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# An Assessment of Bullying/Victimization Behaviors among Third-Graders in Jordanian Public Schools

Cover Page Footnote

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## An Assessment of Bullying/Victimization Behaviors among Third-Graders in Jordanian Public Schools

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### **Abstract.**

This study investigates the prevalence of bullying/victimization behaviors among third graders in Jordanian public schools from the perspectives of both students and their teachers. The study involved 500 third-grade students and 52 teachers who randomly selected from 20 Jordanian public schools in the first Irbid directorate schools. Results of the students' perceptions of bullying and victims of bullying behaviors indicated a generally low amount of bullying and victims of bullying among third graders. However, teachers reported more bullying by other students than the students reported. Also, teachers in this study reported physical bullying/victims of bullying as the most frequent and verbal bullying as the least frequent. Implications for ministry of education and schools were discussed.

*Key words:* bullying, victimization, physical, verbal, relational.

## تقييم العدوانية والاعتداء بالضرب بين طلبة الصف الثالث في المدارس الحكومية في الاردن

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### مستخلص البحث :

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتقييم سلوكيات الاعتداء / الإيذاء بين طلاب الصف الثالث في المدارس الحكومية الأردنية استنادا إلى وجهات نظر الطلاب ومعلمهم. وجاءت العينة من مدارس وطلاب تم تعيينهم عشوائيا. وتكونت عينة الدراسة من (ن = 500) طالب في الصف الثالث ومعلمهم (ن = 52). وشملت استراتيجيات التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي واختبارات للعينات المترابطة لتحديد اختلافات المجموعة. وكشفت النتائج أن سلوكيات الاعتداء / الإيذاء كانت منخفضة استنادا إلى وجهات نظر الطلاب ومعتدلة من وجهة نظر المعلمين. وكان الإيذاء الجسدي هو السلوك الأكثر شيوعا التي حددها كل من الطلاب والمعلمين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، وأظهرت النتائج أن هناك فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين وجهات نظر المعلمين والطلاب فيما يتعلق بسلوكيات الاعتداء/الإيذاء. حيث تبين أن تقييم المعلمين لسلوكيات الاعتداء/الإيذاء الثلاثة جاءت أعلى مقارنة بالطلبة. وتم مناقشة بعض الاقتراحات لوزارة التربية والتعليم والمدارس الحكومية الأردنية.

*الكلمات المفتاحية: العدوانية ، الاعتداء ، الجسدي ، اللفظي.*

## Introduction

Bullying was as a school issue which happening among peers and affecting their interactions and social future lives (Newman, Holden & Delville, 2011). When ‘bullying’ is occurred, it is not possible to consider this issue from only one person. Bullies, victims and bystanders should take into consideration while examining ‘bullying’. Further, victimization in schools is an ongoing problem that plagues many societies and is a current subject of debate and research around the world. It is clear that victims of bullying is prevalent and widespread across the world (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007; Whited & Dupper, 2005; Doğruer 2015). A victim of bullying in schools is a serious problem impacting all grade levels around the world and affects both developed and developing countries (Perezniето, Harper, Clench, & Coarasa, 2010). School victimization includes a wide range of issues such as child abuse, multiple types of school violence, as well as the use of various counseling programs intended to decrease these behaviors (Ohsako, 1997).

Finley (2006) explained, “Bullying in the community is used as a tool to exert power or dominance over others in a variety of ways related to difficulties in relationships with peers, educators, and own family” (as cited in Okour & Hijazi, 2009, p. 361). This reality creates a difficult dilemma for educators to deal with bullying. For example, if a student using bullying tactics views their teachers or adults as a threat to them and respond accordingly, the teachers may never be able to control the behavior. These children need to see a change in their community, homes, and their schools to alter this cycle of violence.

Researchers vary in their definition of bullying. However, there is common agreement among bullying researchers that staff, students, and parents of all the schools under review have considered bullying acts to be a social problem that affects social competence and learning outcomes (Kaukiainen, et.al, 2002). Bullying has been identified as a persistent type of school victims of bullying (Hawkins et al., 2001) and an aggressive behavior (Galen & Underwood, 1997). This aggressive behavior causes a major risk for child development of both the bully and the victim (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). Researchers have estimated that around 10%-23% of students engaged in bullying behaviors (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001). Thus,

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policy makers and educators should give close attention to tackling this social problem at early stages of development before it becomes more of an influence on students' learning and academic performance later. Therefore, implementation of school bullying prevention programs are paramount to reduce bullying, improve academic achievement, and increase pro-social skills among students (Pereznieto, Harper, Clench, & Coarasa, 2010).

## **Background and Significance**

Olweus noted the importance of eliminating bullying, "It is a fundamental democratic right for a child to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation inclusive in bullying" (as cited in Smith & Brain, 2000, p. 21). School bullying is not new and occurs in classrooms all over the world. According to Dake, Price, and Telljohann (2003), school bullying has gained more attention recently due to the increase in school shootings and suicides. A report conducted by the United States Secret Service and Department of Education (2004) involving school shootings found that "three quarters of school attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked or injured prior to the incident" (p. 21) and sometimes this harassment had been ongoing for an extended period of time. This same report stated, "most of the attacker's schoolmates described the attacker as 'the kid everyone teased' (p. 21).

In Jordan, UNICEF published a report in (2007), entitled *Bullying against Children: A Study in Jordan*, which showed widespread problems with bullying and victims of bullying. More than two thirds of children in Jordan are subjected to verbal attacks (direct bullying) by their parents (70 percent), teachers, and/or administrators (71 percent), while about half of children experience verbal attacks by siblings and schoolmates. One in every ten children experiences bullying by schoolmates (UNICEF, 2007).

Children in Jordan are exposed to bullying from a variety of sources, not just peers. Bullying also comes from teachers, parents, neighbors, and others. This bullying can have short and long-term results, which influences not only all aspects of a child's growth, but future interactions in the community as well (Rawashedh, 2011). Therefore, it is imperative to resolve this social problem and to protect children's quality of life and development. In response to continued violent behaviors within the public school system, schools need to incorporate various programs and strategies aimed at lowering the frequency of bullying behaviors. Most of the studies conducted in the U.S. and around the world focused on the concepts and the prevalence of bullying among

middle and high schools; however, quantitative research studies looking at elementary school populations were scarce. Therefore, this study intended to fill that void.

Specifically, Middle Eastern countries have not examined school bullying patterns systematically or in depth to date (Khoury-Kassabri, Astor, & Banbnishty, 2009). Since Jordan is included in this category and has no data on elementary school populations, this study provides important data to try to resolve this deficit in research. Khoury- Kassabri et al. (2009) suggested that victims of bullying patterns, risk factors, and predictors of perpetration are very similar among Middle East and Western cultures; therefore, it is probable that what is applied in Western countries regarding school bullying can be transferred and adapted to Middle Eastern countries and vice versa. Thus, these results are not limited only to Jordan, but can be used to deal with the problem around the world.

Moreover, according to a study conducted in Israel among a sample of 16,604 pupils ranging from seventh to eleventh grade examined perpetration of school bullying like hitting, threatening, and punching against peers and teachers among Jewish and Arab students. The findings showed that one third of students reported bullying by peers; whereas, one out of five experienced bullying by teachers. A subset of the results showed Arab students reported more violent behaviors from peers and teachers than Jewish (Kassabri, 2009).

It is worth noting the scarcity of literature investigating the problem of school bullying in Jordanian schools (Rawashdeh, 2011). Fortunately, the awareness of the royal family (specifically Queen Rania) toward this problem has garnered the attention and interest of Jordanian researchers who have recently started to address this social problem. An early study by Owidat and Hamdi (1997) explored the types of problem behaviors among 1,907 students from eighth to tenth grades in Jordanian schools. Results showed that the most frequent behavioral problems were fighting and hitting each other, which were also related to watching violent behaviors on T.V and other settings. More recently, Rawashdeh (2011) conducted a study in Jordan among a sample of 150 boys and girls to analyze the student's perceptions of school bullying in a public school in Jordan. Results showed that both boys and girls had negative attitudes toward students bullying other students. Further, a study conducted by Jaradat, (2017) which examined Jordanian middle schools students' differences in bullying and victimization with a sample of 330

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students. Results revealed that males had significantly higher on bullying than females. Also, males are more involved with bullying than females and the most frequent behavior is physical bullying among males and verbal bullying among females.

Several plans have started recently in Jordan to reduce bullying in schools, such as the Ma'An campaign. The first goal of the Ma'An campaign is to use a comprehensive approach to prevent child abuse at home, school, and throughout the community.

The new way of discipline is based on asking teachers to take four steps when a problem occurs in the classroom as follows: pause, enquire about the problem from the student, engage the class in discussion around this issue and finally, take action suitable to the mistake that happened (as cited in Child Protection - Ma'An Campaign to Reduce Bullying in Schools, 2011).

The second goal of the Ma'An campaign was to improve interpersonal communication in schools. According to UNICEF, "This will be reinforced by a monthly discussion sessions led by the advocate group utilizing the results of the monthly random survey on violence" (Child Protection - Ma'An Campaign to Reduce Bullying in Schools, 2011). Hopefully such initiatives would help in tackling school bullying among Jordanian schools. Moreover, providing evidence that is based on research regarding prevention programs for bullying at schools would also help policy makers and administrators adapt effective prevention programs to tackle this problem.

## Overview of Literature

### Bullying: Types and Prevalence

Researchers frequently find that bullying is an issue that can be harmful to the child development (Haynie et al., 2001; Nansel et al., 2001, 2003). According to Kowalski and Limber (2007), bullying is defined as "repeated aggressive behavior in which there is an imbalance of power between the parties" (p. 22). Bullies target victims in a purposive manner and they intentionally harm those individuals (Olweus, 1994).

Bullying includes direct physical acts (e.g. hitting), verbal abuse (e.g. threatening), and indirect acts (e.g. social segregation and rumor spreading) (See Table 1). Female bullies tend to use indirect acts more frequently (Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008), while direct bullying acts tend to be more associated with males (Swearer, Espelage, Vailancourt, & Hymel, 2010; Olweus, 2005).



Bullying can also be spread through emails, text messages, or chatting (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Moreover, bullying is not only a negative action against others, but rather a behavior that is “repeated and over time” (Olweus, 2005, p. 9).

Unnever and Cornell (2003) described a “culture of bullying” in schools as a type of school climate that encourages bullies to act aggressively without fear of reprisal as well as giving the victims a sense of passivity and fear of asking for assistance (Olweus & Limber, 2000). In general, as Nansel et al. (2001) mentioned, bullying occurs where there is inequality of power between the bully and the victim.

**Table 1**

*Common Forms of Bullying*

Type	Direct bullying	Indirect bullying
Verbal bullying	Verbal bullying, name calling	Spreading rumors
Physical bullying	Hitting, kicking, shoving, destruction someone for you or theft of property	Enlisting a friend to assault
Non-verbal/ Non-physical bullying, relational	Threatening Obscene gestures	Excluding others from a group, manipulation of friendships, threatening by e-mail

*Source: copied from Rigby (2003). See also Olweus, (1993a).*

Research studies have clearly shown that bullying occurs at a higher frequency in the U.S. than Europe (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). An estimated 5.7 million students are involved in bullying issues in the U.S. In a national survey of students in sixth to tenth grades, 13% reported bullying others, 11% reported being the target of bullies, and another 6% said that they were both a bully and a victim themselves (Nansel et al., 2001). Consistent with this, an estimated total of 10–20% of children and adolescents are frequently involved in bullying (whether as bully, victim, or both), with boys involved more than girls and younger subjects more than older (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould,

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2007; Liang, Flisher, & Lombard, 2007; Rigby & Slee, 1992; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Meanwhile, other studies have shown that bullying seems to increase in during the middle school years (Banks, Fischler, Shenker, & Susskind 1997). Additional studies have discovered that boys tend to use more direct acts of bullying such as name calling, while girls tended to use a more indirect approach, such as spreading rumors (Banks, Fischler, Shenker, & Susskind 1997; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Nansel et al., 2001).

Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, (2007) examined the potential differences between students and teachers' perceptions of the frequency of bullying with sample of 75 elementary, 20 middle and 14 high school students. Results indicated that teachers at all school levels estimated the frequency of bullying greater than students. Teachers are more likely to handle the bullying situations.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2009) survey, 4% of students who were bullied chose to protect themselves by carrying a weapon to school, compared to less than 1% of students who were not bullied carried weapons to school. Also 15% of bullied students were involved in direct bullying acts (e.g. hitting or kicking) compared to about 4% of non-bullied students were involved in the same acts.

Turkmen,et.al, (2013) investigated the prevalence of bullying behaviors, its victims and the types of bullying behaviors among high schools students in Turkey. Results indicated that 96% were involved in bullying as bullied or victims among male students and involved in violent behaviors more than female students.

In a recent study of 3,767 middle school students who attended six schools in the southwestern and northwestern United States, Eleven percent had been electronically bullied at least once in the last couple months; 7% were both bullies and victims; and 4% had electronically bullied someone else (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Another study found that approximately 13% of sixth to tenth-graders were being bullied electronically (Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009; Wang, Nansel, & Iannotti, 2010). Thus, online bullying can occur anywhere, either at school or outside. This makes online bullying potentially even more dangerous because the bully cannot see the damage they are inflicting on the victim.

## Consequences of Bullying and School Violence

Research over nearly forty years has shown that bullying is a global issue (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin- Kelly, 2007; Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005; Whitted & Dupper, 2005).

Bullying is considered an imbalance in power (Olweus, 1994; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Bullying impedes childhood development (Grahm & Bellmore, 2007). It involves both boys and girls. Bullies are linked to engaging in antisocial behaviors such as, destruction, substance abuse, stealing, and criminal activities recorded in public records. This pattern has been shown to continue into adulthood; whereas the victims show behavior problems such as depression, anxiety, and difficulties in adjustment to new situations as well.

Research on school bullying began first in the Scandinavian countries with the publication of Dan Olweus's (1978) book "*Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys*". Olweus started a campaign against bullying in schools and developed his well-known *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program* (Hazelden Foundation, 2007). Attention to this problem became even more focused when three teenage boys committed suicide in Norway in 1983, as a result of being bullied by other classmates.

School bullying may have substantial negative consequences for the child. For instance, the bullying act may result in low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and also increasing the suicidal thoughts (Limber et al., 2004). Finnish researchers found that bullied children were more likely to feel unsafe as well as feel suicidal four to eight times more than those who were not (Nansel et al., 2001). Furthermore, victims of bullying try to avoid attending school, have poor academic performance, experience isolation, and have psychological problems like depression and anxiety that continue into adolescence (Nansel et al., 2001; Rigby, 2003).

A study conducted by Pintabona (2002) in Western Australia examined nearly 2,000 children in fourth grade across 29 schools. Results indicated that 16.5% suffered from frequent bullying over time, and 29% of these victims suffered from depression, and 20% from anxiety. Supporting this finding, other studies have shown that depression and anxiety were

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correlated to victimization even if the victims had additional support later (Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Rubin, & Patton, 2001). Moreover, Sourander et al. (2007) conducted a study with a group of boys aged 8 to 18 and found that being a victim in childhood was associated with anxiety disorders in late adolescence, while being a bully was associated with antisocial behavior. Their results also showed that being a victim in childhood did not result in perpetration later during adolescence, but being a bully was connected to later perpetration.

Additionally, Schreier et al. (2009) suggested that those who had been emotionally bullied experienced long term psychological problems. While another study conducted by Rossow and Lauritzen (2001) found an association between being bullied and suicidal intention. Such frightening consequences call for immediate interventions from teachers, administrators, and policy makers. In the same matter, Chen and Astor, (2011) conducted a study in Taiwan that explored how student maltreatment by teachers, students' perpetrations against other students, and student victimization by others affected the self-esteem and depression of 1,376 junior high school students. The study also explored how student-teacher relationships and peer support moderated the impact of school violence. The overall findings suggested that depression is a major consequence of school bullying in Taiwan.

Johnson (2009) reviewed 25 articles focused on understanding schools social and physical environments as well as teachers and students' perceptions of safety and their experiences of school violence. The findings showed that schools with less bullying tended to have students who were aware of school rules and had a good relationship with their teachers, believed all the rules were fair, felt that they had rights in their school, and they were in a positive classroom and school environment. Further, Brand et al. (2003) conducted a longitudinal study with a sample of over 105,000 students in 188 middle schools. They found a strong relationship between socio-emotional adjustment and positive school climate dimensions, such as: higher peer commitment to academic achievement and pro-social behaviors, higher teacher support, safety, clear rules, and instructional innovations.

Motoko (2013) examined the characteristics of students who feared being victimized by school bullying and also examined teacher and school characteristics associated with students' fears. This study was based on a secondary analysis of the Program for International Student Assessment

(PISA) data collected from a nationally representative sample of 2,787 of 15-year-olds in 111 schools in the United States. The study found that students who have low achievement reported a higher level of fear of school violence. Student-teacher bonding was also associated with a lower level of fear. Motoko recommended that administrators should support teachers and provide a positive school climate by providing a caring and effective classroom.

From the aforementioned research, it seems that bullying represents a problem in all school levels, whether the bullying is verbal, physical, or digital. Henson, (2015) cautioned schools to be careful of their hidden curriculum, stating, “the content we choose to teach, the rules we implement, the way we organize the classroom, and the methods we use to teach the content all send messages to students,” adding, “the socialization process that comes from school itself is part of the hidden curriculum” (p. 13). Schools need to become more aware of preventing this major social problem and develop intervention programs to teach both educators and students. When this happens, the hidden curriculum can actually have a positive effect on the school climate. Intervention programs help teachers, students, and parents to solve these bullying behaviors cooperatively (Henson, 2015), and help students develop compassion and empathy to become part of a safe and constructive climate in their schools and future neighborhoods.

In sum, the awareness of the importance of implementing bullying prevention programs; developing warm relationships between teachers, principals, students, counselors and parents; identifying the rules and limits against bullying; and applying positive role models to encourage students’ academic learning all go a long way in counteracting bullying effects beginning in the early stages. Moreover, all schools need to adapt or develop a comprehensive prevention programs to stop school bullying (Swearer, Espelage, Vailancourt, & Hymel, 2010). Research has shown long-term interventions are effective in reducing bullying and may also increase pro-social skills among students.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Actions of bullying are experienced by students in Jordan on a frequent basis. Lack of policies and assertive legislations have placed

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Jordanian school children at risk of bullying acts. To the researcher's knowledge little research, has been dedicated to this issue in Jordan specifically. As a result, studying the incidence, frequency, and the associated factors of school bullying is a crucial step in the development of useful interventions and preventative measures, and policies. This study will provide implications to schools and administrators in regard to the incidence and frequency of school bullying among Jordanian elementary school children. Furthermore, implications for policymakers are necessary to stop school bullying and make the school a safer environment for children.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to assess the prevalence of bullying/victimization behaviors among third graders in Jordanian public schools from the perspectives of both students and their teachers.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study focused on the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Jordanian elementary school students (grade 3) exhibit bullying behaviors?
2. To what extent are Jordanian elementary school students (grade 3) victims of bullying behaviors?
3. To what extent do Jordanian teachers of elementary school students (grade 3) experience bullying behaviors in their schools?
4. How frequently do Jordanian elementary school students (grade 3) and their teachers experience different types of bullying and victim behaviors?
5. Do the degrees of bullying among Jordanian elementary school students (grade 3) differ by gender?
6. Are there differences in perception about bullying and victim behaviors between Jordanian elementary school (grade 3) students and their teachers?

### **METHOD**

A cross-sectional study was conducted in order to address the study's purposes. Data were collected using self-reported questionnaires from 500 third-grade students and 52 teachers randomly selected from 20 Jordanian public schools in the northern region of Jordan.

## Sample and Setting

The accessible population consisted of all third graders in the first Irbid directorate schools (6,350) and their teachers (200) in Jordan. The study's questionnaire was distributed to a convenience sample of 500 third-grade students and 52 teachers randomly selected from 20 Jordanian public schools in the directorate.

The researcher used 50/50 split and 5% sampling error. Which means when the population is about (6,350), the sample is around (450-500), this is based on Salant, Dillman, & Don's (1994) table for sample selection.

## The Instrument

Two instruments were used to investigate the bullying and victims of bullying among third graders in Jordanian public schools. The bullying behavior scale and victimization scale were originally developed by Austin and Joseph (1995). These two instruments employed a three point Likert scale (A = always/often; S = sometimes; N = never): Scale: 1.00-1.66 low, 1.67-2.33 moderate, 2.34-3.00 high (Austin and Joseph (1996).

The Arabic versions of both instruments were established by translation and back translation process and the content validity for the Arabic versions of the instruments were examined by a panel of experts who are interested in research topic. The instruments were piloted with 25 participants before the data collection process for the following purposes: to assess the clarity & appropriateness of items and to test the readability of the instrument among a Jordanian sample. The results of the pilot study indicated that the instruments were clear, and readable. The findings also showed that the internal consistency of bullying behavior scale was 0.85 and the internal consistency of the victimization scale was 0.87. These results meant that the reliability coefficient was satisfactory for the purpose of this study.

Bully/victim problems were 12 items for Victimization Scale and the 12-item Bullying-Behavior Scale. The item pool of the Bullying-Behavior Scale was based on the Victimization Scale and involved changing the tense of the item from passive to active. The Bullying-Behavior Scale consisted of

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six forced choice items, three of which referred to being the perpetrator of negative physical actions (i.e., hit and pushed, picked on, bullied) and three of which referred to being the perpetrator of negative verbal actions (i.e., teased, horrible names, laughed at). These two scales represent two of six subscales. Internal reliability was (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83) for the Victimization Scale and the Bullying-Behavior Scale was (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82). These two results indicated that the scales had high reliability.

### **Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Considerations**

Approvals from the Ministry of Education and the relevant schools' directorates in Jordan as well were obtained before the study commenced. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the principals, teachers, and students of the targeted schools. After gaining the permission of the school's principal to include the school in the study, and an informed consent was obtained from the teachers and the parents of each student. The participants were informed that participation was voluntary and the researcher would protect the confidentiality of the participants. All participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time with no penalty. Paper document data were stored in a locked cabinet in possession of the researcher. Electronic data were stored on a password protected computer. No one had access to the data except the researcher. To ensure the maximum level of confidentiality, a pseudonymous ID was assigned for each participant. Consent forms were kept. The study's data were stored in a locker that only the researcher had a key. All electronic data was password protected. All the data was destroyed after the end of the study.

Once the researcher obtained the permission to conduct the study, the researcher contacted the research sites in order to set up a time to explain the study to the participants, obtain their consent, and administer the two survey items. The researcher developed a power point presentation to teach students and their teachers how to answer the surveys. The surveys were "pencil and paper" and the participants were asked to seal it in an envelope and give it directly to the researcher after completing the survey.

### **Data Analysis**

Once the surveys were completed and data compiled, the researcher coded the participants' responses and entered them into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program. The data was checked for



accuracy. The researcher ran preliminary tests such as means and standard deviations. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample and variables of the study such as means and standard deviations.

Inferential statistics was used to test the research questions. For questions 1-4, descriptive analysis was used. First, to describe demographics of teachers and students and then mean and standard deviations were computed to examine the mean scores of bullying/victims of bullying behaviors. For questions 5 and 6, t-tests were used to examine differences between male and female students and then between students and teachers regarding bullying and victims of bullying behaviors.

## RESULTS

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate whether third grade students and their teachers experienced bullying and victims of bullying behaviors in their classrooms. A .05 Alpha level was applied to all results to find significance. Table, 2 and 3, show descriptive information for students and teachers who were included in this study.

**Table 2**

*Students Demographic Data*

Students	Frequency	Percent
Male	290	58.0
Female	210	42.0
Total	500	100.0

**Table 3**

*Teachers demographic data*

Teachers	Frequency	Percent	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	21	40.4
	Female	31	59.6
<b>Years of experience</b>	1-5	19	36.5
	>5-10	12	23.1
	> 10	21	40.4
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor	43	82.7
	Master	7	13.5
	PhD	2	3.8
	Total	52	100.0

In order to answer the first and second research questions concerning bullying behaviors and victims of bullying as experienced by students, means and standard deviations were computed (see Table 4,5, and6). As seen in Table 4, the total of mean scores were low, which means that third grade students experienced few bullying behaviors (M= 1.18) and victims of bullying behaviors (M= 1.26).

**Table 4**

*Means and standard deviations of students' perceptions of bullying and victims*

Rank		Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Victims	1.26	.338	Low
2	Bullying	1.18	.280	Low

*Scale: 1.00-1.66 Low, 1.67-2.33 Moderate, 2.34-3.00 High*

As seen in Table 5 and 6 the total mean scores for bullying (M=1.18) and victims of bullying behaviors (M= 1.26) was low. However, results indicated frequency scores for students that reported experiencing being victims were higher than reports of being a bully.

**Table 5**

*Descriptive Statistics of Bullying Items*

Rank	#	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	1	Bullying other children	1.27	.492	Low
2	3	Calling bad and nasty names	1.21	.496	Low
3	5	Hitting or kicking other children	1.20	.478	Low
4	11	Leaving out of games and other activities	1.19	.478	Low
5	15	Mocking or laughing because of one's appearance	1.19	.470	Low
5	24	having been mocked because of one's low school achievement	1.19	.463	Low
7	7	Stealing belongings	1.17	.424	Low
8	21	Mocking because of one's high school achievement	1.16	.465	Low
10	17	Mocking because of one's gender	1.14	.428	Low

Rank	#	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
10	19	Mocking because of one's financial standing	1.14	.411	Low
12	13	Mocking because of one's family	1.12	.375	Low
13	9	Mocking because of one's descent	1.11	.366	Low
		<b>Bullying</b>	1.18	.280	Low

**Table 6**  
*Descriptive Statistics of victims Items*

Rank	#	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	2	having been bullied by other children	1.44	.593	Moderate
2	4	having been called bad or nasty names	1.35	.617	Moderate
3	8	having belongings stolen	1.35	.537	Moderate
4	6	having been hit or kicked by other children	1.33	.563	Low
5	16	having been mocked because of one's appearance	1.25	.529	Low
6	12	having been left out of games and other activities by other children	1.24	.493	Low
7	23	Mocking because of one's low school achievement	1.24	.500	Low
8	22	having been mocked because of one's high school achievement	1.22	.507	Low
9	20	having been mocked because of one's financial standing	1.21	.507	Low
10	10	having been mocked because of one's descent	1.19	.464	Low
11	18	having been mocked because of one's gender	1.18	.475	Low
12	14	having been mocked because of one's family	1.14	.419	Low
		<b>Victims of bullying</b>	1.26	.338	Low

Means and standard deviations were computed to answer the third question concerning "to what extent do Jordanian teachers of elementary school students (grade 3) experience bullying behaviors in their schools?"

As seen in table 7, teachers' perceptions of bullying and victims of bullying scales were moderate, also the most frequent pattern of bullying

behaviors seen by teachers was physical ( $M = 2.29$ ), followed by relational ( $M = 2.20$ ), and verbal ( $M = 2.11$ ).

**Table 7**  
*Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Perceptions*

Rank		Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Physical	2.29	.421	Moderate
2	Relational	2.20	.457	Moderate
3	Verbal	2.11	.441	Moderate

rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level	
1	7	Some children are often bullied by other children	2.40	.569	High
2	2	Some children often bully other children	2.35	.590	High
3	5	some children are aggressive with other children	2.25	.590	Moderate
4	19	Some children hit and pushed about by other children	2.15	.638	Moderate
		<b>Physical</b>	2.29	.421	Moderate

rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level	
1	3	Some children are often teased by other children	2.35	.590	High
2	22	Some children call other children horrible names	2.13	.658	Moderate
3	17	Some children often tease other children	2.12	.615	Moderate
4	23	some children are mocking others	2.12	.615	Moderate
5	10	Some children are laughed at other children	2.04	.625	Moderate
6	11	Some children are called nasty names	1.92	.682	Moderate
		<b>Verbal</b>	2.11	.441	Moderate

rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	15	2.21	.667	Moderate
2	13	2.19	.561	Moderate
	<b>Relational</b>	2.20	.457	Moderate

As seen in table 8, the total mean scores of teachers who had not experienced bullying was moderate ( $M = 2.10$ ). Those teachers may not follow their students with their behaviors that why they had not experienced the bullying and victims of bullying behaviors.

**Table 8**

*Descriptive statistics of teachers who had not experienced bullying/victims of bullying behaviors*

rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	1	2.21	.572	Moderate
1	6	2.21	.696	Moderate
3	24	2.19	.742	Moderate
4	12	2.13	.793	Moderate
5	16	2.12	.758	Moderate
6	8	2.08	.621	Moderate
7	9	2.04	.685	Moderate
8	14	2.00	.626	Moderate
9	18	2.00	.741	Moderate
10	21	2.00	.741	Moderate
11	4	1.96	.593	Moderate
12	20	1.94	.698	Moderate

To answer the fourth question concerning “How frequently do Jordanian elementary school students (grade 3) and their teachers experience different types of bullying and victim behaviors?” means and standard deviations were scored.

As seen in tables 9 and 10, the most frequent pattern of bullying behaviors that teachers and students rated among the three subscales of

bullying was physical. However, teachers perceived higher levels on all three types of bullying/victims of bullying than students.

**Table 9:** Results for Types of Bullying and Victims of bullying Based on Students' Perceptions (N = 500)

Rank	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Physical	1.29	.339	Low
2	Relational	1.22	.386	Low
3	Verbal	1.19	.296	Low

**Table 10**  
Results for Types of Bullying and Victims of bullying Based on Teachers' Perceptions (N = 52)

Rank		Mean	Std. Deviation	Level
1	Physical	2.29	.421	Moderate
2	Relational	2.20	.457	Moderate
3	Verbal	2.11	.441	Moderate

To answer the fifth question "Do the degrees of bullying among Jordanian elementary school students (grade 3) differ by gender?" t-tests were performed based on gender. Results are shown in Table (11 &12). Table 11, below shows a statistically significant difference ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) exists regarding the frequency of bullying behaviors in this population based on gender. Results show that males bullied more frequently than females.

**Table 11**  
Bullying T-Test Results Based on Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Bullying</b>	Male	290	1.21	.311	3.776	498	.000
	Female	210	1.12	.222			

Table 12, below shows victims of bullying based on gender in the tested population. As seen in Table 13, frequency for males is slightly higher than females but did not reach a level of statistical significance.

**Table 12***Victims of bullying T-Test Results Based on Gender*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Victims</b>	Male	290	1.28	.355	1.544	498	.123
	Female	210	1.23	.311			

At the end, t-tests were also run to answer the sixth question “(Are there differences in perceptions about bullying and victim behaviors between Jordanian elementary school (grade 3) students and their teachers?)”. Table 13 below shows statistically significant differences ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) on all three types bullying and victim behaviors among third-grade students. Teachers perceived more bullying and victims of bullying in all three categories than their students felt occurred.

**Table 13***T-Test Results on Differences of Perceptions of Students and Teachers on Bullying and Victims of bullying*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Physical	Student	500	1.29	.339	-19.637	550	.000
	Teacher	52	2.29	.421			
Verbal	Student	500	1.19	.296	-20.246	550	.000
	Teacher	52	2.11	.441			
Relational	Student	500	1.22	.386	-17.211	550	.000
	Teacher	52	2.20	.457			

## DISCUSSION

These results make some important contributions to what is known about bullying and victims of bullying in educational settings of Jordan. Results of the students' perceptions of bullying and victims of bullying behaviors indicated a generally low amount of bullying and victims of bullying among third graders. These low results could have been due to students' fears of reporting honestly. These results are not supported by prior research generally. Consistently, there is a lower rate of serious violent

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behaviors in the elementary level than in the middle or high schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009).

Further, studies conducted with students in middle school grades reported significantly higher incidents of bullying/victim of bullying (Unnever & Cornell, 2003). Without further study, it is unclear if there actually are fewer bullying incidents in third graders or if they simply did not report accurately in this study.

In this current study teachers reported more bullying by other students than the students reported. This matches other past studies that found the same result. Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, (2007) noted that school staff was asked about occasions when they witnessed bullying whereas students were asked about occasions when they personally experienced bullying. In line with Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan (2007), Stockdale et al. (2002) also found that teachers' estimates of the frequency of bullying were generally higher than the estimates of students and parents.

The types of bullying witnessed by teachers and students also are in line with Owidat and Hamdi's (1997) results. Teachers in the current study reported physical bullying/victims of bullying as the most frequent and verbal bullying as the least frequent. Owidat and Hamdi's (1997) results showed the most frequent behavioral problems were fighting and hitting each other (physical), which were also related to watching violent behaviors on T.V. and other settings. The current study's results concerning the type of bullying behaviors was in line with Turkmen,et.al (2013) which indicated that the likelihood of being a bullied and a victim of physical, emotional, and verbal bullying was higher among males rather than females. However, this current study is inconsistent with prior research that indicated that verbal victimization behavior was reported as the most frequent form of bullying/victimization and physical victimization was the least frequent form of bullying/victimization (Sourander et al. 2007).

Regarding gender differences, boys rated higher on bullying scale than girls, this result is consistent with a number of recent and past studies (eg. Jaradat, 2017; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2006; Nansel et al., 2001). However, no statistically significant differences were reported between being a victim of bullying among third-grade students and their gender was found. This current result in line with Doğruer, (2015), which indicated that gender by subtype analyses revealed no significant sex differences. In general, gender differences tend not to be statistically robust in regards to being a victim.



Finally, teachers rated higher levels of bullying/victims of bullying behaviors than the students themselves. This could be in part because school teachers are commonly identified to be the school personnel to address bullying/victims' behaviors. Given the possibility that teachers are dealing with most instances of school bullying, it makes sense that they would include higher perceptions of bullying behaviors (Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007).

### **Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations**

This study found the most frequent type of bullying/victim of bullying was physical behavior. Boys reported bullying more than girls, but victim of bullying behavior was nearly equal. Teachers reported more bullying/victim of bullying behaviors in students than their students self-reported. Many interesting implications arise from these findings. First, the nature of bullying/victim of bullying behaviors among third graders remains between low and moderate, but programs to reduce these actions could be effective to lower these numbers further.

This study has shed the light over the issue of bullying/victim of bullying behavior among school children in Jordan. The study is among the early efforts to address this phenomenon in Jordan specifically and in the Arab world in general. The research study findings implies the importance of developing training programs for teachers, schools personnel, parents, and students. Besides, policies that encourage student to bullying/victim of bullying behaviors should be instituted and the school teachers and students should be trained on the use of such policies. Further, strong legislation to subject judicial punishment upon the perpetrators should be developed along with policies that protect students and teachers against school bullying/victim of bullying behavior.

Moreover, the current study makes it clear that additional qualitative data, including interviews and observations, to support the researchers' interpretations are needed. Moreover, this study only focused on third graders and their teachers, future study could examine more grades like k-12. This study also did not address bullying by teachers toward students, which was reported in alarmingly high numbers in this study's introduction. Future studies could address this important aspect of bullying further as well.

Bullying/victim of bullying behavior is a common issue in schools and may happen for several reasons, from administration to individual to environmental factors. This issue has the potential to distress the students' development, the teaching process and the school environment in general. All efforts should be directed to recognize, report, and alleviate the contributed factors to bullying/victim of bullying behavior in schools. Policies and legislation concerning bullying/victim of bullying behavior should be established; moreover, school personnel should be trained on how to deal with bullying/victim of bullying behavior incidents.

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