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Prevalence of Bullying Among Primary School Students in Zagazig City

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## Abstract

Bullying is a major public health concern affecting the lives of many children and adolescents. **The aim** of the study was to assess the prevalence of bullying among primary school students in Zagazig city .  
Subjects and methods: A cross-sectional descriptive design was used in this study was utilized with sample  
325 selected from four governmental primary school in Zagazig city. The data collecting an interview  
questionnaire composed of two parts: Socio- demographic data and bullying scale among primary school  
students. **Results**, Most of bully's students (81.5%) were male and 70.5% of them were from rural area.  
Regarding school grade more than half (53.2) of them enrolled in fifth grade. Additional 69.7 % of bullied  
students living with both parents, the prevalence of bullying among the student in the study school were  
39%, the most frequent bullying among them were psychological bullying 90% followed by social bullying  
85%. **Conclusion**, the majority of bully's students were male, the most frequent bullying among primary  
school students, were psychological bullying followed by social bullying Therefore, it is recommended to  
develop and implemented **program in reducing bullying among primary school students**

**Key word:** Bullying, and primary school students

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## Introduction:

School is considered a part of a micro-system for children after home that has a vital role in  
both social and emotional development<sup>(1)</sup>. Bullying is an aggressive behavior shown by repetition  
and an imbalance of power. It involves a recurrence abuse of power where a person repetitively  
abuses their power. The person being bullied who is the victim cannot defend him or herself for  
various reasons such as less physical strength and being less psychologically resilient than the  
bully ignored<sup>(2)</sup>. Bullying in schools has become a widespread problem that can have lifelong  
negative consequences for both the bully and victim<sup>(3)</sup>. Bullying and victimization can have  
permanent effects on the children and adolescents, which persists until adulthood like leaving the

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school, physical damages, social and psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, suicide thoughts and behavior, grief and sorrow, humiliation, lower self-rated health and reduction of self-esteem<sup>(4)</sup>. Anti-bullying interventions in schools are currently of critical importance and those that have a whole-school approach, involving the participation of students, school staff or teachers, and parents. There are many effective strategies for both teachers and parents stop bullying<sup>(5)</sup>.

### **Significance of the study:**

Bullying in childhood is a major public health problem that increases the risk of poor health, social and educational outcomes in childhood and adolescence. These consequences are felt by all those involved in bullying (bullies, victims and bully-victims) and are now recognized to propagate deep into adulthood<sup>(6)</sup>. The prevalence of bullying across the world, ranging from 22.8% to 48.2%<sup>(7)</sup>.

### **Aim of the study**

The present study aimed to assess the prevalence of bullying among primary.

### **Research hypothesis:**

- What are the prevalence of bullying among primary school students?
- What are the most prevalence type of bullying among primary school students?

What are the factor can player on increasing prevalence bullying among primary school students?

### **Subjects and Methods:**

#### **Research design:**

A cross-sectional descriptive design - was used.

#### **Study setting:**

The study was conducted at four governmental primary school in Zagazig city. These schools were randomly selected from two Zagazig educational administrations.

#### **Study subjects:**

The subjects of this study consisted of 325 of bullied students in primary school selected previously mentioned settings at time of data collection were selected under the inclusion criteria:

- Age: ranging between 10 to 12 years old , Bullied students according to teachers opinion who experience not less than five year
- Both sexes
- Had no any health problems

#### **Tools of data collection:**

An interview questionnaire sheet for data collecting composed of two tools

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**Tool I: Socio- demographic of the studied sample:**

-Personal data: such as students age, sex, school name, classroom, residence, birth order rank, with whom do you live (Questions 1-8)

- Family data: such as number family member, parents educational and parent's occupation (Questions 9-13).

**Tool II:** Bullying scale among primary school students according to teacher opinion. This scale was adapted by Eldsoky (2016) to measure the bullying among children that composed of 28 questions answered by student's teacher. A bullying scale divided into 4 subscales:

- ✓ Verbal bullying it consist of 7 items, such as Cursing and cursing his colleagues, deliberately offending some students, he calls his colleagues funny names, responds to criticism from others with harsh words and He looks at others with angry looks to frighten them etc.(items 1-7)
- ✓ Physical bullying it consist of 5 items, such as intentionally hitting or pushing others for no reason, he slaps one of the students in front of the other, he puts his foot in front of some of his colleagues to throw them to the ground and he deliberately takes things that belong to his colleagues and refuses to give them to them etc.(items 8-12)
- ✓ social bullying it consist of 6 items, such as he asks his colleagues not to help others, he prevents students from participating in playing and some sports and from participating in play and some sports etc.(items13-18)
- ✓ Psychological bullying it consist of 10 items, such spreading rumors and lies to some students, he deliberately criticizes his colleagues and ridicules them without reason and he enjoys when others fear him etc.(items19-28)

**Scoring system of bullying:-**

It was used to assess bullying of the studied students. It consisted of 28 items evaluated on a three point likert scale ranging from never with score one, sometime with score two and score three for a lot. The total grades were summed to yield 84 grades and student was considered highly bullied if the percent score was more than 75% (>63- 84), moderately bullied if the percent score was more than 50% (>42-63) and low if less than 50% (< 42).

**Content validity:**

The tool was ascertained by panel of three experts in community health nursing, community medicine and medical surgical nursing, who reviewed the content of the tool for clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and understandability, all recommended modifications on the tools were performed.

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#### **Fieldwork:**

After securing all official permission, the researcher first introduced herself and explained the purpose of the study briefly to the schools teachers who helps her to choose bullied students according to bullying scale obtained from teachers and the time consumed to collect teacher answers ranged from 5-10 minutes. Then the researcher met bullied students and explained the purpose of the study and oral consent for participation was obtained and she assured that the obtained information will be treated confidentially and used only for the purpose of the study. The researcher read, explained the tool items to the students and then give students questionnaire to answer it. The time needed for filling the tools ranged from 15-20 minutes. Based on this phase, the participants with high score in bullying scale enrolled in the study. This period lasted for 2 months from (October to November 2021)

#### **Pilot study:**

The pilot study was carried out a sample of thirty three students represents 10% of the calculated study sample. The aim was to test clarify of questions, the format of the tools, comprehension of the items and to estimate the exact time require for filling out the tools sheet. The students involved in the pilot study were excluded from the main study sample

### **STATISTICAL DESIGN**

Data entry and statistical analysis were done using SPSS 23.0 statistical software package. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages for qualitative variables, and means and standard deviations and medians for quantitative variables. Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to assess the reliability of the developed scales through their internal consistency. Quantitative continuous data were compared using the non-parametric Mann-Whitney or Kruskal-Wallis tests and paired t test. Qualitative categorical variables were compared using chi-square test. Whenever the expected values in one or more of the cells in a 2x2 tables was less than 5, Fisher exact test was used instead. Spearman rank correlation was used for assessment of the inter-relationships among quantitative variables and ranked ones. In order to identify the independent predictors of knowledge, and bullying score improvement, multiple linear regression analysis was used and analysis of variance for the full regression models was done. Statistical significance was considered at p-value <0.05.

#### **Results:**

Results **table (1)** shows that the age ranged between 10 and 12 years, with mean  $10.42 \pm 1.43$  years. Most of bullies students (81.5%) were male And 70.5% of them were from rural area. Regarding school grade more than half (53.2) of them enrolled in fifth grade. Additional 69 .7

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% of bullied students living with both parents and (61.7) % of them had family number ranged from five to six individuals with **total** Family size mean  $5.8 \pm 0.6$  member

**Table (2):** Illustrate that 41.8% of their fathers were read and write, and 95% of them were workers. As for mothers 36.7% of them had secondary/intermediate education, and 73.3% of them not working.

**Figure (1):** Demonstrate that more than half (56.3%) of bullies students in the study sample belonged to moderate social class

**Figure (2):** Illustrates the prevalence of bullying among the student in the study school were 39%

**Figure (3):** Illustrate that 45.2% of bullies students in the total sample had moderate bullying levels and 18.5% of them had high bullying levels.

**Figure (4):** Demonstrate that types of bullying behavior disruption among interventional study sample. The most frequent bullying were psychological bullying 90% followed by social bullying 85% then physical and verbal bullying with the same percent.

**Table (3)** presents that best fitting multiple linear regression models for bullying score. It indicate that age, rank of child between his siblings, and number of family members were a statistically significant independent positive predictor of bullying score. Conversely, School grade, residence, living with whom and knowledge score were negative predictor. The model explain that 41% of bullying score decrease after intervention as shown by the value of r-square( $R= 0.4$ )

## Discussion:

Primary school period is considered as the beginning of the psychosocial period in children, and their experiences in this period directs their emotional and social development to a large extent. School period, which has the most intense peer relationships, may lead to involuntary behavior against poor and powerless children (8). Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength. It is a repeated behavior and can be physical, verbal, or relational (9).

Concerning the prevalence of bullying among primary school, the current study result revealed that more than one third of students in the total study sample were bullying. This might be related to overcrowd in the classes of the schools and lack of observation. Moreover Socialization and domestic violence in a bully's family, and acquires this behavioral through what is shown on television and electronic games that contain a lot of violence. This finding is in congruence with the result of a study carried in china by (10) in augmented prevalence of the bullying phenomenon have been reported through multiple item questionnaires both in this study (34.8%) and other experiences. Furthermore, similar a study conducted by (11) to assess the prevalence and nature of bullying in schools in **Bangladesh** which reported that 44.4% of the

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participants had a bullying and a study performed in **Indonesia** by (12) which found that bullying experienced by students in schools in **Bandung**, founded that 49.3% of participants who had experienced bullying. **Additionally**, a study was conducted among private school children in Riyadh in **Saudi Arabia** by (13) which found a bullying prevalence of 41% and, a study in Jeddah performed by (14) who reported that a bullying prevalence of 41.1% among primary school in **Saudi Arabia**.

**On the contrary**, these study results disagreed with that of (15) in developed countries, in Italy, which showed that a prevalence of bullying 21% and a study conducted in Brazil, by (16) to assess the prevalence of bullying among school children. The researchers found a bullying prevalence of 21.26%. **Also**, this finding is disagreed with the result of study by (17) carried out in **China**, which reported that prevalence of bullying among primary school students in rural China (73%) of sample students were bullied frequently (defined as either monthly or weekly) and a study by (18) in **Oman**, a cross-sectional report assessed the magnitude of bullying among school pupils in Muscat, the study found that 76% of students had experienced bullying one form or another.

The present study revealed that the bullying behavior among male higher than among female and, males showing higher mean scores of psychological, social, verbal, and physical bullying. This result might be explained by cultural factors as boys in the Egyptian community, are less often punished for misbehavior compared with girls. This result agreement with those of a very recent study by (19) in Egypt, who found that bullying behaviors was more common among males compared with females and in the same line with the result of a study by (20) in Egypt, who mentioned that boys reported being more bullied than girls. On the same line a study performed **India** by (21), who found that boys were more likely to be bullied than girls, and similarly a study conducted in Nigirian by (22) who reported that male's higher number of bullying than female. Several researchers from around the world on disparities in bullying by sex have reported higher incidence of victimization in males than in females by (23) and (24).

Regarding type of bullying prevalence among study sample. The current study revealed that the most frequent bullying were psychological and social bullying, this type of bullying is the most damaging types, and called indirect bullying is when one person, or group of people, undermines or tries to ruin your reputation by spreading rumors and gossiping behind your back. Indirect bullying mostly inflicts harm by damaging another's social reputation, peer relationships and self-esteem (25). These results were consistent with those of a study conducted in finland by (26) who showed that the most common form of bullying was indirect bullying and a very recent study conducted in Egypt by (27), which found that verbal and social bullying were most prevalent among our study group, followed by psychological bullying and males scored higher in verbal, psychological, and physical bullying. Similarly, the results of a study by (28) in Finland, on forms of bullying among school students which found that the most

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common forms of bullying were verbal teasing and social exclusion. Conversely a study conducted by (18) in Oman, which found that social isolation/exclusion the lowest form of bullying among school pupils in Muscat.

The presents study indicates that age, was a statistically significant independent positive predictor of bullying score. This in agreement with a recent study conducted in Italy by (16), that showed positive relationships with all types of bullying and the student's age, indicating that a higher level in terms of the student's perception of his/her relationship with the teacher as conflictive and the student's negative expectations regarding his/her relationship with the teacher were associated with higher levels of all types bullying and with being older. In addition, only verbal and physical violence perpetration showed a positive association with social impact and the student's age, indicating that higher levels of verbal and physical bullying perpetration were linked to social impact and to being older. Additionally another study found that personal variable that has been widely studied in relation to bullying is age. Many researchers have shown a higher risk of being involved in bullying at younger ages (29). Also another study find significant evidence suggesting an age trend for bullying, with older students being less affected than their younger counterparts (30). Increase of bullying behavior with age. Bullying peaks during middle school years, and tends to decrease by the end of high school (31).

### **Conclusion:**

In the light of the results of the current study, it can be concluded that, the majority of bully's students were male. The prevalence of bullying among the student in the study school were 39%. The most frequent bullying were psychological bullying followed by social bullying. Age, rank of child and number of family members were the factors that increasing the prevalence of bullying among primary school students.

### **Recommendations:**

On the basis of the current study findings, the following recommendation are suggested:

- Health education for students about bullying definition, type and consequences.
- Disruption of pamphlets that shown consequences of bulling on bully's students and victims.
- Developed and implemented program to reduce bullying among primary school students.

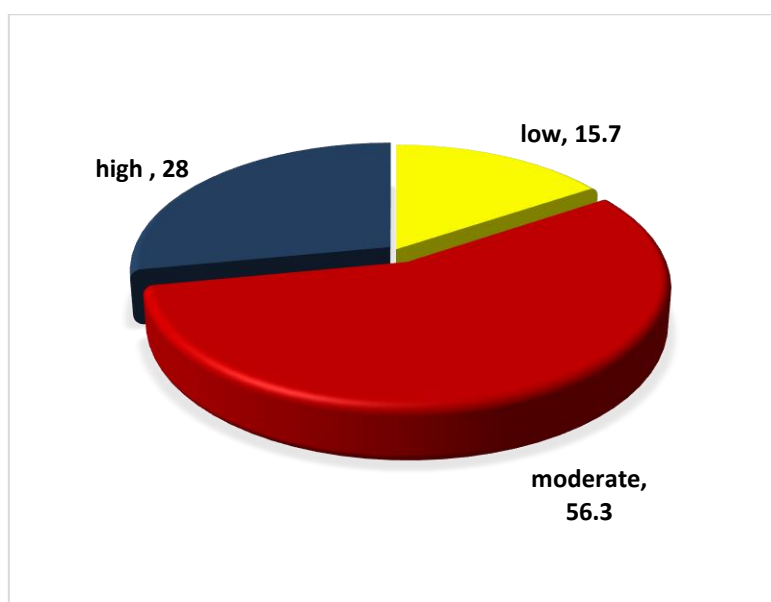
Table 1: Demographic characteristics of all bullies students (N=325)

Demographic characteristics	(n=325)	
	Frequency	Percent
Age group: /year		
10 –	173	53.2
11-	152	46.8
Mean ± SD	10.42 ± 1.43	
(range)	(10 – 12)	
Gender:		
Male	265	81.5
Female	60	18.5
School class/ grade:		
Fifth grade	173	53.2
Six grade	152	46.8
Residence:		
Urban	96	29.5
Rural	229	70.5
Rank of child between his siblings		
Single	45	14.0
The first	97	29.7
The last	79	24.3
Other: [the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth & seventh]	104	32.0
Living with whom:		
With both parents	226	69.7
With one of parents	81	25.0
With relatives	18	5.3
Cause of living with one of parents: N=81		
Traveling	12	14.8
Divorcing	49	60.50
Death	20	24.70
Number of family members plus you:		
< 5	92	28.3
5-6	202	61.7
≥ 7	31	10.0
Total Family size mean:	5.8 ± 0.6	



**Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the bullies students' parents enrolled on the modification program (N=60)**

Demographic characteristics	(n=60)	
	Frequency	Percent
<b>Father education:</b>		
Illiterate	4	6.7
Read/write	25	41.7
Basic [primary + preparatory]	5	8.3
Secondary / intermediate	22	36.7
University / Postgraduate	4	6.7
<b>Father job:</b>		
Work	57	95.0
Not Work	3	5.0
<b>Mother education:</b>		
Illiterate	6	10.0
Read/write	21	35.0
Basic [primary + preparatory]	7	11.7
Secondary / intermediate	22	36.7
University / Postgraduate	4	6.7
<b>Mother job:</b>		
Work	16	26.7
Not Work	44	73.3
<b>Social class:</b>		
Low	9	15.0
Medium	34	56.7
High	17	28.3



**Figure 1 social class distribution among all bullies students (n=325)**

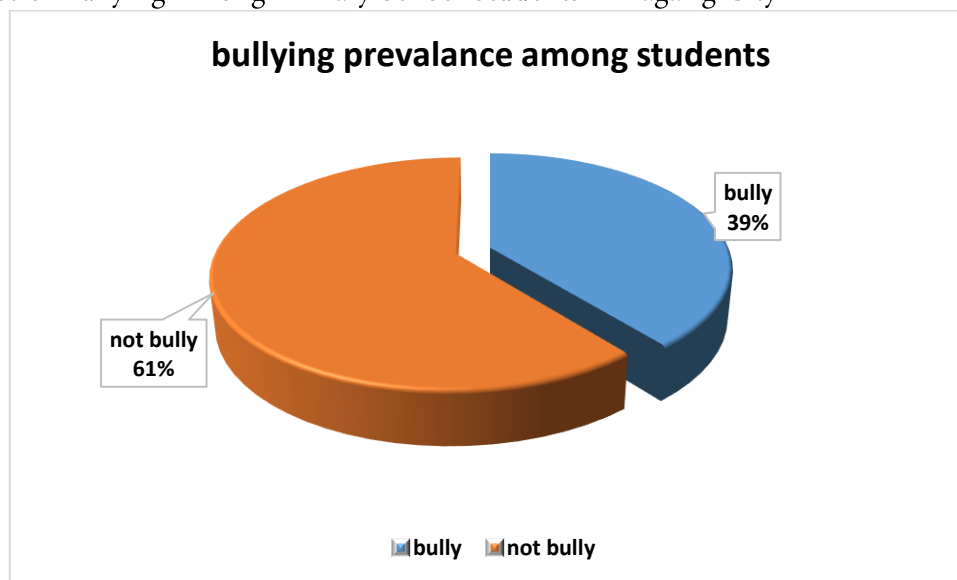
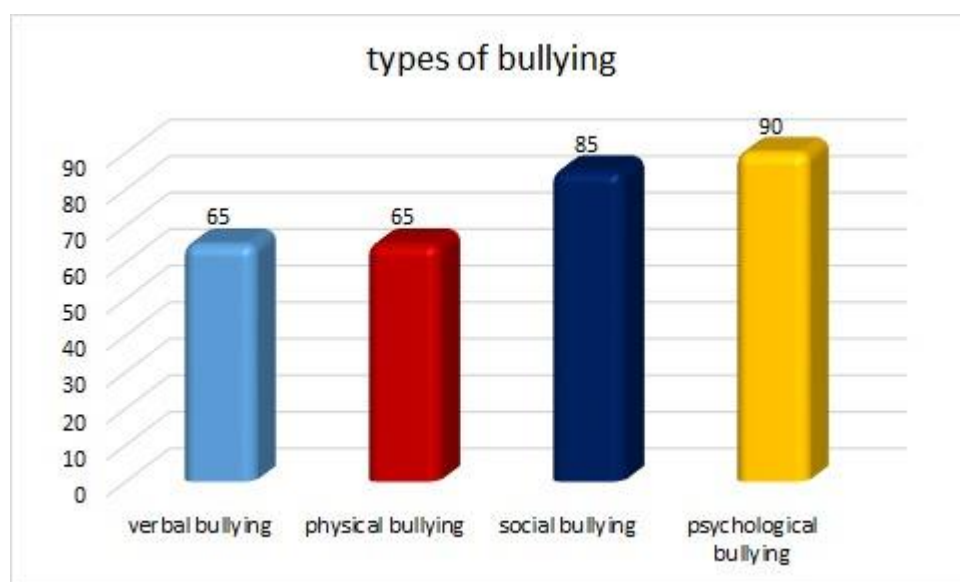


Figure 2: bullying prevalence among all four primary school students (n=834)



Figures 3: Type of bullying distribution among interventional study sample (n= 325)

Table (5): Best fitting multiple linear regression model for bullying score

Items	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)		17.036	<0.001	36.535	46.291
Age	.165	.792	.432	-.776	1.787
School class/ grade:	-.100	-.468	.642	-1.570	.976

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Residence	-.082	-.586	.560	-1.669	.914
Rank of child between his siblings	.116	.756	.453	-.199	.440
Living with whom:	-.105	-.770	.445	-1.050	.468
Number of family members plus you:	.081	.508	.613	-.601	1.009

R-square=0.41 Model ANOVA F=3.82 p<0.05

(\*\*) Statistically significant at p<0.01

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