



## The Urgency of Preventing Bullying in Schools: Systematic Literature Review Qualitative

*Original scientific paper*

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### Abstract

*Bullying practices that still occur with various types, motives, victims, perpetrators, and places, also become the responsibility of schools to participate in handling them. This Systematic Literature Review using the PRISMA Framework aims to reveal the harmful effects of bullying practices, especially on victims, and the urgency of school policies to deal with bullying practices. The researcher found 761 research articles that were inputted into the PRISMA framework, which consisted of the Identification, Screening, Eligibility, & Inclusion stages, resulting in 27 research articles that fit the research topic. The results showed that bullying of various types has harmful physical and mental effects, resulting in anxiety, trauma, and suicidal practices experienced by victims. Schools need to develop policies to deal with bullying practices by understanding social phenomena in the student environment, developing policies to prevent bullying practices by instilling a sense of sympathy and empathy for others, and inviting parents to participate in the program's success that the school has prepared.*

**Keywords:** Urgency, Bullying, School, Systematic Literature Review

If the practice of bullying takes place continuously, it can become a serious threat to student's mental and physical health (Roland & Galloway, 2004). Victims of bullying will get trauma because of the intimidation or oppression they receive. Although discussion and research on bullying is a widespread discussion (Hanish et al., 2013), But the practice of bullying

continues. It is essential to look at the various causalities of bullying practices from the side of students and schools as the parties responsible for preventing incidents of bullying in the school environment (Samara & Smith, 2008). Because the motives of the perpetrators and the impact received by the victims need to be widely elaborated so that schools can predict and develop related

prevention of bullying practices.

Mapping the impact of bullying needs to be done to track the various reasons behind the perpetrators of bullying. At the same time, categorizing the injuries that the victim received physically and psychologically from the victim are classified as easy or difficult to heal in the short and long term (Mukherjee et al., 2020). Victims also need special treatment according to the type, perpetrator, time, and place of bullying because different cases require different handling. The trauma that the victim received while he was a student will affect his psychosocial behavior in adulthood (Strøm et al., 2018).

Frequently bullied students experience feelings of misery and loss of motivation, both of which contribute to a decline in their ability to concentrate and passion for school (Blitz & Lee, 2015a). The physical impact of bullying is easy to see, in contrast to the psychosocial effects, which are challenging to recognize and requires a specific context. Today, bullying is not limited by space and time, and it occurs both in the real world and in cyberspace, directly or indirectly (Hutzell & Payne, 2018). The more reasons there are for bullying, the more challenging it is to foresee the motives or triggers for bullying. As a result, schools tend only to recognize the most common forms of bullying and dismiss alternative possibilities.

Students involved in bullying are often classified into one of three categories: victim-only, perpetrator-only, or both perpetrator and former victim of bullying. Each of these categories includes various subcategories: physical; mental; relational or social (Rezapour et al., 2022). Schools must provide particular interventions in dealing with bullying practices. It's possible that teaching kids good coping skills, enhancing communication between harassed students and teachers and other school personnel, and providing a safe place for children to go in the case of bullying might help reduce the number of students who choose not to attend school (Vidourek et al., 2016). However, even if the presence of empathic adults at school may not always prevent bullying, it may lessen the destructive psychological impact that bullying has on those who are bullied. As a result, efforts must be made in every school to guarantee that the people at the school, and teachers in particular, are prepared to detect the symptoms of kids'

distress and to give help when required. Maintaining student–teacher connections that are positive and trustworthy is essential not only because they contribute to the students' increased academic accomplishment but also, most importantly, because they are necessary for the student's overall social and emotional growth (Baek et al., 2019).

A teacher must be able to become a psychologist for students as a mediator in the practice of bullying and heal students' fears or negative feelings so that the fear of being bullied is not carried into adulthood (Boulton et al., 2012). Therefore, using students' free time while at school is a determinant of welfare; if not used positively, it is feared that it can plunge students into delinquent behaviour such as bullying (Efianingrum et al., 2021). Social capital and psychoeducation need to be developed in schools to deal with bullying practices (Nisa Utami & Efianingrum, 2021). There is a very close relationship between school policymakers and bullying practices, from the policies made by the school principal to the teacher's role as a psychologist to counsel perpetrators and victims of bullying (Dardiri et al., 2020). This study aims to answer the problem of the impact of bullying and the urgency of school policies in dealing with bullying.

## Method

This study utilized Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), as seen in Figure 1. All research articles utilized to perform this literature review were outlined in a flowchart, from the identification phase through the twenty-seven research papers received for this literature study.

This review intends to highlight the impact of bullying that threatens kids based on the motivations, causes, and importance of avoiding bullying in schools. The author has derived the following three research questions from our purpose:

- What are the harmful effects of bullying practices?
- What is the urgency of school policy in dealing with bullying?

The author collects 761 papers relevant to the topic in the identification process. The authors searched Scopus, ERIC, Springer, and Taylor and France Group to collect

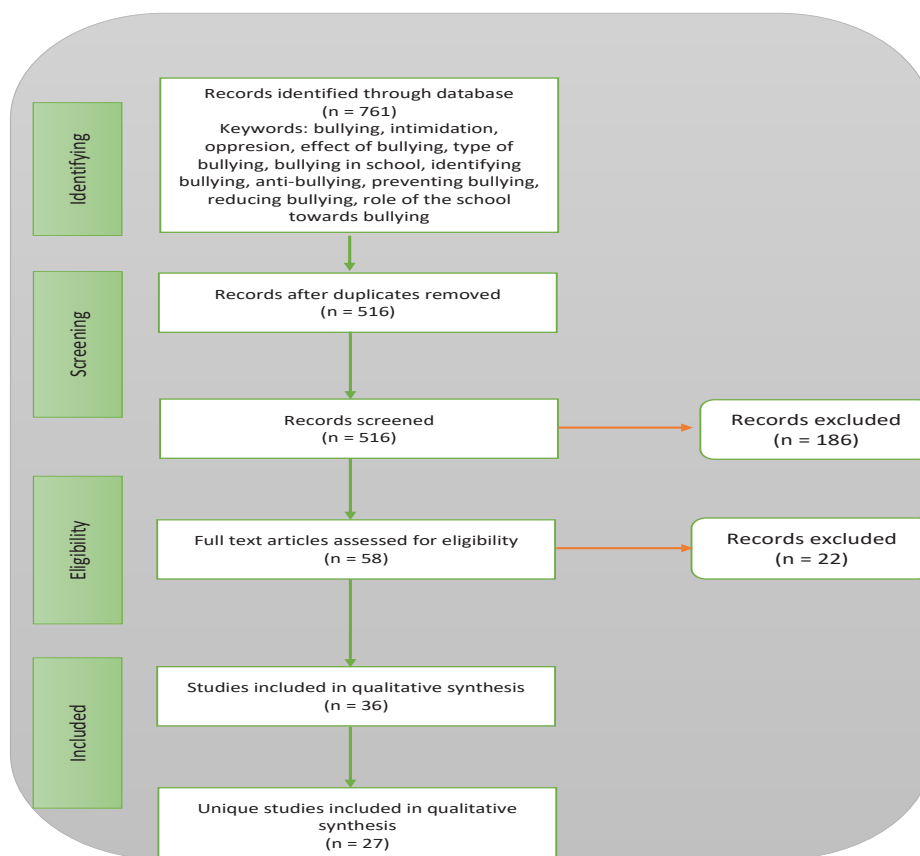
all these papers. This study uses several keywords to speed up the identification process. The keywords used by the writer are as follows: ["bullying" OR ("intimidation" OR ("oppression"))] AND [("effect of bullying" OR ("bullying in school) OR ("role of the school towards bullying") OR ("type of bullying") OR ("identifying bullying") OR ("Anti-Bullying") OR ("preventing bullying") OR ("reducing bullying")]. In the first screening process, the authors found that 245 papers were duplicated, so they were not used in research papers. After that, the authors continued the screening process to ensure that the authors got the best papers with studies that were most relevant to the research topic.

The authors collected 516 research papers after eliminating duplications in the first screening stage. The next step is to conduct a second screening for the 516 papers mentioned earlier. At this stage, the authors have eliminated many research papers to narrow our references. In detail, 272 papers were not included because the authors only used papers from 2013 to 2023.

This year's interval was chosen because the authors are interested in knowing the dynamics of impacts and policies related to bullying from year to year. The author also excludes papers that do not discuss the impact of bullying and school policies in preventing it. A total of 186 papers were also excluded based on the title and abstract. After the authors underwent a second screening process, 458 papers were excluded because they did not meet the criteria. After that, the author needs to prove the feasibility of each paper. A total of 58 research papers in the form of full-text articles were assessed for their eligibility. In answering questions from systematic literature payments, the authors excluded 22 other research papers.

The author excluded a total of 9 other pieces of research. The author has carried out all the processes from the PRISMA flow chart so that the selected papers will be used as samples and discussed further to support the research topic. The author compiled this systematic literature review using 27 studies as references to the study and review.

**Figure 1.**  
*Research Flow Using the PRISMA Framework*



## Result and Discussion

According to the findings of the author's research, a search using the keywords "bullying," "intimidation," "oppression," "effect of bullying," "bullying in school," "role of the school toward bullying," "type of bullying," "identifying bullying," "Anti-Bullying," "preventing bullying," and "reducing bullying" yielded a total of 761 publications across Scopus, ERIC, Springer, and Taylor & France Group.

After analyzing 58 publications eligible for consideration and removing papers deemed irrelevant, 27 papers were selected for this systematic review due to their applicability and relevance to the issue at hand, focusing on uncovering the harmful effects of bullying, as well as the relevance of schools in viewing the bullying phenomenon. The papers that have been selected for the systematic literature review can be seen in table 1 below.

**Table 1.**  
*Synthesis Results on Urgency of Preventing Bullying in Schools*

No	Author/Years	Method	Participant	Bullying threatens students physically and mentally	Urgency of school policy in dealing with bullying
1.	(Saldiraner, et al., 2021)	Qualitative Phenomenology	20 principals, 7 were from Akdeniz, 6 were from Toroslar, 3 were from Mezitli and 4 were from Yenişehir	Agree	Urgent
2.	(Yeşim, et al., 2022)	Quantitative Survey	590 students, 299 girls and 289 boys in Primary School Çankırı	Agree	Urgent
3.	(Baldry, et al., 2017)	Quantitative Survey	2.785 Italian students	Agree	Urgent
4.	(Esselmont, et al., 2014)	Quantitative Survey	The data for the current analysis is from the 2001–2002 United States Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) survey	Agree	Urgent
5.	(Mann, et al., 2014)	Quantitative Survey	Data from the 2009 Youth in Iceland survey among students, aged 14 to 16 years, who were enrolled in the 9th and 10th grades in all Icelandic secondary schools	Agree	Urgent
6.	(Longobardi, et al., 2019)	Quantitative Experiment	430 students in two Italian public middle schools (grades 6–8)	Agree	Urgent
7.	(Hall, et al., 2016)	Quantitative Experiment	324 schools in 85 (74%) of the 115 school districts in North Carolina	Agree	Urgent
8.	(Chen, et al. 2013)	Quantitative Survey	1912 students in Primary School Taiwan	Agree	Urgent

**Table 1 (continued).***Synthesis Results on Urgency of Preventing Bullying in Schools*

9.	<i>(Dorio, et al., 2019)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	The sample included students in 6th (35.2%), 7th (32.8%), and 8th (31.8%) grade (N = 870; 49.7% female). Participants' self-reported their racial/ethnic makeup as follows: White (56.3%), Hispanic/ Latino (22%), Multiracial (9.9%), African American (8.5%), Asian American (2.6%), Native American (0.1%), Pacific Islander (0.1%), and missing (10.5%)	Agree	Urgent
10.	<i>(Haugen, et al., 2019)</i>	Qualitative Content Analysis	Anti-bullying policies were obtained in 2018 through 2019 from 76 public school districts and charter schools across the State of Louisiana	Agree	Urgent
11.	<i>(Markkanen, et al., 2019)</i>	Quantitative Survey	4262 respondents of which 2152 were 13 years old (1045 boys, 1107 girls) and 2110 were 15 years old (1008 boys, 1102 girls)	Agree	Urgent
12.	<i>(Rigby, 2022)</i>	Qualitative	Theoretical perspectives and two explanatory model of school bullying	Agree	Urgent
13.	<i>(Pepelasi, et al., 2019)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	29 students (9-11 years) in sixth grade	Agree	Urgent
14.	<i>(Atkins, et al., 2020)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	Within the 4 four schools, 185 students between 5th and 8th grades	Agree	Urgent
15.	<i>(Romano, et al., 2019)</i>	Quantitative Survey	6.585 students who participated in a pilot test introducing a new Mental Health-Module (MH-M)	Agree	Urgent
16.	<i>(Potard, et al., 2021)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	967 adolescents aged 11–16 year	Agree	Urgent

**Table 1 (continued).***Synthesis Results on Urgency of Preventing Bullying in Schools*

17.	<i>(Eldridge, et al., 2019)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	150 teachers in the study (113 women and 37 men: elementary, middle, high school)	Agree	Urgent
18.	<i>(Rezapour, et al., 2021)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	834 students from 16 Iranian public middle schools	Agree	Urgent
19.	<i>(Jenkins, et al., 2021)</i>	Quantitative Survey	683 primarily White 8–11-year old youth from three elementary schools in the Midwest	Agree	Urgent
20.	<i>(Perace, et al., 2022)</i>	Qualitative Case Study-Multi Case	3–12 staff members depending on school size) or via telephone (team coordinator only) in the middle and at the end of the school year	Agree	Urgent
21.	<i>(Man, Ting-Lan, et al., 2020)</i>	Quantitative Survey	730 seventh graders from an urban public junior high school in southern Taiwan	Agree	Urgent
22.	<i>(Gardella, et al., 2019)</i>	Quantitative Survey	64,992 students from 115 high schools across 27 school districts from across a southeastern US	Agree	Urgent
23.	<i>(Nixon, et al., 2019)</i>	Mix Method	Theoretical justification and experimental verification of content (53 students)	Agree	Urgent
24.	<i>(Stark, et al., 2021)</i>	Quantitative Survey	30 participants per group	Agree	Urgent
25.	<i>(Zych, et al., 2020)</i>	Quantitative Survey	916 students followed up from ages 7 to 17 with 7 waves of data	Agree	Urgent
26.	<i>(Dietrich, et al., 2022)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	1675 children who entered the school system in Zurich and whose 56 schools were randomly selected to participate in this study from 90 public schools in Zurich	Agree	Urgent
27.	<i>(Ringdal, et al., 2020)</i>	Quantitative Experiment	1814 students High Schools in Norway	Agree	Urgent

**Note:** The article data presented was selected based on considerations related to the threat of physical and mental bullying of students explicitly and expresses the urgency of handling bullying in schools. Number and location of participants are presented in as much detail as possible.

### **Bullying Threatens the Physical and Mental Health of Students**

Based on a systematic literature review explaining if bullying has a detrimental effect on student's physical and mental health (Ringdal et al., 2020; Saaldiraner & Gızır, 2021). Use forceful physical contact, including hitting, pushing, and kicking. In the meantime, victims can be subjected to intimidation, discrimination, threats, and harassment through verbal forms of oppression (Hall & Chapman, 2018; Nixon et al., 2020; Stark et al., 2022). Bullying in relationships denies the victim's presence or isolates them from social interaction (Chen et al., 2015; Esselmont, 2014). The use of computers, laptops and other electronic devices that are compatible with social media platforms is associated with another type of bullying that is referred to as cyberbullying. This type of bullying is carried out to cause victims emotional and mental harm and is carried out in cyberspace (Baldry et al., 2017). When violence occurs over a prolonged period and in stages, it inevitably leads to victims suffering physical and social injuries, which in turn affect their mental health. The most dangerous of the effects of bullying on mental health is the idea of suicide (Atkins et al., 2020; Gardella et al., 2020; Nixon et al., 2020; Rigby, 2022). The effects of bullying on mental health include decreased well-being, self-esteem, trust, interpersonal relationships, depression, anxiety, and the idea of suicide (Rezapour et al., 2022; Romano et al., 2020).

If the victim does not receive special treatment, such as putting some distance between themselves and the person who harmed them, it will be difficult for them to recover from the potentially harmful effects of the incident. So that victims are not subjected to repeated acts of intimidation and violence, and so that they have the opportunity to heal both physically and mentally from the wounds they have sustained. In most cases, the person who is wronged becomes the weaker party, while the person who is victimized becomes the stronger party (Kaufman et al., 2021). Therefore, there is a need for mediation, as well as a modification of the existing social climate, in order to lessen the negative impact that is had on the victim (Dietrich & Cohen, 2021; Zhao & Chang, 2019). If nothing is done to stop it, the negative

effects of bullying will only get worse over time, which will result in trauma for the victim (Blitz & Lee, 2015b; Kennedy, 2021; Ribakova et al., 2016; Sterzing et al., 2020).

### **Urgency of School Policy in Dealing With Bullying**

Based on a systematic literature review, it was found that schools have a fundamental role in preventing and handling bullying practices. This role makes schools raise the urgency of school policies in dealing with bullying practices. Prevention and handling can be done through policies prepared and implemented by schools to minimize the adverse effects of bullying practices. Inappropriate educational policies, overcrowded school programs, and inadequate physical and social facilities in facilitating students' social relations are considered school factors that cause bullying in schools, so the role of the principal in diagnosing bullying practices systematically and examining the possibilities that arise from various points of view (Saaldiraner & Gızır, 2021). Bullying often occurs in school environments rarely seen by teachers (playgrounds, corridors/hallways, canteens, school transportation, etc.). Schools need to intervene in suppressing the practice of bullying through specific policies so that students who are vulnerable to becoming victims get protection (Eldridge & Jenkins, 2020; Mann et al., 2015; Stickl Haugen et al., 2020). School interventions can act as a counter to harmful social group norms in the student's environment (Rigby, 2022).

Although teachers are busy with class time, they should not only focus on explicitly visible bullying practices but also understand the various social phenomena that occur in students' social circles, such as culture and power relations (Markkanen et al., 2021), because usually bullying perpetrators engage in more than one bullying practice, according to situational factors (Jenkins et al., 2022). Without support from schools through policies that provide positive experiences, bullying practices can quickly occur (Dorio et al., 2020; Ma & Chan, 2021; Tzani-Pepelasi et al., 2019). The school policy is also supported by all school members, from the principal teachers, employees, and peers. Policies made by schools also facilitate gender justice, meaning that they do not discriminate against one gender because there are differences in bullying

practices experienced by men and women (Potard et al., 2022). School policies are not only limited to drafting but also practice, especially harmonious coordination in the division of roles of each school member (Pearce et al., 2022). In practice, schools invite families to oversee the programs that have been implemented (Zych et al., 2021). It should be emphasized that the harmful effects of bullying practices certainly make schools have to develop policies to prevent them. However, the most important thing is not only the policies that are formulated or practiced but always fostering a positive school climate through sympathy and empathy for others (Longobardi et al., 2020).

### Limitations and Future Research

This research is a systematic literature review that has limitations in that it does not look at the duality between social actors (perpetrators or victims of bullying) and social structures (family, school, community) in depth by considering the noumena or something hidden behind the phenomenon, the things that underlie the social phenomenon of bullying practices. This research has implications as a future preliminary study in understanding the phenomenon of bullying from various social structures and revealing the hidden factors behind bullying practices. However, this study emphasizes two things expected to be of concern to all perpetrators in educational institutions. First, regarding the most dangerous effects of bullying practices, namely depression, trauma, and suicide experienced by victims. Second, to make schools aware of the need to formulate particular policies to prevent bullying practices while internalizing a sense of sympathy and empathy in every practice.

### Conclusion

Research and discussion on bullying will be an ongoing discourse, along with the socio-cultural dynamics in society. As an educational institution, it should play an active role in preventing bullying, given the harmful impact of bullying on victims. In its development, bullying has several types because the motives and places where bullying practices occur are increasingly

diverse: physical, mental, social-relational, and cyber with various practices. The harmful impact of bullying also forces schools to develop and practice policies for preventing and handling bullying practices.

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