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The Assessment of bullying and its effect on the Academic Performance of Students the Case of Mekdela Elementary School in Addis Ababa

MSW Dissertation Research Project Proposal

(MSWP-001)

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Schools are critical for individual development, children spend most of their day as they are the first place in which children undertake a formal learning process that provides them with basic knowledge and thus enables them to discover and deepen the skill they need to be successful and independent adults. Having a good academic achievement help children become whatever they wanted to become in life. A 2012 report by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children 1 notes that 'more than one billion children around the world attend school. Many of these children enjoy their right to be taught in a safe and stimulating environment. For many others, however, schooling does not guarantee such opportunity. These girls and boys are exposed to bullying, sexual and gender-based violence, corporal punishment and other forms of violence. Many are also exposed to schoolyard fighting, gang violence, assault with weapons, and sexual and gender-based violence by their own peers.

Globally it is estimated that more than one in three students between the ages of 13 and 15 are regularly bullied (Fleming and Jacobsen, 2010: 75). The effects of bullying on the learning process as well as on the children and adolescents' emotional development may be devastating and profound. Bullying is one form of violent behavior and refers to the intentional and persistent aggressive behavior towards others, such as physical hitting, verbal harassment, spreading of false rumors, social exclusion and use of the Internet or cell phones for sending nasty messages (Olweus, 1996). Bullying is a unique but complex form of interpersonal aggression, which takes many forms, serves different functions, and is manifested in different patterns of relationships. Bullying is not simply a dyadic problem between a bully and a victim,

but is recognized as a group phenomenon, occurring in a social context in which various factors serve to promote, maintain, or suppress such behavior (Olweus, 2001)

Bullying is a behavioral problem which affects the lives of thousands of school children and their families. The humiliation, fear, frustration and social isolation and loss of self-esteem which children experience when bullied results in absenteeism from school, poor or deteriorating schoolwork, personality change, illness, depression and unfortunately sometimes suicide. Bullying knows no boundaries of age, sex or socio-economic background. It can take many forms; it can be short term or continue over long periods, even years. (Dublin, 1993)

In schools, bullying occurs in all areas. It can occur in nearly any part in or around the school building, though it more often occurs in PE, recess, hallways, bathrooms, on school buses and waiting for buses, classes that require group work and/or after school activities. Bullying in school sometimes consists of a group of students taking advantage of or isolating one student in particular and gaining the loyalty of bystanders who want to avoid becoming the next victim. These bullies taunt and tease their target before physically bullying the target. Bystanders may participate or watch, sometimes out of fear of becoming the next victim. Bullying can also be perpetrated by teachers and the school system itself: There is an inherent power differential in the system that can easily predispose to subtle or covert abuse (relational aggression or passive aggression), humiliation, or exclusion — even while maintaining overt commitments to anti-bullying policies. (Journal of Education and Practice, 2012)

 Bullying is not a new problem for schools, since it has been present for a long time; however, only in recent years is its importance being recognized. We speak of specific phenomenon of school violence which affects schools around the world regardless of national boarders,

geography or politics (Debarbieux, 2003) The effect of peer cruelty are far –reaching and can cause immense stress, anxiety, health problems, depression, and humiliation that may result in serious mental health issue for children. Bullying also induces fear and insecurity, which impacts students' concentration, academic achievement, and learning performance. (Michele Borba, 2016)

With the fast growth of internet and technology one of the emerging forms of bulling is Cyber Bullying Cyber bullying brings an added dimension of risk and pain. Cyber bullying involves posting or sending electronic messages, including text, pictures or videos, aimed at harassing, threatening or targeting another person via a variety of media and social platforms such as online social networks, chat rooms, blogs, instant messaging and text messaging. Cyber bullying may include spreading rumors, posting false information, hurtful messages, embarrassing comments or photos, or excluding someone from online networks or other communications. It allows perpetrators to remain anonymous, can affect the victim at any hour and on any day, and messages and images can quickly reach a very wide audience.

Bulling being growing as one of the most serious problem for students, teachers and school community it has been given little attention in most of the academic institutions in Ethiopia. Usually in it is considered as a problem of the western countries and normal behavior around school environment. Growing up in Addis Ababa city and learning in one of the local government school I still remember all my childhood memories .During the time I had no understanding of the concept of bullying and never had the idea about its effect. After being a victim as a child and working for more than a decade in the field of education as a teacher, counselor and director in schools I came to realize the seriousness and negative impact of bullying. As a child I was a victim of bullying and I still remember the psychological and social

impact that caused me as a student. When I look back to my childhood memories all the form of bullying existed even during that time. It was common by the time to see verbal and physical bullying. Sometimes the negative nick name given by teachers for the students also intimidates and discourages the students. I was having my own nick name too. The amazing part it was not only the bullying comes from student to student sometimes it come from teachers too. I remember teachers who were famous for beating and intimidating students.

Working in the field of education I have noticed the serious development of bullying in our schools. It's common to see not only students verbally bullying other students, but some also teacher considers to insult students as a right for the profession. With fast growing of private and government schools in Addis Ababa bullying become a major challenge for many schools. Lack of strong School Discipline Policy and underestimating the impact of it on the academic performance of students makes is a serious problem in schools.

The researcher believes that this study significantly describe and explore the different impact of bullying on students mainly focus on its impact on the academic performance of students and also explore the level of awareness about bullying among students, teachers and the entire school community.

2. Statement of the Problem

According to the UNICEF 2016 report school violence and bullying occurs throughout the world and affects a significant proportion of children and adolescents. It is estimated that 246 million children and adolescents experience school violence and bullying in some form every year. Estimates of the proportion of children and young people affected by school bullying specifically vary between countries and studies, ranging from less than 10% to over 65%. In the 2016

UNICEF U-Report/ Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children (SRSG-VAC) opinion poll, to which 100,000 young people in 18 countries responded, two-thirds of respondents reported that they had been the victim of bullying.

Bullying has been recognized as a serious problem in today's schools (Rose & Monda-Amaya, 2012). It is imperative that educators understand the dynamics and consequences of bullying, as well as what they can do to support students in these situations (Allen, 2010). Bullying is an everlasting problem in the lives of school kids. It is a problem that affects all students, the person who bully, those who are victims, and the persons who witnesses to interpersonal violence. Bullying may include verbal and physical assaults, threats, 'jokes' or language, mockery and criticizing , insulting behavior and facial expressions. These factors work individually, or collectively, to contribute to a child's likelihood of bullying. Bullying is difficult to eradicate in schools because it is so often effectively used by students. Teachers as professionals have to deal with the consequences of pupil-on-pupil bullying. (Journal of Education and Practice, Vol.6, No.19, 2015)

School is more than the academic instruction that occurs in the classroom. Our students' education also depends on an environment that supports learning. It is impossible for students to achieve at their fullest potential if they fear for their safety. The long-term effects of bullying, cruelty, bias, and hate-motivated behavior can have a tremendous impact on student success both for the victims and for the perpetrators. (California Department of Education, 2003) One channel by which bullying may lead to poorer educational achievement is via elevated levels of stress affecting mental health and poorer memory functioning, in addition to other factors, such as higher levels of absenteeism (Vaillancourt et al., 2011)

The educational impact on victims of school violence and bullying is also significant. Victimization by teachers or peers may make children and adolescents who are bullied, and bystanders, afraid to go to school and interfere with their ability to concentrate in class or participate in school activities. They may miss classes, avoid school activities, play truant or drop out of school altogether. This in turn has an adverse impact on academic attainment and achievement and future education and employment prospects. International learning (UNESCO, 2017)

The act of bullying and the harm it causes have typically been given little consideration and never considered as a serious problem in school environment in Addis Ababa. Working more than a decade in the field of education and understanding the attention needs to be given for the issue how it affect the academic performance of students the researcher believes this study significantly identifies the problem as it exist and suggest possible recommendation to fight bullying at school environment. The study also explores the social and psychological impact of bullying on the students. It is now known that bullying behavior is common among children and that the harmful and lasting effects on children deserve special attention.

3. General Research Questions

To analyze the impact of bullying on the academic performance of students in Mekdela Elementary school the researcher inquires the general question, how bullying affects the students' academic performance. This general question is further divided into the following specific questions in order to achieve the goal of the study.

- What are the impacts of bullying on the academic achievement of students?
- What are the Social and psychological impacts of bullying on students?

- How teachers and school community contribute to prevention of bullying?

- Which groups of students are highly affected by bullying?

- What is the level of awareness of teachers and the school community about bullying?

4. Objectives of the Study

4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine and explore the impacts of bullying on the academic performance of students in Mekdela Elementary School.

4.2. Specific Objectives

✓ To explore the impact of bullying on students' academic performance.

✓ To determine the social and psychological impact of bulling on students.

✓ To find out which group are highly vulnerable for bulling at school.

✓ To raise the level of awareness of teachers and school community about the negative effect of bullying students.

✓ To explore the role of teachers and the school community in the prevention of bulling.

5. Significance of the Study

This study will have a significant importance in examining the negative effects that bullying has on the academic achievement of students. It also will explore the social and the psychological impact of bullying on students. It is extremely important that educators are aware of the reasons why students are bullied and the school community raise its awareness about bulling and its negative effect on students.

- The study will help Mekdela Elementary school to identify how bulling impacts the academic performance of students.

- The study significantly contributes in creating awareness about the negative social, psychological impact of bullying on students.

- The result of the study helps the particular school where the study will be conducted and also other similar schools to give serious consideration for bullying and have strong discipline policy.

- The findings and the recommendations of the study help as an input for all concerned bodies to develop anti bulling policies and school rules and regulations for creating safe school environment for students.

- For interested individuals and researchers to lay ground to conduct a wide and in depth study with respect to the impact of bullying on the academic performance of students.

6. Scope (Delimitation) of the Study

This study is going to be undertaken in one of the government school in Addis Ababa City, Nifas Silk Lafto sub city particularly in Mekdela Elementary school. The particular sub city is chosen by the researcher because of the researcher resides in the same sub city and is familiar with the area. The close distance of the research site to the researcher's home location avoids unnecessary transportation cost. Mekdela Elementary school is selected not only because of the location suitability for the researcher, but also easy to get the required information which will be a positive contribution for the success of the study. In addition, the government school is selected due to high number of students per class and also the diversity of students from different background where the researcher believes it help to better explore the problem.

The study covers children from age 10- 15 years who are attending in the school. It includes both female and male students with equal proportion from the total number of 1185 students who are

enrolled in the school. The study also uses 20 teachers who are teaching from grade five to grade eight which are the classes in respective age of the students. The teachers and the students will be selected in consideration of their positive contribution for the success of the study.

7. Limitation of the Study

The expected limitations of the study are time and financial problems because all the costs and expense to conduct the study are covered by the researcher. In addition, non-responsiveness of participant is expected to occur during the study from the participants and the school community. The other factor is lack of awareness about the problem and unavailability of previous local study regarding the problem. It's also expected to face some challenge from the school administration in lack of cooperation in exposing and accepting the existing problem of bullying. This is because the administration may consider the result of the study will have a negative effect on their responsibility and school. As a qualitative research its time consuming and the participants have more control over the content of the data collected.

8. Operational Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this MSW desertion "The Impact Of Bullying on The Academic Performance of students" the following words refer to the specific definition stated.

Bullying: - is aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength. It occurs across all geographic, racial and socioeconomic boundaries. Bullying occurs when a student is subjected to negative behavior, repeated over a period of time, by another student or group of students.

Physical Bullying - hitting, kicking, and beating up, pushing, spitting, property damage, and/or theft.

Verbal Bullying - teasing, mocking, name calling, verbal humiliation, verbal intimidation, threats, coercion, extortion, and/or racist, sexist or homophobic taunts.

Social Bulling -Gossip, rumor spreading, embarrassment, alienation or exclusion from the group, and/or setting the other up to take the blame.

Bully: - a person who is cruel to others, especially to weaker or has less power.

Victim: - Victims can also be separated into two distinct groups; passive victims and provocative victims. Passive victims tend to have characteristics such as low self-concept and self-confidence, be sensitive emotionally and have fears of inadequacy. They tend to be physically smaller and weaker than other children their age and have ineffective social skills or poor interpersonal skills. They will often internalize and blame themselves for any issues that arise (Ross, 2002, p. 115). Provocative victims on the other hand, are "far more assertive, confident, and active than other victims and are noted for prolonging a fight even when they are losing" (Ross, 2002, p. 118).

Cyber bullying :-involves posting or sending electronic messages, including text, pictures or videos, aimed at harassing, threatening or targeting another person via a variety of media and social platforms such as online social networks, chat rooms, blogs, instant messaging and text messaging.

Consequence: - a result of action, especially is such a result is unwanted or unpleasant

Direct Bullying: - teasing, verbal attacks, shoving, assaults, extortion, and destruction of property.

Indirect Bullying: shunning, spreading rumors, malicious practical jokes, and similar verbal and social behavior.

Bystander: - A person who, although present at some event, does not take part in it or observer

9. Research Design and Methodology

Research designs are plans and procedures for search that plan the decisions from broad assumption to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. This plan involves several decisions and they need to be taken. (John W. Creswell, 2009); considering the topic of the study and the nature of the research the researcher will undertake the study using qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research is used considering the help it has for exploring and understanding the social and human problem in depth. Quantitative research method is also required to put all the variables and measure the numbered data and analyze using statistical procedures. By using the methods the researcher focuses on the impact of bullying on the academic performance of the students in school. The qualitative research strategies the researcher uses case study which will help to explore the problem in depth.

9.1. Universe of the Study

The study will be conducted in Addis Ababa city administration Nifas Silk Lafto sub city Particularly in Mekdela primary school. Mekdela Elementary school is a local government school with the total of 1185 students who are enrolled in 2017/2018 Academic school year. Among the total number of 1185 students who are enrolled the researcher select 160 students who are from age 10-16 students. In addition to the students selected 79 teachers will participate in the study.

9.2.　　　Sampling Procedures

Social research is often conducted in situation that does not permit the kind of probability samples used in large scale. Suppose you wanted to study homelessness, there is no list of a; homeless individuals, nor are you likely to create such a list. Moreover, as you will see there are times when probability sampling wouldn't be appropriate even if it were possible. Many these situation call for nonprobability Sampling. (Earl Babbie, 2010) The researcher will use two nonprobability sampling methods for the success of the study. The researcher will use probability and nonprobability sampling methods for the success of the study. For the non-probability sampling the selection will be based on personal observation and identifying target groups and teachers' recommendations. For the probability sampling simple random sampling will be used. A total of 160 students and 56 teachers were used as a sample of the study and they were studied.

Sources of data and Tools of Data Collection

Primary Source

The primary data will be collected from the selected sample participants of the study. Selected sample of Students, teachers and other staff members of the school community will participate in gathering the primary data.

Secondary Source

Considering the need of gathering existing data that help the success of the study the researcher also will use secondary data collected from written documents such as reports of organizations, published books, journals, newspapers and other related source which provide basic and important information related to the research topic.

Tools and Procedures Of data Collection

In social research, variables are often operationalized when researchers ask people questions as a way of getting data for analysis and interpretation. Sometimes the questions are asked by an interviewer, sometimes they are written down are given to respondents for completion. In other cases, several general guidelines can help researchers frame and ask questions that serve as excellent operationalization of variables while avoiding pitfalls that can result in useless or even misleading information. (Earl Babbie, 2010) The researcher considers the need of effective data collection plays great part for the success and fruitfulness of the study. The main data collection will be interview schedule (interview questionnaire) and questionnaire which will be used to collect data from the participant of the study. For this particular study the researcher will use the interview schedule, questionnaire and non-participant observation which will be used to collect data from students, teachers and other participants of the study. The interview schedule will be used to collect data from the students. The questionnaire will be used to collect data from teachers and students. Non participant observation will be carried out with students in class and outside of classrooms to gather information that will help the study.

10. Ethical Consideration

As it's very essential and helpful as a researcher to follow all the ethical standard and procedures to conduct sound and effective research the research will follow all the ethical standard and procedures required to conduct the study.

The researcher will selects each sample participant of the study voluntarily after briefing the purpose of the study. They will be well informed the objective of the study. Selected sample Participant will be asked for their consent prior participating in the study .Each selected sample

participant will be given a letter of consent prior to participating in the study of the impact of bullying on academic achievement of students.

Researcher also needs to anticipate the possibility of harmful intimate information being disclosed during the data collection process. (John Creswell, 2009) The researcher also believes keeping the confidentiality of the necessary information that shouldn't be disclosed and only used the collected data for the objective of the study.

The researcher will follow all the rules, regulations norms and culture of the research site. The researcher will conduct the research with professional relationship with all the participant of the study.

11. Data Processing and Analysis

To allow for feedback from a large number of students, where it is impractical to collect feedback using other more resource intensive methods the researcher will use structured questionnaire. It will give participant the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on their experience. Structured questionnaires will be used to collect feedback from students. The researcher uses it considering structured questionnaire data can be processed by software packages such as Excel and SPSS. In the questionnaire all of the questions will be used for gathering information will be carefully prepared by the researcher in order to get the essential feedback from the participants.

12. Chapterization

The study will be organized into five main chapters. Each chapter of the study will address a specific theme.

The first chapter shall be an introduction to the subject matter of the study . In this chapter an attempt shall be made to describe the concept of the impact of bullying on the academic performance of students.

Chapter two shall deal with a review of literature regarding the impact of bullying on the academic performance of students in school environment and explore the gap of the study.

The third chapter shall explain research design and methodology used in assessing the impact of bulling on the academic performance of students

The fourth chapter shall be on data analysis and interpretation about the impact of bullying on the academic performance of students.

The fifth chapter shall give the recommendations and conclusions of the present study and some suggestions for prevention of bullying and creating safe school environment for student's better academic performance.

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