

The Bullying Experiences and Classroom Discipline Techniques in an Urban National High School in the Philippines: A Basis for an Anti-Bullying Program

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Abstract

While bullying in schools has begun to receive great attention with the enactment of the Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act and the DepEd's Child Policy, little is known about the link between and among classroom discipline techniques, parenting styles and bullying incidences. This descriptive study is aimed to provide insights how bullying behaviors could be integrated in the classroom discipline techniques employed by the teacher and be able to craft an anti-bullying program involving the stakeholders of Binakayan National High School, Kawit, Cavite.

Keywords: Bullying Incidences, Classroom Discipline Techniques

Introduction

Bullying all over the world is becoming a primary concern among children, adolescence and even adults. According to Abe (2012), it can occur in any context in which human beings interact with each other. This includes school, church, family, workplace, home, and neighborhoods. It is even a common push factor in migration and it can exist between social groups, social classes and even between countries.

Bullying is a repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behavior by a person or group directed towards a less powerful person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear

(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/>). In Safe Schools/Healthy Students Albemarle/Charlottesville Project conducted in 2012 among 3,387 grades 6-8 students in Virginia, USA, up to 9% of them reported that they are bullied at least once a week, with verbal bullying frequently occurring. In 2011, about 28 % of students between the age of 12-18 reported having been bullied at school during the school year and 9% reported having been cyber-bullied (American Institutes for Research). Most of them are males and had experienced name calling, hitting and intimidation. What is more critical is it is not confined to a one time occurrence or for a short time but can be going on for months (41%) and years (11%) and it is confounded by short and long term effects (Stop ABully School Reports from 2011-2012).

In the countryside, despite the passing of the Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act and the Department of Education (DepEd) Child's Protection Policy, the DepEd documented more than 1,700 cases of child abuse and bullying in school year 2013-2014. Of these, 60 percent were only resolved (Flores, 2014). Furthermore, in 2012-2013 DepEd report, 80% (1,165 out of 1,456) of the child abuse cases involved acts of bullying (Malipot, 2013). Among the psychological and verbal violence experienced in school in elementary and high school in 2009, ridiculing, cursing and humiliating were the most rampant incidences (Dinopol, 2013).

In this regard, the role of school being an avenue for a stable and secure learning environment is expected to provide an education that caters to students' physical and mental well-beings, to develop their self-confidence and helps their ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

The R.A. No. 10627 which is an **act requiring all elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies to prevent and address the acts of bullying in their institutions** and DepEd Order No. 40, S. 2012 or the child protection policy are the two enacted laws to safeguard children's rights against the unimaginable effects of bullying. To achieve this, teachers are expected to create optimal learning environments by establishing and enforcing discipline rules, creating caring teacher–student relationships, addressing problem behaviors, and using quality communication. Students of all ages may have behavioral, attitudinal, and social issues (www.sagepub.com/upm-data/39273_3). But the gray areas are: How capable the teachers are in recognizing bullying behaviors in school? How can they integrate bullying behaviors in their classroom management approaches to mitigate bullying incidences? Is there a link between bullying incidences and classroom management skills together with parenting styles?

Holt and Keyes (2004) reported that a greater proportion of studies have found that teachers report lower prevalence rates of bullying than students do, which likely indicates that students are aware of bullying to a much greater extent than teachers do. Teachers, especially pre-service ones, are concerned about the problem of bullying, that they often have limited knowledge of the issue, and that they desire to learn more about it (Nicolaidis, Toda, & Smith, 2002). Furthermore, what is striking about teachers' observation about bullying is that it seems very possible for teachers who appear to have perfectly behaved classes to provide havens for bullies that shelter them against detection. This speaks to the savvy ability of some bullies to manipulate the classroom environments of well meaning, yet unsuspecting teachers, and to hide behind facades of innocence. It is evident; this is a bullying situation teachers need help recognizing (Allen, 2010).

Parenting style also plays a role in early socialization of children regarding bullying behavior. Pupils identified as bullies were 1.65 times more likely to come from homes with authoritarian style of child rearing compared to a participatory style. Bullies also were 1.71 times more likely than non-bullies to have parents who used punitive forms of discipline more often. Being bullied also relates to parenting styles. A significant correlation existed between bullying of a child and high levels of intrusive coerciveness by the parent ($r = -0.20$). This findings show that parents who allowed the child few opportunities to control social circumstances may foster a passive orientation that could become problematic for the child. On the other hand, a pupil who has a complete family is more likely to show favorable behavior compared to those who have a single parent and are abandoned (cited by Tiongco, 2010).

In Binakayan National High School, Kawit, Cavite, there is a reported 36 bullying cases for SY 2013-2014 which emanate from name calling, playing offensive jokes, hiding or getting someone's personal belongings, and inflicting physical injury. These had turned into physical bullying where kicking, slapping and beating up another person in the school are the most common cases. Based on interview and teachers' records; however, verbal bullying such as name calling, mocking, and hurtful teasing happen frequently inside and outside the classroom which are not usually reported to school authorities and resolved immediately instead. The discrepancies on the number of reported cases and its surrounding information deplete the capability to understand the taxonomy and cellular level of bullying.

Hence, this descriptive study is aimed at investigating the bullying experiences of students and classroom discipline techniques employed by the teachers towards the crafting of an anti-bullying program in the school. It has the following objectives: determine students and teachers' profile relevant to main variables; assess the occurrences of direct and indirect bullying incidences among students and the classroom discipline techniques employed by teachers; test the independence of the profile variables from bullying incidences; create a model localized to the concerned school that adequately explains classroom discipline techniques employed by the teachers; and propose an anti-bullying program of the school.

Methodology

The study utilized the descriptive type of research and it followed the Stake's Congruence Contingency Model. The model consisted of the Antecedent, Transaction and Outcome. The respondents were the fifty-five teachers (55) and one hundred forty-four (144) purposively selected students of Binakayan National High School, Kawit Cavite. The selection of students was based on school records and teachers' recommendation as based on the indicators of bullying behaviors. Their consent was sought as well.

A validated questionnaire was utilized in the study. The bullying domain consisted of direct and indirect bullying. Under direct type, physical, verbal and psychological bullying were included while social and cyber bullying for indirect. On the other hand, the classroom discipline techniques is composed of the following: Focusing –The teacher motivates pupil's attention before classes begin; Direct Instruction – The teacher tells the pupils what exactly will happen before classes begin; Non-Verbal Cuing – The teacher displays body posture and hand signal to catch the attention of the pupils; Modeling- The teacher demonstrates courtesy, promptness, enthusiasm, and control for the learners to emulate; Assertive I- messages –The teacher focuses on the behavior she wants the learners to exhibit, not on the misbehavior; and Humanistic I- messages –The teacher learns to manage his classroom in ways that encourage students to cooperate and participate.

Interview and documentary analysis were also exhausted. The pilot testing was conducted at Emilio Tria Tirona National High School and it yielded Cronbach alphas of .85 and .81 for teachers and students, respectively. Descriptive statistics, chi-square test of independence with phi coefficient and multiple regression analysis using backward elimination were used as statistical tools.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

Results show that majority of the student-respondents are *kayumanggis* (84.9%), females (50.7%), 4ft and 6in to 5ft and 4in (69.1%) with complete parent-status (82.2%) each earning P5,000 to P20,000 per month (58.9%). Mostly are 13-14 years old (47.3%) whose weight ranges from 33-43 kilos (40.4%). The students claimed that their parents are authoritative to authoritarian most of the time, involved, and moderately permissive.

Meanwhile, majority of the teachers are females (76.4%), 20-35 years old (65.4%), either single or married (85.4%), below 10 years in service (76.4%), and are pursuing advance studies (51%).

Bullying Experiences

Student-respondents claimed bullying incidences of different magnitude. Under the direct type of bullying, students experienced incidences of pushing/shoving, being bitten, cases of extortion, theft, hitting, spitting, kicking and throwing of papers. In terms of verbal bullying, they felt they were insulted, mocked, and given dirty looks. They were as well coerced, excluded from group and was threatened under the psychological type of bullying.

On the other hand, occurrences of indirect bullying were also noted by the respondents such as receiving insulting and threatening texts and intimidating gossips thru the internet world. Aside from these incidences of cyber type of bullying, students asserted cases of social bullying like spreading of hearsays and vandalism.

Classroom Discipline Techniques

According to teachers, they employ different strategies in class control. They claimed that they implement very often the following methods: direct instruction, focusing, modeling, assertive I-messages, non-verbal cuing, and humanistic I-messages, of that order.

Relationship between Classroom Discipline Techniques and Respondents' Profiles

There exist moderate significant associations ($.20 < \phi < .40$) between the following set of students' profiles: height to non-verbal cuing and humanistic I-messages; and family monthly income to humanistic I-messages and assertive I-messages. Based on the cross tabulation, as the category of height becomes smaller, the proportion of students who claimed that their teachers are doing the non-verbal cuing and humanistic I-messages decreases as well. On the other hand, as the proportion of students whose family income gets larger, teachers are getting more humanistic. Same trend persists in the assertive I-messages and family income.

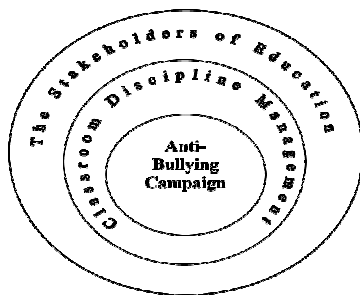
On the other hand, the highest educational attainment of teachers is moderately associated ($.20 < \phi < .40$) to non-verbal cuing and classroom discipline technique as a whole; and their years in service is related to modeling and assertive I-messages. The cross tabulation reveals that the proportion of teachers who utilized non-verbal cuing very often is higher among those who pursue advance studies than those Bachelors' degree holder. In general, the proportion of teachers who possess MA units or MA degree employ different strategies little higher than those who are Bachelors' degree holder. On another note, the proportion of teachers who are below 5 years in teaching are more assertive and models more than the others.

Regression Model That Explains the Classroom Discipline Techniques

The regression analysis shows a modest model fit, $p < .00$, to explain the factors concerning the classroom discipline techniques employed by the teachers. Six variables were figured to comprise the model: verbal bullying, psychological bullying, authoritative parenting style, family income, height, and sex, of that order of beta coefficients, $(.09 < \beta < .36)$. All of the variables offer unique significant contribution in the model except family income and sex, $p > .05$. A total of 14.17% to 19.2% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the set of variables with .44 index of multiple relationships. Three important things are implied in the model and in the study in general: firstly, teachers' classroom discipline techniques are not sufficiently directed to recognize and mitigate bullying cases; secondly, bullying does not occur in a vacuum and so the need to expand as well the functions and power of classroom discipline techniques in combating bullying incidences; and thirdly, while teachers' roles are important. Students and parents must also take part in the mitigation through series of programs and activities.

Anti-Bullying Program

Series of proposed activities are planned to harmoniously mitigate cases of behavior problems and bullying. These activities involved the stakeholders of education so that a clear direction can be established out of everyone's effort. An evaluation of the program will be done regularly. The framework of the program is shown below.



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