

Bullying Experienced among Indigenous People Students of Philippine Normal University North Luzon, Philippines: A Basis for Formulating School Policy

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Abstract

Bullying is a major issue in today's world and is getting increasing attention in the research literature. This even gets wider attention from authorities to control such. There were studies conducted about bullying to school children but limited to indigenous people bullying experienced in the tertiary level. This study endeavors to describe and analyze the bullying experiences of the indigenous people students of Philippine Normal University-North Luzon, and to determine their social impact as basis for formulating school policy to prevent bullying. Significant on the findings of the study is the existence of unintentional institutional bullying but were handled in a very positive manner that even encourages the students to strive more on their studies. Therefore, it indicates that the indigenous people students of Philippine Normal University are matured enough to handle concerns and issues on bullying.

Keywords: Bullying, Indigenous People, Experience, School Policy.

1. Introduction

Generally, bullying is a worldwide issue and concern not only to children but even adolescence and adults. This problem occurs when a person is subjected, repeatedly and over time to negative actions from another person or group. This may happen at home, in the school, in the community or even in the workplace. This even gets wider attention to authorities to control such.

In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 10627 otherwise known as the Anti – Bullying Act of 2013, defines acts of bullying in schools and direct the schools to adopt policies aimed at addressing bullying. The law prohibits bullying at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related and through the use of technology or an electronic devise that is not owned, leased or used by a school if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

There are three different types of bullies that are common in schools today; physical bullies, verbal bullies, and relational bullies. Physical bullies are just what they sound like, physical. These types of bullies tend to hit, kick, punch, shove, or use any other type of physical exertion of energy towards other kid. Verbal bullies are the types of bullies that use harsh words such as name-calling, insults, racial comments, or comments about another student's physical appearance in order to degrade their victim. Verbal bullying is the most commonly reported type of bullying. Finally, relational bullies are acts that single out victim from their peer group. This is mostly done by the bully using verbal threats or spreading undesirable rumors about their victims. While these types of bullying are not necessarily the stereotypical pictures that come to mind when thinking about bullies, they are all very serious and can possibly have some serious detrimental effects on both parties involved.

Unfortunately, bullying is an unavoidable part of life especially for children. It is very frequent and since the beginning of time it has plagued all over the world. What is the best way to deal with bullying so that both the bully and the victim can grow from the experience and become better people? Before this question can be answered, it is important to explore every aspect involved with bullying. It is needed to look at everything that bullies do, the way it affects both the victim and the bully, and exactly how much bullying currently occurs in schools.

In American schools and in the United Kingdom, bullying is a widespread numerous studies and research that are ongoing to effectively respond to this problem. Majority of available literature on bullying come from these countries. Both their government and their educational systems continue to study this phenomena specifically on how to have a proactive stance toward it.(Mania, 2005 cited by Tangalin 2015).

In Asian schools, bullying is seen as a serious problem, affects ranging from physical injuries to poor marks. The problem appears to be particularly pronounced in Manila, where a number of parents claimed that their own child had been bullied. In the Philippines, the National Education and Testing Research Center (NETRC) came up with the study on bullying that focuses on determining the percentage of the students population that comprise bullies and establishing a profile of the offenders by age, gender, type of school, and curriculum level. It also aim to identify forms of bullying and the effects they may have on bullies and victims. The study also geared towards generating possible means to lessen, if not eradicate bullying.

The study found out that the common and serious forms of bullying that occur among primary school children are: a.) exhibiting physical or motor aggression, which include kicking, hitting, shoving or pushing, moving about disruptively and throwing objects at another , b.) blurting out or commenting which includes answering without permission , giving unsolicited remarks, crying, screaming, and laughing , c.) producing disruptive noise with objects such tapping pencil and tearing papers and engaging in various form of oral disturbances. The data gathered from the NETRC study reveals that victim of bullying commonly feel scared and threatened. They tend to feel vulnerable in school and may have an attendance problem. Also bullies are observed to be easily distracted from the class and may poorly perform. They may also hardly earn social acceptance from the rest of the students (Tangco, 2010).

In DepEd Order No. 40, S. 2012 entitled “DepEd Child Protection Policy,” bullying is committed when the students commits an act or a series of single acts directed towards several students in a school setting or a place of learning , which result in physical or mental abuse , harassment, intimidation, or humiliation . Such acts may consist of any one or more of the following: a. Threats to inflict a wrong upon the person , honor or the property of the person on or his family; b. Stalking or constantly following or pursuing a person in his or daily activities , with unwanted and obsessive attention; c. Taking of property; d. Public humiliation or public malicious imputation of a crime or of a vice versa or defect , weather real or imaginary, or any act of emission , condition, status, or circumstance tending to cause dishonor, discredit or expose a person to contempt; e. Deliberating destruction or defacement of or damage to child’s property; f. Physical violence upon committed upon a student , which may or may not results to harm or injury, with or without the aid of weapon . Such violence may be in the form of mauling, hitting, punching, kicking, punching, kicking, throwing things at the students, pinching, spanking, or other similar acts; g. Demanding or requiring sexual or monetary favors, or extracting money or property , from a pupil or student ; and h. Restraining the liberty and the liberty and freedom of a pupil or student.

The above Policy also spells out the procedure in handling bullying incidents in the school. This is a manifestation that DepEd people are really serious in addressing problems caused by bullying. The aforecited Order does not mandate the Commission on Higher Education to comply with, but may be a basis of formulating PNU policy to address issue on bullying where the present study is interested. The above mentioned literature and studies discussed policies, incidents and predictors of bullying in school here in the Philippines and abroad. As a result bullying gained its recognition as a major issue to be given attention by authorities. This is one of the reasons why DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 otherwise known as Child Protection Policy and R.A No. 10627 or the Anti – Bullying Act of 2013 were created. The present study is different from those above mentioned literature and studies because it focuses on the bullying experiences of the Indigenous People Students of PNU – North Luzon and its social impact. Respondents were given an opportunity to suggest solutions to control bullying which eventually becomes the basis of formal or institutional mandate to solve such problem.

BOR Resolution No. U-1852 created PNU – North Luzon as the Indigenous Peoples Education Hub, Consequently, in June 2013, a freshmen class labeled as GE IP (General Education – Indigenous People) was created exclusively for indigenous people students. The section labeling caught the attention of the researcher since the usual labels are GE 1, GE 2, GE 3 onward and which case an IP student asked why their section label is different from the others. This scenario further prompted the researcher to conduct this study. Hence, it aimed to answer the following: What forms of student bullying are experienced by the indigenous people students of PNU-North Luzon?, How do the indigenous people handle bullying? And what suggestions are offered by the indigenous people to solve problem concerning bullying?

2. Methodology

Descriptive qualitative research sets out to seek accurate and adequate descriptions of activities, objects, processes and persons. It is not only concerned with fact gathering but also with identifying and predicting relationships in and between variables. The main goal of this type of research is to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied (Frankel, 2006). This was employed in this study to determine and analyze bullying experienced of PNU – North Luzon IP students.

The participants of this study are the II BEEed - 2, the former GE-IP and other IP students of PNU-North Luzon. They were selected through purposive sampling and identified by the researcher through the help of the class adviser.

Planned and unplanned; small group and one on one interviews were conducted. The researcher assured the respondents of the confidentiality of the interviews..

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Forms of bullying experienced by the Indigenous People students

Indirect Bullying

The indirect bullying was experienced by the IP students in the following situations:

1. Some students and some teachers wondered why there are Indigenous People whose skin complexion is fair and they perceived them as poor and backward.2. When some teachers and students recognized the presence of the IP students with seemingly sympathetic expression such as telling “so sweet oh, the IP students are here!” The IP students perceived this situation as if they are strangers in the school.3. In the classroom, some teachers would tell “*I will explain the lesson/s in the mother tongue so you can understand the topic well. You know it is only in your class that I am using the mother tongue.*” This is underestimation to the IP students.

The allege giving of extra and special attention during class discussion and assigning several coaches during competition is perceived by the IP students as if they are intellectually inferior, weak, and can hardly cope with instruction/s.

Verbal Bullying

The following are the experiences of the IP students on verbal bullying:

First, some students and teachers who do not know the first name of the IP student/s call them “IP, IP, IP or IP please come here”. The way it is said was sweet, but for the IP students, it is irritating.

Second, in the classroom there are instances when some teachers who comment to a wrong answer as, “*IP katalaga, dumble etc.*” and is even within the hearing of the whole class. This is very painful and demeaning to them, but they just bow their heads calmly.

Third, when they were told by some teachers that they assigned students to monitor them in doing their obligations and in their attitude when telling the truth. This statement is repeatedly said during their classes. And worst, when the assigned students told the IP that the instruction of monitoring them was given during their class and within the hearing of their classmates. The IP students were also scolded for non – payment of their monetary obligation/s.

Psychological Bullying

This type of bullying was experienced by the IP students when they were combined with BEEed 1 in one of their classes, where the seating arrangement made by teacher was for the IP students to sit at the back.

Institutional Bullying

These are some of the non – intentional bullying experienced by the IP students of PNU- North Luzon.

1. The labeling of the IP students group when they were in first year was GE-IP (General Education – Indigenous People)which is in contrary to the usual labeling of sections in the first year curriculum as GE-1, GE-2 onward.2. when two IP students who performed well in the GE-IP class during the school year were transferred to BEEed-1. According to the IP students, their two classmates were their source of strength in the class, and yet they were taken from them. 3. Some promises made before their entry at PNU were not accorded or did not materialize.

Findings of the study conform to the study of Suba, cited by Tangalin 2015, conducted among grade school level of private schools in Quezon City.

It shows that bullying happened inside the classroom and the most common form is verbal bullying. On the other hand, the study of Tangalin noted the occurrences of indirect bullying among the students of Binakayan National High School. It is noteworthy to mention that the present study noticed institutional bullying experienced among students in the tertiary level but not in the previous studies conducted in the basic education.

3.2 Ways of handling bullying by the Indigenous People Students

Indirect Bullying

Regarding the perception of others on IP as being poor, backward and dark, the IP students usually told them that in their hometown, there are several IPs whose skin complexion is fair and even white. Some are studying in a well-known University in the region and even in the country, supported by their own family. It is just so unfortunate that these IP students who are at PNU-North Luzon are poor, which is why they have to look for a University that they can afford financially. IP students however did not mind the perception of others about them, because they know it is not true and they are not even disturbed about it.

In the instances when somebody told, *oh, the IPs students are here!* some IP students responded with a very naïve smile; others just immediately left, while some others have no reaction as if they heard nothing.

In the classroom, they are trying their best to communicate to their teachers in English or Filipino to show that they also know the language though not perfect. That is why during the visit of the Fulbright scholars at PNU – North Luzon in July 6 to 10, 2015, the IP students requested the coordinator to leave them alone with Sir Dough during their meeting. The IP students were able to prove that they have the facility of the language and were able to manage their discussion using English as medium of communication.

In their boarding houses and during vacant school hours some of the IP students kept on studying their lessons so that they could cope with the standard of PNU to lessen if not to eradicate the idea that IP are intellectually weak, inferior and backward. This type of branding challenges them to improve their study habits. It is noteworthy, however, that to date some teachers are telling that the IP class performance is getting better compared with when they were in the first year at PNU.

The IP students are also doing their best during their practice and actual performance in the University competitive activities to prove that they can follow instructions at par with other PNU students with the hope that on the next competition, only one coach will be assigned to train them and not so many. In the situation that other students are calling them IP instead of their name, some of the IP students pouted and consequently told their first name when called, while in the case of the teachers calling them IP, they just do their teachers' request or command as a sign of voluntary obedience.

Verbal Bullying

In the classroom, some teachers reacted negatively to a wrong answer of the IP students like; *IP katalaga, dumb! etc.* For the IP students, they took the comment as a challenge to strive more but upon arrival at their boarding houses, the victim/s kept crying in their bedroom. There was even a time that they entertain the idea of dropping the subject/s, transfer to other University, or even stop from schooling. In another instance, if some were put to shame, other IP students console them through sending inspiring text messages, others went to the boarding house of the victim/s to show their sympathy by giving pieces of advice, telling stories or relating situations that lighten the burden of the victim/s, while others cry with them.

The scolding for non-payment of financial obligation and telling that they have assigned students to monitor them pushed their determination to finish their studies. For the IP students, if education is one of the possible ways to uplift them from poverty, lessen prejudice, discrimination and bullying experiences, they should not be discouraged but rather be inspired to continue their studies despite those hurting words from some teachers and students.

Psychological Bullying

When a teacher assigned the IP students to sit at the back in the classroom, the more that the IP students felt that they were discriminated. They did not like that kind of seating arrangement. This is one of the reasons that they hesitated to participate in class discussion. This did not motivate them to perform better. However, they just allow the situation to happen because they could not do otherwise except to follow the instruction.

Institutional Bullying

The IP students of PNU – NL Campus handled unintentional institutional bullying by simply accepting it. But there was an instance that they consoled themselves by sharing the information to other students that it is only in the first curriculum year that sectioning is labeled as General Education (GE) anyway in the succeeding years it is according to program like BEEd and BSE. This gave hope to the IP students. The second year curriculum was changed to BEEd – 2 former GE IP hence, no particular group of people were identified.

They also decided not to rely on any promises and be ready for any regrouping that will happen in the future. This indicates their improved level of maturity, cultural capital and social capital. In the preceding premises it can be gleaned that IP students of PNU-NL handled bullying in a positive way. According to Sasson, a positive person anticipates happiness, health and success, and believes he or she can overcome any obstacle and difficulty.

3.3 What suggestions are offered by the respondents to solve problem concerning bullying?

Indirect Bullying

According to the IP students there should be a corner where they can display photos of different IP groups showing/indicating participation to school, community affairs and development and list of successful IP in the country and abroad to show that there are IPs whose skin complexion is fair and are doing activities just like other Filipinos.

The above concept is justified by the idea that recognition enhances performance and generates greater success.

Verbal Bullying

There must be school policy specifying to call people by name and not label because as the popular adage say “the sweetest word to a man’s ear is his name.” Calling by name will enhanced the spirit of belongingness and unity. The IP students should enhance their study habits to cope with the standard of PNU to erase the perception that IP are intellectually inferior. According to the IP students, their subject – teachers should be patient, respectful and should know how to process why IP students sometimes or even most of the time gave answer to the question/s of the teacher dubbed by the latter as “wrong.”

This concept of the IP students is back up by the conditions of learning that; learning is facilitated in an atmosphere which consistently recognizes individual’s right to make mistake and an atmosphere in which different ideas can be discussed but not necessarily accepted.

Teachers should avoid scolding them within the hearing of others and they should just remind them for non – payment of financial obligation instead of being closely monitored by other students.

Psychological Bullying

To be more comfortable in the classroom, the IP students suggested that they be allowed to choose their seat. This gives a feeling of respect and acceptance and encourages them to be active in class. According to Lardizabal, learning is facilitated in an atmosphere when individual feels that they are respected and accepted.

Institutional Bullying

The usual labeling of section in the first year curriculum should be maintained according to the IP students. This is to avoid particularity. Looking Glass Self Theory advances the premise that how we look at ourselves depends on how others perceive us. So the inclusion of the tribe to a section must be eradicated. Words of encouragement are motivational factor to pursue education/ studies. This is justified by another principle of learning which is; learners must be motivated to learn.

The above mentioned ideas of the IP students manifest their innate capacity to handle and solve problems.

4. Conclusions

1. The section labeled GE – IP gives a feeling of discrimination among the IP students who belong to the section.
2. Calling IP instead of their names, cheering IP, IP IP! during competitions hurts the IP students.
3. IP students can handle bullying in a more mature level by taking it as a challenge to strive more.
4. IP students are capable of solving problems on bullying and can propose solutions to control.

5. Recommendation

1. The school should create a system wide policy on standardized labeling of sections of the students in the different year levels, not according to particular group of people.
2. Educational Community should be culture sensitive to any school endeavor.

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