

Management Strategies for Bullying Prevention: A comparative Study of Secondary schools in Bindura District, Mashonaland Central Province.

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ABSTRACT

Bullying incidents in secondary schools were the driving force for the study. The study's goal was to investigate managerial techniques for preventing bullying in secondary schools. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to lead the investigation. In order to identify the types of bullying, their causes, and effective management techniques, a survey was created for secondary schools. Six school administrators and fifty-six form teachers were given a self-reporting questionnaire to complete in order to collect information. This study found that social bullying, verbal bullying, and physical bullying are all prevalent. Bullying through the media and online is widespread in schools. The survey also found that poor teacher-student relationships, instructors' absence from class, and their lack of empathy and mutual understanding are the leading causes of bullying in secondary schools. The study identified the following strategic requirements for handling bullying in secondary schools: the creation of a system for confidential reporting, the creation of an anti-bullying policy by school administrators, and the involvement of other stakeholders such as law enforcement and religious leaders. Additionally, the report suggested that teachers and students should regularly attend classes and receive frequent training on bullying.

INTRODUCTION

According to Shams et al. (2017), bullying of school-age children has become a significant global problem. Bullying can therefore be regarded as pervasive. It may happen more frequently in schools, even though parents and educators may not be aware of it. Furthermore, 4-45% of children either bully other children or are the objects of bullying at school, according to Shams et al. (2017). Oarreta et al. (2012) claim that bullying is associated with the youngster exhibiting undesired behaviours. The victims of bullying may experience mental, physical, and emotional health problems. People who experience bullying in school may easily do poorly as a result of this. According to Boulton et al. (2008), bullying in schools can have a detrimental effect on a child's abilities, emotional well-being, and academic achievement. Given the detrimental consequences bullying has on its victims, it is imperative that bullying in schools be treated with greater seriousness.

Background to the Problem

In order to better understand the potential and challenges of school-based interventions, we need keep learning more about the traits of the kids involved in the relationships of bullying victims and their social networks. Brain and Smith (2000: pp. 9) However, rather than completely eliminating bullying in schools, the aim of this study is to continue combating it and keep it within acceptable bounds. In this case, parents and teachers need to be vigilant and inspired to address bullying-related concerns as soon as they appear. Teachers should therefore constantly support children who are being bullied by others, and pupils should always feel safe at

school. All things considered, secondary schools are important venues for responding to and preventing bullying. They offer kids a remarkable opportunity to develop their social and emotional skills, deepen their empathy, and form important relationships. However, bullying is still becoming more common in most schools, and it has long-term detrimental effects on children's academic performance, interpersonal connections, and mental health. Finding efficient preventative and intervention techniques is the goal of this study in order to gain a better understanding of the incidence and consequences of bullying in secondary schools. As reported by the National Centre for Education Statistics (2020), 20% of adolescents in the United States between the ages of 12 and 18 say they have been bullied in school. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020) found that 25% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 17 have experienced bullying at school. The important thing to keep in mind, though, is that secondary schools in Zimbabwe might be facing comparable problems to those in other countries. In Zimbabwe, bullying in secondary schools is a widespread problem that should not be ignored because the majority of cases may go unreported. Furthermore, it can be challenging to compare definitions of bullying because various people may have different ideas about what it is.

Forms of bullying

Common bullying involves the use of words to harm or intimidate others. This can include name-calling, insults, teasing, and threats (Olweus, 1993). Verbal bullying involves using words to harm, intimidate, or humiliate others. This can include:

- Using names that are offensive or disparaging to describe someone.
- Saying something disparaging about someone's skills, intelligence, or looks.
- Making fun of someone with the intention of causing them pain or embarrassment is known as teasing.
- Verbally threatening to hurt or threaten someone.
- Using words to make someone feel unimportant or inferior.
- Copying or ridiculing the words, demeanour, or actions of another person.
- Continually expressing unpleasant or offensive remarks to someone

Since verbal bullying can result in mental anguish, anxiety, and despair, it can be very harmful (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). In general, verbal bullying can have serious and enduring effects on its victims, which highlights the necessity of efficient preventative and intervention techniques. Schools are also frequently the scene of physical bullying, which is when someone uses physical force to hurt or threaten another person. Physical hostility can take several forms, such as pushing, kicking, and hitting (Olweus, 1993). Physical bullying can cause emotional distress, physical harm, and a host of other detrimental effects (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). Using social connections to hurt or threaten others is known as relational bullying, and it can also happen frequently. Rumours, interpersonal manipulation, and exclusion from social groupings are a few examples of this (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). According to Hawker & Boulton, (2000) relational bullying can be particularly damaging as it can lead to social isolation, emotional distress, and decreased self-esteem. We also have cyberbullying Sexual). Additionally, there is cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is when someone uses technology to threaten or hurt someone else. Hertz et al. (2017) state that this can include sending angry or threatening messages, posting embarrassing photos or videos, and making offensive comments. Kowalski et al. (2014) claim that cyberbullying can cause negative outcomes like depression, anxiety, and emotional distress. Sexual bullying is another pervasive problem, which is when someone threatens or injures another person by using sexually suggestive words, gestures, or behaviours.. In the words of Chandler (2014), this may entail sexual remarks, inappropriate touching, and sexting. According to AAUW (2011), bullying can have major repercussions, such as mental discomfort, anxiety, and depression. In summary, bullying in schools is a complicated, multidimensional problem that can take many different forms. Bullying that is verbal, physical, relational, cyber, or sexual can have detrimental effects on the victims.

Causes of bullying

An individual with aggressive qualities may exhibit a pattern of thought and behaviour that manifests as conflict, animosity, and in certain situations, violence. Students' aggressive personality traits may manifest in

the classroom as verbal or physical aggression, such as striking or passing, or they may manifest as name-calling. Additional indicators of an aggressive personality in the classroom include the tendency to place blame elsewhere on other pupils and the inability to control anger or criticism. Hertz et al. (2017) assert that mental health problems are a direct cause of bullying in schools. Teens who struggle to control their emotions, such as those who suffer from anxiety, depression, or other mood disorders, may act violently or bullishly. Bullying can result from anxiety or low self-esteem caused by mental illnesses as a means of controlling others. Children raised in homes with high levels of conflict, aggressiveness, and neglect may come to believe that bullying is a good approach to resolve disputes and maintain relationships, according to Olweus (2001). This illustration shows how poor family dynamics are linked to bullying in the majority of schools. Olweus (2001) also noted that children who experienced abandonment, lack of supervision, or lack of guidance may be more prone to bullying since they may not have been taught proper social skills and restrictions. Finally, bullying in schools may be linked to a history of aggression in the family.

Hertz et al. (2017) noted that in the absence of adequate supervision, kids may act in a bullying manner with no repercussions, which could result in the bullying continuing. Inadequate parental supervision can be blamed for problems in schools. Without parental supervision, children may be more vulnerable to social pressure and influence, which could result in bullying behaviour, as noted by Bera et al. (2016). Without parental supervision, kids are actually more likely to be bullied by their peers due to increasing peer pressure. Bullying behaviour may be encouraged by an undesirable school climate, according to Limber et al. (2018). A bad school climate is frequently indicated by teachers and other employees acting without empathy or regard for one another. Low teacher-student relationships can also be a sign of a bad environment. Bullying is likely to be a frequent occurrence in the classroom if there is a lack of respect between the teachers and the kids. Hertz et al. (2017) have proposed that if a violent behaviour is normalised in the environment, other children may find it acceptable. Therefore, if a child is reluctant to report bullying, it may go unnoticed. Additionally, certain peer groups can easily form and may encourage or facilitate the bullying behaviour. A hostile climate may lead to low student participation, which may eventually create a situation where students are less likely to intervene when bullying happens, according to Juvenen et al. (2016). In this case, bullying creates an atmosphere that encourages chaos in the classroom, which is equivalent to a bad school climate.

Inadequate leadership can fail to address the problem of bullying by permitting it to continue, claim Green et al. (2013). For instance, bullying in schools is likely to occur when there are unclear policies in place. Likewise, in situations where there is a deficiency of robust leadership, there is a possibility of functioning without anti-bullying regulations, which leaves both kids and teachers in the dark regarding the expectations and repercussions of bullying. It is extremely difficult to prevent and address bullying because of the harm it causes. In reality, poor leadership can lead to inadequate supervision. According to Olweus (2001), bullying may occur in public areas such as classrooms and playgrounds when there is little supervision. In conclusion, insufficient leadership in schools can often lead to bullying. The absence of good communication is another sign of inadequate leadership in the school. In the end, poor communication skills in schools lead to a lack of awareness and understanding of the pain that bullying causes, which makes it very challenging to avoid and manage.

Jovonen et al. (2016) state that large class sizes can make it difficult for teachers to monitor and assist students, which could lead to bullying. Although there are other factors that contribute to bullying, class size may be one of the most important ones. It is easier to prevent and address bullying when class sizes are smaller because they foster deeper bonds, more individualised attention, and a greater feeling of community.

Hertz et al. (2017) found that creating a safe and supportive learning environment is one way to reduce bullying events in schools. Educational and supportive settings work well because they help students develop empathy and a clear understanding of one another, which in turn helps to build healthy relationships. As usual, it is presumed that all learners are safe in schools with a supportive learning environment. According to Woolner et al. (2012), bullying in schools is decreased when a supportive learning environment is established and maintained. Therefore, creating a supportive learning environment in schools helps lessen bullying because it can lay a strong foundation by encouraging a culture that is inclusive, courteous, and positive—the very

opposite of bullying. In schools, bullying can be decreased by using inclusive practices, according to Waasdorpnd et al. (2011). People in this situation, regardless of their many histories, identities, or situations, are certain to feel appreciated, respected, and supported because to the inclusive policy. Furthermore, fostering an atmosphere where everyone has an equal chance to engage in and excel in all school-related activities is key to inclusion. Ultimately, a supportive environment is a real motivator for lessening bullying.

Olweus (1993) believes that students ought to have the authority to report bullying situations and seek assistance. To reinforce the idea of giving students authority, Mitra (2004) suggests encouraging students to report bullying they may encounter. In order to accomplish this goal of reporting any bullying they may experience, a clear reporting procedure must be established. Therefore, it is recommended that schools designate specific teachers or set up avenues for reporting bullying. In conclusion, giving children the tools to fight bullying requires a multifaceted approach that may involve guidance, support, and encouragement that forces them to think about other people's viewpoints and understand the negative effects of bullying.

In their research, Jovoren and Gross (2008) discovered that student wellbeing is enhanced bullying is decreased when parents and schools work together. Waasalorp et al. (2011) came to the conclusion that bullying conduct in schools is decreased when parents are involved. It might be underlined in this context that schools should make sure to work with parents in their efforts to combat bullying. When keeping an eye on bullying, parents and teachers should work together. The head of the school should also collaborate with the community to support anti-bullying programs and provide moral support to the impacted children and their families, incorporating parents, teachers, and students. Additionally, Horg and Espelage (2012) stated that parent-teacher partnerships are useful in preventing bullying. Horg and Espelage (2012) recommended that school administrators work with law enforcement and other groups. Olweus (1993) is likewise in favour of a comprehensive school strategy that includes parents, teachers, and students.

Taylor (1994) urged that when creating an educational program, student involvement should be taken into account. Clubs and a variety of athletic events can be used to engage the students and promote camaraderie and cooperation. One of the key components in lowering bullying is friendship and cooperation. Students can be intellectually engaged by their teachers in order to redirect their attention from social disputes to learning. In practical terms, more schoolwork can equate to more time spent in class or on organised activities, which can decrease the likelihood of bullying. Collaboration is essential to preventing bullying and creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Espelage and Swearer (2010) emphasised that preventing and addressing bullying requires cooperation from parents, legislators, and educators in order to establish a secure and encouraging learning environment for all students.

Comprehensive cyberbullying laws and policies should be implemented, according to Hertz et al. (2017). Kowaiski et al. (2014) suggested that school and district policies be drafted and implemented. In this regard, schools should create policies and procedures for dealing with cyberbullying, and teachers should receive training on how to prevent and respond to cyberbullying. Hertz et al. (2017) also stated that education and awareness programs can significantly lower the prevalence of cyberbullying in schools. To combat cyberbullying, awareness campaigns can be conducted through extensive campaigns and events. These awareness campaigns should serve as a forum for discussing cyberbullying laws and policies.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying is still a widespread and enduring problem that has to be addressed in schools across the world. As stated by UNESCO (2019) around the world, one in three students are said to have experienced bullying at school. According to the South Africa Human Rights Commission (2018), 54% of South African students reported having been bullied. According to a (2020) study by the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 30% of schoolchildren in Zimbabwe had experienced bullying at some point in their lives. In Mashonaland Central a mother was compelled to take her child out of one of the high schools because other students were bullying him. The focus of this study is to come up with management measures to decrease bullying incidents in

secondary schools because bullying by its very nature has a detrimental impact on students' academic performance and safety.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions

What are the forms of bullying common in secondary schools?

What are the causes of bullying in secondary schools?

What management strategies can school administrators adopt to curb bullying in secondary schools?

Research Objectives

The study attempts to achieve the following objectives to:

- Identify forms of bullying common in secondary schools
- Establish causes of bullying in secondary schools
- Come up with management strategies to curb bullying in secondary schools

Significance of the study

METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy

Phenomenological methods served as the researchers' compass. Phenomenological study design, according to Creswell (2009), is a technique where researchers determine people's human experiences based on the topic being studied. The purpose of this study approach is to deconstruct the experiences of those who have been bullied and those who have observed bullying. The approach allowed for a more thorough comprehension of the experiences of the bullied youngsters on an individual basis. Therefore, the phenomenological approach in this study allowed the researchers to gather data from 100 pupils, 40 teachers 2 deputy heads and the school head. These participation groups are in charge of dealing with bullying at schools. According to Leedy and Ornard (2001), the goal of the phenomenological approach is to guarantee that the participant's experience is understood. Consequently, by employing a phenomenological send design, researchers were able to get current viewpoints from children, senior women, senior masters, deputy heads, and heads of schools.

Population

Population is defined by Burns and Croore (2003) as the number of restrictions on the elements being studied. Sounders et al. (2008) also view a population as a collection of instances from which a sample is taken. The schools that were chosen reflected a variety of urban and rural environments. This geographical difference made it possible to analyse cultural and environmental elements that can affect bullying and management techniques in Zimbabwean schools. This methodology and the choice of schools made it possible for the study's conclusions to be applied to both urban and rural schools in Zimbabwe. Teachers, from the chosen secondary schools, and school administrators (headmasters and deputy headmasters) made up the target group for the study on effective management measures to eliminate bullying in secondary schools. By including both teachers and students, a comprehensive understanding of the tactics employed to lessen bullying in secondary schools was guaranteed.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling, is a technique that enables researchers to choose people or groups that are very skilled or informed (Parton (2002: pp230). In order to get useful information about the tactics being employed, schools

with established management systems and recognised bullying problems were chosen through a purposive sampling technique. According to Creswell (2014), purposeful sampling is particularly useful in qualitative research when the objective is to collect data in order to examine or explain a phenomenon. To guarantee varied participant representation across grades and positions, stratified sampling was used within schools. With 200 participants overall from about 20 schools, this study offered a manageable but representative sample size for both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Data Collection Methods

Teachers, and administrators were given structured surveys to gauge the frequency of bullying, opinions about current management techniques, and self-reported effectiveness. In order to provide a baseline for comprehending the scope of the problem, school bullying reports were examined to look at the types and frequency of bullying occurrences over the previous academic year. . Non-participant observation was used to evaluate the school environment, with an emphasis on student interactions and the presence of authority figures (teachers) at strategic locations.

Ethical Considerations

The goals, methods, and possible dangers of the study were explained to each participant. Parents' and school officials' consent was sought for the students who participated. Anonymisation of data and safe storage of gathered information were two steps used to safeguard participants' identity. By concentrating on management techniques rather than specific bullying incidents, the study aimed to prevent re-traumatizing students who had been bullied.

Limitations

The study's findings may be specific to the sampled Bindura District and Mashonaland Central Province and may not represent the entirety of the country's diverse educational contexts. As bullying is a sensitive topic, responses in surveys and interviews may be influenced by social desirability, affecting the accuracy of self-reported data

FINDINGS

Data presentation

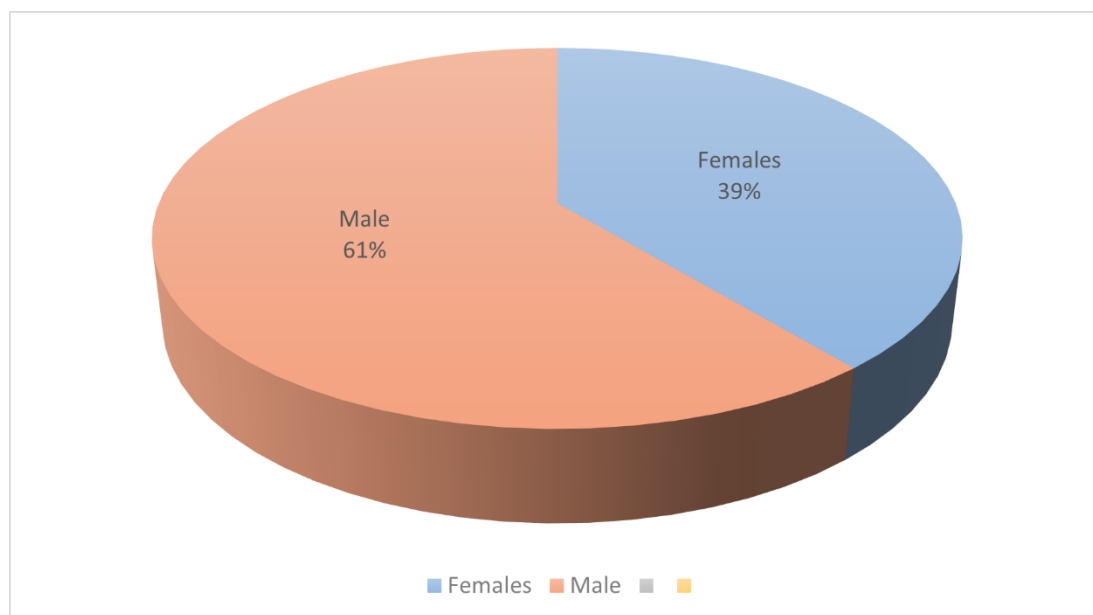
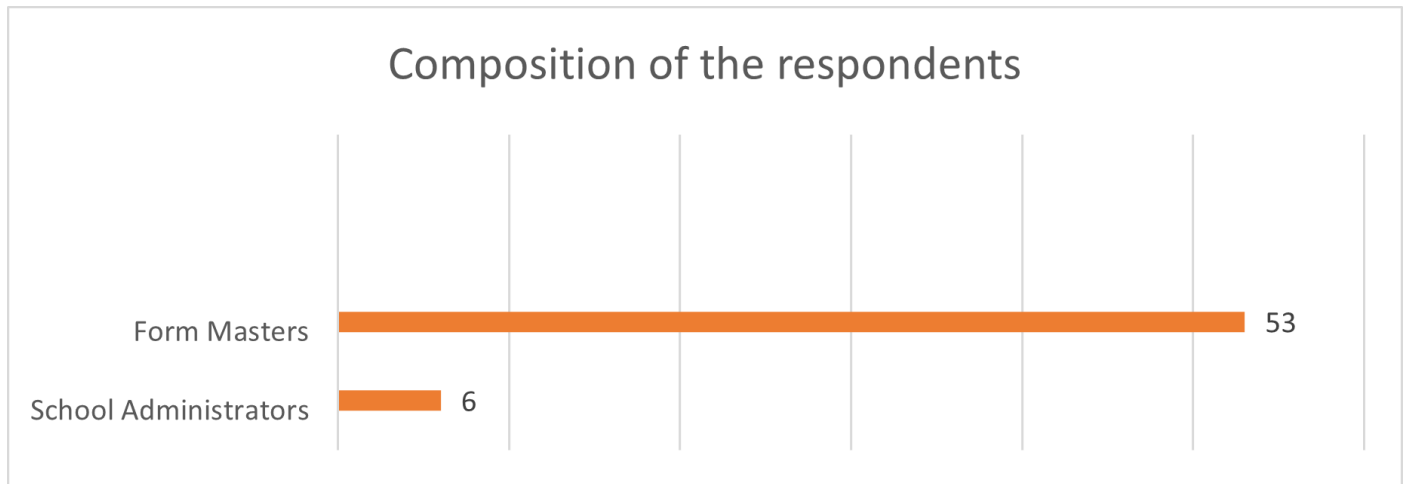


Figure 1.1

A total of 70 questionnaires were administered, yielding a response rate 84, 3% (n =59). As shown by Figure 1 above the respondents consisted of 23 (61%) males and 36 (39%) females. Notably, the males' opinions had a slightly stronger representation in the results (see figure 1 above).

Composition of the participants



As seen in Figure 1,1 above, 89.83% (53) of the participants were form teachers, while 10.17% (6) were school administrators. While the 10.17% (6) school administrators offer insightful information about school-level policies and initiatives, the high number of form teachers (89.83%) (53) guarantees that the research encompasses a varied variety of viewpoints and experiences.

Common forms of bullying in secondary school

Forms of bullying

To ascertain whether the participants had witnessed or heard about bullying in any form at their different schools, they were asked to select "Yes" or "No." All participants (100%) chose the "yes" icon to show that bullying happens regularly in secondary schools

Table 1

Form of bullying	Frequency
Physical bullying (corporal punishment by teachers, each other hitting, pushing, kicking)	100
Verbal bullying (name-calling, insults, teasing)	80
Social bullying (exclusion , spreading rumours)	75
Cyber bullying(on-line harassment, threats)	40

As shown in Table 1 above, all participants rated corporal punishment by teachers as the most prevalent form of bullying in schools. According to 80% of participants, verbal bullying is also common in secondary schools. Seventy-five percent of respondents said that social bullying, which includes exclusion and rumour spreading, is another form of bullying that takes place in secondary schools. Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that also happens in secondary schools, according to 40% of respondents.

Causes of bullying

To identify the primary causes of bullying in secondary schools, participants were asked to cross out those that applicable, as shown in Figure 2. 2 below.

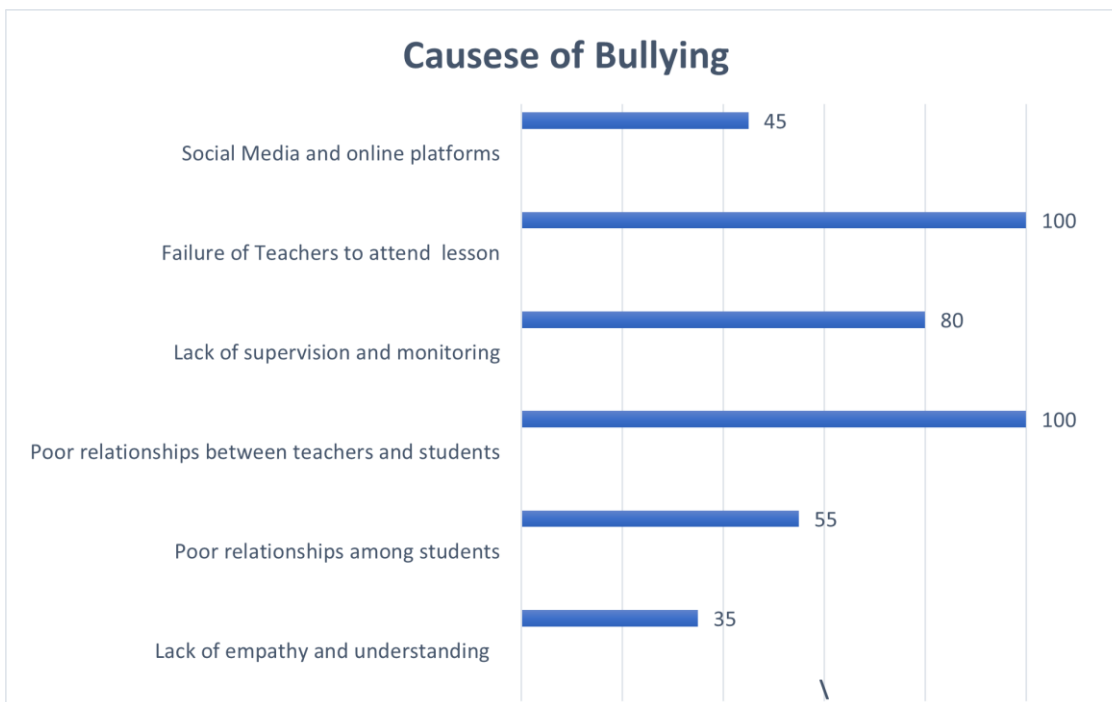


Figure 2.2

All participants cited inadequate teacher-student interactions and instructors' absences from class, which result in inadequate supervision, as the primary causes of bullying in secondary schools (see Figure 2.2 above). Oleweus (2001) and Hertz (2017) also found in their study that bullying in schools can be triggered by a lack of monitoring. In their study, Bera et al. (2016) noted that bullying in schools can result from a lack of supervision. The primary reason of bullying in secondary schools, according to 80% of respondents, is teachers' lack of supervision and control. Of those who took part, 55% thought that bullying in secondary schools can be encouraged by strained relationships between students. Juvenen (2016) also discovered that bullying in schools is mostly caused by a hostile school environment. Bullying in secondary schools is exacerbated by teachers' and students' lack of empathy and understanding, according to 45% of respondents. 35% of respondents said that media and the internet can also facilitate bullying in secondary schools.

Strategies to reduce bullying in secondary schools

The results of the study suggest that school administrators should try to enhance the relationship between students and teachers. Additionally, the survey suggested that schools enable students to immediately report bullying incidents that occur in the classroom or throughout the school. This result is consistent with Olweus's (1993) suggestion that students should be empowered to report instances of bullying. Additionally, Mitra (2004) recommended that students be given the confidence to report any bullying they experience. Parents' role in preventing bullying in schools was brought up by participants. In his research, Waasalorp et al. (2011) also found that parental involvement can lessen bullying in schools. Jovoren and Gross (2008) also concluded that if bullying is to be reduced in schools, parents and teachers should collaborate. Horg and Espelage (2012) also recommended that school administrators should work with other groups in schools to fight bullying. Similarly Espelage and Swearer (2010) also emphasised that fighting bullying requires cooperation from parents, legislators, and educator's. The study also suggested that to stop bullying in schools students should be educated about bullying and encouraged to report. Hertz et al. (2017) also came to conclusion that education and awareness programs can significantly lower bullying in schools. Another strategy derived from this study is the creation of clear policies and procedures for reporting and managing bullying. Hertz et al. (2017). Kowaiski et al. (2014) are in agreement that comprehensive, laws and policies that deals with bullying in schools should be drafted and implemented. The other strategy that participants recommended was ensuring that teachers attend every class and closely monitor student behaviour. According to the study's findings, more counselling sessions in schools should be included as an additional strategy.

The study's conclusions suggest the following tactics for reducing bullying in secondary schools:

- Teacher-student relationships and student-student relationships should be improved by school administrators.
- School administrators should make sure that more counselling sessions are scheduled.
- School Heads are advised suggestion box allows students to report bullying incidents without worrying about becoming victims themselves.
- In order to educate children about bullying in all of its forms and how to report bullying incidences, school administrators should invite police officers to speak as resource persons.
- One tactic that might be used is to ascertain the socio-economic background of the perpetrators, taking into account their parents.
- In order to prevent bullying behaviours, teachers should try to inculcate empathy and kindness in their students.
- It is advised that other stakeholders, such as church leaders, and Police be included by school officials when campaigning against bullying
- Involving church elders and other stakeholders is advised for school administrators.
- School administrators should make sure that more counselling sessions are scheduled.
- It is recommended that school administrators establish clear reporting protocols for any bullying-related concerns.
- While teachers should monitor student behaviour, they should not use physical force to control it.
- To combat bullying in schools, parents should also be involved through the school development committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the face of the above findings and conclusions the researcher is recommending the following strategies for managing bullying in secondary school.

- Establishing a confidential reporting system for students to report bullying incidents;
- School Heads ensure prompt action on all reported bullying cases in their schools are looked at
- School should offer victims of bullying counselling, peer support, or other pertinent assistance to aid in their recovery
- Developing a thorough anti-bullying policy that defines bullying precisely, outlines its consequences, and provides support to victims.
- In order to prevent and address bullying, school heads should engage students, teachers, and parents by promoting cooperation and communication among all stakeholders.
- School heads should provide regular training and bullying prevention. Thus teachers and pupils should be educated on bullying prevention, identification and response
- Teachers should be constantly reminded on managing classroom dynamics
- School heads should be encouraged to foster positive relationships between students, teachers and SDC through mentoring peer

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