



School Bullying is Occurring Everywhere: A Need for Effective Anti-bullying Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Background: Teachers play a crucial role in screening bullying, as well as in increasing students' awareness towards bullying. There is a dearth of studies that describe teacher perceptions about bullying among students. **Purpose:** This study aimed to describe teachers' perceptions about bullying among students at schools. **Methods:** A qualitative descriptive design was used among 24 teachers from five public schools. Content analysis was used to find out the study themes, patterns of ideas, and relationships. **Results:** Three themes emerged: (1) the shocking experience of witnessing bullying, (2) teachers' perceptions of the predisposing factors of bullying, and (3) the hazardous impact of bullying on victims and on the school environment. Teachers provided a new understanding of bullying at schools and its causative factors. **Conclusions:** Bullying could end with a hazardous impact on students and the school environment. Policymakers and school nurses should implement anti-bullying strategies and legislations to ensure a safe school environment for school teachers, administrators, and social counselors. **Implications for Nursing:** Teachers and school nurses could play crucial roles in screening, reporting, and referring in the incidence of school bullying. Also, they could play a significant role in implementing anti-bullying strategies, taking into consideration the active engagement of students, parents, teachers, social counselors, policy makers, and school principals. Cultural strategies should be taken into consideration when implementing anti-bullying programs and strategies at different levels, including family, school and community levels. The role of school nurses is vital in fighting school bullying and mitigating its adverse impacts on students as well as on the school environment.

Keywords: Bullying, Experiences, Perceptions, Qualitative descriptive design, Schools, Teachers, Victims, School nurses.

What does this paper add?

1. Bullying at schools is a significant social and health problem that has dramatic impacts on students and on the school environment.
2. Teachers could play a crucial role in screening, reporting, and referring in the incidence of school bullying.
3. Teachers could play a significant role in implementing anti-bullying strategies, taking into

consideration the active engagement of students, parents, teachers, social counselors, policy makers, and school principals.

4. Cultural competent strategies should be taken into consideration when implementing anti-bullying programs and strategies at different levels, including family, school and community levels.

Introduction

Bullying is a major public-health problem. It is described in terms of unwanted exposure of different types of aggression by a young person against another one that involve power imbalance which is repeated for several times (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, 2018). Bullying at schools occurs in high prevalence rates. In the USA, one in five students reported being bullied at school (Kann et al., 2018). A study was conducted in Jordan among students (13-15yrs) who reported a 46.7% incidence rate of physical bullying for at least once or more times by other students (Al Ali et al., 2017).

The most prevalent types of bullying at schools were verbal bullying and social bullying, in addition to other forms including physical, emotional, and cyber bullying (Hicks et al., 2018). Emotional bullying or aggression includes repeated exposure of a victim to teasing, calling names, mockery, verbal or written threats, inappropriate sexual harassment, and social exclusion (CDC, 2018). Physical bullying is described in terms of using physical harm and aggression, indicating acts of fighting, hitting, and pushing (CDC, 2018; WHO, 2016). Cyber-bullying is "wilful and repeated harm inflicted through a medium of electronic text" (Barkoukis et al., 2016; Elbedour et al., 2020).

Bullying results in several hazardous impacts on its victims. It causes negative psychological, physical, and psychosocial problems on its victims when compared to children who did not undergo bullying (Sarzoza & Urzúa, 2015). In addition, bullying increases the victim's likelihood to psychological stress, psychosomatic disease, poor physical well-being, suicide ideation, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, isolation, and social segregation (Arnarsson & Bjarnason, 2018). According to Al-Raqqad et al. (2017) and Oliveira et al. (2018), bullying ends up with students' poor academic performance that accordingly affects their entire lives negatively. Victims of bullying are at risk of physical injuries, sleep problems, depression, lower academic performance, running away from home, increased risk of alcohol and drug abuse and addiction (CDC, 2018).

Teachers' perceptions of bullying at schools are important in helping in introducing an in-depth understanding of this crucial phenomenon. Teachers play a significant role in implementing bullying interventions and largely contribute to the overall school

climate (Holt & Keyes, 2004; Rosen et al., 2017). Moreover, school nurses play an important role in screening, early detection, referring and educating students about bullying. There is a dearth of studies that describe the perceptions and experiences of Jordanian teachers about bullying among students at schools. So, this study aimed at describing Jordanian teachers' perceptions and experiences about bullying among students at schools in Jordan.

Methods

Design

A descriptive qualitative design is used in this study. This approach helps in describing the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the view of those who lived the entire experience (Neubauer et al., 2019). Also, this approach provides a detailed and in-depth description of the entire experience as perceived by teachers who experience the phenomenon.

Study Participants and Setting

In this study, a purposive sampling method was used. This method provides a rich description about the studied phenomenon, as it is the most effective method when information resources are limited (Palinkas et al., 2015). 24 teachers (12 males and 12 females) agreed to participate in this study. The inclusion criteria included Jordanians, with teaching experience more than one year, bachelor degree holders, 22-55-year-old teachers, who witnessed bullying at school. The study was conducted in 5 middle and high governmental schools (3 of males, 2 of females), from grades 4-12, located in a northern city in Jordan.

Data Collection Process

Ethical approvals were granted from the Jordan University of Science and Technology (IRB:# 116/132/2020) and from the Ministry of Education. A planned meeting with the school principals was conducted to assure their approval and support. The purpose of the study and data collection process were discussed with the school principals. A list of teachers and their mobile phone numbers was obtained from the school principals. Teachers were contacted by phone and were invited to participate. 24 teachers agreed to participate. A schedule for individual interviews was established according to the teachers' convenient time and place.

All interviews took place in the selected schools by the primary investigator. At the beginning of each interview, teachers were informed about the study purpose, risks and benefits of participation, and their rights to withdraw from the study at any time. Teachers were asked to sign consent forms. Each teacher was met in a private room separately. They were assured for the confidentiality of their interview information and the secrecy in processing the interview data throughout the whole research process.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted. An interview guide was used during the interviews (Table 1). Each participant was asked to

respond to open-ended questions about their experiences of witnessing bullying among students at schools. Probing questions were asked when additional information was needed. Field notes were taken for teacher reactions to the questions.

All the interviews were audio-tape recorded and a verbal approval for audio taping the interviews has been granted. All interviews were transcribed in the original Arabic language. Each transcript was given a code and a serial number, and was kept in a secured drive with the main researcher. Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes. Data collection was terminated when saturation occurred and no new themes emerged.

Table 1. Interview questions' guide

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1. Describe your experience with students bullying at school.
 2. What are the forms of bullying you witnessed among students at school?
 3. What was your response toward student bullying at school?
 4. What are the predisposing factors of bullying at school?
 5. What are the far consequences of bullying on students' health and academic performance?
 6. What are the far consequences of bullying on school environment?
 7. Do you need to add anything else?
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Data Analysis

Content analysis was used. This approach enabled the researchers to extract the meaning from data and offered a method for organizing and interpreting the qualitative data in order to create a narrative understanding that combines the similarities and differences in the participants' explanations of their individual experiences (Crowe et al., 2015). Intercoder agreement was used during the data analysis process by two expert researchers to validate the coding process. This approach is a measure of the extent to which coders agreed on the same codes to the same set of data. The categories applied were described, and the outlines were specified; then, the coding process was carried out. Coded data was grouped into smaller categories. Categories and sub-categories were grouped in relation to each other. Then, the final categories were defined into study themes.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established based on Lincoln and Guba (1985) criteria, including credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability.

Credibility was assured using member checking by referring to the participants themselves to validate the study findings. Dependability was achieved by describing detailed steps taken by the researchers during the research process. Conformability was assured by the bracketing approach. Bracketing indicates that the study investigators set aside pre-occupied ideas and thoughts about the study subject under investigation before data collection and analysis processes, so that the study findings are based on the participants' personal experiences and not on the researchers' biases. Transferability was assured through sufficient and rich description using the teachers' quotes and narratives, by which the reader can assess how the interpretations are applicable to other circumstances and cultural contexts.

Results

Twenty-four teachers from 5 public schools participated in the study. Their ages ranged between 37 and 55 years. Twenty-three of them were Muslims and one was Christian. Demographic characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of study participants

	Female	Male
Age	39- 52	37- 55
Experience period	9- 30	2-31
Marital status	Single: 1 Married: 11	Single:2 Married: 9 Divorced: 1
Religion	Muslim:12	Muslim: 11 Christian: 1
Monthly income	400-700	232- 900
Nationality	12 Jordanian	12 Jordanian
Elementary school	5	6
Secondary/ school	7	6

Three main themes emerged from data analysis that describe the entire experience of teachers toward bullying among students at schools. These themes included (1) The shocking experience of witnessing

bullying, (2) Teachers’ perceptions of the predisposing factors of bullying, and (3) The hazardous impact of bullying on victims and the school environment. The study themes are presentd in Table 3.

Table 3. Description of study themes

Study main themes	Description of main themes
(1) The shocking expereince of wittnessing bullying	1- New, shocking and overwhelming experience 2- Teachers’ reaction to bullying among students 3- Forms of bullying: Physical and emotional forms
(2) Teachers’ perceptions of the predisposing factors of bullying	1. Students’ related factors 2. Family related factor 3. Teachers’ related factors 4. School’s related factors
(3) The hazardous impacts of bullying on victims and the school environment	1-Hazardous impacts on victims 2-Hazardous impacts on teachers 3- Hazardous impacts on school environment

Theme #1: The Shocking Experience of Witnessing Bullying

The teachers in the current study described the experience of witnessing bullying among students at schools. This theme is composed of 2 sub-themes; namely, new shocking and overwhelming experience, and forms of bullying among students.

New Shocking and Overwhelming Experience

Teachers described bullying among students as a harsh experience and were shocked by bullies’ aggressive acts against victimized students. Teachers have described bullying as an aggressive behaviour or

act of an individual or group of bullies against a victimized student or a group of victimized students.

Q9: "It happened during the break time in the school yard. I was shocked by the behavior of a student in the first grade of high school, when she took off the veil of another student, and then she began to scream that she was the victim in a way to show that she did nothing, even though she was wrong, and appeared as a victim".

The teachers were surprised for witnessing bullying at school setting for the first time. This experience was not previously known. Teachers were overwhelmed and uncertain how to intervene appropriately for both bullies and victims of bullying.

Q22: "Several years ago, when I was newly hired at a school, I was unable to deal with incidences related to students' bullying, because such experience is new for me. For example, a young student who was known of being naughty was unable to stay in his classroom, and he used to take or steal his classmates' books, make noise, and make his classmates dance in the classroom. As a new teacher, I did not know what to do with that naughty student".

Forms of Bullying among Students

Teachers in the current study reported several forms of bullying, including verbal, emotional, physical, and cyber bullying. Verbal bullying was described in terms of verbal insults, threatening, name-calling and mockery. Verbal bullying was identified as the most common form of bullying among female students.

Q21: "Verbal bullying was seen among students at school setting. Verbal bullying was the most common form of bullying among girls. A girl can hurt her classmates in her own way. She may talk about private matters, such as their fathers and mothers, poverty, dark skin, and ugly face".

Physical bullying was described in terms of kicking, hitting, biting, and pushing. It was the most common form of bullying among male students. Physical bullying was used against victims to assure control and strength.

Q5: "Physical bullying is described in terms of hitting and beating. Bullies tended to have a huge body building, so they attack those who were weaker than them, and they lacked self-confidence, so they try to prove themselves by hitting others".

Cyber-bullying was described in terms of sending messages on social media with the purpose of deliberate and repeated harm through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. It also included hurtful text messages, abusive e-mails or posts, images, or videos that intended to cause harm to others.

Q17: "I have witnessed an offensive incidence. A group of students attacked another student, hit him, made a film of that fight and then posted the video on Facebook. The victim's father came to school, and as teachers we tried to solve the problem. The biggest problem was how to absorb the father's anger and prevent him from reporting the incidence to the police".

Teachers reported high incidence rates of bullying at school sometimes occurring at daily or weekly bases.

Physical attacks were committed by stronger students against weaker ones. Bullying is known of its repetitive nature against victims.

Q9: "Bullying at school occurs in a repetitive manner, and known of its aggressive nature by a stronger person against a weaker or younger one. Bullying at school begins at an individual level at first, and then extends to a group level, either in order to protect oneself, or against someone who is weaker".

Theme #2: Teachers' Perceptions of the Predisposing Factors of Bullying

Teachers in the current study reported several predisposing factors for bullying at schools, including students, family, teachers, and schools related factors.

Students Related Factors

Teachers described the students- related factors of bullying in terms of bullies' and victims' personal characteristics. Teachers believed that students' appearances, personalities, and abilities had major influences on the occurrence of bullying. Most teachers described bullies in terms of their violent acts and attitudes, controlling attitudes, strong personality, strong body building, and problematic offensive behaviours. Teachers believed that bullies were imitating aggressive parents or peers, and witnessing violence in their families.

Q24: "Bullies are known of their poor academic performance, being naughty and troublemakers, and had a strong body building that makes them capable of winning fights, and use force and aggression to assure their strong existence at school. In addition, they are known to have a sluggish tongue, offensive behavior, and poor communication skills that make them uncontrollable and intolerable in classroom and school settings".

Teachers described victims of bullying as weak, introverted, peerless, or privileged (wealthy, or clever), making bullies jealous from them. Victimized students were also described as being thin, short, fat, weak, younger or with special needs. Victimized students were known of their poor social skills, low self-esteem, and poor self-confidence, as they were unable to defend themselves or communicate well with others.

Q11: "Victimized students are known of their weak physical structure and appearance, weak social relationships, poor communication skills, poor self-

confidence, and reliance on others. They are known to live in a protected environment and show frequent complaints".

Some teachers believed that students at the adolescence stage witnessed physiological changes, as their body building, strength, and length increase obviously. Some students want to approve their personality by controlling other students and using violence against them as a way of establishing power superiority and manhood. In addition, they are affected by the aggressive role models in their community, television, media, homes, or at school.

Q11: "When students reach the stage of adolescence, as part of physiological and hormonal changes, they try to prove their manhood and personality as adults and their physical body building as strong ones. If there is no family control on the adolescents, their negative interactions and behaviours may increase. Therefore, using power is a mechanism to prove their strength and personality by bullying others".

Family Related Factors

Teachers mentioned family related factors of bullying in terms of exposure to poverty, poor parenting approach, neglection by parents, witnessing domestic violence, and family split related to death or divorce.

Q8: "Family problems could trigger the incidence of bullying, such as family separation related to divorce or death. In addition, parents' negligence and failure to establish healthy relationships, and their inability to follow up with their kids' matters and school related issues, all ended with student persistence of bullying behaviours".

Teachers Related Factors

Teachers reported teachers' predisposing factors of bullying that included, teachers' discrimination approach based on student high performance, teachers' unpleasant approach dealing with students, bullying approach of teachers against students at public schools, and teachers' improper communication with students.

Q14: "Sometimes the teacher inside the classroom unintentionally punishes a student, which ended up with the student's disappointment, and the risk of being bullied by other students. Teaching experience plays a role. New teachers have poor classroom management; they can easily create a bullying environment by mocking a student in front of his/her colleagues and

embarrass him/her; then, he/she is likely to be bullied by other students accordingly".

School Related Factors

Teachers reported school-related factors of bullying. These factors included the absence of rules and legislations against bullying, the absence of specialized training for teachers about bullying prevention, the absence of assertive interventions toward bullies at school settings, the absence of supportive and empathetic approach toward victimized students, poor supervision during class breaks, and the absence of advising and counselling roles at school. In addition, school environment characteristics could end up with bullying, including crowded classes, close buildings, and poor infrastructure services.

Q8: "Overcrowded schools and classrooms make it difficult for both principals and teachers to deal with all bullying cases or following up with parents of bullies".

Also, school administration plays a crucial role in controlling bullying. In our schools, bullying incidences were sometimes ignored, and victims' complaints were not taken into account, which promoted the environment of bullying at school accordingly".

Theme#3: Hazardous Consequences of Student Bullying at Schools

Teachers mentioned the hazardous consequences of bullying at schools, including hazards on victims, teachers, school, and teaching environment.

Hazardous Impacts on the Victims

Teachers identified hazardous impacts of bullying on the victims' mental and physical health and academic performance. Bullying could end with depression, sadness, isolation, weak personality, low self-confidence, which could sometimes end up with suicide at the long run.

Q14: "Victimized students are seen to be depressed and prefer to stay alone. They frequently skip and flee from school. All that affects their academic achievement performance dramatically".

Hazardous Impact on Teachers

The teachers pronounced that bullying affected the teaching process and productivity. Bullying has negative effects on the teacher's psychological status and personality. These effects led to teachers feeling

frustrated and their motivation to teaching being negatively affected. Sometimes, teachers ignore bullying incidence and do not intervene in order to complete teaching tasks. This leaves the feeling of guilt toward the victims for not providing the needed help.

Q22: "Teachers" in general do not care about solving students' bullying related problems. We do not have enough time for that, as we need to to complete the class and finish the needed tasks. In many times, I got frustrated and ended up with the feeling of guilt and burnout, because I could do nothing to the victims".

Hazardous Impacts on School Environment

Teachers in the current study mentioned hazardous consequences of bullying to school environment. School environment was described as unsecured for both teachers and students, unqualified learning environment, destroyed school environment properties and buildings, and labelled as a hate environment. All that could end up with students flee, drop out from school, decrease of academic performance, and destroying school reputation as well. Bullying could end up with risky behaviours of students, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, holding weapons, drug abuse, and being at risk to make a felony or crime.

Q23: "Bullying made schools unhealthy environments. The students are frightened and frustrated. They hate to go to school, because schools are not safe places anymore. Furthermore, teachers are frustrated and so not motivated to do their teaching tasks. They consider school an uncomfortable and not suitable environment to establish teaching tasks".

Discussion

Teachers in the current study described their experience of witnessing bullying among students at school settings. Teachers were shocked and surprised by the bullying behaviours of bullies against victims which occurred in high prevalent rates. Worldwide, school bullying was reported in a high prevalence rate among boys and girls ranging from 32 % to 36 %, respectively (Moyano et al., 2020). Bullying experience was not known before for some teachers who were newly hired at schools. This result is consistent with the finding of Farahat (2019) who revealed that about 50% of the teachers had never heard of bullying before, but they recognized it when explained to them briefly.

In addition, teachers in the current study described

bullying as a cruel aggressive behaviour by an individual or a group of students against a victim or a group of victims. Van Verseveld et al. (2021) investigated how teachers distinguish between bullying and harassment. About 45% of the teachers described bullying as a situation in which the victim experiences negative or harmful behaviours committed by bullies against victims.

Moreover, teachers defined several forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, social, and cyber-bullying. Similarly, in Markkanen et al. (2021), teachers defined verbal bullying and physical bullying. Verbal bullying was described in terms of verbal teasing, spreading false rumours to make others hate the victim, calling names, or making jokes about the victims. Also, physical bullying included hitting, kicking, or pushing. Related to Alebeah et al. (2024), verbal bullying was found to be the most common bullying form among Jordanian university students. However, verbal bullying, leaving dramatic consequences on victims, is rarely reported. So, victims of bullying are directed to report verbal bullying and seek the needed help.

Bullying was more prevalent among male students than among female students. In addition, teachers stated that physical bullying was more prevalent among male students, while verbal bullying was more frequently seen among female ones. This finding is supported by the findings of Markkanen et al. (2021) who found that physical bullying was more prevalent among boys, while verbal violence was present in male and female students at the same prevalence rates. In Jordan, male students used force as a way to assure their manhood and strength inspired by family culture and Jordanian culture.

In the present study, teachers reported several factors leading to bullying among students at schools, including students, family, teachers, and school related factors. Teachers in this study mentioned bullying factors that were related to aggressive personality, physical body building, and strong personality of bullies. These results go in line with Donat et al. (2018) who stated that aggression was seen as one of the characteristics of bullies who attack their victims in various ways. Bullies lacked empathy toward others, have a strong desire to control others, and have stronger body building than others. These characteristics are seen among bullies in all cultures and regions, emphasizing the need to study bullies' perceptions about bullying and to provide an in-depth understanding of their intentions for bullying.

In addition, teachers in the current study described bullying victims as having certain characteristics that made them at risk of being so. These characteristics included weak body building, being introverted, having no friends, being thin, short, fat, and weak, or with special needs. Victims were known to have poor social skills, low self-esteem, and low self-confidence. These findings are similar to Çalışkan et al. (2019) who described victimized students of bullying in terms of low self-esteem, shyness, having no friends, being thin, often considered ugly, and fat. So, teachers and school counselors should identify victims and intervene at an early stage to assure their integrity (Al Ali et al., 2017). In addition, victims of bullying should be directed to seek help and should be treated immediately to prevent the physical and psychological dramatic impacts of bullying.

Some teachers in the current study believed that students at the adolescence stage witnessed physiological and hormonal changes in their bodies. Some students wanted to approve their personality by controlling other students as a mean of establishing power, superiority, and manhood. These findings are similar to these of Troop-Gordon and Ladd (2015) who reported that physiological changes associated with puberty increased the risk of bullying. Moreover, there was a positive relationship between the development of puberty and peer bullying victimization among boys and girls alike. Social workers and school nurses should promote student awareness about this stage and help them gain control over their bodies through sport exercises and communication skills.

Teachers in the current study emphasized family related factors that ended up with student bullying. These factors were described in terms of family exposure to poverty, poor parenting approach, neglecting parents, family split related to death or divorce, and witnessing domestic violence Sharma et al. (2016); Wokoma and Udochukwu (2020) mentioned that witnessing parental violence and bullying victimization increased the likelihood of engagement in bullying against others.

Bullies tended to imitate their aggressive parents, siblings, community, television, media, or their peers at school. Social cognitive theory emphasized aggression as being a learned behaviour. So, a person should have a role model, observe and imitate his/her behaviours, including friends and siblings (Bandura, 1986; Brownhill et al., 2020). Domestic violence is occurring

in high prevalence rates, and is socially acceptable as well in the Jordanian culture. So, Jordanian parents are asked to use good parenting skills and communication with the aim at preventing domestic violence.

Teachers' predisposing factors that ended up with bullying included teachers' discrimination based on student high performance, unpleasant bullying approach of teachers against students, and improper communication skills with the students. On contrary, (Donat et al., 2018) mentioned that teachers' justice promotes a sense of belonging to school and recognition of laws and standards both within and outside the classroom. Furthermore, they mentioned that the greater the teachers' experience in classroom management, the less likely the existence of bullying behaviours at school. Thomas et al. (2018) revealed that teachers promoted and facilitated bullying behaviors through ineffective responses to bullying and poor supervision.

In the current study, teachers reported school-related bullying factors. These factors included the absence of rules and legislations against bullying, the absence of teacher training for prevention of bullying, the absence of interventions towards bullies, and the absence of a supportive and sympathetic approach towards victimized students. These findings are supported by those of Rigby (2020) who mentioned that the existence of bullying was related to school failure to address cases of bullying, inappropriate school interventions, and the absence of advising and counselling at schools.

Teachers mentioned environment characteristics as significant factors of bullying, including crowded classes, close buildings, and poor infrastructure. Manca et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of well-structured building design, and appropriate class sizes to promote students' well-being, promote flexible learning environments, and eliminate bullying accordingly.

Teachers in the current study mentioned hazardous consequences of student bullying, including hazards on victims, school, and teaching environment. Teachers described the impact of bullying on victimized students, including physical and psychological burdens (CDC, 2018). WHO (2016) mentioned that victimized students experienced depression, anxiety, and low self-confidence that all could end up with suicide.

Also, bullying prevented victims from going to school, which ended up with low academic achievement and school dropout (CDC, 2018). Afifah and Jaedun (2017) mentioned that bullying had negative impacts on

a student's academic performance, sometimes preventing him/her from going to schools if he/she was threatened.

Teachers in this study expressed that bullying affected their teaching process and productivity, and left negative effects on teachers' psychological status and personality. So, all that ended up with teachers feeling frustrated and their motivation for teaching negatively affected. Ignorance of bullying ended up with teachers' guilt feeling toward victims of bullying for not providing the needed help. Meriläinen et al. (2019) mentioned that there were negative effects of bullying on work performance, negative effects on employees' health and behaviours, and negative effects on employees' feelings or emotional status.

Teachers in the current study mentioned hazardous consequences of bullying on the school environment. School reputation could be dramatically affected by bullying incidents, as they were described as leading to an unsecured and unsafe environment for both teachers and students. Aggressive students could destroy school environment and buildings and foster a hate environment. All that could end up with student flee, decrease their academic performance, and destroy the school reputation. Sarzosa and Urzúa (2015) mentioned that bullying could have negative impacts on students' educational attainment, fostering hate approach, ending up with student absenteeism and dropout, and refusing class activities and tasks.

Teachers in the current study mentioned that bullying ended up with risky behaviours by bullies, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, holding weapons, drug abuse, increasing the risk of being a part of a gang, and committing a felony or crime. Mello et al. (2017) emphasized that risky behaviour was associated with bullying behaviours among adults, including alcohol drinking, drug abusing, and smoking. Moreover, Alebeah et al. (2024) identified that bullying has a strong statistical association with psychosomatic complaints, with sleep problems being the most commonly reported complaint.

However, teachers in the current study mentioned the predisposing factors of bullying and the dramatic consequences of bullying from their point of view. They were reluctant to intervene in the incidences of bullying. Teachers gave priority to teaching tasks over intervening in the incidences of bullying. So, more emphasis should be put on providing the appropriate education and training on effective anti-bullying strategies at school

environment, as well as assuring the effectiveness of teachers' roles in intervening and referring victims and bullies in the incidences of school bullying.

Implications for Nursing

Policy makers should place emphasis on initiatives for screening stress and depression among students. In addition, students who are stressed or depressed should be given appropriate advice and referred to a social counsellor at school to avoid long-term consequences of bullying. Policy makers should focus on providing anti-bullying strategies at school for school teachers, administrators, and social counsellors. Education policy makers and the Ministry of Education should strengthen their efforts to establish a safe school environment. In addition, they should enforce legislations to address and combat school bullying and violence. The role of school nurses in mitigating the negative consequences of school bullying is not to be ignored.

School nurses should foster using effective coping mechanisms among students at school settings. Also, school nurses should emphasize taking different measures for assuring a safe school environment free of violence and bullying. Finally, it is crucial to conduct cultural competent anti-bullying programs taking into consideration students' social and cultural beliefs.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this qualitative study described teachers' perceptions in public schools in the northern part of Jordan. The findings of the current study are relevant to study participants, their reflection and unique experience of bullying at schools, which added to the depth and the meaning of the experience as well. Their experiences cannot be generalized to other settings, which added to the uniqueness of understanding the study phenomenon. So, it is highly recommended to include other teachers from different cities and countries to describe their experiences with school bullying.

Conclusion

The current study described teachers' perceptions about bullying among students at school settings. Bullying at school could end up with hazardous impacts on students, the school environment, and the community accordingly. Teachers were aware of bullying, but could not provide a precise definition of bullying and its forms. Teachers provided a new understanding of different

factors of bullying at school.

This study has several implications to combat bullying at schools. Teachers could play crucial roles in screening, reporting, and referring in the incidences of school bullying. Additionally, teachers could play a significant role in implementing anti-bullying strategies, taking into consideration the active engagement of students, parents, teachers, social counsellors, policy makers, and school principals. Finally, competent cultural strategies should be taken into consideration when implementing anti-bullying programs and strategies at different levels, including family, school and community levels.

More qualitative studies are needed to shed light on bullying at school from the perspectives of school administrators, students themselves, and parents as well. Ethnography and ethnonursing qualitative approach are highly recommended to study the phenomenon in the school setting. This will help in providing an in-depth understanding for school bullying phenomenon and providing practical and effective anti-bullying strategies

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accordingly.

Ethical Approval

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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