

## INVESTIGATION OF BULLYING IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BY GENDER AND SCHOOL TYPE

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the levels of peer bullying of high school students attending the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades in terms of gender and type of school. The universe of the research consists of adolescents studying in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of high schools in different cities of North Macedonia in the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample of the study consists of a total of 301 students, 215 girls and 86 boys, selected by simple random sampling method from each high school level in the cities of Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Radoviš, Resne, Struga, Ohrid, Debre, Kırçova. The analysis of the data obtained in the study was carried out using the SPSS 22.0 package program. Pearson Correlation analysis, independent groups t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Tukey Posthoc test were used in the analysis of the data in the study. .05 significance level was taken as basis in the statistics.

As a result of the analysis of the research data; while it was seen that the peer bullying victimization subscale of high school students participating in the research differed significantly in terms of school type, no significant difference was found in the bullying and victimization subscales in terms of gender. The findings were discussed on the basis of the relevant literature and some suggestions were presented.

**Keywords:** High School Students, Peer Bullying, Gender, School Type.



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## **Introduction**

Adolescence, which has different definitions and classifications in various sources, is defined as the transition period from childhood to adulthood, a period of rapid growth, development and maturation in terms of psychological, biochemical and social conditions, in which physical development is almost completed, the age limits of which are not clearly defined (Atkinson et al. 1999); Yavuzer, 2012; De Oliveira, 2020). A large part of the adolescence period covers the high school age. One of the most important aspects of adapting to the school environment during adolescence is belonging to a peer group, and this situation occupies such a dominant place that friendship relationships usually have a greater influence than parents (Drolet & Isabelle, 2013; Bellmore et al. 2017). In this period, the individual who wants to be more involved in social life and attaches more importance to friends may choose some negative people as a model for herself. In addition, being in environments where negative behaviors are shown or efforts to make himself-herself accepted in the group he is in may cause the individual to exhibit some negative behaviors during adolescence. It can be said that one of the consequences of these situations is peer bullying (Öztuna, 2018).

In recent years, the number of studies on bullying has increased with the frequent media coverage of aggression among students in schools, and it has become one of the important research topics that researchers focus on.

Peer bullying is one of the most basic problems and negative interactions faced by students in the school environment. Peer bullying is frequently encountered as a problem that can cause many negativities both individually and socially. Peer bullying has a negative psychological, social and social impact on the lives of both bullies and bullied children, as well as their families, other students who witnessed bullying, teachers and administrators, and leaves permanent traces (Pişkin, 2002; Barboza et al. 2009; Perren), S. et al., 2010; Eroğlu and Güler, 2015).

Since the first studies on bullying were initiated by Olweus in the 1970s, it is the definition most frequently used in international studies.

According to Olweus (1993), bullying is “any repetitive negative behavior that one or more people do to someone weaker than themselves”.

Although bullying is also a type of aggression, it is not enough for any behavior to be defined as bullying to include simple aggressive actions. It should include features such as the presence of power imbalance between the parties, its repetition, and deliberate action (Olweus, 1999).

Although studies on the prevalence of peer bullying reveal different results, it is noteworthy that bullying is a serious problem in almost every country. The results of the peer bullying research show that the rate of students who engage in bullying varies between % 1.6 and % 90.1, and the rate of students who are exposed to bullying varies between % 1 and % 93.8.

When analyzed as countries, the rates of bullying and exposure to bullying; In Southern Cyprus, 5.4% are bullies and 7.4% are victims (Stavrinides et al., 2010; Sismani et al. 2014), 14% are bullies and 25.8% are victims in India (Nazir, 2018), in China in Nigeria, where victimization of bullying ranges from 1% to 44.5% and bullies 28% (Zhang, Chen, & Chen, 2016; Hu & Li, 2019; Otake, Liu & Luo, 2019), 28% victims and 42% bully (Owuamanam & Makinwa, 2015), victim rates in Turkey are 8% to 47%; bullying rates are between 2.8% and 34.9% (Pişkin, 2010; Arslan et al. 2012; Atik, Özmen and Kemer, 2012; Hesapçioğlu and Yeşilova, 2015; Topçu and Erdur, 2016; Heşapçioğlu et al. ,2018; Sarı, 2019, Gür et al. 2020), 13% of victims and 5% of bullies in Portugal (Susana, 2009), in Brazil between 5.7% and 10.2% of victimization, bully 7.1% (Rech et al. 2013; Azerado et al. 2015; Isolan et al. 2013; Costa et al. 2015), bully 7.6% and victim 7% in Jordan (Shahrour et al. 2020), victimization 10.6% vs. 24.8%, bully in USA 5 to 13% (Nansel et al. 2001, Basile et al. 2019, Luxenberg, Limberneve Olweus, 2019), North Macedonia victims 5-15% and bullies 7-12% (Nakova, 2018), victimization in Iceland 5.5% (Garmy, Vilhjálmsson & Kristjánsdóttir, 2017), bullying victimization 13.3% to 15.1% in Australia, bully 1.6% to 5.27% (Thomas et al. 2017, Jadambaa et al. 2019), bully % in Italy It has been determined that it varies between 48.3% and 59% of the victims (Baldry, 2003).

According to the studies examined, the phenomenon of bullying is the subject of much research in the fields of education and psychology; It can be said that it is a phenomenon seen in all cultures, people of different genders and different ages, and its effects can be seen in all areas of life. Regardless of education level or age, no study has been found in which there is no evidence of bullying in any country.

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between peer bullying and victimization levels in high school students with gender and school type.

## **Method**

Descriptive analysis method was used in the research. The universe of the research consists of adolescents studying in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of high schools in different cities of North Macedonia in the 2020-2021 academic year. The sample of the study consists of a total of 301 students, 215 girls and 86 boys, selected by simple random sampling method from each high school level in the cities of Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Radoviš, Resne, Struga, Ohrid, Debre, Kırçova. Since the trainings continued online due to the Kovid -19 pandemic, the data collection form was created through the Microsoft Teams forms application. The data collection form was delivered to high school students through their classroom teachers. The participants applied the data collection form online. Classroom teachers were informed by the researcher, and the participants who agreed to participate in the research were asked to fill in the forms.

## **Data Collection Tools**

"Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher and Peer Bullying Scale Adolescent Form (ASBÖ-EF) scales developed by Pişkin and Ayas (2007) were used to collect data in the study. The "Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher was used to gather information about the gender and school type of the individuals in the sample group.

Peer Bullying Scale Adolescent Form (ASBÖ-EF)

The scale developed by Pişkin and Ayas (2007) consists of two subscales. The first subscale is the bullying scale, and the second is the victimization scale. The items in the two subscales are the same, and one contains statements about bullying and the other about victimization. In the bullying subscale, students are asked how often they use words or actions that contain bullying against other students, and in the victimization scale, how often these words or actions are applied to them. Each of the Bully and Victim scales consists of 53 parallel items and 6 factors. These factors are; physical bullying, verbal bullying, isolation, spreading rumors, damaging property and sexual bullying. Total scores for both bullying and victimization can also be obtained from the scale. There are 14 items in the physical bullying sub-dimension, 8 items in the verbal bullying sub-dimension, 6 items in the isolation sub-dimension, 5 items in the rumor spreading sub-dimension, 10 items in the attacks on property sub-dimension and 10 items in the sexual bullying sub-dimension. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 53, and the highest score is 265. High scores indicate high levels of bullying and victimization, and low scores indicate less.

## Findings

Gender-Related Findings of High School Students' AZBÖ-EF Scores

**Table 1**

*T-Test Results in Independent Groups Regarding AZBÖ-EF Bullying Sub-Dimension Scores by Gender*

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
<b>AZBÖ-EF</b>	male	86	65.55	21.32	299	.546	.586
	female	215	64.06	21.49			
	bullying sub-dimension						

As seen in Table 1, as a result of the T-test in independent groups; When the bullying sub-dimension was evaluated according to gender, no statistically significant difference was found ( $t(299) = -.546, p > .05$ ).

**Table 2**

*T-Test Results in Independent Groups Regarding Subscale Scores of AZBÖ-EF Bullying Sub-Dimension by Gender*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t
Physical bullying	Male	86	19.74	7.74	2.282	.023
	Female	215	18.00	5.07		
Verbal bullying	Male	86	9.34	4.61	1.235	.218
	Female	215	8.69	3.92		
İsolation	Male	86	8.04	4.50	-.246	.805
	Female	215	8.19	4.61		
Rumor spreading	Male	86	5.89	2.36	-1.487	.138
	Female	215	6.53	3.66		
Attacks on property	Male	86	11.61	4.92	-.592	.554
	Female	215	12.03	5.80		
Sexual bullying	Male	86	10.90	2.70	.855	.393
	Female	215	10.60	2.85		

As seen in Table 2, as a result of the T-test in independent groups; When the subscale scores of the bullying subscale were evaluated according to gender, no statistically significant difference was found ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 3**

*T-Test Results in Independent Groups Regarding AZBÖ-EF Victimization Sub-Dimension Scores by Gender*

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t	p
<b>AZBÖ-EF</b>							
victimization	male	86	66.68	20.78	299	-	.923
sub-	female	215	66.95	22.12			
dimension							

As seen in Table 3, as a result of the T-test in independent groups; When the victimization sub-dimension was evaluated according to gender, no statistically significant difference was found ( $t(299) = -.096$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

**Table 4**

*T-Test Results in Independent Groups Regarding Subscale Scores of AZBÖ-EF Bullying Sub-Dimension by Gender*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t
Physical bullying	Male	86	20.54	7.17	.827	.469
	Female	215	19.79	7.09		
Verbal bullying	Male	86	9.91	4.44	-.150	.898
	Female	215	10.00	4.49		
Isolation	Male	86	7.27	3.36	-1.069	.120
	Female	215	7.77	3.75		
Rumor spreading	Male	86	6.06	2.65	-.236	.783
	Female	215	6.13	2.16		
Attacks on property	Male	86	11.22	2.78	-1.013	.107
	Female	215	11.69	3.94		
Sexual bullying	Male	86	11.65	4.18	.204	.536
	Female	215	11.54	4.07		

As seen in Table 4, as a result of the T-test in independent groups; When the subscale scores of the victimization sub-dimension were evaluated according to gender, no statistically significant difference was found ( $p>.05$ ).

#### Findings of AZBÖ-EF Scores Regarding School Type

**Table 5**

*One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test Results for the Subscales AZBÖ- EF Bullying Sub-Dimension Scores by School Type*

	Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	1901.010	2	950.505	2.087	.126
Within Groups	135744.219	298	455.518		
Total	137645.229	300			

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the bullying sub-dimension scores of the students do not differ significantly according to the type of school they attend ( $F_{2;298}= 2.087$ ;  $p>.05$ ).

**Table 6**

*One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test Results for the Subscales of AZBÖ- EF Bullying Sub-Dimension by School Type*

		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	p
Physical bullying	Between Groups	110.857	2	55.428	1.545	.215
	Within Groups	10694.386	298	35.887		
	Total	10805.243	300			
Verbal bullying	Between Groups	63.207	2	31.604	1.857	.158



İsolation	Within Groups	5071.723	298	17.019		
	Total	5134.930	300			
	Between Groups	49.392	2	24.696	1.180	.309
Rumor spreading	Within Groups	6236.881	298	20.929		
	Total	6286.272	300			
	Between Groups	60.396	2	30.198	2.715	.068
Attacks on property	Within Groups	3313.976	298	11.121		
	Total	3374.372	300			
	Between Groups	55.157	2	27.578	.891	.411
Sexual bullying	Within Groups	9227.767	298	30.966		
	Total	9282.924	300			
	Between Groups	9.098	2	4.549	.573	.564
	Within Groups	2365.546	298	7.938		
	Total	2374.645	300			

When Table 6 is examined, the scores of the students' Bullying Sub-Dimension Subscales (physical bullying,  $F_{2;298} = 1.545$ ; verbal bullying  $F_{2;298} = 1.857$ ; isolation,  $F_{2;298} = 1.180$ ; spreading rumors,  $F_{2;298} = 2.715$ ; attacks on property,  $F_{2;298} = .891$  and sexual bullying  $F_{2;298} = .573$  did not differ significantly according to the type of school they attended ( $p > .05$ ).

**Table 7**

*One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test Results for the Subscales AZBÖ- EF Victimization Sub-Dimension Scores by School Type*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	3802.864	2	1901.432	4.115	.017
Within Groups	137689.588	298	462.046		
Total	141492.452	300			

When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that the students' AZBÖ-EF Victimization Sub-Dimension scores differ significantly according to the type of school they attend ( $F_{2;298} = 4.115$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Tukey test was used to understand between which groups the difference was. Tukey Posthoc results are given in Table 11.

**Table 8**

*Tukey Posthoc Test Results Regarding the Differences Between Groups in AZBÖ-EF Victimization Sub-dimension by School Type*

		Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
Normal highschool	Health vocational high School	-6.43385*	2.51577	.030
	Economics High School	-13.04435	7.79337	.217
Health vocational high School	Normal highschool	6.43385*	2.51577	.030
	Economics High School	-6.61051	7.81690	.675
Economics High School	Normal highschool	13.04435	7.79337	.217
	Health vocational high School	6.61051	7.81690	.675

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

When Table 8 is examined, Tukey test shows that there is a significant difference between normal high school and health vocational high school.

**Table 9**

*One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test Results for the Subscales of AZBÖ- EF Victimization Sub-Dimension by School Type*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Physical bullying	Between Groups	311.189	2	155.595	3.119	.046
	Within Groups	14867.781	298	49.892		
	Total	15178.970	300			
Verbal bullying	Between Groups	139.017	2	69.508	3.529	.031
	Within Groups	5868.864	298	19.694		
	Total	6007.880	300			
İsolation	Between Groups	75.413	2	37.706	2.865	.059
	Within Groups	3922.388	298	13.162		
	Total	3997.801	300			
Rumor spreading	Between Groups	47.507	2	23.753	4.554	.011
	Within Groups	1554.188	298	5.215		
	Total	1601.694	300			
Attacks on property	Between Groups	78.500	2	39.250	2.981	.052
	Within Groups	3923.732	298	13.167		
	Total	4002.233	300			
Sexual bullying	Between Groups	86.983	2	43.491	2.616	.075

Within Groups	4954.585	298	16.626
Total	5041.568	300	

When Table 9 is examined, the scores of the students' Victimization Sub-Dimension Subscales (physical bullying,  $F_{2;298}=3.119$ ;  $p<.05$ ; verbal bullying  $F_{2;298}=3.529$ ;  $p<.05$  and spreading rumors,  $F_{2;298}=3.529$ ;  $p<.05$  differ significantly according to the type of school they attend but isolation,  $F_{2;298}=1.180$ ; attacks on property,  $F_{2;298}=.891$  and sexual bullying  $F_{2;298}=.573$  did not differ significantly according to the type of school they attended ( $p>.05$ ). Tukey test was used to understand between which groups the difference was. Tukey Posthoc results are given in Table 10.

**Table 10**

*Tukey Posthoc Test Results Regarding the Differences Between Groups of the Subscales in the AZBÖ-EF Victimization Sub-dimension by School Type*

			Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
Physical bullying	Normal highschool	Health vocational high School	-2.00318*	.82669	.042
		Economics High School	-2.47419	2.56093	.599
	Health vocational high School	Normal highschool	2.00318*	.82669	.042
		Economics High School	-.47101	2.56866	.982

Verbal bullying	Economics High School	Normal highschool	2.47419	2.56093	.599
		Health vocational high School	.47101	2.56866	.982
	Normal highschool	Health vocational high School	-1.33684*	.51939	.028
		Economics High School	-1.67742	1.60898	.551
	Health vocational high School	Normal highschool	1.33684*	.51939	.028
		Economics High School	-.34058	1.61384	.976
	Economics High School	Normal highschool	1.67742	1.60898	.551
		Health vocational high School	.34058	1.61384	.976
	Normal highschool	Health vocational high School	-.68799*	.26728	.028
		Economics High School	-1.61371	.82799	.127
	Health vocational high School	Normal highschool	.68799*	.26728	.028

Economics High School	Economics High School	-.92572	.83049	.506
	Normal highschool	1.61371	.82799	.127
	Health vocational high School	.92572	.83049	.506

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

When Table 10 is examined, Tukey test shows that the differences in victimization of physical bullying, verbal bullying and spreading rumors are between regular high school and health vocational high school. Table 10 shows the results of only the subscales that differ. In other words, the victimization of peer bullying of health vocational high school students was found to be higher than the students attending regular high school.

## Discussion

In the study, no significant difference was found for the sub-dimensions of AZBÖ-EF bullying and victimization according to the gender variable (Table 1 and Table 3). According to our findings, male and female students engage in and are exposed to similar levels of peer bullying and victimization. In the literature, results were found to support the research finding. In a study conducted on high school students, similar to this study, it was found that the frequency of bullying (bully) and being exposed to peer bullying (victim) did not differ statistically significantly according to gender (Düzgün, 2020). In a study conducted by Gümüşler-Başaran (2014) on high school students, it was determined that there was no gender difference in bullying behaviors of students, similar to this study. Unlike research findings in India, Rana et al. (2020) found that being a male is an important predictor of bullying in a study with 667 students. Unlike our research Rana et al. (2020) findings in India, found that being a male is an important predictor of bullying in a study with 667 students.

When the research findings are examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference between the type of school the students attend and the scores of the bullying sub-dimension (Table 5). In a study conducted with 384 high school students, which supports the research findings, it was determined that the bullying sub-dimension did not differ significantly according to the school type variable (Alkan & Aslan, 2020). Similarly, in a study conducted by Adalar Çelenk and Yıldızlar (2019) with 478 students from different high schools to examine the frequency of peer bullying and victimization in high school students, no significant difference was found between bullying and school types. Hanani (2018) unlike the our research findings, found that there were significant differences in terms of bullying sub-dimension and school type variable in his study with high school students studying in different school types.

When the findings of the study are examined, it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference between the type of school the students attend and the Bullying Sub-Dimension Subscales (Table 6). Different from the research findings, Ayas and Pişkin (2011) found in their study that there were differences in terms of school type variable in physical bullying, verbal bullying and rumor spreading subscales.

When the research findings are examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the type of school the students attend and the scores of the victimization sub-dimension (Table 7). As a result of the analysis carried out to determine which groups the differences are between, it was determined that the students who attend health vocational high school and those who attend normal high school (Table 8). Similar studies have been found in the literature that show differences in bullying and victimization depending on the type of school attended (Ayaz & Pişkin, 2011; Denge, 2020; Özada, 2020).

As a result of the research, it has been determined that there is a significant difference between the type of school the students attend and the subscale scores of the victimization sub-dimension. (Table 9). As a result of the analysis carried out to determine between which groups the differences were, it was determined that the differences were between the students attending health vocational high school and the students attending normal high school (Table 10). Similar to the research findings,

in another study conducted with a total of 6776 high school students, 3220 girls and 3556 boys, statistically significant differences were found between all subscales of victimization and the type of school variables (Izığır, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

In the study, no significant difference was found according to the sub-dimensions of AZBÖ-EF bullying and victimization and gender variable. No significant differences were found in terms of AZBÖ-EF bullying subscale and bullying subscale scores and school type variable. Significant differences were determined in terms of the scores of the AZBÖ-EF victimization sub-dimension and victimization subscales, and the school type variable.

In the light of the findings obtained as a result of this research, the following suggestions can be made:

In this research, peer bullying of high school students was examined.

In order to prevent bullying in schools, first of all, it is necessary to see it as a problem, to understand it correctly, to take the necessary precautions and to develop applicable intervention programs.

The sample of the study consisted of high school students studying Turkish. For this reason, conducting the research among other ethnic groups will contribute to obtaining more objective and general results.

This research only considered students' perspectives. In addition to the students' own answers regarding the level of peer bullying, teacher and peer views can also be included in the research.

Courses, seminars or in-service trainings can be organized in order to increase the awareness of teachers and students about the mentioned variables, in order to make applications about peer bullying with students.



Awareness of students who are exposed to bullying should be increased, and a school environment should be created where they can share their problems without hesitation.

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