Age's Differences at Bullying's Acts in School Age

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Abstract

It's is ascertained that the phenomenon of bullying is increased recently in the 9-year schools and in the high schools of the city of Elbasan. The main focus of this scientific article is the frequency's evidence of the occurrence of the phenomenon of bullying in different school ages in two 9-year schools in the city of Elbasan. The main scientific methods applied in this study are survey and observation. The data are statistically analysed. From this scientific research is concluded that bullying's acts (experiences as bullies and victims) get reduced in schools with students in older age and also it occurs an increase of prosocial behavior. The occurrence's frequency of bullying's acts increases starting in the early years of the 9-year school (10-15 years old). Starting from high schools with the increasing of the age, get reduced the number of bullies and victims of bullying's acts. So starting from age 15-16 years old, bullying's act in schools get reduced. Transition periods (such as the enrollment, school changes, etc.) are particularly important because they often have the consequence of increasing the problem of bullying's acts. Physical bullying is mostly related to age. The more children grow, they use less direct and physical forms of bullying. With the age increase the most frequently used forms of bullying are the verbal and relational bullying.

Keywords: bullying's acts, age differences, physical and verbal bullying, direct and indirect bullying, relational bullying.

1. Literature review

In absolute terms, bullying (experiences as perpetrators and victims) get reduced in schools with older students and in those schools is ascertained an increase of prosocial behaviors. Salmivalli ¹based on the results founded in her studies puts somewhat in doubt the correlation between the reduction of victimization's experiences and the age. It criticizes that the results are mainly derived based on self-reports. If taken into account estimates and opinions of teachers, parents and peers is clear that there is no link between the reduction of victimization's experience and the age. Such a decrease is ascertained only in the number of children who perceived themselves as victims, that means to students who reported victimization, but that certainly were not victimized.

In general, it can be concluded that the authors of bullying's acts prefer to attack victims younger than themselves, which makes it clear that they choose victims who are perceived as less risky to make resistance, therefore it is absolutely obvious that bullying is a demonstration of force or power. But here it's not intended the measure of the author's personal strength, but his strength measurement compared with that of a younger person, who is first perceived weaker than himself (Alsaker, 2003).

There are conducted many studies, whose focus is the age's differences at bullying's acts in school. The results of those studies are different but there are also some similar results. They can be summarized as follows:

- Bullying's acts occur since at the age when children attend kindergarten.
- Frequency of occurrence of bullying increases starting in the early years of the 9-year cycle school (10-15 years). Starting from high schools with the age's increase, get reduced the number of perpetrators and victims of bullying. So starting from age 15-16 the students make less bullying's acts, as result the bullying in schools get reduced.
- Transition periods (such as the enrollment, school changes, etc.) are of particular importance because they often have the consequence of increasing the problem of bullying.¹

¹ A.D. Pellegrini, Bullies and victims in school: A review and call for research. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 92, 1998, pg. 360-366.

- 2Physical bullying is mostly related with age. As more children grow, they less use direct and physical forms of bullying. With the increasing of the age the most frequently used forms are the verbal and relational bullying, which means that the forms of bullying's expression became more refined and complex with the increasing of the age.
- At the same time increase also the prosocial behaviors.

Results found regarding to the frequency of occurrence of the phenomenon of bullying in different age groups are partly controversial, because of changes in methodologies applied (eg information processing methods, sources of information, etc.)

2. Methodology

Population: The sample consisted of 300 students, 150 students of the age 7 – 10 years ols, 150 of te age 10 – 15 years old and 100 of the age 10 – 15 years old, selected in two 9-year schools in the city of Elbasan.

Instrument of measure and procedure: It was developed a questionnaire with eight groups of items on closed questions in close collaboration with the teachers and school psychologist of the selected schools. The data were processed in SPSS.

3. Analysis

The statistical data presented in the graph 1 shows that 47% of the surveyed subjects, age 7 -10 years old, claimed to have committed acts of physical bullying last 3-4 months in school. 28% of them claimed to have committed acts of verbal bullying last 3-4 months in school. This shows that as more children grow, they less use direct and physical forms of bullying.

Graph 1

The statistical data presented in the graph 2 shows that 18% of the surveyed subjects, age 10 -15 years old, claimed to have committed acts of physical bullying last 3-4 months in school. 57% of them claimed to have committed acts of verbal bullying last 3-4 months in school. This also shows that as more children grow, they more use verbal forms of bullying.

Graph 2

²L.D. Owens & C.E. MacMullen, Gender differences in aggression in children and adolescents in South Australian schools. Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 6, 1995, pg 21-35.

Conclusions

From this scientific research is concluded that bullying's acts (experiences as bullies and victims) get reduced in schools with students in older age and also it occurs an increase of prosocial behavior. Various reasons have been identified to argue correlation between reduction of bullying cases when the child grows older. The children in early childhood are potentially vulnerable to become victims because they are in a weaker position versus school age children. In addition, children in early childhood do not know yet, that other children are not victimized. Also, these children do not yet possess social skills and persistent competence to avoid and to prevent victimization. In the course of their development, children acquire verbal and social skills that enable them to replace physical forms of bullying behavior with the cunning or fine and socially acceptable strategies³.

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³ See Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 17 June 2008 "Establishing a framework for community action in the field of maritime environment policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive) Article 4 (2) b, published in Official Journal of the European Union date 25.06.2008, L164/26.