

## Fostering Child-Friendly Schools Through Strengthened School-Parent Partnerships: Addressing Violence and Bullying Against Female Students in Senior High Schools

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### ABSTRACT

Creating a child-friendly school environment requires collaborative efforts between schools and parents, particularly in combating violence and bullying targeting female students. This study explores how school-parent partnerships can enhance student safety and foster inclusivity in senior high schools. Using a qualitative case study approach, research was conducted in three private senior high schools in Malang, Indonesia (SMA A, SMA B, and SMA C). Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving principals, teachers, parents, and students. The findings indicate that strong school-parent collaboration significantly reduces gender-based violence, such as body shaming and sexual harassment. These partnerships improved communication, encouraged joint prevention efforts, and strengthened a shared sense of responsibility among stakeholders. A safer and more inclusive school climate emerged, positively impacting the well-being of female students. Effective engagement between schools and families plays a strategic role in establishing protective systems and promoting a respectful school culture. The study underlines the importance of gender-sensitive strategies and inclusive school policies in creating supportive learning environments. To ensure all students, particularly girls, feel protected, schools should strengthen communication with parents and involve them in safety initiatives. This research underscores the crucial role of school-parent collaboration in addressing gender-specific issues and advancing child-friendly educational spaces.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The school environment plays a critical role in shaping students' academic, social, and emotional development. A supportive and safe environment allows students to thrive, fostering not only intellectual growth but also the development of social skills, emotional resilience, and self-confidence. Positive school climates are essential for creating a sense of belonging and safety, which directly impacts students' ability to focus, engage, and succeed in their studies. However, in many schools, students—especially female students—are exposed to various challenges such as violence, bullying, and harassment, which can significantly hinder their personal and academic development (Stamatis & Nikolaou, 2016; Lee et al., 2013). In recent years, concerns about the prevalence of violence and bullying in schools have escalated, with female students often being disproportionately affected. These negative experiences can lead to a range of detrimental effects, including anxiety, depression, decreased academic performance, and lower self-esteem (Stives et al., 2018; Axford et al., 2015; Francis et al., 2022). It is increasingly recognized that to address these issues, schools must prioritize creating a safe, inclusive, and child-friendly environment (Shahrour et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). This includes not only implementing effective anti-bullying policies but also fostering partnerships between schools and parents to ensure that the needs of students are met both at school and at home (Jordan & Austin, 2012; Mercado, 2023). A collaborative approach is vital in addressing the root causes of bullying and violence and in developing strategies to create a supportive atmosphere where all students, particularly females, can feel safe and empowered (Yang et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2013).

Female students often face significant challenges related to gender-based violence and bullying in schools, which can manifest in various forms such as verbal harassment, physical aggression, sexual harassment, and social exclusion. These issues are often deeply rooted in societal gender stereotypes and power dynamics, making female students particularly vulnerable (Atkins et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). Bullying and violence targeting female students can be exacerbated by traditional gender norms, which normalize certain types of behavior and discourage open dialogue about these issues. The psychological toll of such experiences can be devastating, affecting the overall well-being and development of female students (Babae et al., 2021; Khalil et al., 2021). The consequences of violence and bullying extend beyond physical harm; they significantly impact the mental health of female students. Victims often experience anxiety, depression, and lowered self-esteem, which can lead to a sense of insecurity both in and outside of school. Furthermore, the constant threat or experience of bullying can create an environment where students feel unsafe, affecting their ability to concentrate, participate in school activities, and perform academically (Pontes et al., 2018). These issues contribute to a cycle of disengagement and poor academic outcomes, which can persist into adulthood. Despite the growing awareness of these challenges, there remain significant gaps in effectively addressing the gender-specific needs of female students. Many high schools still lack comprehensive policies tailored to the unique experiences of female students, and support systems are often insufficient to help them cope with or report incidents of bullying and violence (Wang & Holcombe, 2010; Mahmud et al., 2014). Addressing these gaps requires not only school-level interventions but also a collaborative approach involving parents, teachers, and the wider community to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Collaboration between schools and parents plays a crucial role in addressing violence and bullying, as both parties are key stakeholders in a child's well-being and safety. While schools are responsible for creating a safe environment within the school grounds, parents have a significant influence on their children's behavior, attitudes, and emotional development. When schools and parents work together, they can establish a unified approach to preventing and addressing bullying, ensuring that students receive consistent messages about respect, empathy, and zero tolerance for violence. This partnership allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by students, as parents can share insights into their children's behavior outside of school, while schools

can provide updates on incidents occurring within the school environment (Hong et al., 2016). Parental involvement in school safety initiatives brings numerous benefits, both for the students and the wider school community. Active engagement from parents helps reinforce the importance of safety and well-being, encouraging students to take an active role in reporting bullying and supporting their peers (Rodriguez et al., 2014; Soliman et al., 2018). When parents are involved, they can also serve as advocates for their children, ensuring that schools are responsive to their concerns and needs. Additionally, parent involvement fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility, making it easier to implement and sustain effective anti-bullying programs (Shuval et al., 2010; Dunn et al., 2019). School-parent partnerships can provide holistic support to students by addressing their emotional, social, and academic needs, while also strengthening anti-bullying efforts (Dasgupta & Prashar, 2019; Enriquez et al., 2011). By working together, schools and parents can create an environment where students feel supported, empowered, and safe, which in turn contributes to their overall success and well-being.

A child-friendly school environment is one that prioritizes the safety, well-being, and holistic development of students. This environment is characterized by mutual respect, inclusivity, and a commitment to fostering a sense of belonging for every student, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or background. In such an environment, students feel valued, heard, and supported in their academic, emotional, and social growth. A child-friendly school is also one where positive behaviors are encouraged, and negative behaviors, such as bullying and violence, are actively prevented through clear rules, guidance, and support systems (Jannah & Hidayati, 2022; Latif, 2023). Key characteristics of a child-friendly environment include safe and clean physical spaces, emotionally supportive staff, and inclusive curricula that reflect the diverse needs of the student body. A supportive and inclusive school environment significantly contributes to reducing incidents of violence and bullying. When students feel that their school is a place where they are respected and accepted, they are less likely to engage in harmful behaviors towards others. Such environments promote positive interactions, foster empathy among students, and encourage conflict resolution skills, all of which help to prevent bullying (Norozi, 2023). Additionally, students who feel secure in their school are more likely to report bullying incidents, knowing that they will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately. Furthermore, schools that emphasize inclusivity and respect help create a culture of understanding where students learn to appreciate their differences and work together harmoniously (Syaukani, 2023; Pattiruhu, 2023).

School policies, programs, and parental engagement play an essential role in creating a child-friendly environment (O'Reilly et al., 2018). Effective school policies, such as strict anti-bullying guidelines and clear consequences for violence, provide a framework for ensuring that students understand the boundaries of acceptable behavior (Patalay et al., 2020; Sharpe et al., 2016). Comprehensive programs, such as peer mediation, conflict resolution workshops, and mental health support, further reinforce these policies by equipping students with the tools to handle conflicts constructively and to seek help when needed (Garside et al., 2021; Das et al., 2016). Parental engagement is equally important, as parents can help reinforce the values of respect and inclusion at home, while also partnering with schools to address bullying and violence (Reinke et al., 2011; Giles-Kaye et al., 2022). Through regular communication and collaboration, schools and parents can ensure that efforts to create a safe and supportive environment are consistent, comprehensive, and effective in reducing incidents of bullying and violence (Patalay et al., 2017; Atkins et al., 2015). While numerous studies have addressed the importance of creating child-friendly school environments and preventing bullying, much of the existing research has concentrated on internal school mechanisms such as policies, curricula, or one-directional intervention programs. There remains a lack of focused inquiry into the strategic role of school-parent collaboration in addressing gender-based violence, particularly in secondary education settings. Despite growing recognition of the need for inclusive and comprehensive approaches, the contribution of parents as co-creators of a safe school climate is often

overlooked. This gap highlights the need for research that explores the forms, challenges, and potential of school-parent partnerships in supporting female students who are vulnerable to bullying and gender-based violence.

In light of these considerations, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How do school-parent partnerships contribute to the creation of a child-friendly school environment that prevents bullying and violence against female students in senior high schools?

## 2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach, specifically utilizing a case study design to explore the role of school-parent partnerships in creating a child-friendly environment and reducing violence and bullying toward female students. By focusing on real-world settings, qualitative methods enable an in-depth understanding of social phenomena, attitudes, and experiences. The case study design is particularly suitable as it allows for a detailed examination of collaborative efforts between schools and parents in three private senior high schools in Malang City: SMA A, SMA B, and SMA C. These schools were selected using purposive criteria to ensure sample representativeness, including: (1) schools with active parental involvement programs, (2) schools that have reported or documented incidents of gender-based bullying, and (3) schools willing to provide access for observation and interviews. Each school serves as an individual case, offering unique insights while also allowing for cross-case comparisons that reveal common challenges, strategies, and best practices in fostering a safe school environment for female students.

The data collection methods consist of interviews, observations, and document analysis, providing a comprehensive approach to understanding the dynamics of school-parent partnerships. Interviews will be conducted with various informants to gain diverse perspectives on the current environment and efforts to reduce bullying and violence. Observations within the school settings will offer firsthand insights into daily interactions, school climate, and any visible effects of policies or partnerships on student safety. Additionally, document analysis, including policies, reports, and communication records, will provide contextual information on each school's practices related to school safety and child-friendly initiatives.

Informants are selected using purposive sampling to ensure relevance and depth. Key informants include school principals, who have strategic oversight of school policies and engagement with parents. Primary informants are teachers and parents, as they are directly involved in implementing safety efforts and supporting students. Supporting informants include students, whose firsthand experiences and perceptions provide essential insight into the school climate and gender-based issues. This multi-perspective selection enhances the richness and reliability of the data.

To ensure the validity and credibility of findings, data will be validated through methodological triangulation, comparing insights from interviews, observations, and documents. Furthermore, member checking will be conducted by sharing preliminary findings with selected informants to confirm interpretations and refine understanding. This process of cross-verification strengthens the rigor of the study and enhances trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry.

Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, involving three key steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Relevant data from interviews, observations, and documents will be coded and categorized to identify significant patterns and themes. These will be organized in matrices and visual displays to facilitate cross-case comparisons and thematic synthesis. The conclusions will be grounded in the evidence collected across cases, offering practical insights into how school-parent partnerships contribute to building safer and more inclusive environments for female students.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Examine The Impact of School-Parent Partnerships on Creating A Child-Friendly School Environment

The findings below summarize the impact of school-parent partnerships in creating a child-friendly school environment, with a specific focus on reducing incidents of violence and bullying toward female students in senior high schools. These findings highlight the role of collaborative efforts between schools and parents in enhancing student safety, inclusivity, and support systems, as reported by principals, teachers, parents, and students.

**Table 1.** Impact of School-Parent Partnerships in Creating A Child-Friendly School Environment

Finding	Description	Impact on School Environment	Informants
Increased Communication Between School and Parents	Regular meetings and communication channels have been established, enhancing transparency and trust between parents and school staff.	Strengthened cooperation between parents and schools, leading to early detection and intervention in bullying cases.	Principals, Teachers, Parents
Implementation of Joint Anti-Bullying Programs	Schools and parents have collaborated on anti-bullying campaigns and workshops, focusing on gender sensitivity and inclusivity.	Reduced bullying incidents as students become more aware of respectful behavior and gender issues; creates a more inclusive environment for female students.	Principals, Teachers, Parents
Parental Involvement in Policy Development	Parents are included in developing school policies on violence prevention, especially concerning the needs of female students.	Policies are more comprehensive and tailored to address specific challenges faced by female students, resulting in a safer and more child-friendly school environment.	Principals, Parents
Improved Reporting and Support Systems	Schools have set up confidential reporting systems that allow students, with parental support, to report bullying incidents safely.	Female students feel more secure and supported, knowing they have a safe avenue for reporting issues, which contributes to a decrease in bullying incidents.	Teachers, Students, Parents
Enhanced Monitoring and Supervision on School Grounds	Increased parental involvement in school activities and events has led to better supervision, especially in areas where bullying was previously common.	Creates a more visible adult presence, discouraging bullying behaviors and promoting a safer, more supportive school climate.	Teachers, Parents
Development of Student Support Groups with Parental Endorsement	Student-led groups focusing on peer support and bullying prevention have been encouraged by both schools and parents.	Empowers students to support one another, reducing bullying incidents and enhancing a sense of community and mutual respect among students.	Teachers, Students, Parents

Positive Role Modeling by Parents and School Staff	Schools and parents have jointly emphasized respectful and supportive behaviors, serving as positive role models for students.	Female students experience a more respectful and inclusive environment, reinforcing positive behaviors among peers and reducing incidents of violence and bullying.	Principals, Teachers, Parents
Increased Awareness of Gender-Specific Challenges	Schools and parents jointly educate students on gender-based bullying, raising awareness of the unique issues faced by female students.	Female students feel safer and better understood, resulting in a supportive environment that specifically addresses gender-sensitive bullying and violence issues.	Principals, Teachers, Parents, Students

The data indicate that active school-parent partnerships significantly contribute to a safer and more inclusive environment for female students. Increased communication channels between schools and parents have fostered transparency and early intervention, leading to quicker responses to potential bullying cases. The joint implementation of anti-bullying programs, with a focus on gender sensitivity, has positively influenced student awareness about respectful behaviors and gender inclusivity. Including parents in policy development has also tailored school policies to address the unique challenges faced by female students, enhancing their sense of security and belonging within the school. Additionally, improved reporting systems and greater parental involvement in school activities have contributed to a noticeable decrease in bullying incidents, with students feeling supported and protected through secure channels for reporting issues. The establishment of peer support groups, backed by both schools and parents, has empowered students to engage actively in creating a positive school climate, fostering a community of respect and mutual support. These collaborative efforts reflect the effectiveness of school-parent partnerships in reducing violence and bullying, confirming that a collective approach can successfully create a more child-friendly and inclusive school environment.

### 3.2 Challenges Faced by Female Students Related to Violence and Bullying

The table below presents the findings related to the specific challenges faced by female students concerning violence and bullying, and how school-parent collaboration plays a role in addressing these challenges. The data highlight the primary issues female students encounter and the strategies implemented through school-parent partnerships to mitigate these issues, as reported by key informants, including principals, teachers, parents, and students.

**Table 2.** Challenges Faced by Female Students Related to Violence And Bullying

Finding	Description	Challenges Faced by Female Students	Impact of School-Parent Collaboration	Informants
Gender-Based Bullying and Harassment	Female students report facing verbal bullying, exclusion, and physical intimidation often linked to gender stereotypes or societal expectations.	Verbal harassment, physical bullying, and exclusion based on gender, affecting self-esteem and social relationships.	School-parent collaboration led to the development of targeted programs to raise awareness and prevent gender-based bullying.	Students, Teachers, Parents
Lack of Safe Reporting Channels	Female students expressed reluctance to report bullying incidents due to fear of	Fear of retaliation and lack of trust in reporting systems led to	Schools and parents worked together to implement	Students, Teachers, Principals

	retaliation or lack of confidential reporting channels.	underreporting of incidents.	of confidential, safe reporting systems, encouraging more students to come forward.	
Psychological Impact of Bullying	Many female students experience anxiety, depression, and lower academic performance due to bullying and violence in school.	Mental health struggles, including anxiety and depression, resulting in poor academic performance and social isolation.	Parent-school partnerships facilitated counseling programs and mental health support, helping female students cope with bullying effects.	Students, Teachers, Parents, Principals
Lack of Parental Awareness and Involvement	Some parents were unaware of the bullying issues their children were facing due to limited communication with the school.	Limited awareness of bullying situations at home, leading to inadequate support and interventions from parents.	Schools encouraged more parent involvement through regular meetings and updates, helping them to better understand and address issues.	Parents, Teachers, Principals
Cultural and Societal Norms	Cultural norms that downplay the seriousness of bullying, especially gender-based violence, were identified as a barrier to addressing the issue effectively.	Cultural attitudes that normalize bullying and violence against females, reducing the urgency for intervention.	Collaborative educational efforts between schools and parents challenged these cultural norms, fostering a more supportive environment.	Students, Teachers, Parents
Peer Pressure and Social Dynamics	Female students often face bullying due to social dynamics and peer pressure, with few support networks to resist such behaviors.	Peer pressure and social exclusion within the school environment contribute significantly to bullying and violence.	Schools, in partnership with parents, promoted peer-led support groups and activities, encouraging students to challenge bullying behavior.	Students, Teachers, Parents
Inadequate School Policies for Gender-Sensitive Bullying	Many schools lacked clear, gender-sensitive policies to specifically address bullying of female students, leading to inconsistent responses.	Gender-insensitive policies and lack of consistency in handling bullying cases left female students vulnerable.	School-parent partnerships led to the development of more inclusive and gender-sensitive anti-bullying policies and practices.	Principals, Teachers, Parents

Role of Supportive Adult Figures	Female students reported that positive role models and mentors, such as teachers and parents, played a significant role in reducing bullying and supporting their well-being.	Absence of supportive adult figures who could advocate for female students and address bullying situations.	Collaboration between schools and parents helped identify and encourage the involvement of adult mentors who could provide guidance.	Students, Teachers, Parents
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The research identifies several critical challenges faced by female students in senior high schools, with bullying and violence rooted in gender-based discrimination being the most prevalent issues. Female students reported enduring verbal harassment, social exclusion, and physical intimidation, often stemming from entrenched societal and gender stereotypes. One of the key challenges highlighted was the lack of safe and confidential reporting channels, which prevented many students from voicing their concerns due to fear of retaliation. However, where schools and parents worked together to establish clear and safe reporting systems, there was a noticeable increase in reported incidents, suggesting that improved communication between the school and parents can significantly enhance support for students. Additionally, many students struggled with the psychological impact of bullying, including anxiety and depression, which affected their academic performance and social well-being. School-parent collaboration played a crucial role in addressing these issues by implementing counseling programs and offering emotional support. Despite the presence of some barriers, such as limited parental awareness and cultural norms that downplay the seriousness of gender-based violence, the partnership between schools and parents proved effective in challenging harmful stereotypes and creating a safer environment. Furthermore, the development of peer support groups and the involvement of adult mentors helped female students feel more supported and less isolated. These findings underscore the importance of a collaborative approach in addressing the unique challenges faced by female students and in fostering a more inclusive and supportive school climate.

**3.3 Recommendations for Strengthening School-Parent Partnerships as A Strategy To Promote A Safe, Inclusive, and Supportive School Environment For Female Students**

The table below presents the recommendations developed to strengthen school-parent partnerships as a strategy for creating a safer, more inclusive, and supportive school environment for female students. These recommendations are based on findings that highlight key areas where collaboration between schools and parents can be enhanced to address bullying, violence, and promote well-being for female students.

**Table 3.** Recommendations for Strengthening School-Parent Partnerships

Recommendation	Description	Expected Outcome	Informants
Establish Regular Communication Channels Between Schools and Parents	Develop consistent and structured communication methods, such as parent-teacher meetings, newsletters, and digital platforms, to share information regarding student well-being.	Increased transparency between parents and school staff, fostering a more proactive approach to addressing issues.	Principals, Teachers, Parents
Create Safe and Confidential Reporting Systems	Implement anonymous and accessible reporting mechanisms for female students to report	More students will feel comfortable reporting incidents, leading to faster intervention and support.	Students, Teachers, Parents

		bullying or violence without fear of retaliation.		
Implement Gender-Sensitive Anti-Bullying Programs		Design and launch programs that specifically address gender-based bullying, focusing on respect, equality, and empathy for female students.	Greater awareness of gender issues among students, reducing incidents of gender-based violence and harassment.	Students, Teachers, Parents
Offer Training and Workshops for Parents on Supporting Female Students		Provide workshops that equip parents with strategies for supporting their daughters in the face of bullying, as well as training on identifying early signs of distress.	Parents will be better equipped to support their children and intervene when necessary, promoting a healthier environment.	Parents, Teachers, Principals
Develop Peer Support Programs and Mentorship Initiatives		Create programs where older students or trained peers act as mentors to support younger female students in navigating bullying or violence-related challenges.	Enhanced peer networks will offer emotional support, guidance, and advocacy for female students.	Students, Teachers, Parents
Integrate Gender Equality Education in the Curriculum		Incorporate lessons on gender equality, respect, and anti-bullying into the school curriculum, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and diversity.	Students will develop greater respect for gender equality, fostering a more inclusive and supportive school culture.	Students, Teachers, Parents
Strengthen the Role of School Counselors and Social Workers		Increase the availability and visibility of school counselors and social workers to provide ongoing support to students, especially those facing bullying or violence.	Female students will have more access to emotional and psychological support, reducing the negative impact of bullying.	Principals, Teachers, Parents
Encourage Collaborative Policy Development Involving Both Parents and Schools		Involve both parents and school staff in the creation and revision of school policies regarding bullying, safety, and student well-being, ensuring that policies reflect the needs of female students.	Policies will be more inclusive and reflective of both student and parental concerns, leading to better implementation.	Principals, Teachers, Parents
Provide Awareness Campaigns on Healthy Relationships and Anti-Violence Practices		Organize campaigns in schools to raise awareness about healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and the harmful effects of bullying, particularly targeting female students.	Greater student awareness of the signs of bullying and violence will foster a more supportive and protective school climate.	Students, Teachers, Parents

The research emphasizes that strengthening the partnership between schools and parents is essential to creating a safer and more supportive environment for female students. Several key recommendations emerged from the findings, such as establishing regular communication channels between schools and parents, which can lead to better monitoring of students' well-being and more

proactive interventions. Implementing safe, confidential reporting systems is crucial in empowering female students to report bullying or violence without fear of retaliation, thereby facilitating quicker responses to issues. Gender-sensitive anti-bullying programs are also vital to ensuring that both students and parents understand the unique challenges that female students face and how to address them. Additionally, training parents on how to identify signs of distress and provide support to their daughters can help in early intervention. Peer support programs and mentorship initiatives are recommended to foster solidarity among students, offering them the emotional and social support they need to cope with bullying. Moreover, integrating gender equality education into the curriculum will create a culture of respect and inclusivity, further reducing gender-based violence. Finally, enhancing the role of school counselors and social workers, strengthening policies through collaboration with parents, and launching awareness campaigns on healthy relationships are all strategies that can help build a more inclusive school culture. Overall, these recommendations highlight the importance of a collaborative approach in creating a school environment that is both safe and supportive for female students.

### *Discussion*

Active school-parent partnerships are crucial in fostering a safer and more inclusive environment for female students. Research indicates that increased communication between schools and parents enhances transparency, facilitating early intervention in bullying cases, which is essential for timely responses to potential incidents (Espelage et al., 2014; Axford et al., 2015). Collaborative anti-bullying programs that incorporate gender sensitivity have been shown to raise awareness among students regarding respectful behaviors and inclusivity (Midgett, 2023; Huang et al., 2019). Furthermore, involving parents in policy development allows schools to tailor their approaches to the specific challenges faced by female students, thereby enhancing their sense of security and belonging (Shahrour et al., 2020; Axford et al., 2015). The establishment of effective reporting systems and parental involvement in school activities has led to a reduction in bullying incidents, as students feel more supported and protected (Midgett et al., 2022; Cook et al., 2010). Additionally, peer support groups, supported by both schools and parents, empower students to actively contribute to a positive school climate, fostering a community of respect and mutual support (Rue et al., 2014; Nation et al., 2019). These findings underscore the effectiveness of school-parent partnerships in mitigating violence and bullying, demonstrating that a collective approach can create a more child-friendly and inclusive educational environment (Johnson et al., 2011; Edwards et al., 2019).

Female students in senior high schools face significant challenges, primarily due to gender-based discrimination manifesting as bullying and violence. Reports indicate that these students frequently endure verbal harassment, social exclusion, and physical intimidation, often rooted in entrenched societal stereotypes (Pontes & Pontes, 2019; Carbone-López et al., 2010). A critical barrier to addressing these issues is the lack of safe and confidential reporting channels, which discourages many from voicing their concerns due to fear of retaliation (Gizzarelli et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2019). However, effective collaboration between schools and parents in establishing clear reporting systems has been shown to increase the reporting of incidents, highlighting the importance of communication in supporting students (Brown et al., 2020; Espelage et al., 2014). The psychological impact of bullying on female students is profound, with many experiencing anxiety and depression, which adversely affects their academic performance and social well-being (Hertz et al., 2015; Weng et al., 2017). School-parent partnerships that implement counseling programs and emotional support mechanisms have proven beneficial in mitigating these effects (Chisala, 2023; Badger, 2023). Despite challenges such as limited parental awareness and cultural norms that trivialize gender-based violence, collaborative efforts can effectively challenge harmful stereotypes and foster a safer school environment (Badger, 2023; Bevilacqua et al., 2017). Furthermore, the establishment of peer support groups and mentorship

programs enhances feelings of support and belonging among female students (Baker & Ayyd, 2018; Ali et al., 2022).

Strengthening the partnership between schools and parents is crucial for fostering a safer environment for female students. Establishing regular communication channels can enhance monitoring of students' well-being and facilitate proactive interventions (Hale et al., 2017). Implementing confidential reporting systems empowers female students to report bullying without fear of retaliation, which is essential for timely responses to incidents (Chisala, 2023; Moore et al., 2017). Gender-sensitive anti-bullying programs are vital for educating both students and parents about the unique challenges faced by female students (Cosgrove & Nickerson, 2015; Waasdorp et al., 2011). Furthermore, training parents to recognize signs of distress can aid in early intervention (Hale et al., 2017; Cin et al., 2018). Peer support and mentorship initiatives promote solidarity among students, providing necessary emotional support (Turner et al., 2014). Integrating gender equality education into the curriculum fosters a culture of respect, which is critical in reducing gender-based violence (Cin et al., 2018; Han et al., 2017). Enhancing the roles of school counselors and social workers, along with launching awareness campaigns on healthy relationships, further contributes to building an inclusive school culture (Brown et al., 2020; Li et al., 2017; Schroeder et al., 2011). Overall, a collaborative approach is essential for creating a supportive environment for female students.

Despite the identification of cultural barriers—such as the normalization of gender-based violence and traditional views that dismiss female students' experiences—some schools have developed practical strategies to challenge these norms. For instance, one school implemented regular parent workshops that addressed harmful gender stereotypes and emphasized respectful behavior at home and in school. These sessions not only raised awareness among parents but also empowered them to support their daughters in reporting bullying incidents. In contrast, other schools faced difficulties due to resistance from parents who viewed bullying as a 'rite of passage' or a private family matter, limiting the effectiveness of intervention programs. The disparity highlights how the success of school-parent partnerships often depends on the school's ability to foster cultural sensitivity and trust within the parent community.

A comparative analysis of the three case study schools revealed notable differences in the effectiveness of their school-parent collaboration. Schools with structured communication platforms, such as parent liaison officers and regular feedback meetings, demonstrated better responsiveness to bullying cases and a stronger sense of shared accountability. These schools also showed a higher rate of incident reporting and follow-up action. Conversely, schools lacking these mechanisms struggled with delayed responses and limited parental involvement, which weakened their efforts to address gender-specific bullying. This contrast illustrates that while school-parent partnerships hold great potential, their impact relies heavily on sustained commitment, cultural adaptability, and the institutionalization of inclusive practices that actively engage both stakeholders.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the crucial role of school-parent partnerships in fostering a safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment, particularly in addressing gender-based violence against female students. Active collaboration between schools and parents was found to significantly reduce incidents of body shaming, sexual harassment, and other forms of bullying, thereby promoting the emotional well-being and academic success of female students. Despite these important findings, the research is limited by its qualitative case study design, which restricts the generalizability of results to broader school populations. Moreover, the study was conducted in a specific regional and institutional context, which may not reflect the diversity of experiences in other areas. Future research should adopt mixed-method or quantitative approaches to validate and expand upon these findings,

ideally through large-scale surveys and longitudinal studies. These could provide measurable insights into the long-term impact of school-parent collaboration on student safety, reporting behavior, academic performance, and psychological resilience. Furthermore, future studies should explore how cultural, institutional, and socio-economic factors influence the effectiveness of such collaborations, offering deeper understanding for scalable, context-sensitive interventions. Ultimately, strengthening school-parent partnerships through institutional policy and inclusive practices remains essential to creating child-friendly schools where all students, especially girls, feel safe, respected, and empowered to thrive.

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