Teachers' Perceived Contributing Factors of School Bullying in Public Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Teachers' perception about bullying, embedded in bullying knowledge and his/her perceived contributing factors, influences the mechanism of choosing and practicing appropriate intervention strategies to handle school bullying. The major purpose of the current paper was to explore the contributing factors of school bullying perceived by teachers which may significantly determine the bullying incidences in public elementary schools. To achieve this purpose, survey research design (quantitative) was adopted. Total 300 elementary teachers from 60 elementary schools were selected through stratified sampling technique from three randomly selected tehsils of Sargodha district. Data was collected through self-developed instrument. Results revealed that teachers' perception about the seriousness of bullying is strongly associated with their knowledge of bullying. Further, teachers were found in favour of multiple constructive intervention strategies instead of corporal punishment to handle bullying issues. In addition, female teachers reported significantly more knowledge of school bullying than male teachers (t = 3.378, p < .01). Further, teaching experience and tehsils were also found significantly different. Concerning contributing factors, results showed that classroom management (b_{CM} = .232, p < .001), conducive learning environment (b_{CLM} = 1.413, p < .001) and fair environment (b_{CFE} = .127, p < .01) significantly reduce the bullying incidents in school. Moreover, father's support, parents' interrelationship positively reduces the chance of a child to be victim of school bullying (F 6, 273 = 5.679, p < .001) and to be bully (F6, 274 = 14.327, p < .001). Thus, by introducing a conducive learning environment with constructive classroom management in schools and parents' positive support in homes, school bullying can be minimized.

Keywords: School bullying, Teachers' support, Parents' control, Parent's role in child rearing, Parents Interrelationship, Handeling strategies, Classroom management.

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Introduction

Bullying is a universal issue, which is defined as hurting others through physical, verbal, and emotional torture. Olweus (1993) defined bullying as disruptive or cruel behaviour of an individual when a person observes repetitive harmful and undesirable activities with one or many students. Research reveals that the prevalence of bullying in school has produced harmful effects, even in later life of those who were involved in this phenomenon (Li & Andrade, 2016; Gradinger et al. 2017). However, community involvement and school can perform constructively in diminishing the frequency and the intensity of bullying issues (Farley, 2018). Within the community, the role of parents and teachers work has been recognized as catalyst in the process of helping victims of bullying to prevent, cope with and end bullying (Bjereld et al. 2017).

Though, no single solution can be recommended for every victim of bullying, however, school teacher as a key agent and manager for the classroom can alter the disorderly situation and align classroom climate in the direction of learning environment. To develop a conducive learning atmosphere in school, classroom discipline plays a vital role. Therefore, it depends on the capability and vitality of teacher to control a classroom and unruly situations without much difficulty by utilizing his personal skills and strategies via constructive approach (Ahmad et al. 2012). Beside this, to understand and address the issue of school bullying, how teacher perceives this phenomenon and what he/she thinks about its contributory factors is of vital importance. For example, the factors like classroom discipline, fair environment, knowledge about bullying, teaching experience and classroom management style, significantly estimate teachers' perception of school bullying and dealing bullying incidences (Leff et al.,1999).

Therefore, on the one hand, teachers' knowledge of school bullying is of immense importance. On the other hand, how school teachers recognize and identify bullying proceedings, and various types of tactics they use in practice to stop bullying situation, is a subjective issue of bullying phenomenon (Boulton, 2014). Furthermore, how teachers' intervene bullying situation and what kind of different strategies he/she utilizes to minimize the frequency of bullying in school is not only affected by the student's age, gender and extent of bullying behavior, but also teacher's own gender and age (Espelage, 2013). Moreover, teachers' perception about parents' rearing of their children, their support and parents' interrelationship, which are key indicators of developing the personality traits of the child, also confined in controlling bullying episodes in school (Mayes et al. 2017). Therefore, teachers' perception is the key element in building his capacities to deal with bullying. The literature review is presented below to explore this important aspect in detail.

Literature Review

The role of teachers holds vital influence on students' activities and thus a teacher having spectator's eyes significantly contribute to recognize, understand about bullying measures in school premises (Ertesvag, 2016). Literature has documented various contexts and individual factors which form the perception of the teacher about school bullying and his attitude towards handling it (Wei et al. 2010; Casas et al. 2015; Elliott et al. 2019). The individual variables and contextual factors are interdependent and develop mutual effect on teachers' perception about bullying events. In this connection, contextual aspects explain and clarify the interaction of bullying characteristics, such as, different type of bullying, teachers' own understanding, awareness and knowledge about school bullying (Lester et al. 2018; Ruzicka, et al. 2018). However, it is obvious that if a teacher does not recognize and identify the occurrence of inappropriate behaviour among students and even he does not observe an event as case of bullying, or does not have ability to probe the condition of bullying, it means that the teacher had a passive response in the case of bullying (Boulton, 1997; Yoon & Kerber, 2003). Whereas, individual factors (i.e. Age, gender, empathy and teaching experience) also substantially develop the perception of teacher about school bullying (Liu et al. 2018). Besides, researchers explored that teachers' level of efficacy, scarce knowledge and their perception about the supportive factors of school bullying can serve as a controlling or enhancing predictor of bullying. In addition, teachers' belief about the home environment influence, where the students brought up, also affects his strategies to intervene the bullying incidences. However, literature indicates that there was dearth of the research regarding understudy issue specifically in the selected geographical area of the present study.

Teachers' Knowledge about School Bullying

School bullying behaviour may be considered as to highlight and signify the harassment or brutality actions, which is normally repetitive action, by solitary person or group of persons towards an individual. However, the events of bullying are very critical, common and serious issue for school students as well as for school administration. Usually, there are three main characters involve in the process of bullying incident; Bully is one who misuses power to suppress the other individual; the bullied person or a victim who suffers from a injurious action or destructive and aggression of bully; third one is a passive one who is silent, standing and just watching bullying phenomena through naked eyes, but he/she is not taking keen interest to intervene, and that person generally called bystander (Vanderbilt & Augstyn, 2010). Among the various types of bullying, from verbal to sexual harassment & social exclusion, the most dangerous practices of bullying take place directly as being teased; being physically attacked, and social separation (Smith et al. 2003). Whereas, many psychologists suggested that verbal bullying is the most frequent format elementary level (Piotrowski & Hoot, 2008; Goldweber et al. 2013). On the contrary, it is found

that many teachers believe that verbal abuse cannot lead students towards harmful injury (Casey-Cannon et al. 2001) thus do not observe verbal aggression, non-physical kind of antagonistic behaviour as violent behaviour, which leads toward physical aggression (Rosen et al. 2017).

Various researches at the elementary level exposed that, usually teachers fail to identify bullying incident which is generally challenged by students (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008; Noam & Strohmeier, 2012a). This is because of their misunderstandings about bullying or not sufficient knowledge of bullying. Teachers witness violence or bullying in school as a normal fragment of childhood (Coloroso, 2002; Craig et al. 2011). In addition, research also declares that they are familiar with only one-third of all bullying incidences happened in school (Leff et al. 1999; Pellegrini and Bartini, 2001; Migliaccio, 2015). Similarly, in another study, it is found that school teachers perceive only one incident out of twenty-five incidents (Pepler et al. 2000). In this connection, only 25 % teachers break through the frequency of school bullying occurrence and 75% of teachers describe that they usually neglect bullying situation in school (Ziegler & Rosenstein-Manner, 1991). In some cases, while examining bullying matters, school discipline committee, teachers and school personnel face difficulty to differentiate between the peer conflict and bullying among students (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008; Strohmeier & Noam, 2012b). Therefore, the knowledge of the teachers and what they observe need to be evaluated in order to recognize that how they comprehend it and what is their commitment to control it, *especially since awareness informs response to bullying* (Migliaccio, 2015; p.84).

Besides the knowledge of bullying, teachers' belief and perception confined in with contributing factors, effect on their behaviour while they interact or cooperate with students (Poulou & Norwich 2002) or even prevent bullying incidents (Sairanen & Pfeffer, 2011). In consequence, having proper knowledge about bullying phenomenon, and understanding of logical sequence of the effecting factors may help the teacher to choose better way to handle. In consequence, having sound technical knowledge to cope or handle bullying episode can stimulate an instant response in terms of intervening with diverse technique each time, in extracting correctly and controlling bullying incidents and even prevent it (Rigby, 2007; Rigby, 2011; Waasdorp et al. 2013).

Effect of Teacher's Individual Characteristics

Research reveals that diversity of teachers' individual characteristics like gender, age, experience, education level, locality etc. are the variables which alter or stimulate his perception and hence attitude toward school bullying (Craig et al. 2000). Perception and thus Readiness of the teacher to deal with school bullying substantially depends upon his characteristics that may manipulate the intensity of the action (Mishna et al. 2005). Among all these variables, teacher's gender plays a vital role to discourse

bullying phenomena. A reference to the reporting of bullying, rating of bullying situation and the severity of bullying, male teachers report more than female teachers (Green et al. 2008). Usually, the male shows aggressive response to stop and intervene bullying incidents in school premises, but sometimes female teachers were found less flexible in comparison to male and provided a passive response towards bullying behaviour between the students (Mishna et al. 2010).

Similarly, the other prominent variable which were found to be significant is teaching experience. Length of teaching experience is found crucial to deal with bullying event. The experienced teacher believed to have more readiness, self-confidence and skills (Ruzicka et al. 2018) than the teachers with less or no experience and pre-service teachers (Lester et al. 2018) to deal with bullying in elementary schools. Teaching experience ensures positive aspect of experience sharing, anti-bullying initiatives and deal approach to prevent and manage students bullying behaviors (Sahin, 2010; Rosen et. 2017; Lester et al. 2018; Ruzicka et al. 2018).

Teachers' Support and Counseling

The teacher-student relationship is highly pertinent to the successful and constructive process of learning. However, the quality of this relationship highly depends upon the teachers' support and counseling, particularly in school bullying. Teachers are acknowledged as the savior against bullying. Researchers reported that the positive teacher-student relationship, teacher's support and willingness to intervene are significant factors to reduce bullying events and peer victimization. In addition, bullies perceive dwindling authority of teachers due to his weak emotional and instructional support which affect a teacher's ability to stop bullying (Boulton et al. 2013; Espelage et al. 2014; Ertesvag, 2016). Such a feeling of insecurity and low level of teacher's support are further reported for the students to be victimized by bullying (Boulton et al. 2002). Moreover, this ratio is found more among boys (6.4% are bully-victims, while 21.9% of all are involved in violence) than the girls (1.1% are bully-victims while 11.2% of all are involved in violence) at the elementary school level (Berkowitz & Benbenishty, 2012). Thus, positive perception of teacher's support enhances perceived safety among students (in classroom and playground) and substantially associated with the reported level of being bullied.

Classroom Management, Fair and Conducive Learning Environment

Literature documents that classroom management has two main goals for the favourable learning atmosphere, first, to introduce highly supportive learning activities by eliminating students' disruptive behaviour and secondly to produce a healthy and safe climate for students (de Kantter, 2001). Therefore, to achieve these goals, teachers must practice skillful teaching in the classroom and guidance for a healthy learning environment. Other way around, if the teachers are not equipped with effective management skills they may be associated with frustration and maltreatment of students

which may lead to many kinds of bullying (We et al. 2010). The teacher performs as a catalyst in changing school climate and the main mediator for controlling subversive behaviour and intimidation among students to bring the fair environment (Abbas et al. 2014). However, teachers with adequate skills, strategies and practical knowledge can easily deal with the classroom issues and develop an enjoyable environment for orientation (Ahmad et al. 2012). Moreover, productive classroom practices are essential and significant in minimizing the school bullying frequency. An enjoyable and conducive learning environment for the classroom occurs only if students exhibit less destructive behaviour, as research has proved astrong association between bullying and low academic achievement (Allen, 2010). The other disadvantage of bullying includes psychological issues that create hindrance in concentration in studies and enthusiasm for the prosperous life. Conducive learning environment directly leaves an imprint on the students' performance (Arong & Ogbadu, 2010; Chukwuemeka, 2013).

To sum up, it may said that both negative and positive types of classroom managements are significantly associated with bullying incidences. For instance, several results showed that teacher classroom management were closely linked to the involvement of students in bullying aggression and victimization (Espelage et al. 2014).

Teachers' Perception about Parents' Role in Child Rearing

Research about school bullying, documents that the integration of factors like, school harmony, paternalism, parent-child communication, and peer pressure tend to be relevant and necessary to capture a more comprehensive vision of the phenomenon. Among them, parents' discipline and their positive role in child rearing make a significant positive contribution in fostering home-school collaboration to reduce the chances of bullying events (Abbas et al. 2016). Furthermore, the results of various research studies also showed that children who were bullied had worse relationships with their parents, like parent-child neglecting relationship, than those who were not victimized. The victims had a greater probability of finding difficulty in talking to parents about things that were bothering them, feeling that the family was not listening to what they were saying, and had low confidence in their teacher or vice versa (Bjereld et al. 2017). On contrary, research also indicates that the parents having authoritarian or disciplined upbringing style affects positively on bullying (Lee & Wong, 2009). The effect can be positively accelerated through channelizing constructive upbringing of children (Bjerel et al. 2017).

Consequently, a fairly thorough understanding of teachers about bullying and how far they belief that school bullying is because of the parent-child relationship can deal or stop occurring of such events before its happening (Glenn & Espelage, 2018). However, it is also evident that understanding and belief provides the basis for the formation of one's perceptions (Ajzen, 1991). Thus, teacher's understanding and their belief that teachers' perception about parents' role in child rearing, as it is documented

above, is directly linked with the school bullying more than any other factor has a significant role in their dealing the bullying incidences.

Theoretical Framework

Bullying activities in the school are multifaceted and difficult phenomenon in which many theories exist to clarify such kind of behaviour. For the present study theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is taken as the grounded theory. This theory describes as "*the human behaviour is guided by intention, and the intention is influenced by the attitude towards the behaviour, perceived norms and perceived behaviour control*" (Ajzen, 2011; p. 311). The current study encompassed on the role of perceptions of teachers about bullying and the factors that they perceived to contribute in bullying phenomenon positively or negatively. Therefore, expressing the perception about how and why such aggressive behaviour demonstrated by few students, direct towards the understanding and identification of teachers' perception to handle bullying effectively and efficiently.

Objectives of the Study

The first objective of the study was to estimate the association between teachers' knowledge about school bullying and the demographic variables (gender, teaching experience, age etc.). The second objective of this paper was to explore the perceived dealing strategies of school bullying. The third objective was to measure the group differences for the teachers' knowledge about school bullying (KSB) and the perceived contributing factors on the basis of demographic variables. The fourth objective of this paper was to evaluate the teachers' perceived factors (teacher support, classroom management, parents' support and their role in child rearing), which may significantly predict school bullying and the last objective was to predict significant classroom factors in handling school bullying.

Research Methodology

This study aimed at evaluating the teachers' perceived contributing factors of school bullying at elementary level in public sector schools in Sargodha district, therefore, to investigate this phenomenon, a quantitative survey research design was adopted and a self-developed research instrument was used to collect the data. A quantitative research design being objective in nature provides an elaborative picture of the problem at large. Therefore, in a situation where it is to investigate, which set of factors predict the school bullying in public sector elementary schools perceived by the teachers, was objective in nature rather than focusing subjectivity by exploring 'how' and 'why' this phenomenon happens, hence a quantitative survey research design was admissible.

Population and Sampling

The study population of the current research was consisted of all elementary school teachers in all seven tehsils (Sargodha, Shahpur, Silanwali, Bhulwal, Bhera, Kot Momin & Sahiwal) of district Sargodha. A multi stage sampling strategy was adopted. At first stage, three tehsils (that is, Sargodha, Shahpur, Bhulwal) out of seven tehsils were selected randomly through lottery method. Usually, results are generalized to the population from where the sample was drawn, therefore these results can be generalized for the Sargodha district. Moreover, the Sargodha district is agrarian, thus all tehsiles were having almost same socio-cultural characteristics, therefore, three tehsils (which is about 40% of the whole district) can be a true representative of the population to generalize the results.

There are total 365 elementary schools[†] in all seven tehsils. In sampled three tehsils, there are 210 elementary schools (Sargodha =141, Shahpur=36 & Bhalwal=33) in total. Out of these, 30% elementary schools from each tehsil were selected through stratified sampling technique, that is, 60 elementary schools (40 schools from Sargodha tehsil, 10 from Shahpur and 10 from Bhalwal) were selected to ensure further the generalizability. This was reverified through sample size calculation[‡]. At 95% confidence level and with confidence interval 10, the sample size was calculated 66. Lastly, at the third stage, 50% of the elementary teachers from each school were selected randomly as the respondents for this research study. A total of 300 elementary teachers responded the questionnaire of this research study.

Development of Research Instrument

Development of the research instrument that would lead to valid and reliable results is a crucial part and challenging task in the research (DeVellis, 2003; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). Therefore, to develop the research instrument for the current study, three steps were followed. At first, in the light of available literature, operational definitions of the variables and their constructs were formulated. Twelve variables (given in table 1) were selected and operational definitions were developed and their constructs were identified. At the second stage, to generate the item bank against each variable, already existing scales and research articles were reviewed. Total 98 items were developed for twelve scales and content validity was ensured through the experts and the scales were refined.

Lastly, the reliability of these scales was ensured through Chronbach Alpha by using SPSS v.20. Reliability of the research instrument was confirmed in the pilot test administered on 56 teachers selected from six elementary schools of Sargodha tehsil and three from Bhalwal. Four items were deleted whose alpha value was less than 0.6

[†]http://schoolportal.punjab.gov.pk/census/schoolinfoNew.asp retrieved on July 1, 2019.
[‡] https://www.statisticssolutions.com/sample-size-for-populations.html retrieved on July 1, 2019

(DeVellis, 2003; Field, 2009), therefore, total 94 items were remained for thirteen variables. Variables and their alpha values are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Cronbach Alpha values of scales of the study

Variables (Code)	Alpha (α)	No. of items
i. Teacher's knowledge of school Bullying (KSB)	0.64	5
ii. Classroom management style (CM)	0.712	14
iii. Classroom Fair environment (FE)	0.798	10
iv. Teacher's perceived Conducive learning environment (CLE)	0.719	4
v. Bully (Bl)	0.689	10
vi. Bullying Victim (BV)	0.814	10
vii. Teacher's perceived Mother's role in child rearing(MCR)	0.767	8
viii. Teacher's perceived father's role in child rearing(FCR)	0.887	8
ix. Teacher's perceived Mother's control(MC)	0.813	5
x. Teacher's perceived father's control(FC)	0.711	5
xi. Parent Interrelationship(PIR)	0.661	3
xii. Teacher's support (TS)	0.763	12

There were three parts of the final research instrument. Part 1 was based on demographic information of respondents (gender, age, qualification, designation, type of organization, teaching experiences). In part 2, various strategies to handle the school bullying were incurred. Lastly, in part 3, twelve variables measured by items in 7-points Likert scale vary from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" were asked.

Results

Every theory needs empirical evidence for its validation. So, to explore the overall impact on the base of sample information, there is no tool rather than the statistics. Therefore, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied by using Statistical package of social sciences (SPSS, v.22) to analyze the data in the light of the stated objectives of the study. Lastly, conclusions and discussion were made keeping in view the results and findings.

Keeping in view the first objective of this research, data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics like; frequency distributions and percentages, and then applied Chi- square to measure the association between the variables of the study presented in 8.1 below.

Demographic Information of the Participants

Demographic information plays a significant role in analyzing the research problem with respect to various socio-cultural patterns. In table 2, frequency distribution provided for the demographic description of the sample of the study.

Table 2

Frequency distribution of demographic details of the participants

Demographic Variables	Values
Gender	
Male	165 (55%)
Female	135 (45%)
Teaching Experience	
Less than 2 years	47 (15.7%)
2-5 years	113 (37.7%)
6-10 years	77 (25.7%)
Above 10 years	63 (21.1%)
Education	
B.A/B.Sc.	74 (24.7%)
M.A/M.Sc. and above	226 (75.3%)
Material Status	
Single	84 (28%)
Married	209 (69.7%)
Number of kids	
None	125 (41.7%)
One to Two	42 (14%)
Three	54 (18%)
Above three	47 (15.7)
Type of locality taught in	
Urban	203(67.7%)
Rural	97 (32.3%)
Specialization	
Science	107 (35.7%)
Arts	191 (63.7%)
Tehsil	
Sargodha	201 (67%)
Bhulwal	57 (19%)
Shahpur	42 (14%)
Knowledge about School bullying	
Yes	218 (72.7%)
No	82 (27.3%)

Knowledge about Cyber Bullying	
Yes	114 (38%)
No	185 (62%)
Bullying is a serious problem	
Yes	158 (52.7%)
No	93 (31%)
Don't Know	49 (16.3%)
Use of Social Media	
Yes	175 (58.1%)
No	125 (41.9)

It can be seen from the results in table 2 that 55% respondents were male while 45% respondents were female. Thus there was almost an equal representation from each gender in this study. Further, to observe the effect of teaching experience on the variables of the study, four levels were mentioned in the questionnaire. The results indicated that 15.7 % respondents belonged to teaching experience group less than 2 years, while largest portion among all experience slots, that is, 37.7 % respondents were lying within 2-5 years teaching experience group. While, 25.7 % respondents were having 6-10 years of teaching experiance and 21% respondents were having 10 years or above experiance. Regarding marital status of the respondents, 29.7% of the total participants were single, whilst, 69.7 % respondents were married who responded the questionnqire. Only 0.7% of the respondents were widows/divorced, this was small proportion so kept as outlier from the data. In addition to marital status, information about the number of kids of the teachers was asked to study the impact of the family structure on their dealing strategies for school bullying. A substantial portion of the total married sample, 125 (41.7%) teachers were not having any kid, whereas, remaining 58.3% of the sampled teachers were having kids. Moreover, to explore the influence of locality or the region where the school was situated, a question was asked about the locality in terms of Urbal/Rural where the teachers were teaching. It was found that total 67.7% of the respondents were from urban schools and 32.3% of the elementary teachers were teaching in elementary schools situated in rural region. Further, among all elementary school teachers, 35.7% were the science teachers and 63.7% were general/arts elementary teachers.

To investigate the bifurcation of data with respect to tehsils, it was found that out of total 300 teachers, 201(67%) respondents were belonging to 40 elementary schools of tehsil Sargodha, 57(19%) respondents were belonging to 10 schools of tehsil Bhulwal, while 42(14%) respondents were belonging to 10 elementary schools of tehsil Shahpur.

Last but not least, after asking demographic profile of the respondents in section A of the questionnaire, four questions were asked about the knowledge of

school bullying and cyber bullying, teachers' perception about the severity of the bullying and whether they use social media or not (Facebook, twitter, Instagram, blogging etc.). A vast majority of the respondents (72.7%) claimed to have the knowledge of school bullying, however, 62% of teachers reported that they didn't know the cyber bullying. Statistics revealed that 52.7% of participant of the study reported bullying as serious problem of the school as compare to 31% who negated such issue, whereas, 16.3% reported unawareness to the matter. In order to investigate the association of social media usage and development the teachers' perception about school bullying, 58% of the respondents confirmed that they use social media, while 42% of the teachers never used social media.

Association between the Variables

There were two identifying parameters; that is, the teachers are well aware of the knowledge of the school bullying and cyber bullying, and they are conscious about the seriousness of the bullying act. In addition, how this knowledge and awareness of bullying alters with respect to the various demographic characteristics of the respondents? to verify it, test of independence was run in table 3 for the demographic variables.

Table 3

Association between the demographic variables and perception of school bullying among teachers

Association between the variables	χ^2 Values	
i. Gender * Bullying is serious problem	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 10.64**$	p < .01
ii. Teacher's level of Education * Knowledge about school Bullying	$\chi^2_{(1)} = 4.14*$	p < .05
iii. Teacher's level of Education * Knowledge about Cyber Bullying	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 3.59*$	p < .001
iv. Teaching Experience * Bullying is serious problem	$\chi^2_{(6)} = 17.87**$	p < .001
v. Nature of school * Bullying is serious problem	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 12.44**$	p < .01
vi. Locality of school * Bullying is serious problem	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 1.94$	p = .3
vii. Tehsil * Bullying is serious problem	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 7.32$	p = .12
viii. Use of Social media * Knowledge about school Bullying	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 27.77***$	p < .001
ix. Use of Social media * Knowledge about Cyber Bullying	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 16.44***$	p < .001
x. Use of Social media * Bullying is a serious problem	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 16.44***$	p = .001
xi. Knowledge of school bullying * Bullying is serious problem	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 26.24***$	p < .001

To investigate the association between gender of the teacher and is/her consideration of bullying as serious problem, Chi square test of independence was run. Results revealed a significant association between the variables ($\chi^2_{(2)}$ = 10.64**, $p <$ .01). In addition, it was also found that as compare to female teachers (36.6%), male teachers (63.4%) consider bullying as serious problem in the schools. Measuring the association between bullying knowledge and level of education of the teachers, chi square value affirmed a significant association between the level of qualification degree and having knowledge about the school bullying ($\chi^2_{(1)}$ = 4.14*, $p <$ .05). Teachers having masters' level or MPhil degree (67.1%) as compare to B.A/BSc qualification (32.1%) were found to claim of having more knowledge about bullying. In the same manner, knowledge about cyber bullying was found significantly depending upon the level of education of the teacher ($\chi^2_{(2)}$ = 3.59*, $p <$ .05), 78.4% of the elementary teachers having Masters/MPhil qualification reported to have knowledge about cyber bullying as compare to 21.6% bachelor qualified teachers. These findings showed that knowledge and uniderstanding about school bullying increases with higher degree of qualification among teachers.

The next important variable of the study was teaching experience of the teachers. Chi square value ($\chi^2_{(6)}$ = 17.87**, $p <$ .01) indicated that teaching experience was significantly associated with the perception of the teacher about bullying as the serious problem. This means, with the increase in teaching experience, teachers show more concern about school bullying matters. Out of total, 49.2% of the teachers belonging to above 10-year experience group are considering this issue as serious one as compared to 12.9% of the teachers belonging to have teaching experience less than 2 years. Moreover, the nature of the school, that is, whether it is girls' school or a boys' school has any relationship with the perception of school bullying? A significant association ($\chi^2_{(4)}$ = 12.44**, $p <$ .01) was found, which indicated that nature of the school (boys' school vs. girls' school) significantly associated with the development of teacher's consciousness about bullying problem. As compare to girls' school teachers (45.2%), teachers teaching in boys' schools (53.8%) considered more the school bullying as the source of distressing situation on contrary, teacher's viewpoint was found not associated with the locality of the school where it is situated (Urban or rural). Furthermore, effect of tehsil, that is, geographical location, in which school belong to, didn't appear as significant variable in creating the concept of the teachers about bullying issue ($\chi^2_{(4)}$ = 7.32, $p =$ .12).

In the last, to explore the influence of social media usage among the teachers and their awareness of school bullying, chi-square was calculated. Significant association was found between the usage of social media and knowledge about school bullying ($\chi^2_{(4)}$ = 16.44***, $p <$ .001) and cyber bullying ($\chi^2_{(4)}$ = 27.77***, $p <$ .001). Results revealed that the use of social media enhanced the knowledge of school bullying and its types among the teachers. Moreover, teachers' impression of

seriousness of bullying problem was found significantly dependent upon their level of knowledge about bullying ($\chi^2_{(4)}$ = 26.24***, $p < .001$). This result indicated that 72.7% out of total teachers who claimed to know about school bullying, only 31% of them thought it as serious problem. It means more they claim to have the knowledge less they consider it as a serious problem.

Strategies to Handle the Bullying Situation

The second objective of this paper was to find out the perceived handeling strategies of school bullying. To achieve this objective, Section B in the research instrument was comprised of the checklist of the possible strategies to handle the school bullying incidence by the teachers, results are shown below in table 4.

Table 4
Strategies opined by the teachers to handle the bullying matters.

Strategies	Values
1. Corporal punishment	
Yes	117(39%)
No	183 (61%)
2. Disciplinary action	
Yes	227(75%)
No	73(25%)
3. Surveillance	
Yes	267(89%)
No	33(11%)
4. Penalty of community services	
Yes	284(94%)
No	16(6%)
5. Inter-colleague's discussion	
Yes	272(90%)
No	28(10%)
6. Discuss with bully's parents	
Yes	285(95%)
No	15(5%)
7. Counseling of Bully and bullied	
Yes	240(80%)
No	60(20%)

The results exhibited in table 4 that 39% of the respondent teachers were of the opinion that by applying corporal punishment against the bully person they can hendel the situation as compare to 61% who refused to support this strategy for such situation.

However, 75% of the respondents in this study were in favour to take strict disciplinary action against bully. Moreover, 89% of the teachers thought vigilant surveillance including CCTV cameras would be the better choice to avoid bullying against 11% of the teachers who negated this strategy. The data gathered revealed that 94 % of the teachers supported the option of punitive penalty like assigning community services to the bullies to reduce the school bullying, however, 16 % were not in the favour of it. Concerning the approach of discussing bullying issue with colleagues, 90% respondents were of the view in its favour, while 10% were against it. Further, 95% of the teachers considered meeting with the parents of the bully to discuss his psychological and social issues with them is a promising strategy to overcome bullying incidences, whilst 5% of the teachers refused it. A graphical presentation of these handling strategies is given in figure 1.
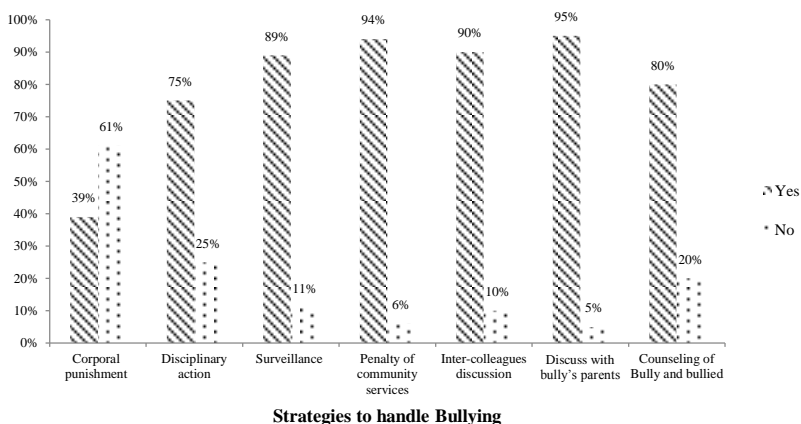

Figure 1. Graphical presentation of proposed strategies in handling school bullying

Literature reviewed that counselling of bullies in order to create the sense of responsibility and appreciation of others' dignity among them and rehabilitation program for victims is a convincing technique that can reduce the school bullying. Teachers (80%) in the current research demonstrated their willingness to adopt this technique to reduce the school bullying as compare to 20% who didn't approve it.

Group Differences between the Perceived Contributing Factors

The third objective was to measure the group differences for the teachers' knowledge about school bullying (KSB) and the perceived contributing factors on the basis of demographic variables. To accomplish this task, t-test of k independent sample was run to check the group differences with respect to gender, marital status, nature of school, region and level of education.

A significant gender difference (t = -3.378**, $p < .01$) was found in KSB. More female teachers (M = 16.53, SD =3.48) than male teachers (M = 15.04, SD = 4.01) were found to have better knowledge of school bullying. In addition, female teachers reported (M = 10.84, SD = 2.36) significantly better view for girls (t =-2.699**, $p < .01$) than their counterpart male teachers (M = 10.07, SD = 2.50). Female teachers thought that girls show less bullying behaviour than the boys. Regarding marital status group differences, a significant difference was found between single and married teachers (t = -1.96*, $p < .05$). More married teachers (M = 16.01, SD = 3.43) showed knowledge of school bullying than single teachers (M = 15.08, SD = 4.49). For teachers' perception of handling bullying events and its contributing factors, married teachers scored more on average than single teachers, however these differences were not found significant at 5% level of significance. Similarly, no group difference between the teachers was found regarding the locality (Urban/Rural) of the school.

Teaching Experience and Tehsils Group Difference

On the next step, to explore the group differences among the teachers regarding their teaching experience levels and tehsils, analysis of variances was computed. A significant group difference among teachers (F (3, 296) = 2.67*, $p < .05$) was found in classroom management democratic style. Bonferroni test was conducted in order to locate the groups that were significantly different. It was found that teachers belong to "2-5 years" group (M = 20.56, SD = 4.56) reported democratic style to handle the bullying significantly more than the teachers of "Above 10 years" experience group (M = 18.74, SD = 4.56). It means, more you are experienced the less you believe in democratic classroom management style to avoid bullying incidences. Similarly, for the factor "girls towards bullying", significant F-value (F (3, 295) = 3.35*, $p < .05$) was found among the teachers belonging to various teaching experience groups. Through Bonferroni multiple comparison test, it was found that teachers belong to "2-5 years" group (M = 10.76, SD = 2.56) thought girls are less prone to bullying than the teachers of "less than 2 years" (M = 9.53, SD = 2.34) teaching experience. Furthermore, regarding the teachers' perception of handling school bullying, significant result was found (F (3, 295) = 3.22*, $p < .05$). Teachers belong to "2-5 years" group (M = 40.57, SD = 5.12) perceive positive perception towards controlling bullying than the teachers belong to "less than 2 years" (M = 37.66, SD = 6.29).

Further, ANOVA was computed for the variable "Tehsil" in which school was situated, to examine its effect on the perception of the teachers. In table 5, the results of ANOVA are given.

Table 5
ANOVA results for group differences of three Tehsils

Factors		SS	Df	MS	F
Concept of School bullying	Between Groups	8.9	2	4.47	.300
	Within Groups	4422.8	297	14.89	
	Total	4431.7	299		
Authoritarian CM	Between Groups	132.7	2	66.38	2.643
	Within Groups	7459.7	297	25.12	
	Total	7592.5	299		
Democratic CM	Between Groups	711.9	2	355.98	22.14***
	Within Groups	4758.9	296	16.07	
	Total	5470.9	298		
Laissez faire CM	Between Groups	208.1	2	104.06	7.78**
	Within Groups	3955.5	296	13.36	
	Total	4163.6	298		
Fair Environment	Between Groups	1662.7	2	831.36	12.72***
	Within Groups	19403.8	297	65.33	
	Total	21066.5	299		
Conducive Learning Env.	Between Groups	66.8	2	33.42	6.48**
	Within Groups	1531.1	297	5.15	
	Total	1597.9	299		
Parents' Support	Between Groups	233.8	2	116.93	8.56***
	Within Groups	4041.6	296	13.65	
	Total	4275.4	298		
Parents' role in Child rearing	Between Groups	65.8	2	32.947	5.58**
	Within Groups	1745.1	296	5.89	
	Total	1811.1	298		
Teachers' Support	Between Groups	540.2	2	270.11	8.18***
	Within Groups	9768.7	296	33.00	
	Total	10309.2	298		

**$p<0.01$ & ***$p<0.001$

ANOVA results for the variable "Knowledge of school bullying" among the teachers and their perception about handling the bullying through "Authoritarian" classroom management style indicated no significant difference. However, for the remaining factors of the current study, significant results were found and Bonferroni test was conducted in order to locate the groups that were significantly different. It was found that for the factor "Democratic style", teachers from tehsil Bhalwal ($M = 22.01$, $SD = 3.95$) were having significantly more positive perception than the teachers from tehsils Sargodha ($M = 20.09$, $SD = 3.91$) and Shahpure ($M = 16.58$, $SD = 4.54$) given

that, Sargodha was having significantly positive perception than the Shahpure's teachers. Likewise, teachers working in Bhalwal ($M = 12.28$, $SD = 4.45$) were to have significantly more inclination towards "laissez-faire" management style than the teachers from Sargodha ($M = 10.11$, $SD = 3.48$). Similarly, for the factor "fair environment" in the class, teachers teaching in tehsil Bhalwal reported significantly more positive perception ($M = 49.33$, $SD = 7.72$) than that of Sargodha ($M = 45.62$, $SD = 8.22$) and Shahpure ($M = 41.05$, $SD=7.87$).

Concerning, teachers' viewpoint about the conducive learning environment for handling/preventing bullying, teachers from Bhalwal tehsil ($M = 12.42$, $SD = 1.9$) showed significantly more score than that of Shahpure's ($M = 10.76$, $SD = 2.70$).

Similarly, teachers' perception about the effect of parents' support in bullying, a significant F value ($F (2, 296) = 8.56$; $p < .001$) demonstrates that teachers' perception of three tehsils is significantly different. Teachers from Bhalwal tehsil ($M = 13.85$, $SD = 3.9$) considered parents' support as significant ingredient in preventing bullying than the Sargodha ($M = 12.38$, $SD = 3.56$) and Shahpure ($M = 10.76$, $SD = 4.03$). Likewise, teachers from three tehsils were also found significantly different regarding the perception of parent's role in child rearing ($F(2, 296) = 5.58$; $p < .01$).Teachers from Bhalwal ($M = 11.36$, $SD = 2.05$) scored significantly higher than the Sargodha ($M = 10.25$, $SD = 2.5$) and Shahpur' teachers ($M = 9.95$, $SD = 2.3$), thus perceived more the positive influence of parent's role in child rearing on school bullying.

Furthermore, teachers' support to handle school bullying, significant F-ratio ($F(2, 296) = 8.18$; $p < .001$) demonstrated that teachers' perception level varied, yet positive, with respect to the tehsils in which they were teaching. Bhalwal teachers ($M = 41.98$, $SD = 5.35$) were showing significantly more constructive perception regarding the teacher's support in resolving bullying issues than the teachers of Sargodha ($M = 38.92$, $SD = 5.5$) and Shahpure's ($M = 37.73$, $SD = 7$).

Regression Analysis for Bullying Victim and Bully

The fourth research objectives of this paper was to explore the significant contributing predictors. It has two parts; one deals with the predicting factors for a student to be a "Bullying Victim" and "The Bully", while other addresses the predictors for "handling/controlling bullying event". To achieve it. a multiple regression equation was computed with the six factors, these were, mother & father's role in child rearing, mother & father's support, Parents Interrelationship and teacher's support. The table 7 presents the results for model 1 of "Bullying Victim".

For Model 1, the ANOVA results verified the significance of the regression model for the dependant variable "Bullying Victim" ($F (6, 276) = 5.679$, $p < .001$). In addition, the "R^2" which explains the variation in the linear model (Field, 2009), here for "Bullying Victim", it was found 0.28. It showed that predictors (mother's role in

child rearing, father's role in child rearing, mother's support, father's support, Parents Interrelationship and teacher's support) generates 28% of the variation in the variable 'a student be a bully', which ensures the contribution of independent variables in estimating the dependant variable 'to be a bully'.

The column 1 presents the regression coefficients (b1), *SE*, *t*-values and their upper & lower bounds respectively at 95 % of confidence interval. Among all variables, "teacher's perception of father's positive support" and "parents' good interrelationship" were found to have a significant negative influence on the student being bullying victim. In other words, teachers perceive that father's support and healthy interparental relationship significantly reduce the chance of the student to be bullied by the students, that is, one-unit increase in father's support reduces the .24 units to be bullying victim. Similarly, one-unit increase in the "parents' interrelationship" decreases .64 units' chances for the student to be the bullying victim.

Table 7

Prediction of contributing factor for the student to be "Bullying Victim

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p	95 % Cl	
	B	Std. Error			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	34.76	4.832	6.661	.000	22.650	41.725
Mother's role in Child Rearing	-.156	.153	-1.021	.309	-.458	.146
Father's role in Child Rearing	.169	.123	1.374	.171	-.074	.412
Mother's Support	-.076	.151	-.503	.615	-.375	.223
Father's Support	-.243	.121	-2.018	.045	-.481	-.005
Parents Interrelationship	-.642	.257	-2.500	.013	-1.148	-.135
Teacher's Support	-.068	.060	-1.135	.258	-.186	.050
R^2	.28					
F	5.679			.000		
ΔR^2	.28					

Now for estimating the student to be a "Bully", again a multiple regression model was run with the above mentioned perceived contributing factors in SPSS in table 8. The significant F value ($F (6, 274) = 14.327, p < .001$) indicated that this model 2 was significantly predicting the variable 'Bully'.

Table 8

Teachers' perceived factors predicting the variable "Bully"

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		*t*	*p*	95 % Cl	
	B	Std. Error			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	35.253	4.975	7.086	.000	25.433	45.073
Mother's role in Child Rearing	-.242	.117	-2.071	.040	-.472	-.011
Father's role in Child Rearing	.040	.124	.322	.748	-.204	.284
Mother's Support	-.129	.131	-.987	.325	-.388	.129
Father's Support	-.204	.102	-1.998	.047	-.405	-.003
Parents Interrelationship	-.594	.142	-4.173	.000	-.876	-.313
Teacher's Support	-.046	.062	-.733	.465	-.169	.077
R^2	.26					
F	14.327			.000		
ΔR^2	.26					

The model 2 in table 8 presents the regression coefficients against the teachers' perceived factors. The variable, 'perception of mother's role in child rearing' was found to have the significantly negative effect on the student to be a 'Bully' (b = -.242**). This means that teachers perceived that mother's positive role in child rearing reduced .24 units for a student to do the bullying. The second factor which was found significant in model 2 was 'Father's support' which lessens the chance for a student to be a bully (b = -.204*). This indicated that with the increase of one unit in 'father's support' on the student lessen .204 units for him/her to be a bully. Similar to the model 1 in table 7, here in model 2 in table 8, the factor 'Parents Interrelationship' was also found significantly contributing in reducing the effect for the student to be a bully (b = -.594***). However, the factor 'Teacher's support' was found non-significant for both models predicting the student to be 'Bullying Victim' and 'Bully'.

In the end, last objective in this research was to explore the contribution of the classroom variables in handling/controlling bullying events in school. Taking demographic variable as constant, Model 3 was run with "Handeling school bullying" as an outcome variable and three classroom factors as independent variables for whole sample of 300 teachers in table 9.

Table 9

Model 3 for Handling school bullying predicted by its classroom variables

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	p	95 % Cl	
	B	Std. Error			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	12.884	2.256	6.153	.000	4.145	21.623
Classroom management (CM)	.232	.053	4.727	.000	.143	.321
Conducive learning environment (CLE)	1.413	.153	7.837	.000	1.074	1.751
Classroom Fair environment (CFE)	.127	.083	1.951	.043	.034	.221
R^2	.391					
F	48.075			.000		
ΔR^2	.384					

F-value in table 9 for this model confirmed that the variable handling bullying event was significantly predicted by all three classroom factors, management, fair and conducive environment (F (3, 293) = 48.075, $p < .001$). For this model, the value of R^2 was found 0.391, which explains 39% of the variation in the variable 'Handling bullying'.

Further, in column 1, the 'b' values against each factor demonstrate that CM (b_{CM} = .232***), CLE (b_{CLE} = 1.413***)" and CFE (b_{CFE} = .127*)" are significantly predicting the outcome variable "handling bullying event". Moreover, the positive signs all three predictors are showing that these factors are positively contributing in handling or reducing the bullying events in the school. The share of CM is 0.23, CLE is 1.4 and CFE is 0.127 towards the "handling bullying" variable. Among these three factors, "conducive learning environment" is playing a major role, that is, one-unit increase in it enhances 1.41 units in handling/controlling bullying events in school.

Conclusion and Discussion

Teachers' perception about bullying is latent in its definition, which plays a significant role in determining and reporting bullying events as they are liable for taking actions against real cases of bullying, similar is theorized by Ajzen in the *Theory of Planned Behaviour*. The result of the current study also supports the association of teachers' knowledge and their perception about handling school bullying like other researches (Pepler et al., 2004; Strohmeier & Noam, 2012a; Migliaccio, 2015; Burman, 2018). The study findings revealed that this perception of teachers is significantly associated with their gender. Male teachers exhibited more serious consideration for the

school bullying as compare to the female teachers. The possible reason for this situation is due to the fact of more prevalence of bullying events in boys' schools as compare to the girls' schools as reported by the other researches (Green et al. 2008; Mishna et al. 2010). The boys in the school are more indulged in bullying activities as a result of their daring behaviours in male dominating society like Pakistan. Hence, male teachers witness bullying most frequently, which let to their perception of bullying as a serious problem.

On the contrary, girls display fewer bullying behaviours in the presence of the teachers due to their introvert and concealed personalities in primitive society. Hence, it reduces the chances of female teachers to observe the bullying acts directly, consequently, constructing female teachers' perception about bullying as a less serious issue, the same is supported by the Berkowitz & Benbenishty (2012).

Furthermore, the experience of the teacher, in this study, was found an effective variable in developing their perception about bullying as a serious problem, same is supported by the results of other researchers (Şahin, 2010; Rosen et. 2017; Lester et al. 2018; Ruzicka, et al. 2018). It is the law of nature that experience with respect to aging usually enhances the maturity to understand any phenomenon in a comprehensive manner (Theory of self-actualization by Abraham Maslow, 1943). Therefore, with the passage of time, teachers witness abundant cases of bullying events which ultimately influence their level of perception. Moreover, a significant result came to the surface displaying the role of social media in promoting knowledge about bullying among masses. However, it does have the other side of the coin, which is, making the people less sensitive about the serious harms of this issue. They are becoming more absorbent what they witness more frequently rather to be reacting in a right direction (Cultural Theory of Risk by Marry Douglas 1970). Owing to the negligence of the consequences and taking the situation as it is, it will never be possible to provoke any masses' demand for particular policies and interventional strategies to reduce the threats and prospect threats of the school bullying.

Despite of the fact, that all elementary teachers responded positively with varying degree for the use of intervention strategies in classroom to cope the bullying phenomenon, the need of the hour is to identify the set of interventional strategies that may be practiced simultaneously as mentioned earlier by Boulton (1997). It is a common belief that uniqueness of personalities exists, so how could be a single intervention strategy suitable for bullied and bully as well while both may have different traits of personalities (Bjereld et al. 2017).

An assumption of the current research was that knowledge about bullying is positively associated with the seriousness of this issue. On the contrary, the results of this study demonstrated that less knowledge made the perception of the teachers about bullying as a serious problem however, more knowledge among females creating vice

versa effects on their perception. This finding is in contrast with the results mentioned in studies by Migliaccio (2015). In addition, with reference to the gender difference in knowledge about school bullying, female teachers were found more knowledgeable as compare to male teachers, although they were claiming to take bullying as a serious issue in earlier results of the study.

Furthermore, significant group differences were noted among single and married teachers. It may be assumed that married teachers have more socialization channels within the society due to their dual parental and in-law family system, which help them to develop their perceptions more vigorously as compare to single teachers about the effects of bullying.

Similarly, differences with respect to teaching experience was found significant for the variable management style. Less experienced teachers were more inclined towards democratic classroom management style as compared to the more experienced teachers in order to prevent/deal with bullying. It might be the reason that young teachers are more adaptive to modern approaches and believes to deal with the bullying incidences within the classroom settings (Theory of Diffusion of Innovations by Everett Roger, 2003). In addition, teacher's support was the significant tool to eliminate the occurrence of the bullying and this scenario is more significant for boys.

Likewise, School environment in terms of classroom fair environment, classroom management, and conducive learning environment, was found significant predictor for handling school bullying. These factors play a vital role to prevent the effects of bullying like; learning capacities may be hindered in the absence of fair classroom management and environment.

Further, teachers belonging to three tehsils were also found significantly different in their perception about management style, parents support & upbringing style and teacher' support in addressing the school bullying. Bhalwal tehsil is geographically situated near the more developed areas of the region. In addition, mostly, breadwinners of the families of this tehsil have migrated to other developed countries, causing the trickle-down effect of diffusion of the modern culture. This scenario is making this tehsil more inclined towards modern socialization patterns in families and schools as well as compare to other tehsils (Theory of Trans-cultural diffusion by Leo Frobenius, 1897).

Concerning the contributing factors of school bullying, father's support and Parents' Interrelationship were found most influential factors to prevent or minimize the happenings of the bullying, particularly for the girls (Shea et al. 2016; Bjereld et al. 2017). However, the mother's role in child rearing perceived by teachers was identified as a significant variable for the bullies only. It might be because of the fact that, in agrarian societies like Pakistan, the mother adapts more lenient child rearing patterns

for her children to exhibit her love. In Pakistan, due to extended and joined family system, there is a strong relationship between the child rearing style of parents and members of the family and aggression leads to bullying among children (Lieber, Fung & Leung, 2006). In such families, mothers become permissive parents who exert low control and high responsiveness. The mothers do not convey clearly the limitations and boundaries of ethical values (Rubin et al. 1995).

In nutshell, in the light of the above conclusion and discussion, great responsibility falls upon teachers to prevent bullying and providing fair school environment though the results of this study showed that according to teacher's perception, the teacher's support was non-significant factor. Thus, it is suggested that by introducing conducive learning environment in the class and adopting effective intervention strategies, the rate of bullying can be decreased in the class. Furthermore, the results of the study and existing literature, it can be assumed that parents, teachers and overall school environment are significant moderators for school bullying phenomenon. The students are having opportunities to communicate directly with parents and teachers more often. Thus, if parents and teachers have sufficient knowledge about contributing factors of school bullying then they can handle the situation more effectively at home and schools respectively. This can be made feasible by offering different guidelines to parents in parent-teacher meeting, specific counselling session to students by the professional school social workers, special teacher trainings using relevant latest research findings and offering channels of knowledge sharing.

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