STUDIES ON THE PREDICTIVE EFFECT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF COMPASSION AND DIFFICULTY IN EMOTION REGULATION ON PEER BULLYING

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ABSTRACT

Bullying, which is a special type of aggressive behavior, continues to exist as an important problem in social life from past to present. Studies conducted in Turkey and around the world show that bullying in school is also common among students. "Peer bullying" in schools affects the development of students, our future generations, personally, emotionally, psychosocially, academically, morally, etc. can have a negative impact in many areas. The effect of this bullying, which started at school, can continue for years, leaving deep scars that are difficult to heal. To prevent the negativities to be experienced, recognizing bullying will be possible by discovering its causes and taking responsibility for the solution. In this study, firstly peer bullying, then emotion regulation skills and compassion concepts, which are thought to be related to bullying, are explained. Previous studies on these concepts are included.

Keywords: Aggression, Peer bullying, Compassion, Emotion regulation, Emotion regulation difficulty.

INTRODUCTION

Aggression, which existed as a motive for vital activities such as nutrition, protection, and shelter at the beginning of humanity, has started to serve different purposes as people gain a place in social life over time. The person's desire to be superior, his desire to be a respected person, perhaps his need for entertainment has been tried to be satisfied with bullying behaviors over other people. Although bullying has been in our lives for many years, it started to be the subject of scientific research in the 1980s. Although it attracted attention with the situations, we call "mobbing" in the workplaces in the early days, bullying can occur in many other areas where social relations exist.

Bullying at home, at work, in sports, at school, etc. We can meet in many places. Since the problems that it causes in the school environment are more intense, the studies are generally carried out on students. Bullying is an unconditional stimulus. Bullying at school negatively affects the school environment, friendship relations, and continuity. The academic success of the student who is absent may decrease, and these situations may lead to school dropout. In fact, the bullied student may resort to unsafe methods such as carrying a knife to defend himself. For these and similar reasons, more studies are conducted in schools. As a level, studies in primary and secondary education are dominant. When most of us think about our education life, we do not have difficulty remembering a time when we were bullied (Ayas and Pişkin, 2015).

Although the behavioral and concrete part of the situation is aggression, it is necessary to mention the emotional part as well. There are different emotional states of the person who shows aggression and the person who is exposed to it. The bully could not regulate their emotions and express themselves constructively. The exposed person, on the other hand, may hold himself responsible for this situation and internalize the situation, and his sense of self and self-esteem may be damaged. May have trouble trusting other people. For these reasons, teaching emotion regulation skills is thought to be effective in combating bullying.

When we look at the conscientious dimension of bullying, a reason is sought for the bully to repeat the aggressive behavior toward the victim and to see no harm in doing so. Considering the moral development

that may be related to bullying, "Can the values gained at an early age and the correct and conscious acquisition of the sense of "compassion" existing within these values prevent bullying behaviors? question comes to mind.

Aggression; although it is an action that we often hear, observe, or perhaps experience in our daily lives, defining aggression can be complex. In addition to those who describe aggression as a result-oriented "destructive action," there are also opinions that emphasize the "intention of the person who performs the action" by emphasizing the thought (Öğülmüş, 1995).

Defines aggression as "behaviors with consequences such as injuring an individual or damaging his property"; defined it as "behavior done to harm another of the same species." Evaluated aggression as a behavior that is motivated to avoid such a behavior to injure or harm another living thing. Defined aggression as a form of intentionally harming others. Here, the focus of the aggressive behavior turned into action. When looked at, the common point of many definitions of aggression is that the behavior has "intention to harm" (Mansız and Kolburan, 2022, p.1391)

AGGRESSION AND REASONS FOR AGGRESSION

Aggression; It is malicious behavior with the aim of harming an object or a person. Aggression, which we encounter in many forms such as violent hitting, breaking, kicking, insulting, walking on, mocking; it can wear down its interlocutors and cause serious problems in daily life (Hasta and Güler, 2013).

When we look at the causes of aggressive behavior, we generally focus on three basic views: (a) Aggression is an innate drive (biological origin), (b) it occurs with frustration, and (c) aggression is learned later.

It is one of the basic assumptions of Psychoanalytic Theory that aggression is an innate drive. According to this theory, the energy arising from the tension of the life instinct and death instinct is discharged by destructive behaviors. Although this energy has been suppressed to some extent or channeled to other activities with the taking place of

people in modern societies, they still argue that aggression is the basis of human impulses (Geçtan, 2003).

Another view speaks of aggression brought on by frustration. He says that when we face obstacles in a subject we want to do, we can act aggressively if we cannot get what we want. It does not apply to every individual. Sometimes it can be direct, sometimes it can be indirect. In addition, the person may show crying behavior as a passive aggression. It is thought that this process, which begins in infancy, prepares the ground for destructive behaviors for later ages (Dollard *et al.*, 1939).

Those who argue that aggression is learned are learning theories. They think that we are neither good nor bad when we are born, and that we are shaped by what we have learned over time (Atkinson *et al.*, 1995). Aggression can also be learned through direct or indirect reinforcements, social learning, or modeling throughout life (Bandura, 1977; Bandura and Walters, 1963).

Aggression is a destructive behavior that disrupts the functioning of society, violates rights, disrupts living together in peace and unity, and renders the world and relationships unreliable. They are often associated with violence and bullying. The most general expression of these concepts, which have close meanings to each other, is "aggression." Bullying is a display of violence and is generally an aggressive behavior. But not all aggression is bullying (Gurhan, 2017).

The biggest difference between aggression and bullying is that bullying is repeated over and over in a systematic way. The person chosen as the victim is constantly bullied on purpose. This can cause profound and lasting effects on the person (Bond *et al.*, 2001).

BULLYING AND PEER BULLYING

Along with the beginning of humanity in history, the historical process of aggression and violence began. This impulse, which was vital for needs such as survival, food, shelter, and protection; over time, it continued to be exhibited even though there was no concrete life-threatening danger. The concept of bullying, on the other hand, manifests itself in social relations as a sub-dimension of aggression. Bullying is an aggressive behavior. However, it has different and defining features that distinguish it from other types of violence.

The concept of bullying first attracted attention with the concept of "mobbing" used by Swedish Doctor Paul Heinemann in his research on racism in the 1970s. "Mobbing", as the word meaning, is the act of using psychological violence, humiliation, pressure, and threatening others by abusing one's power or position. After Heinmemann's studies on mobbing, Dan Olweus in the 1980s first examined similar aggressive events among students in schools under the name of "ganging." This concept left its place to the concepts of "bullying" and "peer bullying" in the late 1980s. Thus, "bullying, peer bullying" among students in schools has started to find a place for itself in scientific studies for the 1st time (Olweus, 2013; Yasoz, 2021).

DEFINING BULLYING AND DIFFICULTY

It is necessary to distinguish the phenomenon of bullying from other aggressive behaviors. In a survey conducted by Olweus, school bullying, which he calls "bullying", is clearly defined as: "A student is repeatedly, repeatedly, deliberately exposed to negative and aggressive behavior by another student or group of students". In the next process, the idea that "there is an imbalance of power between the parties, that the strong party is bullying while the weaker party has difficulty in defending himself" was added to this definition. Therefore, it is possible to define peer bullying in general as follows: Peer bullying; It is the intentional and repetitive negative behavior of a psychologically or physically stronger student or group of students towards a relatively less powerful student that will hurt, scare and harm him (Gurhan, 2017).

Similarly, Roland defines bullying as "a persistent type of violence with physical or psychological consequences, perpetrated by an individual or group against a person who is unable to protect himself or herself." (Roland, 1989; Pişkin, 2002, p.535).

Students who share the same environment in schools differ from each other in many areas such as cognitive, physical, sociocultural, socioeconomic, morals, attitudes, abilities, and values. These differences can cause conflicts in interpersonal relationships (Ayas *et al.*, 2010).

Although peer bullying is a situation that negatively affects friendship relations and social development in schools, it has not been studied, noticed or ignored for many years. Studies on the concept of bullying are recent in the literature, and studies on peer bullying have gained momentum in recent years in our country (Yalnuz, 2019).

Thus, more attention began to be drawn on the subject, and the search for a solution to bullying was started.

TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying behaviors are classified in different ways in different sources. According to Ayas and Pişkin (2011), peer bullying is discussed under three headings. Physical bullying includes slapping, hitting, and shoving. Verbal bullying manifests itself with verbal messages such as swearing, insulting, and mocking. Relational bullying, on the other hand, excludes the individual in relationships, ignores, rejects, etc. includes behaviors. While verbal and physical bullying is defined as direct bullying, relational bullying is called indirect bullying.

In another source, Albayrak (2012) diversified bullying behaviors at school and examined them under different titles. Emotional bullying when the student is insulted, humiliated, excluded by his friends; bullying because someone else wants to; bullying by proxy; Cases such as voyeurism, exhibitionism, inappropriate behavior, and abuse are handled under the name of sexual bullying.

Below is information about the most common types of bullying.

Physical bullying
Pushing, kicking, punching, biting, throat squeezing, etc. with physical intervention include offensive actions. It has traditionally been recognized as the most common type of bullying in schools. It may involve harming a person or property. It is more common in male students. Bullies often target younger students. As bullies get older, physical contacts may become more aggressive and hurtful (Crick, 1996; Crick and Bigbee, 1998).

Verbal bullying
Bullying with words. Even if there is no physical effect, it can be at least as hurtful. Behaviors such as teasing, insulting, using nicknames, threatening, slandering, gossiping, and making heavy criticism can be included in the scope of verbal bullying. It is embarrassing and embarrassing for the victim (Taylor, 2009).

Social bullying
Relational bullying is also known as psychological bullying or emotional bullying. This type of bullying is the most complex to define and hard to detect. It manifests itself with actions such as exclusion, rejection, and ignoring in social relations. This process, which starts with not including it in the games played at a young age, can become more malicious in later ages. Relational bullying is the most difficult and hurtful type of bullying according to the victims (Sharp, 1995).

Direct bullying
According to Olweus (1993); described direct bullying as "relatively overt attacks." It is easier to notice and observe. Often the bully and the victim are face to face. There is an open attack. Most of the physical and verbal bullying behaviors can directly fall under the title of bullying (Harris and Petrie, 2003; O'Moore and Minton, 2004).

Indirect bullying

It is the opposite of direct bullying. It is mostly done through third parties or the attacker is anonymous (Arslan and Savaşer, 2009). The bully and the victim are not face-to-face, and indirect bullying is often done through relationships. Intentional social exclusion is an example of this. It includes manipulative behaviors such as preventing others from liking that person, slandering, backbiting, and making threats over the internet. The victim may feel insecure, alone, and helpless toward people (O'Moore and Minton, 2004).

Sexual bullying

This includes disturbing behavior related to the person's gender, sexual orientation, or sexuality. It can be done indirectly or directly. Sexual jokes, touching private parts, behind-the-scenes about sexual orientation, teasing, belittling, sharing exhibitionist photos, etc. are actions. The difficulty of its emergence is generally due to the fact that the victim hides it and is ashamed of the situation (Gruber and Fineran, 2015; AAUWEF, 2001).

Cyberbullying

While studies on bullying continue, new research shows that a new field of bullying has emerged with the developing technology today. Blackmail, offensive messages, dissemination of messages, etc., carried out over the Internet. Situations started to be examined under the name of cyber/virtual bullying. According to Belsey (2004); cyberbullying; The use of transportation means such as e-mail, mobile phone, pager to hurt, or harm another person is defined as the deliberate and continuous continuation of this situation. The endless possibilities offered by the age of technology have turned into opportunities in the hands of tyrants. Although it is not considered a direct form of bullying, it falls within the scope of relational and indirect bullying (Citemel, 2014).

PARTICIPANT ROLES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PEER BULLYING

Bully

The person who initiates the bullying behavior. A bully is a person who deliberately and consciously harms the person he chooses as a victim and exhibits behaviors that will disturb him. Bullies do not care if the other person is hurt. All they care about is their own wants and needs. They want to be the center of attention. Since they cannot achieve this with their positive features, they try to attract attention by harming those around them. In general, they are physically and psychologically stronger than their peers, but lack problem-solving skills, have almost no empathy skills, and have low anger control skills. They tend to break the rules at school and in most places. The surprising thing is that bullied children who are excluded in their childhood can be attracted by their friends and become popular when they reach adolescence (Cook *et al.*, 2010).

In the study of Wild *et al.* (2013), the relationship between bullies and gender was examined. Considering the result, it was determined that men seek less support when they have any problems due to cultural attributions and coding, and they try to solve the problem themselves. This may make men more vulnerable to bullying or being a victim of bullying.

Victim

A person who is constantly or repeatedly bullied, has difficulty in defending himself, and is physically and psychologically weaker than the bully is called a victim or victim. As the victim is bullied, they lose their self-confidence and self-esteem. He feels hurt, helpless, and alone. He does not know how to deal with the bully. It stays silent most of the time. Unless he is able to defend himself effectively, he continues to be bullied systematically. (Green *et al.*, 2010). Victims are usually unpopular, quiet, introverted people. (Ayas, 2018).

When students experience bullying, they are reluctant to seek help from the school administration and teachers. In a study, half of the students who were victims of bullying stated that their friends were interested in them, but they could not get help from teachers and administrators at the level they wanted. It has been observed that students find teachers and administrators inadequate in preventing bullying at school (Hesapçıoğlu and Yeşilova, 2015).

Bully-victim

People are both the bully and the victim of a bully. They bully the person they see as weaker than themselves. They are also bullied by someone who is stronger than them. Because of this dual situation, these people can show the personality traits of both bullies and victims (Georgiou and Stavrinides, 2008).

Audience

One of the participants in the bullying process is the audience. Spectators are people who are aware of the bullying situation and do not prevent it, do not interfere, and are content to watch from afar. Although these people seem to be doing nothing, they may actually be criminals. Because being a bystander to bullying plays a role in the reinforcement of the bully. The audience sees the bully as a charismatic leader and encourages him. The purpose of the bully is to attract attention and be followed. Not stopping him can cause the bullying to continue. From this point of view, spectatorship can be equated with being cruel (Wet, 2005).

The audience is divided into two groups: the first group is indifferent to the event, ignoring it, or simply watching. The second group realizes that something is wrong and tries to prevent it and asks someone for help. When this help is ineffective, they may internalize the situation as if they are experiencing the bullying themselves and experience fear and anxiety (Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996).

BULLYING AND RELATED FACTORS

Bullying and gender

The relationship between bullying and gender is a matter of curiosity. When we look at the literature, it is seen that the majority of the students who are both bullied and bullied are male. (Pişkin, 2002). According to a study in England, 65% of bullying behaviors are carried out by men. It has been determined that the rate of girls is 15% and the rate of both girls and boys is 19% (Satan, 2011). In studies examining the relationship between peer bullying types and gender, it was found that boys were mostly involved in physical bullying, and girls were more involved in verbal bullying; In cyberbullying, there was no significant difference between both genders (Wang *et al.*, 2009; Chokprajakchat *et al.*, 2015; Besag, 2006; Tokunaga, 2010). In another study on participatory roles and genders in peer bullying, men generally play bully and supportive roles; on the other hand, it was seen that the girls were mostly in the roles of defender or spectator. (Salmivalli *et al.*, 1996; Goossens *et al.*, 2006; Wu *et al.*, 2016).

Bullying and age factor

The relationship between age and bullying has been the subject of research. When the results of the related studies were examined, it was observed that the frequency of bullying increased as the age increased, but the rate of being a victim decreased with the increase in age. On the other hand, the type of bullying may differ with age. While physical bullying is common in lower classes, verbal and relational bullying is more common in upper classes. (Pişkin, 2002). Relational bullying is thought to come to the fore with the increase in cognitive development and language skills in adolescence (Espelage *et al.*, 2004; Archer and Coyne, 2005; cited in Yasoz, 2021).

There is a tendency for direct bullying (physical or verbal) and more frequent bullying at younger ages. Bullying decreases with age and is seen as indirect bullying (Elsea and Rees, 2001). Decreased levels of physical bullying in children as they transition from primary to secondary education; verbal bullying levels increase (Green, 2003). Since bullying behavior is more common in the 1st years of school, it is expected that the youngest children in any school will be at a higher risk of becoming a victim (Kumpulainen *et al.*, 1999; Citemel, 2014, p.20).

Bullying and cultural differences

Perceptions of bullying in behavior can change as the place of residence and the culture they grow up in differs. For example, spreading rumors and social exclusion is a serious form of bullying in the USA (Crick and Grotpeter, 1995). While defining bullying in Japan, Morita *et al.* (1999) emphasized that the bully and the victim are in the same class or in the same peer group, unlike other countries. However, in many Norwegian studies, the bullies are older than the victims (Olweus, 1993b). Cultural differences can cause differences even in the definition of bullying. For example, bullying in Japan is described by the word "Ijime." This word literally means "pretending not to exist, exclusion." Tanaka (2001) defined "Ijime" as staying away from in his study. Bully students who use this bullying stay away from, ignore and ignore their peers they choose as their victims. They act as if they do not exist. As a result of the research, it was concluded that 56.6% of the students in Japan experienced avoidance bullying, 42% of them were verbally bullied and only 22% of them were physical bullying (Citemel, 2014).

Bullying and academic performance

In the study conducted by McEnvoy and Welker (2000), it was seen that students' crime and aggression levels were lower in schools with high academic achievement. Children who are exposed to bullying both at school and in society are in the highest risk group in terms of academic failure (Schwartz and Gorman, 2003).

Eisenberg *et al.* (2003) concluded in their study that children with high academic achievement are less likely to be victims of bullying (Citemel, 2014).

Psychological and social problems associated with bullying behaviors

Being involved in violence, regardless of the role, contains complex emotions. Each of the people who are in the position of victim (victim), bully, or spectator experience different mental problems. It has been determined that victims of bullying have more loneliness, truancy, suicidal ideation, and low self-esteem levels compared to their other peers (Hawker and Boulton, 2000; Kochenderfer and Ladd, 1996). Also, being a victim of bullying, headaches and stomachaches etc. It is also associated with physical health problems (Srabstein *et al.*, 2006; Citemel, 2014).

Bullying and physical characteristics

Students who are physically shorter, weaker and weaker than their peers have a higher risk of being bullied. Because they are insufficient to protect themselves, they can become the clear target of bullies (Albayrak, 2012). The victims are generally less interested in sports and do not have a sport in which they are successful. Pain thresholds may be low and they remain in the background in tasks that require courage (Dölek, 2002, p.41; Albayrak, 2012). In the Jamaica report of Unicef (2015), teachers state that children who are less masculine, weak, neglected, scattered and poor in appearance are victims (Unicef Jamaica Report, 2015, p.29). West and Salmon (2000) state that victims feel like they are physically ill, and therefore they often consult a doctor with complaints such as nausea, dizziness, and arm-leg aches (Yelboğa and Koçak, 2019).

Bullying and peer influences

At school age, most of the day is spent at school, with friends. For this reason, it is a known fact that peer relationships play an important role in psychosocial and emotional development. Peer influence manifests itself in positive or negative situations. The reactions of students in schools where bullying is experienced affect the course of the process; it can even reinforce the roles of bullies or victims. Studies show that some bully students are the most popular students in the school environment, while other students admire bullies. Therefore, the bully's behavior is reinforced by his peers. These studies reveal the importance of the effect of peer reactions on bullying (Craig, 1998; Graham and Juvonen, 2001; Olweus, 1993a, 1993b; Rigby and Slee, 1993; Çitemel, 2021).

Bullying and parental attitudes

Parental attitudes directly affect the child's personality development, mental health and behaviors (Karataş, 2009). It is known that this effect starts before the child is born and continues until the end of his life (Yavuzer, 1993). The mental health of children who grow up with consistent behaviors and positive attitudes in a loving family is also positively affected (Yavuzer, 2003).

Children who have positive relationships with their parents and have a pleasant time can establish healthier friendships with their peers. In the studies, it was found that the adolescents who bullied come from families with authoritarian, harsh and punitive attitudes; Parents of bullying victims have been shown to be overprotective of their children (Spriggs *et al*, 2007; Espelage and Swearer, 2003; Duncan, 2004; Perry *et a*l, 2001)

The diagnosis of psychiatric disorder in the parent, domestic conflict, and violence, exposure to abuse or neglect, and inappropriate parenting attitudes were associated with both bullying and exposure to peer bullying (Broll and Reynolds, 2020; Nocentini *et al.*, 2018).

Bullying and settlement

It is discussed whether living in an urban or rural area has an impact on bullying. In this direction, in a study conducted in Afyon, it was determined that the rate of violence among students in rural areas is significantly higher than the rate in urban areas (Yörük and Çankaya, 2013). Another study measuring the stress level that predisposes bullying was conducted with 2nd-year students in Malaysia. According to the results of this research, the stress level of students in rural areas is higher than those in urban areas (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2009).

In the study conducted by Du Dan (2009) in China, the level of compassion and warmth of mothers living in rural and urban areas was examined. As a result, it was seen that the levels of compassion and warmth of mothers living in urban areas were better.

Bullying and school type

The type of school children go to also has an impact on their behavior. In the study conducted by Ayas and Pişkin (2011), industrial vocational high schools of the school type with the highest rate of exposure to bullying; It has been revealed that the schools with the lowest score are Anatolian high schools. At the same time, Anatolian high school students were the least bullied group, while private high school students were the most bullied group.

CAUSES OF PEER BULLYING

Family and environment are the foundation of child development. It has been observed that children who spend time with their families and feel family love are less prone to bullying than children who do not spend time with their families (Toksöz, 2010). In Eşkisu's (2014) study with 683 high school students, it was found that family functioning and social support had a great effect on bullying. While it was found that the parents' involvement with the emotional and physical care of the child had a negative relationship with bullying, it was also found to have a positive relationship with avoiding bullying (Ok and Aslan, 2010).

According to the research conducted by Kandemir and Özbay (2009), an indirect negative relationship was observed between self-esteem and bullying behavior. It was concluded that as self-esteem decreases, social relations are negatively affected and negative social relations cause bullying behavior. In the studies, it was found that the adolescents who bullied come from families with authoritarian, harsh and punitive attitudes; it has been shown that the parents of bullying victims are overprotective of their children (Spriggs *et al*, 2007; Espelage and Swearer, 2003; Duncan, 2004; Perry *et al,* 2001).

The diagnosis of psychiatric disorder in the parent, domestic conflict, and violence, exposure to abuse or neglect, and inappropriate parenting attitudes were associated with both bullying and exposure to peer bullying (Broll and Reynolds, 2020; Nocentini *et al*, 2018).

In a meta-analysis study examining 28 studies, it was found that involvement in bullying was positively associated with low socioeconomic status, while roles of bully and victim were negatively associated with high socioeconomic status (Tippett and Wolke, 2014).

CONSEQUENCES OF PEER BULLYING

A school-age child spends most of the day at school. School life has an impact on the personality, social, emotional, and moral development of the child as well as affecting the mental, cognitive, and academic fields. The traces of these developments will be with the child for a long time, perhaps it will guide his future life. The healthy and productive times spent at school become a light for the child now and in the future; Bad and unhealthy events (peer bullying, etc.) experienced at school can leave permanent negative effects on the child's present and future life.

In the study of Sigurdson *et al.* (2014), it was stated that people who were exposed to and/or practiced bullying at the age of 14–15 had a negative impact on their life at the age of 26–27 and experienced more negative emotions compared to other people (Yılmaz and Çağlayan, 2018, p.86).

It has been shown that being bullied reduces the quality of life by impairing physical and mental health, causing depressive symptoms, anxiety, decreased self-esteem, unhappiness, and feeling of loneliness (Bogart *et al*, 2014; Juvonen and Graham, 2014).

Studies conducted with adolescents have also found that exposure to bullying increases the risk of alcohol-substance use (Radliff *et al*., 2012; Tharp-Taylor *et al*., 2009).

It has been reported that the risk of suicidal ideation and behavior increases in children who are involved in peer bullying in any role, and this risk is mostly in the bully-victim group (van Geel *et al.*, 2015; Holt *et al.*, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2005).

In addition to all these, compared to their peers, students who engage in peer bullying have lower academic success, more absenteeism, weaker ties to school, and a higher risk of dropping out (Glew *et al.*, 2005; Vaillancourt *et al.*, 2013; Bradshaw *et al.,* 2014); Nakamoto and

Schwartz, 2010; Spriggs *et al.*, 2007; Yasoz, 2021, pp.30-31). According to the results of Kapcı's (2004) study, students who encounter emotional, physical, verbal and sexual bullying have low self-esteem, high levels of depression, and experience high anxiety.

RESEARCH ON PEER BULLYING

In this section, first of all, programs developed to combat peer bullying abroad and experimental studies on the effects of these programs will be discussed. Afterward, some studies on the variables that affect bullying will also be included in the study.

Youth violence, including bullying and other serious violent behavior, has received increased attention over the past few decades. Despite the decline in violent behavior among youth and in schools over the last decade, the victimization of children by other children in school settings remains a major concern. In response to this, a number of prevention and intervention programs have been developed to reduce bullying and violence in schools.

In the following, information will be given about empirical studies examining the effect of some school-based bullying prevention programs. When looking at these programs in general, it was seen that the effectiveness of programs targeting especially at-risk youth was slightly better, but in general, anti-bullying programs had little noticeable effect on young participants. Reasons why anti-bullying programs can produce little effective change are discussed.

Anti-bullying programs in schools are as varied as definitions for understanding violence. More traditional bullying prevention programs often follow the model of Olweus, who first introduced the concept of bullying. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Olweus *et al.*, 1999) was implemented in Norway after a violent incident of bullying that received national attention. The program is designed to help identify bullies in elementary, middle, and high schools and help them cope with the effects of this type of school violence. The Second Step Violence Prevention Program is a classroom-based program that has shown some success in improving social competence and reducing anti-social behavior (Taub, 2001) and aggression (Van Schoiack-Edstrom *et al.*, 2002). Also, Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP) teaches students social skills and how to respond to conflict (Farrell *et al.*, 2003; Farrell *et al.*, 2001).

More recent programs have attempted to approach this problem from the restorative justice model, which attempts to re-establish the relationship between victim and offender using forgiveness and reconciliation, as well as the reintegrative shaming techniques suggested by Braithwaite (1989) to reduce the incidence of bullying (Ahmed and Braithwaite, 2006). In addition, researchers are investigating the role of biological processes, and more specifically, the role that hormones play in youth's ability to mediate conflict (Hazler *et al.*, 2006). There is also research on understanding individual coping mechanisms, how children and adolescents process information and how they interpret situational cues, and how they use their past experiences to cope with aggression (Gini, 2006). The literature shows that aggressive children tend to interpret situational cues differently from their non-aggressive peers (Gini, 2006). When clues are misinterpreted, responses can also be inaccurate or offensive. However, the literature also suggests that bullies lack empathy for their victims' pain. Therefore, in addition to the cognitive and emotional dimensions of bullying, programs focusing on moral sensitivity and appropriate empathic approach have also been implemented in schools (Jolliffe and Farrington, 2006; Ferguson et al., 2007).

Demaray and Malecki (2003) examined the effect of parental attitudes on bullying behavior and found that the children of families who used violent punishments while raising their children, exhibited repulsive behaviors that were not accepting, had poor social skills and lacked coping skills tended to exhibit aggressive attitudes. According to the

study conducted by Furlong *et al.* (2004), it was concluded that students who acted in bullying behavior at school were exposed to authoritarian parents at home and exhibited the aggressive behaviors they learned indirectly by observing to their friends. In addition, in this study, it was found that children in the role of victims have difficulty in initiating and maintaining social relationships, have low self-esteem, are anxious in terms of mental state, and are physically short and weak (Seçer, 2014).

In another study investigating the role of teachers or other adults who witnessed bullying in the prevention of bullying, it was underlined that being a spectator to bullying and not reacting to bullying may encourage bullying and may lead to bullying even if it is not intentionally. With the training program called "Bullying Hunters" in the USA, it was aimed to raise the awareness of teachers about bullying, and a 3-week training was given to the teachers. During this process, teachers both gained awareness and at the end of the process, they had the opportunity to come together and consult each other about the situations they witnessed. This training improved teachers' ability to cope with bullying and contributed to the development of their sense of self-efficacy (Bell *et al.*, 2004; Solo, 2019).

In the aforementioned studies, the attitudes of parents and teachers were examined within the framework of the causes and consequences of the phenomenon of bullying. The child's aggressive behavior and the transformation of these behaviors into repeated bullying are largely shaped by the reactions he receives from the environment. Therefore, parent and teacher training can be very effective in dealing with bullying.

EMOTION REGULATION

Emotion

One of the most well-known theories on emotions is the James-Lange theory. James defined emotion as a distinctly different physical expression produced by the stimulation of internal organs resulting from external situations or events (James, 1884). In another source, emotions are mentioned as previously experienced behaviors, reactions that occur spontaneously when the person experiences situations that attract the attention of the person and correspond to his interests and needs, and a reaction mechanism developed for the current situation (Saruhan *et al.*, 2019).

Emotions prepare us for action. When emotions are triggered, it governs systems such as perception, attention, inference, learning, memory, goal selection, motivational priorities, physiological responses, motor behaviors, and behavioral decision making (Cosmides and Tooby, 2000; Tooby and Cosmides, 2008). To prevent the chaos of competing systems working at the same time, emotions simultaneously activate certain systems while deactivating others and provide coordinated responses to environmental stimuli (Levenson, 1999). However, whether people actually acted, the context in which the emotion occurred, the target of the emotion, the perceived consequences of one's actions, previous experiences, etc. depends on many factors such as Emotions are seen as a factor that complicates the life of the individual when they are not expressed correctly in appropriate times and conditions (Gross and Thompson, 2007, p.4).

Myths about emotion regulation

The American psychological association defines emotion regulation as an individual's ability to modulate an emotion or a set of emotions.

Emotion regulation is the ability to exert control over one's own emotional state. It may include behaviors such as rethinking a challenging situation to reduce anger or anxiety, hiding visible signs of sadness or fear, or focusing on reasons to feel happy or calm. Emotion regulation consists of different strategies to monitor and change the frequency, intensity, duration, emotional reactions, and expression of a wide variety of emotions, especially in the context of goal-directed behavior (Kring, 2010; Gross, 2015). Emotion regulation strategies involve properly channeling intense emotion experience to facilitate reaching desired goals (Gratz and Roemer, 2004).

Babies are not born with enough knowledge to regulate their emotions, these skills and strategies need to be acquired later. Unlike young children, adults are expected to be able to manage their emotions, especially anxiety and anger, in a socially acceptable way. The absence of some or all of these abilities also causes difficulties in emotion regulation (Gratz and Roemer, 2004). When emotional control fails, people often say or do things they regret later and wish they could keep their emotions in check.

a. Difficulty in Emotion Regulation: Emotion dysregulation is defined as "dysfunctional understanding, reactivity, and maladaptive emotional response reflected in management" (Mennin *et al.*, 2007). Difficulty in emotion regulation is thought to play a role in many emotional problems.

Emotion regulation is one of the biggest challenges people experience. We all experience similar feelings, albeit at different times or situations. However, we cannot say that the emotion felt in the face of an event determines the reaction to be given. Emotions do not actually put us in certain patterns. It is the individual who shapes them. Not everyone reacts the same when they are sad, and they do not feel the need to scream when they are happy. Here, the individual's unique reactions and how he regulates his emotions make a difference. For example, when individuals get very excited, they may become quiet, embarrassed, or prefer to enjoy the situation by talking more without caring. Emotions and how they are regulated are important because psychological well-being is related to emotions (Gross, 2002). People rarely act unexpectedly under the influence of emotions. For example, when a mother is angry with her child, even though she loves her

very much - even knowing that she will regret it later – she may say otherwise. Emotion regulation comes into play here. Now, how to deal with the feeling of anger and how to express it is up to the individual's emotion regulation skills. When expressed in a constructive way, the results can be positive, but when high reactions are given with the heat of the moment, the situation can lead to completely different results. Therefore, this small example shows how great the share of emotion regulation skills in our lives is. Moreover, individuals need to be able to successfully regulate and manage their stronger emotions in other areas of life (work, friendship, marriage, etc.). Expressing oneself correctly, maintaining healthy relationships and adapting to the environment are closely related to this skill. Emotion regulation difficulties occur when emotions are not properly regulated, which affects personal well-being and social relationships (Gross *et al.*, 2006).

In this study, it is thought that having difficulty in emotion regulation may be related to peer bullying. Difficulty in emotion regulation may predispose to bullying, or it may occur as a result of bullying. The inability of the bullies to regulate their anger, the withdrawal of the victims and experiencing depression and anxiety, and the fact that the bystanders do not show the necessary assertiveness and act while witnessing the situation seem to be related to their emotion regulation skills.

GOD'S REFLECTION ON HUMAN MERCY

The concept of compassion

Compassion has been studied and studied in different disciplines, from philosophy to sociology, from psychology to celestial and human religions. For this reason, the concept of compassion has more than one explanation and definition. Schopenhauer evaluated this concept as a tool that brings the individual to justice and love. He also stated that thanks to compassion, the individual puts himself in the other person's place (Akçetin-Çalışkan, 2016). In terms of religious approaches, compassion is expressed in the Bible as reducing the pain of others, feeling the pain and reacting to it (Kunter, 1969).

In the Islamic belief, compassion is an element that completes the human being (Benazus, 2009). In Buddhism, another belief, this concept is stated as the desire to relieve the pain of others (Davidson and Harrington, 2002). Compassion, which has found its place in terms of philosophical approaches and belief forms, is a concept that has just begun to be studied in psychology (Goleman, 2004). Along with positive psychology, the concept of compassion has started to find a place for itself in psychology (Kartopu and Hacıkeleşoğlu, 2016).

Although compassion is expressed as an emotion, it is associated with thought and behavior processes (Gilbert, 2005). For this reason, when the individual wants to realize his feelings about compassion, he should also consider his thought and behavior processes (Cassell, 2002; Gilbert, 2005). Compassion consists of two basic components: Feeling and acting. An individual who feels compassion by being close to other people shows compassion in his behaviors by taking responsibility in actions and activities for their well-being and helping them (Hosking, 2007).

There is no Turkish word that fully expresses the meaning of the word mercy. The word mercy is in Turkish dictionaries; it is expressed with the words "to pity", "to spare" and "to forgive" (Devellioğlu, 1970). However, it is necessary to distinguish the feeling of compassion from the feeling of pity. Kemal Sayar says: "Unfortunately, many people confuse the concept of compassion with the concept of pity. What we call pity contains a benevolence, a view from above, an arrogance. I am in a position above and I pity you who exist below. Mercy is not like that. Compassion, as we have been told, is something that we can already heal by giving it. Compassion is actually a reflection of our divine essence in human relations." (Sayar, 2014, p.30).

It is necessary to focus on two sources in religion and in education in general: One is creation and the other is acquisition (kesb). Creation

is from God. There is no human contribution to it. Creation carries a tendency, a force towards the good and beneficial. Acquisition is related to internal and external conditions that affect people (Bilgin, ibid, pp. 25-26). In other words, it is thought that compassion is an innate feature and can also be acquired through education. This brings to mind that the compassion education given to students, especially at a young age, can be effective in the formation of awareness and consciousness against bullying behaviors in the future.

Research on the relationship between peer bullying, emotion regulation, and compassion
In a study examining the relationship between cognitive flexibility levels and cognitive emotion regulation strategies of 400 high school students who were exposed to peer bullying; it was observed that as the level of exposure to peer bullying increased, the level of cognitive flexibility decreased and the level of using maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies increased (Bilgiç, 2021).

In the experimental research conducted by Aydemir (2018) to prevent bullying, the effect of the education program called "Compassion Revolution," which was developed sensitive to religion and culture, was examined. The Compassion Revolution training program is an educational, developmental, cognitive-oriented, skill-building, and task-oriented social skills training. The research was carried out with the participation of 22 secondary school sixth grade students, who were divided into experimental and control groups. The scale was applied to the students before and after the program. In the results, the perception and behavioral changes experienced by the experimental group students who participated in the "Compassion Revolution" were analyzed and it was determined that the program was effective in reducing the bullying levels of the students.

In another study, in which secondary school teachers' perceptions of the concepts of compassion and bullying were curious, a semi-structured interview form was prepared and asked to the teachers about their views on these concepts, the sample situations they encountered, and their opinions on the relationship between these two concepts. The views of 16 teachers were examined with a phenomenological design and content analysis was used while analyzing the views. When the results were examined, it was concluded that the teachers perceived the concepts of "bullying" and "compassion" as "two poles of a magnet." While teachers define compassion as a feeling that emerges within the scope of wishing the well-being of all living things with the feeling of pity and having an empathetic attitude towards them, they define bullying as a situation that includes an imbalance of power towards the person, exposure to psychological and physical violence behavior and maltreatment. As a result of the research, the authors suggested that the teaching of the value of compassion could be a part of these programs while developing anti-bullying programs (Aydemir *et al.*, 2021).

Another study examined whether individual differences in moral competence and compassion were associated with roles classified as bully, victim, or defender. The sample of the study consisted of a large group of children (n=719, 9–13 years old). In relation to victims, both bullies and advocates demonstrated advanced moral competence by integrating information about beliefs and consequences to judge the moral permissibility of an action; victims showed delayed moral competence by focusing only on outcome information. But paradoxically, the bullies, despite their enhanced moral competence, were sadly inadequate in their moral compassion compared to both victims and defenders. These results parallel the increasing number of studies on adult psychopaths, suggesting that there is a dissociation between knowledge that guides abstract moral judgments and factors that mediate morally appropriate behavior and emotions (Gini *et al.*, 2011).

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