Understanding and Behavior of Students on Teacher Bullying

in a Local Community College

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Abstract

Student bullying a teacher is a phenomenon given with the least attention and focus since the perpetrators were seen as the academe itself. This descriptive study is aimed to determine the understanding and behavior of students in a higher education institution towards teacher bullying. The study surveyed 105 conveniently selected respondents from the three (3) different departments of a local community college in Olongapo City who were currently enrolled within the school year of 2017-2018. A draft questionnaire was created and submitted for validity, reliability and consistency checks from different experts. The data collected were then processed using SPSS 22. The following results were generated: the respondent was a female, 18-20 years of age, first-year level and studying under the College of Business and Accountancy. The respondents moderately understood the idea of teacher bullying and their behavior towards teacher bullying is slightly inappropriate. Significant findings were found when the variables were grouped according to the year level and department. There was also a low relationship that was observed between understanding, year level and department. Based on the results, pertinent institutional policies and programs were recommended and suggested.

Keywords: Behavior, Local Community College, Students, Teacher Bullying, Understanding

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Introduction

The concept of the teacher being bullied in higher education is a collective occurrence yet disregarded to some extent due to its nature and its interpretation in the public eyes. As told by Benton, Stroschen, Cavazos, and McGill (2014), bullying in higher education is an increasingly common phenomenon that negatively affects organizational climate, completed work's quality and quantity, and students' educational experiences. On the accounts of Berliner (2011), a massive 90% of the teachers surveyed on the internet, complained of teacher bullying.

It has s significant impact on a variety of factors and it definitely contributes a considerable effect to the individuals who is/ are involved. According to Longobardi, Badenes-Ribera, Fabris, Martinez, and McMahn, (2018) the prevalence of violence perpetrated against teachers by students showed a range of 20% to 75% with a pooled prevalence of 53% within < 2 years' time frame. Hollis (2015) also reiterated that when leadership allowed bullying to flourish, employees disengaged from the work tasks, spending hours regrouping from hostile interaction. Thus, May and Tenzek (2018) implored that bullying is problematic on multiple levels in the academe. Further, Caldwell (2017) also exposed the lack of resources to address victimized teachers and revealed that there were very few evidenced-based programs that may assist teachers and school administrators to combat bullying.

Correspondingly, different factors played along with the proliferation of bullying. A study of Pyhalto, Pietarinen, and Soini, (2015) confirmed such notion and they indicated that the teacher–working environment fit, that is, receiving collegial support and acknowledgment, combined with a positive professional climate and capability to solve difficulties constructively. The said variables can function as inhibitors of both teacher-targeted bullying and exhaustion. In addition, there are significant effects that bullying can generate to a certain individual like what Moon and McCluskey (2014) speculated in their research where victimized teachers can suffer psychological distress, impaired personal relationships, and report higher levels of fear, leading to detrimental impacts on their job

performance and relationships with students. From the perspectives of Fox and Stallworth, (2010) pervasive bullying and violent acts were associated with strains in zero-order correlations, but when regressed, pervasive bullying rather than violence was associated with strains. They further conferred that relations between violent acts and strains were moderated by satisfaction with the administrations' handling of violent acts. Factor analysis was done by the team of Merilainen, Sinkkonen, Puhakka, and Kayhko, (2016) also revealed three dimensions of bullying: exclusion and discrimination, person-related belittlement and professional undermining. These dimensions were consistent with the categories of the consequences of bullying or inappropriate behavior based on open-ended answers. Furthermore, the findings also specified that teachers are aware of isolated and ongoing student bullying by their colleagues; however, they have a higher sense of accountability for peer bullying and forms of bullying with physical instead of socio-emotional concerns. (Zerillo & Osterman, 2011). Additionally, Misawa (2015) revealed three types of bullying: (a) positional bullying, (b) counter-positional bullying, and (c) unintentional conspirative positional bullying which enable them to bully a person in a position of power situated between them, by means of that person's race, gender, or sexual orientation.

There is a dearth in the local studies and literature in the country pertaining to this research, but one study of Tolentino (2016) pointed out that there were four major types of bullying which are experienced by teachers: emotional, verbal, physical, and cyberbullying. She also added that workplace bullying negatively affects all facets of the teachers' lives like their physical health, psychological health, and social health. In the opinion of Llego (2016), students can bully a teacher in many ways like displaying terrible behavior in class just to get attention and eventually distract them from focusing on the lesson and on the teacher. Furthermore, he added that even outside the classroom, teachers can be bullied and this can be done by the use of social media or even sending insulting texts and instant messages to other students via cellular phones or computers.

According to the news report of dela Cruz (2013), the chairman of Teacher's Dignity Coalition (TDC), Benjo Basas, stated that cases of students bullying teachers have been

increasing in the country. The worst so far was the case of a teacher in Caloocan who was stabbed and killed by a student.

This study aimed to produce baseline figures and facts with regards to the understanding and behaviors of students towards teacher bullying at the college level. The paper hopes to provide essential information about teacher bullying and its significance to the teaching profession. Also, the researcher anticipates a more drastic move and orientation to policy-makers to give this idea a little attention to the simple notion that teachers are very essential in molding the future generation. Lastly, to add up to the research world some substantial data that would be very beneficial for future researchers who will endeavor in the same field.

Methodology

The study made use of a descriptive research design with the use of a survey as a primary instrument so as to compliment with the main objective which is to assess the understanding and attitude of college students towards teacher bullying. Since the researcher is trying to describe certain characteristics of a population or phenomenon, it is only befitting to use such technology for its convenience in this investigation.

The researcher utilized 105 participants in this study from the different departments in Gordon College using a convenience sampling technique. The respondent is a bona fide student, currently enrolled and studying within the semester of Academic Year 2017-2018 in Gordon College, Olongapo City.

A self-made questionnaire was created by the researcher after an exhaustive reading of related literature and materials. It was then submitted for critiquing to experts and professors who are practitioners in the field of research for validity and reliability. Their comments were considered in revising and finalizing the construction of the questionnaire. To furthermore test the clarity and validity of the questionnaire, it was first pilot-tested to senior high students who were not included as subject participants in the study for ambiguous or hard to understand words and terms.

In this particular study, Pearson r, Analysis of Variance, t-test, frequency count and weighted mean were utilized for its statistical analysis. All of the data and information was

gathered in order to be tallied, tabulated, classified, analyzed and interpreted using SPSS 22.

The weighted values assigned to the understanding and attitude of college students were

patterned after Likert Scaling.

Results

As shown in Table 1, the frequency distribution and percentage equivalence of

respondents according to Sex, Age, Year Level, and Department. It can be deduced that the

majority of the respondents were female and fall in the age bracket between 18-20 years old.

It is also important to note that most of the respondents were in their first-year level and were

affiliated to the College of Business and Accountancy department.

Table 1 Descriptive Data of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	29
Female	75	71
Total	105	100
Age Bracket		
18-20 years old	84	80
21-25 years old	10	9
26-30 years old	4	4
31 years old above	7	7
Total	105	100
Year Level		
1st year	47	45
2nd year	31	29
3rd year	27	26
Total	105	100
Department		
College of Education, Arts & Sciences	26	25
College of Business and Accountancy	57	54
College of Allied Health Studies	22	21
Total	105	100

Table 2 exhibits the mean distribution of respondent's understanding of teacher

bullying. It can be observed in statement 4, got the highest mean. However, statement 15 got

the lowest mean average. Both statements fall under the same descriptive interpretation of

Moderately Understood. The overall mean was also interpreted as Moderately Understood by

the respondents.

Table 2. Mean Distribution of Respondents on the Understanding of Teacher Bullying

Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1) "Workplace bullying" refers to unreasonable behavior by an individual that intimidates or degrades another individual in work.	2.91	Moderately Understood
2) Bullying negatively affects the physical or psychological health of the targeted teacher(s).	3.23	Moderately Understood
3) Bullying generally involves repeated, unreasonable actions, but it can also be a single, severe action.	2.97	Moderately Understood
4) Bullying can be in the form of shouting, threats of violence, malicious gossips, etc.*	3.42	Moderately Understood
5) Anyone can bully a teacher such as students, staff, school administrators, department head, etc.	3.08	Moderately Understood
6) Policy on teacher bullying should be implemented in every institution.	3.34	Moderately Understood
7) Bullied teachers can report their situation to a committee in the school for proper evaluation and counseling.	3.18	Moderately Understood
8) There exists a law/ policy that protects teacher from bullying.	2.92	Moderately Understood
9) Bullying can lead to personality breakdown and sometimes loss of professionalism of a teacher.	3.31	Moderately Understood
10) Every teacher is a possible target of bullying.	3.18	Moderately Understood
11) Bullying can be through social media, physical, emotional or psychological means.	3.41	Moderately Understood
12) Bullied individuals (e.g. teachers) can be bullied inside or outside the classroom.	3.32	Moderately Understood
13) Bullied teachers can suffer depression, physical deterioration and sometimes loss of life.	3.35	Moderately Understood
14) Bullying a teacher can also lead to unemployment of that individual.	3.08	Moderately Understood
15) A bullied teacher can fight back to those bullies but in a more unexpected way.*	2.79	Moderately Understood
Overall Mean	3.16	Moderately Understood

Table 3 indicates the mean distribution of respondents' behavior towards teacher bullying. It can be analyzed that statement 3, got the highest mean which has a descriptive interpretation of Slightly Appropriate. On the other hand, statement 12 got the lowest mean which has a descriptive rating of Slightly Inappropriate in the Likert Scale. The overall mean was also interpreted as slightly inappropriate by the respondents.

Table 3. Mean Distribution of Respondent's Behavior towards Teacher Bullying

Statement	Mean	Descriptive Rating
1) When I see acts of bullying or harassment to a teacher, I report it.	2.40	Slightly Inappropriate
2) I avoid students who bully teachers for fear of my own safety.	2.71	Slightly Appropriate
3) I disregard bullying behaviors of staff members towards teachers.*	2.88	Slightly Appropriate

4) I make excuses or cover-up or defend certain students involved in teacher bullying.	1.84	Slightly Inappropriate
5) I fear I will be reprimanded by school administration for reporting teacher bullying.	2.22	Slightly Inappropriate
6) I believe the best way for targeted teachers to prevent future incidents is to fight back.	1.99	Slightly Inappropriate
7) I use violent language or actions while dealing with teachers.	1.58	Slightly Inappropriate
8) I believe targeted teachers set themselves up to be bullied.	2.07	Slightly Inappropriate
9) I tend to overlook problem behaviors in teachers since it is not my responsibility to check them.	2.13	Slightly Inappropriate
10) I do not report teacher bullying incidents to protect the school from social issues.*	2.01	Slightly Inappropriate
11) If I get mad to a teacher, I send insulting text messages to my text mates about that teacher.	1.53	Slightly Inappropriate
12) I usually send "poison" letters to the school to degrade a teacher that I do not like.*	1.50	Slightly Inappropriate
13) I try to conspire with my fellow classmates to prank our teacher whom we hate the most.	1.56	Slightly Inappropriate
14) When I am angry with a teacher, I usually post my grievances in the social media.	1.55	Slightly Inappropriate
15) I use a "code" or "call sign" with my classmates to a specific teachers	1.92	Slightly Inappropriate
Overall Mean	1.99	Slightly Inappropriate

Table 4 represents the t-test on the understanding and behavior of respondents towards teacher bullying. It can be inferred that there are no significant differences in terms of understanding and behavior of the respondents towards teacher bullying regardless of their sex since t (103) = 0.688, $p >$ .05 for understanding of teacher bullying and t (103) = 0.704, $p >$ .05 for behavior towards teacher bullying.

Table 4. T-Test for Significant Difference on Understanding and Behavior of Respondents towards Teacher Bullying grouped according to Sex

	Male		Female		t- test
	M	SD	M	SD	
Understanding of Teacher Bullying	3.15	.545	3.19	.522	0.688
Behavior towards Teacher Bullying	2.04	.801	1.99	.679	0.704
df = 103					

Table 5 shows the Analysis of Variance on the understanding and behavior of respondents towards teacher bullying grouped according to age. It is safe to assume that there is no significant difference in the understanding and behavior of the respondents regardless of

what age bracket they may belong to when it comes to teacher bullying. The computed values were $F(3,101) = .133$ for understanding on teacher bullying and $F(3,101) = 1.617$ for behavior towards teacher bullying, both have a $p > .05$.

Table 5. ANOVA for Significant Difference on Understanding and Behavior of Respondents towards Teacher Bullying grouped according to Age

Teacher Bullying		SS	dF	MS	*F* value
Understanding	Between Groups	0.113	3	0.038	0.133
	Within	28.695	101	0.284	
	Total	28.808	104		
Attitude	Between Groups	2.420	3	0.807	1.617
	Within	50.383	101	0.499	
	Total	52.803	104		

Table 6 displays the ANOVA on the understanding and behavior of respondents towards teacher bullying when respondents are grouped according to the year level. It can be scrutinized from the table that understanding on teacher bullying yielded a significant value, since $F(2,102) = 3.251$, $p < .05$, thus there exists a significant difference in understanding of the respondents based on the year level where they belong. However, behavior towards teacher bullying did not get enough to provide significant results since $F(2,102) = 2.462$, $p > .05$.

Table 6. ANOVA for Significant Difference on Understanding and Behavior of Respondents towards Teacher Bullying grouped according to Year Level

Teacher Bullying		SS	dF	MS	*F* value
Understanding	Between Groups	1.726	2	0.863	3.251*
	Within	27.081	102	0.266	
	Total	28.808	104		
Behavior	Between Groups	2.432	2	1.216	2.462
	Within	50.371	102	0.494	
	Total	52.803	104		

*$p < .05$

Table 7 details the Analysis of Variance of the respondent on understanding and behavior of respondents towards teacher bullying grouped according to their department. Significant findings were found. The results include $F(2,102) = 8.632$, $p < .05$ for understanding on teacher bullying and $F(2,102) = 6.459$, $p < .05$ for behavior towards teacher

bullying stresses a significant difference in their response towards teacher bullying depending

on the department that they are affiliated.

Table 7. ANOVA for Significant Difference on Understanding and Behavior of Respondents
towards Teacher Bullying grouped according to Department

Teacher Bullying		SS	dF	MS	*F* value
	Between Groups	4.170	2	2.085	8.632*
Understanding	Within	24.638	102	0.242	
	Total	28.808	104		
	Between Groups	5.936	2	2.968	6.459*
Attitude	Within	46.868	102	0.459	
	Total	52.803	104		

*p< .05

Table 8 shows the relationship of understanding and behavior towards teacher

bullying with the profile of the respondents. It can be deduced that only understanding

portrayed a significant relationship with the year level and department of the respondents

since *r* = .245 and .352 respectively. The rest of the variables did not yield significant results

to qualify them with a relationship with others.

Table 8. Correlation Matrix between Understanding and Behavior towards Teacher Bullying
and Profile Variables

	Understanding	Behavior
Sex	.040	- .037
Age	-.045	.146
Year Level	.245*	- .051
Department	.352*	- .138

*p<0.05

Discussion

The main purpose of this study is to assess the understanding and behavior of college

students toward teacher bullying. This is idea is prevalent for higher education institutions

due to the advancement of technology and the era of social media is just a touch away. Thus,

teacher bullying has never been this "enthusiastic" than ever before. Little do we know that

such practice has been emanating in the office, though this study only focused on students

which bully teachers, its impact is no different from the others. Based on the literature

reviews of Prevost and Hunt (2018), the most common kind of bullying was psychological

and emotional assaults. Although the perpetrator of bullying is unaware of such, it can be

summed up to this by the victims who receive it. According to Meires (2018), there is

evidence that indicates incivility is a precursor of bullying in academia. Although factors can

be related to bullying, it can lead to negative outcomes on the victims (Prevost & Hunt,

2018).

In the study, it was observed that the respondents tend to have a moderate

understanding of what teacher bullying is all about. The main concern here is the prevalence

of bullying in the academe and do the perpetrators are guilty of it. Prevost and Hunt (2018)

mentioned that bullying is often directed to other academics and faculty. In the words of de

Wet (2010) lack of an effective regime for the monitoring of regulations on behavior and the

characteristics of the bullies and victims are reasons for bullying which have the same idea as

Reigel (2016), wherein she pointed the notion of the institutional process of reporting bullies

in the workplace.

Furthermore, it was also noted in the study that when it comes to teacher bullying,

students were quite abashed with the idea of teacher bullying thus, they projected a slightly

inappropriate response to almost all the items. Corroboratively, Bradshaw, Sawyer &

O'Brennan (2007) reported that students and staff report the highest exposure to and concern

about bullying. However, Reigel (2016) revealed that most instructors who are bullied were

reluctant to report such an incident in the institution. This issue needs to be addressed along

the line since; it may lead to various work related and institutional consequences. (Prevost &

Hunt, 2018)

Differences in the understanding and behavior of the respondents regarding the year

level and the department made this study unique. There has been no literature that directly

supports the result of this study. However, Borochowitz and Desivillia (2016) claimed that

faculty and students both have considerable similarities in identifying uncivil behavior and

also, they both agree that the main cause lies in the penetration of norms from external

culture.

Finally, concerning the relationship between the understanding and behavior of

students towards teacher bullying and the profile variables, although there is a lack of related

literature to support the results, Foley et. al (2014) provided some significant findings in their

multivariate analysis that is partly related in the current study. Furthermore, Pyhalto,

Pietarinen & Soini (2015) showed that exhaustion and bullying were significant determinants of teacher turnover.

Conclusion

Based on data gathered, tabulated and analyzed, the researcher concluded that the respondent was a female, 18-20-year-old, first-year student, studying under the College of Business and Accountancy.

The respondents moderately understood teacher bullying and they also behave slightly inappropriate.

There was no significant difference in the results when understanding and the behavior of students towards teacher bullying were grouped according to sex and gender. However, regarding the year level and department, there was a significant finding. There was also a low significant relationship that was observed between understanding of teacher bullying, year level, and department.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed by the researcher:

1) The School administrator should provide policies that focus on the protection of teachers in bullying.

2) Relative student education appertaining to the dos and don'ts between teacher-student relationships, both inside and outside the school campus.

3) Personality development seminar/ workshop for teachers to improve their image in front of their students and minimize teacher bullying.

4) Personnel education in bullying in the workplace, how is it done, and how should it be avoided or prevented.

5) Counseling for the bullied individual and provision of support group during the time of the rehabilitation program.

6) Lobbying of a law that gives protection and safeguards for bullied teachers with corresponding sanctions and punishments to those who are proven guilty

7) Conduct further researches and studies on this field.

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