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Bullying of Children with Special Needs in Elementary Schools: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Bullying of children with special needs persists as an issue in the execution of inclusive education in elementary schools. Children with special needs, who encounter obstacles in communication, social interaction, and adaptive skills, are more susceptible to bullying, which can adversely impact their psychological, social, and academic development. This study seeks to examine the manifestations of bullying, its underlying causes, effects, and prevention strategies for children with special needs in elementary school environments using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology. This study adheres to the PRISMA 2020 guidelines for the identification, selection, and analysis of articles. Data were sourced from the Google Scholar, Garuda, Scopus, and SINTA databases, encompassing publications from 2020 to 2026. Seven articles were identified and analyzed through thematic analysis based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. The findings demonstrate that bullying of children with special needs manifests as verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying. The primary contributing factors encompass social stigma, communication obstacles, insufficient comprehension of diversity, inequitable peer relationships, a lenient school culture, and inadequate supervision. The effects of bullying were identified in the psychological, social, academic, emotional, and behavioral domains of students. Bullying prevention for students with special needs should be executed by enhancing an inclusive school culture, providing anti-bullying education, fostering collaboration between schools and families, and ensuring continuous psychosocial support.

Keywords
Bullying
Children with Special Needs
Inclusive Education
Primary School
Systematic Literature Review

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Introduction

Bullying in elementary schools continues to be a significant issue, especially for children with special needs {CSN). This group is more susceptible to discriminatory treatment due to their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, or communicative limitations in comparison to typical students. Students with special educational needs are at an elevated risk of bullying due to perceptions of them as different, vulnerable, or incapable of self-defense in social contexts within the school environment [1]–[3]. This suggests that the presence of inclusive schools does not necessarily ensure the establishment of a secure learning environment devoid of discriminatory conduct.

A prevalent form of bullying encountered by children with special needs is verbal bullying. This document encompasses taunts, insults, pejorative labels, verbal threats, and disparaging remarks regarding the child's physical condition and cognitive capabilities. Verbal bullying is frequently trivialized as innocuous teasing, resulting in its oversight by educators and the school community [4]. Verbal bullying can diminish self-confidence, induce anxiety, compromise a sense of security, and prompt children to retreat from their social surroundings [5].

Alongside verbal bullying, children with special needs may also encounter physical, social, and cyberbullying. Physical bullying is exhibited by behaviours such as shoving, striking, pinching, kicking, or harming the victim's possessions. Simultaneously, social bullying manifests through isolation, rejection from peer groups, negative labelling, and discriminatory treatment [4]. Advancements in digital technology have broadened the modalities of bullying encountered by children with special needs through cyberbullying. This form of bullying typically transpires through social media, chat rooms, or other digital platforms employed to humiliate or frighten victims online [6]–[8].

The prevalence of bullying against students with special needs is affected by multiple interconnected factors. A low comprehension of diversity among pupils may result in stigma, adverse stereotypes, and discriminatory actions toward peers with special needs [2]. A permissive school atmosphere, inadequate teacher supervision, and ineffective bullying prevention strategies might elevate the likelihood of bullying [9]. Consequently, the prevention of bullying necessitates more than mere school regulations; it must also be underpinned by cultivating a school culture that is secure, inclusive, and attuned to kids' needs.

The repercussions of bullying on students with special needs extend beyond their emotional health, influencing their psychological, social, academic, and behavioral development. Individuals subjected to bullying may suffer diminished self-esteem, heightened anxiety, increased stress, a disinterest in academic pursuits, and challenges in establishing social connections with peers [10]. Children with developmental and behavioral disorders who endure bullying face an elevated risk of enduring psychological trauma in the long term [11]–[12].

Despite extensive research on bullying targeting children with special needs, the majority of studies predominantly concentrate on identifying the types of bullying or its effects on students' psychological well-being. Research that systematically connects types of bullying, contributing factors, effects, and intervention strategies concerning students with special needs in elementary schools is scarce. Moreover, recent research advancements concerning negative stereotypes, social exclusion, cyberbullying, and school-based prevention programmers have not been comprehensively synthesized in a single study dedicated to inclusive elementary education. This study seeks to examine the manifestations of bullying directed at children with special needs in elementary schools, the underlying factors contributing to such bullying, its effects on students' development, and pertinent prevention and intervention strategies in inclusive education.

Literature Review

A. The Concept and Dynamics of Bullying in Elementary Schools

Bullying in elementary schools constitutes a type of hostile conduct aimed toward students perceived as more susceptible within social dynamics. This conduct may arise from peer relationships, hierarchical group dynamics, and an educational setting that is inadequately attuned to aggressive behavior [13]–[15]. Bullying should not be dismissed as simple jest, as it can undermine students' feelings of security, their ease in the learning environment, and their social growth.

In this research, bullying is characterized as intentional and recurrent action that adversely affects the victim within an imbalanced social dynamic. This conceptual description serves to differentiate bullying from peer disputes, general hostility, discrimination, or social ostracism, which do not consistently embody the traits of bullying. Disputes among peers typically arise in specific contexts among individuals of comparable status, but bullying signifies a recurring pattern of adverse behavior that renders the victim more susceptible [16]–[19].

B. Characteristic and Conditions of Children with Special Needs (CSN)

Students with special educational needs possess diverse traits and educational requirements stemming from particular obstacles, including intellectual, physical, communicative, social, emotional, or developmental challenges [20]–[21]. In the realm of

inclusive education, children with exceptional educational needs should not be regarded as a uniform category, since each type of special need possesses distinct traits, social experiences, and varying degrees of susceptibility to bullying.

Cognitive disabilities pertain to restrictions in comprehending knowledge, engaging in abstract thought, and adhering to educational methodologies, as observed in children with intellectual impairments. Physical disabilities are restrictions in physical functions or sensory conditions that can influence a child's engagement and involvement in school activities, including mobility, visual, or auditory difficulties. Developmental, communicative, and social deficits pertain to challenges in comprehending social exchanges, establishing connections with peers, and articulating personal experiences, as observed in children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Simultaneously, emotional and behavioral obstacles pertain to challenges in emotion regulation, behavioral control, and social adaptation, as observed in children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or emotional and behavioral issues [18], [22].

Variations in traits among different categories of special educational needs might affect a child's social interaction patterns and heighten their susceptibility to stigma, social isolation, or bullying if the educational setting fails to offer adequate assistance. According to the reviewed literature, children with special educational needs, including ASD, ADHD, and emotional and behavioral challenges, represent a cohort that has been thoroughly examined concerning their experiences of bullying in inclusive educational environments [23]–[24]. Nonetheless, not all examined research delineated the specific sort of special needs, resulting in many findings being categorized broadly under children with special needs. This represents a constraint in the research synthesis, as variations in the attributes of each group of special needs may affect experiences of bullying and the necessary solutions.

C. Types Bullying Targeting Children with Special Needs

Harassment of children with special needs in elementary schools may manifest in several ways, including verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying. These types delineate the methods by which offenders perpetrate bullying via communication, direct actions, social encounters, or digital platforms [25]. Verbal harassment may manifest as jeers, derogatory remarks, disparaging monikers, or statements that demean a child's circumstances and capabilities. Conversely, physical bullying includes behaviors that inflict immediate injury, such as striking, shoving, squeezing, or vandalizing the victim's possessions [26].

Social bullying pertains to behaviors that impact the victim's social connections, including exclusion from a group, ostracism, or activities that diminish the victim's status among their peers. Moreover, the advancement of digital technology has broadened the manifestations of bullying to encompass cyberbullying, which denotes behaviors executed on digital platforms

to degrade, threaten, or coerce the victim [25]. For children with special needs, it is essential to comprehend these types of bullying in relation to each child's unique traits and requirements, avoiding the generalization of individual experiences.

D. The Effects of Bullying on the Development of Children with Special Needs

Bullying of children with special needs adversely impacts their psychological, social, academic, emotional, and behavioral development. Children subjected to bullying are susceptible to developing anxiety, fear, diminished self-esteem, reduced motivation for learning, and challenges in establishing social relationships with peers. The effects may be exacerbated for children with special needs, as many encounter obstacles in articulating their experiences and obtaining social support. Students with developmental, emotional, and behavioral difficulties are at a heightened risk of bullying compared to their peers [27]–[28].

E. Ecological Factors Influencing Bullying

Addressing bullying of children with special needs necessitates comprehension within the framework of an inclusive educational environment, since bullying behaviour is shaped by individual student factors, peer dynamics, institutional culture, educator oversight, and family support. Insufficient peer empathy, adverse stigma, a culture of ridicule, inadequate teacher oversight, and ineffective anti-bullying regulations can elevate the likelihood of bullying against kids with special needs [29]. Bullying prevention should be based on cultivating a school atmosphere that is secure, responsive, and appreciative of student diversity. Furthermore, it is imperative to enhance reporting procedures, adopt a child-centric educational approach, and reinforce school-based preventative programs to systematically and sustainably address bullying [30].

Material and Methods

The information was acquired by a search of scholarly literature across four databases: Google Scholar, Garuda, Scopus, and SINTA. This research utilized a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, conforming to the guidelines of systematic literature review [31]. The procedure for locating, evaluating, and choosing articles was conducted in alignment with the PRISMA 2020 standards to guarantee clarity in the documentation of the research phases [32]. Keywords were developed based on the three principal themes of the research, specifically bullying, children with special needs, and primary school/inclusive education, employing Boolean operators (AND and OR).

This research did not document its protocol on internet platforms like PROSPERO or OSF before the review process. All phases of the research were methodically delineated via the literature search strategy, criteria for article selection, and analytical techniques to ensure the transparency of the systematic literature review process. This research employed the PEO (Population, Exposure, Outcome) framework to delineate the review's emphasis, with the

Population consisting of primary school children with special needs, the Exposure involving experiences of bullying, and the Outcome encompassing the types, causal elements, effects, and strategies for the prevention and management of bullying. In accordance with this paradigm, this research developed five enquiries, specifically: (RQ1) The attributes of studies concerning bullying among children with special needs in primary education; (RQ2) the types of bullying encountered by children with special needs; (RQ3) the underlying causes of bullying; (RQ4) the effects of bullying on children's growth; and (RQ5) approaches for the prevention and management of bullying in primary school environments.

A search was performed in the Scopus database utilizing the Title-Abstract-Keywords fields with the following query: TITLE-ABS-KEY (("bullying" OR "school bullying" OR "peer victimization") AND ("children with special needs" OR "special educational needs" OR "disability") AND ("primary school" OR "elementary school" OR "inclusive education")). In the Google Scholar, Garuda, and SINTA databases, a specific set of keywords was employed, customized to the attributes of each database, namely (“bullying” OR “perundungan”) AND (“children with special needs” OR “special needs”) AND (“primary school” OR “inclusive education”). The inquiry was confined to journal publications released from 2020 to 2026, in both Indonesian and English, concentrating on the bullying of children with special needs in primary or inclusive educational environments. The conclusive literature search was undertaken on 22 May 2026, resulting in 65 preliminary papers, which included 45 sourced from Google Scholar, 3 from Scopus, 7 from Garuda, and 10 from SINTA. All these papers subsequently underwent a selection procedure in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 recommendations. The procedure for selection encompassed the identification of papers, elimination of duplicates, screening according to titles and abstracts, and an evaluation of eligibility via a comprehensive reading of the complete text. Articles failing to satisfy the inclusion criteria were eliminated at each round of the selection process until seven articles qualifying for further examination were discovered.

Thematic analysis was employed to discern, classify, and integrate the principal patterns from the chosen articles. The preliminary phase of the analysis encompassed data condensation via a meticulous examination of the articles to identify essential information regarding the types of bullying, its origins, effects, and methods for preventing and tackling bullying directed at children with special educational needs in primary educational settings.

The data extraction procedure progressed with open coding, which entails allocating codes to pertinent information units to aid in data categorization. The processes of article selection, data extraction, and coding were conducted by two reviewers, who are the authors of this research. The two reviewers individually analyzed the articles and performed the

coding, then reconciled their coding outcomes to achieve agreement throughout the thematic synthesis.

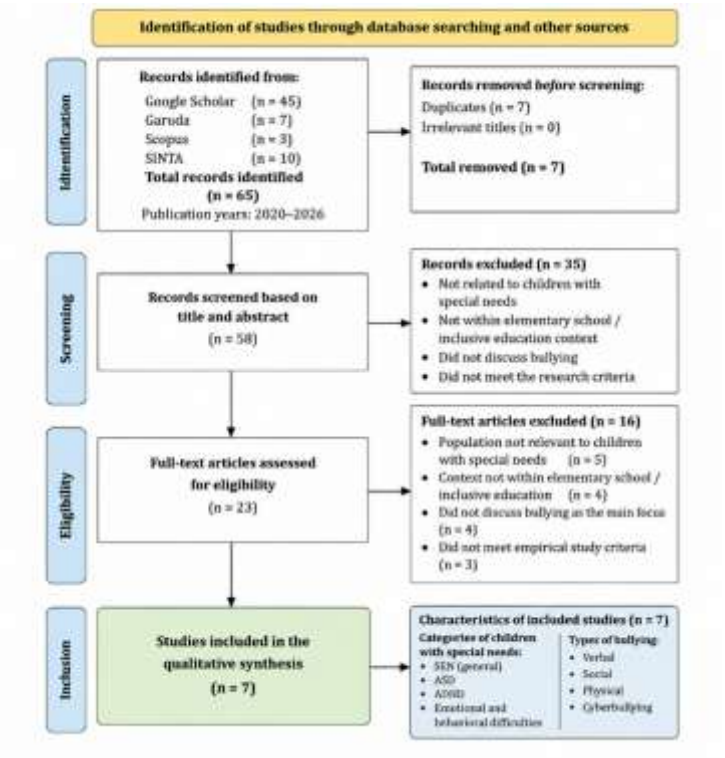


Fig. 1. PRISMA 2020 Flowchart

The encoded information was subsequently organized into categories and primary topics via a synthesis procedure. Thematic synthesis was conducted via a hybrid methodology, specifically a blend of deductive and inductive strategies. The deductive method was employed in accordance with the research emphasis within the PEO framework, but the inductive method was used to discern sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of the articles.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion

Type of Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Date	Articles published from 2020 to 2026.	Articles published prior 2020.
Language	Indonesian and English Languages.	Languages other than Indonesian and English.
Demographics and Framework	children with special needs in elementary or inclusive schools.	studies that overlook children with special educational needs or are not situated inside a primary school or inclusive educational framework
Research Methods	Empirical investigations employing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method methodologies.	Systematic Literature Review, meta-analysis, literature review, non-research articles or opinion pieces.

Results and Discussions

A. Characteristic of Research Concerning Bullying of Children with Special Needs in Elementary Educational Institutions

The PRISMA 2020 selection procedure identified seven articles that met the inclusion criteria. The publications included national and international investigations utilizing qualitative, quantitative, and case study methodologies. The publishing period extended from 2020 to 2026, signifying that the issue of bullying against children with special needs in primary schools has received heightened attention over the last five years. This advancement corresponds with the increasing emphasis on inclusive education and the mental health of pupils.

Table 2. Evidence Extraction Matrix and Study Quality Assessment

Authors	Study Characteristics	Methods & Instruments	Characteristics of Bullying	Key Findings	MMAT Quality
Carmona & Montanero [33]	Spain; Elementary institutions; Students with special educational requirements (SEN).	Quantitative; Analysis of peer relationships, social exclusion and bullying.	Bullying and social exclusion amongst pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in peer relationships.	Pupils with SEN exhibited greater difficulties in social relationships, as well as a higher risk of rejection and bullying.	5/5 (Very Good)
Efendi & Widiyono [34]	Indonesia; SDN 1 Sowanlor; pupils with SEN, including those with learning difficulties, dyslexia and dysgraphia.	Qualitative phenomenological study; observation, interviews and documentation	Verbal and physical bullying amongst pupils with SEN, including those with learning difficulties, dyslexia and dysgraphia.	Psychoeducation enhances pupils' understanding of bullying and helps foster empathy towards pupils with SEN.	4/5 (Good)
Horton et al. [35]	Sweden; primary school; male pupils with SEN requiring additional educational support.	Qualitative ethnographic; observation and interviews.	The involvement of pupils with SEN in the dynamics of bullying within the school environment.	Involvement in bullying is related to the interaction between pupils' characteristics and the school environment in shaping their experiences of inclusion.	5/5 (Very Good)
Hidayati & Idhartono [36]	Indonesia; Inclusive School X, Surabaya; teachers, pupils and headteachers.	Descriptive qualitative; interviews and observation.	Bullying of pupils with special educational needs in an inclusive school.	Prevention is achieved through open communication, child-friendly school policies and the promotion of an inclusive culture.	4/5 (Good)
Khairunnisa & Muttaqin [37]	Indonesia; inclusive primary school; pupils with ADHD.	Descriptive qualitative; a study of the implementation of the Child Friendly School policy.	Bullying of pupils with ADHD in an inclusive school environment.	The implementation of the Child-Friendly School policy supports the creation of a safe and inclusive school environment as a	5/5 (Very Good)

Authors	Study Characteristics	Methods & Instruments	Characteristics of Bullying	Key Findings	MMAT Quality
				means of preventing bullying.	
Pranintasari & Wachidah [38]	Indonesia; primary schools; children with special educational needs as the focus of the study.	Descriptive analysis of bullying against children with special educational needs in primary schools.	Various forms of bullying against children with special educational needs in primary school settings.	Bullying against children with special educational needs is linked to differences in pupils' characteristics and a lack of understanding of the diversity of pupils' needs.	4/5 (Good)
Touloupis & Athanasiades [39]	Greece; 29 primary schools; 240 Year 6 pupils, comprising pupils with SEN and those without SEN; SEN includes ASD, ADHD and learning difficulties.	Quantitative cross-sectional survey; Cyberbullying Questionnaire and Basic Empathy Scale.	Cyberbullying took the form of offensive or threatening messages, rumors or negative comments, and the dissemination of offensive images or videos via digital media.	Pupils with SEN were more likely to be involved in cyberbullying, both as victims and perpetrators, than pupils without SEN.	5/5 (Very Good)

Carmona and Montanero [33] undertook a study in Spain focusing on students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) to investigate peer dynamics, social ostracism, and instances of bullying, as informed by the traits of the assessed studies. Efendi and Widiyono [34] investigated instances of bullying among students with special educational needs in Indonesian primary schools, utilizing a phenomenological methodology and gathering data through observations, interviews, and recordings. Moreover, Horton et al. [35] examined the interactions of bullying among students with special educational needs who necessitate supplementary academic assistance in the educational setting.

Hidayati and Idhartono [36] investigated initiatives aimed at mitigating bullying against students with special educational needs in inclusive educational settings. Khairunnisa and Muttaqin [37] examined students with ADHD within the framework of establishing Child-Friendly Schools to foster an inclusive educational setting. Additionally, Pranintasari and Wachidah [38] address the issue of bullying directed at children with unique educational requirements in elementary schools, while Touloupis and Athanasiades [39] investigate cyberbullying among students with exceptional educational needs, encompassing individuals with ASD, ADHD, and learning disabilities.

B. Thematic Synthesis Audit Trail

This research provides an audit trail that elucidates the theme formation process, tracing the journey from the initial results in the primary articles to the conclusive analytical themes, thereby improving the transparency of the synthesis process. This audit trail illustrates the

connection among the extracted data, preliminary codes, descriptive categories, and the themes employed in the analysis of the research outcomes.

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of Harassment Targeting Children

Raw Findings from the Study	Initial Codes	Descriptive Categories	Analytical Themes	Supporting Studies
Children with special educational needs experience teasing, insults, negative labelling and demeaning comments relating to their condition or learning abilities.	Teasing and negative labelling	Verbal bullying	Forms of bullying	Hidayati & Idhartono [36]; Efendi & Widiyono [34]; Pranintasari & Wachidah [38]
Children with special educational needs experience social exclusion, rejection within playgroups, and barriers to social relationships with peers.	Social exclusion	Social ostracism	Forms of bullying	Carmona & Montanero [33]
Differences in the characteristics of children with special educational needs, social stigma and a lack of understanding amongst peers increase the risk of bullying.	Stigma and lack of understanding	Individual and social factors	Causal factors	Pranintasari & Wachidah [38]; Hidayati & Idhartono [36]
Communication barriers make it difficult for children with special educational needs to report experiences of bullying and seek help.	Communication barriers	Individual vulnerability	Causative factors	Khairunnisa & Muttaqin [37]; Horton et al. [35]
Bullying causes anxiety, a sense of insecurity, low self-esteem and disrupted social relationships.	Psychological and social distress	Developmental impacts	Impacts of bullying	Carmona & Montanero [33]
Schools implement anti-bullying policies, open communication, awareness-raising and empathy-building programmers.	School-based interventions	Bullying prevention	Prevention strategies	Khairunnisa & Muttaqin [37]; Efendi & Widiyono [34]; Hidayati & Idhartono [36].

The findings from data extraction and thematic synthesis reveal that the examined studies demonstrate that bullying directed at children with special educational needs in primary schools includes various forms of bullying, underlying factors, consequences, and methods for prevention and intervention. These patterns served as the foundation for categorizing the synthesis outcomes into the study's main themes. A prevalent topic pertains to the types of bullying encountered by children with special educational needs, which will be elaborated upon based on the findings from the research featured [33], [38], [39].

C. Patterns of Bullying Targeting Children with Special Needs

According to the findings from a thematic synthesis of the seven key pieces of empirical research analysed, children with special educational needs in primary schools experience several types of bullying, including verbal, social, physical, and cyberbullying. According to the prevalence of documentation in the examined studies, verbal and social bullying emerged as the most commonly reported types of bullying, each identified in three studies. Moreover, numerous studies examined revealed the presence of physical bullying, cyberbullying, and the

participation of students with special educational needs in bullying dynamics. These frequencies do not reflect the incidence of bullying among students with special educational needs but instead demonstrate the trends observed in the synthesized publications.

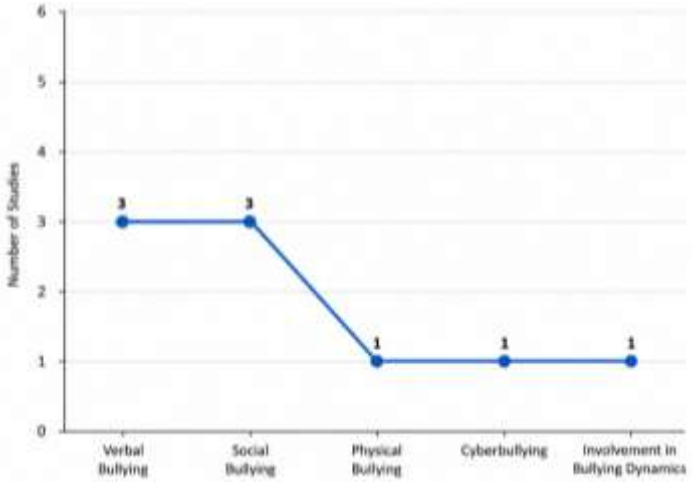


Fig. 2. Frequency of Reported Bullying Types Across Included Studies

Verbal harassment emerged as the most commonly documented type in the examined research, predominantly manifesting as derision, slurs, disparaging labels, and remarks that demean children with special needs [40]. Moreover, numerous studies have documented social bullying manifested through exclusion and rejection by peers. Exclusionary behaviors are classified as bullying when they are intentional, recurrent, and characterized by a disparity in social standing between the aggressor and the target. Such circumstances may impede social engagement and peer connections among students with special educational requirements in inclusive educational environments [33], [34], [36], [38].

Besides verbal and social harassment, numerous studies have also documented instances of physical bullying and cyberbullying among students with specific educational requirements. Cyberbullying signifies that instances of harassment might transpire not solely through face-to-face encounters in educational settings but may also arise within virtual spaces [41]. While specific types of bullying may be more prevalent in research findings, variations in sample attributes, categories of special educational needs, assessment tools, and educational environments indicate that the frequency of reports in different studies cannot be used to infer the overall prevalence of bullying among all children with special educational needs [39].

D. Factors Contributing to the Bullying of Children with Special Needs

Bullying of children with special needs is affected by personal factors, peer dynamics, school environment, teacher oversight, and familial support. The analysis of the articles reveals that the primary factors are communication barriers, social stigma, inequitable social relationships, a permissive school culture, insufficient teacher supervision, and minimal family support. This array of factors suggests that bullying of children with special needs is linked not

only to the child's condition but also to a school social environment that has not fully accepted student diversity. Students with special needs are at an elevated risk of bullying due to their frequent social vulnerability in inclusive educational environments [33], [38].

Communication barriers hinder certain students with special needs from articulating their experiences of bullying, advocating for themselves, or conveying the treatment they have received to educators and guardians. This circumstance may prolong instances of bullying due to delayed detection. Children with emotional, developmental, and behavioral difficulties are at an increased risk of being bullied due to their challenges in social communication and response management to peer pressure [35], [37]. Moreover, social stigma directed at children with special needs frequently presents as negative labeling, ridicule, exclusion, and discriminatory practices. The inadequate comprehension of the diverse needs of students by their peers can perpetuate stigma and heighten the likelihood of bullying towards children with special needs. Negative labeling and hate speech may diminish the social status of children with special needs in playgroups and classroom activities [36].

The educational setting contributes to the establishment of circumstances that facilitate the occurrence or repetition of bullying. Actions like mocking, labelling, or excluding children with special educational needs, if not swiftly recognized and rectified, might render them more susceptible to bullying. Consequently, prevention should extend beyond altering individual conduct to encompass the embrace of diversity, the enhancement of peer relationships, the oversight of student interactions, and the implementation of school regulations that effectively address bullying [36]–[37].

E. The Effects of Bullying on Children with Special Needs

Bullying profoundly affects the psychological, social, academic, and emotional welfare of children with special needs. The effects can be further complicated as certain children with special needs struggle to comprehend social contexts, articulate emotions, or solicit assistance when subjected to adverse treatment [42]. Children experiencing developmental, emotional, and behavioral difficulties are more susceptible to the psychological stress caused by bullying [33], [38]. This situation highlights that bullying of children with special needs must be acknowledged as a significant concern in the execution of inclusive education.

Table 4 indicates that the repercussions of bullying on children with special needs pertain not only to the students' internal condition but also influence their social interactions and participation in learning. Students experiencing anxiety and a diminished sense of security often retreat from their social surroundings. Challenges in formulating coping strategies may emerge when social support within the educational environment is not yet operating effectively. Academically, instances of bullying can diminish students' motivation, focus, and engagement in learning [33], [38].

Table 4. Effects of Bullying on Children with Special Needs

Effects	Impact Manifestation
Psychological	Students exhibit worry, dread, diminished self-esteem, and a compromised sense of safety within the school environment.
Social	Victims of bullying often retreat socially and struggle to establish interpersonal interactions with their classmates.
Scholarly	Experiences of bullying result in a decrease in kids' enthusiasm to study and their engagement in class.
Affective	Kids with special needs exhibit heightened sensitivity, increased susceptibility to stress, and emotional instability.
Conduct	Certain students display passive, confrontational, or avoidant behaviors in relation to the educational environment.

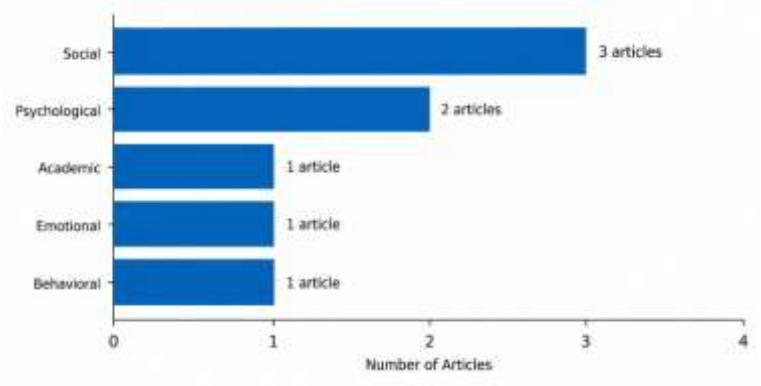


Fig. 3. Quantity of Findings Regarding the Effects of Bullying

According to the prevalence of reporting in the examined research, psychological effects emerged as the most frequently recognized category, followed by social, academic, emotional, and behavioral effects. This trend reveals a close connection between instances of bullying and kids' feelings of safety, self-assurance, interpersonal relationships, and involvement in educational activities. Nevertheless, the quantity of studies indicating a certain effect cannot be construed as the frequency of that effect among children with special educational needs, given that each study possesses distinct attributes regarding sample, tools, and context.

The academic, emotional, and behavioral effects must also be taken into account, as all three are interconnected with the continuity of students' learning experiences. Students who perceive a lack of safety at school often exhibit diminished concentration, participation, and engagement in their learning activities. The caliber of teacher-student relationships and students' social status among peers are correlated with bullying experiences in students with special needs [35]. Initiatives to combat bullying of students with special needs must prioritize the establishment of a secure classroom atmosphere, the provision of psychosocial support, and the enhancement of social acceptance in inclusive educational settings.

F. Strategies for Preventing and Addressing Bullying of Children with Special Needs

Strategies to avert bullying against children with special needs should encompass the enhancement of an inclusive school culture, anti-bullying education, teacher oversight,

parental collaboration, and psychosocial support. Educators are essential in establishing a secure classroom atmosphere by fostering character development, overseeing student interactions, and promptly addressing bullying behavior. Anti-bullying education should be instituted beginning in elementary school to ensure that students comprehend the ramifications of bullying and cultivate respect for the diversity of their peers [37].

Psychoeducational programs can enhance students' empathy and awareness regarding the risks of bullying among individuals with special needs. These programs assist students in identifying bullying behaviors, comprehending their effects, and promoting mutual respect within an inclusive setting [34]. Furthermore, teamwork among educators, parents, and support personnel is essential to oversee the social and emotional welfare of students with special needs, particularly those who struggle to articulate their experiences with bullying [43]. This approach illustrates that bullying prevention cannot be tackled just at the individual level but must encompass the entire school system.

Despite the proposal of various strategies, their execution continues to encounter obstacles, including inadequate inclusive literacy, insufficient oversight, and subpar engagement from the entire school community. Strategies to prevent bullying of students with special needs should not depend exclusively on regulations; instead, they must be sustainably integrated through a secure school culture, explicit reporting systems, and psychosocial assistance for victims [36], [44].

G. Analysis of Research Results

The results of this synthesis characterize bullying of children with special needs in inclusive elementary schools as a phenomenon that transcends mere peer-to-peer interactions. The susceptibility of children with special needs stems from the interaction of communication obstacles, restricted social abilities, adverse stigma, and the educational environment's preparedness to accept diversity. Students with special needs frequently occupy a socially vulnerable position, rendering them more prone to discriminatory treatment, such as victims or, in some instances, as contributors to bullying dynamics [33], [35].

The manifestations of bullying directed at students with special needs seem to be becoming progressively more intricate. Verbal and social bullying continue to be prevalent, yet the advent of digital media has broadened the scope of bullying to encompass cyberbullying. Safeguarding students with special needs necessitates more than mere oversight of in-person interactions at school; it must also encompass the digital environments utilized by students. The susceptibility of students with special needs to comprehend social interactions, particularly in digital environments, necessitates increased focus on cyberbullying within research on inclusive elementary education [38]–[39].

This study's findings underscore the necessity of a systematic strategy to prevent the bullying of students with special needs. Prevention initiatives should encompass the enhancement of an inclusive educational environment, anti-bullying instruction, teacher oversight, parental collaboration, and continuous psychosocial assistance. Preventive programs can enhance students' empathy and comprehension of diversity however, research on the long-term efficacy of anti-bullying interventions is still scarce [34], [36]–[37]. Support for students with special needs should transition from case management to the establishment of a school environment that is secure, compassionate, and attuned to the requirements of all students.

Conclusion

The bullying of students with special needs in inclusive primary schools is a complex issue that includes verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying. This study revealed that children with special needs are susceptible to bullying because of communication obstacles, social stigma, imbalanced peer connections, a permissive school environment, inadequate teacher oversight, and insufficient parental support. The effects of bullying manifest in psychological, social, academic, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, notably through worry, insecurity, disengagement, diminished motivation for learning, and alterations in student behavioral reactions. Preventing bullying of children with special needs necessitates the enhancement of an inclusive school culture, the implementation of anti-bullying teaching, the monitoring of student interactions, coordination between school and home, and the provision of continuous psychosocial support. These findings affirm that the efficacy of inclusive education is contingent not alone upon the enrollment of children with special needs in mainstream schools but also upon the institution's capacity to foster a secure, compassionate, and non-discriminatory educational atmosphere.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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