RESEARCH

A psychoeducational intervention for teachers about bullying behavior prevention among secondary school students

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Abstract

Background: Bullying among peers in schools is a significant public health problem that contributes to unhealthy outcomes for those who bully or are bullied.

Aim: The aim of the study is to evaluate the effect of a psychoeducational intervention for teachers about bullying behavior prevention among secondary school students.

Results: The present study shows that there is highly statistical significance between total intervention regarding bullying at school and total bullying perceptions post-psychoeducational intervention.

Conclusions: It is important for teachers to receive a psychoeducational intervention from time to time to help them teach students how to solve their problems that can redirect potentially negative or passive behaviors to positive problem-solving and leadership skills.

Keywords: Bullying, Psychoeducational, Teachers, Secondary school students

Background

Bullying is commonly defined as intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated for a long time, and involves an imbalance of power. It can have negative effects on children's physical and psychological health and can even escalate to the tragedy of suicide [1].

Literature about bullying and psychoeducational intervention

Bullying is one of the problems that occur in the social environment. The aggression of bullies occurs in social contexts in which teachers and parents are generally unaware of the extent of the problem and other children are either reluctant to get involved or simply do not know how to get help. Thirty-three percent of students who

reported being bullied at school indicated that they were bullied at least once or twice a month during the school year; of those students who reported being bullied, 13% were made fun of, called names, or insulted; 12% were the sample of rumors; 5% were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; and 5% [2] were excluded from activities on purpose. A slightly higher portion of females than male students report being bullied at school (23% vs. 19%). In contrast, a higher percentage of male than female students report being physically bullied (6% vs. 4%) and threatened with harm (5% vs. 3%). Bullied students reported that bullying occurred in the following places: the hallway or stairwell at school (42%), inside the classroom (34%), in the cafeteria (22%), outside the school grounds (19%), on the school bus (10%), and in the bathroom or locker room (9%) [3–20].

Moreover, there is evidence that school-based prevention and a psychoeducational intervention can produce positive effects on students' academic and behavioral functioning; the ability of teachers to sustain high-quality

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implementation remains an open and vexing question. Because teachers are often the intervention agents in school-based prevention programs, assessing both their adherence to program procedures and their competence in a psychoeducational intervention [4].

Bullying has several harmful consequences. For example, students who are bullied are more likely to have poor school adjustment, sleep problems, anxiety, and depression. Furthermore, those who are both bullied and bully others are more likely to be bullied themselves. In addition, students who are both targets of bullying and engage in bullying behavior are at greater risk for both mental health and behavior problems than students who only bully or are only bullied [5].

Addressing bullying in secondary schools requires developmentally appropriate intervention strategies and an intervention that meets school needs and can be feasibly implemented in these typically large and differently organized school environments [6]. A positive school climate where a school's norms, values, and expectations result in all children feeling safe, respected, and valued is a strong determinant of effective anti-bullying approaches [7].

School nurses play an important role in health promotion and educating students on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Additionally, schoolteachers must play a critical part in the development of whole-school bullying rules. Administrators, parents, and student mentors can all help make the school a safer place to be. Bullying policies apply to the entire school [8].

Significance of the study
In Egypt, bullying is a problem that occurs inside school grounds and in the greater social environment outside of school; it was found that 27% of children aged 8–17 in Egypt had been subjected to online bullying, and 60.3% were bullied offline [9]. Schools must ensure they are safe places for all students.

For this, the researchers view that there is a need for a bullying prevention program that focuses on involving all different groups in the bullying prevention process that start by providing training workshops for teachers to correct some misconceptions they have about bullying and fill the gaps in their knowledge about bullying identification, intervention, and prevention.

Hypothesis
A psychoeducational intervention for teachers regarding bullying behavior has a positive effect on teachers' perception, dealing, and prevention of bullying among secondary school students.

Methods
Design
The design of the study is quasi-experimental.

Setting, timetable, and sampling
A purposive sample of 60 teachers, selected from the two largest secondary schools for boys (Fatma Alzhraa School, Hoda Shaarawy School), belong to the AL Masara administration who are teaching students and have more contact with them and accept to participate in the study. The teachers with less than 12 months of experience or employed in school and who were absent on the day of data collection were excluded.

Fieldwork
After obtaining official permission to carry out the study, the researchers have explained the purpose of the study to teachers in school. Written consent was obtained from the participants. The data collection of the study was covered for 4 months from the beginning of October 2019 to the end of February 2020 in the previously mentioned settings, and the researchers were available in the study settings 2 days per week, on (Mondays and Tuesdays) from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m.

Tools
Part I: Socio-demographic datasheet
This tool was developed by the researchers and covers socio-demographic characteristics such as age, sex educational level, years of experience, and incidence of bullying in their school.

Part II: Perception of teachers about bullying and its causes
This tool was developed by the researchers after reviewing the recent related literature. It includes 8 questions to assess the teachers' perceptions, and the questions were adapted from the survey designed by the researcher [10].

Scoring
A 4-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) ranges from 4 to 1. Sum scores were calculated to obtain a total perception score.

- The positive attitudes. Level if score < 60% of the maximum score
- The negative attitudes level if score ≥ 60% of the maximum score

Part III: Intervention methods for bullying questionnaire
The scale aims to assess teachers' dealing behaviors toward bullying situations; the 8 questions where the items were scored as yes = 1 and no = 0 [10].

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Part IV: Preventive methods

This questionnaire focused on bullying prevention, where 10 questions assessed teachers' motivation to act toward preventing bullying from occurring in their school. The items were scored according to a 4-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), ranging from 4 to 1 [10].

Part V: Barriers to dealing with bullying questionnaire

It includes 9 questions focused on teachers' perceived barriers regarding dealing with bullying at school; the items were scored as yes = 1 and no = 0 [10].

Validity

The tools' validity was examined by presenting them to three academic experts from nursing and education colleges to determine their relevance, clarity, completeness, and comprehensiveness. The experts' comments for the face validity were either agreeing or disagreeing. After that, their input was analyzed, and final tools were created and implemented.

Ethical considerations

After describing the study's goal and before data collection, participants signed consent forms. They were given the option of declining to participate, and they were informed that they might withdraw at any time during the study without giving a reason. They were also told that the information they provided would be kept private and utilized solely for research purposes.

Statistical analysis

PSS for Windows version 20.0 was used for all statistical analyses. Prior to any calculations, the data were checked for normality of distribution. Continuous data were normally distributed and reported in frequency, percentage, and mean standard deviation (SD). The chi-square and correlation coefficient (r) tests were performed to determine the closeness of the relationships between variables. The threshold for statistical significance was established at p0.05.
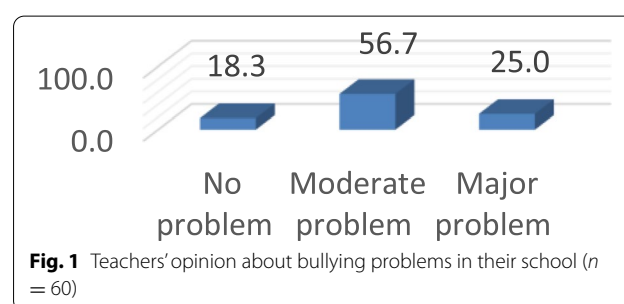
Results: figures and tables

Sociodemographic characteristics

Table 1 clarifies the socio-demographic characteristics of teachers; more than half of them are between the ages of 30 and 50 years old, and about three-quarters of them (71.7%) are male and had experience and employed in school for about 10 years (70%, 73.3%). While more than fifty of them (56.7%) did not receive

Table 1 Socio-demographic characteristics ($n = 60$)

Item	No.	Percent
Age		
> 30	12	20.0
30–50	35	58.3
< 50	13	21.7
Mean ±SD, 49.9 ± 13.2 years		
Sex		
Male	43	71.7
Female	17	28.3
Highest level of education		
Diploma	15	25.0
Bachelor	36	60.0
Postgraduate degree	9	15.0
What grades do you currently teach?		
1st grade (first year)	4	6.7
2nd grade (second year)	38	63.3
3rd grade (third year)	18	30
How many years of experience do you have in teaching?		
1–5	22	36.7
6–10	20	33.3
< 10	18	30.0
How many years have you been employed in this school?		
1–5	6	10.0
6–10	44	73.3
< 10	10	16.7
Did you receive any training programs inside or outside school to deal with bullying?		
Yes	26	43.3
No	34	56.7

Fig. 1 Teachers' opinion about bullying problems in their school ($n = 60$)

any training program inside or outside school to deal with bullying

Figure 1 shows that 25% of teachers consider bullying behavior a major problem in their school while 18.3% think bullying behavior is not a problem.

Figure 2 clarifies the incidents of bullying in school which 36.7% of teachers witness or report 7 to 10 incidents of bullying.

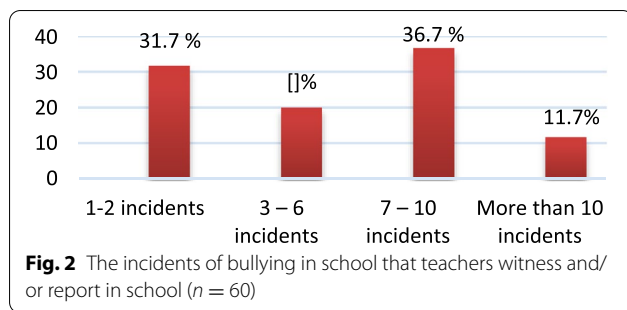**Fig. 2** The incidents of bullying in school that teachers witness and/or report in school (n = 60)

Figure 3 illustrates that more than half of the teachers (59.7%) do not recognize well the signs of bullying in the pre-program while most of them recognize it very well (31.7) and moderately well (53.3%) after training.
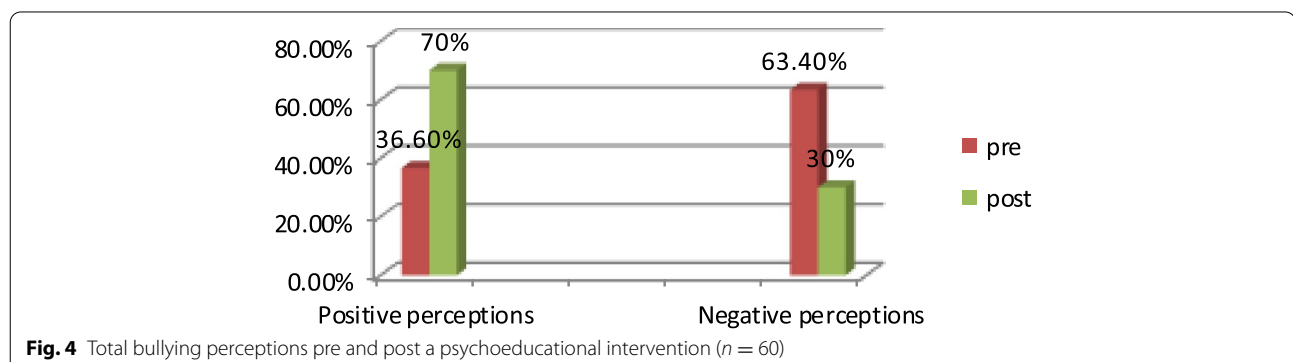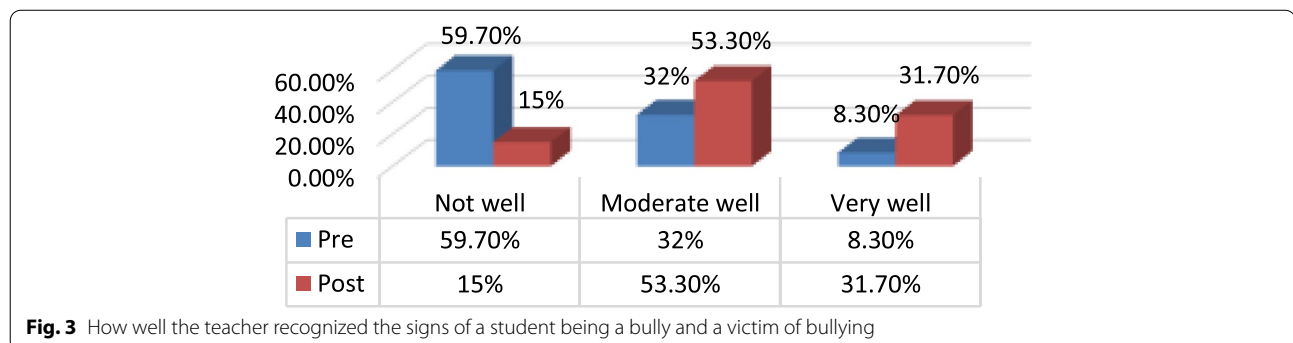
Figures 3 and 4 show the perception of teachers regarding bullying behavior; more than two-thirds of (66.7%) teachers in pre-program do not know much about bullying (66.7%), and it is hard for them to differentiate between bullying and playful teasing (61.7%) and think the bullies are evil by nature (63.4%); after the training program, their perception becomes better and positive (70%) in the most item of perception family breakdown, parents' education, and economical situation of their family as well as.

Table 2 mentioned the intervention for bullying incidences in school; at pre-program, most of them (80%) could not deal with this issue, and two-thirds of them encourage the bully to apologize to the victim (68.3%) and allow the parents of the bully and the victim come to school to help resolve the situation (63.3%). After the program, most teachers can deal well with bullying behavior at school with statistically significant between pre- to post-program (P = 0.001) (Fig. 5)

According to Fig. 3, in half of the studied sample (50%), their intervention and dealing with bullying behavior at school were a poor pre-program, while almost all of them the intervention is good (96.7%) after the training program.
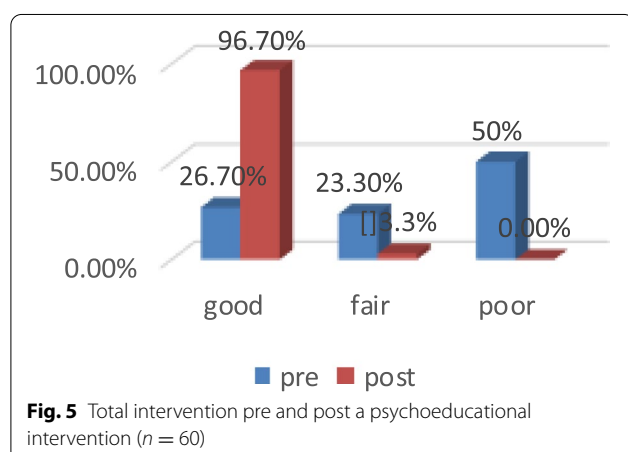
Figure 6 illustrated that 48% of studied subjects change their total barriers from pre to post with highly statistically significant (P = 0.002), which the nearly three-quarters of schoolteachers have high barriers to dealing with bullying behavior among school students, while after a psychoeducational intervention, only 20% of them have these barriers also 48.3% have moderate barriers which less to (11.7%) after a psychoeducational intervention.

According to teachers' opinions prevention of bullying behavior among school children, Table 3 clarifies that almost three-quarters of teachers show highly perceived the importance of adding bullying prevention to the school curriculum (75.7%) and awareness program

	Not well	Moderate well	Very well
Pre	59.70%	32%	8.30%
Post	15%	53.30%	31.70%

Fig. 3 How well the teacher recognized the signs of a student being a bully and a victim of bullying

Fig. 4 Total bullying perceptions pre and post a psychoeducational intervention (n = 60)

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Table 2 Distribution of the studied subjects according to their intervention/dealing with a student who was a bully or victim pre and post a psychoeducational intervention (*n* = 60)

No.	Statement		Pre		Post		Chi-square pre and post	
			No.	%	No.	%	x^2	*P*-value
1.1.	I would not deal with this issue; it is not my job.	Yes	48	80.0	20	33.3	0.884	0.347
		No	12	20.0	40	66.7		
1.2.	Refer to school academic and social counselor.	Yes	33	55.0	52	86.7	32.267	< 0.001** HS
		No	27	45.0	8	13.3		
1.3.	Refer to the principal.	Yes	29	48.3	36	60.0	0.417	0.519
		No	31	51.7	24	40.0		
1.4.	Make teachers and other school staff aware of the situation.	Yes	22	36.7	43	71.7	19.461	< 0.001** HS
		No	38	63.3	17	28.3		
1.5.	Encourage the bully to apologize to the victim.	Yes	41	68.3	55	91.7	0.480	0.488
		No	19	31.7	5	8.3		
1.6.	Control on bully behavior from forbidden him from sharing in fun activities.	Yes	29	48.3	29	48.3	17.376	< 0.001** HS
		No	31	51.7	31	51.7		
1.7.	Have the parents of the bully and the victim come to school to help resolve the situation.	Yes	38	63.3	38	63.3	27.149	< 0.001** HS
		No	22	36.7	22	36.7		
1.8.	Talk with the bully about appropriate behavior.	Yes	27	45.0	39	65.0	17.376	< 0.001** HS
		No	33	55.0	21	35.0		
1.9.	Meet with the victim and the bully to work out a solution.	Yes	32	53.3	53	88.3	20.376	< 0.001** HS
		No	28	46.7	7	11.7		
1.10.	Training of bully and victim on building self-confidence through some activities.	Yes	29	48.3	39	65.0	17.176	0.278
		No	31	51.7	21	35.0		

Fig. 5 Total intervention pre and post a psychoeducational intervention (*n* = 60)

students (75%) and training students about argument control (71.4%) and on activities about bullying prevention (75%), as well as, quarters of them stated the importance of presence professions school nurses and/or counselors to deal with bullying (35%) and promote a healthy environment in school. After the intervention, increase to be most of them their opinion agrees and strongly agree with the previously mentioned prevention methods
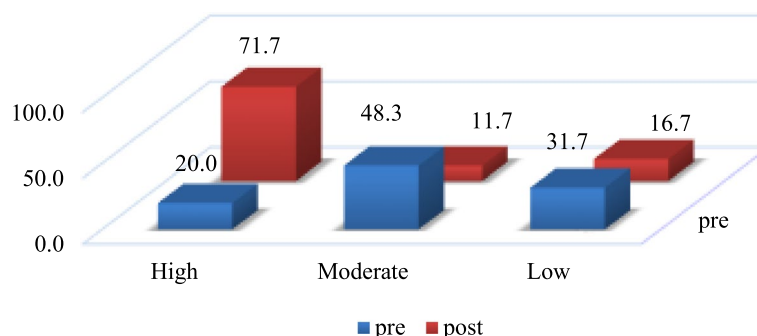
Table 4 shows that there is a highly statistically significant correlation between total bullying perceptions and total levels of perceived barriers regarding dealing with bullying at school (*P* = 0.001) school last year, while 11.7% of them witnessed or report more than 10 incidents of bullying.

Discussion

Bullying is a public problem that occurs inside school grounds and in the greater social environment outside of school. Effective interventions involving the entire school community are important to control bullying among school students, so this study aimed to evaluate the effect of a psychoeducational intervention for a teacher on bullying behavior prevention among secondary school students.

In accordance with socio-demographic factors. According to the findings, more than half of the study volunteers were between the ages of 30 and 50, and a third of them had work experience ranging from 5 to 10 years. This discovery could be attributable to the fact that secondary school demand is low, even though the number of new graduates is low. This result is in line with the

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Fig. 6 Total levels of ability of barriers regarding dealing with bullying at school

Table 3 Distribution of the studied subjects according to their bullying prevention pre and post a psychoeducational intervention (*n* = 60)

No.	Statements		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.1.	Topics about bullying prevention should be part school curriculum.	Pre	25	41.7	21	35.0	10	16.7	4	6.7
		Post	30	50.0	19	31.7	6	10.0	4	6.7
1.2.	Presence of professionals as school nurses and/or counselors to deal with bullying and promote a healthy environment in school.	Pre	12	20.0	9	15.0	22	36.7	17	28.3
		Post	26	43.3	22	36.7	8	13.3	4	6.7
1.3.	Training of students on cooperation and problem-solving.	Pre	20	33.3	11	18.3	21	35.0	8	13.3
		Post	33	55.0	24	40.0	2	3.3	1	1.7
1.4.	The school should have clear policies for preventing and dealing with bullying situations.	Pre	9	15.0	5	8.3	37	61.7	9	15.0
		Post	6	10.0	5	8.3	40	66.7	9	15.0
1.5.	The school should have an awareness program for students about bullying behavior.	Pre	36	60.0	9	15.0	9	15.0	6	10.0
		Post	16	26.7	12	20.0	24	40.0	8	13.3
1.6.	Teachers must discuss bullying in the classroom.	Pre	13	21.7	19	31.7	14	23.3	14	23.3
		Post	6	10.0	5	8.3	29	48.3	20	33.3
1.7.	The teachers should put a strict rule in the classroom about not tolerating bullying; the students will follow the same attitude.	Pre	15	25.0	18	30.0	14	23.3	13	21.7
		Post	34	56.7	22	36.7	2	3.3	2	3.3
1.8.	Availability of school activities targets bullying prevention.	Pre	26	43.3	19	31.7	8	13.3	7	11.7
		Post	12	20.0	16	26.7	27	45.0	5	8.3
1.9.	Training of students about argument control and dealing with psychological pressure.	Pre	25	41.7	18	30.0	7	11.7	10	16.7
		Post	34	56.7	19	31.7	5	8.3	2	3.3

Table 4 Correlation between total levels of perceived barriers regarding dealing with bullying at school total bullying perceptions pre and post a psychoeducational intervention (*n* = 60)

Total levels of ability of barriers regarding dealing with bullying at school	Total bullying perception			
	Pre		Post	
	r	*P*-value	*r*	*P*-value
High	10.784	0.005* s	18.373	< 0.001** HS
Moderate	8.276	0.082	28.185	< 0.001** HS
Low	3.519	0.172	9.907	0.007* S
Range	9–33			
Mean ± SD	22.7 ± 5.3			

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findings of a study conducted by Shalabi [11] who discovered that the average age of the teachers was 32 years old. Their years of teaching experience range from 2 to 6 years on average. Furthermore, the current study's findings revealed that males were more common as primary workers, accounting for roughly three-quarters of the teachers studied. This conclusion could be attributed to the present boys' secondary school's desire for teachers to deal with them during their adolescent years. Moreover, a tenth of the topics studied had a master's or doctoral degree. This finding could be related to the fact that most teachers' workloads, and responsibilities prevent them from finishing their studies after graduation, which requires time, money, and effort. This result contradicts the findings of research conducted by Lyndsay et al. [12] who found 70% were females and 30% of them were male.

According to the findings of this study, two-fifths of instructors received some type of psychoeducational intervention, either inside or outside of school, to cope with bullying. The researchers believe that teachers should undergo psychoeducational interventions from time to time to assist them in teaching pupils how to solve problems and redirect passive behaviors toward constructive problem-solving. That is correct. Veenstra et al. [13] found that teachers agreed that their school provides adequate professional training on bullying prevention. On the other hand, Shalabi [14] clarified that the teachers mentioned that there was no training about bullying in school. The findings clarified that the incidents of bullying (physical or social or verbal) at school last month were slightly more than one-third was less than three-time reported that agrees with Valerie [15] who reported the frequency of bullying during the school year among students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied at school 66.8 once and twice per year.

The findings show that more than half of teachers do not notice the indicators of bullying before a psychoeducational intervention, but most of them do thereafter. In a similar vein, research conducted in Saudi Arabia by Mobarki et al. [16] showed that the teachers know the bullying signs very well especially verbal bullying.

According to the study's findings, more than half of the participants say bullying is a moderate problem at their school, while one-quarter believe it is a major problem. That could be because, as the professors have indicated, school is critical in reducing bullying, which I agree with [17]. Most instructors stated that bullying among teens is a very high degree problem in schools, according to those who gave teachers' perspectives on school bullying behavior among adolescents.

It is critical to recognize and comprehend the origins of bullying to comprehend bullying in general. According to the findings of the current study, the most common causes of bullying behavior among pupils were family breakup, parents' education, and family economic position, as well as media/internet and peer group, both before and after a psychoeducational intervention. These findings are backed up by findings from a study conducted in Egypt. Farahat [10] found that students' socioeconomic states and their family characteristics are influencing on similarly that behavior. Similarly, a study was done in Palestine by Mohamod et al. [19] who reported the most causes among school children were a breakdown of the family, parents' culture, and education, while our findings reported that the fewer causes of bullying were the strong personality of bullies and the weak relationship between school and family.

In terms of teachers' perceptions of bullying, the study found that one-quarter of subjects agreed that bullies are evil by nature before a psychoeducational intervention, but after a psychoeducational intervention, more than two-fifths of them reject this idea; additionally, the teachers strongly agreed that bullying can have a serious impact on children's development. The research is carried out by Antonopoulos [18] who did an analysis of teachers' perceptions of bullying at school and found that the teachers mentioned that some children because of their developmental stage might act in a way that seems aggressive and act by bullying.

In terms of bullying intervention, the current findings revealed that before a psychoeducational intervention, more than half of the subjects believed that intervention referred to a school counselor or social worker, but after a psychoeducational intervention, more than four-fifths of them believe that intervention relates to a school co-counselor social worker. This outcome is in line with the findings of a study of Shelbi [11] mentioning teachers considered that their role in intervening was more essential than that of parents and social workers, according to the researchers, and the results showed that teachers agreed that school plays an important role in eliminating bullying.

Furthermore, teachers disagreed when asked if bullying was not a problem in Egypt. Lastly, teachers strongly agreed that bullying can have a serious impact on children's development.

The current findings revealed that there is a high level of statistical significance between total bullying intervention at school and total bullying perceptions following a psychoeducational intervention. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between total levels of perceived difficulties in dealing with bullying at school and total bullying perceptions after a psychoeducational intervention.

Regarding the barriers we are facing, the teachers in dealing with bullying behavior at school, teachers said the most common difficulties they face in dealing with

bullying behavior at school are not knowing how to spot the indications of bullying, not being prepared to deal with bullying conduct, and bullying occurring in places other than the classroom, such as the cafeteria or the bus. In a similar vein, a study on Jizan was conducted by Mobarki et al. [16]. Teachers believed that bullying happened when there was a lack of monitoring and/or overcrowding in areas such as the school bus and playground, where they could not observe it.

In terms of teachers' perceptions of the importance of including bullying prevention in the school curriculum and raising awareness of a psychoeducational intervention for students and training them in argument control and bullying prevention activities, the findings of this study reveal that nearly three-quarters of teachers hold a strong belief in the importance of including bullying prevention in the school curriculum and raising awareness of a psychoeducational intervention for students and training them in argument control and bullying prevention activities. This was the result. Mohamod et al. [19] mentioned that teachers stated that sharing them in different activities and training them about controlling aggressive behavior and strengthening the positive behavior of bullies students between the school and family are key things to minimize bullying behavior among school children. In addition, the current study discovered that teachers emphasize the necessity of having professional school nurses and/or counselors on hand to deal with bullying and maintain a healthy school environment. Similarly, research conducted in Saudi Arabia on instructors' perceptions of bullying by Mobarki et al. [16] reported that the teachers perceived the importance of the presence of specialized people such as school nurses to deal with students and give information and implement a program of bullying prevention for teachers and students.

Conclusions
Considering the current study's findings, it can be stated that the study's findings revealed that a quarter of instructors believe bullying is a big problem at their school. Furthermore, after a psychoeducational intervention, instructors' perceptions of bullying conduct improve and become more favorable.

Furthermore, their intervention in dealing with bullying behavior at school was poor prior to a psychoeducational intervention, but almost all of them had favorable outcomes after a psychoeducational intervention, with statistically significant differences between pre- and post-intervention. As a result, teachers should obtain psychoeducational support from time to time to assist them in teaching students how to handle problems and divert negative behaviors to constructive problem-solving and leadership abilities.

Recommendations
Based on the results of this study, the following are recommended:

- Continues to research bullying and develops a comprehensive and long-term bullying prevention program for high school kids
- More empirical research on bullying in Egypt, at all levels of society, not just schools
- Adequate availability and training of school nurses and counselors to improve the school's health environment and support kids' psychological statistics

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate
Approval from the ethical committee of the Faculty of Nursing, Helwan University, was obtained. The reference number is 30 in August 2021 meeting— Faculty of Nursing, Helwan University. Written informed consent was given by participants to participate.

Consent for publication
Written informed consent was given by the participants for publication.

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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