



Validity and Reliability Study of the Early Childhood Peer Violence Children Observation Form

Okul Öncesi Dönemde Akran Şiddeti Çocuk Gözlem Formu Geçerlik ve Güvenirlik Çalışması

Nazife Koyutürk Koçer  Gülümser Gültekin Akduman 

Dr., Ministry of Education, Istanbul, Turkey

Prof. Dr., Gazi University, Gazi Education Faculty, Fundamental Education Department, Ankara, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Developing a teacher observation based evaluation instrument so as to identify peer violence behaviors of children in early childhood educational institutions was aimed in this study. Development stages and validity and reliability studies of the Peer Violence Children Observation Form were included in the study. Stages concerning creating the item pool of the Peer Violence Children Observation Form, ensuring content validity based on expert opinions and carrying out tentative implementations were observed. Content validity was achieved according to the opinions of 7 field experts. The Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was evaluated so as to determine reliability after the tentative implementation. According to the study results, it is evident that the form, consisting of physical violence, verbal violence and indirect violence sub-dimensions, is quite reliable at all sub-dimensions for the bully child, victim child and passive bully child.

Keywords: Preschool Education, Bullying, Peer Violence

ÖZET

Bu araştırmada okul öncesi eğitim kurumuna devam eden çocukların akran şiddetini belirlemek amacıyla öğretmen gözlemine dayalı bir ölçüm aracı geliştirmek amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada Akran Şiddeti Çocuk Gözlem Formu'nun oluşturulması, geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışmalarına yer verilmiştir. Akran Şiddeti Çocuk Gözlem Formu için madde havuzunun oluşturulması, alan uzmanı görüşleriyle kapsam geçerliğinin sağlanması, denemelik uygulamanın yapılması aşamaları izlenmiştir. Toplam 7 alan uzmanının görüşleri doğrultusunda kapsam geçerliği sağlanmıştır. Denemelik uygulama sonrasında güvenilirliğinin belirlenmesi amacıyla Cronbach's Alpha iç tutarlılık katsayısı hesaplanmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda fiziksel şiddet, sözel şiddet, dolaylı şiddet alt boyutlarından oluşan formun, tüm alt boyutlarında zorba çocuk, kurban çocuk ve pasif zorba çocuk için oldukça güvenilir olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Öncesi Eğitim, Zorbalık, Akran Şiddeti

1. INTRODUCTION

After starting school, children learn how to integrate their own interest and needs with other students' interests and needs. They need to learn how to follow rules and perform their duties decently when proceeding with their co-workers or trying to boost their imagination. Failure experienced at these stages can cause a feeling of insufficiency or incompetence in the child with peer relationships. It is important for the child to control negative emotions encountered during this stage and to display the behaviors expected by him or her (Koyutürk-Koçer & Gültekin-Akduman, 2021).

Types of peer relationships emerge as a result of experiences between peers. Peer violence is one type of these relationships (Gülay-Ogelman & Erten-Sarıkaya, 2016). Polanin, Espelage and Pigott (2012) define peer violence as a physical, psychological, social behavior resulting from inequality in strength; or, with respect to other factors, forceful and perpetual aggressive behaviors against a weaker victim. Being exposed to peer violence (being a victim), refers to a child encountering repetitive and long term negative behaviors displayed by one or more children. Children who carry out peer violence (bully) are those who systematically bully a group they chose among their peers (Pellegrini, 1998). "Supportive-passive bully" children are defined as those who tend to bullying but don't have an active role (Olweus, 2003).

It is evident that peer violence takes place under three titles physical violence, verbal violence and indirect violence (Sharp & Smith, 2003). Physical violence refers to hitting, slapping, punching, holding too tight, shaking and similar behaviors (Monks, 2000; Sharp & Smith, 2003; Craig & Pepler, 2003). Verbal violence refers to teasing, nicknaming, scolding, shouting, using bad words and similar behaviors (Monks, 2000; Sharp & Smith, 2003). Indirect violence refers to behaviors such as gossiping, intentionally excluded from the group or ignoring (Rivers & Smith, 1994).

Peer violence is connected with many problems that can touch many children's and other people's lives. When a child is victimized, he or she may get afraid to go to school. The child can get sick on Sunday evening and have a sick stomach even when thinking about going to school on Monday morning and facing with the bullies. Fear, anxiety and stress can cause children to fake being sick, to truant school or skip classes. These weakening emotions not only cause children to fall behind with school activities but also lead to despair, depression and even post-

traumatic stress. Aggression, despair and maybe even hopelessness emerge after fear, anxiety and stress. In addition, children can question whether or not they can rely on the assistance of the adults around them or can feel they deserve being peer bullied due to the feeling of being disadvantaged (Beane, 2008).

Physical symptoms such as feeling unwell, losing appetite or unwilling to do something, aggressiveness, anxiety, insomnia, fatigue, feeling ill and scared, depression, staying at home, vomiting, attempting to suicide are observed in children who are victimized (Rigby 1997). In addition, one other emotional reaction commonly reported in peer victimized children is chronic anxiety (Olweus, 1978). Observation studies on children who were exerted to peer violence during early childhood underline that effects of peer violence are prolonging (Olweus, 1993; Farrington, 1993). It is also evident that victimized children have low self-confidence and can undergo depression during adulthood (Rigby 2003). It is believed that peer violence begins during early childhood when peer interaction is quite high.

Ineffective peer relationships that emerge during early childhood lead to negative outcomes in all developmental stages including feeling of guilt, maladaptive behavior and low school performance (Szewczyk-Sokolowski, Bost, & Wainwright, 2005). As they progress in social and emotional skills, children also gain the confidence and efficiency required for interacting, problem solving and overcoming emotions (Parlakian, 2003). Based on this, it is considered important to bring in the child with skills such as social skills, emotion regulation and social problem solving to prevent encountering peer violence.

It is believed that it's important to identify peer violence, which leads to crucial outcomes, by developing relative measurement instruments. Measurement tools which allow observing children in their natural environments are crucial in getting information about children behaviors during early childhood. Detailed information can be obtained about such children behaviors through these measurement tools. Thus, studies can be carried out on identifying behaviors, gathering information about children's peer roles, interactions and problematic behaviors and preventing them.

According to studies conducted in Türkiye, it is evident that the number of studies on peer violence and bullying during early childhood are low and that the measurement instruments used in these studies are:

"*Peer Victimization Scale*", is the instrument developed by Kochenderfer and Ladd in 1997 for children aged 5-6. The linguistic equivalence, reliability and validity studies of the scale were carried out by Gülay (2008). It is filled in by teachers. The scale consists of four items concerning the four types of aggressiveness (physical, indirect, direct and general). Each item is scored through the "Never", "Sometimes" and "Always" expressions. The internal consistency coefficient was identified as .72 ($p < .01$) (Gülay, 2008).

The "*Peer Bullying Scale*" was developed based on the "*Peer Victimization Scale*". The level of peer bullying was determined through the four items that were created parallel with the four items in the Peer Victimization Scale. The extent of peer victimization was examined through the Peer Victimization Scale and the extent of peer bullying was examined through this scale (Gülay-Ogelman- Erten Sarıkaya, 2016).

The "*Bully and Victim Child Behaviors Evaluation Form*" was developed by Özyürek and Kurnaz (2019). The form consists of three sub-dimensions; bully child behaviors (14 items), victim child behaviors (13 items) and passive-bully child behaviors (5 items). The KR-20 internal consistency coefficient was observed as 0.86 for the Bully Child Behaviors sub-dimension, 0.88 for the Victim Child Behaviors sub-dimension and 0.71 for the Passive-Bully Child sub-dimension (Özyürek & Kurnaz, 2019).

It is believed that enhancing this form, which allows observing the types of peer violence (physical, verbal, indirect) displayed by children during early childhood according to the roles of children (bully, victim and passive-bully). The need for research stems from this.

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this study is to carry out the validity and reliability studies of the Peer Violence Child Observation Form developed from the Education Program for Preventing Peer Violence so as to prevent peer violence behaviors of children during early childhood.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section consists of information about the study group, the form development process and data analysis. Before collecting data, the form to be used in the application was submitted to the "Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education"; Necessary permission has been obtained for the implementation.

2.1. Study Group

The study group consists of 60-72 months aged 50 students studying in İsa Yusuf Alptekin Primary School located in Bağcılar, İstanbul under the Ministry of National Education during the 2018-2019 academic years.

2.2. Developing the Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument was developed, as a requirement for the dissertation carried out by Koyutürk-Koçer (2020) so as to determine peer violence among early childhood children.

The stages for defining the features to be examined, creating the experiment items, seeking expert opinions, carrying out a pilot study, conducting validity and reliability analyses and achieving the final form (Tezbaşaran, 2008) were followed closely when developing the form.

Stages of the Peer Violence Child Observation Form are given below:

- ✓ *Conducting a relative literature review:* When defining the features to be examined, national and international researches were examined and a draft was created concerning the concepts of peer violence.
- ✓ *Determining the items and sub-dimensions of the observation form:* As a result of the examinations, it was observed that there are three groups concerning peer violence; one who initiates and displays violence (bully), one who supports the bully (passive bully) and one who is exposed to violence (victim). According to the literature review, it is evident that peer violence during early childhood is generally accepted as physical violence but it can also take place as verbal and indirect violence. With this respect, it was underlined to focus on bully, passive bully and victim states in the physical violence, verbal violence and indirect violence dimensions.
- ✓ *Getting expert opinions:* After determining the model of the Children Observation Form (three dimensions and three groups for each dimension), opinions of seven early childhood lecturers were resorted to.
- ✓ *Rearranging the form based on expert opinions:* Content validity of the Peer Violence Children Observation Form was ensured at this stage. Content validity is defined as the type of validity that determines to what extent the items of the evaluation instrument correctly reflect the feature that is to be evaluated (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020; Yeşilyurt & Çapraz, 2018). Getting the sufficient amount and effective expert opinions while determining the extent of content validity of the evaluation instrument items concerning the target feature is necessary to achieve high content validity of the evaluation instrument (Yeşilyurt & Çapraz, 2018).

The vertical table was changed to a horizontal table after gathering expert opinions for the Children Observation Form items. The statement “joins the behavior his/her peer started” was added to passive-bully items based on expert opinions. Items related to passive-bully children were reorganized. The making fun of and teasing items in the verbal violence dimension were found to be the same and the making fun of item was excluded from the form. Based on expert opinions, it was emphasized that “scolding and shouting” statements are difficult to be differentiated during the observation stage, thus the shouting statement was excluded from the form leaving only the scolding statement. After these corrections, a total of 16 items concerning the bully, passive bully and victim children were reorganized and the Children Observation Form obtained its final form with 7 items under physical violence, 4 items under verbal violence and 5 items under indirect violence.

- ✓ *Checking form items:* Scale items were read out loudly to three preschool teachers before the pre-implementation stage. Whether or not the teachers misunderstood or failed to understand a point was detected.

Information concerning the Peer Violence Children Observation Form is given on Table 1.

Table 1. Features of the peer violence children observation form

Dimensions	Groups	Number of items	Ranking
Physical violence	Bully child	7	3 point degree
	Passive bully child	7	
	Victim child	7	
Verbal violence	Bully child	4	
	Passive bully child	4	
	Victim child	4	
Indirect violence	Bully child	5	
	Passive bully child	5	
	Victim child	5	

It is evident on Table 1 that there are a total of 16 items; 7 items in the physical violence dimension, 4 items in the verbal violence dimension and 5 items in the indirect violence dimension of the Child Observation Form. Each item of the dimensions contains statements for “bully child”, “passive-bully child” and “victim child”. Form items were degreed under the 3 point (never-once-more than once) Likert method. There are no items in the form that need to be re-coded during the scoring stage.

2.3. Data Analysis

Consensus among the experts and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient were used to ensure content validity during data analysis.

3. FINDINGS

Content validity and reliability analyses of the Peer Violence Children Observation Form are presented in this section.

Opinions of seven early childhood lecturers were resorted to so as to identify the content validity of Peer Violence Children Observation Form. The vertical table was changed to a horizontal table after gathering expert opinions for the form items. The statement “joins the behaviour his/her peer started” was added to passive-bully items based on expert opinions. Items related to passive-bully children were reorganized. The “making fun of” and “teasing” items in the verbal violence dimension were found to be the same and the “making fun of” item was excluded from the form. Based on expert opinions, it was found convenient to exclude the “shouting” item and leave only the “scolding” item in the form so as not to make it difficult to differentiate the “scolding and shouting” statements during the observation. After these corrections, a total of 16 items concerning the bully, passive bully and victim children were reorganized and the Children Observation Form obtained its final form with 7 items under physical violence, 4 items under verbal violence and 5 items under indirect violence.

Reliability of the Peer Violence Children Observation Form was determined with the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient.

The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated so as to determine the reliability of the Peer Violence Child Observation Form at the end of the implementation. Calculation results are given on Table 2.

Table 2. Cronbach Alpha reliability values of the children observation form

Dimensions	Groups	Cronbach’s Alpha
Physical violence	Bully child	0.95
	Passive bully child	0.94
	Victim child	0.82
Verbal violence	Bully child	0.95
	Passive bully child	0.95
	Victim child	0.86
Indirect violence	Bully child	0.97
	Passive bully child	0.92
	Victim child	0.76

Kalaycı (2009) underlines that the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient can be interpreted as:

- ✓ unreliable if $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$.
- ✓ low reliability if $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$.
- ✓ quite reliable if $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$.
- ✓ highly reliable if $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$.

Thus, it is evident that the Child Observation Form has quite or highly reliable results for all measurements.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to carry out the validity and reliability studies of the Peer Violence Children Observation Form, which aims at preventing peer violence behaviors of children during early childhood. A literature review was carried out initially, then the items of Peer Violence Children Observation Form were created. Form items were presented to 7 field experts and the items were determined. Among the 16 items, there are 7 items in the physical violence dimension, 4 items in the verbal violence dimension and 5 items in the indirect violence dimension of the Child Observation Form. Each item of the dimensions contains statements for “bully child”, “passive-bully child” and “victim child”. Form items were degreed with the 3 point Likert scale. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability analysis was conducted concerning the reliability of the Peer Violence Children Observation Form. It was concluded that the Peer Violence Children Observation Form is highly reliable for bully, victim and passive-bully children at the physical violence, verbal violence and indirect violence dimensions. The Peer Violence Children Observation Form is considered convenient to be used by teachers in evaluating the students. A more accurate evaluation can be made concerning children behaviors through multiple observations. The Peer Violence Children Observation Form can help teachers evaluate children behaviors after they adapt to their school especially during free play time. Sparing at least 30 minutes for the observation is also found useful.

4.1. Suggestions

- ✓ When evaluating early childhood year’s children, survey-based information are gathered through adults due to their age groups, thus, observation-based evaluation is preferred when evaluating children. The child observation form concerning peer violence was developed in this study, validity and reliability studies were carried out. Observation forms that examine various features can be developed and can contribute to the field.

- ✓ The peer violence child observation form consists of items about bully, victim and passive-bully children. Items concerning audience children are not included in the form. Children in the audience seats can be included in the new forms of further studies.
- ✓ The Peer Violence Children Observation Form is limited to data that are based on teacher opinions concerning children who attend to an early childhood institution and have normal development. The reliability coefficient can be examined under a more comprehensive sample. Reliability can also be examined in studies conducted on children with special needs.

Acknowledgements

This paper is part of a doctoral dissertation of the corresponding author.

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