**Bullying in schools in Kazakhstan**

Research question: Why do teenagers between 11-16 bully others in school in Kazakhstan?

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February 26, 2021

**Acknowledgements**

 I cannot express enough thanks to my teacher Ainagul Urazalina for her continued support and encouragement. My completion of this project could not have been accomplished without the support of my classmates: Arinaz, Luiza, Symbat, Islam; and my parents, who in every possible way motivated and treated my activities with understanding.

Also, I want to express my deep gratitude to all respondents who took part in the interview, where they gave full answers to the questions asked, and for taking the time to do this.

**Abstract (Kazakh)**

Бүгінгі күні көптеген жасөспірімдер мектептерде бұзақылықтан зардап шегеді, бірақ олардың аз ғана бөлігі көмекке жүгінеді. Көбінесе жәбірленушінің мінез-құлқы зерттелетіні қызықты, бірақ жасөспірімдердің өз құрдастарына қатысты зорлық-зомбылық себептері туралы жан-жақты ақпарат беретін жұмыстар өте аз.

Толық ақпарат алу және гипотезаны тексеру үшін 15 пен 18 жас аралығындағы бірдей жастағы топ жасөспірімдерімен сұхбат жүргізілді. Сұхбат бұқалардың (агрессорлардың) өзін гормондар мен кешендердің әсерінен ғана емес, көптеген жағдайларда олар үйде зорлық-зомбылыққа тап болатындықтан осылай ұстайтындығы туралы гипотезаны толығымен растады.

Зерттеу нәтижелері біржақты түрде білім беру мекемелерінде бұзақылықпен жұмыс жасаудың тиімсіз екендігін көрсетті, өйткені бұл мәселенің түбірін шеше алмайды, сондықтан мұндай бұзақылық жағдайлардың саны азаймайды.

**Кілт сөздер:** жасөспірімдер, қорқыту, мектептер, бұзақылар (агрессорлар), мәселенің тамыры, себептері, зорлық-зомбылық.

**Abstract (English)**

Currently, many teenagers suffer from bullying in schools, but only a small proportion seek help. It is interesting to note that the victim's behavior is most often studied, but there are very few works that provide comprehensive information about the reasons for the abuse of adolescents among their peers.

To obtain complete information and test the hypothesis, an interview was conducted in which adolescents of the same age category from 15 to 18. The interview fully confirmed the hypothesis, namely, that bullers (aggressors) behave this way not only because of hormones and complexes but in many cases because they face violence at home.

The results of the study clearly show that working with bullers in educational institutions is ineffective, since this does not solve the root of the problem, therefore, the number of such cases of bullying does not decrease.

**Key Words:** teenagers, bullying, schools, bullers (aggressors), the root of the problem, violence, reasons.

**Abstract (Russian)**

В настоящее время многие подростки страдают от издевательств в школах, но лишь небольшая их часть обращается за помощью. Интересно отметить, что чаще всего изучается поведение жертвы, но очень мало работ, дающих исчерпывающую информацию о причинах жестокого поведения подростков по отношению к их сверстникам.

Для получения полной информации и проверки гипотезы было проведено интервью с подростками той же возрастной категории от 15 до 18 лет. Интервью полностью подтвердило гипотезу о том, что буллеры (агрессоры) ведут себя так не только из-за гормонов и комплексов, но во многих случаях потому, что они сталкиваются с насилием дома.

Результаты исследования однозначно показывают, что работа с буллерами в образовательных учреждениях неэффективна, так как это не решает корня проблемы, следовательно, количество таких случаев буллинга не уменьшается.

**Ключевые слова:** подростки, буллинг, школы, буллеры (агрессоры), корень проблемы, причины, жестокое поведение.

**Introduction**

Currently, the problem of the bullying is widely spread not only in Kazakhstan, but all over the world. Turegaliyeva (2018) claimed that there are many types of bullying, age categories, but the most common is school bullying among teenagers aged between 11-15 years old. According to statistics, every third child in Kazakhstan was bullied at school (Forbes Kazakhstan, 2018). Considering the fact that in most cases bullying is committed secretly and few people talk about having encountered it, this is a fairly large indicator. Therefore, bullying in schools is important issue and requires urgent intervention. Moreover, Van Dizen (2019) states most children who experience bullying at school have physical and mental health problems. The scale and consequences of bullying at school are growing day by day and require immediate intervention not only from parents, teachers and psychologists, but also from well-known personalities and the whole society (National Center, 2015). In addition, Kurmangaliyeva (2019) claimed that bullying in school harms not only the aggressors and victims, but also children who study in this environment, because they are afraid of being in the victim's place.

   Unfortunately, few people are interested in the root of the problem - know the reasons why a teenager becomes an aggressor, as they look for problems and reasons in the victim of bullying (Federal government website, 2011). That is why research without determining the focus (such as the reasons for becoming an aggressor) is ineffective. Therefore, research on why teens become bully is very important. This research does not describe the fact that people ignore this problem, it is about effectively way to stop bullying at school, also people rethink their attitude toward the problem. This will create an opportunity for society, actually for teachers, psychologist, parents and children to take steps to reduce the harm from bullying in schools.

  Personally, I pay special attention to this topic, since from the very first days of my kindergarten I have faced this problem. Moreover, if in kindergarten I was a victim, in primary school I acted as an aggressor out of fear. Having been both in the role of a victim and in the role of an aggressor, I can say bullying is not the best method of problem solution. It is very valuable if as many people as possible know that bullying is as urgent and important a problem as many others.

The research is directed to the following sub-questions:

• What is the reason for aggressive behavior and bullying of one teenager to another at school?

• What is the reason for the widespread bullying among adolescents between the ages of 11-16 in schools in Kazakhstan?

As a result:

• This study will show the urgency and importance of this problem through the use of statistics and examples of bullying from real life.

• It will be possible to explain the possible сonsequences of the researched topic.

• Research discoveries can effectively eliminate this problem and prevent dire consequences.

 **Context**

Lemuаn (2018) pointed two - thirds of children and adolescents in the world are bullied - at school. As for statistics in Kazakhstan, according to Nurotan's (2016\_) data about 17% of 11-15 year olds were bullied at school one or more times a month (as cited in the National Health Center of the Ministry of Health, 2016). At first glance, it may seem that this is not so much and not a threat to humanity. But if you think about these numbers, this is a disastrous amount. In every classroom where teenagers study, at least one child is bullied (as cited in the National Health Center of the Ministry of Health, 2016). And it is impossible to count such classes in the country.

Moreover, as a rule, they do not talk about it to adults and experience psychological and physical trauma in silence (as cited in the UN news, 2016). Van Dizen (2019) claims bullers tend to bully children who stand out in one way or another: they look, speak, act or even think differently. According to Van Dizen (2019) «By focusing on the child's differences, abusers try to turn their peers into "normal" ones. Everyday life becomes ideal. Mediocrity is encouraged. And if children cannot do what is considered “normal,” bullying becomes extremely violent».

Lemuan’s (2018) article clarifies that girls are capable of bullying their peers, but they do it on the sly, for example, by spreading rumors on social networks. Boys make fun of others for physical weakness, not “masculine”, from their point of view, behavior. Article says that Abusers often come from dysfunctional families, where they are often subjected to violence. Kasenova (2019) cites the words of psychologist Olga Mustafina (2019) as an example of the reasons for this behavior of buller “It happens if a child doesn’t  have unconditional love and support. If a parent is involved, the child will feel support, warmth, love and won’t need to express their negative aggressive emotions to classmates.” The findings of the research conducted by UNICEF (2013) together with the local authorities in Kazakhstan showed that about 75% of adults support corporal punishment to control the behavior of their children. Every second child aged between 2-14 is subjected to violent forms of discipline in the family. Many of them simultaneously initiate bullying and become victims of bullying themselves. Such children, according to psychologists, are in a particularly difficult situation and need urgent help. In 2018, UNICEF, together with the authorized bodies, launched a communication campaign to prevent violence against children. The campaign is aimed at raising awareness of parents, as well as the public, about the inadmissibility of violent methods in the upbringing and education of children, changing approaches, norms and attitudes in this matter.

  The e-government website of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2019) lists the following signs that a child is being abused at school: Fear of going to school or going out into the yard, anxiety and / or excitement in a child, few friends at school or outside, sudden loss of friends, loss or disappearance of clothing, electronics, or other personal items, low academic performance, they often ask for money, skipping class or calling from school asking for permission to return home, striving to stay close to adults, bad sleep and nightmares, complaints of headaches, abdominal pain, or other physical ailments, sad mood after spending time on the Internet, becomes unusually secretive, especially when it comes to online experiences.

 In addition to all the above, Kurmangaliyeva (2019) claimed that those children who are not victims or aggressors, but are in this area, also suffer, because they are scared of being in the victim's place. If the team adopts the practice of violence, then its leader allowed it, did not track it in time, did not express the inadmissibility of such behavior, or even encouraged it. According to the official website of the well-known publication Forbes Kazakhstan (2019), 402 children from 40 schools in Kazakhstan, when interviewing schoolchildren, 33% of children (and this is every third child in school) were victims of psychological violence at school, in particular ridicule.

 This problem is popularized and gaining momentum and needs to be addressed. According to the Ministry of Education and Science (2016) , in order to effectively solve this problem, it is necessary to improve the psychological service of the school by clearly distributing and coordinating the responsibilities of not only psychologists, but also social educators, school inspectors, deputy directors for educational work, medical workers, class teachers, members of the parent committee, and intensify their professional cooperation ; to increase the practical part of the work of psychologists not only with children, but also with parents and teachers in order to increase their psychological competence, develop the practice of family counseling; improve the system for recording, registering, monitoring and reporting the facts of school violence and assessing the effectiveness of actions to combat bullying. The article also highlights that the aggressive behavior of schoolchildren is influenced by many factors, in addition to family factors: personal, environmental, situational and social (as cited in the Ministry of Education and Science, 2016) . Therefore, to create a comfortable climate at school, it is necessary to work together with school psychologists, teachers, parents and the public as a whole.

**Aims**

This research is conducted to collect and analyze the data about teenagers that become a bullers (aggressors).  This study will discover the root of the problem of bullying at schools.

As a result:

1) The number of cases of bullying will decrease.

2) People will not turn a blind eye to such a serious problem.

3) Interest in this topic will increase.

 **Methodology**

   I used several methods for different purposes to conduct the research. To identify the causes of teenage aggression and bullying in schools, I turned to primary and secondary sources of information. To get accurate and reliable information, all resources were checked and passed through 6 steps of checking source credibility, which include origin, author, purpose, perspective, academic, and relevance, the criteria for identifying the credibility of sources. For general information and the definition itself of bullying in schools, I used sites found on the Internet. These sites were created on behalf of government agencies and national organizations, which indicates the accuracy of the information as well as accurate statistics.

    In terms of statistics, the websites of national organizations provide a large amount of the latest statistics on bullying cases in schools in comparison with the general population of a country, the mainland, or the whole world. For instance, according to research by the international organization UNESCO (2018), one in three teens worldwide is being bullied.   This example clearly demonstrates, that this issue was widespread

      Primary sources were used to get student's opinions on the issue and to get information about possible experiences with teenage aggression. I had conducted several interviews as a primary source. I did not create a survey and there are reasons for this:

• It is very difficult to find a suitable number of respondents who agree to take the survey

• Most often, respondents are not serious about the survey and want to finish it as soon as possible, which hurts the survey.

• Collecting and analyzing information takes a very long time, despite its inefficiency

• A survey is not able to give full and abstruse answers to the proposed problematic question.

   My interview consisted of 8 questions that required an open answer. The people with whom I spoke was schoolchildren of different age groups and students in different schools in our town.

Interviews were taken with different representatives of bullying, with the aggressor, with the observer, and the victim. This was done to look at the problem from different perspectives.  The NSU (2016) claimed, that interview provides a great opportunity to go into details, thereby improving the quality of the information collected. Three main groups were interviewed: Buller (aggressor), victim, and observer. An aggressor, a person who has been bullying others. A victim is a person who has suffered from the aggressive behavior of a classmate. An observer is a person who was not a victim or aggressor but lived in the same environment with them. An observer is a significant and most common role in bullying, because according to UNICEF (2019), despite its renunciation, living in an environment where bullying suffers no less than the victim. All these people were born and live in the city of Aktobe. But for security reasons due to the circumstances connected with the pandemic, the interview was conducted through the Microsoft Teams program. Interviews lasted for about 5 - 7 minutes.

     As I expected, all the answers were quite profound, because the topic I chose made people think about the problem of increasing violent and aggressive behavior of a teenager among peers in schools, and they were interested in my conclusion. The interview turned out to be the right choice for me because I got all the information I needed, as well as secondary sources that brought me closer to answering my research question.

    The only and rather significant problem in conducting my research was the difficulty in finding a teenager who was an aggressor because not everyone can admit this. Fortunately, a preliminary conversation before the interview about the importance of this study not only helped to find respondents from different groups, but also contributed to the most honest and objective answers.

 Moreover, for all the respondents, this topic was very difficult and sad. This situation made my task more difficult but did not worsen my result in any way.

**Results**

To collect useful and relevant ideas on the given issue, respondents were asked the same questions in the interview related to the topic of bullying in schools in Kazakhstan. To start with, every respondent in the interview awared of the problem of bullying in schools between teenagers. During the interview, there were some problems with understanding the meaning of some professional words such as “ buller”. The results from the interviews were useful and helped me to come up with the main features of the given problem. In general, there were 5 participants in the investigation, 4 of whom were students of NIS and one representative of another school.

     In order to find the general opinion of the respondents they firstly were asked about the age range of respondents, to expand the information and understanding of the person and set him up for an interview.  With the help of this question, it became known that one of the respondents was 15, the other was 16, two of the interviewees were 17 and one has reached the age of 18.

* According to the answers to the first question, the age diapason of respondents is between 15 and 18 years old. This is the most appropriate age to receive information about this problem.

     Subsequently, participants were asked about have ever experienced bullying at school, if they have experienced it, what role were they in. In this question, I offered answer options such as:

• Buller/aggressor

• Victim

• Watcher/observer

• Based on the results, pie charts answers are presented below

• Have not such experience (Pic.1).

 **** Pic.1

* According to the results of the pie chart, all respondents were bullied at school, where the majority, that is, 60 percent of them were victims, 20 percent admitted to being the bully and the rest were observers.

    The next question was about the impact of bullying at school on teenagers. The most popular answers among respondents are presented below.  There was no significant difference in data between primary sources used and  findings from interview.

* Psychological trauma
* health problems
* diffidence
* mental problems
* suicide

But somewhat surprisingly, according to Center for Practical Psychology (2018), bullying children have a significantly higher incidence of headaches, sleep disturbances, abdominal pain, anxiety, sadness, poor appetite and bedwetting. Bully children have three to seven times higher rates of depression.

The respondents were also asked what is being done in their schools to prevent and reduce the level of bullying in schools.

* NIS students had a fairly similar response, namely psychological support from professionals and disciplinary advice, as well as punishment in the form of expulsion from school.
* A representative from a general education school gave examples such as preventive conversations with a juvenile affairs inspector and psychological assistance from professionals.

It is also interesting to note that representatives of both schools consider these methods to be ineffective. Which means other methods are required to deal with this problem

     The next and one of the most important question was the question of what might be the reasons for the violent behavior of a teenager among peers.

• The majority responded that children who act as buller have an unstable situation at home and face domestic violence.

• Another part thinks that the main reason is lack of attention and complexes, which are compensated by humiliating others.

• Also, in response, the following answer options were heard: lack of control by adults (teachers, school staff, and parents).

The last two questions were related to solving this problem.

* The first of these questions was about the anti-bullying centers in their city. But all the interviewees found it difficult to answer and 100 percent of them did not know any anti-bullying centers.

The next question required a deep analysis, where the respondents had to offer their ways of solving the given problem and list the most effective ones in their opinion. The interviewees cited the following solutions: toughening punishment, opening and policing anti-bullying centers, educational conversations not only at school but also at home, an annual check of the conditions in which a teenager lives, and monthly meetings with their parents.  Also, according to an article written by Sobolevskaya (2019), improving the school climate will be beneficial. The article provides such examples of the adoption of clear, fair and uniform rules of conduct for all, as well as the formation of trust between teachers and children.

The rules of conduct can be enshrined in the school charter. It is desirable that children participate in its development. The "code" of conduct must be immutable. It is important that non-compliance with the rules - initiation of bullying - entails known consequences.

In general, the respondents' answers were similar, except for those that required analysis and critical thinking, such as the reasons for the adolescent's violent behavior and solutions to this serious, and significant problem. Also, people who took part in the interviews hope for a quick and effective solution to this problem among teenagers.

**Conclusion**

By considering all the answers from interviews that were conducted it is possible to make relevant conclusions and answer the questions that appeared at the beginning of the research.

· How does bullying in schools affect teens?

In general, according to the respondents, this type of abuse affects mental health, which in turn causes many problems associated with physical health. In addition, adolescents growing up in such an environment are deeply unhappy and insecure, and sometimes this leads to suicide.

· Why do teenagers between 11-16 years old bully others at school in Kazakhstan?

According to the answers that were obtained through interviews, it can be argued that the main reason is lack of attention. This point includes a lack of attention, not only from peers but also from teachers and even more so from parents. The respondents believe that proper attention, love, and care from parents will significantly reduce the amount of bullying in schools. An equally significant factor is domestic abuse in the family in which the aggressor lives, because, as one of the respondents mentioned, children are most often the prototype of their parents and most often repeat their actions. Also, besides, the answers should include such a reason as a change in the teenager's hormonal background most often at the age of 11 to 16. That is, this factor is not co-coordinated by the teenager or adults.

· What can be done to prevent and significantly reduce the level of bullying in schools in Kazakhstan?

According to the answers of the respondents of the interview, it is not enough to be limited to preventive conversations. This method should only be used if both parties (adults and adolescents) are serious about the issue and have a good understanding of the purpose of the conversation. This problem requires a special approach and long-term solution. The most effective solution, according to the respondents, is to open and popularize an anti-bullying center, where teenagers can share their experiences and problems, where, with the help of professionals, terrible consequences can be avoided.

In conclusion, I would like to add that from year to year this problem is not only gaining great popularity, but also the consequences are ten times worse and more dangerous. If humanity wants to grow up a mentally and physically healthy and happy generation, then we should not hesitate to solve this problem. Also answering the main question "why adolescents aged 11 to 16 bully others in schools in Kazakhstan", it can be concluded that the most effective way to prevent and combat bullying is to create a healthy and good climate in

the environment in which adolescents live, it is also worth introducing in the work of psychologists, not only conversations with adolescents, but also with their parents.

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