

Investigation of the Teachers' Coping Strategies Against Peer Bullying*

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is to determine what kind of peer bullying primary school teachers encounter, the coping skills they develop against bullying behavior and investigate the effects of psychodrama on their coping skills.

Participants of this study are teachers from various domains and students from grades 6, 7 and 8 from a primary school in Ankara. The mean scores were calculated with the answers given to items in Peer Bullying Scale and Z scores were calculated to determine the type of the bullying that participants mostly perform. Moreover, content analysis was conducted with the qualitative data gathered from participants.

Analysis of the quantitative data showed that most frequently encountered type of bullying is "physical bullying" and "verbal bullying". Analysis of the interviews showed that participants use following strategies when coping with bullying behavior: 1) ignoring, disregarding; 2) warning, threatening; 3) verbal and physical violence; 4) not taking initiative; using mediator; 5) refereeing, trying to solve the situation fairly.

In the light of these information, teachers participated in a 15-session psychodrama activity to develop coping skills about bullying. After the end of sessions it has been noted that teachers have gained such coping strategies about peer bullying: expressing emotions; using " I " language; letting students to empathize; trying to find a mutual solution for opposite sides; redirecting to a specialist.

As a result, it was seen that teachers' coping skills against bullying behavior was developed positively in the process of pscyhodrama group work in this study.

KEY WORDS: Peer bullying, coping strategies, classroom management

1. INTRODUCTION:

Today, an increasing spread of violence throughout society has necessitated giving more weight to the studies on aggression and bullying. Aggression is verbal or physical behaviours directly or indirectly aiming to damage or destroy people or goods. These behaviours can be exhibited whether depending on a due reason or not, in an explicit or implicit, severe or mild, reactionary or planned way. No matter how it is exhibited, if the behaviour aims to injure, it is described as aggression even if it has not hurted or given pain (Kartal & Bilgin, 2007). In general, aggression can be physical in such ways as beating and injuring; it can also be seen in emotional way such as rejection, isolation, pressure, depriving someone of love and stimulus, humiliation, threatening, accusation, ignoring, bearing expectations noncompliant with individual's age and features, as well.

Most often used as synonymous with aggression, violence can be defined as the expression and reflection of aggressiveness, which is considered to be inherent in human, at the individual and social level damagingly. Olweus (1999) has identified violence as "relatively serious injury or damage a person has done to other person physically or via an object" (see also Durmuş & Gürkan, 2005). Violence encountered in all kinds of conflict relations (in family, school, groups, races, and so on) in this manner is the most furthest and extreme level of aggression disregarding the human will and freedom (Gökler, 1993).

Peer bullying is one of the violent behaviours seen often among students at schools. In addition, it includes physical, verbal and psychological attacks, which are lack of provocation by the victim and repetitive among the same children, causing the victim to fear and feel pain, leading to power imbalance between the parties and enabling the strong one to exercise pressure on the weaker one (Kartal & Bilgin, 2007).

As seen, violence is a form of aggression. Aggression is, in a way, an umbrella concept including both violence and violent acts. In fact, violence and aggression constitute the two sub-dimensions of aggression. Although according to Olweus (1999) bullying and violence occur physically and resemble each other, they are completely different in terms of the distinctive features of bullying such as the power imbalance between the bully and the victim and its continuity (see also Totan, 2007).

Scientific studies on peer bullying have been done by the Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus. According to Olweus, bullying is constant and regular exposure to one's and ones' adverse behaviours. Olweus (1999) has expressed that in order to define an act as bullying, there must be aggressive behaviors deliberately aiming to damage; these behaviours must be regular; the bully must repeat these kind of acts continuously not once; there must exist a power imbalance physically and psychologically between the bully and victim and the victim exposed to bullying behaviours can not protect and defend himself/herself against the bully.

Many scientists (Olweus, 1993; Eliot, 1997; Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Mynard & Joseph, 2000) classify bullying differently. Some of them identify bullying as deliberately aggressive behaviors against others while some state that these behaviors must be repeated on a regular basis in order to consider them as bullying (Kartal & Bilgin 2008). However, the common point is the physical, verbal, emotional attacks and social exclusion exercised to the victim. Pişkin (2005) addressed bullying in five categories as Physical, Verbal, Exclusion- Isolation, Spreading rumors, damaging the individual's goods and properties. Sexual bullying was added to these five types of bullying based on the study conducted by him and Ayas in 2006.

The behaviours exhibited by individuals within a group are different from the ones they display when they are alone. The individuals' behaviors alone vary according to the dynamics of the group. Group has the effect to put pressure on individuals. In some instances, children can do some acts which they do not want to do individually in the classroom more easily as they don't want to be alone or excluded by the group and

they just want to adapt to the group (Sadik, 2008). This situation easily leads to emergence of peer bullying at schools. The school environment is not only the physical environment, but also a social environment. Psychological dynamics such as multi-dimensionality, concurrence, instantaneity, unpredictability, lack of privacy, common history make the school environment even more complicated (Weinstein & Mignano, 1997).

Schools in contemporary education system have undertaken some important tasks such as enabling students to acquire physical, emotional and social skills as well as academic success. Schools are the primary environments in which individuals can be brought up in a harmony with society, as happy and productive people. Therefore, schools are considered as the institutions contributing to education as well as students' personality development (Ayas, 2008). Order, even if at a minimum level, is necessary to allow for training and education within this complicated structure of school and network of relations influencing each other. Also, an efficient management is required to draw the attention of students and maintain it (Doyle, 1986).

When the studies in Turkey are analyzed, bullying is a major problem at schools in Turkey as in other countries. The studies on bullying (Fekkes, Pijpers & Verlove-Vanhorick, 2005; Hazler, 1994; Kumpulainen, Rasanen & Puura, 2001; Natvig, Albrechtsen & Qvarnstrom, 2001; Olweus, 1993; Rigby & Slee, 1993) should be evaluated as an issue concerning not only the students exposed to bullying behaviors but also all students and teachers who cope with these student behaviors. The dimension of the subject in terms of teachers has revealed the importance of developing the management and coping skills by them.

2. METHODS

This is a screening study to determine how the participants perceive the subject, what they know about it, what attitudes they have towards it and what they do (Knowledge, Attitude and Practice- KAP). KAP screening research design based on the investigation of descriptive and particular subjects in an explanatory way is often preferred when direct observation is difficult. Therefore, KAP screening design has been used in this research. In this study, method diversity and data diversity out of the four types of diversity (triangulation) Denz (1978) has proposed have been used. The data in method diversity has been collected via quantitative and qualitative research techniques while those in data diversity have been collected from the students and teachers separately through interview and questionnaire (see also Patton, 1990). Diversity (triangulation) is a practice aiming to use two or more integrated methods supporting each other rather than just a method and hence achieve enrichment in methods in a research (Patton, 1990; see also Büyüköztürk et al 2010). Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2010)

2.1. Participants

11 teachers teaching various classes and subject-fields and 103 students attending 6th-7th and 8th grade in a primary school in the district of Keçiören, Ankara were included in this study. Quantitative data related to the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Socio-Demographic Profile of Group Members

Age		<i>Explanations:</i> <i>The qualitative and quantitative data have been obtained from 11 teachers and 103 students.</i> <i>Group sessions have been completed by 8 teachers following the separation of 3 classroom teachers.</i>
Average	53	
Educational Status		
Faculty of Education	8	
Faculty of Arts and Sciences with Pedagogical Formation	1	
Business Administration	1	
Agricultural Engineer, PhD	1	
Study-Field		
Classroom teacher	8	
English	1	
Art	1	
Turkish	1	
Marital Status		
Single	1	
Married	10	
Number of Children		
No	2	
1 child	1	
2 children	7	
3 children and more	1	
Service period		
0-5 years	1	
5-10 years	1	
10-15 years	6	
More than 15 years	3	

2.2. Research Data, Collection tools and Analysis

Quantitative data of the research has been collected via Peer Bullying Scale- Adolescent Form developed by Pişkin and Ayas (2007) and applied to 103 students. The Scale consists of six factors as 1) Physical Victimization, 2) Verbal Victimization, 3) Exclusion, 4) Exposure to rumors, 5) Damage to properties and 6) Sexual Victimization. Expert opinion has been consulted for the validity of the scale and then confirmatory factor analysis has been conducted. Cronbach α internal consistency reliability coefficient has been calculated for reliability of the scale. Qualitative data has been collected by the researcher via interview forms including open-ended questions and applied to both students and teachers separately taking into account the sub-scale groups in Peer Bullying Scale.

2.3. Procedure

While assessing the qualitative data obtained from students and teachers, the notions and words repeated often have been identified. These notions have constituted the main theme of psychodrama sessions and they have become the basis of the group process. As a result, a time-limited group study with a

specific purpose is targeted. In this group, 10 persons have been determined and it has been paid attention not to decrease this number below 8. The group has met at the same place and time once a week and the sessions have been planned as 2 hours on average ranging between 1.5 and 2.5 hours, and 15 sessions have been arranged.

	CONTENT	PURPOSE
1	Meeting. Establishing the rules Applying the scales	Enabling the members to know each other and acquire knowledge about the process of psychodrama.
2	What if I'm an object? Imagination	Developing the expressing and listening skills of members Allowing them to be aware of their personality characteristics and their position and responsibilities in group and life.
3	We see but not hear. Protagonist game	Reviewing the teaching practices. Developing the empathy skills. Recognizing students' feelings.
4	The ones we choose and exclude Protagonist game	Reviewing our decisions. Revealing one's own feelings and requirements. Realizing the personal and environmental systems.
5	Communication. Group game	Discovering the most and least used organ used in communication. Realizing and expressing the features we attribute to ourselves. Trying to use the most negatively used communication organ in the most positive way.
6	The ones we choose and exclude Protagonist game	Putting forward the criteria defining our choices. Developing the empathy skill. Realizing personal and environmental systems, making a decision independently, realizing our own desires in life and paying attention to them.
7	Now we are students and gather in garden. Group game	Reviewing the developmental features of children. Realizing feelings, opinions and the preference dynamics in group. Knowing children by empathizing with them.
8	We can't remove contrasts and taboos. Group game	Establishing relationships under different identities. Communicating efficiently, developing the strategies to cope with a new situation. Self-evaluation under different roles.
9	I solve a problem, Teaching is difficult. Group game	The ability to empathize. Developing the skill to make a decision and produce a solution against an unexpected situation. Seeing the results of the decisions.
10	I solve a problem. We respect your decision. Group game	Establishing effective communication. Being aware of developmental features, occupational limits and taking initiative.
11	I solve a problem which is a quite difficult situation. Group game	Developing the strategies to cope with new situations. Self-evaluation in different roles. Recognizing one's own limits.

12	I solve a problem, I should solve. Group game	Showing empathy, being aware of feelings. Seeing students' and family's reactions towards different situations.
13	Anger meeting Group game	Developing the communication skill. Achieving awareness about ourselves and others. Showing empathy. Realizing the effect of anger and the need to control it. Recognizing students' feelings.
14	May God speed you. Saying goodbye to the member leaving the group	Sharing feelings, Recognizing the rewards of interpersonal interaction.
15	The ones we have acquired and allowed to be acquired	Evaluating the process, making self-evaluation,

2.4. Data analysis

The data obtained from the students has been gathered and the interpretive data analysis has been done for descriptive grouping. When analyzing the quantitative data, SPSS data analysis software package has been used and descriptive statistics have been applied. Of the descriptive statistics, arithmetic average, standard deviation and Z-score have been used. Z-score is the conversion of the raw scores obtained from a measurement of a property in a way to be represented in a normal distribution with the average of 0 (zero) and the standard deviation of 1 (one) (Kan, 2008). The process to convert Z-score has been used to compare the raw scores obtained from the factors of Peer Bullying Scale.

3. RESULTS

This study has been planned to define the types of bullying that teachers must cope with and to determine the strategies that they use against peer bullying. For this purpose, the data obtained from students and teachers have been analyzed via qualitative and quantitative methods.

The data obtained from Peer Bullying Scale are shown in the tables.

Table 2.

Descriptive statistics related to the items of Peer Bullying Scale

BEHAVIORS	I DID IT			IT WAS EXPOSED TO IT		
	N	Average	SD	N	Average	SD
1 Disturbing by practical jokes	103	2,6505	1,46668	103	1,5825	1,54998
2 Tickling constantly to disturb	103	,9126	1,34388	103	,6214	1,07664
3 Pulling hair and ear	103	1,1456	1,45796	103	,5049	1,04669
4 Putting a disturbing object while being seated	103	,5534	1,10904	103	,2233	,64065
5 Taking one's turn forcibly in queue, cutting in line.	103	1,6214	1,59728	103	,8058	1,35080
6 Forcing somebody to leave the field or place while playing game	103	,5340	1,05548	103	,3301	,87882
7 Pinching, biting	103	1,3010	1,55194	103	,4757	,95840
8 Attacking with sharp objects such as pencils, pins etc.	103	,5049	,95869	103	,1650	,52575
9 Pushing, nudging, twisting arm, tripping up, pulling someone over.	103	1,9417	1,42681	103	1,2427	1,33920
10 Flinging, throwing some objects at somebody in order to damage or disturb.	103	1,0000	1,29857	103	,5146	1,00844
11 Shouldering deliberately, elbowing, hitting.	103	1,6019	1,40963	103	,7961	1,18288
12 Hitting with objects such as stick, rod, ruler, etc.	103	,6699	1,07911	103	,3204	,70312
13 Kicking-slapping, punching, punching to the face head and the nape of neck.	103	1,3010	1,39912	103	,8447	1,22680
14 Attacking or frightening with sharp objects such as knife, knuckle, stanley knife, etc.	103	,2330	,68890	103	,0485	,21596
15 Attacking or frightening with firearms and explosives such as guns.	103	,0777	,38829	103	,1262	,62119
16 Making fun of hair and skin color, tooth structure, appearance, clothes, physical appearance, physical disablement.	103	1,0777	1,38401	103	,4369	,83631
17 Making fun of style of pronunciation, accent and speech.	103	,7282	1,20615	103	,2427	,60173
18 Making fun of one's name or surname, giving unpleasant, insulting names (nicknames).	103	1,9320	1,53560	103	,9612	1,37856
19 Making fun of one's mother, father or family's some features.	103	,2913	,88152	103	,1359	,61115
20 Cursing, saying rude and ugly things.	103	2,1845	1,57024	103	1,1845	1,43996
21 Bullying, insulting, humiliating, embarrassing, scorning, teasing, making fun, hurting, irritating, making somebody cry because of various reasons.	103	1,3010	1,37794	103	,4951	,88422
22 Threatening.	103	,6505	1,17747	103	,3689	1,00966

23	Not accepting somebody to the game and various activities.	103	,5534	1,10016	103	,3981	,98359
24	Leaving somebody alone by excluding him/her from group.	103	,5534	1,08219	103	,2427	,74710
25	Ignoring, disregarding.	103	,5922	1,03315	103	,2913	,62042
26	Refusing to talk and answer questions in order to exclude.	103	,7087	1,20969	103	,3981	,94288
27	Restraining other students from talking and being a friend of him/her.	103	,4563	1,03637	103	,2621	,85131
28	Trying to derive a wedge between friends by provoking them against him/her.	103	,7282	1,18151	103	,4660	1,09200
29	Spreading rumors against him/her.	103	,6990	1,20322	103	,3010	,80239
30	Accusing someone of slanders related to the things he/she hasn't done and unfounded rumours and exposing to a difficult position.	103	,9806	1,30595	103	,3398	,95541
31	Writing ugly things about someone on various places.	103	,7573	1,24038	103	,3592	,97874
32	Complaining to the teacher about the things he/she hasn't done.	103	,7961	1,23954	103	,3301	,80912
33	Putting someone in a difficult position by telling his/her secrets.	103	,6699	1,10603	103	,2233	,64065
34	Grabbing money or pocket money.	103	,4078	,90138	103	,1262	,57188
35	Grabbing properties or food.	103	,3981	,93242	103	,2136	,77524
36	Forcing somebody to buy something from the canteen.	103	,3786	,95092	103	,2621	,81603
37	Stealing money or properties.	103	,5437	,97796	103	,1845	,65301
38	Tearing, breaking, throwing, burning someone's pencil, book, notebook, etc deliberately.	103	,5728	,95591	103	,2816	,75948
39	Drawing notebook or books or writing bad things on them.	103	,5534	,99733	103	,2621	,72708
40	Tearing, trying to tear one's clothes intentionally and making them dirty.	103	,2913	,85899	103	,1942	,62714
41	Focusing somebody to load credits for his/her mobile phone.	103	,1359	,56096	103	,1068	,44087
42	Not giving back the borrowed money or property.	103	,6311	,99005	103	,2524	,80096
43	Delving in one's bag or property without permission.	103	,7961	1,24742	103	,3398	,94509
44	Using the body and the facial expressions evoking sexuality (lip licking, making eyes at somebody, making gestures.)	103	,6990	1,31980	103	,3689	1,00966
45	Disturbing by using the words, " baby, peach, handsome".	103	,4951	1,05602	103	,3883	1,00228
46	Kissing, touching someone for sexual purposes outside his/her request or trying to do them.	103	,2427	,74710	103	,1942	,76771

47	Disturbing someone by raising his/her clothes (skirt, sweatsuit, etc.) outside his/her will.	103	,2816	,79727	103	,3301	,98407
48	Making physical jokes disturbing and having sexual content.	103	,5049	1,05602	103	,4369	1,04478
49	Giving nickname with sexual content (gay, lesbian, psycho, etc.)	103	,3689	,94962	103	,2330	,73035
50	Making verbal jokes disturbing and having sexual content.	103	,5631	1,06338	103	,4757	1,08325
51	Forcing somebody to talk about sexual subjects even he/she doesn't want.	103	,5631	1,10852	103	,2718	,84243
52	Spreading rumors with sexual content.	103	,4369	1,00655	103	,1262	,60520
53	Writing something or drawing a picture with sexual content on the wall or door of toilet by using one's name.	103	,3592	,85008	103	,2039	,71892

In Table 2, the highest average scores of the peer bullying behaviours of 103 students to whom the scale has been applied have been identified as “2.6505 for Disturbing by practical jokes”; “1.9417 for Pushing, nudging, twisting arm, tripping up, pulling someone over”; “2,1845 for Cursing, saying rude and ugly things.”; “1,9320 for Making fun of one's name or surname, giving unpleasant, insulting names (nicknames).” This situation has indicated that teachers must cope with students' physical and verbal bullying.

Table 3.

Descriptive statistics related to types of Peer Bullying

Factor and Score	Total	It was done to me				I did it			
		N	Aver.	SD	Z Score	N	Aver.	SD	Z Score
Physical Bullying		103	16,0485	10,24540	,66063	103	8,6019	8,07239	-,02649
Verbal Bullying		103	8,1650	5,90961	-,06681	103	3,8252	4,10267	-,46725
Exclusion		103	3,5922	4,64724	-,48875	103	2,0583	3,67510	-,63029
Spreading rumors		103	3,9029	4,69358	-,46008	103	1,5534	3,23803	-,67688
Damage to the properties		103	4,7087	5,52291	-,38573	103	2,2233	4,59738	-,61507
Sexual Bullying		103	4,5146	6,24164	-,40364	103	3,0291	6,07382	-,54071
Total		103	40,9320	28,55516	2,95670	103	21,2913	23,42892	1,14439

In the table, Z scores of types of peer bullying have been calculated and according to this, it has been found out that the most common type is physical bullying (,66063); the least one is exclusion (-,48875).

When the open-ended data obtained from the interviews with students are evaluated and the responses that students have given when they are asked what their teachers do for any type of bullying are analyzed, it is seen that they use the following strategies to cope with peer bullying.

- Disregarding/ indifference

He/she doesn't do anything.

He/ she says that you can solve it yourself.

He /she doesn't want us to be as the first-grade students and complain.

Most of our teachers don't do anything. Some of them tell us that we have a problem.

My teacher doesn't understand, he/she doesn't care at all. However, he/she just says "what shall I do?" "Shall I kill him/her? He/she is not a decent person." That's all.

- Warning/ threatening

Our teachers warn our friends.

Our teachers tell us not to do. He/she says that's not true, namely warns us.

Our teacher warns only when given a damage to the students.

He/she threatens by referring to disciplinary.

He/she only warns but doesn't understand that I feel pain, which makes me sad.

- Resort to verbal, physical violence

He/she looks daggers at us.

She directly attacks and beats.

He/she loses his/her temper, shouts.

He/she punishes.

He/she gets angry and tells the negative sides of fight, force.

Our teacher doesn't let us complain but if someone teases, he/she laughs, which is enough for me to feel strange from him/her..

- Lack of initiative, using a mediator

He/she sends to disciplinary board.

He/she sends to the principal.

It has been seen that the students have responded in a similar way when they have been asked what they want their teachers to do for bullying.

I warn.

I want my teacher to send him/her to disciplinary board.

I want my teacher to beat him/her.

I want my teacher to send him/her to prison.

I want my teacher to warn and punish him/her.

I want my teacher to be angry at him/her.

I want him/her to think what he/she has told again.

I would expel him/her.

When the open-ended data obtained from the interviews with teachers are analyzed, it has been seen that they use the following statements when they are asked what they do for any type of bullying.

- Warning/threatening

I say that if I see him/her do it again, I would write a petition against himself/herself for the crime of "damaging public property".

I warn as soon as possible, I can't ignore.

By warning the students, I tell them not to do it again.

- Resort to verbal, physical violence

First, I break up the fight. I shout at both of them.

If the mockery exceeds the limits of rudeness, I punish, as well.

If there is extreme injustice, I punish, too.

- Arbitrating, effort to solve the problem fairly

I take care of the excluded student more. By giving important tasks to that student, I provide that he/she feels himself/herself important.

I approach them and ask what the problem is. I listen both sides in order. After I try to find the resource of the problem, I point out that they can solve it by talking.

I try to understand the situation, determine the fair and unfair sides.

I forcibly involve the excluded student into a group.

I hold the group responsible for the problem of a student.

- Disregarding

I say that they can agree by talking.

- Lack of initiative, holding other person responsible

For female students, I talk to female teachers and want them to give a warning.

I immediately want the support of an expert in these matters.

I contact with counsellor and classroom teacher and we try to find a common solution.

It is seen that teachers generally don't disregard bullying behaviors among students; in fact, they interfere in the situation in order to secure the justice by arbitrating. However, it is understood that they use teacher-centered strategies not solution-oriented ones for bullying behaviors. This situation is reflected in the forms of expressions used by teachers.

I try to find

I share.

I take the necessary measures.

I want him/her to correct.

I try to provide.

I tell the importance.

I express.

Considering these findings, process of psychodrama group planned to develop teachers' communication skills and empathic understanding and increase the awareness of their own characteristics is as follows.

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In recent years, it is known that peer bullying at schools in our country and world is a problem that shouldn't be underestimated. According to the result of the "Peer Bullying Scale" developed by Pişkin and Ayas (2007) and applied to the second-stage primary school students, the most frequently-encountered type of peer bullying is physical bullying seen as "Disturbing by practical jokes"; "Pushing, nudging, twisting arm, tripping up, pulling someone over"; and verbal bullying as "Cursing, saying rude and ugly things."; "Making fun of one's name or surname, giving unpleasant, insulting names (nicknames). Similar results are also supported by the results of different researchers (Baldry & Farrington 1999; Tapper & Boulton 2005; Stassen Berger 2007; Pişkin, 2005; Özkan & Çiftçi 2010; James 2010; Şahin & Sarı 2010; Kapçı, 2004).

Following the interviews held with teachers and students, it was discovered that the following coping strategies are developed by teachers against peer bullying: 1) disregarding, indifference; 2) warning, threatening; 3) resort to verbal and physical violence; 4) lack of initiative, using a mediator; 5) arbitrating, effort to solve the problem fairly.

Bullying behaviors sometimes damaging only the person exhibiting the behavior and sometimes negatively influencing other students, teachers and family are unwanted behaviors that are often seen in classrooms and schools (Olweus, 1993; Pişkin & Ayas 2005; Gökler 2009). This situation has become evident in the protagonist game played at the 4th session and a teacher's exposure to bullying behaviors while trying to break up the students' fight in the garden has been discussed in this game. Research findings concerning the place of experiencing bullying show that students are firstly exposed to bullying behavior in

the classroom, followed by school garden, corridors, the path to and from school, and then they are exposed to bullying in canteen and toilets. Exposure to bullying in the school garden is placed on the top in many studies (Buchanan & Winzer 2001; Dake, Price & Telljohann, 2003; Fekkes, Pijpers & Verlove-Vanhorick, 2005; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson & Sarvela, 2002). As a reason for this, school gardens are considered to be places where different-aged group of students communicate each other mostly and come together.

Based on the researches, it has been found out that students exposed to peer bullying have applied different practices for receiving help (Özkan & Çiftçi 2010; Kartal & Bilgin 2008). Suderman et al. (1996) have stated in their research that most students don't inform an adult about bullying and they even stay silent against this situation for a long time (see also Özkan & Çiftçi 2010). According to Kartal and Bilgin (2007), the ones from whom they receive help mostly are a friend or parents. On the other hand, in Özkan and Çiftçi's (2010), studies on peer bullying in primary schools, it has been seen that almost all students exposed bullying receive help from their teachers. But the school guidance services are the least ones that students consult for help. In accordance with the results of the mentioned researches, it is understood that teachers are important people to reveal peer bullying and prevent it. As the student exposed to bullying doesn't want to go to guidance service and prefer to stay silent, it is compulsory, in one sense, for teachers to interfere in. Also, the fact that teachers have contact with parents and they have a role to ensure healthy interaction between students indicates their critical position in terms of peer bullying. According to the findings of the same research, the place where peer bullying is most frequently seen is classrooms and school garden. The place where students feel safe the most is still their classroom, which creates a contradiction (Özkan & Çiftçi 2010).

Although the fact that classroom is considered as both the most common place to witness bullying and also the safest place is seen as contradictory (Özkan & Çiftçi 2010), it makes easier for students to receive help from their teachers in classroom. Also the fact that the most unsafe places are outside the school strengthens the influence of presence of teachers against peer bullying.

Therefore, bullying behaviors among students need to be brought under control and practices should be developed in order to prevent them. It is interesting that most of the researches define just students' opinions. However, along with opinions of students exposed to bullying, it is crucial to define remarks of teachers witnessing bullying and coping. It is also extremely important to identify the teachers' level of awareness of bullying among students and the coping methods because teachers play a key role in preventing bullying via effective intervention.

However, the limited number of studies on teachers' remarks about peer bullying are available. In Boulton's (1997) study on how teachers define bullying and what their attitudes are against it, it has been pointed out that teachers don't see "giving nickname, spreading rumors and exclusion from the group" as bullying behaviors. Similarly, based on Holt and Keyes' (2004) study conducted with teachers, it has been determined that "they think a little teasing doesn't hurt people very much" (Akt: Bauman & Del Rio 2005). In this study, students's statement as "*My teacher doesn't understand, he/she doesn't care at all. However, he/she says what shall I do? Shall I kill? He/she is not a decent person. That's all.*" supports the research findings.

The results of the research on teacher's intervention in bullying vary. Research findings (Pepler, Craig, Ziegler & Charach, 1994; Bauman & Del Rio 2005) indicating that most of the teachers "always" interfere in bullying among students support the finding of this study as "Arbitrating, effort to solve the problem fairly." However, considering another observational research, Doll, Song and Siemers (2004) have reported that very few teachers interfere in bullying (Akt: Kartal & Bilgin 2008). The strategy of

“indifference” for coping with bullying in this study corresponds to Doll, Song and Siemers’ (2004) findings. In addition, Cooper and Snell (2003) have found out in their study that teachers often stop bullying.

Researches on students’ remarks have indicated that teachers rarely interfere in bullying behaviors or they remain incapable of intervention (Craig, Pepler & Atlas 2000; Cohn & Canter 2003; Yoon & Kerber 2003). Similarly, Pepler, Craig, Ziegler and Charach (1994) have reported that many teachers always or often interfere in bullying but few students confirm this finding.

The reason of the difference of opinions related to intervention in bullying behaviors between teachers and students results from not only teachers’ perceptions of bullying and not being able to know how they interfere, but also their lack of awareness of how students are affected by bullying, as well. On the other hand, teachers’ incapability of intervention in bullying behaviors indicates that they do not know students’ emotions and developmental characteristics.

Studies on coping skills with peer bullying generally have been conducted on the students exposed to bullying (Yöndem & Totan 2008; Öz, Kırımoğlu & Temiz 2011, Malkoç & Ceylan 2010; Çayırdağ 2006;). There exist limited studies on teachers’ coping skills with bullying among students. (Totan, 2007). These studies are mostly concerned with teachers’ classroom management skills and bullying intervention methods (Genç, 2007; İlgar, 2007; Çubukçu & Girmen, 2008). In the mentioned researches, the importance of being a leader in the classroom for an effective classroom management has been emphasized. Effective leadership necessitates that teachers during the teaching-learning process should behave democratically, provide students with the chance and opportunity in order to let them make a decision in a group or individually, decide with students or student groups by common consent during the teaching process, prompt students to study as a member of a group, allow students to create a social structure in which they manage themselves, gain students’ trust. In group process planned to develop teachers’ coping skills with peer bullying, the themes of behaving democratically, enabling students to make decision via a group or individually, prompting students to study as a member of a group, creating a social structure in which students manage themselves and ensuring the trust of students have been discussed in the protagonist game at the 3rd session, but due to the lack of effective leadership, there appeared difficulties in coping with bullying behaviors in the classroom. Bell and Hall (1954) have expressed in their research that people with leadership characteristics have high empathy skills (see also Dökmen, 1997). This finding is supported by the protagonist’s feedback, “I have never thought they feel like that” for his/her practices in the classroom.

In addition, Smokowski and Kopasz (2005) refer to some intervention strategies to prevent bullying. While some of intervention programs focus on only the bully or victim, some of them deal with bullying behavior multidimensionally by using systematic approach. The most comprehensive and widely accepted of these programs is “Olweus Bullying Prevention Program” developed by Olweus and Limber and aiming at primary and secondary-level students. The execution of the program mostly belongs to teachers and administrators. This program prompts adults to behave as an authority figure and role model via some features such as guiding school staff to be warm, moderate and participative, being consistent while limiting unacknowledged behaviours, practising not hostile punishments against violation of the rules (see also Gökler 2009).

In this study, when the coping strategies developed by teachers against peer bullying such as disregarding, indifference; warning, threatening; resort to verbal and physical violence; lack of initiative, using a mediator; arbitrating, effort to solve the problem fairly are taken into consideration, it is thought that these are not effective in creating positive environment in the classroom, preventing problems before they occur or solving them appropriately after they occur.

Effective communication with students, enabling students to gain self-efficacy and internal control while solving problems in classroom, increasing the efficiency of teaching by minimizing conflicts and

classroom management skills are considered as the key competencies for contemporary teachers (Gürşimşek, 1999). Students' expressions as "my teacher doesn't understand, he/she doesn't care at all." reveal the importance of these competencies.

According to Takkar and Kanekar's (1989) research results, it has been found out that people developing empathy with the ones in a difficult situation give more help compared to the ones developing no empathy. (see also Dökmen 1997).

Marcus, Telleen and Roke (1979) have found a relation between empathy skills and cooperation (see also Dökmen 1997). As empathy has an effect of facilitating interpersonal communication, it has been emphasized by some researchers (Collingwood, 1971; Egan 1971; Blair & Fretz 1980; Avery & Thiessen, 1982) that teachers, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors should be given a training in order to develop empathy skills (see also Dökmen 1997). This requirement supports the importance of this study based on the development of teachers' skills in coping with bullying.

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