A Research about Effectiveness of the Peer Mediation Education in the Schools in Turkey

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Abstract

The school which is the little reflection of social life includes several different profiles of students. These differences cause several conflicts in schools. The students that have not problem-solving skills can't develop empathy or the students being externally controlled; inhibit the formation of healthy education and training. The students should be peaceful, fair, constructive, collaborationist, accommodationist in the school that the students spend time altogether for a healthy school atmosphere. The peer mediation education aims at educating the students finding fair keys of the solution, developing the strategy of dealing with the problems and having self-control. The fact that peer mediation education will supply some various advantages for teachers, managers and students in the schools with this approach is asserted. That peer mediation education will affect behavior of the students positively, will be lucrative if we think that the conflicts among the students in primary education and in secondary education in Turkey is increasing day by day is thought. Concordantly, the purpose of this article is introducing the importance of peer mediation education and researching effectiveness on the students in primary and secondary education in our country. In the direction of this aim, this literature was scanned within mediation, peer mediation, peer mediation in solving conflicts and peer mediation education. Then, effectiveness studies for the primary and secondary school students within peer mediation education were explained. Consequently, in the consideration of this literature implementations of the peer mediation education in primary and secondary schools in Turkey were discussed and various offers were presented.

Key Words: Peer mediation, primary school students, secondary school students.

1. Introduction

Students come to school environment with different physical-social-perceptual-moral developmental characteristics, from different religious, denominational, ethnical origins and in cultural features due to these and with different genders, age, ability, etc. (Sweney & Carruthers, 1996). School is an environment where interpersonal interaction is lived intensively; students are both in continuous communication with each other and their teachers. Being in continuous communication also brings disagreement from time to time. Because everyone has different ways of thinking, values and beliefs peculiar to himself, in briefly everyone look to events in different ways, brings different interpretations and show different reactions. This situation causes to have conflicts and to be at odds. If it is thought that every student has different characteristics and lives, it is ordinary to have conflicts because of their different conceptions of each other (Taştan,2010). Students clash with each other in school environment, classroom, school garden, school bus, at lessons or when playing games and they usually try to solve these disagreements by assaulting verbally or pysically (Johnson and Johnson, 2000).

The researches show that especially in recent years undesired types of behaviours like violence, fighting, nicknaming are too widespread between the students of elementary education (2nd stage) and secondary education. Elementary education and secondary education periods are the critic periods which physical, cognitive, social and physocological developments are experienced. At the elementary education (2nd stage) which is the term of preadolescence, and at the secondary education term where puberty lived; student tries to adapt himself to differencies which he lives, begin to seek identity and feels himself under pressure. When reaching puberty and the differences lived in puberty, they cause the teenager not to agree with the people around him, to live conflicts with peers, teachers and family. If students couldn't solve the conflicts in a positive way by using constructive solving manners within the conflicts between peers and teachers at the school environment, the possibility of a healthy interpersonal relation with a good quality of learning and teaching environment at school decreases (Taştan,2010).

Johnson and Johnson (2000), emphasize the necessity to teach how to cope with the conflicts in positive ways at school. Conflict is an indispensable and normal part of life and without it, improvement and alteration can't be lived. For this reason it is very important to gain the ability to use constructive conflict solving methods (Deutcsh, 1994). Schools are the determiners of societies' futures, but the traditional methods which are used at schools aren't adequate to ensure a peaceful and a democratic environment.

Therefore, it is a necessity to carry out some programs for the students to contribute some abilities in their improvement to ensure a peaceful and a democratic environment at schools (Öner, 1999).

At interpersonal conflicts, when the problem couldn't have been solved between two people, support must be taken from the mediator to run the process. The mediator is an impertial and equalitarian person whom two or more people get help to solve the conflict between each other (Çiftçi et al., 2008). When students give support service to other students as mediators thay are named as peer mediators.

Mediation is a communication process which the people who have problems work with the help of a third impartial person and cooperate to solve their conflicts in a peaceful way. It is an approach which the controversial parts sit face to face and find an opportunity to talk without being interrupted to solve thier conflicts. Thus both the views of each part are listened. After defining the problem, the parts generate options which both parts win and choose a win-win option. They make an agreement about their future behaviours (Akbalık, 2007).

Peer mediation is to ensure an educated mediator for bringing together the conflicted parts and make them to talk face to face without any interruption interactively (Taştan, 2010). With peer mediation assistance, help is lended to parts or groups who take part by finding solutions for both their advantages (Çiftçi et al., 2008). Students are being improving both for their communication abilities and accepting the other part without prejudice, as what they are because they try to learn the other person's thoughts and talking about their problems within the mediation process (Türnüklü, 2006: 69-70; cited in Türk, 2013).

According to Öner (1999); the aim of education is not to discipline the student by external pressures, but to help him to construct his internal control. Applying mediation and conflict solution programs at schools are the main studies which come at the beginning of improving the students' internal control.

Peer mediation education programs given at schools to students for questioning the violence as a means of disagreement solution and to be analyzed critically in interpersonal disagreements. In this way, students take responsibilities actively for their disagreements and solve them and gain sufficiency at the time of solving process (Williamson, Warner, Sanders & Knapper, 1999).

In the schools of Turkey, it is widespread that the students' solving their problems and conflicts between their friends with the tendency of violence and aggression. These tendencies are increasing day by day and effect firstly their communication with each other and the school atmosphere negatively inside and outside the class, and decrease the quality of education and teaching. Incresing conflicts within the students by progressing and outbreaking the violence as a solution method necessiate to increase the students' conflict solution abilities. Peer mediation education takes an important part to ensure the students the problem solving ability for both to prevent the violence and for to increase an awareness about solving a problem without help of an adult.

With this study it is aimed to introduce peer mediation education and to examine the effectiveness of the applications which is done on the primary school and secondary school students in Turkey. With this aim, peer mediation's content and the quality of it are described primarily. After this, it has given place to some researches about the effectiveness of peer mediation education which is applied to the students in primary and secondary education in Turkey. Finally, in the light of the related literature the application of the peer mediation education in Turkey has been discussed and several suggestions are presented.

2. The Content of Peer Mediation Education and Its Quality

Mediation is a term of solving conflicts which takes place in Turkey's school programmes recently. Within the peer mediation education, its definition, the content of its process, the steps of its process, the content of these steps and the abilities of peer mediator take an important place (Taştan, 2010).

Mediation process is an effective and useful process which based on willingness of using to solve the conflicts between two people. During the mediation process it is tried to reach a solution for both the benefits of two sides. So, the parts try to start to look the problem from the other's eye, to listen and understand each other. This situation is luck for improving the relations; mediation process also helps to increase the self-confidence of the parts and to solve the conflict abilities (Haynes, 1993).

The general aim of the peer mediation is to provide the students to gain abilities to solve their peers' problems and to teach them as mediator. This education's aim is to provide gaining lives which help to solve their peers' conflicts and the mediation ability of students. Applying peer mediation process causes to define the conflicts anew, and to form the attitude of win/win instead of win/lose attitude.The parts who join to mediation process try to solve their problems in cooperation. So, it is focused on new probabilities which are useful for both parts and solution ways are created. Thus, the people are participators instead of being conflicted parts. In some sense peer mediation education is the applying of democracy principles (Taştan, 2010).

According to Smart (1993) mediation process, provides people to gain some behaviour like effective listening ability, using favourable conflict solving ways which help them to communicate in a positive way. He emphasizes that the abilities which are gained in mediation process, can be used in every side of life. These abilities which decrease the violence of the coflicts, ease to reach the solution, and provide the solution to be satisfactory for both parts are "constructive conflict solving ability", "effective listening ability" and "anew costructive ability."

The aim at the mediation process is to reach a solution for meeting both the two parts' requirements by bargaining which rely on win/win basis in a cooperation of these parts. At the process of implementation, the parts are listened by both the mediator and the other person, they help the problem solving, feel they are important for the mediator and feel they are respected, they gain self-confidence. Also they reach a result by taking their problems solving responsibility. The parts start to see each other not as enemies but the people who work in cooperation together and solve their problems by the mediator's effort. As trying to reach the solution they make efforts for both their and the other person's requirements and wishes. Within the mediation process, the mediator gives message to them as understood by summarising and repeating the parts' narratives. The mediator helps the parts to focus on their feelings and the narratives which they tell by listening them in an effective way (Smart, 1993; Gentry, 1999).

The application of mediation programs at school helps the students' improvement of the decision making and the interior control. At the mediation process, the students who are grown as peer mediator have two responsibilities: the first responsibility is to help the parts to solve their conflicts in a constructive way; the second responsibility is to provide them to solve their conflicts in a remediation manner (Rozmus, 1997).

The mediator is a person who doesn't take place in a conflict directly; and who provides the people to decide how to solve the problem. The mediator the narratives about the problems and help them to find a way to solve the problem (Çiftçi, 2008). Mediation is a process which is based on volunteering principle and the mediator is not a person who punishes, finds faults. The mediator is a person who provides the parts to come to a fair agreement point for both two sides for not breaking out the relations of the conflicted people. For this reason he can use the positive conflict solution approaches, can have the abilityof communication and can use the process of mediation process (Taştan, 2010). According to Çiftçi (2008) there are four principles that the peer mediators should follow. These are being impartial principle, self determination (determining his fate by himself) principle, privacy principle and volunteering principle.

The main aim of peer mediation education programmes is to strengthen the student about the constructive solution of conflicts. The student will increase the power and the competence about the constructive and peaceful solution abilities of conflicts with the facilitative way of himself or the peer to solve the conflicts, instead of an adult or a person who is older than him. This process is changing the way of solving the problem with force and an adult in an understanding of traditional discipline, with facilitating the problem solving of himself or a peer deciding freely and in an applying way (Nix and Hale, 2007).

One of the first conflict solving and peer mediation education is, "The programme of teaching students how to be peaceful" which is improved in Minnessota University in the middle of 1960s. By applying this education programme it is tried to bring in cooperation ability to students, to solve the conflicts by reaching to a remediation way, and the education is given according to take duty about solving peer conflicts as mediators. So students can be able to check over their behaviours and be more constructive in interpersonal conflicts (Johnson and Johnson, 1996).

At the beginning of 1970s, the teachers (who work in state universities in New York), with the result of their interests on teaching the students towards the violence, the children's creative reaction to conflicts is improved. The studies held in state schools show to teachers how students learn to solve creative conflict abilities (Prutzman, 1994; Johnson and Johnson, 1995a).

In our country the first study about peer mediation is held by Pekkaya in 1994. In a research that is done with primary school's 7th grade students; a study has been done to find a solution to the conflicts by the way of the mediation,applying mediation programme at schools and examining the students' self improvement, leadership abilities, aggressive behaviours and the effect of the problem quantity of perception.

Thompson (1996) emphasizes that an education programme which is about conflict solution and peer mediation needs to have four dimensions. These are (a) the role and the qualities of peer mediators, (b) to make sense of the conflicts: the style and the source of conflicts, (c) communication abilities: effective listening and (d) the steps of mediation.In addition to this, the improved education programme should also include advanced education. However in the content of this education a privacy talk to each conflicted parts individually,respect to distinctness,the management of anger, the discovery of the agendas and the latent

benefits and advanced communication abilities (reflecting the feelings) come to hand (Thompson, 1996; cited in Türnüklü, 2009).

Although, Türnüklü (2009) has built a consultation and peer mediation education programme in his researches as they include four main areas like to make sense the nature of interior conflicts, communication abilities, anger management abilities, the solving abilities of interpersonal conflicts (problem solving and peer mediation abilities). The education programme in which the peer mediators are determined with sociometry technique consists of 5 sessions which are approximately 80 minutes.

According to Moriarty and Mcdonald (1991), a good organized student based mediation programme serves for three useful aims. First of all, it fills the emptiness between the school's mission and the application of these aims in daily life. Secondly, mediation is a perfect process about giving authority to students. The students who take part in mediation and cooperative learning experiences believe that their supplements are important and useful. Finally, the opportunity of the meaningful supplements to the conflict solution processes builds a steady basis for students about the understanding of the democratic and the effects of responsible citizenship.

According to Gerber and Terry-Day (1999) the main philosophy which all the improved conflict solving and mediation programmes rely on is to provide the students to do their supervision in the coflicts they live, to be able to solve their conflicts by constructive conflict solving ways with the help of one of the peers.

The conflict solving and peer mediation education programmes which are applied in schools have two main aims in general terms (Johnson and Johnson, 2004). The first of these is to provide security of the students. The students share the learning environment by communicating in a constructive and peaceful way because they take peer mediation and conflict solving education at the school environment. However the second aim is to provide the students to be socialized in an environment where the constructive and peaceful conflict solving abilities used when communicate with neighbours, friends, colleagues at workplace, families and the career acquiring process in the future (Türnüklü, 2009).

3. The Effectiveness of Peer Mediation Education in Primary and Secondary Education Students

Peer Mediation Education; it shows its face as a preferred education program at schools day by day so long as its advantages are seen for students, teachers and school administration. In Peer Mediation Education, which helps students develop their decision talent and internal audit, students feel close themselves to their peers so in conflict resolution functional efficiency is gotten.

Conflicts occur in a social atmosphere "in classrooms or schoolyards" among students. The social atmosphere where students' conflicts occur can be known best by conflicting students' peers and the peers can understand the process correctly. Teachers or school administrators often ignore these experiences due to the density of their works and occupation and can only deal with consequences. Therefore; it is thought that the conflicts which happen among students can be understood best by the conflicting students and their peers and they can contribute more to constructive resolutions (Türnüklü, 2011).

A research done by Johnson & Johnson (1995, c) has appointed that most of the students have daily conflicts before they get conflict resolution education. These are conflicts at school; infuriation, mocking, conflicts at schoolyards, conflicts about personal belongings, physical violence and fighting, conflicts about lectures and desk conflicts. Before the education, it is determined that students reported most of their conflicts to the teachers, instead of solving the problems they used destructive strategies and they were lack of negotiation understanding. Nevertheless; after the education, it is seen that more than half of the students who have gotten the education choose the way to compromise in order to solve the conflicts which were given them as a scripts.

The method of Peer Mediation is an effective way to go around the conflicts as constructor and helps group members to understand and solve their conflict problems. The individuals joined Peer Mediation activities come through positive sides like peace becoming prominent and understanding its importance, progress in listening and thinking skills, a group atmosphere which is going much better and the significance of dual conversation, decreasing in need of disciplinary punishments and less fighting (Çiftçi, 2008).

Nowadays, it is seen that the researches towards the practicality of Peer Mediation education in primary and secondary school students have gradually increased. It is new in Turkey as well as, the area in our country is enhancing with the researches done in summer. When related literature review is made, the research results are seen positively and functionally and it is known that the education is practiced for students in such areas like bringing in solving skills for interpersonal conflicts, increasing students enterprise level, decreasing aggressiveness tendency, developing empathy skills, providing anger management and raising communication skills (Koruklu, 1998; Taştan 2004; Ergül, 2008; Türnüklü et al., 2009; Gülkokan, 2011).

The effectiveness of Peer Mediation education applied towards primary and secondary students is supported by various efficiency searches as well. The existing efficiency researches are actualized by used of quantitative and qualitative researches.

3.1. Quantitative Researches

It is seen that in an attempt to study the effectiveness of Peer Mediation education at schools in our country mostly experimental and quasi-experimental studies are done. One of these studies is practiced by Koruklu (1998). Koruklu, in his study of master's thesis where the effectiveness of Peer Mediation is examined to a primary level students group's conflict solving behaviors, carried out Peer Mediation and conflict solving skills saving education to primary school students who are in level of 6th, 7th and 8th grade by executing an experimental research. According to the research's findings, it is confirmed that the experimental group which the program was carried out in proportion to control group, there are reduction in aggressive behaviors and increment in problem solving behaviors.

In his study which was applied to 6th grade students, Taştan (2004) investigated the conflict solving education program and the peer mediation education program's effects on positive conflict solving skills and peer conflicts solving. Pretest and posttest with control group design was used in the study. According to the study results, it is observed that there is a rise in students' positive conflict solving skills and it is found out that the mediators, who took peer mediation education, can correctly carry out the steps of the mediation process and can solve the peer conflicts.

In his study which was applied to 9th grade secondary students, Sünbül (2008) investigated problem solving and peer mediation education program's effects on students' conflict solving skills, anger control skills and self-esteem level. Pretest and posttest quasi- experimental design with control group was used in the study, problem solving and peer mediation education program was applied to experimental group while the control group wasn't provided any education. According to the findings from this study, it is confirmed that the experimental group which took the problem solving and peer mediation education program is more constructive than the group which hasn't taken conflict solving skills. Students who took the education can solve the conflicts by using the mediation method, it is determined that mediation is an effective way to solve the conflicts constructively.

In another study, Ergül (2008) searched problem solving and mediation education's effects on 9th grade secondary students' conflict solving tendency, enterprise level and aggressiveness tendency. The quasi-experiment design was used in the study, the independent variables were problem solving and mediation education program while dependent variables were conflict solving tendency, enterprise and aggressiveness level. According to the study results, it is confirmed that it makes a positive contribution to students, who were in experimental group taken the mediation education, about their social skill developing. It is also seen that there wasn't a substantive difference between experimental and control groups' aggressiveness levels and lastly there was an improvement on enterprise level in students who were in experimental group.

Türnüklü, Kaçmaz, Kalender, Türk, Şevkin and Zengin (2009) searched the conflict solving and peer mediation education's effects on students' empathy skills. Pretest posttest quasi- experimental design with a control group was used in the study, students in experimental group were given conflict solving and peer mediation education. The study's dependent variable was empathy skills. At the end of the study when the experimental and the control groups' empathy skills were compared, it is confirmed that there was a substantive difference in male students.

Türnüklü, Kaçmaz, Türk, Kalender, Şevkin and Zengin (2009) searched the conflict solving and peer mediation education's effects on primary students' interpersonal conflicts. The study was carried out with 4th and 5th grade students who are sub socioeconomic level. Students stood between peers' conflicts. The study's dependent variable was the mediation forms which were filled by the peers during the mediation process. According to the study's results, it is seen that the peer mediation model is an effective and functional method in solving students' conflicts.

In another study Türnüklü, Kaçmaz, Türk, Kalender, Şevkin and Zengin (2010) searched the conflict solving and peer mediation education's effects on primary students' conflict solving strategies. In the study, students partaking in experimental group were provided a education which included understanding of conflict's nature, communication skills, anger management skills and problem solving and peer mediation skills. Pretest posttest quasi- experiment design with a control group was used in the study and the dependent variable was the conflict solving strategies. When the study results were analyzed, there was given place to analysis which belonged to integration, compliance, domination and avoiding subscales of conflict solving scales. According to these, the education is effective statistically on the increasement in students' integration conflict solving strategies whereas it is effective on the decrease of domination and avoiding conflict solving strategies. It isn't encountered a substantive difference in compliance strategies.

Besides that the peer mediation education's effects on different variables like students' empathy and aggressiveness level were investigated.

In a similar study, Türnüklü, Kaçmazi Gürler, Türk, Kalender, Şevking and Zengin (2010) searched conflict solving and peer mediation education's effects on primary students' aggressiveness level. Pretest posttest quasi-experiment design with a control group was used in the study, the experimental group was provided education about conflict solving and peer mediation while the control group wasn't provided any education. The dependent variable of the study was students' aggressiveness level. When examining the study results, it is confirmed that there is a substantive difference between experimental and control group students' aggressiveness level, there is a decrease in experimental group's aggressiveness level and there is a more substantive decrease in male students' aggressiveness level in comparison with female students. Therefore, it is determined that male students take more advantages of the education than the female students.

Lastly Gülkokan (2011) searched the peer mediation education's effects on primary students' disagreements. Pretest posttest quasi- experimental with a control group design was used in the study and within the education program students were thought the understanding of conflict's nature, communication and anger management skills, and interpersonal conflict solving skills. While the study's independent variable was the peer mediation education, the dependent variables were conflict solving skills, peer mediation forms, and the interviews with peer mediators. When the study's results were analyzed, it is confirmed that students in experimental group have improved the constructive conflict solving skills. When peer mediation process id compared as it is concluded with agreement or not, it is determined that it is substantive statistically. Peer mediators stated that they used peer mediation method in problem solving and obtained significant contributions.

When some quasi-experimental and experimental design studies' results about peer mediation education's effect on primary and secondary school students in Turkey are analyzed, it is seen that the peer mediation education has a positive effect on decreasing students' aggressive behaviors, empathy and conflict solving skills. It can be said that educating mediator students can help students' problem solving and coping with peer conflicts.

3.2. Qualitative Research

In Turkey when you look for effectiveness of peer mediation education in schools it is seen that experimental designs and quasi-experimental designs are more compact than the other researches. Qualitative researches are not sufficient but there are some researches. One of these researches is done by Türnüklü, Kaçmaz, Sünbül ve Ergül (2010). Researchers conducted a research in conflict resolution and education of peer mediation on interpersonal conflict of high school students. Lower socio-economic level of high school students who study in high school education saw a two-year period of conflict resolution and peer mediation high school students training. When looked the negotiation for male students most frequently used undesirable behavior finalize the deal, while female students reached an agreement through negotiation debate is observed that the most preferred. At the end of the study, it is appointed that conflict resolution and education of peer mediation is effective way to solve students' conflicts in a constructive way.

In a similar way, some other researches looking for the effectiveness of peer mediation on primary year's students a study is done by using technical data analysis, interview, mediation forms, and qualitative data. By the side of peer mediation Kaçmaz, Türnüklü ve Türk (2011) studied primary years students difficulties in the process of peer mediation. In both primary schools, in 4th and 5th grades after the education of conflict resolution and peer mediation, by the process of peer mediation focused on the difficulties of conflicted parties. More of a condensing the process of evaluation among the qualitative data techniques intervies are analysed by using semi–strcutured interview and content analysis. According to the peer mediators when looked over the researches conflicting parties had some difficulties and showed emotional resistance, had problems while communicating, cause they didn't show sufficient empathy towards the others so they didn't understand each other, solutions are passed over by the same reasons.

In another research Güloğlu (2011) looked over the thoughts of conflicting students peer mediators peer mediation application. The purpose of the study to evaluate by the eyes of conflicting parties   and peer mediation have been applied in a high school for five peer mediation process. In the   study of semi–structured interview qualitative datas are analyzed by the content analysis. When the results analyzed, students chose to solve conflicts in a constructive peer mediation way, it is emphasised that the most difficult part is the empathy. In addition to this most of the students confirm that after the peer mediation practice students who are conflicting with others pointed that their friendship improved as in the past and more. Besides when teachers' opinions are analyzed students chose to solve their conflictings

using peer mediation, after the practice of the programme it is mentioned that decreasing discipline problems and classroom management is got easy.

Finally, Türnüklü (2011) in another study that examined the perceptions of peer to peer mediator for the mediation process has examined the experience of studying in high school peer mediators. The content of this research it has been interviewed with peer mediators by using semi structured interview. In the study of qualitative analysis students thoughts are also included. According to the results that the adoption of the peer mediation process by a peer mediator, it is stated that peer mediators self-esteem and self-confidence are improved, develops conflict resolution and empathy skills, interpersonal conflict and to decrease the fight, their relationships with their peers, were found to develop in a positive way. Peer mediators stated that the skills they have learned is also used out side of the school.

When looked at the literature peer mediation researches are so new in our country.When the current studies evaluated the peer mediation training held in Turkey , can be used to solve a variety of problems experienced in the primary and secondary school students , and can be said to be an effective method of conflict resolution. According to the applications of peer mediators education, improved self confident, influenced the interpersonal relations in positive way, can be said that it is improved the constructive solution skills and helped to develop fine education period in schools.

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Looking back fifty years from today the fundamental discipline problems observed in schools were running in the corridors, chewing gum, speaking loudly and behavior as such. However contemporary issues and problems vary from physical and verbal violence to rude behavior and from time to time in certain schools we even face the use of firearms and weapons, murder and the use of illegal drugs. In order to resolve conflict within the classroom, these problems alone are enough to drain a teacher's time and energy (Jonhson and Jonhson, 1995a).

The alteration and day to day increase of problems among students in schools forge the need for peer mediation education. When results of the peer mediation program implemented in Turkey's schools are evaluated, it is noticed that students who have taken part in the training try to resolve conflict in a constructive manner, rather than relying on authority they are more self controlled, they can give nondiscriminative decisions and have shown a positive development in various other areas. Furthermore, taking a closer look at the research shows that (Taştan, 2004; Sümbül, 2008; Gülkokan, 2011) in schools where students have been given peer mediation training there has been a decline in conflict issues among students.

Violence among individuals in the school environment does not remain as an isolated incident. Interpersonal violence prevents the teaching and learning process, it leads to fear and unexplained non-attendance among students and pushes teachers to suffer exhaustion (Hart & Gunty, 1997). In addition, interpersonal violence within a school is a major problem which consumes both time and energy of the executive staff, teachers and students of that school (Lane & McWhirter, 1992). The aim of peer mediation training is to give students problem solving skills and to be able to solve conflict without the need of direct authority, it also helps teachers and executives facilitate their work leading to a healthier learning and teaching environment. Instead of learners directing their energy towards disruptive conflict methods they are given the opportunity to channel their energy towards learning activities showing an increase in academic success. Furthermore learners who are taught to solve conflict in a productive manner have a tendency not to skip school, they have less non- attendances and this together builds a healthier schooling environment. When the peer mediation program implemented within primary and secondary schools in Turkey is observed it can be clearly stated that the program has lead students to solve conflict based issues and further given them positive change in various other points. With peer mediation training students are able to solve problems alone without the interference of outside factors such as teachers or administrators, they avoid negative attitudes and become less biased, they develop the ability to empathies, they gain awareness towards solving conflict in a constructive manner, and they can give fair decisions and demonstrate a peaceful and cooperative attitude.

With the peer mediation training learners will gain skills to solve problems they face on a daily basis and the certain problems within school, they will also help develop a happy and safer school environment. Along with this the peer mediation program will not only give students the skills to solve problems in a constructive manner it will also become an important part of their life in the future and when implemented can lead to their contribution towards positive social change.

Due to over populated classrooms in our primary and secondary schools, teachers are not able to reach every individual situation of conflict students confront. The teacher's job will become much easier to

facilitate when students have gained self control and conflict resolution skills. These skills are taught with the peer mediation program.

When considering the advantages of the peer mediation program, it becomes a noticeable and essential element to create a healthy learning environment within our schools.

At First, in order to develop student's empathy skills in primary and secondary schools, guidance teachers working within the school can give individual or group counseling sessions. Schools can implement a variety of peer mediation activities outside counseling hours. Seminars could be held in order to inform both teachers and administration about peer mediation. In addition to this schools can encourage projects that require collaborative work rather than competition. Furthermore parents can be asked to cooperate to help learners implement the skills they have learnt from peer mediation into their daily lives.

When observed closer it is noticeable that although research towards peer mediation is experimental or quasi experimental and further descriptive research and Meta analysis work is not so wide spread. In this context it would be a suggestion that researchers do further descriptive and meta-analysis research in this area.

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