

Asia Pacific Journal of Developmental Differences
Vol. 10, No. 2, July 2023, pp. 249—288
DOI: 10.3850/S2345734123001034



Understanding Bullying Experiences among SEN students: A Parental Perspective

Madinah Begum¹ and Sujatha Nair^{1*}

1. Dyslexia Association of Singapore

Abstract

A total of 185 parents of students studying at Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) were given online questionnaires, asking them about their children's prior experiences with bullying and what they felt could be done to eliminate it. For qualitative data, we first devised common responses that parents had for each question, then recorded the frequency of those responses. Afterward, we tabulated and analysed quantitative and qualitative data and charted all data for easier representation.

The data was examined in relation to gender and age. The findings indicate that students are most affected by verbal, indirect, and peer victimization, and the majority of the bullying lasted for years. Findings from this study also advocate that raising awareness and training for parents and schools would help prevent bullying among SEN students. Moreover, our data show that support from parents and schools was the most critical factor in helping to reduce bullying rates. Lastly, it was found that males experienced higher rates of bullying than females for all types of bullying.

Keywords: Bullying Prevalence, SEN Students, Bullying Intervention, School and Parental Support, Parents' Perspective, Raising awareness, Dyslexic students, Bullying and SEN Education

* Correspondence to:

Sujatha Nair, Assistant Director (Educational Advisory), English Language and Literacy Division & Lead Educational Therapist, Dyslexia Association of Singapore Email: sujatha@das.org.sg

INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Bullying is a pervasive social issue that causes physical, emotional, social, and educational harm among peers. According to Juvonen and Graham (2014), bullying is the systematic abuse of power among peers that harms the victim. A bully is a person who is physically stronger or socially prominent and abuses their power to threaten, demean, or belittle their victim. The power imbalance between the bully and the victim distinguishes bullying from conflict (Emmery et al., 2018.. According to Smith et al. (2019), bullying is characterized by three key features: power imbalance, intention to harm, and repetition. These features have been consistently identified in research and are widely acknowledged as essential components in understanding and recognising bullying incidents.

In recent years, there has been increasing awareness of disablist bullying, which is the harassment that people with special educational needs with or without disabilities (SEN/D) experience due to their condition (González-Calatayud, Roman-García, & Prendes-Espinosa, 2021). Individuals with or without disabilities can perpetrate disablist bullying, and it can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and social harassment. Like traditional bullying, disablist bullying must involve repetition, intentionality, and an imbalance of power between the bully(s) and the victim.

While research on disablist bullying is limited, studies suggest that it is a prevalent issue that has detrimental effects on the well-being and development of individuals with SEN/D (Huang & Yan, 2019; Whitson & Triche, 2018). Disablist bullying can result in adverse outcomes, such as low self-esteem, social isolation, academic difficulties, and mental health problems (Görzig & Albdour, 2020). Therefore, it is essential to understand and address disablist bullying to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals in educational settings.

Research has consistently shown that children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) are particularly vulnerable to bullying, with alarming statistics indicating that 82% of individuals with learning disabilities have experienced such victimization (Bullying and SEN, n.d., para. 1). Children who have special needs (SEN) are at an even greater risk of being bullied. SEN students are perceived as being different from their peers, which can make them a target for bullies. Students with SEN also have difficulties in communicating and expressing themselves; they lack social cues, which makes them easy targets for bullies. Most SEN students may not be able to stand up for themselves as they might also lack self-confidence.

This article focuses on the prevalence of bullying among SEN students – focusing on the subgroup of dyslexia, and examines its different forms, distinguishing between overt and covert manifestations. By shedding light on these aspects, the study aims to enhance our understanding of the complex nature of victimization experienced by dyslexic students,

highlighting the urgency for targeted interventions and inclusive environments that promote their well-being and social inclusion.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Dyslexia

SEN refers to a diverse range of educational needs that require additional support and interventions beyond what is typically provided in mainstream educational settings. Students with SEN have unique learning requirements due to various factors such as disabilities, learning difficulties, or developmental delays. These needs can affect their academic progress, social interaction, and overall well-being (Farrell, 2013; Lindsay, 2013; Norwich, 2015).

Dyslexia is a specific subgroup within SEN. It is a specific learning difficulty that primarily affects a person's reading and writing abilities. Individuals with dyslexia may have difficulty with phonological processing, which involves recognising and manipulating the sounds of language. This can lead to challenges in decoding words, spelling, and reading fluency. Dyslexia is neurobiological in nature and is not related to intelligence or lack of educational opportunities. It is estimated that approximately 10% of the population worldwide may have dyslexia (Snowling, 2013; Vellutino et al., 2013; Peterson & Pennington, 2015; Shaywitz, 2018).

Within the context of SEN, dyslexic students represent a distinct subgroup with specific learning needs related to reading and writing. These students require targeted interventions and accommodations to support their literacy development and overall educational progress. Understanding the experiences and challenges faced by dyslexic students in relation to bullying is essential for designing effective interventions and creating inclusive environments that meet their unique needs (Graham, 2013; Hertzog & Childs, 2013; Görzig & Albdour, 2020). Hence, the focus of this study was dyslexic students from the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS).

Overt and Covert Bullying

Overt Bullying is characterized by observable physical acts that are easily witnessed and can cause immediate harm to the victim. Examples of overt bullying include hitting, punching, shoving, or kicking (Swearer, Espelage, & Napolitano, 2012; Volk et al., 2014). These aggressive behaviors are explicit and often involve direct physical contact, making them more visible and recognisable forms of bullying.

Covert Bullying encompasses subtle and less noticeable acts of victimization that are equally harmful and can inflict emotional distress on the target. Covert bullying is often more challenging to detect as it occurs behind the scenes and may lack physical aggression. Instead, it involves psychological manipulation and social exclusion tactics. Examples of covert bullying include spreading rumors, gossiping, manipulating

friendships, and enforcing social isolation (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2015; Wolke et al., 2013).

The distinction between overt and covert bullying is crucial for understanding the various forms of victimization experienced by students. While overt bullying is more overtly aggressive and physical, covert bullying relies on psychological tactics to cause anguish and distress for the victim (Salmivalli, 2010). Recognising both forms of bullying is essential for effective prevention and intervention strategies to address the different ways victimization can be experienced.

Students with SEN, especially dyslexia, are particularly susceptible to overt and covert forms of bullying due to their perceived differences and vulnerabilities. Overt bullying targeting dyslexic students can manifest through physical acts such as hitting, pushing, or kicking, which can directly harm these students physically and emotionally (Rieffe et al., 2012; Rose et al., 2012). Covert bullying, on the other hand, poses a unique challenge for SEN students as it involves subtle tactics like gossiping, spreading rumors, and social exclusion, which can be incredibly distressing for individuals who struggle with social cues and communication difficulties (Cappadocia et al., 2012; Humphrey & Symes, 2011). The impact of overt and covert bullying on dyslexic students can be severe, leading to heightened social isolation, decreased self-esteem, and hindered academic progress (Espelage et al., 2013; Sutherland & Sullivan, 2017). Recognising and addressing overt and covert bullying experienced by dyslexic students is crucial in creating inclusive and supportive environments that promote their well-being and ensure equal participation in education. Addressing and mitigating the occurrence and effects of both forms of bullying experienced by dyslexic students is essential in creating inclusive and supportive environments that promote their overall well-being and ensure their equal participation in education.

Therefore, it is crucial to consider the experiences of dyslexic students within the broader context of SEN research on bullying. By recognising the specific vulnerabilities and challenges faced by dyslexic students, interventions and policies can be tailored to address their unique needs and provide the necessary support effectively. Understanding the prevalence, nature, and impact of bullying incidents targeting dyslexic students is paramount in designing evidence-based interventions that promote safe and inclusive learning environments. Additionally, investigating the existing support systems and evaluating their effectiveness will aid in identifying areas for improvement and ensuring the well-being and academic success of dyslexic students in educational settings.

Statement of the Problem

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the prevalence and nature of bullying experienced by students with dyslexia. Specifically, we aim to explore the frequency and severity of bullying incidents encountered by dyslexic children and the

types of bullying they may have been subjected to, such as verbal, physical, or relational aggression. Additionally, we seek to understand the factors contributing to bullying incidents targeting dyslexic students, including the role of peer attitudes, school climate, and awareness of dyslexia among students and staff.

Furthermore, this study aims to examine the support systems for dyslexic students who have experienced bullying. We will investigate the availability and effectiveness of interventions and strategies employed by schools to address bullying and support the well-being of dyslexic students. This includes exploring the role of educators, parents, and peers in providing support and identifying any barriers or challenges that may impede the implementation of effective anti-bullying measures.

By addressing these research questions, we seek to gain comprehensive insights into the bullying experiences of dyslexic students and evaluate the adequacy of existing support systems. The findings from this study will contribute to a better understanding of the specific challenges faced by dyslexic students about bullying and inform the development of targeted interventions and policies to create safe, inclusive, and supportive environments that promote their well-being and ensure their equal participation in education.

The Motivation Behind this Study

The motivation for conducting this study arose from two deeply concerning incidents that highlighted the urgent need to address bullying and violence experienced by dyslexic students.

In the first case, a distressing event unfolded involving a 13-year-old student who faced cyberbullying, physical violence, and verbal assaults solely due to her dyslexia. The severity escalated to the point where her peers taunted her with suggestions of self-harm (Lee, 2020). These distressing experiences occurred in 2020, just before Singapore entered a "circuit-breaker" phase, which necessitated a transition to Home Based Learning (HBL) and the cessation of regular activities.

Remarkably, the HBL period provided temporary relief for the student as she no longer had to confront her bullies at school. Her well-being showed signs of improvement during this time. However, when the circuit breaker was lifted, and students were mandated to return to physical schooling, the student experienced an overwhelming level of stress, resulting in a suicide attempt through painkiller overdose (see Figure 1).

Fortunately, timely intervention from her mother enabled her to receive immediate medical attention and support. Moved by this harrowing incident, the student took the courageous step of writing to the Prime Minister, urging improvements in how schools and the Ministry of Education (MOE) respond to bullying and violence (Lee, 2020). It is



My son told me that his composition was displayed in class for his poor handwriting and weak content. His name was not displayed, but obviously, the whole class knew it was him.

I asked him if he was hurt by it, he said, "No... Teachers do this all the time!"

I was enraged. 😡 Something that is commonly done does not mean it is right!

He did not want me to speak up... But I had to. How could I, as a parent, see generations of children who are weak in their studies, have their self-esteem crushed by generations of educators who think it is right to publicly display their academic inadequacy in the disguise of "teaching" the other children?!

I am thankful that I have brought my children up to be confident people, so they are not affected by such actions. However, I am sure, there are others, who could have felt the shame from being ridiculed in this manner.

The school teachers have been informed that my children are dyslexic. While, that doesn't mean they have entitlements, I do hope that the teachers could manage their expectations with the knowledge that poor reading and writing skills are a part of this internationally recognised condition, which even Singapore's founding father Mr Lee Kuan Yew, was known to have. Publicly mocking their inadequacy certainly will not help in encouraging them to improve.

I thank DAS for spreading awareness and educating our children. I hope that DAS could continue equipping MOE educators with the necessary knowledge and empathy to teach dyslexic children. MOE, please advise teachers to teach in a positive manner, and certainly, not at the expense of weaker children.

Ministry of Education, Singapore

Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS)

Figure 2. A screenshot of a Facebook post shared by a concerned parent regarding her son's bullying experience in school due to his dyslexia. (Facebook, n.d.). Unpublished work.

These incidents underscore the pressing need to explore and address the bullying and violence experienced by dyslexic students in educational settings. By conducting further research, we aim to gain deeper insights into the underlying factors contributing to such incidents and develop effective strategies to create safer, more inclusive, and supportive environments for dyslexic students.

Next, the article will delve into a comprehensive literature review, examining existing research and scholarly works that explore the prevalence, impacts, and interventions related to bullying and violence among students with dyslexia. This review will provide a solid foundation for understanding the broader context of the issue and inform the development of appropriate interventions and support mechanisms.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature Review

1. Rates of Incidences

Bullying is reported by one out of every five students (20.2%). 41% of victims believe that they will be targeted again. Of these victims, 13% were verbally bullied (e.g., teased, called names, insulted), 13% experienced relational bullying (e.g., gossips), 5% were physically abused (e.g., pushed, tripped, spit on), and 5% experienced exclusion and isolation. Body image, racial group, gender, impairment, religion, and sexual orientation were the most common causes of bullying. Moreover, male students are highly likely to be physically bullied as compared to female students (6% vs. 4%), whereas female students are highly likely to be victims of relational bullying – gossip (18% vs 9%) and exclusion (7% vs 4%; National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2019).

The prevalence of bullying differs across different research (9%-98%). A meta-analysis of 80 studies that examined bullying engagement percentages (bully and victim) among 12-18-year-old teenagers revealed that they experienced typical bullying at 35% and cyberbullying at 15% (Modecki, Minchin, Harbaugh, Guerra, and Runions, 2014). 49.8% of tweens (9 to 12 years old) reported being victims of school bullying,, while 14.5% of tweens indicated being cyberbullied (Patchin & Hinduja, 2020; Bullying statistics, n.d.).

2. Cause of Bullying

Warning Signs and Risk Factors

Prior research on potential risk factors of school bullying revealed that bullying is affected by various aspects that interact with one another (Xu et al., 2020). The crucial elements of a teenager's life are family, friends, and school, creating the social atmosphere that molds children's thoughts and actions (Erginoz etraits and situational factors. They found that individual traits associated with bullying were alcohol usage and poor emotional regulation. All five aspects of school bullying t al., 2015). Ethnicity, age, class rank, gender, alcohol and cigarette usage, and other personal factors are all linked to school bullying incidents (Silva et al., 2019).

Qian et al. (2019) analysed warning signs and risk factors for multiple types of school bullying (physical, verbal, relational, sexual, and possession) among Chinese middle school children, incorporating personal were associated with alcohol usage. Relational bullying was associated with strained familial connections, the father's alcoholism, and poor parenting. Physical, verbal, and relational bullying were associated with poor sense of stability and the unavailability of reliable people.

3. Bully and Victim Characteristics

Characteristics of Bullies

Bullies feel proud of themselves based on the social feedback they receive. Bullies may feel good about themselves and possibly disregard the harm they cause others when they receive positive social feedback paired with hostile attributional bias (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Bullies place importance on control, and they are viewed as famous, influential, and “awesome” figures among their peers despite being disliked by their schoolmates. They tend to be the leaders of their cliques and teenage bullies resonate with those with similar tendencies and support one another in their violent actions (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2016).

The perpetrators of bullying have high social skills but lack social and interpersonal abilities. Despite their high social skills, they are limited in their ability to feel empathetic and compassionate on a mental and affective level – they have issues comprehending victims’ emotions and opinions (Kaminaridi & Tsaliki, 2017).

Characteristics of Victims

The peer collective sustained and even fostered bullying when peers do not challenge bullies' hostile conduct. Bullies target victims who are “safe” and allow them to be empowered. They mainly target those easily subservient: those who are apprehensive, diffident, and sensitive. Longitudinal research has shown that embodying issues and lacking assurance in interpersonal relationships makes for highly targeted individuals. Bullies also target victims who respond aggressively. Unfortunately, this aggression is fruitless, causing them to become perfect victims for bullies due to their affective reactions. The victims from this group tend to have issues controlling their emotions and attention and share some of the plight of victims (Juvonen & Graham, 2014).

According to Brank et al. (2012), bullying victims are fragile, introverted, and apprehensive. Victims' academic performance is low, and they miss school to prevent bullying. Victimization can have a negative impact on achievement and contribute to absence. Victims are associated with numerous problems such as anxiety, depression, and poor self-regard, and they usually have few or no friends, face rejection or no acknowledgment from them, and have poor interpersonal relationships (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2016). They also were more likely than bullies to report suicide ideation, according to Skapinakis et al. (2011).

4. Family

In addition to the characteristics of bullies and victims, the family plays a vital role in encouraging a child’s violent behaviour, especially the quality of relationships within the family.

Olweus (2009) states three significant aspects as vital for such violent behaviours. He first states that how parents react emotionally during a child's first years makes a difference. Cynicism, along with little compassion and engagement, can cause a child to react violently towards others.

Parents' tolerance level for their child's violent behaviour is the second deciding aspect. If strict expectations are not set, a youngster has a higher chance of becoming violent later in life.

The last aspect is the ineffective parenting practices embraced by parents. Physical discipline and intense emotional breakdowns are some examples of such tactics. Children reared in aggressive surroundings will exhibit intense manners of responding and demanding possessions. Children growing up in a domestic violence environment are more prone to victimize others (Baxendale, Cross, & Johnston, 2012).

The family framework and organisation, parents' didactical perceptions, the level and standard of disciplinary actions, and the affiliations between parent and child are all possible reasons for the advancement of violent attitudes and the formation of mutual affective and psychological systems that promote violent attitudes (Kaminaridi & Tsaliki, 2017).

5. Teachers and Schools' Attitudes Towards Bullying

It is essential to analyse teachers' attitudes and personalities that may affect how they react to bullying incidents. Teachers and schools are essential in eradicating the bullying climate in schools. Bullies and victims behaviours are affected by how teachers react to bullying incidents. Teachers are more likely to interfere when they have compassion for the victims and how serious they consider the situation to be. Such teachers are more likely to comprehend and sympathize with the victim's experience, and compassion has been associated with prosocial behaviour. Therefore, teachers with higher compassion are prone to view bullying seriously and take appropriate actions (Byers, Caltabiano & Caltabiano, 2011).

Davis & Nixon (2010) reported that students found the most helpful manner educators can help is by hearing and checking in with the student to check if the victimization has ended and to provide counsel. Moreover, informing the victims to address the issues on their own, informing them to change their behaviour or attitude, overlooking the issue, or scolding them for tale telling are among the most detrimental actions educators may take, according to students.

Research reveals that school bullying prevention initiatives can reduce bullying incidents by up to 25% ((McCallion & Feder, 2013). Rose & Monda-Amaya (2012) have suggested favourable bullying prevention measures for students with impairments, such as

educators and students participating in communal interplay that are both relevant and appropriate, boosting social aptitude and positive networks by giving incentives and utilizing suitable mediation tactics that promote social engagement and equip with tailored meditations for victims.

Teacher Bullying

Teacher bullying is a serious issue documented in research for decades. Teacher bullying of students, also known as "teacher-on-student" bullying, is a form of bullying that occurs within educational settings. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), teacher bullying of students has been linked to a wide range of negative adverse outcomes including academic underperformance, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of anxiety and depression (Smith, 2018). Studies have also found that teacher bullying can make students feel disempowered and disrupt the learning environment (Jones, 2020). Moreover, teacher bullying is often an indicator of a more significant problem within the school system. It can lead to students disengaging from the education process and feeling disengaged from the school community (Clark, 2019). Therefore, school systems need to create a safe learning environment where students can feel secure and supported by their teachers.

It refers to repeated negative behaviour by a teacher towards a student or group of students, which can include verbal abuse, exclusion, manipulation, and physical aggression (Salmivalli, 2010).

Research has shown that teacher bullying of students can have detrimental effects on the academic and psychological well-being of the targeted individuals. A study by Nansel et al., (2001) found that students who experience teacher bullying have lower academic achievement, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of absenteeism than those who do not experience teacher bullying. Another study by Kärnä et al. (2011) found that teacher bullying is associated with an increased risk for mental health problems such as anxiety and depression among students.

School administrators and policymakers need to take action to address teacher bullying of students. This can include implementing policies and procedures for reporting and addressing bullying, providing professional development for teachers on appropriate classroom management and positive discipline strategies, and fostering a culture of respect and support within the school community (Salmivalli, 2010).

Teacher bullying of students, also known as "teacher-on-student bullying," is a significant problem in schools. According to a study published in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, "teacher bullying is a serious problem that affects the mental health and academic performance of students" (Nansel et al., 2001). Another study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* found that "teacher-on-student bullying is associated

with a range of negative outcomes for students, including increased absenteeism, lower academic performance, and decreased psychological well-being" (Limber et al., 2010). Furthermore, research has shown that teacher bullying can have long-term effects on students, such as decreased self-esteem and increased risk of mental health issues (Swearer et al., 2015). Schools need to take steps to address this issue, such as implementing policies and procedures for addressing teacher-on-student bullying and providing training for teachers on how to create a safe and inclusive classroom environment.

6. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a growing form of harassment that can damage its victims. It is defined as "any form of bullying conducted through electronic technology" (Smith et al., 2008, p. 376). According to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (2016), cyberbullying occurs when a person or group uses electronic devices such as the internet, cell phones, and social media to intimidate, threaten, and harass another person. This type of bullying can have long-term effects on a person's mental and physical health, such as depression, anxiety, and increased risk of suicide (Gini & Pozzoli, 2019).

A study by the Cyberbullying Research Center (2018) found that 34% of students in grades 6-12 have reported experiencing cyberbullying. Additionally, a meta-analysis by Kowalski et al. (2014) found that victims of cyberbullying are at an increased risk for depression, anxiety, and suicidality. Furthermore, the anonymity and reach of the internet can make it difficult for victims to escape their bullies, as cyberbullying can occur at any time and place (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to be aware of the dangers of cyberbullying and to take steps to protect students from this form of abuse. Educators, parents, and policymakers must work together to develop effective strategies to prevent and address cyberbullying.

It is important to note that the effects of cyberbullying can be severe, including depression, anxiety, and in some cases, suicide. Steps must be taken to address this issue, such as implementing policies and programs to prevent and respond to cyberbullying and providing support and resources for victims.

7. COVID Effects

Bullying is a serious issue that has been shown to adversely affect children's mental health and well-being (Nansel et al., 2001). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on how children experience bullying, both in terms of the prevalence and the form it takes (Hosseinpour et al., 2020). Studies have shown that the shift to virtual learning environments has led to increased cyberbullying, with children experiencing bullying through online platforms such as social media and gaming

(Kowalski et al., 2020). Additionally, the isolation and stress caused by the pandemic may make children more vulnerable to bullying (Hosseinpour et al., 2020).

Research has also shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted children who were already at risk of bullying, such as those with disabilities or from marginalized communities (Hosseinpour et al., 2020). For example, a study by Hosseinpour et al. (2020) found that children with disabilities were more likely to experience bullying during the pandemic, both in person and online.

One study conducted by the Cyberbullying Research Center found that the percentage of students who reported being bullied online increased from 15% to 25% during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, found that the prevalence of cyberbullying victimization among adolescents increased from 11.5% to 15.5% during the pandemic (Yabara et al., 2021)

Steps must be taken to address the issue of bullying during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the implementation of effective prevention and intervention strategies. This may include providing education and support to children, parents, and educators on how to recognise and respond to bullying, as well as increasing access to mental health resources for children who have been bullied (Hosseinpour et al., 2020).

8. SEN Students and Bullying

Bullying has been recognised as a social phenomenon. In recent years there has been an increase in interest in the research of bullying among students with special educational needs (SEN) and other disabilities. Studies have highlighted the attributes prevalent in SEN students and children who are bullied, indicating the high possibility of SEN students being at high risk for bullying. Unfortunately, the literature is quite limited compared to bullying among school-age students and adolescents (Mishna, 2003i).

More than 5% of children from ages 0 to 14 have a disability as, estimated by World Health Organization (2011) in its World Report on Disability. Students with learning difficulties, conduct disorders, autism spectrum disorders, and developmental delays were some of the disabilities highlighted. They are deemed more likely to be bullied and remain same for an extended period. Prevalence rates differ when assessing distinct forms of disabilities: High levels of bullying victimization are experienced by 35.3% of students with behavioral and emotional disorders, 33.9% of students with autism, 24.3% of students with intellectual disabilities, 20.8% of students with health impairments, and 19% of students with specific learning disabilities (Rose & Espelage, 2012).

A research study conducted in the USA deduced that one out of every five (20.2%) students report being bullied (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). The

bullying incident rates with special educational needs (SEN) are much higher when compared to non-SEN students (Rose & Gage, 2016).

Various factors contribute to students with SEN being more vulnerable to bullying. Firstly, these students tend to form fewer friendships and are likelier to be isolated from their peer groups. When isolated, they are less protected and thus become easier targets to bully. At the same time, social isolation takes away opportunities for students with SEN to develop the ability to interact with others, further limiting their abilities to build social relationships (Kaukiainen et al., 2002).

Secondly, students with SEN generally have poorer social skills. This results in the students lacking social behaviour, which can help them to avoid becoming a victim of bullying, such as being able to read social cues accurately. Having poor social skills also causes the students to be more passive and timid, which may reinforce pre-existing bullying behaviours towards them (Rose, 2011).

Thirdly, due to the learning difficulties that students with SEN have, they are more likely to suffer from stigmatization, being viewed more negatively among their peers. This causes their peer groups to view them as "abnormal" and are more likely to reject them socially, making them more likely to become victims of bullying (Baumeister, 2008)

For students with SEN, suffering from bullying has severe consequences. Bullying victims cause them to be at a very high risk of poor academic performance due to their existing learning difficulties. Being bullied also often results in the students having more severe social deficits, including a poorer ability to communicate with others and less adept at showing empathetic behaviours. Lastly, it was also shown that students with SEN often become bullying perpetrators as a learned behaviour due to prolonged victimization (Rose, 2011).

Teachers tend to underestimate the extent of bullying of SEN students. Swearer et al.'s (2012) study revealed that teachers in Hong Kong tended to overvalue the social status of SEN students, causing them to misjudge the level of bullying they experienced. In addition, Bradshaw, Swayer, and O'Brennan (2007) illustrated that 71.4% of teachers estimated that only 15% or less of their students were bullied, in contrast to an incidence of 40.6%. This reiterates the point that teachers are unaware of the degree of the bullying SEN students suffer from.

10. Effects of Bullying

Victims of bullying are at high risk for mental health and emotional issues such as sleep disorders, anxiety disorders, depression, poor school performance, and leaving school. Individuals who play the role of victims and bully are more likely to have mental well-being and behavioral issues than those who are just bullied or tormented (Centers for Disease Control, 2019).

According to the National Centre for Educational Statistics (2019), bullying causes negative repercussions on how victims view themselves (27%), their affiliation with loved ones (19%), their academic performance (19%), and their physical health (14%). Moreover, Gini and Pozzoli (2013) indicated that victims are twice as likely as non-victims to suffer from unfavourable physical illnesses such as headaches and stomachaches.

Perren, Ettakal, & Ladd (201), found that youth who condemn themselves for being victims of bullying have a higher chance of being depressed, bullied for long-term, and emotionally disturbed. Furthermore, Patchin & Hinduja (2020) found that being cyberbullied for tweens caused negative emotions about themselves (69.1%), their friends (31.9%), their health (13.1%), and academic performance (6.5%).

11. Singapore and Bullying

Research on bullying in Singapore is limited, especially in SEN. However, there has been a rise in the cases of students being bullied in recent years. According to Singapore's Minister of State for Education, Sun Xueling, two cases of bullying per 1,000 primary schools and five cases per 1,000 secondary schools were reported in 2020 (Ong, 2021).

In a 2018 study conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) - which evaluates the quality of learning among 15-year-old students in 79 participating education systems, Singapore was also one of the participating countries. For this study 6098 Singapore students participated. They were selected from 168 public schools and 290 from nine private schools to take the computer-based test. It was discovered that 18.3 percent of the students have indicated that they have experienced some form of bullying. This is above the OECD average of 10.9 percent.

As of 2019, 80% of Singaporean students with special educational needs (SEN) study in mainstream schools. (Choo, 2019). Integrating students with SEN into mainstream schools is essential as it allows them to interact with other children in a typical social environment, training their social skills and enabling them to become more independent (Thompson et al., 1994). However, without protective measures and interventions, students with SEN become highly vulnerable in mainstream schools. This can be seen from how students with SEN are more susceptible to bullying than mainstream students (Whitney et al., 1992). Compared to children without SEN, students with SEN were more concerned about school safety and being hurt or bullied by their peers (Saylor & Leach, 2009).

Holt, Chee, Ng, and Bossler, (2013) analysed how the risk of suicide and absenteeism from school are related to online and physical bullying and how technology and several socio-demographic issues affects Singaporean youths. They found that aggression in

both settings is associated with the results and there are significant disparities in suicide ideation between the genders.

8. MOE's Zero Tolerance Policy

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore has implemented a zero-tolerance school bullying policy. This policy is based on the belief that every student has the right to feel safe and respected. Bullying is unacceptable behavior that must be addressed promptly and effectively.

According to the MOE's Anti-Bullying Framework (Ministry of Education, n.d, para. 4), "bullying is a repeated and intentional act that causes harm to others." This includes physical, verbal, and psychological forms of bullying and cyberbullying. The framework also notes that bullying can take many forms, including direct and indirect actions, and can occur in person or online.

The MOE's zero-tolerance policy on bullying includes several key elements, such as:

- ◆ Clear and consistent disciplinary actions for those who engage in bullying behaviour
- ◆ Support and resources for students who have been bullied
- ◆ Education and awareness-raising efforts to prevent bullying
- ◆ Collaboration with parents, schools, and community partners to address bullying.

One study conducted by the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore found that the MOE's Anti-Bullying Framework has effectively reduced bullying in schools. The study found that the framework's emphasis on clear and consistent disciplinary actions, as well as its focus on providing support and resources for victims, has contributed to a decrease in the prevalence of bullying in Singaporean schools (Chua, Wong & Ang, 2016)

Another study published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* found that the MOE's efforts to raise awareness about bullying and provide education on how to prevent it has effectively reduced bullying in schools. The study found that students who received education on bullying prevention were less likely to engage in bullying behavior and more likely to intervene when they witnessed bullying (Wang, Ang & Chua, 2019)

In conclusion, the Ministry of Education in Singapore has implemented a zero-tolerance policy on bullying in schools, based on the principle that every student has the right to feel safe and respected. The policy includes several key elements, such as clear and

consistent disciplinary actions, support and resources for victims, education and awareness-raising efforts, and collaboration with parents, schools, and community partners. Studies have shown that the MOE's efforts have been effectively reducing the incidence of bullying in Singaporean schools.

Current Study and Hypothesis

Thus far, there is still a lack of information on how dyslexic students are vulnerable to bullying compared to neurotypical students. Therefore, this research aims to determine the prevalence rates of bullying cases involving students with SEN in Singapore. This allows for a better overview of local bullying cases and would aid in finding out what needs to be done to prevent such cases. The study also hopes to identify the type and duration of bullying most commonly faced by DAS students, the impact of victimization, the intervention and support received and the actions to be taken moving forward.

Hence, it was hypothesized that dyslexic students are vulnerable to bullying and are likely to be bullied due to their learning differences. The hypothesis was then further divided into the following sub-categories:

- a. SEN students, especially those with dyslexia do not receive enough support from schools or teachers to address the bullying incidents.
- b. There is a lack of awareness about bullying and SEN in schools.
- c. Educating parents, teachers, and students about SEN and bullying is necessary.

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

Methodology

Participants

The target participants were parents as we wanted to understand parents' perspectives on whether their dyslexic child is being bullied in school and schools' response towards the incidents. The survey was sent out to 3000 parents with children who were currently or used to be students of the Dyslexia Association of Singapore in September 2019 through email. Out of the 3000, 185 parents responded to the survey. The parents have children ages 5-16 and above (P1: 12.8%, P2: 8%, P3: 10.2%, P4:15%, P5: 13.9%, P6:18.7%, S1:8%, S2:7.5%, S3: 3.7%, S4:2.1%). The majority of their children were male (66%) compared to females (34%). 91% of them only had one child studying at DAS, whereas 9% had two or more children studying at DAS.

Data Collection

A questionnaire consisting of seven multiple-choice questions and fourteen open-ended questions was sent out to parents. The questionnaire questions were adapted from several bullying questionnaire surveys (Harbin, 2016; CDC, 2011; Retrospective Bullying Questionnaire, 1999). The survey was administered via google forms shared with the parents by our centre administrative staff. The team members then collected the responses after the deadline. There was one duplicate response, which was not counted in the analysis.

Procedure

Parents were contacted through email, and they were given three weeks to complete the questionnaire.

The multiple-choice questionnaires asked if the children were verbally, physically, indirectly, or cyber-bullied at school. They also asked if the children were bullied by their peers, teachers, or outside of school (e.g., siblings, uncle, aunts, etc). Parents were asked to rate from a range of Always to Never (refer to the Appendix A).

The open-ended questions were divided into two categories. The first category is based on the "Perspectives of parents whose SEN children have encountered bullying" and the second category is the " Perspectives of parents whose SEN children have not encountered bullying". Parents who mostly answered "Sometimes", "Often" or "Always" to the multiple-choice questions were directed to the first category. Parents who mostly answered "Rarely" or "Often" were directed to the second category.

In the first category, questions on the length of bullying incidents, reasons parents thought their child was bullied, if schools gave any help, how the child was coping after the incidents, and what actions needed to be taken to eliminate bullying were asked.

In the second category, questions on why parents believe their child was not targeted, if they agreed that SEN students are vulnerable to bullying, suggestions for parents whose child is being bullied, and if they feel enough is done to minimize bullying were asked.

Data Analysis

The completed questionnaires were subjected to thorough analysis by the research team. The multiple-choice data was initially processed using Google Forms, enabling efficient data collection and organisation. Subsequently, the information obtained was subjected to further analysis utilizing Hotjar data analysis tools. The aim was to extract meaningful insights and patterns from the multiple-choice responses.

In addition to the multiple-choice data, the open-ended responses were meticulously analysed. Hotjar, along with Text Analyzer, was employed to examine and interpret the rich qualitative information provided by the participants. This combination of tools allowed for an in-depth exploration of the open-ended data, enabling the identification of emerging themes, sentiments, and nuances within the participants' written responses.

The utilization of Google Forms, Hotjar data analysis, and Text Analyzer ensured a comprehensive and rigorous examination of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the collected data. This rigorous approach to data analysis enhances the validity and reliability of the study findings, enabling a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

Text Analyser

Text analysers are software tools that enable researchers to analyse unstructured data such as open-ended survey responses, social media posts, and customer feedback. These tools use natural language processing (NLP) algorithms to identify patterns, themes, and sentiments in large volumes of text data (Mohammad, 2018). Text analysers have become increasingly popular in research and business settings. They allow researchers and analysts to derive meaningful insights from qualitative data that might otherwise be difficult to quantify or interpret.

One widely used text analyser is the open-source software package called "Natural Language Toolkit" (NLTK). NLTK is a suite of libraries and programs for symbolic and statistical natural language processing tasks, including tokenization, stemming, and part-of-speech tagging (Bird, Klein, & Loper, 2009).

In the context of our study, the text analyser allowed us to investigate the common themes of each open-ended question in our survey. We used NLTK to preprocess and analyse the text data, identifying key terms and phrases that are indicative of the responses' themes were then incorporated into our analysis of hotjar data to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the information gathered.

HOTJAR

Hotjar is a user experience (UX) analytics and feedback tool that allows website owners to track visitor behavior and collect qualitative data through various methods such as heatmaps, session recordings, surveys, and polls (Hotjar, n.d.). Hotjar captures data from both desktop and mobile devices and provides insights into how users interact with a website, including where they click, how they scroll, and what they engage with (Hotjar Features, n.d.).

In the academic world, Hotjar is a valuable tool for qualitative data analysis in articles and research studies (Sharon, 2013). It provides valuable insights into user behavior and attitudes, which can be used to inform the design and development of digital products and services (Sharon, 2013; Sauro & Lewis, 2016). Additionally, it can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of existing digital products and services and identify improvement areas (Sauro & Lewis, 2016).

In conclusion, Hotjar is a powerful UX analytics and feedback tool that is valuable for academic research, providing insights into user behavior and attitudes that can inform the design and development of digital products and services (Sharon, 2013; Sauro & Lewis, 2016).

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

RESULTS

The study's results significantly supported the hypothesis that SEN students, especially those with dyslexia are vulnerable to bullying and are likely targets due to their learning differences. A significant number of participants shared their experiences with the types of bullying faced by their children and the type of support they received or did not receive from schools and teachers. Participants also expressed their concerns over the lack of awareness about SEN in schools and the need for education on special needs and bullying.

Types of Bullying

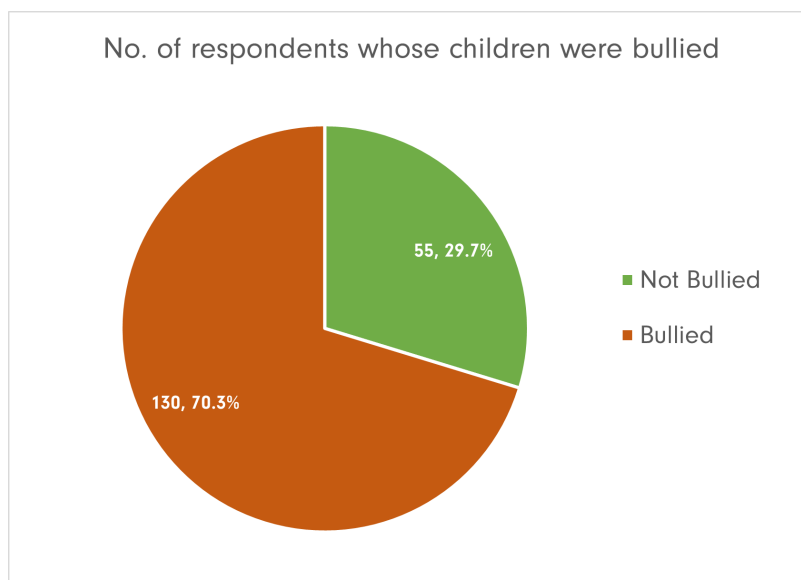


Figure 3: No respondents who indicated that their child was bullied.

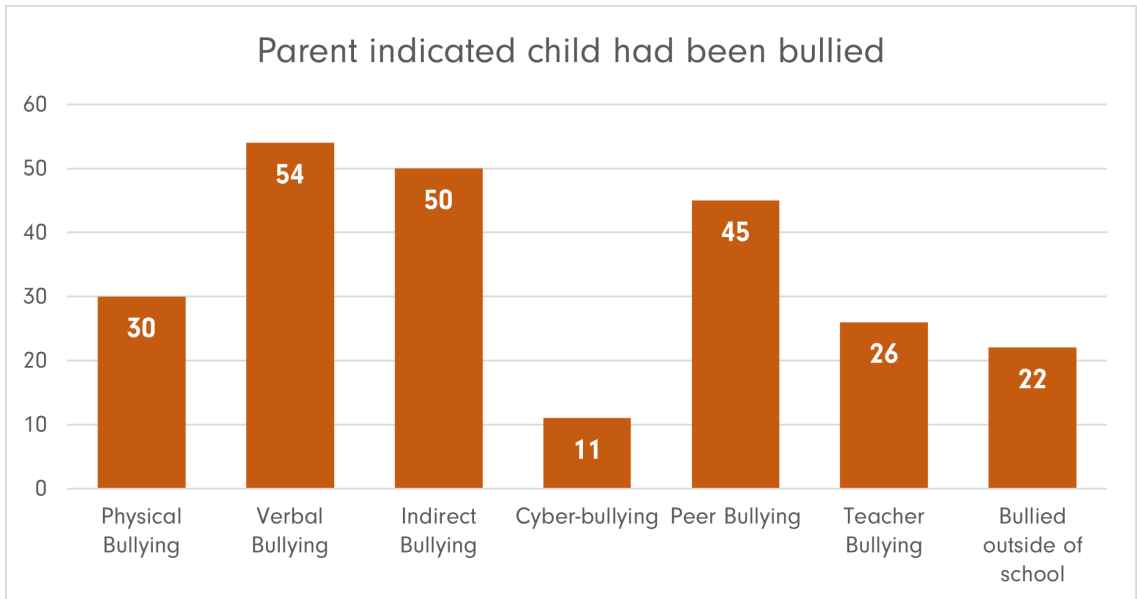


Figure 4: Summary of parent indicating that their child has been bullied.

As represented by Figure 3, 70.3% of the respondents indicated that their child had been bullied, and 29.7% indicated that their child had not been bullied.

Parents were then asked about the bullying their child faced in and out of school. Participants were asked to indicate if their children faced any physical bullying at school, verbal bullying at school, indirect bullying at school, cyber-bullying, bullying by their

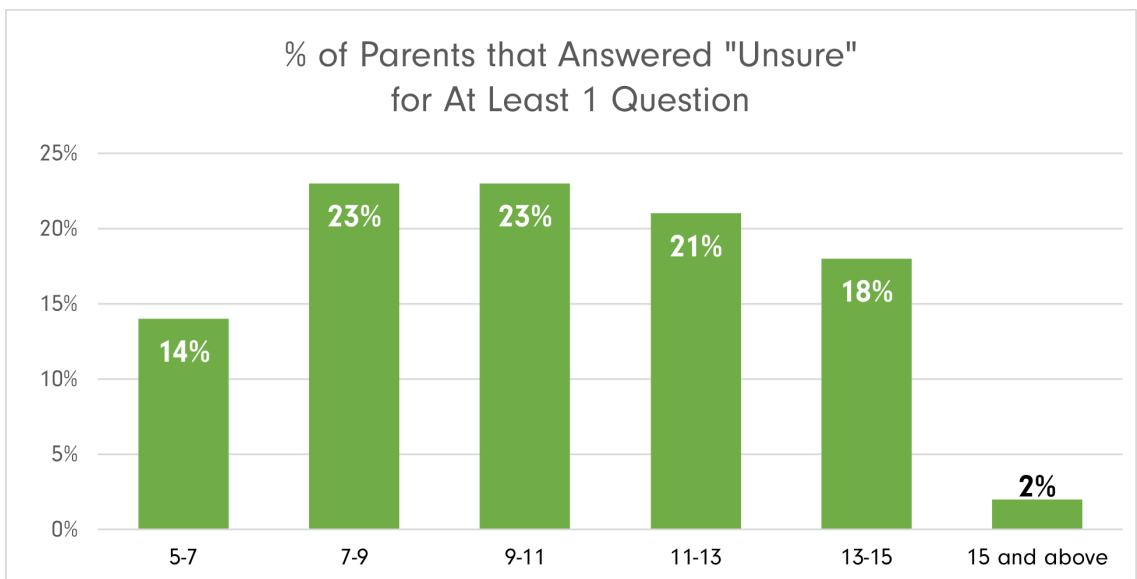


Figure 5: Significant number of parents answering "Unsure"

peers, bullying by their teachers, and/or bullied outside of school. They were asked to rate from Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Always, or Unsure.

It was found that the top three types of bullying faced by these children were Verbal Bullying (54%), Indirect Bullying (50%), and Peer Bullying (45%), as highlighted in Figure 4. Cyberbullying was also deemed the lowest form of bullying faced by children (11%). Figure 5 highlights that many parents are unsure if their child has been bullied in the seven areas mentioned above. The most significant percentage (23%) seems to be from the age group of parents with children 7-9 and 9-11, followed by 11-13 years old (21%).

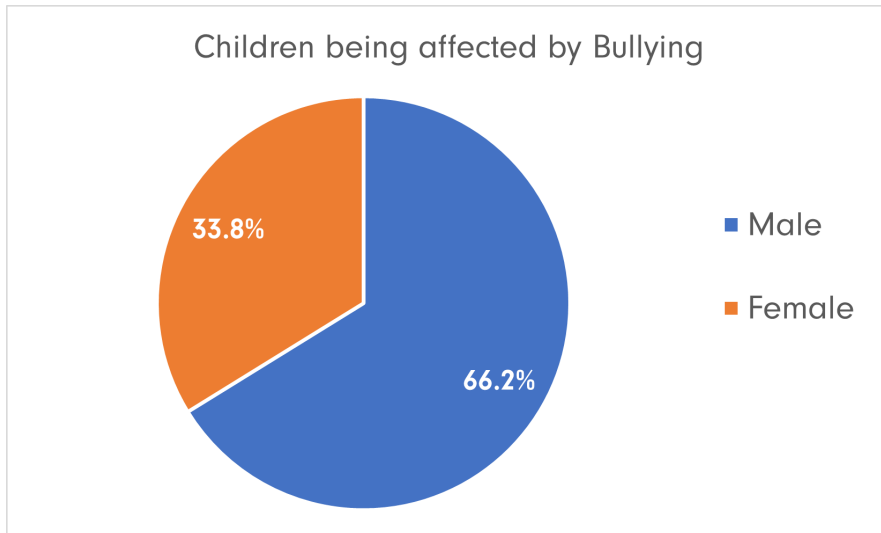


Figure 6: Gender-wise distribution of children affected by bullying

Figure 6 presents data on the gender of children affected by bullying. The results indicate that 66.2% of the children affected by bullying were male, while 33.8% were female. This finding aligns with previous research that has shown that boys are more likely to be victims of bullying than girls (Espelage & Swearer, 2020; Kowalski & Limber, 2013). However, it is essential to note that this gender difference may be influenced by various factors, including socialization, cultural expectations, and the types of bullying behavior that are more common among boys versus girls.

Duration of Bullying Incidents

According to the data presented in Figure 7, a notable portion of children experienced prolonged bullying episodes; specifically, 25% of the children were bullied for multiple years, while 16% reported being bullied more than twice. In addition, 10% of the children experienced bullying for several months, 4% experienced it only once, and 3% experienced it twice. Furthermore, a small percentage of children reported experiencing bullying for shorter periods, with 2% indicating it lasted only a few weeks.

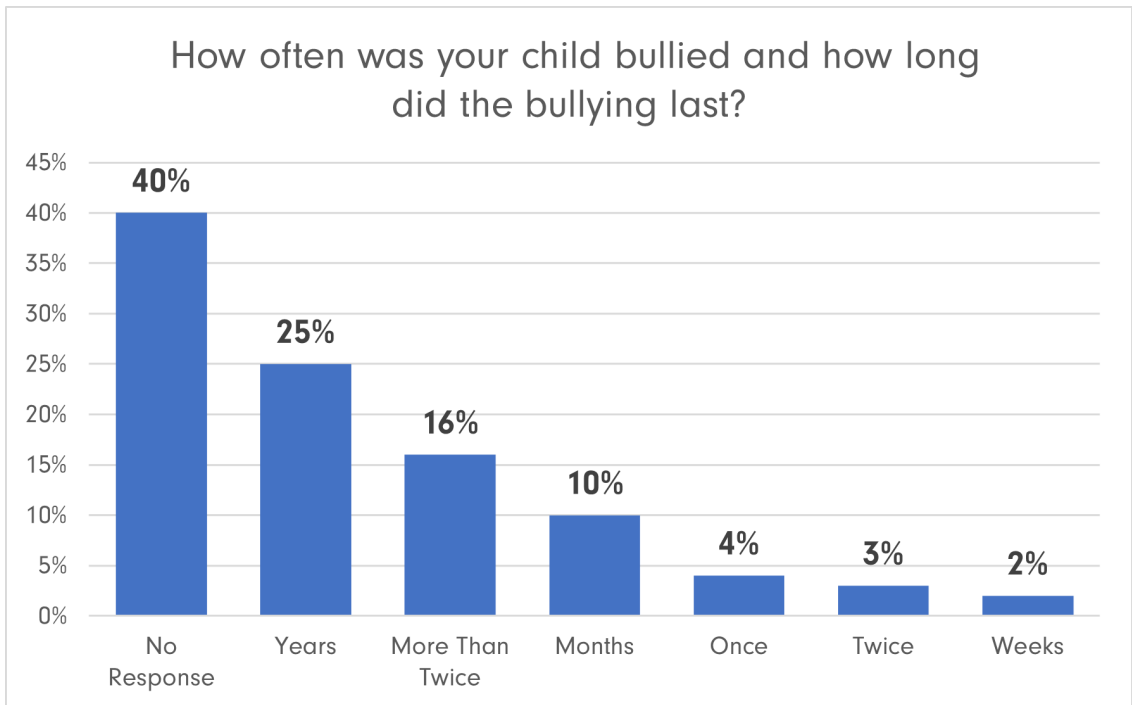


Figure 7: Frequency and Duration of Bullying Incidents Experienced by Children

Parents’ Perspectives

Results of the survey indicate that children may be bullied for a variety of reasons, including difficulties with social cues (13%), low self-confidence (11%), low academic performance or forgetfulness (24%), a passive nature (27%), emotions that are easily triggered (5%), difficulty fitting in (9%), and difficulties with expression (10%). It is important to note that these are parent-reported reasons do not necessarily reflect the underlying causes of bullying. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that addressing underlying emotional and social issues, improving academic performance, and reducing forgetfulness may be essential factors in preventing bullying. Additionally, strategies that help children develop vital social skills and build self-confidence may prevent bullying.

Follow-up Actions after Bullying Incidents

It was found that 59% of the respondents reported the bullying incidents to the school staff, whereas 28% did not. Among those who reported bullying, only 13% reported that the school staff refused to acknowledge the bullying case and took no action to address it. On the other hand, 87% of the respondents reported that the school staff acknowledged the bullying case and took appropriate action to address it. These results highlight the importance of school staff intervention in addressing bullying incidents and the need to ensure that schools have effective reporting and response mechanisms to

Table 1: Reporting of Bullying and School Response: Parental Quotes

| SCHOOLS IGNORED THE BULLYING. | THE SCHOOL ACKNOWLEDGED THE BULLYING |
|---|--|
| "School teachers usually dismiss such incidents and tell children to stop complaining." | "Investigation is still ongoing. Teachers are very responsive." |
| "I had emailed the Teachers and principal, but no effort was taken in it." | "Usually, when it occurs, she will inform the teacher-in-charge immediately. However, the teacher will lecture the bully on the spot, and no follow-up to counsel my child or the bully after that. So the bullying will continue another day." |
| "Sometimes, but I feel the teachers do not listen to her and feel she is always in the wrong." | "Teacher asked for a written report, and action was taken. The bullies' parents were informed, and the boys apologized and signed a written contract that promised not always to harm my son. My son was taught how to deal with bullies in the future by the school counsellor and AED." |
| "No, he did not approach anyone, or he might have and was told it was not an issue. The school even denied they had "bullying" issues - they insist they do not have bullies in St James. He had his pants pulled down by the other kids once, and the school mentioned nothing to me, but they were aware of the incident when I raised it." | "She initially reported to the teacher, who responded by speaking to the bully to apologize. However, when it happened again, I took the time to go down to school and speak to the teacher. The teacher spoke to the child once again. I also spoke to the van driver, who feedback that d bully herself used to be a bully victim. All in all, the matter was resolved more or less. Moreover, now she is in Pri 3 and no longer sees d bully as much as in different sessions (the bully is 1 yr older)." |

tackle this issue. It is also important to note that a significant proportion of bullying incidents may go unreported, indicating the need for increased awareness and support for victims to come forward and report such incidents.

Impact of Bullying on the Child

The data in this study indicate that a significant proportion of children experience bullying, and many may suffer adverse consequences. Out of the total respondents, 27.64% of parents reported that their child had avoided school due to bullying, with fear and anxiety being a major factor. 8.18% of parents reported that their child had thought about hurting themselves or taking their own life as a result of bullying, with depression and low self-esteem being significant factors. However, when children received at least one type of support, such as familial support or professional support, they were more likely to cope well with the bullying. Among those who did not cope well, avoidance and withdrawal were common coping mechanisms towards distress, and they experienced behavior changes such as increased aggression and becoming less trusting or socially avoidant. These findings highlight the importance of addressing bullying and providing support to children who experience it, both in school and at home, to prevent the negative consequences that can result.

Overall, the data suggests that a significant proportion of children experienced negative outcomes due to bullying. A total of 27.64% of children avoided school due to bullying, and those who did reported feelings of fear, anxiety, and a lack of motivation. Additionally, 8.18% of children reported thinking about hurting themselves or taking their life due to the bullying, with low self-confidence and depression being common contributing factors. However, it's worth noting that the majority of children did not experience these severe outcomes, with 78.18% reporting no suicidal thoughts or attempts.

Regarding coping strategies, the results indicate that receiving support from family and friends can be helpful for children dealing with bullying, with 56% of children who received at least one type of support reporting that they coped well. However, only 25% of children who did not cope well reported receiving support, suggesting that more needs to be done to ensure that children are aware of the support available to them.

Finally, while some children reported increased aggression or behavior changes following the bullying, many also grew more resilient in the face of adversity. Overall, the data highlights the need for effective bullying prevention and support strategies to be implemented in schools and at home.

Strategies Recommended by Parents to Address Bullying

Bullying in schools has become an increasingly critical issue with negative effects on children's mental and physical health. To tackle this problem, various strategies have been proposed to prevent and manage bullying effectively. The results indicate that raising awareness is considered the most effective strategy for addressing bullying by

33% of respondents, followed by school involvement (26%) and parental involvement (22%).

In terms of school involvement, respondents believe that teaching children how to handle bullying (38%) and rehabilitating both bullies and victims (56%) are the most effective methods. Teachers play a crucial role in managing bullying cases (23%), followed by parents (12%), and students (65%). Respondents suggest that open communication with schools (37%) and with their child (36%) and encouragement to build confidence (14%) and resilience (9%) are the most useful strategies for parents of bullied children. Finally, a majority of respondents (37%) feel that more needs to be done to minimize bullying, with educating parents (11%) and teachers (16%) being the top two suggestions. Students (74%) have also been identified as a crucial population to educate about bullying. Overall, these findings indicate the importance of collaborative efforts between schools, parents, and students to prevent and manage bullying effectively.

The data suggests that raising awareness, school involvement, parental involvement, and mediation are the most common strategies for addressing bullying. The majority of respondents believe that schools should take an active role in preventing and addressing bullying, with 65% suggesting that schools should focus on educating students about how to handle bullying. Respondents also suggested that rehabilitating both bullies and victims (56%) and teaching children socioemotional skills (33%) are important approaches. Additionally, open communication between schools and parents (37%) and between parents and children (36%) was recommended. Encouraging children and building their confidence (14%), teaching resilience (9%), and helping children to excel in other areas (4%) were other strategies suggested by respondents. However, the data indicates that there is still work to be done to minimize bullying, as over half of the respondents (59%) believe that more needs to be done, either through training and education for parents and teachers (37%) or raising awareness (22%).

Understanding the Risk of Bullying among Students with SEN

The issue of bullying among students with special educational needs (SEN) is a growing concern in many educational settings. According to the data presented, the majority of respondents (70%) agreed that students with SEN are at greater risk of being bullied than children without learning disabilities. The main reasons cited for this were exclusion (21.21%) and being viewed as different (33.33%), which can lead to low self-esteem (15.15%) among students with SEN. These findings suggest that there is a need for greater awareness and education on how to prevent and address bullying among students with SEN. It is important for educators, parents, and students to work together to create a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of their learning abilities.

In addition, the data shows that a significant number of respondents (23%) disagreed with the statement that students with SEN are at greater risk of being bullied, while 7% were unsure. This highlights the need for further research and discussion on the issue. It is possible that those who disagreed or were unsure may not fully understand the challenges that students with SEN face or the impact that bullying can have on their mental health and academic performance.

DISCUSSION

The present study highlights the prevalence and types of bullying experienced by school-aged children based on parental reports. The high percentage of parents reporting that their child has been bullied emphasizes the need for effective prevention and intervention strategies. The findings also indicate that verbal, indirect and peer bullying are the most common types of bullying, suggesting the need for interventions targeting these forms of aggression. The low prevalence of cyberbullying reported by parents could be due to under-reporting or a lack of awareness of this issue among parents.

Based on the data presented in the study, it becomes evident that children with special educational needs (SEN) are at a higher risk of experiencing bullying. This is consistent with previous research, which has found that children with disabilities or learning difficulties are more likely to be bullied than their non-disabled peers (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Unnever & Cornell, 2003). However, it is important to note that while the data suggests a higher risk for SEN children, further investigation is needed to confirm this observation, particularly from the parents' perspectives.

One possible explanation for this is that children with SEN may be perceived as different or less capable by their peers, making them more vulnerable to bullying (Rose et al., 2012). Additionally, it is worth noting that some parents included in the study had children who were not identified as having special educational needs. While this suggests the presence of non-SEN students in the sample, additional information is required to confirm this and explore potential dynamics between non-SEN students and their peers with SEN in relation to bullying experiences.

The study also found that bullying incidents were often prolonged, with a quarter of children experiencing it for multiple years. This is concerning, as prolonged bullying can have long-term negative effects on a child's mental health and well-being (Arseneault et al., 2010). It is important for schools to take a proactive approach to addressing bullying and to provide ongoing support for victims.

As per the findings parents of children aged 7-11 were particularly uncertain about whether their child had experienced bullying. This suggests that younger children may be less likely to report bullying incidents or may not fully understand what constitutes

bullying. It is important for parents and teachers to educate children about what bullying is and how to report it.

The data also suggests that boys were more likely to be victims of bullying than girls. This is consistent with previous research, which has consistently found that boys are more likely to be both victims and perpetrators of bullying than girls (Smith et al., 2002). It is important for schools to address this gender disparity and to provide support and resources for male victims of bullying.

Moreover, parents reported various reasons why their child may be bullied, including difficulties with social cues and low self-confidence. This suggests that strategies that help children develop stronger social skills and build self-confidence may be effective in preventing bullying. For example, social skills training programs have been found to be effective in reducing bullying and improving social skills among children with SEN (Woods & Wolke, 2004).

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of reporting bullying incidents to school staff. While a majority of parents reported the bullying incidents to school staff, a significant proportion of incidents may go unreported. It is important for schools to create a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable reporting bullying incidents and for staff to take appropriate action to address them.

The evidence presented corroborates a need to improve awareness and support for victims of bullying. A significant proportion of bullying incidents may go unreported, highlighting the need for increased awareness and support for victims. This finding is consistent with previous research that indicates that many incidents of bullying go unreported, particularly among students with disabilities (Hymel et al., 2013). The study affirms that parents reported various reasons why their child might be bullied, including difficulties with social cues and low self-confidence. Therefore, strategies that help children develop stronger social skills and build self-confidence may be effective in preventing bullying.

The results of the research also highlight the need for increased awareness about special needs and bullying in schools. Many parents expressed concerns over the lack of awareness about SEN in schools and the need for education on the topics of special needs and bullying. Therefore, it is essential to provide training to teachers and staff members to increase their understanding of SEN and how to support students who are victims of bullying. Additionally, there is a need for more targeted educational interventions for students, which can increase their understanding of disabilities and promote positive attitudes towards students with special needs.

The findings from both Figure 3 and Figure 4 underscore the importance of continued efforts to address and prevent bullying in schools and other settings. Parents and educators should be aware of the prevalence of bullying and its potential impacts on

children's mental health, academic achievement, and overall well-being. In addition, efforts to promote positive social relationships, empathy, and conflict resolution skills among children may help to prevent and reduce bullying behaviours.

The goal of the research was to examine the vulnerability of special educational needs (SEN) students to bullying and the support mechanisms available to them in schools. The evidence presented here supports the hypothesis that SEN students are particularly vulnerable to bullying due to their learning differences, with a majority of respondents reporting that their child had been bullied. This is consistent with previous research that has identified SEN students as a high-risk group for bullying (Rose et al., 2012).

The study further supports the hypothesis that there is a lack of support for SEN students in schools. Participants shared their experiences of schools not taking appropriate addressing or failing to provide the necessary support to SEN students. This finding is consistent with previous research that has identified a lack of support for SEN students in schools (Ttofi et al., 2011).

Moreover, the results support the hypothesis that there is a lack of awareness about SEN and bullying in schools. Parents expressed concerns about the lack of awareness and education on these topics among teachers, students, and parents. This finding aligns with previous research that has highlighted the need for increased awareness and education about SEN and bullying in schools (Ttofi et al., 2011; Rose et al., 2012).

The results add weight to the hypothesis that educating parents, teachers, and students about SEN and bullying is essential. Participants highlighted the need for increased education and awareness about SEN and bullying to prevent and address bullying incidents. This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of education and awareness in preventing and addressing bullying incidents (Ttofi et al., 2011).

In conclusion, the results of the present study provide strong support for the hypothesis that SEN students are vulnerable to bullying and are likely to be bullied due to their learning differences. The study also highlights the need for increased support mechanisms, awareness about SEN and bullying in schools, and education for parents, teachers, and students. Future research could further explore the effectiveness of strategies to prevent bullying and support SEN students in schools.

LIMITATIONS

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, some limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study's sample size was relatively small and may not represent the broader population of SEN students and their families. Additionally, the sample was limited to parents of dyslexic students from the Dyslexia Association of

Singapore. It may have included only those more likely to report bullying incidents, potentially overestimating the true prevalence of bullying.

Furthermore, the study relied on self-report data from parents, which may not accurately reflect their children's experiences. Children with SEN may have difficulty communicating their experiences, or parents may not be aware of all bullying incidents their child may have experienced. It would be valuable for future research to include data directly from SEN students, potentially through interviews or focus groups.

Another limitation of the study is that it was conducted in a single geographical location and may not be generalizable to other regions or cultures. It would be valuable for future studies to include a more diverse sample to understand better the cultural and contextual factors that may impact bullying experiences for SEN students.

Finally, the study focused solely on the experiences of SEN students and did not include a comparison group of non-SEN students. A comparison group would allow for a better understanding of whether bullying experiences for SEN students differ from those of their non-SEN peers.

Overall, while this study provides important insights into the experiences of SEN students and their families, some limitations should be considered in future research to better understand the issue of bullying in this population.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study sheds light on the prevalence and nature of bullying experienced by students with special educational needs (SEN). The findings of this study provide strong evidence that SEN students are particularly vulnerable to bullying due to their learning differences, with a majority of respondents reporting that their child had been bullied. Verbal, indirect, and peer bullying were the most common forms, with cyberbullying being less prevalent. The study also found that bullying incidents were often prolonged, with a quarter of children experiencing it for multiple years.

The research also underscores the need for increased awareness and practical strategies to prevent and address bullying among school-aged children. Parents, educators, and policymakers should collaborate to create safe and inclusive learning environments for all students.

The study highlights the need for increased awareness about special needs and bullying in schools and improved support mechanisms for victims of bullying. Strategies that help children develop stronger social skills and build self-confidence may effectively prevent bullying. However, it is essential to recognise the study's limitations, including its reliance on parent-reported data, which may not accurately capture the full extent of bullying experienced by children with SEN. Further research is needed to explore the perspectives

of children with SEN on their experiences of bullying and investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions and support mechanisms in preventing and addressing the bullying of SEN students.

Overall, the findings of this study have important implications for educators, policymakers, and parents. Schools must develop comprehensive policies and practices to prevent bullying and support students with special educational needs at heightened risk of bullying. Additionally, there is a need for increased awareness and education about special needs and bullying among all stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and students. By working together, we can create safer and more inclusive learning environments for all students, regardless of their learning differences or abilities.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and discussion above, several future recommendations can be made to address the issue of bullying among SEN students. Firstly, schools and teachers should receive comprehensive training on identifying, preventing, and addressing bullying incidents, particularly those involving SEN students. This training should include strategies for promoting a positive and inclusive classroom environment, developing social skills among students, and building self-confidence and resilience.

Secondly, there is a need for increased awareness and education among parents, teachers, and students about special needs and bullying. This could be achieved through regular workshops, training sessions, and awareness campaigns that address SEN students' unique challenges and provide strategies for supporting and protecting them from bullying.

Thirdly, schools and educators should take a more proactive approach to addressing bullying incidents, particularly those involving SEN students. This may involve implementing clear reporting procedures, providing additional support and resources for victims of bullying, and working closely with parents and caregivers to ensure that students receive the necessary support and interventions.

Finally, future research should focus on developing evidence-based interventions and programs to address bullying among SEN students. These interventions should be rigorously evaluated to determine their effectiveness in reducing bullying incidents and improving SEN students' well-being and academic outcomes.

Overall, addressing the issue of bullying among SEN students requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach that involves schools, educators, parents, and students. By working together and implementing evidence-based interventions and strategies, we can create a safer and more inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of their abilities or learning differences.

REFERENCES

- Arseneault, L., Bowes, L., & Shakoor, S. (2010). Bullying victimization in youths and mental health problems: 'Much ado about nothing'? *Psychological Medicine*, *40*(5), 717-729.
- Bird, S., Klein, E., & Loper, E. (2009). *Natural Language Processing with Python: Analyzing Text with the Natural Language Toolkit*. O'Reilly Media, Inc.
- Bradshaw, C., Sawyer, A., & O'Brennan, L. (2007). Bullying and peer victimization at school: Perceptual differences between students and school staff. *School Psychology Review*, *36*(3), 361-382.
- Brank, E. M., Hoetger, L., & Hazen, K. P. (2012). Bullying. *The Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, *8*, 213-230. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-102811-173820>
- Baxendale, S., Cross, D., & Johnston, R. (2012). A review of the evidence on the relationship between gender and adolescents' involvement in violent behavior. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *17*, 297-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2012.03.002>
- Bullying and SEN. (n.d.). *SEN Magazine*. <https://senmagazine.co.uk/content/education/bullying/2173/bullyingandsen/>
- Bullying Statistics - National Bullying Prevention Center. <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/stats.asp>
- Cappadocia, M. C., Weiss, J. A., & Pepler, D. (2012). Bullying experiences among children and youth with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *42*(2), 266-277.
- Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2019). *Preventing bullying*. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv/bullying-factsheet508.pdf>.
- Chua, Y. Y., Wong, W. Y., & Ang, R. P. (2016). The effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Framework in Singapore schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *108*(2), 187-199.
- Cyberbullying Research Center. (2018). *Cyberbullying statistics*. <https://cyberbullying.org/cyberbullying-statistics/>
- Emmery, C., Desmet, B., Lefever, E., Verhoeven, B., De Pauw, G., Daelemans, W., & Hoste, V. (2018). Automatic detection of cyberbullying in a social media text. *PLoS One*, *13*(10), e0203794.
- Erginoz, E., Alikasifoglu, M., Ercan, O., Uysal, O., Alp, Z., Ocak, S., Tanyildiz, G. O., Ekici, B., Yucel, I. K., & Kaymak, D. A. (2015). The role of parental, school, and peer factors in adolescent bullying involvement: Results from the Turkish HBSC 2005/2006 study. *Asia-Pacific Journal Public Health*, *27*(2), NP1591-NP1603. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1010539512473144>
- Espelage, D. L., & Swearer, S. M. (2003). Research on school bullying and victimization: What have we learned, and where do we go from here? *School Psychology Review*, *32*(3), 365-383.
- Espelage, D. L., Rose, C. A., & Polanin, J. R. (2013). Social-emotional learning program to reduce bullying, fighting, and victimization among middle school students with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*, *34*(1), 43-54.
- Facebook. (n.d.). A screenshot of a Facebook post shared by a concerned parent regarding her son's bullying experience in school due to his dyslexia [Description]. Unpublished work.
- Farrell, P. (2013). *Special educational needs: A new look*. Routledge.
- Gini, G., & Pozzoli, T. (2013). *Bullied children and psychosomatic problems: A meta-analysis*. *Pediatrics*.
- González-Calatayud, V., Roman-García, S., & Prendes-Espinosa, M. P. (2021). Disablist bullying: A systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *121*, 105829.

- Görzig, A., & Albdour, M. (2020). The impact of disablist bullying on students with and without special educational needs in English mainstream schools. *British Educational Research Journal*, 48(2), 293-313.
- Görzig, A., & Albdour, M. (2020). Cyberbullying and its association with wellbeing among primary school pupils in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(23), 9033.
- Graham, L. J. (2013). *Bullying and students with disabilities: Strategies and techniques to create safe schools*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hertzog, N. B., & Childs, K. E. (2013). Bullying and students with disabilities: The untold narrative. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 48(2), 177-189.
- Hosseinpour, M., Shokri, O., & Ebrahimi, M. (2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on bullying among children and adolescents: A systematic review. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health*, 7(1), 1-8.
- Hotjar. (n.d.). *Hotjar*. <https://www.hotjar.com/>
- Hotjar Features. (n.d.). *Hotjar*. <https://www.hotjar.com/features/>
- Huang, F. L., & Yan, X. (2019). Disablist bullying experiences and coping strategies of students with special educational needs and disabilities in Hong Kong mainstream schools. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 66(5), 531-546.
- Humphrey, N., & Symes, W. (2011). Peer interaction patterns among adolescents with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) in mainstream school settings. *Autism*, 15(4), 397-419.
- Hymel, S., Comfort, C., & Schonert-Reichl, K. (2013). The social-emotional development of children with disabilities. In K. S. Rosenthal, & B. B. Evans (Eds.), *Handbook of medical and psychological correlates of bullying*, 127-141. Springer
- Juvonen, J., & Graham, S. (2014). Bullying in schools: The power of bullies and the plight of victims. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65, 159-185. [10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115030](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115030)
- Kowalski, R. M., Gini, G., & Steinberg, M. (2014). Bullying in the digital age: A critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(4), 1073-1137.
- Kowalski, R. M., Giumetti, G. W., Schroeder, A. N., & Lattanner, M. R. (2020). Bullying in the digital age: A critical review and meta-analysis of cyberbullying research among youth. *Psychological Bulletin*, 146(2), 129-157.
- Lee, J. (2020, Dec 17). *S'porean, 13, overdosed on painkillers after school bullies assaulted & harassed her relentlessly*. Mothership. <https://mothership.sg/2020/12/sporean-13-overdosed-on-painkillers-after-school-bullies-assaulted-harassed-her-relentlessly/>
- Limber, S. P., Small, M. A., & Simeonsson, R. J. (2010). Teacher-on-student bullying: Prevalence and relationship to school climate. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102(2), 351-361. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018380>
- Lindsay, G. (2013). Educational psychology and the effectiveness of inclusive education/mainstreaming. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 83(1), 1-23.
- McCallion, G., & Feder, J. (2013). *Student bullying: Overview of research, federal initiatives, and legal issues*. Congressional Research Service. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R43254.pdf>.
- Menesini, E. & Salmivalli, E. (2017). Bullying in schools: the state of knowledge and effective interventions, *Psychology, Health & Medicine*, 22:sup1, 240-253, DOI: [10.1080/13548506.2017.1279740](https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2017.1279740)
- Ministry of Education. (n.d.). *Anti-Bullying Framework*. <https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/programmes/social-and-emotional-learning/anti-bullying-framework>

- Mohammad, S. M. (2018). *Sentiment analysis: A comprehensive review*. In Proceedings of the 2018 International Conference on Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing, 1–7.
- National Center for Educational Statistics. (2019). *Student reports of bullying: Results from the 2017 School Crime Supplement to the National Victimization Survey*. US Department of Education. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2015056>
- Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *JAMA*, *285*(16), 2094–2100. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.285.16.2094>
- Norwich, B. (2015). Diverse perspectives on inclusive school communities. In L. Florian, (Ed.), *International perspectives on inclusive education*, pp. 15-35. Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Ong, J. (2021, May 11). Five in 1,000 secondary school students bullied in 2020: Sun Xueling. The Straits Times. <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/politics/five-in-1000-secondary-school-students-bullied-in-2020-sun-xueling>
- Olweus, D. (2009). Understanding and researching bullying: Some critical issues. In S. Jimerson, S. Swearer, & D. Espelage (Eds.), *Handbook of bullying in schools: An international perspective* (pp. 9–33). New York: Routledge.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2020). *Tween Cyberbullying in 2020*. Cyberbullying Research Center and Cartoon Network. https://i.cartoonnetwork.com/stop-bullying/pdfs/CN_Stop_Bullying_Cyber_Bullying_Report_9.30.20.pdf.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2010). Bullies move beyond the schoolyard: A preliminary look at cyberbullying. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, *8*(2), 148–169.
- Perren, S., Etekal, I., & Ladd, G. (2013). The impact of peer victimization on later maladjustment: Mediating and moderating effects of hostile and self-blaming attributions. *Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *54*, 46-55.
- Peterson, R. L., & Pennington, B. F. (2015). Developmental dyslexia. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *11*, 283-307.
- Rieffe, C., Oosterveld, P., Miers, A. C., Terwogt, M. M., & Ly, V. (2012). Peer victimization and self-esteem in children with and without hearing loss: The mediating role of loneliness. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *53*(7), 731-738.
- Rose, C. A., & Espelage, D. L. (2012). Risk and protective factors associated with the bullying involvement of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders*, *37*, 133–148. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ989490>
- Rose, C. A., Espelage, D. L., Aragon, S. R., & Elliot, A. (2012). Bullying and victimization rates among students in general and special education: A comparative analysis. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, *18*(2), 125-142.
- Rose, C. A., Monda-Amaya, L. E., & Espelage, D. L. (2012). Bullying perpetration and victimization in special education: A review of the literature. *Remedial and Special Education*, *33*(2), 114-126.
- Salmivalli, C. (2010). Bullying and the peer group: A review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *15*(2), 112-120.
- Sauro, J., & Lewis, J. R. (2016). *Quantifying the user experience: Practical statistics for user research*. Morgan Kaufmann.
- Saylor, C. F., & Leach, J. B. (2009). Perceived bullying and social support students accessing special inclusion programming. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, *21*, 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-008-9126-4>

- Sharon, T. (2013). *Measuring user experience on a large scale: User-centered metrics for web applications*. Morgan Kaufmann.
- Shaywitz, S. E. (2018). Dyslexia. *New England Journal of Medicine*, *378*(24), 2295-2296.
- Silva, G. R., Lima, M. L., Barreira, A. K., & Acioli, R. M. (2019). Prevalence and factors associated with bullying: Differences between the roles of bullies and victims of bullying. *Jornal de Pediatria*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jped.2019.09.005>
- Smith, P. K., Morita, Y., Junger-Tas, J., Olweus, D., Catalano, R., & Slee, P. (2002). *The nature of school bullying: A cross-national perspective*. Routledge.
- Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2008). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *49*(4), 376-385.
- Smith, P. K., Mahdavi, J., Carvalho, M., Fisher, S., Russell, S., & Tippett, N. (2019). Cyberbullying: Its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *50*(4), 376-385. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2008.02046.x
- Snowling, M. J. (2013). Dyslexia: A language learning impairment. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *54*(1), 4-15.
- Sutherland, K. S., & Sullivan, J. R. (2017). Students with emotional and behavioral disorders and their experiences with bullying: A national study. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *25*(2), 96-108.
- Swearer, S., Wang, C., Maag, J., Siebecker, A., & Frerichs, L. (2012). Understanding the bullying dynamic among students in special and general education. *Journal of School Psychology*, *50*(4), 503-520.
- Swearer, S. M., Espelage, D. L., & Napolitano, S. A. (2012). *Bullying prevention and intervention: Realistic strategies for schools*. Guilford Press.
- Swearer, S. M., Hoyt, T. L., & Cary, L. A. (2015). Teacher-targeted bullying prevention and intervention: A social-ecological perspective. *School Psychology Review*, *44*(3), 354-373.
- Skapinakis, P., Bellos, S., Gkatsa, T., Magklara, K., Lewis, G., Araya, R., Stylianidis, S., & Mavreas, V. (2011). The association between bullying and early stages of suicidal ideation in late adolescents in Greece. *BMC psychiatry*. *11*. 22. 10.1186/1471-244X-11-22.
- Ttofi, M. M., Farrington, D. P., Lösel, F., & Loeber, R. (2011). Do the victims of school bullies tend to become depressed later in life? A systematic review and meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research*, *3*(4), 219-227.
- Unnever, J. D., & Cornell, D. G. (2003). Bullying, self-control, and ADHD. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *18* (2), 129-147. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260502238732>
- Wang, L., Ang, R. P., & Chua, Y. Y. (2019). The effectiveness of bullying prevention education in Singapore schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *111*(6), 1277-1289.
- Waasdorp, T. E., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2015). The overlap between cyberbullying and traditional bullying. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *56*(5), 483-488.
- Whitson, M. L., & Triche, L. B. (2018). Disablist bullying: Shedding light on the experiences of adolescents with disabilities. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *88*, 233-240.
- Wolke, D., Copeland, W. E., Angold, A., & Costello, E. J. (2013). Impact of bullying in childhood on adult health, wealth, crime, and social outcomes. *Psychological Science*, *24*(10), 1958-1970.
- Vellutino, F. R., Fletcher, J. M., Snowling, M. J., & Scanlon, D. M. (2013). Specific reading disability (dyslexia): What have we learned in the past four decades? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, *54*(1), 3.
- Volk, A. A., Dane, A. V., & Marini, Z. A. (2014). What is bullying? A theoretical redefinition. *Developmental Review*, *34*(4), 327-343.

- Xu, S. Q., Ren, J., Li, F. F., Wang, L., & Wang S., M. (2020). School bullying among vocational school students in China: Prevalence and associations with personal, relational, and school factors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/088626052090736>
- Ybarra, M. L., Diener-West, M., Markow, D., Leaf, P. J., Hamburger, M., & Boxer, P. (2021). Prevalence and Correlates of Cyberbullying Victimization Among Adolescents in the United States During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 69*(1). 88-95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.12.020>

APPENDIX 1—DAS Bullying Questionnaire

ARE YOU CONCERNED THAT YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?

DAS BULLYING QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear DAS Parent,

DAS is committed to providing support for you and your child in areas influencing their learning. You may have read in National media about Bullying and how it affects those who are discriminated upon by various acts. The issue of bullying is particularly critical for children with Special Educational Needs as it affects learning and emotional health.

This survey has been designed to obtain information of the prevalence, nature of and support for acts of bullying encountered by children with dyslexia. Your contributions will prompt further action, including the development of Behaviour Management to support students and parents.

Please be assured that all information shared in this survey will be kept private and confidential. When sharing the final report, all information will be anonymised. This survey will take between 10-20 minutes to complete. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Madinah Begum
Educational Advisor, Dyslexia Association of Singapore (madinah@das.org.sg)

SECTION 1:BACKGROUND DATA

Name of parent: _____ (OPTIONAL)

No. of Children attending DAS: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 (please select one)

| | Child 1 | Child 2 | Child 3 | Child 4 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Name of child at DAS | | | | |
| Age | | | | |
| School level | | | | |
| Gender | | | | |
| DAS Learning Centre | | | | |

Number of Family Members: 1–2 3–5 6–10 more than 10

Email Address of parents: _____

(OPTIONAL – Please provide us with this information if you consent to us contacting you to further clarify your responses.)

SECTION 2: PREVALENCE OF BULLYING

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of these statements regarding Bullying.

| Questions on the Prevalence of Bullying | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|---|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 1. Was your child physically bullied at school? | | | | | |
| 2. Was your child verbally bullied at school? | | | | | |
| 3. Was your child indirectly bullied at school? (e.g, peers talking behind their back, being excluded from peer circles) | | | | | |
| 4. Was your child ever cyberbullied? | | | | | |
| 5. Was your child bullied by his peers? | | | | | |
| 6. Was your child bullied by his teachers? | | | | | |
| 7. Was your child bullied outside of school (e.g, siblings, cousins, uncle, aunt, etc) | | | | | |

If you answered Sometimes, Often and/or Always to any of the above questions, please proceed to Section 3. ^

If you answered Rarely and/or Never to all the questions, please proceed to Section 4. *

^ (Internal comment - Those who have children who have been bullied respond to sections 1,2 & 3.
Total number of Qns:21)

* (Internal comment - Those who have children who have not been bullied respond to sections 1,2 & 4.
Total number of Qns:15)

SECTION 3:

PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTS WHOSE SEN CHILDREN HAVE ENCOUNTERED BULLYING

Please complete this if you answered "Sometimes", "Often" and/or "Always" to any of the questions in Section 2. We appreciate your honest and open responses to the following questions.

Q9: How often was your child bullied and how long did the bullying last? Elaborate more on the bullying incident/s.

Q10: Why do you think your child was bullied?

Q11: Did you or your child approach the school staff to report the bullying? If yes, please elaborate on the response from the school?

Q12: Did your child avoid school by playing truant or pretending to be sick because they were bullied? If yes, please elaborate.

Q13: Did your child think about hurting him/herself or taking his/her life? If yes, please elaborate.

Q14: Is your child coping well with the bullying? If yes, what has helped your child cope with the bullying?

Q15: Does your child feel distressed in situations which remind them of the bullying event/s? If yes, please elaborate.

Q16: Did the bullying event/s cause long-term effects to your child? If yes, please describe below.

Q17: What do you think adults/schools/parents do to eliminate bullying in school?

END

Your views are very important to us.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. If you would like to find out more about the study or what can be done to support your child with the bullying encountered in school, please contact me at: madinah@das.org.sg

SECTION 4:**PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTS WHOSE SEN CHILDREN HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED BULLYING**

Please complete this if you answered "Rarely" and/or "Never" to the questions in Section 2.

We appreciate your honest and open responses to the following questions.

Q18: "Students with SEN are at greater risk of being bullied than a child without learning disabilities." Do you agree with that statement? Please elaborate.

Q19: Why do you think your child has not been bullied? Please elaborate.

Q20: What suggestions do you have for parents of children who are being bullied?

Q21: Do you think that enough is done to minimise bullying? If no, please elaborate on what else you feel can be done to improve this for SEN learners.

END

Your views are very important to us.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. If you would like to find out more about the study or what can be done to support your child with the bullying encountered in school, please contact me at: madinah@das.org.sg