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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AWARENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “ANTI-BULLYING LAW” AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTHEASTERN CAGAYAN

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Abstract

Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the rights of students to learn in a safe environment without fear. This study was conducted to determine the level of awareness and level of implementation on the Anti-Bullying Law and determine whether there is a significant difference on the awareness and implementation level as perceived by the respondents to provide recommendations to effectively deal with bullying incidence. The study uses a descriptive and correlation research design. There were 408 respondents of the study composed of teachers and students from secondary schools in Northeastern Cagayan. The findings indicate that the respondents are “very much aware” on the different forms of bullying like physical, written and cyber forms of bullying including the legal implications, prohibited acts and the prevention and intervention measures on bullying as well as the duties and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the implementation of the law except for the verbal form of bullying. The respondents perceived that physical and cyber form of bullying together with the prohibited acts, prevention and intervention programs and the duties and responsibilities of the stakeholders of the law are “very much implemented” while verbal, written form and the legal implications is perceived to be “much implemented”. Finally, the finding indicates that there is no significant difference on the level of awareness but there is a significant difference between respondent’s assessments on the implementation of the law. Based from the findings, it is recommended that there shall be a continuous education drive to students about the “Anti-Bullying Law” with emphasis on the verbal and written form of bullying including its legal implications; and school principal and teacher should intensify the implementation of the “Anti-Bullying Law” particularly on the verbal and written forms of bullying.

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Introduction:-

Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the rights of students to learn in a safe environment without fear. It is widespread, and perhaps the most

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underreported safety problems in schools. Bullying greatly impacts the academic achievement and overall well-being of students. It also continues to present public relations and legal challenges for local schools (Fretwell, 2015).

In the Philippines, fifty (50) percent or one in two Filipino school children are being bullied or abused in school (Ancho, 2013). These alarming statistics prompted the Department of Education (DepEd) to issue Department Order No. 40, s. 2012 entitled DepEd Child Protection Policy, thereby, all elementary and secondary high school in the country are to set up a system that will address bullying, discrimination, exploitation, violence and other forms of abuse committed in the school premises.

The Philippine Congress also enacted Republic Act No. 10627 otherwise known as the “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013” to provide legal reinforcement to the department’s initiatives in curbing the problem of bullying and other related abuses in the Philippine schools. The 2015 DepEd Report, however, still showed an increasing trend in bullying despite the measures implemented by the Department and Congress (Diaz, 2015).

In 2014, the DepEd recorded bullying incidence totalled to 6,363 or around 31 cases per school day, 21 percent higher than 2013. These figures still caused concern among parents and school authorities though many of the cases were already attended to, knowing that the biggest threat to the school children is not street criminals but rather their fellow students. Also, the data may also one idea that the society as a whole is still struggling to understand the problem and in finding resolutions to the escalating social concern (Diaz, 2015).

Under Republic Act No. 10627 otherwise known as the “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013”, it defines “bullying” as 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; such as, but not limited to, a) Any unwanted physical contact between the bully and the victim like punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, slapping, tickling, headlocks, inflicting school pranks, teasing, fighting and the use of available objects as weapons; b) Any act that causes damage to a victim’s psyche and/or emotional well-being; c) Any slanderous statement or accusation that causes the victim undue emotional distress like directing foul language or profanity at the target, name-calling, tormenting and commenting negatively on victim’s looks, clothes and body; and d) Cyber-bullying or any bullying done through the use of technology or any electronic means. The term shall also include any conduct resulting to harassment, intimidation, or humiliation, through the use of other forms of technology, such as, but not limited to texting, email, instant messaging, chatting, internet, social media, online games, or other platforms or formats.

To address bullying in the Philippines, all elementary and secondary schools are directed to adopt policies to address bullying in their respective institutions prohibiting it on school grounds, or at school-sponsored or school-related activities, and providing disciplinary administrative action against the bully or retaliation on persons reporting the bullying incident, among others (Sec. 3, R.A. No. 10627).

In the North-eastern part of Cagayan, data shows there were one-hundred eight (108) cases of bullying among secondary schools from year 2014-2017 recorded.

Recent studies on bullying usually aimed at determining causes and effects of bullying as well as the behaviours and characteristics of the bullies and the victims or bullied. However, this study aims to determine whether the students and teachers are aware with the Anti-Bullying Law particularly the different acts of bullying, its legal implications, prohibited acts on bullying, prevention and intervention measures against bullying and the duties and responsibilities of the teachers and school administrators under the law and whether the law is implemented in order for the College of Criminal Justice Education of the University to craft extension program which will benefit the community or service areas of the University.

Objectives of the Study:-

This study has been initiated to:

1. What is the level of awareness and level of implementation of the respondents on Anti-Bullying Law in the following dimensions?
 - 1.1 Forms of Bullying
 - a. Physical

- b. Verbal
 - c. Written
 - d. Cyber
 - 1.2 Legal implications of bullying
 - 1.3 Prohibited Acts
 - 1.4 Prevention and Intervention Programs
 - 2.5. Duties and responsibilities of stake holders
 - a. School Administrators
 - b. Teachers and personnel
 - c. Students
- 2. What is the level implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law in the following dimensions as assessed by the respondents?
 - 2.1 Forms of Bullying
 - a. Physical
 - b. Verbal
 - c. Written
 - d. Cyber
 - 2.2 Legal implications of bullying
 - 2.3 Prohibited Acts
 - 2.4 Prevention and Intervention Programs
 - 2.5. Duties and responsibilities of stake holders
 - a. School Administrators
 - b. Teachers and personnel
 - c. Students
- 3. Is there a significant difference on the level of awareness and extent of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law as perceived by the two (2) groups of respondents?

Methodology:-

Research Design

The study used descriptive research since it measures the level of awareness of the respondents and their perceived level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law. Moreover, the study used correlation method since it correlates the level of awareness of the respondents and their perceived level of implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted to determine the level of awareness of the respondents' teachers and students on the anti-bullying law and their perceived extent of implementation of the same law. The identified largest secondary schools in the Northeastern part of Cagayan namely Sta. Ana Fishery National High School, Gonzaga National High School and Sta. Teresita National High School all found in the municipalities of Sta. Ana, Gonzaga, and Sta. Teresita respectively were selected as the locale of the study.

Population of the Study

The respondents were teachers and students of selected secondary schools in the Northeastern part of Cagayan namely Sta. Teresita National High School, Gonzaga National High School and Sta. Ana Fishery National High School.

A random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. The distribution of the respondents is presented below.

Table 1:- Showing the distribution of the respondents.

Respondents	Number	Percentage
Teachers	55	13.48%
Students		
Grade 7	99	24.26
Grade 8	83	20.34

Grade 9	89	21.81
Grade 10	82	20.09
Total	353	86.51
Over-all Total	408	100%

Data Gathering Tools

The needed information and data from the respondents were elicited through a survey questionnaire which was formulated based from Republic Act No. 10627 otherwise known as the “Anti-Bullying Act of 2013” and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and Republic Act No. 9344 otherwise known as the “Juvenile Justice and Welfare System Act of 2006.”.

Treatment of the Data

Mean, Frequency Count and Percentage Distribution were used to obtain scores on the respondent’s level of awareness and their perceived level of implementation of the “Anti-Bullying Law”.

To interpret and analyze the level of awareness of the respondents on the “Anti-Bullying Law” and their perceived level of implementation of the same law a four-point Likert scale was used:

Table 2:- Four-point Likert scale.

Numerical Values	Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.26-4.00	Very Much Aware Very Much Implemented
3	2.51-3.25	Much Aware Much Implemented
2	1.76-2.50	Moderately Aware Moderately Implemented
1	1.00-1.75	Not Aware Not Implemented

To test the difference between awareness and assessment of implementation level of the Anti-Bullying Law among students and teachers the t-test of difference for two related samples was used.

To test the difference between awareness and assessment of implementation level of the Anti-Bullying Law between the students and teachers, the t-test of difference for two independent samples was used.

Results And Discussion:-

Table 3:- Summary of Awareness and Level of Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law as Perceived by the Respondent Students and Teachers.

		Level of Awareness				Total mean	D.I	Level of Implementation				Total Mean	D.I
		Students		Teachers				Students		Teachers			
		Mean	DI	Mean	DI			Mean	DI	Mean	DI		
A. Different Forms of Bullying													
a)	Physical Form	2.96	MA	3.78	VMA	3.37	VMA	2.87	MI	3.8	VMI	3.33	VMI
b)	Verbal Form	2.91	MA	2.76	MA	3.25	MA	2.76	MI	3.62	VMI	3.19	MI
c)	Written Form	2.84	MA	3.74	VMA	3.29	VMA	2.74	MI	3.64	VMI	3.19	MI
d)	Cyber bullying	2.97	MA	3.8	VMA	3.38	VMA	2.87	MI	3.68	VMI	3.27	VMI
B. Legal Implications of Bullying		2.84	MA	3.72	VMA	3.28	VMA	2.83	MI	3.64	VMI	3.23	MI
C. Prohibited Acts on Bullying		2.83	MA	3.7	VMA	3.26	VMA	2.85	MI	3.74	VMI	3.29	VMI
D. Prevention and Intervention Programs													
a)	Prevention Programs	2.99	MA	3.65	VMA	3.32	VMA	2.97	MI	3.61	VMI	3.29	VMI
b)	Intervention Programs	2.98	MA	3.73	VMA	3.35	VMA	2.96	MI	3.8	VMI	3.38	VMI

E. Duties and Responsibilities of Stakeholders												
a) School Administrator/ Principal	3.05	MA	3.73	VMA	3.39	VMA	3.02	MI	3.71	VMI	3.36	VMI
b) Teachers & other School Personnel	3.00	MA	3.83	VMA	3.41	VMA	3.01	MI	3.8	VMI	3.40	VMI
c) Students	3.11	MA	3.74	VMA	3.42	VMA	3.11	MI	3.76	VMI	3.43	VMI
Over-all Weighted Mean	2.95	MA	3.65	VMA	3.33	VMA	2.91	MI	3.70	VMI	3.30	VMI

As shown from table 3 a total mean of 3.42 means “very much aware” and being the highest mean indicates that the respondents students and teachers are fully aware with the duties and responsibilities of former when it comes to the observation and enforcement of the “Anti-Bullying Law”. This implies that the students actively participate in all prevention and intervention measures against bullying and they refrain themselves from committing any acts of bullying. They are also conscious to the fact that it is their duty to intervene whenever bullying acts are committed in their presence and to report the same to their teachers or school authorities. The respondents also believed that these duties and responsibilities are “very much implemented” as supported by a mean of 3.43. Meaning, the teachers and school authorities undertake measures to enhance the awareness of the students on their role under the Anti-Bullying Law’ and they implement measures so that the students as stakeholders of the law become cooperative in every endeavors to ensure a bullying free school community. These measures include lectures, seminars, team building activities and counselling aim at increasing the awareness of the students on their role under the “Anti-Bullying Law”. These finding was supported by the findings is supported by Menesini&Salmivalli (2017) who asserted that raising awareness among students about the role of the whole group has an impact on maintaining bullying, and enhancing anti-bullying norms and responses within classrooms is crucial. It is also highly important that teachers clearly communicate their anti-bullying attitudes to students. The unsupportive school climates allow bullying to occur and define them as “negative relationships between teachers and students, and positive attitudes towards bullying.” By contrast, positive school climates might decrease the level of bullying (Wong et. al. 2011).

Moreover, a total mean of 3.25 means “much aware” and being the lowest mean indicates that the respondents are acquainted with the different form of verbal bullying however, the finding indicates that awareness does not reach the highest level. This implies that the students still engages verbal form of bullying and the most identified act commonly committed is name-calling or teasing. This further implies that the students treat name-calling as usual and a form of jokes. A mean of 3.19 mean “much implemented” indicates that verbal form of bullying is implemented but not to the highest degree possible to totally control or prevent verbal form of bullying. This further manifests that there are students who commits verbal form of bullying but nor reported to the teachers or any school authorities and sometimes if reported it is being dismissed or tolerated since no outward manifestation of violence like injury on the part of the students being bullied. However, it must be considered that bullying in any form, be it physical, verbal or cyber form has lasting negative effects on the development of a person. The effects are not only exhibited by the victim but also the bullies, symptoms for both will range from short-term to long, severe and life hanging effects (Limo, 2015).

A total mean of 3.19 means “much implemented” imply that written form of bullying is implemented with a considerable degree but such implementation does not reach the maximum degree to ensure the students will not commit said acts. This further imply that the students are not totally prevented to commit written form of bullying or students particularly would-be victims are not protected from written bullying especially that it is not highly visible or observable when they are committed unlike physical form where it is highly observable on the part of the teachers and other students whenever they are committed. This further implies that the teachers usually fails to detect signs of written form of bullying especially those happens inside their class or school activity or event under their direct supervision. This finding was supported by Fretwell (2015) who suggests that teachers should be able to identify early warning signs of violence. These warning signs include emotional and behavioral indicators. High expectations shall be set and students are taught how to behave. Moreover, staff training o bullying identification and remediation is vital on school wide anti-bullying programs (Kendrick, 2015).

A total mean of 3.23 means “much implemented” indicates that the legal consequences of bullying are implemented. Meaning, bullies are usually held accountable for their actions. However, the implementation does not reach the highest degree possible. This means that there are bullying cases which are settled by the teachers, parents and students involved even if the act of bullying resulted to injury in which case the bullies is not given appropriate intervention and diversion program by appropriate authorities like the Department of Social Welfare and

Development for case work analysis and identification of intervention and diversion program suited to the offender or bullies for the development of his psychological, emotional and psycho-social well-being. The significance of this program was emphasized by Wong et.al (2011) who mentioned that restorative practice can be helpful device as measure in bullying. The concept of restorative justice prioritizes repairing harm done to relationships over the need to assign blame and dispense punishment.

An over-all weighted mean of 3.33 means “very much aware” indicates that the respondent students and teachers are fully aware with the provisions of the “Anti-Bullying Law”. This further manifests that they are knowledgeable with the different forms of bullying; the legal implications of bullying; prohibited acts of bullying; prevention and intervention measures as well as their duties and responsibilities as stakeholders in as much as “Anti-Bullying Law” is concern. The respondents likewise believed that the “Anti-Bullying Law” is “very much implemented” as supported by an over-all weighted mean of 3.30. This further implies that students who bully fellow students are acted upon the teachers and school authorities. Moreover, there are measures implemented by the teachers and school authorities to make the students aware with bullying like the incorporation of bullying topics in the Values Education subject as part of the curricula of the high school beside the conduct of seminar, team building activities, informing parents the anti-bullying policy of the school during meetings, and counselling among others. The teachers on the other hand are equipped with the basic knowledge in responding or handling bullying incidence and they implement measures to support the establishment of a bullying free school community. Beside from integrating into the curriculum the study of bullying and its underlying consequences, they also supervise their students’ activities be it inside or outside the classroom or school.

Moreover, the school authorities and teachers also made it sure that the classrooms or school project a wholesome environment where students can interact and deal with each other in a positive climate. This finding is supported by the findings of Johnson et. al. (2011) that a positive social interactions in the classroom, as well as feelings of belonging by students, help student’s link school with safety. When the amount of violence and disruptions in the classroom are limited, the amount of bullying that takes place will decrease. Schools having higher levels of social cohesiveness, shared values, and beliefs reduce social disorder. Consequently, schools that are able to develop strong social bonds with all of their students may be able to reduce bullying (Chan, 2013). Likewise, there are strong and significant relationships between bullying and school climate (Gendron et. al. 2011). In addition, promoting greater whole-school awareness of their anti-bullying policies, disseminate and discuss information relating to school anti-bullying policies more fully with students and parents, and inform parents about what the school is doing and how incidents involving their children are being handled is vital in preventing or controlling bullying and other school violence (Rigby and Johnson, 2016).

Table 4:- MS Excel t-test of Difference Between Awareness Level and Implementation Level Between Students and Teachers.

Variables	Computed probability of rejecting H_0	Decision at .05 level	Meaning of Test Result
Awareness and Implementation Levels among Students	0.00425	Reject H_0	Awareness differs significantly from implementation
Awareness and Implementation Levels among Teachers	0.0000000000000000000025017	Reject H_0	Awareness differs significantly from implementation

Difference Between Awareness and Assessment of Implementation Level Among Students

To test the difference between awareness level and assessment on implementation of Anti-Bullying Law (Table 4) among students, the t-test of difference for two related samples was used. The test revealed a probability of **0.00425** of rejecting the null hypothesis, which is lower than the .05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis that awareness and implementation levels of Anti-Bullying Law do not differ is rejected. This means that awareness of Anti-Bullying Law differs significantly from its implementation. This implies that the students’ perception on their level of awareness on the Anti-Bullying Law is higher but the perceived level of implementation of the same law is lower. This further manifest that the students are knowledgeable with the different forms of bullying, the prohibited acts, legal implications of bullying including their duties and responsibilities under the law but somehow failed to totally refrain themselves from committing acts of bullying and failed to comply or perform their task as provided under the law i.e reporting incidence of bullying to proper authorities.

Difference Between Awareness and Assessment of Implementation Level Among Teachers

On the difference in level of awareness of the Anti-Bullying Law and assessment on its implementation among teachers (Table 4), the t-test of difference for two related samples was used. The test revealed a probability of **2.5017E-23** of rejecting the null hypothesis, which is lower than the .05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis that awareness level does not differ from implementation level is rejected. This means further that there is a significant difference on the level of awareness and level of implementation of Anti-Bullying Law as perceived by the teachers. This manifests that the level of awareness of the teachers of the Anti-Bullying Law is higher than their perceived level of implementation. This means that to some extent, the law is not implemented to the highest point possible. The finding was supported by Santorelli (2012) who mentioned that anti-bullying policies can fail to make a practical difference to the lives of students who are being bullied if they are not effectively implemented and well-developed among others. Moreover, when policies are implemented, the amount of violence and disruptions in the classroom are limited (Johnson, 2011).

Difference in Awareness Level and Implementation Between Students and Teachers on the Anti-Bullying Law

Table 5:- MS Excel t-test of Difference in Awareness and Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law Between Students and Teachers.

Variables	Computed probability of rejecting Ho	Decision at .05 level	Meaning of Test Result
Awareness of Bullying Between Students and Teachers	0.429	Accept Ho	No difference between students and teachers, therefore no relationship between awareness and respondents' classification.
Assessment on Implementation of Anti-Bullying Law Between Students and Teachers	0.0000003713	Reject Ho	Students and teachers/school personnel differ in assessment; therefore there is relationship between implementation and respondents' classification.

To test the difference in awareness level (Table 5) between the two groups, students and teachers, the t-test of difference for two independent samples was used. The test revealed a probability of 0.429 of rejecting the null hypothesis, which is higher than the .05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis that the two groups of respondents do not differ in awareness of bullying is accepted. This means that whether the respondent is a student or teacher, it has nothing to do with his or her awareness on bullying.

Difference in Assessment on Implementation of Anti-Bullying Law Between Students and Teachers.

On the difference in assessment on implementation of Anti-Bullying Law between students and teachers (Table 5), the t-test of difference for two independent samples was used to determine difference. The test revealed a probability of 0.0000003713 of rejecting the null hypothesis, which is lower than the .05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis that the two groups of respondents, students and teachers/school personnel, do not differ in assessment is rejected. The two groups differ in assessment. This means that whether the respondent is a student or teacher, it has something to do with his or her assessment. This implies that student's assessment on the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Law is lower than that of the assessment of the teachers hence, the need to increase the awareness of the students is imperative to fully understand bullying and its attendant consequences. This finding was supported by Menesini&Salmivalli (2017) who mentioned that raising awareness among students about the role of the whole group has an impact on maintaining bullying, and enhancing anti-bullying norms and responses within classrooms is crucial. It is also highly important that teachers clearly communicate their anti-bullying attitudes to students.

Conclusions:-

It is concluded that the respondent students are knowledgeable with the "Anti-Bullying Law" such as the different forms of bullying, the legal implications, the prohibited acts, the prevention and intervention programs on bullying as well as their duties and responsibilities in the implementation of the law hence, it can be said that the students tend to obey the same law except however on the verbal and written form of bullying.

The teachers are also knowledgeable with the “Anti-Bullying Law” such as the different forms of bullying, the legal implications, prohibited acts, the prevention and intervention programs on bullying as well as their duties and responsibilities in the implementation of the law hence it is concluded that they can basically perform their functions like the identification and detection of acts of bullying, and can respond to and handle incidence of bullying.

Finally, it is concluded that the awareness of the respondents of the “Anti-Bullying Law” does not connote an automatic or absolute full compliance of the law which will ensure a bullying-free school community but it can guide them in any way to become more judicious and responsible for their actions.

Recommendations:-

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are presented:

1. Continuous education campaign to students about the “Anti-Bullying Law” with emphasis on the verbal and written form of bullying including the legal implications of bullying.
2. School Principal and teacher should intensify the implementation of the “Anti-Bullying Law” particularly on the verbal and written form of bullying.
3. School Principal/Administrators shall keep their teachers and the members of the Child Protection Policy up-to-date with the existing laws, policies and procedures concerning bullying through seminars and conference.
4. Teachers are encouraged to closely monitor and supervise the activities of their students both classrooms and outside classrooms activities.
5. A research of the same kind may be conducted to determine other related factors that might cause the existence of bullying incidence.

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