

Aggression and bullying: a literature review examining their relationship and effective anti-bullying practice in schools

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ABSTRACT

Power relationships exist among students in schools which are often characterized by violent and aggressive behaviors. The current study deals with the concept of bullying. In particular, through literature review methodology, it aspires to answer into the following two research questions; 'what is the evidence for a relationship between aggression and bullying' and 'what can be done in order to deal effectively with bullying in schools'. Regarding the first research question, there seems to be a close connection between aggression and bullying. Indeed, both proactive and reactive aggression can be found in bullying. Nevertheless, it is stated that while aggression is a normal feeling which should not be suppressed, bullying is socially unacceptable. It causes hurt to the victim and therefore it must be condemned in the most explicit way. As for the second research question, whole school policies which take into account the social nature of bullying should be adopted by educators. Moreover, peer mediation schemes are discussed and a balance argument is given for them.

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INTRODUCTION

Power relationships were always present in human societies. While such relationships were not necessarily abusive, in many cases their main characteristic was violence. The one who got the power was repetitively exerting physical and mental violence to the less powerful victim, who was unable to protect him/herself (Smith & Brain, 2000). While the person who was using violence was often characterised as aggressor, this was not always the case. In many cases he/she seemed to remain calm enjoying the whole situation. Moreover, it was quite often that the victim was the one who was experiencing high levels of aggression, which was making him/her ready to counter attack (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). Aggression seems to play a key role in power relationships. A number of scholars in the past have tried to analyze this key role and clarify the kind of relationship which exists between aggression and violence (Roland & Isdoe, 2001).

Unfortunately, these kinds of power relationships exist in schools, too. Students who got the power often exert both physical and mental violence to more weak pupils. These incidents are described by the term bullying, where the one who got the power is called bully and the other is called victim (Ma et al., 2001). Feelings of aggression are likely to emerge in school bullying situations too (Roland, 2002). A number of researchers, the last thirty years, have tried to estimate the prevalence of bullying. While, the results vary from study to study, it is well accepted that bullying incidents occur on a daily basis in every school (Roland and Isdoe, 2001). In particular, in a study conducted in an English school, Menesini et al. (1997) found out that 5 per cent of students are being bullied regularly. In another similar study in Italian school, Baldry and

Farrington (1999) came up to the conclusion that more than 14 per cent of pupils are experiencing bullying in a weekly basis. Therefore, it seems that bullying exists in the everyday school life and therefore should not be underestimated by school staff.

What is worth mentioning here is that bullying is a universal phenomenon which has been found in all areas of world. The first bullying incident which came into the light of academic research was in Norway in the 1970's, when Olweus revealed that three children aged between 10 to 14 years old committed a suicide after being bullied (Olweus, 1977). After this event a number of other researchers dealt with the problem of bullying throughout the world. Nowadays bullying has been found in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, China and Japan (Aggression & Isdoe, 2001). Although there are cultural variations in which bullying manifest itself in different countries, it seems that the violent characteristics of bullying do not differ very much from country to country (Eslea et al., 2003).

Fitzpatrick et al. (2007) points out that there are 3 different ways that bullying manifests itself; that is physical bullying such as hitting and kitting, verbal bullying such as name calling and racist remarks and finally indirect bullying such as spreading nasty rumours and excluding people from social groups. Greene (2003) refers to another newest form of bullying called cyber-bullying. This involves sending threatening email and text messages. Cyber-bullying should be taken into account very seriously as it has the ability to penetrate even in this very private, safe environment of someone's room (Reid et al., 2004). What is worth mentioning here is that irrespectively of the way that bullying manifests itself, it makes victims feel unhappy and can cause to them psychosomatic problems (Natvig et al., 2001).

METHODS

Research Questions

Judging from the above there is no doubt that bullying is a very serious issue which should be taken into account by every school staff. In addition, educational researchers should focus on it and try to study it from different perspectives. The present study moves along this line and tries to answer the two following research questions: (1) what is the evidence for a relationship between aggression and bullying; (2) what can be done in order to deal effectively with bullying in schools'.

Literature review methodology

In order to fulfill this purpose, a literature review methodology was adopted. In contrast to the simplistic point of view that this method confines into just reading a number of books and discussing both their advantages and disadvantages, literature review goes a step further and equips the researcher both with the fundamental and the expert knowledge on a specific research area as well as its interconnection with other research areas too (Hart, 1998). By so doing, it enables him/her to explore the theories that govern a specific subject along with their controversies and their limitations. To quote Ramdhani, Ramdhani & Amin (2014) *'it gives an overview of what has been said, who the key writers are, what are the prevailing theories and hypotheses, what questions are being asked, and what methods and methodologies are appropriate and useful'* (p. 48).

Within this study, the core aim of the literature review was to explore the relationship among aggression and bullying as well as to identify effective anti-bullying practices in schools. To accomplish this goal, multitude of articles were thoroughly analyzed and studied while data were abstracted from them in a descriptive manner and were reclassified in order to be compliant with the research purposes (Pare & Kitsiou, 2017). By so doing the structure of the manuscript was illuminated and the research questions were scrutiny examined in order to be answered. In what follows the aforementioned answers are elaborated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1st Research Question: What is the evidence for a relationship between aggression and bullying? **Aggression**

Aggression is a term which is usually used to describe a negative situation or a negative feeling. One of its main characteristics is the element of hurting someone. That is, aggression is usually used in situations where pain is inflicted to someone (Roland & Isdoe, 2001). Berkowitz (1993) defined aggression as 'any form of behaviour that is indented to injure someone physically or psychologically' (Berkowitz, 1993, p.3). Therefore, feelings of aggression exist in any situation where two or more people are quarrel or fighting each

other. Due to the fact that aggression has a negative meaning, it is usually used to describe actions that are not socially approved. Therefore, the term of aggression is commonly used to depict the riots of hooligans in a football match or in a public demonstration. On the other hand, it will never be used on an occasion where a doctor performs an operation on his/her patient, as this is a totally normal and acceptable action within our society (Berkowitz, 1993).

Nevertheless, this is not always the case. Many times the term of aggression can be used in a socially acceptable context, totally free from any negative meaning. Specifically, as Berkowitz (1993) points out, aggression can be used to describe an intellectual achievement or independence. So, for example Greek people are proudly presenting the people who war for their national freedom as aggressive fighters. Moreover, in sports, it is expected from a rugby or football player to be aggressive in a final cup game. Therefore, aggression may have a positive meaning too.

Tomkins (1987) refers to aggression and states that it is an affect, among other eight affects such as interest, enjoyment, surprise, distress, shame, dissmell and disgust. Affects are normal feelings which are innate in nature and are experiencing by every human being. They are universal and cross-culturally validated as they cannot be learned; they are inherited from generation to generation. They are 'the irreducible building blocks of all of our more complex emotional experiences' (Kaufman & Raphael, 1997, p.20).

Roland (2002) points out that aggression can manifest itself in two different ways; one is proactive and the other is reactive aggression. In particular, proactive is defined as 'a stable tendency to attack someone to achieve some material or social reward' (Roland, 2002, p.199). The aggressor is not characterized by any feeling of anger or frustrations and his/her intention is not necessarily to hurt the victim. In contrast, feelings of pleasure and stimulation are characterizing the aggressor whose main aim is either gaining power again the victim or affiliation. That is, the aggressor uses the victim as a mean in order to gain an external reward such as a higher social acceptance among his/her peers (Roland & Isdoe, 2001). For this reason, proactive aggression has been named as instrumental aggression too (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002).

On the other hand, reactive aggression is mainly characterized by feelings of anger and retaliation. Roland (2002) defines it as follows 'reactive aggression is a stable tendency to become angry when frustrated and to hurt oneself or others because of this' (Roland, 2002, p. 199). Therefore, reactive aggression follows a sequence of frustration – anger – attack. In particular, a frustrated event induces feelings of anger and race to someone. The person looses his/her temper and as a result he/she attacks to someone else. What is important here is that his/her whole behaviour is guided by his/her anger feeling (Roland & Isdoe, 2001).

Aggression and Bullying

A number of researchers seem to relate bullying with proactive aggression but not with reactive aggression (Berkowitz, 1993). According to this idea, bullying is an institutionalized habit which does not necessarily include any external provocation. Instead of hot-tempered outburst it can be better characterized as a 'cool aggression' (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). This is the case for Roland and Isdoe (2001) who conducted a large scale research into a representative sample from 38 municipalities in Norway. In particular, the two researchers gave questionnaires concerning proactive and reactive aggression in more than 3500 pupils of both fifth and eighth grade and came to the conclusion that bullying is predominantly a form of proactive aggression (Roland & Isdoe, 2001).

The idea that bullying is merely related to proactive aggression assumes that the victims are rather insecure and no aggressive characters. They are afraid their bully and they are not likely to react against him/her in a violence way (Olweus, 1978). Indeed, these children will rarely get in a fight with someone. In contrast, they are likely to withdraw and react with crying (Olafsen & Viemero, 2000). Moreover, victims experience high levels of anxiety and have low self-esteem. They hold a negative view of themselves as they realize in an everyday basis that they cannot cope with the bully in an effective way (Olweus, 1978). The fact that they are humiliated and mocked by their peers has leded them to adopt a passive and submissive behaviour (Salmivalli et al., 1996).

Except of a shy and insecure victim, the idea that bullying is predominantly a form of proactive aggression also assumes that bullies are social intelligence pupils. This view is in accordance with Sutton's and Smith's (1999) research findings. In particular, those two researchers carried out a research in a sample of 193 schoolchildren in South-East London schools and found out that bullies preformed better on social cognition tasks than the 'normal' sample. According to them, bullies have a better understanding of social

roles and are capable to use their ring-leader skills in order to manipulate their victims in the way they want (Sutton & Smith, 1999).

As it was stated above, the idea that bullying is strongly connected with proactive but not with reactive aggression is mainly rely on the fact that victims seems to be shy and no aggressive characters while bullies perform well on social cognition tasks. Nevertheless, this is not always the case. Salmivalli and Nieminen (2002) challenge the classical view of the insecure victim and point out that victims and bully/victims are likely to counter-attack their bully. Indeed, in many occasions the bully/victims adopt a totally different behaviour than the submissive one described above. They respond with aggression to the provocations and they attack the bully. There are occasions where their aggression is directed against their peers or even the staff. This is a way of showing to their peers that they should not be regarded as 'easy targets'. Moreover, it is a way to draw the staff attention to themselves, so that they will be protected from any prospective offender (Ireland, 2002 cited in Ireland & Archer, 2004). This aggressive profile of victims and bully/victims indicate that bullying is not only connected with proactive but also with reactive aggression too.

Moreover, instead of calm and socially capable pupils, bullies are often characterized as aggressive characters (Olafsen & Viemero, 2000). This was the finding of a research which was conducted by Ireland and Archer (2004). In particular the two researchers gave a questionnaire to 291 male offenders and found out that bullies have high levels of hostility and anger. Olweus (1979) also refers to bullies and states that they are impulsive and short-tempered. They hold positive attitudes toward violence and they use their physical strength in order to fulfil their need for dominating others.

In addition, Camodeca et al (2003) challenge the idea that bullies are socially capable pupils. They state that they lack in prosocial responses and they use insufficiently socially competent strategies. They use less assertive strategies when they are provoked and they can generate only few alternative solutions when they are facing a problem. This is well reflected in the deficits they show in almost every step of their Social Information Processing (SIP) (Smorti & Ciucci, 2000). Specifically, SIP takes place in five steps and leads to a behavioural enactment. In the first step the child code social cues. Then, in the second step he/she gives meaning to those cues and in the third step he/she clarify his/her goals. Having done this, then in the fourth step the child uses his/her long-term memory to generate responses and in the fifth step he/she chooses one of them (Camodeca & Goossens, 2004). What is important here is that bullies, as well as victims, seems to face problems in every of the above five steps in processing information. In particular, 'they encode fewer and less social cues (step 1), they attribute more hostile intentions (step 2), select goals which damage the relationship, generate fewer prosocial responses and evaluate aggressive responses more favourably (step 5)' (Camodeca & Goossens, 2004, p.2). As a result, both bullies and victims seem to lack in basic sociocognitive skills and capacities (Smorti & Ciucci, 2000).

Judging from the above, it can be concluded that bullying is not connected only with proactive but also with reactive aggression too. Indeed, both proactive and reactive characteristics of aggression are likely to be found in every bullying situation.

2nd Research Question: What can be done in order to deal effectively with bullying in schools?

While the prevalence of bullying is at a high rate and more that 5 per cent of students are being bullied regularly, teachers seem not to deal with it in a proper way. Unfortunately, teachers seem to underestimate the bad impact it has to their students (Reid et al., 2004). This is well reflected in O' Moore's (2000) research which shows that more than 51 per cent of school staff in an Ireland second-level school does not recognise bullying as a serious issue. Indeed, a number of myths about bullying have stable roots in society (O Moore, 2000). These myths, which are spread around even among school staff often state that bullying does not cause any harm as it is a normal part of growing up. What is more, they claim that bullying can even have a positive effect on a child as it can help him to build a strong character and therefore made him a 'proper' man (O' Moore, 2000). To quote a teacher's point of view 'It's not all that bad, bullying toughens them up, its part of growing up' (Limper, 2000. p.126). What is even more alarming is the fact that in some occasions teachers are less sympathetic to victims as they blame there for their misfortune. Indeed, they think that it is their fault for being offended, as they should not express such sensitive and insecure characteristics (Yoon & Kerber, 2003). In addition, few teachers also participate in the bullying process. This is the case in name-calling, which is often regarded as a funny game where everyone revel (Lines, 2001).

Nevertheless, as it was stated previously, bullying can cause to students a number of psychosomatic problems and can generally have a very bad impact in pupil's lives. Therefore, teachers must try to deal with

it in an effective way. In what follows there would be a presentation of some techniques that could be adopted by schools in order to confront bullying in an effective way.

Whole School Policies

The literature clearly suggests that bullying is quite difficult to confront by a teacher's individual techniques and methods. In contrast, a whole school approach is needed if bullying is to be encountered effectively (Dake et al., 2004). Indeed, bullying must be seen to be a problem by all those who are involved in such a situation. These are the teachers, the administrators, the school staff, the parents and the entire pupils who are involved either directly or indirectly in any bullying incident. Greene (2003) labels all these with the name 'key stakeholders' and states that they should all be informed about the dynamics of bullying. In particular, they should know about the relationship which exists between aggression and bullying and they should recognize the extremely bad consequences that bullying has on students. Moreover, they should be aware of the extent and the locations that bullying usually manifests itself in their school (Greene, 2003). They should also be informed of any new phenomenon concerning bullying such as cyber-bullying (Reid et al., 2004). Limper (2000) also suggests monthly seminars where all the staff of the school could be informed about issues such as the difference between teasing and bullying, the extent of bullying and the psychological mechanisms which are evolved in all those who are involved in bullying incidents.

A recommended whole school approach which is proposed by Limper (2000) for encountering bullying in an effective way is the 'Five-Track method'. According to this method, the school should first of all try to help the victim by offering to him/her counselling and advice. Secondly, the school should try to help the bully by offering him/her the opportunity to learn prosocial responses and basic social skills. Thirdly, teachers should try to take advantage of the fact that bullying usually occurs in the presence of many other pupils. Specifically, they should try to actively engage bystanders in challenging bullying process and make them to stand up for the victims (Salmivalli, 1996). Bystanders play a key role in encountering bullying and therefore I will refer to them extensively in the next subsequent. Fourthly, the school should help the teachers by informing them about issues such as the nature, the causes and the signs of bullying incidents. Finally, the school should try to actively engage parents in the tackling of bullying. Indeed, parent involvement can help the school to deal with bullying in a much more efficient way (Dake et al, 2004). For this reason, parent's evenings can be organized by the school, where bullying issues could be discussed in a friendly and relax atmosphere (Limper, 2000).

Undoubtedly bystanders hold a prominent role into the 'Five-Track method'. Indeed, the school should recognise the social nature of bullying and try to engage the silent majority of pupils in reacting against bullying incidents (Sutton and Smith, 1999). Salmivalli et al (1996) recognises that bullying is social in its nature and points out that 'bullying often takes place in a situation in which several numbers of the group are present; even the ones not present are usually aware of what is going on, due to the fact that bullying by definition happens repeatedly, over a period of time' (Salmivalli et al., 1996, p.2).

Salmivalli et al. (1996) state that children are actually sharing roles in any bullying incident. These are called the 'participant roles' and namely are the bully, the reinforcer, the assistant, the defender and the outsider. In particular, the bully is the one who starts bullying and always tries to harass the others. The reinforcer laughs, giggles, supports the bully and incites him/her by shouting. The assistant assists the bully and stands against the victim. On the other hand, the defender stands up for the victim and tries to help him/her either fighting against the bully or by going to tell the teacher about the bullying. Finally, the outsider remains neutral and tries to avoid the whole situation (Salmivalli et al., 1996).

It is quite interesting the fact that while the majority of pupils are against bullying, in reality they rarely adopt a defender role. In contrast, they usually help the bully by either going for the assistant role or by remaining outside the situation and passively accept the bullying behaviour (Sutton & Smith, 1999). This is well reflected in Dawn's et al. (2006) research findings which show that nearly three-quarters of a state primary school in South West London thought that children should be able to protect themselves without any help, if they are to be regarded as tough students. Moreover, in another study of McLaughlin et al (2005) it was found that about 30 per cent of secondary school students would not report to the school staff name calling and harassment. Their main motivation for doing so was self-protection and avoiding trouble. Nevertheless, 20 per cent of the students stated that they would get a teacher if they come across a bullying behaviour. Their answers were mainly driven by empathy and by moral and justice issues (McLaughlin et al., 2005).

One way of enhancing pupils' responsibilities and making them to actively engage in bullying incidents is through the application of 'shame management' theory (Ahmed, 2005). Shame acknowledgment implies that someone admits that he/she did something wrong and shows remorse. In contrast to shame displacement, where the individual blames the others for his/her mistakes, in the shame management approach the individual experiences feelings of shame and he/she is ready to make amends. According to 'shame acknowledgment' theory, the one who admits feeling of shame, accept responsibility and tries to resolve the problems caused by his/her actions is likely to combat bullying and stand up for the victim (Ahmed, 2005). To quote a bystander's words 'I feel that maintaining discipline at my school is my responsibility. If I don't stand up for the injustice that I see, eventually the bullies will become more encouraged to continue bullying others. I feel that I should act against these sorts of activities' (Ahmed, 2005, p. 27).

Peer Mediation

Peer mediation is a technique where bullying incidents and other disputes and conflicts can be resolved through the facilitation of peer supporters. Sellman (2002) refers to this method and states that it is a rather structure process. The process consists of four specific stages. In the beginning the disputants along with the peer mediator set the scene and agree to specific ground rules. Having done this, each of the disputants explains his/her thoughts and feelings. Possible solutions are then discussed and finally both sides come to an agreement (Cohen, 1995 cited in Sellman, 2002).

While this is the main structure of the process, peer mediation can be manifested in slightly different ways too. Cowie and Hutson (2005) acknowledge 3 different schemas of peer mediation; that is peer counselling, befriending and conflict resolution. Slight differences exist between these activities. So, for example while peer counselling and conflict resolution are usually implemented in a structured way, befriending can often be applied in a much more informal way. Nevertheless, what is important to mention here is that all these schemas are based on peer mediation ground rules. In particular, peer mediators do not try to find out who of the disputants is right and who is wrong. They do not have an arbitration role. In contrast, their role is just confined to insisting that the agreed ground rules will be kept during the whole process (Sellman, 2002).

Price and Jones (2001) point out that the role of peer supporters is that of 'caring, listening, and helping peers find their own solutions-but not giving advice or being an advocate' (Price & Jones, 2001, p.37). Indeed, peer mediators should try to listen actively to the disputants and respond genuinely and authentically to their needs and feelings. Their aim is not to find solutions but to give the disputants an opportunity from moving through their conflict into a resolution (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). Sellman (2002) argues that communication skills and the use of language are likely to play an important role here. Specifically, he states that interrupting and blaming language should be avoided at all, while positive language should be implemented for creating a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Moreover, the suitable choice of words, tone of voice and rhythm of speech are likely to help the participants come up with an agreed solution to their problem (Cowie & Hutson, 2005).

Adults play an important role in peer mediation as they are the ones who will choose the peer supporters and who will teach them the appropriate skills (Cowie, 2000). In choosing peer mediators, teachers are usually going for those who have developed social and communication skills (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). Moreover, for those who have adopted the defender role in previous bullying incidents. Indeed, these pupils have already developed an anti-bullying attitude and therefore are more likely to have the motivation and the basic skills for implementing such a process. Nevertheless, sometimes outsiders or even reinforces can be selected for peer mediators, as it is a chance to foster them prosocial skills and feelings of empathy (Salmivalli, 199).

As regard the training of peer supporters, it is an adult's responsibility to introduce peer supporters into the world of counselling and familiarize them with the basic ideas of the person-centred approach (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). In particular, in the centre of this approach lie the concepts of respect, genuineness and empathy. Therefore, teachers should try to help bystanders to adopt a non-judgemental style by showing full acceptance of the disputants. Moreover, they should help them to be open-minded towards any bully or victim and develop an empathic understanding for them. That is, they should try to perceive the situation as the participants perceive it and experience in a degree the feelings of the disputants (Embleton-Tudor et al., 2004). Nevertheless, it is important to be made clear to the peer mediators that they should not

handle situations alone in which there was a serious offence such as sexual abuse or drug use (Price & Jones, 2001).

Positives of Peer Mediation

Research shows that peer mediation is a widely used process, which can help schools to deal with bullying in an effective way (Cowie & Hutson, 2005). This was the case for Impington Village College, a secondary school near Cambridge. Specifically, the schools implemented a peer mediator scheme for more than 2 years and it was evident that the number of bullying incidents had dramatically dropped (Knights, 1998). Moreover, in another research conducted by Menesini et al (2003) in two middle schools from central Italy, it was found that peer mediation activities prevented the increase of bullying behaviours.

Moreover, apart from successfully confronting bullying incidents, peer mediation has also a very positive impact to all the participants of the process. In particular, peer helpers seem to have great benefits for themselves as they develop empathy skills and self-concept (Salmivalli, 1999). Cowie (2000) carried out research in 51 schools that had operated peer support systems for at least 1 year and found that peer mediators had experienced an increase in self-confidence and self responsibility. The gratifying sense of responsibility is well reflected in the following words of a girl peer supporter 'my dad seems really proud for what I am doing because he knows that I've helped someone and if he knows that I've helped one person, he knows I can help other people' (Cowie & Hutson, 2005, p.43).

In addition, bullies can benefit from adopting a role of supporter through a mediation scheme. To quote a 14-year-old boy 'I took the role of befriender, although before I used to bully other children...At the beginning I was not involved in the project but then...with time, doing the training and working together with other supporters I became more and more aware of what I did, It was really useful for me' (Menesini et al., 2003, p.12). Finally, peer mediation can have a positive impact on victims too, as it makes them feel that they have enrolled in a caring school where they have someone to turn to when they face a problem (Cowie, 2000). Indeed, after evaluating an anti-bullying peer support programme in a British secondary school, Hurst (2001) reported that the majority of those who used the scheme were satisfied and were willing to recommend it to others too.

Critique of Peer Mediation

While acknowledging the positive impact that peer mediation can have in confronting bullying incidents, a few authors have expressed some sceptical views about this scheme. In particular, Bishop (2003) points out that peer helpers are likely to confront hostility from other pupils. Indeed, it is likely that a number of students were jealous of the peer mediators as they would see them having a form of power that they do not have. Moreover, bullies may turn against those who are trying to prevent them from enacting their bullying behaviour. Cowie (2000) conducted a study in 2 primary and 7 secondary schools in the United Kingdom and found that peer helpers encountered derision and hostility behaviours from some of their classmates. This was in the form of 'hoax calls and referrals, adverse comments and jealousy at all the attention' (Cowie, 2000, p. 88).

In addition, Hurst (2001) argues that the lack of privacy when approaching the peer mediator's room may cause extra problems to the children who are seeking help. Indeed, it is likely that these children will be characterized by some of their classmates as weak and 'sneak' persons. Consequently, this may lead to further bullying. The issue of confidentiality is either more serious when pupils from different cultural backgrounds such as Saudi Arabia are approaching peer mediators. Indeed pupils from these cultures can be severely stigmatized if they seek for help outside the family (Bishop, 2003). Cowie and Hutson (2005) seem to sympathize with this view and state that an email peer support scheme could be the solution to this problem. Specifically, they state that an email helpdesk can be an open space to meet without any preconceptions and boundaries.

Finally, Sellman (2002) argues that a peer mediation scheme is likely to fail if it is to be implemented in a school which built upon principles of teacher control. Indeed, in a school where pupil's voice is not taken into account and set protocols and sanctions are used to control students, it is impossible for peer mediation to be an effective process in dealing with bullying incidents. Therefore, a shift in school culture from horizontal to vertical styles and democratic approaches is more than necessary for those schools who are wishing to put into operation such mediation schemes. Moreover, such schemes need continuous

advertising of the approach through posters, leaflets and handouts in order for the schemes to maintain their momentum (Sellman, 2002).

CONCLUSION

Judging from the above it can be concluded that a close relationship exists between aggression and bullying. Indeed, research evidences suggests that both proactive and reactive aggression can be found in bullying (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). What is worth mentioning here is that aggression is a normal feeling. As Tomkins (1987) points out it is an affect which is likely to be experienced by every human being. Therefore, we should not teach children to suppress their anger. In contrast, we should encourage them to express it in a socially acceptable way. What is important here is that while aggression is a normal reaction, bullying is not. Indeed, bullying involves feelings of pain and sadness. It makes victims feel unhappy and can cause to them a number of psychosomatic problems (Natvig et al., 2001). Therefore, bullying is socially unacceptable and must be condemned in the most explicitly way.

As it was stated above, bullying is such an extremely serious issue that it is unlikely to be confronted by occasional actions of individual teachers. In contrast, whole school policies are needed in order to deal with bullying in an effective way. Indeed, the schools should try to understand the social nature of bullying and engage in their anti-bullying projects all the parties who are involved either directly or indirectly in the bullying incidents (Limper, 2000). Moreover, they should try to take advantage of bystanders and try to enhance responsibility to them in order to take action against bullying (Salmivalli, 1996). In addition peer mediation schemes can be adopted by schools in order to tackle bullying behaviours. While a few authors have pointed out some legitimate sceptical views about mediation procedures, literature clearly shows that those schemes can have an extremely positive impact in both peer helpers and participants (Cowie & Hutson, 2005).

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