



AWARENESS ON ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES AND LEARNER'S WELL-BEING IN MANOLO FORTICH, BUKIDNON

**GAYLORD H. DEGORIO
RESEARCHER**

School of Graduates and Professional Studies
gaylorddegorio@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Bullying and victimization are widespread phenomena that can have a serious effect on the well-being of an individual, especially growing children. With this, a study was conducted to determine the level of awareness of anti-bullying policies and learner's well-being in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon during the School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, it sought to: 1) find the respondent's level of awareness of anti-bullying policies in terms of prohibitions of bullying acts, disciplinary administrative actions, clear procedures and strategies, reports of bullying or retaliation, awareness of false accusation, and dynamics of bullying; 2) find the level of learner's well-being as regards social, emotional, and physical; and 3) determine the significant relationship between the learners' awareness on anti-bullying policies and their well-being. The respondents were the one hundred fifty-two (152) respondents among the learners mentioned herewith. Further, a stratified random sampling procedure was used to get the percentage and appropriate number of respondents in every school. A researcher-made questionnaire was used in gathering the data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage mean, standard deviation, and the Pearson Product

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Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) to determine the significant relationship between learners' awareness of anti-bullying policies and their well-being.

The findings showed that learners are most aware of reports of bullying or retaliation and have the highest level of social and physical well-being. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between awareness of anti-bullying and the well-being of the learners. It is recommended that DepEd take-action to let the learners know the anti-bullying policies, especially on prohibition acts. Teachers and parents must also guide their children who have the lowest level of emotional well-being.

Keywords: *Awareness of anti-bullying policies, Learner's well-being*

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INTRODUCTION

Promoting a nurturing and safe learning environment is really important. One critical aspect that significantly impacts learner’s overall well-being is the presence and awareness of anti-bullying policies. Bullying can have effects on a child's emotional, social, and academic development, making it essential to understand the role of anti-bullying measures in safeguarding learners' mental and physical health. Alongside, the researcher observed that the implementation of the said policy is not being adopted in most of the schools in Manolo Fortich III, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. Children are most likely doing things as if they never have an awareness of bullying. On this note, they are just joking, not knowing that they are engaging in bullying. There are instances that bullying happens in the classroom or in the corner of the school, but it is being ignored since there is no awareness of the policies pertaining to the said problem.

Bullying and victimization are widespread phenomena that can have a serious effect on the well-being of an individual, most especially the growing children. Usually, these victims are bullies themselves. The observable effect of bullying has caused the students to manifest low self-esteem, which leads to social isolation, Celeste et al. (2019). Schools play a crucial role in fostering safe and inclusive environments for students, and implementing effective anti-bullying policies is an essential step in addressing this problem. However, despite the recognition of the importance of such policies, challenges persist in creating awareness and successfully implementing them in schools. According to a study by Hall (2018), bullying is a pervasive and

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persistent threat to the well-being and school success of students. Bullying has been conceptualized in a number of ways, with definitions varying slightly between countries' stakeholders.

Republic Act No. 10627 is an act requiring all elementary and secondary schools to adopt policies to prevent and address the acts of bullying in their institutions. For purposes of this Act, bullying shall refer to any severe or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of actually causing or placing the latter in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm or damage to his property; creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; infringing on the rights of the other student at school; or materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school (Pinera et al. 2022).

When learners are aware of the policies and guidelines established under Section 3 of RA 10627, they are equipped with valuable information about their rights and the responsibilities of educational institutions in ensuring a safe and inclusive environment. This awareness can instill a sense of empowerment among learners as learners become aware of the steps to protect themselves and their peers from bullying incidents. Moreover, familiarity with the policies can lead to improved reporting mechanisms and intervention strategies, as learners are more likely to recognize and report instances of bullying, allowing for timely and appropriate action to be

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taken. Learners can also experience a greater sense of security and psychological well-being. This awareness can contribute to reduce fear and anxiety associated with bullying, allowing learners to focus on their academic pursuits and personal.

The researcher believed that this research study can contribute to awareness that affects children's well-being. Addressing the issue of bullying requires a holistic approach that includes the development and implementation of effective anti-bullying policies in schools. While challenges exist in increasing school awareness and successfully implementing these policies, by focusing on comprehensive education, providing necessary resources, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, schools can create safer and more inclusive environments for all students. It is imperative for schools to prioritize these efforts, as they play a pivotal role in nurturing the next generation and fostering a society free from bullying. During this observation, the researcher conducted a study on awareness of anti-bullying policies and learners' well-being in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive–survey method of research in order to gather knowledge about the problem of bullying that is happening among schools in Manolo Fortich III District,

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Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. This method often involved the use of surveys or questionnaires to collect data from participants.

Through a survey questionnaire, the learners will answer the indicators on awareness of anti-bullying policies and learner's well-being in their respective schools. Using the tool, it also determined the learner's awareness of the said policies and how they affect the learner's well-being in the schools in Manolo Fortich III District, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

Research Setting

The research was conducted in the nine (9) selected public elementary schools in Manolo Fortich III District for the School Year 2023-2024. The said district is comprised of ten (10) schools. Each of the schools is headed by a principal/school head. The PSDS, School Heads/Principals, and teachers are both aiming for a quality education for the learners.

The school locations are all accessible. Schools found in hi-way are Plantation Central Elementary School and Dahilayan Integrated School. While schools on the rough road but still in nearby places are Camp 1 Elementary School, Gauron Elementary School, Lindaban Elementary School, Kalugmanan Elementary School, Kibulawan Elementary School, Bagalangit Elementary School, and Sankan Elementary School. The source of livelihood in most of the places is agriculture, so they sell their crops in the market as their income.

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The geographic location of the municipality of Manolo Fortich, where all respondent's schools are located, has a total area of 506.64 square kilometers (195.61 sq. mi), accounting for 6.1% of the total land area of the province of Bukidnon. Manolo Fortich is situated in the northern part of the province of Bukidnon. It is about 40 minutes away from the bustling commercial center of Cagayan de Oro.

The choice of the schools was determined by the familiarity of the researcher, ease of access, and it is nearby to the study area. This can allow the creation of rapport with the respondents during the data collection.

Respondents and Sampling Procedures

The respondents of this study were one hundred fifty-two (152) Grade 6 learners in Manolo Fortich III District, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, School Year 2023-2024. The respondents were determined using Slovinc's Formula with a population of five hundred ninety-one (591) learners and a margin of error of 7%. Further, a stratified random sampling procedure was used to get the percentage and appropriate number of respondents in every school. This was done by dividing the computed sample size by its population. The distribution of respondents by school is shown in Table A.

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Distribution of Respondents

District/School	Population	Respondents
Plantation Central Elementary School	211	55
Sankan Elementary School	84	22
Lindaban Elementary School	74	19
Camp 1 Elementary School	61	15
Dahilayan Integrated School	55	14
Kalugmanan Elementary School	67	17
Gauron Elementary School	15	4
Bagalangit Elementary School	11	3
Kibulawan Elementary School	13	3
Total	591	152

Research Instrument

The instrument used in gathering the needed information is a questionnaire composed of two (2) parts.

Part 1 dealt with the awareness of anti-bullying policies in terms of prohibitions of bullying acts, disciplinary administrative actions, clear procedures and strategies, reports of bullying

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or retaliation, awareness of false accusations, and dynamics of bullying. This is adapted from RA 10627 in Section 3, which is Adoption of Anti-bullying Policies. However, the indicators were researcher-made with the following options: 4 – At all Times, 3 – Most of the Time, 2 - Sometimes, and 1 - Never.

Part 2 involved the learner’s well-being in terms of social, emotional, and physical well-being. This is patterned from Barranta Jr. (2020) in his study on Philippine Issues on School/Classroom Bullying and Best Day on The Effects of Bullying on Mental Health. However, the indicators were researcher-made with the following options: 4 - Always, 3 - Very Often, 2 - Rarely, and 1 - Never.

Validation of Instrument

The instrument was tried out to thirty (30) respondents in Mampayag Elementary School last September 11, 2023, who have the same characteristics to those of the actual respondents but they do not participate in the actual study. This was to ensure that the data collected were valid, reliable, and adequate in collecting the needed data. The result of the test was then referred to the statistician to calculate the validity and reliability of the study. Based on the result, item 2 in Disciplinary administrative actions (D2), item 5 in Disciplinary administrative actions (D5), and item 5 in awareness of false accusation (A5) were correlated negatively with the scale.

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Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher requested an endorsement letter from the Dean of Graduate Studies of PHINMA – Cagayan de Oro College. The letter was released and handed to the Division Office of Bukidnon. The permission to conduct the study was approved and given to the School Principal of the concerned schools in Manolo Fortich III District. A brief orientation was given to the respondents in each school who participated and answered the survey questionnaire.

The researcher himself personally distributed and administered the survey questionnaires to the respondents. They were given sufficient time to fill out the questionnaires. It was explained to them that their participation would be a great help to the researcher and their responses would be kept confidential. The survey questionnaires were retrieved and tallied for statistical analysis and interpretation.

System of Scoring

The following variables and their system of scoring are presented below:

Part I. Awareness of Anti-Bullying Policies

Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.51 – 4.00	At all Times	Very High
3	2.51 – 3.50	Most of the Time	High
2	1.51 – 2.50	Sometimes	Low
1	1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very low

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Part II. Learner's Well-being

Scale	Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.51 – 4.00	Always	Very High
3	2.51 – 3.50	Very Often	High
2	1.51 – 2.50	Rarely	Low
1	1.00 – 1.50	Never	Very Low

Statistical Treatment

After collecting and recording the data gathered in this study, the researcher used the following statistical tools:

Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage mean, and standard deviation were employed to describe the variables in this study. These are reflected in the findings for the problems where these statistical tools are needed. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was also employed to determine the significant relationship between learner's awareness of anti-bullying policies and their well-being.

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Ethical Considerations

It is necessary to protect the teacher's privacy and the identity of those who participate in this study. Teachers could be more inclined to engage honestly and openly if they feel certain that their identities and private information will be kept confidential. It is important to take the following ethical factors into account:

Acknowledged Consent. After being fully informed of the objectives of the study, the procedures for gathering data, and its intended use, all participating teachers are required to provide their consent. This is to ensure that individuals are free to discontinue the research at any time without facing repercussions.

De-identification of Data. Teachers will be requested to change or remove any personally identifying information (such as names, school names, or contact information) when analyzing and reporting the data.

Strong Data Security. When storing collected data, ensure that it is protected, restrict access to it to authorized persons, and keep it securely.

Ethics Evaluation. To ensure that the research design and data management processes follow ethical standards and guidelines, an institutional review board (IRB) or ethics committee will be consulted before obtaining ethical consent.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result of the Test on Relationship between Learners' Level of Awareness on Anti-Bullying Policies and their Level of Well-Being

Anti-Bullying Policies	Learners' Well-Being			Overall	Interpretation
	Social	Emotional	Physical		
Prohibition of Bullying Acts	r – 0.593 p – <0.001	0.636 <0.001	0.607 <0.001	0.665 <0.001	S
Disciplinary Administrative actions	r – 0.575 p – <0.001	0.614 <0.001	0.583 <0.001	0.614 <0.001	S
Clear procedures and strategies	r – 0.625 p – <0.001	0.648 <0.001	0.633 <0.001	0.690 <0.001	S
Report of bullying or retaliation	r – 0.653 p – <0.001	0.655 <0.001	0.615 <0.001	0.696 <0.001	S
Awareness of false accusation	r – 0.641 p – <0.001	0.635 <0.001	0.580 <0.001	0.671 <0.001	S
Dynamics of Bullying	r – 0.646 p – <0.001	0.654 <0.001	0.630 <0.001	0.698 <0.001	S
Overall	r – 0.729 p – <0.001	0.748 <0.001	0.711 <0.001	0.791 <0.001	Very high positive correlation; S

Legend: *Significant at p<0.05 Alpha level; S – Significant; NS – Not significant

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The table presents the data of the significant relationship between awareness of anti-bullying and the well-being of the learners in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon. The overall r-value is **0.791** and **P-value** is **< .001** which is interpreted as **Very High Positive Correlation and Significant**. Thus, the null hypothesis was **rejected**. This means that there is a high positive relationship between awareness of anti-bullying and well-being. This suggests that learners who have higher awareness of anti-bullying measures tend to have better overall well-being. The statistically significant correlation between these two variables indicates that the result of this study is generalizable. Meaning, this result may also be true in other settings in the context of anti-bullying prohibitions and learners' well-being.

As observed, when learners are knowledgeable about anti-bullying strategies, policies, and their rights, they are more likely to experience improved emotional, social, and physical well-being. This is because they feel safe and secured socially, emotionally, and physically. Further, promoting awareness of anti-bullying within the school is crucial for enhancing learners' well-being. There is a need for the school to prioritize educational initiatives, awareness campaigns, and programs that promote a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusivity. By fostering a positive climate and providing resources for learners to develop their understanding of anti-bullying, the school can contribute to a healthier and safer environment for all learners (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2020).

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Meanwhile, **Dynamics of Bullying** obtained the highest **r-value of 0.698 (p=<0.001)** with the learners' Well-Being among the other variables, which is interpreted as **High Positive Correlation and Significant**. This result means that among the areas of anti-bullying policies, the policies on dynamics of bullying has the strongest association with the learners' overall well-being. This result indicates that as the implementation of policies regarding dynamics of bullying accelerates, the overall well-being of the young learners gets better as well.

As perceived, bullying has a significant detrimental effect on the overall well-being of students. Bullying can have severe emotional, psychological, and physical consequences for victims, leading to decreased self-esteem, increased stress, anxiety, and even depression (Warner, 2021). However, because of the implementation of anti-bullying policies in the school community, cases of bullying are being guarded to protect the overall well-being of our young learners.

The strong correlation between the dynamics of bullying and learners' well-being indicates the significant impact of bullying on students' overall well-being. It highlights the urgency of intervention, the need for a holistic approach, the importance of support systems, the promotion of prevention and awareness, and the value of collaborative efforts (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

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On the other hand, **Disciplinary Administrative Actions**, among the other areas of awareness about anti-bullying policies, obtained the lowest relationship with the well-being of young learners with an r-value of **0.614 (p=<0.001)** which is interpreted as **High Positive Correlation and Significant**. This means that there is a strong positive correlation between Disciplinary Administrative Actions and the well-being of young learners, and this correlation is statistically significant. This denotes that as the implementation of disciplinary measures increases, the well-being of young learners also tends to improve. In other words, when anti-bullying policies are enforced through disciplinary actions such as consequences for bullying behavior, there is a positive impact on the emotional well-being of young learners.

As perceived, when learners are knowledgeable about the anti-bullying policies in terms of disciplinary administrative actions, the learners obtain a better overall well-being. The researcher holds this true based on observations, hence this is not likely due to chance but reflects a meaningful relationship between Disciplinary Administrative Actions and well-being. This finding underscores the importance of disciplinary measures as a component of anti-bullying policies in promoting the well-being of young learners.

It is worth noting that while disciplinary actions can play a role in addressing bullying incidents, solely relying on punitive measures may not be sufficient to fully address the emotional challenges or distress experienced by young learners. Therefore, it is important to complement disciplinary actions with other elements of anti-bullying policies, such as

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prevention programs, support services, and educational initiatives, to create a comprehensive approach that addresses the broader aspects of well-being (Marces et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, **Emotional well-being**, among the other two domains of well-being obtained the highest relationship with the level of awareness of anti-bullying policies among the young learners with the **r-value of 0.748 ($p < 0.001$)** which is interpreted as **Very High Positive Correlation and Significant**. This means that there is a very strong positive correlation between Emotional well-being and the level of awareness on anti-bullying policies among young learners, and this correlation is statistically significant. This indicates that as the level of awareness about anti-bullying policies increases, the emotional well-being of young learners also significantly improves. In other words, when young learners have a better understanding of anti-bullying policies, it positively impacts their emotional well-being.

As observed, when young learners are knowledgeable about anti-bullying policies, they are more likely to experience improved emotional well-being. This might be attributed to several factors, such as increased confidence in recognizing and reporting bullying incidents, knowing available support systems, and feeling a sense of safety and security within the school or community.

Given the significant impact of awareness on emotional well-being, it highlights the importance of comprehensive educational efforts that prioritize teaching young learners about

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anti-bullying policies, their rights, and strategies for prevention and intervention. By fostering a deep understanding of these policies, young learners can develop the necessary skills and resilience to navigate bullying situations, leading to enhanced emotional well-being and a more inclusive and supportive learning environment (Stives et al., 2021).

On the other hand, **Physical Well-Being**, among the other areas of a learners' overall well-being in the context of this study, obtained the lowest r-value of **0.711 (p-value of <.001)** with the learners' awareness of anti-bullying policies though it is interpreted as **Very High Correlation and Significant**. This means that as the level of awareness of anti-bullying policies among the young learners increases, their Physical well-being also increases. Therefore, this result indicates an important relationship between these two variables.

As noticed, having knowledge about anti-bullying policies empowers learners to become proactive in addressing emotional challenges or distress. By understanding the principles and guidelines outlined in these policies, learners not only gain awareness about the negative impact of bullying but also acquire the necessary tools to intervene effectively.

In addition, learners who are well-versed in anti-bullying policies can play a pivotal role in identifying signs of distress among their peers. They can act as empathetic listeners, offering support and guidance to those who may be experiencing emotional difficulties as a result of bullying. By lending a helping hand and fostering a sense of belonging, learners can contribute

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to creating a safe and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and protected
(Halse, 2021).

To sum up, these findings underscore the significance of anti-bullying policies and awareness in fostering a positive and inclusive school climate. By equipping learners with knowledge and skills and implementing a multi-faceted approach, schools can contribute to the well-being of their students and create a supportive environment that discourages bullying and promotes overall flourishing.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION/FINDINGS/SUMMARY

Summary

The study attempted to find out the level of awareness of anti-bullying policies and the learner's well-being in Manolo Fortich III District, Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, School Year 2023-2024. Specifically, the study sought to find the respondent's level of awareness, find the respondent's level of well-being, and determine the significant relationship between the respondent's awareness on anti-bullying policies and their well-being. A descriptive survey method of research was used in the study. The respondents are the one hundred fifty-two (152) Grade 6 learners in the schools where the study was conducted. The instrument used in this study was adapted from RA 10627 in Section 3, Adoption of Anti-bullying Policies and from the study of Barranta (2017) on Mental, Emotional and Physical well-being.

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To find out the level of awareness of anti-bullying policies and the learner's well-being, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage mean, and standard deviation were employed to describe the variables in the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to determine the significant relationship between learner's awareness of anti-bullying policies and their well-being.

Findings

The analysis showed the following findings:

1. The respondent's level of awareness on anti-bullying policies is low .
2. The learners' level of well-being is high.
3. There is a significant relationship between the learner's level of awareness of anti-bullying policies and their well-being.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are hereby drawn for the study. Based on the results, learners are most aware on Reports of Bullying or Retaliation. They understand the importance of taking-action when bullying occurs and the potential risks associated with retaliation against individuals who report such incidents. However, learners have the highest level of Physical Well-Being. The learners are more physically fit than emotionally fit in terms of their overall well-being. Hence, there is a high positive relationship between awareness of anti-bullying policies and learners' well-

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being. The significant correlation between these two variables indicates that the result of this study may also be true in other settings in the context of anti-bullying policies and learners' well-being.

Recommendations:

On the basis of the results of this study, the following are recommended:

1. DepEd officials, school administrators, and teachers should do something to inform pupils about bullying prohibitions. The learners are least aware of the Prohibitions of Bullying Acts; they have limited knowledge and understanding of the specific prohibitions and regulations related to bullying behaviors.
2. Parents should guide their children by supporting them in terms of their emotional well-being with in the educational context.
3. Anti-bullying policies should be conducted by teachers in other places to validate results since the study is significant. This may also be true in other settings in the context of anti-bullying prohibitions and learners' well-being.

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