

Prevalence of Bullying and Intervention among the Pupils and Teachers in the Selected Public Elementary Schools in Region III, Philippines*

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Abstract

The study aimed to assess the perception of the nine hundred eighty-six (986) Grade V and Grade VI pupils and two hundred ninety-one (291) teachers on the prevalence of bullying and the level of intervention on bullying. The study was conducted in the selected elementary schools in the 18 Schools Division in Region III, Philippines.

The findings reveal that out of 291 teachers, 52.80 % are 41 years old and above, 87.30 % are female, 80.10 % are married, 59.11 % are BS degree holders with MA units, 51.89 % have rendered more than the mean length of service of 13.45 years, and 97.94 % hold the eligibility from either the Professional Board Examination for Teachers or the Licensure Examination for Teachers. Out of 986 pupils, 79.40 % are 11-12 years old, 63.10 % are girls, and 50.90 % are in Grade V.

According to 44.80 % of the pupils, the pupils in the same grade level bully others the most. Saying mean things to others, teasing others, and calling others names were done by boys and girls according to 28.80 %, 8.34 %, and 42.28 % of the pupils respectively. It was perceived by 35.80 % and 33.16 %, respectively that nobody inflicted physical harm and tried to hurt others' feelings. Bullying is perceived by 57.20 % to happen in the classroom. The pupils sometimes witnessed bullying in school. Telling the teacher was the type of intervention for the 54.26 % pupils.

For 30.93 % of the teachers, the pupils in a higher grade level bully others the most. Inflicting physical harm, teasing others, and hurting others' feelings were perceived by 43.40 %, 54.30 % and 58.42 % of the teachers respectively to be done by boys and girls. The boys, according to 49.48 % of the teachers, said mean things to others. The teachers witnessed a mean of 3.38 bullying activities per day. According to 70.79 % of the teachers, bullying happens in the classroom and 37.80 % perceived that the 6th Grade pupils have the biggest problem with bullying. Conference with the parents was the type of intervention for 92.10 % of the teachers.

Key Words: Bullying, Elementary School, Intervention, Prevalence, Region III –Philippines

Introduction

The lack of teachers, classrooms, chairs, textbooks, absenteeism, drop-out, fraternities, and hazing are among the most common problems that beset the country's educational system. These problems have been given much attention by all the stakeholders. Bullying, its consequences and the extent of seriousness is an equally important concern that continues to remain unchecked in recent years.

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*This study was undertaken in selected public elementary schools in Region III, Philippines during the school year 2013-2014 to assess the prevalence of bullying as to the grade level of pupils who bully others the most; the kind of bullying and sex of pupil involved in bullying; frequency of witnessing bullying; place where bullying happens; grade level with the biggest problem on bullying; and the level of intervention on bullying.

It is a problem for the teachers, pupils, parents, peers, and also for the innocent victims. Learners who are picked on, made fun of, ostracized, harassed, and humiliated and targeted by fellow learners over a period of years may build up anger and hatred that could explode into physical violence (Sanders & Phye, 2004). The negative impact of bullying on students, teachers, parents, school properties, the community, and the educational process is well-documented (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). However there are still many incidences of bullying that require immediate attention. Despite the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (R.A. 10627), an act requiring all elementary and secondary schools in the Philippines to adopt policies to prevent and address the acts of bullying in their institutions, bullying in the public elementary schools in Region III, Philippines continues to be a serious and prevalent problem that requires documentation and intervention.

Statement of the Problem

The study answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teachers in terms of (1.1) age, (1.2) sex, (1.3) civil status, (1.4) highest educational attainment, (1.5) length of service, and (1.6) eligibility?
2. What is the profile of the pupils in terms of (2.1) age, (2.2) sex, and (2.3) grade level?
3. How may the level of prevalence on bullying as perceived by the pupils be described as to the (3.1) grade level of pupils who bully others the most, (3.2) kind of bullying and sex of pupil involved in bullying, (3.3) frequency of witnessing bullying, and (3.4) place where bullying happens?
4. How may the level of prevalence on bullying as perceived by the teachers be described as to the (4.1) grade level of pupils who bully others the most, (4.2) kind of bullying and sex of pupil involved in bullying, (4.3) frequency of witnessing bullying, (4.4) place where bullying happens, and (4.5) grade level with the biggest problem on bullying?
5. How may the type intervention on bullying as perceived by pupils be described in terms of the frequency of the following: (5.1) hit them, (5.2) tell the teacher, (5.3) walk away, (5.4) ask them to stop, and (5.5) bully back?
6. How may the type intervention on bullying as perceived by teachers be described in terms of the frequency of the following: (6.1) cell phone/telephone call home from the school, (6.2) conference with the parent, (6.3) meet with the parent, (6.4) suspension from school, (6.5) expulsion from school, (6.6) detention, and (6.7) nothing?

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the behaviorist theory developed by B.F. Skinner (Lejeune, Richelle, & Weardon, 2006) and the problem behavior theory (Jessor & Jessor, 1977). The behaviorist theory proposes that people respond to their environment but they also operate on their environment to produce certain consequences. The problem behaviour theory states that involvement in one problem behavior may lead to involvement in another problem behavior.

Methodology

The study was conducted in randomly selected public elementary schools in eighteen schools divisions in Region III, Philippines. The stratified random sampling procedure was used in the selection of the 986 Grade V and Grade VI pupils and 221 teachers from the Divisions of Zambales, Olongapo City, Angeles City, Pampanga, Mabalacat City, City of San Fernando, Tarlac Province, Tarlac City, Balanga City, Province of Bataan, Bulacan, Meycauayan City, City of San Jose Del Monte, Nueva Ecija, City of Munoz, Cabanatuan City, Gapan City, and Aurora. The study used the descriptive-survey design.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Teachers

The demographic profile of the teachers is presented in Table 1. The data indicate that 153 (or 52.58 %) belong to the age group 41 and above, and are older than the mean of 40.09 years, 254 (or 87.30 %) are female, 233 (or 80.10 %) are married, 172 (or 59.11 %) are BS degree holders with MA units, 151 (or 51.89 %) have rendered more than the mean length of service of 13.45 years, and majority (or 97.94 %) hold either the Professional Board Examination for Teachers (PBET, 53.95 %) or Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET, 43.99 %) eligibility.

Teaching in the elementary level is viewed as a woman’s profession and females are regarded as more nurturing than males (Paton, 2013). Majority of the teachers are married adults, who are willing to accept several tasks and responsibilities. In addition to their baccalaureate degree, teachers enroll in the Master’s degree program for professional advancement and for promotion. They have remained loyal to their profession as evidenced by rendering more than a decade of service. Passing the Professional Board Examination for Teachers or the Licensure Examination for Teachers is one of the requirements to become eligible for teaching the public elementary schools in the Philippines.

Table 1: Distribution of the Teachers According to the Demographic Profile

Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage	Length of Service (years)	Frequency	Percentage
46 and above	106	36.43	21 and above	79	27.15
41-45	47	16.15	17-20	45	15.46
36-40	49	16.84	14-16	27	9.28
31-35	50	17.18	11-13	22	7.56
26-30	30	10.31	7-10	50	17.18
21-25	9	3.09	4-6	31	10.65
			0-3	37	12.72
Total	291	100.00	Total	291	100.00
	Mean = 40.09			Mean = 13.45	

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Eligibility	Frequency	Percentage
Male	37	12.70	PBET	157	53.95
Female	254	87.30	Civil Service	6	2.06
			LET	128	43.99
Total	291	100.00	Total	291	100.00

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	58	19.90
Married	233	80.10
Total	291	100.00

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
BS Degree	63	21.65
BS Degree with MA units	172	59.11
Master’s Degree	47	16.15
MA with Doctoral Units	6	2.06
Doctoral Degree	3	1.03
Total	291	100.00

Demographic Profile of Pupils

The data on demographic profile (Table 2) show that 783 (or 79.40 %) out of 986 of the pupils are 11-12 years old, 25 (or 2.50 %) are 13 or more than 13 years old, with a mean age of 11.19, 622 (or 63.10 %) are girls, and 502 (or 50.90 %) are in Grade V.

The pupils are very young and are classified in their late childhood with age ranging from 6 to 12 years. This is the stage where the child develops self-help skills, social help skills, school skills and play-skills(<http://www.togetheragainstbullying.org/elementary-school-ages>).

Table 2: Distribution of the Pupils According to the Demographic Profile

Age (years)	Frequency	Percent	Sex	Frequency	Percent	Grade Level	Frequency	Percent
9-10	178	18.10	Boy	364	36.90	Grade V	502	50.90
11-12	783	79.40	Girl	622	63.10	Grade VI	484	49.10
13 and above	25	2.50						
Total	986	100.00	Total	986	100.00	Total	986	100.00

Mean = 11.19 years old

The Pupils' and Teachers' Perception on the Grade Level of Pupils Who Bully Others the Most

The data in Table 3 show the pupils' and teachers' perception on the grade level of pupils who bully others the most. Out of 986 respondents, 442 (or 44.80 %) of the pupils perceived that pupils in the same grade level bully others the most. Out of 291 respondents, 90 (or 30.93 %) of the teachers perceived that pupils in a higher grade level bully others the most. Most bullies victimize students in the same class or year, although 30 percent of victims report that the bully was older, and approximately ten percent report that the bully was younger (Sampson, 2002).

Table 3: Pupils' and Teachers' Perception on the Grade Level of the Pupils Who Bully Most

Grade of the pupils(s) who bully others the most	Pupils		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. In the same grade	442	44.80	56	19.24
2. In the same grade but in a different class	159	16.10	74	25.43
3. In a lower grade	43	4.40	63	21.65
4. In a higher grade	42	4.30	90	30.93
5. I haven't been bullied/I haven't seen pupil being bullied	300	30.40	8	2.75
Total	986	100.00	291	100.00

Bullying begins at a very early age, even in preschool. Until about age 7, bullies appear to choose their victims at random. Thereafter, they single out specific children to torment on a regular basis. Nearly twice as much bullying goes on in grades two to four as in grades six to eight. As the bullies grow older, they tend to use less physical abuse and more verbal abuse (<http://www.healthofchildren.com/B/Bullies.html#ixzz3b1kgeT2Q>).

Pupils' and Teachers' Perception on the Kind of Bullying and Sex of Pupil Involved in Bullying

The pupils' and teachers' perception on the kind of bullying and the sex of pupil involved in bullying is presented in Table 4. Most (35.80 %) of the pupils perceived that nobody, while 43.30 % of the teachers perceived that boys and girls inflicted physical harm. Saying mean things to others was perceived by 284 (or 28.80 %) of the pupils to be done by boys and girls, 144 (or 49.48 %) of the teachers perceived that boys said mean things to others. Teasing others was perceived by 378 (or 38.34 %) of the pupils and by 158 (or 54.30 %) of the teachers to be done by boys and girls. Calling others names was perceived by 417 (or 42.29 %) of the pupils and by 155 (or 53.26 %) of the teachers to be done by boys and girls. Majority (33.16 %) of the pupils perceived that nobody, while 58.42 % of the teachers perceived that boys and girls tried to hurt others' feelings. Both the pupils and teachers perceived that verbal and emotional bullying was inflicted more than physical bullying.

Both genders are involved in bullying. Studies showed that males inflict more bullying than females (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). Males not only inflicted more bullying, but are also exposed to more bullying (Cohn & Canter, 2003). In the study involving grade five and grade seven students, it was revealed that 60% of the girls were bullied only by boys, 20% bullied by both boys and girls (Olweus, 1993). A large percentage, 80% of the boys reported that they were bullied by males. Boys are typically bullied by boys, while girls are bullied by both boys and girls (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

Table 4: Pupils’ and Teachers’ Perception on the Kind of Bullying and the Sex of Pupil Involved in Bullying

Pupils	Boys and Girls	Boys	Group of Boys	Girls	Group of Girls	Nobody	Total	Total
Physical harm	27.69	20.18	10.85	3.04	2.43	35.80	986	100.00
Said mean things to you	28.80	18.36	11.26	10.14	2.94	28.50	986	100.00
Teased you	38.34	20.28	10.95	7.20	2.84	20.39	986	100.00
Called you names	42.29	16.94	7.30	5.78	1.83	25.86	986	100.00
Tried to hurt your feeling	33.06	17.24	7.40	6.19	2.94	33.16	986	100.00

Teachers	Boys and Girls	Boys	Group of Boys	Girls	Group of Girls	Nobody	Total	Total
Physical harm	43.30	16.84	35.40	1.37	0.00	3.09	291	100.00
Said mean things to others	49.48	19.93	18.56	4.81	4.47	2.75	291	100.00
Teased others	54.30	20.27	19.59	1.37	2.75	1.72	291	100.00
Called others names	53.26	20.96	18.21	1.72	1.72	4.12	291	100.00
Tried to hurt other’s feelings	58.42	14.09	18.90	1.37	4.47	2.75	291	100.00

Pupils’ and Teachers’ Perception on the Frequency of Witnessing Bullying

Table 5 summarizes the pupils’ perception on the frequency of witnessing bullying. It was perceived that the pupils: sometimes (2.90) see a pupil bullying another pupil in school, have been sometimes (2.79) bullied in school, and have rarely (2.16) bullied another pupil in school. Overall, it was perceived that the pupils sometimes (2.62) witnessed bullying in school.

Table 5: Pupils’ Perception on the Frequency of Witnessing Bullying

Number of Times Seen Bullying	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
1. How often you have been bullied in the school?	2.79	Sometimes
2. How often have you bullied another pupil at school?	2.16	Rarely
3. How often do you see a pupil bullying another pupil at the school?	2.90	Sometimes
Overall Weighted Mean	2.62	Sometimes

Table 6 summarizes the teachers’ perception on the frequency of witnessing bullying. It was perceived that 264 (or 90.72 %) out of 291 teachers witnessed 0-5, 6 (or 2.06 %) witnessed 20-25, with a mean of 3.38 bullying activities per day. In the study on the elementary school teachers’ perception of bullying and the need for bullying prevention programs in a city in southeastern Wisconsin, it was revealed that the first grade teachers did not see daily bullying occurring, while at least 25% of second, third, and fifth grade teachers saw bullying occurring daily. In the same study, bullying seemed to be more of a common occurrence in second grade than in fourth grade, when one might assume the opposite would be true (Gerend, 2007).

Table 6: Teachers’ Perception on the Frequency of Witnessing Bullying per Day

Number of times a day witness bullying	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	264	90.72
6-10	18	6.19
11-19	3	1.03
20-25	6	2.06
Total	291	100.00
Mean = 3.38		

Pupils' and Teachers' Perception on the Place Where Bullying Happens

The pupils' and teachers' perceptions on the place where bullying happens are presented in Table 7. Majority (564 or 57.20 %) of the 986 pupils and 206 (or 70.79 %) of the 291 teachers perceived that bullying happens in the classroom. On the contrary, 15 (or 1.50 %) of the pupils perceived that bullying happens in the canteen, 2 (or 0.69 %) of the teachers perceived that bullying happens in the tricycle/jeepney.

Bullying is believed to take place on the way to and from school but bullying takes place within the school where there is inadequate or no adult supervision like the hallways, the cafeteria, restrooms, locker rooms, school grounds, playground, bathrooms, and in the classrooms before lessons start (Sheras, 2002). It was shown that 50 % of bullying actually occurs in the classroom itself, and 35 % occur in the school bathrooms (Harachi, Catalano & Hawkins, 1999).

Table 7: Pupils' and Teachers' Perception on the Place Where Bullying Happens

Place where bullying happens	Pupils		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. Classroom	564	57.20	206	70.79
2. Hallways	198	20.10	26	8.93
3. Comfort Rooms	15	1.50	n.a.	n.a.
4. Canteen	65	6.60	n.a.	n.a.
5. Playground	144	14.60	57	19.59
Tricycle/Jeepney	n.a.	n.a.	2	0.69
Total	986	100.00	291	100.00

n.a. – not applicable

Teachers' Perception on the Grade Level that has the Biggest Problem on Bullying

Table 8 presents the data on the teachers' perception on the grade level that has the biggest problem on bullying. Most of the 291 teachers perceived that the 6th (110 or 37.80 %), 5th (73 or 25.09 %), and 4th (67 or 23.02 %) Grades are the top three ranking grade levels having the biggest problem with bullying. Bullying increase at the elementary level; reach its peak at secondary level and has a tendency to decrease in 11th and 12th grades (Salmivalli, 2002).

Table 8: Teachers' Perception on the Grade Level that has the Biggest Problem on Bullying

What grades do you think have the biggest problems with bullying?	Frequency	Percentage
Kindergarten	1	0.34
1st Grade	8	2.75
2nd Grade	7	2.41
3rd Grade	25	8.59
4th Grade	67	23.02
5th Grade	73	25.09
6th Grade	110	37.80
Total	291	100.00

Pupils' and Teachers' Perception on the Level of Intervention

Table 9 presents a summary of the pupils' and teachers' perception on the level of intervention. Telling the teacher was the type of intervention perceived by 535 (or 54.26 %) of the 986 pupils. Conference with the parents was the type of intervention perceived by 268 (or 92.10 %) of the 291 teachers. Students can assertively ask a bully to stop, ask friends to help, notify adults of what is going on, and continue to let adults know if the bullying continues (Sheras, 2002). Schools with helpful and visible principals experienced less violence than schools whose principals were unhelpful and invisible (Beane, 1999). There was an inverse relationship between amount of adult supervision and bullying problems (Olweus, 1993).

Table 9: Pupils' and Teachers' Perception on the Type of Intervention

Type of Intervention	Pupils		Type of Intervention	Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
Hit them	31	3.14	Cell phone/Telephone call home from the school	1	0.34
Tell the teacher	535	54.26	Conference with the Parent	268	92.10
Walk Away	95	9.63	Meet with the Parent	11	3.78
Ask them to stop	262	26.57	Suspension from School	7	2.41
Bully back	63	6.39	Expulsion from School	1	0.34
			Detention	2	0.69
			Nothing	1	0.34
Total	986	100.00	Total	291	100.00

Conclusions

Majority of the teachers in the selected public elementary schools in Region III, Philippines are married, female adults, BS degree holders with MA units, have rendered more than a decade of service and are eligible for government service. Majority of the pupils are girls in their late childhood and are in Grade V. The pupils perceived that (1) the pupils in the same grade level bully others the most; (2) saying mean things to others, teasing others, and calling others names are done by boys and girls; (3) nobody inflicts physical harm and hurts others' feelings; (4) bullying happens in the classroom; (5) the pupils sometimes witness bullying in school; and (6) telling the teacher is the type of intervention.

The teachers perceived that (1) the pupils in a higher grade level bully others the most; (2) inflicting physical harm, teasing others, and hurting others' feelings are done by boys and girls; (3) the boys say mean things to others; (4) 3.38 bullying activities happen per day; (5) bullying happens in the classroom; (6) the 6th Grade pupils have the biggest problem with bullying; and (7) conference with the parents is the type of intervention.

Recommendations

The teachers should incorporate lessons on peer relation, respect, responsibility for others, and non-violence in their classes in Values Education, Social Studies, and Physical Education. The school administrators should adopt interventions aimed at improving social and interpersonal skills among boys and girls. Increase adult supervision, security guards or police visibility at key times (e.g. recess, lunch and going home). A comprehensive intervention program that involves the entire school community (pupils, parents, and school staff) should be implemented to ensure a safe and optimal learning environment. A similar study should be conducted in the elementary schools in other Regions of the country to validate the findings. A follow-up study on the perception of the guidance counselors, school administrators, and parents on the prevalence of bullying and intervention measures should be conducted.

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