

Effects of Bullying Experiences on the Academic Achievement and Psychological Well-being of Some Elementary School Learners in the Division of Quezon

¹Roxannie A. Banal, ²Walter F. Galarosa

Department of Education

¹roxannie.banal@deped.gov.ph, ²walter.galarosa@deped.gov.ph

Article Details:

Received: 20 April 2026

Revised: 26 April 2026

Accepted: 1 May 2026

Published: 7 May 2026

Corresponding Email:

roxannie.banal@deped.gov.ph

Recommended Citation:

Banal R. A., Galarosa W. F. (2026). Effects of Bullying Experiences on the Academic Achievement and Psychological Well-being of Some Elementary School Learners in the Division of Quezon. *The International Review of Multidisciplinary Research*. 1 (5), 1-6.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20069734>

Index Terms:

bullying experiences, academic achievement, psychological well-being, anti-bullying measures, socio-emotional learning, elementary learners

Abstract. Bullying remains a pervasive challenge in schools affecting learners' emotional and academic development. This mixed-methods study examined effects of bullying on academic achievement and psychological well-being of elementary learners in Quezon Province. The quantitative component used a correlational-predictive design assessing physical, verbal, gender-based, social, and cyberbullying and explored school strategies addressing bullying. A total of 86 learners from 22 public elementary schools participated, completing questionnaires, adapted Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale, and interviews with guidance counselors. Findings showed verbal and social bullying were most frequent, followed by physical, cyber, and gender-based. Victims showed low academic performance and psychological well-being, with reduced autonomy, personal growth, relations, and self-acceptance, and moderate environmental mastery and purpose in life. Regression analysis indicated verbal and cyberbullying significantly reduced academic achievement and psychological well-being while other forms showed no significant effects. Schools implemented anti-bullying measures such as awareness programs, counseling, classroom integration, and stakeholder collaboration. Study concludes emotionally distressing forms of bullying have strongest negative impact, highlighting need for targeted interventions. In response, Project SEL: A Socio-Emotional Learning Program is proposed to enhance resilience, well-being, academic performance, and school safety.

Introduction

Bullying remains a persistent global issue affecting students' academic and psychological development. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) reports that millions of learners worldwide experience various forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying. Its effects are well documented, ranging from reduced academic performance to psychological distress. International studies show that victims often experience lower academic achievement, decreased motivation, anxiety, and depression (Abrigo, Lingatong, & Relos, 2025), emphasizing the need for effective school-based interventions.

In the United States, approximately 20% of students aged 12 to 18 have experienced bullying (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2023). Despite the implementation of anti-bullying policies, counseling services, and peer mediation programs, bullying remains prevalent, particularly among younger learners. Similarly, European countries such as Finland and Sweden have implemented structured programs like the KiVa Program, which highlights the importance of whole-school involvement in preventing bullying and supporting victims (Salmivalli, Kärnä, & Poskiparta, 2011).

In Asia, bullying continues to be a major concern. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2019) reports that nearly one in three students experience bullying. In countries such as Japan and South Korea, academic pressure further intensifies the effects, leading to burnout, stress, and social withdrawal. The rise of digital

platforms has also contributed to increased cyberbullying, making monitoring and prevention more challenging for parents and educators (Abrigo, Lingatong, & Relos, 2025).

In the Philippines, bullying persists despite the implementation of Republic Act No. 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013. Reports from the Department of Education (DepEd, 2013) indicate continuing cases that negatively affect students' academic performance and emotional well-being. The Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS) has documented increasing incidents, particularly in elementary schools, suggesting that existing interventions may still be insufficient.

In the Division of Quezon, EBEIS data for School Year 2022–2023 revealed reported cases of physical, verbal, gender-based, social, and cyberbullying in public elementary schools. These incidents highlight the need for more effective intervention strategies to ensure safe learning environments. Prolonged exposure to bullying has been linked to psychological difficulties such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. According to Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Theory (Ryff, 1989), well-being is characterized by self-acceptance, positive relations, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. However, bullying victims often experience deficits in these areas, affecting both emotional stability and academic motivation.

Moreover, bullying has been shown to negatively affect academic performance, as victims often struggle with concentration, task completion, and participation in school activities (Espelage, Low, & Polanin, 2021). In this context, this study examines the effects of bullying on academic achievement and psychological well-being among elementary learners in the Division of Quezon. It further aims to identify the types of bullying experienced and propose an intervention program that strengthens both prevention and support mechanisms. The findings may serve as a basis for enhancing existing anti-bullying programs and promoting a safer and more supportive learning environment.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to examine the effects of bullying experiences on the academic achievement and psychological well-being of elementary school learners in the Division of Quezon. The mixed-methods approach combined quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem through statistical evidence and contextual insights.

The quantitative component utilized a correlational-predictive design. It investigated the extent to which different forms of bullying experiences—physical, verbal, gender-based, social, and cyberbullying—affected learners' academic achievement and psychological well-being. Academic achievement was measured using the respondents' final grades obtained from official school records, while psychological well-being was assessed using an adapted version of Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale. Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the significant effects of the identified forms of bullying on the dependent variables.

The qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with school guidance counselors, guidance coordinators, or designated school personnel. These interviews explored the strategies and interventions implemented by schools in addressing bullying incidents. The qualitative findings were used to enrich the interpretation of the quantitative results and to identify practical school-based responses.

The study was conducted in 22 purposively selected public elementary schools in the Division of Quezon Province that reported bullying cases in the Enhanced Basic Education Information System (EBEIS) for School Year 2022–2023. The respondents were elementary school learners officially identified as having experienced bullying. Out of 103 initially identified learners, 86 participated in the study due to the unavailability of some respondents during data gathering. Four research instruments were utilized: (1) a researcher-made questionnaire on bullying experiences, (2) a data retrieval form for academic grades, (3) an adapted 30-item Ryff Psychological Well-Being Scale, and (4) a semi-structured interview guide for key informants. All instruments underwent expert validation, and pilot testing was conducted to establish clarity, relevance, and reliability.

Prior to data collection, approval was secured from the Schools Division Office and school authorities. Informed consent from parents or guardians and assent from learners were obtained before participation. Ethical principles such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and the protection of child participants were strictly observed throughout the study.

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, ranking, and multiple regression analysis. Qualitative interview responses were transcribed and analyzed through thematic coding procedures to identify recurring themes related to school anti-bullying strategies.

Results and Discussion

1. Level of Bullying Experiences Among Elementary School Learners

The results revealed that learners experienced varying levels of bullying across five dimensions: physical, verbal, gender-based, social, and cyberbullying.

Among these forms, verbal bullying emerged as the most prevalent ($M = 4.47$, Most Experienced), followed by social bullying ($M = 4.20$, Highly Experienced). This indicates that learners are frequently exposed to relational and verbal aggression such as name-calling, teasing, exclusion, rumor-spreading, and public humiliation.

In contrast, cyberbullying ($M = 3.21$), physical bullying ($M = 3.13$), and gender-based bullying ($M = 3.04$) were moderately experienced, suggesting that these forms occur less frequently but remain present in the school environment.

Overall, the grand mean of 3.61 (Highly Experienced) indicates that bullying is a persistent issue among learners, occurring during a substantial portion of the school year.

These findings suggest that bullying in elementary schools is more verbal and relational in nature rather than physical, consistent with studies emphasizing that verbal and social aggression are the most common forms of peer victimization in school settings (Smith et al., 2002).

2. Academic Achievement of Learners Experiencing Bullying

The academic performance of learners who experienced bullying yielded a mean grade of 78.41, interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory. Most respondents (41%) fall within the 75–79% range, while a notable portion (24%) did not meet academic expectations.

These results indicate that many bullied learners are performing at average to below-average academic levels, suggesting that bullying may negatively affect academic engagement and consistency in performance.

This finding aligns with research showing that bullying contributes to reduced concentration, school avoidance, emotional distress, and lower academic motivation, which ultimately affects achievement outcomes (Graham & Juvonen, 2002).

3. Level of Psychological Well-being of Learners

The overall psychological well-being of learners was found to be low (Grand Mean = 2.47).

Among the six dimensions, only Purpose in Life ($M = 3.05$) and Environmental Mastery ($M = 2.91$) were rated moderate. The remaining dimensions—Autonomy ($M = 2.04$), Positive Relations with Others ($M = 2.07$), Self-Acceptance ($M = 2.26$), and Personal Growth ($M = 2.46$)—were all low.

This indicates that while learners still maintain some future goals and basic functional skills, they struggle significantly in emotional, social, and self-related domains.

These findings support Ryff's (1989) theory that psychological well-being is multidimensional and can be weakened by environmental stressors such as bullying, particularly in areas involving self-worth, autonomy, and social relationships.

4. Effect of Bullying on Academic Achievement

Regression analysis revealed that verbal bullying ($p = 0.001$) and cyberbullying ($p = 0.004$) significantly predict academic achievement, both showing negative effects.

Meanwhile, physical, gender-based, and social bullying were not statistically significant predictors ($p > 0.05$).

This suggests that emotionally and psychologically harmful forms of bullying have a stronger impact on academic outcomes than physically based aggression.

The model indicates that verbal and cyberbullying interfere with learners' motivation, attention, and classroom engagement, leading to lower academic performance.

Since some variables were significant, the null hypothesis is partially rejected.

5. Effect of Bullying on Psychological Well-being

Similarly, verbal bullying ($p = 0.001$) and cyberbullying ($p = 0.001$) significantly affect psychological well-being, both showing negative relationships.

Physical, gender-based, and social bullying were not significant predictors.

This implies that verbal and online forms of bullying are the most damaging to learners' emotional stability, self-acceptance, and social functioning.

The findings are consistent with literature showing that verbal and cyber victimization are strongly associated with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Juvonen & Graham, 2019; Olweus, 1993).

Thus, the null hypothesis is also partially rejected.

6. School Strategies in Addressing Bullying

Schools implement several strategies to address bullying, including:

- Awareness campaigns
- Counseling services
- Classroom discussions
- Monitoring and early intervention
- Parent involvement
- Community collaboration

These interventions show that schools apply a multi-stakeholder approach, combining prevention, intervention, and support systems.

However, variation in implementation frequency suggests that some programs are more periodic rather than continuous, which may limit long-term effectiveness.

7. Integration of Findings

The overall findings indicate that although schools implement anti-bullying programs, learners still experience high levels of verbal and social bullying.

These forms of bullying significantly affect both academic performance and psychological well-being, particularly in emotional and social dimensions.

This suggests a gap between existing interventions and actual learner experiences, highlighting the need for stronger socio-emotional and preventive programs such as the proposed Project SEL.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that bullying remains a persistent concern among elementary school learners in the Division of Quezon, with learners experiencing varying forms of victimization. Among these, verbal and social bullying are the most commonly experienced, followed by physical, cyber, and gender-based bullying. This indicates that bullying in elementary schools is predominantly relational and verbal in nature, significantly affecting learners' school experiences, emotional well-being, and social interactions.

These findings imply that school-based interventions should prioritize addressing verbal and social forms of bullying, as these are the most prevalent and have the most substantial impact on learners' development. Strengthening classroom climate, peer relationships, and communication norms is essential to reduce these forms of victimization.

The results further reveal that learners who experience bullying generally demonstrate average to low academic performance, suggesting that victimization may hinder engagement, motivation, and active participation in learning activities. This implies the need for instructional strategies that promote inclusive participation, learner motivation, and emotionally safe classroom environments to support academic success.

In terms of psychological well-being, bullying negatively affects learners' emotional stability, self-acceptance, autonomy, and social relationships. These findings imply that schools must strengthen socio-emotional learning programs and provide sustained psychological support to help learners rebuild confidence, resilience, and healthy peer relationships.

Regression analysis shows that only verbal bullying and cyberbullying significantly affect both academic achievement and psychological well-being, while physical, gender-based, and social bullying do not show significant effects. This implies that emotionally and psychologically driven forms of bullying have a stronger impact on learners' development compared to physical forms. Hence, the null hypotheses (H_{01} and H_{02}) are partially rejected.

The study also reveals that schools implement various interventions such as awareness programs, counseling services, classroom-based discussions, stakeholder collaboration, and policy enforcement. While these initiatives reflect a comprehensive approach, their periodic implementation suggests the need for more consistent, sustained, and systematically monitored programs to ensure long-term effectiveness.

Overall, the findings imply that a holistic, preventive, and sustained school-wide approach is necessary. Strengthening socio-emotional learning (SEL), integrating digital citizenship education, enhancing counseling services, and promoting stronger parent and community engagement are essential strategies to mitigate bullying and improve learners' academic and psychological outcomes.

Acknowledgements

The researcher acknowledges Almighty God for guidance and strength throughout the completion of this study.

The researcher expresses appreciation to Marinduque State University and Quezonian Educational College, Inc. for institutional support.

The panel of evaluators, Dr. Diosdado P. Zulueta, Dr. Julieta Q. Nabos, and Ms. Carmencita L. Aragon, are acknowledged for their critical review and recommendations.

Gratitude is extended to Dr. Walter F. Galarosa, research adviser; Dr. Rogel L. Limpiada, statistician; Dr. Joy S. Montejo, editor; and Dr. Ernesto L. Largado, copy editor, for their technical assistance.

Acknowledgment is also given to Dr. Leodegario M. Jalos Jr., Dr. Rizalie M. Lim, and Ms. Liezl M. Manoy for their guidance and support.

The researcher recognizes Dr. Rommel C. Bautista, Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Quezon, for granting permission to conduct the study, and the respondents for their participation.

Finally, the researcher acknowledges the support of her family and VIES family.

Funding

This research received no external funding from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agency, and no organization provided financial support for the conduct of the study, authorship, or publication of this article.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

References

- Abrigo, M. R. M., Lingatong, E. E., & Relos, C. M. L. (2025). School bullying contributes to lower PISA achievement among Filipino students: Who gets bullied? Why does it matter? *Philippine Institute for Development Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.62986/dp2024.45>
- Department of Education. (2013). *Republic Act No. 10627 (Anti-Bullying Act of 2013) implementing rules and regulations*. <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/10/72034>
- Espelage, D. L., Low, S. K., & Polanin, J. R. (2021). Bullying, cyberbullying, and student well-being in schools. *Educational Psychologist*, 56(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2021.1933369>
- Graham, S., & Juvonen, J. (2002). The impact of peer victimization on academic motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431602022002003>
- Juvonen, J., & Graham, S. (2019). Bullying in schools: The power of bullies and the plight of victims. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 70, 119–140. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115030>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). *Student reports of bullying: Indicators from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2024/2024109.pdf>
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Blackwell Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.10114>
- Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069>
- Salmivalli, C., Kärnä, A., & Poskiparta, E. (2011). Counteracting bullying in Finland: The KiVa program and its effects on different forms of bullying. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 35(5), 405–411. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025411407457>
- Smith, P. K., Cowie, H., Olafsson, R. F., & Liefvooghe, A. P. D. (2002). Definitions of bullying: A comparison of terms used, and age and gender differences, in a fourteen-country international comparison. *Child Development*, 73(4), 1119–1133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00461>
- UNESCO. (2019). *Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://www.unicef.org/media/66496/file/behind-the-numbers.pdf>
- World Health Organization. (2021). *Global status report on preventing violence against children*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240039322>

Appendices

Appendix upon request