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Differentiating Perceived Forms, Sources and Awareness on School-Based Bullying in San Ramon Elementary School: A Descriptive Research Design

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the perceived forms and sources of bullying, as well as the level of awareness of school-based bullying among intermediate pupils in San Ramon Elementary School. Utilizing a descriptive research design, data were gathered from Grades 4 to 6 pupils through a researcher-made survey questionnaire, with respondents selected via purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean.

Findings revealed that verbal bullying, particularly name-calling, was the most prevalent form, reported by 48.33% of respondents. In contrast, social and cyberbullying were less frequently reported, which may be attributed to under recognition rather than actual absence. Peer influence and pressure emerged as the most significant sources of bullying (weighted mean = 3.59), suggesting that students often engage in bullying to gain social acceptance or avoid exclusion. Other contributing factors included school culture, media exposure, and broader social dynamics, while family and community influences were perceived as less impactful. Although most pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying, many remained unaware of the school's anti-bullying policies, indicating a gap in policy communication and student engagement.

These findings led to three key conclusions: (1) the high reporting of verbal bullying indicating the urgent need for targeted interventions to address this issue. In contrast, the low reporting of social and cyberbullying likely reflects limited awareness rather than low prevalence; (2) peer influence play a central role in bullying behavior, necessitating targeted social interventions; and (3) the lack of awareness about the school's anti-bullying initiatives reveals a communication gap, emphasizing the need to enhance the visibility, promotion, and accessibility of these programs to ensure all stakeholders are informed and engaged.

In a nutshell, the study recommends the implementation of comprehensive anti-bullying programs that feature awareness campaigns and anonymous reporting tools, specifically addressing underreported forms such as social-relational bullying. The school may promote positive peer interactions by integrating social emotional learning programs, establishing peer

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mentoring systems, and organizing inclusive group activities to counteract the negative effects of peer dynamics on bullying behaviour.Increase the visibility and accessibility of anti-bullying initiatives by consistently promoting them through student assemblies, classroom discussions, posters, and digital platforms to ensure all students are well-informed and actively engaged in prevention efforts. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the long-term effects of anti-bullying interventions on student behavior, peer relationships, and the overall school climate.

Keywords: *school-based bullying, perceived forms of bullying, sources of bullying, policy awareness, peer influence, weighted mean*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Bullying remains a pervasive problem in schools worldwide, deeply affecting children's emotional, psychosocial, and academic development. It does not only harm the victims but also impacts families, teachers, and the wider school community. At San Ramon Elementary School, bullying incidents have raised concerns for student safety and well-being. Despite existing laws such as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (RA 10627) and the DepEd Child Protection Policy, gaps persist in how pupils recognize, report and respond to bullying.

Bullying has been widely studied as a learned behavior influenced by social interactions and moral development. Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) posits that children acquire bullying behaviors by observing peers and authority figures, especially when such behaviors are rewarded or go unpunished. Cognitive Developmental Theory (Piaget, 1972; Kohlberg, 1984) emphasizes the role of evolving moral reasoning and empathy in reducing bullying tendencies as children mature. Behaviorism (Skinner, 1953; Watson, 1913) focuses on how reinforcement and punishment shape conduct, offering practical strategies to modify aggressive behavior. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework to understand and address bullying in school settings.

Empirical research shows that bullying negatively impacts students' academic performance, mental health, and social relationships (Maisarah et al., 2023; Brendgen & Poulin, 2018). Furthermore, the sources of bullying are multifaceted, ranging from family environment, peer pressure, school culture, media influences, to broader societal factors (Košir et al., 2021; Pouwels et al., 2018). While policies such as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 provide a legislative framework for prevention, schools continue to face challenges in translating these policies into effective practice, as evidenced by ongoing bullying cases in Philippine schools.

This study is anchored on the integrated theoretical perspectives of Social Learning Theory, Cognitive Developmental Theory, and Behaviorism. These frameworks guide the investigation of how bullying behaviors are perceived, the contributing factors, and the students' awareness of bullying within their classrooms. By examining these dimensions among intermediate pupils at San Ramon Elementary School, the study seeks to inform school-based initiatives that foster a positive, respectful, and safe educational environment.

Accordingly, this study aims to describe the perceived forms and sources of bullying, as well as the level of awareness of bullying among intermediate pupils at San Ramon Elementary School. Specifically, it seeks to determine: (1) the forms of bullying commonly perceived by pupils, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying; (2) the sources of bullying ascribed to the family environment, peer influence and peer pressure, school culture, media, social and cultural factors, individual factors, and community and societal influences; and (3) the level of awareness of bullying among these pupils. By addressing these objectives, the study intends to provide evidence-based informations that can guide the design of more anti-bullying initiative does not not only within the school but also as model for other educational institutions confronting similar challenges.

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II. MATERIALS and METHODS

This study employed a descriptive research design to provide an accurate portrayal of bullying-related experiences among intermediate pupils, specifically the perceived forms and sources of bullying, as well as their level of awareness. Descriptive research was deemed appropriate because it captures the natural occurrence of social phenomena without manipulation, allowing the researcher to documents pupil's perception.

The study was conducted at San Ramon Elementary School during the school year 2024-2025, with a total of 60 respondents, purposively selected from Grade 4, 5, and 6, comprising 20 pupils per grade level. These respondents were considered suitable for the study where bullying is more commonly observed and personally experienced.

Data were gathered through a survey-questionnaire consisting of three parts. Part I and II were adapted from the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire which measured the perceived forms of bullying and its sources. Part III was a researcher-made instrument designed to assess pupil's awareness of bullying within the school. To ensure validity, the instrument was reviewed by two Guidance Designates and one Master Teacher who had prior experience in guidance work. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert Scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree".

The data gathering procedure followed ethical protocols. Approval was obtained from the school administration, teachers, and parents, while informed consent was secured from the parents of all respondents. Questionnaire were distributed and accomplished during class hours under the researcher's supervision to ensure clarity of instructions and independent responses. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to secure a 100% retrieval rate.

The data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages to describe the distribution of responses regarding bullying forms and sources, while weighted mean was computed to determine the overall level of awareness. The findings were then interpreted in light of relevant theories and previous studies to draw conclusions and recommendations

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III. RESULTS

Table 1. Perceived Forms of Bullying among Intermediate Pupils at San Ramon Elementary School

Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Physical Bullying		
Hitting	15	25.00 %
Kicking	16	26.67%
Pushing	22	36.67
Damaging Property	9	15%
Verbal Bullying		
Name Calling	29	48.33%
Teasing	15	25.00%
Insults	12	20.00%
Threatening	9	15.00%
Social Relational Bullying		
Spreading rumor	18	30.00%
Damaging relationships	1	1.67%
Cyberbullying		
Using technology to harass	4	6.67%
Sending hurtful messages	15	25.00%
Online threats	6	10.00%
Intimidating someone	2	3.33%

Table 2. Perceived Sources of Bullying among Intermediate Pupils at San Ramon Elementary School

Sources of Bullying	Mean	DR
Family Environment		
1. I think bullying can sometimes happen because of problems at home, like fights or not getting enough care.	3.10	N
2. I think students who experience bullying may often come from homes with limited support or guidance.	3.08	N
Sub mean	**3.09**	**N**
Peer Influence and Peer Pressure		
3. I think students sometimes bully others to fit in with a specific peer group or to gain social status.	3.58	A
4. I have observed that bullying in school is frequently driven by students' desire to gain approval or avoid rejection by their peers.	3.60	A
Sub mean	**3.59**	**A**
School environment and culture		
5. I think bullying at school may be influenced by a lack of clear rules or inconsistent enforcement of policies.	3.48	A
6. I feel that the physical school environment (e.g., playgrounds, hallways, or classrooms) may create opportunities for bullying to occur.	3.42	A
Sub mean	**3.45**	**A**
Media and Social Media	3.45	A
7. I think TV shows, movies, and video games can affect how kids act and may cause bullying at San Ramon Elementary School.	3.53	A
8. I think bullying is sometimes exacerbated by the use of social media platforms, where students may target others anonymously or through cyberbullying.	**3.49**	**A**
Sub mean		
Social and cultural factors	3.45	A
9. I think bullying can happen when people treat others unfairly because		

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	of their gender, skin color, or where they come from.	3.43	A
10.	I have seen that bullying can happen when kids don't understand or respect different cultures at San Ramon Elementary School	**3.44**	**A**
	Sub mean		
Individual factors		3.43	A
11.	I believe that individual personality traits, such as a tendency to be aggressive or insecure, contribute to bullying behaviour at school.	3.47	A
12.	I believe that personal experiences, such as being bullied themselves, can sometimes influence students to become bullies.	**3.45**	**A**
	Sub mean		
Community and Societal influences		1.52	D
13.	I believe that local community attitudes or behaviors can influence bullying in the school, particularly in relation to how children are raised or socialized.	2.30	D
14.	I think bullying in San Ramon Elementary School can be directly influenced by societal issues such as economic disparities or lack of community support programs.	**1.91**	**D**
	Sub mean		
	Overall mean	**3.22**	**N**

Statistical Limits:

4.20-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA)
3.40-4.19 Agree (A)
2.60-3.39 Neutral (N)
1.80-2.59 Disagree (D)
1.00-1.79 Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 3. The level of awareness of bullying among intermediate pupils at San Ramon Elementary School.

Awareness of Bullying		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	DR
1.	I am familiar with the definition of bullying.	14	28	3	11	4	**3.62**	**VA**
2.	I am aware of the different forms of bullying (e.g., physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying).	24	21	6	6	3	**3.95**	**VA**
3.	I know where to report bullying if I witness it at San Ramon Elementary School.	21	34	2	2	1	**4.2**	**VA**
4.	I believe the school's staff actively works to prevent bullying.	9	34	10	7	0	**3.75**	**VA**
5.	I understand the consequences of bullying for both the victim and the bully.	19	31	4	1	5	**3.97**	**VA**
6.	I feel that bullying awareness is regularly addressed in school activities or lessons.	1	28	14	13	4	**3.15**	**MA**

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7.	I am aware of any anti-bullying programs or campaigns being run at San Ramon Elementary School.	7	25	10	14	4	**3.28**	**MA**
8.	I know the proper actions to take if I am being bullied.	13	42	3	1	1	**4.08**	**VA**
9.	I feel comfortable discussing bullying-related issues with a teacher or staff member at school.	6	46	3	2	3	**3.83**	**VA**
10.	I think students at San Ramon Elementary School have a good understanding of how to prevent bullying.	11	31	8	6	4	**3.65**	**VA**
Overall mean							**3.75**	**VA**

Scale ***Descriptive Rating***
4.21-5.00 Highly Aware (HA)
3.41-4.20 Ver Aware (VA)
2.61-3.40 Moderately Aware (MA)
1.81-2.60 Somewhat Aware (SA)
1.00-1.80- Not Aware

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the most commonly perceived form of bullying among intermediate pupils in San Ramon Elementary School is verbal bullying, with name-calling receiving the highest percentage at 48.33%. This indicates that nearly half of the respondents have perceived name-calling as a form of bullying in their school environment, making it the most prevalent bullying behavior reported. It suggests that verbal bullying, particularly through name calling, is a significant concern in the school environment compared to other forms like physical, social, or cyberbullying.

This shows that bullies often use hurtful words, labels, or mean nicknames to make others feel bad. It is one of the main ways they target their victims. Instead of using physical force, they try to embarrass or insult someone with words, which can still cause much emotional pain. Examples include calling someone names like “fatty,” “loser,” or “weirdo.” Even though it may seem like just teasing, it can affect how someone feels about themselves

Name-calling is the most common type of verbal bullying because it is easy to do and often not taken seriously. People can say hurtful names quickly without much thought, and many adults or other students might see it as just a joke or teasing. This makes it more likely to happen again and again. Sometimes, students use name-calling to get attention or feel more powerful in front of others. It can be especially hurtful when it targets things like how someone looks, where they come from, or how they speak. Because it often happens quietly, it can be hard for teachers or parents to notice and stop it. All of this makes name-calling a common but harmful form of bullying.

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The high rate of name-calling in verbal bullying has several important implications. First, it can cause serious emotional harm to victims, affecting their self-esteem and mental health, especially when the insults target personal traits. Over time, this can lead to issues like anxiety, depression, or withdrawal from social situations. Name-calling also creates a negative and unsafe environment, particularly in schools, where students may feel unwelcome or afraid to participate. When this behavior is ignored or brushed off as harmless, it sends a message that bullying is acceptable, which can lead to more serious or frequent incidents. Additionally, name-calling can damage relationships, leading to conflicts, isolation, and a lack of trust among peers. These effects highlight the need for stronger awareness, prevention, and response strategies to address verbal bullying effectively.

Sanapo (2020) identified verbal bullying, especially name-calling, as the most common form of bullying in schools, echoing the results of this study. It highlighted that name-calling can have a profound emotional impact on students, affecting their self-esteem and social interactions. Similarly, a 2023 study at a high school in Dapitan City found that verbal bullying, especially name-calling, was the leading cause of emotional distress among students, contributing to feelings of isolation and anxiety. This reinforces the idea that name-calling is a frequent and harmful form of bullying.

However, contrasting findings were reported in the study of Dela Cruz (2020), which showed that while verbal bullying was prevalent, physical bullying was more commonly reported as the primary form of bullying among adolescents. The study suggested that physical bullying may have more immediate, visible consequences, making it easier to identify and address compared to verbal forms like name-calling. This contrast highlights the complexity of bullying behavior, where the type of bullying may vary based on cultural, social, or regional factors.

Given these findings, several key implications must be considered for school policy and intervention. Firstly, San Ramon Elementary School should strengthen its efforts to address verbal bullying, especially name-calling, by implementing comprehensive, school-wide anti-bullying awareness campaigns. These initiatives must educate students, teachers, and parents about the harmful effects of verbal aggression, correcting the widespread misconception that it is harmless teasing. Secondly, the school should incorporate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) frameworks into the curriculum, as recommended by Santos and Villanueva (2023), to equip students with empathy, communication, and conflict-resolution skills that can help prevent bullying behaviors before they occur. Thirdly, teacher training and professional development should include strategies for identifying and intervening in verbal bullying, particularly when it occurs subtly or under the guise of humor. Teachers should be empowered to respond swiftly and appropriately to both overt and covert forms of bullying.

Furthermore, establishing a clear reporting system that encourages students to speak up about bullying, and ensures confidentiality and follow-up, is critical. School leadership must treat verbal bullying with the same seriousness as physical aggression, recognizing that the psychological impacts can be equally damaging. Lastly, involving parents and guardians in bullying prevention efforts through workshops and communication channels can reinforce positive behavior at home and ensure that students receive consistent support from all fronts.

In conclusion, the study's findings demonstrate that verbal bullying especially name-calling is the most significant form of aggression perceived by intermediate pupils in San Ramon Elementary School. Its prevalence and emotional impact necessitate a holistic and sustained

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response that includes student education, teacher involvement, parent engagement, and system-level reform. By addressing verbal bullying comprehensively, the school can foster a safer, more respectful, and inclusive environment where every student feels valued.

On the other hand, the lowest perceived form of bullying among intermediate pupils at San Ramon Elementary School is social or relational bullying related to damaging relationships, which received the smallest percentage of 1.67%. This suggests that only a very small fraction of students identified behaviors such as sabotaging friendships or social exclusion as bullying, indicating either a low occurrence or low awareness of this form of bullying in the school environment. Social bullying often involves subtle and covert actions that harm a student's social reputation or peer relationships, such as spreading rumors or intentionally isolating a student from a group.

The low recognition rate of this form of bullying may reflect a lack of awareness among students regarding what constitutes relational aggression. Many pupils may view such actions as mere conflicts or "drama" between friends rather than harmful behavior that warrants intervention. Moreover, the invisibility of these actions often taking place quietly in group dynamics or behind the scenes makes it more difficult for teachers and school personnel to detect and address them promptly. In some cases, victims themselves may be uncertain whether what they are experiencing qualifies as bullying, leading them to suffer in silence rather than seeking help. As a result, relational bullying can continue unchallenged, quietly harming a student's emotional health and social development over time.

This low awareness of social bullying among pupils carries critical implications for school policy and intervention strategies. Firstly, it highlights a significant gap in understanding not just among students but also among teachers and parents regarding the emotional harm caused by social aggression. When exclusion, rumor-spreading, or friendship manipulation are not recognized or reported as bullying, they are more likely to persist, creating a toxic peer culture that encourages subtle forms of mistreatment. Victims of relational bullying may experience long-term psychological effects, such as low self-esteem, social withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and difficulty forming trusting relationships. These effects can be just as damaging if not more so than those caused by physical or verbal bullying, particularly because victims often receive less support or validation.

In light of these findings, it is crucial for schools like San Ramon Elementary School to adopt proactive measures to raise awareness and address relational bullying. Awareness campaigns should be launched that explicitly define and illustrate what social bullying looks like, using real-life examples that pupils can relate to. These campaigns should communicate that social exclusion, rumor-spreading, and damaging peer relationships are serious and unacceptable behaviors. Moreover, the incorporation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) frameworks into the school curriculum can play a vital role in prevention. SEL programs teach students essential skills such as empathy, communication, perspective-taking, and responsible decision-making, which are key to recognizing and avoiding relational aggression. By fostering these skills, students become more capable of managing their emotions and resolving interpersonal conflicts without resorting to harmful behavior.

Additionally, teacher and guidance designate training is essential to equip school staff with the ability to detect subtle signs of social bullying and intervene effectively. Unlike physical bullying, relational aggression may not leave visible marks, but it can be just as devastating. Teachers must be trained to observe group dynamics, notice patterns of exclusion or

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manipulation, and create classroom environments where all students feel valued and included. Establishing clear policies and reporting mechanisms that specifically address social bullying can also encourage victims to come forward, knowing their concerns will be taken seriously. Furthermore, involving parents in education efforts can help reinforce healthy social behavior outside the classroom, creating a more holistic and consistent approach to bullying prevention.

The underreporting of social bullying in this study aligns with findings from Garcia and Santos (2022), who observed that Filipino students often fail to recognize relational aggression as bullying due to its covert nature and the difficulty of proving intent. Many students in their study did not understand that social exclusion or rumor-spreading qualifies as bullying, highlighting a critical gap in awareness and education. Conversely, a study by Lopez et al. (2023) found that although relational bullying was less frequently reported, it had deep psychological impacts, including feelings of loneliness, rejection, and vulnerability to anxiety and depression. This disparity between frequency of reporting and severity of impact underscores the urgent need to educate school communities on the full spectrum of bullying behavior and its consequences.

In conclusion, while social or relational bullying is the least recognized form among pupils at San Ramon Elementary School, it poses significant risks to students' emotional and social well-being. The low awareness and reporting rates call for intensified educational initiatives, improved detection and intervention strategies, and the integration of SEL principles to build safer, more inclusive, and emotionally healthy school environments. Recognizing and addressing the hidden harms of relational bullying is essential to ensuring that all students regardless of the form of bullying they may face feel protected, respected, and supported.

Table 2 show that students generally agree that peer influence and peer pressure play a significant role in bullying behavior. Specifically, the statement *"I think students sometimes bully others to fit in with a specific peer group or to gain social status"* received a mean score of 3.58, while *"I have observed that bullying in school is frequently driven by students' desire to gain approval or avoid rejection by their peers"* received a slightly higher mean of 3.60. Both scores fall within the "Agree" range (3.40–4.19), resulting in a sub-mean of 3.59 for the dimension. These findings indicate a consistent level of agreement among students that peer-related factors such as the need to belong, gain approval, or avoid social exclusion are strong motivators for bullying behavior in school settings.

Among the different sources of bullying, Peer Influence and Peer Pressure received the highest sub-mean, suggesting that a significant number of students perceive bullying to be strongly influenced by social dynamics, by social factors, like peer pressure and the need to fit in. Both statements had average scores above 3.5, meaning most students agreed that bullying often happens because someone wants to be accepted or avoid being left out.

This suggests that bullying may not always stem from a desire to harm others. Instead, some students may engage in bullying not out of a desire to harm others, but because they believe it will help them secure social acceptance or elevate their status within a particular group. For example, a student might join in teasing a classmate simply because their friends are doing so, even if they do not personally dislike the victim. Additionally, some students may also engage in such behavior to align themselves with dominant peer groups or avoid becoming targets. In such cases, the motivation is less about hostility and more about maintaining their place within the group and avoiding social exclusion.

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These findings have important implications for the design and implementation of anti-bullying interventions in schools. If students are engaging in bullying behaviors primarily to gain acceptance, maintain friendships, or elevate their social status, then interventions that focus solely on individual accountability may be insufficient. It becomes essential to address the broader peer dynamics and social norms that reinforce such behaviors. Schools should implement programs that foster inclusive group values, promote positive peer influence, and create environments where students feel accepted without needing to conform to harmful behaviors. Empowering students to resist negative peer pressure, along with encouraging student-led initiatives that promote kindness and empathy, can help shift the school culture toward one that discourages bullying as a means of social advancement.

This perception aligns with the findings of Herlyssa et al. (2022), who reported a significant relationship between peer behavior and the incidence of bullying. Their study highlighted that students who experienced negative peer behavior were more likely to engage in bullying themselves. Similarly, a study by Nurhidayah et al. (2021) found a significant relationship between peer pressure and bullying behavior in early adolescents, emphasizing the role of peer influence in the occurrence of bullying.

However, Mikami et al. (2020) suggest that while peer influence is a factor, individual characteristics such as empathy and emotional regulation play a crucial role in bullying behavior. Their study indicates that students with higher levels of empathy and better emotional regulation are less likely to engage in bullying, even in peer-influenced environments.

Thus, the findings not only affirm the role of social motivations in peer-related aggression but also support a comprehensive intervention approach that addresses both the individual and the social environment. This highlights the importance of designing school-based intervention strategies that do more than target individual bullies; they must also work to reshape the peer norms and group dynamics that sustain bullying behavior.

In conclusion, the findings in Table 2b affirm that peer influence and social pressure are powerful forces behind bullying behaviors. To effectively reduce bullying, San Ramon Elementary must take a comprehensive, systemic approach that addresses the social, emotional, and relational factors that shape student behavior. By fostering a school culture built on empathy, acceptance, and positive peer norms, students can be empowered not only to avoid bullying but also to stand up against it, creating a safer and more supportive environment for everyone.

Students expressed neutral perceptions regarding the influence of the family environment on bullying behavior. The first statement, "I think bullying can sometimes happen because of problems at home, like fights or not getting enough care," received a mean score of 3.10, which corresponds to a "Neutral" descriptive rating (DR). The second statement, "I think students who experience bullying may often come from homes with limited support or guidance," had a mean score of 3.08, also falling under the "Neutral" rating. The combined sub-mean score for these statements is 3.09, which reinforces the neutral perception of the family environment's role in bullying behavior. This suggests that respondents neither strongly agreed nor disagreed that issues within the home significantly contribute to bullying at school.

Although the family environment was not seen as the most or least important cause of bullying, it still has a moderate effect on how students behave. This "neutral" view means that students may see some connection between home life and bullying, but they don’t think it’s the main reason bullying happens. The family plays an important role in helping children learn how to manage emotions, build relationships, and behave properly. Even if students aren’t fully aware

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of it, problems at home—like parents arguing, lack of care, or little supervision—can lead to stress or anger that may show up as bullying at school. These family issues might not be as obvious as problems with classmates, but they are still part of the bigger picture behind bullying

This neutral perception could be attributed to several factors. First, students may not fully understand how much family experiences can affect a person's emotions and behaviour, especially bullying. For example, while they might recognize that problems at home, like family fights, neglect, or lack of emotional support, can influence how a child behaves, they may not see these issues as the main cause of bullying. Instead, they may focus more on obvious things, like interactions with friends, social status, or the school environment. Additionally, students might not have enough knowledge or life experience to understand how family life can deeply affect someone's behavior, especially in social settings like school. Many of them may think bullying mostly comes from problems with friends or classmates, and they may not realize that things like fights at home or poor parenting can also lead to bullying. This shows that students might not be fully aware of the bigger picture and all the different factors that influence how people act and feel.

These findings imply that while students may recognize that family dynamics could play a role in influencing a child's behaviour at school, it is not considered a dominant or obvious source of bullying. Additionally, the neutral perception could imply that students either do not have enough information or experience to make a stronger connection between home life and bullying, or that they perceive bullying to be more heavily influenced by immediate social and school-related factors (such as peer pressure, school environment, etc.).

In conclusion, this result suggests that the family environment is not viewed as the primary driver of bullying among students. This could be due to various reasons, including limited awareness of the complex role family plays in shaping social behaviors or a stronger focus on more visible and immediate factors like peer relationships and school culture. Understanding this perception gap is important for shaping comprehensive anti-bullying programs that not only address peer dynamics and school rules but also consider the broader home context in which bullying behaviors may be rooted.

Parsons et al. (2021) found that parental stress indirectly influenced bullying through adolescent anxiety and family resilience, which may not be easily perceived by students. Similarly, Baldry et al. (2019) noted inconsistent links between parenting styles and bullying, with harsh parenting increasing bullying, but the protective effects of positive parenting being less clear. Gómez-Baya et al. (2024) showed that family cohesion and parental monitoring reduced cyberbullying. However, adolescents often did not recognize these factors as protective, further supporting the neutral perception of family influence on bullying.

Conversely, Muñoz-Morales et al. (2018) found a direct link between authoritarian and neglectful parenting and increased bullying, suggesting students may be more aware of family influences. Navarro et al. (2020) observed that adolescents with favorable attitudes toward violence often came from conflict-ridden homes, reinforcing the connection between family dynamics and bullying. Similarly, Rukavina et al. (2020) found that students from families with domestic violence or harsh punishment were more likely to bully, and students recognized these patterns. These findings suggest that cultural norms, visibility of family conflict, and psychological insight may influence how students perceive the role of family in bullying.

Taken together, the literature underscores the complexity of student perceptions regarding family influences on bullying. While some students may recognize and internalize

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these connections, others may focus more on school-based or peer-related factors. The current study contributes to this discourse by highlighting a potential gap in awareness, indicating the need for educational programs that better inform students about the broader psychosocial origins of bullying behavior, including those rooted in the family environment. This, in turn, may support the development of more comprehensive anti-bullying initiatives that integrate both school-based strategies and family engagement.

Table 2 also presents data on intermediate pupils' perceptions regarding the role of community and societal influences in contributing to bullying at San Ramon Elementary School. Two key indicators were measured: (1) students' beliefs about how local community attitudes and child-rearing practices may influence school bullying, and (2) the perceived impact of broader societal factors such as economic disparity and lack of community programs. The computed means for both indicators were 1.52 and 2.30, respectively, resulting in a sub-mean of 1.91, which falls under the "Disagree" descriptive rating. This indicates that students generally do not perceive bullying in school as being influenced by external community or societal factors.

These findings can be attributed to the developmental stage of intermediate pupils, who typically focus on immediate, observable experiences such as peer interactions rather than abstract or systemic influences. For example, children may see bullying as something that happens primarily within their classroom or peer group rather than as a reflection of broader community norms or economic challenges. They might not link aggressive behavior to external factors like neighborhood violence, poverty, or community neglect because these influences are often indirect and less visible. Moreover, in some communities where aggressive behavior is normalized or unchallenged, students may accept such conduct as routine, failing to recognize its connection to bullying. For instance, a child witnessing adult conflicts or neglect within their community might not associate these experiences with the bullying behaviors they observe or endure at school.

Despite these findings, existing literature strongly supports the argument that the community is one of the most powerful sources of bullying behavior. The Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) suggests that children's behavior is influenced by multiple environmental systems, including the microsystem (family and peers), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), and exosystem (wider community and societal structures). Within this framework, the community plays a critical role in shaping children's values, social behaviors, and coping mechanisms.

Exposure to adverse community factors such as violence, economic hardship, social disorganization, and cultural acceptance of aggressive behavior creates a climate that may normalize bullying and other forms of peer aggression (Wang et al., 2021). These environmental stressors influence children's values, coping strategies, and conflict resolution skills, increasing their vulnerability to both perpetrate and experience bullying within schools (Wang et al., 2021). Additionally, community factors often interact with family dynamics and peer influences, further compounding the risk of bullying involvement (Fraguas et al., 2022).

The gap between students' perceptions and research findings likely exists because children at this age have limited cognitive and social awareness to fully grasp these indirect influences. Additionally, community problems may be so common that children accept them as normal, failing to see them as sources of bullying. Schools usually teach about bullying by focusing on how students treat each other and personal choices, but they don't always talk about

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bigger issues like the community or money problems. This makes it harder for kids to understand the full reasons behind bullying.

Furthermore, the school system often emphasizes individual responsibility and peer interactions when addressing bullying. Anti-bullying interventions may focus on classroom behavior and interpersonal conflict without incorporating lessons on socioeconomic, cultural, or familial contexts. As a result, students may fail to connect broader societal issues such as parental neglect, neighborhood violence, or lack of social services—with the bullying they witness or experience in school.

Overall, the study indicates that peer pressure and peer influence are perceived by intermediate pupils at San Ramon Elementary School as the most significant sources of bullying. The responses suggest that students often view bullying behavior as a means to gain social acceptance, avoid exclusion, or align with dominant peer norms. This highlights the powerful role of peer dynamics in shaping student behavior, particularly in formative school years where social belonging is a critical developmental need. In contrast, community and societal influences such as local attitudes, economic disparities, and the broader social environment were rated as the least influential factors, suggesting a limited awareness among pupils of how broader systemic issues contribute to bullying behaviors.

These findings underscore the necessity for schools to design anti-bullying programs that prioritize the cultivation of healthy peer relationships, social-emotional learning, and values-based education. However, focusing solely on peer-related interventions may neglect the deeper structural and environmental contributors to bullying. Therefore, it is equally important to involve families and community stakeholders in sustained educational campaigns, support services, and policy efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of aggression and social inequality.

Table 3 reveals that the overall mean score for the level of bullying awareness among intermediate pupils at San Ramon Elementary School is 3.75, which falls within the "Very Aware" (VA) descriptive category. This suggests that the majority of students possess a high level of awareness regarding bullying its definition, different forms (physical, verbal, social, cyberbullying), reporting mechanisms, consequences for both victims and perpetrators, and school efforts to prevent bullying.

The "Very Aware" rating indicates that the students are not only familiar with bullying in a general sense but also understand its complexities and the appropriate actions to take when faced with such behavior. For example, high mean scores on items such as knowing where to report bullying (mean = 4.20), understanding the consequences of bullying (mean = 3.97), and feeling comfortable discussing bullying with school staff (mean = 3.83) highlight both cognitive awareness and emotional readiness to engage with bullying prevention strategies.

This level of awareness is a positive reflection of the school's efforts in delivering information through lessons, campaigns, or guidance programs. However, the data also point to some gaps. For instance, the lower means in items like "I feel that bullying awareness is regularly addressed in school activities or lessons" (mean = 3.15) and "I am aware of any anti-bullying programs or campaigns being run at the school" (mean = 3.28) suggest that while students understand bullying conceptually, they may not be consistently engaged in school-wide efforts or formalized campaigns. These moderately aware scores pull the overall mean slightly

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below the “Highly Aware” category, indicating that there is still room for improvement in school programming and visibility of anti-bullying efforts.

From a developmental perspective, this level of awareness is significant. Intermediate pupils are in a cognitive stage where they can grasp social norms and consequences, but may still need guidance in applying that knowledge in real situations.

This aligns with Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes the importance of environmental modelling such as teachers and peers demonstrating appropriate behavior in shaping student actions. When students see adults responding seriously to bullying and peers speaking up, they are more likely to adopt these behaviors themselves. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory reinforces the idea that the school (as part of the child’s microsystem) plays a central role in shaping a student’s perceptions and behaviors. A school that fosters open communication, inclusivity, and support can empower students to act when they witness or experience bullying.

The implication of this finding is clear that the school has established a solid foundation of bullying awareness among its pupils. However, to elevate that awareness to the “Highly Aware” level, more consistent reinforcement through structured campaigns, regular activities, and community involvement is needed. Encouraging more visible, interactive, and student-led initiatives could help translate this awareness into sustained action. Moreover, involving parents and local stakeholders could deepen the connection between what is taught in school and what students experience in their broader social environments. In sum, the 3.75 overall mean is a strong indicator of success but also a call for ongoing, systemic reinforcement to ensure that awareness leads to prevention and meaningful change.

In conclusion, the overall mean score of 3.75, categorized as “Very Aware,” indicates that intermediate pupils at San Ramon Elementary School have a strong level of awareness regarding bullying, its forms, consequences, and appropriate responses. This reflects the effectiveness of the school’s foundational efforts in educating students about bullying and promoting a safe learning environment. However, the presence of moderately rated items suggests that awareness could be further strengthened through more consistent implementation of anti-bullying programs, regular integration into school activities, and greater visibility of support systems. Enhancing these areas will not only sustain high awareness but also empower students to actively participate in bullying prevention efforts. A more holistic approach involving teachers, students, parents, and the wider community will be essential in translating this awareness into long-term behavioral change and a more inclusive school culture.

Among the ten indicators in Table 3, the item *“I know where to report bullying if I witness it at San Ramon Elementary School”* received the highest mean score of 4.20 placing it at the threshold of the "Highly Aware" (HA) description rating.This result indicates that students are particularly confident and knowledgeable about the formal reporting mechanisms available to them within the school setting. This level of awareness is significant as it shows that the school has likely succeeded in clearly communicating procedures and providing accessible channels for reporting bullying incidents. For instance, students may have been oriented on how to approach guidance counselors, use anonymous reporting boxes, or directly inform trusted teachers or school staff members. The visibility of these options empowers students to take immediate and informed action, which is critical in preventing the escalation of bullying cases.

According to Carretero Bermejo et al. (2021), clear school policies and visible reporting systems significantly enhance students' willingness to act against bullying, either as victims or

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bystanders. Similarly, Sorrentino et al. (2021) emphasize that when children feel that reporting bullying is safe, confidential, and leads to real action, their intention to report increases dramatically. These findings are consistent with the current result, which reflects a strong culture of responsiveness and safety within the school environment. Furthermore, Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), supports the idea that when individuals perceive a behavior (like reporting bullying) as easy and supported, they are more likely to carry it out. In this case, knowing where to report gives students the sense of agency and control needed to act, thus reinforcing positive behavioral intentions.

Additionally, the Ecological Systems Theory, revisited in modern educational psychology by Bronfenbrenner & Morris (2020), continues to highlight the vital role of the school (as a microsystem) in shaping children's behaviors and perceptions. When the school climate promotes open communication and consistently responds to student concerns, it builds behavioral confidence and prosocial norms. Moreover, Yang et al. (2022) argue that effective school-wide bullying prevention efforts must include a well-defined, actively promoted reporting system to build students' confidence and sense of agency.

A practical example might include a student who witnesses cyberbullying in a computer lab and immediately informs the ICT teacher or guidance office, knowing their report will be kept confidential and addressed promptly. In such a system, reporting becomes not just a possibility, but a natural, encouraged behavior. This confidence in the process helps reduce fear, break the cycle of silence, and foster a more protective peer culture.

The high mean score indicates that San Ramon Elementary School has successfully established a visible, accessible, and trusted reporting system for bullying incidents. Students' strong awareness of where and how to report suggests that the school has invested in clear communication and built a culture where seeking help is encouraged. However, this awareness must be sustained by consistent, meaningful action from school authorities. It is not enough for students to know the reporting channels—they must also see and experience that their concerns are taken seriously and addressed promptly. When bullying reports result in appropriate consequences and protective interventions, students develop greater trust in the system and are more likely to report future incidents. Conversely, if students perceive inaction or inconsistency, the reporting system risks becoming symbolic or performative, undermining its credibility. Therefore, maintaining student trust requires a systemic and transparent approach where awareness is matched with accountability, follow-through, and visible support from educators and administrators.

In conclusion, the item received the highest mean because the students perceive the reporting process as both accessible and credible, a direct result of deliberate school policies, staff engagement, and ongoing education. Supported by current literature, this finding highlights the need for schools to not only teach anti-bullying policies but to ensure students believe in and see the results of those systems in action.

Despite the strengths, item “I feel that bullying awareness is regularly addressed in school activities or lessons” received the lowest mean of 3.15, falling under the “Moderately Aware” (MA) category. This indicates that while students have a fair understanding of bullying overall, they perceive a lack of consistent integration of anti-bullying education into everyday school programming and activities. In contrast to other items that scored within the "Very Aware" range—such as knowing where to report bullying or recognizing its consequences—this lower score reveals a potential gap between policy and practice. It suggests that although students may

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be individually taught about bullying through isolated lessons or announcements, these messages may not be reinforced frequently or meaningfully enough through ongoing school-wide efforts, campaigns, or activities.

One likely reason for this lower rating is the inconsistency or limited visibility of anti-bullying initiatives across the school year. For instance, if discussions about bullying are only conducted during orientations or special observances like National Bullying Prevention Month, students may not view them as a regular or essential part of the school culture. A lack of interactive or student-led activities such as role-playing, peer support groups, or classroom projects may also contribute to a feeling that bullying awareness is not deeply embedded in their daily learning experience.

According to Espelage et al. (2020) highlights the effectiveness of sustained, developmentally appropriate, and participatory anti-bullying interventions in reinforcing student learning and engagement. When schools fail to routinely include anti-bullying content in curricula or co-curricular programs, students may not internalize these values, weakening their understanding and responsiveness over time.

In addition, Salmivalli and Kärnä (2021) emphasize that bullying prevention is most successful when integrated into the school climate through systematic, whole-school approaches that involve both educators and students in ongoing dialogue and action. The moderate rating in this item suggests that such an approach may be underutilized or insufficiently implemented at San Ramon Elementary School. Without consistent exposure, students may not fully grasp the practical ways to prevent bullying or recognize their role in fostering a respectful environment.

This finding is supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (revisited in 2020), which underscores the need for continuous interaction between the school (microsystem) and the child. When schools maintain regular, structured discussions and activities about bullying, they influence not just awareness but also behavioral norms, emotional intelligence, and collective responsibility.

For example, a school that regularly conducts peer mediation sessions, conflict resolution workshops, or monthly awareness drives is likely to see students reporting higher engagement and recall. In contrast, if bullying is only discussed in passive lectures or not at all after initial introductions, students may not retain or value the information.

Therefore, the lowest mean score highlights a critical area for improvement. While students know what bullying is and how to respond, many do not feel that the school emphasizes bullying awareness consistently in its regular programming. This suggests the need for more frequent, interactive, and visible school-based initiatives—such as student-led campaigns, classroom integration, storytelling, and community partnerships—to reinforce key messages and cultivate a stronger anti-bullying culture. Addressing this gap could elevate not only this specific awareness indicator but also enhance the overall effectiveness of the school's bullying prevention efforts.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion revealed that verbal bullying is the most commonly reported form, indicating the urgent need for targeted interventions to address this issue. In contrast, the low reporting of social-relational bullying suggests either underreporting or a lack of awareness among students, pointing to the importance of more comprehensive and inclusive anti-bullying strategies. Additionally, peer groups play a significant role in influencing bullying behavior, often driven by students' need for acceptance, fear of rejection, and desire for social dominance. This highlights the need to foster positive peer relationships and implement programs that promote empathy and empower bystanders to intervene. Lastly, the lack of awareness about the school's anti-bullying initiatives reveals a communication gap, emphasizing the need to enhance the visibility, promotion, and accessibility of these programs to ensure all stakeholders are informed and engaged.

Based on the mentioned conclusions, several recommendations are proposed to strengthen bullying prevention efforts at San Ramon Elementary School. The school is encouraged to implement comprehensive anti-bullying programs that feature awareness campaigns and anonymous reporting tools, specifically addressing underreported forms such as social-relational bullying. The school may promote positive peer interactions by integrating social emotional learning programs, establishing peer mentoring systems, and organizing inclusive group activities to counteract the negative effects of peer dynamics on bullying behaviour.Increase the visibility and accessibility of anti-bullying initiatives by consistently promoting them through student assemblies, classroom discussions, posters, and digital platforms to ensure all students are well-informed and actively engaged in prevention efforts. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the long-term effects of anti-bullying interventions on student behavior, peer relationships, and the overall school climate.

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