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THE ROLE OF A TEACHER IN THE PREVENTION OF PUPILS' AGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Abstract

Agressive behaviour of elementary school pupils is constantly increasing. Be it verbal or non-verbal agresion, its consequences can be unpleasant for both, those who are exposed to it and and those who exert it upon others. Being exposed to agressive beahviour causes anxiety, depression, lack of self-confidence and it can last until the adult age. On the other hand, pupil who act agressively are not socially adapted in a proper way and therefore they are very often rejected by their peers. The lack of social communication and clashing with teachers' authorty removes and isoltaes pupils from others which can cause bad results at school and consequently to even more destructive behaviour. In order to prevent agressive behaviour at school, it is necessary to get to know about the sources and reasons that cause such behaviour. Psychological and social conotation of agressive behaviour should be detected and, also, try and understand what role agressiveness plays in pupils' growing up and getting independent. It should also bear in mind the fact that each kind of agressive behaviour is not apriori negative. In relation to that, nowadays it is spoken of assertive behaviour *i.e. about positive, healthy and controlled agressivness in which self-confidence dominates together* with investing efforts and energy into the achivement of life-important aims. The role of teachers, school pedagogues, psychologists and parents is to get, through joint efforts, as much information as possible about eacht pupil's personality and to get to know them in the best possible way, udnerstand their problems and on the basis of that to apply the most adequate methods for the prevention of the unwanted forms of agressivenss.

Key words: agressivenss, assertiveness, behavious, pupil, teacher, prevention.

INTRODUCTION

The term agression originates from the latin word *agressio* (aggredi) which refers to attacking, assaulting, haressing, the use of force and treathening with the same. It is most defined as the form of behaviour whose aim is to harm somebody. Agressiveness is a very complex term that is comprised of many different criteria and meanings and therefore it is very difficult to define it. This article will not deal with human agressiveness that is

condemned by everybody and which manifests itself in wars, war destruction, agressiveness in family, at sports fileds and similar. The central idea of this article is to speak about agressiveness as the phenomenon that has got different features at school as an educational institution. The majority of authors describe agressive beahvious in thier works as the bad side of a human's personality, its tendency and readiness to act agressively to other people. However, when a child rebels against the authority, he is agressive but he also expresses its need for independence, which is a necessary and very importnat feature in the process of growing up(Storr, 2007: 15). Therefore, at school, it should be differentiated between agressive and assertive behaviour of a child. Assertive behaviout represents the positive, healthy and controlled agressiveness in which confidence dominates together with investing efforts and energy into realoization of the aim. In order to be able differentiate between assertive (wanted) from agressive (unwanted) beahviour of pupils, one needs to posses rich pedagogical and psychological education realted to practical experience.

1. THEORETICAL STANCES ABOUT HUMAN AGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Despite the fact that agressive behaviour is common among human beings, it is still being discussed whether agressiveness is innate to human beings and, as sexual drive, it strives to be expressed spontaneously or it is only the spontaneous answer (natural reaction) to unfavourable outer circumstances, therefore, it is not an instinct. In order to be able to understand agressiveness more properly we will first give a few theoretical viewpoints that can help us to understand agressive behaviour among pupils. There are six types of theories that are related to the possible causes of agressive behaviour:

1. Instinct theories explain agressive behaviour as a result of the existence of more or less premanent and stable biologicaly determined moving force, i.e. instict. The most importnat theories of this type are psychoanalytic theory, neoanalytic theory and etiology. The basic tenet of these theories is the belief that people have got an inborn instinct to be agressive and it is being developed until it is finally expressed. The inborn instinct of agressiveness can be expressed through the direct attack on another human being or it can be expressed through catharsis that is released or channaled through socially acceptable modes such as sport. However, a biologically innate instinct of agressiveness has not been defined and aslo the term chatarsis has a not been further supported. Therefore this theory cannot be accepted and we, also, cannot claim that phisical exercises provide socially acceptable tools for natural agression instincts channeling.

2. Frustration agression theory. The most common explanation of agression sees frustration as its main cause. This theory is based on the hypothesis that human agression is directly related to frustration that is caused by unability to achieve an aim or because because of a failure to succeede. This theory was established in 1939. By psychologists from Yale (Dollard et al.) Somewhat later it turned out that frustration results in other types of behaviour in addition to agression. However, frustration-agression hypothesis contributed to the deepr insight into agressive behaviour among pupils since at traditional schools they are constantly being exposed to frustrating situations.

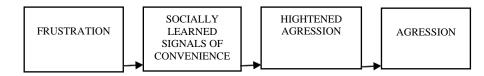
3. Social learning theory whose founder is A. Bandura (1973. and 1986.), is a very important theory which can contribute to better understanding of human agression. This theory explasines agressive behavious as being learned through observing others while behaving agressively and who, therefore, serve as a modal of agressive behaviour. The one

who learns comes up with a conslusion as to whether asgressive behaviour of a model was a successful or unsuccesufl aid in achieving the aim and whether it was punished or awarded. If agressive behaviour is seen as a successul aid, the learning is generally taking place. Even if a model's agressive behaviour was not approved, or if it is not punished, learning can still take place. Even if a pupil is not seen as acting agressively as a model, it does not mean that "the lesson" has not been learned.

4. Revised frustration-agression theroy. This theory combines elements of the original hypothesis of frustration-agression theory. As seen from that perspective, and also on the basis of the claim that frustration doesn not inevitably lead to agression, it was found out that agression provokes hightening of excitement and fury. (Berkovic, 1993; Baron and Richardson, 1994). However, hightened excitement and fury result in agression only when socially learned signs signal that agression is convenient in a certain situation. If socially learned sgnals indicate that agression is not convenient, in that case it will not appear. The process of agression as based on Berkovic's model is presented on picture 1.

Firstly, an individual gets frustrated in some way (bad playing, loss of a game, etc.). Secondly, the level of excitement hightenes, usually in the form of pain or fury as a result of frustration. Thirdly, such state will not automatically result in frustration. It will happen only if the individual has learned to be agressive in a certaion situation. Revised agression-frustration theory offers in its essence an interactive model which combines the best achievemnt of the initial models offrustration-agression theory and social theory of agression.

Picture 1. The process of agression (Berkovic's model)



5. Cognitive theories. These theories are oriented towards cognitive processes that take place in an idividual from the moment he/she was exposed to a certain stimulus all the way to the eventual reaction, in other words – agressive behaviour. The most important authors related to this group of theories are Kennet Dodge and Raphel Human who suggested the model a separation of agressive behaviour.

6. Biological theories. These thoeries explain agressive behaviour as a result of the functioning of bilogical and physiological structures in a human body. According to the authors who support these theories, agressive behaviour can be caused by genes, hormones or the centars in brain that are responsible for such behavious. Moyer theory is the most famous one (up. Žužul, 1989: 42-43 and Čokorilo, 2010: 173-175).

Philosophers and scientists have never fully agreed as to whether agression is innate, instictive or such behaviour is learned (Baron and Richardson, 1994; Berkovic, 1993; Gin, 1998). The contradictory opinions of Hobbes and Rousseau on this issue were strengthened and rejected in the course of the time. According to Hobbes, human beings are in their natural animal state and, therefore, society can prevent thier natural instincts by imposing on them the rule of law and order. Contrary to Hobbs, according to Rousseau's theory of the noble savage, human beings are in their natural state of being noble but the restrictive society forces then to be agressive. Hobbes' pessimisim was further developed by Freud who believed that human beings were born with the instinct for living (eros) and the instinct for dying (tanatos). The instinct of dying acts in every human being with the

tendency to bring it down to the level of its original state of still nature. Freud believed that agressive energy needs to vent out so as not to create an illness. According to Freud, *society plays the main role in the control of these instincts and it helps people to subilme them* – *i.e. to convert their energy into acceptable and useful behavioure* (Aronsonu et al., 2005: 417-418).

As observed from the point of view of pedagogy theories of agressive behaviour can be divided into two groups: 1. Theories that do not accept the role of education on agressive behaviour and its prevention; this group comprises instinct and biological theories. 2. Theories that explain agressive behaviour as the result of the influence of the environment and learning; this gropu comprises theories of frustration and social learning (up. Savović, 2003: 11).

2. THE FORMS OF AGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AT SCHOOL

There are different definitios of agressive behaviour, however, they are essentially only variations of of the theory that was suggested by Dollard and his coworkers according to whom agression is behaviour whose aim is to hurt a person towards whom it is directed. The special form of behaviour of peers that takes the form of maltreating and molesting of pupils, and in English such behaviour is covered with terms bullying and mobbing. Along with the mentioned ones there is a whole array of other terms similar to the notion of agression. Therefore, it is very difficult to give a precise answer to what agression is. In connection to this, the notion of asocial behaviour represents a very broad cateogory to which agression belongs, too. Among pupils, asocial behaviour comprises the whole array of different kinds of behaviour (disobedience, undisciplined behaviour, lying, bad company, skipping classes, stubborness, consuming drugs and alcohol, etc.). Playing violent video games. A child that plays violent games ",destroys" probably hundreds of enemies in a day, but that is not seen as real agression or violence since no harm has been inflicted upon a human being but upon a fictional character. On the other hand, such games contribute to the appearance and growth of agression, and it also increases a childs indifference towards violence. Prejudices themselves are not seen as violence, but discrimination as a result of predjudices is seen as such. Punishment as an educational measure is not seen as violence and it does not have to lead to it, even if non-pedagogical punishment can be seen as violence. What makes punishment different from violence is that it is used in order to help to a child, which makes a justifiable and legitimate educational measure.

In general, there are two critera on the bases of which different kinds of agressive behaviour at school can be differentiated among. Firstly, according to the way agression is being exerted: a) verbal agression (swearing, yelling, threatening) and b) physical agression (hitting, trippin somebody up). Secondly, according to the causes of agression: a) impulsive agression (expressing emotions of rage and anger) and b) instrumental agression (agression used as an instrument for achieveing a goal (Žužul. 1989: 53).

Apart from the metioned forms of agressive behaviour, in literature we come across other forms of agressive behaviour ovih oblika agressivnog ponašanja at schools, such as: a) agressive expansion – when a child, without expressing agression openly, pushing himself and his personality in the foreground and by doing so is disturbing the rights of others; b) agressive vengance – stands for a pupils vengeance because he was deprived of parental love and (because of death, divorce, long absence), or because of not being accepted by his peers; c) agression as a pupils reaction to big dameands – it represents the unability of a pupil to answer to big demands set by his parents, teachers, or a wider social environment,

which provokes in him the feeling of guilt and defeat. (Gašić-Pavišić, 1996: 727).

At school, the biggest amount of attention is devoted to agression of a pupil to too big and non-adequate educational demands. Those could be represented by too demaning subject curricula, inability to understand ceratin terminology, bad communication with teachers, ect. Very often these factors provoke in pupils the feeling of inability and failure, and on the other hand parents and teachers exert pressure upon them and that is very often followed by punishment. In that way a pupil develops repulsion towards the source of failure (school and and school environment), and very often that feeling turns into agression. It can be expressed through quarelling, but also through physical conflicts among peers, as well as through destroying school assets, etc. Such kind of tension is especially noticable in physical education classes, and it is expressed through the lack of cooperation when it comes to being a part of certain class activities. Repulsion towards school is sometimes expressed through formation of social groups of pupils who have got similar problems. Various researches point out to the conslusion that agressive behaviour is a reaction to the situation which is precieved by an idividual as being provoking. It depends on the following for factors if the provoking situation will lead to agression.

1. Emtionally motivational factors. When a provoking situation causes the increase of emotional excitement in the body and consequently it leads to the motivation for agressive behaviour.

2. Cognitive-informational factors. They appear in three phases that are set in between the acting of social stimulation and reaction. The first factor is related to the recognition of the provoking situation, while it is thought that the agressive reaction will not appear as a result of the situation, but it will depend on the way in which it is going to be percevied by an individual – as provking or non-provoking. The second group of factors are related to the recognition of the emotional excitement and finding the possible answers to it. Finally, there is the third group of cognitive factors which is related to the estimation of the consequences and agressive behaviour.

3. Social factors. Since agressive behaviour is agressive social behaviour it is logical that certain social factors will have an influence on the possible appearance of agresive behaviour. Among different social factors that can have an influence of the appearance of agression, three factors are of particular importance. The first factor is related to the sources of frustration. Individual characteristics of a person that is the source of provocation will have na influence on whether the situation will be seen as provoking. The second factor that has got an influence on the recognition of an emotion is the behaviour of other persons who are being present in a certain situation. The third social factor relates to the theird cognitive factor and those are the characteristics of the aim of agression.

4. Situational factors. Agressive behaviour is always the reaction to a certain situation and therefore it is possible to single out three groups of situational factors. It is being emphasized that the intensity of the agressive motivation is directly dependent on the intensity of emotional excitement. The second group of factors comprises the outer motives that did not come about as a result of emotional changes. The third and the most important group of factors is represented with agressive symbols that stand for the stimuli from the surroundings and as such they purports the appearance of agression. Such symbols of agression can be films with agressive contents, toys, observed violence, weapons and similar. (up. Žužul, 1989: 64-79).

3. CAUSES AND CONSEQUNECES OF PUPILS' AGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

When speaking generally about the causes and consequeces of pupils' agressive behaviour at school, it is important to bear in mind the fact that the causes of such behaviour are mupltiple and that they differ in different development phases. The identification of causes is importnat because it helps with spotting "risky children" and it makes it possible to act prevnetively before problematic behaviour appears. If we do not act preventively, agressiion is more difficult to be dealt with once it appears.

3.1. A pupil's personality as the cause of agressive behaviour

One of important factors that can cause to agressive behaviour is a pupil's personality. The individuals that show biggest number of agressive reactions in a on situation tend to be more agressive in other situations, too. This confirms the hypothesis of agression being a stable feature of a presonality and it it gets formed rather early in one's life. (Žužul, 1989: 93-99).

The author Thomas A. Speaks about three kinds of temperament that can be recognized in the eraliest childhood.

Unique temperament is related to babies that have a predictable rhytham eating and sleeping. These are children with a postive disposition and they are capable of adapting easily.

Children with temperament that is characterized by a somewhat slower "phase of warming up", have also got a predictable rhythm of eating and sleeping. In new situations they act cautiously but they adapt to the situation as soon as they have investigated the circumstances in their own pace.

Difficult temperament in the earliet childhood comprises lability, restlesness and short attention span. Researches have shown that children with such temperemant often show certain kinds of deviant behaviour in their youth. It depens of parents and their edicational influence whether agressive behaviour will appear or not. It is not difficult to conclude that ,,dificult temperament" in itslef does not obligatorilylead to agressive behaviour.

Agressive children very often find an excuse for their behaviour by claiming that they have been prooked, and less often by claiming that the victims are physically weaker and that they do show resistence. They are prone to attibute adversary intentions to others and to claim that victims are responsible for being maltreated. They find an excuse for their behaviour by claiming that their peers behaved in an adversary manner, and they thend to interpert "the social signs" of their peers as the signs of antagonism. However, the researches shows that a small number of children bhevase provocatively and therefore we can assume a several causes of agressive behaviour among children even though they have not been provoked. A certain number of children behaves agressivelly in other to show others that they are powerful and strong. In this way they satisfy their need to dominant among their peers. Agressive behaviour can also appear when a vicitm is similar to children that a bully sees as victims, if children tolerates the demands of a bully and when they do not show facial and verbal signs that act repressively of a bully's behaviour. (Krnjajić, 2002: 25).

4. THE POSSIBILITY OF AGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR PREVENTION AT SCHOOL

School as an educational institution puts in the forground two sides in a partnership – pupils and teachers. Despite the dact that a teacher is traditionally seen as a lecturer and one who conveys knowledge, that is not his only role. Very often we tend to forget another very important educational role of a teacher whereby he acts educationally by setting his own example.

A teacher is a medaitor between a school, school programme and a pupil. He has got a big role in school's functioning and therefore it can be concluded that he has got an important role when ti comes to the appearance and prevention of agressive behaviour. The reasearches that dealt with discipline problems point ot to the fact that teachers of slightly older children see speaking in the class and disturbing other children as the biggest discipline problems, while teachers of the youngest children see speaking in the class, agressive behaviour and noise as the biggest discipline problems. (Krnjajić, 2002: 19).

When it comes to agressive behaviour of pupils at schol, the teacher has got the biggest role in it its prevention. It is not unknown that quite often teachers use threats as well as physical punishment as strategies for the prevention of agressive behaviour. Teachers very often use violent strategies that end the conflict, whereas pupils, according to the teachers' claims, aslo use kind of behaviour that are not adequate and do not contirbute to the resolution of the conflict, but they often only deepens the initianl conflict and lead to the new ones. In the same way, in order to prevent agressive behaviour, teachers very often yell at pupils, threaten them with low grades and the removal from the class. Such "education!" measuers for the prevention of agressive behaviour are least efficient and

"educationl" measuers for the prevention of agressive behaviour are least efficient and successful. In this way teachers become models of agressive behaviour. It would be desirable for teachers to build up a kind of pedagogical behaviour that supresses and rejects repressive measures and to build with pupils a relationship of cooperation and partnership.

We will single out some of the most efficient ways that teachers can use in order to prevent agressive behaviour among pupils.

A teacher should get to know about a child's personality and the situation in his family, his the level of his emotional development, situations that he finds himself in at a school so he could discover the causes of a child's agressive behaviour (it has been already said that discovering of causes of agressive behaviour is the first step towards its).

A teacher should behave towards pupils with attention, kindness and respect.

A teacher should present pupils with kinds of social behaviour that ar an alternative to agressive behaviour.

A teacher should reward desirable behaviour and show open disapproval yowards agressive behaviour.

Teachers should be provided with educational contents that enables non-agressive resolution of conflicting situations.

Parents, pedagogues and psychologists should be included in the process of solving the problems of agressive behaviour.

A teacher should exchange their experience with their colleagues, follow the adequate literature and attend seminars of professional advancemt.

It is important for a teacher to create the atmosphere in which everyone feels safe, accepted and appreciated. If there are problems related to pupils' behaviour, concrete respressive measuers should be used in the classroom. We will list a several concrete stepts that create a positive atmosphere in the classroom.

A teacher should act efficinetly as soon as the case of agression appears.

A teacher should come up with a set of simple, concrete and applicable rules in the classroom and gymnastics hall (together with pupils).

A teacher should listen to pupils and try to understan them.

A teacher should try and help pupils to express their emotions.

A teacher should present to his pupils the skills that will help them to solve conflicts, to accept others (to develop the sense of empathy) and he should also promote team work.

A teacher should help pupils to develop self-confidence and self-respect.

One should never be agressive towards a bully, since in this way, agressive behaviour gets supressed only temporarily, but it does not slove a problem, since in this way an example of positive behaviour is not being set.

A teacher should give an example of proper behaviour in all the situations.

A teacher should give an opportunity to bullies to "shine", to be very good at certain activities and since it will make them feel that somebody has got belief in them. The key for constructive approach to agressive behaviour among children is restitution. Restitution is the process in which the mistake is being corrected. Instead of a punishment it gives a child the opportunity to correct the mistake by his own efforts and in this way to keep and improve his self-respect, and all of that by not deprving him of the responsibility for his own decisions at the same time. Above all, it should be put to a pupil's knowledge that everyone makes mistakes and then an accent should be put on what should be done in order to correct a mistake that was made. The pupil should suggest solutions by himslef and by acting in that way he corrects the mistake. It happens very often that pupils reject a teacher's help or talking to him (be about a victim of agression or the bully himself). Teachers do not succeede to help pupils since they do not know how to act efficiently. Theit failure is usually in what they say to a child when he has got problems with behaviour.

CONCLUSION

Our analysis showed that agressive behaviour at school is a very complex problem to which proper attention should be devoted. Since agressive behaviour is inevitably followed by the risk of the appearance of conflict, pupils' demotivation, neglecting primary school obligations, etc., it should be seen as a serious problem. Therefore, it is very important to differentiate between assertive (reliable) behaviour from agressive behavisour, both at school and everyday life. On the basis of has been learned about agression so far, it is possible to give a main features of a strategy for control and regulation of this undesirable kind of pupils' behaviour.

As it has been already said, there are meany sources of agression at school, family and society. Discovering and controlling frustrating situations should be some of the main tasks of each teacher. It is difficult to control sub sitiations if we do not follow a pupil and if we do not warn them after they show the first signs of agressive behaviour It is more efficient to act prevetively, i.e. to try and teach pupils the skills of contolling their emotions and reacting to frustration. On the basis of that it is possible to to use the strategy of social learning (modelling and stimulating) so we could, in this way, enable pupils to solve conflicts related to school and social life with the use of non-agressive techniques. Finally, we remind teachers of some important moments that can the of essential importance in their efforst to act educationally and prevetively when ti comes to pupils' agressive behaviour:

- 1. to work permannetly on their pedagogical and psychological education,
- 2. to try and recognize the fosrt symtpomns of agressive behaviour among pupils,
- 3. to learn to differentiate between agressive and assertive behaviour of pupils,
- 4. to discover and control frustrating situatuations in which pupils find,
- 5. model non-agressive behaviour,
- 6. moderate and timely punishment,
- 7. learn how to control your own emotions and emotions of your pupils,
- 8. help your pupils to express their rage and to get conscious of it,
- 9. provoke and "teach" empathy,
- 10. use pedagogical tactics in order to sublime (up. Čokorilo, 2010:180).

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INTERNET LINKS

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