cyprus. A random sampling method was used to select the participants. In this study, participants from different schools and cities were selected in order to increase diversity and representativeness, and to obtain a more balanced and efficient sample.

Selecting 41 participants from each group provides a suitable framework for both identifying general trends and examining individual views in depth. Additionally, 41 participants is a sufficient number to obtain data in a semi-structured interview.

Data Collection Tool

An interview form was used to obtain the data. The interview form was prepared by the researchers and consists of 10 structured questions and 1 semi-structured question. In the structured questions, options were provided, and participants were asked to select one option. In the semi-structured question, teachers were asked for their suggestions regarding the solution to peer bullying. After the survey questions were prepared, feedback was obtained from two experts (an educator/pedagogue and a psychologist), and based on their feedback, the survey was restructured.

Data Analysis Method

In this regard, structured questionnaire forms were used to collect quantitative data, and descriptive statistics were applied in the analysis of the data. The statistical analysis of the quantitative data in the study was carried out using the SPSS 24.0 data analysis software, and the findings were subsequently presented in tables and interpreted.

In the qualitative part of the study, data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers based on the semi-structured question. In-depth interview is a data collection technique based on verbal communication between the researcher and the participant, regarding the topic (Uslu & Demir, 2023). "In-depth interviews are data collection techniques in which open-ended questions are asked, allowing for detailed responses. This method involves face-to-face, one-on-one interviews, providing the opportunity to gather information on all aspects of the topic being researched. It provides access to the feelings, knowledge, experiences, and observations of the interviewee" (Tekin, 2006). The views obtained during the interviews regarding the topic are provided in the findings section of the study.

RESULTS

In this part of the study, the findings obtained are presented comparatively.

TABLE 1. Findings regarding the child's exposure to bullying behaviour at school/classroom

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Yes, the child is highly exposed.	14,6	6	Yes, I encounter quite frequently.	53,7	22
No, the child is never exposed.	9,8	4	No, I never encounter.	-	
The child is sometimes exposed.	68,3	28	I sometimes encounter.	46,3	19
I have no opinion.	7,3	3	I have no opinion.	-	

As can be seen in Table 1, 14,6% of families answered "Yes, the child is highly exposed" 9,8% answered "No, the child is never exposed" 68,3% answered "The child is sometimes exposed" and 7,3% answered "I have no opinion." When looking at the families' responses, it was found that only 9,8% of children had never been exposed to bullying, which is a very low percentage. Another striking finding was that 7,3% of the families had no idea whether their child was bullied or not. Looking at the findings, it can be seen that the majority of the families stated that their children were exposed to bullying.

On the other hand, 53,7% of the teachers answered "Yes, I encounter quite frequently" and 46,3% answered "I sometimes encounter". Looking at the teachers' findings, it was determined that there were no responses as "No, I never encounter" or "I have no opinion." Based on the teachers' findings, it was concluded that all the teachers have encountered peer bullying.

When the findings obtained from teachers and families are compared, it is seen that the number of students exposed to peer bullying in schools is quite high.

TABLE 2. Findings regarding the types of bullying the child was exposed to at school/classroom

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
The child was exposed to physical bullying.	41,2	14	The child was exposed to physical bullying.	34,1	14
The child was exposed to emotional bullying.	5,9	2	The child was exposed to emotional bullying.	7,3	3
The child was exposed to verbal bullying.	32	11	The child was exposed to verbal bullying.	46,3	19
The child was exposed to social bullying.	5,9	2	The child was exposed to social bullying.	4,9	2
The child was exposed to cyber bullying.	-		The child was exposed to cyber bullying.	2,4	1
The child was exposed to property bullying.	15	5	The child was exposed to property bullying.	4,9	2
The child was exposed to sexual bullying.	-		The child was exposed to sexual bullying.	-	

Based on the findings in Table 2, the families reported that 41,2% of their children were exposed to physical bullying, 5,9% to both emotional bullying and social bullying, 32% to verbal bullying, and 15% to property bullying. (In Table 1, 9.8% of the families answered as "no, the child is never exposed" and 7.3% answered as "I have no opinion", so they left this

question unanswered. Also, it was determined that their children had never been exposed to cyber bullying or sexual bullying.

As can be seen from the teachers' findings, 34.1% of students were exposed to physical bullying, 7.3% to emotional bullying, 46.3% to verbal bullying, 4.9% to both social bullying and property bullying, and 2.4% to cyber bullying. Based on the teachers' findings, it was determined that students had not been exposed to sexual bullying.

When the findings obtained from teachers and families are compared, it was concluded that children are most commonly exposed to physical and verbal bullying at schools.

TABLE 3. Findings regarding the situations in which the bully child usually engages in bullying

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Due to power imbalance	14,6	6	Due to power imbalance	29,3	12
Due to family problems	34,1	14	Due to family problems	36,6	15
Due to lack of anger control	34,1	14	Due to lack of anger control	14,6	6
Due to peer group pressure	17,2	7	Due to peer group pressure	19,5	8

Based on the findings in Table 3, families reported that 14,6% of bully children engage in bullying due to power imbalance, 34,1% both due to family problems and lack of anger control, and 17,2% due to peer group pressure.

Looking at the teachers' findings, 29,3% stated that bullying was due to power imbalance, 36,6% was due to family problems, 14,6% was due to lack of anger control, and 19,5% was due to peer group pressure.

When comparing the findings obtained from teachers and families, it was found out that the majority of the families believe that the bullying behaviour of the child is due to lack of anger control, while the majority of the teachers believe that the bullying behaviour is due to family problems.

TABLE 4. Findings regarding the symptoms displayed by the child who was exposed to bullying

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Reluctance to socialize	36,6	15	Reluctance to socialize	26,8	11
Lack of self-confidence	17,2	7	Lack of self-confidence	43,9	18
Refusing to go to school	31,6	13	Refusing to go to school	14,6	6
Sleep problems	14,6	6	Sleep problems	-	-
Failure in lessons	-	-	Failure in lessons	14,6	6

Based on the findings in Table 4, families reported that 36,6% of the students who were bullied were reluctant to socialize, 12,7% had a lack of self-confidence, 31,6% refused to go to school, and 14,6% experienced sleep problems.

Looking at the teachers' findings, it was determined that 26,8% of the students were reluctant to socialize, 43,9% experienced a lack of self-confidence, 14,6% refused to go to school, and similarly 14,6% faced failure in their lessons.

When comparing the findings of obtained from families and teachers, the majority of families expressed that the child who was bullied typically experienced reluctance to socialize. On the other hand, the majority of teachers stated that the students who were bullied experienced a lack of self-confidence.

TABLE 5. Findings regarding the child's witnessing of bullying towards others

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Yes, the child witnessed	51,2	21	Yes, the child witnessed	48,8	20
The child occasionally witnessed	31,6	13	The child occasionally witnessed	36,6	15
No, the child did not witness	-		No, the child did not witness	2,4	1
I have no opinion	17,2	7	I have no opinion	12,2	5

Based on the findings in Table 5, 51,2% of families stated that their child has witnessed bullying, 31,6% said their child has occasionally witnessed bullying, and 17,2% expressed that they have no opinion on whether their child has witnessed bullying. It was also determined that none of the families responded their child did not witness bullying.

According to the teachers' findings, 48,8% stated that the student has witnessed bullying, 36,6% said the student has occasionally witnessed bullying, 2,4% reported that the student has not witnessed bullying, and 12,2% expressed that they have no opinion.

When comparing the findings of obtained from families and teachers, it was determined that the majority of both families and teachers expressed that the child has witnessed peer bullying.

TABLE 6. Findings regarding what the child did if he/she witnessed bullying

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Felt guilty	-	-	Felt guilty	-	-
Thought the bullied child deserved it	-	-	Thought the bullied child deserved it	17,5	7
Remained silent	17,6	6	Remained silent	47,5	19
Complained/Reported it	82,4	28	Complained/Reported it	35	14

Based on the findings in Table 6, 17,6% of the families reported that their child remained silent after witnessing bullying, while 82,4% stated that their child complained/reported it. It was also found that none of the families responded as "the witnessed child felt guilty" or "the witnessed child thought the bullied child deserved it". (In table 5, 17.2% of the families did not express an opinion on whether they witness bullying or not. So, they did not answer this question).

According to the findings obtained from the teachers, 17,5% of the teachers stated that the witnessed child believed the bullied child deserved it, 47,5% reported that the witnessed child remained silent, and 35% indicated that witnessed child complained/reported the bullying. (Similarly, in the fifth table, 2.4% of the teachers stated that the child did not witness bullying and left this question unanswered).

When comparing the findings from the families and teachers, it was found out that the majority of families stated that the witnessed child complained/reported the bullying, whereas the majority of the teachers indicated that the witnessed child remained silent.

TABLE 7. Findings regarding the reasons of peer bullying behaviour

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Cowardice	2,4	1	Cowardice	-	-
Cruelty	12,2	5	Cruelty	17,2	7
Weakness	2,4	1	Weakness	2,4	1
Aggression	36,6	15	Aggression	19,5	8
Jealousy	17,2	7	Jealousy	2,4	1
Loneliness	7,3	3	Loneliness	4,9	2
Unhappiness	12,2	5	Unhappiness	12,2	5
Desire to be popular	7,3	3	Desire to be popular	36,6	15
Low self-esteem / self-disgust	2,4	1	Low self-esteem / self-disgust	4,9	2

Based on the findings in Table 7, families identified the reasons of peer bullying behaviour as follows: 2,4% attributed it to cowardice, weakness, and low self-esteem / self-disgust; 12,2% both to cruelty and unhappiness; 36,6% to aggression; 17,2% to jealousy, and 7,3% to both the child's desire to be popular and loneliness.

According to the teachers' findings, 17,2% attributed peer bullying behaviour to cruelty, 2,4% to weakness and jealousy, 19,5% to aggression, 4,9% to loneliness and low self-esteem/ self-disgust, 12,2% to unhappiness, and 36,6% to the desire to be popular.

When comparing the findings obtained from the families and teachers, it can be seen that the majority of the families identified aggression as the primary reason of peer bullying behaviour, while the majority of teachers attributed it to the child's desire to be popular.

TABLE 8. Findings regarding the solution suggestions for preventing bullying.

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Help should be sought from the guidance service	39	16	Help should be sought from the guidance service	53,7	22
Help should be sought from the administration	9,8	4	Help should be sought from the administration	12,2	5
Help should be sought from the teacher	39	16	Help should be sought from the teacher	7,3	3
Help should be sought from the families	12,2	5	Help should be sought from the families	26,8	11

Based on the findings in Table 8, 39% of the families stated that help should be sought from the guidance service and teachers to prevent bullying, 9,8% suggested that help should be sought from both the administration, and 12,2% suggested that help should be sought from the families.

According to the teachers' findings, 53,7% stated that help should be sought from the guidance service, 12,2% suggested that help should be sought from the administration, 7,3% suggested that help should be sought from the teacher, and 26,8% suggested that help should be sought from the families.

When comparing the findings obtained from the families and teachers, it can be seen that the majority of both the families and teachers suggested that help should be sought from the guidance service to address bullying. Secondly, it was found that families mostly recommended seeking help from the teacher, while teachers proposed seeking help from the family as the solution.

TABLE 9. Findings regarding whether the bullying that the child experienced was resolved or not

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Yes, problem resolved	32,3	11	Yes, problem resolved	34,1	14
No, the problem persists	5,9	2	No, the problem persists	17,2	7
The problem was resolved, but the child faced another form of bullying	26,5	9	The problem was resolved, but the child faced another form of bullying	7,3	3
The problem was partially resolved	35,3	12	The problem was partially resolved	41,4	17

As can be seen in Table 9, 32,3% of the families stated that the problem was resolved, 5,9% mentioned that the problem persists, 26,5% indicated that the problem was resolved but the child encountered another form of bullying, and 35,3% stated that the problem was partially resolved. (As 9.8% of the families stated that in table 1 that the child is not exposed to bullying and 7.3% of the families stated that they have no opinion if the child is exposed to bullying, they did not express any opinion on whether the bullying was resolved or not).

On the other hand, 34,1% of the teachers stated that the problem was resolved, 17,2% mentioned that the problem persists, 7,3% indicated that the problem was resolved but the child encountered another form of bullying, and 41,4% stated that the problem was partially resolved.

When comparing the findings from the families and teachers regarding the resolution of the bullying the child experienced, it was found out that the majority of the families reported that the problem was resolved. In contrast, the majority of the teachers stated that the problem was partially resolved. Looking at both family and teacher findings, it was found that approximately 40% of the cases were resolved.

TABLE 10. Findings regarding how the bullying was resolved

Family	%	<i>f</i>	Teacher	%	<i>f</i>
Resolved by the class teacher	58,3	18	Resolved by me personally	5,9	2
Resolved by the administrator	8,3	2	Resolved by the administrator	11,5	4
Resolved by the guidance service	11,2	4	Resolved by the guidance service	56	19
The bully child left the school/class	22,2	8	The bully child left the school/class	3	1
My child left the school/class	-		The bullied child left the school/class	3	1
Resolved by the family	-		Resolved with the help of the family	20,6	7

As seen in Table 10, regarding the resolution of bullying, 58,3% of the families stated that the issue was resolved by the teacher, 8,3% said it was resolved by the administrator, 11,2% said it was resolved by the guidance service, and 22,2% said the issue was resolved because the bully child left the school/class. Based on the findings from the families, there was no response indicating that “my child left the school/class” or “the bully student’s family resolved the issue”. (In table 9, 5.9% of the families had stated that the problem persists and not resolved, and in table 1 9.8% of the families had stated that the child is not exposed to bullying and 7.3% had stated that they had no idea. So, they did not express any view on how the bullying was resolved).

According to the findings obtained from the teachers, 5,9% of the teachers stated that the issue was resolved by themselves, 11,5% said it was resolved by the administrator, 56% indicated that it was resolved by the guidance service, 3% mentioned that the bully child left the school/class and similarly 3% stated that the bullied child left the school/class, and 20,6% reported that the issue was resolved with help from the bully student’s family. In addition, 17.2% of the teachers had stated in table 9 that there is no solution to bullying in schools, so they left this question unanswered.

When comparing the findings from the families and teachers, it can be seen that the majority of the families reported that the issue was resolved by the class teacher. On the other hand, the majority of the teachers stated that the issue was resolved by the guidance service. Based on this, it can be said that the family first informed the class teacher, and the class teacher then informed the guidance service, leading to the solution of the problem. Looking at the findings of both the families and teachers, it is seen that the school administrator was not very effective in resolving the issue. Another finding is that while bullied child’s families were unable to resolve the problem with the bully’s families, teachers were able to resolve it mostly by seeking help from the bully’s families.

Findings Regarding Families' Views on Peer Bullying

TABLE 11. Findings Regarding Families' Views on Solutions to Peer Bullying

Category	<i>f</i>
Seminars should be held	8
The number of guidance counsellors should be increased	17
Families should pay more attention to their children	4
Psychology graduates should be appointed as teachers in schools	14
Teachers should raise awareness among their students on this issue during lessons	12
Violence at home should be prevented	8
Children should be kept away from social media	3
It should be prevented with the collaboration between families, teachers and guidance services	9
Bullying students should be punished and expelled from school	15

As can be seen in Table 12, regarding solutions to peer bullying, families expressed the following opinions: seminars should be held, violence at home should be prevented (stated by 8 families), the number of guidance counsellors should be increased (stated by 17 families), families should pay more attention to their children (stated by 4 families), psychology graduates should be appointed as teachers in schools (stated by 14 families), teachers should raise awareness among their students on this issue during lessons (stated by 12 families), children should be kept away from social media (stated by 3 families), bullying should be prevented with the collaboration between families, teachers and guidance services (stated by 9 families), and bullying students should be punished and expelled from school (stated by 15 families).

Quotes from family views;

"It is very important for my child to be in a safe environment. Unfortunately, families are unconscious and the school administration does not pay much attention to this issue. Therefore, there should definitely be a psychological counsellor in the school where my child can get help and the number of guidance counsellors should be increased."(P1)

"When a bullying child alienates the other children from school, it creates a negative impression on the school. It is important to impose sanction to the bullying child. I think the bullying child should be suspended from the school and the bullied children should be supported." (P4)

"I think that family consciousness, and a warm family environment has disappeared. Psychological problems are at the highest level and families are not willing to solve anything if their child is not bullied. First of all, families should be educated on this issue. My child has become disenchanted with school, I don't know how to approach them. The school administration is not enough to solve this issue and they expect everything to be solved by the guidance counsellor and class teacher. The number of guidance counsellors is also not enough, there are too many problematic students and they cannot keep up. I think psychological counsellors should be assigned to schools as soon as possible so that our children can be in a safer environment." (P18)

"I think, first of all, violence in the family should be prevented, and I think that teachers and school administration should get to know the children closely. Most of the time, even if a child has a problem, teachers and school administration do not take measures before the problem gets bigger and more serious. They do not inform the family. At the point of solving the problem, instead of supporting bullied child and family, they try to cover up the problem as if there is no problem. Unless we, as families, get support from the school administration, we cannot solve the problem."(P29)

Findings Regarding Teachers' Views on Peer Bullying

TABLE 12. Findings Regarding Teachers' Views on Solutions to Peer Bullying

Category	<i>f</i>
Seminars should be held	8
The number of guidance counsellors should be increased	8
Families should pay more attention to their children	15
Psychology graduates should be appointed as teachers in schools	6
Teachers should raise awareness among their students on this issue during lessons	9
Violence at home should be prevented	4
Children should be kept away from social media	3
It should be prevented with the collaboration between families, teachers and guidance services	19
Bullying students should be punished and expelled from school	5
Bullying students should be enrolled in activities such as sports or arts, and their socialization should be ensured	5

As can be seen in Table 12, regarding solutions to peer bullying, teachers expressed the following opinions: 8 teachers stated that seminars should be held and the number of guidance counsellors should be increased, 15 teachers mentioned that families pay more attention to their children, 6 teachers suggested that psychology graduates should be appointed as teachers in schools, 9 teachers emphasized that teachers should raise awareness among students on this issue during lessons, 4 teachers highlighted the need to prevent violence at home, 3 teachers mentioned that children should be kept away from social media, 19 teachers stated that there should be collaboration between families, teachers, and the guidance service, 5 teachers suggested that bullying students should be punished and expelled from school, and bullying students should be directed to activities where the socialization can be ensured.

Based on this, it has been found out that teachers predominantly believe that there should be collaboration between families, teachers, and the guidance service, and that families should be more involved and pay more attention to their children.

Quotes from teacher views;

"The teachers should be in consultation with families and the school counselling service, and the number of counselling and guidance teachers should be increased."(P1)

"In schools, the guidance services should be more active, families should exhibit more love and spend time with their children, activities that develop empathy should be organized, concepts such as love, re-

spect, and tolerance should be emphasized in the classroom, and the uniqueness of each individual should be made to feel by children from an early age...”(P2)

“Psychological support should be provided. In some cases, school counsellors are insufficient because they need to attend to too many students. The number of counsellors should be increased, and one psychology graduate teacher should be appointed at schools.”(P3)

“Empathy should be frequently emphasized in lessons at schools. Families should not ignore complaints about their children and should seek support together with their child. Considering that not every family may have the means to access this support, this service should be offered for free in schools.”(P3)

“We urgently need guidance counsellors and psychologists. The teacher is inadequate in dealing with this issue. These problems need to be taken seriously and addressed immediately.”(P6)

“Information about the family’s cultural and socio-economic status should be gathered, and firstly it should be determined whether the child is experiencing bullying at home. It is necessary to prevent repressed emotions from being directed towards peers at school.”(P8)

“This problem is increasing every year. I believe children should be kept a bit away from social media. Activities that focus on friendship and communication should be increased at school. TikTok should be banned, and Squid Game should be removed from broadcasting. Violence-based games, series, and movies should be removed from the media, and educational and entertaining content should be prioritized. Families should be more sensitive and conscious about this issue.”(P11)

“Support should be provided to help the child establish healthy communication with their family and environment. The child should be guided towards activities they enjoy and are interested in, and should be integrated into friend groups.”(P13)

“The teacher should intervene immediately. The school administration should take strict measures. The person engaging in bullying should be removed from the school environment immediately. If the punishment mechanism is not activated, the negative behaviour continues. Since I personally experienced it, I can say that no measure worked, as the family was indifferent. I believe the issue is because of the family rather than the child.”(P25)

DISCUSSION

Based on the literature review, it has been determined that bullying is a significant problem in schools and that a large number of children are exposed to peer bullying. UNICEF also emphasizes that one out of every two children in the world is exposed to peer bullying. Eray et al. also found in their study that more than one third of students at all school levels are involved in the peer bullying cycle. According to UNESCO’s findings, bullying affects approximately one-third of children worldwide. Similarly, Akpınar and Akpınar found in their study that all teachers had observed peer bullying in the schools where they work.

In the study on types of bullying, it was found that physical and verbal bullying were the most commonly observed types. Similarly, Roberts also stated in his study that physical bullying is one of the most common type of bullying. According to a study conducted by Tanrikulu et al., which examined physical, social, and verbal bullying behaviours at preschool period, it was concluded that verbal bullying behaviours tend to increase with age.

Green and Turner emphasized that verbal abuse and exclusion have serious negative effects on a student's academic performance. The literature also emphasizes that psychological bullying has more long-lasting traumatic effects compared to physical bullying. As can be seen, even though the type of bullying varies, the effects it leaves on children negatively affect their lives. Therefore, children who are at risk of or affected by bullying or any violent behaviour should have access to psychological support and counselling services in schools. For this purpose, psychologists should be assigned to schools by the Ministry of National Education and students should have access to mental health, psychological help and counselling services in schools. Sun and Cao, in their study, concluded that being exposed to peer bullying during children's developmental stages is a significant factor affecting their healthy development.

In a study conducted by Mermer, it was found that almost half of the students did not feel safe at school. Schools are the places where children spend most of their times. Ensuring children's safety in schools and transforming the school into a safe environment for children is a priority. Children not only learn academic knowledge at school, but also gain friendship, sharing, cooperation and trust emotions. In order to transform schools into a safe environment for children, teachers should emphasize empathy, friendship, sharing and cooperation in their lessons, which will be effective in preventing physical and verbal bullying.

Gökler stated that families play a significant role in a child's aggressive behaviour and inappropriate Family approaches, such as intolerance, authoritarianism, and the use of violent methods in child-rearing, affect the way the child interacts with their social environment.

White and Anderson underlined in their study that educating families and ensuring their active participation in school processes are effective in reducing peer bullying.

Cenkseven Önder and Yurtal also highlighted in their study that children who perceive their families as overly controlling and believe that there is not enough warmth in their family are more likely to become bullies.

Chrysanthou and Vasilakis (2020) emphasized in their study that experiencing bullying during adolescence leads to internalization disorders such as anxiety, social withdrawal, depression, and psychosomatic symptoms in the bullied person, as well as externalization disorders such as hyperactivity, property damage, physical and verbal aggression, and a tendency towards criminal behaviour.

Xue et al. (2020) stated that the individuals who experience bullying exhibit higher levels of insecurity, becoming introverted, anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, physical and mental symptoms, and low self-esteem compared to their peers. Additionally, they experience difficulties in making friends and creating relationships with classmates. For this reason, children should be informed about this issue before they are exposed to bullying and should be made aware of how to cope with bullying. Awareness and well-being seminars should be organized for children and families.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, which aims to reveal the opinions of families and teachers regarding peer bullying, significant results have been found out. According to the findings of the study, the majority of families indicated that their child has been exposed to peer bullying or has witnessed peer bullying. All of the teachers who participated in the study think that students are

exposed to peer bullying in their schools, and witness peer bullying. They also think that bullying is usually caused by family problems. Based on this, it can be said that peer bullying has reached serious levels in schools and taking necessary precautions is an urgent necessity.

Secondly, it was found out that families and teachers agreed that children were mostly exposed to physical and verbal bullying. Based on the findings of the study, it can be said that physical bullying and verbal bullying is not underestimated.

According to another finding of the study, the families stated that the bully child mostly engages in bullying due to a lack of anger control, while teachers attributed bullying behaviour to family-related problems. Based on this, it is beneficial to highlight that negative role models within the child's family can be a triggering factor in the child's inability to control their anger.

These findings clearly highlight the importance of the family and the impact of family attitudes on an individual's inner world and behaviours. The influence of the family is significant in both a child's engagement in bullying and being exposed to bullying. It is necessary to promote awareness-raising efforts on how families can raise healthy and happy children across various areas of society.

The findings from the families revealed that children who were exposed to bullying are unwilling to socialize, refuse to go to school, experience sleep problems, and feel a lack of self-confidence, respectively. Teachers, on the other hand, indicated that the bullied child mostly experiences a lack of self-confidence, as well as unwillingness to socialize, refusing to go to school, and academic failure. It was concluded that teachers and families agreed on the symptoms shown by the child exposed to bullying.

Another finding reveals that the majority of families reported that their child has witnessed bullying and complained about it. In teachers' findings, on the other hand, it was concluded that students often witness bullying but remain silent. Families emphasized that bullying behaviour mostly stems from aggression, while teachers highlighted that the desire to be popular is the primary reason. In addition, unhappiness, jealousy, loneliness, and cruelty are cited as reasons of bullying behaviour. The vast majority of families and teachers have stated that assistance should be sought from the guidance service and the bully's families in order to prevent bullying.

An important result from the findings of both families and teachers in the study is related to the solution of bullying. It was observed that bullying is resolved at a relatively low rate. The findings indicate that families typically seek help from teachers, while teachers get help the guidance service and the bully's families to resolve the issue. In this context, it is a very difficult and long process for the family or teacher to resolve peer bullying. In schools without psychological and guidance counsellors, teachers and school administrators may be inadequate in solving unwanted student behaviours. School administration, families, teachers, guidance counsellors and psychological counsellors should cooperate in order to prevent peer bullying. In addition, the Ministry of National Education should initiate a study on peer bullying. Thus, a safer and more supportive educational environment can be created in schools.

Based on the findings, it appears that the school administration remains more passive in addressing this issue. Additionally, it is a striking and important result that, although it is rarely, bullying is resolved when either the bullying or the bullied child leaves the school. However, leaving the school will have a negative effect for both. Even though bullying children may feel powerful and superior, this behaviour can lead to a lack of empathy, which could result in more serious criminal

situations in the future. On the other hand, the bullied child will become more introverted and feel inadequate. Preventing bullying from an early age will help these children develop healthier psychological growth. Teachers have a great role in this regard. The reactions of the school administration and teachers to inappropriate behaviour in school are very important. It is important to evaluate the behaviours and situations fairly and set clear rules. The school's sanctions should also differ whether the bullying is physical or verbal. It is much more difficult for families to sanction bullying at school. The school's fair sanctions on peer bullying and its consistency in this regard will be effective in preventing peer bullying.

In conclusion, peer bullying creates various psychological effects on children. Peer bullying negatively affects the child's self-esteem and self-worth. Bullied children often face issues such as anxiety, low self-esteem, social isolation, and academic failure. Peer bullying may also arise some long-term effects such as problems in interpersonal relationships, lack of self-confidence, and traumatic experiences.

Bullying, which seriously affects our present and poses a threat to our future, should be addressed starting from the family, the cornerstone of society. If supportive efforts are also carried out across various parts of society, it can make a significant contribution to preventing major risk factors that prevent social development.

In this context, based on the results of the research, it is recommended that a psychologist should be assigned to schools, the number of guidance counsellors should be increased, trainings should be organized to raise awareness of families, children's use of social media should be limited, children should be directed to art and sports branches that they are interested in, teachers should observe and get to know students closely, and parents, teachers and guidance services should be in cooperation.

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