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## Sohanjana Antibullying Intervention: Culturally and Socially Targeted Intervention for Teachers in Pakistan to Take Actions Against Bullying

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**Abstract:** Several studies have demonstrated that bullying and cyberbullying are prevalent in Pakistani educational institutions, negatively affecting students' physical and mental health. Literature has revealed that it has not always been successful to prevent bullying in Pakistani educational institutions by adapting or adopting antibullying interventions from other countries. Sohanjana Antibullying Intervention is the first contextualized antibullying intervention designed specifically for Pakistani teachers. Assisting teachers in identifying bullying and victimization issues prevalent in educational institutions, intervening quickly to assist pupils, and creating a conducive school environment are the main goals of this program. A description of the Sohanjana intervention program, its modules, and its design is presented in the current study. After a comprehensive literature review on bullying in Pakistan, and conducting a baseline survey for need assessment, the program's content and activities have been developed. In this 32-hour professional development program, teachers are trained on eight different themes over the course of eight modules. In the present paper, the design, the theoretical background, details of the different modules and preliminary evaluation data of the Sohanjana intervention program are presented. A pilot study of the intervention so far has produced successful results and gathered positive feedback from participants. As a result of the feedback, several recommendations and suggestions are discussed in the study.

**Keywords:** *Aggression prevention, antibullying intervention, Pakistan's educational institutions, social and cultural adaptation, teachers' professional development.*

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### Introduction

Bullying is characterized by repeated aggressive behaviour intended to harm individuals through physical, emotional, or mental means, and is most often initiated by people of superior status (Burger et al., 2015). Traditional bullying or face-to-face bullying is further classified into physical, verbal, and emotional often known as social bullying (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). Acts such as hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing or damaging property are considered as different forms of physical bullying. On the other hand, name-calling, insults, swear words, teasing, intimidation, and rude remarks constitute verbal bullying. The purpose of social bullying is to harm someone's social reputation and/or humiliate them in front of others. There are several types of behavior that fall under this category, including lying and spreading rumors, negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks, playing nasty jokes to humiliate and embarrass others, mimicking unkindly, causing others to exclude someone from social gatherings, damaging someone's reputation, or affecting the acceptance by others (National Center Against Bullying, 2021). Cyberbullying has evolved into a more technologically oriented form of bullying as a result of the advent of technology and increasing internet usage, defined as willful harm inflicted on victims using computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices (Englander et al., 2017; Siddiqui, Kazmi & Siddiqui, 2021). Many forms of cyberbullying are perpetrated in a social context and aim to humiliate someone in front of others, such as posting degrading comments on social networking sites or insulting them in a classroom chat (Schultze-Krumbholz et al., 2018).

The issue of bullying and cyberbullying has gained prominence worldwide, but for educational institutions in Pakistan, this matter has yet to be studied in depth. In this article, the corollaries of traditional bullying and cyberbullying in Pakistan's education system are highlighted. A discussion is also provided on the importance of culturally appropriate

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bullying control interventions for Pakistani educational institutions. A detailed description of the steps involved in the development of a new intervention design is also presented in this article.

The Sohanjana Antibullying Program is an initiative to educate and train teachers in identifying, standing up to, and appropriately intervening in bullying issues among students. This intervention was developed in collaboration with the Department of Educational Psychology at Technische Universität Berlin, and numerous professionals worldwide (Refer to Figure 1 and Table 1). It is an attempt to integrate theory into practice and contextualize it according to the needs of a specific society and its conditions. The name "Sohanjana" is derived from the concept of the healing benefits of the Miracle Tree "Sohanjana", a plant native to South Asia. By working with professionals and educators, Sohanjana hopes to foster and support children, families, and societies by enhancing their emotional and physical safety in educational institutions and nurturing an environment conducive to learning.

The aim of this study is to present the description of the Sohanjana intervention program, its modules, and main findings of the baseline survey and the pilot study pertaining to the development of the program. After an extensive literature review on bullying in Pakistan and conducting a baseline survey to assess needs, the content and activities of the program were developed. In addition, following the pilot study, modifications were made to the design, which are detailed in the discussion section.

## Literature Review

### *An Overview of Bullying and Cyberbullying in Pakistan*

Numerous studies have shown that bullying and cyberbullying are routine practices in Pakistan's educational institutions and have affected the physical, emotional, and mental health of students (Asif, 2016; Inamullah et al., 2016; Khawaja et al., 2015; Magsi et al., 2017; McFarlane et al., 2017; Musharraf & Anis-ul-Haque, 2018; Naveed et al., 2019, 2020; Saleem et al., 2021). According to Musharraf and Anis-ul-Haque (2018) more than 60% of university students are involved in cyberbullying and this behaviour is widespread in higher education institutions. A similar endorsement was made by Saleem et al. (2021) who explained that cyberbullying has increased significantly in Pakistani educational institutions and is common in urban universities as well. It was discovered by Magsi et al. (2017) that females in Pakistani universities are also being scoffed at, harassed using electronic media, and about half of the victims do not disclose this due to cultural and religious restraints and to avoid being discredited as immoral. Rafi (2019) contends that offline disputes often serve as a rationale for similar cyber-associated behavior. The emotional and social consequences of bullying are also detrimental to both victims and perpetrators. Bullying perpetrators exhibit significantly higher severity of depressive symptoms due to distress in psychosocial functioning (Naveed et al., 2019). As reviewed, cyberbullying and bullying are not only prevalent in Pakistan's universities but also in its schools (Inamullah et al., 2016; Khawaja et al., 2015; McFarlane et al., 2017; Naveed et al., 2019, 2020). Violence in the form of physical and verbal abuse is common in major cities and provincial capitals, according to Khawaja et al. (2015). Furthermore, Asif (2016) and Inamullah et al. (2016) noted that bullying and victimization are also associated with poor academic performance and high school dropout rates.

Among youth in Pakistan, victimization is a major cause of mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, according to Murshid (2017); Musharraf and Anis-ul-Haque (2018), but low- and middle-income countries, such as Pakistan, lack resources to address mental health issues. Research teams have recommended the creation of support centers for bullying and cyberbullying situations in academic settings (Saleem et al., 2021; Siddiqui, Kazmi & Siddiqui, 2021; Somani et al., 2021; N. Ullah et al., 2018). Educating students about prevention and coping methods should be the goal of these centers and interventions should be tailored to the country's unique circumstances.

### *Challenges Associated with Pakistan's Context for Implementing and Evaluating International Interventions*

Despite being an independent country, Pakistan's economy is unstable and still in the process of development. According to Husain (2000), the post-independence economic development benefited a small group of elites, while the majority of the population remains impoverished. Unemployment, accelerating inflation rate, erratic population growth and low literacy rate are some additional enduring factors in the decreasing lifestyle of Pakistan's major population (Arslan & Zaman, 2014; Rehman et al., 2015). Considering these factors, it is difficult for education institutions to invest in whole school intervention design where teachers, parents, students, and the whole community are involved in the antibullying strategies. In addition to being a multilingual and multicultural society, Pakistan is a challenging place to learn English (Khan et al., 2017). The findings of these studies show that international interventions in English cannot be used to articulate and explain antibullying interventions among Pakistanis since most of them cannot communicate in, understand, and write English.

Maddison (2013) has clearly indicated that the social structure of the sub-continent is more complex than that of most countries. Since Pakistan is an Islamic state, there are many differences in its educational practices. For example, the mix of males and females is viewed as unsuitable for education, and co-education is viewed negatively by many families, particularly in rural areas (Ahmad et al., 2014; Ali et al., 2021). Second, female students may be shy to speak with teachers or participate in high level classes if the teacher or counsellor is male. Furthermore, it is believed that taking lessons from male teachers creates negative thoughts in the minds of innocent children (Ali et al., 2021). To prevent bullying in

institutions and help victims cope with trauma, it is recommended that female counsellors be on duty for female students and vice versa. Moreover, according to Siddiqui, Soomro and Mehboob (2021), Pakistan's rising disintegration rate has negatively affected children's development, resulting in trauma, hostile effects and involvement in bullying behavior. In contrast to Pakistan, parental separation is common and accepted by children in western countries. It is concluded that when children seek counselling, they should be counselled on the root causes, which may differ from western regions.

### *Interventions in Pakistan to Combat Bullying*

In Pakistan's context, interventions are substandard so far in controlling bullying and its consequences, despite previous research uncovering higher cyber risk behavior among youngsters and frequent traditional bullying incidents (Saleem et al., 2021). In addition, despite bullying and victimization frequently being discussed as a public health issue in low- and middle-income countries, as well as the prevalence of behavioral problems in students, there are few policies and interventions designed, implemented, and evaluated (Naveed et al., 2020). Interventions adapted or adopted to control bullying issues in educational institutions of Pakistan are not only limited, but most of the interventions applied only focus on one aspect of the training like engaging with physical activities (Karmaliani et al., 2020; McFarlane et al., 2017), creating safe physical environments (Hakim & Shah, 2017), or enhancing pro-social skills and emotion regulation of the victims (Maryam & Ijaz, 2019). They have produced mixed results in terms of success. In the intervention plan developed by Maryam and Ijaz (2019), victims of bullying were taught the necessary social skills and the skills to protect themselves so that they could stand up to bullying, and the skills they learned improved, and bullying incidences decreased in general. While presenting the framework for Right to Play's intervention, which builds essential life skills, enhances school retention, and prevents violence among children, McFarlane et al. (2017) concluded that Pakistan may present a particularly challenging evaluation setting for school-delivered interventions as children are not able to attend school regularly in Pakistan, which impacts all school-based interventions. Play-based activities may also be impacted by extreme heat during summer and flooding during the monsoon. It may also be difficult to implement play-based interventions due to teachers' frequent strikes. A study by Karmaliani et al. (2020) in which researchers used play-based life-skills interventions produced greater reductions in violence reported by girls than boys, and it could be because teenage girls are more mature than boys and therefore may benefit more from interventions that require discussion and processing of information. In addition, preventing boys' violence may be challenging because in patriarchal countries like Pakistan, violence is more socially acceptable behavior for boys than girls, so there is a higher prevalence of violence among boys, explaining why it is harder to change their behavior. To design effective anti-bullying initiatives, school-based mental health services and psychosocial counselling procedures are recommended (Saleem et al., 2021; Siddiqui, Kazmi & Siddiqui, 2021). Naveed et al. (2020) further emphasize the importance of understanding the underlying patterns of behavioral difficulties.

### *Teacher-Led Antibullying Interventions*

Teachers' Professional Development Programs are devised to control bullying and aggressive behaviours. They are based on the belief that teachers are the prime agents that can modify the whole school environment with the help of their competencies that can be used to introduce efforts against bullying perpetration and victimization (Strohmeier et al., 2012). Teacher-led intervention programs are considered practical and successful especially in low- to middle-income countries due to their low cost as compared to programs delivered by external psychologists (Rajaraman et al., 2015). Moreover, teachers' constant presence in classrooms throughout the academic year provides opportunities for students to seek help at any time in case of experienced or witnessed bullying or victimization. In addition to the benefit of low cost, Shamsi et al. (2019), however, have reported that more than half of the teachers lacked adequate knowledge to handle prevalent bullying issues in schools in Pakistan. So targeted interventions for teachers are needed.

## **Methodology**

This research paper aims to explain the steps involved in designing a new intervention for Pakistan's educational institutions. During this intervention, professional teachers working in different educational institutions learn how to identify bullying and victimization, stand up to it, and intervene appropriately. This intervention was developed according to the steps shown in Figure 1. Following an analysis of literature and baseline data, Table 1 highlights areas and skills that need to be developed in order to target bullying. SPSS version 27 and Smart PLS version 4 are two of the main software packages used for analysis of baseline needs assessment and pilot evaluations.



Figure 1. The Step-by-Step Process of Developing the Sohanjana Antibullying Intervention

Table 1. Summary of the Modules Proposed after Literature Review and Needs Assessment

S.No	Modules	Objectives	Supporting Literature
1.	Identification of Bullying and Victimization Behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure teachers are aware of the types and concepts of bullying and can inform their students</li> <li>• Inform teachers about the status of bullying, both traditional and cyber in Pakistan</li> <li>• Assist teachers in recognizing bullying children and victims</li> <li>• Guide teachers in the importance of keeping a bullying incident report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bullying and cyberbullying are routine practices in Pakistan's educational institutions (Naveed et al., 2020; Saleem et al., 2021).</li> <li>✓ Teachers lack competencies and skills towards identification and intervention in bullying (Ahmed et al., 2022).</li> <li>✓ Saleem et al. (2021); Siddiqui, Kazmi and Siddiqui (2021); Somani et al. (2021); N. Ullah et al. (2018) suggested to build support centers in academic settings to deal with the bullying and cyberbullying situation and to implement anti-bullying interventions.</li> </ul>
2.	Characteristics of Bullying Perpetrators and Motivations behind Antisocial Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support teachers in recognizing and identifying the characteristics of bullies</li> <li>• Create awareness about the underlying reasons for aggression</li> <li>• Help to understand the motivations behind antisocial behaviors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Naveed et al. (2020) has emphasized the comprehension of the underlying patterns of behavioral difficulties in order to devise effective pragmatic anti-bullying initiatives in Pakistan.</li> <li>✓ Behaviors and motivations associated with bullying are influenced by personality traits. Prevention and intervention efforts against bullying should take personality traits and motivations into account. In order to prevent antisocial behaviors in young individuals, it is crucial to identify their personality characteristics early on. For effective intervention it is important to identify motivations behind antisocial behaviors (Tanrikulu &amp; Erdur-Baker, 2021).</li> </ul>
3.	Addressing Cyberbullying Issues in Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help teachers identify characteristics of cyber victimization</li> <li>• Empower teachers to proactively support pupils in protecting themselves from cyberbullying</li> <li>• Develop rules of digital citizenship and netiquette.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cyberbullying has conventionally co-existed with traditional bullying (Kowalski et al., 2014).</li> <li>✓ Controlling one form of bullying can lead to the perpetrator engaging in other forms of bullying (Campbell et al., 2012; Elledge et al., 2013).</li> <li>✓ Interventions designed to control cyberbullying and consequences are substandard so far in Pakistan's context (Saleem et al., 2021).</li> </ul>
4.	Creating Empathy, Sensitization and Pro-social Bystanders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide teachers with information about how bystanders can respond to bullying incidents.</li> <li>• Inform teachers how to help students develop empathy and sensitivity towards bullying victimization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Bullying is characterized by a lack of empathy and impulsivity (Dameron, 2015).</li> <li>✓ Antisocial behaviors can be improved with education and sensitization programs (Doğan et al., 2017; Negi &amp; Magre, 2019; Solomontos-Kountouri et al., 2016; Sulistyawati et al., 2011).</li> <li>✓ Bystanders are often the first to witness an incident and report it to the teacher, which is why they are trained in most interventions (Bjereld, 2018).</li> <li>✓ When bystanders defend the target of bullying and intervene, the bullying stops within 10 seconds more than half of the time (Polanin et al., 2012).</li> </ul>

Table 1. Continued

S.No	Modules	Objectives	Supporting Literature
5.	The Role of Physical Activity and Sports in Controlling Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help teachers combat bullying by teaching children self-control, tolerance, self-management and discipline through sports and physical activities.</li> <li>• Support teachers in identifying and engaging pupils in effective physical activities for controlling antisocial behavior.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Physical activity and sports engagement have been found to be effective methods of controlling bullying in many international investigations and interventions (Green et al., 2020; Nery et al., 2020; Nikolaou &amp; Crispin, 2022).</li> <li>✓ There are no sustained or planned interventions in Pakistan to develop students physically and mentally (Ahmed et al., 2016; Sadiq et al., 2021; Sahito et al., 2021).</li> <li>✓ Raza (2021) stated that physical education and sports at educational institutions is just a conventional practice without predefined objectives or goals.</li> </ul>
6.	Emotional Management and Development of Problem-Solving Skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitize teachers to stress management and managing emotions among pupils.</li> <li>• Teach them how to help students develop problem-solving skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ No matter the context, the age, or the type of aggression, there was an inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and aggressive behavior (García-Sancho et al., 2014; Siddiqui et al., 2022).</li> <li>✓ There has been strong evidence to suggest that frustration is one of the driving forces behind perversion (Jaghoory, 2018; Tam &amp; Taki, 2007; Vranjes et al., 2021).</li> <li>✓ Teaching stress management and problem-solving skills can be helpful in combating antisocial behaviors (Kang et al., 2019; Maryam &amp; Ijaz, 2019; Méndez et al., 2019).</li> <li>✓ Maryam and Ijaz (2019) reported a successful anti-bullying program in a Pakistani school utilizing pro-social and emotional management techniques.</li> </ul>
7.	School Development-Antibullying Policy and Creating a Conducive Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitize teachers/administrators to the severity of the bullying issue</li> <li>• Help teachers to implement an antibullying policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Educators believe that the severity of sanctions for bullying behavior serves as an effective deterrent (Roberge, 2012).</li> <li>✓ The education system in Pakistan is mostly focused on good grades and does not pay attention to the different issues students face (Ahmed et al., 2022).</li> <li>✓ A qualitative study in Pakistan suggests that educators should be vigilant and that an institution should have a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying and victimization (Ahmed et al., 2022).</li> <li>✓ The majority of teachers have general rules of understanding on how to handle bullying issues, however, expertise in this field is still inadequate (Hakim &amp; Shah, 2017).</li> <li>✓ For discipline purposes, children are normally rewarded and lightly penalized in Islamic society (Nazri et al., 2005)</li> </ul>
8.	Reaction to Bullying Incidents-Counselling and Effective Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop basic counselling and communication skills of teachers.</li> <li>• Support teachers in motivating the perpetrator to engage in healthy activities.</li> <li>• Inform teachers on how to help victimized children cope with trauma and stand up to bullying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A proven method to control antisocial and bullying behavior is counselling (Esere &amp; Mustapha, 2018; Ferris et al., 2021; Waasdorp et al., 2021).</li> <li>✓ The vast majority of teachers in Pakistan possess subject knowledge, but do not have any formal education in pedagogy (M. H. Ullah et al., 2011).</li> <li>✓ It is recommended that teachers undergo counselling and communication training (M. H. Ullah et al., 2011) or a qualified counsellor's position should be created at the school (Khan, 2019).</li> </ul>

### Sample and Instrument used for the Baseline Needs Assessment Survey

An initial baseline survey is one of the key features of the intervention. Baseline assessments are important to act as a benchmark for measuring project success or failure and establishing priority areas for a project. Baseline information helps interveners to decide which aspects of a project need more focus than others (Mwania, 2015). The variables of the study were assessed using a self-reported questionnaire where 454 teachers (22% from primary schools, 41% from secondary schools, 13.2% from higher secondary schools, and 23.6% from universities) from different parts of Pakistan answered a baseline need assessment survey. According to Cohen et al. (2002), the sampling distribution of the mean must be normal if each sample consists of more than 50 observations (in the current study, the number is 454). Thus, due to the large sample size, the data is considered normally distributed. Various forms of bullying were discussed with the teachers, and they provided their opinions about the prevalence of each type of bullying. The questionnaire was reviewed by the second author's research team consisting of educational psychologists and educationalists and two university teachers from the Department of Education from a private university in the metropolitan city of Karachi, Pakistan. Several items were revised to avoid ambiguous statements, contextualized and adapted for better understanding by Pakistani teachers. Before hypothesis testing, a factor analysis was run using Smart PLS Version 4. Items with a factor loading greater than 0.7 were kept for hypothesis testing. Reliability and validity were computed with the Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability ( $\rho_a$  and  $\rho_c$ ) and average variance extracted (AVE) (refer to Table 2) (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015; Hair et al., 2022; Jöreskog, 1971).

Questions from the following instruments were used in the study:

- Berlin Cyberbullying-Cybervictimization Questionnaire (BCyQ) by Schultze-Krumbholz and Scheithauer (2011), (No. of items = 13, Likert scale, 1 = never to 5 = frequently).
- Emotional/Social bullying questions used by Doğruer (2015) in his dissertation, (No. of items = 9, Likert scale, 1 = never to 5 = frequently).
- Verbal bullying questions adapted from publications of - Doğruer (2015), Xiu et al. (2021), and González-Cabrera et al. (2020) (No. of items = 7, Likert scale, 1 = never to 5 = frequently).
- Physical bullying questions adapted from publications of Demaray et al. (2016), Xiu et al. (2021), and González-Cabrera et al. (2020), (No. of items = 7, Likert scale, 1= never to 5 = frequently).
- Teachers' opinions about new antibullying interventions were also assessed to better understand what educators expect from new interventions. Example statements were: what should be the mode of training (Options: Face to Face, Online, Hybrid), Arguments from holybooks and Sunnah should be part of an intervention (Likert scale, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Table 2. Reliability and Validity Statistics

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability ( $\rho_a$ )	Composite reliability ( $\rho_c$ )	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Cyberbullying	0.931	0.933	0.940	0.549
Emotional/Social Bullying	0.901	0.902	0.919	0.557
Physical Bullying	0.915	0.916	0.932	0.663
Verbal Bullying	0.895	0.895	0.917	0.614

### Sample and Instrument Used for the Pilot Implementation Evaluation

For piloting of these modules, different educational institutions in Pakistan were contacted and invited to a 4-hour online workshop for each module. The primary purpose of these workshops was to evaluate workshop contents, activities, and delivery via pre- and post-questionnaires based on a mix of open-ended (*Example item: Explain briefly the purpose of preparing and sending a letter of commitment before implementing antibullying policies in an institution*) and closed-ended questions (*Example item: When an electronic means is used to harm someone's reputation, it is called...bullying*). Further, researchers evaluated outcomes and suggestions provided by participants using a mix of open-ended and closed-ended feedback questions. Based on the contents of each workshop, the authors developed a variety of questions along with the rubrics for every module. A team of researchers checked those questions before conducting piloting sessions. The open-ended questions were of exploratory nature and referred to suggestions to improve different aspects of the workshops. Suggestions were carefully reviewed by researchers and incorporated into the final version. These sessions were attended by a mix of professional teachers, educators, researchers, and students of education from different educational institutions in Pakistan. SPSS version 27 was used to analyze the pre-post questionnaire through paired sample t-tests.

### Findings

#### Results from the Baseline Survey

The researchers of the current study conducted a baseline survey to assess the level of bullying and antisocial behavior in Pakistani schools because of limited knowledge on this topic. Teachers (N= 454) were asked how they felt about bullying incidents and what interventions they expected to be able to use to identify and combat bullying. Based on a detailed analysis of the baseline survey and assessing the need for a comprehensive antibullying intervention, the new intervention was designed. A summary of baseline results and how this information was used to develop different modules is provided below:

- In order to identify the most common types of bullying, a baseline survey was conducted. The graphical presentation (refer to Figure 2) and mean scores show that teachers have encountered more emotional (mean=3.35) and verbal bullying (mean=3.17) incidents than physical harassment (mean=2.79) and cyberbullying (mean=2.64). Students in Pakistan were found to be frequent victims of face-to-face and cyberbullying in their educational institutions when data was collected from students where Musharraf and Anis-ul-Haque (2018) have reported that cyberbullying involves more than 60% of Pakistani students. The contradictions in these results are discussed in the discussion section.

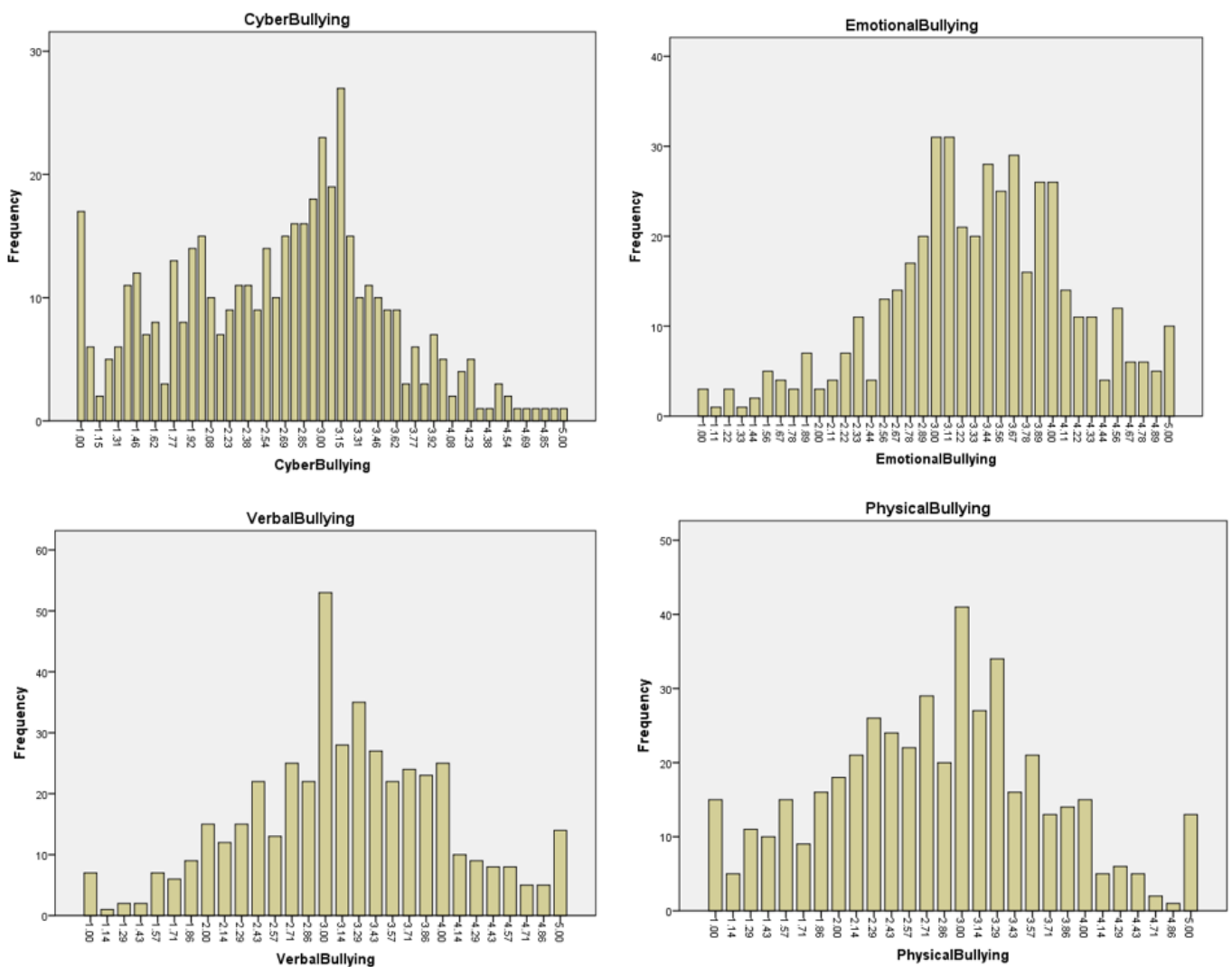


Figure 2. Teachers' Report on Different Forms of Bullying.

- Additionally, the baseline survey showed that cyberbullying is positively associated with conventional forms (physical, verbal and social/emotional bullying). Path coefficients using Structural Equation Modeling were used to determine the influence of cyberbullying (independent variable) on other forms of bullying in institutions (Refer to Figure 3). Cyberbullying coefficients are 0.62, 0.70, 0.69 showing that physical, verbal, and social/emotional bullying among educational institutions increases with the increase of cyberbullying. R-Square and R-Square adjusted values have been calculated to measure the strength of relationships, and



values ranged from 0.39 to 0.49, indicating weak to moderate strength and positive relationship (Weir & Vincent, 2020).

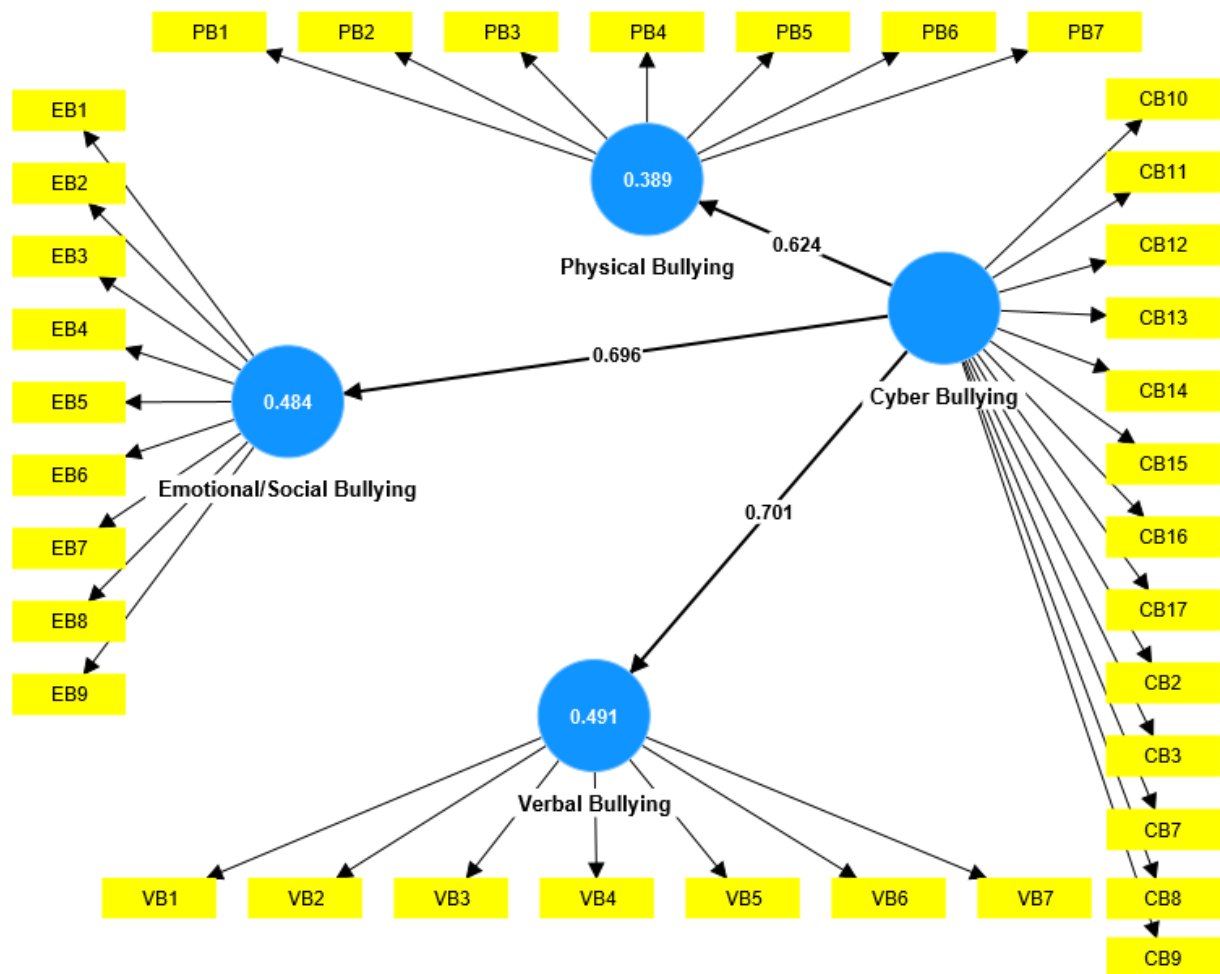


Figure 3. Path Coefficients- Influence of Cyberbullying on Different Forms of Bullying

- Often, bystanders witness incidents and communicate them to teachers, which is why they are trained in most interventions (Bjereld, 2018). However, the baseline survey found that bystanders in Pakistan are the least likely to report an incident to a teacher or take indirect action. Only 46 (10%) of 454 teachers reported that peers or bystanders reported bullying. Reasons behind these passive bystanders are discussed in discussion section.

#### *Tentative and Preliminary Evaluation Pilot Results:*

Piloting each module through Zoom sessions and highlighting preliminary reports are part of the project before final implementation. Each module was piloted with a different group of educational staff in Pakistan to get feedback and suggestions from multiple perspectives. Using a pre-post questionnaire, the quantitative portion of the study sought to assess the effectiveness of the workshops in increasing participants' understanding of bullying concepts as well as improving bullying strategies at their respective facilities (total participants that submitted both pre- and post-tests in 8 workshops = 172). Based on the contents of each workshop, researchers developed a variety of questions along with the rubrics for every module. Team of researchers checked those questions before conducting piloting sessions. Closed-ended questions were also used to obtain feedback on the various components of the workshops.

Descriptive statistics are used to get feedback from participants, and paired sample t-test results are calculated for pre-post differences at p-value of .05. Statistical analysis using paired sample t-test showed that overall differences between pre-test (mean =.53, standard deviation=.25) and post-evaluation (mean =0.73, standard deviation=.30) were observed. There was a significant improvement in overall results where participants have shown improvement in their knowledge and understanding about bullying concepts, consequences, and strategies to control bullying (Refer to Table 3).

Table 3. Paired Sample t-test

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-Test/Post-Test	172	-.20065	.27551	.02101	-9.551	171	.000

Descriptive statistics of feedback questions revealed that over 85% of the participants in the pilot study rated the content (Very well; Well = 86.4%) and activities (Very well; Well = 95.5%) as informative and practical for controlling bullying and cyberbullying in institutions. The participants praised the efforts and viewed these modules as novel, especially in Pakistan's context. The feedback provided also helped researchers to identify some of the most significant factors that will be considered when the intervention is implemented in its final version. The open-ended questions were about suggestions to improve different aspects of the workshops. Suggestions were carefully reviewed by researchers and incorporated into the final version.

Some of the suggestions recommended by participants included:

- Some of the participants reported difficulty understanding questions due to the English language. Some participants were not very expressive during the session due to discomfort speaking English. Providing examples of answers, along with translation was also recommended by participants. Some participants mentioned the following answers to the question regarding how the workshop could be improved:

*By the use of bilingual language (Urdu and English both).*

*Using translation software and providing subtitles in Urdu.*

*Add videos in the local language.*

- Pilot sessions were conducted online, but many participants suggested they should be conducted face-to-face instead. Some of the responses were:

*If it was face to face instead of online.*

*By physical appearance, the workshop could be improved.*

- A number of participants suggested extending the session as some were unable to complete activities during the session and others wanted a longer discussion. Some of the responses were:

*Time was short. Things were shared in a rush.*

*It was a bit overloaded with lots of activities which could be reduced as per the time constraint.*

*Extend the duration of the workshop.*

*I think more time would be even more effective.*

## Discussion

The Sohanjana Antibullying Program is the first contextualized initiative to educate and train teachers in identifying bullying among students, standing up to it, and intervening appropriately. The aim of this research paper was to present the development process of these modules and briefly explain the feedback collected from educators studying and working in a variety of educational institutions who attended pilot sessions of the intervention. A baseline needs assessment and feedback from participants attending piloting sessions contributed to the preparation of the final version of the intervention and helped researchers identify the strengths of the intervention program.

The baseline need assessment showed that teachers have witnessed more emotional and verbal bullying incidents as compared to physical and cyberbullying. The opposite has been found when data was collected from students in Pakistan, which indicated that face to face and cyberbullying is a frequent practice in Pakistan's educational institutions (Naveed et al., 2020; Saleem et al., 2021). However, data collected from teachers does not support the assertion that cyberbullying or physical bullying are prevalent in schools. In light of these contradictory statements, researchers concluded that bullying and cyberbullying are prevalent in educational institutions, but that teachers are seldom aware of them, and they need training in identifying victimization and perpetrator behavior so they can intervene effectively and control unacceptable behavior. Therefore, Module I was designed to deal with the identification behaviours of perpetrators and victims.

The baseline survey also showed that cyberbullying is positively associated with traditional forms of physical, verbal and social/emotional bullying. These results are consistent with Kowalski et al. (2014), who stated that cyberbullying usually occurs at the same time as traditional bullying, so institutions where cyberbullying is common must also have a higher incidence of traditional bullying. From this we concluded that both forms of bullying should be addressed in the intervention design. Cyberbullying and related incidents are addressed in Module III, which aims specifically to train teachers in helping children protect themselves from cyber associated risky behaviours.

Bystanders are often the first to witness an incident and report it to the teacher, which is why they are trained in most interventions (Bjereld, 2018). However, the baseline survey found that bystanders in Pakistan are the least likely to report an incident to a teacher or take indirect action. There are several reasons why bystanders do not intervene or tell adults what is happening, such as being afraid of being victimized, lacking knowledge about what to do, mistrusting adults (Gordon, 2020). So, it was concluded that the bystanders' role in the bullying chain should be emphasized and bystander training and empathy training should be key components of Module IV.

From the piloting sessions feedback, it was concluded that some participants have difficulty understanding pre-post questions and the content of the program. Siddiqui, Kazmi and Ahmed (2021) also reported that most people living in Pakistan are not able to communicate, understand, or write in English and that using questionnaires in English for Pakistanis will not provide reliable data. We concluded that pre-post questionnaires should be developed in multiple languages (English, Urdu, or regional languages) for the final implementation. Moreover, all content will be delivered bilingually, and participants will be encouraged to express themselves freely in any convenient language. In addition to other suggestions, the workshop time for each module which was originally intended to be 3 hours, will be increased to 4 hours for more in-depth discussions. Changing the time allotted for activities and rearrangement of content are also considered.

Participants in the pilot sessions used the Zoom portal, but many recommended face-to-face meetings instead. Numerous studies have also demonstrated that blended and hybrid programs are more effective than face-to-face sessions or online sessions alone (Siddiqui, Soomro & Thomas, 2020; Siddiqui, Thomas & Soomro, 2020; Zainuddin & Perera, 2019). Piloting was done through online zoom sessions, but most participants would prefer live physical sessions, so the final implementation will be done through the physical presence of the trainers or through hybrid programs as per convenience.

A description of the Sohanjana intervention program, its modules, results of the baseline survey and pilot research are presented in this study. After completing an extensive literature review on bullying in Pakistan, conducting a baseline survey to assess needs, the content and activities of the program were developed. Some changes have been made after piloting sessions. In order to reduce bullying issues in educational institutions, first and foremost, a final evaluation should be conducted, once the program is implemented in educational institutions by trained professionals. This new intervention has many strengths and some unique features. Sohanjana Antibullying Intervention is a low-cost teachers' professional development program and evidence-based research intervention, which is specially designed for low to middle income countries like Pakistan, and aims to control both traditional and cyber forms of bullying to address the issues at their root. Majeed and Malik (2017) suggested that anger expressions are influenced by societal practices in Pakistan and differences of expressions and acceptance of aggression in different communities vary greatly and using similar tools and skills to address aggression and bullying among different cultures may not provide successful results (Siddiqui, Kazmi & Ahmed, 2021). Because of these highlighted factors, components are structured with social, cultural, and religious values in mind and for multilingual settings to accommodate teachers from different regions of Pakistan. In addition, the Sohanjana Antibullying Intervention has both proactive and reactive components with a combination of techniques to handle pre-bullying behavior and post-bullying consequences. To ensure sustainable bullying control, the intervention is tailored according to the needs and begins with baseline data assessment. In addition, it discourages replicating and applying interventions in cross-cultural studies before tailoring them to meet the needs of the population. Moreover, teachers will have the opportunity to tailor the intervention to the needs of their institution after they have received extensive training. When the overall school situation is clear, antibullying actions taken by the school community are more likely to be effective in reducing antisocial behaviors (Theodorou, 2021). Another important strength of this intervention is that based on the success rate of peer involvement in antibullying interventions (Menesini et al., 2018; Zambuto et al., 2020; Zhao & Chang, 2019), Sohanjana Antibullying Intervention is designed to involve high status peers to help school administrators and teachers to create a zero-bullying environment.

### Conclusion

Antibullying programs usually include a variety of measures; therefore, they require significant amounts of resources that are not readily available in low- and middle-income countries (Sivaraman et al., 2019). Considering the current situation in Pakistan, the presented antibullying intervention is a low-cost design. A variety of activities have been designed to combat bullying issues and are currently being prepared and piloted. The purpose of this research paper is to describe the steps involved in designing this intervention design. It also describes the content, objectives, and main areas of focus for each module. The intervention design has been completed and is in the final stages of implementation. Future studies will analyze and present the outcomes of the intervention in controlling bullying in institutions where teachers will be trained.

### Recommendations

The initial baseline needs assessment was based on self-reported data from teachers. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of a new intervention, a survey of multiple respondents is recommended in order to obtain as accurate results as possible, including teachers, students, administrators, parents, and if possible, non-teaching staff who are also likely to witness bullying in institutions, such as canteen workers, gate guards, or bus drivers.

### Limitations

To gain feedback from groups of educators and to check their understanding of the proposed intervention, this study presents an initial framework for a new antibullying intervention. Its final effects on reducing bullying episodes will be evaluated once it is fully implemented by trained teachers. Further, the initial baseline needs assessment was based on self-reported data from teachers. Despite the advantages of self-reported questionnaires, one limitation of self-reported questions is information derived solely from the participant may be biased. Some respondents may also lose interest or get tired after answering the first set of questions or rush through the final set, which may limit the interpretability of the data. However, the perception of the program by the teachers is pivotal because they later decide whether they will implement the contents in their classrooms. Therefore, we consider the teachers' self-reports as a valuable information source. The national language of Pakistan is Urdu and it is used as a lingua franca across the country as Pakistan is a multilingual country. Mahboob (2007) stated that in Pakistan, English is the third option for communication, whereas Urdu and local regional languages are at second and first place. The initial training is designed in English which also a limitation of the study.

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### Authorship Contribution Statement:

Siddiqui: The manuscript and intervention design are part of Ms. Sohni Siddiqui's research degree. The author came up with the idea of this intervention design and was involved in every step of the project, from literature review to analysis and conclusion. She has analyzed the collected data and written this manuscript under the supervision of Dr. Schultze-Krumbholz. Schultze-Krumbholz: The entire intervention was developed under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Anja Schultze-Krumbholz. Moreover, she analyzes the design of the intervention critically and provides feedback periodically to improve it. Additionally, she assisted the author in obtaining funding for this project and in completing the final draft. Kamran: Mahwish Kamran assisted the authors in collecting data for baseline survey assessments and in contacting universities for pilot sessions. Her feedback on each module helped the researchers contextualize the intervention for Pakistani society.

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