**Impacts of Bullying**

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**Introduction**

Bullying remains one of the most pervasive and damaging issues within schools around the world. More than merely causing temporary discomfort, research demonstrates that bullying leads to severe and long-lasting consequences for affected students. It results in heightened psychological distress, undermines students’ sense of safety, and diminishes academic outcomes. This paper examines three major impacts of bullying supported by peer-reviewed research: increased suicide risks, its link to school shootings, and lowered academic achievement.

**Bullying and Increased Suicide Risks**

Among the most tragic outcomes associated with bullying is its strong correlation with suicidal thoughts and behaviors among youth. Zhang et al. (2023) found that adolescents who experience frequent or severe victimization are significantly more likely to engage in suicidal ideation or attempts compared to their peers. Similarly, Çetin et al. (2024) demonstrated that depression often serves as a mediating factor between bullying and suicide risk, suggesting that early mental health intervention can reduce tragic outcomes. Moreover, Zhang et al. (2022) noted that this relationship is not confined to victims alone. Bully-victims—those who both experience and perpetrate bullying—are also at elevated risk due to overlapping factors such as hopelessness and poor emotional regulation. Collectively, these findings highlight the importance of comprehensive school-based suicide prevention programs that include targeted mental health support for students exposed to bullying (Zhang et al., 2022; Çetin et al., 2024).

**Bullying and School Shootings**

Research also identifies bullying as a significant contributor to school shootings. According to Dowdell et al. (2022), case studies of school shooters frequently reveal histories marked by prolonged victimization and social rejection. Similarly, Leary, Kowalski, Smith, and Phillips (2003) analyzed multiple incidents and found that teasing, exclusion, and peer humiliation often preceded violent retaliation. Building on these earlier findings, Pfaffendorf et al. (2025) refined the understanding of such risks, demonstrating that bullying victimization constitutes a crucial sociological precursor to violent outcomes. When combined with social isolation and lack of adult support, bullying can escalate emotional distress into extreme actions. Thus, implementing robust anti-bullying measures and early intervention strategies can play a vital role in preventing school violence (Pfaffendorf et al., 2025).

**Bullying and Lowered Academic Achievement**

Bullying’s negative effects extend beyond mental health and safety, reaching into students’ academic performance. Mendez et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis showing that students who experience bullying display measurable declines in academic achievement, engagement, and cognitive-motivational factors. In a more recent study, Avcı and Koc (2024) confirmed that chronic bullying impairs attention, motivation, and classroom participation, ultimately resulting in lower grades and increased absenteeism. Furthermore, O’Reilly et al. (2022) emphasized that bullying victimization decreases students’ self-efficacy and school engagement, compounding the emotional and educational harm. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that bullying directly undermines academic success by damaging students’ confidence and sense of belonging in school (Avcı & Koc, 2024; Mendez et al., 2021; O’Reilly et al., 2022).

**Conclusion**

Bullying produces profound and far-reaching consequences for student well-being, school safety, and academic success. Peer-reviewed evidence demonstrates that it is closely associated with suicide risk, contributes to the likelihood of school shootings, and significantly reduces academic performance. Educators, families, and policymakers must therefore take proactive steps to address bullying through prevention programs, counseling, and inclusive school environments. By fostering empathy and early intervention, schools can protect students and promote safe, supportive, and academically enriching communities.

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