

## **Bullying in School Environments**

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### **Abstract**

The research problem is expressed in the multifaceted question of the complexity meaning and manifestation of bullying in schools. The main research findings of the paper are the behaviors or actions that determine the most common forms of bullying behaviors in schools. In addition, this research enables us to obtain relevant knowledge about bullying with the help of scientific methods such as theoretical research of a qualitative nature, and the qualitative method of document content analysis which is mainly applied as one of the methods of data collection. This paper contributes from a criminological, victimological, sociological, and psychological point of view, which are engaged in preventing the appearance of bullying in schools as a negative and untreated phenomenon not only in us but also internationally.

**Keywords:** Bullying, verbal bullying, bullying in schools, forms of bullying behavior.

### **Introduction**

Violence at school is a problem that almost every child faces at least once in his or her lifetime. A problem that is becoming part of everyday life, and that in recent years it is getting bigger and bigger. Bullying behavior among pupils is not identical to any culture and unfortunately has been around for a long time. As society progressed into the technological age of the last century, bullying behavior was transformed. The level of sophistication for bullying behaviour has grown to incorporate the world of cyberbullying. Research on bullying behaviour has been conducted worldwide since the late 1970s and 1980s, with some of the most well-respected researchers such as Australian psychologist, Dr Ken Rigby and Dr Dan Olweus a Scandinavian psychologist. The issue of bullying is not such a simple and clear phenomenon that we could solve quickly and easily. Dealing with this

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problem, until the bullying behavior is addressed, is limited to looking only at the bullies and the bullied (Zgjana, 2022).

School violence is a form of violence that occurs at schools, with the purpose of intentionally and unjustifiably harming others. Violence can also happen outside of schools as well, and still be considered that it happens within the territory of schools for instance, if it happens in the schoolyard, or on the way from home to school and on the way back.

According to Rigby (2002), bullying can be avoided by well-planned interventions, which include equipping pupils with skills and strategies, inclusion of an anti-bullying program within the school curriculum, empowering pupils by engaging them in prevention activities (eg, being a member of anti-bullying groups) and intervention activities (eg, using conflict resolution skills), adopting a whole-school approach, which combines supportive relationships between the individual, the classroom, the school, parents and the community; early start of interventions: interventions carried out at the preschool level have even greater opportunities for success; high level of commitment from staff to implement an anti-bullying program.

Bullying is a negative and untreated phenomenon not only in us but also at the international level, it has to do with the way we make fun of each other to hurt in everyday life, as in the family, in society, and especially in schools.

Bullying in school premises is when one of the children is the object of continuous negative treatment (Jugore, 2023). This treatment may include behavior such as physical attacks, insults, dissembling, or other actions intended to harm or offend others. Bullying can also include isolating the child from society, nasty talk, or any type of behavior intended to emotionally or psychologically harm others. The purpose of bullying is to prevent the bullied person from participating in school activities, group activities, or even on virtual chat platforms. Regarding the definition of bullying in schools, many opinions differ in terms of the conceptualization of the bullying construct (Olweus, 2013).

The term "mobbing" for bullying behavior was first introduced by Heinemann in 1972, who was inspired by Lorenz's studies on animal behavior, describing it as "a situation where everyone is against one person" (Søndergaard, Schott, and Marie, 2014),

Author Olweus (1993, 1996, 2001, 2013) is recognized as a prominent leader in the field of bullying research in the context of education, showing a clear trend toward scientific studies since 1970. His commitment to understanding bullying is based on the analysis of quantitative data and aims to identify its causes, predict occurrences, and develop evidence-supported strategies to intervene effectively.

Author Olweus (Olweus, 1993), says that bullying is a form of violence, which is usually directed at an individual and is often perpetrated by one or more individuals. Farrington (1993) defined bullying as repeated mental or physical abuse towards a person unequal to the perpetrator, focusing on the relationship between the bully and the bullied. Moreover, Rigby (2008), assumed that bullying involves the use of power in interpersonal relationships in a systematic way. Rigby treats bullying in terms of social relations, although he was influenced by the work of Olweus.

Jasarević and Maloku (2021a) explain bullying very well from the criminological aspect (Jasarević and Maloku, 2021a) and the criminal procedural aspect. Contrary to conceptual differences (Danuza, 2021) in the definition of the concept of bullying in the context of individual or social events, the aforementioned definitions emphasize at least one of the three main characteristics: the aim or purpose of aggressive behaviors, the repetition of harmful actions and the absence of power equality.

Professors Maloku & Maloku in their book "Dictionary of Legal-Criminal Terminology for Journalists" elaborate on many terms related to victims, among others they elaborate on bullying (Maloku and Maloku, 2021). Furthermore, the criminologist Ahmet Maloku in his book "Terminological Dictionary of Victimology" (Maloku, 2019), states that bullying is an unwanted and aggressive behavior among school-aged children that includes a real or perceived power imbalance or has the potential to reoccur. To consider a behavior bullying, then it must be aggressive and include: 1. A power imbalance: Children who use violence use their power, such as physical strength, access to unpleasant information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people, and 2. Repetitions: Bullying behaviors occur more than once or have the potential to occur more than once.

Bullying and harassment are not the same. Therefore, a defining line must be drawn between the terms bullying and harassment. In addition, harassment is done for fun, not intended to hurt, but to give both parties some pleasure, and is stopped if the person objects or gets upset. Meanwhile, bullying behavior includes non-reciprocal taunts that are intended to hurt physically or emotionally or even annoy the victim (Coloroso, 2003).

To distinguish bullying from other forms of violence, we must consider a power imbalance between the victim and the bully or bullies. An act of violence is not automatically classified as bullying unless there is a power imbalance between the victim and the bully and there are no differences in their strength. In the case

of bullying, the person doing the violence is always more powerful than the victim and the latter is not able to respond adequately (Danuza, 2021).

Bullying is a way of gaining a role and influence over others. While, Monks the Smith (Monks and Smith, 2006), have emphasized that power can be defined in forms of different natures such as physical, psychological, and social, and is quite difficult to assess. When dealing with the source of power, (Olweus, 1996), he refers to the victim as "weak" on the scale of "mental strength" rather than physical strength.

A weakness that can be considered a situation where the victim differs from others due to characteristics such as his or her health, appearance (including wearing glasses), height, height compared to peers, or relationship with teachers, etc. The main element of the victim's vulnerability is the feeling of social isolation or the lack of a strong social network. What is important is that the bully or bullies are aware of these power differences and use them to harm the victim.

The most common distribution of bullying occurs in school settings, including classrooms, corridors, stairs, canteens, toilets, gymnasiums, sports fields, locker rooms, and even on the way from home to school or vice versa (Smith, 2014). Bullying in the classroom usually occurs when teachers are not present, but there are cases when it also occurs during their presence.

## **Methodology**

The importance of this paper lies in the complexity of the problem (Maloku, Kastrati., Gabela, & Maloku, 2022a), of bullying in school environments. The method of analysis and synthesis is used in this paper. These methods will be particularly useful in researching the theoretical perspectives of local and foreign authors (Maloku, Qerimi & Maloku, 2022) who have studied and analyzed bullying in school environments. In similar circumstances, the induction and deduction method is also used. Content analysis as a necessary method will be used to study the numerous literatures, in which this problem has been addressed in various aspects (Maloku, Jasarevic & Maloku, 2021).

## **Results and discussion**

The behaviors or actions used determine the forms of bullying behavior. The most common forms of violence in schools are:

- Verbal (swearing, teasing, gossiping,)
- Social exclusion (exerting pressure on peers to avoid, i.e. not socializing and communicating with a certain child from school),
- Physical (hitting, fights) and

- Sexually (giving greedy nicknames, illegal touching among peers, illegal distribution of photos from social networks and commenting on them in a sexual aspect, etc.). Unfortunately, exposure to violence does not end when school ends but continues into digital cyber violence. At school, pupils can suffer violence from their peers but also from their teachers. However, there are also cases when pupils use violence against their teachers using provocations, insults, but also threats, and physical attacks. Perpetrators of violence most often see the basis for the exercise of violence in the material and intellectual status, as well as in the national and sexual affiliation of the victim.

Verbal bullying includes teasing, threats, insults, and offensive comments, although, according to O'Moore (2011), teasing is not always an indicator of bullying behaviour. The act of bullying is not considered bullying if it occurs in a friendly context without bad intentions, and also when there is no obvious power imbalance between the pupils. Björkqvist, Österman, and Björkqvist (1994) distinguish between direct acts of violence, such as physical and verbal, and complicated or unusual forms of violence. Unusual violence is a behavior or action that takes place in secret, intending to harm the victim through the intervention of a third party. While the identity of the person who carries out the violence and his negative intent remain hidden.

O'Moore (2011) states that relational violence is known for the manipulation of friendships to harm another person's social relationships. This includes situations where someone uses threats, such as threatening that their friendship will end if others do not obey their instructions. This type of violence can be seen as a kind of threat to maintaining social relations. because this group of people is at risk of being excluded from the social circle or even from their activities.

Similarly, Galen, Rachelle, and Underwood (1997) have described the concept known as "social violence" using the term that is characterized by the intention to damage the self-confidence or image of a person in a social context. Social violence includes behaviors such as verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body language, gossip, and social exclusion. O'Moore and his colleagues have proposed that unusual, relational, and social violence are aspects of the same phenomenon and are not separated from each other (O'Moore, 2011). Based on the above data, under the guise of relational bullying fall rumors, spreading insults, and exclusion from the social circle.

In general, bullying consists of repeated confrontations between the bullied person and the bully. However, this is not always the case. From the bullied person's point of view, the effect of even a single, i.e. non-repeated, event can be damaging.

The issue of bullying is quite complex and the research in this area does not identify the superiority of any single cause of bullying. Below, some key factors that are considered to contribute in different ways to the possibility of bullying behavior are summarized. The following information does not constitute a complete list of all factors, but represents the main categories of focus, with examples of key influencing factors within each other. Environmental factors are a complex area to generalize about, as some pupils may watch a lot of media violence and not be affected, while other pupils may show higher levels of aggression from seeing a lot of media violence. Children raised in an environment that provided them with security and comfort during their childhood made them less likely to bully (Zgjana, 2022). The presence of bystanders can contribute to bullying (Olweus, 2001). Bystanders can be passive, which leads to condoning or not reacting to the bullying incident or they can prevent it by intervening (Salmivalli, 2001).

Cairns dhe Cairns (1994) identified the influence of peer groups. While individuals more than groups exhibit bullying behavior (Rigby & Slee, 1999), about 85% of bullying incidents occur within peer groups (Atlas and Pepler, 1998). A study of bullying incidents in playgrounds found that, although bystanders were present in 88% of bullying incidents, they intervened in only 19% of cases (Hawkins, Pepler, and Craig, 2001). In individual factors, children who have been bullied have been reported to have low empathy and, therefore, are not sensitive to the plight of others (Endresen & Olweus, 2001).

The bullying as a result of individual differences approach suggests that bullying results from the different levels of personal power between each pupil. These differences are physically or psychologically based. Bullies tend to be physically stronger than the average pupils and, from a personality perspective, tend to be more aggressive, manipulative, and low on empathy (Olweus, 1993).

Victims tend to be physically weaker, introverted, and have low self-esteem (Rigby & Slee, 1993). School programs based on this perspective tend to focus on changing the behavior of bullies through counseling and/or discipline and look at changing the behavior of victims through social skills and self-confidence training.

In bullying as a developmental process, children initially engage in more direct forms of physical bullying, but, as they progress in development, they adopt less socially offensive forms of bullying, replacing them with more indirect means (Rigby, 1997). This perspective prompts schools to adopt programs that positively promote pupils' growth and challenge them to address subtle changes in bullying as pupils mature.

Bullying as a socio-cultural phenomenon takes a broader social perspective when the cause of bullying behavior is identified. Bullying is seen as a consequence of power differentiation between different social groups in our society, based on gender, race, social class, etc. Bullying is more often initiated by boys than by girls (Olweus, 1993), Boys are more likely to bully girls than vice versa (Rigby, 1997) School programs that adopt this perspective develop programs that address prejudice and discrimination and attempt to increase cultural sensitivity, introducing a collective and collaborative approach.

Bullying as a response to peer pressure within the school is seen as a group phenomenon. Groups are not necessarily related to race, gender, etc., but exist through a common interest or purpose. Within a school setting, the peer group will often bully another group or individual, for a reason (real or imagined) or just for fun. Bullies have admitted to acting as part of a group for half of the bullying incidents they have been involved in (Rigby, 2002).

Bullying by individuals is most often carried out with the support of a group (Pepler and Craig, 1995). School programs that work from this perspective focus on groups that try to use peer pressure to positively influence responsible individual actions.

## **Conclusion**

Bullying in schools is a complex national and international phenomenon not only with the characteristics of individuals, but also the educational procedures within the family, as factors of the situation. We talk about bullying at school when one or more pupils disturb, attack, or hurt another child who cannot defend himself repeatedly and intentionally. It can take the form of threats, physical harm, rejection, ridicule, harassment, and gossip. It most often occurs in school restrooms, hallways, and other spaces outside the teacher's control. It can also happen in the classroom, in front of other children who do not help you because of lack of interest, fear or lack of compassion, or other reasons.

Considering the findings from this paper, we hope to work more on the awareness of citizens about cyberbullying specifically. We recommend the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to start awareness campaigns in all schools. This can be achieved in the form of various campaigns, media and visual advertising, theatrical performances, and various workshops with young people. We recommend family members increase care and support towards their children and to inform them that in case of inadequate use of social networks, they may fall prey to various cyber attacks such as cyberbullying.

We recommend the teachers and heads of the respective classes be alert and ready to provide help in case of need. Also, provide them with appropriate

information on the consequences of bullying. The development of mutual educator-parent communication is one of the key factors that must be worked on as much as possible to highlight the problem of bullying in schools that is very present in our society. The family as the functional elementary cell of any society is the pillar of everything. Only through the cooperation of teachers and parents can achieve good results to prevent bullying in schools in the future.

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