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Does peer-mediation really work? effects of conflict resolution and peer-mediation training on high school students' conflicts[1]

Abbas Turnuklu[a]*, Tarkan Kacmaz[a], Dilara Sunbul[a], Hatice Ergul[a]

[a]Dokuz Eylul University Conflict Resolution Research Centre, Izmir, Turkey

Abstract

The purpose of the research was to examine the effectiveness of Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation (CRPM) training on high school students' interpersonal conflicts. The study was conducted in a high school located in a low SES part of Izmir, Turkey. During the two-year study, a total of 830 students from 28 classrooms received training. Data were collected through peer mediation forms filled by the mediator students following the mediation sessions. Majority of the conflicts referred to mediation were physical, verbal and non-verbal violence, relationship and communication conflicts, and conflicts of interest. Of the 253 mediation sessions; 94.9% resulted in resolution and 5.1% in no-resolution. This result indicates that the peer mediation had been effective in constructive and peaceful resolution of high school student conflicts.

Keywords: Effects; high school; peer-mediation; student; work.

1. Introduction

Interpersonal violence in schools continues to jeopardize the safety and quality of education in the schools today. Woody (2001) argues that school violence has received greater attention in society and in the professional literature in the past decade, primarily because of the recent occurrence of increased acts of violence in schools throughout the world. However, these acts of violence are often chronic and less extreme in the form of verbal threats, cursing, name calling, insults, racial slurs, pushing, grabbing, shoving, punching, kicking, and fighting which are commonplace in many schools, and which ultimately cause disruption of the educational process, fear and absenteeism among students, and staff burnout (Hart & Gunty, 1997). Traditionally, as a response to the problems of

* Abbas Turnuklu. Tel.: 0090-232-4204882/1633; fax: 0090-2324204895.
E-mail address: abbas.turnuklu@deu.edu.tr.

disruptive and violent students, teachers and administrators often make punitive decisions. Yet, few professionals would agree that punitive, reactive measures to aggressive acts teach appropriate behaviors or that they are effective in the long term (Smith, Daunic, Miller & Robinson, 2002). Therefore, alternative approaches to interpersonal conflict resolution have been sought.

Hart and Gunty (1997) claim that, in the last decade, an alternative form of response to this problem has been "Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation" (CRPM) programs. Similarly, Smith et. al. (2002) report that many educators have responded to the need for alternatives by implementing school-based preventive programs focusing on CRPM training, which emphasize teaching students to manage their own conflicts and which represent a move away from programs that depend on punitive, seclusionary methods of behavior control. These effective, student-centered, preventive programs can reduce teacher stress and increase instruction time. Such programs also provide students with multiple opportunities to be responsible for their own actions at a critical developmental period. Through conflict resolution training, students can better understand the dynamics of conflict and become better equipped to deal constructively with interpersonal conflicts, and use appropriate skills in handling their shared problems (Burrell, Zirbell, Allen, 2003). Stevahn and Johnson (1997) claim that students learn to negotiate constructive resolutions to their conflicts through conflict-resolution training. They define negotiation as a process by which people who have both shared and opposed interests and wish to come to an agreement attempt to work out a settlement. Through constructive and integrative negotiation, students attempt to maximize both their gains and the others'.

Johnson and Johnson (1994) argue that although students are naturally socialized through interpersonal interaction and conflicts, without a systematic CRPM program, many school-age children develop destructive and ineffective conflict resolution strategies. In addition, Johnson et. al. (1992) also claim that most students are ill-equipped with skills or knowledge about how to resolve conflicts or how to manage their feelings in conflict situations, and mismanagement of interpersonal conflicts usually results in violence. Because some children believe that physical force is the procedure by which conflicts are resolved, and others use such procedures as verbal attack, the cold shoulder, giving in, getting even, or responding in kind. This general lack of co-orientation and skills is problematic for the quality of school life and forecasts future adult problems (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Therefore, managing conflicts constructively emerges as one of the most important competencies that children, adolescents, and young adults need to master as part of their schooling (Stevahn Johnson, Johnson & Schultz 1997). In support of this view, Jones (2004) reports that exposure to conflict resolution and peer mediation reduces personal conflict and increases the tendency to help others with their conflicts, increases prosocial values, decreases aggressiveness, and increases perspective taking and conflict resolution competence.

Probably the most popular conflict resolution training program in schools today is peer mediation which is basically a structured process in which a neutral and impartial student assists two or more students to negotiate an integrative resolution to their conflict (Johnson et. al., 1995). Mediation is also described as a process which involves disputants actively in the resolution of their own conflicts, assisted by trained peers (Telson and McDonald,1992). Johnson and Johnson (1996, b) conclude that peer mediation programs reduce the rates of suspensions and detentions, referrals to the principal, and absenteeism, while increasing students' self-confidence, academic time on task, and academic achievement.

Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs used in schools are generally of two types: (a) the "cadre" approach, in which a small number of students are trained to serve as peer mediators for the whole school, and (b) the "total student body" approach, in which all students in the school (or class) are taught how to manage conflicts constructively. The cadre approach to peer mediation, which can be adopted relatively easily and inexpensively, is based on the assumption that a few specially trained students can defuse and constructively resolve interpersonal conflicts among students (Johnson, Johnson, Dudley, Magnuson, 1995). However, this approach has its shortcomings in that peer mediators selected by grown ups may not always reflect students' choice. Therefore, conflicting students may not relate to and confide in these peer mediators who were selected without their participation. On the other hand, total student body approach has its own shortcomings, too. First, being a peer mediator requires certain personal characteristics which may not be possessed by each and every student. Second, students may not trust and confide in any and all students. Therefore this study used an eclectic approach which consists of a school wide CRPM training but selection of peer mediators by the students themselves. Since all students received CRPM training, familiarity with the peer mediation process was ensured, they had faith in the

process for resolving their own conflicts peacefully, and therefore, readily welcomed peer mediation without adult supervision and referral.

Various research studies on the effectiveness of CRPM training programs exist worldwide (Savage & Rehfuss, 2007; Smith et. al., 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Bell et. al., 2000; Johnson & Johnson, 1996, a;). A cumulative result in these studies was that 90-100% of the conflicts brought to peer mediators resulted in agreements accepted by both parties. A meta-analysis of peer mediation studies by Burrell, Zirbell, and Allen (2003) reveals that, in twenty-three studies, of the 4327 mediations, 4028 ended in agreement (93%) which indicates the success of mediation programs in the schools. Majority of the above studies report positive findings about the effects of peer mediation on student violence from western cultures. Our purpose in the present study was to test empirically the effectiveness of CRPM training in Turkish primary school context.

Despite the increased popularity of peer mediation programs, very little research on its nature and effectiveness has been conducted, and it is relatively unknown what specific types of conflicts are mediated by conflict managers, what solutions are derived from peer mediation, and whether there are differences among male-male, female-female, and male-female conflicts (Johnson & Johnson, 1996, a). This study examined the effects of a peer mediation model in low SES high school students' interpersonal conflicts. The research was conducted to provide more information on (a) types of conflicts brought to peer mediation in a primary school, (b) differences among male-male, female-female, and male-female types of conflicts, (c) gender of disputants and mediators, (d) number of disputants, (e) success rates of peer mediation sessions, (f) types of solutions derived from peer mediation, and (g) differences among male-male, female-female, and male-female types of solutions.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The study was conducted in a high school located in a low-SES part of Izmir, Turkey. The CRPM program was administered to the first-year students by the researchers for two years. The training in the fall semester was followed by peer-mediation in the spring semester. In the first year of the research, 460 first-year students were trained and they were observed during the following three semesters. In the second year, 370 more first-year students were trained and observed during the semester that followed. A total of 830 students from 28 classrooms received training for two hours a day, for 16 weeks, and following the training, 12 peer mediator students were selected from each classroom by their friends. For such a large scale, whole-school-based study required permission had to be obtained from the Turkish Ministry of Education's, Research and Development Centre which rigorously monitors a wide range of ethical and research-standard issues. Following the approval of this centre, requests from schools which reported an increased number of conflicts and higher incidence of interpersonal violence among students, and which were interested in such intervention programs were reviewed, and one high school which offered whole school participation, and ensured administrative commitment, as well as parent-teacher association and student body support was selected. The school where the study was conducted serve students with lower socio-economic levels. Majority of the students come from impoverished families that had migrated from various parts of Turkey.

2.2. Procedures

The study was conducted in a high school for two years. For two consecutive years first year students were given CRPM training. The CRPM training program was developed based on current literature in the field, such as by Simpson (1998), Teolis (1998), Johnson and Johnson (1995a), Johnson and Johnson (1995b), Cohen (1995), Schrumpf, Crawford, and Bodine (1997a), Schrumpf et al. (1997b), Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf (2002a), Bodine et al. (2002b), and Girard and Koch (1996). The 31-class-hour training program covered four basic skills; understanding the nature of interpersonal conflicts (eleven hours), communication skills (four hours), anger management skills (six hours), and interpersonal conflict resolution skills (ten hours). "Understanding the Nature of Interpersonal Conflicts" focused on rights and responsibilities, associations of conflicts, understanding interpersonal conflicts, learning the benefits of conflicts, understanding the sources of conflicts, studying the conflict resolution

strategies and techniques. "Communication Skills" included active listening, empathy, self-expression, welcoming criticism, and respecting differences. "Anger Management Skills" included recognizing one's emotions, expressing one's emotions, the nature of anger, the kind of behaviour that triggers interpersonal relationships, reactions to anger, and how to manage our anger. "Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Skills" attempted to help students develop negotiation and peer mediation skills. The negotiation part of the program dwelled on the following issues: requesting that the shared problem be resolved through negotiation, determining the demands of each side and their reasons, determining the emotions of each side and their reasons, assuring the other side that their demands, emotions, and reasons are understood through empathy and active listening techniques, producing and evaluating resolution alternatives that reflect mutual interests, creating a just, fair and logical wise-agreement (win-win). The peer-mediation part of the program, on the other hand, focused on the following: Ending the aggression and calming the students; making sure that both sides are ready to seek mediation, facilitating the negotiation process (as explained above) and contracting the agreement (win-win).

Due to emotional overload as a result of the conflict, the disputants are, more often than not, unable to listen and understand each other. Therefore, mediator students are basically responsible for directing questions and reflecting what they understood through active listening. It is the disputants' responsibility to resolve the conflict and reach a win-win agreement. Disputants are mainly responsible for expressing themselves, understanding each other, generating solutions and agreeing on one of the solutions they generated.

The CRPM training program was presented to the experiment group during the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 academic year, beginning in September, for two hours a week, totaling 31 hours. The program material consisted of a teacher's book and a student book. The training sessions were held in the school during school hours, for two hours a week. The training involved individual learning, whole-class teaching, and pair-work and group-work activities. Scenarios were provided and role-play activities were carried out frequently. Before working with students, teachers were also trained to ensure a parallel between the teachers and the students in order to achieve school-wide reception of the program. By the end of the fall semester of 2007-2008 academic year, the training was completed and peer-mediation model was initiated and observed the following semester.

The model used in this study for selecting peer mediators was a synthesis of "total student body" and "cadre" approaches. The basis for this decision was to ensure that all students be familiar with how peer mediation works. After all the students in the school were given the CRPM training, a small number of students were selected by their class-mates to serve as peer mediators. Student input was used as selection criteria in appointing the peer-mediators. Students in each classroom were asked to name three class-mates they would trust and seek help from in resolving their interpersonal conflicts in a constructive and peaceful manner. The three class-mates students named were then run through a frequency test and the most popular students were appointed as classroom peer-mediators. Hence, those students who earned the trust and support of their friends were given priority. In each class, 12 peer-mediators were appointed with ideally equal gender distribution where possible.

After the peer-mediators were selected, the peer-mediation process was initiated. In teams of two, for two weeks each, peer-mediators mediated their friends' conflicts. Therefore, these peer-mediators were involved in the process as likely disputants as well. At the beginning of their two-week turns, the peer-mediators were once again trained for two hours using scenarios and role-playing techniques. They were also trained to assist disputants in negotiating their shared problems to reach a mutually satisfying wise agreement, and to make sure mediation report forms were completed properly. The purpose of this was to form a standard procedure among the mediators.

2.3. Completing mediator report forms

The essential part of the study was to ensure that the mediator report forms be completed duly by the mediators following the mediation sessions. The mediation report form consists of two pages. The first page includes an introductory paragraph, mediation rules, and the negotiation procedure. The negotiation procedure includes the following: determining the demands of each disputant and their reasons; determining the emotions of each disputant and their reasons; assuring the other disputant that their demands, emotions, and reasons are understood through empathy and active listening techniques; producing and evaluating resolution alternatives that reflect mutual interests; and creating a just, fair and logical agreement (win-win). After the mediation sessions the mediators are required to fill out the other side of the form, which includes the name and class of the mediator, date and place of the mediation session, names and classes of the disputants, the nature of conflict, whether an agreement was reached

or not, and the type of agreement. Both the mediator and the disputants are asked to provide the required information and sign the form. Mediators are to fill out this form after every session and return it to the school counsellor who is to check and file these report forms.

2.4 Dependent Measures

The dependent variables of the research were gender of the disputants and peer mediators, type and nature of conflict, and types of agreement derived from peer mediation. Data collected through mediation forms were analyzed through content-analysis. The dependent variables of the study; number and gender of the mediators and disputants, and the results of the mediation were computed quantitatively. However, the nature of conflicts, types of conflicts and types of agreement reached were analysed based on the written input of the students. Content-analysis was performed based on the model of Johnson et. al. (1996). First, all mediation forms were read to gain an orientation to their contents. Second, each form was read to categorize the responses. Third, related categories were combined into a more generic category (physical aggression, verbal aggression, non- verbal aggression, conflicts of interest, interpersonal and communication conflicts). Fourth, once the categories were determined, the rater reread each form and classified the responses into the appropriate categories.

Student responses were coded into predetermined categories by one of the researchers. Before the final coding intra-rater reliability was checked (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Responses in 50 mediation forms were coded by the same researcher twice, one week apart. The result of both codings indicated 94.23 % reliability.

2.5 Analysis of Data: For numerical data frequencies and percentages are reported for all dependent variables. A chi-square test was also used to compare frequencies. For qualitative data content analyses were performed.

3. Results

A total of 253 mediation sessions were held during the two years the study was conducted, 143 (56.5%) of which were mediated by girls and 110 (43.5%) by boys. When the genders of the mediators who were chosen to mediate conflicts were compared, a significant difference was found, $X2(1, N = 253) = 4.304$, $p < 0.05$, between male and female students which shows that more female students were preferred by their peers to mediate their conflicts than male students. When the number of disputants in the 253 conflicts referred to mediation were analyzed, 211 (83.4%) involved two disputants, 36 (14.2%) involved three, 5 (2%) involved four, and 1 (0.4%) involved six disputants. Majority of the conflicts were between two disputants. When the types of conflicts referred to mediation were analyzed, 86 (34%) were between girls, 113 (44.7%) were between boys, and 54 (21.3%) were between boys and girls. When the mediation sessions were compared in terms of disputants, a statistically significant difference, $X2(2, N = 253) = 20.688$, $p < 0.05$, was found. Majority of the conflicts appear to take place between boys.

The comparison of the types of conflicts referred to mediation is presented in Table 1. As can be seen in Table 1, student conflicts were analyzed under three headings in terms of gender of disputants as "male-male", "female-male", and "female-female". The types of conflicts referred to mediation were analyzed under five headings. These are "physical violence", "verbal violence", "non-verbal violence", "conflicts of interest", and "relationship and communication conflicts". As can also be seen in Table 1, types of conflicts vary according to gender of disputants. The content analysis of the 253 interpersonal conflicts revealed 268 conflict types. A holistic look at the conflict types shows that some conflict types prevail. For instance, 27% of all the conflicts are of "physical aggression". In this category "fighting" (13%) and "rough play" (13%) seem to prevail. "Verbal aggression" accounts for the 34% of the total conflicts. Under this heading, "humiliating" (17%) and "mocking" (9%) seem to prevail. Non-verbal aggression is not as frequent as physical and verbal aggression. "Hand gestures" and "looking daggers" only constitute 3%. When physical, verbal and non-verbal aggression were considered together, "interpersonal violence" seems to account for 64% of the total 268 conflicts. Therefore, aggression was seen as the most common type of conflict among first and second year students. In addition to these conflict types, "conflicts of interest" constitute 3% of all the conflicts. The prevalent conflict types in this heading are "conflicts regarding personal belongings" (2%) and "seating conflicts" (1%). "Relationship and communication conflicts" account for 29% of all conflicts. In this heading the prevalent types of conflict are "misunderstanding" (12%), "game related conflicts" (4%), "girl friend conflicts" (3%) and "not getting along" (3%)

When the types of conflict in the main headings were analyzed based on gender, different causes of conflict seem to prevail. "Fighting" and "rough play", prevalent in the physical aggression category, were more frequently seen in male-male conflicts than male-female and female-female conflicts. On the other hand, "humiliating" as the most

common cause in the non-verbal category seems to occur more frequently in male-female conflicts. However, "mocking" was seen more often in male-male conflicts. Similarly, "unauthorized use of another person's belongings" in "conflicts of interest" category was the cause of more male-female conflicts, whereas, "seating conflicts" was more common in female-female conflicts. Similar to this, while "misunderstanding" and "not getting along" in the relationship and communication category caused more female-female conflicts, male-male conflicts were more "game related".

Table 1 Types of Conflict referred to Mediation.

Types of Conflict referred to Mediation			M-M		F-M		F-F		TOTAL	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Physical Violence	1.	Fight (*fighting, hitting; physical assault*)	28	20	5	10	2	3	35	13
	2.	Play fighting (*tripping, practical joke, bumping*)	24	17	4	8	7	9	35	13
	3.	Molesting each other	2	1	1	2			3	1
Verbal Violence	4.	humiliating (verbal *dueling; swearing; insulting; verbal violence; verbal assault*)	24	17	12	24	10	13	46	17
	5.	Mocking (scoffing, name calling)	15	11	4	8	6	8	25	9
	6.	Aggression	5	4	2	4			7	3
	7.	Blaming, false accusation	2	1	1	2	2	3	5	2
	8.	Talking behind, gossiping					5	6	5	2
	9.	Not keeping secret					2	3	2	1
	10.	Lying			1	2			1	0
	11.	Threatening			1	2			1	0
Non-Verbal Violence	12.	Pestering; hand gestures	4	3	2	4			6	2
	13.	Looking daggers	2	1			1	1	3	1
Conflicts of Interest	14.	Conflicts regarding personal belongings (unauthorized use, not returning borrowed items, not sharing things; damaging other's belongings; scribbling other's notebook)	2	1	2	4	2	3	6	2
	15.	Seating conflicts			1	2	3	4	4	1
	16.	Line related conflicts	1	1					1	0
Relationship and Communication Conflicts	17.	Misunderstanding	9	7	5	10	19	24	33	12
	18.	Game related conflicts	12	9					12	4
	19.	Ogling other's girl friend; girl trouble	3	2	5	10	1	1	9	3
	20.	Not getting along	1	1	1	2	6	8	8	3
	21.	Jealousy					5	6	5	2
	22.	Negative feelings towards each other	2	1			3	4	5	2
	23.	Not observing class rules	1	1	2	4			3	1
	24.	Sulking					3	4	3	1
	25.	Prejudice			1	2	1	1	2	1
	26.	Exclusion					1	1	1	0
	27.	Sending virus to other's computer			1	2			1	0
	28.	Showing off	1	1					1	0
TOTAL			138	100	51	100	79	100	268	100

When the results of the 253 mediation sessions were analyzed, 240 (94.9%) resulted in agreement, while 13 (5.1 %) resulted in no agreement. When the mediation process was analyzed according to whether the mediation sessions resulted in agreement or no agreement, a statistically significant difference was found, $X2(1, N = 253) = 203.672$, p < 0.05. Therefore, the fact that 94.9% of 253 mediation sessions resulted in peaceful, constructive, and restorative agreement indicates that the peer-mediation model might be effective in negotiating student interpersonal conflicts of the high school students in low-SES schools.

When the types of agreement reached at the end of mediation sessions were analyzed, the following results, which are presented in Table 2 were found: 51% of the mediation sessions resulted in "negotiating an agreement", 28% resulted in "promising to stop offending behavior", and 9% resulted in "apologizing". Therefore, 88% of all the mediation sessions involved some sort of reconciliation, peace and absolution. Based on these results, we can assume that peer-mediation might be an effective approach to student interpersonal conflicts of high school students.

Table 2 Types of Agreement

Types of Agreement	Male-Male		Female-Male		Female-Female		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. No agreement	1	1	3	5	6	7	10	4
2. Avoidance/not talking	4	3	7	11	4	5	15	6
3. Apologizing	13	11	4	6	7	8	24	9
4. Negotiating an agreement	64	52	26	42	50	57	140	51
5. Agreement with stipulation	2	2	4	6	1	1	7	3
6. Promising to stop offending behaviour (*humiliate, fight, hit, mock, call names, use each others belongings without permission, sulk, etc.*)	39	32	18	29	19	22	76	28
TOTAL	123	100	62	100	87	100	272	100

When the student conflicts were analyzed in terms of the gender of disputants some significant results were found. "Negotiating an agreement" was more frequently used in female-female conflicts than male-male and male-female conflicts, whereas, "promising to stop offending behavior" was predominantly more common in male-male than male-female and female-female conflicts. "Apologizing", on the other hand, was more commonly seen in male-female male-female conflicts. In light of these results, it can be claimed that types of agreement differed according to the gender of the disputants.

4. Discussion

Peer-mediation programs have become a widely accepted student centered remedy for the increasing student violence in schools. One of the reasons for this acceptance is the ineffectiveness of adult imposed models in warranting the desired positive change in students' behavior and in preparing them for more serious future interpersonal conflicts. Despite the widespread use of such peer-mediation models, especially in developed countries, limited data exist on the effectiveness of these programs in developing countries. In today's globalizing world, more research to test the effectiveness of similar models in different cultures is needed. Present study involved testing the effectiveness of peer-mediation approach, based on western theory and practice, in a different setting in terms of pedagogical orientation, discipline concept, behavior management, child-rearing practice and socio-cultural dynamics.

This was a two-year study with high school students. During the first year of the study, all first-year students were given CRPM training for two hours a day for a total of 18 weeks and the following 18 weeks, peer-mediation model was tested on real student conflicts. During the second year, the new first-year students were given CRPM training and the returning students continued peer mediation.

The total number of peer-mediations during the two-year study was 253. Girls mediated 56.5% of these and boys mediated 43.5%. The model was run solely by the students. Either the disputants sought mediation or the conflicting

students were approached by the mediator students. Regardless of the gender of disputants, female mediators were preferred more over the male mediators. This may be due to the fact that girls are more proactive in mediating their friends' conflicts. Adult prompted mediations were too few to indicate any meaningful result. Majority of the conflicts referred to mediation were between two disputants (83.4%). Of the total 253 conflicts, 44.7% were male-male conflicts, 34% were female-female, and 21.3% were male-female conflicts. Nearly half of the conflicts referred to mediation were male-male conflicts.

Majority of the conflicts were of physical, verbal, and non-verbal nature (64%). Gender of the disputants seems to have an effect on the frequency of the types of conflict. For instance, physical violence (fighting and play fight) is predominantly seen among boys, while "humiliating" is prevalent among girls. "Conflicts of interest" which account for only 3% of the total conflicts does not seem to be as frequent among high school students. Relationship and communication conflicts which account for 29% of all conflicts, on the other hand, are seen more often among girls. The prevalent types in this category are "misunderstanding", "not getting along", and "jealousy". This indicates that types of conflicts appear to vary according to gender of disputants.

In this study, 240 (94.9%) of the 253 mediations ended in agreement. Therefore, we would not be wrong to assume that peer-mediation works in students in low-SES schools. This finding is in parallel with some of the research in western societies. For instance, Bell et al. (2000) reports 94% success rate in a study he conducted in a low-SES school; Rehfus (2007), reached 100% success rate in a diverse suburban elementary school; and Johnson et al. (1996) found that 98% of the mediations in their study ended in some form of agreement. Burrell, Zirbell, and Allen (2003), in their meta-analysis of 23 peer-mediation studies concluded that 4028 (93%) of the 4327 mediations reported in those studies ended in agreement. Findings from this study successfully replicated the success rate in the aforementioned studies in other countries. In light of these findings, it is possible to conclude that CRPM programs can prove to be an effective alternative in preventing school violence and building a more peaceful society both in western and other cultures.

In the 253 mediations, disputants were generally able to negotiate an agreement (51%). Additionally, 28% promised to stop the offending behavior and 9% promised to apologize, while 6% chose avoidance and not talking as a type of agreement. Types of agreement in the mediations seem to vary according to gender of disputants. When the types of agreement were analyzed based on gender of disputants, "promising to stop the offending behaviour" is more prevalent among boys. "Negotiating an agreement", on the other hand, is predominantly seen among girls. "Avoidance" and "not talking" was a more prevalent type of agreement in male-female conflicts. The relatively more integrative and constructive agreements reached may be due to structure of the study. The current study, offered CRPM training to all the first-year students for a whole semester during the first and second year of the study to achieve school wide awareness and acceptance of the model and a positive attitude toward peer-mediation. Thus, the students knowingly and willingly chose peer-mediation to resolve their conflicts and almost all of the mediations ended in more integrative constructive agreements.

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be made. First, peer-mediation can be a useful tool in resolving student conflicts across different cultural settings. Second, peer-mediation might also be useful in helping the students acquire the necessary skills to manage their conflicts by mediating their actual conflicts, and, thus, inoculating the young students for future more serious interpersonal conflicts. Third, this study tested a synthesis of Cadre approach and total student body model. Using only Cadre approach, Johnson et al. (1996), report 98% success rate, yet 84% of the agreements reached were avoidance. The present study, on the other hand, reports 94.9% success rate and almost all of the agreements were integrative agreement. The reason for this might be the program was offered to all first year students, and therefore, a positive attitude toward the model and necessary skill set were available to all students. Fourth, as a result of the nomination and selection of the peer mediator students by the students themselves they were able to trust and confide in the mediators. Therefore, offering the CRPM training to all the student body and allowing them to nominate and select the peer mediators themselves and initiate the model may augment the success of any such program.

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