Effectiveness of Schools in Combating Bullying Behaviors among Public Secondary Schools in Hai District, Tanzania

Joyce J. Mboya
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7908-8679
Department of Education Foundations, St. Augustine University of Tanzania
Email: mboyajoyce@gmail.com

Daniel Onyango, PhD*
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5381-226X
Department of Education Foundations, St. Augustine University of Tanzania
Email: jumadan06@gmail.com

***Corresponding Mail**: jumadan06@gmail.com

Abstract: The study investigated on the management of bullying behavior in public secondary schools in Hai District. The study employed the mixed research approach to organize the qualitative and quantitative data so as to deal with the research problem. Convergent parallel research design was employed to enable the researchers to collect data concurrently. While the targeted schools were 45 in the district, 5 schools were purposively selected with the sample of 171 respondents. The study found that majority of teachers were not effective in managing bullying behavior in schools though they are obligated with the task of managing students' behaviors in through identifying, directing, controlling, monitoring the behavior and providing guidance and counseling to students. The study recommends that schools should come up with strategies to control bullying by offering short courses, seminars and workshops to teachers so as to equip them with skills on how to control bullying. Clubs and societies should be established in schools so as to involve learners in management of bullying. Schools should put in place a schedule where talks on various aspects of bullying can be presented to students. Speakers from outside the school can be invited to make presentations.

Keywords: Bullying; Bullying Behavior; Teachers' effectiveness; combating.

Introduction

Bullying is defined as a violent action done by peers in schools, especially on the weak ones and their effects may include psychological distress, physical disability, long-term physical damage and mental problems (Farrell, Sullivan, Sutherland, Corona and Masho 2018). Studies have indicated the existence of bullying behaviors in various parts of the world.

In Asia and Australian schools, bullying leads the affected persons to defend themselves through bullying others, hence, bullying behavior persisting from one person to another (Mallow, 2017). In Korea, Koo (2007) points out that bullying behavior exist in schools, happening in various forms including gossiping, kicking, biting and severe punishment. The identified bulling behavior has many psychological and emotional effects to learners.

In Australia, Rigby (2020) argues that to manage bullying, teachers need to be proactive that is they must be on top of the situation, control it rather than just wait to take action after the event has taken place. This shows that schools in Australia have largely been able to control bullying through proactiveness which has prepared them to deal with bullies instead of waiting for them to strike first. The author also insists that schools must implement to help them deal with bullying such as regularly talking about dangers of bullying during school assemblies and other forums.

In America, Marsh (2018) noted that bullying has declined in public schools. She attributes this to implementation of robust strategies. She observes that once a policy has been enacted, everyone is required to commit himself/herself to its implementation. All teachers are required to work together as a team and ensure that the policy is implemented. She further notes that if the policy is left to a few teachers, they may not do much to alleviate the situation. Then involving all grade class teachers contributes significantly to reducing bullying in schools. She is of the view that contributing factors to bullying within the school context such as lack of positive school climate and lack of quick interventions must be dealt with.

Africa is not exempted from the rest of the world as far as bullying is concerned. In South Africa, it is reported that the rate of bullying is 61 percent. Nigeria it is at 50 and in Kenya it is at 56.3 percent. This shows that prevalence of bullying in Africa is high and it needs to be addressed (Ndebele, 2014; Okoth, 2014). In Africa, there is a perspective that bullying behavior may result from family and society. According to Juliana, Georgina, Okorn, & Akeke (2016), the causes of bullying include lack of parental attention at home, neglected children and divorced families. In Zimbabwe, bullying is caused by poor school rules implementation, family background, peer group influence and watching media where bullying behavior is portrayed (Mugove, 2017).

In Tanzania, secondary school rules and regulation prohibit bullying and the child act of 2009 spells out that a child must be protected from any kind of torture. Measures such as suspension or dismissal to the students who engage in bullying behavior are prescribed. However, in spite of all these anti-bullying policies and management strategies, bullying is still prevalent in Tanzanian secondary schools as (Ndibalema, 2013; Tangi, 2018; Shayo & Lawala, 2019; Kakuru, 2020) point out that in Tanzania, students are bulled in different ways; bullying is done by both researchers and learners in schools.

Tangi (2018) in a study carried out in secondary schools in Mwanza Region reports that there exist extreme acts of bullying in secondary schools in Mwanza. She observes that the acts of bullying have contributed to violence within and outside schools. In Hai District, public secondary schools students experience bullying in terms of kicking, biting, name-calling, use of abusive languages, destroying others' property, severe punishments, stealing, gossiping, fighting, isolation behavior, jealous and sexual harassment (Hai District Education Office, 2021). A visit to the District Education Office during reconnainasance, the DEO shared with the researchers the challenges which bullying poses to learners in the district. He specifically identified the five schools where prevalence of bullying is high. He noted that he has received many applications of students wishing to transfer from these schools because they are mishandled by other learners to a appoint where they prefer to drop out of school rather than continue being harassed by their colleagues while in school (Hai District, 2021).

According to Huang, Lewis, Cohen, Prewett & Herman (2018), teachers must have positive relationships with students and there should be a conducive atmosphere for students to report to their teachers all issues concerning bullying as this would enable teachers to find the solution. Teachers are required to be effective in controlling the behavior in schools by educating, advising and directing students about what to be done to prevent bullying behavior in schools.

Several studies such as one by Allen (2010) have been carried out in Tanzania. However, bullying still exists. He blames extreme acts of bullying meted on learners on lack of proactiveness in effectively dealing with the menace of bullying in schools. He observes that various key stakeholders such parents and teachers in eliminating bullying have not played their roles effectively. Few Empirical studies in Tanzania have addressed the teachers' effectiveness in management of bullying. This study therefore, sought to investigate on effectiveness of schools in combating bullying behavior among secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a convergent parallel research design under the mixed research. The design gave the researchers an opportunity to collect the two types of data concurrently.

Population and Sampling

The targeted schools were 45 in Hai District. Five secondary schools which were reported to have more bullying cases in the district were purposively selected. These schools were selected purposively because they were singled out by the DEO during recoinnaisance visit that students who were applying to leave the schools were many and they attributed their wish to leave because of harassment by fellow students and teachers were not doing much to stop these harassments (Hai District, 2021). The study used a sample size of 171 respondents generated from 13,945 educational stakeholders. The researchers employed Stratified Sampling Techniques, Purposive Sampling Techniques and Simple Random Sampling Techniques to obtain the required sample size. The attribute of sex was used to classify both teachers and students into male and female. This ensured that both sexes were represented in the study. Proportionate sampling was then used to pick 48 boys and 48 girls from the sample allocated to students. These students were randomly picked from form 1,2 and 3 using the lottery method. Picking students from form 1,2 and 3 ensured that each class was represented. The DEO, Discipline masters and student leaders were purposively selected because it was believed that they had relevant information required by the study.

Instrumentation

Data was collected using a questionnaire and an interview guide.

Validity and Reliability

Instruments were validated through sharing with two research experts from Saint Augustine University of Tanzania to observe the arrangement of the items in the instruments and if the item relate with the research objectives. The study used triangulation by employing different sources of data. Furthermore, reliability of the quantitative data yielded the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.75 prior to actual data collection.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Qualitative data was analysed through thematic approach in a narration form. Quantitative data, on the other hand, was analyzed through frequencies and percentages with the help of the SPSS.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers ensured ethical standards before data collection by acquiring a research clearance from the St. Augustine University of Tanzania research authority. They also consulted the Kilimanjaro Region government authority and particularly the Hai District Authority for research permit. During data collection, respondents were informed about the topic and were given freedom to participate or not. Anonymity and confidentiality were also considered.

Findings and Discussion

The study sought to determine the effectiveness of schools in combating bullying behaviors. It was guided by two research questions:

Table 1: Effectiveness of Schools in Combating Bullying Behavior

SN	Teachers' Effectiveness Indicators	D	%	N	%	A	%
1	Teachers are trained to deal with bullying issues	38	64.4	10	16.9	11	18.7
2	Provision of seminars to teachers on bullying in schools	30	50.8	9	15.3	20	33.9
3	The presence of anti-bullying clubs in school	53	89.8	0	0	6	10.2
4	Teachers talk about bullying practices occurring in the schools	39	66.1	8	13.5	12	20.4
5	Teachers controlling bullying practices in schools	42	71.1	11	18.6	17	10.3
6	Quick response to bullying issues	36	61	9	15.3	14	23.7

Key: D = Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree

Research Question 1: What is the perception of teachers on how effective are schools in managing bullying among the students in Hai district?

Table 1 presents teachers' responses about schools' effectiveness in combating bullying behaviors among Secondary School Students.

Findings from Table 1 indicates that majority of teachers disagreed that teachers are trained to deal with bullying issues, that there is provision of seminars to teachers on bullying in schools and that there are anti-bullying clubs in schools. They also disagreed that teachers talk about bullying practices that occur in schools, that teachers control bullying

practices in schools and that there are quick response to bullying issues in schools. These findings were supported by interview. One of the interviewed respondents, for instance, had this to say: "apart from the discipline office, we do not have a special department that deals with these matters." Another respondent said, "we do not have a teacher to deal with bullying issues." The findings suggest that teachers fail to intervene immediately when bullying matters are reported to them, the situation which leads to an increase of more bullying behaviors in schools. The findings concur with Lucas, Nocentini & Menesini (2019) who reported that teachers did not respond to bullying behavior. The findings disagree with observations by Marsh (2018) who carried out a study in America and observed that to control bullying in schools teachers need to be proactive and not only to respond when bullying cases are reported to them. Through this approach, they will be able to control bullying in schools. The strategy of teachers being proactive has also been adopted in Australia to control bullying in secondary schools and it is working (Rigby, 2020). The results in table 1 point to a situation where teachers in Hai seem to have given up. Unless this is changed prevalence of bullying will continue to increase and this will affect academic performance in Hai.

The statement implies that teachers are not effective enough to observe students; they are busy with class preparation and personal issues, not students' issues especially bullying management. The situation of teachers not much interacting with students witnessed by the researcher when she was collecting data observed that soon at around 2 to 3 pm many teachers have already left the school, only teacher on duty remain with the students. Through this kind of teacher's behavior, bullying acts among students will continue prevailing in schools as teachers lack cooperation among them and they forget that they have mandated on students' behavioral control to shape them becoming good people.

Absence of observation of students' interaction to identify bullying results in teachers' dependence on unreliable sources for indiscipline cases. Some schools that lack anti-bullying clubs and respective teachers tend to be largely dependent on reports from parents about bullying and the reliability of this information depends on the quality of relationships that schools have with parents. In addition, there is a perceived need for staff to develop good relationships with pupils so that they are accepted by pupils as credible sources of support (Tattersall & Maunder 2014). With the concern of investigating students' interaction in and outside classrooms; little is reported to be put in practice. The absence of anti-bullying clubs is largely one of the barriers to practicing such a role.

Table 2: Students' responses about effectiveness in managing bullying behavior in Hai District

S/N	Teachers 'Effectiveness Indicators	D	%	N	%	A	%
1	Teachers are not trained to deal with bullying issues	28	28.7	12	12.5	58	60
2	Provision of seminars to teachers to control bullying in schools	55	57	0	0	41	42.6
3	The presence of anti- bullying clubs in school	54	56	11	11.5	31	32.2
4	Teachers visiting areas where bullying may occur	57	59.3	5	5	35	36
5	Teachers talk about bullying practices occurring in the schools	59	61.3	11	11.5	26	26.8
6	Failure of teachers to control bullying practices in schools	30	31.3	20	20.8	46	47.8
7	Quick response to bullying issues	58	60	0	0	38	39.5
8	Lack of anti-bullying club teachers in schools	35	36.5	2	2	59	61

Key: D = disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, F= Frequency

Research Question 2: What is the perception of students on how effective are schools in managing bullying among the students in Hai district?

As reflected in table 2, this section addresses the second research question regarding the perception of students on how effective are schools in managing bullying among the students in Hai district.

Findings from Table 2 indicates that majority of students were of the view that their teachers are not trained to deal with bullying issues. This was evident from 60 percent who agreed with the statement. The absence of training on how bullying should be controlled implies that teachers had no relevant skills to deal with the menace. This is a risk to schools as they become prone to the existence of bullying the result of which leads to poor academic

performance. Lack of training to teachers to enable them to protect students from bullying has become a major problem in most of today's secondary schools. Morales (2021) shows that a survey of college students taking a required teacher-training course reveals that they have a broad understanding of guidance and counseling but lack specific knowledge about what constitutes bullying and what to do when they see it. The author recommends a strategy where pre service teachers would be equipped with skills on how to help young students who have been targeted by bullies as an essential part of their training. Schools with trained teachers to control bullying become a safer place for learning.

On the issue of provision of seminars to teachers on bullying in schools, some students only 42.6 percent agreed while 56 percent disagreed. This shows that there are some schools where this activity is carried out and there are some where the activity is nonexistence. When asked on whether bullying clubs existed or not, the majority indicated that the clubs did not exist while some indicated that the clubs existed. This again point to the fact that some schools in Hai were implementing strategies to control bullying while some were not doing so. Rigby (2020) conducted a study in Australia and was of the view that in order to eliminate acts of bullying schools, anti-bullying policies should be implemented to the latter. This shows that students are fed up with acts of bullying which are prevalent in their schools; they would like their teachers to effectively control bullying but they appeared not to be effective. Establishment of clubs in schools would help students to deal with the menace them themselves.

Clubs are only found in a few schools and because teachers who are supposed To be patrons lack adequate knowledge about managing bullying, it even becomes difficult to operationalize these clubs even if they existed. This is a tall order in the whole exercise of eradicating bullying in schools. The absence of anti-bullying clubs in secondary school is supported by Demetria, Kimambo & OleMeiludie (2017) who argued that in most of the schools in Tanzania, there are no anti-bullying clubs. To resolve the problem, they suggested the formation of teachers' and students' anti-bullying committees and clubs. The students' anti-bullying committee should comprise of twelve students from different classes. This suggestion is supported by a study carried out in America by Marsh (2018) who

believed that such a forum would help teachers work as a team and deal with the problem of bullying in schools.

These findings were supported by interview. One of the interviewed respondents, for instance, had this to say: "My school does not have an anti-bullying club and does not also have anti-bullying club teacher." A student's leader further asserted that "we do not have an office for anti-bullying" (Interviewee's response, STL 5 August 2021). This shows that students yearn for anti-bullying clubs in their schools but there is none; they do not have a special teacher to deal with these matters. Another respondent said, "we do not have a committee to deal with bullying issues." The finding suggests that students wanted to contribute to a good school that is free from bullying but they had no way to do it. Involving students in such initiatives can result in effectiveness in managing bullying in secondary schools in Hai district.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Conclusions
It is concluded that schools had not implemented strategies to combat bullying menace as teachers were not trained on how to combat bullying in schools. Seminars were not conducted for teachers to equip them with skills to monitor and deal with bullies. There were few talks organized by the schools to address the issue of bullying and majority of schools had not established anti bullying clubs.

Recommendation
Schools should come up with strategies to control bullying by offering short courses, seminars and workshops to teachers so as to equip them with skills on how to control bullying. Clubs and societies should be established in schools so as to involve learners in management of bullying. Schools should put in place a schedule where talks on various aspects of bullying can be presented to students. Finally, speakers from outside the school can be invited to make presentations against bullying.

References
Allen, K. P. (2010). Classroom management, bullying and teacher practices. 34(1). files.eric.ed.gov/full text/ej988197.pdf.

Demetria, M. H., Kimambo, R. W., &OleMeiludie, J. E. (2017). Reducing Child to Child Bullying in Primary Schools in Tanzania the Case of Korogwe Primary Schools in Kibaha District. Change projects-Batch12.pdf.

Farrell, A. D., Sullivan, T. N., Sutherland, K. S., Corona, R., & Masho, S. (2018). Evaluation of the Olweus. Prevention Science. https://doi.org/10.1007/s1121-018-0923-4.

Hai District Education Office (2021). Report on the presence of bullying in schools.

Huang, F. L., Lewis, C., Cohen, D. R., Prewett, S., & Herman, K. (2018). Bullying involvement teacher-student relationships and psychosocial outcomes. School of Psychology Quarterly, 33(2), 223-234. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/spq0000249.

Juliana, A. M. Georgina, O., Okorn, O. O., & Akeke, M. N. G. (2016). Prevalence, causes and effects of bullying in tertiary institutions in Cross River State Nigeria. Journal of Education and Practice 7(29). https://www.researcgate.net/publication/333148969.

Kakuru, I. (2020). School Bullying Students' Perspectives from Tanzania Secondary Schools. [Master's Thesis, University of Gothenburg, Sweden].

Koo, H. (2007). A timeline of the evolution of school bullying in differing social contexts. Asian Pacific Education Review 8(1), 107-116.

Lucas, L-D., Nocentini, A., &Menesini, E. (2019). The teacher's Role in Preventing Bullying. Frontiers in Psychology. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01830.

Mallow, M. S. (2017). School bullying in Malaysia: Causes, Effects and Possible Solution. 4th International conference on education, social sciences and humanities, 10-12 July 2017. Dubai, UAE.

Marsh, V. L. (2018). Bullying in School: Prevalence, Contributing Factors and Interventions. www.rochester.edu/warner/cues/Rochester, New York.

Morales, J. (2021 January 21). Study Reveals Keys to Train Teachers to Deal with Bullying.

Mugove, K. (2017). Causes of bullying in boarding high schools in Zimbabwe. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, 7(12), www.ijsrp,org.

Ndebele, C. (2014). An analysis of the prevalence and effects of bullying at a remote rural school in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa: Lessons for school principals. Studies of Tribes and Tribals, 12(1), 113-124.DOI:10.1080/0972639x.2014.11886693.

Ndibalema, P. (2013). Perception about bullying behaviour in secondary schools in Tanzania: The case of Dodoma Municipality. International of Education and Research, 1(5) 1-26.

Okoth, O. J. (2014). Teachers' and students' perceptions on bullying behaviour in public secondary schools in Kisumu East District, Kisumu County, Kenya. Journal of Educational and Social Research, 4(6), 125-138. DOI: 10.5901/ijesr.2014.v4n6p125

Rigby, K. (2020). How teachers deal with cases of bullying at schools: What victims say. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.www.mdpi.com/journal/ijerph.

Shayo, F. K., & Lawala, P.S. (2019). Does bullying predict suicidal behaviours among adolescents in schools? A cross-sectional finding from Tanzania is an example of a low-income country. https://www.researchg a te .net/publication/337961019.

Tangi, F. (2018). Physical and Psychological Bullying in Secondary Schools in Mwanza Region, Tanzania [Doctorate Dissertation, University of Vechta]. University of Vechta, Germany. Land, Australia.

Tattersall, A., & Maunder, R., (2014). Staff experiences of managing bullying in secondary schools: The importance of internal and external relationships in facilitating intervention. Educational & Child Psychology 27(1), 116-128.