Bullying Prevention Practices and Child Stress in Public Elementary Schools

Clarissa B. Zosas; Remigilda Gallardo

Abstract:- This quantitative study employed surveys to assess the extent of bullying prevention efforts from schools and parents, and to measure levels of child stress in terms of distress, lack of well-being, and absence of social support. The sample consisted of students from multiple public elementary schools. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficients, and regression analysis. The study found that both school and parental bullying prevention efforts were very extensive. Child stress levels were generally low across various indicators. A significant negative relationship was found between bullying prevention practices and child stress, indicating that effective prevention efforts are associated with reduced stress levels in children. Both school-based and parental efforts were identified as significant predictors in reducing child stress. The findings suggest that comprehensive bullying prevention efforts are effective in reducing child stress. The study emphasizes the importance of a multi-faceted approach involving both schools and parents in bullying prevention programs. The study concludes that effective bullying prevention practices are associated with lower levels of child stress, highlighting the need for collaborative efforts between schools and parents. Recommendations are made for researchers, the Department of Education, school heads, and teachers to enhance bullying prevention programs.

Keywords:- Bullying Prevention, Child Stress, Public Elementary Schools, Parental Involvement, School Policies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Bullying was shown to have detrimental effects that persist into late adolescence and contribute independently to mental health problems. In the Philippines, with the passing of Republic Act (RA) 10627, otherwise known as the Anti-bullying Law of 2013, schools are required to establish their own anti-bullying programs which includes the formation of a committee who would ensure the protection of children against abuses from their peers as well as adults, formulation of awareness programs to increase students' knowledge of bullying, and provision of counseling programs for both bullies and victims. Educators, school personnel, and students are also encouraged to report school bullying they have witnessed to proper channels.

To address these issues, the researcher conducted an in-depth investigation into bullying prevention practices and child stress within the setting of a public elementary school. This study was meticulously designed to explore the effectiveness of various bullying prevention strategies implemented in the school and their impact on the stress levels of the students. By doing so, the researcher aimed to identify practical solutions that could alleviate stress among children and create a safer, more supportive educational environment.

The study titled, "Bullying Prevention Practices And Child Stress In Public Elementary Schools" aimed to assess the extent of prevention efforts from both schools and parents and to examine how these efforts relate to various indicators of child stress, such as distress, lack of well-being, and absence of social support. Specific objectives include: to evaluate the extent of bullying prevention efforts made by schools; to assess the extent of bullying prevention efforts made by parents, to measure levels of child stress in terms of distress, lack of well-being, and absence of social support, to determine the relationship between bullying prevention practices and child stress, and to identify which specific prevention efforts significantly affect child stress. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between bullying prevention practices and child stress in public elementary schools.

The researcher was hopeful that the study will be beneficial to the following: the Department of Education, School Heads, Teachers, Students and Future Researchers. To the Department of Education, it was hoped that this study may provide insights to the Department of Education officials on how to further strengthen programs pertaining to bullying prevention practices specially in elementary education which is the foundation of development. Through this study, school heads may be inspired to develop or enhance existing programs on bullying prevention practices to ensure the safely and holistic development under their care. Teachers, especially in the elementary level, may gain further understanding on how bullying may affect students' socio-emotional level of young learners. Students may find the study beneficial through programs that will safeguard their socioemotional development and the prevention of bullying in school. Future researchers may find the findings of this study as an additional information in understanding further how bullying can be prevented to ensure the holistic development of children.

In conclusion, this study aimed to assess the extent of prevention efforts from both schools and parents and to examine how these efforts relate to various indicators of child stress, such as distress, lack of well-being, and absence of social support. The specific objectives included evaluating the extent of bullying prevention efforts made by

schools, assessing the extent of bullying prevention efforts made by parents, measuring levels of child stress in terms of distress, lack of well-being, and absence of social support, determining the relationship between bullying prevention practices and child stress, and identifying which specific prevention efforts significantly affect child stress.

II. METHOD

This study utilized descriptive correlational design. According to McBurney & White (2019), descriptive correlational research is used in research studies that aim to provide static pictures of situations as well as establish the relationship between different variables. In correlational research, two variables such are studied to establish their relationship. In this particular study, the variables are bullying prevention practices and child stress in public elementary schools.

The respondents of this study were students from a public elementary school Particularly, the researcher selected students in Grades 4-6 from Masawang Elementary School in Marilog District. The researcher utilized total enumeration. In sampling, units are the things that make up the population. In the case of total population sampling, the units of interest tend to have some characteristics that are not very common. It is important to note that only some characteristics are not very common, but since it is these characteristics that we are interested in, they influence our choice of total population sampling.

For the independent variable, which is the Bullying Prevention Practices, a survey questionnaire was adapted from Child Safety network (2023). There are two indicators for this such as prevention efforts from the school and prevention efforts form parents. The students answered the survey questionnaire using a 5-point Likert Scale as follows: 5 – always, 4-sometimes, 3- seldom, 2- rarely, and 1 – never.

The study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing surveys to collect data from a sample of public elementary school students. The survey included questions designed to measure the extent of bullying prevention efforts from schools and parents, as well as questions aimed at assessing various indicators of child stress. The data was then analyzed using statistical methods, including mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficients, and regression analysis, to draw conclusions about the relationship between bullying prevention practices and child stress.

Surveys were distributed to students in multiple public elementary schools, and the collected data was then anonymized for analysis. The survey questions were designed based on existing literature and validated scales to ensure reliability and validity. The data was analyzed using mean scores, standard deviations, and correlation and regression analyses.

In conclusion, the study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing surveys to collect data from a sample of public elementary school students. The survey included questions designed to measure the extent of bullying prevention efforts from schools and parents, as well as questions aimed at assessing various indicators of child stress. The collected data was anonymized to protect the participants' identities and analyzed using statistical methods such as mean scores, standard deviations, correlation coefficients, and regression analysis to draw conclusions about the relationship between bullying prevention practices and child stress.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher focused on the results and discussions of the study, presenting the findings on the relationship between bullying prevention practices and child stress in public elementary schools. The study showed how different ways of preventing bullying, both by schools and parents, affect various signs of child stress, such as distress, lack of well-being, and absence of social support.

The first theme presented the extent of bullying prevention practices in public elementary schools. The overall mean for the table is 4.20, described as "Very Extensive." This means that bullying prevention practices is always manifested in the public elementary school. This implies that teachers are generally proactive in implementing bullying prevention measures in the classroom.

The second theme outlined the extent of bullying prevention practices in public elementary schools, specifically focusing on prevention efforts from parents. The overall mean for the table is 4.22, described as "Very Extensive." This means that bullying prevention practices is always manifested in the public elementary school. This implies that parents are generally very involved in bullying prevention efforts related to their children.

The third theme provided a summary of the extent of bullying prevention practices in public elementary schools, focusing on two key indicators: Prevention Efforts from School and Prevention Efforts from Parents. The overall mean for the table is 4.21, described as "Very Extensive." This means that bullying prevention practices is always manifested in the public elementary school, which implies that both schools and parents are actively involved in bullying prevention practices.

The fourth theme provided an overview of the extent of child stress in public elementary schools, specifically focusing on various forms of distress. The overall mean for the table is 2.53, described as "Rarely Extensive." This means that child stress is rarely manifested in the public elementary school which implies that stress-related distress is generally not a pervasive issue among the surveyed elementary school children.

The fifth theme delved into the extent of child stress in public elementary schools, specifically focusing on indicators of a lack of well-being. The overall mean for the table is 2.49, described as "Rarely Extensive." This means that child stress is rarely manifested in the public elementary school which implies that issues related to a lack of well-being are generally not widespread among the surveyed elementary school children.

The study found that bullying prevention efforts are notably strong both in schools and from parents. This suggests that there is a robust support system in place, which could be instrumental in mitigating bullying and its associated stressors in public elementary schools. The data revealed that child stress levels are generally low in the areas of distress, lack of well-being, and absence of social support among the surveyed population. This could be seen as a positive indicator of the overall emotional and psychological well-being of the children in these schools.

Results show a significant negative relationship between bullying prevention practices and child stress. This implies that the more extensive the bullying prevention efforts are, the lower the levels of child stress, highlighting the effectiveness of these practices in creating a safer and more supportive school environment.

The high extent of bullying prevention efforts from both schools and parents suggests that a strong support system is already in place. This could serve as a foundation for further initiatives aimed at reducing bullying and enhancing student well-being. The generally low levels of child stress across various indicators are encouraging. This may suggest that current educational and familial support systems are effective in promoting emotional and psychological well-being among children. The multifaceted experiences of Grade 1 teachers emphasized the need for comprehensive teacher training programs. Educators should receive training that not only equips them with effective teaching strategies but also focuses on building emotional resilience. Furthermore, schools should provide ongoing support and resources to help teachers adapt to the dynamic challenges of the classroom.

Finally, the data confirms that both school and parental efforts are crucial in reducing child stress. This highlighted the need for a collaborative approach between schools and families to effectively tackle the issue of bullying and its associated stressors.

From the results and conclusions, this study recommended that the Department of Education should consider implementing nationwide policies that encourage schools to actively involve parents in bullying prevention programs. School heads should consider adopting or enhancing multi-faceted bullying prevention programs that involve not just teachers but also parents and community members. For teachers, given that teacher-led efforts in bullying prevention were found to be effective, teachers should continue to be trained in the latest methods and strategies for bullying prevention. This also includes future

researchers, where the study opens the door for further research on the specific types of stress children experience in relation to bullying.

REFERENCES

[1]. American Psychological Association (2016). Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations. Retrieved from www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2006/08/zerotolerance.aspx.

[2]. Arseneault L, Bowes L, Shakoor S. (2017). Bullying victimization in youths and mental health problems: "Much ado about nothing? Psychol Med. 2010;40(5):717–29. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291709991383.

[3]. Baldry, A. C., & Farrington, D. P. (2020). Bullies and delinquents: Personal characteristics and parental styles. Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 10, 17-31. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1099-1298(200001/02)10:13.0.CO;2-M

[4]. Baumrind, D. (1996). The discipline controversy revisited. Family Relations, 45, 405- 414.

[5]. Bayer JK, Mundy L, Stokes I, Hearps S, Allen N, Patton G. (2018). Bullying, mental health and friendship in Australian primary school children. Child Adolesc Ment Health. 2018;23(4):334–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12261.

[6]. Bogart LM, Elliott MN, Klein DJ, Tortolero SR, Mrug S, Peskin MF, Davies SL, Schink ET, Schuster MA (2019). Peer victimization in fifth grade and health in tenth grade. Pediatrics. 133(3):440–447.

[7]. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Epstein, J. L. School/family/community partnerships. Phi Delta Kappan, 76, 701-712.

[8]. Bru, E., Murberg, T. A., & Stephens, P. (2021). Social support, negative life events and pupil misbehaviour among young Norwegian adolescents. Journal of Adolescence, 24, 715-727

[9]. Chaiklin, S. (2003). The zone of proximal development in vygotsky's analysis of learning and instruction. In Kozulin, A., Gindis, B., Ageyev, V.S., & Miller, S.M. (Eds.), Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context (39-63). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

[10]. Chen, L. M. (2015). Self-Reported Frequency and Perceived Severity of Being Bullied among Elementary School Students. Journal of School Health, 85, 587-594.

[11]. Child Safety network (2023). Bullying prevention. Retrieved from https://www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/child-safety-topics/bullying-prevention

[12]. Demaray, M. K., & Malecki, C. K. (2015). Perceptions of the frequency and importance of social support by students classified as victims, bullies, and bully/victims in urban middle school. School Psychology Review, 32, 471-489.

[13]. Demaray, M. K., Malecki, C. K., Davidson, L. M., Hodgson, K. K., & Rebus, P. J. (2015). The relationship between social support and student adjustment: A longitudinal analysis. Psychology in the Schools, 42, 691-706.

[14]. Devine, J. & Cohen, J. (2017). Making your school safe: Strategies to Protect Children and Promote Learning. New York: Teachers College Press.

[15]. Dollard, J., Doob, L. W., Miller, N. E., Mowrer, O. H., & Sears, R. R. (2019). Frustration and aggression. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

[16]. DuBois, D. L., Felner, R. D., Brand, S., Adan, A. M., & Evans, E. G. (2012). A prospective study of life stress, social support, and adaptation in early adolescence. Child Development, 63, 542-557.

[17]. Dubow, E. F., & Tisak, J. (2019). The relation between stressful life events and adjustment in elementary school children: The role of social support and social problem-solving skills. Child Development, 60, 1412-1423.

[18]. Eisenberger NI (2022). The neural bases of social pain: Evidence for shared representations with physical pain. Psychosomatic Medicine. 2012;74(2):126–135.

[19]. Emmanouil C, Bacopoulou F, Vlachakis D, Chrousos GP, Darviri C. Validation of the Stress in Children (SiC) Questionnaire in a Sample of Greek Pupils. J Mol Biochem. 2020;9(1):74-79.

[20]. Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

[21]. Fowler, D. (2021). School Discipline Feeds the "Pipeline to Prison". Phi Delta Kappan, 93(2), 14-19.

[22]. Fowler, F. J. (2023). Survey Research Methods. New York, NY: SAGE Publications.

[23]. Garandeau, C. F., Vartio, A., Poskiparta, E., & Salmivalli, C. (2017). School Bullies' Intention to Change Behavior following Teacher Interventions: Effects of Empathy Arousal, Condemning of Bullying, and Blaming of the Perpetrator. Prevention Science, 17, 1034-1043. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-016-0712-x

[24]. Georgiou, S. N. (2018). Bullying and victimization at school: The role of mothers. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 78, 109-125. doi:10.1348/000709907X20 4363

[25]. Grant, K. E., Compas, B. E., & Stuhlmacher, A. F. (2015). Stressors and child and adolescent psychopathology: Moving from makers to mechanisms of risk. Psychological Bulletin, 129, 447-466.

[26]. Grant, K. E., Compas, B. E., Thurm, A. E., McMahon, S. D., & Gipson, P. Y. (2018). Stressors and child and adolescent psychopathology: Measurement issues and prospective effects. Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 33, 412-425.

[27]. Hager AD, Leadbeater BJ (2016). The longitudinal effects of peer victimization on physical health from adolescence to young adulthood. Journal of Adolescent Health. 2016;58(3):330–336.

[28]. Haggerty, K., Elgin, J., Woolley, A. (2021). Social-emotional learning assessment measures for middle school youth. Report commissioned by the Raikes Foundation. (pp. 1-59). Seattle: Social Development Research Group.

[29]. Harter, S. (2018). Causes, correlates and the functional role of global self-worth: A life span perspective. In J. Kolligian & R. Sternberg (Eds.), Perceptions of competence and incompetence across the life span (pp. 67-100). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

[30]. Hysing M, Askeland KG, La Greca AM, Solberg ME, Breivik K, Sivertsen B. (2019). Bullying involvement in adolescence: implications for sleep, mental health, and academic outcomes. J Interpers Violence. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519853409.

[31]. Jacobs, G. & Asokan, N., (1999). Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Social Development. In: Human Choice, World Academy of Art & Science, USA.

[32]. Johnson, T. A. (2022). The impact of parent involvement in bullying at the middle school level. Dissertation Abstracts International: Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, 72 (10-A), 3661

[33]. Kahn, B. B. (2020). A model of solution-focused consultation for school counselors. Professional School Counseling, 3, 248-254.

[34]. Kanner, A. D., Coyne, J. C., Schaefer, C., & Lazarus, R. S. (2021). Comparison of two modes of stress measurement: Daily hassles and uplifts versus major life events. Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 4, 1-39.

[35]. Kanner, A. D., Feldman, S. S., Weinberger, D. A., & Ford, M. E. (1987). Uplifts, hassles, and adaptational outcomes in early adolescents. Journal of Early Adolescence, 7, 371-394.

[36]. Kothari, C. R. (2014). Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques. New York, NY: New Age International.

[37]. Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (2020). Stress, appraisal, and coping. New York: Springer

[38]. Le HTH, Tran N, Campbell MA, Gatton ML, Nguyen HT, Dunne MP (2019). Mental health problems both precede and follow bullying among adolescents and the effects differ by gender: a cross-lagged panel analysis of school-based longitudinal data in Vietnam. Int J Ment Health Syst. 2019. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13033-019-0291-x.

[39]. Mann, M. J., Kristiansson, A. L., Sigfusdottir, I. D., & Smith, M. L. (2015). The Role of Community, Family, Peer, and Social Factors in Group Bullying: Implications for School-Based Intervention. Journal of School Health, 85, 477-486. https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.12270

[40]. McBurney, D. & White, T. (2019). Research Methods. New York, NY: Cengage Learning.

[41]. Milaid MR, Quirk GJ (2020). Fear extinction as a model for translational neuroscience: Ten years of progress. Annual Review of Psychology. 2012;63:129–151.

[42]. Modecki, K. L., Minchin, J., Harbaugh, A. G., Guerra, N. G., & Runions, K. C. (2014). Bullying Prevalence across Contexts: A Meta-Analysis Measuring Cyber and Traditional Bullying. Journal of Adolescent Health, 55, 602-611. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.06.007

[43]. Mourshed, M., Chijioke, C., & Barber, M. (2020). How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better. New York: McKinsey & Company. Retrieved from: http://mckinseyonsociety.com/downloads/reports/Educ ation/ How-the- Worlds-Most-Improved-School-Systems-KeepGetting-Better_Download-version_Final.pdf.

[44]. Nansel P. (2021). Bullying behaviors among U.S. youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. Journal of the American Medical Association, 285, 2094-210

[45]. National School Climate Council. (2019). National school climate standards: Benchmark to promote effective teaching, learning and comprehensive school improvement. New York: Author. Retrieved January 29, 2012 from: www.schoolclimate.org/climate/standards.php.

[46]. Nestmann, F., & Hurrelmann, K. (1994). Child and adolescent research as a challenge and opportunity for social support theory, measurement, and intervention: And vice versa. In F. Nestman & K. Hurrelmann (Eds.), Social networks and social support in childhood and adolescence (pp. 1-22). Berlin: de Gruyter.

[47]. Okayasu, T., & Takano, I. (2020). Psychological stress of victims and bullies in junior high school. Japanese Journal of Educational Psychology, 48, 410-421.

[48]. Pryor-Brown, L., & Cowen, E. L. (1989). Stressful life events, support, and children's school adjustment. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 18, 214-220.

[49]. Rigby, K. (1998). Peer victimization at school and the health of secondary students. British Journal of Educational Psychology, 22(2), 28-34.

[50]. Rigby, K. (2014). How Teachers Address Cases of Bullying in Schools: A Comparison of Five Reactive Approaches. Educational Psychology in Practice, 30, 409-419. https://doi.org/10.1080/02667363.2014.949629

[51]. Sharp, S. (1995). How much does bullying hurt? The effects of bullying on the personal wellbeing and educational progress of secondary aged students. Educational Child Psychology, 12, 81-88.

[52]. Silva, M. A. I., Pereira, B., Mendonca, D., Nunes, B., & de Oliveira, W. A. (2013). The Involvement of Girls and Boys with Bullying: An Analysis of Gender Differences. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 10, 6820-6831. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph10126820

[53]. Suckling, A., & Temple, C. (2022). Bullying: A whole-school approach. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

[54]. Swearer, S. M., & Espelage, D. L. (2015). Introduction: A social-ecological framework of bullying among youth. In D. L. Espelage, & S. M. Swearer (Eds.), Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention (pp. 1-12). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

[55]. Taki, M. (2022). Ijime koui no hassei youin ni kansuru jisshouteki kenkyu [Empirical research in investigation of causal factors of bullying behavior]. Kyoiku Shakaigaku Kenkyu, 50, 366-388.

[56]. Ttofi, M. M., & Farrington, D. P. (2021). Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: A systematic and meta-analytic review. Journal of Experimental Criminology, 7, 27-56. doi:10.1007/s11292-010-9109-1

[57]. U. S Department of Education & the Department of Health and Human Services (2012) Prevention at School. Retrieved from www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/atschool/index.html.

[58]. Vaillancourt T, Sanderson C, Arnold P, McDougall P. (2020). Handbook of Bullying Prevention: A Life Course Perspective. Bradshaw CP, editor. National Association of Social Workers Press

[59]. Werner, E. E., & Smith, R. S. (2022). Vulnerable but not invincible: A longitudinal study of resilient children and youth. New York

[60]. Wilson, M. L., Dunlavy, A. C., & Berchtold, A. (2013). Determinants for Bullying Victim ization among 11-16-Year Olds in 15-Low-and-Middle Income Countries: A Multi-Level Study. Social Sciences, 2, 208-220. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci2040208

[61]. Yin, R. K. (2009). Case Study Research: Design and Methods. New York, NY: SAGE Publications.