

The bullying experience and its effect on learning outcome of Grade 5 learners in selected schools of East1 District, Division of Butuan City

Aileen C. Dandanon

Agusan Colleges, Inc.

Butuan City, Caraga, Philippines

Email address: aileen.dandanon@deped.gov.ph

ABSTRACT

The study determined the effect of bullying experience on the learning outcome of Grade 5 learners in selected schools of East I District, Division of Butuan City, for the school year 2019-2020. On the bullying experience, the male respondents disagreed that they experienced physical and sexual bullying. The male respondents agreed that they experienced verbal bullying, social bullying, and prejudicial bullying. The female respondents disagreed that they experienced physical bullying. They agreed that they experienced verbal bullying, social bullying, and prejudicial bullying. However, the female respondents disagreed that they experienced sexual bullying. Regarding the learning outcome, a majority of the respondents achieved a satisfactory outcome. It was followed by a very satisfactory learning outcome. On the test of difference, there is no significant difference in the level of perception of male and female respondents on bullying experience. On the test of effect, verbal bullying, social bullying, and prejudicial bullying had a significant effect on the learning outcome of the learners; physical bullying and sexual bullying had no significant effect on the learning outcome of the learners. Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn: bullying experiences in school, including verbal, social, and prejudicial bullying, pose obstacles and hindrances to learners' development and their ability to study effectively. Physical and sexual bullying did not bother, disturb, or hinder the studies of the learners in school. The Grade 5 learners are average and above average in their learning outcomes. Bullying experiences are not a differentiating factor in the level of perception of male and female respondents. Verbal bullying, social bullying, and prejudicial bullying experiences are influencing factors on the learning outcomes of the learners. Physical and sexual bullying experiences do not influence the learning outcomes of learners. Based on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made: school heads should implement a strict rule prohibiting bullying practices in school to avoid hindrances to learners' studies. The teachers should monitor the activities of the learners in school to avoid bullying practices. The Grade 5 learners should study their lessons diligently to improve their learning outcomes. They should avoid getting involved in bullying practices in school. Researchers should undertake a study similar to the present research work to verify the validity of the results.

Keywords: the bullying experience, learning outcome, verbal bullying

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying in schools is a pervasive issue that negatively influences learners' interest and engagement in their studies. It disrupts their minds and emotions, diverts their attention from learning tasks, and ultimately diminishes their concentration in the classroom. When learners are subjected to bullying, their motivation to learn weakens, discouraging them from focusing on their academic responsibilities. The Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 provides a clear definition of the act, identifying it as any severe or repeated use by one or more learners of written, verbal, or electronic expressions, or physical acts or gestures, or a combination thereof, directed at another learner. Such acts result in creating reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm, damage to property, or a hostile school environment that substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of the school (Maglasang, 2015).

The consequences of bullying are not only immediate but also long-term, manifesting in both physical and psychological forms. Learners who experience bullying may withdraw from family and school activities, develop tendencies to seek isolation, and become increasingly shy. They often suffer from physical complaints such as headaches, as well as emotional and psychological symptoms including panic attacks, insomnia, exhaustion, and recurring nightmares. These effects diminish their capacity to focus on learning and can hinder participation in school-related tasks. Furthermore, the presence of misbehaved learners who perpetuate bullying discourages victims from sustaining an interest in their studies, which may ultimately lead to school avoidance and, in severe cases, the abandonment of formal education if no effective measures are implemented to curb the problem.

The researcher, as a practicing elementary school teacher, is particularly interested in exploring how experiences of bullying affect the learning outcomes of Grade 5 learners. At this developmental stage, children are highly vulnerable to peer influences and environmental stressors, making it crucial to understand the academic consequences of bullying and to identify protective strategies that promote engagement and academic persistence.

This study is anchored on the conceptual framework that different forms of bullying—physical, verbal, sexual, social, and prejudicial—directly affect learners' academic outcomes. Physical bullying, such as being punched, slapped, or kicked, inflicts bodily pain that disturbs learners' emotions and decreases their willingness to participate in classroom activities. Verbal bullying, which includes insults, humiliation, and antagonism, causes learners to feel inferior in academic settings and fosters a sense of hostility within the peer environment, discouraging active participation. Sexual bullying instills fear, humiliation, and feelings of insecurity, leading to absenteeism and avoidance of class participation. Social bullying isolates learners from group activities that cultivate companionship, teamwork, and collaborative learning, thus discouraging cooperation and active engagement in academic tasks. Prejudicial bullying exposes learners to bias and unfavorable treatment, resulting in feelings of exclusion and unwelcome participation in group settings, which diminishes motivation and the desire to perform academically.

Maglasang (2015) further emphasized that bullying severely undermines the academic progress of hardworking learners by distracting them from their goals and discouraging perseverance in their studies. The long-term consequences extend beyond the classroom, as

victims may face difficulties in their career development and emotional stability. In this regard, the study's research paradigm positions bullying experiences of male and female Grade 5 learners as the independent variable, while the dependent variable is their learning outcome. This paradigm highlights the necessity of examining the impact of bullying in order to develop effective interventions that ensure a safe, supportive, and conducive learning environment for all learners.

Statement of the problem

The study determined the effect of bullying experience on the learning outcome of Grade 5 learners in selected schools of East I District, Division of Butuan City.

1. How do male and female respondents experience bullying in terms of physical, verbal, sexual, social, and prejudicial aspects?
2. What is the level of learning outcome of respondents?
3. Is there a significant difference in the bullying experience of the male and female respondents?
4. Is there a significant effect of bullying experience on the learning outcome of respondents?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design, which was deemed appropriate as it sought to describe the experiences of bullying among Grade 5 learners and determine their effect on learning outcomes. The design enabled the researcher to present an accurate account of the bullying situations encountered by the respondents and assess the significance of their relationship to academic performance, using suitable statistical tools to draw valid conclusions.

The research was conducted in two elementary schools under East I, Butuan District, Division of Butuan City, namely Pianing Elementary School and Taguibo Elementary School. Pianing Elementary School is situated in Barangay Pianing, approximately five kilometers from the national highway leading to Surigao City from Butuan City. Taguibo Elementary School, on the other hand, is located in Barangay Taguibo, about fifteen kilometers away from the same highway and roughly three kilometers from Pianing Elementary School. These schools were selected as the research environment to provide an appropriate context for the study of bullying experiences and their effects on learners' academic performance.

The respondents consisted of 138 Grade 5 learners drawn from the two selected schools, with the study employing complete enumeration to cover the entire population. At Pianing Elementary School, there were 71 respondents, of whom 45 were male and 26 were female, representing 51.4% of the total sample. Meanwhile, Taguibo Elementary School contributed 67 respondents, comprising 33 males and 34 females, which accounted for 48.6% of the population. In total, the respondents included 51 males and 87 females, representing the full 138 learners in the population. This approach ensured that the data reflected the perspectives of all eligible Grade 5 learners within the research locale.

Data collection relied on a research instrument consisting of two components: the Bullying Experience Research Questionnaire and the learning outcomes measured through the 4th Quarter Examination. The questionnaire was designed to assess bullying experiences across five dimensions—physical, verbal, sexual, social, and prejudicial—using a Likert scale ranging

from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree). The instrument was adapted from Maglasang (2015) and underwent review and revision by the Panel of Examiners of the Agusan Colleges Incorporated Graduate School to ensure validity, clarity, and appropriateness before its use in the study.

After securing approval, the researcher sought formal permission from the Superintendent of Schools of the Division of Butuan City to administer the instrument. Once authorization was granted, the researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to the respondents, allowing them one hour and thirty minutes to accomplish the task. The instruments were then collected, and the data were systematically recorded, analyzed, and interpreted. Quantification of data followed established scales, with bullying experiences categorized from “Never at All” (1.0–1.8) to “All the Time” (4.21–5.0), while learning outcomes were graded and rated from “Very Unsatisfactory” (74 and below) to “Outstanding” (94 and above).

To analyze the data, several statistical treatments were employed. Frequency counts were used to identify the number of respondents corresponding to different levels of bullying experience and learning outcomes. Percentages were computed to present these frequencies proportionally. Weighted mean analysis determined the overall perceptions of the respondents regarding bullying and its influence on learning. To compare experiences between groups, the t-test was applied to establish whether significant differences existed between male and female respondents. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which bullying experiences influenced the learning outcomes of Grade 5 learners. These procedures ensured that the findings were supported by rigorous and appropriate methods of statistical evaluation, allowing the study to provide meaningful insights into the relationship between bullying and academic performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results highlight the extent of manifestation of bullying experiences among learners in terms of physical, verbal, sexual, social, and prejudicial forms, as well as the level of their learning outcomes. Statistical tests were also employed to determine significant differences in bullying experiences between male and female respondents, as well as the effect of these experiences on their academic performance.

Bullying experiences

The findings on physical bullying revealed that both male and female learners generally disagreed with statements about being slapped, kicked, or physically harmed by classmates, indicating a low extent of such experiences. In some cases, both males and females acknowledged receiving unwelcome touches from classmates, to which they responded neutrally, suggesting moderate occurrence. Males reported sometimes being punched in the head (wm = 3.0), while females experienced being locked in a confined space (wm = 3.0). The overall weighted mean of 2.5 for males and 2.0 for females reflected a low extent of physical bullying. Oliveus (2013) noted that physical bullying is the most obvious form of bullying, involving physical actions to gain power over others. Similarly, Hong (2012) emphasized that physical bullying is characterized by aggressive behavior intended to hurt or discomfort another, typically perpetrated by those with greater size, strength, or peer support.

In terms of verbal bullying, both male and female learners reported a high level of manifestation, as shown in their agreement with items about being insulted, called names, or subjected to unpleasant remarks. Neutral responses were given in cases of unwelcome teasing, suggesting occasional occurrences. With an overall weighted mean of 3.7, respondents confirmed a high extent of verbal bullying. Estevez et al. (2012) highlighted that verbal bullying is common in schools, particularly affecting female learners through sarcasm, rumors, and derogatory remarks. Mullins and Gath (2013) further explained that verbal bullying, often more harmful than physical aggression, uses words and insults to demean, control, and hurt others, frequently targeting learners based on their appearance, behavior, or mannerisms.

Sexual bullying was found to be the least prevalent among the forms considered. Both males and females disagreed with items about sexual name-calling, exposure to pornographic material, or threats of sexual assault, indicating low manifestation. However, neutral responses were recorded for experiences of vulgar gestures (wm = 2.8 for both), suggesting moderate exposure. Male learners sometimes reported uninvited touching by the opposite sex (wm = 3.3), while females did not (wm = 2.3). The overall weighted mean of 2.3 indicated a low extent of sexual bullying. These results suggest that such experiences are less common, especially under adult supervision. Fernandez et al. (2013) described sexual bullying as repeated, harmful acts targeting individuals sexually, often through crude comments about appearance or development, which can be deeply humiliating.

The analysis of social bullying showed a higher degree of prevalence. Both males and females agreed with items indicating exclusion from social activities (wm = 3.7), being prohibited from joining groups (wm = 3.5), receiving threatening notes (wm = 3.6), and being blamed for quarrels (wm = 3.8). An overall weighted mean of 3.6 revealed a high manifestation of social bullying. Harper (2017) explained that social bullying, also referred to as relational aggression, damages social status and relationships and has been exacerbated by the rise of digital communication. Though often covert to avoid adult detection, it is highly detrimental to learners' social development and classroom participation.

Prejudicial bullying was also prevalent, with both males and females agreeing with all related items, including prejudices in treatment (wm = 3.7), exclusion in idea sharing (wm = 3.5), lukewarm behavior in group activities (wm = 3.3), unfair favoritism (wm = 3.6), and hostile treatment in competitive situations (wm = 3.8). The overall weighted mean of 3.8 signified a high manifestation of prejudicial bullying in the schools. Thompson (2015) explained that prejudice often manifests in peer groups through exclusion, favoritism, and belittling remarks, particularly in school settings where social interactions are crucial.

Level of learning outcome of respondents

The data on the level of learning outcomes revealed that a majority of respondents achieved satisfactory performance. Specifically, 55.6% of learners were rated satisfactory, followed by 39.1% rated very satisfactory, while 2.9% were outstanding, and 3.6% required improvement. No learners fell into the "did not meet expectations" category. These results indicated that while most learners performed adequately, the prevalence of bullying may have influenced the limited number of high achievers.

Difference in the bullying experience of the male and female respondents

The analysis of significant differences in bullying experiences between male and female respondents showed no meaningful variation. The computed t-value of 0.116 fell within the critical value of 1.645, leading to the decision not to reject the null hypothesis. This indicated that both male and female learners shared similar bullying experiences. Jankauskiene et al. (2018) supported this result, noting that both sexes often encounter comparable bullying situations in schools, which continue to serve as environments where violence and peer aggression are perpetuated despite expectations of safety and socialization.

Effect of bullying experience on the learning outcome of respondents

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of bullying experiences on learning outcomes. The results revealed that verbal bullying was the strongest predictor, with a negative beta coefficient of -1.819 and a significant p-value of 0.002. This suggested that an increase in verbal bullying corresponded to a decrease in learning outcomes, contributing 9.36% to the variation in academic performance. Oliveus (2009) similarly argued that verbal bullying adversely affects academic achievement and may even lead to severe psychological consequences, such as depression or suicidal tendencies.

Social bullying was the second-best predictor, with a negative beta coefficient of -1.647 and a p-value of 0.008, indicating a significant negative impact. Together with verbal bullying, social bullying accounted for 13.52% of the variation in learning outcomes. Maglasang (2015) affirmed that social bullying discourages learners from attending classes and disrupts concentration, resulting in decreased academic performance. Prejudicial bullying emerged as the third significant predictor, with a beta coefficient of -1.482 and a p-value of 0.012, showing that it also negatively influenced academic performance. Verbal, social, and prejudicial bullying combined accounted for 16.25% of the variation in learning outcomes. Jose (2013) explained that prejudice and verbal harassment diminish students' motivation, participation, and confidence, further reducing learning outcomes.

Conversely, physical and sexual bullying did not emerge as significant predictors of academic performance. Their computed t-values of 1.386 and 1.109, with p-values of 0.071 and 0.093 respectively, indicated no significant effect on learning outcomes. These findings suggest that while physical and sexual bullying are detrimental, it is verbal, social, and prejudicial forms that exert the greatest negative impact on learners' academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to determine the effect of bullying experiences on the learning outcomes of Grade 5 learners in selected schools of East I, Butuan District, Division of Butuan City for the school year 2019–2020. Using a descriptive research design, the investigation involved 138 learner-respondents and utilized a research instrument measuring the extent of physical, verbal, social, and prejudicial bullying. The learning outcomes were drawn from the first grading period of the same school year. Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, t-tests, and regression analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between bullying and academic performance.

The findings revealed that learners' experiences with physical and sexual bullying were generally low in extent, while experiences of verbal, social, and prejudicial bullying were reported to be high. Despite these challenges, the learners as a group achieved a very satisfactory

level of learning outcomes. It was also observed that the extent of bullying experiences was nearly the same for male and female respondents, with no significant differences in their reported experiences. However, verbal, social, and prejudicial bullying emerged as common experiences across both groups, and these forms of bullying were found to significantly and negatively affect learning outcomes. As the extent of bullying increased, the level of learners' academic performance decreased accordingly.

From these findings, several conclusions were drawn. It was evident that verbal, social, and prejudicial bullying are prevalent in schools, suggesting that school heads and teachers may not be sufficiently observant or proactive in addressing these issues. The persistence of these forms of bullying indicates that interventions are not adequately enforced, allowing them to thrive within the school environment. Furthermore, the data showed that bullies do not necessarily discriminate based on sex; both male and female learners were equally likely to become targets. Most importantly, the study confirmed that learning outcomes decline when learners experience high levels of bullying, particularly in the forms of verbal, social, and prejudicial bullying, which are more pervasive and damaging compared to physical or sexual bullying.

In light of these conclusions, several recommendations are advanced. School authorities should implement the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 more strictly to reduce, if not eliminate, the high incidence of bullying among learners. Remediation programs are also encouraged to help raise the academic performance of learners who have been affected by bullying. Additionally, the initiation of social enhancement programs would foster more harmonious relationships between students and teachers, thereby creating a safer and more supportive learning environment. Integrating an orientation on the Anti-Bullying Act into classroom discussions is likewise recommended to remind students of the adverse effects of bullying and promote awareness and accountability. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to undertake similar studies to further explore the impact of bullying on learners and to expand the understanding of its long-term academic and psychosocial effects.

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