

Prevalence of School Based Bullying among Monduli District Public Secondary Schools, Tanzania

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Abstract: The study aimed to analyze the prevalence rate of School Based Bullying. The study was done at Monduli District Public Secondary Schools, in Tanzania and it used descriptive survey design which falls in a quantitative research approach. A standardized closed-ended questionnaire was used in data collection from students of the schools. The population of the study was 121 representing respondents from each Public School in Monduli District. The study applied systematic sampling to identify students for the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by employing mean, frequencies and percentages. The findings showed that various forms of bullying took place in schools under investigation including stealing other learners' property, beating, tarnishing others' image by drawing on building walls, spreading disinformation, excluding others, taunting others and bad nicknaming. The study recommends that in order to lower the prevalence rate of bullying in schools, the ministry of education ought to provide a clearer guidance at school-level on dealing with school violence and particularly bullying behaviors. Measures taken against bullying would include anonymous reporting mechanism and corresponding stricter punitive consequences. The study further recommends that the government should provide continuous capacity building workshops with teachers on how to deal with and eradicate bullying behaviors in schools.

Keywords: Bullying; prevalence, secondary schools; Monduli; Tanzania

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Introduction

Bullying can be defined as any behavior that intended to hurt other people physically (CDC, 2022), taking place in various settings including those where children should be safest like in schools, in care institutions and at homes. Like a contagion, bullying spreads through communities and is transmitted to future generations. It threatens children's survival and development, erodes family structures, jeopardizes education,

generates social insecurity and consumes precious national resources (Olweus, & Limber, 2010; Salmivalli, & Peets, 2009).

UNICEF (2022a) defines Bullying as all forms of physical or mental injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Studies have indicated that bullying against children can possess a heavy impact on core aspects of emotional, behavioral and

physical health as well as social growth throughout life. These consequences may vary depending on a child's age when abused, the duration and the severity of the abuse, the child's innate resiliency and co-occurrence with other maltreatment or adverse exposures such as the mental health of parents, substance abuse by the parents or bullying between parents.

There are many forms of bullying against children. These may include physical, sexual and emotional abuse (McGaha-Garnett, 2022). It can be observed from various settings, like home, school, community and over the Internet.

According to Espelage and Swearer (2010), children who experience bullying within their homes or their neighborhoods are most likely to associate bullying as a preferred and acceptable way of communication. Furthermore, children who bully their peers in schools have increased expectations of negative outcomes. For example, a student with an increased desire to fight physically is more likely to expect the targeted student to reciprocate aggressive interactions. In addition, a student who faces daily physical negative interactions outside of the learning environment may be more likely to consider physical aggression as normative.

Statistics reveal that close to 300 million (3 in 4) children aged 2 to 4 worldwide experience violent actions by their health care providers on a regular basis and 250 million (close to 6 in 10) are punished by physical means (UNICEF, 2022b). Worldwide, 1 in 4 (176 million) children below age 5 live with a mother who is a victim of intimate partner bullying. Worldwide, close to 130 million (slightly more than 1 in 3) students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying. Moreover, 732 million (1 in 2) school-age children between 6 and 17 years live in countries where corporal punishment at school is not fully prohibited. Every 7 minutes, somewhere in the world, an adolescent is killed by an act of bullying. In 2015 alone, bullying took the lives of about 82,000 adolescents worldwide. In the United States, the homicide rate among non-Hispanic Black adolescent boys aged 10 to 19 is about 19 times higher than the rate among non-Hispanic White adolescent boys. Worldwide, about 15 million teenaged girls aged 15 to 19 have experienced forced sex in their life.

In Latin America and Caribbean, about 58% of children experienced sexual, physical or emotional bullying regularly (Guedes, Bott, Garcia-Moreno &

Colombini, 2016). In the Middle East and North Africa, 88% of children experience some form of bullying (UNICEF, 2022b; Flemming, & Jacobsen, 2010; Muli, 2012). In Uganda, 3 in 4 people experienced some forms of bullying during their childhood. This figure many include students who might be experiencing some kind of bullying in different ways from school environments, homes and community as whole (Cheshire, & UNESCO, 2022).

Tanzania has been recognized as being the foremost country in Africa to undertake A National Study on Bullying against Children, measuring all sorts of bullying (sexual, physical and emotional) amongst Male and female children. In the country, a high percent of both males and females children aged 13 to 24 years reported that they had experienced physical bullying in childhood. Roughly three-quarters of females (73.5%) and males (71.7%) reported receiving physical bullying prior to the years of 18 (Ndibalema, 2013).

Kakuru (2020) conducted a qualitative study in Tanzania to examine secondary school students understanding of bullying practices and how gender is involved. The study employed Bandura Theory of Social Learning and revealed that girls were bullied by both teachers and students; bullying was also seen in science subjects where girls are not expected to master the subjects. Another in the country study was done by Shayo and Lawala (2019) to explore the implications of bullying in Tanzania as a low income economy. The study focused on the relationship between bullying and suicidal behavior and it confirmed the relationship to be existing by 27%.

An exposure to bullying has also been linked with a kind of behavioral health risks such as smoking and obesity and specific health problems such as diabetes and ischemic heart disease. In addition, exposure can have negative repercussions for cognitive development, including language deficits and reduced cognitive functioning. In schools, for example the role of corporal punishment as a method of trading with major disciplinary issues in schools is among the bullying behaviors (Kambuga, Manyengo, & Mbalamula, 2018).

It is important to note that all forms of bullying experienced by children, regardless of the nature or severity of the act, are harmful (Center for Disease Control, 2022). Bullying undermines children's sense of self- worth and hinders their development. Yet

bullying against children is often rationalized as necessary or inevitable. It may be tacitly accepted due to the familiarity of perpetrators or minimized as inconsequential. The memory or reporting of bullying may be forgotten due to shame or fear of reprisal. The freedom of offenders and prolonged exposure may leave victims believing bullying is normal. In such ways, bullying is masked, making it difficult to prevent and terminate it (Shayo & Lawala (2019).

This study sought to determine the prevalence of school based bullying among Monduli District Public Secondary Schools, Tanzania. The study was opted to be done in Monduli because there are inadequate studies in the area which deal with prevalence of bullying (Shayo & Lawala, 2018).

The study was guided by one research question: What is the prevalence rate of bullying in Monduli District public secondary school?

Methodology

The section presents the methodology that was employed in the study.

Design

The study used a survey research design. According to Babbie (2008), survey design deals with respondents from a wide range of demographic characteristics. The design sought to obtain a persistent and precise information concerning the current state of phenomena and whenever possible to draw varied conclusions from facts discovered.

Population and Sampling

While Monduli District had 12 public secondary schools, the researchers performed a simple random sampling to determine a sampling frame of four schools. A total number of 121 students who were studying in Form Two in the four schools were involved as sample to fill the questionnaires (Sim & Wright, 2000).

Statistical Treatment of Data

Treatment of data used descriptive statistics. The research question was analyzed using descriptive statistics in terms of mean scores.

Validity and Reliability

The study employed content validity approach to ensure that the questionnaire assesses what it was intended to measure. The University of Arusha Thesis Defense Committee read the questionnaire against the research question and approved it with a

few recommendations for further improvement. Thus, the questionnaire was considered to be valid for data collection. Reliability was ensured through a pilot study which was done to a secondary school in Monduli District. The reliability results yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .923, which is considered appropriate.

Ethical Consideration

The study was keen to ensure research ethics were followed. First, an approval letter from Graduate School of the University of Arusha was sought by the researchers. The approval letter helped in seeking higher authorities' permission at the regional and district level to conduct the research and collect data. Respondents filled consent forms prior to data collection and respondents were informed that all their responses would be confidential and the information would only be used for academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

This part presents the data analysis and discussions of the findings. The findings are based on one research question namely: What is the prevalence rate of bullying in Monduli District public secondary school? The analysis started with presentation of demographic characteristics of respondents.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

In this study, demographic characteristics such as gender are reported. Most of the respondents were male students (N=76; 62.2%) as compared to female students (N=46; 37.7%) The minor disparity could be attributed to lesser enrollment of girls in selected schools due to Maasai culture which is highly patriarchal.

Analysis of data

This section presents the results based on data analysis as guided by one research question: What is the prevalence rate of bullying in Monduli District public secondary school? Descriptive statistics was applied to determine the prevalence rate of bullying. To meet this target, respondents were asked to rate their perception by showing their level of agreement or disagreement with the items in the questionnaire as appears in table 1. Interpretation of response was based on the following criteria: 3.50-4.00 = strongly agree, 2.50-3.49= agree, 1.50-2.49 = disagree and 1.00- 1.49 = strongly disagree.

Table 1: Prevalence Rate Bullying

SN	Items	Mean	Std. De	Interpretation
1	Some students force others to give them things like money and food	1.9174	1.03752	Strongly Disagree
2	Some student force others to do things for them like assignments	1.8017	.85264	Strongly Disagree
3	Some student use sexual bullying to others	1.9669	1.04828	Strongly Disagree
4	Some student send nasty letters, text messages or pictures to others	2.1282	1.01318	Disagree
5	Some students hurt/ harm / others	2.3033	1.09763	Disagree
6	Some students use to kick/beat others	2.8934	3.80910	Agree
7	Some students write about others on the walls or other places	2.7295	.96241	Agree
8	Some students spread rumors about others	2.8017	1.03778	Agree
9	Some students steal others' properties	2.8934	.94307	Agree
10	Some students gossip about others	2.8934	.99426	Agree
11	Some students call bad nick names to others	3.0984	.86636	Agree
12	Some students isolate /exclude others	2.6529	1.07013	Agree
13	Some students jeer about others	3.4262	3.94574	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean			3.2375	Agree

Table 1 answers the research question which was intended to determine the prevalence rates of bullying in the secondary schools under investigation. Bullying was evident from the overall mean of 3.2375 which is interpreted as agree. The bullying is in the form of stealing other learners' property (M=2.8934), beating others (M=2.8934), tarnishing others' image by drawing on building walls (M=2.7295), spreading disinformation (M=2.8017), excluding others (M=2.652 and taunting others (M=3.4262) as well as bad nicknaming (M=3.0984). It was noteworthy to discover that sexual bullying (M=1.9669) and bullying through mobile phones were not prevalent (M=2.1282). Also, it was interesting to discover that the use of force in getting money or causing others to do assignments was not prevalent (M=1.8017). These finding mean that there is a high prevalence of selected forms of bullying in the four public secondary schools. These findings are similar to those by Shayo and Lawala (2019) who conducted a cross-sectional study in Tanzania to determine how bullying predicts suicidal behaviors among in-school adolescents. The study revealed an existence of bullying in various forms.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section covers the conclusions and recommendations of the study based on research questions that underpinned the study.

Conclusions

The study concludes that various forms of bullying took place in schools under investigation including stealing other learners' property, beating, tarnishing others' image by drawing on building walls, spreading disinformation, excluding others, taunting others and bad nicknaming.

Recommendations

The study recommends that in order to lower the prevalence rate of bullying in schools, the ministry of education ought to provide a clearer guidance at school-level on dealing with school violence and particularly bullying behaviors. Measures taken against bullying would include anonymous reporting mechanism and corresponding stricter punitive consequences. The study further recommends that the government should provide continuous capacity building workshops with teachers on how to deal with and eradicate bullying behaviors in schools.

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