Attitude Toward Violence and School Bullying

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Summary

Living with others is a basic human need. Although some people easily achieve this, the others can not (Bacanlı, 1999) and violence is experienced more intensely by society (İnam, 2001). Attitude which is gained by learning (Ülgen, 1995) can be defined as positive or negative response of people toward any stimulus (Oppenheim, 1992, as cited in Şahin and Dişsiz, 2009). The differences between societies on value judgments determine the attitude toward violence of individuals (Zülal, 2001).

Violence is as old as human history and includes committers, victims and continuously experienced by individuals. This concept is defined as “using physical force for personal and group benefits” by Social Sciences Encyclopedia (Ergil, 2001). It can be thought that violence experienced in family is a form of societal violence (Kaya et al., 2004). Children learned aggressiveness and violence from their family and make similar behaviors to others in time (Ayas, 2008:23). Most of the people committed violence crimes were the violence victims or observers of violence in their childhood (Tarhan, 2004). Similar findings presented by Ayan (2007), he reported that people have been exposed domestic violence by their parents have higher aggressiveness tendency. The studies indicated that violence is a learned behavior and the victim of violence will be crime committed in time.

School which has a significant effect on children’s socialization is the place that violence is the most common action. Violence has a destructive effect on school atmosphere and personal development of children by giving rise to hopelessness and helplessness. Moreover it is harmful for cognitive abilities, psychological functions and attachment behaviors of children who are violence victims (Kütük, 2008). Bullying and violence at school also have negative effects on psycho-social development of children (Elmacı, 2009). Studies indicated that both exposing violence and having positive attitude toward violence increase violent behavior (Vernberg and Jacobs, 1999; Balkıs, Duru and Buluş, 2005; Ünalmış, 2010).

Although violence events in schools got more attention and became more popular, as being a significant factor of dropping out school, bullying has not got enough importance. School bullying is a common problem throughout the world (Furniss, 2000:9). Pişkin (2002:539) reported that between %4 and %50 of the students exposed school bullying and Kapçı (2004) indicated that half of the students experienced physical, verbal, emotional or sexual bullying in schools.

There is a relationship between attitude toward violence and bullying (Vernberg and Jacobs, 1999; Balkıs, Duru and Buluş, 2005; Ünalmış, 2010). Even though attitude does not turn into behavior always, it is a good predictor of behavior. Olweus (1994) indicated that there is a fourfold increase of individuals’ crime rate in their twenties who were bully in their childhood and adolescence. Moreover people who were victims of bullying in their childhood and adolescence have higher degree of depression and low-self-esteem (Olweus, 1994). Another finding of a study made by Olweus (1995, as cited in Koç, 2006) indicated that %60 of the children at grade 6-9 who defined as chronically bully experienced legal problems and recorded police reports at least once, when they become twenty four years old.

Because of the predictive power of attitude toward violence on bullying, it is important to make propaganda actions against violence such as changing positive attitude toward

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violence to negative one for prevention school bullying. Consequently the bullying prevention activities including the dimension of attitude toward violence should be planned.