Risky and Protective Factors of Bullying's Acts

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Abstract

In bullying's acts the students are divided into two main groups: the bullies and the the victims. The main focus of this scientific article is to explain why students become authors (bullies) or fall in the role of victim. In order to explain this, in this article are identified some explanatory attempts, which are based on identifying risky factors and protective factors for these roles. The development of the child gets possible through an interplay of risky and protective factors. Besides individual characteristics of a child, which play an important role in understanding the development of aggressive behaviors should also be taken into account the social context, where the child is being developed. Interactions with family and peers, and in a broader context are considered as key determinants of socialization. In this article is also analysed the family and socio-economic background of children, who exhibit bullying problems. The physical and psychological factors that affect their social behavior, are also analysed.

Keywords: *bullying's acts, risky and protective factors, family background, socio - economic, physical and psychological factors.*

1. Introduction

To explain why children become authors or fall in the role of victim, there have been some attempts disclosures, which are based on the identification of risky factors and protective factors for these roles. Developing is formed through an interplay of risky and protective factors. Besides individual characteristics of a child, which play an important role in understanding the development of aggressive behavior should be taken into account also the social context, where the child develops. Interactions with family and peers, and in a broader context are considered as determinants keys of socialization. In the following sections will be dealt with family background and socio-economic development of the children, who exhibit bullying problems, and also with the physical and psychological factors that affect their social behavior.

2. Family and social-econimic background

Results found about family background are similar to authors and authors - victims (victims aggressive), as both groups exhibit aggressive behaviors.

In the development of aggressive behavior, the family plays a very significant role[1]. In families children learn certain behaviors for example from the models[2]. During behavioral modeling there are important elements, first, the experience of domestic violence, but also educational paths of parents (especially unstable and not well-defined borders, inappropriate and severe punishments). In addition, positive and negative reinforcement of aggressive behavior is achieved through unstable and unpredictable behavior of parents, through which the child learns that his way of behavior is valuable[3].

The parent - child relationships provide a basis for all social interactions and further relationships. From the research, there is evidence that children who have had an insecure attachment in the first years of life have a greater probability of having behavioral problems later. Insecure attachment parent-child seems to affect more particularly to

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[2] Bandura, Aggression: A social learning analysis. 1973, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

[3] G.R. Patterson, Family Process: Loops, levels and linkages. In N. Bolger, A. Caspi, G. Downey & M.Moorehouse (Eds.), Persons in context, 1988, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Fq 115

girls, which in such cases are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior[4]. Children who experience violence from their parents, are more at risk of experiencing violence and victimization experiences in further social relationships - a phenomenon, which is defined with the term "transmission of violence from generation to generation"[5].

Shields & Cicchetti[6] concluded from the study of 267 children who participated in a summer camp, that 76% of perpetrators that bullied other children (in this study they are included only a group of authors - the victim) had had abuse experience from their parents, while only 24% of them had no such experience. This means that children who have been abused, are most likely to exhibit aggressive behavior toward peers (consequence of the model of parental violence).

Unlike boys, girls who are exposed to domestic violence, exhibit mostly psychological problems such as depression and anxiety, and rarely exhibit behavioral problems. Girls are often more dependent and therefore they are seen as the most likely subjects to school bullying.

Especially to the group of authors - victims of bullying, is noticed a deficient system of emotions. Rejection and violent treatment by parents, can cause the fact that children do not learn to regulate their emotions and consequently also develop hostile attribution of causes (attributions). This means that the actions of others are more likely to be interpreted as hostile and therefore the child reacts automatic aggressively to defend himself against a perceived bullying act. While this may be an appropriate response in a violent family environment, such a reaction is a sign of misadaption in other social contexts. Children with such uncontrolled rage reactions are also risked to be excluded from the circle of peers and they get systematically harassed and tormented by other children.[7]

In summary, many studies found that aggressive children (authors and authors - victims), are faced with aggressive models and have experienced domestic violence experience, in a greater extent than other children.

Children who are part of the group of authors of bullying, especially those of the authors – victims group are often faced with different periods of crisis such as parental divorce and difficult economic conditions of the family (Alsaker, 2003), lack of general interest of parents for their children's lives and lack of information about their children's activities during free time, single parents, who often leave small children alone or neglected themselves, poor relationships between parents and children (poor emotional connection between family members), inadequate supervision, malpractice or overprotection from parents[8]

Aggressive children have felt few love and affection in their families. For this reason the relationship with their parents is of low quality and more tense than that of other children. This is especially true for the group of authors - victims.

All events that can lead to a child's psychological problems and can cause periods of crisis to child, are seen and considered as risky factor for the emergence of bullying phenomenon. Olweus (1973, 1978) could certainly ascertain from his investigations, that guys in the role of victim (he studied only boys) compared to males in general (boys unaffected by the phenomenon of bullying), had a more narrow and more positive relationship with their mothers. However in this case it is unclear whether this relationship is a cause or a result of victimization. Simultaneously Olweus found that fathers of boys mentioned were critical and distancing to them, which can make it difficult the identifications of these boys with fathers.

Bowers noted good relations of children, (whose role was victims of bullying) to the parents, as well as to their siblings. He suspects that these families tend to confuse or "trapped" family model, they may have such a close relationship with each other, that as cause they may limit or restrict each other in developing their autonomy. From such an overprotection, children do not learn to solve their problems independently and to compete against other peers and especially to protect themselfes appropriately from possible harassment.

3. Physical factors

In connection with the physical strength, the results of various studies indicate that the perpetrators are superior in

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strength than their victims[9]. These results are based on subjective assessments of the children and / or external evaluations of teachers. When was made a objective measurement of physical strength and skill, there were not found any distinction between victims and perpetrators. This result shows clearly that aggressive children (the authors) are often considered stronger than they really are, and this explains among other factors, why victims often do not even attempt to attact against bullying's acts of authors, since those early perceive themselves as loser[10].

The same applies for disability, disorder or other physical abnormalities. When the teachers and the victims were asked about the reasons for victimization, they reported as cause of bullying the physical characteristics of children tormented by bullying[11]. Olweus[12], however, did not find any connection between physical anomalies and victimization. Alsaker often found invidids who had language deficits and concerns at birth only in the group of authors - victims. Also in this group were found most individuals who suffer from attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity. Such deficits can hamper the child's integration in the peer group and the "unusual" behavior, may favor victimizing behavior from his peers.

4. Social behavior and peer relationships

Children differ in terms of their social behavior and in terms of their integration into their social environment. Special features found primarily in children affected by the phenomenon of bullying, especially in authors, authors - victims and victims clearly differ in their behavior towards peers, in their relations with them as well if one compares them with each - other.

5. Social competence and prosocial behavior

Authors and authors - victims exhibit aggressive behavior, but they differ from each - other in terms of their integration into the peer group. The group of authors - victims is similar to the group of victims cause they both experience victimization experiences, but differ with each - other in terms of their behavior towards others.

Children who enjoy popularity in relationships with peers have the ability to behave properly in the processes of interaction, they possess social competencies, which are essential elements for a successful friendships and relationships between peers. Social competence has many aspects. Thus, the people who own social competence are expected to communicate effectively, understand themselves and others better, to respect the norms and moral rules of their society, to control their emotions, can be expressed in the behave properly and in accordance with their age[13]. According to Elliot and Gresham[14], modes of social behavior can be addressed and analyzed in five areas: collaboration, persistence, responsibility, empathy and self-control. Children with poor social competence have deficits in these areas and thus are more likely to experience negative relationships with peers and adults.

Children involved in bullying have deficits in some areas of social competence, but not in others, and therefore can not be said in general that the perpetrators and victims of bullying have a total lack of social competence.

In the field of cooperation with peers Alsaker (2003), found that victims were significantly less cooperative than children included in bullying. Limited cooperation of victims may be conditioned by negative experiences with their peers and can either be a prove of skill deficits and social achievements of these children. In this regard, however, in this aspect the group of author – victims is more deficient that the group of victims.

In terms of social contacts and connections (socialization) of the children, the study found that victims are less sociable than other children. It is believed that this happens for the same reasons as for the limited cooperation with their peers. The authors of bullying's acts does not have difficulties in socialization, while the group of authors - victims appeared uncertainty, but there is less difficulty than the group of victims in socialization.

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In terms of prosocial behavior (show of readiness, kindness, compassion, giving assistance, etc.), authors and authors - victims of bullying reach lower values. This effect becomes stronger with increasing of the age of the children. Victims, however, exhibit the same social competence as children uninvolved.

Another interesting finding from the study of Alsaker is associated with peer support. Victims face great difficulty in clearly defining their personal boundaries towards others and the protection of these limits. As a result they are generally not able to find support in the peer group. They are often drawn. While the authors of bullying are able to provide support in the group and they gladly take the lead in the group. Authors, and authors - victims of bullying show initiative in the group of children (about contacts, activities suggestion), which Alsaker (2003) sees as a positive use of personal capacity.

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