Investigation of school bullying in terms of school factors

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Abstract

Bullying, a serious concern for educators, can be defined as repeated aggressive behaviour by a more powerful person or group with the intent to harm or distress a less powerful person. It is emphasised that it is critical to distinguish bullying from other forms of aggression among students because these unique characteristics of bullying make it more harmful than similar forms of aggression. Bullying can occur directly or indirectly. The direct type of bullying involves the performance of aggressive behaviour face-to-face but is not limited to face-to-face. For example, bullies or perpetrators verbally threaten or physically attack the targeted student. When bullying takes an indirect form, the bullies or perpetrators target the student's reputation or social standing when the targeted student is not around, such as spreading upsetting rumours electronically, spreading malicious gossip, or organising a group of students to isolate the targeted student. Additionally, bullying can be witnessed in more than one context. Bullying behaviours in these contexts can take physical, verbal, and social/relational forms. Examples of physical bullying behaviours include damaging personal property, pushing, spitting, kicking and hitting, threatening verbally or with signs or written notes, making inappropriate sexual comments, name-calling and teasing. In this study, school bullying is examined in terms of different factors.

Key Words: Bullying, school bullying, students, teachers.

Introduction

Services regarding the personal development of students are also provided in schools, which are institutions responsible for the education and training of students and their growth as helpful individuals for society. However, students' ownership of the school and their feeling of safety are considered essential requirements. These positive experiences at school not only cause students to establish a better bond with the school but can also help them develop a positive attitude towards school (Pişkin & Ayas, 2011). Quality of school life, linked to the established bonds and attitudes, is related to the level of teachers, students, administrators and other employees feeling happy and

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safe in the school environment. Improving the quality of education at school becomes possible by controlling school violence and school bullying, which is the most common form of violence at school (Akyol et al., 2017).

Those who exhibit bullying behaviour at school are generally students who want to force the other party to do what they want, who have an aggressive temperament, who encounter physical force in their families, who experience injustice and insults, who try to prove themselves and who take pleasure in these negative behaviours. Students who are bullied are students who become introverted as a result of the behaviour of bullies, feel ashamed of these people with whom they cannot cope, see themselves as worthless, and cannot express themselves well (Özkan & Çifci, 2010). For students who are exposed to bullying behaviour to feel safe in educational institutions and to regain their self-confidence, most of the task of effectively dealing with the students who commit these behaviours and their damaging behaviours falls on teachers and administrators in schools. Identifying students who are bullied and bullying, informing students and families, and cooperating with the school guidance service and school administration are some of the methods of dealing with these behaviours. These undesirable behaviours are among the most critical problems that can leave the student, the most essential element of the education-training process, out of the system and cause significant problems (Çankaya, 2011).

Bullying develops a high risk of behavioural changes to the one who had been bullied repeatedly through time. According to Thornberg, Halldin, Bolmsjo and Petersson (2013), there are fundamental processes of victimising in school bullying, which consist of four phases: (a) initial attacks, (b) double victimising, (c) bullying exit and (d) after-effects of bullying.

The Social Stigma Theory is also known as Goffman's theory. By definition, it is the situation of an individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance. Most of the bullying victim feels the same as this theory defines. Their social behaviour is greatly affected by the act of bullying, and because of this, they feel unaccepted and isolated from others. The strong disapproval of people to the bullied victim inflicts trauma and depression for a long time if it is not addressed. According to Thornberg et al. (2013), Stigma is the core concept for understanding the consequences of labelling. This type of verbal bullying sometimes upsets the victim, rather than physical instances of bullying. It generates negativity and a pessimistic outlook in the victim's life as they feel their worth is low and unaccepted by society.

There are different theories which encompass and affect school bullying. Conflict theory is one theoretic framework with the principle that "society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition…those with wealth and power try to hold on to it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless (Investopedia, 2013)." It means that people are fighting because of the struggle to gain power and dominance against others. This can be related to school bullying in the sense that bullies in school suppress the victims through intimidation for the bullies to have an understanding of power and feel that they are better or superior to them (Kartal & Bilgin, 2012).

Social norms is another theory in which social norms "are people's beliefs about the attitudes and behaviours that are normal, acceptable or even expected in a particular social context" Social norms theory explains that in some circumstances, people may falsely perceive particular

destructive behaviours as normal and acceptable in certain situations. This can be related to school bullying. The forms of bullying, either physical (physical pranks), emotional (name-calling and teasing), or in cyberspace, are being misleadingly perceived, usually by friends and peers, as usual, and acceptable that they assume it to be a norm or customary acts of the youth.

Another theory is the diathesis-stress model in which, according to this theory, "people are born with a certain biological or genetic predisposition to a mental illness("Diathesis, stress, and protective factors: Understanding the diathesis-stress model," 2003)."In other words, there are certain behaviours of a person that come from both a combination of certain genetic or biological predispositions to a mental illness and stress from experiences in life. It means that a confident attitude of a person towards others has resulted from a specific disease (e.g. depression, schizophrenia) combined with stressful events that happened during the course of their life. This relates to bullying in a viewpoint that a student's involvement in bullying other students may have come because they are either suffering from mental disorders such as depression or they have a traumatic or stressful past event that they experienced in their life.

According to Moon et al. (2008), one of the theories that briefly describe and provide explanations and understanding of the causes of aggressive behaviour of bullying is the control Theory; it highlighted that the phenomenon of bullying is considered a serious problem among students, a threat to students in their academic performances. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) stated that one of the causes of criminal behaviour is the lack of self-control. It assumes that low self-control is the primary source of criminal behaviour, and behaviour can lead to crime, in which students with low self-control are more likely to seek immediately to be physically active, to be insensitive to others, and to possess limited academic ability. They then argued that students with low self-control traits are more likely to become involved in criminal and accidental behaviours than those with high self-control. Naturally, Students are very impressionable; they can easily be intimidated and influenced. According to this theory, the most effective way to prevent low self-control in students is to maximise the role of parents. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that effective parental practices like monitoring significantly affect the development of self-control. Parenting practices are hypothesised to have a significant effect on students 'self-control.

Bullying cases are increasing in number, and these cases pose threats to every person, particularly in the teenage period. As people know what bullying is and its effects, how it begins bothers everyone. Is it a phase in everyone's adolescent period? Is it natural in a sense? Should people experience this case to learn things, or maybe it can be avoided? What triggers someone to bully a person, and what does a person do to cause them to be driven? Why do children usually experience bullying cases? Do bullying programs help? These questions, I think, have answers that may not be that certain, but somehow, they can be explained in various concepts, such as theories. To understand bullying, we must understand its definition. Bullying is a sense of intentional harm to another person repeatedly. In that case, bullies have these factors that trigger them to harm others, such as they think it makes them cool, they hate that person, they were pressured by their friends to do so, or they are being bullied also at home or in another area (Dikbıyık & Yılmaz, 2016). And what makes driven people a target? Maybe they are weak enough to accept the case, scared and afraid, and kind enough not to get revenge or think other people are

superior to them. These factors that trigger bullies to harm others and factors that make bullied targets have created a broad concept of bullying cases. Bullying evolves, basically getting ways to hurt people. There's the creation of cyberbullying and other trend aspects, which are just verbal, physical, emotional and psychological aspects. Bullying is tragic and has tragic outcomes. It causes depression, stress, and other threats, specifically suicide. As suicide cases boosted in number and authorities found out that the cases had something to do with bullying, it got the attention of every person. We all know how losing someone is; everything can happen just because of a small repeated tease or harm.

This research focuses on school-related bullying since it seeks to the impact of bullying on every victim's or even non-victim's academic performance. One theory that could further explain why bullying cases are happening exactly is the social cognitive theory. A social-cognitive psychological perspective has been proliferated among the best practices to tackle aggressive and violent behaviours in adolescence. It involves learning, thinking, and reasoning, so it fits well with the school's educational objectives. This theory would indicate that children or youth are more aggressive during adolescence. Regarding bullying behaviours, several studies have shown that adolescents with higher levels of moral disengagement are more likely to be involved in bullying. This theory has indicated that aggressive and bullying behaviours were associated with low academic performance. This intervention focuses on enhancing students' self-esteem and developing positive attitudes towards school and school achievement.

According to D'cruze (2000), "The pattern of it has been described as interpersonal violence in everyday life". It only defines the act of bullying, and its term is only pattered on what is, in reality, happening in human nature, which is the behavioural act of humans toward one another that creates a gap that reflects the power to each other. Violence describes harming someone, either physically or mentally. History of racism is widespread, and it only concludes that bullying is happening in our daily lives. Inflicting harm to someone is not a new act of bullying; instead, it's much earlier to say that making violence to each other is the one that can be labelled an initial act of bullying.

Human nature is one of the bases of what bullying is. The survival of the fittest and the rule of power are there. Power is in between the line of the bully and the victim, which makes the bully and victim relationship in human nature, which can be traced to the behavioural part of a human. It is natural for someone to gain for their self-interest, and for them to get it, they must have the power to do so. Bullying is one of the acts of practising power on someone whom they think they can dominate. In history, most cases of bullying relate to instances of racism. Ethnicity is a prevalent source of bullying; because of their skin colour, physical appearance, and other factors, they are being bullied for what they are. These acts lessen over time because of the joint efforts of organisations and other people, but these acts are inevitable and can still happen in time.

Any country will never know when it will be struck by lightning. Even the best of the best stands no chance against the unknown, which is the future. For all we know, there could be some people plotting against our country right now. And who would we run to if that happens? There is no denying that our great leaders would be the answer to that. What if, say, twenty-five years from now, the students leading us by then are the very students right now? You see, this is why it is

pivotal that only the best, and nothing short of that, must be given to the young ones when it comes to the academe—be it their environment or academic nurturing (Hilooğlu & Cenkseven-Önder, 2010).

Not every child lives his or her life like a prince or a princess. Students nowadays experience difficulties while studying. One of them can be the teacher's education and teaching style. Students' knowledge is filled mainly by their teachers' education, thus playing an important role here. Things/factors like socio-economic aspects and the class environment are one, too. It could mean that some students are very loud and rowdy in class, and some might be used to a quiet environment. Or, the difficulty might be because of the child's family background. A child might come from a family of criminals or simply from that of an illiterate one or had just never finished school—the child might set them as his examples. (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). Or could it be because of bullying?

Bullying is defined as mean, hurtful behaviour that repeatedly occurs in a relationship with an imbalance of power or strength (Peck, 2014). Alice Walton from Forbes stated that more and more studies show how the effects of bullying continue to adulthood (Walton, 2013). And there are different kinds of it. Physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying (Suzanne Peck, 2014). But it seems that no matter what type of bullying happens, it still has so much impact on a person's entirety.

One study by Duke University (2013) showed the effects of bullying that continue to adulthood. This study also acknowledged the impact on the victims and the aggressors (Costello, 2013). This means that, as early as possible, bullying must be prevented at the least. It is the effects that need to be prevented from happening. The effects vary, and some of them are isolation, low self-esteem, depression, and loneliness (Victoria State Government, 2013). A study in JAMA Psychiatry showed that kids who were constantly bullied but have never been bullied have more possibility of having depressive disorders like OCD, generalised anxiety, and others of the like (Walton, 2013).

Cyberbullying seems to be a unique version of bullying because it is the only one done through technology. Although not physically done, this type of bullying creates just as significant an impact as the others. Studies showed the effects of this kind of bullying, such as the depression above, getting low grades, engaging in substance abuse, and absenting from school (Eisenberg, Newmark-Sztainzer, & Perry, 2003; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2007; Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Ybarra, Espelage, & Mitchell, 2007; Ybarra & Finkelhor, 2007).

These effects are worrisome. As mentioned at the start of this paper, today's youth will surely be tomorrow's leader and source of hope. These effects and BULLYING itself must be prevented at all costs, and this prevention must be, just like what Tarsi Dunlop wrote, "worth prioritising" (Dunlop, 2013). Nobody surely wants this to get worse and lead to more terrifying incidents like the one in Indiana, USA, wherein a victim's mother made her gay son bring a stun gun to school (CNN Wire Staff, 2012).

Being bullied, as mentioned, has effects on the victims—and alarming ones at that. A study showed that of the 6,500 8-11 year-olds that they did the research, 75% were boys who suffered paramount degrees of depression, paranoia, suicidal behaviour, and the like. These certain behaviours, according to Peter Langman (Langman, 2009), were seen in a particular student, and

he was therefore sent to a hospital for evaluation because "he was seen as posing a threat for a Columbine-like attack." (Langman, 2009). The Columbine Massacre (Colorado, USA, 1999) took place in a high school, wherein two teenagers, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris (1999), took the lives of twelve students and one teacher, and later, theirs.

In the 20th century, where technology is much advanced, we have various forms of bullying. Bullying usually takes place personally or through physical contact, but when technology comes, they level it up. Some bullies make something that can destroy the image of someone by using social media or the internet. Social media are powerful tools to express emotions or something that can't be said personally. Phone texts or calls are beneficial to everyone, but these technology outlets can also be an outlet for bullies to level up their aggravation. They may say something that is against you, which others can see.

To students who experienced in their lifetime the act of bullying. It can be a source of knowledge on how bullying affects one's academic performance academically and its effect on the one who bullies. This study aims to provide adequate information to students for future research purposes.

Teachers want to know how their students are affected by bullying in the school, especially if the students pretend that nothing is happening, and the teachers know when or where to act on the situation. It also gives the teachers adequate information for future research purposes.

Like the teachers and students, the significance of this study is that it can be used as the basis of information and data gathered upon surveying. This also provides adequate information and ideas that can be used for future research purposes.

For the parents to know their children's performance at school in terms of socialisation, especially academics. Also, it serves as a guideline to inform them that bullying might affect their children's academic performance so that they may come up with a solution for the future to avoid this from happening.

The Student Affairs Office should inform them that bullying may and will always happen to the university's students. So, as a bullying-free campus, they must uplift and strictly implement the rules and regulations regarding bullying to minimise or prevent bullying acts from happening (Duy & Yıldız, 2014).

Security personnel, like teachers, must know when and where to act to prevent and stop bullying.

With the help of the student affairs office, the student organisation can help strictly implement rules and regulations by simply informing their co-students not to bully because it may affect the students' performances on campus.

Academic Performance - refers to the student's productivity regarding their studies to attain academic achievement. This includes grades, attendance, and behaviour during class.

Anxiety – a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome

Aggressive – ready or likely to attack or confront; characterised by or resulting from aggression

Bully – To frighten, hurt, or threaten (a smaller or weaker person); to cause (someone) to do something by making threats or insults or by using force

Depression – feelings of severe despondency and dejection. Disabilities – a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities

Dominate – have a commanding influence on; exercise control over

Ethnicity – the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition

Fear– an unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain or a threat

Isolation – the process or fact of isolating or being isolated

Power – the ability or suitability to control people or things

Self-esteem – confidence in one's worth or abilities; self-respect.

Social media – forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content

Suicidal – deeply unhappy or depressed and likely to commit suicide; likely to have a disastrously damaging effect on oneself or one's interests.

Threat – a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action on someone in retribution for something done or not done

Violence – behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

Method
This part of the study includes topics such as the research model, population and analysis group, data collection tools and techniques.

Research Design
The study is aimed at teachers and explained through the concept of mobbing. The interview technique was applied to students to determine the results of mobbing behaviour teachers are exposed to in schools. In addition, the literature review conducted within the scope of the study was limited to studies examining the effect of mobbing applied to teachers.

Participants
The descriptive scanning method, one of the research methods, was used in the study. The research population consists of teachers working in schools in Istanbul in the 2023-2024 academic year. The sample consists of 80 teachers determined by the quota method.

Data Collection Tools
While collecting the research data, an interview form prepared in line with the purpose of the study was used. The data obtained by the participants filling out the forms was used in the study by performing descriptive analysis.

Results

Table 1. Normality and Norm Values of All Sub-Dimensions of Teachers' Bullying

Bullying		Bullying Effect	Communication	Attitude	Happiness
N	80	80	80	80	80
Arithmetic	3,657	4,009	4,015	3,907	3,71
Average	0,018	0,017	0,017	0,021	0,013
Average Standard	3,7059	4	4	4	3,684
Mistake	3,88	4	4	4	3,53
Median	0,643	0,639	0,628	0,769	0,474
Mode	0,413	0,408	0,394	0,592	0,225
Standard deviation	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*	0.00*

Based on the information in Table 1 above, we can say what the average, mode, median and standard deviation values of mobbing effects are based on the table (Standard deviation is 0.47, the median is 3.68). To obtain results for the sub-problems based on the table, each problem must be examined separately.

Table 2. Item Statistics for Sub-Dimensions

Materials	N	Average	Standard Deflection	Comment
Bullying Behavior Applied	80	3.71	0.47	High
Bullying Effect Sub-Dimension	80	3.66	.64	Low
Teacher's Attitude Sub-Dimension	80	4.00	.64	High
Communication Sub-Dimension	80	4.01	.63	High
Happiness	80	2.74	.57	High

When the table above is examined, information such as the mean and standard deviation of sub-dimensions such as happiness, attitude and communication can be obtained. In this regard, we conclude that the highest average in organisational happiness is the communication dimension, with 4.01.

Table 3. Correlation Situations Between the Dimensions of the Scale

Bullying		Attitude	Communication	Bullying Effect	Happiness
Bullying Effect	1	.55*	.43*	.47*	.92*
Attitude		1	.56*	.35*	.78*
Communication			1	.36*	.63*
Happiness				1	.59*

If we act in line with what is given in Table 3, we can say that the relationship between the dimensions has changed. According to the table, we conclude that the relationship level varies between -.08 and .92. In other words, the conclusion to be drawn from the table is that while there is a significant relationship between the positive values shown in the table, there is a shallow relationship between opposing values and other values.

Result and Discussion

The research attempted to evaluate the leadership style applied by school principals within the maintenance leadership approach framework, with the teachers' opinions. Depending on the demographic characteristics of the teachers, the level of leadership characteristics of the school principals in the context of the sustaining leadership approach was determined, and the results of the analysis conducted for this purpose were included. As per the research findings, most teachers have reported that their principals tend to intervene, regardless of whether things are going well. The principals are open to innovation but are not keen on taking risks. They only reward the teachers if they have completed the given task, and they feel that the principal constantly reminds them of their responsibilities. In addition, apart from those who expressed an undecided opinion, half of the teachers stated that school principals care more about not losing than winning, and the other half disagreed. When the set targets are not achieved, 40.3% of the teachers think that the value given to them by the principal decreases, and 39.8% believe that their administrators value them in any case.

According to the sustaining leadership approach, the leadership style of school principals varies depending on the teachers' gender. Accordingly, female teachers said their principals adopted the sustaining leadership style more than male teachers. Research results by Soba et al. (2018) support the research results. The research detected a significant difference between the gender variable and the sustaining leadership style. The research results do not support the research results of Altunkaynak (2023), Tura (2012), Maral (2016) and Şahin (2006). When the literature is examined, it is seen that the results of research on gender variables and leadership styles generally differ. It can be thought that the difference in the school variable especially reveals this result.

When we look at the results of a one-way analysis of variance, which was conducted to determine which groups the leadership style adopted by school principals differs according to the age

variable of teachers within the scope of the sustaining leadership approach, it is seen that there is a statistically significant difference. According to the results of the Tukey HSD test, which was conducted to determine which differences in leadership styles arise between groups, teachers under the age of 30 are more likely to be teachers in the 31-40 age range, teachers in the 31-40 age range are more likely than those in the 41-50 age range, and teachers in the 41-50 age range are more likely to be 51-60 years old than those in the 31-40 age range. It is understood that school principals adopt the sustaining leadership style more than those in the age range. This result can be explained by the fact that teachers have more innovative perspectives at earlier than later ages. No significant difference could be detected between teachers' views on the type of institution they work in and the leadership styles of their principals.

In the research, it is seen that teacher attitudes towards school bullying differ significantly according to the gender of the teachers and that female teachers have higher attitude scores towards school bullying than male teachers. Accordingly, female teachers are more sensitive and knowledgeable about bullying than male teachers. In the studies conducted by Dursun-Balanuye (2007) and Yaman and Ceylan Çuha (2014), teacher attitudes towards school bullying differ significantly between male and female teachers. It was concluded that female teachers' attitudes towards school bullying are higher than male teachers. Accordingly, the results of the studies are similar to each other. It can be said that female teachers' perceptions of school bullying are more desirable than those of male teachers. However, in the research conducted by İrfaner (2009), it was observed that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female teachers towards bullying acts. In this research, it is thought that traditional women's roles and women's biological, psychological and emotional structure are effective in the positive attitudes of female teachers towards school bullying compared to men. Moreover, considering that kindness, compassion, responsibility and dedication are more developed in women (Beutel and Marini, 1995), such a result seems normal.

The study shows that teachers' attitudes towards school bullying do not differ significantly according to teachers' seniority. In the research conducted by İrfaner (2009), it was observed that teachers' attitudes towards bullying acts did not differ significantly according to the seniority of the teachers. In other words, this research and İrfaner's (2009) research concluded that whether teachers are new to the profession or experienced, their attitudes towards the bullying they encounter in their schools do not change. However, in Dursun-Balanuye's (2007) study, teachers' attitudes towards school bullying differed significantly according to their years of professional seniority. It was revealed that teachers with 16-20 years of seniority had a more positive attitude towards school bullying than teachers with 6-10 years of seniority. The research showed that the average attitude score of teachers with 6-10 years of seniority was the lowest, and the average attitude score of teachers with 16-20 years of seniority was the group with the highest average attitude score. Again, in Yaman and Ceylan Çuha's (2014) study, teachers' attitudes towards school bullying differed significantly according to their years of professional seniority. It has been revealed that teachers with 21 years of seniority or more have a more positive attitude towards school bullying than teachers with 6-10 years of seniority. The study observed that teachers with 21 years of seniority and above had the highest attitudes towards school bullying, and teachers

with 6-10 years had the lowest attitudes. Dursun-Balanuye's (2007) study concluded that teachers' attitudes towards school bullying did not differ significantly according to teachers' branches.

The study shows that teacher attitudes towards school bullying do not differ significantly depending on the settlement where teachers work and whether they receive in-service training on negative student behaviour.

The average teacher attitude score of the teachers participating in the research towards undesirable student behaviours in the classroom is different. It was revealed that teachers' attitudes towards unwanted student behaviours in the school did not differ significantly according to teachers' gender and whether or not they received in-service training on negative student behaviours.

According to another variable, the branch teachers' attitudes towards undesirable student behaviours in the classroom differ significantly. It was observed that the attitudes of secondary school branch teachers were better than those of classroom teachers. It is thought that this result is caused by the fact that it is more challenging to deal with young children due to their age, and professional burnout is higher in classroom teachers.

The researchers found that bullying cases are a serious matter that affects the student's academic performances following the results above. Because of this, people should raise awareness and get involved. To do so, the researchers recommend the study the following:

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