Research Article

Factors Related to Bullying: A Qualitative Study of Early Adolescent Students

Hedayatallah Shams,[1] Gholamreza Garmaroudi,[2,*] and Saharnaz Nedjat[3]

[1]Ph.D Candidate in Health Education and Promotion, School of Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran
[2]MD, MPH, Chair, Department of Health Promotion and Education Associate Professor of Maternal and Child Health Research Field: Child and Adolescent Mental Health, School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran
[3]MD, PhD, Professor, Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Knowledge, Utilization Research Center, School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran

Corresponding author: Garmaroudi Gholamreza, MD, MPH, Chair, Department of Health Promotion and Education Assistant Professor of Maternal and Child Health Research Field: Child and Adolescent Mental Health, School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, IR Iran. Tel: +98-2188989128, E-mail: garmaroudi@tums.ac.ir

Abstract

Background: Bullying is considered a serious health problem in primary schools, high schools, and universities. It can have negative effects on both the bully and who is bullied. The negative consequences of it include depression, anxiety, drug abuse, etc. These consequences can be devastating in many areas of the person's future life like his/her relations with other people. The current study aims at investigating the factors that students and teachers believe can affect bullying.
Methods: A qualitative design based on content analysis approach was used to collect the data and analyze the perspective of 72 Iranian students, 12 teachers, and 9 parents chosen by a purposeful sampling strategy in Gonabad. Semi-structured interviews were held in order to collect the data. Sampling was continued until the data saturation. The data were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis approach by MAXQUDA 2010 software.
Results: In this study, five factors associated with bullying were identified. The factors include 'psychological factors', 'family factors', 'school factors', 'socioeconomic factors', and 'the influence of the media'. The first factor includes four sub-factors of psychiatric disorder, pride and arrogance, jealousy, and imposing will and opinions on others. The second factor includes four sub-factors of family violence, wrong parenting, siblings' bullying behavior, and parental employment. The third factor includes four sub-factors of not paying attention to the students' inappropriate behaviors, discrimination against the students, teachers' behaviors, and peer influence. The fourth factor includes three sub-factors of the lack of patience, neighbors' influence on our behaviors, and poverty. And the fifth factor includes two sub-factors of the influence of social media and the Internet, and violent video games.
Conclusions: Bullying has different aspects and, therefore, we should pay attention to its psychological causes, family problems, school problems, and social and economic factors, etc. we should pay more attention to the lack of patience as a religious-mental variable which seems to be closely linked with a behavioral issue.

Keywords: Bullying, Adolescents, Qualitative Research

1. Background

Bullying means hurting someone else (1). Bullying has different types which are: Physical (hitting, shoving, stealing, or damaging property), verbal (name calling, mocking, hurtful teasing, or making sexist, racist, or homophobic comments), social (excluding others from a group, spreading rumors, or damaging friendships), written (writing notes or signs that are hurtful or insulting), and electronic (commonly known as cyber-bullying)–spreading rumors and hurtful comments through the use of cell phones (e.g., text messaging), e-mail, and on social media sites (2).

Currently, bullying is a globally serious problem, in particular, among school-age children. Bullying occurs in almost all schools and the rate of the problem is often more than what teachers and parents know. The results of the

international surveys have indicated that 4-45% of all children are bullies or victims of bullying (3). Bullying is a behavior that plagues the school as well as the family, because the negative consequences of the involvement in it, is already widely known for the bully as well as for the victim (4). This very common phenomenon is the abuse of power in which a strong person dominates and subdues a weak person (5). Bullying can lead to the development of emotional, physical, and mental problems in the victims (6). Bullying is more likely to occur in teen-years; it is also likely to peak at the age of 12 and after that it appears to happen less (7).

Bullying in school is a behavioral problem which can negatively affect the bullies' educational success and achievements, social skills, and mental health (8).

Students who are bullied will suffer from several prob-

lems and complications including: Social phobia, loneliness, isolation, and lack of self-confidence. They may also develop general anxiety disorder and get depressed or show aggressive behaviors. Even some of the victims may skip their school classes or drop out of their schools, or they may be at an increased risk of academic underachievement. School bullying among adolescents is an international problem which affects 100 to 600 million of teenagers annually (9).

Studies have indicated that about 30% of the students are affected somehow by the problem, but this figure has reached 72% of the students in Tehran; 28% of whom are victims, 9.5% bullies, and 34.5% are both victims and bullies (10). A lot of research has been conducted on bullying in three decades since Dan Olweus, 1977; however, regrettably, much is still unknown about this phenomenon (11). Griffin and Gross (2004) note that we do not yet have a comprehensive understanding of childhood bullying behavior, which is attributed, in part, to the types of the methods that have been used (12). Torrance (2000) noted that the dearth of qualitative research on bullying is surprising given that the exploration of bullying occurrences within the social context is necessary (13). Although bullying in children and adolescents is an old phenomenon, it has recently attracted the attention of many communities (14). Unfortunately each study has focused on a different aspect of bullying problem (13). Due to the fact that bulling is a psycho-social phenomenon and it has different aspects, quantitative study cannot investigate all the aspects of it and, therefore, we decided to conduct a qualitative study on the factors influencing the school bullying.

2. Methods

The present qualitative study has used content analysis. In content analysis, coding categories (factors and subfactors) are derived directly from the text data (15).

The study was conducted in all-girls and all-boys high schools in Gonabad city, Khorasan Razavi province in Iran. Interviews were conducted with the parents and the teachers who were willing to do interviews and had good verbal communication skills.

2.1. Participants

The study's participants included students, teachers, and parents. Purposeful sampling was used and the saturation of the data collected continued with maximum variation. Student Participants were selected by considering their gender, age, geographical area, and different grade. Teacher participants were selected by their gender and educational field. Parent Participants were selected by their

gender, job, and educational status. The participants included: 72 students (of whom 36 were male and 36 were female) who were between the ages of 12 - 15, 12 teachers and school principals (7 were female and 5 were male), and 9 parents (5 were male and 4 were female). In qualitative research the number of the samples is allowed to change until the researcher gets the new idea he/she wants (16). The research was conducted in Gonabad city's high schools in 2015 - 2016 school year (started September 23).

2.2. Ethical and Moral Considerations

First, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. They were told that they had the right to refuse to take part in the study and they could leave the study whenever they wanted to. Respondents were also insured that their personal information would be suitably protected and would not be revealed to anyone. After that, the participants signed the consent form. The study was approved by the ethics committee at Tehran University of Medical Sciences and was granted a code (8921108007).

2.3. Data Gathering

Data were collected from the participants through semi-structured interviews by a researcher who has an experience of 17 years of teaching in Medical University, and is a member of the parent-teacher Association School. Several parents-and-teachers meetings were held and different subjects were discussed in the meetings. Some of the key questions of the interviews include: What is the exact definition of school bullying? What are the different types of bullying? What factors can lead to the emergence of bullying behaviors? How can bullying be reduced in schools?

The interview time could vary for different participants, but they usually took 60 to 90 minutes and the average interview was 60 minutes. The interviews were all recorded and then the recordings were transcribed verbatim and the data were analyzed.

2.4. Data Analysis

To analyze quantitative data, the conventional content analysis method was used. So that, the interviews were recorded and, then, they were transcribed. In the next step, the data were coded by MAXQDA 10 software. Each word and phrase in the interviews was considered as a unit to be analyzed. Repeated review of the interviews in the writing forms as well as notes helped us to recognize the basic relationships between the concepts extracted from the participants' statements. Content analysis also helped us to reveal hidden themes and patterns in collecting the data. Data analysis was performed based on the steps suggested by Graneheim and Lundman (See Table 1). Irrelevant

themes were removed. The participants' statements were summarized and categorized and, then, the themes were extracted from the data. Primary codes were also categorized by their similarities and differences.

Table 1. The Steps of the Analysis Based on Graneheim and Lundman Approach

Steps	Activity
Start Point	The interviews were transcribed
Step 1	The texts were read through several times to get a sense of the whole
Step 2	Meaning units were extracted from the text
Step 3	An abstraction of the meaning units into codes was created
Step 4	The various codes were read and re-read and compared against each other. Based on these readings and a reflective process, the codes were sorted out into sub-categories
Step 5	The next step in the analysis was to count the occurrence of each sub-category in the interviews
Step 6	The sub-categories were compared with each other and with the original text to create mutually exclusive categories
Step 7	An independent analysis of all the texts was performed by each of the two co-authors. All authors discussed the categorization and the content and reached a consensus about the categorization

2.5. Trustworthiness

Linncoln and Guba (1985) proposed measures to enhance the accuracy of the qualitative research which include: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (14). In this study, the researchers have devoted enough time to collecting the data and making a close relationship with the participants. The interview participants were returned to verify the accuracy of the results and the credibility of the homogeneity of their experiences as a member checking. The data were coded and categorized by the authors. Then, the emerged themes were compared. For expert's opinion, three health education and promotion and epidemiologist candidates for data analysis (as peer checking) were asked and they discussed for three weeks. The research team discussed until a consensus was reached and, then, they interpreted the findings. This enhanced the item validity and reliability of the study.

The principal investigator collected and analyzed the data while others checked and verified the results. The participants were selected by considering the maximum variety in their gender, age, family history, treatment, duration of disease, education, grade, and job to ensure the transferability of the study (Table 2).

2.6. Introduction of the Participants

By the analysis of the study findings using the framework analysis, 5 main themes and 17 sub-factors were ex-

Table 2. Personal Information of the Respondents

Sex	Number	Range of Age	Class
Girl	36	12 - 14	7 - 8
Boy	36	12 - 14	7 - 8
Administrators, teachers	7	25 - 35	Female
Administrators, teachers	5	25 - 40	Male
Parent	5	40 - 55	Male
Parent	4	30 - 45	Female

tracted (Table 3). Here are the explanations about the themes and the sub- themes:

Table 3. The Summary of of the Themes and the Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes	Percent
Psychological factors	Psychiatric disorder	44
	Pride and arrogance	10
	Jealousy	18
	Imposing will and opinions on others	5
Family factors	Family violence	30
	Wrong parenting	8
	Siblings' bullying behavior	4
	Parental employment	5
School Factors	Not paying attention to the students	8
	Inappropriate behavior of the teachers	6
	Discrimination against students	3
	Peer influence	25
Social factors	Lack of patience	7
	Neighbors' influence on our behaviors	3
	Poverty	2
Role of the media	Influence of social media and the Internet	14
	Violent video games	23

3. Results

The participants in the study were 36 girl students and 36 boys with a mean age of 0.92 ± 13.73, 7 teachers with an average age of 3.67 ± 28.85, 5 teachers with a mean age of 5.94 ± 32.4, 5 male parents with a mean age 5.8 ± 48, and 4 female parents with an average age of 6.18 ± 37.7. There

were 57.1 percent males and 42.9 percent females. Teachers and parents, 33.3% and 47.6%, had bachelor's degree and 19 percent had a high school diploma.

In this study, five factors associated with bullying were identified. The factors include: 'Psychological factors', 'family factors', 'school factor', 'socioeconomic factors', and 'the influence of the media'.

The first factor includes four sub-factors of psychiatric disorder, pride and arrogance, jealousy, and imposing will and opinions on others. The second factor includes for sub-factors of family violence, wrong parenting, siblings' bullying behavior, and parental employment. The third factor includes four sub-factors of not paying attention to the students' inappropriate behaviors, discrimination against students, teachers' behaviors, and peer influence. The fourth factor includes three sub-factors of the lack of patience, neighbors' influence on our behaviors, and poverty. And the fifth factor includes two sub-factors of the influence of the social media and the Internet, and violent video games (See Table 3).

3.1. Psychological Factors

3.1.1. Psychiatric Disorder

One of the most important factors which can increase the risk of bullying behavior are the mental illnesses. Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are more at risk of showing bullying behaviors and depressed children are more likely to be the victims. Participants, too, believed that mental illnesses can lead to the occurrence of bullying behaviors or being bullied.

"A child who bullies has a mental illness. He may feel superior to the other people or he may have an old conflict with one of his classmates." (A female student)

"At first, the colleagues say the student was good before, we do not know what has happened to her that her scores are significantly lower than her previous exams. The student does not say anything. Then gradually she asks for help and we realize what is going on." (Headmaster of a girls school)

3.1.2. Pride and Arrogance

Some teachers pay more attention to some students and this can cause 'false pride' which can be maladaptive or even pathological. Respondents believed that taller and stronger students are more likely to feel superior to other people.

"That kid has a strong body and so he thinks everyone should listen to him." (A male student)

"A student which feels superior to others may force a shy student to do whatever she wants." (A female student)

3.1.3. Jealousy

Is an unhappy or angry feeling of wanting to have what someone else has. The feeling may develop since the age of two and may continue till adulthood. Although jealousy is a normal feeling in kids, if continues, it can have negative consequences. A person who is jealous is always unhappy with other people's happiness, success and economic, educational, and career progress. In other words, jealousy is feeling resentful of someone because of that person's rivalry, success, or advantages. Some of the respondents believe that jealousy can cause bullying.

"The student who is jealous of other students wants to destroy their beloved belongings." (A female student)

"A stronger student is jealous of a physically weaker student who is a more successful learner." (A male student)

3.1.4. Imposing Will and Opinions on Others

A stronger and taller student wants power and control. Respondents believed that bullies want to control those they target by using their power.

"I've seen this many times, one person who is physically stronger gets what he wants from physically weaker students. I've seen students who force other students to give half of their sandwiches to them and other students do this." (Headmaster of a girls school)

"Imposing will and opinions on others means to force other people to do what we want." (A male student)

3.2. Family-Related Factors

3.2.1. Conflict Between Parents

Fight between spouses can have negative effects on the children. Children who have witnessed violence between their parents are more likely to show bullying behaviors. The study participants said that:

"The conflict between parents can have negative effects on the student's behavior." (Headmaster of a boys school)

"Conflicts between parents can make children nervous and mentally ill. There should be no tension between the child and the parents and between him and the teachers." (A female parent)

3.2.2. Parenting Style

Parents who are permissive and indulgent are likely to have children who bully other students and, on the other hand, children of authoritarian parents are likely to be bullied by other students. Children who are bullied at home will be involved in bullying at school.

"Parents who are well-disciplined themselves and don't show aggressive behaviors, can pass these traits on to their children." (Headmaster of a girls school)

"When we meet parents, we conclude that they have passed their behaviors on to their children."(Headmaster of a girls school)

3.2.3. Learning from Siblings

Children who are bullied by their siblings are more than twice as likely to report depression as those who are bullied by peers or parents. Respondents believed that bullying is common in families.

"Bulling is common in homes, and as schools are 'Students' Second Homes', bullying is common in schools, as well." (Headmaster of a girls school)

"Sometimes parents' wrong discipline can encourage a child to bully his/her younger sibling." (A male student)

3.2.4. Working Parents

Working parents usually do not have enough time to monitor their child's behavior. The main reason for the development of behavioral problems in adulthood is the lack of attention from parents in childhood.

"In the past, you know, fathers worked outside and mothers used to stay at home, saving a lot of time to fulfill children's demands. But now, mothers are mostly employees, in some cases doing fake jobs. This is so much time taking." (Headmaster of a girls school)

"We both have to work to be able to curb financial shortages, so we have less time for the kids." (A male parent)

3.3. School-Related Factors

3.3.1. Not Paying Attention to the Students

It should be thwarted in the best possible way. Today, bullying is considered as a risky act for both victim students and the witnesses in schools.

"They try to hide bullies from teachers. Although the school staff try to control misbehaviors, they cannot spend their whole time in the campus to detect the cases." (a male teacher)

"The schools lack security guys. They should assign special forces for that." (a male student)

3.3.2. Holding Prejudice Towards the Students

As the children's second home, school plays a dominant role in nurturing their characteristics, because before 18, they spend a huge time in there. Definitely, teachers and school staff strongly affect forming the students' behaviors. Generally, the kids tend to attract the school parents' attention through establishing friendly relationships with them. Therefore, ungracious behavior with their peers is often observed.

"We make an attempt not to discriminate between the students, but inevitably, a good and a weak student in studying receive different qualities of attention." (Headmaster of a boys school)

"Teachers pay more attention to the students who are cleverer. The prejudice is not limited to school performance alone, but, sometimes our families like someone much more than the others for personal reasons. This stimulates jealousy." (A male student)

3.3.3. Teachers' Attitude

Students might copy their teachers' and school manager's manners towards the students and apply similar trends to their weaker peers. Students inspire teachers' attitudes. The way a teacher behaves could be reflected in the students' characteristics. In the instructing process, teachers' manner is always significant to the students. The schoolteachers should be honorable enough to be selected as behavioral patterns. Unfortunately, a large number of teachers do not know how to react against the students' bullying.

"School manager is considered a sample whose manner affects the students' behavior towards each other." (A male student)

"He has chosen his teacher as a sample. Teacher's manner and behavior affect the students' behavioral choices" (Headmaster of a boys school)

3.3.4. The Roles of the Peers

If bullying is encouraged by friends, it grows. The way the children react against their friends' misbehaviors, enormously affects the perpetrators. Peers play a key role in controlling bully and the more amicable the kids' relationships are, the less violence will happen in schools. The research subjects believed that friends could strongly fuel or quell the posed violence.

"When one bullies others, some might think they can be bossed too when they get obedient to others." (A female student)

"Bullying could be learned by the perpetrator's companions; similarly, a good friend could also positively influence others' behaviors." (A female teacher)

3.4. Socioeconomic Factor

3.4.1. Impatience and Intolerance

Impatience and intolerance are among the social issues faced by teenagers and young adults. In the past, society made a fair compromise with the world outside. Yet, the development of urban life facilities, social welfare, the mass media, and academic centers has drastically decreased the society's tolerance threshold. Social values have twisted, driving youngsters to prioritize their personal benefits to respecting human rights.

"Today in the society you should find a way to defend your rights. You should eat or be eaten.' (A female student)

"Tolerance, patience, and forgiveness are fading out among the people, which is rooted in the families' inaccurate upbringing and the accepted rule that people should fight for their rights. Such concepts increase aggression. Parents bring up demanding children and provide them with whatever they desire." (A female teacher)

"Students should be patient and work hard for what they want. Adhering to today's common and wrong methods and presenting simple and unsuitable solutions for their problems delay their logical maturity." (A female teacher)

3.4.2. The Effects of the Neighbors on Manners

Manner takes shape in the societal context. Obviously, in infelicitous environments, the emergence of violence is more probable. The research subjects believe that neighbors in the social environment affect bullying.

"Bullying happens sometimes in our neighborhood, but it is more frequent in the school." (A male student)

"Family, society, and the mass media are three factors that might be affecting violence, yet, among all, society absolutely affects misbehavior." (A female parent)

3.4.3. Poverty

Financial shortages are among the major factors which affect bullying. Although poverty does not always come with violence, it is considered as a risk factor increasing the chances of violence emergence in some cultural situations. Poverty, by itself, might be considered trivial; however, if it is combined with other risk factors, it might end in higher levels of aggression. The research subjects believed that poverty affects the burst of bullying in people.

"One of the reasons behind bullying is poverty. If they have no money, they tend to get it from others by force." (A female student)

"Financial problems in a family affect each member. If students have such problems in their families, they carry them with themselves to the school." (A female parent)

3.5. Factors Related to the Media

3.5.1. The Internet and Social Networks

The fast-growing digital world, during the last decade, has caused a huge amount of data to be shared globally, making changes in the interrelation and recreation preferences. Unfortunately, a major number of teenagers use social applications without parental control. On the other hand, parents are also overinvolved in those applications in a way that no time is saved to be spent on the children and their issues in the virtual space. The research subjects believed that social applications have affected the family relationships.

"A father once complained that a friend of his daughter's had threatened her to do something for her, or she would share his daughter's phone number with other guys to disturb her and she did so." (Headmaster of a girls school)

"Your daughter has a smart phone and Wi-Fi connection in her home. No matter what she's doing all the time. It's ok. But, bringing phones to the classrooms is absolutely forbidden." (A female teacher)

3.5.2. Media Violence Movies and Video Games

Children learn and copy violence and bully when they watch certain inappropriate films and play violent games in which aggression, crime, and destruction are mostly focused subjects. Teenagers find the games exciting and the best way to burst out their accumulated energy, being unconsciously suggested that fighting is the best way to do it. In such films, human emotions and family ties are excluded and everything is victimized by aggression. The more children are involved in the violence, the more they would reflect it on the others.

"If someone watches violent films so often, whenever such situations happen in the real world, he will react in a manner similar to what has been shown in those films; struggling and velitation." (A male student)

"Not are all the video games ok. Sometimes when you pass or win a level, the game plays an inappropriate scene or clip as a reward." (A male parent)

4. Discussion

The present article is to elaborate the reasons behind bullying among high school students. The reported causes included: Mental, family, school-related, economic, social, and the mass media-related factors. The most focused factors were impatience and intolerance, a subgroup of socioeconomic factors, which are explained in details in the following.

4.1. Mental Factor

The subjects believed that mental factors were influential on the emergence of bullying. Although there is a default level of harassment in teenagers' manners, bullying is considered a more serious and risky point, threatening their behavioral health [17]. It has been proved in numerous studies that the people perpetrating violence are more likely to get involved in depression in future. In addition, the victims of bullying, mostly, suffer from degrees of anxiety. Violent children and their victims are both exposed to

numerous emotional, behavioral, and relationship-related disorders. Costello et al. wrote in their study that compulsion and anxiety are related behaviors and anxiety is the most important factor in education and social relationships, affecting children and adolescents (18). Compulsion has short-term and long-term negative effects on interpersonal relations among business persons (19). Also Kant et al. wrote in their study that the victim of compulsion is the weak immune system and consequently poor physical health (20), indicating that the psychosomatic effects such as headaches and sleep disorders are related (21).

4.2. Family Factors

Family structure is one of the important factors playing a role in the emergence of aggressive behaviors. Lereya et al. found that there are weak links between the parents and the children behind most violence cases among children. In other words, parents do not support teenagers and have an inordinate manner in relationships, for instance, they punish children sometimes without any reason (22). Children who are frequently punished without a logical reason will not defend themselves while facing social violence. Making things worse, parents might encourage regressive and retaliatory manner. In such cases, children learn misbehaviors and consider them an accepted means of revenge (23). Indifference and negligence towards children could be another factor contributing to violence. Some employed parents have less time to spend with their children. On the other hand, some children who receive little attention from their parents seek weaker peers to bully them and compensate for their mental gaps.

There are teenagers who believe they will be respected and loved if they can bully others and because no one stops them, they continue perpetrating violations. According to Olweus, children who receive little love and attention from their parents and are left to do what they want, reflect more violence (24). There are few studies focusing on the role of siblings in the aggravation or the control of bullying. Wolke and Samara found that there is a significant relation between aggression among siblings and their violence at school (25).

4.3. School-Related Factors

The research subjects believed that the school atmosphere and environment are key factors in the bursting of violence. Social environment prevailing in schools should be preventive against health threatening accidents. School staff should control bullying and if it happens, they should take appropriate measures. Today, bullying is considered dangerous for both perpetrators and witnesses. Research findings show that about 7 percent of Swedish students bully at school and 5% to 15% from all school grades are among the victims (26). This information confirms that schools are in charge of providing a safe environment for learning. Teachers play major roles in positively or negatively changing the students' behaviors. Studies have proved that if teachers tolerate bullying by students, the misbehavior will grow further (27).

In addition, research subjects believed that teacher's reaction against bullying could be preventive or stimulating for students; because, teachers are students' first behavioral model. McEvoy in his research maintains that teachers' and students' bullying are similar in terms of power relations and humiliation of the victim in front of his friends, leaving destructive effects on the victim's mind (28). It is experimentally proved that the teacher's positive attitude towards bullying, ethical inefficiency, wrong monitoring, and ineffective interference are influential in the bursting of misbehaviors of 13 to 16 year old students (7th to 9th grades) (29).

Furthermore, research subjects believed that teenagers learn how to bully from their peers; they think aggressive behavior will bring them fame and respect. However, peers and classmates could control or aggravate bullying.

Peers could be important supports for aggression and if there is no amicable relationship between the students, bullying could turn into a serious and dangerous issue in schools (30). Due to the hormonal fluctuations during the puberty period, teenagers face high sensational and emotional challenges. Following their emotional fragility, gradual physical maturity would also happen. This stage is inevitably combined with sleep and temper disorder and even depression. During this critical period, friends' share in the teenager's life is much bigger than that of parents (31).

A research conducted on 125 Afro-American male children aged between 8 to 13 in three consecutive years found that aggression and violent behaviors are affected by being exposed to verbal aggression at home, violence witnessed in the society, bad home conditions, and taking behavioral patterns from friends. Furthermore, the findings showed that aggressive behaviors are aggravated as the time passes. In addition, the factors most effective on violence were incest and family disputes (32).

4.4. Socioeconomic Factors

Impatience and intolerance are considered as the worst defects which are, unfortunately, growing fast among the people of all ages especially youngsters. Education system and the media in the country function in favor of increasing social expectations, driving people to think

about what they do not have more; this is a sort of psychological repression. Today's life style is generally based on egocentrism and prompt demand satisfaction. This could also be effective in the decrease of patience and tolerance threshold. On the other hand, spiritualism is fading away, giving its place to materialism among the society members and logical thinking is taking over humanistic emotions. Impatient people have little control over their manner and burst in anger in no time, endangering themselves and others thorough their aggressive manner (33). Patience is one of the psychological variables that seems to be religious.

Bullying is associated with the moral virtue of patience that makes a person inhibit himself with perseverance and endurance in harsh conditions (34). Izadi Tame et al.'s study also showed that the use of educational strategies of patience is effective in reducing aggression (35). Also, Khormaei indicated the role of patience in negatively predicting aggression. The results also indicated that the hesitation component predicted bullying negatively. In other words, self-restraint against inner desires and passions is associated with a reduction in bullying. This finding is quite expectable. Hesitation describes people who can resist against temptations, desires, demands, and unreasonable expectations which are contrary to their own social expectations. When faced with situations that are not as desired, these students do not get angry and do not react in response to their classmate's bad behavior. Obviously, these features are accompanied by a reduction in bullying (34). Also, Chiu and Chan's study indicated a significant negative correlation between bullying and self-control (36).

Poverty is also presented as a factor effective in bullying and other researchers have also proved that in economically underdeveloped regions, bullying prevails more strongly (37). In addition, the research subjects believed that wealthy people use their money to bully others (38). This is compatible with the research findings conducted by Jank Auskiene who found out that aggression and bullying are mostly perpetrated by middle class and wealthy people, victimizing mostly poor people (39).

4.5. Media-Related Factors

A decade of research into the question of whether violent video games or showing violent films on television is associated with hostile behavior (40). The meta-analysis of these studies was that violence in the media is related to aggressive and antisocial behaviors. Olson et al.'s study showed that playing video games is a too strong predictor of behaviors and compulsions in adolescents (41). The Internet provides endless possibilities for growth both in children and adolescents, growth such as social protection, development of personal skills, and critical thinking; but, the main complaints about the Internet are abdominal pain and headache (42).

4.6. Conclusions

Bullying is considered one of the most serious challenges faced by school health, unfortunately, prevailing in almost all schools throughout the world. The violent behavior leaves negative mental, social, and academic effects on schoolers (43). Bullying mostly happens among peers, impacting people's interpersonal relationships and future life (44). In addition, victims of bullying might be such affected that they commit suicide (45). The findings of the present research showed that bullying is dependent on various factors such as mental and psychological factors, family factors, school-related factors, and more.

One of the most repeatedly reported factors by research subjects was loose family connections. In families with loose connections, parents' upbringing methods are heterogeneous and inordinate and parents punish children for ignorable things. The information is consistent with the results of the research by Ahmed et al. who argued that the most important variable which forms the bases for violence among children is inappropriate relationship with parents. In other words, parents who do not give enough support to their children, over control them, have an inordinate parenting method, or are too amicable or too cold with them, grow more bullying and aggression in their kids (46). The key parenting role of mothers is highlighted, because if they establish close and friendly connections with their children, they can contribute to curbing aggression problems in their teenagers.

The other important factor was school environment. It was elaborated that if the school parents are indifferent towards bullying and consider such misbehaviors as natural manners among the school children, they will help grow the abnormal behavior among the teenagers. This is consistent with findings of Kochenderfer and Pelletier who argued that a major part of the teachers are unaware of the extension and the severity of the dangers of bullying among teenagers; therefore, they would naturally not know how to react against bullying (47). Pianta, Steinberg, Rollins, and Wentzel proved in their evidence-based research that low quality teacher-student relationship, anxiety, aggression, weak control over violence, and positive attitude toward aggression are among the strong predictors of bullying and violence in schools (48).

In addition, Yurtal and Artut maintained that among the different identified factors affecting bullying, interaction between the students and teachers or other school staff during working times and in the school environment

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is the most important factor (49). Therefore, appropriate behavior and reaction against students could effectively curb bullying. According to 'Social Learning Theory' of Bandura, students learn the misbehaviors of teachers, then, reflect them on their peers. Teenagers learn violence from each other and if their interrelations are not strong enough to survive, bullying can be considered a threatening and serious issue in schools. Furthermore, Espelage and Henkel argue in their research that peers are important supporting sources (50). The other serious and important factor is the role of the mass media including violent movies and videogames. Watching such films and playing games, children learn to act violently and put aggression into practice, losing their sensitivity over the misbehavior. This is in line with the results of the research by Colwel and Payner who investigated the relation between video games and social solitude and the decrease in self-confidence and aggression among 204 students aged 10 to 14 in London. The results indicated that although there were no direct relation between violent video games and social solitude, there was a strong and direct relation between aggression and playing destructive games (51).

In addition, numerous studies have proved that exposing teenagers to the violence in TV shows, (52) violent video games, and the Internet (53) helps increase the frequency of the occurrence of aggressive behaviors (54).

A new point highlighted by the research subjects was that impatience and intolerance are one of the origins of bullying. Patience is a religious-mental variable which along with perseverance, tolerance, edification, and piousness helps people to control themselves and progress towards perfection.

As asserted by Khormaei in his research, patience and its sub-branches could predict bullying behaviors. With the increase of the patience score, bullying decreases (34). Therefore, in order to curb violence, strengthening patience and embedding it in anti-measures against violence are strongly suggested to the students, their parents, and the school staff.

4.7. Suggestions

Regarding the obtained results, it is recommended that more qualitative and quantitative researches be conducted on the relation between bullying and patience in order to comprehensively elaborate different dimensions of the topic.

Training courses should be designed on how parents should establish accurate relationships with their teenagers who have just finished elementary school and are fresh high schoolers.

Furthermore, it is worth focusing on the inappropriate relationships between parents and their parenting styles

and, also, the reasons behind their struggles through qualitative studies.

4.8. Research Limitations

1) In the generalization of the research findings, different aspects of the issue should be considered, as usual in qualitative researches; because, cultural and social varieties in every region might require different measures to be taken.

2) The present study has been carried out in Gonabad County and, clearly, the results couldn't be generalized to other cities.

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