MAKING BULLYING MATTER: BASIS FOR POLICY AND GUIDELINES RECOMMENDATION

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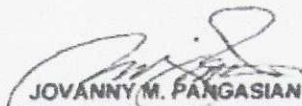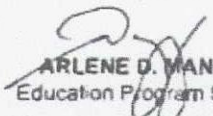
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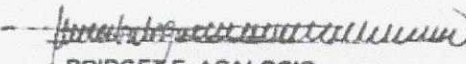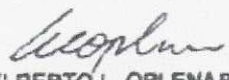
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Abstract

Schools are the second homes of the learners. Its role is to provide quality education and guide the learners to become a holistic one. Learners must need a stable, security learning environment for them to perform well in their studies and in school activities. In most cases bullying behavior in a school setting by its nature may weaken and can create a big factor in quality of education. The study primarily aimed at determining how bullying cases affect the performance of school and policy and guidance program as basis for helping the student through making counselling process. The study used the descriptive- correlation method of research. The study was conducted at DepEd, Division of Lanao del Norte, Region 10. This division is classified as medium size with a total 337 elementary & 75 secondary schools (including Integrated School). The selection of the respondents, 30 secondary schools (non IS) was done using purposive sampling. The data revealed that the secondary school learners at Lanao del Norte are purely dominated by Cebuano female with age ranging 13-15 years old and mostly a Grade 10 students, indicating that they have accrued high school life experiences. In terms of types of bullying frequently occurred in school and being experienced by majority of the respondents was Verbal bullying. As such, the result readily implies that there is need to an enhance school child protection policy and guidelines as a tool in hastening bullying to happen in schools. The emergence of significant relationship between the respondents' profile and bullying occurred in schools have incurred the desirable effects and such phenomenon affected to their image as learners. Thus, the evolved functional and enhanced School Child Protection Policy is strongly recommended and be adopted in the involved secondary schools to ensure school's better image and performance.
Keywords: bullying, child protection policy, descriptive-correlation, Lanao del Norte

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Introduction

Schools are the second homes of the learners. Its role is to provide quality education and guide the learners to become a holistic one. Learners must need a stable, security learning environment for them to perform well in their studies and in school activities. In most cases bullying behavior in a school setting by its nature may weaken and can create a big factor in quality of education.

Bullying is generally defined as repeated aggressive acts intended to do harm and is characterized by a power or status difference between the students (www.Nea.Org). Students who have been experiencing bullying by other peers may feel depressed, frustrated, and loner. These characteristics really shows that being a victim of bully acts can acquire negative feelings and attitude which will result to hatred. They tend to be strong and will think of fighting back as well to a peer who cause him/her felt down. They might be also rebellious and tend to bully others. Academics also will be affected because the learner becomes bothered and already disturbed in concentrating his/her studies.

With the above scenario, the researcher is able to conceptualize this action research to help address School-based bullying which may be one of the factors in the Division of Lanao del Norte's problem on Access especially in the Drop Out, Participation and Repetition Rates.

Hence, Intervention must be made by school officials and others stakeholders. Thus, it is important to note that school-based anti-bullying

program must be part of the advocacies in every school in the Division of Lanao del Norte to lessen the bullying cases and be able to help the learners experience life free from abuses and violence.

Literature Review

1. Bullying: An Overview

For the past years bullying behavior by children and adolescents with their peers considered as normal part of being in their stage. Nowadays, it creates a big impact in the society most especially in a school setting. As we define Bullying it is a hurtful, aggressive and repeated behavior that aims to embarrass, threaten or intimidate. It can be carried out by an individual or group towards one or more persons and is complex social problem, which can occur in environment such as schools (Griifin and Gross, 2004). As we can observe bullying actions mostly occurs in a social group setting one of the example is in a school scenario. Moreover, bullying is widely present as a problem in schools and communities in line with this it resulted a negative impact in a learning process of a learner and environment since they can feel fears and threats in their daily activities. It can also affect the behavioral aspect wherein they can have a long term academic, physical, and emotional effects in both the bully and the victim.

Kinds of Bullies

Classifying the different kinds of bullies will give us an idea on where that certain action belongs. Here are the 6 kinds of Bullying that a parent and a teacher must know. (Gordon, 2016)

1. Physical Bullying- this is the most obvious among the kinds of bullies where in a person will used his/her force or aggressiveness into physical actions to gain more power and control over his/her target. The examples of physical bullying are hitting, kicking, punching, slapping and other physical attacks. It is also being stated that unlike other kinds of bullies this one is the easiest to identify. In addition, more cases like this are being reported in school.

2. Verbal Bullying- it is the use of words, statements and name calling by the perpetrators to gain more power and control over a target. Verbal bullies resulted insults to belittle, demean and hurt person feelings. They used to target those persons the based on the way they look and act. This kind of bully is very difficult to identify since it will just be occurred when the adults are not around. Moreover, this action also creates more impact on the feelings of a certain person it will result a scar on his/her emotions.

3. Relational Aggression- it is a type of social manipulation where teens try to hurt the feelings of their peers or sabotage everything just to break the friendship or social standing in the group. It may also have referred to emotional bullying because it relates in hurting one's feeling. The goal of relationally aggression is to increase their own social standing in the group and being selfish because they just look on their own interest. This kind of behavior will spread rumors and manipulate everything just to stand out in the group. Most often, it is present in a group of girls' others call it the "mean girls'. And sometimes it also

occurs in the workplace bullying the bosses just to be heard clean in the company and be promoted.

4. Cyberbullying- it is call a cyberbullying when a person harasses somebody using technology like posting photos, comments or status in the social media e.g. facebook, twitter or instagram, embarrass somebody in the phone by sending hurtful messages. Nowadays, this is the present issue that everyone is facing since it is hard for you to identify who is responsible for that post especially in the social media because everybody can make an account whether it is fake or not. This people identified as anonymous since they don't have any courage in face to face challenge towards the person they bullied. Online bullying considered as cruel and non-ending it can create a significant affection of the individual.

5. Sexually bullying- consists of repeated, harmful and humiliating actions that target a person sexually. It includes the following examples; sexual name calling, crude comments and vulgar actions. Example are common in a relationship where in, after the break ups boys shared photos which is not appropriate for public views only for keep in private with in themselves. But for the sake of bullying or some may use for revenge and fun they tend to do it even if it may result into low morality of their previous partner. Additionally, some people also make gender biases and judgements which leads to teasing the gender preference of a person. A wide scope of today's issue in the society because people have different views especially those who live in a biblical and religious

ways than those who are open embracing the freedom to choose of a person.

6. Prejudicial Bullying- it is the prejudice of a person towards people of different races, religion or sexual orientation. Hence, this kind of bullying encompasses the other types of bullying that is stated above it used. Any time a child is bullied for his race, religion or sexual orientation, it should be reported.

2. Why Bullying Occurs

There are many considerations to note why bullying takes place. But there are three basic reasons why bullying happens it is because of jealousy, fear and distrust (notobullying.com, 2015). In a school setting, students who are jealous and fearful may tend to bully others to take away what they feel. They have this behavior due to emotional problems that they may carry in their hearts and possibly these things originate in their home and families. These are the causes that needs to process since it will take into a healing for it to eliminate the negative feelings they have inside. Negative must be replaced positive thoughts in order to distract the mind in bullying others. There are variety of issues to note why people are bully. One is culture, we are into different beliefs because we also live differently that is the reason why others can't accept and understand.

Bully and Victims Characteristics

Bully for many of us, brings to mind the images of a big boy who uses physical strength to dominate a small one (Slee & Rigby, 1993). It

is being found out that bullies have an average self-esteem unlike the victims. However, female bullies often have low self-esteem, the same cannot be said of male bullies (Slee & Rigby, 1993).

Based on a Medical Explanation Children who bully are experiencing the following actions: (Healthwise Inc., 1995-2015)

1. May witness physical and verbal violence or aggression at home. They have a positive view of this behavior, and they act aggressively toward other people, including adults.

2. May hit or push other children.

3. Are often physically strong.

4. May or may not be popular with other children around their same age.

5. Have trouble following rules.

6. Show little concern for the feelings of others.

Children who are bully are often not thinking of their actions and for what other people feel about the thoughts and actions. They are at risk of failing in school and dropping out. Getting also into crime and fights in later life (Healthwise Inc, 1995-2015).

It has been said that those children who are fun of bully are at involve in some family risk factors for bullying. They lack warmth and love of their parents. Lack of guidance and supervisions by parents. And, they experienced harsh discipline at home and bullying incidences from their siblings (Witmer, 2016).

On the other hand, victims of bullying have been found to suffer from low self-esteem, lack of social skills, anxious all the time and less popular with their peers.

We take into consideration the two types of victim characteristics. The sociodemographic and school related experiences and perceptions.

The Victim Sociodemographic Characteristics included in the analysis were: Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Grade Level, Household region, Household income. While the Student school related experiences and perceptions included in the analysis were: Victim's academic performance, whether the victim skipped classes during the academic year, whether the victim has an adult at school who cares about him/her, and whether the victims' school has an adult who helps him or her with problems (Petrosino, Guckenburg, Devoe, Hanson, 2010).

3. Effects of Bullying on learning and School Achievement

Skrzypiec (2008) administer a survey by involving almost 1400 seventh-, eighth- and ninth graders in Australian primary schools and examined the effects of bullying on students' learning and their social and emotional wellbeing and mental health status. The analysis found that a third of students who had been seriously bullied also reported having serious difficulties in concentrating and paying attention in class because of bullying and the fear associated with it. The report (Plan International, 2008) finds that bullying is common in schools throughout the world and that bullied students often develop concentration problems and learning difficulties. Bullying is a form of

social interaction that many school children experience. Among all methods of bullying assessment, self-reports are valued more, in which individuals are asked to indicate frequently experienced forms of harassment with a specified time frame or they are asked to express their subjective feelings of being a victim (Nansel et al., 2001).

Nishina & Juvonen (2003) compared the relative frequencies of different bullying behavior experienced by students and concluded verbal aggression to occur more than frequently than physical or indirect aggression. Konishi et al. (2010) studied the links between school bullying and student-teacher relationships and academic achievement in Canadian schools. The study worked with data for almost 28 thousands 15-year-old students participating in the Program for International Student Assessment conducted by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in 2006. Results of multilevel analyses showed that academic achievement was negatively related to school bullying and positively related to student-teacher connectedness. In other words, students who reported being bullied or suffering some other form of peer mistreatment showed lower academic achievements than their non-bullied peers. Students who reported a better rapport with their teachers also showed higher academic achievements.

4. The Role of Bystanders in School

Bystanders are very different from either a victim or bullies, because they make a decision to stay on the outside of the situation

(Rigby & Johnson, 2013). Being a bystander you are just there to take into opportunity to embarrass and threaten the victims of bullies because they will have an audience.

Bystanders need to realize that being there they are already intervening and as a way of supporting the bullies in bullying their victims. Hence, in order to help the victim bystanders need not to take involvement in the problem instead just make a good action in avoiding the two parties getting into conflict.

Research Questions

The study primarily aimed at determining how bullying cases affect the performance of school and policy and guidance program as basis for helping the student through making counselling process.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following problems:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
   a. Age
   b. Gender
   c. Ethnicity
   d. Grade Level

2. What are the types of bullying that do occurs in school?
   a. Physical
   b. Verbal
   c. Social
   d. Electronically
   e. Racial

f. Gender?

3. What are the existing initiatives of the school in addressing bullying in school?

4. What is the relationship between bullying and their demographic profile?

5. What policy and guidelines can be proposed based on the research findings?

Scope and Limitation

This study focused on developing contextualized policy in division/school level anchored on the issued guidelines of the Department on Child protection Policy, that can address bullying problems in 30 secondary schools in the Division of Lanao del Norte. Moreover, this study made use the descriptive- correlation method of research. The descriptive method was utilized on the demographic characteristics of the respondents (Grade 7-10 learners, who were to be selected through purposive sampling) such as age, gender, ethnicity, grade level, types of bullying that occurred at school and the intervention programs and policy to be done by the division and school officials.

On the other hand, correlation was employed to: (1) establish relationship between the respondents' age, gender, and ethnicity in terms of Bullying acts Physically, Verbally, Socially, Electronically, Racially and Gender; and (2) determining relationship between the respondents' level of bullying acts and its intervention.

Research Methodology

a. Sampling Procedure

The study was conducted at DepEd, Division of Lanao del Norte, Region 10. This division is classified as medium size with a total 337 elementary & 75 secondary schools (including Integrated School). The selection of the respondents, 30 secondary schools (non-IS) was done using purposive sampling.

b. Data Collection Process

The data collection procedures in this study consisted of three phases. The first phase was quantitative data collection where the respondents from Grades 7,8, 9 and 10 with at least 150 learners (5 learners per school) were being asked to answer the Respondents' Background & Bullying Survey Questions thru online using the online facility of Google called Google Form (http.//deped.in/ChildProtection). The responses of the respondents were also obtained from the same facility. Then data analysis followed.

Moreover, the researcher used the SurveyMonkey.Com, Inc. as reference. This is an online survey which said to be a reliable source of questions since they already conducted it online for many times.

The second and third phases were the qualitative data collection. Out of 150 respondents, thirty (30) of whom one (1) per school undergoes online discussion using Microsoft Teams. The researcher audio recorded their responses- The audio-recorded responses of the

respondents were transcribed verbatim. And the third phase was school visitation to assess the anti- bullying initiatives.

In gathering the desired data, the used of Survey Questionnaire, FGD & School Visitation were employed:

1. **Respondents' Background Questionnaire.** To gather some feasible information about the respondent's background, the researcher developed a respondents' background questionnaire. Such instrument was utilized to gather information on the respondents' age, gender, ethnicity and grade level.

2. **Bullying Survey Questions**. The questions provided in the Modified Survey includes on how safe they feel at school and the types of bullying that they experienced at school. Table 2. Shows the Modified Survey Questionnaire as research instrument.

3. **Online Focus Group Discussion.** The questions focused on where, when and how often bullying occurs and how people respond to this kind of behavior. And to validate the responses of the respondents.

4. **School Visitation.** The researcher conducted school visitation to identify the different initiatives implemented in school to address bullying.

Table 2. Modified Survey Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to find out about student safety and bullying at your school.
Your name is not required on this survey, but we do want to know something
about the students who complete this survey. So, please answer the following questions:

SurveyMonkey Inc. Based on ReportBullying.com (Modified Survey)

Your answers are confidential, so please try to answer the questions as honestly as you can.
Just Check your preferred Answer.

1. Gender   **2. Age**   **3. Ethnicity**

○ Male   ○ 13-15   ○ 19 and up   ○ Bisaya   ○ Tagalog

○ Female   ○ 16-18   ○ Maranao

4. Grade Level

○ Grade 7   ○ Grade 9

○ Grade 8   ○ Grade 10

How safe do you feel at school? Safe means feeling comfortable, relaxed, and not worried that someone could harm you.

1. Do you feel safe at school?

☐ Never

☐ Sometimes

☐ Often

☐ Always

2. Do you feel safe on your way to and from school?

☐ Never

☐ Sometimes

☐ Often

☐ Always

3. Who do you talk to when you have problems at school?

☐ Parent

☐ Guardian

☐ Sibling

☐ Counselor

☐ Administrator

☐ Teacher

☐ Other student

When you answer the next questions, think about THE PAST SCHOOL YEAR…..
Have you been bullied by other students ...(Bullying meaning, a repeated act, or continuous act of one of the following?)
1. Physically?
Examples: hit, pushed, shoved, slapped, kicked, spit at,or beaten up, had property stolen

○
    Not once

○
    Once or twice

○
    Every week

○
    Many times

○
    Don't know

2. Verbally?
Examples: called names, teased hurtfully, insulted, humiliated, threatened

○
    Not once

○
    Once or twice

○
    Every week

○
    Many times

○
    Don't know

3. Socially?
Examples: excluded from a group, made to look dumb by someone, gossiped about; rumours spread

○
    Not once

○
    Once or twice

○
    Every week

○
    Many times

○
    Don't know

4. Electronically?
Examples: threatened,embarrassed, singled out,had your feelings hurt,been gossiped about, or had secrets about you revealed through e-mail or phone text messages or pictures

○
    Not once

○
    Once or twice

○
    Every week

○
    Many times

○
    Don't know

5. Racially?
Examples: treated differently or badly because of your race, culture,ethnic

○
    Not once

○
    Once or twice

○
    Every week

○
    Many times

○
    Don't know

6. Gender?
Examples: left out or treated badly because you are a boy or a girl; heard sexist
comments

○
    Not once

○
    Once or twice

○
    Every week

○
    Many times

○

c. Ethics in Research

The researcher ensured confidentiality of the results of the test being given to the respondents. They were informed regarding the conduct of the study and their participation is voluntary, that they can back out anytime. Furthermore, parental consent was also be given parents containing all the important conditions and guidelines in in the conduct of the study.

d. Data Analysis

To arrive at an accurate data interpretation, the following statistical tools were being employed:

1. Frequency and Percentage distributions is to be used to describe the profile of the respondents and their bullying questions answers.

2. Mean was being used to determine the percentage of students in terms of the bullying actions and on how often it occurs in the school.

3. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was being used to determine the relationship between the respondents' age, gender, ethnicity, grade level, bullying actions and where, when, and how often the bullying occurs to provide intervention actions in the recommended policy. Likewise, it was used in determining significant relationship between the respondents' profile and the result of bullying survey. However, to test the significance of r, the value of t was computed.

4. Correlation Coefficient(r) was being employed in determining the relationship between the respondents' profile and the bullying survey.

And finally, in interpreting the results, the following scales were used:

Strength of Relationship (r)

0.00 = no correlation

±.01 - ±.20 = very low correlation

±.21 - ±.40 = low correlation

±.41 - ±.60 = substantial to high correlation

±.61 - ±.80   = very high correlation

±.81 - ±1.0 = perfect correlation

Results and Discussion

Problem 1: What is the profile of the respondents in terms of Age, Gender, Ethnicity, and Grade Level?

As shown in Table 1, the majority (64%) of the respondents were females, and only 54 (36%) were males. From the finding, one can infer that majority of the students who were selected as respondents were females. Such result could be attributed to the notion that females can be easily tapped in school activities.

Table 1. Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male	54	36.00
Female	96	64.00
Total	**150**	**100.00**

The figures reflected in Table 2 indicates that 78 or 52.00 percent of the respondents had ages ranging from 13 to 15 years old; followed by 53 or 35.33 percent with ages falling within 16 to 18 years old; and only 19 or 12.66 percent with ages within 19 and up, respectively.

The age distribution presented indicates that mostly of the respondents were Grades 10 who have at least 3 years experienced as high school student.

Table 2. Respondents' Distribution According to Age

Category	Frequency	Percent
13-15 years old	78	52.00
16-18 years old	53	35.33
19 and up	19	12.67
Total	**150**	**100.00**

As indicated in Table 3, the majority (85.33%) of the respondents were Cebuanos, followed by 19 or 12.67 percent were Maranaos, and only 3 or 2.00 percent were Tagalogs. From the result, one can deduce that majority of the students are Cebuanos. As such, one could further infer that the respondents speak Cebuano well in expressing their ideas to somebody.

In support to Table 3, Cebuano was the dominant language spoken at home since the area is dominated by Cebuano-speaking individuals. Dewan (1989) and Whiteley (1974) substantiated such claim. According to them, Cebuano is widely used at home among the respondents because it afforded them practical convenience of communication which is used to establish

endearments, intimacy, emotional outbursts, and nostalgic moments among family members. Thus, it is the lingua franca at home to facilitate easy transactions of work within the house.

Table 3. Respondents' Distribution According to Ethnicity

Category	Frequency	Percent
Cebuano	128	85.33
Maranao	19	12.67
Tagalog	3	2.00
Total	**150**	**100.00**

As gleaned from Table 4, the majority (42%) of the respondents were Grade 10, followed by 39 or 26.00 percent who were Grade 8, then 27 or 18.00 percent were Grade 8 and only 21 or 16 percent were Grade 7. From the findings, one can infer that majority of the respondents were old timer as secondary students. Thus, the more veteran the respondents, the better her experiences tend to be.

Table 4.   Respondents' Distribution According to Grade Level

Category	Frequency	Percent
Grade 7	21	14.00
Grade 8	39	26.00
Grade 9	27	18.00
Grade 10	63	42.00
Total	**150**	**100.00**

Problem 2. What are the types of bullying that do frequently occurs in school?

As revealed in Table 5, the type of bullying experienced by the majority of the respondents (58.66%) is Verbal, followed by Physical which is 38 percent, then Electronic which is 35.33 percent, followed by Social which is 32.66 percent, then Gender which is 28.66 percent and Racial which is only 12 percent.

The above data was supported by the online interview (using MS Teams platform) conducted to the respondents, out of 15 respondents joined the Focus Group Discussion 7 said they experienced being bullied verbally and physically. Respondent no. 1 said "Ako naka experienced nga na bully sa ako classmate, iya ko gisinggitan ug tambok tambok, nahiubos kayo ko niya." In addition, respondent no 2 claimed that she was bullied by a Grade 11 student by teasing her. Moreover, respondent 3 said that "I was also bullied pagsulod naku sa room first day sa klase last year, gitumban ako tiil sa ako classmate." Respondent no. 4 reiterated also that he was bullied by his neighbor who was a Grade 9 student by hiding his bag. And the three (3) other respondents claimed that they experienced also being humiliated, mocked and insulted.

From the result, one can deduce that majority of the students were bullied verbally. As such, one could further infer that respondents still have the trauma in them being bullied.

Table 5. Respondents' Experiences on the Types of Bullying

Respondents' Experience	Types of Bullying					
	Physical	**Verbal**	**Social**	**Electronic**	**Racial**	**Gender**
Not Once	89	46	69	83	114	90
Once or Twice	55	69	49	51	16	32
Every Week	0	1	0	0	0	0
Many Times	2	18	0	2	2	11
Don't Know	4	16	32	14	18	17
Percentage Bullying occurs in school	38%	58.66%	32.66%	35.33%	12.00%	28.66%

Problem 3. What are the existing initiatives of the schools in addressing bullying in school?

Based on the schools' visit conducted by the researcher, the following were the existing initiatives of the secondary schools to address bullying:

1. Integration of Values Formation in schools' activities.
2. School Child Protection Policy is included in the school manual/booklet and being given to all students at the start of the School Year.
3. Anecdotal Record per classroom is being imposed.
4. Learners were given school activities which promote on Anti-bullying and Child Protection e.g. symposium, sports expo, youth camps
5. Implemented Peer Counselling
6. Conducted "No to Bullying" campaign

7. "Child Friendly and Anti-bullying Corner" in every classroom

8. Posted posters, signage, and slogans in the school campus

9. School organized Monitoring Team to monitor and follow up Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDOs) and students need special concern.

10. Regular consultation with the parents of problematic learners.

11. Created Teen Center and Freedom Wall.

Problem 4. What is the relationship between bullying and their demographic profile?

To test the hypothesis that there was no significant relationship between bullying and the respondents' profile, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed. As depicted in Table 6, 3 or 75.00 percent of the variables indicated substantial to high correlation. These variables included age and bullying (**.52)**, ethnicity and bullying (**.42**), and grade level and bullying (**.43**). On the other hand, only 1 or 25.00 percent indicated very high correlation which involved the variable on gender and bullying (**.62**).

From the above results, one can deduce that all variables have significant bearing on the bullying happened in schools.

Table 6.   Relationship Between the Respondents' Profile and bullying

Variables	Computed r	Strength of Relationship	Computed t at 0.05	Analysis	Decision

Age and bullying	.52	Substantial to high correlation	3.50	significant	Reject Ho
Gender and bullying	.62	Very high correlation	4.54	significant	Reject Ho
Ethnicity and bullying	.42	Substantial to high correlation	2.66	significant	Reject Ho
Grade Level and bullying	.43	Substantial to high correlation	2.73	significant	Reject Ho

Legend: Tabled/critical value at α = 0.05 = 2.032

Strength of Relationship (r)

0.00 = no correlation
±.01 - ±.20 = very low correlation
±.21 - ±.40 = low correlation
±.41 - ±.60 = substantial to high correlation
±.61 - ±.80 = very high correlation
±.81 - ±1.0 = perfect correlation

Problem 5. What policy and guidelines can be proposed based on the research findings?

Proposed Division Child Protection Policy and Guidelines

(Anchored on DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 re: Policy and Guidelines on Protecting Children in School from Abuse, Violence, Exploitation, Discrimination, Bullying and other Forms of Abuse)

Pursuant to the 1987 Constitution, the state shall defend the right of children to assistance including proper care and nutrition and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development (Article XV, Section 3).

In adherence to the above mandate, the Department of Education (DepEd), in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders, ensure that all schools are conducive to the education of children. The best interest of the child shall be the paramount consideration in all decisions and actions involving children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, and legislative bodies, consistent with the principle of First Call for Children, as enunciated in the CRC. Teachers and learning facilitators especially in learning centers are their substitute parents. In this connection, the Family Code empowers the school, the administrators and teachers, or the individual. Entity or institution engaged in childcare to exercise the special parental authority and responsibility over the child under their supervision, instruction or custody.

DepEd has adopted the policy to provide special protection to children who are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances which affect their normal development and over which they have no control, and to assist the concerned agencies and their rehabilitation.

Accordingly, DepEd thru its D.O 40 reiterates a zero-tolerance policy for any act of child abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, bullying and other forms of abuse.

As answer on the above national directive, this **Division Child Protection Policy and Guidelines: A Contextualized** is recommended.

A. There must be a yearly conduct of information-dissemination activities and in-service training for teachers on the protection of

children in school from abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, bullying or peer abuse and other related cases.

B. Undertake advocacy campaign and capability building activities to enable the schools to do the following:

. Apply positive and non-violent discipline,

. Formulate and implement guidelines and procedures to emphasize the role of all stakeholders and other persons in the prevention of reporting cases of bullying, and

. Provide conflict resolution or peer mediation, including referral to appropriate service provider.

C. School must establish Child Protection Committee (CPC) every School Year which shall compose of the following:

1. School Head/Administrator – Chairperson
2. Guidance Counselor/ Teacher – Vice Chairperson
3. Representative of the teachers as designated by the Faculty Club
4. Representative of the Parents as designated by the Parent-Teachers Association
5. Representative of pupils, students and learners as designated by Supreme Student Council
6. Representative from the community as designated by the Punong Barangay, preferably a member of the Barangay Council for Protection of Children (BCPC)

D. Organize and conduct the capacity building for members of the Child Protection Committee and Guidance Counselors/Teachers.

E. Schools must consolidate reports on incidents and cases of child abuse and bullying, then submit it to the Division Office.

F. Schools should enhance, protect, preserve and maintain the physical ang mental health of the learners at all times.

G. Schools are encouraged to draft School' Child Protection Policy every school year and strictly adhere and impose on it.

H. A complaint for bullying or peer abuse shall be acted upon by the School Head following the procedures herein set forth:

   a. Upon the filing of a complaint or upon notice by a school personnel or official of any bullying or peer abuse incidents, the same immediately reported to the School Head, who shall inform the parents or guardian of the victim and the offending child in a meeting called for the purpose. The victim and the offending child shall be referred to the Child Protection Committee for counseling and other interventions

   b. If bullying is committed for a second or subsequent time, after the offending child received counseling or other interventions, the penalty of suspension for not more than (1) week maybe imposed by the School Head. During the period of suspension, the offending child and the parents or guardians may be required to attend further seminars and counseling.

   c. Procedure of suspension – the imposable penalty on the offending child is suspension or expulsion, the following minimum requirements of due process shall be complied with:

1. The child and parents or guardian must be informed of the complaint in writing;

2. The child shall be given the opportunity to answer the complaint in writing, with the assistance of the parents or guardian;

3. The decision of the School Head must be in writing, stating the facts and the reasons for the decision;

4. The decision of the school head may be appealed in existing rules of the Department (D.O 40, s. 2012)

I. Positive and non-violent discipline, as maybe required under circumstance, is recommended to schools, provided, that in no case shall corporal punishment be inflicted to the students.

J. Institutionalize all schools' initiatives to address bullying in schools.

K. Schools are encouraged to support activities and campaigns initiated by stakeholders (PNP, DOH, LGU and NGOs).

L. Schools must furnish the learners with good and wholesome educational materials, supervise their activities (e.g. sports, scouting and youth camps) and protect the learners from bad company then prevent them from acquiring habits detrimental to health, safety, studies and morals.

M. Frequent monitoring and evaluation of the program implementation and enforcement of all private and public schools is also recommended.

N. Division Office focal person shall give recommendations to the Regional Office and device measures to address and prohibit abuse,

exploitation, violence and discrimination, and bullying or peer abuse of children.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study primarily aimed at determining bullying cases in school and what are the school child protection policy and guidelines can be imposed as basis for helping the learners.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following: (1) What is the profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and grade level; (2) What are the types of bullying that usually occur in school; (3) What are the existing initiatives of the school in addressing bullying in school; (4) What is the relationship between bullying and their demographic profile; (5) What policy can be proposed based on the research findings.

Summary of Findings

The obtained data generated the following findings:

A.   Respondents' Profile

The findings disclosed that majority of the respondents were Cebuano females. In addition, most of the respondents were 13-15 years old and who were in Grade 10 level.

B.   Types of bullying frequently occurred in school

As disclosed, the type of bullying experienced by the majority of the respondents was Verbal, followed by Physical, then Electronic, next was Social, then Gender and Racial.

C.   Existing initiatives of the schools in addressing bullying

Based on the findings there were various initiatives of the school to address bullying which includes the 1) Integration of Values Formation in schools' activities; 2) School Child Protection Policy is included in the school manual/booklet and being given to all students at the start of the School Year; 3) Anecdotal Record per classroom is being imposed; 4) Learners were given school activities which promote on Anti-bullying and Child Protection e.g. symposium, sports expo, youth camps; 5) Implemented Peer Counselling; 6) Conducted "No To Bullying" campaign; 6) "Child Friendly and Anti-bullying Corner" in every classroom; 7) Posted posters, signage, and slogans in the school campus; 8) School organized Monitoring Team to monitor and follow up Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDOs) and students need special concern; 9) Regular consultation with the parents of problematic learners; and 10) Created Teen Center and Freedom Wall.

D. Relationship between bullying and respondents' demographic profile

As revealed, all variables exemplified significant relationship with the respondents' demographic profile and bullying happened in schools.

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E.   Proposed Enhanced Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for Secondary Schools

The proposed enhanced and contextualized Child Protection Policy and Guidelines for secondary schools be adopted in the Division of Lanao del Norte.

Conclusions

The secondary school learners at Lanao del Norte are purely dominated by Cebuano female with age ranging 13-15 years old and mostly a Grade 10 students, indicating that they have accrued high school life experiences.

In terms of types of bullying frequently occurred in school and being experienced by majority of the respondents was Verbal bullying. As such, the result readily implies that there is need to an enhance school child protection policy and guidelines as a tool in hastening bullying to happen in schools.

The emergence of significant relationship between the respondents' profile and bullying occurred in schools have incurred the desirable effects and such phenomenon affected to their image as learners.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions made, the following recommendations are hereby inferred by the researcher:

1.   In as much as most of the respondents have experienced Verbal bullying, the schools must double their efforts and initiatives in addressing this pressing concern.

2.   The emergence of significant relationship between the respondents' profile and the types of bullying they experienced, school must to take into consideration their impacts to the performance of the respondents in school.

3. The implemented school initiatives in addressing bullying in schools must be sustained.

4.   The evolved functional and enhanced School Child Protection Policy is strongly recommended and be adopted in the involved secondary schools to ensure school's better image and performance.

5.   Another study to this effect be conducted in other schools using other variables to ascertain the generalizability of the study.

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