Parenting at home and bullying at school

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Abstract   The present study aimed at examining the relationship that may exist between specific parental practices at home and the child's bullying and victimization experiences at school. This study attempted to go beyond parental styles, a variable that most of the earlier studies have used and introduce three, relatively new parameters of bullying and victimization; namely, parent–child conflict, parental monitoring and child disclosure. It was found that parenting at home seems to be related to bullying at school. However, not all aspects of parenting are related, and not in the same way. Parent–child conflict was found to be positively correlated to, and a potent predictor of both bullying and victimization; child disclosure was found to be negatively correlated to and also a potent predictor of bullying (not victimization), while parental monitoring, unlike earlier reports, was found to be statistically unrelated to either bullying or victimization.

1 Introduction

Bullying at school is recognized as a global phenomenon (Andreou 2000; Karatzias et al. 2002; Tanaka 2001) affecting a significant minority of children and adolescents (Seals and Young 2003). It is a serious problem, not only because of its obvious short-term effects, such as disturbing school climate, but also because of its long-term consequences for those concerned. Bullying is defined as a physical, verbal or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress or harm to

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the victim. It can be direct, such as physical and verbal violence, or indirect, such as social exclusion. To be considered as bullying, an aggressive act must be intentional and systematic. Furthermore, the two individuals involved must be characterized by an imbalance of power (Farrington 1993; Rigby 2002).

Many children that are involved in peer violence, either as bullies or as victims, run the risk of facing psychological difficulties later in life (Headley 2004; Roland 2002). Bullying during childhood has been found to be associated with externalizing problems such as aggressive and antisocial behaviour in adulthood, while victimization has been found to be associated with internalizing problems such as depression and anxiety (Sourander et al. 2000). Therefore, teachers, school psychologists and other related professionals worldwide are looking for ways to eliminate this disturbing phenomenon, or at least minimize its effects. Furthermore, since most researchers and practitioners agree that bullying at school starts at home, parenting and all of its aspects have been examined as possible correlates of bullying.

1.1 Parenting and bullying

There is sufficient evidence in the literature that parental practices, attitudes and behaviour at home are related to the child's aggressive activity at school. Craig et al. (1998) developed and tested a model describing the effects of structural and functional family characteristics on peer aggression. They reported that parenting and family management practices interacted with individual behavioral attributes and contributed indirectly to aggressive behaviour such as bullying. Similarly, Snyder et al. (2005) tested a model of the early development of child conduct problems that incorporates the reciprocal effects of child behavior on parenting practice and of parenting on child behavior. They concluded "that discipline encounters are really co-constructed by the parent and the child rather than imposed on the child in a "top-down" fashion by the parent" (p. 39). In other words, children are active producers of their relationship with their parents, and their behavioral characteristics uniquely influence this relationship.

Regarding the relationship between specific aspects of parenting and child aggressive behaviour, several studies have shown that permissiveness best predicts the experience of victimization by the child while authoritarianism best predicts bullying behavior (Baldry and Farrington 2000). According to Miller et al. (2002), permissive parents tend to have children with difficulties in curtailing their impulsive aggression. Other researchers have reported that children who bully their peers are more likely to come from families where parents use authoritarian, harsh and punitive child-rearing practices (Espelage et al. 2000). Bullies describe their family as authoritarian, more conflict oriented and less organized, while children who perceive their parents as authoritative (i.e. setting limits but respecting their children's independence and being responsive to their needs) are less likely to engage in bullying behavior (Rican et al. 1993). Peer violence is associated with weak parental supervision and inadequate involvement with the child (Cernkovich and Giordano 1987). As Hagan and McCarthy (1997) comment, parents who pay attention to their children, monitor them closely and expect them to succeed are instrumental in reducing aggressive behaviour,

both within the family and outside. That is, responding to the child's needs, having a warm, accepting relationship, being available to discuss the child's problems and helping with difficulties is negatively related to aggressive behaviour, including bullying. It should be noted that the vast majority, if not all, of the studies mentioned above are cross-sectional. Therefore, and in the absence of longitudinal data, no cause-and-effect relationships can be inferred between aspects of parenting and bullying at school.

Parenting has been extensively researched as a correlate of bullying and victimization. However, most of this research was based on the taxonomy known as parental styles (Baumrind 1991). These studies have consistently shown that children of authoritarian parents tend to exhibit bullying behavior (Kaufmann et al. 2000). Other researchers have reported that children who bully their peers are more likely to come from families where parents use authoritarian, harsh and punitive child-rearing practices (Rigby 1993). Three aspects of parenting that have not been systematically examined in relation to bullying propensity are parent–child conflict, parental monitoring and child self-disclosure. These will be outlined below.

1.2 Parent–child conflict

Conflict, defined as an aversive behavior exhibited by one dyad member that is immediately followed by an aversive behavior of the other member of the dyad (Snyder et al. 1994), has been identified as a consistently robust predictor of child and adolescent externalizing problems, such as peer aggression, hyper-activity, defiance and distractive behavior (Scaramella and Leve 2004). Ingoldsby et al. (2006) followed 218 low-income boys from ages 5 to 11 and found that parent–child conflict was significantly associated with early-starting antisocial trajectories. Also, El-Sheikh and Elmore-Staton (2004) examined parent–child conflict as predictor, moderator and mediator of child adjustment. They found that after controlling for marital conflict, parent–child conflict predicted additional unique variance, mainly for children's externalizing problems. Moderation effects illustrated that a higher level of parent–child conflict was a vulnerability factor for behavior problems.

Additional work suggested that mother-child conflict in particular is a potent predictor of child externalizing problems (O'Keef 1994; Volling and Belsky 1992). Further, Dumas et al. (1995) compared mother-to-child and child-to-mother control exchanges. They found that, in comparison to socially competent children, aggressive children made regular use of coercive control and their mothers responded indiscriminately and failed to oppose extreme forms of coercion. In sum, as Kazdin (1992) has concluded, children's externalizing problems such as bullying at school are strongly associated with coercive conflict between family members, especially between parents and children, who directly or indirectly reinforce the child's aggressive responses.

1.3 Parental monitoring

Parents gain knowledge about their children from two main sources: one is parental monitoring and the other is child disclosure. Monitoring reflects the parents' effort to find out directly through observation how their child behaves. It is defined as "a set

of correlated parenting behaviours involving attention to and tracking of the child's whereabouts, activities and adaptation" (Dishion and Mc Mahon 1998, p. 66). Prior research suggests that parents who systematically monitor their children's behaviour, have adolescents who are less likely to engage in risky behaviour (Barnes and Farrell 1992; Reifman et al. 1998; Fletcher et al. 2004; Waizenhofer et al. 2004; Wood et al. 2004; van der Vorst et al. 2006).

Even though most studies report negative correlations between parental monitoring and child problematic behaviour, some studies claim the opposite. Steinberg and Silverberg (1986), for example, argue in favour of the autonomy-granting perspective. According to this perspective, reductions in monitoring are followed by reductions in delinquent behaviour as parents grant more autonomy to well adjusted adolescents. Furthermore, some authors have suggested that the relationship between parental monitoring and children's rule-breaking should be re-interpreted as a two-way rather than a one-way (parent to child) process (e.g. Kerr and Stattin 2000; Stattin and Kerr 2000). These authors suggest a dynamic view of family systems in which parents and children influence each other in a reciprocal way that allows parental actions to influence child development and at the same time the child's actions to influence parental behaviour (Crouter et al. 1990; Waizenhofer et al. 2004; Caldwell et al. 2005).

Research on the development of adolescent delinquency uses multiple research and statistical methods in order to estimate bidirectional parent–child relations (Crouter and Booth 2003; O'Connor 2002; Wood et al. 2004). In this line of research, Laird et al. (2003) found that lower levels of parental monitoring predicted greater delinquent behaviour the following year and that lower levels of delinquent behaviour predicted higher levels of monitoring. From a parent-effects perspective, adolescent delinquent behaviour tends to decrease in response to parental efforts. Alternatively, from a child-effects perspective, high levels of delinquent behaviour cause a decrease of parental monitoring, depending on whether one supports the abdicating or the autonomy-adjusting parenting model (Crouter et al. 1990; Laird et al. 2003).

Dishion et al. (2004) have proposed a bidirectional model, which they call "premature autonomy" model, claming that parents tend to disengage from their children that lean towards deviant behaviours. Similarly, other studies have shown that adolescent engagement in delinquency predicts relative declines over time in the parent–adolescent relationship (Laird et al. 2003; Smetana and Daddis 2002). Also, Patterson and Dishion (1985), describe a process by means of which parents abdicate their parental responsibilities and disengage in the face of adolescent problem behaviour. As a result, the now abandoned adolescent has enhanced opportunities for even more delinquent behaviour, which in turn affects negatively the parenting practices (Patterson et al. 1992).

Despite the fact that transactional models in their original conception emphasized both directions of causality (for example Patterson and Dishion 1985) some proponents of these models assert that the causal pathway from children to parents is more influential, in that adolescent deviant behaviour predicts parental monitoring efforts much more strongly than parenting predicts delinquent behaviour (Jang and Smith 1997; Kerr and Stattin 2003).

1.4 Child disclosure

Child disclosure is the children's free and willing information offering to their parents about where they are during their free time, how they do in school, whether they keep secrets from them, who they socialize with, and what they do when they go out at night. Kerr et al. (1999) found that parents tend to trust their children more when their children disclose information to their parents about their activities and socialization. Further, Stattin and Kerr (2000) documented the relationship between child disclosure and adolescents' adjustment by showing that child disclosure predicts less norm-breaking behaviour. Smetana et al. (2006) found that boys and girls did not differ in terms of the levels of disclosure to both their parents. In the same study however, boys were more secretive to their mothers whereas girls were more likely to share information with their mothers. Earlier studies, have also suggested that girl-mother relationships might become closer during the adolescent years than that of mothers with their adolescent boys (Furman and Buhrmester 1992). Recent studies have found that while active parental monitoring was not predicting future adolescent delinquency, child self disclosure did predict reductions in outcome variables (Stavrinides et al. 2010; Stavrinides 2011).

1.5 The present study

The present study aimed at examining the relationship that may exist between specific parental practices at home and the child's bullying and victimization experiences at school. This study has both theoretical and practical importance. It contributes to the theoretical discussion about the connection of parenting to bullying propensity at school by attempting to go beyond parental styles, a variable that most of the earlier studies have used (for example, Baldry and Farrington 2000; Kaufmann et al. 2000; Espelage et al. 2000) and by introducing three relatively new parameters of bullying and victimization, namely, parent–child conflict, parental monitoring and child disclosure.

Existing evidence connects these three factors to bullying and victimization, at least logically. For example, it has been documented that authoritative parents (i.e. those that exhibit both monitoring and good communication with the child, part of which may be the child's self disclosure), constitute a protective factor for bullying at school (Spera 2005). In contrast, parent–child conflict appears to be a risk factor for peer aggression including bullying (Scaramella and Leve 2004). However, empirical studies that support this connection are limited.

From a practical point of view, this study is important because it identifies aspects of parenting that are related to bullying and could help in the design and implementation of prevention and intervention programs aiming at the elimination of bullying at school. It is generally accepted that if such programs are to be effective, they should not be limited within the boundaries of schools, but they should also include homes.

Based on earlier literature, the following hypotheses were stated:

1. There will be positive, statistically significant correlation between bullying and victimization and parent–child conflict.

2. There will be negative, statistically significant correlation between bullying and victimization and parental monitoring.
3. There will be negative, statistically significant correlation between bullying and victimization and child disclosure.
4. All three parameters (parent–child conflict, parental monitoring and child disclosure) will be able to predict child bullying and victimization experiences at school.

2 Methods

2.1 Participants

The participants were 492 Greek Cypriot early adolescents and both of their parents. Adolescents' age ranged from 13 to 15 years with a mean age of 14.2 years (SD = 1.4). Males and females were about equally represented in the sample (47 and 53 % respectively). The sampling procedure was as follows: Eleven public high schools were randomly selected (out of a total of about 200). The only criterion used for the selection was the school's location (urban vs. rural). Since the demographic representation of Cyprus is about 70 % urban and 30 % rural, eight of the selected schools were located in urban areas and three schools were located in small, rural communities. In this sample of schools we used stratified cluster sampling where grades 1–3 represented the strata and each classroom represented a cluster. Using this procedure we randomly generated a group of twenty two classrooms that comprised a sample of 549 students. Thirty nine students (or either of their parents) turned in incomplete questionnaires and therefore they were excluded from the final sample which consists of 492 students. Also, eighteen students were absent from school at the time of data collection (response rate 89.6 %). Without violating anonymity, we asked the Principals of the participating schools to briefly describe the profiles of these students, pointing out any known difficulties that these students have with bullying or victimization. This investigation showed that students who were absent during the data collection of the present study were not different that the rest of the students in terms of bullying or victimization experiences at school. Missing values were replaced by the mean score of the relevant distribution of scores.

Parents came from both urban and rural areas of Cyprus with the majority (72.8 %) residing in urban areas which is close to the demographic characteristics of the country. In terms of educational level, 4.8 % of the mothers and 8.4 of the fathers had elementary education only; 8.5 and 7.9 % respectively were Junior High school graduates; 47.3 and 57.3 % respectively were Senior High school graduates; and 39.4 and 29.4 % respectively were college graduates.

2.2 Instruments

For the purpose of the present study, three instruments were used; one of these was completed by the participating adolescents while the other two were completed separately by their mothers and fathers. The children/adolescents completed the Revised

Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire (BVQ-R). Participating parents completed the Child–Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS), and the parental monitoring and child disclosure questionnaire.

2.3 Revised Bullying and Victimization Questionnaire: BVQ-R

The BVQ-R is based on the original questionnaire initially constructed by Olweus (1993) and it consists of twenty items. It has been recently translated into Greek language and was adapted to the local culture (Kyriakides et al. 2006). It has also been used in a number of studies in Cyprus showing good psychometric properties (Georgiou and Stavrinides 2008; Georgiou 2008; Stavrinides et al. 2011). Items from the bullying subscale include statements such as "other children complain that I hit them"; "I want other children to do as I say"; "other children are afraid of me". Items from the victimization subscale include statements such as "I was threatened or forced by other children"; "Other children have said lies or bad things about me"; "I was excluded/ignored by other children". Participating children/adolescents responded to each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale.

2.4 The Child–Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS)

Conflict between parents and their child was measured by means of the 28-item Child–Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS, Pianta 1992), an instrument based on attachment theory. Participating mothers and fathers were asked to report their own feelings and beliefs about their relationship with the child, and about the child's attachment behavior toward them. The CPRS items are rated on a 5-point, Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 = "Definitely does not apply" to 5 = "Definitely applies". Two main subscales derived from the CPRS, measuring conflict and closeness between the parent and the child. For the current study only the conflict subscale was used. The conflict score was computed as the sum of 12 items, (e.g. "My child easily becomes angry at me", "My child and I are always struggling with each other") with higher scores indicating more conflict between the parent and the child.

Parental monitoring and child disclosure were measured by means of Stattin and Kerr (2000) questionnaire. This instrument has recently been adapted to Greek language and it has been used in Cyprus in empirical studies on parent–child processes with satisfactory psychometric properties (Stavrinides et al. 2010; Stavrinides 2011). The authors of the original instrument report that there are two main sources from which parents can learn about their adolescents' activities: through parental monitoring and through child disclosure. Based on this assumption, a 15-item instrument has been created as follows:

Parental monitoring: This subscale measures parents' active efforts to monitor their child's behaviour and to solicit information regarding their children's socialization. The subscale consists of the following ten items: "Does your child need to have your permission to stay out late on a weekday evening?"; "Does your child need to ask for your permission before he/she decides with his/her friends what they will do on a Saturday evening?"; "If your child stays out until late one night, do you require

Table 1 Participants mean scores and standard deviations on the scales of conflict, parental monitoring, child disclosure, bullying, and victimization

Construct	Mean	SD	Alpha	n of items
Mother conflict	21.75	7.64	.85	12
Father conflict	21.04	7.35	.83	12
Mother monitoring	39.30	7.79	.88	10
Father monitoring	36.73	8.46	.88	10
Child-disclosure (mother)	19.31	4.18	.78	5
Child-disclosure (father)	18.00	4.33	.79	5
Bullying	21.04	7.35	.83	10
Victimization	12.49	4.95	.86	9

that he/she explains what he/she has been doing and who he/she was with?"; "Do you always require that your child tells you where he/she has been at night, who he/she was with, and what they did together?"; "Before your child goes out on a Saturday night, do you require him/her to tell where he/she will be at and with whom?"; "How often do you talk to your child's friends when they come over to your house?"; "During the past month, have you talked to the parents of your child's friends? "; "During the past month, have you talked to your child about how he/she spends his/her free time? "; "How often do you talk with your child about things that happen during a usual day?"; "Do you usually ask your child how he/she spends his/her free time? ".

Child disclosure: The child disclosure subscale measures how parents perceive their children's free-willing information sharing with them. It consists of the following five items: "How often does your child talk to you about his/her achievement in various school subjects?"; "How often does your child talk to you about a usual day at school?"; "Does your child keep many secrets from you regarding his/her free time?"; "Does your child keep many secrets about what he/she does during nights and weekends?";"If your child goes out one night, does he/she tell you the following day what he/she has done during that time?". Parents responded on all items on a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, Cronbach alphas, and number of items in each scale of the measures used in the present study.

2.5 Procedures

Participating students were asked to complete the BVQ-R in the classroom during one teaching period. The students were explicitly informed about the purpose and the confidentiality of the study and were asked to participate on a volunteer basis. The Child–Parent Relationship Scale along with the parental monitoring and child disclosure questionnaire were sent to each parent in a sealed envelope with an accompanying letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their participation on a volunteer basis. The letter explicitly informed them of the anonymity of the study and the data protection measures that were taken. For matching of each child with her parents while ensuring anonymity, a unique code number was printed on each child's set of questionnaires that corresponded to the same code number printed on the questionnaire sent to parents.

Table 2 Correlation coefficients between conflict, monitoring, child disclosure, bullying, and victimization.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Mother conflict	–	.61**	−.18**	−.10*	−.41**	−.31**	.22**	.26**
2. Father conflict		–	−.08	−.18**	−.28**	−.43**	.17**	.17**
3. Mother monitoring			–	.69**	.61**	.48**	−13**	−.02
4. Father monitoring				–	.40**	.55**	−.08	.01
5. Chlid disclosure (mother)					–	.66**	−.20**	−.10*
6. Child disclosure (father)						–	−.17**	−.12*
7. Bullying							–	.41**
8. Victimization								–

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 3 Stepwise regression analysis predicting bullying and victimization from mothers' measures

Dependent measures

Bullying			Victimization		
	β	R^2		β	R^2
Step 1			*Step 1*		
Conflict	.22**	.05	Conflict	.26**	.07
	β	ΔR^2			
Step 2					
Conflict	.16**				
Child disclosure	.14**	03			

** $p < .01$

3 Results

The first notable finding is that adolescent conflict with the father was highly correlated with the respective conflict with the mother (r = .61, p <.01). Similarly, mother monitoring and child self disclosure to mother were highly correlated to the corresponding measures for fathers (r = .69 and .66 respectively, p <.01, see Table 2). Consequently, the predictive ability of the variables reported by fathers and mothers was almost identical (see Tables 3 and 4).

The results show significant positive correlations between parent–child conflict, bullying and victimization. Further, while mothers' monitoring is significantly negatively correlated with bullying, fathers' monitoring is not significantly correlated with either bullying or victimization. Interestingly, child disclosure is significantly negatively correlated with bullying and victimization and this correlation is significant for disclosure to both mothers and fathers (see Table 2).

Stepwise regression analysis revealed a similar predictive model for both mothers and fathers. Bullying was negatively predicted by child disclosure while positively predicted by conflict with parent. Parental monitoring could not predict bullying at school. Victimization was predicted only by conflict. Neither monitoring nor child disclosure had any significant prediction on victimization (see Table 3).

Table 4 Stepwise regression analysis predicting bullying and victimization from fathers' measures

Dependent measures					
Bullying			Victimization		
	β	R^2		β	R^2
Step 1			*Step 1*		
Child disclosure	−.19**	.04	Conflict	.18**	.04
	β	ΔR^2			
Step 2					
Child disclosure	−.14**				
Conflict	.11*	.02			

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Multicollinearity was investigated throughout the regression analyses and all the found predictors' indices of Tolerance and VIF were within highly acceptable levels (Tolerance range 95–.99 and VIF range 1.00–1.05).

A word of caution is due here, in that the predictors in the present study, although they are statistically significant, they do not explain more than 10 % of the variance of bullying and victimization. Even though this is clearly a weakness, it is not uncommon in the relevant literature. For example, in a recent meta-analysis of 153 studies the authors report a series of similar effect sizes of a wide range of personal and interpersonal predictors of bullying and victimization (Cook et al. 2010).

4 Discussion

The results of the present study support and enhance earlier reports that parent–child conflict is related to the child's peer aggression behavior at school, including bullying and victimization (Dumas et al. 1995; El-Sheikh and Elmore-Staton 2004; Ingoldsby et al. 2006; Kazdin 1992; O'Keef 1994; Volling and Belsky 1992). Thus, research hypothesis 1 was fully supported by the results. The direction of the influence could not be examined here, since no longitudinal data were available. Therefore, we cannot say based on the current findings whether conflict at home influences bullying at school or whether bullying behavior brings about or exacerbates conflict at home. Probably, both are true and a bidirectional model of influence is in operation (Crouter and Booth 2003; O'Connor 2002; Wood et al. 2004). However, additional research is needed in order to establish this claim.

Hypothesis 2 was only partially supported by the findings. Monitoring by the mother was negatively correlated with bullying, but not with victimization, while monitoring by the father was not related with either bullying or victimization. Furthermore, parental monitoring was not able to predict child aggressive behaviour. This contradicts some prior findings (Barnes and Farrell 1992; Reifman et al. 1998; Fletcher et al. 2004; Waizenhofer et al. 2004; Wood et al. 2004; van der Vorst et al. 2006). A possible explanation may be that parents of bullies at a certain point accept their inability

to control their child's aggressive behaviour and give up. As Patterson et al. (1992) point out, parents abdicate their parental responsibilities and disengage in the face of adolescent problem behaviour.

Hypothesis 3 was fully supported by the results. It seems that a child who willingly discloses information related to his/her daily experiences at school to either parent is a child that has no problem with bullying or victimization. If one puts together this and the previous finding, then one will conclude that a child effect rather than a parent effect is in operation, as some prior researchers have predicted (Kerr and Stattin 2003). In other words, what a parent does trying to monitor the child's behaviour is not effective in reducing bullying activity at school. In contrast, if the child chooses to talk more with the parent, then this self disclosure works as a protective mechanism against peer aggression at school.

Finally, hypothesis 4 was partially supported by the results, in that only parent–child conflict and child self disclosure were able to predict child bullying activity at school. Parental monitoring could not. As for victimization, it could be predicted only by conflict. It may be true that only a minority of children report being bullied to their parents and only a minority of parents even believe their children when such reports are offered (Hunter et al. 2004). Thus, child self disclosure predicts bullying, but not victimization.

4.1 Limitations and contribution of the present study

Like much of the existing literature in the area of parenting and child outcomes, the present study utilized standard cross-sectional methodology. While such method is established in the social sciences, it also bears limitations, such as significant constraints in unfolding cause and effect links. Therefore our conclusions are limited because they are based on correlational relationships. Additional investigation of these variables using longitudinal data is needed.

Further, we also acknowledge the limitations of self-report measures. Despite the fact that this data-collection method is widely used and despite the acceptable psychometric properties of the instruments, the results should be interpreted with caution. Also, since these results may be culture specific, additional research is needed to verify that they are true in other cultures as well.

Finally, this study placed its emphasis on specific parental measures such as parental monitoring and parent–child conflict. It would be interesting, however, to investigate the role of other parent–child processes such as the role of authoritarian versus authoritative parenting style, specific facets of parental control such as psychological and behavioral control, and variables of parental involvement that might also be related to bullying and victimization. That is, whether maintaining good communication with the teachers and participating in school activities would be instrumental in reducing peer aggressive behavior.

An argument that has drawn considerable attention recently is that bullying cannot be fully understood without examining both the social and moral aspects involved in the phenomenon (Arsenio and Lemerise 2004). According to this argument, bullies have a theory of mind and can predict what the other person's response to their own

action will be. In other words, bullies do not harass random victims. Rather, they deliberately choose to act aggressively towards pre-selected individuals because they value aggression as a useful interpersonal strategy. Based on this viewpoint, future research could examine the application of moral structures during peer interactions. Such research could explore the connections between children's understanding and their behavior involving aggression and other morally relevant acts.

Another concept that is related to parenting and may be a parameter of bullying is the socialization of moral emotions. According to Ttofi and Farrington (2008), parents can use either reintegrative shaming (i.e. rejecting the wrongdoing while approving the wrongdoer), or disintegrative shaming (i.e. shaming offered in a stigmatizing or rejecting way). It is possible that parents who systematically use disintegrative shaming of their children set in motion a chain of events including shame displacement, less bonding with parents, and a theory of mind that values ruthless competition, power imbalance and inequality as useful interpersonal strategies. This type of socialization of moral emotions may eventually lead to children's aggression towards peers, one aspect of which is increased bullying propensity. Empirical studies need to verify that such a relationship exists.

Regardless of the limitations mentioned above, the present study contributes to the relevant literature by introducing two possible parameters of bullying behaviour at school. One is the degree of existing conflict between the parent and the child and another one is the amount of self disclosure that the child willingly makes about his or her bullying experiences at school. Additionally, this study contributes to the discussion about the relationship between active parental monitoring and child behaviour. Unlike earlier studies that have collected data only from one parent (usually from mothers), the present study has examined information provided by the adolescent and both of her parents.

Parenting at home seems to be related to bullying at school. However, not all aspects of parenting are related, and not in the same way. The present study examined the relationship between bullying and victimization at school and each of three, relatively new variables in the current, relevant literature. The first such variable (i.e. parent–child conflict) was found to be positively correlated to, and a potent predictor of both bullying and victimization; the second (child disclosure) was found to be negatively correlated to and also a potent predictor of bullying (not victimization), while the third one (monitoring), unlike earlier reports, was found to be statistically unrelated to either bullying or victimization. These findings should be taken into consideration if prevention and intervention programs introduced at schools are to be effective.

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