

# Bullying Experiences of the Lesbian and Gay Students and Its Effect to their Behavior

Hazel R. Nanales<sup>1</sup>, Maricon C. Pablo<sup>2</sup>, Wilfredo D. Dalugdog<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bachelor of Science in Criminology, Laguna State Polytechnic University - Siniloan Campus, Philippines

<sup>2,3</sup>Instructor - I, College of Criminal Justice Education, Laguna State Polytechnic University - Siniloan Campus, Philippines

**Abstract:** *This study used the descriptive research method to determine the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay students and its effect to their behavior. The purposive sampling technique was used in distributing the self-made survey questionnaire to the thirty (30) respondents. The basic statistical treatment was used to interpret and analyze the data gathered. The study revealed that majority of the age of the respondents are 14, lesbian and grade 7. The lesbian and gay have experienced being bullied. The study also revealed that there is no significant relationship with the profiles of the respondents in terms of age, gender and grade level to the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay respondents. However, there is significant relationship with the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay to their behavior. There were preventive measures to prevent occurrence of bullying.*

**Keywords:** Behavior, Bullying, Lesbian and Gay, Preventive Measures

## 1. Introduction

Bullying is a worldwide issue and it can occur anywhere be it from school, workplace, home, church, family, and neighborhoods. Likewise, bullying is the most common in unsupervised places such as school bus, playground, hallways, restrooms, between or around building, and the like[1]. Bullying is an unavoidable part of life especially for children[12]. As supported by the findings in Virginia, USA, up to 9% of the 3,387 students from grade 6-7 have reported that they were victims of verbal bullying at least once a week [4]. Likewise, based on the study the survey given to a private and public schools across the United States showed that bullying was experienced by 29.9% of the 15,686 middle school to high school students who joined the survey[10].

Likewise, other countries outside the United States are also experiencing this problem, in Norway, 14% of school-age children are either bullies or victims[1]. In Japan, 15% of primary school children say that they are bullied, which in Australia and Spain, the problem prevails among 17% of student[1].

In the Philippines, the students from private and public schools are not exempted to be a victim of bullying. The DepEd documented more than 1,700 cases of child abuse and bullying in school year 2013-2014, 60% of these were only resolved [4]. In the school year 2012-2013 the DepEd reported that 1,165 out of 1,456 of the child abuse cases involved acts of bullying [4].

Similarly, the results of the study about bullying conducted in the Philippines, that around 58% of the Filipino participants reported being made fun of by other kids, 45% being forced to do things, 36% being physically hurt, and 30% being left out of groups[10]. In the year 2015, the Philippine Star reported that there were total of 6,363 cases of bullying in public as well as private elementary and high schools were recorded in 2014, up nearly 21 percent versus the 5, 236 documented in 2013 [5].

In Kawit, Cavite, were 36 reported bullying cases for school year 2013-2014 which emanate from name calling, playing offensive jokes, hiding or getting someone's personal belongings, and inflicting physical injury [4]. The top three common forms of bullying are direct verbal, indirect or relational bullying and physical bullying [4]. The most common forms of bullying among Filipino children are verbal and indirect or relational[4].

Despite of the passage of Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act and the Department of Education (DepEd) Child's Protection Policy, still the occurrence of bullying in the Philippines is still alarming. In this regard, the researchers would like to determine the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay students at Siniloan National High School and correlate the bullying experiences to the profiles of the respondents in terms of age, gender, and grade level.

Meanwhile, bullying is even more prevalent among the lesbian, gay, and bisexual than heterosexual high school students[13]. Bullying experiences have certain effects to the behavior of the victims[10], [4]. Bullying victimization results to higher rates of depression and anxiety, poor academic performance, and even school absenteeism. Likewise, children who were bullied experienced sleeping problems, headache, and stomach ache, bedwetting and depression [10], [4].

Likewise, as cited by Hajdukova et al., (2015) the negative psychological effects of bullying associated with victimization, such as low self-esteem, sadness and anger, social adjustment issues manifested in loneliness, isolation and school absenteeism, and increased psychological distress, including high levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal thinking[7]. In addition, being bullied contributes to a greater likelihood of engaging in health-risk behaviors such as smoking and alcohol use among adolescents relative to those who do not report being bullied[13].

Similarly, one of the long-term damaging consequences of bullying is the absence from school of the child who has

been bullied, leading to permanent dropout from school, which in turn may impair employment and financial prospects in adulthood [3]. Thus, the researchers would like to determine the significant relationship between the bullying experiences and its effect to the behavior of the lesbian and gay respondents.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

In general, the objective of this study was to determine the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay students and its effect to their behavior. Specifically, this study aimed to determine the profiles of respondents in terms of age, gender and year level; determine the bullying experiences of lesbian and gay students; determine the effect of bullying experience on the behavior of the lesbian and gay students; determine the preventive measures to prevent bullying occurrence; and correlation of the profiles of the respondents, bullying experiences and effects of the bullying on the behavior of the lesbian and gay students.

## 3. Materials and Methods

The researchers used the descriptive research method to determine the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay students and its effect to their behavior. Bullying is a common experience for lesbian, gay and bisexual than heterosexual students [6]. Bullying is more common in schools specifically in a school ground and in the classroom [2]. This study was conducted at Siniloan National High School offering senior high school from grade 7 to grade 10 to the 20 barangays in Siniloan, Laguna and nearby provinces. The thirty (30) respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique based on the following criteria: (1) they must be a lesbian and gay, (2) they must be a student of the Siniloan National High School for the school year 2015-2016, and (3) they must be willing to take part in this study. The self-made survey questionnaire was based on the existing literatures and previous studies. It was validated by the two faculty members of the College of Criminal Justice Education and the Principal of Siniloan National High School. The questionnaire contained four parts: Part I dealt about the demographic profiles of the lesbian and gay-respondents in terms of age, gender and grade level; Part II aimed to determine the bullying experience of the lesbian and gay-students; Part III aimed to determine the effect of bullying experiences on the behavior of the lesbian and gay-students; and Part IV aimed to determine the preventive measures to prevent bullying occurrence. In conducting this study, the researchers sent a request letter addressed to the principal of Siniloan National High School to conduct and distribute the self-made survey questionnaire to the target respondents. After the approval, the researchers distributed the survey questionnaire to the target respondents. It took one week to finish the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire. The basic statistical treatment was used including the frequency, percentage, ranking, Pearson r, Chi-square and Spearman rho to interpret and analyze the data gathered. This study was limited to the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay students at Siniloan National High School with a grade level from 7 to 10 and the effect of bullying experienced to the behavior of lesbian and gay

students. The ethical consideration was followed by the researchers in the conduct of this study.

## 4. Results and Discussions

Table I presents the profile of lesbian and gay student-respondents at Siniloan National High School. Majority of the respondents are 14 years of age with a frequency of 8 or 27% followed by 15 and 16 years of age both with a frequency of 7 or 23%. Least of the respondents are 17 years of age with a frequency of 1 or 3%. Lesbian and gay respondents has a frequency of 20 and 10 with 67% and 33%, respectively. Majority of the respondents are grade 7 with a frequency of 9 or 30% followed by grade 9 with a frequency of 8 or 27%.

Table II revealed that majority of the lesbian and gay student-respondents have responded that they sometimes experience being bullied like normally resorted to name-calling, cursing, or abusive language with a weighted mean of 3.20. It is similar to the results of the study conducted by the Human Rights Watch (2017) that the verbal bullying appeared to be the most prevalent problem that LGBT students faced. Likewise, the most prevalent form of bullying in the school is name calling, teasing or taunting, spreading rumors or lies and social exclusion [8]. Verbal bullying uses harsh words such as name-calling, insults, racial comments, or comments about another student's physical appearance in order to degrade their victim [12]. This type of bullying is mostly experienced by students with special needs [7].

Thus, the second highest rank of the bullying experienced by the lesbian and gay student-respondents that they are sometimes blamed and laughed by peers or by older children with a weighted mean of 3.13. This bullying is considered as verbal and relational bullying.

However, the least of the lesbian and gay student-respondents said that sometimes they have boundary among their peer group with few or no close friends with a weighted mean of 2.61. Similarly, this findings has something to do with the relational bullies are act 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 [12].

In general, the findings of the study show that bullying is sometimes experienced by the lesbian and gay students with a general weighted mean of 2.88. It implies that the bullying experienced by lesbian and gay students are not prevalent at Siniloan National High School.

**Table 1: Profile of the lesbian and gay student-respondents**

| Profile         | Frequency | Percentage  | Rank |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|------|
| <b>Age</b>      |           |             |      |
| 12 years of age | 3         | 10%         | 5    |
| 13 years of age | 4         | 13%         | 4    |
| 14 years of age | 8         | 27%         | 1    |
| 15 years of age | 7         | 23%         | 2.5  |
| 16 years of age | 7         | 23%         | 2.5  |
| 17 years of age | 1         | 2%          | 6    |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>30</b> | <b>100%</b> |      |

| <b>Gender</b>      |           |             |   |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|---|
| Lesbian            | 20        | 67%         | 1 |
| Gay                | 10        | 33%         | 2 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>30</b> | <b>100%</b> |   |
| <b>Grade Level</b> |           |             |   |
| Grade 7            | 9         | 30%         | 1 |
| Grade 8            | 6         | 20%         | 4 |
| Grade 9            | 8         | 27%         | 2 |
| Grade 10           | 7         | 23%         | 3 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>       | <b>30</b> | <b>100%</b> |   |

**Table 2:** Bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay student

| Statement   | Mean        | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Has normally resorted to name-calling, cursing, or abusive language. | 3.20        | Sometimes             | 1    |
| 2. Has been bullied by peers or by older children.                      | 2.81        | Sometimes             | 6    |
| 3. Has a boundary among his peer group with few or no close friends.    | 2.61        | Sometimes             | 10   |
| 4. Has been blamed and laughed by peers or by older children.           | 3.13        | Sometimes             | 2    |
| 5. Laugh out loud to their physical appearance.                         | 2.81        | Sometimes             | 6    |
| 6. Has been teased and humiliated.                                      | 2.74        | Sometimes             | 8.5  |
| 7. Has been physically abused or harassed.                              | 3.03        | Sometimes             | 3    |
| 8. Throw or hide their personal things.                                 | 2.81        | Sometimes             | 6    |
| 9. Has witnessed or suffered abuse or neglect at home.                  | 2.94        | Sometimes             | 4    |
| 10. Embarrass them in the public.                                       | 2.74        | Sometimes             | 8.5  |
| <b>General Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>2.88</b> | <b>Sometimes</b>      |      |

Table III showed that the age has p-value of 0.901 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore not significant. It implies that the respondent's bullying experiences has no significant relation to their age. Students from grade school to high school even from tertiary education can be bullied.

The data also show that the gender and grade level have p-value of 0.099 and 0.956 respectively which are greater than 0.05 level of significance, thus the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore not significant. It implies that the respondent's bullying experiences have no significant relation to their gender or grade level.

Findings reveal that the bullying experiences of the lesbians and gays are on the same level regardless of their age, gender, and grade level. This result signifies that being young or old has nothing to do with bullying. In particular, at any age level, one can be bullied. In addition, at each grade level, one may experience bullying. The result of no significant relationship reflects that at any level of education, bullying is still visible.

**Table 3:** Determine the significant relationship between the profiles of the respondents and bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay students.

| Variable    | Computed Value | P-value | Statistical Tool | Decision  | Interpretation  |
|-------------|----------------|---------|------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Age         | 0.024          | 0.901   | Pearson r        | Accept H0 | Not Significant |
| Gender      | 26.054         | 0.099   | Chi-square       | Accept H0 | Not Significant |
| Grade Level | 52.884         | 0.956   | Chi-square       | Accept H0 | Not Significant |

Table IV revealed that the effect of the bullying experienced by the lesbian and gay student-respondents are sometimes being sad, angry, or scared at times with a weighted mean of 3.10. The negative psychological effects of bullying associated with victimization, such as low self-esteem, sadness and anger, social adjustment issues manifested in loneliness, isolation and school absenteeism, and increased psychological distress, including high levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal thinking[7].

Sometimes, the lesbian and gay students show disinterest in school or refuses to go to school with a weighted mean of 2.97. One of the long-term damaging consequences of bullying is the absence from school of the child who has been bullied, leading to permanent dropout from school, which in turn may impair employment and financial prospects in adulthood [3].

In general, the bullying experiences of the lesbian and gay students have negative effect on their behavior with a general weighted mean of 2.79 and verbal interpretation of sometimes. It implies that the bullying experienced by the lesbian and gay students can affect their schooling and career in the future as they are not attending their classes which lead to their disinterest in schooling and possible drop-out in the future.

**Table 4:** Effects of bullying experiences on the behavior of the lesbian and gay students

| Statement   | Mean        | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Shows disinterest in school or refuses to go to school.            | 2.97        | Sometimes             | 2    |
| 2. Takes an unusual route to go to school.                            | 2.90        | Sometimes             | 3    |
| 3. Always wants to be alone.  | 2.67        | Sometimes             | 9    |
| 4. Lack of self-confidence.   | 2.77        | Sometimes             | 4.5  |
| 5. Being sad, angry, or scared at times.                              | 3.10        | Sometimes             | 1    |
| 6. Has mental depression.   | 2.70        | Sometimes             | 7.5  |
| 7. Uses undignified or offensive language when speaking about peers.  | 2.70        | Sometimes             | 7.5  |
| 8. Has physical injuries not consistent with explanation.             | 2.57        | Seldom                | 10   |
| 9. Is exhausted, has headaches, stomachaches, and is unable to sleep. | 2.73        | Sometimes             | 6    |
| 10. Is something out of character like tantrums.                      | 2.77        | Sometimes             | 4.5  |
| <b>General Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>2.79</b> | <b>Sometimes</b>      |      |

Table V revealed that the effect of bullying experiences on the behavior of the lesbian and gay respondents has a p-value of 1.24 E-06 which is less than 0.05 level of

significance, thus the null hypothesis is rejected since it is significant. It implies that student's bullying experiences have significant relation to the effects of bullying on their behavior. Bullying experienced by the students becomes a source of negative emotions mostly felt by the students at school[2].The negative feelings by the students who had been bullied are anxious, sad, angry, bored, unhappy, insecure, confused and uneasy[2].

Results of the analysis imply that the higher the extent of bullying experienced by the lesbian and gay, the higher the negative impact of their behavior. This infers that gays and lesbians who have been exposed to bullying really experience agony or negative implication to their personal behavior.

**Table 5:** Relationship between the bullying experiences and its effect on the behavior of the lesbian and gay students.

| Variable  | Computed Value | P-value  | Statistical Tool | Decision  | Interpretation |
|---|----------------|----------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Effect of bullying on the behavior of respondents | 0.758          | 1.24E-06 | Spearman rho     | Reject H0 | Significant    |

Table VI showed that there are preventive measures to prevent occurrence of bullying at Siniloan National High School. As responded by the respondents, the implementation of anti-bullying in the school and classroom rules and policies against bullying are implemented sometimes with a weighted mean of 3.17. Usually, classroom orientation is conducted on first day of classes, wherein the rules and regulations, and policies implemented in the class and school as a whole are one the topics being discussed. These preventive measures are anchored to the Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act and the Department of Education (DepEd) Child's Protection Policy.

However, the data show that the bully students attend an orientation ranked second with a weighted mean of 2.53 and verbal interpretation of seldom. It implies that these students are continuously bullying other students because they do not know the consequences of their action as they seldom attend the orientation about the anti-bullying in the school and classroom rules and policies against bullying. In general, it implies that there are preventive measures to prevent bullying against the lesbian and gay students at Siniloan National High School, and these are not specifically for lesbian and gay since these are for the general students with a general weighted mean of 2.90 and verbal interpretation of sometimes implemented and enforced. To have an effective intervention the anti-bullying should be gender sensitive and appropriate[9].

**Table 6:** Preventive measures to address bullying occurrence

| Statement   | Mean        | Verbal Interpretation | Rank |
|---|-------------|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Orientation about anti-bullying.                                 | 3.13        | Sometimes             | 3    |
| 2. Implementation about anti-bullying in the school.                | 3.17        | Sometimes             | 1.5  |
| 3. Classroom rules and policies against bullying.                   | 3.17        | Sometimes             | 1.5  |
| 4. Have undergo counseling for the bullied children.                | 2.70        | Sometimes             | 7    |
| 5. Separation of the classroom both the bully and bullied children. | 2.59        | Seldom                | 8    |
| 6. Expulsion of the bully child in the school.                      | 3.07        | Sometimes             | 5    |
| 7. Bully students attend an orientation.                            | 2.53        | Seldom                | 10   |
| 8. The bullied suspended for a week.                                | 3.10        | Sometimes             | 4    |
| 9. School program about anti-bullying.                              | 2.97        | Sometimes             | 6    |
| 10. Having special assignment for the bully children.               | 2.57        | Seldom                | 9    |
| <b>General Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>2.90</b> | <b>Sometimes</b>      |      |

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The results of the study indicate that lesbian and gay students have experienced bullying sometimes. These are mostly verbal bullying. Profiles of the lesbian and gay students have no significant relationship with the bullying experiences regardless of their age, gender and grade level. The bullying experienced by the lesbian and gay students has negative effect on their personal behavior. These effects are being sad, angry, or scared at times. The preventive measures to prevent occurrence of bullying for the general students are sometimes implemented and enforced.

Thus, the researchers would like to recommend that the information and dissemination must be conducted regularly and the school administrator and faculty must require all students to attend to this activity. Regular implementation and enforcement of preventive measures to prevent or lessen occurrence of bullying must be conducted. Counseling for the lesbian and gay, and for general students who had been a victim of bullying must be conducted for them to know how to deal with the bully.

## References

- [1] Akpan, J.P. &Notar, C.E. (2016). *Is Bullying a Global Problem or Just in American? A Comparative Meta-Analysis of Research Findings*.International Journal of Education and Social Science.Vol. 3 No. 9.
- [2] Aulia, F. (2016). *Bullying Experience in Primary School Children*.Indonesian Journal of School Counseling.DOI: 10.23916/schoulid.v1i1.37.28-32
- [3] Bitsika, V., &Sharpley, C.F. (2014) *Understanding, Experiences, and Reactions to Bullying Experiences in Boys with an Autism Spectrum Disorder*.Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities. 26:747-761. DOI 10.1007/s10882-014-9393-1
- [4] Cardona, R.S., Reyes, A.S. and Tangalin, M.M. (2015). *The Bullying Experiences and Classroom Discipline Techniques in an Urban National High School in the Philippines: A Basis for an Anti-Bullying Program*. American International Journal of Contemporary Research.Vol. 5, No. 2.
- [5] Diaz, J. (2015, September 28). *31 bullying incidents take place daily in schools*.The Philippine Star.
- [6] Evans, C.B.R. and Cahpman, M.V. (2014). *Bullied Youth: The Impact of Bullying Through Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Name Calling*.American Journal of Orthopsychiatry.Vol. 84, No. 6. DOI: 10.1037/ort0000031.

- [7] Hajdukova, E.B., Hornby, G., and Cushman, P. (2015). *Bullying Experiences of Students with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)*. Educational Review, DOI: 10.1080/00131911.2015.1067880.
- [8] Laus, M.A. (2016). *A Profile of Bullying, Peer Aggression, and Victimization in Philippine Junior High School*. Journal of Society & Technology. 6:22-36.
- [9] Nillos, B.E. (2013) *Gender Differences in Bullying among School-Aged Children and Adolescents*. Asia-Pacific E-Journal of Health Social Science. Vol. 2, No. 2.
- [10] Ouano, J., Buot, N.R. and dela Rosa, E.L. (2013). *A Measure of the Experience of Being Bullied: An Initial Validation in Philippine Schools*. Philippine Journal of Counseling Psychology. Vol. 15, No. 1.
- [11] Pearce, N., Cross, D., Monks, H., Waters, S., and Falconer, S., (2011). *Current Evidence of Best Practice in Whole-School Bullying Intervention and Its Potential to Inform Cyberbullying Interventions*. Australian Journal of Guidance and Counseling. Vol. 21, Issue 1. DOI:10.1375/ajgc.21.1.1
- [12] Reyes, A.S. (2016). *Bullying Experienced among Indigenous People Students of Philippine Normal University North Luzon, Philippines: A Basis for Formulating School Policy*. American International Journal of Contemporary Research. Vol. 6, No. 1.
- [13] Zou, C., Andersen, J.P, &Blosnich, J.R. (2013). *The Association between Bullying and Physical Health among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Individuals*. Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association. 19 (6) 356-365. DOI: 10.1177/1078390313510739