



## Full Length Review Article

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BULLYING AND AGGRESSION IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

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#### ABSTRACT

Bullying is a problem that affects all children- those who bully, those who are victimized, and those who are witnesses to interpersonal violence. It is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate or aggressively to impose domination over others and most common among children in middle childhood which need to be controlled. The aim of the study is to understand the different aspects of aggressive and bullying behavior in young children, in both genders. It may be defined as the activity of repeated, aggressive behavior intended to hurt another person, physically or mentally. It is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person. Justifications and rationalizations for such behavior sometimes include differences of class, race, religion, gender, sexuality, appearance, behavior, strength, size or ability. It consists of four basic types of abuse emotional, verbal, physical or cyber. The word 'aggression' most people probably tend first to think of physical force- a fist-fight, an assault with a weapon, a loud verbal retort or some other form of intense and punitive action enacted in the source of conflict between two people. It may be carried out in any behavior actuated by intent to harm another person against that person's wishes. On one hand, victimized children's lack of friends might render them psychologically and socially vulnerable, and thus more prone to becoming easy targets and on the other hand, bullies seemed to be preferred playmates, particularly for other aggressive boys. This affiliation of aggressive children might lead to an increase in bullying behavior.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a problem that affects all children- those who bully, those who are victimized, and those who are witnesses to interpersonal violence (Shelley Hymel, Susan M. Swearer). It is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate or aggressively to impose domination over others. The behavior is often repeated and habitual. One essential prerequisite is the perception, by the bully or by others, of an imbalance of social or physical power. Behaviors used to assert such domination can include verbal harassment or threat, physical assault or coercion and such acts may be directed repeatedly towards particular targets. Justifications and rationalizations for such behavior sometimes include differences of class, race, religion, gender, sexuality, appearance, behavior, strength, size or ability. If bullying is done by a group, it is called mobbing.

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"Targets" of bullying are also sometimes referred to as "victims" of bullying. It consists of four basic types of abuse emotional, verbal, and physical or cyber. It may be defined as the activity of repeated, aggressive behavior intended to hurt another person, physically or mentally. It is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person (Fuller Robert). Espelage and Swearer, (2011) found that because bullying is a dynamic process, factors that influence involvement may be related to interactions between an individual and his or her family, peer group, school community, and societal norms. One study investigates links between children's social behavior and their sociometric status, empathy and social problem-solving strategies. Sociometric ratings were obtained from a sample of 1319, ten years old children drawn from two matched schools. Each child also completed a new developed and empirically derived Social Behavior Questionnaire. This questionnaire led to the identification of 21 prosocial children, 23 bullies and 14 victims of bullying. Children in these subgroups then assessed on measures of empathy and social problem-solving. Prosocial

children were significantly more popular than the other role groups, and bully- victims were most frequently rejected by their peers. They also showed greater empathetic awareness than either bullies or victims, but gender was the significant source of variance. These children and victims responded more constructively than did bullies to socially awkward situations, and bullies were less aware than prosocial children of the possible negative consequences of their solution strategies. In another study which examines social behavior and peer relationships of children involved in bully/victim problems in kindergarten, three hundred and forty-four, five to seven years old children participated. Children were categorized as victims, bully victims, bullies and non-involved by means of teacher ratings and peer nominations and social cluster mapping (Pihl and Zoccolillo, 1996).

### Aggression

Aggression is 'a response that delivers noxious stimuli to another organism'. Certainly what we ordinarily call aggression does involve aversive stimulation of some sort and intensity, whether it is in the form of a bullet, a bomb fragment, a physical blow, or some more subtle act like an insult or an undeserved criticism. We do not encounter the real problem of stating what aggression is until we attempt to formulate a definition would indicate. Other elements must be added, and these elements create certain complexities. A study reports the first prospective investigation of the early family experiences of boys who later emerged as both aggressive and bullied (that is, aggressive victims) during their middle childhood years. It was hypothesized that a history of violent victimization by adults leads to emotion deregulation that results in a dual pattern of aggressive behavior and victimization by peers. Interviews with mothers of 198, 5 years old boys assessed preschool home events. Four to five years later, aggressive behavior and peer victimization were assessed in the school classroom. The early experiences of sixteen aggressive victims were contrasted with those of 21 passive (non-aggressive) victims, 33 non-victimized aggressors and 128 normative boys. Analysis indicated that the aggressive victim group had experienced more punitive, hostile and abusive family treatment than the other groups. In contrast, the non-victimized aggressive group had history of greater exposure to adult aggression and conflict, but not victimization by adults, than did the normative group on any home environment variable. (David Schwartz, Kenneth A. Dodge, Gregory S. Petite and John E. Bates).

### The form of aggression

The word 'aggression' most people probably tend first to think of physical force- a fist-fight, an assault with a weapon, a loud verbal retort or some other form of intense and punitive action enacted in the source of conflict between two people. It may be carried out in any behavior actuated by intent to harm another person against that person's wishes. Some different forms of aggression are as follows:

#### Instrumental Aggression

It may or may not involve strong emotions but is motivated by concerns more important by to the aggressor than the harm

doing itself. Another type of it is an attempt to establish coercive power over others through violence or the threat of violence (Tedeschi and Felson, 1994).

#### Affective Aggression

Aggression is often accompanied by strong negative emotional states. The emotion that we call anger is usually aroused by some provocation. Anger is most often thought of as an intervening condition that instigates and then guides affective aggressive behavior aimed primarily at injuring the provoking person (Johansson, 1981).

#### Proactive and Reactive Aggression

The first of these terms refers to aggressive behavior that is enacted in response to provocation, such as an attack or an insult, and it is manifested in both self- defensive and angry actions. The latter term refers to aggression that is initiated without apparent provocation, such as we see in bullying behavior. Such behavior is not evoked by anger, hostility or the need to defend oneself, but by other motives that relate to obtaining goods, asserting power, assuring that approval of reference groups and other such goals.

#### Effect of gender on aggression

There is considerable evidence that boys are disproportionately represented among seriously aggressive children and young people. From about four years of age onwards, boys are more likely than girls to engage in both aggressive and non-aggressive antisocial behavior (Keenan and Shaw, 1997; Lahey, Schwab- Stone, et.al). Tantrums, over- activity and fighting occur at a higher rate in school age boys. Young men are likely to commit crime than young women (Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 1998). Average aggressiveness ratings are higher for boys at all ages (Lahey, Waldman and Mc Burnett, 1999). The life- course persistent variety of aggression is much more common in males (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter and Silva, 2000).

Males predominate to a large extent in the adolescence – limited group also, though not as much as in the life- course - persistent group. However, there is not total agreement about 'the facts' on male and female aggression. Some find tantrums, over activity and fighting higher in boys, others find relatively trivial gender differences. Few gender differences in toddler peer- directed aggression have been found (Loeber and Hay, 1997). And in Crick it is argued that much aggression in girls has been overlooked because it is in a different form from that of boys (Crick and Grotpeter). Girls are more likely to use 'relational aggression', that is, verbal and indirect aggression, such as, alienation, ostracism, character defamation and gossip. One study found the same rate of bullying by school age girls as boys, although girls were less likely to own up to bullying in interviews (Pepler and Craig, 1995). Both boys and girls report fairly high rates of physical aggression with their siblings, which is, therefore, not necessarily seen as a form as maladjustment (Dunn, 1993). Evidence of increased aggression among young females is a matter for concern and requires further investigation of the causes of this increase.

In 1973-74, 23.5% boys were arrested for assault for every girl arrested. By 1993-94, this ratio had dropped to 4.4% (National Crime Prevention, 1999). However, there can be no argument with the fact that males are convicted of violent delinquent and criminal acts in considerably greater numbers than females. Clearly we need to look more deeply at why most forms of antisocial behavior are so much more prevalent in males than females (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter and Sylva, 2000). Sex differences in frequently and level of physical aggression have been consistently reported. Scientists have proposed both social and biological explanations for this difference. Higher levels of physical aggression for boys have been reported by mothers from 17 months of age. Sex differences in aggression therefore appear before they could be extensively affected by socialization. Even though most children show a decrease in the frequency of physical aggression as they grow up, girls tend to reduce their aggression earlier and the sex differences tend to stay stable through childhood and adolescence. As physical aggression declines, face-to-face verbal aggression increases, followed by social and relational aggression around 4-5 years of age.

The goal of relational aggression is to harm a person's social relationships and self-esteem, for example, by becoming friend with someone else in revenge. It includes non-verbal behaviors such as disdainful facial expressions and direct expressions of rejection. These forms of aggression are slightly more common in girls but are also used by boys, sometimes in conjunction with direct verbal and physical aggression. Both physically and relationally aggressive children tend to lack empathy and attribute hostile intentions to others, but perpetrators of relational aggression are likely to have advanced language skills, contrary to physically aggressive children. Indirect forms of aggression may cause as much pain in victims as physical aggression may cause as much pain in victims as physical aggression but perpetrators are less likely to face disapproval by adults and peers.

### Effects of gender on bullying

Studies show that boys are more likely to carry out direct or physical bullying (pushing, slapping, punching, spitting or tripping) while girls are more likely to carry out indirect bullying (threats, teasing, rumors, stealing or extortion). But Dr. Wright pointed out the disturbing trend that girls are now engaging in more physical bullying (Melinda, Tanzola, 2007).

- Boys tend to be physically aggressive
- Boys may be more accepting of bullying than girls
- Boys are more likely to both bully and be bullied than girls
- Girls tend to bully other girls indirectly through peer groups. Rather than bully a targeted child directly, girls more often share with others hurtful information about the targeted child

Girls experience sexual bullying more often than boys (for example, spreading rumors about sexual activity or being targeted as the recipient of sexual messages). The life-course persistent variety of aggression is much more common in males. No argument with the fact that males are convicted of violent delinquent and criminal acts in considerably greater

numbers than females. Clearly we need to look more deeply at why most forms of antisocial behavior are so much more prevalent in males than females (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter and Sylva, 2000). Sex differences in frequently and level of physical aggression have been consistently reported. Males predominate to a large extent in the adolescence – limited group also, though not as much as in the life-course - persistent group. (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter and Silva, 2000). From about four years of age onwards, boys are more likely than girls to engage in both aggressive and non-aggressive antisocial behavior (Keenan and Shaw, 1997). Young men are likely to commit crime than young women (Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 1998). Few gender differences in toddler peer-directed aggression have been found (Loeber and Hay, 1997). In 1973-74, 23.5% boys were arrested for assault for every girl arrested. By 1993-94, this ratio had dropped to 4.4% (National Crime Prevention, 1999). However, there can be

### Conclusion

Parents should bring up their children in a very gentle way that they do not harm others and at the same time, don't get hurt themselves too, and, if anyhow they got indulge in such activity, then, through interventional plan and teacher-parent support has to make resilient against bullying. This study will be done to identify how young children done bullying in various ways and which is the most prevalent act of bullying and what should be done to preventing them to do so. Since, this behavior of bullying and its types, in middle childhood can improve through putting children into more and more constructive behavior or conditions, if a child becomes resilient towards bullying he/she can have positive socio-emotional development, and sense of stability and belonging.

The after effects of bullying are becoming more and more dangerous, even from mental sickness to death. Thus, it is necessary to make the upcoming generation aware of the same and sensitize them. One of the effects of bullying is that it can change the victim's personality. It can cause people who are normally confident and happy to become self-conscious, shy, and unsure. Additionally, victims of bullying may also become sad or depressed. Once a person has been bullied, they may hesitate to participate in situations where he or she might be ridiculed, such as in public speaking or in sports. Despite all the negative effects of bullying, there are even far more serious consequences. Meanwhile, there are times when victims see no recourse but to seek revenge by serious acts of violence against the bully and instigators. As a result of bullying, people can lose their ability to love and trust, denying them the chance to experience a quality relationship later in their life. In relation to this, bullies who are not confronted or stopped may find themselves in future positions where they can bully as adults.

Aside from its long-term effects, some consequences of bullying can be seen and felt immediately. When one child calls another child names, the victim might cry and a bruise might appear after a punch to the arm. However, some effects of bullying are not always obvious to the naked eye. This is why it is so important to stop bullying. Therefore, to study children personality, resiliency against bullying is must. Resiliency can be build by parents and teachers as well, by inculcating moral values.

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