

Factors Associated to Bullying and the Level of Exposure to Bullying among Secondary Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the factors associated with bullying and the level of exposure to bullying among secondary learners, aiming to identify personal, school, and community factors, describe the level of exposure as victims and bullies, and explore the relationship between these factors and exposure levels. Utilizing a descriptive and correlational research design, the study found that self-esteem was strongly related to student involvement in bullying, while leadership tendencies had a moderate connection. Teacher-student interactions were moderately linked to bullying incidents, and a safe, inclusive school environment was strongly associated with bullying prevention. Verbal bullying, characterized by name-calling and teasing, was the most prevalent form and often led to other aggressive behaviors. The study revealed that while personal and school-related factors showed no significant relationship with bullying exposure, community factors significantly influenced both victims' and bullies' exposure levels. The findings emphasize the importance of self-esteem development, positive teacher-student interactions, and a supportive school community in reducing bullying. It recommends implementing programs to boost self-esteem and leadership skills, enhancing teacher training to handle bullying, and involving the community in prevention efforts to foster a safer, more inclusive environment. These comprehensive interventions are vital for addressing bullying effectively and promoting a culture of respect and empathy both within schools and the broader community.

Keywords: Bullying, teachers, learners

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Bullying and victimization are widespread phenomena that can have a serious effect on the well-being of and individual most specially the growing children. Usually, these victims are bullies themselves. The observable effect of bullying has caused the learners to manifest low self-esteem that leads to social isolation. At the same time school performance is also affected but depending on how a learner copes (Santos, 2022).

Jansen, Verlinden, Berkel, Mieloo, Ende, Veenstra, & Tiemeier (2021) found out that children from families with a low socioeconomic background have an increased risk of this behavior that encompasses physical aggression, threats, teasing, and harassment. In any form, bullying is unacceptable anti-social behavior that can undermine the quality of the school environment, affect learners' academic and social outcomes and even jeopardize the life of an individual. It can have harmful effects on childhood development and detrimental influences that can even stretch into adulthood, depending on how victims handle the trauma (Ying and Chui, 2022).

Many learners actually perceived bullying as part of growing up. They have teased, harassed and have been categorically mean to their peers. Because it is seen not as a big deal, learners are just left to live with it and resolve issues among themselves making the school a place with high risk of peer bullying (Chirila, 2022). More

recently however, bullying gained attention as it becomes a worldwide problem affecting more students with short and long term psychosocial effects observed to be detrimental to the victim's well-being (Srabstein and Leventhal, 2020).

Srabstein and Leventhal (2010) argued that when an individual continually experience negative behavior, be it physical or emotional, verbal or social in form, it is already considered bullying, as commonly observed and recorded in schools and in work places. Bullying has become a public health concern and has been associated with increased morbidity and mortality as its negative consequences. It has also downplayed the productive transition of learners from the basic education and the sustainability of the learning processes (Abocejo and Padua, 2020) towards higher tertiary education.

The Department of Education (DepEd) through its Department Order No. 55, series of 2013 or the "Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 10627, otherwise known as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013" has mandated all elementary and secondary schools to formulate their own anti-bullying programs and referral systems to effectively address all bullying complaints. The school has to come up with an Anti-Bullying Committee that would warrant the protection of children against peer abuse or bullying and provide intervention and counselling program to both bullies and victims. This includes the conduct of orientation activities to learner as well as the parents/guardians, about the Anti-Bullying Policy of the school.

Bullying in the Philippine schools suggests a rising trend every year with an aggregate cases of 6,363 bullying in private and public schools 2016 while 5,236 cases were recorded in 2019 (Garcia, Gan and Apigo, 2021). Their study clearly indicated an increasing trend of 18 percent making an average of 31 bullying incidents happening every day. Such that school bullying stood as one of the persistent problems in the Philippine context. The negative impact of bullying and learners' level of exposure to it poses a serious problem in schools the same way as the lack of teachers, learner delinquencies and inadequate school facilities and supplies which affect the teaching learning process (Sanapo, 2020).

In the case of Borongan City Division, an overwhelming cases of bullying of learners are referred by teachers to the Anti-Bullying Committee and or to the Child-Protection Committee due to academic truancy, attitudinal problems and some behavioral problems which includes bullying. Interestingly, referrals from the Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Committee show that incidence of verbal and physical fights or even truancy boils down to bullying. This case is directly observed by the researcher herself as a teacher. As an advocate of child protection, the researcher agrees that "every child deserves to grow free from harm and in a stable and nurturing environment", may it be at home or in school. Interested to investigate the factors associated to bullying and their level of exposure to bullying, this study hopes to provide inputs towards guidance program enhancement with the end view of educating the learners, parents, teachers and stakeholders about the nature and negative psychological effects of bullying thereby minimize, if not eliminate, bullying incidence in schools.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated the factors associated to bullying and the level of exposure to bullying among secondary learners. This research aimed to attain the following specific objectives:

What are the factors associated to bullying incidents among secondary learners in terms of:

- 1.1 Personal factors;
- 1.2 School factors; and
- 1.3 Community factors?

What is the level of exposure to bullying among secondary learners as:

- 1.4 victim; and
- 1.5 bullies?

Is there significant relationship between the factors associated to bullying and the level of exposure to bullying?

Significance of the Study

The study holds significant importance as it sheds light on the early onset of bullying behaviors and their impact on young children. By identifying the key factors and circumstances that contribute to bullying in this vulnerable age group, the research provides critical insights to the following:

Teachers. The findings of this study are significant for teachers as it equips them with crucial insights into the early signs and underlying causes of bullying. This knowledge empowers educators to implement effective preventative measures and create a safer, more supportive classroom environment, promoting the well-being and healthy development of their students.

Learners. The findings of the study aim to identify and address the factors contributing to bullying, creating a safer and more nurturing educational environment. By mitigating bullying incidents, the study helps ensure that young children can focus on learning and developing positively without fear or distress.

School Administrators. This may provide data-driven insights necessary for developing effective anti-bullying policies and programs. This enables administrators to create a safer and more inclusive school environment, fostering the overall well-being and academic success of their students.

Education Supervisor. It offers crucial information to guide the development and oversight of anti-bullying initiatives and teacher training programs. By understanding the factors contributing to bullying, supervisors can ensure the implementation of effective strategies to promote a safe and supportive learning environment across schools.

Parents. It highlights the early signs and contributing factors of bullying, enabling them to better protect and support their children. By understanding these dynamics, parents can collaborate more effectively with educators to create a safer and more nurturing environment for their young ones.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on examining the factors associated with and exposure to bullying incidents among secondary learners in Borongan City Division. Factors under investigation include personal-related, school-related, and community-related factors and the level of exposure to bullying by secondary learners. The study encompasses secondary learners in the Schools Division of Borongan selected via total enumeration. In order to accomplish the objectives of this research, the researcher adapted a questionnaire from Haramain (2019) for the factors associated with bullying and a research questionnaire from Milano (2018) for the level of exposure to bullying.

Definition of Terms

The following concepts were operationally defined in order to give readers of this study a shared frame of reference:

Bullies. In this study, it refers to individuals who habitually seek to intimidate, harm, or exert control over others through verbal, physical, or emotional aggression, often exploiting power imbalances or vulnerabilities. Their behavior aims to undermine, hurt, or dominate their targets, creating distress and fear in their victims.

Bullying. As used in this study, it is an intentional aggressive behavior by an individual or group directed towards a victim who is perceived as vulnerable, with the intent to cause physical, emotional, or psychological harm.

Level of Exposure to Bullying. Refers to the frequency and intensity with which an individual experiences or witnesses bullying incidents within a specific timeframe. It encompasses the extent to which a person is directly targeted by bullying behaviors or indirectly affected by observing such behaviors in their environment.

Victim. In this study, it refers to an individual who is repeatedly subjected to intentional aggressive behavior by others, resulting in physical, emotional, or psychological harm. This person is typically perceived as vulnerable and unable to defend themselves effectively against the perpetrator(s).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the discussion of the main theories and general ideas of previous studies about the factors associated to bullying incidents and the level of exposure to bullying of Grade Six pupils. They contain information with direct and indirect bearing on the present study. Hence, these are presented and discussed in this portion of the text showing the similarities and differences in some aspects of the present study.

Definition and Concept of Bullying

Bullying is the use of force or aggressiveness toward another person being weak or less powerful; it can be in form of physical, verbal, social and even online abuse (Magan, 2021). This wrongful act can be observed everywhere but it is more prevalent in schools. Several studies were conducted across the world to learn more about bullying – its causes and effects physically and mentally, and how detrimental it is to one’s self. Ying (2020) define bullying is a behavior that can only be easily recognized when individuals experience it. Bullying can happen to anyone at any age and anywhere whether at school, home, or even in a workplace. It can also be considered as a harmful behavior, which can seriously affect one’s performance. Bullying takes place everywhere and it can happen anytime and anywhere, regardless of your age, race, physical appearance, social status and etc.

According to Espero and Espinosa (2022) there are things to consider in characterizing bullying to see the distinction of it from other forms of aggression. Aggression is very usual in the school setting; it is sometimes being used by students to resolve conflicts. For example, a clash concerning students having equal power in terms of physical and strength and number. This kind of conflict is common and conventionally do not last long. However, when we talk about bullying, it is more systematic. There at least three attributes in which can accentuate the difference of bullying from other aggression. First, power differential, the strong ones or the ones who has more friends or somewhat influential tends to be the bully while the ones who are vulnerable to bullying usually are the ones having no friends or those introvert in a classroom. Second thing is the repeated abused, bullying tends to create pattern on when they will attack the victim, and bullies normally torment the victim in a certain time of the day whenever the victim is isolated. Third, it creates anxiety, intimidation and fear, when the abuse is being repeatedly done, it intensifies the feeling of fear and other emotional impacts on the victim (Husien and Jan, 2020).

Bullying can have an immediate as well as long-term social and educational impact. Bullying among youths could be very detrimental to their health. – It could lead to different emotional diagnosis. Aside from introvert students, gays and lesbians are the usual victims of bullying (Hinduja, Sameer and Patchin, 2020).

Victims of bullying are more likely to report feeling unhappy and lonely at school, and having fewer good friends (Boulton and Underwood, 2022). It’s because they are being isolated from the people around them. Because of this act of seclusion students are mostly less aspired to pursue much higher grade than those who are not being bullied, because of unsafe mindset that he/she can be bullied anytime in school. The effect of this on a student sometimes reflects on their academic performance in school, because they always have the fear of being maltreated and physically harmed by someone. On the point of the view of parents, sometimes they can’t determine if their kids are being bullied in school, making it harder for the child to keep up with the school activities and academic performance, because there is no outlet of their anger and disappointments that sometimes lead to self-isolation to remain secure from the discriminations and maltreatment. In school, bullying is inevitable especially to someone who has imperfections physically, mentally, psychologically and sometimes even the involvement of religion as spiritually can be involved in such act of discriminations. Before a student choose to enroll on a school, they would consider the environment on that particular school that they are interested in, because they need to ruminate not just the distance, tuition fee, and quality, but also the environment inside the school— if it is enjoyable to stay and safe from detriment from others. The bully does

the act to the victim, because of the existence of power between the two, either physically or mentally superior. These traits of a bully are one of the factors that make him/her to think that they can do anything as long as they have the power to do so and make everything favorable to them. According to Hinduja and Patchinet. al. (2021) a bully does not necessarily need to have actual power over a potential victim. Perceived powerless on victim is all that is required to establish a bully victim connection. Some instances may happen that the act does not just happen for one time, but it is continuously happening or in multiple occasions that leading to change of acts of the victim or even of the behavior.

A student being bullied is more likely to undergo physical and mental damages such as, feeling anxious, depressed, insecure, lonely and feel like crying a lot or sometimes can lead to loss of interest on things they used to enjoy, decreasing concentration in school, being afraid and nervous to go to school – when these impacts deepen, it could lead to suicidal thoughts or hurting oneself thinking that one's life is useless anymore or cutting one's skin to somehow alleviate the negative emotions. ³ According to Centers for Disease and Control (CDC) violence prevention, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death resulting to 4,400 deaths per year (Colorosso, 2021). And as for students who bully others they tend to suffer from alcohol, cigarette and even prohibited drugs abuse, involvement into fights and in some cases the long-term effect would be having criminal convictions when they become adult, and to be abusive to their romantic partners. According to Olweus as cited by Markhan (20233), children who become bullies usually come from families that lack parental warmth and involvement. This statement provides the idea that since the kid was in the environment where their parents are not guiding them enough, there's a tendency that the kid can grow as attention seeker person and that's when they will use someone for them to let go of their frustrations and seek for attentions from other people. The bullies tend to have relatively strict or authoritarian guardians or parents, which has the idea as their model of behavior of discipline and punishments.

There is no experiment that can tell whether being bullied directly affects academic achievements or even school participations. But, in some instances, the adjustments of victim directly affect their concentration on academic subjects inside the school that leads to poor performance. Bullying may result in poor academic performance, health problems, delinquency, and criminality (Hymelet. Al., 2020). Continuous bullying can be a source of health problem, especially physical health issues, because of anxiety and physical injury on contacts from the bully. Most of the people who are being bullied take place in public for the bully to humiliate much more the person. The act of bullying is greatly affected by those who stands against the act, because somehow it makes the bully to rethink of what he is doing, especially if one of the against it is their peers or friends. The society takes a very special role in lessening the cases of bullying, because they can do something against it while it is happening. It's just a matter of whether you will stand for what is right, or just let this act continue and somehow when time comes, your kids can be the next ones to be bullied.

Factors Associated to Bullying

Personal Factors

The individual or personal factors were influential on the emergence of bullying. Although there is a default level of harassment in teenagers' manners, bullying is considered a more serious and risky point, threatening their behavioral health (Nansel et al, 2020). It has been proved in numerous studies that the people perpetrating violence are more likely to get involved in depression in future. In addition, the victims of bullying, mostly, suffer from degrees of anxiety. Violent children and their victims are both exposed to numerous emotional, behavioral, and relationship-related disorders. Costello et al. wrote in their study that compulsion and anxiety are related behaviors and anxiety is the most important factor in education and social relationships, affecting children and adolescents (Costello, Egger, and Angold, 2021). Compulsion has short-term and long-term negative effects on interpersonal relations among business persons (Craig, 2020). Also Kant et al. (2021) wrote in their study that the victim of compulsion is the weak immune system and consequently poor physical health, indicating that the psychosomatic effects such as headaches and sleep disorders are related.

Family structure is one of the important factors playing a role in the emergence of aggressive behaviors. Lereya et al. (2023) found that there are weak links between the parents and the children behind most violence cases among children. In other words, parents do not support teenagers and have an inordinate manner in relationships,

for instance, they punish children sometimes without any reason (Samara, 2022). Children who are frequently punished without a logical reason will not defend themselves while facing social violence. Making things worse, parents might encourage regressive and retaliatory manner. In such cases, children learn misbehaviors and consider them an accepted means of revenge (Faun, 2021). Indifference and negligence towards children could be another factor contributing to violence. Some employed parents have less time to spend with their children. On the other hand, some children who receive little attention from their parents seek weaker peers to bully them and compensate for their mental gaps.

School Factors

The school atmosphere and environment are key factors in the bursting of violence. Social environment prevailing in schools should be preventive against health threatening accidents. School staff should control bullying and if it happens, they should take appropriate measures. Today, bullying is considered dangerous for both perpetrators and witnesses. Research findings show that about 7 percent of Swedish students bully at school and 5% to 15% from all school grades are among the victims (Vambheim, 2021). This information confirms that schools are in charge of providing a safe environment for learning. Teachers play major roles in positively or negatively changing the students' behaviors. Studies have proved that if teachers tolerate bullying by students, the misbehavior will grow further (Yoneyama, 2023).

In addition, research subjects believed that teacher's reaction against bullying could be preventive or stimulating for students; because, teachers are students' first behavioral model. McEvoy in his research maintains that teachers' and students' bullying are similar in terms of power relations and humiliation of the victim in front of his friends, leaving destructive effects on the victim's mind (McEvoy, 2020). It is experimentally proved that the teacher's positive attitude towards bullying, ethical inefficiency, wrong monitoring, and ineffective interference are influential in the bursting of misbehaviors .

Furthermore, research subjects believed that teenagers learn how to bully from their peers; they think aggressive behavior will bring them fame and respect. However, peers and classmates could control or aggravate bullying.

Peers could be important supports for aggression and if there is no amicable relationship between the students, bullying could turn into a serious and dangerous issue in schools (Espelage, 2023). Due to the hormonal fluctuations during the puberty period, teenagers face high sensational and emotional challenges. Following their emotional fragility, gradual physical maturity would also happen. This stage is inevitably combined with sleep and temper disorder and even depression. During this critical period, friends' share in the teenager's life is much bigger than that of parents (Ncube, 2022).

Community Factors

Impatience and intolerance are considered as the worst defects which are, unfortunately, growing fast among the people of all ages especially youngsters. Education system and the media in the country function in favor of increasing social expectations, driving people to think about what they do not have more; this is a sort of psychological repression. Today's life style is generally based on egocentrism and prompt demand satisfaction. This could also be effective in the decrease of patience and tolerance threshold. On the other hand, spiritualism is fading away, giving its place to materialism among the society members and logical thinking is taking over humanistic emotions. Impatient people have little control over their manner and burst in anger in no time, endangering themselves and others thorough their aggressive manner (Shields & Pierce, 2023). Patience is one of the psychological variables that seems to be religious.

Bullying is associated with the moral virtue of patience that makes a person inhibit himself with perseverance and endurance in harsh conditions (Khormaei, 2020). Izadi Tame et al.'s (2021) study also showed that the use of educational strategies of patience is effective in reducing aggression. Also, Khormaei (2020) indicated the role of patience in negatively predicting aggression. The results also indicated that the hesitation component predicted bullying negatively. In other words, self-restraint against inner desires and passions is associated with a reduction in bullying. This finding is quite expectable. Hesitation describes people who can resist against temptations, desires, demands, and unreasonable expectations which are contrary to their own social

expectations. When faced with situations that are not as desired, these students do not get angry and do not react in response to their classmate's bad behavior. Obviously, these features are accompanied by a reduction in bullying (Khormaei, 2020). Also, Chiu and Chan's study indicated a significant negative correlation between bullying and self-control (2020).

Poverty is also presented as a factor effective in bullying and other researchers have also proved that in economically underdeveloped regions, bullying prevails more strongly (Rigby, 2020). In addition, the research subjects believed that wealthy people use their money to bully others (Yan, 2021). This is compatible with the research findings conducted by Jank Auskiene (2020) who found out that aggression and bullying are mostly perpetrated by middle class and wealthy people, victimizing mostly poor people.

Bullying as the outcome of individual differences

Bullying is a result from the differing level of personal power between each student. These differences are either physically or psychologically based.

Bullies tend to be physically stronger than the average student and from a personality perspective, tend to be more aggressive, manipulative and low in empathy (Olweus, 2023). Victims tend to be physically weaker, introverted with low self-esteem (Slee and Rigby, 2021). School programs based on this perspective tend to focus on changing behavior of bullies through counselling and/or discipline as well as looking at changing behavior of victims through social skills and assertiveness training.

Bullying as a developmental process

Based on the belief that there is a natural instinct to dominate, in terms of social dominance, to ensure survival of the species. Initially children engage in more physically direct means of bullying but as they progress developmentally, they adopt less socially offensive means of bullying by replacing them with more indirect means (Rigby, 2020). This perspective leads schools to adopt programs that positively foster the developmental growth of students and challenges schools to address the subtle changes in bullying as students mature.

Bullying as a socio-cultural phenomenon

It takes a broader societal perspective when identifying the cause of bullying behavior. Bullying is seen as a consequence of the power differential between various social groups in our society based on gender, race, social class, etc. Bullying is more often initiated by boys than girls (Olweus, 2023; Smith and Sharp, 2020). Boys are more likely to bully girls than vice versa (Rigby, 2020). School programs adopting this perspective develop programs that address prejudice and discrimination and attempt to increase the cultural sensitivity by introducing a collective and cooperative approach.

Bullying as a response to peer pressures within the school

This perspective sees bullying as group phenomena. Groups are not necessarily tied to race, gender, etc. but exist through a common interest or purpose. Within a school environment, the peer group will often bully another group or individual for a reason (real or imagined) or simply just to have fun. Bullies have admitted to acting as part of a group for half of the bullying incidents they have been involved in (Rigby, 2020). Bullying by individuals is more commonly conducted with the support of a group (Pepler and Craig, 2021). School programs working from this perspective focus on groups attempting to utilize the peer pressure of the group to positively influence responsible individual action. The Method of Shared Concern (a staff training resource for bullying) works from this perspective.

Bullying from the perspective of restorative justice

This approach takes an individualistic view of the bully and sees bullying behavior as a result of the specific and unique psychological and emotional characteristics of the bully. It views bullies as not being able to self-regulate with feelings of shame.

Bullies are considered not to have pride in their school nor integrate well into their community (Morrison, 2022). Programs based on this approach believe the school community and significant others should support the bullies as they are provided with opportunity to expose their wrongdoing in a caring environment not a punitive environment. The primary aim is to restore positive relationships among the bully and victim and the whole community.

The act of bullying undoubtedly affects one’s life- the one who is bullied, the one who bullied and those who witnessed acts of bullying. On the part of the one who is bullied, the act of bullying may experience negative issues physically, mentally, and academically. He is more likely to experience depression and anxiety, feelings of sadness and loneliness, health complaints, and decreased academic achievement (www.stopbullying.gov., n.d.).

The sadder part is that these issues may persist into adulthood which in no doubt may affect the whole lifestyle of victim as well as the security of the community. Those who bully others may engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood. They are more likely to abuse alcohol and other drugs in the adolescence and as adults, get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school, engage in early sexuality, have criminal convictions and traffic citations as adults and be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults (www.stopbullying.gov.,n.d.). Lastly, kids who witness bullying are more likely to have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs; have increased mental health problems, including depression and anxiety; and miss or skip school (www.stopbullying.gov.,n.d.).

Conceptual Framework

The variables in this study are elucidated in Figure 1. The variables include the factors associated to bullying incidents among Grade Six pupils and level of exposure to bullying. The independent variable of the study is the factors associated to bullying incidents among Grade Six pupils in terms of: personal factors; school factors; and community factors and the dependent variable of the study is level of exposure to bullying.

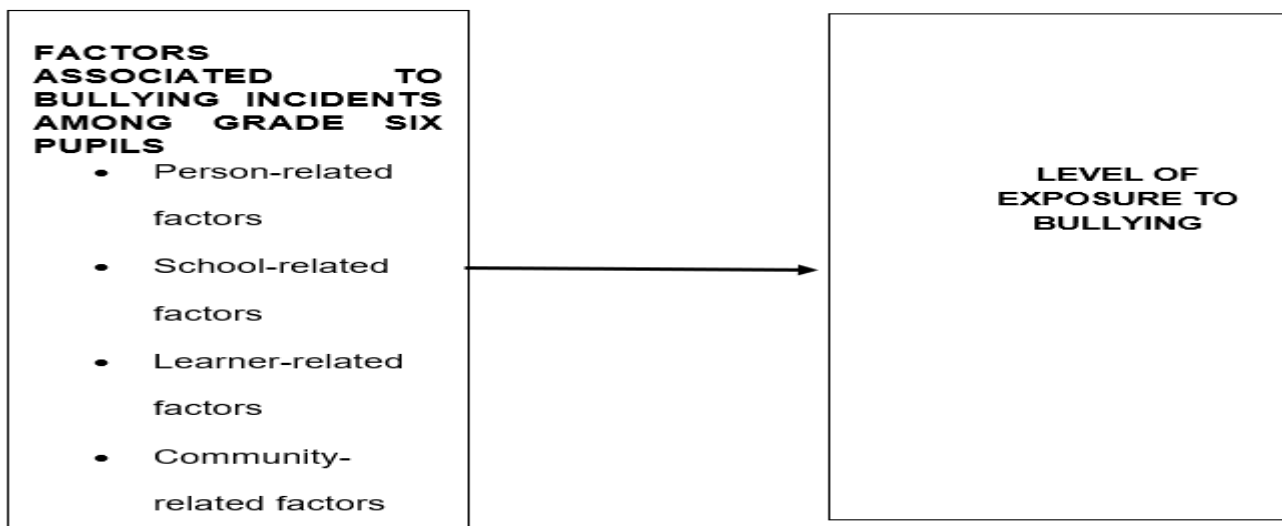


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study will be tested at a 95% confidence level.

There is no significant relationship between the factors associated to bullying incidents among Grade Six pupils and level of exposure to bullying.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodological approaches used by the researcher including the research design, the locale of the study, respondents of the study, sampling procedure, research instruments, validation of instrument and data gathering method. It also includes the measurement of variables and data analysis using statistical measures and treatment to analyze and interpret the data gathered in the study.

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive and correlational research design. Saunders, et al (2020), defined descriptive research as a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying, and tabulating data about prevailing conditions, practices, processes, trends, and cause-effect relationships and then making adequate and accurate interpretation about such data with or without or sometimes minimal aid of statistical methods. In this study it is descriptive in nature because the study aims to accurately and systematically measure the different factors associated to bullying and levels of exposure to bullying among secondary learners. Frequencies, mean, and percentages will be used to determine the factors associated and the level of exposure.

Moreover, it is correlational in nature because it tried to reveal the significant relationship between the factors associated to bullying and levels of exposure to bullying among secondary learners. A correlation research design is used when a study focuses on the current situation and the aim is to discover a new reality, according to Bordens & Abbot (2021). It is only useful when the data to be collected is about the current state, offering the importance of evidence, and concentrating on the most interesting items to say. In order to analyze the collected numerical data in the sense of the research, a descriptive analysis will be used.

As mentioned by Campbell (2021), correlation research design is valuable in providing facts on which scientific judgment is based on determining two variables' relationship using correlation analysis, based on the computed and analyzed data.

Locale of the Study

Borongan, officially the City of Borongan, is a 4th class city and capital of the province of Eastern Samar, Philippines. According to the 2015 census, it has a population of 69,297 people. It has the highest literacy rate among the municipalities in the whole province of Eastern Samar (Census of Population (2015)).

This study was conducted to all seven secondary schools in Borongan City Division namely, Eastern Samar National Comprehensive High School, Sta. Fe National High School, Maypangdan National High School, Calingatnan National High School, Supt. Fidel E. Anacta Memorial High School, Lalawigan National High School and Benowangan National High School.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were the 35 School Administrators in Borongan City Division

Name of School	Sample Size
Eastern Samar National Comprehensive High School	17
Sta. Fe National High School	4
Maypangdan National High School	4
Calingatnan National High School	2
Supt. Fidel E. Anacta Memorial High School	2
Lalawigan National High School	4
Benowangan National High School	2
Total	35

Sampling Procedure

Total enumeration sampling involves including the entire population within the scope of a study. For research on factors associated with bullying incidents among secondary schools in the Borongan City Division, this approach ensures that every potential respondent, such as all students or teachers within the target schools, contributes data. This method is particularly advantageous when the population size is manageable, and comprehensive data collection is critical to accurately understanding a phenomenon. Total enumeration eliminates sampling bias and supports generalizability, as all views and experiences within the population are considered, providing a detailed insight into bullying's causes and prevalence (Ismail et al., 2021; NCES, 2022).

In the context of bullying research, total enumeration allows for a more nuanced analysis of associated factors, such as individual characteristics, peer dynamics, and school environments. For instance, studies have shown that bullying correlates with age, gender, peer relationships, and school climate (Ismail et al., 2021). By collecting data from all individuals, researchers can identify even subtle trends and interactions that might be overlooked in smaller, randomly selected samples. Additionally, this method supports the development of tailored interventions that address specific needs and risks present in the entire school community.

However, implementing total enumeration can be resource-intensive, requiring substantial time and effort to reach all participants. Ethical considerations are also critical, particularly in bullying research, as confidentiality and sensitivity to participants' experiences must be upheld. Nonetheless, the comprehensive nature of total enumeration aligns well with the study's goal of understanding bullying in depth, making it an ideal sampling method for this research in Borongan City Division (NCES, 2022; Cambridge Core, 2023).

Research Instruments

The researcher adopted a tool to investigate the factors associated to bullying and levels of exposure to bullying among secondary learners. The researcher gone through a series of literature reviews related to the major variables of the study that are declared in the objectives of the study in order to make sure that the construct definition is in line with applicable prior research and theory and to determine existing survey items significant for the current study. The researcher summarized the review of the literature in relation to the factors related to the academic performance of the pupils. The researcher had work to ensure that the items would be intelligible, straightforward, and prepared in accordance with current best practices in survey design as they were being created. This was accomplished by looking to a questionnaire that fairly represented the study's factors.

The study utilized a survey questionnaire as its tool for gathering the needed quantitative data on the factors associated to bullying among secondary learners. This study will adopt from the study of Haramain (2019). It consists of item statements regarding factors associated to bullying among secondary learners in the following parameters such as personal factors, School-Related and community-related factors. The researchers used a five-point Likert Scale for the responses of the learners in each indicator. Learners' responses on the factors associated to bullying among kindergarten learners will be ranged from (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Sometimes, (4) Often and (5) Always.

To achieve the second objective of the study, level of exposure to bullying among secondary learners, the researcher will utilize research questionnaire from Milano (2018).

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher obtained an approval for the study's execution from the division superintendent of Borongan City. The full research period will take place from 2024 to 2025 during the academic year. The researcher conducted an internal survey, visiting respondents at their homes or places of employment after the data collection tool is devised and authorized by the research panel. The researcher will personally ask the superintendent and school heads for their permission to collect the essential data at the primary schools that are the subject of the investigation. The researcher will deliver the survey questionnaires intended for teachers and students in chosen elementary schools in the division of Borongan City after describing the objective of the research and getting consent from the respondents.

A questionnaire adopted by the researcher will be used to collect the data. In the Borongan City division, the survey questionnaire will be distributed to secondary school head respondents of particular secondary school. They will be given instructions on how to complete the questionnaire.

In order to encourage honest and truthful responses from the respondents, it will be made clear to them that there were no right or wrong answers to these questions, that it would not have any bearing on their scholastic standing, that this exercise is only for research purposes, and that their answers would be kept strictly confidential.

The researcher will gather every questionnaire and sent each participant a statement of appreciation for their cooperation. The questionnaires will be assessed in accordance with the procedure specified, and the information is then recorded for analysis and interpretation.

Measurement of Variable

The questionnaire, which will be used to gather information about the factors associated to bullying among secondary school learners, will be measured using the following:

SCALE	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
5	4.20-5.00	Always	Highly Related
4	3.40-4.19	Often	Moderately Related
3	2.60-3.39	Sometimes	Partially Related
2	1.80-2.59	Rarely	Poorly Related
1	1.00-1.79	Never	Not Related

For the level of exposure to bullying among secondary school learners, the following measurement will be used based on the study of Milano, 2018:

SCALE	WEIGHTED AVERAGE	ADJECTIVAL RATING
5	4.21-5.00	Very Highly Exposed
4	3.41-4.20	Highly Exposed
3	2.61-3.40	Moderately Exposed
2	1.81-2.60	Lowly Exposed
1	1.00-1.80	Very Lowly Exposed

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the data gathering instruments will be tallied, computed and analyzed statistically. The results will be interpreted using the specific statistical tools.

For statement problem 1 and 2 frequency count, mean and percentages will be used. Spearman rho will be used to test the relationship between the factors associated to bullying and level of exposure to bullying among secondary school learners.

All tests will be performed at 0.05 level of significance and 95% confidence interval.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher will observe various obligations during the research process ensuring honesty, objectivity, and integrity. The researcher will request permission identified schools where the study will be conducted. Permission to participate as respondents of the study will be asked to respondents.

Their participation will be voluntary. The privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity of the respondents and data were given due consideration.

Moreover, the researcher has to properly cite the original source of information incorporated in this research manuscript by acting responsibly and taking care of copyrights, intellectual property, patents and other forms of rights.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter contains the presentation of gathered, tabulated and interpreted data.

Factors associated to bullying incidents in terms of Personal Factors

The role of self-esteem in bullying incidents is a significant area of concern in secondary schools. The findings of this study indicate that self-esteem levels are highly related to students' involvement in bullying, with a mean of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 0.695. Students with low self-esteem are more susceptible to becoming victims of bullying, as they may lack the confidence to assert themselves or seek help when targeted. Conversely, some individuals with inflated self-esteem may use bullying as a mechanism to assert dominance or compensate for underlying insecurities. This aligns with the findings of Patchin and Hinduja (2020), who emphasize the critical relationship between self-esteem and peer victimization, suggesting that fostering positive self-worth in students can significantly reduce bullying behaviors and victimization.

Additionally, the results reveal that strong leadership tendencies among students are moderately related to bullying behavior, with a mean of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 0.973. This suggests that some students who exhibit assertive or dominant traits might misuse their leadership capabilities to exert control over peers in the form of bullying. Research by Menesini and Salmivalli (2022) supports this, noting that while leadership is generally a positive trait, it can be misdirected in the absence of proper guidance, leading to increased aggression or manipulation. Schools should channel such tendencies through structured programs that cultivate responsible leadership, teaching students the value of empathy and collaboration to prevent the misuse of power dynamics in peer relationships.

Table 1A. Personal factors associated to bullying incidents among secondary high school

Statement	Mean	sd	Interpretation
I believe that a child's self-esteem level is a significant factor in whether they engage in or become victims of bullying	4.40	.695	Highly Related
In my experience, children with strong leadership tendencies are more likely to exhibit bullying behaviors	3.37	.973	Moderately Related
I have observed that children with social skills difficulties are more vulnerable to bullying	4.00	.728	Moderately Related
Children who exhibit high levels of aggression or impulsivity tend to be involved in bullying incidents	3.91	.658	Moderately Related
I have noticed that children who struggle with regulating their emotions are more frequently involved in bullying	3.94	.802	Moderately Related
In my opinion, a child's home environment and family dynamics play a crucial role in their involvement in bullying	4.03	.985	Moderately Related
I believe that children who lack empathy towards their peers are more likely to engage in bullying	3.97	.923	Moderately Related
I have observed that children who are often isolated or have few friends are more prone to being bullied	3.86	.912	Moderately Related
In my experience, children with certain physical characteristics or disabilities are more likely to be targeted by bullies	4.09	.981	Moderately Related
I believe that children who display a strong need for attention or dominance in the classroom are more likely to be involved in bullying incidents	3.97	1.014	Moderately Related
Average	3.954	.4835	Moderately Related

These findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions to address personal factors influencing bullying. Building students' self-esteem through counseling and inclusive school activities, while fostering ethical leadership skills, could mitigate these behaviors. As supported by Espelage et al. (2021), a whole-school approach integrating social-emotional learning programs can effectively address these issues, fostering a safer

and more supportive school environment. Educators and policymakers must prioritize these strategies to address the nuanced personal factors contributing to bullying incidents effectively.

Factors associated to bullying incidents in terms of School Factors

The findings of the study highlight the significant role of school factors, particularly teacher-student interactions, in influencing bullying incidents among secondary school students. With a mean of 4.14 and a standard deviation of 0.772, the frequency and quality of teacher-student interactions are moderately related to bullying incidents. Positive interactions create a sense of trust and belonging among students, reducing the likelihood of bullying. Conversely, poor-quality or infrequent interactions can lead to a disconnect, making it easier for bullying behaviors to manifest and persist unnoticed. Research by Garandeanu et al. (2021) supports this observation, emphasizing that a supportive and communicative teacher-student relationship contributes significantly to a safer school environment by fostering mutual respect and early identification of bullying behaviors.

Another critical school factor identified is the training and preparedness of school staff to address bullying, which also scored a mean of 4.14 but with a slightly higher variability (SD = 0.944). This underscores the crucial role of staff competence in managing bullying incidents effectively. Adequate training ensures that school personnel can recognize subtle signs of bullying, intervene appropriately, and implement preventative measures. Williford et al. (2021) highlight that schools with comprehensive training programs for staff experience fewer and less severe bullying incidents, as trained personnel are more proactive and confident in handling such situations. Without such preparedness, staff may unintentionally contribute to an environment where bullying is not adequately addressed.

Table 1B. School factors associated to bullying incidents among secondary high school

Statement	Mean	sd	Interpretation
I believe that the overall school climate plays a significant role in the occurrence of bullying incidents	4.00	.907	Moderately Related
In my experience, the availability and effectiveness of school-based anti-bullying programs influence the frequency of bullying	4.11	.832	Moderately Related
I have observed that the level of teacher supervision during recess and other unstructured times affects the occurrence of bullying	4.03	1.014	Moderately Related
I believe that the physical layout and safety of the school environment contribute to the likelihood of bullying incidents	3.89	.963	Moderately Related
In my opinion, the consistency and fairness of the school's discipline policies impact the prevalence of bullying	4.17	.954	Moderately Related
I have noticed that the presence of a supportive and inclusive school culture reduces bullying incidents	4.11	1.051	Moderately Related
I believe that the frequency and quality of teacher-student interactions can either mitigate or exacerbate bullying	4.14	.772	Moderately Related
In my experience, the degree of parental involvement in school activities and their communication with teachers influence bullying behaviors	4.09	.981	Moderately Related
I have observed that class size and teacher-to-student ratios play a role in the frequency of bullying incidents	3.91	.951	Moderately Related
I believe that the training and preparedness of school staff to handle bullying situations are crucial in preventing and addressing bullying	4.14	.944	Moderately Related
Average	4.060	.5751	Moderately Related

The interplay between teacher-student interactions and staff training has broad implications for school policies and practices. Educational institutions must prioritize professional development programs that address both relational dynamics and technical skills in managing bullying. Evidence-based frameworks like the KiVa program and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program provide structured approaches that schools can adopt to strengthen both teacher-student relationships and staff preparedness (Salmivalli & Poskiparta, 2022). These

programs have demonstrated effectiveness in reducing bullying by fostering a comprehensive understanding of its dynamics and equipping school staff with practical tools for intervention.

Furthermore, creating a whole-school approach to bullying prevention is vital to address these factors comprehensively. Collaboration among teachers, administrators, students, and parents can create a unified front against bullying. Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2022) emphasize that such an approach fosters a cohesive school culture where all members understand their roles in preventing and addressing bullying. Regular communication and shared accountability among stakeholders can strengthen the impact of training programs and ensure that the quality of teacher-student interactions remains consistently positive.

Factors associated to bullying incidents in terms of Community Factors

The findings highlight the critical role of community factors in influencing bullying incidents, particularly the environment fostered within the school’s community. With a mean score of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 1.023, the perception that the school community fosters a safe and inclusive environment is highly related to the prevention of bullying. A positive school climate, characterized by inclusivity and safety, deters bullying behaviors by promoting a culture of respect and mutual support. Garandau et al. (2021) emphasize that when students perceive their school as a safe space, they are less likely to engage in or become victims of bullying. This underscores the importance of collaboration among school staff, students, and community members in cultivating a safe learning environment.

Table 1C. Community factors associated to bullying incidents among secondary high school

Statement	Mean	sd	Interpretation
The school's community fosters a safe and inclusive environment for all students	4.20	1.023	Highly Related
Parents and guardians in the community are actively involved in promoting kindness and respect among children	4.40	.812	Highly Related
There are sufficient community resources available to support anti-bullying programs	4.20	.759	Highly Related
Local organizations and businesses support the school's efforts to prevent bullying	4.06	.968	Moderately Related
Community events and activities emphasize the importance of positive social interactions among children	3.97	.985	Moderately Related
Community members are aware of and actively address bullying behaviors when they occur	3.94	.838	Moderately Related
There is effective communication between the school and community about bullying prevention strategies	4.17	.747	Moderately Related
The community provides accessible mental health resources for children who are victims of bullying.	3.91	.853	Moderately Related
Community leaders regularly participate in school initiatives aimed at reducing bullying.	3.97	.985	Moderately Related
The local culture and values promote empathy and discourage aggressive behavior among children.	4.14	.845	Moderately Related
Average	4.097	.5988	Moderately Related

Parents and guardians in the community also play a pivotal role, with active involvement in promoting kindness and respect scoring the highest mean of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 0.812. Parental engagement is crucial in shaping children's attitudes and behaviors, both within and beyond school settings. When parents model and reinforce values of empathy and respect at home, children are less likely to engage in bullying. A study by Smith et al. (2021) supports this, demonstrating that parental involvement in anti-bullying initiatives significantly reduces incidents of aggression and fosters prosocial behaviors among students. Schools and communities must therefore create opportunities for meaningful parental participation, such as workshops, awareness campaigns, and joint activities that reinforce positive behavior.

Another significant finding is the availability of sufficient community resources to support anti-bullying programs, which also scored a mean of 4.20 with a lower variability ($SD = 0.759$). These resources include counseling services, training programs, and partnerships with local organizations dedicated to bullying prevention. Such resources enhance the capacity of schools to implement evidence-based strategies and provide additional support for both victims and perpetrators. Espelage et al. (2021) highlight that access to community resources is a key factor in the sustained success of anti-bullying programs, as these resources help address the broader social and emotional needs of students.

Findings suggest that fostering a collaborative approach involving schools, parents, and community stakeholders is essential to effectively combat bullying. Schools should work closely with parents and community organizations to implement holistic interventions that address the root causes of bullying and promote prosocial behavior. Community partnerships can also enhance the reach and effectiveness of anti-bullying campaigns by leveraging local expertise and resources. As noted by Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2022), a community-centered approach that aligns school efforts with broader societal values creates a unified front against bullying.

Level of exposure of bullying as a victim

The findings reveal a high level of exposure to various forms of bullying among secondary high school students, with verbal bullying being the most frequently reported. Being called mean names, teased, or made fun of in a hurtful way had the highest mean score of 4.00 ($SD = 0.939$), signifying its prevalence and significant impact. Verbal bullying often undermines victims' self-esteem and can lead to long-term psychological effects, such as anxiety and depression. According to Smith et al. (2021), verbal bullying is particularly damaging because it often goes unnoticed by adults, making it essential for schools to establish open communication channels for students to report such incidents.

Social exclusion also emerged as a highly exposed form of bullying, with a mean score of 3.86 ($SD = 0.912$). Students being purposefully left out of activities, ignored, or excluded from peer groups reflects relational aggression, which can cause emotional distress and feelings of isolation. Espelage et al. (2021) highlight that relational aggression is one of the most covert forms of bullying and often escalates when left unaddressed. Interventions aimed at fostering inclusive environments and promoting social integration can mitigate the harmful effects of exclusion on students.

Physical bullying, such as hitting, pushing, or locking victims indoors, also scored highly, with a mean of 3.74 ($SD = 1.146$). While less frequent than verbal or social forms, physical bullying can cause immediate harm and instill fear in victims. Additionally, theft or damage to personal belongings and threats or coercion (mean scores of 3.57 and 3.60, respectively) highlight the persistence of material and psychological forms of bullying. Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2022) recommend a multi-tiered approach, including clear anti-bullying policies and restorative practices, to address these aggressive behaviors comprehensively.

Cyberbullying, which involves cruel messages, hurtful photographs, or digital harassment, scored a mean of 3.66 ($SD = 1.187$). The rise of technology has extended bullying beyond physical spaces, making it inescapable for victims. Studies by Patchin and Hinduja (2020) reveal that cyberbullying often exacerbates the emotional toll on victims due to its anonymous and pervasive nature. To combat cyberbullying, schools and communities must collaborate to promote digital literacy, encourage responsible online behavior, and implement stringent measures to identify and penalize offenders.

Table 2A. Level of exposure to bullying among secondary high school as Victim

Statement	Mean	sd	Interpretation
He/she called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way.	4.00	.939	Highly Exposed
Other students left him/her out of things on purpose, excluded from their group of friends, or completely ignored.	3.86	.912	Highly Exposed
He/she was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors.	3.74	1.146	Highly Exposed
Had his/her money or things taken away or damaged.	3.57	1.195	Highly Exposed
He/she was threatened or forced to do things he/she didn't want to do	3.60	1.117	Highly Exposed

He/she was bullied with mean names or comments about his/her race or color.	3.57	1.145	Highly Exposed
He/she was bullied with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning.	3.71	1.073	Highly Exposed
He/She was bullied with cruel messages or hurtful photographs using a cellphone or Internet.	3.66	1.187	Highly Exposed
He/she was bullied in other forms that weren't mentioned.	3.57	1.195	Highly Exposed
Other students told lies or spread rumors about him/her and tried to make others dislike me.	3.71	1.226	Highly Exposed
Average	3.700	.8738	Highly Exposed

The findings emphasize that bullying among secondary high school students is multifaceted, requiring a holistic approach to prevention and intervention. Schools, families, and communities must work together to address the root causes and manifestations of bullying. Efforts should include fostering empathy through education, strengthening reporting mechanisms, and providing victims with access to counseling and support. As Salmivalli and Poskiparta (2022) suggest, addressing bullying in its various forms creates a safer and more supportive school environment, ultimately improving students' well-being and academic outcomes.

Level of exposure of bullying as a bully

The findings highlight the high level of exposure among secondary high school students to engaging in bullying behaviors. The most prevalent form of bullying, with a mean score of 3.94 (SD = 1.056), involved calling others mean names, teasing, or making fun of others in a hurtful way. Verbal bullying, as indicated in this result, is often a gateway to other aggressive behaviors and is driven by the desire to assert dominance or control. According to Smith et al. (2021), verbal aggression stems from both personal insecurities and social dynamics that reinforce hostile communication. Schools must address this by promoting empathy and effective conflict resolution skills.

Social exclusion, with a mean score of 3.89 (SD = 1.022), ranks second in prevalence. Intentionally excluding or ignoring peers is a covert yet harmful form of bullying that erodes the victims' sense of belonging and self-worth. Espelage et al. (2021) argue that social exclusion thrives in environments where cliques and peer hierarchies are prevalent. Addressing this requires fostering a school culture that values inclusivity and cooperation, supported by structured activities that encourage group participation and reduce isolation.

Physical bullying, with a mean of 3.63 (SD = 1.165), reflects direct aggression such as hitting, pushing, or confining peers. Though less frequent than verbal or social bullying, physical bullying can cause immediate harm and instill fear in victims. This behavior often escalates when unchecked and is usually observed among individuals with poor anger management or a history of exposure to violence. Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2022) suggest implementing school-wide positive behavior interventions to reduce physical aggression and promote prosocial behaviors.

Relational aggression, including spreading false rumors (mean = 3.77, SD = 1.114), further underscores the complexity of bullying behaviors. Such acts aim to damage social relationships and reputations, often motivated by jealousy or the desire to gain social standing. Research by Garandeanu et al. (2021) highlights that relational bullying requires interventions targeting peer group dynamics and enhancing students' social-emotional skills to prevent manipulative behaviors.

Table 2B. Level of exposure to bullying among secondary high school as Bullies

Statement	Mean	sd	Interpretation
He/she called another learner (s) mean names, made fun of, or teased him/her in a hurtful way	3.94	1.056	Highly Exposed
He/she kept him/her out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends, or completely ignored him or her.	3.89	1.022	Highly Exposed

He/she hit, kicked, pushed, and shoved him or her around or locked him or her indoors.	3.63	1.165	Highly Exposed
He/she spread false rumors about him/her and tried to make others dislike him/her.	3.77	1.114	Highly Exposed
He/she took money or things from him or her or damaged his/her belongings.	3.54	1.221	Highly Exposed
He/she threatened or forced him/her to do things he/she didn't want to do.	3.54	1.314	Highly Exposed
He/she bullied him/her with mean names or comments about his/her race or color.	3.46	1.221	Highly Exposed
He/she bullied him/her with mean names, comments, or gestures with sexual meaning.	3.54	1.094	Highly Exposed
He/she bullied him/hers with cruel messages or hurtful photographs using a cellphone or Internet.	3.57	1.220	Highly Exposed
He/she bullied others using other forms that weren't mentioned.	3.49	1.222	Highly Exposed
Average	3.637	.9705	Highly Exposed

Cyberbullying, with a mean of 3.57 (SD = 1.220), represents a significant challenge in today's digital age. The use of cruel messages or hurtful photographs on digital platforms enables bullies to harm their victims beyond physical spaces. Patchin and Hinduja (2020) emphasize the anonymity and pervasive reach of cyberbullying, making it critical for schools to educate students on digital responsibility and establish strict policies to address online harassment. Furthermore, identity-based bullying, such as mean comments about race or sexual gestures (mean = 3.46–3.54), highlights the need for initiatives promoting diversity and cultural sensitivity.

The overall high exposure to bullying behaviors among secondary high school students, with an average mean of 3.637 (SD = 0.9705), calls for immediate and multi-faceted interventions. Schools must adopt holistic anti-bullying programs that address personal, social, and systemic factors contributing to bullying. Collaboration between educators, parents, and community members is vital in fostering an environment that discourages bullying and supports positive student interactions. As Salmivalli and Poskiparta (2022) suggest, empowering bystanders and promoting restorative practices can significantly reduce bullying behaviors and improve school climate.

Significant relationship between the factors associated to bullying and level of exposure to bullying

The analysis reveals a mixed relationship between factors associated with bullying and the level of exposure to bullying among victims. For personal and school-related factors, the results indicate no significant relationship, with p-values of .510 and .200, respectively. This suggests that individual characteristics and school-specific dynamics, such as teacher-student interactions or staff training, may not directly influence the likelihood of becoming a bullying victim. The lack of significance aligns with findings by Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2022), which emphasize the multifaceted nature of bullying, where personal and institutional factors alone may not adequately explain victimization. This underscores the need for a more comprehensive approach that integrates personal, school, and broader social contexts when addressing bullying.

Conversely, community factors showed a significant relationship with the level of exposure to bullying among victims, with a p-value of .044. This indicates that aspects such as parental involvement, community support, and the promotion of a safe environment substantially impact victimization experiences. Studies by Salmivalli and Poskiparta (2022) highlight that strong community engagement and resources can serve as protective factors against bullying. The findings suggest that fostering an inclusive and proactive community environment can mitigate victimization, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts between schools, families, and local organizations in anti-bullying initiatives. Addressing these community factors is crucial in developing holistic interventions that not only target schools but also leverage community resources to support victims and prevent bullying.

Table 6. Test on significant relationship between the factors associated to bullying and level of exposure to bullying

Factors	exposure	r-value	p-value	decision	interpretation
Personal	Victim	.115	.510	Fail to reject H ₀	Not significant
School		.222	.200	Fail to reject H ₀	Not significant
Community		.342	.044	Reject H ₀	Significant
Personal	Bullies	.083	.634	Fail to reject H ₀	Not significant
School		.100	.567	Fail to reject H ₀	Not significant
Community		.322	.048	Reject H ₀	Significant

level of significance set at 0.05

The analysis indicates a nuanced relationship between the factors associated with bullying and the level of exposure to bullying among those identified as bullies. For personal and school-related factors, the findings reveal no significant relationship, with p-values of .634 and .567, respectively.

This suggests that individual traits, such as self-esteem or leadership tendencies, and school-specific influences, including teacher-student interactions and staff preparedness, may not significantly predict a student’s likelihood of engaging in bullying behavior. These results align with Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2022), who emphasized the complex interplay of multiple influences on bullying, indicating that neither personal nor school-level factors alone adequately explain the behaviors of bullies. This calls for broader interventions that address a wider spectrum of determinants, including social and environmental factors.

In contrast, community factors showed a significant relationship with bullying behavior among bullies, with a p-value of .048. This finding highlights the role of community dynamics, such as parental involvement, social norms, and access to resources, in influencing bullying behavior. According to Salmivalli and Poskiparta (2022), communities that lack strong norms of kindness or fail to actively engage parents and guardians in fostering respectful behaviors may inadvertently contribute to the perpetuation of bullying.

The results imply that addressing bullying requires collaborative efforts beyond school boundaries, engaging community members and organizations to create a supportive and accountable environment. Initiatives that focus on enhancing community awareness, involvement, and resource allocation are critical in reducing bullying behaviors and promoting a culture of mutual respect.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary and findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

Summary

This study investigated the factors associated to bullying and the level of exposure to bullying among secondary learners. This research aimed to attain the following specific objectives: What are the factors associated to bullying incidents among secondary learners in terms of: personal factors, school factors; and community factors; What is the level of exposure to bullying among secondary learners as: victim; and bullies; and is there significant relationship between the factors associated to bullying and the level of exposure to bullying.

This study utilized the descriptive and correlational research design. In this study it is descriptive in nature because the study aims to accurately and systematically measure the different factors associated to bullying and levels of exposure to bullying among secondary learners.

Frequencies, mean, and percentages will be used to determine the factors associated and the level of exposure. Moreover, it is correlational in nature because it tried to reveal the significant relationship between the factors associated to bullying and levels of exposure to bullying among secondary learners.

Findings

The findings of this study indicate that self-esteem levels are highly related to students' involvement in bullying, and strong leadership tendencies among students are moderately related to bullying behavior as for personal factor. The findings of the study highlight the significant role of school factors, particularly teacher-student interactions, in influencing bullying incidents among secondary school students, the frequency and quality of teacher-student interactions are moderately related to bullying incidents, Community factors in influencing bullying incidents, particularly the environment fostered within the school's community, the perception that the school community fosters a safe and inclusive environment is highly related to the prevention of bullying.

The findings highlight the high level of exposure among secondary high school students to engaging in bullying behaviors. The most prevalent form of bullying, with a involved calling others mean names, teasing, or making fun of others in a hurtful way. Verbal bullying, as indicated in this result, is often a gateway to other aggressive behaviors and is driven by the desire to assert dominance or control. The overall high exposure to bullying behaviors among secondary high school students, calls for immediate and multi-faceted interventions.

The analysis reveals a mixed relationship between factors associated with bullying and the level of exposure to bullying among victims and bullies personal and school-related factors, the results indicate no significant relationship. community factors showed a significant relationship with the level of exposure to bullying among victims and bullies.

Conclusions

In light of the findings derived from the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

The study reveals that self-esteem levels significantly influence students' involvement in bullying, while strong leadership tendencies have a moderate connection. Teacher-student interactions play a crucial role, with the frequency and quality of these interactions moderately linked to bullying incidents. Furthermore, a safe and inclusive school community environment is highly associated with preventing bullying, underscoring the need for a holistic approach to address this issue.

The findings reveal a high prevalence of bullying among secondary school students, with verbal bullying, including name-calling and teasing, as the most common form. This behavior often serves as a precursor to other aggressive actions, driven by a desire for dominance or control. The pervasive exposure to such behaviors highlights the urgent need for comprehensive and multi-faceted interventions to address and prevent bullying effectively.

The analysis reveals a mixed relationship between factors and bullying exposure among victims and bullies. While personal and school-related factors show no significant connection, community factors demonstrate a significant relationship with the level of exposure. These findings emphasize the critical role of fostering positive community environments to mitigate bullying incidents.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are presented:

Schools must implement comprehensive programs aimed at boosting self-esteem and leadership skills among students. This can help reduce their involvement in bullying behaviors. Additionally, enhancing teacher-student interactions through regular training and development programs for educators can improve the quality of these relationships and reduce bullying incidents. Creating and maintaining a safe and inclusive school community should be prioritized, as such environments have been shown to be strongly linked to lower levels of bullying. Schools should focus on fostering positive peer interactions, supporting mental health initiatives, and promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity to effectively prevent bullying

Schools should prioritize anti-bullying programs that focus on educating students about the harmful effects of name-calling and teasing, alongside promoting empathy and conflict resolution skills. Teachers should receive training on identifying and addressing bullying behavior early, with a particular focus on fostering positive communication skills. Additionally, creating a school-wide culture that encourages respect, inclusivity, and open dialogue can help prevent bullying from escalating into more severe forms of aggression.

It is recommended that schools and communities focus on strengthening the social environment and fostering positive community factors. Given that community factors were found to significantly influence bullying exposure, initiatives should aim to create safe, supportive, and inclusive spaces both within and outside school settings. Schools can collaborate with local organizations, parents, and community leaders to establish programs that promote mutual respect, empathy, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, encouraging open communication and collective responsibility can help build a community where bullying is less likely to occur. Emphasizing community involvement in bullying prevention has been shown to be crucial for mitigating its impact on both victims and perpetrators

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Survey Questionnaire On Factors Associated with Bullying Incidents Among Grade Vi Pupils

Direction: Please supply all the information needed by writing the space or checking (/) the space provided. Your honest response to every item is needed.

Name of Teacher Respondent: _____ (optional)

Name of School: _____

Part I. Factors Associated to Bullying Incidents

Direction: Please read each statement carefully and indicate your level of agreement using the 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means "Never," 2 means "Rarely," 3 means "Sometimes," 4 means "Often," and 5 means "Always." Your responses will help us better understand the community factors that influence bullying and improve our efforts to address this issue.

CODE	DESCRIPTION
5	Always
4	Often
3	Sometimes
2	Rarely
1	Never

STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
PERSONAL-RELATED FACTORS	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I believe that a child's self-esteem level is a significant factor in whether they engage in or become victims of bullying					
In my experience, children with strong leadership tendencies are more likely to exhibit bullying behaviors					
I have observed that children with social skills difficulties are more vulnerable to bullying					
Children who exhibit high levels of aggression or impulsivity tend to be involved in bullying incidents					
I have noticed that children who struggle with regulating their emotions are more frequently involved in bullying					

In my opinion, a child's home environment and family dynamics play a crucial role in their involvement in bullying					
I believe that children who lack empathy towards their peers are more likely to engage in bullying					
I have observed that children who are often isolated or have few friends are more prone to being bullied					
In my experience, children with certain physical characteristics or disabilities are more likely to be targeted by bullies					
I believe that children who display a strong need for attention or dominance in the classroom are more likely to be involved in bullying incidents					
SCHOOL-RELATED FACTORS					
I believe that the overall school climate plays a significant role in the occurrence of bullying incidents					
In my experience, the availability and effectiveness of school-based anti-bullying programs influence the frequency of bullying					
I have observed that the level of teacher supervision during recess and other unstructured times affects the occurrence of bullying					
I believe that the physical layout and safety of the school environment contribute to the likelihood of bullying incidents					
In my opinion, the consistency and fairness of the school's discipline policies impact the prevalence of bullying					
I have noticed that the presence of a supportive and inclusive school culture reduces bullying incidents					
I believe that the frequency and quality of teacher-student interactions can either mitigate or exacerbate bullying					
In my experience, the degree of parental involvement in school activities and their communication with teachers influence bullying behaviors					
I have observed that class size and teacher-to-student ratios play a role in the frequency of bullying incidents					
I believe that the training and preparedness of school staff to handle bullying situations are crucial in preventing and addressing bullying					
COMMUNITY-RELATED FACTORS					
The school's community fosters a safe and inclusive environment for all students					
Parents and guardians in the community are actively involved in promoting kindness and respect among children					
There are sufficient community resources available to support anti-bullying programs					

Local organizations and businesses support the school's efforts to prevent bullying					
Community events and activities emphasize the importance of positive social interactions among children					
Community members are aware of and actively address bullying behaviors when they occur					
There is effective communication between the school and community about bullying prevention strategies					
The community provides accessible mental health resources for children who are victims of bullying.					
Community leaders regularly participate in school initiatives aimed at reducing bullying.					
The local culture and values promote empathy and discourage aggressive behavior among children.					

Part II. Level Of Exposure of Bullying

Direction: Thank you for participating in this survey on the level of exposure to bullying incidents among Grade VI learners. Please read each statement carefully and indicate how frequently you observe these situations using the 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means "Very Lowly Exposed," 2 means "Lowly Exposed," 3 means "Moderately Exposed," 4 means "Highly Exposed," and 5 means "Very Highly Exposed." Your responses will provide valuable insights into the prevalence of bullying in our school environment.

STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
As a child who are victim...	Very Highly Exposed	Highly Exposed	Moderately Exposed	Lowly Exposed	Very Lowly Exposed
1. He/she called mean names, was made fun of, or teased in a hurtful way.					
2. Other students left him/her out of things on purpose, excluded from their group of friends, or completely ignored.					
3. He/she was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors.					
4. Had his/her money or things taken away or damaged.					
5. He/she was threatened or					

forced to do things he/she didn't want to do					
6. He/she was bullied with mean names or comments about his/her race or color.					
7. He/she was bullied with mean names, comments, or gestures with a sexual meaning.					
8. He/She was bullied with cruel messages or hurtful photographs using a cellphone or Internet.					
9. He/she was bullied in other forms that weren't mentioned.					
10. Other students told lies or spread rumors about him/her and tried to make others dislike me.					
STATEMENT	5	4	3	2	1
As a child who are bullies...	Very Highly Exposed	Highly Exposed	Moderately Exposed	Lowly Exposed	Very Lowly Exposed
1. He/she called another learner (s) mean names, made fun of, or teased him/her in a hurtful way					
2. He/she kept him/her out of things on purpose, excluded him or her from my group of friends, or completely ignored him or her.					

<p>3. He/she hit, kicked, pushed, and shoved him or her around or locked him or her indoors.</p>					
<p>4. He/she spread false rumors about him/her and tried to make others dislike him/her.</p>					
<p>5. He/she took money or things from him or her or damaged his/her belongings.</p>					
<p>6. He/she threatened or forced him/her to do things he/she didn't want to do.</p>					
<p>7. He/she bullied him/her with mean names or comments about his/her race or color.</p>					
<p>8. He/she bullied him/her with mean names, comments, or gestures with sexual meaning.</p>					
<p>9. He/she bullied him/hers with cruel messages or hurtful photographs using a cellphone or Internet.</p>					
<p>10. He/she bullied others using other forms that weren't mentioned.</p>					