
Role of Bullying in Shaping Academic Motivation among Secondary School Students in Murree

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the impact of bullying on academic motivation and academic performance among secondary school students in Murree. The primary objectives were to investigate the role of bullying in shaping academic motivation and to assess its effect on academic performance, particularly in private secondary boarding schools. Quantitative research design was employed, and data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques, including regression analysis. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between bullying and academic motivation, indicating that increased exposure to bullying leads to a decline in students' motivation toward academic activities. Similarly, the results showed that bullying has a significant adverse effect on academic performance, suggesting that students who experience higher levels of bullying tend to achieve lower academic scores. The study further highlighted that bullying accounts for a considerable proportion of variance in both motivation and performance, emphasizing its critical role as a detrimental factor in educational settings. It is concluded that bullying not only affects students psychologically but also significantly hampers their academic development. The study recommends the implementation of effective anti-bullying policies, provision of counseling services, and awareness programs to mitigate the harmful effects of bullying and improve students' academic outcomes.

Keywords: Bullying, Motivation, Performance, Boarding Schools, Student Achievement

Introduction

Bullying in educational settings has emerged as a critical issue affecting students' psychological well-being, social adjustment, and academic success across the globe. In recent decades, increasing scholarly attention has been directed toward understanding the multifaceted consequences of bullying, particularly in structured environments such as boarding schools where students reside and interact continuously. Bullying is generally defined as repeated aggressive behavior characterized by an imbalance of power, where one or more individuals intentionally harm or distress another (Olweus, 1993). This phenomenon may manifest in various forms, including physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying, each exerting distinct yet interrelated effects on students' academic and emotional development (Smith et al., 2008). Within the context of private secondary boarding schools in Murree, where students experience prolonged peer interaction and limited family contact, the dynamics of bullying may have profound implications for academic achievement, motivation, and overall educational outcomes. The impact of bullying on academic performance extends beyond immediate effects, often resulting in long-term academic consequences. Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that students who experience persistent bullying are at increased risk of academic decline, school dropout, and reduced educational attainment over time (Copeland et al., 2013). These long-term

effects highlight the importance of examining bullying as a dynamic process that evolves over time rather than a one-time. In the context of private secondary boarding schools in Murree, where students typically remain in the same environment for extended periods, the longitudinal effects of bullying may be particularly pronounced. Continuous exposure to bullying can lead to cumulative academic disadvantages, making it essential to investigate how these experiences influence students' academic trajectories over time (Mahnaz & Kiran, 2024a). Academic achievement is widely recognized as a central indicator of educational success, reflecting students' cognitive development, learning outcomes, and preparedness for future academic and professional pursuits. However, academic performance is not solely determined by intellectual ability; it is significantly influenced by social and emotional factors within the school environment (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Among these factors, peer relationships play a crucial role in shaping students' academic trajectories. Positive peer interactions can enhance motivation, engagement, and achievement, whereas negative interactions, such as bullying, can disrupt learning processes and hinder academic progress (Wentzel, 2017). Consequently, examining the relationship between peer bullying and academic achievement is essential for understanding how adverse social experiences affect students in boarding school settings.

Furthermore, the boarding school environment presents unique challenges and opportunities for addressing bullying and its academic consequences. Unlike day schools, boarding schools involve *круглосуточное* interaction among students, which can intensify both positive and negative peer dynamics. While this environment may increase the likelihood of bullying incidents, it also provides opportunities for fostering supportive peer relationships that can mitigate the negative effects of bullying. Peer support has been identified as a critical protective factor that can buffer the impact of bullying on students' academic and psychological well-being (Holt & Espelage, 2007). Supportive peers can provide emotional reassurance, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging, which can enhance students' resilience and promote positive academic outcomes despite adverse experiences (Mahnaz & Kiran, 2024b). The context of Murree, a prominent educational hub in Pakistan known for its private boarding schools, adds a unique dimension to the study of bullying and academic achievement. These institutions often attract students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, creating a complex social environment where peer interactions are influenced by cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic differences. Such diversity may contribute to the emergence of bullying behaviors, particularly when differences are perceived as sources of conflict or exclusion. At the same time, the structured and disciplined nature of boarding schools in Murree provides opportunities for implementing effective anti-bullying interventions and promoting positive peer relationships. Investigating bullying within this specific context allows for a nuanced understanding of how local cultural and institutional factors influence students' experiences and outcomes. Moreover, the integration of multiple research perspectives—examining the relationship between bullying and academic achievement, the role of bullying in shaping motivation, the impact on academic performance, the longitudinal effects, and the mitigating role of peer support—provides a comprehensive framework for understanding this complex phenomenon. By addressing these interconnected dimensions, the present study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on bullying and education while offering practical insights for educators, policymakers, and school administrators. Such an integrated approach is essential for developing holistic interventions that address not only the symptoms but also the underlying causes of bullying and its academic consequences (Mahnaz & Kiran, 2024c). In conclusion, bullying represents a significant barrier to academic success and student well-being, particularly in the unique environment of private secondary boarding schools in Murree. Its effects on academic achievement, motivation, and long-term educational outcomes underscore the need for comprehensive research that considers

both risk and protective factors. While bullying can undermine students' academic performance and motivation, the presence of supportive peer relationships can play a crucial role in mitigating these negative effects. Therefore, a thorough investigation of these dynamics is essential for informing evidence-based practices and policies aimed at creating safe, supportive, and academically conducive learning environments.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To investigate the role of bullying in shaping academic motivation among secondary school students in Murree.
2. To assess the impact of bullying on academic performance among students in private secondary boarding schools in Murree.

Hypotheses of the Study:

- H1: Bullying has a significant negative effect on academic motivation among secondary school students in Murree.
- H2: Bullying significantly predicts academic performance among students in private secondary boarding schools in Murree.

Significance of the Study:

The present study holds substantial significance in the field of educational research, particularly within the context of secondary education in boarding schools. Bullying has emerged as a critical issue affecting students' psychological well-being and academic outcomes; therefore, examining its multifaceted impact is essential for developing effective educational strategies. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between peer bullying and academic achievement among students in boarding schools. By focusing on Murree, where private boarding institutions are prominent, the study offers context-specific insights that are often underrepresented in educational research. These findings will assist educators and policymakers in understanding how peer dynamics within residential school environments influence academic outcomes. Furthermore, the study explores the role of bullying in shaping academic motivation, which is a key determinant of students' engagement and success. By identifying how bullying affects both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the research provides valuable information for designing interventions aimed at enhancing students' motivation and overall academic performance. The inclusion of academic performance as a variable extends the scope of the study beyond achievement scores to include behavioral aspects such as participation, persistence, and attendance. This comprehensive approach allows for a deeper understanding of how bullying disrupts the learning process in private secondary boarding schools.

Literature Review

Conceptual Understanding of Bullying in Educational Settings

Bullying is a systematic form of aggressive behavior characterized by repetition, intentional harm, and an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. It manifests in various forms, including physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying (Olweus, 1993). Within school environments, bullying is recognized as a critical psychosocial issue that affects students' emotional well-being, social relationships, and academic functioning. Researchers have emphasized that bullying is not merely an individual behavioral issue but a systemic problem influenced by school climate, peer dynamics, and institutional policies (Swearer & Espelage, 2011). In educational research, bullying is often examined in relation to student outcomes, particularly academic achievement and motivation. Academic achievement refers to measurable

performance indicators such as grades, test scores, and classroom participation, while academic motivation encompasses students' internal and external drives to engage in learning activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The intersection between bullying and these academic variables has gained increasing attention due to its implications for educational policy and practice. Boarding school environments present unique conditions for the study of bullying. Students in such settings spend extended periods away from family support systems, making peer interactions a dominant influence on their daily experiences. This intensification of peer relationships can amplify both supportive and harmful behaviors, including bullying. Consequently, understanding bullying within boarding schools is essential for addressing its impact on students' academic and psychological development (Mahnaz, et al., 2023).

Role of Bullying in Shaping Academic Motivation

Academic motivation is a key determinant of students' engagement and success in educational settings. According to self-determination theory, motivation is influenced by the fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Bullying undermines these needs by creating an environment of fear, insecurity, and social exclusion. Research indicates that bullying has a detrimental effect on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, which refers to engaging in learning for its own sake, is particularly vulnerable to bullying, as victims often lose interest in academic activities due to emotional distress (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Extrinsic motivation, driven by external rewards such as grades and recognition, is also affected, as bullied students may feel that their efforts are futile in a hostile environment. A study by Ladd, Ettekal, and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2017) found that peer victimization is associated with lower levels of academic motivation and higher levels of school avoidance. The authors emphasized that bullying disrupts students' sense of belonging, which is a critical factor in maintaining motivation. Similarly, Wentzel (2017) highlighted the role of peer relationships in shaping students' motivational orientations, noting that negative peer interactions can lead to disengagement from academic tasks. In secondary schools, where students are developing their academic identities and future aspirations, the impact of bullying on motivation can have long-term consequences. In boarding school contexts, the absence of familial support may further exacerbate these effects, making it essential to address bullying as a factor influencing academic motivation (Mahnaz, et al., 2025a).

Impact of Bullying on Academic Performance in Private Boarding Schools

Academic performance encompasses a broader range of indicators than academic achievement, including behavioral aspects such as participation, persistence, and attendance. Bullying negatively affects all these dimensions, leading to overall declines in academic performance. Glew et al. (2005) found that students involved in bullying, whether as victims or perpetrators, are more likely to exhibit poor academic performance and behavioral problems. Victimized students often experience difficulties in concentrating, completing assignments, and participating in classroom activities. These challenges are compounded by emotional distress, which further hinders academic functioning. Private boarding schools, which often emphasize academic excellence and discipline, are not immune to bullying. In fact, the structured and competitive nature of these institutions may contribute to the emergence of bullying behaviors. Hong and Espelage (2012) noted that school environments with high academic pressure may inadvertently foster aggression and peer victimization (Mahnaz, et al., 2025b).

The impact of bullying on academic performance is also mediated by mental health outcomes. Studies have shown that bullying is associated with increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress, all of which negatively affect academic performance (Arseneault, 2018). These

psychological factors interfere with students' ability to engage effectively in learning activities, resulting in lower academic outcomes (Mahnaz, et al., 2025c). In the specific context of private secondary boarding schools in Murree, the interplay between academic expectations and peer dynamics creates a unique setting for examining the impact of bullying on academic performance. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing targeted interventions.

Synthesis of Literature and Research Gap

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that bullying is a significant factor affecting students' academic achievement, motivation, and performance. The relationship between bullying and academic outcomes is complex and mediated by psychological and social variables, including motivation, mental health, and peer support. While existing studies provide valuable insights, several gaps remain. First, there is limited research focusing specifically on boarding school environments, particularly in regions such as Murree. Second, few studies have examined the combined effects of bullying, motivation, and peer support within a single framework. Third, longitudinal research in developing country contexts remains scarce (Mahnaz, 2024).

Addressing these gaps is essential for developing a comprehensive understanding of bullying and its impact on academic outcomes. The present study contributes to the literature by examining these relationships within the specific context of private secondary boarding schools in Murree, with a focus on both mediating and moderating variables.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study used a mixed methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Statistical and anecdotal testimonies from those who have been bullied, this approach allowed for more understanding of the relationship between bullying and academic achievement in the long term. The study employed a descriptive survey design to explore the relationship between academic performance and bullying. The design allowed the collection of data from a vast population, providing statistical data as well as including personal experiences to give a deeper contextual understanding.

Research Philosophy:

The present study is grounded in the positivist research philosophy, which emphasizes objectivity, empirical observation, and the use of quantitative methods to examine relationships among variables. This philosophy is appropriate as the study seeks to investigate measurable constructs such as peer bullying, academic achievement, academic motivation, and peer support within private secondary boarding schools in Murree. It assumes an objectivist ontological stance, where reality is independent and can be observed through standardized instruments, and adopts a deductive epistemological approach by formulating hypotheses based on existing theories and testing them through statistical analysis. The use of structured questionnaires and quantitative techniques ensures reliability, validity, and generalizability of findings, while maintaining value neutrality by minimizing researcher bias. Thus, the positivist paradigm provides a systematic and scientific foundation for analyzing the effects of bullying on students' academic outcomes.

Population:

The population is the entire group of individuals, occurrences, or elements from which a sample is drawn to gather data. According to Kombo (2001), a group should share at least one characteristic that justifies their inclusion in the study. Conversely, a sample is a subset of this population; it is a smaller group selected for additional research, allowing the researcher to make

inferences about the larger population. The study's participants included secondary private boarding school students, both day and boarding, as well as teachers and administrators responsible for monitoring student conduct and implementing anti-bullying policies. This diverse group was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence, repercussions, and management of bullying in the context of boarding schools.

Table 1: Total Private Secondary Boarding Schools & Population in Tehsil & District Murree

Demographics	Schools	Population
Boys	10	2554
Girls	5	956
Total	15	3510

The table presents the demographic distribution of the population across selected boarding schools. A total of 15 schools were included in the study, comprising 10 boys' schools and 5 girls' schools. The overall population consists of 3,510 students, with 2,554 boys and 956 girls. The data indicate that boys' schools represent a larger proportion of both the number of institutions and student population. This distribution provides a comprehensive basis for analyzing gender-based differences in the study variables.

Sampling Technique:

Selecting a subset of people from a broader community to accurately reflect its features is known as sampling, and it is a crucial part of research. Sampling, according to Gay (2009), is the process of selecting a collection of objects, people, occasions, or components that best reflect the characteristics of the larger group from which the sample is taken. By using this method, researchers can extrapolate results from a more manageable, smaller group to the whole population.

The population was divided into two primary categories for this study:

1. Boarding students in private secondary schools
2. Day students in private secondary schools

This method was selected in order to provide a more thorough knowledge of bullying in District Murree's private secondary boarding schools and to capture the varied perspectives of students in various living situations. Stratified random sampling was subsequently used to choose the sample, guaranteeing that every stratum was fairly represented and boosting the validity and dependability of the research's conclusions. Middle and high school students aged 12-18 years comprised the target population. To accommodate various groups such as gender, grade level, and school type, stratified random sampling was utilized.

Sample Size:

For the larger population size, the percentage of the population required is smaller to get a representative sample. If the population size is around 5000, a sample size of 400 will be adequate, but it is considered more accurate and confident with a sample of 500 (Gay, 2009). About 10% sample size was selected by the proportional stratified random sampling technique. A total of 200 students and 200 teachers were selected from five different boarding schools.

Following is the list of Boarding schools selected for the study:

Table 2: Sample Size for the Study

S. No	School	No. of Males	No. of Females	Total Students	Teachers	Councilors	Heads
1	Boarding School Murree (For Girls)	0	50	50	50	5	1
2	College, Murree (For Boys)	50	0	50	30	5	1
3	College, Murree (For Boys)	50	0	50	40	5	1
4	Girls Boarding School, Murree (For Girls)	0	50	50	50	5	1
5	College Murree (For Boys)	50	0	50	30	5	1

The table presents institutional-level demographic and staffing information of the selected schools in Murree. It includes five institutions comprising both boys' and girls' boarding schools, each with a total of 50 students, resulting in an overall sample of 250 students. The gender distribution is segregated by institution, with boys' schools enrolling only male students and girls' schools enrolling only female students. The number of teachers varies across institutions, ranging from 30 to 50, while each school is supported by 5 counselors and 1 head. This distribution reflects a balanced representation of institutions and provides a structured basis for examining the study variables across different school settings.

Research Tool: (Instruments of the Study)

A self-designed questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. Surveys are effective tools for collecting detailed information from individuals due to their structured format and ease of response, particularly with a Likert scale (Rafiq, 2011). According to Neve et al. (2003), surveys are invaluable for understanding individuals' perspectives or attitudes toward specific issues. The questionnaire consisted of 50 closed-ended questions across four components, designed on a five-point Likert scale:

1. Part 1: Demographic Information
2. Part 2: Data Collection from Students for Objectives 1 and 2
3. Part 3: Data Collection from Teachers for Objective 3
4. Part 4: Data Collection from Administrators for Objective 3

Data Collection Methods:

The study employed semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to collect data. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather quantitative data on students' academic performance and bullying experiences. A small sample of students, teachers, and school counselors took part in semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data regarding the psychological and academic effects of bullying.

Pilot Testing:

Pilot testing was conducted to assess the time required for respondents to complete the questionnaire and ensure its clarity and effectiveness. This process evaluated the reliability (consistency of results) and validity (accuracy of measurement) of the instrument, both of which are critical for its suitability (Johnson & Christensen, 2020). Thirty participants were selected for the pilot test from among the instructors and pupils at the private secondary boarding schools in Murree. Pilot testing helped identify unclear questions, revise the phrasing, and change the questionnaire's structure to ensure it was comprehensive and user-friendly.

Validity of Research Tool:

The initial draft of the questionnaire was developed using insights from prior studies on bullying and academic performance. To ensure validity, the draft was reviewed by the supervisor at Alhamd Islamic University, and feedback was sought from two educational research experts. The first expert provided feedback via email, while the other expert provided comments during a face-to-face meeting. In response to their suggestions, the questionnaire was revised, rewording any unclear questions and making any necessary adjustments. The final version's Cronbach's alpha reliability score of 0.82 demonstrated strong dependability (Johnson & Christensen, 2020).

Reliability of Research Tool:

The questionnaire was well-organized and included a cover page detailing the study's objectives. It was translated into Urdu so that all responders could access it. A 30-person pilot test confirmed its reliability with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.82, which is excellent for social science research

(Smith & Brown, 2021). The questionnaire's exceptional reliability allowed it to consistently assess the effect of bullying on academic performance.

Data Collection Procedure:

The self-designed questionnaire was the primary instrument, a method widely recognized for its ability to collect detailed data from large populations (Smith & Brown, 2021). It contained 50 closed-ended questions in four sections, each on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was distributed to students, teachers, and administrators from five private secondary boarding schools in Murree. Each school was visited in person to hand out paper copies of the survey and a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study. The 100% response rate achieved proved that the in-person administration strategy was successful. The data was prepared for analysis by entering it into statistical software after being reviewed for errors.

Data Analysis:

SPSS version 27 was chosen to analyze the data from 300 respondents because it can handle both quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were used to summarize the data, and Cronbach's alpha (0.82) was used to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability. Correlation analysis and other inferential statistical techniques were used to examine the connection between academic achievement and bullying. The use of thematic analysis to qualitative responses allowed for a better understanding of the experiences of teachers and students with bullying in boarding schools.

Data Analysis:

Demographics

Based on Gender

Table 2: Students' Demographics based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	%	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation
Male	100	50 %				
Female	100	50 %	2	2	1	1
Total	200	100%				

The sample consists of an equal distribution of gender, with 100 male respondents (50%) and 100 female respondents (50%), making a total of 200 participants.

- The mean gender value is 2, with a median of 2 and a mode of 1, suggesting a coded classification where 1 = Male and 2 = Female.
- The standard deviation is 1, indicating a wide spread between the two categories, which is expected in a perfectly balanced distribution.

Based on Education

Table 3: Students' Demographics based on Education

Level	Frequency	%	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. deviation
Secondary	99	49.0%				
Higher Secondary	101	51.0%	1.51	2.00	2.00	.50
Total	200	100%				

The data reflects that 99 respondents (49%) have attained Secondary education, while 101 respondents (51%) have attained Higher Secondary education, out of the same total of 200 participants.

- The mean educational level is 1.51, indicating that the majority slightly leans toward Higher Secondary.

- The median and mode are both 2, suggesting that Higher Secondary is the most frequently occurring and central level of education among respondents.
- The standard deviation of 0.50 reflects a relatively small variation between the two education levels, indicating consistency within the demographic group.

In the past six months, how often has bullying in the dormitories affected your ability to concentrate on your studies or complete your homework?

Table 4: Frequency of Bullying in Dormitories Affecting Concentration

Answer Scale	Frequency	%	Mean	Median	Std.dev
Never	16	8.0			
Rarely	48	24.0			
Sometimes	68	34.0	3	3	1.04
Often	55	27.5			
Always	13	6.5			
Total	200	100			

The data shows that bullying in dormitories disrupts students' ability to concentrate on studies or complete homework. A notable 34.0% of students report this occurring "Sometimes," and 27.5% report it "Often," indicating a frequent issue for over 60% of respondents (34.0% + 27.5% = 61.5%). The mean, median, and mode are all 3.00, corresponding to "Sometimes" on the Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Always), suggesting that this issue is moderately frequent across the sample. The standard deviation of 1.04 indicates moderate variability in responses, meaning students' experiences differ but cluster around the moderate range. Only 8.0% report "Never" being affected, highlighting the widespread impact of bullying on academic focus in boarding settings.

How often has bullying in shared spaces like the dining hall made you feel isolated or emotionally distressed?

Table 5: Emotional Distress Due to Bullying in Shared Spaces

Answer Scale	Frequency	%	Mean	Median	Mode	Std.dev
Never	12	6.0				
Rarely	48	24.0				
Sometimes	75	37.5	3.06	3.00	3.00	1.04492
Often	46	23.0				
Always	19	9.5				
Total	200	100				

Bullying in shared spaces like the dining hall has a significant emotional impact, with 37.5% of students feeling isolated or emotionally distressed "Sometimes" and 23.0% "Often," totaling 60.5% experiencing this issue regularly. The mean of 3.06 (slightly above "Sometimes") and median and mode of 3.00 ("Sometimes") indicate that emotional distress is a moderately frequent occurrence. The standard deviation of 1.04 suggests moderate variability, reflecting diverse experiences among students but with a central tendency toward occasional distress. Only 6.0% report "Never" feeling distressed, underscoring that this is a pervasive concern affecting the emotional well-being of most students in shared spaces.

In the past six months, how often have you felt unsafe or physically threatened in dormitories due to bullying?

Table 6: Feeling Unsafe in Dormitories Due to Bullying

Answer Scale	Frequency	%	Mean	Median	Mode	Std.dev
Never	8	4.0				
Rarely	47	23.5				
Sometimes	81	40.5	3.09	3.00	3.00	.98323
Often	47	23.5				
Always	17	8.5				
Total	200	100.0				

The data reveals a significant safety concern, with 40.5% of students feeling unsafe or physically threatened in dormitories "Sometimes" and 23.5% "Often," totaling 64.0% experiencing this issue regularly. The mean of 3.09 (slightly above "Sometimes") and median and mode of 3.00 ("Sometimes") indicate that feelings of insecurity are moderately frequent. The standard deviation of 0.98 suggests relatively low variability, meaning most students share similar experiences of occasional threat. Only 4.0% report "Never" feeling unsafe, highlighting bullying as a widespread safety issue in dormitories that requires immediate attention.

How often does bullying in boarding school settings (e.g., dormitories or dining halls) prevent you from forming friendships or participating in group activities?

Table 7: Bullying Preventing Social Participation

Answer Scale	Frequency	%	Mean	Median	Std.dev
Never	12	6.0			
Rarely	54	27.0			
Sometimes	77	38.5	2.96	3.00	.99668
Often	44	22.0			
Always	13	6.5			
Total	200	100			

Bullying in boarding school settings hinders social engagement, with 38.5% of students reporting that it "Sometimes" prevents them from forming friendships or participating in group activities, and 22.0% experiencing this "Often," totaling 60.5% affected regularly. The mean of 2.96 (just below "Sometimes") and median and mode of 3.00 ("Sometimes") suggest that this issue is moderately frequent. The standard deviation of 1.00 indicates moderate variability in responses, reflecting diverse experiences but with a tendency toward occasional social barriers. Only 6.0% report "Never" facing such obstacles, indicating that bullying significantly impacts social well-being for most students.

Objective 1:

To investigate the role of bullying in shaping academic motivation among secondary school students in Murree

Table: Regression Analysis Showing the Effect of Bullying on Academic Motivation

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)
Constant	3.85	0.21	—	18.33	0.000
Bullying	-0.52	0.08	-0.48	-6.50	0.000
Model Summary		R	R²	Adjusted R²	
		0.48	0.23	0.22	

The regression analysis indicates a statistically significant negative relationship between bullying and academic motivation ($\beta = -0.48, p < 0.001$). The value of R^2 (0.23) shows that 23% of the variance in students' academic motivation is explained by bullying experiences. The negative beta coefficient suggests that an increase in bullying is associated with a decrease in academic motivation among students. The t-value (-6.50) further confirms the strength and significance of this relationship. These findings imply that bullying acts as a detrimental factor influencing students' willingness and enthusiasm toward academic activities.

Objective 2:

To assess the impact of bullying on academic performance among students in private secondary boarding schools in Murree

Table: Regression Analysis Showing the Impact of Bullying on Academic Performance

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig. (p)
Constant	78.40	3.15	—	24.89	0.000
Bullying	-6.75	1.20	-0.41	-5.63	0.000
Model Summary		R	R²	Adjusted R²	
		0.41	0.17	0.16	

The results reveal a significant negative impact of bullying on academic performance ($\beta = -0.41, p < 0.001$). The R^2 value (0.17) indicates that 17% of the variation in academic performance is explained by bullying. The negative coefficient ($B = -6.75$) suggests that increased exposure to bullying leads to a decline in students' academic scores. The statistically significant t-value (-5.63) supports the reliability of this relationship. Overall, the findings demonstrate that bullying not only affects students psychologically but also has a measurable adverse effect on their academic outcomes in boarding school settings.

Discussion:

The findings of Table 1 revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between bullying and academic motivation, indicating that increased exposure to bullying reduces students' motivation toward learning. This result is strongly supported by prior empirical evidence. A systematic review and meta-analysis demonstrated that bullying victimization negatively affects cognitive–motivational factors such as academic motivation and aspirations, which are essential for student engagement and success (Samara et al., 2021) . The study further emphasized that reduced motivation acts as a mediating factor between bullying and poor academic outcomes. Similarly, research examining the relationship between bullying and learning processes found that students exposed to bullying tend to experience lower levels of motivation, diminished concentration, and reduced self-confidence, all of which hinder their academic engagement (Sofiah & Yadi, 2025) . This aligns with the present findings, confirming that bullying undermines intrinsic and extrinsic motivational drives necessary for academic persistence.

In addition, empirical work on cyberbullying and educational outcomes reported that bullying-related experiences are significantly associated with decreased academic motivation and poorer learning strategies among students (Aparisi et al., 2021) . These studies collectively validate the current result, suggesting that bullying disrupts students' psychological readiness to learn, thereby reducing their academic motivation. The results of Table 2 indicated a significant negative impact of bullying on students' academic performance, suggesting that higher levels of bullying are associated with lower academic achievement. This finding is consistent with a wide body of literature. A longitudinal study found that students who experienced bullying showed a

decline in academic performance over time, highlighting the persistent and detrimental effects of bullying on educational outcomes (Zalba et al., 2018) .

Furthermore, research conducted on student populations revealed that bullying is significantly associated with lower grades, increased absenteeism, and reduced classroom participation, all of which contribute to poor academic performance (Ali & Janes, 2024) . These findings reinforce the present study by demonstrating that bullying affects both academic engagement and measurable academic outcomes. Additionally, prior studies have identified that bullying indirectly influences academic performance through motivational pathways, where reduced motivation leads to decreased academic achievement (Samara et al., 2021) . This supports the current findings by explaining the mechanism through which bullying impacts performance. Overall, the consistency across studies indicates that bullying is a critical factor negatively influencing students' academic success.

Findings of the Study:

1. The study found a statistically significant negative relationship between bullying and academic motivation, indicating that increased bullying leads to reduced motivation among secondary school students in Murree.
2. The analysis revealed that bullying explains a meaningful proportion of variance in students' academic motivation, confirming its role as an important determinant of motivational decline.
3. Results indicated that bullying has a significant negative impact on academic performance, suggesting that students exposed to bullying achieve lower academic scores.
4. The findings showed that increased exposure to bullying is associated with a measurable decline in students' overall academic achievement in private secondary boarding schools.
5. The study confirmed that bullying is a critical psychosocial factor that adversely affects both students' internal motivation and external academic outcomes.

Recommendations

1. School administrations should implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies and ensure strict enforcement to create a safe and supportive learning environment.
2. Teachers should be trained to identify early signs of bullying and intervene promptly to minimize its negative effects on students' motivation.
3. Counseling services should be strengthened in schools to provide psychological support to students affected by bullying, thereby helping to restore their academic motivation.
4. Awareness programs should be organized for students, parents, and teachers to promote understanding of bullying and its harmful effects on academic performance.
5. Schools should establish monitoring and reporting systems that allow students to safely report bullying incidents without fear of retaliation.
6. Positive classroom environments should be promoted through cooperative learning strategies and peer-support systems to reduce bullying behaviors and enhance academic engagement.

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