

Original Paper

Effects of Bullying Behavior among Students on Learning Process in Public Secondary Schools in Ilala, Dar es Salaam

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Abstract

As days pass on, bullying behavior increases and spreads at a high speed. Many children are victims of bullying behavior. Bullying becomes very common in inner city schools and the community in general. The acts of bullying behavior discourage away many students from attending school.

The study presents the effects of bullying behavior among students in learning process in selected public secondary schools in the city of Ilala, Dar es Salaam. The study firstly investigated why bullying is happening and in what form in five public secondary schools. Secondly it investigated how the school environments encourage bullying behavior in public schools. Thirdly it evaluates effects of bullying behavior on bully and the bullied in learning process, and lastly it investigated if there was any relationship between bullying behavior and class or grade level.

The study was grounded on Social Learning Theory. The study employed a descriptive survey design. The research sample comprised of 299 respondents including students, teachers, school counsellors and discipline teachers. The study employed simple random sampling and purposive sampling to select respondents. Questionnaires, interviews, and documentary reviews were used as methods for data collection under study. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaire from teachers, students and counselors were analyzed using descriptive statistics (SPSS Version 20) technique. Qualitative data from interview of some students, teachers and counsellors and documentary review of extant reports were analyzed through the thematic analysis presented via narrations. The findings pointed out name calling; kicking and theft were the most common bullying in sampled schools. Furthermore, the study

found that bullying occurred more in the cafeteria, classrooms and toilets. It was also found that, bullying behavior among students affected students learning process for both the bully and the victim. Bullied students become truant and even drop out from schools, this affect their learning process and even their future life. Girls and form one students are more affected by bullying. In connection to that, this study found that teachers do not take bullying as a serious issue in their schools, leaving many suffering students un-attended. The study recommends that school managements and teachers in public secondary schools have to take different measures including education and strict rules on bullying in order to reduce, if not eliminate the bullying behavior to students.

Keywords

bullying, learning, academic achievement

1. Introduction

Bullying in school is a worldwide critical problem. It is believed that bullying occurs largely in urban areas, but in reality, bullying does not have a boundary of region, race, the size of the school or setting of the school (urban or rural). School bullying is a critical issue that affects secondary school students in three important parts of their lives; educationally, psychologically and professionally. Students will lose their opportunities to cooperate with other students and enjoy school activities. Bullied students will develop fear and feel weak and this causes students to miss lessons or become scared of attending school; and if they do attend they lose concentration in lessons. As a result, they will gain poorly academically and become irresponsible adults in the future.

Bullying is a behavior characterized by children harassed in various ways. Many common definitions in use were adopted by Roland (1989) and Olweus (1991). Roland defines bullying as “long standing violence, physical or psychological, perpetrated by an individual or group directed against an individual who cannot defend himself or herself” Bullying can be direct and physical (hitting, tripping up, taking belongings), direct and verbal (name calling and taunting: perhaps about race or disability), indirect (passing nasty stories or rumors about someone behind their back or excluding someone from social groups) (Sharp & Smith, 1994).

Bullying is more indirect and is more likely to be done by older students bullying younger ones (Harris & Hathorn, 2006). Stacey (2007) in her study argued that, in USA it reaches a stage where students hold guns so that they can bully others. Silvana (2008), points out that bullying behavior in USA has become a very serious problem-where by students have been killed due to bullying. Findings from the study shows that, El Cajon, California, where in 2001 one victim of bullying killed 2 and wounded 13, and Red Lake, Minnesota, where in 2005, 10 children were killed by a bully.

In connection to that, a study conducted by Cezar (2015) found that the issue of bullying is very serious in Philippines. The occurrence of bullying scenes has been reported by different studies in different areas. Dorcas (2018), Gal (2007), Florence (2017) and Egbochukwu (2007) disclose that in Africa, the prevalence of bullying is common to secondary schools in South Africa (Hammond, 2006) bullying

behaviour seems to be in the worst situation.

Bullying has been threatening the learning life of students in secondary schools in Tanzania. Ndibalema (2013) in a study conducted in Dodoma Municipality, argued that students perceived bullying as a problem in the school. Boys are more preferred bullies than girls. As bullying exist in school environment, it leads to less concentration on the learning process. The study also found that some students own dangerous weapon-type tools such as knives when they go to school. As reported, one of the students stabbed another student with a knife on his left leg, and he said that is one of the defending techniques. This shows that bullying is a behaviour which lives in a school environment.

Again Moris (2006) in her study conducted in Dar es Salaam found out that, bullying is among the problems to secondary school students which affects students physically and emotionally which lead to poor learning and performance. Teachers perceived bullying as a very small problem with no negative impacts for them. Other more studies conducted by Tangi (2018) on her study on bullying and psychological bullying in secondary schools in Mwanza revealed that, bullying is common for both boys and girls. And Kakuru (2020) disclose that, bullying behaviour is a serious problem for students in secondary school. Students have been bullied through corporal punishment from teachers. The study found that discipline issues like corporal punishment led to aggressive behavior which causes poor concentration during learning process.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the fact that, bullying behavior among students can cause poor learning process in public secondary schools, there is little attention being put on effects of bullying behavior among students on learning process. Here several issues arise including. Why of bullying behavior is happening and in what form? How does the school environment encourage bullying behaviour? What effect bullying has on bully and bullied on learning process? And What is the relationship between bullying and class level of students ? To the best of researcher knowledge, there is no study that has been conducted in Ilala District, Dar es Salaam, to assess the Effects of bullying behavior among students in learning process in Public Secondary schools. The focus on public secondary schools was because students in public schools come from different areas with different classes of living; hence these students have different behavior in comparison to private schools.

2. Method

2.1 Research Approach

The study employed a mixed research approach and descriptive survey design to collect data from five public secondary schools in Ilala District.

2.2 Study Population

The sample of the study consisted 255 respondents, including 227 form one and four students, 23 teachers, and 5 counsellors from these schools. Form one and four students were involved because the researcher needed to know the rate and the relationship of bullying according to their class levels. The

researcher involved teachers and counsellors because they have information on student's behavior and are the ones who involved in learning process.

2.3 Tools of Collecting Data

Data were collected by using: questionnaire, interview and documentary review. Questionnaire was used to form one and form four students; teachers and counselors while interview was applied to some students of form one to get more information. In documentary review the researcher used the checklist to review the existing disciplinary report concerning bullying behavior. Quantitative data were analysed using the descriptive statistics technique with the help of statistical package for social science (SPSS-Version 20) while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis presented via narrations. Finally the research ethics were observed in conducting this current study. Before beginning the study, the researcher acquired a letter of permission from all concerned authorities including the St Augustine University of Tanzania, Regional Education Office, District, and targeted school authorities.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1 Why Bullying Behavior Is Happening

The study examines the reasons of bullying behavior to occur in selected public secondary schools at Ilala District. The results of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Variable	Students	Percent
1. Personality, traits like anger and jealousy	22	9.7
2. By watching and playing violent movies and games	56	24.7
3. Poor parenting, attention and seeking behavior	131	57.7
4. Colour of someone	18	7.9
Total	227	100

Table 1. Students views on causes of bullying behavior in their school

As Table 1 indicates, 82.4 (57.7% and 24.7%) thought that poor parenting, attention and seeking behavior and watching and playing violent movies and games cause student to have bullying behavior. 22 (9.7%) said that bullying is caused by personality traits like anger and jealousy while 18 (7.9%) said bullying is caused by appearance of someone. The result shows that poor parenting and watching violent movies and games are the ones which cause students to have bullying behavior which can cause the bullied and the bully to be affected in learning process or activities. One of the interviewed students explained that;

"...One day, our fellow two students started fighting each other in the classroom. The reason behind was that one among them stole a Mathematics Text Book and he was resisting to give it back. So, they started fighting in the class. While fighting some students shouted loudly 'hit him like Jack Chan, hit him, hit him'. Jack Chan is movie actor. Students like to watch his movie that is why they know him

and they want to fight like him. I think these movies are not good because boys learnt is how to fight and they want to practice it. It is very dangerous...” (Interviewed student form four, June 2022)

Wrong upbringing of the child can cause the development of bully behavior if the child is treated too harshly at home or with the society. This can cause a child to become a bully and he or she will practice that behavior to other children either at home or school. For him or her to practice that behavior, it will be a normal thing. In connection to this, the result shows watching and playing violent movies and games can cause bullying behavior to develop to the maximum to the child. From the interview, one student said that some students shout loudly to motivate someone to hit another like Jack Chan. Again the result shows that, students use to watch action movies they want to practice what they use to see in movies. This is very dangerous because students can imitate bad behaviors or actions that can harm someone’s life. There is a need for the society to know that it is not good to allow children to watch movies which do not demonstrate good values.

Moreover, students were asked to provide their views on the major forms of bullying behavior in their schools. Students from five public secondary schools provided different views as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Forms of bullying behavior

Variable	Frequency	Percent
1. Name calling	54	23.8
2. Kicking	71	31.3
3. Insulting	16	7.0
4. Isolation	14	6.2
5. Stealing	61	26.9
6. Touching	11	4.8
Total	227	100

The result in Table 2 indicate that students were aware of bullying acts and happened in their school. About 82% of the respondents said that name calling, kicking and stealing are the major form of bullying in their schools. Most of the students hate school due to these bullying. One of the interviewed students said:

“... I really like school, I have a dream to become a doctor but when I think about the school bullying I wish to quit the school. Older classes especially form fours tend to steal our bags, books, money and other things and if you resist you will be kicked or beaten by them...”. Interview dated...

The study revealed that, stealing, kicking and name calling were the major form of bullying which mostly practiced in schools especially by upper classes. This cause some students to stop coming to school and even quit from the school which affect those students’ academic progress and psychologically. Again the results show that teachers in these schools are not taking bullying behavior as a serious matter in their schools which sometimes cause students to remain in a dilemma of where to report their cases, as one student said:

... “This case has of name calling has been reported several times to teachers but they did not take any

serious measures to the bully rather than telling them to stop calling that name, and other teachers said the girl should accept that name without showing that she dislikes that name and later on those who call her that name will stop it automatically”.

3.2 Respondents Views on How Does the School Environment Encourage Bullying Behavior.

Moreover, students were asked to provide their views on how does the school environment encourage bullying behavior. Students from five public secondary schools provided different views as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Areas which always bullying takes place.

Variable	Students	Percent
1. Toilets	82	36.1
2. Cafeteria	31	13.7
3. Class	99	43.6
4. Playground	15	6.6
Total	227	100

Classrooms, toilets and cafeteria seem to be dangerous area for bullying behaviour about 92.9% said that. Students who mentioned toilets being the most dangerous areas inside the school compound in case of bullying lament that,

“Toilets are most unsafe places of all. When I think of going to the toilet, I feel unsafe. Students (the bully) do ghastly things in toilets, so these areas are not safe. When I reported to school I went to the toilet for a short call, when I entered, I found two boys older than me. They took my bag and I was robbed of my 2000 shillings” (Interview of student: June 2022).

The study found that there is no clear supervision during the brake time in the cafeteria that’s why bullying occur. Toilet areas, corridors there is a need to have camera this will be easy to capture some scenarios that happen around those areas. The study results show that bullying in the classroom is mostly practiced by students especially when someone answer question wrongly; other students laugh at him or her, and this is due to poor class management in the classroom, this discourage students to participate in the class hence lower the learning concentration in the classroom.

3.3 Respondents View on the Effect of Bullying on Bully and the Bullied on Learning Process

When students were asked to provide their views on the effects of bullying on bully and the bullied on learning process. Students from five public secondary schools provided different views as shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Effects of bullying Behavior on learning process.

Variable	Student	Percent
1. Bully and Bullied has always poor performance	93	41.0
2. Bullied always hate school and learning activities	100	44.
3. Bullying discourage students to attend classrooms	18	7.9
4. Bullying make the bullied unhealthy	16	7.0
Total	227	100%

Source: Field data.

The data exposed that bullying undermines one's ability to participate in learning process. About 85% of the respondents said that the bully and bullied has always poor performance and hate school and learning activities. The result shows that when bullying acts become severe, students' performance will drop and students' health will deteriorate. One of the interviewed teachers said this:

“There is a young smart female student who is 15 years old. She was sexually harassed by her classmates and other boys from nearby schools while she was studying after school hours. Her academic performance has dropped. Previously, she had a good performance. For example when she reported in Form I, she had an average of 69%. After the incident in Form II, she had an average of 28.3% and Form III first term she had 18%. She lost interest in studying. Now she does not want to come to school at all” (June 2022).

During the lesson, you can observe her to be there physically but not mentally especially when you ask her a question of what you are teaching, she provides wrong answers. Also a teacher said she sometimes does not want to go to school, when that scenario comes into her mind. This circumstance causes her to have less concentration in the class during learning process and when she stays at home she misses a lot of lessons which affect her academic success.

The researcher found that bullying behavior affects the bullied especially in academic participation during the learning process, students lack learning concentration during learning process.

The study also found that, due to bullying behavior some students fear even to go to school due to being threatened by their fellow students in either classroom or outside the classroom. Again the researcher found that there is bad relationship between the bullied and the bully in the school environment.

3.4 Respondents Views on, if There Is Relationship between Bullying and Class Level of Students

The study wanted to know if there is relationship between bullying behavior and the class level. Results of this variable were as follows in Table 5.

Table 5.: Bullying Behavior Relate with Class Level

Variable	Student	Percent
1. Yes	194	85.5
2. No	33	14.5
Total	227	100

About 85.5% students said YES bullying relate with the class level. The interviewed student had this to say on bullying and class level;

“.....let me be honest, most of the form four students’ bully lower classes especially form one and form two. When the form one report, form four bully them a lot, taking their bags and other things from the bags... (June 2022).

The results show that there is relationship between bullying and class level in schools. Again findings show that lower classes are always bullied compared to higher classes or level. This is due to their size (most of them are small) or because are the new comers to a certain school. Bullying act is higher to lower class especially form one students. The results continue to show that, girls are more affected with bullying compared to boys in schools. Due to this, most of female students fear to go to school because they fear to be bullied by other students especially boys. This affects them in learning process because they will miss some lessons and this will accelerate the rate of poor performance in their studies.

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