Interpretation of School Bullying of Middle School Students: A Study on the Path of Collaborative Education

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Abstract: This paper reviews previous literature to explore the current situation and causes of school bullying among middle school students. This paper concludes that the main reason for school bullying is the unstable psychological state of adolescents, low level of family education, lack of school attention, and the adverse effects of the internet society. To better solve the problems of the epidemic of school bullying, this paper also proposes a theory of family-school-community collaborative education. Multiple prevention and intervention measures are put forward. Parents should improve their education methods and also behave themselves to set up a good example for their kids. Schools should establish a safety system to deal with school bullying cases and students' mental problems, teachers should also strive to increase students' sense of belonging to school. The government should improve the supervision of the Internet, crack down on bad games and cyberbullying, and the whole society should also advocate a harmonious society and put an end to school bullying.

Keywords: school bullying, current situation, collaborative education

1.   Introduction

With the disclosure of a shocking school bullying incident in Handan, Hebei Province, China, the topic of school bullying has re-entered the public's attention. Previous studies have analyzed and explained school bullying from various angles, especially from the aspect of family, school, and peers. However, they have never carried out systematic analysis and given targeted solutions. The main contribution of this work is to supplement the above deficiencies. This review covers the current situation of school bullying. By analyzing a real case, to bring up the causes of school bullying, including the unstable psychological state of adolescents, low level of family education, lack of school attention, and the adverse effect of the internet society. Also, this study introduces a concept of family-school-community collaborative education to give target suggestions to parents, schools, and society, for improving students' health growth.

2.   Current Situation of School Bullying

In recent years, school bullying cases in secondary and high schools around the world have been frequently reported by the media, causing concern in the whole society. In March 2024, the incident of "a junior high school student in Handan, Hebei Province, was bullied to death by his three classmates" created a sensation, triggering countless netizens to discuss the topic of school bullying.

This is not the first time that school bullying has drawn attention. Bullying is the deliberate or malevolent repetitive infliction of harm to peers through physical, verbal, or online means when there is a power disparity [1]. The physical injury, and spiritual trauma such as low social adjustment, anxiety, and increased risk of suicide caused by school bullying, have a significant negative impact on victims' everyday life and academic pursuits. [2]. School bullying has always been a controversial topic, but there is no denying that the phenomenon of school bullying is much more than people think. It can be seen from Table 1 that according to the latest data from the BJS (Bureau of Justice Statistics) and the NCES (National Center for Education Statistics), from 2019 to 2020, 22% of middle and high school students ages 12 to 18 said they had been bullied at school [3]. In China, a survey conducted by CCNU (Central China Normal University) showed that the incidence of school bullying around age 15 to 16 was 17.7 percent [4]. According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) data from 144 countries published in 2019, one in three students worldwide reported having been the victim of bullying in school [5].

From the incident, it can be seen that there are 4 details setting people to ponder. First is the kids' age. All three bullies were under 14, and so was the victim. Second is their parents' attitude. In addition to the Zhang family refusing to accept the police investigation, the other two families have also moved away. Third is the school's declaration. The school claimed that this incident was just an accident, and there was no bullying in school. Lastly is the kids' behavior. One of the bullies, Zhang, was lying in bed playing games with his cell phone when the police knocked on the door of his home. It can be concluded that the unstable psychological state of adolescents, the low level of family education, the lack of school attention, and the adverse effects of the Internet society are the four main influencing factors leading to school bullying. Since these factors still need to be addressed urgently, that is the reason why school bullying keeps emerging and acting up.

3. Causes of School Bullying

3.1. Unstable Psychological State of Adolescent

A person's propensities to think, feel, and act in a particular way are referred to as psychological traits. These characteristics are a generally stable disposition form of personality [2]. Adolescence is a crucial developmental stage that is defined by significant physiological and biochemical changes, as well as considerable emotional instability and poor self-control. In the face of studying pressure, interpersonal relationships, and other problems, they are easy to take violent means to solve the problem, which to a certain extent causes the happening of school bullying.

Gaspar et al's survey of 3195 adolescent students from Portugal indicates that students who do not have a sense of belonging often end up being bullies. They also have psychological traits like impulsivity, misconduct, and aggression. In the meantime, adolescents who suffer from low self-esteem, attachment disorders, and neuroticism are more likely to become victims of bullying at school [6]. Le et al. state that it is definite that bullying victimization and mental health problems are related. By surveying 1539 Vietnamese students, bullying and mental health have been proven to be negatively correlated by Le et al [7]. It can be seen that students with poor mental health are more likely to bully or be bullied at school. Bullying, on the other hand, has been demonstrated to raise the risk of mental illness [1]. Students in poor psychological conditions are bullied, and those who are bullied are in worse psychological conditions, so-called a vicious cycle.

3.2. Low Level of Family Education

Since the family is the primary social contact and connection unit and provides the framework for forming social patterns, the family environment directly impacts children's behavior [2]. Therefore, the quality of family education directly affects children's character and behavior habits. Based on Xu's

survey, nearly half of the participants said that their parents used harsh discipline, excessive interference, and parental favoritism, which highly caused incidents of school bullying [8]. If a child has witnessed or experienced violence at home, they may mimic that behavior and bring it to school. Also lack of moral education and norms of behavior in family education, children may not be able to form correct values and moral concepts, so that it is easy to bully others or become the object of bullying.

What's more, Dhami states that children from households with lower socioeconomic status typically exhibit reduced emotional resilience and a higher likelihood of behavioral issues [2]. Since low-income families may not be able to provide adequate care and support for students, resulting in a lack of security and self-confidence in the process of growing up, and may seek self-affirmation through violent behavior. Sabramani found that the majority of respondents' family earnings fell between the range of RM 1000 and RM 5000 per month (69.9%), with just a tiny portion earning more than RM 10,000 per month (9.4%), which supports the statements above [9]. Therefore, students from low-income families may face greater economic and psychological pressure, which may make them feel frustrated and aggressive, and thus behave violently in school or become the target of school bullies.

3.3. Lack of School Attention

School is an important place for students to learn and grow, and the school's attention and management level have an important impact on the occurrence of school bullying. Due to the current pursuit of academic performance, some schools may focus mainly on teaching and grades and lack sufficient attention to the problem of bullying. This attitude often leads to the problem of school bullying not being dealt with promptly and further aggravating [1]. Despite the current emphasis on holistic education, the concept of merit-based education still needs to be addressed.

As part of the school, teachers also have a crucial influence on school bullying. If teacher-student relations are strained, students may feel neglected or disrespected and act violently to express their grievances or seek attention. In addition, some teachers may mishandle students' problems, such as excessive punishment or indifferent neglect, which may also lead to violent behavior of students. Sabramani found that When a student and teacher do not get along, they find it difficult to regulate their emotions and often act impulsively and violently [9]. Furthermore, the degree of sense of belonging is also an important element. An investigation by Sabramani shows that children who engage in bullying typically have a negative opinion of their school and are not interested in participating in school-related activities [9]. When students lack a sense of belonging to school, they may feel lonely, excluded, and unaccepted, increasing the risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of school violence.

3.4. Adverse Effect of the Internet Society

Nowadays, children are raised in a media-saturated environment. Kids use media for a significant amount of their waking hours [2]. Online games have become part of the daily lives of many middle school students. According to Sabramani, students who spent 1 to 4 hours or more on a weekday and more than 4 hours during the weekend were 1.43 and 1.28 times more likely to be involved in bullying, respectively [9]. However, some online games are full of violent elements, which hurt the minds of minors. Students who have been exposed to these violent games for a long time may imitate the violent behavior in the games and then commit violent incidents in school.

What's more, the phenomenon of students using Internet media to commit cyber violence is becoming more and more serious. A survey data conducted by Camerini indicates that cyberbullying peaks during middle school, with 84.0% of middle school students reporting being cyberbullied [10].

Students may use social media platforms, forums, chat groups, and other channels to publish offensive remarks, malicious slander, rumors, and other behaviors, and carry out cyber violence against others. This situation is no longer uncommon and has even become a trend.

4. Suggestions for Solving School Bullying

To solve the problem of school bullying, it is necessary to cooperate with family, school, and society. The importance of home-school-community cooperation is that it can work together from multiple angles and levels to form a joint force, to prevent and solve the problem of school bullying more effectively. At the same time, home-school-community cooperation can also promote the communication and exchange of family, school, and society, enhance mutual trust and understanding, and create better conditions for the growth and development of students.

4.1. For Family

As the primary place where students grow up, the family has a profound impact on students' behavior and values. Families need to realize that school violence is not just a school problem, but a challenge that families and schools face together. Parents should pay attention to the importance of family education and improve their own education level and education methods. In addition, parents should care about the growth and changes of their children, and timely discover and correct their children's bad behavior. At the same time, parents should also behave themselves, to not bring the wrong influence on their children.

4.2. For School

As the main body of education, school plays a key role in preventing and solving the problem of school bullying. Schools should establish a sound school safety system, strengthen bullying education and psychological counseling for students, and promptly detect and deal with school bullying. At the same time, schools should also form an effective communication mechanism with families, timely feedback on students' performance and problems at school to parents, and jointly pay attention to the growth and development of students. To improve students' belonging, the school should actively create a harmonious school atmosphere. Various activities are held to promote exchanges and cooperation among students and enhance students' sense of belonging to the school. Teachers, should establish a good interactive relationship with students and pay attention to student's emotional needs and psychological changes. Through regular teacher-student communication, psychological counseling, and other ways to help students solve emotional problems, and enhance their self-confidence and sense of belonging.

4.3. For Society

Society, as a large ecosystem, also plays an important role in the prevention and solution of school bullying. Society should strengthen the publicity and education, raising the public's awareness and attention to school bullying. The government should reinforce the supervision of online media to avoid the emergence of non-compliant online games. Finally, all sectors of society should work together to create a harmonious and friendly social atmosphere for the healthy growth of young people.

5. Conclusion

This review paper aims to reiterate the current situation of school bullying and understand what may cause school bullying to happen. The four main factors causing school bullying are the unstable psychological state of adolescents, low level of family education, lack of school attention, and the

adverse effects of the internet society. This review is suited for parents, teachers, governments, and even students themselves. Parents can be stimulated with better education methods and be more self-disciplined. Teachers can be urged to pay more attention to students' lives and mental health in addition to academic achievement. The government can be pushed to be serious about the management of online games and the control of online bullying in online social media. Also, the cutting-edge educational method, family-school-community collaborative education, is mentioned in the paper, which provides an advanced way to connect the whole society and to better help students grow in the future.

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