

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19113956

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AS VICTIMS OF SCHOOL BULLYING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: SAUDI PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

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Received: 06/02/2026
Accepted: 05/03/2026

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ABSTRACT

Parents' perceptions regarding their children with learning difficulties (LD) being bullied are very important. That is because the more aware parents are of school bullying, the more capable they will be of supporting their children and helping them overcome instances of bullying. The key objective of this study is to quantitatively examine the perceptions of Saudi parents of children with LD towards bullying inflicted upon their children in school. This study employed a descriptive-analytical approach. The study tool was distributed to a sample of 162 parents of children with LD. A developed survey was carried out, and several analytical tests were performed to gain insight into parents' perceptions of school bullying targeted towards children with LD. The findings indicate that parents rate their children being bullied at school moderately overall the survey and its four domains. The results revealed no significant differences in the mean sample responses among parents' perceptions based on their age or level of education. Overall, the survey and its domains (except for psychological school bullying) show a significant difference in the mean sample responses among parents' perceptions of their children being bullied and parents' gender in favor of fathers. In conclusion, the findings indicated that school bullying is commonplace in Saudi Arabia, and parents consider it to be moderate. Moreover, the findings revealed that the parents' genders influence parents' perceptions of bullying targeted towards their own children.

KEYWORDS: School Bullying, Parents' Perspective, Learning Difficulties, Elementary Schools, Saudi Arabia.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1963, Samuel Kirk from the United States suggested that the 'learning difficulties' be accepted by researchers and families alike. Students with learning difficulties (LD) can be defined as those who have a deficiency in at least one basic psychological process, which manifests in their ability to read, write, spell and carry out mathematical processes. This does not include learning difficulties caused by other disabilities or cultural/ economic deprivation (Al-Sartawi et al., 2018). Fletcher et al. (2019) carried out an intelligence test (IQ) and a standardized achievement exam for reading, writing, and mathematics to assess LD in students. The results of these two tests revealed a considerable difference, indicating the potential for an average or above-average intellect that did not show up on the achievement assessments. 'Diagnostic Tests for Students with Learning Difficulties in Arabic Language and Math in Elementary Schools' was employed as a standardized achievement exam in Saudi Arabia (General Administration of Special Education & General Administration of Evaluation & Quality of Education, 2016). Although students are permitted to use resource rooms for specific subjects, they are generally expected to attend other classes in mainstream settings with their classmates. Al-Sartawi & Al-Sartawi (2017) estimate that 5-7% of students in elementary schools are likely to have LD, with boys having a higher probability than girls.

Menesini and Salmivalli (2017) explain that school bullying is a significant issue that has harmful impacts on young children in schools across the globe. Bullying is regarded as a behavior that is distinctly different in schools. It is a behavior carried out with the intention of upsetting other people, either directly through verbal or physical abuse or indirectly through social exclusion (Abualdear, 2018). Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus first discussed the topic of school bullying in 1978, which marked the true birth of the idea (Olweus, 1978). After that, countless studies on the topic were conducted all over the world. Olweus defined the term bullying as when "a student is targeted or victimized and exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions by one or more other students" (1993, p. 9). This study uniquely developed a survey specific to parents of students with LD in elementary schools. The research is one of the few studies that have investigated parents' perception of their children with LD in elementary school being bullied. This study provides an understanding from the social point of view regarding bullying in Saudi Arabia from parents' perspective and how the

existence of parents' gender, age, and educational level could impact parents' perceptions. Understanding parents' perceptions consider as important point to introducing interventions to increase parents' awareness of school bullying and provide support to their children with LD. Little is known about all types of bullying in the Arabic cultural context; therefore, this study adds to the knowledge base of school bullying specifically among students with LD which existing in various types of cultural contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bullying does occur amongst typical students in school environments, students with physical or special health needs (and those with developmental or behavioral disorders) are more likely than average students to experience bullying and become victims (Twyman et al et al., 2010). Rose et al. (2011) reviewed more than thirty studies and found that more than 50% of students with LD are targeted as a victim more than others without LD. According to data published in 2021, bullying affects 16.3% of these students. In comparison to typical students, those with special educational needs and LD find it more difficult to participate socially in class and have lower levels of social skills to prevent themselves from becoming victims. In turn, this can put them at a higher risk of experiencing bullying (Rose & Gauge, 2017; Berchiatti et al., 2022; Ezati Babi & Mikaeili, 2022). Students with LD experience low self-esteem and academic challenges, which makes them vulnerable to bullying.

There are several theories which attempt to explain school bullying. The first theory to note here is the Social Learning Theory, which focuses on familial traits and holds that children learn to bully others through observation and imitation (Baldry, 2003). Nonetheless, victims of bullying at school are likely to have low self-esteem and poor social skills (Rose & Gauge, 2017). Additionally, those who experience high levels of control or lack of parental love may be bullies or victims at school (Lereya et al., 2013). The second theory to mention here is the Social Cognition Theory, which holds that bullying is characterized by a person's insufficient response to and negative processing of social information (Crick & Dodge, 2001). Furthermore, children's traits and characteristics impact their chances of becoming bullies or victims at school. Students who bully others often don't take pride in their academic accomplishments and express their emotions in distorted ways in response to the anguish that results from practicing incorrect feelings of shame, whereas

victims frequently engage in such behavior higher than bullies (Morrison, 2002).

In school environments, students with LD may experience many forms of bullying. Bullies specifically target their victims to exert control over them and cause them bodily, psychological, and social harm. Bullying is a social, personal, and educational issue that poses a serious risk to the victim's development and the right to get an education in a safe school setting (Cook et al., 2010). Bullying that involves physical contact with the intent to physically harm another person includes hitting, battering, and destroying personal property. Verbal bullying refers to the verbal abuse of another person, such as mockery and the use of vulgar language. Social exclusion, watching other people's actions, and refusal to participate in activities are all examples of social control used against the victims of social bullying (Abualdear, 2018). Meanwhile, the key intention of psychological bullying is to mentally harm the victim. This can include making jokes about their race or looking at them sarcastically (Alsebeheen & Alqutah, 2013).

There is no consensus in relevant literature regarding which type of bullying is most prominent in students with LD. Although some studies have found that psychological bullying was in the first order (Alrefaae, 2021), others have found that physical bullying is in the first order (Masaadah et al., 2019; Abdualmajeed, 2014). Meanwhile, some researchers have found that verbal bullying is more prominent (Hassan, 2015; Waked, 2016), while others believe that social bullying is the highest ranking (Alotaibi & Abujado, 2020). Some studies have revealed that bullying spreads faster among LD students at a moderate rate (Alsadee, 2017; Muharam & Alabdualat, 2022), whilst others have found it to have a low rate (Masaadah et al., 2019; Abdualmajeed, 2014) and some have found it to have a high rate (Buanaani & Kwraat, 2019; Wiener & Mak, 2009).

Research evidence indicates that bullying is more prominent among male students with LD than their female counterparts (Buanaani & Kwraat, 2019; Hassan, 2015; Waked, 2016). Nonetheless, many studies have failed to identify any differences in the bullying of LD students based on gender (McHale et al., 2003; Swearer et al., 2012). Bullying is universally considered to be a new term in most countries around the world (Olweus, 1978; Olweus, 1993; Abualdear, 2018). In recent times, many studies have examined the topic of bullying from the perspectives of LD students (Twyman et al., 2010; Abdualmajeed, 2014; Hassan, 2015; Ronsley-Pavia et al., 2019;

Alrefaae, 2021), other studies have examined bullying in students with LD from the perspectives of teachers (Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2013; Munro, 2016; Baller et al., 2019; Berchiatti, 2022). Nonetheless, some research focused specifically on studies involving parents (fathers and mothers together) of LD children to obtain their opinions about their children being bullied at school (Sawyer et al., 2011; Khasawneh, 2020).

It is more difficult to include both genders in a study given Saudi Arabia's status as a developed nation and the segregation of the education system between male and female students in schools. The researcher discovered two papers that had specifically examined bullying in students with LD, one of which focuses on male students (Alrefaae, 2021) and the other on female students (Alotaibi & Abujado, 2020). There is also a dearth of research examining the perspectives of parents as two groups (mother and father), as well as the diverse outcomes of bullying among kids with LD generally. The most recent study on the topic examined the bullying that children with LD experience at school from their parents' perspectives, both collectively and individually (mother and father).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Instruments

To develop item generation utilized in this study, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of existing literature pertaining to social bullying, verbal bullying, psychological bullying and physical bullying in general, as well as those who have LD. To examine social bullying in general, surveys were reviewed (Koj, 2012; Alzhrani & Nassef, 2019; Reyes-Rodríguez et al., 2021) and surveys developed particularly for students with LD (Olweus, 1996; Alotaibi & Abujado, 2020). Moreover, several studies have examined verbal bullying in general (Jan & Husain, 2015; Shea et al., 2016; Alzhrani & Nassef, 2019; Reyes-Rodríguez et al., 2021) and others investigated it among students with LD (Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2013; Klomek et al., 2016; Alrefaae, 2021). Furthermore, (Glew et al., 2005; Mundbjerg Eriksen et al., 2012) examined psychological bullying among general students while other studies (Olweus, 1996; Alrefaae, 2021) focus on students with LD. Finally, several studies have been reviewed regarding physical bullying among general students (Shea et al., 2016; Alzhrani & Nassef, 2019; Reyes-Rodríguez et al., 2021) and other studies are related to students with LD (Olweus, 1996; Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2013; Rose et al., 2015; Klomek et al., 2016; Alotaibi & Abujado, 2020).

Based on this thorough examination, the researcher created the survey items for the current study, which were divided into four domains to reflect the many sorts of bullying that children with LD may experience. These domains are as follows: social bullying (1,2,3,5,6,7,9,19), verbal bullying (11,12,13,14,15), psychological bullying (8,18,20) and physical bullying (4,10,16,17). Thus, there are 20 items in the survey, and each item is measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The Likert scale involved strongly agree=5 with a score range (of 5-4.21=very high), agree=4 with a score range (of 4.20-3.41= high), not sure=3 with a score range (3.40-2.61=moderate), not agree=2 with scores' range (2.60-1.81=low) and strongly not agree=1 with scores' range (1.80-1=very low). The length of the duration was determined with 5-point Likert scale by calculating the rang (5-1=4) and dividing it by the largest value within the scale to get the length of the rang (4 divide 5=0.8). Then, this value was added to the lowest value in the scale which is (1). If a participant selected strongly agree with each item, they received a score of 100, indicating that they had experienced significant bullying at school. On the other hand, if strongly disagree is selected for each item, the result is a score of 20, which indicates that the victim has experienced only mild bullying at school. All the items were written in upbeat language to show how bullying at school might affect students with LD from the parents' perspectives. The participants were also questioned for demographic data, including their age, education level, and gender. The survey's objective is explained in a cover letter that also explains the meaning of each rating the respondents assigned to the available items.

3.2. Validity And Reliability

The process outlined below was followed in this

study to confirm that the survey tool was both valid and reliable.

3.2.1. Face Validity

After the survey was created in this study to explore parents' perspectives on their children with LD facing bullying in schools, ten specialists in the fields of psychology and special education were shown the survey items after they had been written in English according to their respective domains. These experts assessed the first draft of the survey in order to make sure that the items were relevant to the topic and that the survey was accurate. This data represented the content validity of the survey (Mason et al., 2020). The survey was then edited based on the comments made by these experts. The survey was subsequently translated into Arabic and revised for clarity by an Arabic proofreader. To ensure that every question had the same meaning in both languages, an Arabic-English version was sent to specialists in each language, and alterations were made based on their feedback. All the expert feedback was carefully considered and used to create the final survey in Arabic that would be distributed to forty-three parents of students with LD to confirm the survey's validity and reliability via a pilot study. The process outlined below confirms that the survey was both valid and reliable.

3.2.2. Internal Validity and Consistency

The internal consistency of the survey was evaluated by computing the correlation coefficient between each item and the sum of the scores for the relevant domains using the Pearson correlation coefficient. As presented in Table 1, the school bullying survey's Pearson correlation coefficient ranged from 0.729 to 0.904, indicating statistical significance for each of these correlations at the <.01 level.

Table 1: The Correlation Coefficient of Each Item with the Final Score of the Correlated Domain.

| Item | Correlation Coefficient | Sig | Item | Correlation Coefficient | Sig |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| 1) Social School Bullying | | | 3) Physical School Bullying | | |
| 1 | 0.806 | 0.000** | 4 | 0.805 | 0.000** |
| 2 | 0.815 | 0.000** | 10 | 0.864 | 0.000** |
| 3 | 0.823 | 0.000** | 16 | 0.835 | 0.000** |
| 5 | 0.786 | 0.000** | 17 | 0.825 | 0.000** |
| 6 | 0.862 | 0.000** | 4) Verbal School Bullying | | |
| 7 | 0.765 | 0.000** | 11 | 0.791 | 0.000** |
| 9 | 0.815 | 0.000** | 12 | 0.841 | 0.000** |
| 19 | 0.729 | 0.000** | 13 | 0.904 | 0.000** |
| 2) Psychological School Bullying | | | 14 | 0.874 | 0.000** |
| 8 | 0.832 | 0.000** | 15 | 0.773 | 0.000** |
| 18 | 0.880 | 0.000** | | | |
| 20 | 0.892 | 0.000** | | | |

Note: Significant **P < 0.01

The internal consistency of the survey was evaluated using the Pearson correlation coefficient, and the correlation coefficient between each domain and the overall survey score for bullying in schools

was calculated. The Pearson correlation coefficient for the correlation between each domain ranged from 0.902 to 0.930, as shown in Table 2. At level 0.01, all of the coefficients are statistically significant.

Table 2: The Correlation Coefficient of Each Domain with the Final Score.

| Domain | Correlation Coefficient | Significant Level | Domain | Correlation Coefficient | Sig |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------------------|---------|
| SSB | 0.903 | 0.000** | PSB | 0.930 | 0.000** |
| PYSB | 0.902 | 0.000** | VSB | 0.916 | 0.000** |

Note: Significant**p < 0.01, SSB = Social School bullying, PYSB = Psychological School Bullying, PSB = Physical School Bullying, VSB = Verbal School Bullying.

3.2.3. Reliability

For each item and domain, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to check the internal reliability of the survey. The survey's total alpha coefficient, which indicates high reliability, was 0.960 according to the data. The alpha for the survey domains was 0.917 for social bullying (8 items), 0.825 for psychological bullying (3 items), 0.852 for physical bullying (4 items), and 0.892 for verbal bullying (5 items) (Taber, 2018). These values indicate strong and high reliability for the survey domains.

3.3. Sampling Process

According to the Saudi Ministry of Education for Al-Kharj City (2022), there are 20 elementary schools that provide services for female students with learning difficulties (serving roughly 240 students) and 24 elementary schools offer a learning difficulties programme for male students (serving roughly 280 students). Only students who have been identified as having difficulties in mathematics, reading or writing are accepted into these learning difficulties programmes and such identifications must be made based on the results of the Diagnostic Tests administered by the Saudi Ministry of Education (General Administration of Special Education and General Administration of Evaluation and Quality of Education, 2016). These 20 elementary schools for girls and 24 elementary schools for boys were approached and invited to participate in the pilot and main study. However, this was only done once the researcher gained approval for the study from the

Ministry of Education in Al-Kharj. Male and female students from 20 and 17 elementary schools respectively responded and agreed to take part in the survey. All of children with LD in these elementary schools received the survey from their instructors in the resource rooms. These teachers instructed their students with LD to give the survey to their parents and then return it to them once it has been completed.

3.4. Participants

The participants involved in the pilot study came from five male schools and four female schools. Pilot studies are effective, statistical ways to determine the reliability and validity of a questionnaire tool. Once the pilot study has been conducted and relevant modifications have been made, the tool can be shared with other schools for the main study. The survey was provided in paper format to all students with LD as part of the main study, and they were asked to give it to their parents for completion and return it to their teachers. Altogether, thirteen female schools and fifteen male schools participated. In total, 104 surveys were distributed to the 13 female schools (with 90 returned), and 117 surveys were distributed to the 15 male schools (with 97 returned). Of these, 82 were completed by mothers (thus generating a response rate of 78.8%) and 80 were completed by fathers (generating a response rate of 68.3%) of students from the female and male schools, respectively. The demographic information for participants in the main study can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Demographic Information for the Main Study (N=162).

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Father | 80 | 49.38 |
| | Mother | 82 | 50.61 |
| Age | Below 28 | 16 | 9.87 |
| | 28-45 | 129 | 79.62 |
| | More than 45 | 17 | 10.49 |
| Education Level | High school and below | 64 | 39.50 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 78 | 48.14 |
| | Graduate study | 20 | 12.34 |

3.5. Research Questions

1. What is the level of school bullying and its domains for students with LD in elementary schools from their parents' perspective?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences in level of school bullying and its domains for students with LD according to their parents' age, education level, and gender?

3.6. Data Analysis

To analyze the gathered data and address, the IBM® SPSS® v. 23.0 software was employed. In turn, this enabled the research questions to be addressed. Moreover, any duplicated answers and outliers were removed. Responses were also eliminated if parents selected one response for all the questionnaire items and if the parents failed to complete the survey items. As a result, 25 response surveys were eliminated, and 162 full surveys were examined using proper statistical techniques. First, descriptive statistics describe the main study sample using frequencies and percentages. The means, standard deviations, and score values were then calculated based on the

parents' ratings of each item throughout the four domains. This was completed for each domain separately, and for the VSBS as a whole. Secondly, a Mann-Whitney test was performed on the independent sample to see whether there were any differences between mothers and fathers in each of the four domains. To investigate differences between fathers and mothers in the VSBS, independent samples t-tests were carried out. Moreover, the Kruskal-Wallis's test was then used to compare the differences in age and educational level between the four domains separately and collectively.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The Level of School Bullying and Its Domains for Students with LD In Elementary Schools from Their Parents' Perspective

Mean scores and standard deviations were applied based on the study sample estimation to investigate students with LD level of school bullying based on their parents' perspective; table 4 shows these levels.

Table 4: Means, SD, And Levels of Cognitive Awareness of the Participants.

| Domains | Items | Mean | Standard Deviation | Level |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Verbal School bullying | 11. Other students make negative comments about my child's grades. | 3.44 | 0.885 | High |
| | 12. My child has been threatened by other students. | 3.07 | 1.010 | Moderate |
| | 13. Students often curse my child. | 3.31 | 0.928 | Moderate |
| | 14. My child is often called stupid by other students. | 3.48 | 0.790 | High |
| | 15. Students make fun of my child. | 3.35 | 0.880 | Moderate |
| | Mean of the domain | 3.33 | 0.704 | Moderate |
| Physical School Bullying | 4. My child has been hit by other students | 3.14 | 0.962 | Moderate |
| | 10. My child is being pushed by others | 3.39 | 0.986 | Moderate |
| | 16. Other students impede my child when he/she is walking | 3.25 | 0.899 | Moderate |
| | 17. Students start quarreling with my child for no reason | 3.32 | 0.988 | Moderate |
| | Mean of the domain | 3.27 | 0.768 | Moderate |
| Psychological School Bullying | 8. My child has received threatening messages from students | 2.64 | 0.988 | Moderate |
| | 18. A student has frowned at my child. | 2.65 | 0.993 | Moderate |
| | 20. My child is often ignored by other students. | 2.80 | 0.904 | Moderate |
| | Mean of the domain | 2.70 | 0.624 | Moderate |
| Social School Bullying | 1. Some students do not allow my child to play with them | 3.54 | 0.757 | High |
| | 2. Students deliberately distance themselves from my child. | 3.14 | 0.848 | Moderate |
| | 3. My child has no friends in the class. | 3.31 | 0.860 | Moderate |
| | 5. Students purposefully interrupt my child when he/she is talking. | 2.85 | 1.067 | Moderate |
| | 6. Students do not listen to my child. | 3.32 | 0.839 | Moderate |
| | 7. Other students prevent my child from joining their groups. | 3.06 | 0.872 | Moderate |
| | 9. My child deliberately distances themselves from some students. | 2.89 | 0.984 | Moderate |
| | 19. My child feels lonely. | 3.06 | 0.976 | Moderate |
| | | Mean of the domain | 3.15 | 0.641 |
| Overall | Mean for School Bullying Survey | 3.11 | 0.557 | Moderate |

Table 4 shows the level of school bullying among students with LD in elementary schools from their parents' perspective. The overall mean for the level of school bullying in the study sample reached 3.11, and the domains' mean ranged between 3.33-2.27, which indicates a moderate level. Meanwhile, the arithmetic averages for the items on the level of School bullying in the same sample ranged between 3.54-2.64, which presents moderate level. The item 'Some students do not allow my child to play with them' came in first place and showed an average level with a mean of 3.54. Additionally, the item "My child is often called stupid by other students" came in second place, with a mean of 3.48 at a high level. On the other hand, the item "My child has received threatening messages from students" revealed students' lowest mean score, with a mean of 2.64 at a moderate level.

4.2. Any Statistically Significant Differences in

Level of School Bullying and Its Domains for Students with LD According to Their Parents' Age, Gender, And Educational Levels, Are Shown as Follows:

4.2.1. Results Related to Age:

According to the age variable, Chi- Square were employed, and the Kruskal-Walli's test was used to statistically analyze the results to measure the level of overall school bullying and its related domains among students with LD from their parents' perspective, table 5 shows the results. As indicated in Table 5, the Chi- Square ranged between 0.459-1.696, which is statistically non-significant at the significance level (0.05). Thus, there were no statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying and its related domains for students with LD based on their parents' age.

Table 5: The Kruskal-Walli's Test to Identify Differences According to Age.

| Domain | Age | N | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | Sig |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----|-----------|------------|-------|
| Social School bullying | Below 28 | 16 | 78.03 | 0.459 | 0.795 |
| | 29-45 | 129 | 81.03 | | |
| | More than 45 | 17 | 88.29 | | |
| Psychological School Bullying | Below 28 | 16 | 70.66 | 1.696 | 0.428 |
| | 29-45 | 129 | 83.86 | | |
| | More than 45 | 17 | 73.76 | | |
| Physical School Bullying | Below 28 | 16 | 69.19 | 2.326 | 0.313 |
| | 29-45 | 129 | 81.39 | | |
| | More than 45 | 17 | 93.91 | | |
| Verbal School Bullying | Below 28 | 16 | 72.47 | 1.105 | 0.576 |
| | 29-45 | 129 | 81.56 | | |
| | More than 45 | 17 | 89.56 | | |
| School Bullying Survey | Below 28 | 16 | 70.81 | 1.640 | 0.440 |
| | 29-45 | 129 | 81.48 | | |
| | More than 45 | 17 | 91.74 | | |

4.2.2. Results Related to Gender

A Mann-Whitney test was carried out to find out if there are any statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying and its domains for students with LD according to their parents' gender. According to Table 6, the findings highlighted a statistically significant difference in Social School bullying ($Z=-2.330$, $P=0.020$ significant at 0.05),

Physical School Bullying ($Z=-3.251$, $P=0.001$ significant at 0.01), and Verbal School Bullying ($Z=-2.167$, $P=0.030$ significant at 0.05) based on parents' gender, in favor of fathers who are rated the previous three domains more highly than mothers. Nonetheless, no statistically significant difference could be identified in Psychological School Bullying ($Z=-1.895$, $P=0.058$) based on parents' gender.

Table 6: The Mann-Whitney Test to Identify the Differences Among the Survey's Domains According to Gender.

| Domain | Gender | MR | Sum of Rank | Mann-Whitney | Z | Sig |
|-------------------------------|--------|-------|-------------|--------------|--------|--------|
| Social School Bullying | Father | 90.17 | 7213.50 | 2586.500 | -2.330 | 0.020* |
| | Mother | 73.04 | 5989.50 | | | |
| Psychological School Bullying | Father | 88.46 | 7077.00 | 2723.000 | -1.895 | 0.058 |
| | Mother | 74.71 | 6126.00 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|---------|----------|--------|---------|
| Physical School Bullying | Father | 93.54 | 7483.50 | 2316.500 | -3.251 | 0.001** |
| | Mother | 69.75 | 5719.50 | | | |
| Verbal School Bullying | Father | 89.55 | 7164.00 | 2636.000 | -2.167 | 0.030* |
| | Mother | 73.65 | 6039.00 | | | |

Arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted according to the gender variable. Further, a t-test was employed to statistically analyze the results for independent samples related to the level of overall school bullying among students with LD from their parents' perspective. The Independent Samples T-test was used for the gender variable because it is the most suitable statistical tool for

comparing the arithmetic means between two independent groups (males and females), as it measures the significance of the differences between them in a quantitative dependent variable (Akpan& Clark, 2023). Table 7 shows the results of the t-test revealing that the t-value reached 0.003, a statistically significant value at a significant level of 0.01.

Table 7: The Independent Sample T-Test Employed to Highlight the Differences Among the Survey According to Gender.

| All Domains | Gender | Mean | Standard Deviation | T-test | Sig |
|------------------------|--------|------|--------------------|--------|---------|
| School Bullying Survey | Father | 3.24 | 0.500 | 3.063 | 0.003** |
| | Mother | 2.98 | 0.582 | | |

4.2.3. Results Related to Educational Level

According to the educational level variable, Chi-Square was employed, and the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to statistically analyze the results to measure the level of overall school bullying and its related domains among students with LD from their

parents' perspective, table 8 shows the results. As indicated in Table 8, the Chi- Square ranged between 0.901-3.335, which is statistically non-significant at the significance level (0.05). Thus, there were no statistically significant differences in the level of school bullying and its domains for students with LD based on their parents' educational level.

Table 8: The Kruskal-Wallis Test to Identify Differences in Terms of Educational Level.

| Domain | Education | N | Mean Rank | Chi-Square | Significant |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Social School bullying | High school and below | 64 | 88.58 | 1.806 | 0.405 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 78 | 76.47 | | |
| | Graduate study | 20 | 85.41 | | |
| Psychological School Bullying | High school and below | 64 | 90.65 | 0.901 | 0.637 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 78 | 79.94 | | |
| | Graduate study | 20 | 80.55 | | |
| Physical School Bullying | High school and below | 64 | 93.10 | 2.077 | 0.354 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 78 | 76.99 | | |
| | Graduate study | 20 | 83.38 | | |
| Verbal School Bullying, | High school and below | 64 | 79.50 | 3.335 | 0.189 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 78 | 75.34 | | |
| | Graduate study | 20 | 89.63 | | |
| School Bullying Survey | High school and below | 64 | 89.40 | 2.197 | 0.333 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 78 | 75.95 | | |
| | Graduate study | 20 | 85.80 | | |

5. DISCUSSION

The study results showed that the level of overall school bullying among students with LD from their parents' perspective was moderate which is aligned with (Alsadee,2017; Muharam & Alabdualat, 2022). In addition, this research found that the level of verbal school bullying, physical school bullying, psychological school bullying and social school bullying among students with LD from their parents' perspective was moderate. This could be due to that

students with LD have been attending mainstream schools and they struggle to adopt cognitive and metacognitive techniques to organize academic knowledge and have poor working memory, attention disorders, and language challenges (Al-Sartawi & Al-Sartawi, 2017). These traits make it difficult for students with LD to succeed in school and often result in lower levels of effort investment, academic self-concept, and achievement. In turn, this often causes poor test scores (Fletcher et al., 2019). Parents generally concur that their children receive

unfavourable verbal comments from their classmates because of their poor test results and they make fun of their children with LD (Khasawneh, 2020). The current research findings related to physical school bullying consisted of (Chan et al., 2018). Swearer et al., (2012) state that teenagers with LD are more likely to experience physical bullying in the form of hitting, pushing, kicking and other physical acts than children with LD.

In addition, this study result is consistent with those revealed by Uzun et al. (2024), who claims that children with LD often experience psychological bullying because their peers neglect them more frequently than other students. Parents who reported that some students refuse to allow their LD children to play with them this is often because of their communication difficulties and lack of social skills (Van der Wilt et al., 2019). The level of social school bullying in this study, could be due to there is a correlation between academic achievement and social function. Children with fewer opportunities to make friends find it more difficult to develop appropriate social skills. In turn, such students have fewer friends and tend to experience loneliness (Krull et al., 2018). The moderate level of school bullying and its four domains could be related to parents claimed that it was difficult for them to recognise bullying, particularly when it came to comprehending the various forms of bullying that their children might experience (Brown et al., 2013).

The current study's findings also show that there are no statistically significant differences in the parents' ages and educational levels among the overall school bullying and its four domains. This conclusion is consistent with Khasawneh's (2020) work, in which it was claimed that parents' perspectives on bullying their children are unaffected by their age. However, the existing research indicates that having LD and living in a family with low parental education were associated with an elevated risk of bullying victimization (Kavanagh, 2018; Tatiani, 2021), which is not aligned with this study's finding. The researcher of the current study refers to parents' less aware and perception of bullying of their children in Saudi Arabia and there is a need to raise the awareness of the Saudi community about the effects and consequences of school bullying. Parents' awareness of bullying allows them to take adequate measures to reduce or prevent bullying. Abed et al. (2023) state that providing an initial step in the Saudi Arabian context toward identifying the forms and types of school bullying, helping parents reduce bullying and develop long-term plans for addressing it. Lastly, this

study found statistically significant differences among verbal school bullying, physical school bullying, social school bullying and overall school bullying regarding parents' gender and the difference was in favour of fathers. This finding is in line with those revealed by (Sawyer et al., 2011; Buanaani & Kwraat, 2019). The current study states there are no statistically significant differences in the parents' gender among the psychological school bullying. This result could be explained as students often provide numerous examples of direct bullying (physical and verbal), but few examples of indirect bullying. Additionally, parents prefer to omit various forms of bullying from their definition of bullying and tend to use the terms physical or verbal bullying (Bjärehed et al., 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study has examined the perceptions of parents of children with LD regarding bullying targeted towards their children in elementary school settings. The four types of abuse – verbal school bullying, social school bullying, physical school bullying, and psychological school bullying) were examined using a survey tool. The findings revealed that, with the exception of items 11 and 14 belonging to the Verbal School Bullying and 1 belonging to the Social School Bullying (which parents' rate highly), parents reported that their LD children experience moderate levels of bullying across all domains (Verbal School Bullying, Physical School Bullying, Psychological School Bullying, and Social School Bullying) and across each item. Moreover, it was discovered that the parents' gender may have an impact on the environmental circumstances, causing a notable difference in the perceptions of mothers and fathers. Furthermore, this study was unable to identify any significant differences between bullying at school based on parents' educational level and age. Lastly, the research confirms and recommends the significance of educating parents of LD students in understanding the meaning of all types of bullying. It is also important to equip them with strategies to prevent bullying, as this could significantly improve the better quality of life of their children with LD.

7. IMPLICATION

Practitioners should take the parents' moderate view of their children being bullied into account and work with parents of children with LD to design a school plan that will raise students' awareness of bullying in schools. School courses increase parents' awareness of bullying in schools and offer techniques

and ways to stop and lessen bullying (Saylor & Leach, 2009; Axford et al, 2015) and provide support to LD children who experience it (Bourke & Burgman, 2010). Moreover, boys experience more direct bullying than girls, who experience more indirect bullying (Bjärehed et al., 2020). Fathers may have higher expectations for their children with LD being bullied, but this does not mean mothers have low expectations for their daughters being bullied. Parents' perspectives on their children with LD being bullied are also influenced by their knowledge and awareness, relationships with their children, culture, and school policy (Lindstrom Johnson et al., 2019). In

order to educate parents and communities about different forms of bullying and their detrimental social, psychological, and emotional effects, it is important to schools and organisations work together. Meanwhile, cooperation between school staff, student education, the learning environment, and teacher training can significantly reduce bullying in schools. Additionally, coordination between the school and the home is crucial in tackling bullying because it affects children's school attitudes and behaviour, based on findings revealed by (Stamatis & Nikolaou, 2016).

Acknowledgment: The author extends her appreciation to Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University for funding this research work through the project number (PSAU/2026/R/1447).

Declarations Ethical Approval and Informed Consent: The study involved grown-up independent participants who would not face any risk. All the study procedures in the study were conducted in accordance with the relevant guidelines and regulations of 1963 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments. The researcher sought and got the informed consent of the participants to participate in the study. All participants accepted and voluntarily participated in the study after the researcher assured them of anonymity and that their responses were solely for academic purposes. All information is anonymized, and the submission does not include images or names that may identify any person.

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