

Systematic Review on Parents' Attitude towards the Problem of Bullying among Primary School Students

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Abstract

The issue of bullying has reached an alarming level of severity and seems to persist through generations. Instances of bullying, particularly among students, attract significant attention on social media platforms. This is a deeply concerning matter as it causes immense harm to the victims, leading to feelings of fear, humiliation, disappointment, and a significant decline in self-esteem, sometimes even resulting in tragic student deaths. While there have been numerous studies on school bullying, conducting a comprehensive review of this research topic has proven to be challenging due to the lack of research on bullying specifically in Malaysia that examines parental attitudes and strategies. Studies conducted in other countries may not be directly applicable to the unique cultural and racial dynamics of Malaysia. Hence, the objective of this study is to ascertain the attitudes of parents towards bullying among primary school students. The review process encompassed five essential methodological steps, such as adhering to a review protocol, formulating research questions, employing systematic searching strategies on well-established databases like Scopus, Science Direct, Springer Link, and Google Scholar to identify, screen, and evaluate relevant studies, followed by a stringent quality appraisal, and meticulous data extraction and analysis. Additionally, the thematic analysis revealed four major themes: (1) the attitude of parents; (2) type of bullying; (3) factors contributing to bullying incidents and (4) bullying prevention strategies.

Keywords Parent, Attitude, Bully, Primary School, Students

Introduction

Bullying is a deplorable behaviour that occurs when an individual repeatedly inflicts harm upon someone unable to defend themselves (Olweus & Breivik, 2014; Olweus, 2013). It is characterized by a power imbalance, with one party seeking to dominate the other (Rigby, 2020a, 1996; Longorbardi, Borello, Thornberg, & Settani, 2019; Huston, 2018; Olweus, 2013, 2010, 2003; Mount, 2005). This power differential is particularly evident when the bully targets individuals who are smaller or weaker (Rigby, 2007). Disturbingly, bullies often engage in these reprehensible acts alongside their peers. Various forms of bullying exist (Olweus, 2016, 2003; Olweus & Breivik, 2014), including physical, relational, verbal (Fauziah, Fatimah, & Jazimin, 2009), and cyberbullying (Hanif Suhairi, Yusof Norhafezah, & Adrian, 2013). In some cases, exceptionally severe incidents of harassment can also be classified as bullying (Olweus & Breivik, 2014).

The phenomenon of bullying is intrinsically tied to the power dynamics and privilege that exist within society, particularly when those who are perceived as weak are subjected to oppression (Ali, 2020; Nur Adlin & Mohd Izwan, 2019). Bullying in primary schools is a major issue that negatively affects children mental and emotional health. Those who are bullied frequently suffer from fear, anxiety, depression, and lowered self-esteem, which may persist into adulthood, influencing their overall growth and social interactions. It is noteworthy that currently, there is no specific legislation in place to address the issue of bullying, be it within the realms of criminal law, such as the Penal Code, or civil law, such as the Education Act 1996. Remarkably, there is also a lack of a legal definition for 'bullying' itself. This irony is compounded by the fact that bullying has profound and detrimental effects on its victims which include the instilling of fear, humiliation, disappointment, and the erosion of their self-esteem (Jamalsafri & Syamsol Azhar, 2021). Consequently, strict measures must be implemented to hold perpetrators of such illegal activities accountable, serving as both a deterrent and a valuable lesson for all members of society, particularly students within educational institutions.

The distressing effects of bullying continue to escalate, persisting across generations without an apparent end. This deplorable practice plagues not only Malaysia but the entire globe. Social media platforms frequently highlight incidents of bullying, particularly those involving students. The gravity of the issue intensifies as it tragically leads to loss of life among our youth (Mohd Shazwan, 2021; Mohd Azam Shah, 2018; Salimah, Noran Fauziah, Zuria, & Louis, 2021). Experts in the field of bullying intervention assert that parents have a significant role to play in providing a comprehensive education to their children, alongside teachers at school. This is because when parents impart a well-rounded education to their children, it cultivates their ability to think in a mature manner. Hence, it is imperative for parents to actively engage in enabling their children to effectively handle instances of bullying (Muhammad Nurshafwan, 2022). Moreover, parents require support to enhance their knowledge and skills in addressing bullying issues faced by their children (Junainah, 2019a). Equipped with clear knowledge and understanding, parents can avoid misinterpreting signs of bullying (Jamalsafri, 2014).

From another perspective, Junainah (2019b) contends that parents who assist their children in dealing with bullying situations employ an approach based on their understanding of their child's behaviour. However, not all parents possess this capability. This is because a child's character is shaped by their interactions with those around them, which significantly

influences their own development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). In this regard, parents serve as rolemodels for both positive and negative actions and behaviours, as children learn through the process of observation (Bandura, 1977). Overall, the issues of traditional bullying and cyberbullying demand immediate attention. The escalating prevalence of such harmful activities has even led to student fatalities. The impact, however, extends beyond just the victim, affecting the bully and bystanders as well. It is evident, therefore, that all parties, especially parents, must assume responsibility for addressing and mitigating the symptoms of bullying, ensuring the mental, physical, and intellectual well-being and character development of students.

Bullying is a widespread issue with harmful impacts on victims, and involving parents in prevention strategies is essential. This study is important because it provides insights into parental attitudes, which can lead to more effective interventions. Although there are numerous studies on school bullying, the effort to systematically review this research topic has been challenging since its lack of comprehension relating to bullying in Malaysia that examines the attitudes and strategies taken by parents. Given this gap found in the literature, the current study aims to determine the attitudes of parents toward bullying among primary school students. Through this approach, the empirical evidence can be justified to identify the gaps and guide the direction for future research in this field. In progressing the review, the author was guided by the main research question; 'What is the attitude of parents towards bullying among primary school students?'

Systematic literature review offers numerous unique procedures that set it apart from traditional review. One of its key strengths is its ability to encourage researchers to expand their search beyond their respective subject areas and networks. This is achieved through the introduction of extensive searching methods, predefined search strings, and standard inclusion and exclusion criteria, as highlighted by Robinson and Lowe (2015). The practice of traditional literature review, a time-honored approach to situating a study within existing knowledge, has been widely esteemed. However, there is now an alternative that offers even greater advantages. As defined by Higgins et al. (2011), a systematic literature review aims to comprehensively locate and synthesize related research using organized, transparent, and replicable procedures at each step. In this study, the author proposes a systematic literature review that explicitly relies on thematic analysis, combining quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. By adopting this approach, the author wants to provide a comprehensive and rigorous synthesis of relevant research to enhance the degree of understanding in this field.

Methodology

Review Protocol – PRISMA 2020

The SLR is conducted in accordance with PRISMA 2020, a highly regarded methodology in the field of evidence synthesis. Published in 2009, PRISMA 2020 serves as a comprehensive guide for systematic reviews assessing the effectiveness of health interventions, regardless of the research approach employed. By providing a structured framework for conducting and reporting systematic reviews and meta-analyses, PRISMA empowers researchers to effectively synthesize and analyse existing evidence on a specific topic. This esteemed statement comprises a checklist and flow diagram that assist researchers in accurately reporting crucial

elements of a systematic review or meta-analysis, including study selection, data extraction, and quality evaluation.

Formulation of the Research Question

The development of the research question for this study was influenced by the PICO framework. PICO, which stands for Population or Problem, Interest, Context (Lockwood et al., 2015), is a widely recognized framework in the field of research, particularly in evidence-based medicine and clinical research. It serves as a guide in creating a concise and focused research question. Each element of the PICO framework represents a crucial aspect of the research question. Firstly, the population component refers to the specific group of individuals or subjects that the study targets. Secondly, the intervention component describes the specific treatment, exposure, or intervention being investigated. Next, the comparison component outlines the alternative or control group against which the intervention is compared. This is essential to assess the effectiveness or superiority of the intervention in comparison to an alternative. Lastly, the outcome component identifies the desired outcomes or endpoints that the study aims to measure or observe.

Adhering to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines, the systematic literature review process commenced by formulating research questions utilizing the PICO method. The document search strategy was meticulously planned and executed in three systematic phases: identification, screening, and eligibility. Furthermore, a thorough quality appraisal process was conducted based on an adapted set of criteria. Before incorporating selected articles into the review, the quality of each was assessed. Subsequently, the data extraction process was guided by the primary research question, while the qualitative data synthesis, through thematic analysis, was performed to analyse the extracted data (Hayrol Azril et al., 2021).

Systematic Searching Strategies

Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a comprehensive and rigorous approach to collecting, analysing, and summarizing existing research studies on a specific topic. The systematic search strategy is a crucial part of the SLR process as it ensures that the review is conducted in a methodical and unbiased manner (Page et al., 2021). The goal is to identify all relevant studies that address the research question, thereby minimizing the risk of missing important findings. The systematic search in SLR typically involves the following key steps:

Identification

Based on the formulated research questions, five main keywords were identified: parent, attitude, bully, primary school, and student. To enrich these keywords, the authors sought their synonyms, related terms, and variations by using an online thesaurus, such as thesaurus.com, when referring to the keywords used by past studies and referring to the keywords suggested by Scopus. The combinations of these keywords were processed using search functions, such as field code functions, phrase searching, wildcards, truncation, and Boolean operators in three databases that is Scopus, Science Direct, and Springer Link (see Table 1). Additionally, the search process was based on a manual searching technique. The method of 'handpicking' was strategically employed within databases such as Google Scholar, enabling the author to meticulously curate a collection of scholarly articles. Through rigorous and exhaustive searching endeavours, the author successfully pinpointed an impressive total of 170,511 prospective articles from these esteemed databases.

Screening

Screening was the second procedure carried out where articles were either included or excluded from the study based on a specific set of criteria (see Table 2). The author used the following groups of search terms; "parent", "attitude", "bully", "primary school", and "student". Considering the notion of 'research field maturity' highlighted by Kraus et al. (2020), this comprehensive analysis has selectively narrowed down the screening process to completely include articles and research papers. It is worth noting that, to maintain clarity and coherence, only those publications written in the English language were taken into consideration. Consequently, a staggering number of 169,899 articles were deemed incongruent with the established inclusion criteria and, regrettably, had to be eliminated from the review. As a result, a refined collection of 612 articles remained for thorough evaluation during the subsequent stage.

Table 1

Search String used in the Selected Database

Database	String
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY(("Parent*" OR "Parents*" OR "Brood*" OR "Household*" OR "Relative*") AND ("Attitude*" OR "Attitudes*" OR "Approach*" OR "Manner*" OR "Opinion*" OR "Opinions*" OR "Perspective*" OR "Philosophy*" OR "Reaction*" OR "Stance*" OR "Stand*" OR "Temperament*" OR "Thought*" OR "Behavior*" OR "Behaviors*" OR "Belief*" OR "Beliefs*" OR "Impressions*" OR "Judgements*" OR "Mentality*" OR "Mindsets*" OR "Perceptions*" OR "Perspective*" OR "Perspectives*" OR "Reactions*" OR "Standpoint*" OR "Values*") AND ("Bully*" OR "Bullied*" OR "Bullies*" OR "Bullying*" OR "Abuser*" OR "Abusers*" OR "Aggressor*" OR "Oppressor*" OR "Tormentor*" OR "Badger*" OR "Browbeat*") AND ("Primary school*" OR "Elementary school*" OR "Grade school*" OR "Grammar school" OR "Lower school" OR "Graded school" OR "Junior school" OR "Preparatory school" OR "Primary education") AND ("Student*" OR "Students*" OR "Apprentice" OR "Junior" OR "Learner" OR "Novice" OR "Pupil" OR "Freshman" OR "Fresher" OR "Sophomore"))
Science Direct	((("Parent" OR Parents)) AND ("Attitude" OR "Perspective") AND ("Bully" OR "Bullying") AND ("Primary school") AND ("Student" OR "Students"))
Springer Link	(Parent OR Relative) AND (Attitude OR Approach OR Thought OR Belief) AND (Bully OR Bullying OR Abuser OR Aggressor) AND Primary school AND Student

Table 2

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Document type	Articles or research articles	Book chapter, review, conference paper, book or note.
Language	English	Non-English
Subject area	Social Sciences and Psychology	Arts and Humanities, Medicine and Dentistry, Computer Science, Decision Sciences, Neuroscience, Economics, Econometrics and Finance, Environmental Science, Agricultural and Biological Sciences.

Eligibility

Eligibility in systematic search strategies refers to the criteria used to decide whether a research study or article should be included or excluded from a systematic literature review (SLR). Furthermore, these criteria help ensure SLR focuses on retrieving and analysing studies that meet specific characteristics, thus maintaining the review's relevance and validity. The criteria are usually determined based on the research question and the objective of the review. It is important to define the eligible criteria before conducting the literature search to ensure consistency in the study selection process. The authors conducted a thorough manual examination of the remaining papers to ascertain whether they met the predetermined inclusion criteria. This involved carefully reviewing the titles, abstracts, and in some cases, the full content of the papers. Throughout this process, a total of 582 articles were deemed unsuitable for inclusion and were excluded. After this rigorous screening process, the number of articles remaining for further evaluation in the quality appraisal stage was narrowed down to just 30 (refer to Fig.1).

Quality Appraisal

The quality appraisal stage was performed to ensure that the methodology and analysis of the selected studies were completed satisfactorily. In order to assess the validity of the studies, one reviewer and one expert independently assessed the quality of each study using a guideline proposed by Kitchenham and Charters. The checklist contained 6 items; QA1 'Is the purpose of the study clearly stated?', QA2 'Is the interest and the usefulness of the work clearly presented?', QA3 'Is the study methodology clearly established?', QA4 'Are the concepts of the approach clearly defined?', QA5 'Is the work compared and measured with other similar work?' and QA6 'Are the limitations of the work clearly mentioned?'. In total, 6 articles fulfilled all criteria, 18 articles fulfilled at least four to five criteria, and a further three articles managed to fulfil at least three criteria (see Table 4).

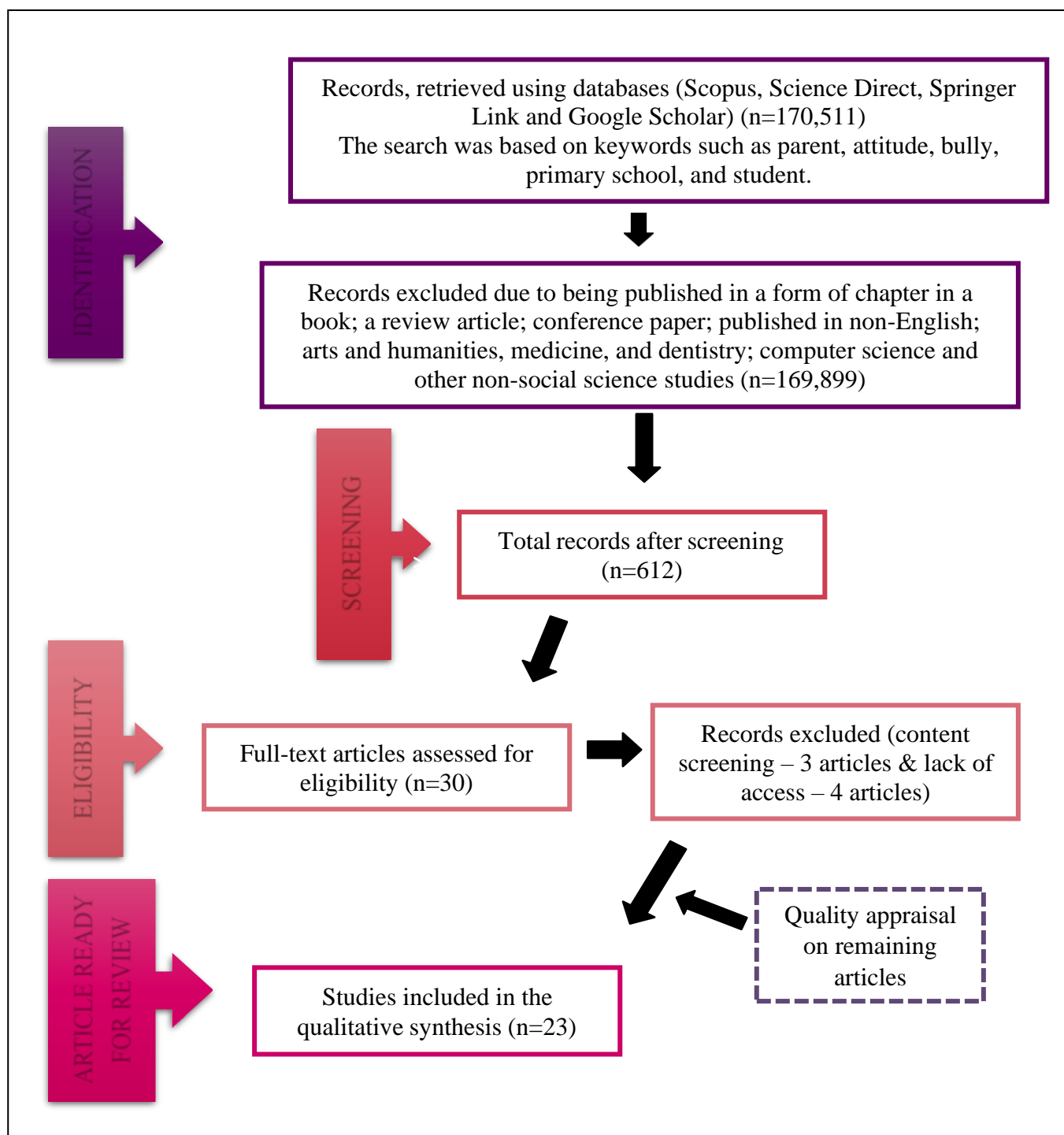


Fig. 1 Flow diagram of the searching process

Data Extraction and Analyses

Data extraction and analysis are two crucial stages in the process of systematic literature review (SLR). These stages require the systematic collection of relevant information from the chosen studies and the synthesis of the extracted data to derive significant conclusions. Since the review encompassed diverse research designs, the articles were thematically analysed to determine the optimal approaches for integrating the variations through synthesis (Whittemore and Knaf, 2005). In this study, the researcher analysed the data using the thematic analysis method. This method is one way to identify, analyse, and interpret patterns

of meaning in qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2016). The researcher has used six steps of thematic analysis to interpret codes and themes from qualitative data, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006):

(1) familiarization of data (2) generation of codes; (3) searching a theme; (4) revise the theme; (5) determine significance of themes and (6) reporting of findings.

During the initial phase, the author thoroughly acquaints themselves with the data that has been acquired. This involves carefully examining each article to gain a comprehensive understanding of the obtained information. Next, the author has created a preliminary code based on the collected data. Utilizing codes can assist the researcher in recognizing the attributes of the data that can provide insights into the research question. The researcher has gone through the data multiple times in order to generate additional codes. During the third stage of the research process, the author diligently undertakes the task of thoroughly examining the data that has been gathered. This involves carefully reviewing the coded information to identify any recurring patterns, commonalities, and areas of overlap between different codes. By meticulously analysing the data, the researcher gains a deep understanding of the underlying themes that emerge from the dataset. It is crucial for the researcher to accurately interpret and explain the significance of these themes, ensuring that their meaning is effectively communicated. Additionally, as part of this stage, the author conscientiously maintains a comprehensive list of the codes that have been identified and extracted through the analysis process. This enables transparency and allows for easy reference in subsequent stages of the research.

In the fourth stage, the researcher conducts a thorough examination of how the identified theme aligns with the data and theoretical framework. If any gaps are identified, the researcher carefully revisits the data to identify any missing elements. Moving into the fifth stage, the researcher critically analyses all the processes involved in thematic analysis, ensuring a comprehensive understanding. Moreover, the researcher organizes the analysed data in a manner that enhances clarity and assigns a concise name to each theme. As the research progresses into the sixth stage, the researcher diligently prepares a comprehensive research report that consolidates the entire data analysis. This report not only assigns meaning to the research data through the identification of a central theme but also provides study participants with a written report to review, ensuring the accuracy and enhancing the validity of the analysed data. Furthermore, the researcher takes great care in revising and refining the final report, ensuring its quality and precision.

Table 3

Results of the Quality Assessment

Study	Year	Research Design	QA 1	QA2	QA3	QA 4	QA5	QA6	Number of criteria fulfilled	Inclusion in the review
1. He et al.	2023	QN	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	3/6	✓
2. Rinaldi et al.	2023	QN	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	5/6	✓
3. Zhao et al.	2023	QN	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/6	✓
4. Escortell et al.	2023	QN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	5/6	✓
5. Strindberg	2023	QL	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	4/6	✓
6. Karaagac et al.	2022	QL	X	P	✓	P	✓	X	3/6	✓
7. Saigh & Bagadood	2022	QL	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	2/6	X
8. Townsend et al.	2022	QL	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	4/6	✓
9. Wang et al.	2022	QL	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	4/6	✓
10. Zhou et al.	2022	QN	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/6	✓
11. Bjereld et al.	2021	QL	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/6	✓
12. Chen et al.	2021	QN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	5/6	✓
13. Norton & Duke	2021	QN	P	P	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/6	✓
14. Sureda-Garcia et al.	2021	QN	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/6	✓
15. Carter et al.	2020	QN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6	✓
16. Mendoza-Gonzalez et al.	2020	QN	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/6	✓
17. Niejenhuis et al.	2020	QN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6	✓
18. Rigby	2019	MX	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	4/6	✓
19. Yang et al.	2019	QN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6	✓
20. Cerezo et al.	2018	QN	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	4/6	✓
21. Govender & Young	2018	QN	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	5/6	✓
22. Johnson et al.	2018	QN	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6	✓
23. Monks et al.	2016	QL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6	✓
24. Salehi et al.	2016	QL	X	X	✓	X	X	✓	2/6	X
25. Makri-Botsari & Karagianni	2014	QN	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	4/6	✓
26. Ok & Aslan	2010	QN	P	X	P	X	X	X	1/6	X
27. Holt et al.	2009	QL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/6	✓
28. Kokkinos & Panayiotou	2007	QN	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	4/6	✓
29. Nasir et al.	2007	QN	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	3/6	✓
30. Eslea & Smit	2000	QN	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	4/6	✓

QA = Quality assessment; QN = Quantitative; QL = Qualitative; MX = Mixed method; P = Partly

Results

Background of the Selected Studies

From 27 articles, a total of two papers focused their studies in Australia (Townsend et al., 2022 and Rigby, 2019), four in China (He et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022 and Zhou et al., 2022), two in Greece (Makri-Botasari et al., 2014 and Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2007), two in Netherlands (Karaagac et al., 2022 and Niejenhuis et al., 2020), two in South Africa (Cartel et al., 2020 and Govendor & Young, 2018), four in Spain (Escortell et al., 2023; Sureda-Garcia et al., 2021; Mendoza-Gonzalez et al., 2020 and Cerezo et al., 2018), two in Sweden (Strindberg, 2022 and Bjereld et al., 2021), two in United Kingdom (Monks et al., 2016 and Eslea & Smith, 2000), four in United States of America (Norton & Duke, 2021; Yang et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2018 and Holt et al., 2009) and a study in Canada (Rinaldi et al., 2023), Pakistan (Nasir et al., 2007) and Taiwan (Chen et al., 2021).

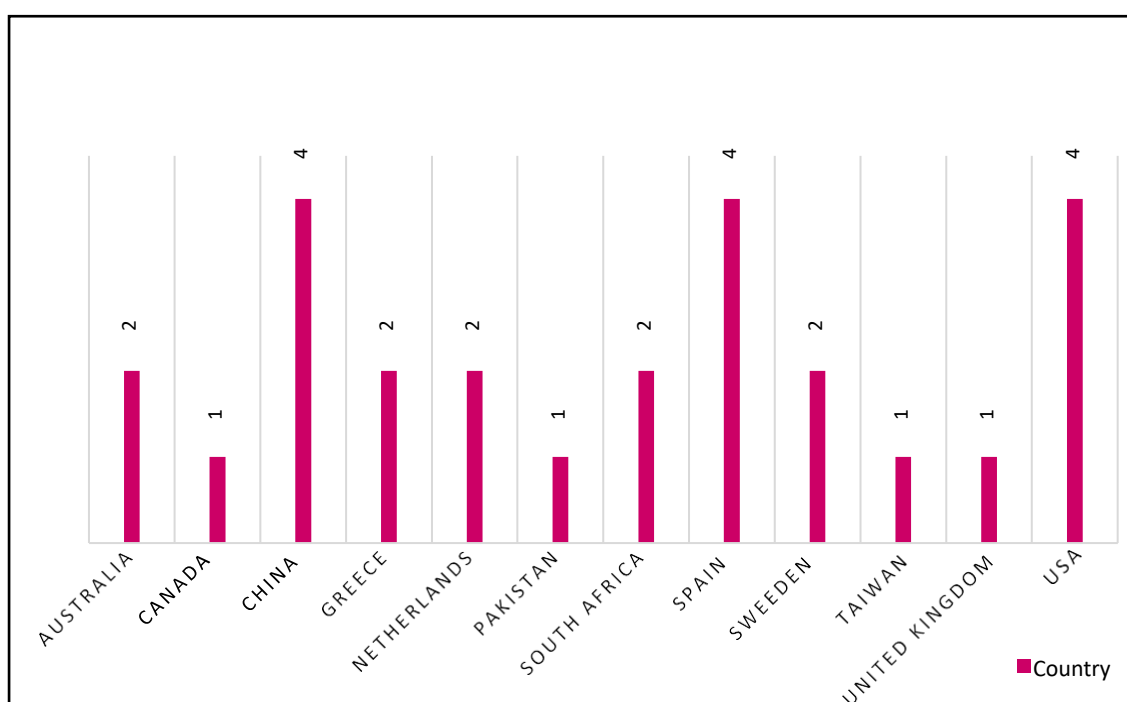


Fig. 2 Countries where the selected studies were conducted

It was recorded that 19 studies focused on quantitative analyses (He et al., 2023; Rinaldi et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2023; Escortell et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2021; Norton & Duke, 2021; Sureda-Garcia et al., 2021; Carter et al., 2020; Mendoza-Gonzalez et al., 2020; Niejenhuis et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2019; Cerezo et al., 2018; Govendor & Young, 2018; Johnson et al., 2018; Makri-Botsari et al., 2014; Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2007; Nasir et al., 2007 and Eslea & Smith, 2000) while the other seven studies focused on qualitative analyses (Karaagac et al., 2022; Strindberg, 2022; Townsend et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022; Bjereld et al., 2021; Monks et al., 2016 and Holt et al., 2009). One study used the mixed method approach (Rigby, 2019).

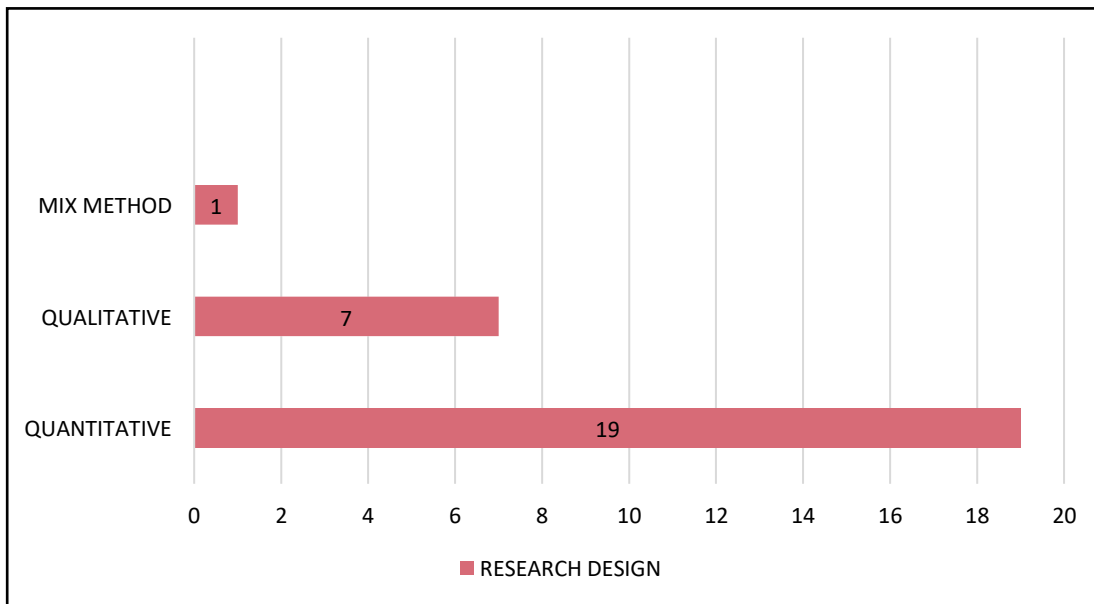


Fig. 3 Research design of selected studies

Regarding the year of publication, four articles were published in 2023 (Escortell et al.,2023; He et al., 2023; Rinaldi et al., 2023 and Zhao et al., 2023), five articles were published in 2022 (Karaagac et al., 2022; Strindberg, 2022; Townsend et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022 and Zhou et al., 2022), four articles were published in 2021 (Bjereld et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2021; Norton & Duke, 2021 and Sureda-Garcia et al., 2021), three articles were published in 2020 (Carter et al., 2020; Mendoza-Gonzalez et al, 2020 and Niejenhuis et al., 2020), two articles were published in 2019 (Rigby, 2019 and Yang et al., 2019), three articles were published in 2018 (Cerezo et al., 2018; Govender & Catherine, 2018 and Johnson, 2018), one article were published in 2016 (Monks, 2016), one article were published in 2014 (Makri-Botasari et al., 2014), one article were published in 2009 (Holt et al., 2009), two articles were published in 2007 (Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2007 and Nasir et al., 2007) and one article were published in 2000 (Eslea & Smith, 2000).

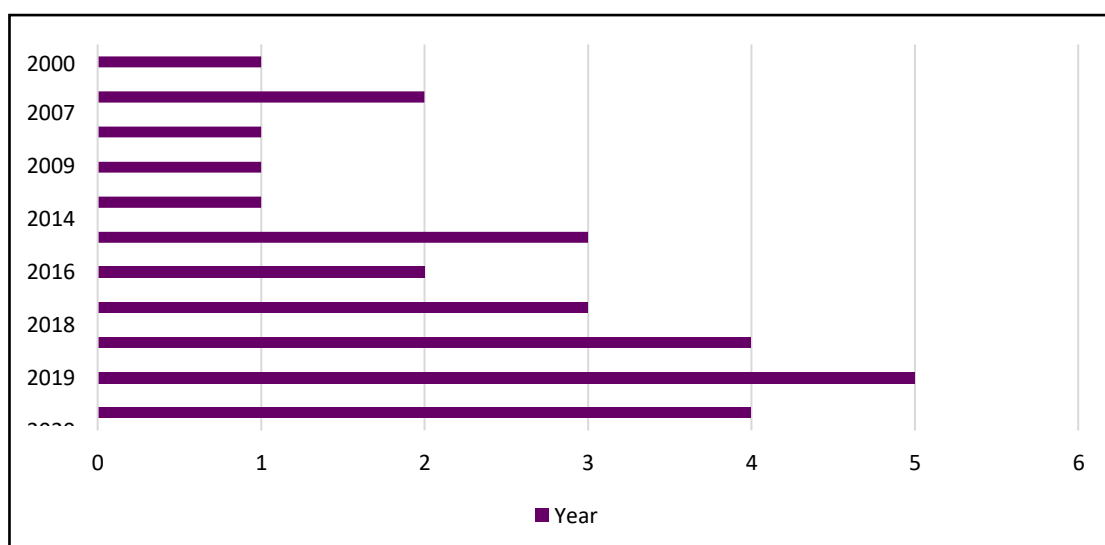


Fig. 4 Publication years of selected studies

The Developed Themes

Within this study, the author meticulously examined the data utilizing the esteemed thematic analysis method. This sophisticated approach serves as a means to discern, scrutinize, and comprehend the intricate tapestry of meaning woven within qualitative data (Clarke & Braun 2016). The thematic analysis was undertaken on 27 selected articles and resulted in four main themes: (1) the attitude of parents; (2) the type of bullying; (3) the factors contributing to bullying incidents and (3) the bullying prevention strategies.

Table 4

Findings

Authors/Themes	Parents' attitude		Type of bullying			Factor contributing to bullying incident		Bullying prevention strategies
	ATB	RP	TB	CB	TBF	BF	PA	
He et al. (2023)			√				√	√
Rinaldi et al. (2023)			√					√
Zhao et al. (2023)			√		√			
Escortell et al. (2023)					√			
Strindberg (2023)			√				√	
Karaagac et al. (2022)								
Townsend et al. (2022)			√					
Wang et al. (2022)								
Zhou et al. (2022)							√	
Bjereld et al. (2021)			√					
Chen et al. (2021)			√					√
Norton & Duke (2021)								
Sureda-Garcia et al. (2021)								
Carter et al. (2020)			√				√	
Mendoza-Gonzalez et al. (2020)			√					
Niejenhuis et al. (2020)	√							√
Rigby (2019)			√					
Yang et al. (2019)			√					
Cerezo et al. (2018)			√		√			
Govender & Young (2018)							√	
Johnson et al. (2018)			√					√
Monks et al. (2016)			√		√			√
Makri-Botsari & Karagianni (2014)			√		√			
Holt et al. (2009)	√				√		√	
Kokkinos & Panayiotou (2007)			√				√	
Nasir et al. (2007)			√√					
Eslea & Smith (2000)	√							

ATB = Attitudes toward bullying behaviour, RP = Role of parents, TB = Traditional bullying, CB = Cyberbullying, TBF = The bullying factor, BF = Bullying factor, PA = Parents

The Attitude of Parents'

The first sub-theme under the attitude of parents was toward bullying behaviours. Most parents understand that bullying is harmful to children and believe that it should be addressed more in schools. Parents who have a more negative view of bullying and feel more responsible for preventing it are more likely to cooperate with schools. Many people, especially parents, believe that bullying in schools is unavoidable. Almost every parent is concerned about their children being bullied and recognizes the importance of their involvement in stopping it (Niejenhuis et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2009 & Eslea & Smith, 2000).

The second sub-theme focused on the role of parents. Certain researchers believe that it is the responsibility of both mothers and fathers to educate and guide their children. Parents play a crucial role as children who are raised by such parents are more likely to seek their assistance in dealing with bullying. This suggests that parenting styles that include democratic elements make it easier for children to discuss negative online experiences with their parents (Makri-Botsari & Karagianni, 2014). In China, parents tend to have stricter supervision and control over their daughters compared to their sons, resulting in less interest in pursuing higher education and a decreased likelihood of being bullied at school (Zhao et al., 2023).

According to esteemed researchers Bjereld et al. (2021), Rigby (2019), Cerezo et al. (2018), and Nasir (2007), it is imperative for parents to prioritize the well-being of their children. Recent findings have revealed the potential efficacy of adult interventions in response to bullying incidents. It is evident that turning a blind eye to bullying never serves the best interests of the victim. Instead, adults should actively engage by attentively listening to the victim's narrative and endeavouring to comprehend their unique perspective. Notably, effective adult responses encompass bolstering their presence and refraining from blaming the victim or making excuses for the bully's behaviour. An intriguing aspect uncovered by the study is that parents of bullied children often possess a heightened awareness of bullying and its detrimental effects, surpassing the awareness levels of the children themselves. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that parents display heightened concern regarding bullying instances, possibly due to their acute sensitivity toward their children being subjected to unfair treatment.

Furthermore, it is crucial for researchers to put emphasis on the necessity for parents to expand their knowledge to effectively assist their children. This comprehensive study reveals that both parents and schools who work closely with primary school children possess an understanding of the potential dangers of bullying and possess some familiarity with its various manifestations. However, the findings also indicate that parents may possess a limited comprehension of self-harm and the underlying mental health issues linked to it (Townsend et al., 2022 & Monks et al., 2016). Adequate support and guidance should be provided to students on how to effectively navigate instances of bullying. Additionally, schools, teachers, and parents must remain vigilant in identifying and addressing any form of bullying, as its repercussions can endure long into the affected individuals' lives. (Zhao et al., 2023 & Yang et al., 2019).

Type of Bullying

Within the realm of bullying, the first sub-theme is traditional bullying. It is disheartening to observe that social violence, encompassing both physical and emotional forms, has become

alarmingly prevalent within our society. Recent studies have highlighted the emergence of bullying and emotional violence as significant forms of social violence endured by female students, alongside the persisting issue of physical violence. While physical violence continues to be widespread, it is imperative to recognize that children are exposed to a multitude of social violence in different forms (Nasir et al., 2007). On the other hand, Strindberg (2023) discovered that the insidious nature of bullying also lurks within more covert avenues, such as exclusion from group activities, deliberate denial of involvement, or being disregarded and marginalized as if one's presence were inconsequential. The discoveries unearthed in this study highlight the diverse spectrum of bullying encounters that students are susceptible to. These encounters can manifest in overt manners, such as being subjected to derogatory labels like "weakling," "intellectual," or "effeminate," having their actions scrutinized, enduring the hurling of writing utensils, or having their belongings desecrated in unspeakable ways.

The second sub-theme is cyberbullying. The distressing phenomenon of cyberbullying extends beyond older individuals, as it has been observed among children of primary school age. It is disheartening to acknowledge that this issue is affecting younger generations at an alarming rate, once they gain access to the Internet and mobile phones and reach a certain level of literacy. Makri-Botsari et al. (2014) and Monks et al. (2016) have revealed that when teenagers partake in cyberbullying, they predominantly employ the tactic of "exclusion" as their preferred method of digital aggression. Conversely, teenagers themselves tend to fall victim to cyberbullying through various methods such as "online harassment", "denigration/defamation", "disclosure of personal data", and "trickery". These findings underscore the popularity of these techniques among today's teenagers, both for perpetrating cyberbullying and experiencing it themselves.

Factors Contributing to Bullying Incident

Under this theme, a total of two sub-themes were produced: both are related to the bullying factors. Zhao et al. (2023) and Escortell et al. (2022) reveal a subtle form of bullying among young students often goes unnoticed by those in authority. However, as these students mature, their understanding and empathy grow, leading to a decline in both perpetrating and experiencing bullying. Disturbingly, those who fall victim to cyberbullying suffer from diminished self-esteem in various aspects of their lives, such as relationships with their parents, academic pursuits, and overall well-being. The adolescent stage marks a pivotal period of personal development, independence, triumph, and social integration. Yet, those who are subjected to bullying perceive their family dynamics differently compared to their non-involved counterparts, raising concerns about the impact of family structure and parenting style on victimization within educational settings. Particularly alarming are cases where neglectful fathers and overbearing mothers are present, as this combination seems to exacerbate the issue. Consequently, it is imperative for children who do not disclose their experiences to their parents to seek solace and guidance from a trusted adult within their school or personal lives, as they may hail from less supportive households. Furthermore, the study highlights that bullies are more commonly found in single-mother households. Additionally, both victims and bullies experience higher rates of child maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence. Victims often come from environments where family members frequently criticize one another and where rules are scarce, while bullies emerge from households lacking proper supervision (Cerezo et al., 2018 & Holt et al., 2009).

Various parenting styles, such as authoritative, permissive, and authoritarian, possess the remarkable ability to diminish the prevalence of adolescent bullying, encompassing undesirable actions such as swearing, quarrelling, fighting, and victimizing submissive peers. These styles, particularly authoritative and authoritarian, exhibit exceptional efficacy when it comes to children hailing from impoverished backgrounds and families with moderate incomes. Notably, the authoritarian approach stands out, as it effectively curtails all four forms of bullying. This can be attributed to the diverse parenting methods embraced by families of varying economic statuses (He et al., 2023). The unfortunate consequence of subjecting children to unwarranted criticism or rejection from their parents is the heightened likelihood of experiencing non-physical bullying within the school environment. Consequently, this fosters a negative familial atmosphere, causing children to feel neglected and unattended to. Even in cases where parents exhibit support towards their pre-adolescent offspring, a weak emotional connection between parent and child still paves the way for increased involvement in verbal bullying (Strindberg, 2023; Zhou et al., 2022 & Carter et al., 2020).

The study's findings suggest that cyberbullies who were raised in strict households may redirect their need for control and dominance towards their peers as a result of a lack of attention, affection, and approval from their parents (Govender & Young, 2018). Adolescents with authoritarian or neglectful parents were shown to be more prone to engaging in cyberbullying, whereas those with nurturing parents were less likely to do so (Makri-Botsari et al., 2014). It seems that teenagers who feel rejected or have strained communication with their parents may resort to cyberbullying as a means of compensating for the lack of freedom, attention, power, or recognition in their parental relationships. Furthermore, Holt et al. (2009) revealed that bullies often come from single-mother households, and both victims and bullies have higher rates of experiencing child maltreatment and exposure to domestic violence. Moreover, bullies tend to come from homes with insufficient supervision. The research also observed that parents who lacked confidence in their ability to control the behavior of their respective children and did not feel responsible for their actions tended to enforce fewer rules and exhibit inconsistency in their parenting practices. Additionally, parents who felt overwhelmed by their child's behavior were more inclined to resort to punishment as a disciplinary measure (Kokkinos & Panayiotou, 2007).

Bullying Prevention Strategies

There was one sub-theme under the fourth theme of bullying prevention strategies: parents. By fostering a strong emotional bond with the children and establishing appropriate expectations for their behaviour, parents have the power to enhance their children's social skills and alleviate emotional distress during adolescence. Consequently, this can significantly decrease the likelihood of bullying behaviour in adolescents. Furthermore, parents should prioritize the development of their children's emotional intelligence through regular social interactions within the family, as these positive interactions can positively impact parenting skills and emotional intelligence. The various styles of parenting can also play a crucial role in mitigating bullying incidents by influencing adolescents' self-awareness and their ability to interact effectively with others (He et al., 2023). In Taiwan, it is imperative for family doctors to actively encourage parenting education programs that aim to reshape parents' beliefs, discourage the use of physical punishment, and guide them in adopting more positive approaches to educating and disciplining their children. Additionally, intervention programs

should prioritize enhancing parents' comprehension and skills in raising their children (Chen et al., 2021).

Moreover, the researchers argue that parents graciously extended more frequent invitations to engage in school meetings surrounding the social ambiance. These enlightening discoveries signify that intervention schools diligently endeavoured to include parents in the noble pursuit of mitigating bullying, a pivotal objective of the intervention. This study effectively contributes to the mounting proof that robust parent-child connections, fostered by caring and engaged parents, are indubitably linked to the cultivation of virtuous behaviours in adolescents. It is thus imperative for institutions of learning and families to unite in a concerted effort to combat the pernicious effects of cyberbullying, as its detrimental influence permeates the educational milieu. Also, parents and guardians necessitate indispensable assistance and guidance in effectively safeguarding their precious offspring in the digital realm (Niejenhuis et al., 2020 & Monks et al., 2016).

Discussion

In this section, the author summarizes the significant findings that have emerged from the comprehensive systematic literature review. By identifying common themes and trends across the numerous studies examined, the author provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of research regarding parents' attitudes towards the pressing issue of bullying among primary school students. Through comparison and synthesis of the reviewed studies, the author successfully identifies overarching patterns and discrepancies. While there is a general consensus regarding the attitudes of parents, it is important to note that variations exist in the factors contributing to bullying incidents and the strategies employed for prevention. Drawing upon the extensive body of research, it becomes clear that parents are often concerned about their children being bullied and believe it is unavoidable (Niejenhuis et al., 2020 & Holt et al.). They believe that both mothers and fathers should educate and guide their children, as children raised by such parents are more likely to seek their assistance in dealing with bullying. In China, parents tend to have stricter supervision over their daughters, resulting in less interest in higher education and a decreased likelihood of being bullied at school (Zhao et al., 2023). Researchers emphasize the importance of prioritizing the well-being of children and the efficacy of adult interventions in responding to bullying incidents (Bjereld et al., 2021; Rigby, 2019; Cerezo et al., 2018 & Nasir 2007).

Parents of bullied children often possess a heightened awareness of bullying and its detrimental effects, surpassing their children's awareness levels. Researchers point out the need for parents to expand their knowledge to effectively assist their children. Both parents and schools working with primary education children understand the dangers of bullying and its manifestations. However, parents may have limited comprehension of self-harm and the underlying mental health issues linked to it. Adequate support and guidance should be provided to students on how to navigate instances of bullying, and schools, teachers, and parents must remain vigilant in identifying and addressing any form of bullying, as its repercussions can endure long into the affected individuals' lives (Zhao et al., 2023 & Yang et al., 2019). It becomes evident that individuals who fall prey to the harrowing clutches of bullying are at a heightened risk of grappling with debilitating emotional turmoil, such as depression and anxiety, should this issue remain unaddressed. Moreover, these unfortunate victims are left feeling a profound sense of trepidation, rendering them reluctant to set foot

within the confines of their educational institutions. Regrettably, the cruel hand of isolation often befalls them, as their dearth of companionship fails to offer solace amidst their distress (Mohd Nizam, 2022). Tragically, some victims suffer the gravest of consequences, enduring severe bodily harm, irreversible disabilities, and even succumbing to the ultimate tragedy of untimely demise, all stemming from the barbarity of physical bullying (Nor Junainah et al., 2021).

Extensive research has revealed a compelling connection between parental support and the cultivation of prosocial behaviour and proficient problem-solving skills amidst instances of bullying. Remarkably, children who are fortunate enough to receive unwavering support from their parents exhibit a greater propensity for employing effective strategies in the face of bullying. Moreover, the presence of supportive parents not only fosters the development of conflict resolution abilities but also serves as an embodiment of exemplary conduct when addressing inappropriate behaviours. This pivotal study further bolsters the mounting evidence that nurturing parent-child relationships, characterized by genuine warmth and active engagement, are intrinsically linked to the emergence of commendable behaviours within children (Rinaldi et al., 2023). In summary, the author's research reveals that parents possess a profound understanding of the manifestations of bullying. Furthermore, they demonstrate a heightened awareness of the gravity of this seemingly innocuous behaviour, recognizing the urgent need for swift intervention. Moreover, it is unanimously agreed among parents that decisive measures must be taken against bullies, as their reprehensible actions should not be tolerated. The study's findings underscore the fact that parents exhibit a distinct approach or methodology in aiding their children through such distressing circumstances.

Implications, Research Gaps and Recommendation for Future Studies

This research study provides evidence that parents are actively involved in addressing the issues faced by primary school students. Not only do they react promptly to these problems, but they also display a willingness to collaborate with educators to ensure the proper education of their children. The findings of this study suggest that parents are deeply concerned about the welfare of their children and are prepared to take significant measures to address any challenges they encounter. Moreover, this study serves as a valuable resource for parents who are seeking guidance on how to handle instances of bullying and effectively support their children in such situations. Additionally, educators can utilize the insights gained from this study to implement appropriate strategies and interventions aimed at reducing the occurrence of bullying in schools.

Moreover, it is important to consider extending the scope of future research on this subject. The current study focused solely on primary school students, but it would be valuable to examine the experiences of victims across different age groups and educational settings. By broadening the sample size and including participants from various educational levels, researchers can obtain a more comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by victimized youth and the strategies that can effectively support them. According to the findings of the SLR, there are several gaps in the existing research that need to be addressed. One area that requires further investigation is the identification of specific actions that adults can take to support and assist young victims of bullying, thereby encouraging them to continue disclosing

their experiences. This is crucial in ensuring that the victimized youth receive the necessary support from adults, which can help in mitigating the negative effects of bullying.

In conclusion, there is a need for further research to address the gaps identified in the existing literature. This research should focus on identifying the actions that adults can take to support victimized youth, with the aim of fostering a culture of disclosure for the sake of their overall well-being. Thus, through the astute application of qualitative research methods and the widening of the scope of investigation, researchers can gather detailed and context-specific data that can inform evidence-based interventions and policies. A qualitative research design could be employed to explore this topic in-depth. Such an approach would provide a solid foundation for understanding the underlying processes involved in different local contexts. By collecting empirical data through qualitative methods, researchers can obtain a much more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the issue, surpassing the limitations of purely quantitative statistics (Ridder, 2014). This would enable researchers to gather rich and detailed information that can inform the development of effective interventions and strategies.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this study is to systematically review the attitude of parents towards the problem of bullying among primary school students. The study offers several significant contributions to practical purposes and the body of knowledge. The author believes that the level of knowledge and attitude possessed by parents play a crucial role in determining the most suitable strategy. This is primarily due to the fact that without adequate knowledge and understanding, it becomes exceedingly challenging to devise and implement effective strategies and approaches. Moreover, the author emphasizes the significance of parents' awareness and mindset, as these factors greatly influence the success of any chosen strategy. It is imperative for parents to possess a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter at hand, as well as a positive attitude towards finding appropriate solutions. Without these essential elements, the researcher highlights the inherent difficulties in formulating and executing strategies that can effectively address the situation at hand.

Gusenbauer and Haddaway (2020) identified a range of databases that could potentially yield relevant articles, but due to restrictions on access, the author focuses on four established databases: Scopus, Science Direct, Springer Link, and Google Scholar. To ensure a rigorous evaluation of the selected papers, the author followed the guidelines proposed by Kitchenham and Charters, which provide a systematic approach for assessing the quality and relevance of research. This framework enables both researchers and reviewers to critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the included papers, thereby enhancing the overall validity and reliability of our synthesized findings. Hayrol et al. (2021) underscored that the goal of quality assessment is not to find flawless articles but rather to identify those that align with the purpose of the review. Further investigation is required to delve into the mindset of parents regarding the prevalent issue of bullying among primary school students in order to equip them with the necessary tools to address this problem. The author posits that the understanding and stance of parents play a pivotal role in determining the most effective course of action. This is due to the fact that parents who are uninformed or unaware are unable to devise suitable strategies and approaches. Consequently, it is earnestly desired that

this study be broadened to curb or alleviate the widespread occurrence of this harmful behaviour.

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