

WHY BULLYING MIGHT OCCUR AND HOW IT CAN BE ADDRESSED IN FIJI PRIMARY SCHOOLS?

A case study at Lautoka Sanatan Primary School

1.0

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Bullying is increasing every day in schools and have become a common problem in majority if the schools in Fiji. "Bullying is the (psychic, physical or sexual) systematic violence from one person or a group towards one or more classmates, who aren't capable (anymore) to defend themselves!" (Bakema, 2010, p.78). The actions include verbal accusations, spreading unpleasant rumors, teasing, and physical contact, through facial or obscene gestures or excluding a person from a group or a play(Charles,2010). In this literature review I will be discussing on different forms of bullying, the context in which bullying takes place, why bullying might occur, effects of bullying, and how it can be addressed in schools.

Comment [S1]: Topic sentence

Comment [S2]: Information from the literature

Comment [S3]: Information from literature

Comment [S4]: Concluding remarks and what will happen in the next paragraph

1.2 Types of bullying

Many individuals have been exposed to different forms of bullying such as teasing, physical bullying, sexual harassment, cyber bullying and antisocial bullying. Antisocial bullying as described by Field (1999) involves a form of social manipulation. The bully manipulates others to attack the victim or exclude the victim from the group. Cyber bullying happens when someone steals the password, places the edited picture of somebody on the net or when they gossip about somebody. Bakema (2010, p.81) stated that "the effects are worse than face to face bullying because the victim cannot respond due to the fact that he (or she) doesn't know who is attacking him (or her)." Hence parents as well as teachers need to have the knowledge of some common areas where bullying takes place so that they are vigilant in the duty of their care.

Comment [S5]: You can have different sub headings for your literature review

Comment [S6]: Each sub heading or paragraph will start with a topic sentence

Comment [S7]: Information from the literature

Comment [S8]: Tells what will happen in the next paragraph or sub heading

Comment [S9]: Concluding remarks

1.3 Where does bullying occur?

Bullying can take place anywhere, wherever the students gather together, whether at school, in the classroom, in the playgrounds, near the canteens, in or near the toilets, at the back of the school building, in school buses, etc. "Bullying is a problem that affects not only students in Fiji but other parts of the world too" as reported by Gopal (2011, p.4). According to Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener(2005, p.719) "bullying does not reside solely with the child who bullies or who is victimized, rather, bullying unfolds in the local context of the peer group, the classroom, the school, the family and the larger community." Bullying is everywhere but it needs to be identified and the reason why it is happening needs to be rectified before it does a drastic damage to someone.

Comment [S10]: Topic sentence

Comment [S11]: Information from the literature

Comment [S12]: Tells about next sub heading and paragraph

Comment [S13]: Your own analysis concluding remarks and what will happen in the next paragraph

1.4 Why bullying might occur?

There are many reasons as to why bullying may occur. Bushman and Anderson (as cited in Piotrowski and Hoot, 2008, p.358) stated that “violent media provides a social structure and/ or model for the bully to follow.” Thus, their aggressive propensities begin when they are young. They try to gain attention from their peers by acting different.

In addition, Dake, Price, and Telljohann, (2003, p.175) asserts that ‘parents who allowed the child few opportunities to control social circumstances may foster a passive orientation that could become problematic for the child.’ It can be concluded that parenting style plays vital role in the early socialization of children as violent behavior is accepted by parents. Hence, the bullies are not taught how to release their feelings and emotions properly.

Moreover, some home environment is conducive to encourage bullying. To the bullies understanding, they feel that they can achieve whatever they want by being violent to others. These may be only few reasons but the effects of bullying are usually large and the suffering is lifelong.

1.5 Effects of bullying

A recent study outlined by Kingman (1994, p.18) suggests that “bullying that is allowed to persist can have a long- term consequences into adult life for both bullies and bullied.” It is very likely that the victims’ childhood and adolescence get affected physically, psychologically, socially and intellectually. They suffer for so long during their childhood that it becomes a norm for them to behave like a victim in their later life. These persist if they are not helped to get out of these malevolent situations.

Furthermore, victims of bullying have poor self esteem; feel negative about themselves, threatened and guilty of crimes they may not have committed. Devi (2013, p.4) supports this by saying that “they have feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem.”

Apart from physical and psychological damage, the victims suffer intellectually too. De wet (as cited in Venter and Plessis, 2012, p.3) comments that “educational problems can include absenteeism, withdrawal from social activities at school, loss of concentration and fear of asking questions.” Victims have fear of being laughed at, also known as ‘gelotophobia’. They feel scared of being noticed when they make a mistake. Thus, they try to hide their special talents and skills. Hence, this limits their achievement and their quality of education drop.

Boulton and Hawker (1997, p.64) conclude that “emotional and psychological bullying is a widespread problem in our schools and is not being taken as seriously as physical bullying.” Non physical forms of bullying leaves a greater damage on the mental health of the children and is associated with higher depression and loneliness whereas physical bullying effect is short lived. Therefore, teachers need to be observable enough to see the emotional state of their students also and design and carry out plans to curb this problem of bullying.

1.6 Ways to tackle bullying in schools

Bakema (2010, p.78) argues that “not only does the victim need help, but those around the victim also need to understand the implications of what is happening and learn to control the situation.” The possibility of eradicating bullying completely from school may not be there but through well planned strategies it can be minimized. Everybody concerned whether it is the parents, teachers or bystanders, need to change their attitude towards the perception of bullying.

Delana suggested (as cited in Sharma, 2012, p.2) “the best way to address bullying was to target the grassroots level.” Children can be actively involved in anti- bullying interventions such as short talks, counseling, poster competitions, and presentations of items on effects of bullying with teachers monitoring it very closely.

Moreover, Venter and Plessis (2012, p.2) claim that “a school’s policy and code of conduct should have definite rules and consequences for any aggressive or violent behavior,” (page 2). The school should see that the same rules apply to all perpetrators and there is no favoritism towards any child.

Furthermore, Marshall’s hierarchy of social development has proved very effective in promoting responsible behavior in classrooms. Charles (2011, p.180) claims that “it helps the students to reflect on their behavior; self control their behavior and develop social responsibility.” If teachers adapt to similar sort of intervention program and monitor it carefully, the students behavior is very likely to improve. “Having meetings with parents and training them how to identify and prevent bullying in their children should predictably play a significant role in the success of anti- bullying programs” as concluded by Fox, Farrington & Ttofi (2012, p.279). The schools or teachers can design activities which can help the bullies identify the damage they have done to the victims. Waqavonoqono supports this (as cited in Vuibau, 2012, p.3) by addressing that “the fight against bullying can be fought by anybody- anyone can stand up to it.”

1.7 Summary

Bullying is a malicious act on a weaker individual. Verbal bullying, exclusion from group/s, sexual harassment, physical violence, anti- social bullying and cyber bullying are some types of bullying that are commonly recognized. The children can be bullied anywhere whether it is the school context, home environment or local communities. Children’s home environment, their up- bringing and mass media largely contribute to them to become bullies. Victims of bullying suffer physically, psychologically, intellectually and socially. The suffering can make a permanent damage to the victims, their career or to their relationship. Though bullying has been there for ages but so far it has not been given the limelight which it deserves. The victims are suffering silently but hardly anyone has asked for justice. Bullying, a serious crime has even lead to suicide and has gone as far as murder of victims just because the other party was having fun while bullying. Children’s rights have been given great consideration but are the children taught about their responsibilities? It can happen if bullying is integrated in the school curriculum. The children need to learn about its effects and consequences. There is a need for workshops where parents, teachers and other

stakeholders are trained how to deal with cases of bullying. There is no need for anyone to compromise for unwanted behavior.

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