

Awareness and Understanding of College Students towards Teacher Bullying:
Basis for Policy Inclusion in the Student Handbook

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Abstract

Teacher bullying is an area given with the least attention and significance in the teaching field because of the notion that bullying tends to be affixed with the students only. This descriptive study aimed to determine the awareness and understanding of 98 randomly selected participants on teacher bullying of Gordon College in Olongapo City. The study has two parts: First is the Awareness of participants towards teacher bullying and second is the Understanding of participants to Teacher Bullying. The instrument was then subjected to validity and reliability to a panel of experts. The data were then tabulated and analyzed using SPSS 20. The findings from the study include the following: for the Awareness on Teacher Bullying, the participants were *Moderately Aware* that they were doing it and for the Understanding about Teacher Bullying, the participants *Understood* the concept. A significant difference was found in the area of Understanding about Teacher Bullying when the respondents were grouped according to profile. Implications drawn from the study can be considered for the basis of the policy included in the student handbook.

Keywords: awareness towards teacher bullying, college students, policy inclusion, student handbook, teacher bullying, understanding towards teacher bullying

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Introduction

The passage of the Anti-Bullying Law in the Philippines paved a new wave of discourse in the teaching academy. But this law only implicates those who bully students. How about the teachers? The prevalence of bullying in higher education is an increasingly common phenomenon (Benton, Stroschen, Cavazos, & McGill, 2014) for it has varied effects and impacts from the students, faculty and even the administrative personnel managing the institution. It is a silent disease that plagues the organization especially the educational system. Concomitantly, Hollis (2015) also reiterated that leadership plays a role in the proliferation of bullying and it may somehow affect the work tasks at hand. This idea shows the importance of addressing such matters for it hampers the daily flow of work and outputs definitely be compromised to some extent. Further, Moon and McCluskey (2014) added that mistreated teachers consequently yield detrimental impacts on their job performance and relationships with students. The student-teacher relationship is a vital key in learning and understanding of lessons that are being taught every day in school, thus, trust each other is imperative to avoid the idea of bullying. On a survey done by Berliner in 2011 showed a massive 90% of the teachers on the internet complained of teacher bullying, 40% of this is students. This result is quite a catch, but the implication is quite poignant since bullying can affect a variety of psychological, physical and even emotional aspects of one's personhood. However, Pyhalto, Pietarinen, and Soini, (2015) confirmed that collegial support and acknowledgment plus positive professional environment and ability to solve problems can function as inhibitors of both teacher-targeted bullying and fatigue.

According to Fox and Stallworth, (2010) pervasive bullying and violent acts were associated with strains. It is already a fact that bullying causes stress to individuals who are suffering from it but somehow, they try to live their lives normally. Factor analysis was done by the team of Merilainen, Sinkkonen, Puhakka, and Kayhko, (2016) revealed three dimensions of bullying and these dimensions were consistent with the categories of the consequences of bullying or inappropriate behavior. Zerillo and Osterman (2011) also disclosed that teachers have a higher sense of accountability for peer bullying and forms of bullying with physical rather than socio-emotional consequences. This area of bullying is also

quite pervasive since physical bullying is already involved and it could also lead to abuse or even much worse. Additionally, Misawa (2015) also revealed three types of bullying which enable them to bully a person in a position of power situated between them, by means of that person's race, gender, or sexual orientation. This is an eye-opener for everyone, especially those who are victimized or becoming a victim of bullying.

In terms of local literature, a few came out of the research, which means, this topic is quite sentimental and obscured in the local settings. According to one study of Asio (2018), the idea of students bullying teachers was moderately understood by students and respondents also behave slightly inappropriate towards bullying teachers. Also, Llego (2016) stipulated that students can bully a teacher in many ways and added that even outside the classroom; teachers can be bullied using social media and the like. Tolentino (2016) further supplemented that there are four major types of bullying as experienced by teachers, namely, emotional, verbal, physical, and cyberbullying. She also added that workplace bullying negatively affected all facets of the teachers' lives, their physical health, psychological health, and social health. The drought in local research drove the researchers to pioneer this study so as to start something from a scratch.

The main concern of the study is to assess the awareness and understanding of college students towards teacher-bullying which can be a basis for policy inclusion in the student handbook of the institution. At the same time to address the following areas of concerns in terms of the profile of respondents, level of awareness and understanding, and statistical analysis and inferences of the data. The bulk of the data will be disseminated hopefully in the mainstream in years to come so as to offer a basis for institutional makeover and upgrading of some obsolete ideas of students and faculty.

The paper hopes to provide crucial evidence about teachers being bullied by students and its impact on the teaching profession. Also, the researchers anticipate an awakening of minds to policy-makers to give this idea a little attention since our teachers are the very essence of molding the future generation. Lastly, to supplement research with new information that would be beneficial for future researchers that will endeavor in the same field.

Methodology

This study used the descriptive research method with the questionnaire as the main instrument for gathering data. The descriptive method aims to analyze, interpret or literally describe features of pertinent data in research. Since the study is concerned with the awareness and understanding of college students on teacher bullying, therefore, the descriptive method is the most convenient method to utilize for the investigation.

Based on the foregoing, the researchers formulated the conceptual framework of the study. Review of related studies and concepts regarding students' awareness and understanding of teacher-bullying were done. Then, the researchers created an instrument to measure these ideas. Accordingly, the students' awareness and understanding about teacher bullying can be used as a basis for policy inclusion in the student handbook. This is for the reason that the teachers also need protection from arbitrary inconveniences created by students.

The researcher utilized 98 participants in this study from the different colleges in Gordon College using a purposive sampling technique. The respondent was a bona fide student, currently enrolled and studying within the semester in Gordon College, Olongapo City, Philippines.

A draft questionnaire was made by the researcher which consists of the following parts: (1) the profile of the respondents, (2) awareness of the respondents towards teacher-bullying, and (3) understanding of the respondents towards teacher-bullying. It was then submitted for critiquing by some professors who are practitioners in the field of research for validity and reliability. Their comments were considered in revising and finalizing the construction of the questionnaire. To furthermore test the clarity and validity of the questionnaire, it was first pilot-tested to senior high students who were not included as subject participants in the study for ambiguous or hard to understand words and terms.

In this study, ANOVA, T-test, frequency count and weighted mean were utilized. All of the data and information was gathered in order to be tallied, tabulated, classified, analyzed and interpreted. The weighted values assigned to the awareness and understanding of college

students was patterned after Likert Scaling. All statistical computations were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM-SPSS) version 20.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 indicates the respondents' Age. As shown from the table, 77 respondents or 79% were aged 16-20, 10 respondents or 10% were aged 21-25, 4 respondents or 4% were aged 26-30 and 7 respondents or 7% were aged 31 and above. This indicates that the majority of the respondents fall in the age bracket between 16-20 years old. This can also be explained that this age bracket is the collegiate years of most students entering tertiary education. Garland et al. (2016) specified in their study that the age of their respondents in their study varied from 18-59 years old with a mean age of 22.49 and a standard deviation of 6.01.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-20	77	79
21-25	10	10
26-30	4	4
31 and above	7	7
Total	98	100
Year Level		
1 st year	42	43
2 nd year	26	27
3 rd year	30	30
Total	98	100%
College		
College of Education, Arts & Sciences	26	27
College of Business and Accountancy	52	53
College of Allied Health Studies	20	20
Total	98	100%

It can also be observed that there were 42 respondents or 43% who were first-year level students, 26 respondents or 27% who were second-year level students, and 30 respondents or 30% who were third-year level students. Most of the respondents fall under the first year level. Garland et al. (2016) indicated in their study that most of their respondents were seniors (36.9%) followed by the juniors (24%), sophomores (21.3%) and freshmen (17.8%).

Lastly, there were 26 respondents or 27% who came from the College of Education, Arts and Sciences, 52 respondents or 53% came from the College of Business and Accountancy and 20 respondents or 20% from the College of Allied Health Studies. It can be

discerned that most of the respondents came from the College of Business and Accountancy as this is the biggest College in terms of the number of students among the colleges.

Table 2 shows the mean distribution of the respondents on Awareness to Teacher Bullying. It can be gleaned that statement 5 got the highest mean with 2.77 which has a descriptive equivalent of Aware in the Likert Scale and statement 3 got the lowest mean with 1.68 and has a descriptive equivalent of Moderately Aware. The overall mean was posted at 2.33 with a verbal interpretation of Moderately Aware in the scale. Garrett (2013) mentioned that student bullying teachers is an emerging global issue, yet it is under-recognized in academic, societal and political spheres compared with violence against teachers and other forms of bullying, resulting in limited conceptual understanding and awareness of the phenomenon.

Table 2. Respondents' Awareness of Teacher Bullying

Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1) There exists a teacher bullying episodes in the school where I study.	2.06	Moderately Aware
2) The school administration has a teacher bullying policy to protect their teachers.	2.13	Moderately Aware
3) Only the students can bully teachers.*	1.68	Moderately Aware
4) Staffs and officers in the school do not bully teachers.	2.23	Moderately Aware
5) Teacher bullying can happen anywhere inside or outside the campus.*	2.77	Aware
6) Other teachers can also bully their fellow teachers.	2.05	Moderately Aware
7) Bullied teachers cannot perform well on their job inside and outside the classroom.	2.44	Moderately Aware
8) Bullied teachers do not last in the workplace because of their situation.	2.44	Moderately Aware
9) Teachers who are bullied always look stressed inside the classroom.	2.45	Moderately Aware
10) Self-confidence, self-esteem etc. are affected in a bullied teacher.	2.59	Aware
11) Social Media is being used today to bully teachers.	2.76	Aware
12) Sending Insulting text messages and black mailing a teacher can be done by everyone in school.	2.42	Moderately Aware
13) A student can attack a teacher physically inside or outside the school premises.	2.33	Moderately Aware
14) School heads or administrators can also be a source of bullying for teachers.	2.50	Aware
15) There has been no reported case of teacher bullying in the school.	2.08	Moderately Aware
Overall Mean	2.33	Moderately Aware

Additionally, on a study of Foley, May, Blevins and Akers (2014), they posited that victims of cyber harassment are significantly more likely to teach in the middle and high

schools with large enrolments, be younger and perceived their interactions with parents as largely negative. Merilainen et al. (2016) cited in their study that one of the persons behind the bullying or inappropriate behavior was a student. At the same time, bullying or inappropriate behavior can occur during teaching.

Table 3 exhibits the mean distribution on respondent Understanding on Teacher Bullying. And it can be easily interpreted that statement 4 got the highest mean with 3.45 as compared to statement 15 which only got 2.81 but both fall under the same descriptive interpretation of Understood. Overall mean pegged at 3.16 which was also Understood by the respondents.

Table 5 Respondents' Understanding of Teacher Bullying

Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1) "Workplace bullying" refers to unreasonable behavior by an individual that intimidates or degrades another individual in work.	2.88	Understood
2) Bullying negatively affects the physical or psychological health of the targeted teacher(s).	3.24	Understood
3) Bullying generally involves repeated, unreasonable actions, but it can also be a single, severe action.	3.01	Understood
4) Bullying can be in the form of shouting, threats of violence, malicious gossips, etc.*	3.45	Understood
5) Anyone can bully a teacher such as students, staff, school administrators, department head, etc.	3.10	Understood
6) Policy on teacher bullying should be implemented in every institution.	3.34	Understood
7) Bullied teachers can report their situation to a committee in the school for proper evaluation and counseling.	3.21	Understood
8) There exists a law/ policy that protects teacher from bullying.	2.95	Understood
9) Bullying can lead to personality breakdown and sometimes loss of professionalism of a teacher.	3.32	Understood
10) Every teacher is a possible target of bullying.	3.18	Understood
11) Bullying can be through social media, physical, emotional or psychological means.	3.43	Understood
12) Bullied individuals (e.g. teachers) can be bullied inside or outside the classroom.	3.33	Understood
13) Bullied teachers can suffer depression, physical deterioration and sometimes loss of life.	3.37	Understood
14) Bullying a teacher can also lead to unemployment of that individual.	3.09	Understood
15) A bullied teacher can fight back to those bullies but in a more unexpected way.*	2.81	Understood
Overall Mean	3.18	Understood

In the words of de Wet (2010) lack of an effective regime for monitoring of regulations governing principals’ behavior and the characteristics of the bullies and victims are reasons for bullying. Since the result confines in the context of moderately understood, the study thus agrees with the mentioned idea.

Table 4 exhibits the ANOVA for the significant difference in awareness and understanding of respondents. It can be deciphered that Understanding produced a significant finding with an F value of 8.925 which corresponds to a probability value of 0.000. The result is lower than the alpha significance value of 0.05. On the other hand, Awareness got an F value of 3.071 with a statistical probability of 0.051 which is higher than the alpha significance level of 0.05. This means that it has not reached the minimum for the result to be considered significant.

Table 4. ANOVA for Significant Difference on Awareness and Understanding of Respondents grouped according to Demographic Profile

		SS	dF	MS	F Value
Awareness towards Teacher Bullying	Between Groups	1.699	2	0.834	3.071
	Within	25.812	95	0.272	
	Total	27.481	97		
Understanding on Teacher Bullying	Between Groups	4.374	2	2.187	8.925*
	Within	23.277	95	0.245	
	Total	27.651	97		

* $p < .05$

It can be deduced then that in terms of understanding, the respondents generated different level responses which can be considered for proper decision making by policymakers in the future. According to Garrett (2014), student bullying teacher (SBT) has received relatively little research attention; in fact, literature exploring teacher perpetrated bullying is more widely available. Thus in this study, the result is considered a substantial basis of information for future researches since this could be the first one of its kind.

Conclusion

Based on the data gathered, tabulated and analyzed, the researcher concluded that the respondent was a 16-20-year-old, first-year student, studying under the College of Business and Accountancy.

The respondents were “moderately aware” on the concept of teacher bullying. Furthermore, they also responded “moderately understood” on the aspect of teacher bullying. There was a significant finding in the Understanding of the respondents towards teacher-bullying when grouped according to demographic profile.

Recommendation

In view of the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are proposed by the researcher:

- 1) The School administrator should provide policies that pertain to the protection of teachers in bullying.
- 2) Student education appertaining to the do's and don'ts between teacher-student relationships, both inside and outside the school campus.
- 3) Personality development seminar/ workshop for teachers to improve their image in front of their students and minimize teacher bullying.
- 4) Personnel education in bullying in the workplace, how is it done, and how should it be avoided.
- 5) Counseling for the bullied individual and provision of support group during the time of the rehabilitation program.
- 6) Conduct further researches and studies on this field.

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