

Bullying and school failure among primary school children: A clinical perspective on emotional and cognitive impacts

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Abstract---School bullying is a growing concern in primary education systems worldwide, with increasing attention being paid to its long-term psychological and academic consequences. This theoretical article aims to explore the clinical relationship between school bullying and academic failure among primary school children, focusing on the emotional and cognitive dimensions of the phenomenon. Drawing on a wide range of psychological theories, including Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, this paper analyzes how repeated exposure to bullying can lead to diminished self-esteem, emotional distress, cognitive disengagement, and, ultimately, school failure. The article also examines the profiles of both bullies and victims, highlighting the psychological mechanisms that contribute to dysfunctional behaviors and poor academic performance. Through a clinical lens, we argue that bullying is not merely a disciplinary or social issue, but a significant psychological risk factor that interferes with a child's learning process, mental health, and overall development. Based on a synthesis of recent literature and case-based clinical observations, this work emphasizes the urgent need for early psychological interventions, safe school environments, and integrated support systems. The paper concludes by suggesting strategies to mitigate the academic decline of bullied children and calls for further interdisciplinary research bridging educational and clinical psychology.

Keywords---School Bullying, Academic Failure, Primary Education, Clinical Psychology, Child Mental Health.

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Introduction

Bullying in schools has emerged as one of the most alarming psychosocial issues affecting children's well-being and academic performance. Primary school pupils (Bayer et al., 2018), due to their developmental vulnerability, are particularly susceptible to peer aggression, whether verbal, physical, or psychological. Bullying behaviors, when repeated over time, may cause severe emotional damage, which often goes unnoticed by educators and parents. Victims of bullying frequently exhibit signs of withdrawal, anxiety, low self-worth, and chronic stress all of which contribute to a decline in their academic engagement and school attendance (Van Ryzin & Roseth, 2018). Moreover, the educational environment, which should foster safety and growth, may become a space of fear and emotional turmoil for these children (Divecha & Brackett, 2019), ultimately impeding their capacity to learn and thrive.

There is growing empirical evidence suggesting that school bullying significantly correlates with academic underachievement and school failure, especially among younger students. Chronic victimization can interfere with the brain's cognitive processing abilities by increasing psychological stress and emotional dysregulation (Ashburner et al., 2008). Students exposed to constant harassment may develop symptoms of learned helplessness, lack of motivation, and difficulty concentrating in class (Ashburner et al., 2008). Additionally, the fear of encountering bullies often leads to absenteeism, classroom avoidance, or reduced participation in school activities. Over time, this leads to a measurable decline in academic performance and, in more severe cases, grade repetition or dropout (Van Ryzin & Roseth, 2018). These effects highlight the need to explore bullying not only as a behavioral issue but also as a major academic risk factor.

From a clinical standpoint, bullying-related trauma can result in long-term psychological consequences, such as depression, anxiety disorders, and even post-traumatic stress symptoms (Idsoe et al., 2021). These emotional conditions often interfere with a child's cognitive development and learning abilities. Theoretical frameworks such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs emphasize the necessity of emotional safety as a prerequisite for learning (Abdullah, 2019). Likewise, Bandura's Social Learning Theory helps explain how children internalize aggressive behaviors and develop maladaptive responses when exposed to bullying (Camodeca et al., 2002). These theories support the idea that effective academic learning cannot take place in a psychologically unsafe environment, and therefore, a clinical understanding of bullying's emotional consequences is crucial for educational planning and intervention.

This theoretical article seeks to explore the intersection between school bullying and academic failure from a clinical psychological perspective. It aims to analyze how emotional and cognitive disruptions caused by bullying contribute to poor academic performance in primary school children. Through a review of existing literature and theoretical models, the article will highlight the psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship and advocate for early clinical intervention. It will also discuss the psychological profiles of both victims and aggressors, offering insight into their behavioral patterns. Ultimately, the paper intends to reframe bullying as a serious clinical concern with far-reaching educational consequences, urging schools and mental health professionals to collaborate in building safer and more inclusive learning environments (Swearer et al., 2010).

Research Methodology

Nature of the Study

This study is theoretical and analytical in nature. It does not involve any empirical or field-based data collection such as surveys, interviews, or observational tools. Instead, the research is grounded in an extensive review of academic literature, scholarly articles, and previously published studies that explore the psychological and educational effects of school bullying. The aim is to conceptually and clinically

analyze how bullying contributes to academic failure among primary school children(Yosep et al., 2022) , particularly through emotional distress, cognitive disruption, and psychological maladjustment. As such, this paper belongs to the category of desk-based research, situated within the broader framework of humanities and social sciences, particularly educational psychology and clinical child studies. This nature of inquiry allows the researcher to develop theoretical insights and construct a conceptual understanding of the phenomenon without relying on firsthand empirical data(Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2013) .

Method Adopted

This research employs the descriptive-analytical method, which is well-suited for theoretical investigations in the fields of education and psychology (Maunder & Crafter, 2017). The descriptive aspect involves presenting, classifying, and synthesizing previous studies, concepts, and theoretical frameworks related to school bullying and academic underachievement. Meanwhile, the analytical component allows for the interpretation and critical examination of how bullying may function as a psychological stressor that leads to academic failure, especially among primary school children(Chen et al., 2023).

By adopting this method, the study seeks to uncover patterns and relationships found in existing literature, rather than relying on numerical data or field experiments(Walsham et al., 2023) (Jiménez-Mijangos et al., 2022). It aims to provide an integrated clinical understanding by bridging findings from educational psychology, child development theories, and clinical case studies. This approach ensures depth in exploring the emotional and cognitive mechanisms that mediate the link between peer victimization and declining school performance (Cubillo, 2022) (Radliff et al., 2015).

Sources and Materials Used

The study is primarily based on a wide range of secondary sources drawn from academic literature in psychology, education, and clinical child development. Key materials include peer-reviewed journal articles, systematic reviews, empirical studies, and theoretical frameworks that examine the relationship between school bullying and academic performance (Van Lier et al., 2012). Specifically, ten scholarly articles were selected for their relevance to the topic, their methodological rigor, and their clinical insights into the emotional and cognitive consequences of bullying among school-aged children.

These sources provided valuable data regarding bullying typologies, psychological responses in victims, and the academic trajectories of affected students. The selection also included studies focusing on socially vulnerable populations, emotional intelligence, and mental health factors influencing school achievement (Galán-Arroyo et al., 2023). Furthermore, theoretical contributions such as Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs were used to interpret the psychological mechanisms behind academic decline.

By synthesizing these diverse materials, the study constructs a conceptual framework that links bullying to school failure through clinical and emotional pathways. The emphasis on reputable and up-to-date sources ensures the reliability and academic integrity of the analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) (Doudenkova, 2021) provides a valuable framework for understanding how children acquire both aggressive and avoidant behaviors through observation and imitation. In the context of school bullying, this theory explains how students may model the behaviors of peers, siblings, or even adults who exhibit dominant or violent traits (Oriol et al., 2017). Bullies often

reinforce their actions through the perceived rewards of power, attention, or peer approval, while victims may internalize a submissive role, leading to increased passivity and disengagement in class (Oriol et al., 2017).

This modeling process affects not only social behavior but also academic engagement (Schwartz et al., 2001). Children exposed to consistent victimization may associate school with danger and humiliation, thus developing anxiety and avoidance responses that interfere with concentration and learning. From a clinical perspective, this learning mechanism may lead to the repetition of maladaptive patterns, lowering self-efficacy and academic resilience (Narayanan & Betts, 2014). The theory underscores the importance of social context in shaping student behavior and academic outcomes, aligning directly with the goal of this study to explore bullying as a psychosocial risk factor in school failure.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) (Doudenkova, 2021) offers a foundational psychological model that emphasizes the role of unmet basic needs in hindering human growth and learning (Lam et al., 2015). According to this theory, a child cannot focus on academic tasks or reach their full cognitive potential unless more fundamental needs such as safety, belonging, and emotional security are satisfied. In the context of school bullying, the environment becomes threatening, and the victimized student often perceives school as an unsafe space, undermining their sense of psychological and physical security (Yang et al., 2018).

This deprivation of emotional safety disrupts the learning process, leading to anxiety, reduced motivation, and difficulty concentrating factors that contribute to academic underachievement. Moreover, children who experience chronic bullying may feel socially rejected, which affects the "belongingness" level of Maslow's hierarchy, further distancing them from classroom engagement and teacher-student interaction (Sharif-Nia et al., 2023). By applying this theory, the present study highlights how bullying obstructs foundational emotional needs, thereby contributing indirectly but significantly to school failure (Wang & Chen, 2023).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (*Optional*)

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979)(Doudenkova, 2021) provides a multi-layered framework for understanding child development within interacting environmental systems (Li & Qiu, 2018). According to the model, a child's behavior and academic performance are influenced by multiple ecological levels ranging from immediate settings like family and school (*microsystem*), to broader contexts such as cultural norms, social policies, and economic conditions (*macrosystem*). In the case of school bullying, both the presence and absence of protective factors across these layers can either mitigate or exacerbate its psychological and academic impact (Hemphill et al., 2013).

For example, a school environment lacking supervision or inclusive practices can allow bullying to persist, while unsupportive family dynamics may hinder a child's ability to process or report their victimization (Cerezo et al., 2018). Moreover, societal tolerance for aggression or competition may normalize such behaviors. Bronfenbrenner's model enables this study to view bullying not merely as an individual or interpersonal issue, but as a consequence of systemic imbalances. It further supports the idea that effective interventions must engage all ecological layers, especially the school and family, to prevent academic decline linked to bullying (Yosep et al., 2024) (Wójcik et al., 2021).

Clinical Interpretations of Psychological Distress

From a clinical psychology perspective, chronic exposure to school bullying is increasingly recognized as a form of psychological trauma, particularly during early developmental stages (Le et al., 2016).

Children who are persistently bullied may experience a range of emotional disturbances, including generalized anxiety, depressive symptoms, low self-esteem, and even signs of post-traumatic stress. These manifestations disrupt not only their emotional regulation but also their cognitive processing directly affecting attention, memory, and executive functioning required for learning (Palamarchuk & Vaillancourt, 2022) (Vacca et al., 2023).

In clinical terms, school becomes a "trauma-associated context" for these children, leading to avoidance behaviors, frequent absenteeism, and reduced classroom engagement. Over time, such distress may crystallize into academic disengagement or even school refusal (Nepal & Rogerson, 2020). The internalization of victimhood identity also reinforces learned helplessness, which undermines academic persistence and motivation (Neupane et al., 2020). By interpreting school bullying as a trigger for psychological dysfunction, this study emphasizes the need to incorporate clinical mental health frameworks into educational discourse and interventions.

Review of Related Literature

Several researchers have explored the impact of school bullying on students' well-being and academic performance. While many studies examined this relationship from a pedagogical or sociological lens, fewer works addressed it through a clinical psychological framework, especially among primary school children. The following review presents key findings from recent research that support and inform the current study.

Study 1

Title: *Academic performance and bullying in socially vulnerable students*

Authors: Marcela Almeida Zequinão et al. Publication Year: 2017

Journal: *J Hum Growth Dev.*, 27(1): 19–27

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7322/jhgd.127645>

Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to examine the correlation between bullying involvement and academic performance among socially vulnerable children and adolescents. The authors aimed to identify whether students' roles in bullying—such as being a victim, aggressor, or bystander were linked to measurable differences in reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. Special attention was given to students attending public schools in low-income Brazilian communities. By focusing on these contexts, the study intended to shed light on how environmental stressors like bullying may disproportionately affect educational outcomes in marginalized populations where academic resources and support structures are already limited.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive, cross-sectional design involving 375 students aged 8 to 16 from two public schools in Brazil. To assess academic performance, the researchers used the School Performance Test (TDE), which includes subtests in writing, arithmetic, and reading. Bullying roles were identified using a Sociometric Scale, while the Questionnaire on Peer Violence helped determine exposure and responses to violence. The study relied on statistical tools such as two-way ANOVA and Spearman correlation to analyze the relationships among bullying roles, gender, age, and performance metrics. The setting focused on students enrolled in a social development program targeting vulnerability.

Key Findings

The results revealed a significant negative relationship between bullying involvement and academic performance. Students identified as victims, aggressors, or bystanders generally scored lower, particularly in arithmetic, with reading and writing also negatively affected—especially among aggressors and witnesses. Girls performed better than boys overall, and adolescent girls outperformed their peers. The data suggest that being involved in bullying, regardless of role, compromises students' academic achievement. Moreover, the compounding factor of social vulnerability appeared to intensify the academic consequences. The study emphasized that both direct aggression and indirect exposure (such as witnessing violence) are sufficient to lower academic outcomes.

Critical Analysis

This research contributes valuable insights into how bullying correlates with lower academic outcomes in disadvantaged populations. Its strengths include a clearly defined sample, use of validated instruments, and analysis of different bullying roles. However, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to determine causality between bullying and school failure. The study also lacks a control group from stable socioeconomic backgrounds, which would have enriched the comparative analysis. Furthermore, the research does not assess emotional or clinical symptoms, which may mediate the observed academic outcomes. Therefore, while behaviorally sound, the study provides limited explanation for the psychological mechanisms behind academic decline.

Relevance to Current Study

Relation to the research topic:

This study is highly relevant to the current research, as it directly examines the link between bullying and academic failure among children a central theme in this paper. By focusing on elementary school students in vulnerable environments, the article mirrors the same population and core concern of the present study. It validates the notion that bullying, even when indirect, can lead to reduced academic achievement, particularly in fundamental skill areas such as math and reading. The evidence supports the idea that school bullying should be addressed not only as a disciplinary issue but also as an educational risk factor.

Relation to the research problem:

The research problem in this study centers on understanding the educational consequences of bullying in low-resource settings. Zequinão et al.'s findings directly contribute to this by showing how children who are socially or economically disadvantaged are more exposed to bullying and more likely to suffer academically. The study situates bullying within a broader context of social inequality, aligning well with the current paper's effort to understand how environmental and psychosocial stressors result in cumulative educational disadvantages. Therefore, this study provides solid behavioral data to support the argument that bullying is a key contributor to school failure.

Relation to the main question:

The main question in this research asks whether bullying contributes to academic failure in primary school children. Zequinão et al. provide a clear answer: yes, it does. Their empirical evidence shows that all roles within the bullying spectrum victim, aggressor, bystander are associated with lower academic scores. This supports the premise that school environments with high levels of interpersonal violence negatively impact learning outcomes. While the study does not delve into emotional or mental health

mediators, it strongly confirms that bullying itself is enough to disrupt cognitive focus, engagement, and performance in core academic subjects, especially for vulnerable children.

Alignment with hypotheses:

This study aligns closely with the current research hypotheses. It supports the idea that bullying, regardless of role, leads to demotivation and academic disengagement. Victims and witnesses showed reduced performance, which reinforces Hypothesis 1 (bullying leads to emotional distress) and Hypothesis 2 (academic disengagement as a result). Although the study does not explicitly measure psychological trauma, the academic effects imply cognitive and emotional disruption, suggesting support for Hypothesis 3 (long-term school failure among bullied students). While it lacks a clinical framework, the findings lay a strong behavioral foundation upon which the present study builds its clinical interpretation.

Study 2

Title: *School Bullying Results in Poor Psychological Conditions: Evidence from a National Sample of 95,545 Chinese Students*

Authors: Na Zhao et al.

Publication Year: 2023

Journal: *Frontiers in Public Health*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1038699>

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this large-scale epidemiological study was to explore the association between school bullying and psychological disorders among children and adolescents in China. Conducted by Zhao et al. (2023), the research involved a national sample of 95,545 students, making it one of the largest studies on the topic to date. The primary focus was to identify the prevalence of bullying and its correlation with clinical mental health symptoms such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, internet addiction, and sleep disturbances. The study also sought to determine how the frequency and severity of bullying exposure influenced psychological risk profiles across different age groups and school levels.

Methodology

The research employed a cross-sectional survey design, targeting students from grades 3 to 12 across public schools in Zigong City, Sichuan province. Data were collected through validated psychological screening tools, including the GAD-7 for anxiety, PHQ-9 for depression, CRIES-13 for post-traumatic stress, and ISI for insomnia. Bullying involvement was measured through a self-report questionnaire identifying victimization, perpetration, and witnessing behaviors. Logistic regression models were used to examine the associations between bullying roles and mental health outcomes, while adjusting for confounding variables such as gender, grade level, socioeconomic status, and parental education.

Key Findings

The study found that 71.6% of students had experienced bullying, with a breakdown of 13.6% as victims, 13.8% as aggressors, and 44.2% as bystanders. Those involved in bullying showed significantly higher rates of psychological disorders, especially anxiety (GAD-7), PTSD (CRIES-13), and depression (PHQ-9). Additionally, internet addiction and insomnia were strongly correlated with bullying exposure. The severity of symptoms increased proportionally with the frequency of bullying. Notably, bystanders were not exempt from risk they too exhibited elevated emotional distress. These findings highlight bullying as a predictor of clinical-level psychological conditions, even without physical harm or academic failure present.

Critical Analysis

This study is remarkable for its sample size, clinical depth, and statistical rigor. It shifts the lens from school bullying as a social behavior to a public mental health issue, deserving clinical attention. The use of validated psychological instruments gives credibility to the diagnoses reported. However, being cross-sectional, it cannot establish causation. Furthermore, while it offers profound insights into emotional consequences, the study does not explore academic performance directly. This limits its educational application, though it strongly reinforces the psychological argument. In summary, the study is clinically sound and methodologically powerful, but it lacks connection to academic indicators such as school grades or dropout rates.

Relevance to Current Study

Relation to the research topic:

This study is strongly aligned with the present research, as both address the psychological impact of bullying among school-aged children. While the current study adds a focus on academic failure, this article enriches the clinical understanding by detailing how bullying leads to mental health symptoms that can affect learning indirectly. The large-scale evidence on depression, anxiety, and PTSD supports the clinical direction taken in the present research. It validates that school bullying should be analyzed not only as an educational problem but also as a mental health threat requiring early intervention.

Relation to the research problem:

The research problem centers on how bullying may act as a hidden factor in school failure through emotional damage. This study contributes to that problem by revealing the psychological cost of bullying, even when academic failure is not yet apparent. It shifts the focus toward internal suffering emotional withdrawal, cognitive overload, and trauma that may precede or explain later disengagement from school. Thus, the article reinforces the need to integrate clinical assessment tools in school contexts, a perspective that supports the rationale and structure of the current study. It confirms the indirect yet dangerous path from bullying to educational decline.

Relation to the main question:

The main research question asks whether school bullying contributes to academic failure and how. Although this study does not address academic failure directly, it answers the “how” part by detailing the emotional and psychological mechanisms involved. It demonstrates that bullying leads to symptom clusters (anxiety, PTSD, depression) that impair concentration, memory, and motivation—critical components of academic engagement. Therefore, while not linking to grades or performance data, the findings provide a strong conceptual bridge explaining how emotional trauma may precede and predict academic disengagement. It helps answer the central question through the lens of clinical symptomatology.

- **Alignment with hypotheses:**

This study aligns with all three of the current research hypotheses.

- **Hypothesis 1 (bullying leads to psychological distress)** is fully confirmed, with clinical data on anxiety, depression, PTSD, and more.
- **Hypothesis 2 (emotional distress contributes to disengagement)** is indirectly supported; though academic outcomes weren’t measured, emotional states are well documented.
- **Hypothesis 3 (chronic exposure leads to school withdrawal)** is suggested by the rising symptom severity in those repeatedly bullied. Even without academic data, the psychological findings create a solid foundation for asserting that bullying threatens school continuity through emotional deterioration.

Study 3

Title: *How Can Bullying Victimization Lead to Lower Academic Achievement? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Mediating Role of Cognitive-Motivational Factors*

Authors: Muthanna Samara, Bruna Da Silva Nascimento, Aiman El-Asam, Sara Hammuda, Nabil Khattab

Publication Year: 2023

Journal: *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (IJERPH)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043130>

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore how bullying victimization contributes to lower academic performance, not just whether it does. The authors focused on identifying cognitive and motivational factors such as academic self-efficacy, school belonging, and academic motivation that may mediate this relationship. As a systematic review and meta-analysis, the study aggregated findings from 27 quantitative studies, creating a synthesized understanding of how psychological and educational variables interact in bullying contexts. The objective was to build a theoretical and empirical model explaining why bullying leads to disengagement from learning, especially when emotional and cognitive resources are depleted.

Methodology

The researchers conducted a systematic review followed by meta-analysis, using PRISMA guidelines. Databases included PsycINFO, ERIC, Web of Science, and Scopus. Studies were included if they provided quantitative data on bullying victimization, academic performance, and at least one mediating variable. The final sample included 27 studies, totaling 195,302 participants. Meta-analytical techniques included random-effects models, moderator analysis (e.g., gender, country), and funnel plot assessment to test for publication bias. The study adhered to high methodological standards, ensuring replicability and statistical validity. All included studies were screened for risk of bias and coded independently by multiple raters.

Key Findings

The results confirmed that bullying victimization is negatively associated with academic performance ($r = -0.18$), and this relationship is significantly mediated by three main factors:

1. **Academic self-concept/self-efficacy** (feeling academically capable),
2. **School belonging** (sense of connection to school),
3. **Academic motivation** (drive to succeed).

These mediators explain how bullying **reduces students' confidence**, weakens their connection to school, and eventually leads to **lower performance or dropout**. The findings also indicated that **cultural context, gender, and school type** can influence the strength of these mediations. The study offers an explanatory model that links bullying to school failure via psychological and motivational breakdown.

Critical Analysis

This study is a high-quality meta-analytic contribution, with strong statistical validity and broad generalizability. Its strength lies in identifying the “hidden mechanisms” cognitive and emotional mediators through which bullying reduces performance. Unlike previous studies focused on behavior or mental health alone, this article highlights academic psychology as a critical space for understanding victimization. However, it relies only on quantitative data, excluding qualitative perspectives that might reveal deeper emotional narratives. Also, most studies analyzed are from Western contexts, limiting

insights into marginalized or culturally diverse populations. Still, the triangulated model it presents is robust and directly applicable to educational and clinical interventions.

Relevance to Current Study

Relation to the research topic:

This article is one of the most directly relevant to the current study's core question how does bullying affect academic success? It offers not just confirmation but a mechanism, through cognitive decline and loss of motivation. The study's emphasis on psychological and motivational mediators complements your clinical approach, especially as your research explores internal emotional pathways leading to school failure. It also supports the design of your theoretical framework, particularly in relation to Bandura's self-efficacy theory and Maslow's belonging needs.

Relation to the research problem:

The study reinforces the idea that bullying is a hidden cause of academic underachievement, operating through internal mechanisms. Your research problem focuses on identifying these mechanisms in emotionally vulnerable children, and this study helps build the conceptual bridge between victimization and failure. It confirms that cognitive factors (e.g., academic confidence) and emotional ones (e.g., school detachment) are key links between social aggression and school decline. This enhances the relevance and justification for your research, especially if you're arguing for clinical screening and intervention at early educational stages.

Relation to the main question:

Your central research question asks if and how bullying leads to school failure. This study gives the most comprehensive and empirically grounded answer so far. It clarifies the "how" through clear mediating constructs: self-efficacy, motivation, and belonging. These are all psychological, cognitive, and emotional traits that mediate learning outcomes. Therefore, the article serves as conceptual evidence supporting your research question from both a theoretical and statistical angle. It helps bridge gaps between theory and practice and can serve as a backbone for your discussion and interpretation sections.

Alignment with hypotheses:

All three of your research hypotheses are supported by this study:

1. **Bullying leads to emotional/cognitive decline (H1):** Confirmed through reduced self-belief and emotional detachment.
2. **This decline leads to disengagement and underachievement (H2):** Supported through motivation and school belonging mediators.
3. **Prolonged exposure to bullying leads to school withdrawal or failure (H3):** Confirmed by studies linking sustained victimization to dropping out.
This study not only confirms your hypotheses but offers **meta-validated pathways**, making it ideal for your theoretical and applied framework.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the clinical link between school bullying and academic failure among primary school pupils. Through a theoretical analysis supported by recent empirical research, it has become clear that bullying whether physical, verbal, or psychological acts as more than just a disciplinary issue; it is a profound emotional stressor. Victims often experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, all of which interfere with their cognitive capacity and motivation to engage in school

activities. These internalized emotional struggles gradually erode academic performance and may eventually lead to withdrawal from the educational process altogether.

The theoretical frameworks discussed such as Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs reinforce the idea that children must feel safe, confident, and socially integrated to thrive academically. When bullying disrupts these conditions, children's learning processes are compromised. As the reviewed literature demonstrates, the mediating roles of academic self-efficacy, motivation, and school belonging are crucial in understanding the psychological chain linking bullying to academic decline. The accumulation of emotional distress, when left unaddressed, becomes a silent yet powerful factor contributing to school disengagement and long-term failure.

Moreover, the reviewed studies emphasized the absence of protective environments and early psychological intervention in schools. Most victims suffer in silence, and by the time academic failure becomes visible, the underlying emotional trauma is often overlooked or misunderstood. The findings of this paper highlight the need for integrating clinical awareness into educational policies, particularly in primary schools where emotional development is still fragile. Teachers, school counselors, and administrators must be trained to detect early signs of emotional distress caused by peer victimization and respond through structured psycho-educational programs.

In conclusion, bullying is not merely a behavioral problem; it is a multidimensional phenomenon with severe psychological and academic consequences. Addressing it requires a combined educational and clinical approach that considers the victim's emotional and cognitive experiences. This paper contributes to the growing body of research that calls for holistic school interventions. Future research should deepen this clinical perspective through longitudinal studies and field assessments, paving the way for more effective prevention and support systems. Ensuring psychological safety in schools is not optional—it is foundational to learning and essential for protecting the academic futures of vulnerable children.

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