Pakistan Social Sciences Review
www.pssr.org.pk

Comparative Analysis of Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of Schoolchildren's Psychological Well-being and Resilience-building

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to investigate parents' and teachers' perceptions of schoolchildren's psychological well-being and resilience-building as influenced by virtual violence (from cartoons, animated movies and video games), bullying, and socioeconomic status. Building resilience is crucial for schoolchildren to improve and sustain psychological well-being, enabling them to perform at their best in daily life. For this qualitative study, conducted in rural areas of six districts (Southern Punjab, Pakistan), a multistage sampling procedure was used to recruit 96 stakeholders (48 teachers and 48 parents) for semi-structured interviews. The results reveal that parents' approach to psychological challenges is largely reactive whereas teachers adopt a broader, more holistic perspective to foster resilience-building in schoolchildren. Considering the poverty level in rural South Punjab and its connection with students' significant psychological challenges, this research recommends that the provincial government train school management and teachers to engage parents effectively and incentivise parents' participation in parental guidance programmes.

KEYWORDS	Well-Being, Resilience-Building, Socio-Economic Status, Virtual Violence

Introduction

Globally, 1 in 7 adolescents and children aged 10 to 19 experience behavioural and mental health issues (WHO, 2024). The increasing influence of deviant factors on children's psychological health is a great concern (Chen et al., 2024) largely depending on family lifestyle and parents' perceptions of these issues. However, the scale of psychological challenges expands when additional stressors are introduced. Yao et al. (2021) highlight that children's psychological health and resilience also depend on how teachers and parents perceive and address these challenges for children. Psychological well-being refers to an individual's overall satisfaction and happiness with their mental and emotional health, and life as a whole (Dhanabhakyam & Sarath, 2023). Siddiqui, Jahangir, and Hassan (2019) emphasise the need to promote well-being and address students' psychological needs. Various elements can impact the psychological well-being of schoolchildren, including peer relationships, family dynamics, school environment, media and technology influences, and socioeconomic status (SES) (Yang, Holden & Ariati, 2021). The current research offers an analysis of the parents' and teachers' perceptions of schoolchildren's psychological well-being and building resilience in connection with deviant factors (school bullying, low SES, and virtual violence).

Literature Review

The existing literature on school bullying, SES, and children's use of online media (watching cartoons, animated movies, and playing video games) offers insights into the

impact of these deviant factors on students' academic performance. Specifically, in the context of Pakistan, very limited attention is given to studying these deviant factors in relation to psychological well-being and resilience building.

Children and adults with low SES often experience poor psychological health and exhibit lower levels of competence (Achdut & Sarid, 2020). According to previous research, Pakistani government schools cater to the needs of underprivileged students (Aslam et al., 2019), with rural areas facing relatively higher poverty levels compared to urban regions (Haque et al., 2021). The low literacy rate in rural South Punjab is closely tied to poverty making it challenging for parents to secure livelihoods while addressing their children's well-being (Ahmad & Faridi, 2020). Research by Ashfaq, Malik, and Ahmad (2024) highlights that school teachers recognise the need for students to be confident, psychologically healthy, and mentally strong but express concerns about the lack of awareness among parents. Bullying is a critical social issue among schoolchildren in Southern Punjab (Pakistan), contributing to severe psychological and social impacts on students' mental health (Saleem et al., 2015). As reported by Salman, Sharjeel, and Abdullah (2021), bullying is more frequent in government schools compared to private ones. Most parents focus on their children's academic performance and grades, paying less attention to their psychological health (Sultan, Hagger, & Hussain, 2015). Pervaiz, Safdar, and Manzoor (2023) highlight that government school teachers in Southern Punjab acknowledge bullying as a significant issue for their students, and they believe students gradually learn to adapt to such circumstances.

Mahmood et al. (2020) found that students in South Punjab face psychological challenges due to virtual violence from online media. Teachers describe some schoolchildren as violent and ill-mannered, attributing these behavioural issues to their exposure to inappropriate online content (Saba et al., 2023). Iqbal et al. (2022) reported that teachers frequently express concerns about parents' lack of awareness regarding online media usage. Kidenda (2023) emphasised that parents should actively monitor their cildren's media consumption by watching cartoons, animated movies, and playing video games to ensure the appropriateness of the content. To better understand teachers' and parents' perceptions of psychological well-being and resilience-building in coping with various emotional challenges, the current research draws inspiration from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST) (1979, 1989, 1999). Tong and An (2024) highlight how Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory explains "bi-directional and reciprocal relationships" between the child and the environment, including parents, teachers, and peers.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory introduces five types of environments: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem, to understand children's developmental processes (Lopez et al., 2021). Analisah and Indartono (2019) explained that EST provides a framework for researching all major aspects of child development, however, it offers limited insights into bullying. Online media, such as video games, cartoons, and animated movies, collectively create an exosystem for children to interact with.

At the same time, the same media, as well as the SES of families form an immediate environment (microsystem), where children experience direct interactions with peers and parents (Kalinowski, Xu & Salen, 2021; Careemdeen, 2023), impacting their behavioural development. Antony (2022) argues that EST offers insights into childhood resilience developing from both individual personality traits and the influence of the surrounding environment, including parents, teachers, peers, and media.

The current study found no research conducted specifically in the context of rural South Punjab that focuses on examining teachers' and parents' perceptions of the

combined influence of bullying, virtual violence, and low SES on schoolchildren's psychological well-being and resilience-building. Therefore, this study examines parents' and teachers' perceptions of students' resilience-building in addressing psychological challenges arising from low SES, bullying, and virtual violence.

Material and Methods

To achieve the objectives of the research, a semi-structured interview approach was employed to gain in-depth insights. This study explores teachers' and parents' perceptions of psychological well-being and resilience-building addressing psychological challenges among students in lower-secondary schools in rural South Punjab, Pakistan. The research was conducted in rural areas across six districts: Khanewal, Bahawalpur, Vehari, Multan, Lodhran, and Muzaffargarh.

Selection of Participants

Non-probability sampling technique was used to select six districts for this study, keeping in mind the principle that the selection of the target population or sample should meet the research needs and objectives (Vehovar, Toepoel & Steinmetz, 2016). Using a random sampling procedure, 48 schools were selected, with eight government lower-secondary schools for boys and the same number of girls' schools chosen from each district to ensure equal gender representation. One teacher teaching the lower-secondary classes and one parent were selected from each school to participate in the interviews.

Data Collection

Two questionnaires, one for parents (26 items) and another for lower-secondary school teachers (24 items), were prepared for conducting the semi-structured interviews. These questionnaires were translated into Urdu for participants' convenience. Each interview was recorded using an Audionic Audio Recorder. The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the School Education Department, Government of the Punjab. Secondly, permit was sought from the headmaster/headmistress of each school. Finally, teachers and parents volunteered and consented to participate in the research. The participants were informed in writing that the data collected would only be used for the current research with pseudonyms and that they could withdraw at any time during the interview without any explanation.

Results and Discussion

Structured open-ended interview questionnaires were administered to 48 parents (26 items) and 48 teachers (24 items), obtaining 1,248 (Fig. 1) and 1,152 responses (Fig. 2), respectively. Stakeholder responses were coded using N-Vivo 1.6. Three themes common to both groups emerged while a fourth theme was predominantly from the teachers' dataset.

Perceptions of Bullying and Its Impact on Psychological Well-being

This major theme emerged from the responses of both parents and teachers which reflects their level of awareness and concerns regarding bullying. It is broken down into four sub-themes, each elaborated through direct quotations from the responses of both parents and teachers.

Behavioural Characteristics of Bullies and Victims

According to the majority of parents, victims, and bullies exhibit distinct characteristics. Asma (a parent) said that victims are "*innocent children and can't handle the bullying,*" while bullies are those who "*exercise authority.*"

Faizan added that:

"*The victims see others as innocent like themselves until they encounter bullies.*"

Noreen described:

"*Physically weak children can't fight the bullies but they take revenge from weaker than themselves.*"

Teacher Safia describes bullies as aggressive individuals seeking power and control, using force to dominate others. Victims, however, are consistently portrayed as shy, less confident, and unable to express themselves, which prevents them from seeking help. As Nabeel notes, victims "Don't complain to the teachers because of bullies' pressure," continuing their victimisation.
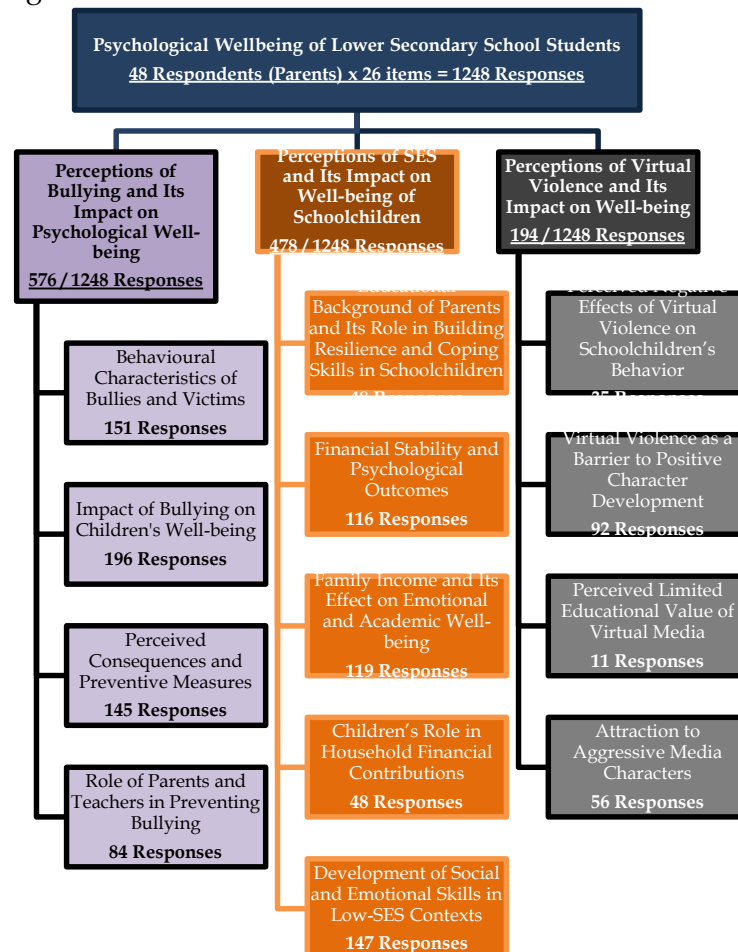

Figure 1 Major Themes and Sub-Themes Derived from Parents' Data Coded in NVivo 1.6

Impact of Bullying on Children's Well-being

Parents' responses offer detailed insights into bullying's psychological impact on children. Faizan acknowledged a more nuanced impact: "*If a child is bullied, they feel stressed*", but also suggested that "*Victims of bullying may initially be affected, they can often find new friends,*" hinting at potential resilience-building and recovery.

The teachers' responses stressed bullying's complex impact on children's psychological well-being in rural areas.

Hassaan highlighted that bullying can cause depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem severely harming children's well-being. He stated:

"Bullying can be extremely problematic for children".

Perceived Consequences and Preventive Measures

Most parents supported punishment for bullying. Faseeha stated it helps bullies *"realise the consequences of bullying"* while Faizan saw it as a corrective measure to make them understand their wrongdoing. Noreen expressed, "*Teachers should not allow such bullies to be let into the class*".

Teachers agree that bullying should lead to punitive consequences. Sarmad and Farghana suggested that bullies *"should be punished strictly by parents and teachers"*. Sitwat Sitwat emphasises tailored consequences, suggesting punishment should align with the bully's understanding, adding, "*Teachers should help students realise why their actions are wrong*". Razia said: "*We should punish the predators for preventing bullying*".
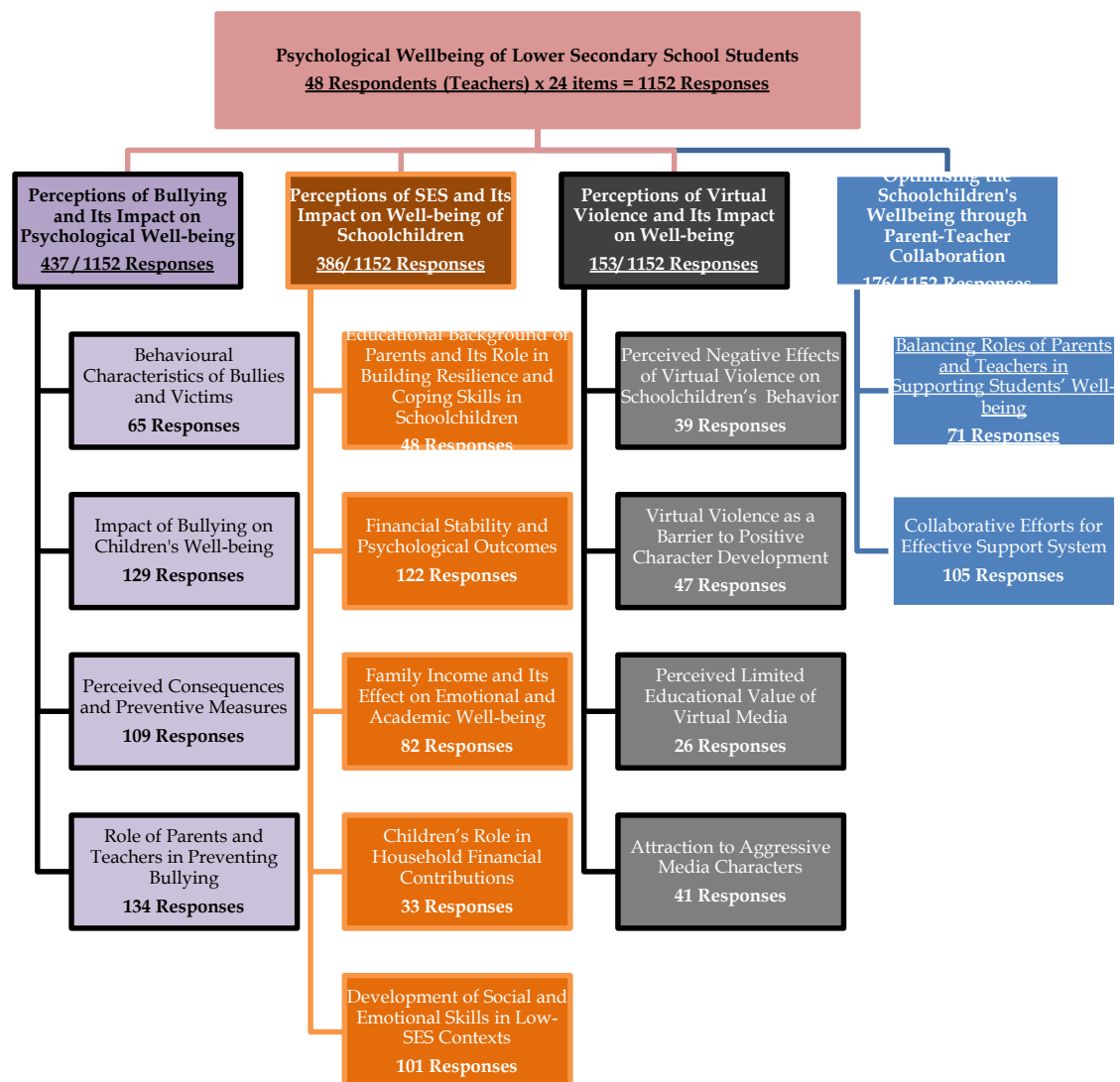
Figure 2: Major Themes and Sub-Themes Derived from Teachers' Data Coded in NVivo 1.6

Role of Parents and Teachers in Preventing Bullying

Ayesha (a parent) believed teachers should teach students to be kind and avoid bullying, emphasising schools' role in managing behaviour. Faizan (another parent) recognised his responsibility, sharing his own experience with his bullying child, stating, "*We couldn't establish a healthy routine, so he's unsocial and harsh towards others*".

Teachers stress the need for shared responsibility between parents and schools to prevent bullying. Ahmad, a teacher, stated:

"*Parents of bullies must teach them to behave, while victims' parents should guide them in responding to bullies. Schools should be engaging and supportive.*"

Waleed added:

"*Schools should establish a supportive environment where students can seek help fosters emotional support for victims.*"

SES and Its Impact on Schoolchildren's Well-being

The meta-theme 'Perceptions of SES and Its Impact on Well-being of Schoolchildren' emerged from stakeholder interviews, divided into five sub-themes, each interpreted through direct quotations providing in-depth insights.

Educational Background of Parents and Their Role in Building Resilience

The parents' academic qualifications in the study, involving 48 participants, varied widely. Two parents held a master's degree, five attended college, eleven completed high school, fourteen finished lower elementary, and twelve attended up to the 5th grade. Four parents never attended school. All expressed a desire for better education for their children. Seema shared, "*I left school during matriculation and my husband went to primary school,*" while Naeem regretted his lack of education, stating, "*I never went to school, and my wife left in class 6.*"

Teachers noted that most parents have low education levels, with many having completed only primary education or less. Teachers like Lubna, Razia, Moeed, and Sarmad emphasised the need for parents to coordinate with teachers and school management to overcome these challenges. Waleed expressed concern stating, "*The lack of educational exposure may influence parental involvement in children's development.*"

Financial Stability and Psychological Outcomes

Many parents are employed in low-wage occupations, such as labourers, farmers, and shopkeepers, and expressed dissatisfaction with their economic circumstances. Saeed, a mechanic, remarked:

"*It's hard to live through the month due to the expenses of our children*".

Financial struggles are a common theme, with many parents, like Asma resorting to borrowing money to cover monthly costs.

In response to the question, "How family income of your students impact the overall well-being of your students?" teachers responded:

Waleed:

"*The family income impacts students' emotions. Parents rarely engage with school to discuss how we together can lessen the impact of their financial issues.*"

Daneen:

"*Financial issues lead to low self-esteem in children. Parents must collaborate with us (teachers) to address these challenges.*"

Family Income and Its Effect on Emotional and Academic Well-being

Many parents mentioned struggling to afford better schooling and extracurricular activities. Yusuf stated, "*We don't have money for better schooling.*" Sultan explained, "*Our earnings are the main issue so we can't afford extracurricular activities for our children.*"

Sibtain (a teacher) mentioned that "*People are less educated*" and livelihood concerns dominate. Nabeel noted that children from lower-income families face "*Interpersonal violence and financial strain.*" Lubna highlighted a divide, suggesting that parents who focus on survival are less engaged in their children's education.

Children's Role in Household Financial Contributions

In rural South Punjab, many families depend on a single breadwinner leading to financial strain and compromises in meeting basic needs.

Regarding the primary earner, Nuzhat said, "*Both my husband and I contribute almost equally,*" while Yusuf stated, "*I am the only breadwinner.*" However, Noreen, Zaheer, and Rustam reported that their entire families, including children, contribute to family expenses.

Given the low level of parental income and financial instability, teachers reported that many students are compelled to contribute to household expenses through part-time work or child labour. A teacher, Waqas indicated a cycle of poverty where children are not only impacted by economic struggles but also expected to contribute to family income from a young age.

Development of Social and Emotional Skills in Low-SES Contexts

The development of social and emotional skills among children in low SES contexts varies. Some parents describe their children as shy or socially reserved, while others note confidence in interacting with teachers. Despite financial constraints, parents encourage communication skills. Faseeha stated, "*We tell them to never hesitate to talk to anyone.*"

When discussing their children's social skills, Noreen expressed, "*Our children are outspoken at home but can't talk in front of others.*"

All teachers agreed that the development of children's social and emotional skills in low-SES rural contexts is shaped by their home environments and living conditions. Tania explained,

"Many of my students are reserved and introverted." Hamid added, *"I teach my students to prioritise quality over quantity in their speech."*

Perceptions of Virtual Violence and Its Impact on Well-being

Stakeholder interviews identified the meta-theme 'Perceptions of Virtual Violence and Its Impact on Well-being' in students. This meta-theme, comprising four sub-themes, is presented in detail through direct quotations from parents and teachers.

Perceived Negative Effects of Virtual Violence on Schoolchildren's Behaviour

Parents expressed concerns about the impact of virtual violence on their children's mindset. Nuzhat highlighted that *"some cartoons and movies"* negatively influence children by introducing conflicting religious ideas and glorifying violent characters. Ali remarked, *"Violent video games have turned our eldest son into a violent child."*

Teachers, including Sadaf and Zareen, raised concerns about the adverse effects of virtual violence on students' values and mind-set. Sadaf noted that excessive exposure to technology, such as cartoons and video games, fosters addiction and impedes social development. Farghana emphasised this issue, stating, *"Children become addicted and spend hours watching cartoons, movies, or playing games."*

Virtual Violence as a Barrier to Positive Character Development

The fear of character spoilage due to exposure to virtual violence was intense among the interviewed parents. Nuzhat pointed out that children are *"more inspired by characters from dramas, movies, and cartoons than by their own parents' personalities."*

Shazia described her children's preference for strong, combative characters. Salah noted that her daughter favours fighting characters.

Teachers like Muhammad and Safia emphasised the negative role of virtual violence in character building of the students.

Tanveer and Zareen pointed out how virtual violence can shape students' behaviour negatively, with Tanveer noting that *"Cartoons, animated movies, and video games harm students' character-building process."*

Perceived Limited Educational Value of Virtual Media

Parents acknowledged that there is limited potential for positive learning from media. Sultan admits there are *"chances for the children to learn if they are exposed to something positive."* Abid showed his concern that *"Children are often more attracted to negativity."* Faizan agreed that *"Positive learning cannot happen without proper guidance."*

Teachers like Moneeza and Hamid highlighted the prevalence of negative content consumption among students. In Hamid's opinion, *"Students are often attracted to negative and inappropriate content."* Moneeza expressed concern for her students, saying *"The use of online media leads students to addiction"*.

Attraction to Aggressive Media Characters

Most parents reported that their children glorify aggressive characters from animated movies and video games. Saba mentioned that her two sons like *"brave characters who engage in fights and become the winners at the end."*

Ahmad, Rustam, and Ali expressed serious concern about their children's involvement with the game "*Pub-G*".

Teachers such as Hassaan and Nabeel expressed their concerns when they were asked "What do students learn from cartoons, animated movies and video games?" Nabeel showed great concern and said

"*Our students are fond of supernatural and powerful creatures so they perceive similar kinds of powers for themselves.*"

Improving Psychological Well-being through Parent-Teacher Collaboration

The meta-theme 'Optimising the Students' Well-being through Partnership' emerged from interviews predominantly conducted with teachers. This overarching theme, composed of two sub-themes, is explained through quotations sourced from the responses of teachers.

Balancing Roles of Parents and Teachers in Supporting Students' Well-being

Parents emphasise the importance of taking action against bullying but predominantly through individualised methods. Faizan highlighted the significance of empowering children to respond to bullies on their own. Similarly, Saira stated, "*There should be strict punishment for the bullies, only the bits of advice don't work.*"

In contrast, teachers like Sadaf emphasise a more collaborative and proactive approach involving both parents and educators. Sadaf was of the view that:

"*We must get in touch with parents of bullies and victims to take measures to prevent bullying. We can stop it through our collaborative efforts*".

All the teachers, specifically Razia, Lubna, and Moeed, stressed the need for the involvement of parents, teachers, school management, and students to overcome a variety of issues related to educational and psychological well-being.

Collaborative Efforts for an Effective Support System

Teachers, such as Quba, Subhan, Waseem, and Atiya, emphasised the significance of collaborative efforts between parents and educators in addressing various aspects of students' well-being. Quba acknowledged the socioeconomic challenges faced by her students and advocated for open communication between teachers and parents to address these challenges effectively.

Teachers such as Hamid, Yasmeen, and Farghana advocated the significance of parental guidance in cultivating healthy online habits in schoolchildren. Farghana suggested, "*We should not only teach our students but also their parents to differentiate inappropriate digital content from suitable content.*" Overall, teachers' responses suggest that educating parents and making their efforts collaborative in nature would be more effective in improving the well-being of students and helping them in resilience-building.

Analysis

This section of the research paper offers a precise and comprehensive comparison of teachers' and parents' perceptions of psychological well-being and building resilience of schoolchildren in rural Southern Punjab.

Comparison of Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying

Bullying has deeply rooted psychological impacts on the minds of its victims (Guo, Tan, & Zhu, 2022). Parents' and teachers' perceptions of managing bullying significantly differ. Parents' responses are emotional suggesting punitive and stricter measures, whereas teachers' approach systematically identifies rehabilitative solutions including counselling and tailored interventions. Parents hold teachers responsible for fostering engaging environments, whereas teachers tend to empower victims through structured programmes and help build resilience. These findings align with those of previous studies (Salman, Sharjeel & Abdullah, 2021; Sultan, Hagger & Hussain, 2015; Pervaiz, Safdar & Manzoor, 2023; Rahayu et al., 2020). Eventually, both stakeholders recognise the importance of collaborative efforts in fostering student resilience.

The stakeholders share overlapping perceptions of bullying traits but differ in their understanding of manifestation and strategies to address them. Parents view victims as innocent and vulnerable, while teachers focus on bullies' dominance and consistent verbal and physical abuse. Both agree on the severe psychological impacts of bullying but emphasise different aspects. Parents highlight immediate emotional reactions like stress and isolation, whereas teachers address long-term effects such as reduced confidence and classroom exclusion.

Stakeholders' Perceptions of SES and Its Effect on Schoolchildren's Well-being

Parents and teachers share concerns about the negative effects of low SES on children's well-being but differ in their perceptions and approaches to addressing these challenges. Parents recognise their limited education and financial constraints as barriers to their children's academic and emotional development. They involve children in labour to meet daily needs, considering it a survival necessity, whereas teachers see it as a compromise to education and resilience. Teachers, however, emphasise the systemic limitations and the need for collaborative efforts to bridge these gaps. Both agree that low income affects children's resilience, with parents focusing on immediate survival needs and teachers advocating for prioritising education and fostering parent-teacher partnerships. These interpretations of the current study are consistent with previous research (Qi & Wu, 2020; Hussain, Irfan, & Yaseen, 2022).

Parents' and Teachers' Stance on Virtual Violence

The stakeholders agree that virtual violence negatively impacts schoolchildren's well-being, but their perceptions and approaches vary. Parents focus on the immediate effects, such as behavioural awkwardness, aggression, and distraction, whereas teachers highlight broader issues like addiction, compromised social skills, and poor creative development. Parents emphasise individual challenges like time constraints, while teachers stress the need for controlled exposure and systemic solutions. Parents are critical of violent media content and its role in shaping children's aspirations. At the same time, teachers see it as a societal failure requiring structured interventions and collaborative guidance from parents and educators.

A Comparison of Parents' and Teachers' Views on Collaborative Efforts

Both groups agree on the importance of collaboration to support students' psychological well-being but there is a contrast in their perspectives on responsibility and execution. Parents view teachers as primary agents for addressing issues like bullying, favouring immediate and reactive solutions, while teachers advocate for shared responsibility and systemic approaches involving parents, educators, and school management. Despite differing emphases, both groups recognise the value of collaboration, highlighting the potential for structured programmes to align parental involvement with teacher-led initiatives for holistic student development.

Conclusion

This research concludes that there is a significant difference between parents' and teachers' perceptions of students' psychological well-being and resilience-building in rural Southern Punjab. The findings reveal that parents' approach to addressing their children's psychological issues is reactive with a limited understanding of psychological resilience, whereas teachers adopt proactive and rehabilitative approaches focused on long-term positive results.

Both groups of stakeholders acknowledge that schoolchildren face severe psychological challenges due to school bullying, virtual violence, and limited family resources. However, parents hold teachers and school management accountable for creating a healthy school environment enforcing strict discipline, and educating children on the positive use of online media. In contrast, teachers' approach toward students' well-being and resilience-building is more realistic and holistic. They advocate for collaborative and structured initiatives to foster open communication and address schoolchildren's psychological challenges. Parents, however, tend to view psychological resilience and challenges as inherent traits of the child.

Recommendations

This research strongly recommends that the management of government schools be trained to implement parental guidance programmes, peer support initiatives, and media awareness campaigns. Given the poverty levels in rural Southern Punjab, the government should mandate parental participation in such programmes and offer incentives to parents who actively engage.

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