A Proposed Culture-Based Model for Elementary School Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying Cases in Kuwaiti Government Schools

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Abstract: This study aimed to prepare a proposed culture-based model for primary school social studies teachers' perceptions of bullying cases in public schools in Kuwait. The study sample consisted of (200) female social studies teachers in elementary schools. The study results showed that the ratio between applying the social studies curriculum in elementary schools and bullying incidents in Kuwait was weak. Social studies teachers are not satisfied with the social studies curriculum in terms of its suitability for the intellectual levels of students and its role in preparing good learners. The study recommended the need for curricula planners to keep up with modern psychological and educational trends in reducing the incidence of bullying in schools and for curricula developers to benefit from the results of this study by taking some measures to reduce cases of bullying.

(**Keywords**: Bullying, Culture-based Model of Action; Social Studies Curricula)

Introduction

Human development is a top priority that indicates the strength of the nation. A happy nation is a reflection of happy people, without discrimination. The negative effects and strain of bullying on the students inside and outside the school have been considered a hindrance to the students' holistic development of learning (Wang et al., 2022). On a global scale, bullying ranks as one of the top problems in schools (UNICEF, 2018). Although there are campaigns against its proliferation, Kuwaiti schools have been taking actions to mitigate this problem but have not been checking on its curriculum implementation to determine whether or not there is a factor influencing cases of bullying incidences in school. The study surveys the strength of implementing social studies curriculum in Kuwaiti elementary schools, knowing that social studies allow learners to solve social issues and live a harmonious life in society. Upon seeing the real scenario of the subject's curricular implementation and how this relates to bullying as a social problem, the institutions must be aided to make informed decisions about the steps to further decrease bullying incidences in school by strengthening curricular implementation.

ملخص: هدفت الدراسة إلى اعداد نموذج مقترح قائم على الثقافة لتصورات معلمي الدراسات الاجتماعية في المرحلة الابتدائية لحالات التنمر في المدارس الحكومية بدولة الكويت. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من) 200 (معلمة من معلمي المرحلة الابتدائية تخصص الدراسات الاجتماعية في فصل الخريف ((2022، وقد بينت نتائج الدراسة أن النسبة بين تطبيق منهج الدراسات الاجتماعية في المدارس الابتدائية وحدوث حالات التنمر في مدراس دولة الكويت جاءت بدرجة ضعيفة، وأن معلمي الدراسات الاجتماعية غير راضين عن منهج الدراسات الاجتماعية من حيث ملاءمته للمستويات الفكرية للطلاب ودوره في إنتاج متعلمين جيدين، وأوصت الدراسة إلى ضرورة توجه مطوري المناهج نحو مواكبة التوجهات التربوية والنفسية الحديثة بغرض التقليل من حالات على التنمر في المدارس، وأن يستفيد مخططو المناهج من نتائج هذه الدراسة من خلال اتخاذ بعض الإجراءات للحد من حالات التنمر.

(**الكلمات المفتاحية**: التنمر، مناهج الدراسات الاجتماعية، نموذج قائم على الثقافة)

Bullying is unwelcome violent behavior by school-age children that incorporates a real or imagined power imbalance. The action is repeated over time or has the potential to be repeated. Children who bully others or who themselves are bullied may experience severe moves towards taking steps to stop bullying. The 1991 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) declared in Article 16, Section 2, that "the child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks".

Along this vein, learning social studies has always been a major area where attitude and action toward bullying are easily integrated into the lessons' learning competencies. Social studies education enables students to comprehend the society they live in make wise decisions regarding matters affecting them, especially as they get older (Coleman, 2021).

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Hence, social studies teachers must impart knowledge and a proper mindset about bullying incidents inside and outside of the school. Technically, teachers must see themselves as models to promote respect and equality among the learners in school to reduce or, if not eliminate, cases of bullying incidences in schools.

However, bullying remains a threat to the learners' humanistic education in school. The United Nations (2018) reported that more or less 130 million children, or one in three children worldwide, have been bullying victims. Oqba bin Nafie Intermediate School Director Mishaan Al-Theferi revealed that there is an increase in bullying cases in the country, and this has resulted in negative effects such as loss of confidence and concentration, refusal to socialize, and consequently poor academic performance (Kuwaiti Times, 2022).

Recognizing this problem, the study aims to understand how the social studies curriculum in elementary schools in Kuwait addresses the problems of bullying among learners in their institutions. Bullying is a societal misconduct that has been considered in much literature and administrative legalities in different countries but still prevails to occur. The widespread use of technology and contemporary media and communication tools, which portray bullying incidents, have made this situation even worse. In schools, bullying is a problem that needs immediate action. Bullying has an effect on the entire school community. It hurts students' health, happiness, and academic performance. Students may experience loneliness, unhappiness, and fear as a result (Grinshteyn et al., 2021; Martinez et al., 2022). More so, bullying was found to be very much related to suicidal ideation, suicidal planning, and suicidal attempts in adolescents worldwide (Tang et al., 2020). Additionally, bullying was investigated in relation to loneliness and perceived social support among 67 victims, 26 bullies and 48 bully-victims in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 in Jordanian schools (Abu Ghazal, 2009). Jaradat (2008) investigated the prevalence and correlates of bullying among Jordanian middle school students and found that victims have low self-esteem.

Locally, Alhajeri and Alenezi (2020) found out that student bullying occurs in public schools in Kuwait, is more common in boys' schools, and is more common in secondary schools. The problems need to be addressed to intensify actions toward mitigating bullying and decreasing cases of this misconduct.

The learning of competencies in social studies in Kuwaiti education has relevant global issues that need intervention, including social problems. Detailed in the Kuwait International Curriculum for Intermediate Education released in 2016, the social studies subject must deliver competencies for the identification of problems in society, inculcating respect, and resolving and acting upon issues about these, which would be inclusive of bullying.

Hence, the teaching of social studies in this country's education is a must for the ultimate goal of decreasing cases of bullying among students in schools. With the mitigation of bullying in schools, the students would be able to learn better, not only in their academics but also in living with others socially.

This study would aid school educators, administrators, and the community in understanding how social studies as a subject can help mitigate bullying occurrences in schools and somehow strengthen their subjects' curriculum and implementation to better create a peaceful school social environment that promotes quality education as one of the 17 goals for sustainable development.

The quest for sustainable development in the world starts in the nation by examining how relevant the country's curriculum implementation is to the stakeholders. Goal 4 on Quality Education addresses this concern to make the nation's human resources equally capable of living and surviving in the 21st century (González García et al., 2020). Crucial to this aspiration is how learners are prepared for their future through more humanistic instruction and the implementation of a curriculum that is free from any form of bullying incidents in school.

The core of education is to mold learners who can contribute meaningfully to the nation's development. This can be made possible by crafting a curriculum that best fits the needs of the educational community. The social studies curriculum focuses on teaching concepts that develop lifelong learners anchored on the country's sustainable development goals (Bordoh et al., 2022). Moreover, the elementary social studies curriculum is specifically designed to focus on equipping learners with desirable values and skills

necessary for their existence in society. This curriculum proves to be challenging for educators to achieve this aspiration (Akpan & Nikan, 2017).

Teachers have a vital role in implementing the curriculum, and therefore, their perception of the implementation of a curriculum is significant (Inocian, 2018). In the social studies curriculum, the social studies teachers in elementary schools are responsible for imparting knowledge specifically on citizenship education to young audiences (Bordoh et al., 2022). The social studies teachers in Ghana believed that the curriculum should evolve and undergo changes, especially in how ideas are conceptualized and taught in the actual teaching-learning scenarios (Eshun, 2020). Likewise, the social studies teachers in Nigeria support the idea that the curriculum is rigorous and should accommodate challenges and changes as the country strives for progress. Teachers have envisioned the elementary social studies curricula as a fundamental tool—a starting point for nation-building—that trained social studies teachers should necessarily teach.In the same manner, as elementary social studies teachers grapple with the concern of how to effectively teach the contents of the curriculum, there is a growing battle over how the subject area will contribute to eradicating societal problems. Teachers perceived that effective teaching of the social sciences among elementary students would enable them to participate actively in the community's future. The curriculum provides avenues for discussing essential topics such as bullying in a safe public space (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). For this to happen, social studies teachers believed that they should be extremely skilled and must have the ability to grasp what is truly essential in every discussion to enable young minds to become critical thinkers. Notably, elementary social studies teachers have positive attitudes toward implementing elementary school social studies curricula. These teachers highlight that the curriculum is well suited to emerging global progress.

Elementary social studies teachers have a favorable opinion of the implementation of social studies curricula in schools, as previous studies have shown. This social regard is caused by the spotlight of the curriculum, whichfocuses on developing the necessary skills for students to effectively live and take part in the community. The social studies curriculum also emphasizes the development of essential skills such as

communication, critical thinking, social skills, and creativity (Seker, 2021; Inocian, 2015). Being able to socially connect with people may have a positive impact on how students deal with life as a whole. Having mentioned this, elementary social studies teachers have the assumption that being able to teach social studies will enhance the social skills among learners and, therefore, reduce the possibility of undesirable actions (Seker, 2021).

In connection with the implementation of elementary social studies curriculum in schools, social studies teachers may note that the teaching of topics revolving around ethnic diversity and cultural relativism may lessen the possibility of behaviors such as bullying (Rodriguez Hidalgo, 2014). Among young individuals, many bullying cases are anchored in discriminatory thoughts based on race and ethnicity. In the Dávila (2015) study, bullying incidents in schools are attributed to racial discrimination. This oftentimes results in a staggering number of bullying incidents in multiracial schools. However, for Vitoroulis and Vaillancourt (2015), the difference in cultural identity and race cannot be associated with the rising cases of bullying in schools. This difference shows that having varied races in school is not the basis for bullying.

At the outset, a few studieshave cited that developing the social skills of students as well as responsible citizenship at an early age tends to reduce or minimize undesirable behaviors among young individuals, including bullying tendencies. However, insufficient literature can support the claim about the relationship between social studies teachers' perceptions and bullying incidence in schools.

With the increasing threat of bullying among elementary school children, which can potentially impair quality education, various educational institutions are pushed to formulate concrete plans that will eliminate bullying tendencies and incidences in schools. Across the globe, educators are keen on keeping schools a safer place for learning. One of the solutions crafted by educators is the implementation of a more inclusive curriculum that targets the emotional learning skills of students (Espelage et al., 2016; Avramidis et al., 2000; Gaad & Khan, 2007; Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017; Somma & Bennett, 2020; You & Park, 2020). This curriculum incorporates the building of social skills such as empathy, communication, and self-reflection among

students. The utilization of this plan has been proven to decrease the bullying tendencies of students compared to those who have not undergone the curriculum.

Similarly, the teacher factor has been seen to be a significant player in school bullying reduction. According to Espelage et al. (2016), support and attention given by teachers to students significantly increase students' interest in school and decrease norm-breaking behaviors. Teachers who provide attention and quality teaching result in better performance among students. To reduce bullying incidences in schools, it is essential to equip social studies teachers with the necessary skills that will enable them to develop their full potential and, likewise, create conducive, safe, and quality classroom learning (Muijs et al., 2014). Indeed, the teacher's ability positively reflects the kind of students they will produce.

Aside from what is mentioned, Muijs et al. (2014) also suggested the involvement of other stakeholders, such as parents and the community, in eradicating bullying in schools. Through the partnership of the stakeholders in crafting policies, the school administration might be able to grasp a better understanding of the phenomena being addressed. The active participation of the community ensures that improvement plans are applied and that all available resources are maximized.

Anti-bullying programs in Australia, such as the National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF), focus on reducing bullying through implementing activities that prevent and manage any form of bullying and undesirable behaviors (Cross et al., 2011). Under the NSSF, teachers are required to attend seminars on how to properly address bullying incidents in schools. However, schools in Australia have failed to fully implement the said framework, thus limiting the validity of the said reduction tool.

Furthermore, to address the problem of school bullying, some schools also opted to utilize school-based interventions, which raise awareness of bullying and how to effectively manage bullying tendencies (Tang et al., 2022). This intervention requires simple activities, such as seminars and information drives. The study's findings on school-based interventions reported positive impacts on decreasing the bullying behaviors of students.

The problem of the Study

Various researchers perceive bullying as an invasive and relevant issue in many schools across the globe (Al-Ali & Shattnawi, 2018). The prevalence of bullying in schools has been documented by various studies, particularly in European and American schools (Goossens, 2018). Al-Saadoon et al. (2014) examined bullying rates across 40 countries and found that these cases usually involve elementary students. Likewise, Modecki et al. (2014) reported the increasing trend of elementary school bullying in 80 countries. This alarming rate of global incidence of bullying in elementary school poses a global threat not only in the educational community but also in the health sector. Students who are bullied oftentimes exhibit vulnerability and mental distress.

In the same study conducted by Al-Saadoon et al. (2014), bullying incidents in America boast an overwhelming rate of 40 to 80 percent, the majority of which are among elementary school. Bullying incidents in the country exist more among males and to a higher degree among elementary-aged individuals. The emotional and behavioral effects of bullying on these affected students remain a challenge among educators and parents (Mbah, 2020). However, despite this growing concern, bullying is often neglected.

Similarly, African countries exhibit a higher rate of bullying among all continents. In the same study by Al-Saadoon et al. (2014), 60% of elementary students in Zambia reported having experienced bullying. Bullying in the country takes many forms, but verbal aggression ranks as the highest and most frequently observed type of bullying in most African elementary schools. Students undergoing bullying have displayed poorer interpersonal skills, lower self-esteem, and high levels of insecurity (Jankowiak et al., 2021).

Under those circumstances, it can be inferred that there is a global occurrence of bullying among elementary schools. Additionally, many studies have pointed out that factors such as the school's location, number of students, and composition, including ethnic and economic backgrounds, are the most dominant aspects that dictate bullying among children (Kim et al., 2022). The occurrence of bullying in elementary students can also be attributed to the fact that this stage of human development concerns controlling behavior as well

as social interaction as influenced by peers and adults in their environment.

Bullying rates in Kuwait have drastically increased, specifically within school institutions (Al-Refaei, 2018). The majority of the reasons for being bullied revolve around the academic performance of the students as well as the economic backgrounds of the victims. Another factor in bullying in Kuwaiti schools lies in the victim's nationality. Non-Kuwaiti students are more susceptible to being bullied (Modecki, 2014).

On the other hand, Johansson et al. (2022) argued that school bullying does not dwell on differences in ethnicity but rather on the school climate, culture, and how a school has been organized. De Luca et al. (2019) emphasized that there is a high proportion of educators who fail to report and prevent bullying cases in their respective schools. Failure to intervene often results in the creation of a culture of violence among the students involved.

Moreover, Alsaleh (2014) said that males are more directly involved in bullying than their female counterparts. However, in terms of being bullied, females have registered a higher rate than males. This context shows that males are vulnerable to aggressive reactions attributed to bullying. Age also plays a vital role in bullying in Kuwaiti schools. In the study of Loughani and Al-Shammari (2022), cyberbullying, which is rampant in Kuwaiti schools, continues to exist and is age-related. Rivara and Menestrel (2016) reiterated that bullying starts and achieves its highest point within the age range appropriate for elementary students and drastically decreases during high school. As age increases, involvement in bullying also decreases.

Another factor associated with bullying behavior within Kuwaiti schools is the hierarchy of power within the four corners of the classroom. It has been perceived that statuses are not evenly distributed in the classroom, which means that only a few students hold the power to decide and run things as they please and, therefore, increase bullying over time. It is suggested that teachers' involvement and attitudes toward bullying drastically reduce bullying behavior among their students (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). This situation further supports the claim that teachers in Kuwait have a bigger role in reducing, if not eradicating, the existence of bullying in schools.

Questions of the study

1. What is the perception of the social studies teacher about the implementation of elementary school social studies curricula?

2. What is the perception of teachers of bullying incidents in elementary schools?

3. Is there a significant relationship between the perception of social studies teachers in the implementation of elementary school social studies curricula and bullying incidence at Kuwaiti public schools?

4. What proposed plan of action can be taken to reduce the likelihood of bullying in school?

Aim of the Study

The study aimed to determine the relationship between the perception of teachers in elementary social studies curricula and bullying cases at Kuwaiti public schools.

Materials and methods

Research design

A descriptive survey design was used to determine the perceptions of social studies teachers on curriculum implementation in elementary social studies and the level of bullying incidences in Kuwaiti schools.

Research instruments

A research questionnaire with two parts was used as the elementary tool of the study. The first tool was the "Survey on the Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Kuwaiti Schools," and the second one was "Teachers' satisfaction with Kuwaiti social studies curriculum effects on the educational process" by Alhajri (2021) at the University of Kuwait. This five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to gather data on the perception of the social studies teacher about the implementation of the elementary school social studies curricula. The original questionnaire's range of answers was modified to suit the needs of the study, but the statements for each item were retained. The Cronbach's Alpha values were 0.093 for all questionnaire items, making it a valid questionnaire used in the study.

The second part of the questionnaire was used to measure the variable on the level of bullying incidences in schools. The "Questionnaire on Bullying Incidences in the School" comprised a five-point Likert scale, which asked respondents to

answer their level of agreement with the eight items on bullying in school. The first part of the questionnaire, "The Impact of School Bullying on Students' Academic Achievement from Teachers' Point of View" by Al-Raqqad et al. (2017), was also used to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha.

Research participants

The participants were the 200 elementary social studies teachers in Kuwait, who were selected using convenience sampling. They were primarily selected based on these inclusion criteria: teaching social studies in elementary school for at least five years, social studies field of specialization, teaching in public schools, and familiarity with bullying incidents inside the classroom and within the school premises.

Data analysis

After the data were collected, these data were analyzed using weighted means in tabular presentations. A Pearson-Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to ascertain the relationship between the teachers' perceptions of the social studies curriculum and their perceptions

of bullying incidences in Kuwaiti schools. These were interpreted, analyzed, implied, and inferred in the results and discussion portion of the paper.

Ethical considerations

After the proposal was made, an ethical form was issued by the Ethics Review Board of the University. It was ensured that the rights of the respondents were respected, and the respondents signed a letter of informed consent before they were asked to answer the questionnaire. The personal information was treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Results and discussion

1. The perception of the social studies teacher on the implementation of the elementary school social studies curricula

To obtain a snippet on the implementation of social studies as perceived by the respondents, Table (1) presents the 20 statements on implementing the elementary social studies curriculum in Kuwait.

Table (1)

The 20 statements on implementing the elementary social studies curriculum in Kuwait.

Statement	Weighted Mean	Description
1. Consistency with a learner's growth condition	3.86	Implemented at Some Point
2. The curriculum reflects the demands of modern life	3.83	Implemented at Some Point
3. Appropriation of adequate learning resources	3.90	Implemented at Some Point
4. Achieving the overall objectives of the educational process	4.03	Implemented at Some Point
5. Its contribution to the future preparation of learners to serve the community according to the desired objective	3.87	Implemented at Some Point
6. Keeping up with developments in line with educational trends	4.48	Very Much Implemented
7. Encouragement of teachers to use modern methods	3.80	Implemented at Some Point
8. Providing learners with up-to-date knowledge and information	3.90	Implemented at Some Point
9. Its ability to develop the national spirit and loyalty to the nation	4.03	Implemented at Some Point
10. Motivating teachers to use e-learning	4.04	Implemented at Some Point
11. Balancing the curriculum with the time allocated to the class sessions	3.89	Implemented at Some Point
12. Supplying the material and resources needed to implement the curriculum	3.57	Implemented at Some Point
13. The attention of curriculum developers to its quality	3.56	Implemented at Some Point
14. Diversification of the supportive learning resources of the curriculum	3.84	Implemented at Some Point
15. Encouragement of teachers to use diverse means of student evaluation	3.93	Implemented at Some Point
16. Encouragement of students' use of various cognitive processes	3.57	Implemented at Some Point

Statement	Weighted Mean	Description
17. Linking it to what the student is prepared for at the teacher preparation institute	3.57	Implemented at Some Point
18. Enhancement of students' competencies	3.96	Implemented at Some Point
19. Enhancement of students' skills	4.00	Implemented at Some Point
20. Suitability of ideas and facts to students' abilities	3.42	Implemented at Some Point
Average Weighted Mean	3.85	Implemented at Some Point

From the 20 items indicating successful curricular implementation, only item 6 ("Keeping up with developments in line with educational trends") could be described as "very much implemented" (with a weighted mean of 4.48). This finding indicates that elementary schools have been on par with global trends in delivering social studies education. This could be seen as a good roadmap for campaigns and programs against bullying in schools since anti-bullying actions have been a prominent trend in modern education, especially as one of the central issues talked about and fought in social studies classes. This was not a surprise, as Kuwaiti teachers and administrators attend seminars and training about learning and implementing new trends in social studies education.

Also, coming next to the highest in rank were "motivating teachers to use e-learning" (item 10 with 4.04 weighted mean), "achieving overall objectives of the educational process" (item 4 with 4.03), "ability to develop the national spirit and loyalty to the nation" (item 9 with 4.03), and "enhancement of students' skills." Still, these were seen as only being implemented at some point by the respondents. From these data, it could be inferred that the social studies curricular implementation in elementary schools is still on par with the modern trend of education, as shown in the use of e-learning resources for the attainment of the ultimate goal of education, i.e., to facilitate students in learning the desired skills emphasizing anti-bullying lessons. Another aspect that has been emphasized in its implementation is nationalism. The government has focused the Kuwaiti teachers of today to be prepared to utilize modern learning resources (Al-Awidi & Aldhafeeri, 2017), not only as a trend in today's education but because these learning resources fit the students' learning needs in the 21st century for them to learn nationalism and civic-mindedness as a target skill to become better citizens of the nation. This aspiration requires respect for individual rights, human dignity, and integrity, where bullying can be avoided.

On the other hand, the lowest among all the items in the implementation of the social studies curriculum is the mismatch between the capability of the learners and that of the desired skills and knowledge to be learned (as evidenced by only a 3.42 weighted mean for item 20 bearing the statement "suitability of ideas and facts to students' abilities"). Delivering ideas and facts to the learners, which may be beyond their abilities to understand and apply, may take a toll on the learners. It would not allow them to incorporate the new learning into their present schema, and hence, the disconnect would disable them from acquiring knowledge (Brophy, 2008). This sad situation increases the students' likelihood of engaging in bullying. Some of the learners in Kuwait are reported by their teachers to have insufficient basic learning foundations on reading and comprehension (Al-Fadley et al., 2018) that may hinder them from understanding lessons, which ultimately may challenge social studies teachers to respond to the unlikely behavior of the students that includes bullying. Though it is "implemented at some point," it would not be too disheartening because some actions need to be taken, like revisiting the curriculum, orientation of teachers, and constant collaboration of parents and other stakeholders (Inocian, 2018).

The Social Studies curricular revisiting is more emphasized since the statement that comes second from the last in terms of the weighted mean is item no. 13, "the attention of curriculum developers to its quality" (described still as "implemented at some point"). This emphasizes the need for government and education leaders to conduct a curriculum review in Social Studies for more effective implementation in elementary schools. In fact, in the study of Alhajri (2021), there was minimal satisfaction among Kuwaiti teachers in terms of the Kuwaiti Social Studies Curriculum's effects on the educational process,

leading to the recommendation of reexamining the quality of its content. All in all, implementing the social studies curriculum in the elementary schools of Kuwait is generally viewed as "implemented at some point" only (with a general weighted mean of 3.85). Although this is not a very alarming result, more improvements in the curricular implementation would lead to better catering to learners' needs in learning social studies.

2. The perception of teachers on bullying incidents in elementary schools

Table (2) presents the data on bullying incidences in Kuwaiti elementary schools using the "Survey Questionnaire on Bullying Incidences in the School" by Al-Raqqad et al. (2017). The table shows an equal split in the statements where the respondents "agreed" and where they were just "neutral" in a generalized sense. Among those

statements where the respondents agreed were "lack of teachers' intervention encourages bullying" (with 3.87 weighted means), "there is a lot of bullying in school" (with 3.59), and "older students often use school bullying" (with 3.58). Although the finding did not reach a "strongly agree" description, this is still an alarming situation as the teacher-respondents observe bullying around their school premises, much of which is done by older students to the young ones. Bullying in schools makes it difficult for students to learn because they have to deal with the emotional, mental, and even physical distress that frees them from harm (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). More so, less improvement could be attained without teachers' interventions in bullying incidences. Teacher intervention lessens the incidence of bullying (Rawlings & Stoddard, 2019).

Table (2)

Bullying incidents in the school

Statement	Weighted Mean	Description
1. There is a lot of bullying in school.	3.59	Agree
2. Teachers sometimes humiliate students in front of the class.	2.76	Neutral
3. Teachers sometimes bully students to the point that it affects their academic achievement.	2.88	Neutral
4. The school witnessed many bullying events every day.	3.25	Neutral
5. The bullying took place in all school facilities.	3.33	Neutral
6. Older students often use school bullying.	3.58	Agree
7. Lack of teachers' intervention encourages bullying.	3.74	Agree
8. Teachers' bullying discourages students from going to class.	3.94	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	3.38	Neutral

Another alarming fact is that aside from the teachers holding the line to not intervene in bullying cases, they even perpetrate the act by bullying the learners. The highest among the items on bullying incidences in schools is item 8, "Teachers' bullying discourages students from going to class," with a 3.94 weighted mean. This is corroborated by the statements where the teacher-respondents neutrally agree, including "Teachers sometimes bully students to the point that it affects their academic achievement" (with 2.88 weighted means) and "Teachers sometimes humiliate students in front of the class" (with 2.76 weighted means). These miserable scenarios are also detrimental to the learners since the persons who are supposed to be protecting them from bullying are the ones who do it. This would make the learner feel helpless and unsafe in school, which would lead to poor academic performance and

discouragement. This must have been brought about by a culture of authoritarianism in Kuwaiti schools, where teachers are always seen as a powerful force in the classroom, repressing learners' voices (Al-Nakib, 2015). This situation may have caused some teachers to abuse their power and authority in the classroom. When teachers engage in bullying behavior within their classes, it consequently explains their inability to eradicate instances of bullying among their students. With a general weighted mean of 3.38 seen as a "neutral" agreement, the overall picture of bullying among the responding elementary schools in Kuwait seems to need intervention to make any real progress.

3. Relationship between the perception of the implementation of the elementary school social studies curricula and the bullying incidence

Table (3) presents the correlation between the implementation of social studies curriculum and bullying incidences in Kuwaiti elementary schools. After the data had been processed through Pearson-Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation computation, it was revealed that the computed r value of 0.02 was less than the critical value of 0.119, leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the two variables. The implementation of the Social Studies curriculum does not significantly influence the occurrence of bullying casesin Kuwaiti schools.

Table (3)

Correlation between the implementation of social studies curriculum in Kuwaiti schools and bullying incidences in the school

Variables Compared	Computed Value of r_s	Level of Correlation	Critical Value of r_s at 0.05 Significance Level	Decision
Implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum in Kuwaiti Schools and Bullying Incidences in the School	0.02	Very Weak	±0.119	Accept H_0

Social Studies Curriculum implementation may not be the only force that must influence the occurrence of bullying incidences in schools. It may include other school disciplines or subjects, teacher training, school facilities, and administrative campaigns and actions. Still, it could not be disregarded that at some point, social studies become a part of solving the problem of bullying (evident in the positive, although very weak, relationship of the variables). Studies show that with the aid of the entire school system, much could be achievedin preventing incidences of bullying from happening in schools (Smith et al., 2008). It is through the holistic action of the schools that bullying can be stopped.

Culture-based plan of action to reduce bullying incidences in school

Responding to bullying cannot be done overnight; it needs to be carefully planned by the educational institution. This action can be taken inductively through the cultural beliefs and practices of stakeholders in the community, particularly teachers and students. Hence, Figure 1 presents a culture-based approach as an apt solution to reduce bullying incidence in schools. This culture-based approach has evolved from "The Katol Culture-based Teaching Model (KCTM), where culture is used as a model of cooperative learning (Guarde et al., 2022). Using this approach in the Philippines as a basis for crafting the culture-based plan of action to reduce bullying incidences in school, which includes the following steps: (1) prepare the blueprint, (2) buzz with stakeholders, (3) assimilate the essentials, (4) systematize the activities, (5) shape the direction; and (6) control the players. Figure (2) presents the Culture-based Plan of Action to Bullying flow, better known as CPAB.

Figure (1)

Culture-based Approach (Guarde et al., 2022)
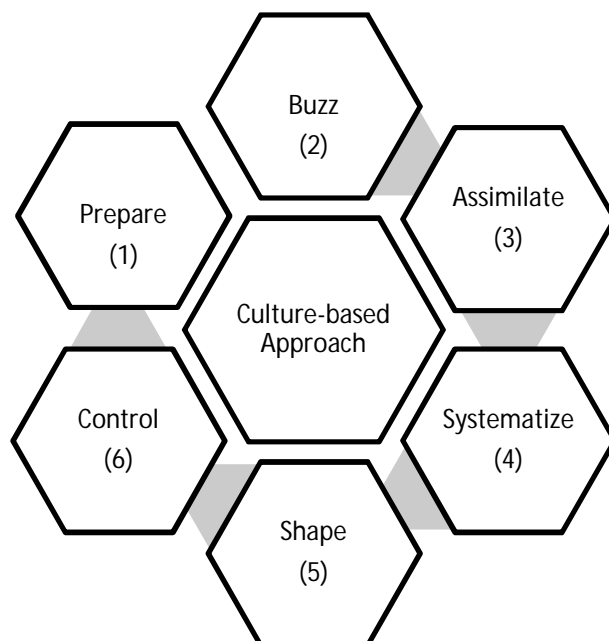
How do stakeholders use the CPAB?

Figure (2) illustrates the six steps of the CPAB. Preparing the blueprint identifies the stakeholders needed to counteract bullying in school, such as the students, teachers, administrators, parents, government and non-government officials, and other sectoral groups that promote child welfare. This initial step includes the preparation of the existing guidelines and policies of the school as well as the laws and regulations on bullying and other global mandates regarding the promotion of the total well-being of children. The preparation of the program, venue, date, and other logistics are also considered in this preparation.

Figure (2)

Culture-Based Plan of Action to Bullying (CPAB)
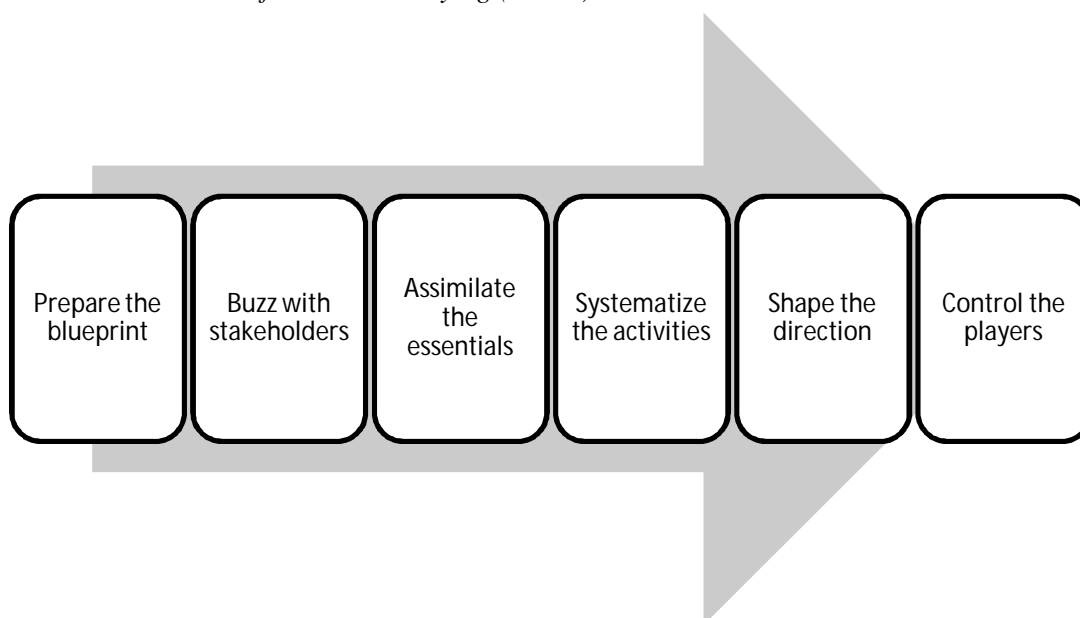
The buzz among stakeholders represents the invited stakeholders' collective discussion on the approach to addressing bullying incidents. They have to engage in cultural, intellectual, and practical discussions on how to mitigate bullying incidences on the part of teachers, students, and parents. They have to review the existing policies and regulations of the school and the government regarding this issue and offer more humane suggestions in consonance with these local, national, and global mandates.

Assimilating the essentials is the sifting of what is useful based on the ideas presented by the stakeholders. There is a need to assimilate the essentials in order to not contradict the existing cultural and religious beliefs, norms, and practices of the people in the community. At the outset, the culture becomes the centerpiece of mending the existing policies and regulations of the school and government regarding eliminating bullying. The stakeholders can give more suggestions on these, representing their multicultural backgrounds as parents, teachers, and officials in the different organizations they represent. They need to lay down the goals and objectives of the CPAB.

Systematizing the activities means planning the program of activities of the CPAB to achieve the identified goals and objectives. Charting a periodic plan to realize these activities is highly commendable. Activities necessitate sequence from easy to difficult that would appear to be leveraging and developmental. Teachers, students, and parents participate in these activities to observe a quotidian role in avoiding bullying cases in school.

Shaping the direction is the monitoring of the program. Sustainability is the key to the effective management of CPAB. The school heads and their representatives in various schools can monitor the implementation of this program and provide reports to other stakeholders on the areas of concern that need to be improved. So, periodic evaluations are needed to shape the direction of this approach.

Controlling the players is the feedback mechanism to be given by the school head to the parents, teachers, and students regarding the successes and failures of the CPAB as the basis for other rounds of stakeholders' conferences to revisit and ensure continual improvement of the CPAB. This is the last step where different stakeholders can see the reduction and elimination of bullying incidences in school by teachers and students.

Conclusion and recommendations

The perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of the social studies curriculum and their views on bullying incidents indicated a notably weak correlation within Kuwaiti elementary schools concerning the observed bullying incidents in these institutions. The curricular implementation of Social Studies does not influence the cases of bullying in schools. This insignificant correlation concludes that the social studies curriculum is appropriate to the learners' intellectual level, and its soundness can produce quality learners. The social studies curriculum is independent and does not promote bullying cases in school.

Bullying incidents are either committed by teachers or students, which has a negative impact on the learners.. Though, some school heads have been moving towards keeping with the education trends to eradicate the culture of bullying in schools. However, there is no systematic approach to curbing this issue. Hence, the creation of the CPAB as a plan of action is recommendedwith emphasis on the following:

1. Social studies curriculum stakeholders in Kuwait may revisit the curriculum to identify learning competencies that can address the school's mitigation, if not elimination, of bullying cases. Anti-bullying principles are integrated into the social studies curriculum implementation to streamline bullying cases in school.

2. The Kuwaiti teachers may undertake intensive training and seminars on bullying and its negative effects on the students so that they will not become perpetrators of these distressing acts.

3. Similarly, students will also be given orientations and talk about bullying as a crime that causes psychological and emotional discomfort among the victims.

4. The Kuwaiti schools may strengthen a grievance system,anti-bullying regulations, and sanctions about bullying so that necessary actions are appropriately given.

5. Future researchers could study the integration of these concepts of anti-bullying in order to promote equality, respect for human rights, and care for humanity.

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