VICTIMIZATION, SOCIAL SUPPORT AND RESILIENCE AMONG HIGH SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF GJILAN

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Abstract

This study aims to look at the victimization of bullying, resilience, as well as the social and family support that adolescents of high schools in the municipality of Gjilan receive after dealing with bad or bullying situations. Through the realization of this study we aim to identify how present is the victimization of adolescents against bullying in high schools, how much they are resistant to those experiences they have gone through in their lives, as well as to identify from whom they receive support when they feel bullied or are victims of bullying, from family and social support, as well as their interconnectedness. The instrument used is the questionnaire divided into four sections such as: victimization, resilience, social support and family support questionnaire.

This study is correlational which was conducted with N = 200 participants, of which (N = 101 or 50.5%) participants were girls, while (N = 99 or 49.5%) were boys. The correlated results confirm that we have a positive and significant correlation between resilience and social support, as well as a positive correlation with family support. From the Chi-Square analysis, shows that both males and females are victims of bullying in the secondary schools of the municipality of Gjilan. In terms of resilience, the average of girls is 3.06, that is, higher than the average of boys 2.45. As for the gender differences in relation to bullying victimization, we see that the average of girls is 1.41, that is, higher than the average of boys 1.20.

Keywords: adolescents, victimization, resilience, social support.

Introduction

As a widespread problem in educational systems around the world, as well as the impact it has on society, bullying is a topic that must be addressed continuously, therefore, our study addresses the aforementioned topic, where according to Olweus (1978; 1993) when a person is bullied and if he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions by one or more other people. These negative actions can be verbal (threatening, degrading, harassing) and physical (hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, vandalizing property, rude gestures and facial expressions). Usually this happens between bullies, students who engage in bullying behavior towards other students, and victims, students who are targets of systematic bullying more than once (Solberg & Olweus, 2003).

Thus, victims are students who are the target of bullying behavior more than once, systematically over a long period of time (Solberg & Olweus, 2003; Jankauskiene et al., 2008; Jansen et al., 2012; Sapouna, 2008; Scheithauer et al., 2006). When it comes to different forms of bullying behavior, the study in relation to peer victimization, found that 38.7% reported being victims of verbal bullying, 19.3% reported being victims of bullying manifested in the form of taking or breaking personal belongings, 39.1% reported being victims of physical bullying and 38.5% reported being victims of relational violence (Verlinden et al., 2014).

Another study, using self-reported measures in a German high school sample, found that 31% self-reported being a verbal bully, 7% reported being a physical bully and 13% reported being a relational bully, while 37% reported being victims of verbal bullying, 7% victims of physical bullying and 23% victims of relational violence (Scheithauer et al., 2006). When we talk about bullying and victimization, we can see a factor that can have a significant impact on reducing the impact of the consequences of bullying victimization, which is resilience.

Resilience may appear to be inherently simple to explain, yet it is a complex construct to define (Kaplan, 2005). Typically, resilience is defined as the achievement of adaptation, positive outcomes, or developmental milestones despite facing significant adversity, stressors, or risks (Goldstein & Brooks, 2006; Luthar et al., 2000; Naglieri & LeBuffe, 2006). Put more simply, resilience is the ability to "returning" when faced with adversity (Ledesma, 2014; Prince-Embury, 2013) and is also about individuals maintaining positive adaptation despite significant adversity experiences and, as such, it can be considered a dynamic process.

Research has suggested that adolescents with higher levels of resilience were less likely to engage in aggressive behavior or be victims of bullying (Donnon, 2010). Therefore, experiencing victimization may result in adolescents relying on their resilience, so that resilience protects them from the potential negative consequences of experiencing victimization. Also another factor is social support, which can be defined as one's perception of care, appreciation and inclusion from others within a network of parents, teachers, peers and community members (Bernard 2004; Haber et al. 2007). It is also a knowledge and feeling that a person is cared for, respected and belongs to the social network of concerned people (Davidson & Demaray, 2007).

The availability of those who provide support, social and psychological knowledge in times of crisis provides positive effects such as a sense of security for oneself. In addition to the main positive effect, social support has a "buffering effect" which can mitigate the negative effect of stress and problematic situations. In other words, social support can improve coping and reduce the harmful consequences of stressful events such as bullying (Cohen et al., 2000; Holt & Espelage, 2007).

The purpose of the introduction is to

Talk about a study like victimization to bullying, resilience and social support in high schools of the municipality of Gjilan, then we see that it is a very important topic, with which we can see the current situation in the country where we live. Therefore, this study aims to see the victimization to bullying, the resilience, as well as the social and family support that high school teenagers in the municipality of Gjilan receive after dealing with bad or bullying situations, also further identifying how present is the victimization of teenagers to bullying in high schools, how much resilient they are to the experiences they have had throughout their lives, as well as to identify from whom they receive support when they feel bullied or are victims of bullying, both from the family side and from the social side. Referring to the relevant literature and numerous studies, we have presented the hypothesis of this study.

Hypothesis:

1. High school teenagers are victims of bullying.
   1.1. Teenage girls are more likely to be victims of bullying than teenage boys.
2. High school teenagers are resilient when they face and are victims of bullying in their lives.
3. There is a positive correlation between the victimization of high school teenagers and their family support.
4. There is a positive correlation between social/family support and being resilient in high school adolescents.

Methodology/Participants

This study is a cross-sectional correlational nature, of a quantitative method, using a purposive sample, participants are 200 teenagers from high schools of the municipality of Gjilan, where 100 students are from the high school of natural sciences "Xhavit Ahmeti" - Gjilan, as well as 100 students are from the high school of social sciences "Zenel Hajdini" - Gjilan. As for the participants, from them (N= 101 ose 50.5%) were girls, while (N= 99 ose 49.5%) of the were boys. Age of participants (N= 32 ose 16.0%) are aged 15-16 years, while (N= 168 ose 84.0%) are aged 17-18 years. All participants are from the Republic of Kosovo.

Procedures

This study has been realized in the Municipality of Gjilan, where permission was first obtained from the Directorate of Education. Where 2 high schools were selected, the first was selected the gymnasium of natural sciences "Xavit Ahmeti" - Gjilan, and the second was the gymnasium of social sciences "Zenel Hajdini" - Gjilan. First, permission was obtained from the principals of the schools, then consent forms were distributed to the teenagers, as well as questionnaires were applied to the students of two high schools. In the following, they were assured of confidentiality stating that their data would remain anonymous.

Instruments

For the realization of this research, the first questionaire that was used is the Juvenile Victimization questionnaire (JVQ), which is a widely used measure of interpersonal victimization and the most widely used tool in primary site surveillance of youth victimization. This scale has the subdimension of abuse by caregiver, victimization, by peers and community. In the main sample of over 2500 participants, a factor analysis was completed for all main items of the JVQ. Peer and community victimization. Eight articles loaded together in the final solution. Internal consistency was 0.71 and 0.83, respectively. Caregiver maltreatment is a six-item factor in the final solution, while internal consistency was 0.83 and 0.80, respectively (Finkelhor et al., 2005; Hamby et al., 2011).

The second questionnaire that was used is the Coping Scale questionnaire, where this coping questionnaire assesses cognitive, emotional and behavioral methods for dealing with problems. Some items, focusing on cognitive and emotional approaches, were adapted from Holahan and Moos (1987), while the remainder of the articles were adapted from Spitzberg and Copach's (2008) framework. Adapted items were reworded to focus on general patterns of coping and simplified to fit a community sample in which some have limited reading levels and educational attainment. Internal consistencies for the pilot and main samples are 0.88 and 0.91, respectively (Holahan & Moos, 1987; Spitzberg & Copach, 2008). Also the third questionnaire that was used is the Social Support Questionnaire – Friends and Adults, which shows that perceived social support is an important interpersonal resource that derives from one's immediate social network and can promote resilience and coping during times of stress.

This scale focuses on support beyond the immediate family from friends and adults without involving parents. Internal consistencies for the pilot and main samples were both 0.90 (Turner et al., 2010; Zimet et al., 1988). The fourth and final questionnaire used in this study is the Family Support questionnaire, which is perceived as an important interpersonal resource that derives from one's immediate social network and can promote resilience and coping during times of stress. This scale focuses on support from an individual's immediate family members. Internal consistencies for the pilot and main samples are 0.82 and 0.88. (Hamby et al., 2013; Turner et al., 2010; Zimet et al., 1988).

Results

Initially, in our study, the reliability of the questionnaire was measured, divided into different sections, therefore, when we talk about the Victimization questionnaire, the Crombah Alpha analysis has reached a very high positive reliability with a coefficient of .816. While when we talk about the Resilience questionnaire, we have achieved a very high positive reliability with a coefficient of .824. Further in the Social Support questionnaire, a very high positive reliability was achieved with a coefficient of .816. At the end we have the questionnaire in relation to Family Support, where from the Cronbach Alpha analysis a very high positive reliability has also been achieved, with a coefficient of .816.

H.1. *High school teenagers are victims of bullying.*

Bullying Victimization Frequency Table and Bullying Victimization Chi-Square Test:

Table 1.

During childhood, are you scared or felt really bad because other kids called you bad names, said unpleasant things to you, or told you to not to stay there?

		Yes	No	Total
Total	Count	140	60	200
	% within Gender	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.962[a]	1	.003
Likelihood Ratio	9.097	1	.003
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.917	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 29.70.

From the **table 1**, the Chi-Square analysis was performed, where we see that $X^2(1, N=200) = 8.962$, p=.003. This shows us that this analysis is statistically significant between genders and if teenagers were scared or felt really bad because others gave them inappropriate names, said unpleasant things to them, or told them not to stay there, therefore, we see that both men and women are victims of bullying in the high schools of the municipality of Gjilan, since

in the frequency table above, from the total of statements of 200 teenagers, we see that 140 or 70% of the teenagers have affirmed that they have been victims of bullying.

H.1.1. Teenage girls are more likely to be victims of bullying than teenage boys.

Analysis of the Independent Sample Test, to see gender differences in relation to victims of bullying:

Table 2.

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Victimization	Male	99	1.2020	.22767	.02288
	Female	101	1.4356	.29037	.02889

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Victimiz ation	Equal variances assumed	12.34 9	.001	-6.32 4	198	.000	-.23362	.03694
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.33 9	188. 934	.000	-.23362	.0368

From the **table 2**, gender differences have also been seen in our study, where in terms of gender differences between girls and boys we see that from the analyzes achieved there is an important statistical difference, where from the statements of high school teenagers in the municipality of Gjilan, the average of girls is 1.41, that is higher than the average of boys 1.20, which means that girls are victims of bullying more compared to boys.

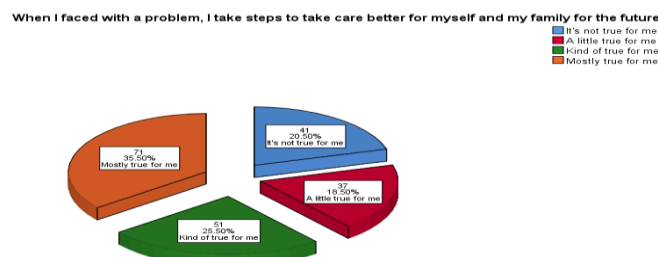***Analysis n resilience in victims of bullying:***

Figure 1.

When we talk about the resilience of teenagers, from the results we see that in a very large percentage, teenagers have affirmed that they are resilient when they faced with any problem, which means that they take steps to take better care of themselves and family for their future. However, we have compared the construct of resilience also in function of gender in the following analysis:

H.2. *High school teenagers are resilient when they face and are victims of bullying in their lives.*

Resilience comparison analysis according to gender:

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
When I faced with a problem, I take steps to take care better for myself and my family for the future	Male	98	2.4592	1.17682	.11888
	Female	101	3.0693	1.02233	.10173

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
When I faced with a problem, I take steps to take care better for myself and my family for the future	Equal variances assumed	8.838	.003	-3.908	197	.000	-.61012	.15613
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.900	191.478	.000	-.61012	.15646

From the above analysis we have made a comparison of resilience as a function of gender, where from the results achieved we see that when we are dealing with gender differences between girls and boys, there is an important statistical difference, where in terms of resilience after facing situations rowdy, from the statements of high school teenagers in the municipality of Gjilan, the average of girls is 3.06, that is, higher than the average of boys 2.45, which means that girls are more resilient after experiencing bullying situations compared to boys.

H.3. *There is a positive correlation between the victimization of high school teenagers and their family support.*

Correlation on Victimization and Family Support:

Table 3.

Correlations

		Family Support
Victimization	Pearson Correlation	.338[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the analyzes that we achieved, using the correlation analysis, based on this analysis we see that we have a positive and significant correlation between the victimization of high school teenagers in the municipality of Gjilan and their family support, where r=.338 **, p=.000, which means that when high school teenagers in the municipality of Gjilan are victims of bullying, then they also have support from their families.

H.4. *There is a positive correlation between social/family support and being resilient in high school adolescents.*

Correlation between Resilience, Social Support and Family Support:

Table 4.

Correlations

		Family Support	Social Support
Resilience	Pearson Correlation	.455[**]	.557[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001
	N	200	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the analyzes achieved, using the correlation analysis, based on this analysis we see that we have a positive and significant correlation that resilience in teenagers is also achieved with the help of social support, where r=.455**, p=.000. We also see that we have a positive and significant correlation also that resilience in teenagers is achieved with family support, where r=.557**, p=.000. As a result of the findings or analyzes achieved, we see that there is a positive relationship between social/family support and being resilient among high school teenagers.

Conclusions

Through the experiences of teenagers, we know that adolescence is a very critical and sensitive period, since during their lives they face different and difficult situations both in the social circle and in the family one. Looking at the challenges of teenagers, then we see that victimization is one of the biggest challenges that teenagers face, therefore through this study, we have seen the victimization of bullying, their resilience and the social and family support that high school teenagers receive after dealing with bad or bullying situations.

As a result of the findings, from the analysis reported in our study, we see that high school teenagers are victims of bullying. We also have other studies which are in line with our study, where a study carried out in our country, that is, in Kosovo, according to Xërxa (2014), 23.8% of teenagers reported that they were involved in a physical fighting, 20.3% reported bullying others and 24.3% reported being bullied by others at least once in the past 12 months, we also have other international studies that are in line with our study, where the study in relation to peer victimization, found that 38.7% reported being victims of verbal bullying, 19.3% reported

being victims of bullying, 39.1% reported being victims of physical bullying and 38.5% reported being victims of relational violence (Verlinden et al., 2014). Another study also has reported that 37% of adolescent were victims of verbal bullying, 7% were victims of physical bullying, and 23% were victims of relational violence (Scheithauer et al., 2006).

Further in our study we observed that teenage girls are more victims of bullying compared to teenage boys, we also have the study of Nabuzoka et al (2009), which is in line with our study, where girls reported that they were victimized more (68.4%) than boys (56.4%), in another studies has been seen that boys are more likely than girls to bully others (Craig & Pepler, 2003; Cook et al., 2010; Chaux et al., 2009; Ma, 2002). Also from our findings in the study we see that high school teenagers are resilient when they face and are victims of bullying in their lives. According to Beightol's (2009) study, they reported that their school intervention designed to increase resilience to higher levels of self-efficacy in adolescents.

Where he points out that experiencing victimization can result in adolescents relying on their resilience so that resilience protects them from the potential negative consequences of experiencing victimization. Research has also suggested that adolescents with higher levels of resilience were less likely to engage in aggressive behavior or be victims of bullying (Donnon, 2010), also improving victims social skills reduced bullying behaviors and was also beneficial emotional state regulation (Lisboa & Killer, 2008).

However, when we talk about correlations, in our study we see that there is a positive correlation between social/family support and being resilient in high school teenagers, where teenagers who have faced bad bullying situations have had social and family support, which has made them more resilient after facing bullying situations. We also have other studies that are in line with our study, where according to Bowes (2010), he reported that family factors, especially warm family relationships and positive home environments were associated with greater resilience to bullying.

Also, other research has shown that adolescent resilience to bullying victimization improved when victims were able to disclose their experiences to a peer or family member and when they received support from their side (Rivers & Cowie, 2006). Thus, social support, understood here as "the perceived support and respect others show toward oneself," predicts many positive outcomes, including body satisfaction, reduced depression, better school adjustment, academic achievement and higher self-esteem up (Harter, 2012; Colarossi & Eccles, 2003).

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