

Fall 12-17-2021

Factors Associated with Omani's Schoolteachers' Reporting Behavior of Suspected Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

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Factors Associated with Omani's Schoolteachers' Reporting Behavior of Suspected

Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect

By

Zeinab Alazri

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The University of Nebraska Graduate College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree OF Doctor of Philosophy

Nursing Graduate Program

Under the Supervision of Professor Hanna, Kathleen M

University of Nebraska Medical Center

Omaha, Nebraska

October 2021

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**Factors associated with Omani's Schoolteachers' Reporting behavior of Suspected Cases of
Child Abuse and Neglect**

Zeinab Alazri, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2021

Supervisor: Hanna, K.M, PhD

Child abuse and neglect is a global problem that can result in severe negative consequences for victims and their societies. Numerous initiatives have been launched by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to combat this problem. Recently, Sultanate Oman, an Arab country, has mandated schoolteachers to report suspected abuse and neglect cases to comply with UNICEF's recommendations. As schoolteachers spend a great deal of their time with children, they are in a good position to recognize and report suspected abuse and neglect cases so the victims can get the needed help and treatment. There is a dearth of information about Omani schoolteachers' reporting behavior and the potential cultural influence. There were no previous published studies to describe the factors associated with reporting behavior of schoolteachers in this country.

Further, the current reporting system in Oman did not track the number of reports done by schoolteachers. So, there was no scientific evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the mandatory law. Therefore, a multi-methods study was designed to describe the factors associated with the intention of Omani basic education schoolteachers (cycle one) in the Muscat governorate to report suspected abuse and neglect cases. The first aim was to synthesize the literature related to factors associated with the reporting by school personnel of child abuse (schoolteachers, principals, counselors, early educators, kindergarten teachers, and daycare teachers) across cultures in an integrative review. The integrative results were used to develop

the qualitative and quantitative portions. The qualitative part aimed to describe factors associated with the intention to report suspected cases using five or six focus groups. A direct content analysis was utilized using prior definitions from the theory of planned behavior (TPB). The quantitative portion examined the predictive contribution of attitude toward reporting, subjective norms about reporting, and perceived behavioral control on intention to report. Predictive correlational design using a self-administered questionnaire, developed by the researcher based on the TPB, was employed with a sample size of 124 participants. Structural equation modeling was used for quantitative data analysis. The results of the integrative review indicated that factors associated with school personnel reporting behavior could be classified into three categories: reporters' characteristics, victims' characteristics, and systems' characteristics. The qualitative portion revealed three themes which were 1) Reporting within an environment of educational resource scarcity; 2) Reporting within an environment of competing female social roles and their professional reporting role; 3) Reporting within an environment of complex and diverse abuse and neglect cases. The findings of the quantitative portion indicated that 38% of the variance in Omani schoolteachers' intention to report was explained by the three predictors (attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control). The knowledge gained from this research provided a scientific foundation for effective nursing intervention, targeting schoolteachers to facilitate reporting. Also, it informed future studies that design to examine the reporting behavior of schoolteachers.

Dedication

To children affected by any form of abuse or neglect, in particular, those whose abuse or neglect has never been recognized or reported to receive the help they need.

Acknowledgment

I want to thank my advisor, Dr. Hanna Kathleen M, for her enormous support throughout my Ph.D. journey. She was available for me any time I need her help. When I say help, it does not mean necessarily reviewing my work or guiding me for the next step. It was by listening to me, allowing me to express my feelings freely, and responding to my needs appropriately. One memory that I will never forget is that in summer 2019, she delayed her vacation to be after I gave birth to my daughter. She did that because she wanted to make sure that she is available to help me submit my IRB before having the baby. In the last five years, she helped me move from a point where only I know I have to do a dissertation, and I want it to be about child abuse. That was what I know during that time. To the point, which is today, I have a complete dissertation with a lot of potentials.

I would also like to thank all the members of my Ph.D. supervisory committee. Dr. Christine Eisenhaur taught me the philosophy in nursing science and qualitative research courses. Learning philosophy is challenging, and it is even more complicated when it is in a second language. However, having a great teacher who chose articles very carefully, focused on the main points, and involved students in the discussion, had make my philosophy learning easier and more enjoyable. That sense of joy extended throughout my qualitative analysis. Without her guidance, I am not sure if I would love qualitative research this much. Dr. Aaron had guided me in the quantitative portion of my dissertation. Dr. Aaron did not limit his guidance and support to the dissertation; he provided me with different options to develop professionally. He invited me for presentations in his classes and found for me a student job that matches my expertise. He pushed me to use the structural equation model for the analysis, which was out of my comfort zone when I started the dissertation, but now it became my area of expertise. He did give me a practical

lesson on how going out of your comfort zone is the way to gain more. Dr. Theresea was very flexible, and her input with mental health nursing lens was always valuable.

I want to express my deep appreciation to my parents. Their love and care paved the way for everything I have achieved. I want to thank my husband, Mauath, for his support. I am not sure if there is enough word to express my appreciation for his trust, respect, and support. Hard time is the best time to know the people who genuinely love you, especially when they provide you with a complete support for whatever decision you make. Special thanks to my kids, who teach me how to be flexible and to know my priorities. I am sure these skills will enrich my professional endeavor.

In resilience science, it is well known that children who grow up with at least one healthy supportive relationship could flourish regardless of how their environment is harsh. Considering myself as a child when I started the Ph.D. program, the healthy supportive relationships with my advisor, supervisory committee members, colleagues, faculty at the UNMC, and my family gave me all the resilience I need for this journey.

Financial Support

My Ph.D program was supported by the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) Graduate Studies Assistantships, and Patach fellowship. I want to thank them for their financial support.

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Chapter#1: Introduction

Background

Although schoolteachers are in an optimal position to identify and report child abuse and neglect, they still fail to report all suspected cases (Bryant. J, 2009; Dinehart, L., &Kenny, M.C., 2015; Feng, Huang, Wang, 2010; Feng et al., 2012). This failure may leave the victims of abuse and neglect suffering the tremendous negative effects of abuse the rest of their lives and depriving them of possible help. In 2014, the Sultanate of Oman, an Arab country, mandated all school personnel including schoolteachers report if they encounter cases of child abuse and neglect. This is an initiative to early identify cases of abuse and neglect and provide the victims with treatment (Ministry of Social Development [MSD], 2017). Unfortunately, there is no available data about the number of reports done by schoolteachers in Oman, which makes evaluation of the effectiveness of this law a challenging task. Based on statistics from other countries that enacted the mandatory law for a while, schoolteachers still fail to report every suspected case. (Bryant. J, 2009; Dinehart, L., &Kenny, M.C., 2015; Feng, Huang, Wang, 2010; Feng et al., 2012). Although many studies have been done worldwide to explore the factors associated with schoolteachers' reporting behaviors, none of these studies were conducted in Oman or any other Arab countries. These studies demonstrated that culturally informed factors like attitude toward reporting and subjective norms are important factors associated with reporting behavior (Schols, De Ruiter, & Ory, 2013; Sivilis-Centinkaya, R., 2015).

Given the limited evidence about factors associated with Omani schoolteachers reporting behavior, there was a need for studies that integrate cultural perspectives. Due to lack of published articles about Omani schoolteachers' reporting behavior, an integrative review about factors associated with school personnel' reporting behavior across cultures was done. This review served as a guide for the multi-methods study. The results of the review were

utilized for questionnaire and interview guide development. Thus, a quantitative assessment of Omani school teachers' intention to report and the factors associated with their intention using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a culturally appropriate model, was needed to provide insight about the potential reporting behavior of Omani teachers and some factors associated with it. Since Oman has its own culture, the transferability of studies from other cultural groups to this group is limited. Therefore, this study also had a qualitative component to allow culturally sensitive factors to be discerned and provided a more in-depth understanding of these factors.

Purpose

The purpose of this multi-methods study was to describe the factors associated with the intention of Omani basic education (cycle one) teachers in the Muscat governorate to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. The **aims** of this descriptive study of Omani basic education (cycle one) teachers were:

1. To synthesize the literature related to factors associated with the child abuse and neglect reporting behavior of school personnel (schoolteachers, principals, counselors, early educators, kindergarten teachers, and daycare teachers) across cultures in integrative review.
2. To examine the predicative contribution of subjective norms about child abuse and neglect reporting, attitudes toward child abuse and neglect reporting, and the perceived behavioral control on intention to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect using a sample of 300 teachers.
3. To describe factors associated with intention to report suspected cases using five or six focus groups.

Impact

This study provided an in-depth understanding of factors associated with intention of basic education schoolteachers to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect in Oman. Such understanding provided a foundation for effective interventions aimed to improve the rates of reporting suspected cases of abuse and neglect. Improved reporting rates by schoolteachers will result in more victims of abuse receiving needed treatment on time. Providing care for all individuals sick or well in all setting, promoting health, and preventing health problems are among central roles for nurses; hence, preventing child abuse and neglect by improving schoolteachers' reporting rate is essentially part of nursing science. Knowledge about factors associated with reporting behavior will serve as a scientific foundation for more effective and individualized nursing interventions for this cultural group. This study will also guide future research on how the TPB can be used to predict the intention to report abuse in other professional settings.

Significance

Reporting child abuse and neglect is an essential step to mitigate the lifelong complications that result from abuse and neglect and save the lives of victims. Abuse and neglect can negatively affect victims' cognitive abilities, language skills, academic abilities, and their personality, which results in lifelong emotional and behavioral problems (Irigaray et al., 2013). These negative effects extend to the whole society. The cost for child abuse and neglect and related fatalities was \$124 billion in the United States (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013). Societies are also burdened with the cost associated with the lifelong consequences of child abuse and neglect like the increased use of the healthcare system, as well as increased juvenile and adult criminal activity (Fang, Brown, Florence, & Mercy, 2012). Child abuse and neglect is recognized as a global problem that affects 40 million children each year (Ark of Hope for Children, 2016). Consequently, the Sultanate of Oman has made concerted efforts in line

with recommendations from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to combat this problem. One of these efforts was, in 2014, when it enacted the Omani Child Law. This law defines child abuse as “the act of inflicting physical, psychological or sexual torture or harm on a child, either deliberately by direct act or as a result of negligence in such a way that creates circumstances and realities that hinder his or her physical, psychological or social development” (MSD, 2014, p.4). This law, specifically article number (63), mandates all school personnel report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. As children spend a lot of their time at school, teachers are in an optimal position to identify victims of abuse and neglect and report the suspected cases. The interaction between teachers and children on a daily basis enables the teachers to understand the children’s behavior and identify any subtle sign of abuse and neglect. Further, children trust their teachers; thus, they may be willing to disclose the abuse with their teachers when it happens to them (Sinanan, A.N, 2011).

A hotline for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect was established by the Omani government for the public and professionals to make anonymous reports. In 2017, 330 calls about child abuse and neglect were received. Statistics were not available for number of reports done by schoolteachers (MSD, 2017). Mandating teachers to report is not enough to ensure their reporting. School teachers in many countries sometimes still fail to report suspected cases despite the established presence of a mandatory reporting law in place. The absence of statistics about the number of the reports done by schoolteachers was a strong indicator that the Omani government still does not realize the potential role teachers might have in reporting abuse cases. This study sought to fill this gap by assessment of Omani schoolteachers' intention to report and the factors associated with it. Many studies done worldwide to describe the factors that are associated with teachers' reporting behavior, have demonstrated that subjective norms and attitudes are important factors associated with

schoolteachers' reporting behavior (Schols, De Ruiter, & Ory, 2013; Sivilis-Centinkaya, R., 2015).

None of these studies were conducted in Oman or any other Arab country. However, some studies in other Arab countries explored factors associated with the child abuse and neglect reporting behavior of dentists and nurses. The uncertainty of the abuse diagnosis, expected negative consequences, lack of knowledge about the reporting process, negative attitudes toward reporting and lack of time were the factors associated with the reporting behavior of these professional groups (Elarousy, W., & Abed, S., 2018; El Tantawi et al., 2018; Hashim, R., & Al-Dallal, S., 2018; Saifan, alrimawi, & AbuRuz, 2014). However, no study has been done in Oman to explore the factors associated with the reporting behavior of schoolteachers who are on the front line dealing with children on a daily basis. Thus, a study that is dedicated to describing the factors associated with schoolteachers' reporting behavior among this cultural group was needed. Understanding the factors associated with Omani basic education schoolteachers will move the science of child abuse and neglect reporting forward and provide a scientific basis for more effective culturally sensitive interventions. Also, the findings have the potential to transform current practice and policy. This project will provide stakeholders with a new direction for policy change.

Innovation

The novelty of this study came from the fact that it provided knowledge about the factors associated with the reporting behavior of schoolteachers in a cultural group that has not been studied. Using multi-methods augmented the chance of identifying cultural beliefs that might be associated with the reporting behavior.

Conceptual framework

This dissertation was guided by the Theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). It postulates that behaviors are driven by intention, which is a plan to perform a behavior. There are multiple assumptions for this theory. First, people are rational, and they use

available information to decide. Second, before participating in any behaviors, people like to think about the expected results of those behaviors (Ajzen, 2006; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). The assumptions of the framework for this study matched the assumptions of the theory. First, Omani schoolteachers will use all available information to decide whether to report the cases of child abuse or not. Second, Omani schoolteachers will think of all the expected consequences of reporting child abuse. The intention is a result of three factors: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2006; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008). The concepts of this theory are culturally informed; therefore, it was sought to be appropriate model to guide this dissertation as it will help reveal the cultural factors associated with reporting behavior.

So, predictors are attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The outcome is the intention to report. The intention to do any given behavior is defined as "An indication of an individual's readiness to perform the behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 39). Attitudes are defined as "a latent disposition or tendency to respond with some degree of favorableness or unfavorableness to a psychological object." (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 76). Perceived behavioral control is defined as "People's perceptions of the degree to which they are capable of, or have control over, performing a given behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 154). Subjective norms concept is defined as "An individual's person's perception that important others prescribe, desire or expect the performance or nonperformance of a specific behavior" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 131). The framework hypothesizes that there are positive linear relationships between the predictors and the intention to report. This theory was used in the quantitative and qualitative parts. Figure one illustrates the model used for this dissertation.

Dissertation Format

This dissertation follows manuscripts option. It consists of introduction, three manuscripts and a synthesized discussion. The first manuscript is an integrative review with the title of “School Personnel and Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Behavior: An Integrative Review”. This review established the current state of science about schoolteachers reporting behavior. The second manuscript is a report of the qualitative aim findings of my research. The third manuscript is a report of quantitative aim findings of my research. Finally, in the discussion, I synthesized how the three manuscripts are related to my research and the implication of this dissertation findings.

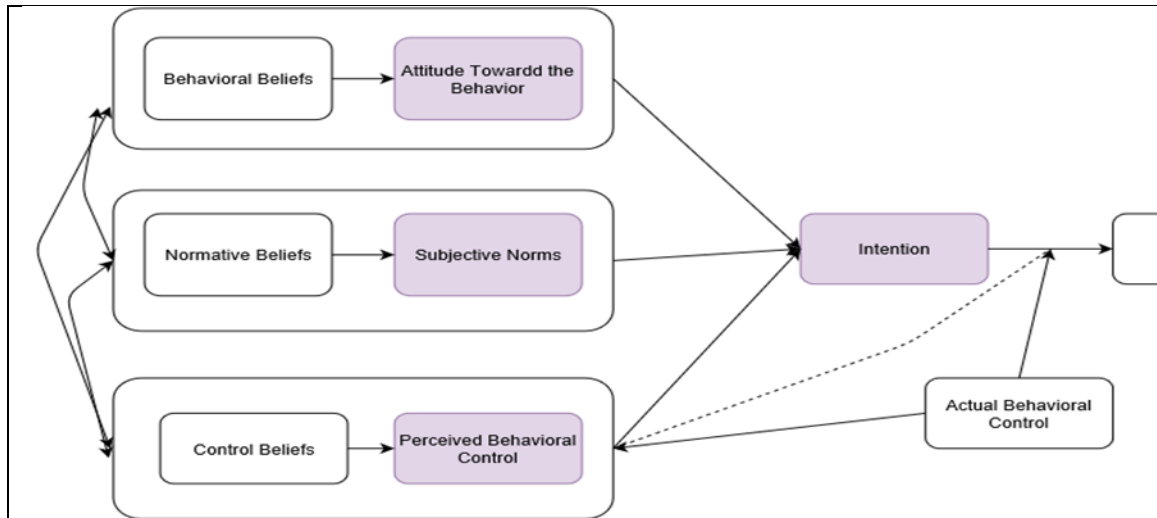


Figure 1 Theory of Planned Behavior Model.

This study selected predictors and the outcomes are highlighted. Retrieved from

Ajzen, I. (2006). Theory of Planned Behavior. Retrieved from

<http://people.umass.edu/aizen/tpb.html>

Chapter 2: Manuscript#1: School Personnel and Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Behavior: An Integrative Review

Alazri, Z., & Hanna, K. M. (2020). School personnel and child abuse and neglect reporting behavior: An integrative review. *Children and Youth Services Review, 112*, 104892

Abstract

Purpose: Although school personnel are in a good position to identify cases of abuse and neglect, they may fail to report these cases. This failure may leave victims to suffer the negative effects of abuse and neglect and deprives them of possible help. Because the evidence for factors associated with this behavior is insufficient, an integrative review was conducted to synthesize the literature related to factors associated with the reporting by school personnel of child abuse (schoolteachers, principals, counselors, early educators, kindergarten teachers, and daycare teachers).

Design and Methods: A systematic search was conducted using the PsychINFO, Embase, ERIC, and PubMed electronic databases that was limited to the past ten years and journal articles in the English language. The search terms were “school personnel,” “child abuse,” “neglect,” and “reporting.” Studies were included if their focus was on factors associated with child abuse and neglect reporting by school personnel in private schools, public schools, or daycares. Studies were excluded if their focus was not on child abuse and neglect reporting; if they were non-research articles, theses/dissertations, or interventional studies; or if the focus was on special education.

Results: Sixteen articles based on 14 studies were reviewed: nine quantitative studies, three qualitative studies, and two mixed methods. All the studies had used different instruments, and only three had a theoretical framework that was different from each other. Three categories of factors associated with the reporting behavior were identified as system, victim, and reporter characteristics. These studies provide a description of these factors; however, the evidence of the degree of association between these factors and the reporting behavior was still at the beginning stage. No common theories or instruments guide the science of child abuse and neglect reporting behavior.

Practice Implications: Further research should investigate the association between school personnel's reporting behavior and influential factors to facilitate effective interventions. Once evidence exists, school nurses, for example, in collaboration with other professionals, can target school personnel with interventions to increase reporting behavior.

Keywords: child abuse/neglect; reporting behavior; school personnel, integrative review

Introduction

Failure of school personnel to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect may deprive victims of early intervention, potentially leaving them to suffer the tremendous negative effects of abuse and neglect for the rest of their lives. Child abuse and neglect may result in lifelong complications for victims and may negatively affect cognitive abilities, language skills, academic abilities, and personality, resulting in lifelong emotional and behavioral problems (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2013; Irigaray et al., 2013). These tremendously negative effects affect victims and society. For example, based on substantiated incident cases in 2015, the estimation of child maltreatment economic burden based on lifetime costs incurred annually for the United States' population was US\$428 billion (Peterson, Florence, & Kleven, 2018). A similar estimation in the United Kingdom shows that the average lifetime cost of non-fatal child maltreatment by primary caregivers is £89,390 (Conti, Morris, Melnychuk & Pizzo, 2017). On an annual basis, the cost of child maltreatment is more than the cost of two leading health conditions: stroke and type 2 diabetes (Fang et al., 2012). In addition, society is burdened with the cost associated with the lifelong consequences of child maltreatment, such as the increased use of the health care system, juvenile and adult criminal activity, mental illness, substance abuse, and domestic violence (Fang et al., 2012).

Fortunately, many interventions have been proven effective in mitigating the effects induced by abuse and neglect. However, the cases of child abuse and neglect must be identified and reported as early as possible to maximize benefits from the interventions. Because children spend a large amount of their time at schools, school personnel are in a good position to identify and report cases of child abuse and neglect. The large amount of time children spend at school provides the school personnel an opportunity to identify any subtle changes in their behavior. Further, school personnel and children commonly have a relationship that includes trust, making

children more willing to disclose the occurrence of abuse to them (Osofsky & Lieberman, 2011; Sinanan, 2011).

Educators are fairly accurate in reporting abuse, and reports made by educators are two times more likely to be substantiated than those made by social and mental health personnel (Smith, 2010). In addition, the statistics show that school personnel do report child abuse and neglect. In Brussels, 38% of all child abuse and neglect reports were made by school personnel (Vanderfaellie, De Ruyck, Galle, Van Dooren, & Schotte, 2018). In the United States, 16% of the reports were made by school personnel, including social workers (Krase, 2015). However, many studies have demonstrated that although teachers and counselors reported suspected abuse and neglect, they did not report all suspected cases. A study in Taiwan shows that 11% of school personnel who participated in the study did not report suspected cases (Feng, Chen, Fetzer, Feng, & Lin, 2012; Feng, Huang & Wang, 2010). Another study in the United States found that when there were mandatory reporting laws, 77% of the suspected cases of child abuse and neglect in the last 12 months were reported by school personnel (Bryant, 2009). In addition, a study by Dinehart and Kenny (2015) in Florida found that 4.4% of the participants did not report suspected cases of abuse when there were mandatory reporting laws.

Although many programs are available to enhance school personnel reporting behavior, the main focus has been education on aspects of child abuse and neglect (Gushwa, Bernier, & Robinson, 2018; Rheingold et al., 2015). Based on the classic work of Albert Bandura, learning about a health behavior does not guarantee behavioral change (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 2005). In other words, multiple factors interact to shape individuals' behavior. Thus, a strategy to improve the level of knowledge of school personnel might insufficient to enhance reporting behavior. Exploring and synthesizing the available evidence of other factors associated with the reporting behavior of school personnel is essential. Such evidence will facilitate more effective

interventions that target different factors to enhance the ability of school personnel to report suspected cases. Effective intervention also empowers school personnel to increase the accuracy of reports, which is necessary to avoid the damaging effects of inaccurate reporting to children and their families and reduce the burden of the social welfare system. Other professionals, such as nurses, psychiatrists, and social workers, can also benefit from this review. These professionals care about child health, are willing to actively prevent child abuse and neglect or minimize the negative consequences that result from such abuse, have in-depth knowledge of and experience with child abuse and neglect, and are willing to help school personnel improve their reporting behavior.

To expand the understanding of school personnel's reporting behavior beyond the literature, this review synthesizes the evidence published in peer-reviewed journals within the past ten years that addressed factors associated with reporting child abuse by school personnel (schoolteachers, principals, counselors, early educators, kindergarten teachers, and daycare teachers). The specific question was what are the factors associated with school personnel reporting behavior of child abuse and neglect cases? The evidence synthesized in this review contributes to a systematic review in the literature that explored the attitudes of schoolteachers toward reporting sexual abuse cases (Walsh, Rassafiani, Mathews, Farrell, & Butler, 2010). The current review differed because it was more general in that it included all the factors associated with reporting behavior regardless of the type of abuse or neglect and was not limited to sexual abuse or the attitudes of reporting behavior. The general aim of this review was to gain a comprehensive understanding of all possible factors associated with school personnel reporting behavior of child abuse and neglect. This aim is critical because school personnel interface with all types of abuse.

Methods

Search Strategy

The Whittemore and Knafl (2005) method, a method to integrate quantitative and qualitative findings, was used to guide this integrative review. A systematic search was conducted in four major databases: PsychINFO, Embase, ERIC, and PubMed. The search was limited to 10 years: January 2009 to June 2018. As cultures are dynamic and reporting laws change, the ten-year period yields contemporary insights into the factors associated with reporting behavior. The search was limited to journal articles published in the English language. A manual search for more articles was conducted, but no relevant studies were identified.

Search terms were adapted to optimize results from each database and included variations for each database. The search terms have three main components: school personnel (teachers, school principal, school counselors, guidance counselor, early educator, kindergarten teachers), child abuse (child neglect, child maltreatment), and reporting (disclosure, intention to report). The search strategies were adjusted for each database. For example, the search terms used in Psych INFO database were (DE "Teachers" OR teacher* OR "school personnel") OR (DE "School Counselors" OR "school counselor*" OR "guidance counselor*") AND (DE "Child Abuse Reporting" OR "child abuse report*" OR "intention to report" OR "disclos*" OR report*) AND (DE "Child Abuse" OR "child abuse" OR "child maltreatment" OR "child neglect").

Eligibility Criteria

A priori eligibility criteria guided the selection of studies. First, the main focus of the study needed to be factors associated with child abuse and neglect reporting. Studies that have focused on aspects of child abuse and neglect other than reporting were excluded. For the purpose of this review, child abuse is defined as any act that leads to actual or potential harm to health, survival, development, or dignity of the child. These acts can be physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other

exploitation in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power (World Health Organization [WHO], 2006). Physical abuse is defined as any intentional use of physical force against a child that results in, or might result in, harm for the child's health, survival, development, or dignity (WHO, 2006). Neglect is the failure of a parent or caregiver to provide the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, clothing, supervision, and medical care for the child, and results in serious harm or presents an imminent risk of doing so (Mathews, 2014). Emotional abuse is any persistent behavior by a parent or caregiver that could lead to emotional harm for the child or their failure to provide adequate emotional nurturing for the child which results in serious emotional harm or presents an imminent risk of doing so (Mathews, 2014; WHO, 2006). Sexual abuse is defined as any sexual act that a child does not fully comprehend or is not able to provide informed consent for that is performed to sexually gratify the abuser. The abuse can be perpetrated by an adult or older child who uses their position of responsibility, trust, or power over the victim (Mathews & Collin-Vézina, 2019; WHO, 2006). Studies have focused on different forms of violence, and types of violence such as family violence, war, and bullying were excluded.

Second, the reporting needed to be performed by school personnel, including schoolteachers, principals, counselors, early educators, kindergarten teachers, and daycare teachers. Although we posit that other professionals such as social workers, psychologists, and school nurses are critical, we excluded them. Our interest was in educators who have face-to-face interactions with all students because these educators are often the first individuals to see symptoms of child abuse. In addition, we excluded student teachers because of their learner role. Studies that had participants from different professions, and that combined reports collectively from different professionals, were excluded. Third, articles needed to be data-based: Research with qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method designs was included, and non-

research articles were excluded. Interventional studies were excluded because this review focuses on understanding factors associated with reporting rather than evaluations of the effectiveness of interventional programs. Finally, the studies had to be conducted in private schools, public schools, and daycares. Studies on special education were excluded because some factors are more relevant to special education and might not be applicable to all children in general education.

Study Selection

Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines were used for this integrative review (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009) and are delineated in Figure 1. A total of 350 articles were obtained from the initial search conducted with the four databases. After the removal of duplicates, 275 articles remained. After the initial screening using titles and abstracts, we excluded 233 articles. Forty-two articles remained after the initial screening. These articles were reviewed for full-text eligibility and 26 articles were excluded. Sixteen articles representing 14 studies were included in the review.

Evidence Tables

Information for each study was extracted in detail and entered into an evidence table. The evidence table was completed independently by the first author and reviewed by the second author. Next, the evidence table was reduced to include study aim, country, design, data collection, conceptual framework, sample size, and major findings (Table 1). The identification of patterns in the findings helped with theme development. Next, all eligible articles were read, and all potential factors associated with reporting were highlighted. The analysis process was conducted by the first author and reviewed by the second author. Any discrepancy was solved by discussion.

Results

Characteristics of the Articles

Sixteen articles based on 14 studies were reviewed: nine quantitative studies, three qualitative studies, and two mixed methods studies. Two articles were based on one mixed-method study, and two others were based on one quantitative study. Of the total quantitative and mixed methods articles, there were eight correlational studies, one descriptive study, and two exploratory factor analysis. All studies used different instruments, and only three had theoretical frameworks that differed from each other (Feng, Huang, & Wang, 2010; Schols, de Ruiter, & Ory, 2013; Toros & Tiirik, 2016).

The sample sizes for qualitative studies ranged between 16 and 193 participants, and that for quantitative studies ranged from 100 to 1,877 participants. The qualitative study with 193 participants used a questionnaire with open questions (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010). The age of participants in both the quantitative and qualitative studies ranged from 19 to 68 years. Participants in the samples were predominately female and ranged from 61% to 100%. The working experience of school personnel ranged from zero months to 60 years. The study with participants without school experience used the American School Counselor Association for recruitment; thus, perhaps some the members never worked as counselors or had not started their professions (Sikes et al., 2010).

Factors Associated with Reporting

Factors associated with child abuse reporting behavior of school personnel were classified into three categories: system characteristics, victim characteristics, and reporter characteristics (Figure 2 and Table 2). System characteristics included the educational level of the school, school setting, and availability of mandatory reporting law. Victim characteristics included victims' race, victims' socioeconomic status, and severity of the abuse the victims' experienced. Reporter characteristics included knowledge about child abuse/neglect and

reporting processes, working experience and educational training, past experiences dealing with child abuse/neglect cases, self-confidence about reporting ability, significant relationships with others, attitudes toward reporting, and miscellaneous characteristics of fear and uncertainty.

System Characteristics

System characteristics were the contextual factors, such as communities and governmental and educational institutions associated with the child abuse and neglect reporting behavior of school personnel. Nine of the reviewed articles discussed how system characteristics affect child abuse and the neglect behavior of school personnel (Bibou-Nakou & Markos, 2017; Bryant, 2009; Bryant & Baldwin, 2010; Feng et al., 2009; Hurtado et al., 2013; Sivilis-Cetinkaya, 2015; Sikes et al., 2010; Toros & Tiirik, 2016; Walsh et al., 2013). Three system characteristics were discussed: school educational level, school setting, and availability of a mandatory reporting law.

School educational level. The educational level of the school was a critical system factor associated with the reporting behavior of school personnel. In one study, school personnel made significantly more reports in elementary schools and middle/junior high schools than school personnel in high schools (Bryant, 2009). A potential reason for the difference in reporting for school levels was noted in the same study: The participants expressed their concern that convincing child protection services to investigate adolescent cases would be difficult (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010). Although less reporting was demonstrated in schools with lower educational levels, school personnel from elementary schools compared with their counterparts in other types of schools had more negative interpersonal and intrapersonal reporting experiences (e.g., criticism, fear, worry, blame, guilt, uncertainty) than those in high schools. However, no significant difference was observed between other school levels in these negative reporting experiences (Sikes et al., 2010). Notably, all the studies used school

education level as a factor of reporting and did not examine the age of children or social expectation of that age group. However, education level reflects the age of children; thus, this characteristic could be included as a victim characteristic. Although culture was not examined specifically within school educational level, it likely influenced factors, especially protective services, social expectations, and perceptions of negative and positive reporting experiences within the greater system's culture.

School setting. Reporting behavior of school personnel differed based on the setting (geographical location and socioeconomic status) of the school. School personnel from urban areas made more reports of physical abuse than their counterparts in the suburban areas in the United States (Bryant, 2009). Feng et al. (2012) found that after controlling for knowledge about child abuse, school geographical area explained 18%–21% of the variance in intention to report of school personnel in Taiwan. Rural teachers in EL Salvador had more concerns for their safety if they made reports of suspected abuse because gang activities are more prevalent in rural areas and identification of the reporter is easier because individuals in some rural areas know each other (Hurtado et al., 2013). Although socioeconomic status could be considered as an underlying difference between rural and urban areas, this was not supported. Sikes et al., (2010) reported that, in the United States, after controlling for the socioeconomic status of the school as measured by the percent of students receiving free lunch, no significant association between school setting and negative interpersonal and intrapersonal reporting experiences was found. Again, cultural influences likely influenced the findings in the rural and urban areas in the countries in which the studies were conducted.

Availability of mandatory reporting laws. Availability of mandatory reporting laws in a country was also associated with the reporting behavior of school personnel. School personnel identified the obligation to report as a critical motive for reporting suspected cases (Bryant,

2009; Feng et al., 2009; Sivilis-Cetinkaya, 2015). In addition, at schools in states that must comply with mandatory reporting legislation, their school personnel have more knowledge of legislative and policy reporting duties (Walsh et al., 2013). Although school personnel identified the obligation to report as a motive to report, some still doubted the effectiveness of mandatory reporting. Their uncertainty was due to their perceptions of ineffective and insufficient investigations following the reporting (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010). They also questioned the amount and quality of help the child would receive after reporting (Feng et al., 2009). Some of them stated that they were not allowed by their directors to report suspected cases of child abuse to authorities even with the presence of mandatory law (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010; Toros & Tiirik, 2016). Personal opinions on being a mandatory reporter and reporting behavior were also investigated, although no association was identified (Bibou-Nakou & Markos, 2017). We acknowledge that mandatory reporting criteria and implementation would vary and be influenced by the culture of various countries.

Victims' Characteristics

Victim characteristics were individual factors related to individuals who experienced abuse. These characteristics were examined by two articles and were identified as race, socioeconomic status, severity of the abuse experienced, and victims' family type (Bryant, 2009; Tillman et al., 2016).

Victims' race and socioeconomic status. Victims' race and socioeconomic status were not significantly associated with reporting behavior of school personnel in one study (Tillman, 2016). However, Bryant (2009) showed a significant relationship between socioeconomic status and the number of child abuse cases reported by school personnel in the last 12 months. This inconsistency might be due to different measurements: Tillman's study used vignettes to assess intention to report, and Bryant's study measured actual reporting within the last 12 months.

Abuse severity and family type. Another victim characteristic identified as significantly associated with reporting behavior of school personnel was the severity of the abuse experienced (Tillman, 2016). Nevertheless, in the same study, the post hoc independent t test was not significant for vignettes where the severity was categorized as no evidence, bruising, or broken arm. Family victim type (e.g., cooperative or defensive) was also examined for its association with reporting behavior. The willingness of school personnel to report suspected cases of defensive families did not differ significantly from cases of cooperative families (Tillman et al., 2016).

Reporters' Characteristics

Characteristics of school personnel as the reporters of abuse or neglect were examined by all articles except one article (Tillman et al., 2016). These characteristics included knowledge about child abuse/neglect and reporting process, working experience and educational training, past experiences with child abuse/neglect cases, self-confidence in reporting ability, significant relationships with others, attitudes toward reporting, and miscellaneous characteristics of fear and uncertainty.

Knowledge. Knowledge about child abuse/neglect and reporting process was associated with the school personnel's reporting behavior. School personnel avoided reporting the suspected cases when they had insufficient knowledge about child abuse/neglect or reporting responsibilities and processes (Dinehart & Kenny, 2015; Feng et al., 2012; Hurtado et al., 2013; Schols et al., 2013; Toros & Tiirik, 2016). Knowledge and reporting behavior were positively associated in most of the vignettes used to assess the intention to report in the hypothetical (Dinehart & Kenny, 2015). Insufficient knowledge of specific types of abuse, asserted emotional abuse and neglect, made the reporting of suspected cases more difficult for school personnel (Bryant, 2009; Bryant, & Baldwin, 2010; Schols et al., 2013; Toros & Tiirik, 2016). However,

Bibou-Nakou and Markos (2017) found a negative correlation between awareness of reporting responsibilities and reporting to authorities. This inconsistency might be due to the use of different definitions for similar concepts and different measurements.

Further, a study by Feng et al. (2010) found that participants correctly answered only 56% of items related to knowledge about child abuse/neglect and reporting law. Training, teaching position, and child sexual abuse reporting history were significant predictors for the level of knowledge of legislative and policy reporting duties. However, teaching experience was not significant in predicting the level of knowledge about legislative and policy reporting duty (Walsh et al., 2012). Further, personal opinions on being required to report child abuse cases were significantly associated with awareness of reporting responsibility (Bibou-Nakou & Markos, 2017).

Working experience and educational training. Several studies investigated the correlations between school personnel's characteristics, such as years of working experience and educational training, and their reporting experience. Although years of working experience negatively correlated with the negative experience of reporting by school personnel, the association was not significant (Sikes et al., 2010). Having had in-service training on child abuse/neglect and reporting processes improved school personnel's knowledge about child abuse/neglect and reporting processes and increased their intention to report (Bryant, & Baldwin, 2010; Feng et al., 2012). However, contrary to expectation, postmaster's degree training had a positive significant association with the negative experience of reporting (Sikes et al., 2010).

Past experience. Past experience with child abuse/neglect cases was also associated with reporting behavior of school personnel; however, the findings were conflicting. Bryant and Baldwin (2010) found that past experience affects school personnel's reporting behavior.

Positive experiences made school personnel more willing to report than a negative experience. However, Bibou-Nakou and Markos (2017) found no significant association between reporting behavior and past experience. Further, past experience was not associated with awareness of reporting responsibilities, discounting the importance of the problem, nor the solvability of the problem. Unexpectedly, the same study found that past experience had a positive association with discounting both the existence of the problem and personal responsibility (Bibou-Nakou & Markos, 2017).

Self-confidence. Perceptions of self-confidence and personal control of reporting ability were other major factors associated with school personnel's reporting behavior. Three articles examined self-confidence or self-efficacy of school personnel in association with child abuse/neglect reporting behavior. Schols et al. (2013) found that lack of self-efficacy was one of the major themes that emerged during the discussion on child abuse/neglect reporting by school personnel. Specifically, school personnel felt less confident talking to highly educated parents about their suspicion of child abuse/neglect, interpreting some signs of emotional abuse, and talking to children if they suspected child abuse. This finding was in line with the finding of Feng et al. (2010) that perceived behavioral control is significantly associated with the intention to report by school personnel.

Significant relationships with others. School personnel's reluctance to report child abuse/neglect was associated with significant relationships to school personnel in terms of perceived social support, perceived help from others, and subjective norms, which are an individual's perceptions of what important individuals in a person's life think about the behavior. Three articles examined social support in terms of perceived availability of social support from important individuals either at work, such as principals or colleagues, or in personal life, such as spouses and families, which were important facilitators for reporting

suspected cases. In contrast, the lack of support from important individuals served as an inhibitor for reporting (Bryant, & Baldwin, 2010; Schols et al., 2013; Sivilis-Cetinkaya, 2015). Feng et al. (2010) assessed the correlation between subjective norms and intention to report of school personnel and found that subjective norms were not a significant predictor of intention to report. Although Feng's finding was not necessarily in conflict with findings from other studies, the inconsistencies might be due to the use of the different concepts of social support and subjective norms.

Attitudes toward reporting. The association between attitudes toward reporting of child abuse/neglect and reporting behavior was explored by ten articles. For this review, attitude was defined as a positive or negative evaluation of behavior based on expected outcomes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2011). A variety of expected outcomes was associated with attitudes of school personnel toward reporting behavior. Some of these expected outcomes were related to the victims, reporters, the process of investigations, and perpetrators of abuse/neglect. School personnel were reluctant to report when the potential negative consequences were the removal of the victims from their home, and reporting was dependent on the amount and quality of help the victims received after reporting (Bryant, & Baldwin, 2010; Hurtado et al., 2013; Schols et al., 2013). Expected outcomes related to reporters included negative conflicts between reporters and families. Reporters may perceive this conflict as jeopardizing their personal safety. School personnel expressed their fear that parents may react negatively and retaliate, especially in countries with no anonymous reporting system (Bryant, & Baldwin, 2010; Feng et al., 2009; Hurtado et al., 2013; Sivilis-Cetinkaya, 2015; Toros & Tiirik, 2016). The conflict might be worse in some cases, such as with incest (Sivilis-Cetinkaya, 2015). The poor expectation of the efficiency of protective services may also affect the school personnel's willingness to report suspected cases of abuse/neglect. They expressed concerns

that they perceived, even if they reported, that there would be no efficient investigation by protective services and that the relationship between school personnel and protective services personnel was not always healthy (Bryant, & Baldwin, 2010; Schols et al., 2013). In addition, some school personnel believed that after reporting, perpetrators would not be punished (Hurtado et al., 2013). Attitudes toward perpetrators were significantly associated with the intention to report (Feng et al., 2010).

Although some school personnel considered reporting suspected cases a part of their professional responsibility, others did not. Attitudes toward reporting as part of professional responsibility were explored by some studies. Toros and Tiirik (2016) found that some school personnel did not consider reporting a part of their professional responsibility. Feng et al. (2010) found that the attitude toward professional responsibility and intention to report was significantly associated.

Some researchers attempted to develop a valid scale to measure school personnel's attitudes toward child abuse reporting. A group of researchers in Australia developed a scale to measure the attitudes of schoolteachers toward child sexual abuse reporting called the "Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for Child Sexual Abuse." Factor analysis for this scale revealed that three factors (commitment to the professional reporting role, confidence in the system's effective responses to reports, and concerns about the consequences of reporting) explained 37.5% of the total variance in teachers' attitudes toward reporting (Walsh et al., 2012). Another exploratory and confirmatory analysis for this scale was conducted in a Malaysian sample to assess the applicability of the scale to a different cultural group. This confirmatory factor analysis did not support the previous structure for the scale, and exploratory factor analysis demonstrated a four-factor structure. In addition to the previous three factors, a factor called "value" was added. This factor relates to the acceptance of teachers of the underlying social

value of reporting. The four-factor model explained 42.1% of the variance. Further confirmatory factor analysis supported the new model (Choo et al., 2013). The same study found that attitude did not differ based on gender or child abuse and neglect training; however, it significantly differed for various ethnic groups, specifically in value and confidence subscales. Additionally, teachers with fewer than ten years of experience had significantly higher scores on both the value and concerns subscales. Notably, teachers with only secondary school certification had lower levels of concern than others with higher education levels (Choo et al., 2013). The speculation regarding this finding is that school personnel with only secondary school certificates have less knowledge about child abuse and its negative consequences; thus, their recognition of the problem's significance is less developed.

Other studies evaluated other attitudes of school personnel in association with reporting behavior. For example, attitudes toward child discipline were also investigated by Feng et al. (2010), who found it to be significantly associated with the intention to report. Further, Bibou-Nakou and Markos (2017) used the discounting concept to indicate the attitudinal resistance or denial of the problem. Their method entailed four sub-concepts: the existence of the problem, the significance of the problem, the solvability of the problem, and personal responsibility. The finding of this study indicated significant negative relationships between awareness of reporting responsibility and discounting of personal responsibility, and discounting of solvability.

Fear and uncertainty. Some other reporter characteristics, such as uncertainty and fears, were also studied. Uncertainty about the severity of the child abuse and neglect problem made school personnel reluctant to report (Toros & Tiirik, 2016). Fear was another reason for not reporting. Fear included the fear of misinterpreting cultural discipline styles or of making a mistake (Dinehart & Kenny, 2015; Toros & Tiirik, 2016). Additionally, the fear of school

personnel of contacting the authorities was a reason not to report. This fear was expressed more by schoolteachers because they preferred reporting to the school administration instead of directly to authorities (Toros & Tiirik, 2016).

Discussion

Our aim for this review was to synthesize the literature published in peer-reviewed journals within the past ten years that addresses factors associated with the child abuse reporting behavior of school personnel. According to our review of the literature, this review is the first to describe the beginning body of evidence of the factors associated with reporting behavior of school personnel. The reviewed articles provide scientific evidence of the factors associated with the reporting behavior of child abuse with good breadth but an insufficient depth. Although the evidence provides a good description of the factors associated with reporting behavior, the degree of association between these factors and the reporting behavior was at the beginning stage. Only eight of the reviewed studies were correlational, and only a few of these correlational studies measured how multiple factors were associated with the reporting behavior. Thus, very limited evidence was provided of the degree of association between the factors and reporting behavior, and minimal evidence was provided to support the factors associated with school personnel's reporting behavior. Thus, further research in this field is necessary.

Because reporting of child abuse/neglect is a complex behavior associated with multiple factors, assessment of the interactions among the factors is essential. Based on this review, three categories of factors were identified: system characteristics, victim characteristics, and reporter characteristics. Most of the reviewed studies focused on one category only, and sometimes only one factor in the category. Such assessment is problematic because it ignores the role of interaction between different factors from one category or even from different

categories. Using a predictive correlational design to assess the interaction between the factors would provide a better sense of the most powerful factors that predict the behavior and help establish the strength and direction of the relationships among the factors and the behavior (Gray, Grove, & Burns, 2013). Moving the evidence from a linear association between one, or a few, factors and reporting behavior toward predictive models, which are more informative, would improve the understanding of the complexity of factors involved in reporting behavior.

Although not specifically studied, we could speculate that culture plays a role in reporting behavior. A major area where culture is likely influential is rural versus urban settings. Reporting behavior in rural versus urban settings differed in that school personnel in different geographical areas exhibited different reporting behavior (Brayant, 2009; Feng, 2012; Hurtado et al., 2013). This finding is consistent with the finding of a study conducted by Francis et al. (2012), which demonstrated that rurally located mandated professionals from different fields preferred to report to their superior, instead of directly to the authorities, to seek support and protection. With this review, it was difficult to discern the difference in reporting behavior between rural and urban areas because the characteristics of urban and rural areas differ in different countries. For example, gang activities could be more prevalent in rural or urban areas on the basis of country. The role of school location and its culture, especially for different countries requires further investigation.

The absence of common theories and instruments in child abuse/neglect reporting science makes the synthesis process of the evidence a challenging task. All the studies used different instruments. Further, only three studies used a theoretical framework, and they were different from each other. Unfortunately, although reporting behavior is the central concept in this area of research, no specific definition or measurement of this concept is available. Some studies used the intention to report by using vignettes to measure it, and others used actual

reporting in the last 12 months. The absence of commonalities in the concept definitions and measurements in this research area is why the science remains unclear.

Using the theory of planned behavior in this area of research could bring together fragmented evidence to understand reporting behavior and within a theory that incorporates culture. This theory helps predict the likeliness of a person engaging in a certain behavior at a specific time and place. It postulates that behaviors are driven by intention. Intention is a result of three determinants: an individual's attitude, normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2006; Fishbein & Ajzen 2011). Culture plays a critical role in shaping attitudes and perceptions; therefore, culture must be well understood to understand the role it plays in shaping attitudes and perceptions and to understand its impact on the behavior of reporting. Notably, this theory, although it indirectly examines the role of culture, focuses on the reporter's characteristics and does not include other factors identified in this review; thus, it should be used if the primary goal is to understand the role of the reporter and the influence of culture. Because not all school personnel encounter cases of abuse or neglect, measuring intention to report might be more appropriate than actual behavior. However, if the intent of the researcher is to measure the actual behaviors, the Integrated Behavior Model is a good option. This model considers intention to report as a determinant of the actual behavior, in addition to other determinants such as knowledge and skills to perform the behavior.

Our review identified factors beyond knowledge as important. Future interventional research should investigate them as well as knowledge. Training programs should target all pillars that affect behavior and should not be confined only to knowledge. Stewards, a training program for schoolteachers, targets knowledge and attitudes and significantly improved schoolteachers' preventive behaviors, including reporting suspected cases (Mathews et al., 2017; Rheingold et al., 2015). This review established evidence of other factors that affect

reporting, and these factors may have a substantial impact if used to improve the effectiveness of training programs. Addressing self-confidence in reporting ability, significant relationships with others, attitudes toward reporting, fear, and uncertainty in training programs might improve the effectiveness of the training program.

Further, training programs are not the only means to improve the reporting behavior of school personnel; thus, efforts that target reporting system changes might be necessary. Because reporting behavior is associated with the reporter, victim, and system characteristics, further intervention research should target all three dimensions instead of only one. Such interventions should include reporting-policy changes or improvements in reporting systems.

Because this review includes studies from different cultures, it is a useful guide for subsequent studies conducted in a cultural group and provides researchers with the possible factors that affect reporting behavior. Then, they can consider them while designing their studies. Factors identified in this review support the role of transculturality in shaping reporting behavior. For instance, availability of a mandatory reporting law is a critical factor that affects reporting behavior, and it is a good example of transculturality. Our argument is as follows: due to transculturality, the general factors that affect reporting behavior are similar across cultures, and each culture shapes each factor differently.

Individualized interventional plans for each school or at least for schools located in the same area and following the same system are necessary. School personnel from different school districts or locations, even from the same country, demonstrate different reporting behavior, as shown by Feng et al. (2012). The individualized plan should address the factors from different levels. They should target school personnel's specific needs so they will be more capable of judging each situation, more willing to report it if necessary, and more accurate if they report. However, unless there is a valid tool that helps assess the needs of schools, designing an

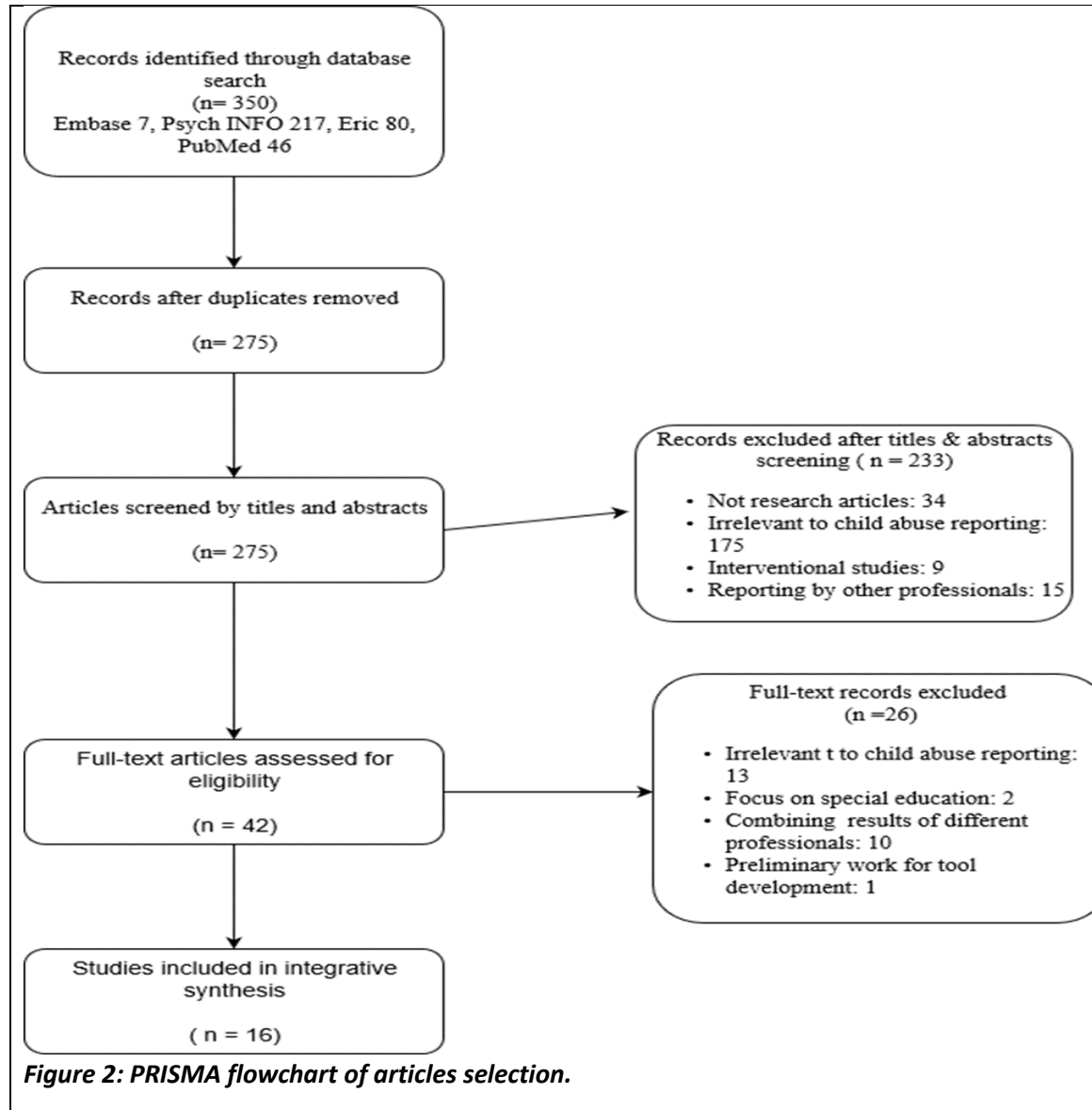
individualized plan is impossible. Availability of a common theory would help unify the definitions of the concepts central in this field, establish robust evidence of reporting behavior and associated factors, and facilitate the creation of a valid tool. Multiple school professionals such as school nurses, social workers, and school psychologists should be involved in the process of needs assessment and intervention planning. These professionals are well prepared in the child health and child abuse and neglect fields. Their expertise can be used to improve the quality of training programs.

Each individualized intervention plan could be grounded on a specific type of abuse; to do so, the evidence of the effects of abuse type on reporting behavior should be established. Although some of the reviewed articles demonstrated that school personnel have insufficient knowledge about certain types of abuse or neglect, none of the articles assessed the effect of type of abuse in reporting behavior. Type of abuse affects nurses' reporting behavior because they are willing to report sexual and physical abuse more than emotional abuse (Fraser, Mathews, Walsh, Chen & Dunne, 2010). Because types of abuse have different causes, symptoms, and effects, school personnel might be more willing to report some types more than others (Mathews, 2014). Examining the effects of type of abuse would provide insights for individualized interventional plan designing.

Although this review provides insights into the factors associated with school personnel's reporting behavior, a few limitations must be explained. First, the authors' experience and background might have influenced the process of synthesizing the evidence. Second, valuable articles in the investigated timeframe could have been overlooked, which could have influenced the conclusion of the review. However, a systematic search of four search engines was conducted, and a hand search was also included. Third, this review was limited to only ten years; thus, the articles older than ten years could have also influenced the results.

However, the evidence from the reviewed articles indicates that not a lot of evidence had been established more than ten years ago. Fourth, at the time of this study, no international mandatory reporting had been established. Thus, the scope of each law should be assessed to assess their influence on reporting behavior. We did not perform such an assessment in this review because insufficient details of the scope of the law were not provided by the primary articles.

Further research is advocated to investigate how multiple factors are associated with intention and actual reporting behavior. Such evidence would facilitate more effective interventions. Evidence of the strength of the influencing factors and their interaction may also be used to build a theory that is very specific and relevant to reporting behavior. In addition, the development of an instrument with high psychometric indicators is necessary to measure reporting behavior more precisely.



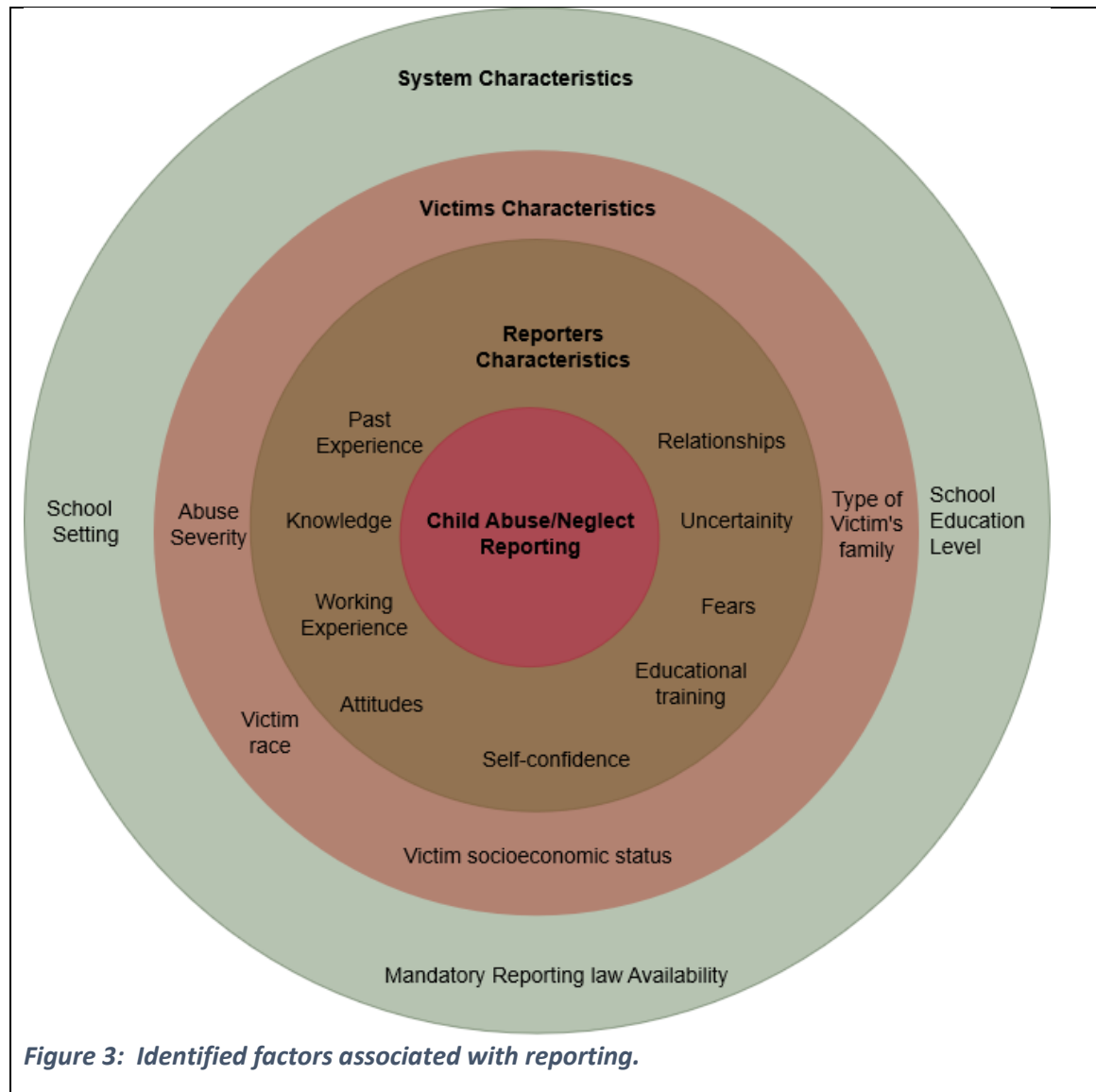


Table 1: Evidence Table for the Reviewed Studies

Study	Country	Theory	Design Data Collection	Sample size/ Type of school personnel	Major Findings
Bibou-Nakou & Markos (2017)	Greece	None	Quantitative Correlational Hawkins and McCallum Questionnaire	N = 306 School teachers	<p>Reporters' Characteristics</p> <p><u>Knowledge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ negative association between level of discounting and level of awareness of reporting responsibility ($r = -.19$ for solvability and $r = -.13$ for personal responsibility) ➤ negative correlation between awareness of reporting responsibilities and appropriate response ($r = -.21$, $p < .01$). <p><u>Past Experiences</u></p> <p>-No association between personal experience and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ reporting behavior ➤ discounting (solvability) ➤ awareness of responsibilities. <p>-Significant association between personal experience and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ discounting (existence of the problem ($p = .001$)) ➤ discounting (personal responsibility ($p = .001$)).

					-Personal opinion significantly associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ awareness of reporting responsibilities
Bryant (2009)	United States	None	Mixed Method Quantitative Correlational Bryan& Milsom (2005) Questionnaire	N = 193 School counselors	Reporters' Characteristics, System Characteristics & Victims Characteristics <u>School Educational Level</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Elementary and middle/junior high schools significantly made more reports than high school ($p = .000$) <u>School Setting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Schools in urban area have significantly more physical abuse reports than those in suburban area ➤ Significant negative relationship between socioeconomic status and reporting behavior ($r = .357$, $p = .000$) <u>Mandatory Reporting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following law is a reason to report. <u>Attitudes</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Concerns about child safety after reporting and perceived ineffective investigations are reasons for not to report.
Bryant & Baldwin (2010)	United States	None	Mixed Method Qualitative	N = 106 School counselors	Reporters' Characteristics & System Characteristics Themes:

			<p>with phenomenological approach</p> <p>Questionnaire with two open ended questions</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Effectiveness of the mandatory reporting process (lack of effective resources for investigation, inappropriate manner of investigation, reporting will harm the child) ➤ Working with child protective services (unhealthy relationship between school and protection services agencies) ➤ Reporting in school setting (lack of support to report, reports about adolescents, negative parent reaction) ➤ Past reporting experiences and perceptions (positive and negative experience)
Choo et al., 2013	Malaysia	None	<p>Quantitative</p> <p>Teachers Reporting Attitude Scale</p>	N = 653 School teachers	<p>Reporters' Characteristics</p> <p><u>Attitudes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Four-factors identified: commitment, value, concern, and confidence. ➤ The model explained 42.1% of the variance.

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gender and training were not associated with attitudes. ➤ Ethic group ($p = .001$ for both value and confidence subscales, educational level ($p = .014$ for concerns subscale), teaching experience ($p = .016$ for concerns, $p = .015$ for value) significantly associated with attitude.
Dinehart & Kenny (2015)	United States	None	Quantitative Correlational Early Childhood Educators Child Abuse Questionnaire	N = 137 Early educators	<p>Reporters' Characteristics</p> <p><u>Knowledge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Knowledge significantly associated with reporting child abuse in all vignettes (a child rub another child, a parent appears intoxicated when dropping the child, a child appears with injuries at schools) except the first one (a child disclose that her step father has been touching her) ($p \geq .01 - >.05$). <p><u>Reported Fears related to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ making inaccurate report ➤ misinterpretation of cultural discipline styles ➤ negative consequences

Feng et al., (2009)	Taiwan	None	Qualitative with grounded theory method Focus groups	N = 20 Kindergarten teachers	Reporters' Characteristics Themes ➤ Preserving relationships ➤ Avoiding harm ➤ Obligation to report
Feng et al., (2010)	Taiwan	Theory of Planned Behavior	Quantitative Correlation Child Abuse Report Intention Scale	N = 598 Kindergarten teachers	Reporters' Characteristics ➤ Attitude toward child discipline ($\beta = .18, p < .001$), and attitudes toward perpetrators ($\beta = .12, p < .001$) and perceived behavioral control ($\beta = .18, p < .001$) are significant and explained 22.4% of variance of intention to report ➤ Subjective norm is not significantly associated with intention to report.
Feng et al., (2012).	Taiwan	None	Quantitative Correlation Feng & Wu, (2005) Questionnaire	N = 572 Kindergarten teachers	Reporters' Characteristics & System's characteristics <u>Setting</u> ➤ after controlling for knowledge, school geographical area explains 18%-21% of the variance in the intention to report <u>Training</u> ➤ After controlling for knowledge, the intention to report is significantly different between eastern region teachers that had in-service training and those that did not

Hurtado et al., (2013)	El Salvador	None	Mixed method Descriptive Questionnaire by the authors Focus group	N = 100 School teachers	Reporters' Characteristics & System's characteristics Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Most common discussed theme was the schoolteacher's safety, in particular, in rural areas ➤ Knowledge is important ➤ Negative expected outcomes: removal of the child from home and no punishment for the perpetrator
Schols et al., (2013)	Netherlands	Integrative-change model	Qualitative Focus group	N = 16 Primary school teachers	Reporters' Characteristics Themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ lack of knowledge about emotional abuse and neglect, signs of abuse, rate of abuse, and reporting process. ➤ Attitude (some believe reporting is not their responsibility, negative expected outcomes of reporting) ➤ Lack of support (direct colleagues largest support, lack of support from formal school system) ➤ low self-efficacy (lack of communication)

					skills with parents and children)
Sivis-Cetinkaya (2011)	Turkey	None	Qualitative Open and closed questions were developed by the authors	N = 25 School counselors	Reporters' Characteristics & System's characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Colleges, lawyers & school principals (20% for each), school police (16%), no perceived support (16%), support from counselors, spouse (8% for each) are the common source of support. ➤ School principle (44%) and families of incest victims (32%), no perceived barriers (16%) are common barriers to reporting. ➤ 48% request for more safety measures for the reporters
Tillman et al., (2016)	United States	None	Quantitative Correlation Questionnaire created by the authors	N = 398 Elementary school counselors	Victim's Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Severity of abuse is significantly associated with reporting ($p=.05$) ➤ Relationship with family, victim race, and victim's SES are not significantly associated with reporting
Toros & Tiirik (2016)	Estonia	Ecological Systems Theory	Quantitative Descriptive Soo et al., 2009 Questionnaire	N = 147 Preschool teachers	Reporters' Characteristics & System's characteristics <u>Knowledge</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Physical and sexual abuse more clear

					<p>than emotional abuse</p> <p><u>Attitudes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Not part of professional responsibility <p><u>Availability of Mandatory reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Directors do not allow to report <p><u>Reported fears related to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ parent might deny the abuse. ➤ conflict with families ➤ making mistakes
Walsh et al., (2013).	Australia	None	Quantitative Correlational Teachers Reporting Questionnaire	N = 470 Elementary teachers	<p>Reporters' Characteristics & System's Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All independent factors (sector, training, attitude toward reporting sexual abuse, teaching position, abuse reporting history) except teaching experience significantly predict moderate and high legislation knowledge ➤ All independent factors except teaching experience significantly predict high and moderate policy knowledge
Walsh et al., (2012)	Australia	None	Quantitative Factor analysis Teacher Reporting Attitude Scale for	N = 444 Elementary teachers	<p>Reporters' Characteristics</p> <p><u>Attitudes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Commitment explained 16.49% of the scale variance

			Child Sexual Abuse		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Confidence explained 11.65% of the scale variance ➤ Consequences explained 9.37% of the scale variance
Sikes et al., (2010)	United States	None	Quantitative Correlational Child Abuse Post-Reporting Experiences	N = 847 School counselors	Reporters' Characteristics & System's Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Significant association between school level and negative reporting experience ($p = .04$) ➤ No significant association between school setting and negative reporting experience controlling for SES ($p = .24$) ➤ No significant association between years of experience and negative experience ($p = .27$) ➤ Postmaster training has significant positive relationship negative reporting ($p = .01$)

Table 1: Evidence Table for the Reviewed Studies

<i>Table 2</i>	
<i>Major Categories, Factors and Studies</i>	
System Characteristics	
Factors	Study
School Educational Level	Bryant (2009); Bryant & Baldwin (2010); Sikes et al. (2010)
Setting	Bryant (2009); Feng et al. (2012); Hurtado et al. (2013); Sikes et al. (2010)
Mandatory Reporting	Bibou-Nakou & Markos (2017); Bryant (2009); Bryant & Baldwin (2010); Feng et al. (2009); Sivilis-Cetinkaya (2015); Toros & Tiirik, (2016); Walsh et al. (2013)
Victims' Characteristics	
Race	Tillman et al. (2016)
Socioeconomic Status	Bryant (2009); Tillman et al. (2016)
Severity of Abuse/neglect	Tillman et al. (2016)
Reporters' Characteristics	
Knowledge about Child Abuse and Reporting Process	Bibou-Nakou & Markos (2017); Bryant (2009); Bryant & Baldwin (2010); Dinehart & Kenny (2015); Feng et al. (2010); Feng et al. (2012); Hurtado et al. (2013); Schols et al., 2013; Toros & Tiirik, (2016); Walsh et al. (2012)
Experiences and Training	Bibou-Nakou & Markos (2017); Bryant & Baldwin (2010); Feng et al. (2012); Sikes et al. (2010)
Self-confidence and Personal Control	Feng et al. (2009); Schols et al. (2013)
Relationships	Bryant & Baldwin (2010); Feng et al. (2010); Schols et al. (2013); Sivilis-Cetinkaya (2015)
Beliefs and Attitudes toward Reporting	Bibou-Nakou & Markos (2017); Bryant & Baldwin (2010); Choo et al. (2013); Dinehart & Kenny (2015); Feng et al. (2009); Feng et al. (2010); Hurtado et al. (2013); Schols et al., 2013; Sivilis-Cetinkaya (2015); Toros & Tiirik, (2016); Walsh et al. (2012)
Fear and Uncertainty	Dinehart & Kenny (2015); Toros & Tiirik, (2016)

Table 2: Major Categories, Factors and Studies.

Chapter 3: Manuscript #2: Female Teachers' Child Abuse Reporting Role in Oman

Accepted by journal of Child Abuse and Neglect

Abstract

Background: Schoolteachers are in a good position to identify and report suspected child abuse and neglect cases; however, they still fail to report all the cases. Recently, the Sultanate of Oman, which is a collectivistic culture, mandated schoolteachers to report any suspected case. However, there is a lack of evidence known to us about the factors associated with Omani teachers' reporting behavior. Such evidence is needed to inform the interventions that are designed to enhance teachers' reporting behavior.

Objective: The current study was designed to address this gap by exploring the factors that affect Omani schoolteachers reporting behavior of suspected child abuse and neglect cases.

Participants and setting: A total of 26 participants were recruited from five basic education schools in the Muscat governorate in Oman.

Methods: This is a descriptive qualitative study. Five focus group discussions were conducted. Thematic coding was used for data analysis.

Results: Three themes were discerned from the data analysis. The factors that affect Omani schoolteachers as described by the participants were: 1) Reporting within an environment of educational resource scarcity; 2) Reporting within an environment of competing female social roles and their professional reporting role; 3) Reporting within an environment of complex and diverse abuse and neglect cases.

Conclusions: Our findings highlight the role of culture in reporting behavior. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Keywords: Child abuse, Mandatory reporting, Social, Collective society, Female, Schoolteachers

Introduction

Although reporting child abuse and neglect cases is a life-saving matter, and schoolteachers are in an optimal position to identify and report these cases, teachers are still reluctant to do so. Globally, self-reported sexual abuse victimization is 30 times higher than official reports and self-reported physical abuse victimization is 75 times higher than official reports (Hillis et al., 2016). Reporting child abuse and neglect is an essential step to mitigate the lifelong complications that result from abuse and neglect, and save the lives of victims. Abuse and neglect can negatively affect victims' cognitive abilities, language skills, academic abilities, and personality, resulting in lifelong emotional and behavioral problems (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). These adverse effects extend to the whole society. It is burdened with the cost associated with the lifelong consequences of child abuse and neglect, such as the increased use of the healthcare system and increased juvenile and adult criminal activity (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019; Fang et al., 2012). Analyzing the substantiated cases in 2015 in the U.S. revealed that \$428 billion is estimated to be the child maltreatment economic burden based on lifetime costs incurred annually for the United States' population (Peterson, Florence, & Kleven, 2018).

Child abuse and neglect is a global problem that affects millions of children each year. In the past year, up to one billion children aged 2–17 years have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect (World Health Organization, 2020). Child abuse and neglect exists in Oman; however, little research has been conducted regarding child abuse and neglect in Oman. In 2020, there were 1040 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in Oman. The most common type was neglect (46.1%), followed by physical abuse (31.1%), emotional abuse (14.2%), and sexual abuse (8.6%). The highest rate of abuse and neglect was in the Muscat government (Ministry of Social Development, 2020). There is a paucity of studies in Oman that

describe the characteristics of Omani victims of child abuse and neglect. One study conducted by Al shekali et al. (2020) described child abuse in terms of perpetrators, setting and disclosure. Al shekali reported that 94% of the Omani sexual victims knew their perpetrators, 29.4% of the perpetrators were first-degree relatives to the victims, and 70.6% are distant relatives. The abuse happened in the victim's residency area for 82.4% of them. Notably, almost 67% of the victims took more than one year to disclose their abuse to their families. This high percentage suggests the reluctance of Omani children to disclose their abuse.

The cultural context may be important, and it varies widely between countries across the world in which some are collectivistic communities, and some are individualistic communities. In collectivistic communities the individual identity strongly centers on the family, whereas the individualistic communities center on the individual. The Sultanate of Oman, an Arab country in the Middle East, a collectivistic society, has made concerted efforts in line with the recommendations from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to combat this problem (Al-Saadoon, Al-Adawi, & Al-Adawi, 2020). One of these efforts was, in 2014, when it enacted the Child Law. This law defines child abuse as "the act of inflicting physical, psychological or sexual torture or harm on a child, either deliberately by direct act or as a result of negligence in such a way that creates circumstances and realities that hinder his or her physical, psychological or social development" (Ministry of Social Development, 2017). This law, specifically article number (63), mandates all school personnel to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect (Ministry of Social Development, 2014). A hotline was established to report suspected cases. As children spend a considerable amount of their time at school, teachers are in an optimal position to identify victims of abuse and neglect, and report the suspected cases. The daily interactions between teachers and children enables the teachers to understand the children's behavior and identify any subtle signs of abuse or neglect. Further, children trust their

teachers; thus, they may be willing to disclose abuse with their teachers when it happens to them (National Children's Alliance, 2014; Sinanan, 2011).

Due to globalization and the improving education rate in Oman in the last 50 years, Omani people's behaviors are products of both culture and modernization. The family function has changed dramatically in the past few years (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007). Although old literature supported that Omani people used physical abuse as a disciplinary strategy, it does not necessarily reflect the current situation. There are no recent studies in this regard. One of the major challenges for Oman's efforts to combat the child abuse problem is the lack of consensus about the child abuse definition and what constitutes abuse. Although the child law in Oman defined child abuse, its definition is global and was not based on Omani culture (Al-Saadoon, Al-Adawi, & Al-Adawi, 2020). Such disagreement makes it harder for legal reporters to decide when to report.

Given this disagreement about child abuse definition and influence of culture, mandating teachers to report suspected child abuse is not enough to ensure reporting happens. School teachers in many countries sometimes still fail to report suspected cases despite the established presence of a mandatory reporting law in place. A systematic review of international studies demonstrates that culturally informed factors like subjective norms and attitudes are associated with school personnel's reporting behavior (Alazri & Hanna, 2020). Most of the articles in the systematic review were from individualistic communities. There were no studies conducted in Oman or any other Arab countries, which are collective communities, that could be identified. Nonetheless, some other Arab countries' studies explored factors related to child abuse and neglect of dentists and nurses' reporting behavior. These studies also demonstrated that culture plays a role in shaping those health professionals' reporting behavior (El Tantawi et al., 2018; Elarousy & Abed, 2018; Hashim & Al-Dallal, 2018; Saifan, Alrimawi, & AbuRuz, 2014).

The problem with mandatory reporting is that it is designed for western countries and its effectiveness in other cultures like Omani culture is not established yet. Western countries are individualistic communities; and Oman is a collective society where family and society overrule individual autonomy (Al-Saadoon et al., 2020). Therefore, the transferability of studies and interventions from other cultural groups to this group is limited. As part of a larger study designed to explore the factors affecting Omani teachers' reporting behavior, this report focusses on the descriptive qualitative aim to describe factors associated with reporting behavior of suspected child abuse and neglect cases of Omani basic education -cycle one- schoolteachers using focus groups. Understanding reporting behavior and the factors associated with it will move the science of child abuse and neglect reporting forward and provide a scientific basis for more contextually sensitive interventions. Also, the findings have the potential to transform current practice and policy by providing the stakeholders with a new direction for culturally appropriate policy and practice change.

Methods

This article reports results from focus group narratives, which were part of a larger study. Qualitative description guided the data collection and analysis (Sandelowski, 2000). Tenets of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) were incorporated into the semi-structured interview guide (Sandelowski, 1993). This theory helps predict people intention to perform a given behavior based on their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. It is a culturally appropriate model that is helpful to explore culturally informed factors for any behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Data were collected from February to September 2020. The first four focus groups were conducted in February and March when schools were in session. School closures occurred in mid-March due to COVID 19. The last focus group was conducted in September 2020, after school reopening.

Setting

Oman has eleven governorates. Each governorate has a different number of teachers based upon the total population. This study was conducted in the Muscat governorate because it had the highest population in the country. Teachers from all over the country come to work in this governorate; thus, it represents a more diverse sample than other governorates.

There are 7,300 teachers in basic public schools in the Muscat governorate. Basic education- cycle one- schools have students from first grade to fourth grade. These schools have only female teachers. After fourth grade, there are separate schools for boys with male teachers and separate schools for girls with female teachers. This study targeted only teachers who teach children from first to fourth grade. Only Omani teachers were included in this study as non-Omani teachers might not be familiar enough with Omani culture. Private schools were excluded because most teachers in these institutions were not Omani and, some of them were not fluent in the Arabic language. The official language in public schools is Arabic; therefore, the study was conducted in Arabic. The Muscat governorate has six cities. Two schools with the highest number of teachers from each city were identified. One school was used for other large study aims, and the second school was used for the qualitative portion. One city has only one basic education -cycle one- school and it was used for the other large study aims. Five focus groups were conducted in five different cities.

Participants

Convenience sampling was used as it was readily available, cost-effective, and suited the exploratory design (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The eligibility criteria were schoolteachers who (a) work at a basic education cycle one school, (b) hold Omani citizenship, and (c) work at public schools in the Muscat governorate. Exclusion Criteria were (a) other school personnel than teachers, e.g., school nurses, social workers, and psychologists, and (b) schoolteachers who hold an administrative position. Guest et al. (2019) proposes five or six groups as sufficient for

achieving information redundancy. Therefore, we planned to conduct five focus groups. Since the schools are public and located in the same governorate, it was expected that each school's group would be homogenous, thus increasing the likelihood of shared experiences.

Data Collection and Procedures

The study was approved by the University of Nebraska Medical Center IRB in the U.S. (IRB#585-19-EP) and the Ministry of Education in the Sultanate of Oman. The first author was the principal investigator (PI) of this study and conducted all data collection and analysis. She holds a pediatric nurse practitioner degree and currently she is a doctoral student in Ph.D in nursing program. Her research interest is child abuse prevention. She, as a member of the Omani community, had insight into the cultural nuances and language spoken by the participants. She has never worked in these schools and was not known to the participants. The second and third authors are her advisors who have expertise in qualitative research and parent-child health, respectively.

The PI visited each targeted school and discussed the study with the school principal. The PI sent an electronic invitation to each school principal, which was forwarded to all schoolteachers. The invitation had all the eligibility criteria and the PI's email address and phone number. The potential participants were asked in the invitation to contact the PI if they were willing to participate or had questions about the study. The PI screened all potential teachers for eligibility criteria. When enough participants were achieved for a focus group, the PI arranged the time that worked for all of them to meet. Each focus group was conducted in the school of the participating teachers in a private room with the door closed. All participants provided written informed consent prior to each focus group.

Each participant completed a demographic survey before the discussion. The demographic survey included questions about age, education level, marital status, teaching

experience, reporting experience, and training about child abuse and neglect. A semi-structured interview guide was utilized by the PI, which incorporated tenets of TPB (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The interview guide questions are listed in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about Here.

The group discussion was moderated by the PI in Arabic and audio recorded. The moderator introduced herself for the participants at the beginning of each focus group including her credentials and research interest. During data collection, the PI made written notations about participant interactions that may have influenced what was shared. After each focus group meeting, the PI conducted member checking of the main findings from the discussion with the participants to confirm the accuracy of understanding (Sandelowski, 1993). Participants were also given a sheet with information about the hotline where they could report suspected cases. For participating, each teacher was given a phone card with a value of US\$8. The PI, who is also fluent in spoken and written English, translated the audio recordings to written English transcripts, and checked them for accuracy against the original audio files.

Some techniques were used to enhance the rigor or trustworthiness of this study. Throughout the research process, the PI wrote weekly reflexive notes about her assumptions, feelings, influence of contextual factors on discussion, and influence of her presence and background in the discussion (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2017). After each focus group, the moderator conducted member checking to summarize the main findings from the group discussion. The participants were asked to validate the summary (Sandelowski, 1993). Triangulation from different focus groups, theory, and literature review enhanced the study validity (Cope, 2014; Sandelowski, 1995). Also, the PI kept an audit trail for all the details about the study progress and analysis process. This study also aligned with the standard for reporting qualitative research protocol (SRQR).

Analysis

A codebook was developed by the PI with a priori codes informed by TPB and a literature review. The a priori codes informed by TPB were attitudes, subjective norms, and confidence. The a priori codes informed by literature review were child abuse knowledge, reporting knowledge, setting, family type, training, experience, uncertainty, fears, availability of mandatory reporting law, availability of evidence, severity of abuse, and type of abuse. Thematic analysis was conducted (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). NVIVO software was used to code and categorize the data. There was weekly peer auditing with a qualitative researcher. Transcriptions were deidentified before being uploaded to the NVIVO software. Each focus group was treated as a unit of analysis. The PI initially read all the transcriptions and manually coded them line by line. The preliminary analysis result was shared with the second author, and some modifications were made to the codebook. Although there were a priori codes, many new codes were discerned from the data. The emergent codes were gender of teachers, life pressure, work pressure, years of teaching, and school location. After three weeks, the PI analyzed the data again, line by line, using NVIVO. Because of the time between the first focus groups and the last one due to COVID restrictions, a comparison was made between the first- and second-time analysis, and the PI investigated the incongruency. The PI kept an audit trail of all analysis process in a time stamped research journal. The analysis process was audited and reviewed by the second author. A within-group analysis was conducted for each focus group. Then, a cross-group analysis was performed. The final codes list was refined based on these analyses. Then, codes were categorized and synthesized into three overarching themes. Themes were relabeled to reflect the data accurately. A matrix with each theme, related codes, findings from within-group analysis and cross-group analysis, and supporting statements for each theme were discussed, reviewed, and edited by all authors during multiple meetings.

Results

The sample characteristics are presented in Table 4. A total of 26 teachers participated. Five focus groups were conducted in five different schools in five different cities in the Muscat governorate. Each focus group had 4-6 participants and lasted from 50 minutes to 80 minutes. Although it was planned with the participants that the focus group will take 60 to 90 minutes, some arrived late and left early to teach their classes. All participants preferred to meet during the school day; therefore, there was a time restriction. Also, each group was planned to have at least five participants, but a participant in the last group did not show up. All participants were Omani female schoolteachers who work in public schools in the Muscat governorate. Most of the teachers were 30-40 years of age. The teaching experience of almost half of them ranged between 0 to ten years. Most of them had a bachelor's degree. Most of them were married and had children. Only two of them had attended child abuse and neglect training as compliance training, three as personal development, and 21 participants never had attended any training. Almost half of the participants had reported suspected child abuse cases, but the reports were only to their school administration.

Insert Table 4 about Here.

There were three overarching themes and multiple sub-concepts within each theme. The Three overarching themes resulting from the data analysis are described and summarized in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 about Here.

Theme 1: Reporting within an environment of educational resource scarcity

The decision to report child abuse cases was justified within a context of educational resource scarcity. In this theme, teachers described how limited resources in the school system

affected their reporting behavior. The two main sub-concepts were training and education, and high workload and lack of support staff.

Training and Education

Scarcity of education and training for teachers about child abuse and neglect and the reporting process has created many challenges for teachers regarding reporting. Only two teachers out of all the focus group participants had attended training about child abuse or neglect as compliance training, and three teachers had participated in one training as a personal interest. The majority of the teachers had mentioned that they had never attended any training on this matter. One participant said, "Since I was in college, I have never learned about children's psychological problems." Also, teachers in each case shared that there was only one course about child psychology during their degree preparation, which only provided a brief overview of child abuse and neglect. None of participants noted that there was not any substantial focus on this topic during their degree preparation.

The lack of mandatory child abuse detection training in the school system was evident by the teachers' poor role definition for child abuse reporting. All participants asserted that they did not have sufficient knowledge of child abuse or neglect. A participant's statement of "No, there is not enough knowledge, our knowledge from being a human," confirmed participants' lack of knowledge about child abuse and neglect, and indicated that current participants' knowledge resulted only from their experience. Participants also asserted that they lacked knowledge related to reporting process and legal issues related to it. Another participants' statements, "There is no other way [to solve the problem] after contacting the parents. There are no active options (like a hotline to report) for us except informing the parents," affirmed their lack of knowledge about reporting resources and process. Limited or lack of knowledge about any given behavior will inevitably affect people's intention to do it. Importantly, two cases

specified that they lacked any knowledge about what constitutes emotional abuse. Discounting emotional abuse as a reportable event was evident in two cases as one participant said, "Emotional abuse is not very clear to us. We mostly have physical abuse knowledge, but emotional abuse is not so important."

Lack of knowledge may not only lead to discounting the problem but can leave a space for misconceptions to evolve. Misconceptions, specifically about reporting law and process, were stated across all the cases. Misconceptions held by teachers were described around: 1) the need to go to a police station or court; 2) fear that the process takes months or years, 3) that parents will sue the teacher if she reports on them, and 4) absence of a specific reporting authority. For example, one participant said, "As a teacher, I do not find that there is a specific authority that is easy to reach." Another participant said, "Some authorities may tell you, this is not our specialty, and we are not responsible. This is the responsibility of another body." Also, three cases added that their lack of knowledge about the child's social background impeded their recognition and reporting process. Knowing the social background was an essential piece of the process of the identifying and reporting child abuse cases.

High workload and lack of support staff

Reporting suspected abuse cases was a low priority within the teacher's work environment of high workload and no support staff. The detrimental effects of high workload and unavailability of support staff were described in 80% of cases. The workload was described as resulting from a high ratio between students to teacher per each class. This ratio ranges between 32-38 students per teacher, and the teacher could have multiple groups per day, so in each of her days, she could meet up to 99 students. Although teaching is their primary responsibility, they have multiple other responsibilities with minimal or no staff support. There was no teacher assistant support reported for any of the cases. One case described having one

school nurse in attendance only three days a week, and all cases reported having only one social worker on staff fulltime for the whole school, which has approximately 700 students. The social worker is employed at school and attends to any social problems that children display. The teachers must respond to the children's needs in all aspects, academic, physical, or emotional. These multiple responsibilities are tightened with the limited time she must spend with the children. One participant had frankly described the situation that due to high workload, she would forget to explore further if she suspected abuse in her students by saying, this "Even sometimes, I talk about myself, for example, if today I find that a student might be sexually abused, the next day I forget about that because I have 30 students and I do not have enough time." The high workload for teachers was a system issue. Yet victims of abuse must pay the price for it.

Further, such an environment with a high workload does not help create a trust relationship between the teacher and students, which may deter children from disclosing any abuse to their teachers. This was illustrated by this participant who said, "We did not give each student enough attention, so our relationships with them are not strong enough for them to disclose if abuse happens to them." The scarcity of work-related resources' effects on teachers' reporting behavior is just one aspect of the problem. A second layer of challenge occurs within the larger community environment.

Theme 2: Reporting within an environment of competing female social roles and professional reporting role

Duality of roles as female and teacher makes reporting behavior a challenging task for Omani schoolteachers. In this theme, teachers described how their decision occurs within a complex environment of competing female social and professional roles. The sub-concepts in this theme were female gender, subjective norms, attitudes, confidence, and society type.

Female Gender.

Just being a woman creates many reporting challenges for teachers. They identify themselves as 'women' whose power and autonomy are overridden by their families or husbands. One participant illustrated this identification as, "In the end, we are women, and it is different from being men." Teachers defined themselves as women who need their husbands' approval to report, which does not always happen. One participant described this by saying, "As a woman, she will need the approval of her husband or her family." Another participant also mentioned this: "right if my husband said no, I could not report."

Going to court by Omani teachers, a socially un-acceptable norm for women in Oman, was another dimension for the challenges created from being women. Subsequently, most of the teachers would not report outside the school administration even if encouraged by the school administration. One teacher described this as "Customs and traditions. My husband simply does not want me to go to the police station or if I was summoned in court."

Also, life responsibilities associated with being a woman, wife, and mother hinder their reporting ability. Most of the participants were married women and have children, so their social responsibilities towards their families competed with their time to attend to carrying out their professional duty of reporting. One teacher said, "At the same time, I have responsibilities towards my children, I do not have the time to engage in other things." The participants across all the cases described a desire to satisfy their assigned social female roles as crucial to them, and they must balance it out with their reporting role.

Subjective Norms.

Important persons around the Omani teachers contribute significantly or even take control of the teachers' reporting decisions. Important people are those on the front line in the teachers' social realm who influence their beliefs and actions related reporting. Those people can be husbands, family members, friends, colleagues, or sometimes the school administration

staff or principals. Crossing the lines to report outside the school administration boundaries was not socially acceptable by most important persons around the teachers. One participant said, "I have to consider my society and family. They [teacher's immediate family] may refuse that I go to the police station for the sake of a student." Participants discussed social norms of not interfering with other people's problems, beliefs that women should focus on their female social roles instead of creating unnecessary problems for themselves, and beliefs of that a teacher's role is limited within school boundaries. This restriction originated from people's misconceptions about the reporting process. One participant illustrated this restriction by saying, "For example, your husband might say do not interfere, it is not your business. The family (of the victim) will find the solution for themselves; he does not want you as a wife to interfere, he may say you have your own problems and responsibilities and do not interfere in these matters." Important people around teachers serve as a guide and reminder for the teachers to stay within socially acceptable boundaries.

Teachers were highly committed to complying with reporting recommendations of people important in their lives. For example, one participant mentioned: "If I have to report a case, sure I will consult my husband, but if he tells me not to report, then I will not." This high commitment stemmed from the social structure of a collective society of close, strong relationships between family members, and the teacher's needs for help and support from them if she would report.

Attitudes.

Teachers' attitudes toward reporting appear to be shaped by the notion that a socially competent female should keep herself and her family safe. Attitudes were defined as the expected negative or positive outcomes from the reporting. A common sentiment shared by teachers across the cases was concern over the potential for harm that could reach them or

their family. Such harm could be revenge, maligning ones' reputation, verbal or physical assaults, and damaging social relationships. These harms are illustrated by these statements: "If she reports, her reputation might be ruined. Also, she might lose her relationship with the people in her community"; and "Yes, but it is possible for the teacher to be subjected to a revenge by the parents in case we have reported." Some teachers also mentioned the harm that could happen to the teacher-student relationships.

The discussion of negative outcomes prevailed over discussion of positive outcomes in each case. Limited appreciation for positive outcomes of reporting suspected child abuse was evident during all focus group discussions. The positive outcomes were child protection, conscience relief, limiting the spreading of abuse, and good teacher records. The contradiction between the social role for women of safety keeping and the negative outcomes of reporting leaves teachers to struggle with their decision to report.

It could be speculated that the absence of basic knowledge about reporting process allows teachers' attitudes toward reporting as a professional responsibility to be largely shaped by their female social role. We noted during analysis that none of the participants mentioned that teachers are mandatory reporters in Oman. Two cases vocalized that they were unaware of mandatory reporting laws. Other cases advocated that reporting is the school administration's responsibility and not their responsibility demonstrating similar attitudes. For the teachers, their reporting role ends when they notify the administration. For example, one participant noted: "Reporting to administration and parents is a red line that should not be crossed by the teachers." Teachers believed that reporting is an administration role because the administration has authority, knows parents more, and parents respect and respond to the administration more than teachers. And without administration support, teachers will create unnecessary problems, be alone and weak, have no authority to report without the administration's

knowledge and approval, and are obligated to follow the school administration decisions.

Avoiding creating problems, seeking support, and avoiding any harm for herself or her family are typical female role expectations that teachers try to achieve to fulfill the social expectations.

Overall, participants believed that the teacher must protect herself and her school and not to interfere in these matters. The few teachers willing to report beyond the administration mentioned that they would report only certain cases.

Confidence.

Teacher confidence to report child abuse appeared to be a dynamic interplay of a larger female social role and professional experience. In this study, personal confidence was defined as a person's beliefs about one's ability to perform a given behavior or have control over it.

Confidence to report within the school was noted to exist, but it appeared that there was none or little confidence to report outside school boundaries. One participant demonstrated this by saying, "We can deal with the parents and with the administration, but if we have to inform higher authorities, we cannot." A few teachers had the confidence to report if it was a sexual abuse case; there was strong evidence; it was an urgent need to help; abuse had happened multiple times; and the school administration's support was available. Female social norms and expectations weakened teachers' confidence, as stated by a participant, "In reality, and because of the society in which we live, I cannot take another step." Lack of social support and disapproval of reporting from important people around teachers and other female roles weaken their ability to report.

Their professional experience exacerbated this weakness. A lack of training and knowledge, perceived unavailability of the law to protect teachers, and perceived procedural difficulties were factors that shattered teachers' confidence to report. One participant described the potential reason for lack of confidence by saying, "Perhaps it (lack of confidence) is only

because we do not have sufficient knowledge of the laws. Frankly, we do not know. Perhaps if we know we will dare to report.” Or “But if the school does not like the teacher to interfere in these matters, the teacher is obligated not to interfere, so the school administration has a big role in this way.” Having no experience reporting outside the school administration lessens teachers' confidence as well. Although almost half of the teachers have reported suspected cases to their school administration, none of them ever reported any case to authorities. This was illustrated by one participant saying, “we don't only take it to the school administration or social worker, but also we talk to the parents. But It never goes beyond the school administration.” If they had reported previously outside the school, their confidence to report in the future could have been higher.

The availability of administration and colleagues' support, years of experience, feeling of mercy, feeling of responsibility, and knowledge about reporting motivated teachers' confidence. One participant explained the effect of years of experience on her confidence by saying, “if you had asked me a few years ago, I would have responded that I would not be able to report, but now after these years, because we are growing up and maturing and we have children and students around us who grow up with us, I cannot let anything happen to them.” Another participant confirmed this influence by saying, “Even the administration itself trusts the old female teachers more than the new ones.”

Socio-cultural norms.

The society where the school was located has a role in building either a supportive or discouraging environment for reporting. One case conducted in a relatively rural city had intensified the role of social norms for reporting decisions within a conservative society. There, most people take care of their children very well. Approaching parents if teachers suspect any abuse would most likely be enough to resolve the problem. This was illustrated by one

participant, who said, "Especially since our society is conservative, parents always want a good reputation for their children and would like to hear from the teacher. They are very cooperative." If not, reaching out to that child's family's friends or relatives to solve the problem is the socially acceptable option for teachers rather than reporting to an authority. Teachers were intimidated from reporting to an authority because they thought there was a higher risk for confidentiality breaches in their society. Such a breach could distort both teacher and family of the victim's reputation and might worsen the family's reaction toward the teachers. In addition, reporting in a community where people know each other could harm the teacher's social relationships with other people in that community was confirmed by three cases. One participant exemplified this by saying, "Especially because I am a woman, I work, and everyone knows me. We live in the same society, and this (reporting) requires caution."

The scarcity of resources within the community where the school was located was another detrimental factor for reporting behavior. One case described their community as having many poor, non-educated people who are non-Arabic speakers, have a high divorce rate, and the extended family lives in one house. The participants expressed the belief that within such an environment, teachers might suspect more cases. However, they cannot deal with families due to language barriers or educational levels. A participant in that case described the situation in this statement, "In my community, most of the parents of students are fishermen, or non-Arabic speakers, a lot of divorced women, and large families live together in the same house. Multiple people raised the child like his grandparents. Although children have a lot of problems, teachers find it difficult to communicate with them." Teachers often do not report these cases to official authorities due to expected harm that could reach the teachers or their families. These concerns act as barriers to reporting. But in situations where teachers were

willing to risk their reputations and relationships, they face challenges when confronting abuse cases from the complexity of abuse itself.

Theme 3: Reporting within an environment of complex and diverse abuse and neglect cases

The diversity of abuse and neglect cases influenced teachers' decisions to report was dynamic and not uniform in all cases. In this theme, teachers described the case-specific factors that shaped their reporting decisions. The sub-concepts in this theme were abuse severity, abuse type, availability of evidence, and teacher-family relationship.

Abuse Severity.

Teachers' reporting behavior was a dynamic process that was highly controlled by abuse severity. Abuse reached the severity threshold if it was frequent, intense, harmful, leaving multiple marks, out of control, needed urgent care by a specialized person, affected other classmates, and/or was sexual or physical abuse. One participant statement demonstrated the need to report repeated incidents by saying, "Right, if it happens repeatedly, we can report, especially if there is no action from the family or the administration." All participants agreed that the severity of abuse would affect their decision to report.

Abuse Type.

Abuse type influenced the path teachers took once they suspected abuse. For example, sexual abuse was reportable to the school administration, while emotional abuse needed to be discussed with parents. Physical abuse could be anywhere between these two options based on its severity. One participant said, "sexual abuse is a red line; we directly inform the administration." Few participants mentioned that they should report to parents in case of emotional abuse. One statement illustrated this: "We do not report emotional abuse. We try to stand by the child and guide the mother, but in general we do not report it."

Availability of Evidence.

The participants described that they must have tangible, robust, and conclusive evidence of abuse to consider reporting the abuse outside of and beyond the school administration boundaries. One participant confirmed that only cases with evidence were reportable by saying, "Of course, not all cases, only those where the abuse could be seen." Such evidence will make teachers 100% sure of the abuse. This evidence could be video clips, recorded conversations, child disclosures, or visible marks on the child, such as a burn. Such evidence most likely will be available in severe cases, which supports the teachers' previous criteria of reporting only extreme cases.

Teacher-Family Relationship.

Teachers gave the student's family-teacher relationship considerable weight in their decision to report. All cases discussed the type of relationship as a factor. They will not report on families that are arrogant, strict, blaming, in denial of family problems or resistant to outside help. Some participants proclaimed that they will not approach these kinds of families if they suspect any abuse, nor will they report to the school administration. One participant stated that, "If I knew that the family had many problems, I would explicitly avoid dealing with them a lot." On the other hand, teachers described the responsive, respecting family as more approachable to discuss any suspected abuse or report to the school administration. For example, as stated by one participant, "Sometimes, if the child is abused by his own father, the mother supports the teacher in solving the problem." Teachers described this family type as increasing the likelihood of deciding to report suspected abuse. In doing so, they most likely are simply trying to achieve their social roles of maintaining social relationships and maintaining safety.

Discussion

Our findings describe the Omani teachers' knowledge and attitudes/beliefs towards child abuse reporting. The findings also provide insight into the community social norms that challenge the successful implementation of mandatory reporting law with female schoolteachers. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first study exploring the factors

associated with reporting behavior of suspected child abuse and neglect cases in the Omani teachers' population.

The influence of the norms of collective societies and the larger societal norms for females on the teachers' reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect cases in this sample illuminate the cultural influence in reporting behavior. The effectiveness of mandatory reporting law could be extremely jeopardized by the influence of collective societies' norms associated with female social roles. Report of suspected abuse or neglect requires teachers to have a high sense of autonomy, which directly contrasts with the collectivist community norms described by the women (Al-Saadoon, Al-Adawi & Al-Adawi, 2020). This discrepancy can significantly increase underreporting of suspected child abuse when implementing child abuse reporting policies based upon individualist societal norms in collective societies such as Oman. Further, our study provides descriptions of the effects of traditional Omani women's social roles on their responsibility as teachers to report abuse. Both rules of collective society and traditional Omani women's social roles influenced the participants' attitudes and beliefs about reporting. Therefore, there is a need for a future ethnographic study to capture how the cultural patterning of female social roles influences Omani women's abuse reporting behavior.

Incorporating community-participatory design elements in future intervention studies is another means to ensure child abuse reporting interventions have contextual sensitivity (LeVeaux & Christopher, 2009; Al-Saadoon et al., 2020). We advocate for future interventions to be culturally sensitive and informed by community participatory methods. In other fields, like parenting, adaptation of interventions to local culture improved the effectiveness of the interventions and they were well-received by the parents (Mejia et al., 2016). Improving mandatory reporting law effectiveness requires that policy-action disconnects be examined for cultural congruence.

This study highlights factors that may contribute to a public policy effectiveness gap for mandatory reporting laws among schoolteachers in Oman. Despite the presence of mandatory reporting law in Oman since 2014, our findings reflect that it did not lead to active reporting by teachers. The findings of this study suggest a lack of teacher knowledge about child abuse, reporting hotlines, mandatory reporting laws and the role of advocacy in improving outcomes contributes to this poor reporting record. Such poor knowledge leaves teachers to build socially skewed definitions and assumptions about the reporting process. These evident attitudes and beliefs, specifically misconceptions about child abuse and the reporting process, impede the accurate assessment of the array of factors affecting reporting behavior. This finding on less than desirable knowledge reinforced the importance of frequent teacher training. Training that target both knowledge and attitudes/beliefs could facilitate desired abuse detection and reporting behavior occurs and to allow for more accurate assessment for teachers' reporting behavior.

Oman's readiness for large-scale child abuse prevention programs was found to be high in terms of legislative mandates and policies; however, it was low in terms of human and technical resources (Al Saadoon et al., 2020). Although knowledge alone is not sufficient for behavioral change, it is well known to be necessary for behavioral change (Bandura, 1977). In other countries, teachers' knowledge about child abuse have been improved significantly by attending training sessions (Gushwa, Bernier, & Robinson, 2018; Nurse, 2018). The same findings have been established in other fields. For example, domestic violence training effectively improved nurses' and midwives' preparedness, knowledge and self-confidence for screening for domestic violence (Baird et al., 2018). Other countries that adopt mandatory reporting laws have specific training requirements and education for mandatory reporters. Therefore, establishing training programs for teachers could be the starting point to connect

policy with action. There is a long road ahead for Omani teachers to be effective mandatory reporters since they do not know that they are mandatory reporters. They need to know it, believe in it, and act based on it.

Given this unpreparedness, teachers try their best to act in the interest of both teachers and victims; however, their current practice of dealing with suspected abuse and neglect cases could impose some risks for the victims. Balancing out the reporting within an environment with the dueling female professional and social roles and limited support resources is essential for teachers to keep their social and professional lives in harmony. Teachers tended to filter the suspected abuse cases based on their severity, type, frequency, availability of evidence, and other criteria. In doing so, they are trying to maintain the balance between their assigned roles while still reporting cases that are really in need. This finding aligns with the extant literature about the factors affect reporting decisions. However, it provides more descriptions on the role of social norms for acceptable female behavior in delaying early reporting of suspected abuse until more evidence is available (Alazri & Hanna, 2020). Such a practice of delayed reporting could expose the child to extra danger during that waiting time.

Most of the teachers in our study preferred to first approach the victim's parents, relatives, or family's friends as the front line means for reporting. These solutions could be unsafe and ineffective as, most likely, they may result in further victimization. It was shown by Turillazzi et al. (2020), that non-reporting abuse or a violent event resulted in the recurrence of the violent event again to the same child. Additionally, contacting relatives instead of going through official reporting may deprive victims from getting any treatments to recover from all the abuse trauma they were going through, and it leaves them to struggle the rest of their lives. Victims need mental health counseling to recover from all the negative consequences of abuse and neglect, and to help them establish a good relationship between themselves and their

parents. Mental health interventions have demonstrated efficacy in improving the negative outcomes of abuse (Derakhshanpour et al., 2017). Using a multidisciplinary approach to deal with child abuse victims was effective in increasing the uptake of needed services and receipt of medical services, the satisfaction of caregivers, and improved child-protection outcomes. (Herbert, J. L., & Bromfield, L. (2017). Therefore, reporting to family member is not sufficient to ensure victim's safety and recovery.

Furthermore, some teachers based their decision to report on the family type, which can inadvertently result in a more maleficent outcome. Children identified at high-risk for abuse need to be reported regardless of who their parents are. A lot of these criteria stem from their lack of knowledge and beliefs influenced by culture. Emphasizing to the teachers that their role is to report suspected cases and not to approve the abuse could enable teachers to report from the first time they suspect abuse.

Limitations

Limitations of this study need to be considered. The data may have been influenced by historical issues. It is important to know that data collection was interrupted due to COVID-19 for a period of time. This suspension resulted in one focus group being interviewed six months after the first four focus groups. However, informational redundancy was discerned across our cases, and the validity was enhanced by using a skillful cultural insider as moderator, member checking, verbatim file transcription, and data triangulation. In terms of generalizability, findings from this study may not reflect teachers' experiences in schools outside of this governorate. Qualitative description provided low inference explanations of the experiences of this sample of Omani teachers who work in first-cycle public schools in the Muscat governorate, inferring idiographic generalizability within this community only. In addition, the use of a convenience sampling over maximum variation sampling may have led to more teachers interested in child

abuse prevention topics participating than other teachers. Finally, one needs to consider the sensitivity of the topic and the potential to be seen in a positive light. Although teachers were assured about confidentiality and privacy was provided during the discussion, there is a chance that they responded in a more positive way to gain social acceptability.

Implementations

This article calls neither for revoking the mandatory law nor for changing collective communities' rules. Importantly, it calls for the empowerment of Omani teachers. Future interventional research is suggested. For example, an empowerment intervention, focusing on knowledge, attitudes, and social norms with community based participatory research is suggested. Such strategies increase the likeliness for long-lasting positive change due to encouraging teachers' voices and stakeholders' involvement (Collins et al., 2018). Future interventional research could examine the effect of training programs for teachers about child abuse and neglect and reporting process; the need for such programs was identified by the participants as their top priority to improve their ability to report. Although such programs are not sufficient to ensure the reporting of all suspected cases, they will improve teachers' knowledge and decrease inhibitory attitudes and beliefs.

Such programs will allow a more accurate assessment of other influential factors. These programs should also emphasize that reporting to authority is the only right way to go when suspecting abuse or neglect. They should also emphasize that the teachers' role is to report abuse rather than build a case for the suspected abuse. Education programs for children about child abuse and how to deal with it is another critical intervention that is needed. These programs will enable children to disclose the abuse to their teachers, which will make teachers more certain about abuse and more willing to report (Tutty, Aubry, & Velasquez, 2019). Past studies have found that Omani parents and teachers supported the need for such programs for

their children as long they are culturally sensitive (Al Zaabi et al., 2018). Empowering teachers and children through culturally sensitive training programs is a promising mean to improve Oman's child abuse reporting rate.

<i>Table 3</i>	
<i>Interview Guide Questions.</i>	
No.	Question
1	Tell me about how you would handle a situation in which you suspect one of your students is being abused or neglected.
2	Tell me about the reasons or situations you might choose to report a suspected case of abuse?
3	Tell me about the reasons or situations you might choose to not report a suspected case of abuse?
4	Tell me what you see are the outcomes after you report a suspected case of child abuse/neglect
5	Tell me more about how important people in your life affect your decision to report or not.
6	Describe your sense of confidence in your ability to report cases of abuse/neglect!
7	To improve your likelihood to report suspected abuse/neglect, what is your primary need?

Table 3: Interview Guide Questions.

<i>Table 4</i> <i>Descriptive Information of Participants (N=26).</i>	
	N
Age	
20-30 Years	8
30-40 Years	12
40-50 Years	6
Teaching Experience in Years	
0-5 years	7
5-10 years	7
10-15 years	5
15-20 years	5
20-25 years	1
>25 years	1
Highest Education Level	
Diploma	2
Bachelor's degree	23
Master's degree	1
Marital Status	
Never Married	3
Married	21
Divorced	2
Having Children	
Yes	21
No	5
Attending Child Abuse and Neglect Training	
Yes, as compliance training	2
Yes, as a degree requirement	0
Yes, other	3
No	21

Factors Associated with Reporting

76

Past Experience of Reporting Suspected cases	
Yes	14
No	12

Table 4: Descriptive Information of Participants (N=26).

<i>Table 5</i> <i>Themes and sub-concepts.</i>	
Themes	Sub-Concepts
Reporting within an environment of educational resource scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and education • High workload and lack of support staff
Reporting within an environment of competing female social roles and professional reporting role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female gender • Subjective norms • Attitudes • Confidence • Socio-cultural norms
Reporting within an environment of complex and diverse abuse and neglect cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse severity • Abuse type • Availability of evidence • Teacher-family relationships

Table 5: Themes and sub-concepts.

**Chapter 4: Manuscript #3: Omani Schoolteachers' Intention to
Report Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect Cases
(Submitted)**

Abstract

Background: Globally, mandatory reporting systems for child abuse and neglect have been developed and are in varying phases of implementation. As important actors in these reporting systems, some schoolteachers are reluctant to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly if these concepts are new to them. In Oman, an Arab country, many recent efforts have been established to improve the reporting rate, in alignment with international practice. Currently, it is unknown in the literature whether Omani schoolteachers are active reporters in these systems.

Objective: A study was conducted with Omani teachers to examine the predictive abilities of child abuse and neglect reporting attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on intention to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

Methods: A sample of 113 teachers responded to a questionnaire framed around the theory of planned behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and a recent systematic review (Zeinab & Hanna, 2020). The data was analyzed using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Results: The three predictors were significantly associated with the intention to report, explaining 38% ($R^2 = .384$) of the variance. The model has a close to moderate explanatory and predictive power.

Conclusion: Implications for future studies and practical considerations for teachers are discussed. Interventional studies that target the three predictors are advocated.

Keywords: child abuse, neglect, reporting, Oman, schoolteachers

Introduction

Mandated child abuse reporting is well-established in some cultures, while systems are being developed and the process of reporting abuse and neglect continues to evolve in others. Mandates like these, particularly ones that involve a seemingly invasive overstep into families, can be overwhelming to individuals. Some schoolteachers, who are often mandatory reporters, are still reluctant to report all cases (McTavish et al., 2017). Their hesitation in reporting could deprive the abuse victims of the help and treatments they need, leaving them to struggle with the consequences of child abuse for the rest of their lives.

Child abuse disrupts all aspects of the victim's life and health (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2019). This disruption has many adverse effects on the victim's cognitive abilities, language skills, academic abilities, and personality. All of these negative consequences lead to behavioral and emotional problems throughout the victim's life. The cost of abuse is not limited only to the victim; the whole society often ends up paying the price. Increased use of the healthcare system and increased juvenile and adult criminal activity are a few of the ways in which abuse burdens society over the victims' lifetimes. In the United States alone, the annual estimated cost for substantiated child abuse and neglect was \$428 billion in 2015 (Peterson et al., 2018).

Background

Child abuse and neglect is a global problem that affects millions of children. The World Health Organization (2020) reported that up to one billion children in the 2–17 age group had experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the last year. Although there are many reports about the number of child abuse and neglect victims, uncertainty about the accuracy of these numbers still exists due to underreporting. Based on adult self-reports, it is estimated that, globally, sexual abuse is 30 times higher and physical abuse is 75 times than official reports state (Hillis et al., 2016).

Child abuse and neglect are as much a problem in the Sultanate of Oman, an Arab country. In 2020, the number of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect was 1040 cases (Ministry of Social Development [MOSD], 2020). Although this number seems low, two things need to be considered. One is that the population of Oman is only five million. The second is that this statistic reflected only the reported and substantiated cases—not the actual number of cases. Given that Oman is a collective society, where individual autonomy is overruled by family and society autonomy, underreporting is possible (Al-Saadoon et al., 2020).

Since 2014, Oman had made concerted efforts to combat this problem, including but not limited to enacting the Omani Child Law. Article 63 of this law mandates some professionals, including schoolteachers, to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect (MOSD, 2014). A hotline to report abuse and neglect cases was established as part of these efforts. Although there have been no published studies conducted in Oman to evaluate the effectiveness of the mandatory reporting law for schoolteachers, multiple studies have been conducted in other countries where a mandatory reporting law has been in place for a long time. The findings of these studies support the idea that mandatory reporting laws improve the reporting rate of sexual abuse by a factor of 3.7 compared to the rate before the law was passed (Mathews et al.,

2016). However, a meta-synthesis that included 42 articles revealed that 70% of the studies confirmed that mandatory reporters had a negative experience with reporting. The findings also suggested that some schoolteachers are still hesitant to report all suspected cases of child abuse and neglect (McTavish et al., 2017). Most of Oman's efforts to combat child abuse and neglect are only in alignment with international best practice like mandatory reporting law, without taking into consideration the culture of this collective society (Al-Saadoon et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence, as there are no existing studies examining the reporting behavior of Omani teachers nor statistics describing Omani teachers' reporting behavior.

Studies conducted in other countries provide guidance for studying teachers' reporting. In a systematic review of child abuse and neglect reporting across various cultures, the factors associated with reporting behavior were stratified into three categories: reporters' characteristics, victims' characteristics, and systems' characteristics (Zeinab & Hanna, 2020). These studies demonstrated that culturally informed factors like attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control were associated with reporting behavior. Although some studies had used actual reporting behavior as an outcome, others used intention to report as an outcome. This study focuses on intention to report—an individual readiness to report a suspected case of child abuse (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

Although attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms have been identified in many studies across various cultures, few studies have investigated the significance and magnitude of the associations between them and reporting behavior, with inconsistent findings. While the attitudes factor was not significant in some of the studies, subjective norms were not significant in others (Christodoulou et al., 2019; Feng et al., 2010). This could be due to inconsistency in the scales used or due to the culture of that society. In essence, the influence of

culture is evident in many of the factors associated with reporting behavior. Hence, researchers should be cautious in relying on studies from different cultures.

Theoretical Framework

A potential guide for researchers to understand teachers' reporting behavior is the theory of planned behavior (TPB), a culturally appropriate model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The TPB helps predict an individual's likeliness to involve in a particular behavior at a specific time. This theory assumes that human beings are rational; they use available information to make a decision and they like to think about the expected consequences before engaging in any behavior. The theory entails three predictors for intention to do a given behavior: attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). This study model, illustrated in Figure 4, includes all three of these predictors.

"Figure 4 about here"

A quantitative study of Omani schoolteachers' intention to report and associated factors was conducted using the TPB to better understand the proposed framework for behaviors. The aim of this descriptive study of Omani basic education (cycle one) teachers in the Muscat governorate was to examine the predictive contribution of suspected child abuse and neglect reporting attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on intention to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. Because the focus of the study was on reporting behavior in general, no questions were asked about the mandatory reporting law. The hypothesis was that, in relation to the reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly predict the intention to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect among Omani schoolteachers.

This study provides knowledge of the factors that predict the intention of basic education schoolteachers to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect in Oman. These

factors can be targeted in future interventional research. Such a knowledge will provide stakeholders with direction in designing effective interventions that embrace the culture of this group, and thus improve the of reporting suspected cases. An improvement in reporting by schoolteachers would mean that more abuse victims will promptly receive the treatment they need and be protected from further abuse and neglect. This study will guide future research on how the TPB can be used to predict the intention to report abuse in other professional settings.

Methods

Research Design

This quantitative article is part of a larger multi-method study that consists of both qualitative and quantitative components; the qualitative component was reported elsewhere (auhtors). A correlational design was used to predict the intention to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect based on Omani schoolteachers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This study was approved by the Institute Review Board of University of Nebraska Medical Center in the United States and the Ministry of Education in Oman in January 2020.

Setting

This study was conducted in schools in the Muscat governorate in Oman. The Muscat governorate was chosen for several reasons. This governorate has the highest rate of child abuse and neglect cases in the country (MOSD, 2020). In addition, it was easier to obtain a more diverse sample in this governorate because it has a more diverse population; a more diverse sample could yield more generalizable findings within the same population. This study targeted only the first cycle of basic education, which is from grade one to grade four. Only female teachers can teach in this first cycle of basic education. A total of 21 schools from six cities in Muscat were included in this study, and these schools did not participate in other aims for the larger study.

Sampling Method

Convenience sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique, was used to sample teachers in one Omani governorate. Teachers were eligible to participate if they were schoolteachers, worked at basic education cycle one schools, held Omani citizenship, and worked at public schools in the Muscat governorate. Other school personnel—e.g., school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and schoolteachers who held an administrative position—were excluded. Since culture is the focus of this study, only Omani teachers were included, as non-Omani teachers might not be familiar enough with Omani culture and might not hold the same cultural beliefs. Private schools were also excluded because their structures, student–teacher ratios, and the socioeconomic status of their students are quite different from those in public schools. In addition, almost all of their teachers are not Omani, and some of them are not fluent in the Arabic language. Screening questions were included at the beginning of the questionnaire to eliminate ineligible participants. If the potential participant was not eligible, they would not be able to complete the questionnaire. For example, a question of “Are you Omani?” was asked.

Sample Size

Since the aim of this study is to explore the predictive contribution of three factors in intention to report, partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for the statistical analysis. Based on the documented table for sample size calculation by Hair et al. (2016), for a model with a maximum of three arrows pointing to a construct in the model, statistical power of 80%, and significance level of 5%, the required sample size ranges from 30 to 124 depending on the minimum R^2 . Since no studies have been conducted in this culture before, we estimated sample size expecting only a small-explained variance (R^2 , .1). The resulting power analysis yielded a target of 124 participants in the sample.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was anonymous and self-reported. SurveyMonkey, web survey application that can ensure anonymity by not tracking any identifiable digital signatures like IP addresses, was used to create and distribute the questionnaire. The study was conducted in Arabic, as it is the official language in Omani public schools. The link for the questionnaire was sent to the school principal of each participating school. In line with school processes, the principal sent out the link to the schoolteachers through email and the WhatsApp application. In the study invitation, we assured potential participants that the survey was voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. After one week, a reminder to complete the questionnaire was sent. The questionnaire's introduction stated that completing the questionnaire implied consent to participate.

Measurement

The questionnaire consisted of five sections. The first section focused on sociodemographic descriptions of the participants, and the other four sections were the four factors measured in the study. In the first section, participants were asked questions about their age, education level (options from diploma to PhD degree), years of teaching experience, marital status, whether they had children (yes or no), whether they had training on child abuse and neglect (yes or no), and whether they had past reporting experience (yes or no). The rest of the sections used a seven-point scale.

The remaining sections were study-devised scales developed by following guidelines for the construction of attitudes, subjective norms, behavioral control, and intention, as outlined by Fishbein and Ajzen (2011). The questions for the factors of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control were also guided by the findings of a systematic review of factors associated with school personnel reporting behavior by the primary investigator and colleagues (Zeinab & Hanna, 2020). Child abuse and neglect experts from Oman and the United States examined the

questionnaire for its content validity, a process of assessing the degree to which the questionnaire measured the target factors (Yusoff, 2019). Experts were asked to assess the factors' definitions, the questions' representations in each scale, and the questions' relevance in each scale. Based on the experts' feedback, some questions were reworded to make them more specific. The Omani expert confirmed that the questionnaire was appropriate for Omani culture. The relevancy of questions in each scale was also examined by three health researchers from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. They were asked to rate each question from very relevant to not relevant at all, and all relevant questions were kept. The readability of the questionnaire was also examined by three female Omani teachers. A few minor rewordings were done based on their recommendations. The questionnaire was initially developed in English and then translated into Arabic by the principal investigator (PI), who is fluent in both languages. Back translation was conducted by a colleague who is fluent in both languages (Acquadro et al., 2008). After translation, four Omani schoolteachers were asked to complete the questionnaire to assess its readability. According to experts in partial least square structural equation modeling (Sarstedt et al., 2021), the formative nature of this questionnaire made it inappropriate to calculate the Cronbach's alpha for the scales; thus, it is not reported. The evaluation of the measures is addressed in the results section.

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Attitudes

Attitudes are defined as "a latent disposition or tendency to respond with some degree of favorableness or unfavorableness to a psychological object" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 76). The attitudes scale had two subscales: outcomes evaluation (OE) and behavioral beliefs (BB), with six questions for each subscale. The outcomes evaluation subscale assessed the beliefs about the values associated with the attributes of reporting behavior, ranging from extremely bad to extremely good. The behavioral beliefs subscale assessed the beliefs that reporting behavior is

associated with these attributes, ranging from extremely unlikely to extremely likely. The questions were: helping victims of abuse and neglect; thorough follow-up investigations for suspected cases of abuse and neglect; fulfilling professional responsibilities for reporting, including actions taken to help victims of abuse and neglect after reporting; risking personal safety with reporting, including conflicting relationships with the family of the victim; and punishing the perpetrators of child abuse and neglect. For example, to examine the attribute of helping victims of abuse and neglect, the question of “Helping victims of abuse and neglect is?” was asked in the outcomes evaluation subscale, and “My reporting of suspected abuse and neglect will help child victims receive valuable help” was asked in the behavioral beliefs subscale.

Child Abuse and Neglect Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control is defined as “People’s perceptions of the degree to which they are capable of, or have control over, performing a given behavior” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 154). The perceived behavioral control scale had two subscales: control beliefs strength (CBS) and power of control (PC), with eight questions for each subscale. The control beliefs strength subscale assessed the beliefs about factors (opportunities or obstacles), ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The power of control subscale assessed the power or influence of each factor in the reporting behavior, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The factors were: having knowledge about the child abuse and neglect (for example, signs/symptoms or complications), having knowledge about the reporting process, having support from the school administration, having support from a spouse, having support from family members, feeling safe after reporting, feeling anxious about reporting, and feeling uncertain about the investigation process. For example, the questions of “I have knowledge about reporting process” in the control beliefs strength subscale and “Having knowledge about the reporting process would enable me

to report suspected abuse and neglect” in the power of control subscale were used to assess the factor of knowledge about the reporting process.

Child Abuse and Neglect Subjective Norms

The concept of subjective norms is defined as “An individual person’s perception that important others prescribe, desire or expect the performance or nonperformance of a specific behavior” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 131). The subjective norms scale consisted of three subscales: descriptive norms (DN), injunctive norms (IN), and motivation to comply (MI), with six questions for each. These questions focused on perceptions of salient referents about reporting behavior. The salient referents were husband, family, school principal, colleagues, close friends, and people in their community. Descriptive norms assessed the beliefs about salient referents— if they will report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect—ranging from definitely false to definitely true. Injunctive norms assessed the beliefs about salient referents’ perceptions about what teachers should do regarding reporting, ranging from extremely improbable to extremely probable. Motivation to comply assessed the willingness of teachers to follow the recommendation of their salient referents, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Using a husband as a salient referent, the questions of “My husband would report suspected child abuse and neglect” in the descriptive norms subscale, “My husband thinks that I should report suspected child abuse and neglect” in the injunctive norms subscale, and “When it comes reporting suspected abuse and neglect, I want to do what my husband thinks I should do” in the motivation to comply subscale were used.

Intention to Report

Intention to report is the outcome of the model. Based on the TPB, intention is defined as “An indication of an individual’s readiness to perform the behavior” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011, p. 39). Intention to carry out any given behavior can be measured by one question: “I intend to

report if I suspect case of abuse or neglect in the future.” This was rated as definitely or definitely will not.

Data Analysis

Prior to analysis, mean imputation was conducted if the participant answered 70% or more of each subscale. There were very few eligible cases for imputation, making the use of mean imputation appropriate (Jadhav et al., 2019). Questionnaires with a higher percentage of missing data and missing data on a single-item scale were excluded.

Then, partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to examine the predictive contribution of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on the intention to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. PLS-SEM emphasizes the prediction in the estimated model, which is essential for our research aim. It is suitable when the proposed model is formative and complex and includes many constructs (Hair et al., 2019). The guideline for analyzing and reporting PLS-SEM reported by Hair and colleagues (2019) was used for the data analysis and reporting. Based on this guideline, the analysis process should start with the evaluation of the measurement model, which we determined to be a formative model. Following the guidelines by Hair and colleagues (2019), the formative measurement model was assessed for indicator collinearity, statistical significance, and relevance of indicator weights; they are presented in the results. The indicator means a question. Then, if these results are satisfactory, the structured model should be evaluated. Again, following guidelines by Hair et al. (2019), the structural model was assessed in terms of the collinearity of constructs, the coefficient of determination (R^2), the blindfolding-based cross-validated redundancy measure (Q^2), the model's out-of-sample predictive power using PLSpredict, and the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients. Again, details of the evaluation are presented in the results. SmartPLS software (version 3) was used for data analysis.

Results

A total of 188 questionnaires were received through the online survey form. The sample size was decreased by 50 based on missing data. It was essential to drop responses that left the critical question (intention to report) blank or had too many missing responses (more than 70%) in each subscale. The sample had 25 unmarried teachers, and they responded “not applicable” to husband-related questions. A decision was made to exclude unmarried teachers in order to produce more homogenous sample. Thus, analysis was conducted for a total of 113 questionnaires, reflecting the number of married participants and those who had imputed means for missing data.

Sample Characteristics

The sample had the following characteristics. Most of the respondents (63.7%) were 31–40 years of age. The majority of them (89.4%) reported having children. Most of the participants (90.3%) held a bachelor’s degree, and their teaching experience ranged from 11 to 15 years for 30% of them. Of the participants, 81.4% did not have any training about child abuse and neglect or the reporting process, and 70.8% never had any reporting experience in the past. The participants’ description is listed in Table 6. The mean for intention to report is 6.02, with a standard deviation of .97. The actual responses ranged between 4 and 7. It has a normal distribution. The mean for each subscale is OE:6.1; BB:6; PC:5.4; CBS:4.6; DN:5.3; IN:5.6; MC:4.9.

Measurement Model Assessment

First, the type of measurement model was determined. There are two types of measurement models in PLS-SEM—the reflective and formative models. The indicators for each construct in the reflective model stem from the same domain, while the indicators for each construct in the formative model stem from multiple domains (Mikulić & Ryan, 2018). Conceptual and theoretical judgement indicated that this study model is

formative. A confirmatory tetrad analysis (CTA-PLS) was also calculated as a secondary method to evaluate the type of measurement model. Based on the guidelines of Hair et al. (2019), a formative measurement model was determined, as all the constructs in the model have at least one tetrad that is significantly different from zero.

The formative measurement model was assessed based on indicator collinearity, statistical significance, and relevance of the indicator weights (Hair et al., 2019). Convergent validity was not checked, as there is no alternative measure for the same construct (Cheah et al., 2018).

Indicator collinearity, the correlation between the indicators for each construct, was evaluated using the outer values of the variance indication factor (VIF). Most of the indicators' values were lower than 3 and a few were lower than 5, which is still acceptable. Only two indicators were deleted (MC44 = 6.4; MC47 = 6.9), as they were higher than 5, which could indicate collinearity issues (Hair et al., 2019). The values of the VIF are listed in Table 7.

The statistical significance and relevance of each indicator in the model were evaluated. According to Hair et al. (2019), if both the indicator's weight and outer loading are not significant, the indicator should be deleted. If the outer loading is significant but is .5 or lower, the indicator should be deleted unless there is a strong theoretical justification for keeping it. A total of 18 indicators were deleted from the model due to their very low outer loadings. The outer loading for indicator CBS23 was .46; it was not deleted because its value was not as low as the other deleted indicators. Also, deleting this item could affect the content validity of the model (Hair et al., 2019). The relevance of each indicator was evaluated using the path coefficients. The indicators OE 3, OE7, BB8, PC21, CBC29, MC43, MC46, IN38, and DN34 were more relevant. All the outer weights and loadings are listed in Table 7. The path coefficients for each indicator listed in Figure 2.

“Insert Table 7 about here”

Structural Model Assessment

After obtaining satisfactory outcomes for the measurement model, the structural model was assessed. The assessment included the collinearity of constructs, the coefficient of determination (R^2), the blindfolding-based cross-validated redundancy measure (Q^2), the model's out-of-sample predictive power using PLSpredict, and the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2019). Initially, the collinearity of constructs (predictors) was checked using inner VIF values. All the values were less than 3; therefore, no collinearity issues were identified.

Then, the R^2 of the endogenous construct (intention to report) was evaluated. R^2 is an indicator for the model's explanatory power and in-sample predictive power. Based on Hair et al. (2016), R^2 values should be considered substantial if $R^2 \sim .75$, moderate if $R^2 \sim .50$, and weak if $R^2 \sim .25$. The R^2 for intention to report is .384; therefore, this model has moderate explanatory power. More precisely, 38% of the variance in intention to report is explained by the three predictors in the model—attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

The predictive accuracy of the model was examined using the Q^2 , which was calculated using the blindfolding procedure (5000 samples setting). Q^2 values of 0, 0.25, and 0.5 indicate a small, medium, and large predictive accuracy of the model, respectively (Hair et al., 2019). The Q^2 for intention to report is .294; hence, the model has a medium predictive accuracy.

The model's predictive power also was evaluated using PLSpredict, which quantified the prediction errors in the endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2019). As an initial step, Q^2_{predict} was evaluated. Q^2_{predict} helped determine if the predictions using the

model outperform the most naïve benchmark (indicator's mean from the analysis subset). If the difference between the predictions and naïve benchmark is larger than 0, it indicates that predictions outperform the naïve benchmark. For this model, the Q^2_{predict} was .3, which means the predictions outperformed the naïve benchmark. The PLSpredict algorithm also produced root mean squared error (RMSE) and naïve benchmark using a linear regression model. The RMSE for the indicator of intention to report (0.817) was lower than the naïve LM benchmark (1.075), which means that the model has lower prediction errors and higher predictive power (Shmueli, 2019).

After the model's explanatory power and predictive power were substantiated, the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients were assessed using bootstrapping (5000 samples). All the path coefficients between predictors and the outcome were significant. Attitudes has the largest path coefficient ($\beta = .296, p < .001$). A more positive attitude was associated with higher intention to report. The higher perceived behavioral control also led to higher intention to report ($\beta = .255, p < .01$). Lastly, higher subjective norms were also associated with higher intention to report ($\beta = .245, p < .01$). Therefore, the hypothesis for this study is supported. Path coefficients are listed in Table 8.

"Insert table 8 about here"

Robustness Checks

The robustness of the PLS-SEM results was checked using confirmatory tetrad analysis (CTA-PLS), nonlinearity, endogeneity, and unobserved heterogeneity (Hair et al., 2019). The CTA-PLS was discussed earlier in this paper; based on its score, the model was ascertained to be formative. Nonlinearity was checked using bootstrapping for quadratic effects. No linearity issue was identified in this model, as all path coefficients ($\beta = -.035, p < .476$ for attitudes; $\beta = -.032, p < .677$ for subjective norms; and $\beta = .075, p < .259$ for perceived behavioral control) were not significant. Endogeneity is not relevant if is predictive-causal goals, therefore, it was not

checked (Hair et al., 2019). Lastly, unobserved heterogeneity occurs when there are subgroups of data, and they produce substantially different model estimates. The finite mixture partial least squares (FIMIX-PLS) approach was used to identify if there is an unobserved heterogeneity issue. Both Bayesian information criteria (BIC), and Consistent Akaike's information criterion (CAIC) supported the use of one segment (Sarstedt et al., 2011). Therefore, the entire data set was used for the analysis.

The Final Model

Due to the final sample size, the demographic factors (age, teaching experience, reporting experience, training, having children, and education level) were included in the model one by one. None of them were significant. Therefore, none of them were included in the model. In summary, the model has a close to moderate explanatory and predictive power, and all three predictors were significantly associated with intention to report. Figure 5 illustrates the final model.

"Insert Figure 5 about here"

Discussion

The analysis findings increase our understanding of the predictors of married female Omani schoolteachers' intention to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. The hypothesis that child abuse and neglect reporting attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly predict teachers' intention to report was fully supported. The three predictors have been identified in the literature as factors associated with reporting behavior of schoolteachers in other cultures (Zeinab & Hanna, 2020). The significance and magnitude of the associations between these predictors and intention to report were investigated only in a few studies across various cultures, and their results were inconsistent (Christodoulou et al., 2019; Feng et al., 2010). A different cultural context for each study or

different measuring tools could justify some of this inconsistency. Strictly following Fishbein and Ajzen's (2011) guidelines to measure attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, this study provides evidence for the strength of the association between these predictors and intention to report in a population that has never been studied with regard to this subject. The scale has close to moderate explanatory power and medium predictive accuracy, making it a valid scale; it was able to explain 38% of the variance in intention to report. This ability is due to the specificity of the measures of the predictors for reporting child abuse and neglect.

This model is successful in illustrating the effects of Omani culture on teachers' intention to report. All the predictors significantly predict the teachers' intention to report, are they are also highly informed by the collective culture of Omani society. Omani teachers are concerned about their salient referents' beliefs about reporting, and they are highly motivated to follow their recommendations regarding the reporting of abuse cases. Their behavior is typical in the context of collective societies (Al Saadoon et al., 2020). Availability of support from their husband, family, and school administration, as well as feeling safe, are determinants of teachers' perceived behavioral control. Seeking support demonstrates how people in a collective society treat themselves as a part of a unit instead acting as an individual. Omani teachers' feelings of responsibility to ensure family safety burden them when they think about reporting suspected cases.

Although knowledge alone is not sufficient to cause a behavioral change, it is nevertheless necessary (Bandura, 1977). In this sample, almost 80% of the participants did not have any training on child abuse and neglect or on the reporting process, which is supposed to improve teachers' knowledge. The absence of accurate knowledge could allow for inaccurate beliefs about child abuse and neglect, the reporting process, and the social welfare system in

Oman to develop and shape teachers' attitudes and perceived behavioral control about reporting behavior. This finding aligns with a previous qualitative study on Omani teachers (Zeinab et al., 2021). It is not enough to enact a mandatory reporting law; an environment that provides training about child abuse and neglect and the reporting process is needed to ensure this law's effectiveness.

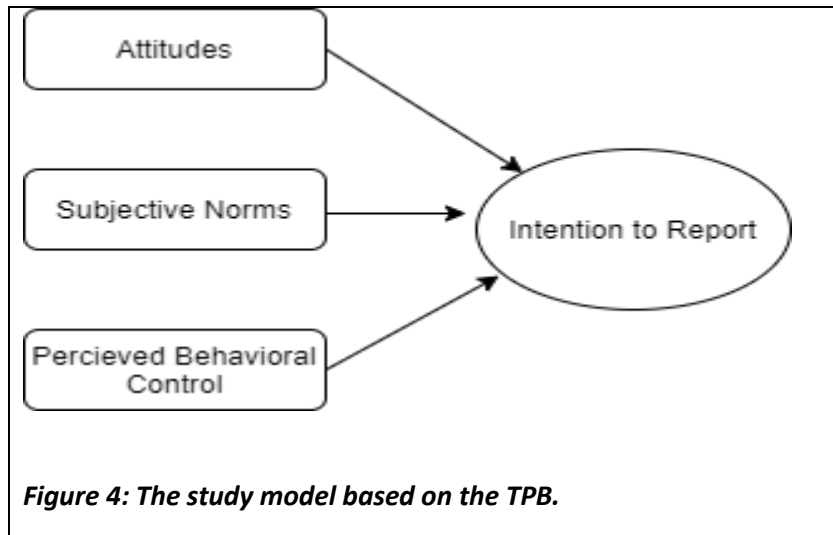
The findings show that teachers' intention to report is high, which is inconsistent with a previous qualitative study on Omani teachers (Zeinab et al., 2021). A possible reason for this inconsistency is the way the intention question was written. In this study, the question about teachers' willingness to report cases of child abuse and neglect was very general. The previous qualitative study showed that Omani teachers have a high intention to report suspected cases to the school administration but not to the official authority, for example, through a hotline (Zeinab et al., 2021). The specification of the reporting destination in the intention scale is essential for future studies.

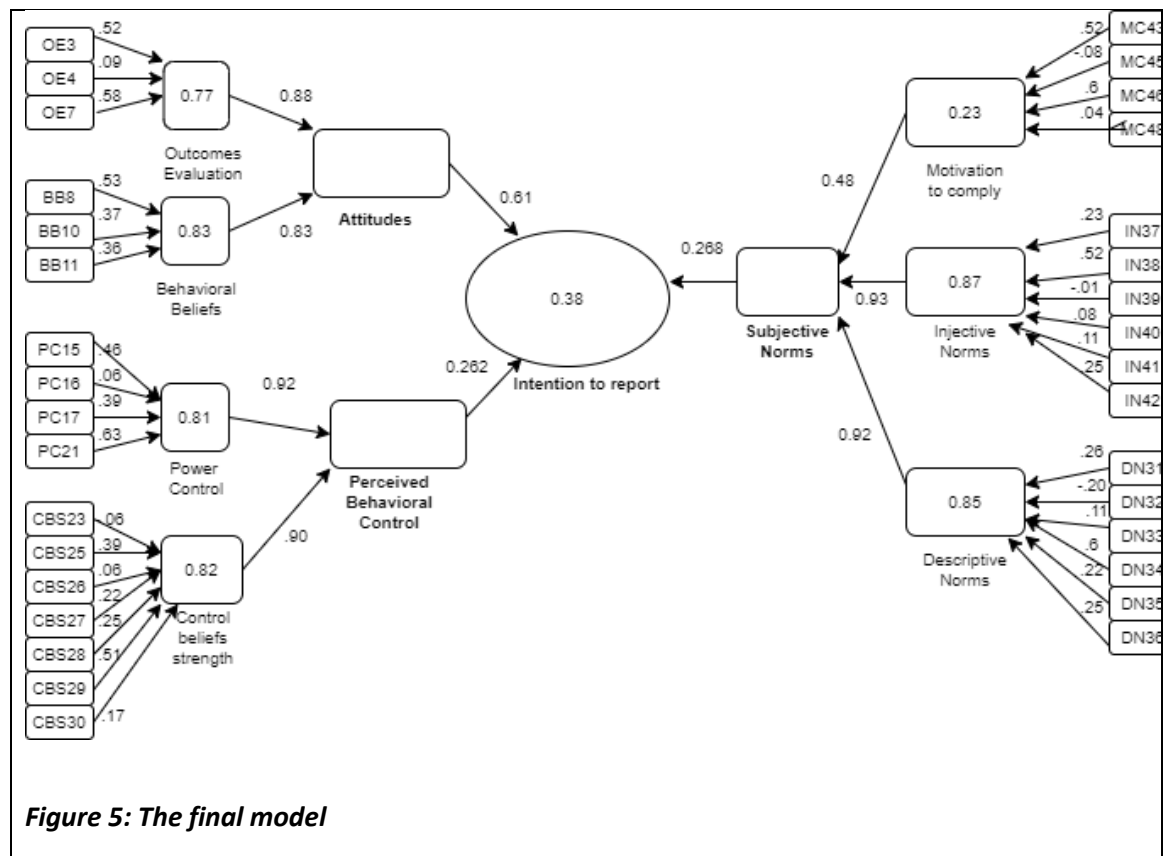
Generalizability and the study's limitations need to be considered. The generalizability of the findings is limited to married female Omani schoolteachers in the first cycle of basic education in the Muscat governorate. However, the Muscat governorate has the highest diversity in the country, so the results are more generalizable to the same population. There is also a limitation with regard to the measures. Zeinab & Hanna (2020) have shown that the severity of abuse and neglect and the type of abuse affect teachers' reporting behavior. Thus, including the severity and type of abuse and neglect as covariance factors would be appropriate in future studies.

Furthermore, this study focused only on married women; non-married teachers should be part of future studies, as their salient referents could differ. Using a single-item measure to report is another limitation, as many questionnaires were excluded due to missing data on the

single-item scale (Hair et al., 2016). In addition, such a scale does not allow for the adjustment of measurement error, thus decreasing their reliability. Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) advise using a one-item scale for the intention. This study also did not check for teachers' awareness about the mandatory reporting law and its effects on their intention to report. This study's findings are valuable in identifying the role of culture in the intention to report; the effects of child abuse type and severity and the effects of the mandatory reporting law should be integrated into future validation studies for this scale.

The findings of this study have implications for future studies. Since attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control explain a significant amount of the variance in the intention to report, we advocate for an interventional study targeting all the predictors or some of them. These predictors are beliefs that form the cognitive foundation of intention to report in Omani teachers. As such, targeting these beliefs using persuasive communication will most likely improve teachers' intention to report. The delivery method could be newspaper ads, flyers distributed in schools, TV messages, or in-person discussions (Ajzen, 2011). Using mass media, like TV, for intervention will not only help change the behavior of teachers but will also help people in Omani society more broadly change their beliefs and behavior. Accordingly, teachers' subjective norms will change. Another direction for future studies could be the further validation for this scale by using a larger sample size at a national level. Finally, future research should consider the prediction of actual behavior based on the intention to report, using a longitudinal study.





<i>Table 6: Demographic characteristics as reported by participants (N=113)</i>			
Factor	Description	N	%
Age in Years	20-30	26	23
	31-40	72	64
	41-50	14	12
	51-60	1	1
Education Level	College Diploma	8	7
	Bachelor	102	90.
	Graduate Degree	3	3
Whether they Have Children	Yes	101	89
	No	12	11
Education or Training in Child Abuse and Neglect?	Yes, professional development	18	16
	Yes, degree requirement	3	3
	No	92	81
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Experience	Yes	33	29
	No	80	71
Years of Teaching experience	0-5	29	26
	6-10	24	21
	11-15	34	30
	16-20	19	17
	21-25	4	3
	More than 25	3	3

Table 6: Demographic characteristics as reported by participants

<i>Table 7: VIF & Outer Weights Significance Testing Results</i>								
Formative Construct	Formative Indicators	VIF	Outer Weights	t value	P Value	Outer Loadings	t value	P Value
OE	OE3	1.636	0.502	2.981	0.003	0.854	9.324	0.000
	OE4	1.394	0.097	0.508	0.611	0.573	3.280	0.001
	OE7	1.388	0.586	3.555	0.000	0.880	11.036	0.000
PC	PC15	1.679	0.465	3.669	0.000	0.653	5.970	0.000
	PC16	2.168	0.066	0.406	0.685	0.576	4.938	0.000
	PC17	1.430	0.394	2.420	0.016	0.594	4.996	0.000
BB	BB10	1.326	0.373	3.501	0.000	0.745	9.821	0.000
	BB11	1.337	0.365	2.969	0.003	0.745	8.878	0.000
	BB8	1.286	0.539	5.039	0.000	0.834	13.085	0.000
CBS	CBS23	1.678	-0.064	0.384	0.701	0.460	3.543	0.000
	CBS25	1.816	0.394	2.037	0.042	0.653	6.177	0.000
	CBS26	2.891	-0.062	0.449	0.654	0.566	5.795	0.000
	CBS27	3.389	0.223	1.298	0.194	0.620	5.802	0.000
	CBS28	1.636	0.252	1.802	0.072	0.714	8.328	0.000
DN	DN31	2.356	0.209	1.000	0.318	0.723	4.397	0.000
	DN32	4.250	-0.208	0.875	0.381	0.777	5.348	0.000
	DN33	3.605	0.110	0.441	0.659	0.791	3.684	0.000
	DN34	3.899	0.612	1.787	0.074	0.926	6.120	0.000
	DN35	2.739	0.226	0.683	0.495	0.758	2.969	0.003
	DN36	1.588	0.257	1.268	0.205	0.723	4.392	0.000
MC	MC43	2.280	0.524	0.875	0.382	0.913	3.188	0.001
	MC45	3.389	-0.088	0.151	0.880	0.780	2.780	0.005
	MC46	3.123	0.600	0.781	0.435	0.933	3.214	0.001
	MC48	2.303	0.044	0.093	0.926	0.699	2.478	0.013

IN	IN37	2.198	0.238	1.244	0.214	0.796	4.934	0.000
	IN39	3.882	-0.015	0.060	0.952	0.830	5.171	0.000
	IN40	2.731	0.088	0.364	0.716	0.714	3.108	0.002
	IN41	2.053	0.116	0.366	0.714	0.697	2.633	0.008
	IN42	1.903	0.259	1.236	0.217	0.730	3.965	0.000

Table 7: VIF & Outer Weights Significance Testing Results

Table 8. Path Coefficients					
				Confidence Interval	
	Path Coefficients	t Values	P Values	2.5%	97.5%
Attitudes -> Behavioral Beliefs	0.910	47.037	0.000	0.874	0.949
Attitudes -> Intention to Report	0.296	2.919	0.004	0.101	0.497
Attitudes -> Outcomes Evaluation	0.890	40.195	0.000	0.852	0.939
Perceived Behavioral Control -> Control Beliefs Strength	0.915	51.567	0.000	0.882	0.951
Perceived Behavioral Control -> Intention to Report	0.255	2.563	0.010	0.102	0.490
Perceived Behavioral Control -> Power of Control	0.905	48.213	0.000	0.870	0.945
Subjective Norms -> Descriptive Norms	0.924	41.796	0.000	0.859	0.948
Subjective Norms -> Injunctive Norms	0.933	51.214	0.000	0.881	0.955
Subjective Norms -> Intention to Report	0.245	2.399	0.016	0.010	0.422
Subjective Norms -> Motivation to Comply	0.486	4.150	0.000	0.339	0.797

Table 8: Path Coefficients

Chapter#5: Discussion

The overall aim of this dissertation was to explore the factors associated with Omani schoolteachers' child abuse and neglect reporting behavior. The first manuscript was an integrative review that explored the factors associated with school personnel's child abuse and neglect reporting behavior across cultures. As no published studies about Omani schoolteachers' reporting behavior could be found, the integrative review sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential factors affecting reporting behavior of school personnel in other cultures. The second manuscript was a report of the qualitative portion that aimed to explore the factors associated with Omani schoolteachers' reporting behavior of suspected child abuse and neglect cases. The third manuscript was a report of the quantitative study that aimed to examine the predictive contribution of child abuse and neglect reporting attitudes, subjective norms, and the perceived behavioral control on intention to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect of Omani basic education (cycle one) teachers in the Muscat governorate.

In the integrative review, the factors associated with school personnel's child abuse and neglect reporting behavior were classified into three categories: system characteristics, victim characteristics, and reporter characteristics. System characteristics consisted of school setting, mandatory reporting law availability, and school education level. Victim characteristics entailed abuse severity, victim race, victim socioeconomic status, and type of victim's family. Reporter

characteristics included past experience, knowledge, working experience, attitudes, self-confidence, education and training, fears, uncertainty, and relationships. It is important to keep in mind that this review included articles from across the cultures, and it was not specific to Oman. Further, it included articles that addressed reporting behavior of any school personnel and was not limited to schoolteachers. The reason behind making the review more general, across cultures and for school personnel, was to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the potential factors that might affect reporting behavior in a school setting. In addition, there were no published studies done in Oman in this matter, so conducting a review specific to Oman was irrational. Although this review was not specific to Oman culture, this review furthered the current state of the science of reporting behavior by providing a snapshot of the factors associated with reporting behavior of school personnel across different cultures. Few articles included in this integrative review quantified the association between any of these factors and reporting behavior, indicating the need for such assessment in future studies. In this integrative review, culturally informed factors were identified, making exploring the role of culture in reporting behavior reasonable.

The second manuscript was a report of the qualitative findings. This study was specific about Omani schoolteachers in basic education in the Muscat governorate. The analysis findings revealed three themes. These themes were: 1) Reporting within an environment of educational resource scarcity; 2) Reporting within an environment of competing female social roles and their professional reporting role; 3) Reporting within an environment of complex and diverse abuse and neglect cases. This study was successful in providing an in-depth understanding of the factors affecting Omani schoolteachers' reporting behavior. Though the findings of this study have idiographic generalizability to teachers in the Muscat governorate only, it is a good start point for future studies in Oman culture.

The third manuscript was a report of the quantitative portion of the study. It was also specific about Omani schoolteachers in basic education. It investigated the predictive contribution of attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms toward child abuse and neglect reporting behavior on teachers' intention to report suspected abuse and neglect cases. The three predictors were significantly associated with the intention to report, explaining 38% of the variance. The study devised questionnaire had close to moderate explanatory power and medium predictive accuracy. The study was able to bridge the gaps that were identified in the integrative review. It emphasized the role of culture in reporting behavior and quantified the associations of intention to reporting with some of the associated factors.

The three components of the dissertation were integral to one another. First, the potential role of culture in reporting behavior was identified in the integrative review. Specifically, some culturally informed factors like attitudes, self-confidence and significant relationships were identified. These findings were aligned with the concepts of the theory of planned behavior (TPB), so the theory and the integrative review were adopted to guide the design of both the quantitative and qualitative portions of this dissertation. To validate the potential role of culture in reporting behavior, the second and third manuscripts were specific to Omani schoolteachers. After conducting the integrative review, we sought to limit the focus to schoolteachers instead of school personnel. School personnel have different educational preparations and working responsibilities; therefore, combining them in the same sample is debatable. Including other school personnel in separate studies would be more appropriate.

Second, the integrative review and the TPB served as a guide for interview guide and codebook development for the qualitative study. The interview guide had questions about attitudes, self-confidence, and subjective norms toward child abuse and neglect reporting behavior. The term of subjective norms was not used in the integrative review; however, the

term of significant relationships with others implies an inter-related concept. Other factors like years of experience, past experience, education level, and training were included in the demographic section. All of these factors also were included as prior codes in the analysis process. Since an exploration was the aim of this study, the open coding was utilized also to allow any potential factors to emerge. Open coding allowed some factors that were not identified in the integrative review, like gender and social roles to emerge.

Third, the findings of the integrative review and the TPB were also utilized to develop a study devised questionnaire to assess the predictive contribution of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control in the intention of Omani schoolteachers to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. Other factors like education level, training, past experience, and working experience were also included in the demographic section. However, none of these factors has a significant association with intention to report. Although these factors were identified in the review, the strength of their influence was either not studied or studied by few articles.

In this dissertation, the quantitative and qualitative portions were not integrated. Given the fact that there are no previous published studies in Oman about reporting behavior, this study lends itself to be an exploratory mixed-method design. The exploratory design involves completing the qualitative phase initially, then using the findings to structure the quantitative phase (Shorten & Smith, 2017). However, due to time restrictions, implementing this design was not feasible. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously and analyzed separately. As a future step, integration of the findings from both portions using a convergent mixed methods design would be appropriate to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors associated with Omani schoolteachers' reporting behavior (Shorten & Smith, 2017). Such integration is needed in the next step to validate and refine the scale used in the quantitative

study. To illustrate this further, the quantitative findings suggested that Omani teachers' intention to report was high. This finding was in contrast with the qualitative results. Teachers during focus groups explained that they have high intention to report to school administration and very low intention to report to authority outside school boundaries. The question used to measure intention to report was not specific about the reporting destination; rephrasing the question to be more specific might yield more accurate answers.

Another example where qualitative findings could enrich the questionnaire validity is the integration of gender-specific findings. The current version of the questionnaire does not have any questions that elicit the role of gender in reporting behavior, and all the participants in the quantitative portion were females. As a result, the quantitative findings did not provide any input about the role of gender in reporting behavior. The role of gender in Omani teachers' behavior was a prominent category in the qualitative analysis. Consequently, modifying the questionnaire to embrace this factor is needed.

The quantitative findings support the qualitative findings. The three predictors in the quantitative portion, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, were also identified as leading categories in the qualitative part. Significant relationships between these predictors and intention to report were found, providing a more substantial level of evidence about the role of these predictors in Omani teachers' intention to report. In addition, it sets the stage for interventional studies that target attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Interventional studies will provide a higher level of evidence about the associations between these predictors and intention to report (Gray et al., 2017). Since all of these predictors are beliefs, using persuasive communication through a variety of delivery methods is advocated (Ajzen, 2010). A persuasive communication about the importance of child abuse reporting could be disseminated in social media, tv programs, and posters in public places

and schools. Such dissemination is cost-effective and can be spread to a large number of teachers easily. In addition, an online training program, designed for teachers using persuasive communication, could be included as part of teachers' professional development program, with all teachers required to do it. Most of the countries that enacted mandatory reporting laws had established similar training programs.

The use of intention versus the actual reporting behavior should be addressed. The TPB supported the use of intention as a way to predict behavior. The empirical research found that intention to do a given behavior had a good predictive validity for the actual behavior. A meta-analysis of 48 studies found that the mean correlation between intention and behavior was .47, ranging from .45 to .62 (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). It is noteworthy that these articles targeted different behaviors and were not specific about child abuse reporting behavior. In addition, using the intention was more feasible to gain the sample, particularly that not all teachers had child abuse reporting experience. Due to the aforementioned reasons, the concept of intention was used instead of the actual reporting behavior.

The predictive validity of intention to report suspected cases of abuse, in particular sexual abuse, needs further assessment. Given the sensitive nature of child abuse reporting behavior, transferability of evidence that targeted other behaviors should be limited. The qualitative findings of this dissertation indicated that teachers had a higher intention to report sexual abuse. Yet, the statistics in Oman (2020) showed that out of substantiated cases, 46.1% were neglect cases, 31.1% physical abuse cases, 14.2% emotional abuse cases, and only 8.6% sexual abuse cases (MOSD, 2020). Although different reporters, not only teachers, reported these cases, their motivations to report certain types of abuse more than others could be the same for teachers. This pattern of reported fewer sexual abuse cases is also existing in other

countries. Mandatory reporters reported neglect and emotional abuse more than sexual and physical abuse (Mathews, 2014). Teachers, especially during focus group discussion, were vulnerable to the threat of social desirability. Future studies should examine the predictive validity of intention to report suspected cases of different types of child abuse and neglect.

Further, this dissertation targeted the factors associated with reporting behavior of all types of abuse and neglect. This approach is appropriate since this dissertation aimed to identify the factors related to Omani teachers reporting behavior of suspected cases of child abuse and neglect in general. Nonetheless, Omani teachers in the qualitative portion demonstrated different intentions to report for different types of abuse. They had a higher intention to report sexual abuse, followed by physical abuse if it is severe, and lastly emotional abuse. The role of type of abuse on reporting behavior was also established in other cultures. Some countries have adapted their mandatory reporting requirements based on the type of abuse (Mathews, 2014). Designing future studies that are specific for each type of abuse could yield a more in-depth understanding of reporting behavior of each type; hence, modifying the mandatory requirement as needed.

Policy Implications

The findings of this dissertation have important policy implications. Oman has enacted a mandatory reporting law and established a hotline for reporting (MSD, 2017). Schoolteachers are among the mandatory reporter professionals. These efforts are consistent with the international interventions to improve reporting rates. However, no evaluation of effectiveness for these efforts has been conducted in Oman yet. The findings of this dissertation illuminate crucial issues that might impede the effectiveness of these efforts, calling for Omani stakeholders' attention. The role of culture and collective communities' rules in Omani

schoolteachers' reporting behavior was evident in this study. Both the findings from quantitative and qualitative portions emphasized the influence of subjective norms in reporting behavior of schoolteachers in Oman, which is an expected finding in a collective community. The female social roles' effects in reporting behavior further diminished the teachers' ability to report.

Amid all of these social-cultural challenges to report, Omani teachers were also faced with resources scarcity. This scarcity entailed a lack of education and training, a high workload, and a lack of support staff. During the focus groups, most of the teachers admitted their unawareness of mandatory law and the hotline availability. An assessment of Oman's readiness for large-scale child abuse prevention programs revealed high readiness in terms of legislative mandates and policies and low in terms of human and technical resources (Al Saadoon et al., 2020). High workload and high student-to-teacher ratio, without staff support like teacher assistants, inevitably jeopardize teachers' ability to recognize and report child abuse cases, especially mild cases.

Most teachers did not have past reporting experience, as shown in qualitative and quantitative portions in this dissertation, and some just reported to school administration. This finding is critical. It could imply that either there were not many cases of abuse and neglect in Oman or that teachers were unable to either recognize or report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. This dissertation finds that the second possibility, that teachers are unable to recognize, or report suspected abuse and neglect, is more likely due to teachers' lack of knowledge, scarcity of resources, and lack of training support. It is the time for stakeholders to invest more efforts in improving the school system by providing more resources to schoolteachers. Improving the school systems would ultimately lead to improvement in human capabilities.

Theoretically, mandating teachers to report without recognition of the whole context will yield to either ineffectiveness or less-than-optimal effectiveness of this mandating law. This dissertation does not show only the cultural incongruence, but policy-action disconnect was also evident. To illustrate this further, although there was an effort to establish the hotlines for reporting in Oman, the qualitative findings revealed that most of the teachers were not even aware of it. Enacting laws must be accompanied by a lot of interventions to ensure people's ability to comply with these laws. How could the country hold a teacher responsible if she fails to report a child abuse case if that teacher has never been given any education about mandatory reporting law or child abuse training?

Teachers' empowerment by fulfilling their needs is advocated. This dissertation successfully unveiled some of these needs; nonetheless, addressing their additional needs is essential. In this dissertation, teachers showed high intention to report to school administrations compared to outside authorities like a hotline or any social service agencies. The reasons behind this preference are understandable. However, reporting to the school administration is not sufficient to protect the teachers from liability if the school administration fails to report the case. Child abuse reporting is a complex process that involves multiple parties. An interventional study with a collaborative community research approach is needed to reveal and address the teachers' needs further. This kind of research provides contextual sensitivity and long-lasting effects and provides a better connection between policy and action (Collins et al., 2018). A study that involves policy makers, schoolteachers, school administrations most likely will be productive to diminish the gap between policy and action.

Limitations

This dissertation has some limitations that need to be addressed. The findings are generalizable for Omani schoolteachers in basic education in the Muscat governorate. A national-level study is needed in order to generalize the findings to Omani culture and teachers in general. This dissertation was also limited to basic education, which enrolls children from first to fourth grades only. The teachers for older children and adolescents might encounter different challenges that are worth exploring. A study by Bryant (2009) indicated that teachers in elementary and middle schools made more child abuse reports than teachers in high schools.

In addition, in Oman the schools for older children and adolescents have male teachers; including them in a study will enrich our understanding of reporting behavior of both male and female Omani teachers. Inclusion of teachers from private schools should be done with extra attention to resources availability for schools and schoolteachers and socioeconomic status of families as potential cofounders. This dissertation excluded non-Omani teachers as they might not be familiar with Omani culture, which is the dissertation's focus. Exploring the teacher's reporting's challenges is needed as they could be unique to them. These needs could be, but are not limited to, safety concerns, fear of misinterpretations of cultural practice or norms, fear of losing their job, and unfamiliarity of reporting systems.

The data for this dissertation was collected from one governorate; a potential difference in intention to report teachers from different cities within the same governorate exists. In the qualitative portion, one focus group per city was conducted. This difference was due to, but was not limited to, the educational level of victims' families and their socioeconomic status, and the type of community if it is urban versus rural. Comparing the qualitative findings from different cities revealed the potential role of location in reporting behavior. However,

teachers were not asked to report their cities in the quantitative portion. Therefore, validation of the qualitative findings using the quantitative data was not possible.

Future Directions

This dissertation contributes to the science of suspected child abuse and neglect reporting behavior by improving the current understanding of the factors associated with such reporting behavior of schoolteachers. Further, it illustrates and validates the role of culture in reporting behavior. It provides a scientific foundation about the reporting behavior of Omani schoolteachers. Based on these dissertation's findings, there are multiple directions for future studies. Refinement of the scale used in the quantitative study could be a starting point for future studies. The refinement should be made by integrating the qualitative and quantitative findings using the convergent mixed methods design. Then, the questionnaire validity could be retested with a larger sample size; a national sample could be utilized.

An interventional study with a community collaborative approach is another possible way for future studies. Far-reaching effects in improving reporting rates had been associated with mandatory reporting laws in other countries (Mathews, Lee, & Norman, 2016; McTavish et al., 2017). So forth, Oman could benefit from this law as well. A community collaborative approach aims to identify, address, and respond to teachers' concerns and needs to improve their reporting behavior; hence, improve mandatory law effectiveness.

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