Towards a Safe School Climate": the Knowledge and Attitudes of Teachers towards Bullying and Bullying Prevention

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Abstract - Bullying is an escalating worldwide problem that can manifest in any educational institution. Bullying can be defined as a repetitive and deliberate act of causing harm within a personal relationship characterized by an unequal distribution of power. The study aims to assess Arabic teachers' perspectives on bullying and their comprehension of its diverse manifestations and consequences. The research was carried out in Hail City, specifically in primary schools, with the participation of 51 Arabic teachers. Using questionnaires to measure attitude and knowledge along with demographic information, the researcher determined 5 main hypotheses assuming that attitude and knowledge of bullying will be correlated, teachers' experience will affect their knowledge and attitude, gender will affect attitude and finally, teachers' attitude is significantly predicted by teacher's knowledge, experience, and educational level. The current study examined the relationship between understanding bullying and attitudes towards it. Moreover, the study unveiled that female educators demonstrate more positive attitudes towards bullying. Furthermore, there is a notable correlation between the level of experience among teachers and the positivity of their attitudes, indicating that greater experience is associated with more favorable attitudes. No discernible influence was detected for any other variables on either the level of awareness regarding bullying or the attitude toward it. The viewpoints of educators toward bullying and their degree of comprehension have a substantial influence on the welfare of both individuals who engage in bullying and those who are targeted by it. To rectify misunderstandings regarding bullying and foster a more thorough comprehension inside educational institutions in Saudi Arabia, it is crucial to execute multiple interventions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Everyone agrees that bullying in schools is a major problem that hurts students' ability to learn. Bullying has garnered global recognition. Multiple legislations have been enacted to mitigate bullying and intentional and persistent harassment in educational institutions and the broader community. Numerous studies conducted in recent decades have demonstrated that individuals who engage in bullying behavior, as well as those who are victimized, are susceptible to various adverse outcomes, including, but not limited to, poor academic performance [1], avoidance of educational settings, challenges in forming and maintaining social relationships [2], mental health disorders [3] and contemplation of suicide [4].

Bullying has garnered international recognition. Numerous legislative measures have been implemented to mitigate instances of bullying and deliberate, recurrent victimization inside educational institutions and broader societal contexts. The measures include the Gun-Free Schools Act and other federal legislation in the United States, and the Child Safety Act established in the United Kingdom, [5]. Anti-bullying policies are in place in most schools worldwide, but their implementation varies. The success of such programs depends on teachers' attitudes, yet unfavorable attitudes lead to less intervention [2], [6]. The act of refraining from intervening in instances of bullying imparts to learners the belief that such conduct is customary and permissible, [7]. Consequently, educators ought to exhibit zero tolerance toward any form of bullying.

Studies, compared the definitions of bullying provided by the World Health Organization and the National Centre against Bullying, [4]. The characterizations indicate that bullies can manifest as either individuals or collectives, exhibiting varying degrees of authority and adopting

intimidation tactics to assert dominance within their social networks or over others. In addition, researchers figured out the participants' demonstration of subjective and objective vulnerability after encountering a perceived or actual threat of physical injury. According to the results of the studies, a comparison was performed between the bullying definitions by the World Health Organization and those by the National Centre Against Bullying [4]. Findings revealed that bullies can be either authoritative individuals or collectives, intimidating their social networks or others for dominance. In their definition of bullying, researchers refer to bullying as an act of individual stranglehold over another feeble individual showing inability to self-defense, [1], [8].

Young people who are bullied are negatively affected and experience feelings such as fear, anxiety, and discomfort. Adolescents may choose to withdraw from various activities or not attend classes because they dislike others who bully, [9]. In addition, individuals may experience more serious effects such as difficulties in establishing social relationships due to reduced self-esteem and reluctance to interact with peers, [6], [10]. Unless significant steps are taken to correct the behavior of bullies, the effectiveness of educational programs designed to treat these behavioral problems may be compromised, which in turn may potentially lead to their involvement in serious criminal activity, [1].

According to a meta-analysis conducted, [1], [3], [9], the implementation of anti-bullying programs in educational institutions resulted in a reduction of bullying incidents by approximately 20% to 23%, as well as a decrease in victimization rates by approximately 17% to 20%. However, it is important to note that previous studies, as indicated by [11], have yielded mixed findings about this matter. Consequently, there exists a need for further enhancement in conventional approaches to address the issue of bullying. Also, based on the studies undertaken by [1], [9], it has been ascertained that bullying exerts adverse consequences on youngsters exposed to it, resulting in the development of emotions such as dread, worry, and discomfort. Due to their strong dislike for individuals engaged in bullying, certain individuals may choose to withdraw from certain activities or avoid going to school. Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that individuals may face more substantial consequences, such as challenges in forming social connections, diminished self-worth, and reluctance to engage with peers [6]. There is a possibility that bullies will have a tough time gaining educational benefits from programs that are specifically designed to meet their requirements. The individuals in question may demonstrate a greater inclination to participate in severe criminal behaviors in the future if preventative measures are not taken to change their behavior, [4]. The behavior of educators has the potential to either amplify or diminish the impact of abuse and aggression within the school environment.

Bullying has become recognized as a significant problem, especially in primary and secondary educational institutions. Given the rising frequency and heightened severity of bullying problems, educators must take proactive steps. To prevent the progression of aggressive behaviors into bullying, it is essential to promptly adopt interventions, as it is natural for young students to engage in experiments related to dominance, [9].

It is the responsibility of educational institutions to provide a safe and appropriate environment for all students. Therefore, the crucial role of schools and teachers in tackling this issue is of utmost importance. It is imperative for them to proactively engage in efforts to cultivate an environment that is free from instances of bullying and victimization. The scientific perspective sometimes overlooks the importance of teachers and schools in tackling the issue of bullying in Saudi Arabia, leading to a lack of resources and awareness within educational institutions about this subject. Hence, the primary aim of this research is to investigate the viewpoints of teachers regarding the phenomenon of bullying and assess their level of understanding of this issue. Consequently, the findings of this study will provide teachers with the necessary tools to effectively address both traditional and cyberbullying perpetration and victimization among teenagers, thereby enhancing preventative and intervention efforts. The basic purpose of this study is to evaluate the viewpoints of educators toward bullying, as well as their understanding of the many manifestations and consequences of bullying.

II. THE PROBLEM

Bullying can happen at any age, but most people identify it with school. Teachers may be the first to notice such a phenomenon, thus they should be knowledgeable and prepared. The instructors feel bullying is a natural developmental phase and blame victims for their misfortune, therefore their awareness is vital to addressing the issue stated by [12]. Other research showed that instructors believe bullying is harmless, natural, promotes character, and should be defended, [2], [13], they found that 91% of teachers acknowledge class bullying, although 25% believe it is useful to ignore it.

Previous studies have mostly focused on examining the characteristics of both the victims and the perpetrators. When discussing and explaining the causes of bullying, it is typical to consider many characteristics of the students, such as their age, gender, socioeconomic level, ethnicity, sexuality, and number of classmates, [9]. Also, many academic investigations have explained the association between risk elements and protective factors about victimization, encompassing demographic attributes,

familial conditions, and school environments, [9], [14]. Physical bullying declines with age, but adolescent boys are more likely to be physically bullied and bully others, Adolescent girls have a higher likelihood of being both victims and perpetrators of relational bullying, [15]. Multiple forms of bullying increase the probability of behavior issues, [16]. Bullying is typically linked to hyperactivity and conduct issues, where youngsters violate others' rights. Bullies are gregarious, good communicators, and have numerous friends at school, [17].

Moreover, a substantial body of literature has been discovered that provides support for the risk factors that have been identified for individuals who experience severe bullying and victimization, [14]. These risk factors include ethnicity, computer usage, television consumption, engagement in physical fights, academic performance, body image concerns, physical health issues, mental health problems, substance abuse, parental monitoring, family satisfaction, peer substance use, peer communication, the overall number of friends, attitudes towards school, sense of belonging in school, and the pressure associated with schoolwork, [15], [18].

The scientific perspective sometimes overlooks the importance of teachers and schools in tackling the issue of bullying in Saudi Arabia, leading to a lack of resources and awareness within educational institutions about this subject. Hence, the primary aim of this research is to investigate the viewpoints of educators regarding the phenomenon of bullying and assess their level of understanding of this issue. It is necessary to emphasize the school-level factors that can impact the occurrence of bullying. This research project will analyze the disposition of educators.

Within the context of Saudi Arabia, there is a scarcity of empirical research examining bullying in general. Furthermore, no studies have specifically investigated the attitudes and knowledge of instructors on this topic. Considering the researcher's expertise in the educational system and experience as an academic supervisor overseeing student-teacher practicums, I recognize the significance of evaluating teachers' attitudes towards bullying and their understanding of it. This is particularly important due to the alarming prevalence of bullying in numerous Saudi schools. Hence the researcher seeks to answer the main question: What are Saudi teachers' attitudes towards and knowledge of bullying in primary/secondary schools?

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. School Bullying:

Bullying is a type of mistreatment characterized by repetitive actions that occur when there is a real or perceived power imbalance, with the more dominant person having the advantage. Bullying is a pervasive and grave problem affecting school-aged youth. It refers to the repeated aggressive behavior of learners with the intent to cause physical or mental harm to another person, such as poking, hurling objects, slapping, choking, punching, kicking, beating, spreading rumors, pulling hair, etc. [19].

Bullying is a form of violent conduct that is frequently distinguished by the perpetrator's desire to inflict harm, its repetitive nature, and the presence of an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim, [20]. In other words, the perpetrator is often more powerful, has an intention to harm the victim and he/she repetitively does that. Children's roles in such occurrences are categorized as bully, victim, victim-bully, and neutral. The bully is the perpetrator of the action, while the victim is the recipient. The bully victim is a child who is tormented and bully's others simultaneously, [19].

Smith developed one of the most extensively used typologies, which divides bullying into four categories: Physical bullying, verbal bullying, and relational bullying, [20]. (including social isolation and rumor spreading), and cyberbullying, [21] as in Figure 1.

Fig. 1 The most common Bullying Types (designed by the researcher)

According to [21] and [22], bullying encompasses various manifestations, such as physical aggression (hitting, kicking, pushing, threatening, or stealing), verbal bullying (name calling, racial slur, teasing, or obscene gestures), and relational bullying (spreading nasty rumors). Another type of bullying is cyberbullying, which describes bullying that occurs using modern equipment such as mobile phones and the internet.

Therefore, youngsters of the 21st century are coping with and attempting to cope with numerous sorts of bullying. Providing students with information and instruction on conflict resolution skills establishes the foundation for a peaceful world.

B. School Climate

Variations in the prevalence of bullying can be observed throughout different school systems, with certain systems exhibiting consistent levels of bullying across all schools. There are notable trends that may be discerned regarding variations in bullying prevalence among different schools, [22], [23]. Unsurprisingly, a safe and orderly school climate, as well as institutions with effective discipline, were shown to have reduced bullying prevalence in most countries. However, because the factors are frequently associated, the impacts of school safety and school discipline may be complicated by school SES in some countries, [24], [25]. The possible hypothesis for the observed correlation between school climate and bullying could be attributed to the influence of school social norms, teacher cooperation, and parent-school relationships, which may foster an environment that tolerates a majority of bullying incidents, particularly those of a verbal or indirect nature, [26].

Bullying in schools has been connected to elements such as achievement variability and school resources. A new study on the incidence of bullying among school students and discovered little evidence linking bullying to students' housing and financial circumstances. According to a study conducted in two rural schools, bullying was, [22], strongly correlated with geographic location, which is a good indicator of the accessibility of educational resources. Bullying at school was positively correlated with better achievement relative to classmates, [21]. The concept of school belonging is gaining prominence in the field of bullying research as a significant protective factor within educational settings, [23]. Moreover, teachers and school leaders were found to play a crucial role in promoting students' sense of school belonging, which in turn reduces bullying prevalence, [21]. This is because students feel safer at school when they believe their teachers and principals care about their academic and social success. Importantly, students at these schools are more likely to seek assistance from teachers and other school officials when bullied, [25].

Planned behavior theory advocates perceived norms like School anti-bullying norms to avoid bullying. Student awareness, violent incident reporting, nonviolent school norms, and decreased peer hostility are associated. They also found that school norms that allow hostility increase peer aggression, [19]. The establishment of the belief that educational institutions will not tolerate bullying may foster a sense of school loyalty and affiliation, thereby discouraging the occurrence of bullying.

C. Bullying and Teachers Role

Teachers' levels of tolerance towards violence or bullying are discernible variations among teachers. Research suggests that the gender of teachers may play a role in shaping their responses, with female teachers exhibiting lower tolerance towards aggressive or negative behaviors among children, [13]. The relationship between a teacher's attitude towards bullying and their level of empathy is elucidated in the literature. Teachers with lower tolerance towards negative behaviors like bullying tend to demonstrate greater empathy towards victims. In these instances, teachers often encourage victims to articulate their emotions while assisting the aggressors in developing an awareness of their actions' detrimental impact on the victim's well-being, [27]. An additional factor contributing to variations among educators is their experience level. Educators with firsthand knowledge of bullying incidents are frequently more attuned to its subtleties and characteristics; consequently, they are more inclined to assist students in revealing their emotions, [28].

Bullying often goes unnoticed by teach instructors must maintain children who disclose incidents of bullying, it is imperative for instructors to maintain a heightened level of vigilance to detect any potential problems. This awareness originates from a grasp of bullying. Teachers and school administrators are obligated to ensure the protection of these rights, [10], [28]. It is critical to take a closer look at the teachers in schools, as well as the characteristics of the teachers that influence their responses to bullying instances, [7].

Teachers and other school officials must play an active role in putting an end to bullying activities. Schools should actively promote their zero-tolerance policy against bullying and highlight the implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy. There are multiple efficacious strategies available to schools and parents seeking to prevent bullying, including ensuring appropriate monitoring of children, [24], imposing effective penalties on bullies, and promoting effective communication between teachers and parents to afford all children opportunities to cultivate strong interpersonal skills, and establishing a social environment that is nurturing and inclusive, [29].

D. The effects of bullying on students

Many internalizing and externalizing issues can result from victimization. Internalizing problems from bullying can cause sadness, anxiety, and low self-esteem Females exhibit a higher propensity for experiencing internalizing difficulties. Additional evidence has substantiated the notion that individuals who occupy the dual role of bully victims tend to experience more adverse psychosocial well-being outcomes, [30]. Serious and far-reaching effects can result from bullying students. A few examples of common impacts include these:

Bullying can have emotional and psychological effects such as B. Fear, worry, sadness, and reduced self-esteem. Furthermore, it can induce psychological distress, hinder focus, and hurt academic achievement, [31].

1. Bullying exerts a detrimental influence on the academic performance of children through the reduction of their motivation, escalation of absenteeism, and

impairment of their capacity to concentrate within the classroom setting, [29].

2. Bullying can have enduring consequences that transcend the school environment and persist throughout one's entire life. Victims may experience enduring emotional harm that might have repercussions on their interpersonal connections, professional opportunities, and overall emotional state, [18].

3. Bullying often leads to isolation from peers and social marginalization. Victims may find it difficult to socialize or participate in social events, which can hurt their psychological well-being, [31].

4. Bullying can worsen pre-existing conditions such as anxiety disorders and, in severe cases, even lead to suicidal thoughts or behavior, [26].

5. Victims of bullying may suffer from physical complaints such as migraines, stomach aches, sleep disorders, and even chronic illnesses due to increased stress levels, [30].

Bullying must be addressed quickly and efficiently in schools and communities to reduce the negative consequences on children's well-being.

E. Academic achievement and teachers' attitude

Bullying and victimization can have a major effect on children's academic achievement, according to [25], individuals who are severely bullied are fifteen times more likely to explain that their academic performance has been affected, and they tend to establish a negative attitude towards education. Bullied children are also explained to have less chance of obtaining a university degree in adulthood.

Such a relationship has been confirmed in a more recent study explaining that victimization leads to lower grades, [32].

There is no doubt that bullying hurts children's wellbeing, but it also affects the school climate. Such factors could lead to poor attention, leading to poor scholastic achievements. Poor relationships between teachers and victimized children can lead to emotional disengagement e.g. the feeling of not belonging in school, [32], feeling safe at school and a sense of belonging improves school grades, [25]. Bullied children may not feel safe at school and can perceive teachers as unsupportive and un-protective against bullies, such a thing might lead to absence from school, [33].

Students' academic performance can be affected by teachers' bullying. As instructors' bullying attitudes rise, academic success falls, according to research, [34]. Teacher bullying can have negative effects on students. First, it generates a hostile learning atmosphere that hampers students' focus and engagement. Bullying teachers can make students anxious, stressed, or afraid, damaging their concentration and performance. Additionally, teacher

bullying can lower pupils' self-esteem and confidence, [35]. This can affect academic performance by decreasing learning desire and interest. Students may lose interest in school and dislike it. Bullying by teachers can potentially harm pupils' mental health. A teacher bullying a student can inflict emotional and psychological harm. This can impede pupils' academic performance due to worry or sadness, [34].

Schools must promote positive teacher-student interactions and anti-bullying programs to solve this issue. A friendly and courteous learning atmosphere is essential for student development.

IV. OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE STUDY CONSTRUCTS

There are two main constructs in this study referring to the teacher's knowledge of bullying in the school environment and their attitude towards it.

Construct one: Attitude towards Bullying, this construct includes 15 items assessing participants' attitudes towards bullying and its types among school children. Answers were based on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly Agree.

Construct two: Knowledge of Bullying, this construct enquired about 16 items enquiring about how much knowledge participants possess about the types of bullying and associated behavior. Answers were coded as True or False (1,0 respectively).

Coding and Recoding: All items in the Attitude construct were made consistent with each other in terms of content and scores (negative questions were made positive and answers were recorded or reversed).

V. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The purpose of the research is to investigate and assess the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between teachers' knowledge of bullying and their attitude towards it in the school environment.

H01: There is no significant correlation between teachers' knowledge of bullying and their attitude towards it.

H2: Teachers' years of teaching (experience) will have a significant effect on their attitude towards bullying at schools.

H02: Teaching experience will have no significant effect on their attitude towards bullying.

H3: Teacher's experience will have a significant effect on their knowledge of Bullying.

H03: Teachers' experience will have no significant effect on knowledge of bullying.

H4: Gender will influence the Teachers' knowledge of bullying.

H04: Gender will have no significant effect on teachers' knowledge of bullying.

H5: Teachers' attitude is significantly predicted by teacher's knowledge, experience, and educational level.
H05: Teachers' attitudes are not predicted by Teacher's knowledge of bullying, their experience, or their educational level.

VI. METHODOLOGY

A. Design and Data Gathering Tool:

This study follows mainly a cross-sectional design (based on correlation). A cross-sectional design/study generally aims to measure the association between variables, unlike experimental designs where the main aim of the study is to look at cause and effect. This study is considered of a Quantitative nature, the data collection method is a Questionnaire that tests teachers' attitude towards Bullying and their Knowledge of it (Appendix 1). There are many advantages to using a quantitative method (e.g. questionnaire), it is cost-effective and allows for fast and accurate measurements of constructs.

B. Participants:

This study was administered using 51 primary/secondary Arabic teachers, who agreed to take part, in the City of Hail (Saudi Arabia). There were 19 female and 32 male Arabic teachers. To gain access to both male and female participants the researcher will approach one Girls' School and one Boys' School. Arabic Teachers had different levels of experience in education, 16 had 0-5 years' experience, 17 had 6-10 years' experience and 18 had 11-15 years of experience.

C. Procedure:

An extensive literature review was conducted regarding bullying based on which the constructs were formalized, validation was achieved through senior lecturers at Hail University, after achieving validation and ethical approval. The researcher started collecting data; hence participants from two primary/secondary schools (Girls and Boys) were approached. The targeted school's headmaster offered to give a helping hand in administering the questionnaires. Participants received a copy of the questionnaire by email and were asked to complete it in their own time and space, the targeted schools (i.e. Headmasters') provided an initial consent and helped in spreading/emailing the questionnaire. Confidentiality, in writing, was assured and the participants understood that it was voluntary participation and that they had the right to withdraw their information at any time.

D. Ethics:

This study went through a university's ethical approval before its administration. As it involved adults this study had minimal risks or harm to the participants. All were notified of the confidentiality of their data, and no personal details (e.g. name or ID) were kept by the researcher. A copy of the questionnaire is kept confidential and anonymous to be used for this study only.

E. Validity and Reliability:

The questionnaire was tested for *Content validity and Internal Reliability* (Cronbach's alpha). Content validity refers to how much the questionnaire and questions within reflect the real world, i.e. the questions of each construct can judge logically and convey the research questions. Validity is a non-statistical test that was confirmed based on the opinions of three senior lecturers from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the of Education at the UOH. It was judged as suitable and valid for the study's purpose.

Internal reliability on the other hand is a statistical test, measured through a correlation test called Cronbach's alpha. It measures whether all questions contain consistent answers or not, i.e. do all questions assess the same idea? This type of test was conducted through SPSS for the Attitude scale and the Knowledge scale. The consistency for questions in the attitude construct was **0.729** and, in the knowledge, construct it was found **0.681.** Such results explain 72.9% and 68.1% similarity or correlations between the questions in the attitude and the knowledge constructs respectively. Although the sample is quite small the reliability can be judged good (Appendix 2).

VII. LIMITATIONS

The present study faced several limitations, mostly about the sample size, which could potentially result in outcomes that are not fully representative. Furthermore, the questionnaires were meticulously designed, and the data was systematically gathered regularly. Furthermore, it is important to note that the questionnaire constructs were not subjected to Factor Analysis, a statistical test commonly used to explore latent variables. Implementing this test could have aided in standardizing the questionnaire; nevertheless, it would have necessitated a substantial number of participants to ensure statistical validity.

VIII. RESULTS

A. Exploring Data:

Teachers' knowledge of bullying and their attitude towards it were measured via two constructs, both reflected good reliability (as explained in the methods section). This piece of research also collected demographic details about participants hence there were 5 main hypotheses concerning the *demographic* variables (Independent variables or what the researcher is manipulating) and two main dependent variables (what the researcher is measuring for) i.e. attitude and knowledge.

Following instructions from [36] is essential to determine the suitable tests for the existing data (hypotheses

testing), to do so the researcher should first determine the *parametricity* of the main dependent variables. To be considered parametric the data must follow a continuous scale and satisfy a normal distribution. Overall, the knowledge scale was formed by adding all correct scores together, and the attitude scale was the average score of the attitude questions (5-point scale), as a result is safe to assume that both variables are considered Continuous. Following that the normality of the variables (the spread of the scores around the mean) was tested using the recommended Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov both of which test the null hypotheses that the data is normal. Table I and Figure 2 and Figure 3, explain that on both tests the attitude and the knowledge variables were not significant ($p>0.05$) this leads to the acceptance of the null hypotheses and rejection of the hypothesis (that data is not normal), therefore it can be concluded that these variables need to be tested using Parametric Tests, [36].

TABLE I. DEPICTING THE NORMALITY OF BOTH VARIABLES OF INTEREST

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
Tests of Normality	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
ATB	.079	51	.200*	.986	51	.803
KOB	.111	51	.163	.163	51	.059

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
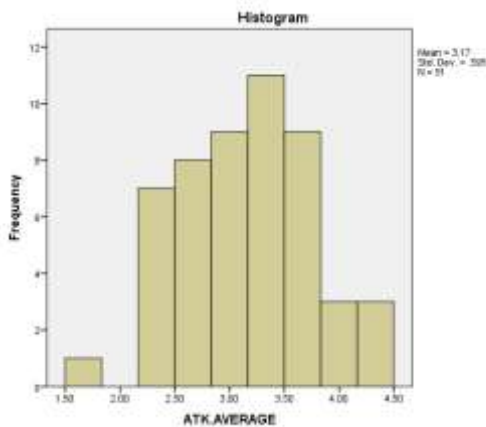**. This is a lower bound of the true significance*

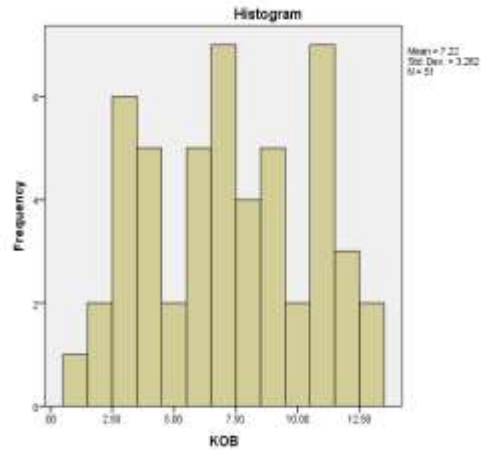Fig. 2 Depicting the frequency of scores in the attitude construct

Fig. 3 Depicting the frequency of scores in the knowledge construct

B. Main Analysis of Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive correlation between Arabic teachers' knowledge of bullying and their attitude towards it in the school environment.

As hypothesized earlier, the attitude toward bullying among Arabic teachers in Saudi will be correlated with their knowledge of bullying. This hypothesis can be suitably tested by following Pearson's r Correlation Coefficient, which measures the linear dependence between two continuous variables, hence it will be applied and used to test the current hypothesis. The results of this test (as in Table II) yielded a significant moderate and positive correlation between the attitude towards bullying and the Arabic teachers' knowledge of it. This can be summarized as $r (51) =0.511$, $p =0.000$. This explains that the more knowledge participants have about bullying the more positive their attitude is, it can also mean the reverse i.e. the more positive their attitude the more knowledge they are likely to have.

TABLE II. DEPICTING THE CORRELATION COEFFICIENT BETWEEN ATTITUDE AND KNOWLEDGE

Correlations				KOP
ATK.AVERAGE	Pearson	Correlation	1	.511**
	Sig. (2	-tailed)		000
	N		51	51

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H2: Teachers' years of teaching (experience) will have a significant effect on their attitude towards 382 bullying at schools.
H3: Teacher's experience will have a significant effect on their knowledge of Bullying.

Hypotheses 2 & 3 are concerned with the effect of teaching experience on teachers' attitudes towards bullying and their knowledge of it respectively. Since the Experience variable has three levels (0-5 years, 386 6-10 years, 11-15 years) a suitable parametric test would be One Way (independent measures) Analysis of 387 Variance. This test will show if both variables (one at a time) will change as a function of experience. 388 Considering the attitude variable it was found that (as in Figure 3 & Table III) the experience has a 389 significant effect on the level of attitude teachers have, F (2,48) =4.56, p=0.015. By looking at the table of 390 means it is evident that the group with the highest experience had the most positive attitude (M=3.45, 391 Sd=0.55) followed by the 6-10 years' group (3.14, Sd=0.46) and lastly the 0-5 years' group (M=2.88, 392 Sd=0.64). Further post hoc (Tukey) tests showed that there was a significant difference between the 11393 15-year group and the 0-5-year group (p=0.011) only.

From Figure 4 and Table III, regarding teachers' knowledge of bullying as a dependent variable, it was not shown to be significantly affected by teachers' experience F (2,48) =1.80, p=0.176. Although those with the most experience showed the highest average knowledge (M=8.16, Sd=3.05) compared to the 6-10 years group 397 (M=7.29, Sd=3.07) and the 0-5 years group (M=6.06, Sd=3.56) the difference was not found to be 398 significant enough, hence no need for post hoc tests.
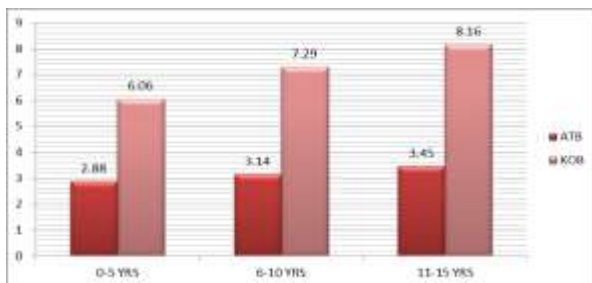

Fig. 4 Depicting the attitude and the knowledge scores across the three age groups

Table III. The difference between groups and the significance of ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ATK.AVERAGE	Between Groups	2.831	2	1.415	4.564	.015
	Within Groups	14.886	48	.310		
	Total	17.716	50			
KOB	Between Groups	37.661	2	18.830	1.804	.176
	Within Groups	500.967	48	10.437		
	Total	538.627	50			

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

H4: Gender will influence the Teachers' knowledge of bullying.

Gender is another demographic variable of interest to the researcher; this hypothesis is enquiring whether the gender of the teachers has a significant effect on their knowledge of bullying or not. To test that an Independent Samples t-test was used, which measures the difference between two independent groups. The results of this test showed (as in Figure 5 and Table IV) that the female participants had significantly higher knowledge of bullying (M=7.96, Sd=3.29) compared to male participants (M=5.94, Sd=2.91) the values of this test were significant at t (49) =2.20, p=0.032. Equal variances between the two groups were assumed at: F=0.679, p=0.414 (Levene's test of equality of variance). To conclude it can be stated that the type of gender will have a significant impact on knowledge of bullying among Saudi Arabic teachers.
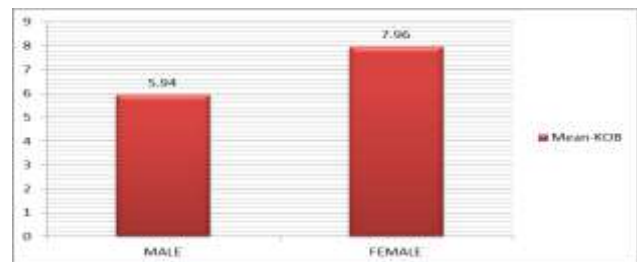

Fig. 5 Depicting the knowledge scores across genders

TABLE IV. INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST TABLE FOR GENDER DIFFERENCES BASED ON KNOWLEDGE OF BULLYING
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
KOB	Equal variances assumed	.679	.414	-2.207	49	.032	-2.02138	.91579	-3.86173	-.18103
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.279	41.745	.028	-2.02138	.88707	-3.81189	-.23087

H5: *Teachers' attitude is significantly predicted by teacher's knowledge, experience, and educational level.* As a prediction hypothesis, the researcher stated that the teachers' attitude (DV) towards bullying will be significantly predicted by their knowledge, experience, and educational level (predictors or IVs). Due to the multiple prediction nature of this hypothesis, the researcher chose to use Multiple Regression Analysis, this test allows the researcher to see how much variances each predictor is responsible for within the DV and whether they are significant or not, it also results in a model that includes the variance explained by all IVs put together. The model summary of a Stepwise (backward) regression showed that the final model (2nd) is responsible for 0.336 (r-square) or 33.6% of the variances within the attitude variable; the second model excluded insignificant predictors. The ANOVA table indicates that the regression analysis is suitable for the current data (F(2,48)=12.15, p=0.000. furthermore, the final model of regression showed that both experience (B=0.284, p=0.024) and knowledge (B=0.436, p=0.001) were significant predictors of the attitude towards bullying. Knowledge was a better predictor as it contributed to more changes within the attitude scale compared to the experience variable (see appendix 7.3.4 for full Statistical output).

C. Discussion of Findings

Bullying in schools has become a worrying issue for educators in Saudi Arabia, however little has been done to investigate it. This study attempted to assess teachers' attitudes towards bullying and the knowledge they have regarding it. Hypotheses were generated and analyzed, following that this section aims to discuss and explain why the results have come in a certain way.

Attitude towards bullying and Knowledge relationship:
The first hypothesis claimed that the attitude towards bullying among Arabic teachers in Saudi Arabia will be correlated with their knowledge of bullying. The results confirmed that such a relationship exists positively, leading to the understanding that a more positive attitude leads to more knowledge of bullying or more knowledge leads to a better attitude. The attitude mean was positive regardless of the groups (mostly above the 2.5 cut-off point) hence it can be assumed that they all have positive attitudes towards bullying, i.e. they know how important to deal with it, diagnose it, and eliminate it. However, it was apparent from statistics that their knowledge was about average, many of the teachers were mistaken in a number of questions regarding the knowledge of bullying i.e. their knowledge was limited. Early research among teachers indicated that almost one case out of 25 bullying cases are correctly identified by teachers, [16], [17]. A teacher's knowledge and attitude is crucial. Earlier research clearly stated that there is

no doubt that bullying hurts children's well-being, but it also affects the school climate. Such factors could lead to poor attention leading to poor scholastic achievements, [27], [28]. The role of the teachers and their attitudes is essential in promoting a positive environment and eliminating bullying. Many researchers see that teachers have a great influence on children's lives; therefore, they can play a crucial part in recognizing bullying and intervening in such incidents, [1], [37].

Experience Effect on Attitude and Knowledge:
It could be assumed that teachers with high experience will have better attitudes and knowledge of bullying in the school environment. This led to Hypotheses 2 and 3 which were concerned with the effect of teaching experience on teachers' attitude towards bullying and their knowledge of it respectively. Experience (0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years) was shown to have a significant effect on the attitude average, thus supporting the hypothesis, it was found that those with the highest experience showed the most positive attitude and those with the lowest teaching experience showed the lowest attitude. This leads to the explanation that teachers with more experience might have come across more bullying cases and have gone through more training regarding it via training programs or sheer experience. Also, with age teachers might become more patient and show better empathy to the victims and less tolerance with bullies. On the other hand, teachers' knowledge was not shown to be significantly affected by the experience, although following the average scores it was obvious that teachers with higher experience had better knowledge, such difference was not significant enough and the third hypothesis was rejected as a result.

Previous research highlighted that individual differences among teachers might affect their knowledge and attitude towards bullying. In support of the second hypothesis (experience effect on attitude) teachers who have personally come across bullying cases are often more sensitive towards bullying and are generally aware of its types and signs, hence they are very likely to help student disclose their feelings, [38], [39].

Gender's effect on knowledge:
Individual differences in knowledge of bullying among teachers are further highlighted when looking at the effect of gender. Gender is another demographic variable of interest to the researcher; this hypothesis is enquiring whether the gender of the teachers has a significant effect on their knowledge of bullying or not. The hypothesis was achieved, and statistics revealed that female teachers had more knowledge of bullying compared to male teachers. This finding might be explained through previous research where gender was found to determine the intervention in

bullying. It was explained that female teachers show less tolerance of aggressive or negative behavior among children [30], [39]. This might explain why they could have more knowledge of bullying compared to male teachers. On the other hand, it could be argued that bullying is more common amongst boys compared to girls, and in the Saudi context, schools are segregated based on gender. It would be expected in this case that male teachers have more knowledge as a result. From a personal the researcher (with experience in the education system) can explain that bullying amongst boys is often overlooked and that some teachers, as stated in previous research, believe that bullying is a normal developmental phase, that has no harm, that it's a normal part of growing up, that it builds the character, [40].

Teachers' attitude prediction: Via teacher's knowledge, experience, and educational level:

As a prediction hypothesis, the researcher stated that the teachers' attitudes toward bullying will be significantly predicted by their knowledge, experience, and educational level. To a certain extent, this hypothesis was supported where experience and knowledge were found the only significant predictors of how positive the attitude of teachers towards bullying. Knowledge of bullying was the best predictor, and this confirms the first hypothesis which also claimed the association between knowledge and attitude, here it is concluded that greater knowledge will lead to a better attitude towards bullying. Furthermore, their experience level, like hypothesis 2, was shown to be a good predictor of attitude. The explanation for this could be linked with earlier discussions. Education on the other hand showed no significant prediction, leading to the conclusion that whether the teachers have a high or low education level their knowledge does not change as a result. From here it can be finally concluded that teachers' knowledge and experience are the best variables to predict attitude.

Previous research highlighted that teachers play a pivotal role in molding the attitudes and actions of students. Their expertise and accumulated wisdom are crucial assets for anticipating and tackling problems, such as bullying, in educational institutions. Teachers demonstrate a deep understanding of their students' social and emotional development, [1], [17].

They possess a comprehensive understanding of the unique difficulties encountered by each child and are capable of identifying indicators of bullying or its effects on the overall welfare of students. Such understanding is due to their meticulous expertise with students' heterogeneous demographics as well as their pursuit in identifying and resolving several societal issues. Thus, it indicates a psychological distress that could obstruct focus as a result of an adverse impact on academic achievement, [16], [30].

Results reveal a decrease in instances of victimization due to the instructor's prescribed behavioral norms. Consequently, bullying regulations are of less importance to safeguard against victimization. However, good attitudes toward bullying limitations should be adopted to pursue protection against victimization. When the school community endorses a positive attitude towards anti-bullying regulations, a safer and more inclusive culture is facilitated. Educational institutions should maintain the well-being and assistance of students in a way facilitated by the implementation of anti-bullying measures that prioritize kindness, empathy, and respect. Disposing of bullying regulations can greatly overcome bullying issues. Anti-bullying policies should consider bullying as deemed reprehensible to deter bullies successfully and enhance the secure feeling among kids to report bullying instances.

IX. CONCLUSION

The prevalence of bullying in Saudi schools is seeing an upward trend, thus necessitating the need for additional empirical investigations to ascertain the magnitude of this epidemic. The present study elucidated the correlation between knowledge of bullying and attitudes towards it.

The connection between knowledge of bullying and attitudes towards it is mostly influenced by individuals' level of awareness and understanding of the nature and repercussions of bullying. When individuals possess a deep understanding of the definition of bullying, its diverse manifestations (including physical, verbal, social, or cyberbullying), and the possible detrimental effects it has on victims, they are more inclined to cultivate unfavorable attitudes towards such conduct. Such consciousness can result in heightened empathy for individuals who have experienced bullying and a heightened determination to actively oppose bullying. Empathy significantly influences views towards bullying. Individuals with a heightened comprehension of the emotional repercussions of bullying on victims are more prone to harboring unfavorable sentiments towards such conduct. Understanding the psychological and emotional impact of bullying promotes empathy and compassion, which motivates individuals to reject and denounce bullying in any manifestation.

Additionally, the research revealed that female teachers exhibit more favorable attitudes towards bullying. The explanation for this revelation can be attributed to the influence of socialization and adherence to gender standards. Individuals are socialized into distinct gender roles and expectations from an early age. Women are frequently urged to exhibit maternal, empathic, and loving qualities. Consequently, female teachers may display more positive attitudes towards bullying because they tend towards nurturing behavior and empathy. The process of socialization can have an impact on how individuals react to

instances of bullying and their perspectives on how to handle such conduct inside the school. Also, Society's gender norms and expectations can influence bullying attitudes. Female instructors may feel more responsibility for fostering a loving and supportive classroom, reflecting cultural expectations of women as caregivers. This sense of duty may encourage them to prioritize understanding, support, and conflict resolution over punishment in bullying situations.

Moreover, the level of experience among teachers appears to have a significant influence on the positivity of their attitudes, with greater experience correlating with more favorable attitudes. Also, no significant impact was observed for other variables on either the level of awareness about bullying or the attitude toward it. I may clarify the matter because the proficiency level of educators greatly affects the frequency and consequences of bullying within educational institutions. Professional teachers are skilled at identifying, addressing, and preventing bullying, creating a more positive and constructive school environment. Hence, educational institutions should allot resources to support the professional development of teachers as well as powerful school administration.

The welfare of perpetrators and the targets of bullying is inflicted by teachers' views and understanding of bullying. As bullies' and victims' level of comprehension and attitudes affect their well-being, teachers are held the responsibility of treating bullying issues in educational institutions. Thus, they should have a profound understanding of bullying and its repercussions to build a secure climate and nurturing environment for all victims of bullying. They should recognize that bullying is not a normal phase of student development, however, it has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of both bullies and victims.

Furthermore, the findings provide significant practical application as they aimed to set effective intervention approaches to accomplish its objectives. Such an issue should be carefully addressed by the Department of Education due to its potential significant effect on kids' well-being and academic performance.

In further investigations, it is advisable to incorporate additional variables, such as the anti-bullying measures implemented by schools, the frequency of reported bullying episodes, and the impact of bullying on children's academic performance. Significant attention should be devoted to the determination of sample size and the design of the questionnaire when considering the adoption of quantitative research methods. Qualitative research methods, such as interviews, can provide valuable insights into the phenomenon of bullying and victimization among children, thus contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of

the subject matter. The viewpoints of both teachers and children should hold equal importance.

A. Recommendation

All stakeholders must acknowledge bullying as a problem and condemn it unequivocally. Teacher, parent, counselor, and administrator participation in this program must be investigated further to determine viable and effective methods. The role of the teachers is essential in promoting a positive environment and eliminating bullying. Many researchers see that teachers have a great influence on children's lives; therefore, they can play a crucial part in recognizing bullying and intervening in such incidents. Developing a comprehensive educational program aimed at prevention is of utmost importance considering the detrimental consequences of bullying. Also, to eradicate bullying, the researchers must seek the help of teachers and other school officials. Teachers must incorporate elements of bullying prevention programs into their curricula. The implementation of school policies and classroom rules is a crucial aspect of anti-bullying programs in educational environments, as it serves to mitigate instances of school bullying. The implementation of preventive and reactive school policies, along with the incorporation of anti-bullying activities, is expected to have a favorable outcome.

Consequently, schools must employ anti-bullying programs and interventions, and teachers and counselors must be involved in addressing bullying issues. Future research should explore the potential successful applications of Interactive computing technology like artificial intelligence, conversation bots, Internet of Things, and expert systems in anti-bullying education to foster meaningful and sustainable environments that can effectively alter students' views. Furthermore, a study might be conducted to evaluate learners' level of understanding and implementation of e-bullying behavior across various educational platforms. Future studies should thoroughly investigate how school climate and a sense of school belonging can work as protective factors against bullying. Furthermore, future research about bullying victims could explore the mechanisms that contribute to the different kinds of victims. This would equip schools, parents, and mental health professionals with valuable insights on identifying signs in students to proactively avoid their victimization. It would investigate how changes in school norms might effectively decrease bullying victimization. Additionally, exploring engagement as a potential avenue for future study could yield positive results.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies in the Writing Process
During the preparation of this work the authors used Quillbot/ paraphrasing tool in order to editing some paragraphs. After using this tool/service, the authors

reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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