Nature, extent and impact of bullying among secondary school learners in Gauteng

Gauteng Department of Education

5th Monitoring and Evaluation Colloquium

Theme: Working together to end Bullying: The Prevention of Bullying in Gauteng Schools

21 August 2012

Presenters

Mrs G Zulu & Prof DH Tustin
Introduction

- Background on YRU
- Describing ‘bullying’
- Research methodology and findings
Research Methodology

- Objective of 2011/12 YRU quantitative study
  - Identify relevant research information related to the nature and extent of school violence in a form of bullying, its manifestation and consequences thereof

- Empirical research
  - Learners ages between 12 – 25 years in grades 8 to 12
  - Randomly selected schools classified by socioeconomic group
  - n = 3371
  - Data collection: Self-administered questionnaire

- Research instrument focus area
  - Personal understanding of bullying
  - Occurrence of bullying
  - Reporting of bullying
  - Awareness of bullying incidents
  - Personal involvement in bullying activities
  - Increasing occurrence of cyber bullying
Research Findings

- Nature and extent of bullying
- Manifestation of bullying in cyber world
- Consequences
- Reporting
Personal understanding of bullying

- Learners demonstrated a clear understanding of the phenomenon.
- View correlate closely with the scholastic description of the phenomenon.
- Concerns regarding the distinction between bullying and abuse.
# RESEARCH ANALYSIS

## Nature and extent of bullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bullied in past 2 years</th>
<th>Not bullied in past 2 years</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>1158</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$%$</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample size $n = 1158$
Extent of emotional, physical and online bullying

Personal Experience

*Have you been bullied during the past 2 years?*

- Grade 8: 42.0
- Grade 9: 33.6
- Grade 10: 32.2
- Grade 11: 32.3
- Grade 12: 31.5
Extent of emotional, physical and online bullying

Personal Experience

Who bullied you?

- Teacher: 7.3%
- Parent: 7.5%
- Unknown adult: 27.7%
- Young person: 60.4%
Nature and Extent of Emotional and Physical Bullying

Bullying Location

- Not indicated: 8.5%
- At school after class: 29.3%
- At school during class: 32.2%
- Outside school premises: 34.9%
Further Exploration of emotional and physical bullying

- Some learners faced multiple exposure to bullying in more than one place
- 91.9% - bullied by one person and 5.6% - bullied by two or more persons
- 75% reported that bullying takes place occasionally
- Findings also reveal - constant exposure to bullying daily, weekly, monthly
- 39.2% of learners identified some character traits/physical traits that make them subject to bullying
  - Jealousy, physical appearance and academic achievement

- 60.4% attribute bullying to the bully's character
  - Status, dominance, ego and financial and material gain out of his/her actions
  - Individuals with insecurities, personal struggles and vulnerable

- 39.7% - did not provide a reason why as to why they think they are bullied
  - Sense of hopelessness/ helplessness
  - View – supported by 40.3% who could not indicate how bullying has impacted on them
Extent of bullying: Peer experience

Are you aware of a friend being bullied?

- Yes: 38.1%
- No: 61.9%
## Type of Bullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bullying</th>
<th>Yourself</th>
<th>Peers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyber</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EMOTIONAL BULLYING
- Name calling
- Spreading rumours
- Threatening and intimidating
- Making things up to get you in trouble
- Taking your friends away
Nature and extent of Emotional and Physical bullying

Effects of Bullying

- Physically ill: 1.0
- Frustrated: 1.8
- Always afraid: 2.2
- Thoughts of suicide: 2.5
- Lonely: 3.4
- Anxious: 4.0
- Embarrassed: 5.6
- Degraded: 7.2
- Anger: 9.7
- Helplessness/powerless: 9.7
- Depression: 11.8
- Sadness: 21.8

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Personal involvement in bullying

Have you bullied someone?

- Yes: 23.3%
- No: 76.7%
Personal involvement in bullying

Bullying Practices

- Physical Bullying: 46.0%
- Verbal Bullying: 25.6%
- Emotional Bullying: 10.7%
- Cyber Bullying: 1.3%

Primary Target Audience

- Fragile learners
- Quiet learners
- Popular learners

Awareness of bullying effects

- 75.2% - Aware of the negative impact on victims
- 40.1% - Faced consequences of their actions
- 66.3% - Aware of strategies to take to stop bullying

Factors Motivating Bullying

- Retaliation: 16.5%
- Peer pressure: 12.0%
- Anger: 10.5%
- Fun and Entertainment: 6.3%
- Fame and power: 6.0%

Feelings Evoked following bullying

- Uncertain: 33.5%
- Embarrassed: 26.0%
- Sad: 10.9%
- Relieved: 10.7%
Nature and extent of cyber bullying (16.9%)

Personal experiences

- Bullied, recorded and photo posted online: 8.7%
- Unflattering/suggestive photos: 13.3%
- Sexual remarks: 24.5%
- Threatening messages: 29.6%
- False statements: 35.7%
- Called names: 48.0%
- Rumours & gossip: 49.0%
- Upsetting messages: 53.6%
Nature and extent of cyber bullying

Personal experiences

- Bullied, recorded and photo posted online
- Unflattering/ suggestive photos
- Sexual remarks
- Threatening messages
- False statements
- Called Names
- Rumours & gossip
- Upsetting messages

Social Networks
Chat rooms
Websites
Mxit
Blogs
E-mails
SMSs
Cyber bullying experiences via electronic devices

- Bullied, recorded and photos/videos distributed online: 5.1%
- Unflattering/suggestive photos: 6.6%
- Sexual remarks: 16.3%
- Threatening messages: 17.9%
- False Statement: 25.0%
- Called names: 36.2%
- Rumours and gossip: 32.2%
- Upsetting Messages: 40.8%

PC at Home, PC at school, Cellphones
Cyber bullying

- Cyber bullying take place mainly through cellphones

- Cyber bullying findings reveal evidence of sexting as a growing phenomenon
  - Sexual remarks
  - Unflattering/suggestive personal photo spread online
  - Bullied, recorded and photo/videos distributed online

- 74.5% - tried to avoid cyber bullying - measure of protection
  - 26.5% - Avoiding chat rooms
  - 25.5% - Avoiding MXit
  - 15.8% - Avoiding social networks
  - 13.8% - Changed cellphone numbers
Reporting Bullying

Verbatim responses

“I’m scared to tell my mother because she always yells at me”
“I am scared they would bully me more”
“I'm scared to make trouble at school “
“I’m scared to open up to my mom because she will think I’m a girl”
“Because I was feeling like I am alone in this world”
“They told me they will beat me up if I report on them”
Conclusions and Recommendations
Conclusions & Recommendations

- This presentation reflects on the outcome of the Gauteng study which is also currently extended to other provinces in SA.
- Traditional forms of bullying are still prevalent. Occurs off school premises and is predominantly emotional in nature.
- Although traditional forms of bullying are still prominent, the presence of cyber bullying is emerging rapidly and sexting in particular.
- Young people recognise that technology is creating a platform for bullying and contribute to the ongoing online victimisation of the youth.
- Cyber bullying takes place predominantly through cellphones (SMS & social media).
- Primarily younger children (grade 8) are at risk of bullying.
- Although the occurrence of bullying declines with grades, learners in all grades particularly tend to be consistently victimised.
Conclusions & Recommendations

- Continuous cyber safety education.
- Serious impact of bullying need to be addressed - coping mechanisms.
- Online awareness campaigns and counselling services are recommended.
- Binding guidelines on appropriate action to reported action need to be enhanced.
Recommendations

Future Research

Expand to other provinces (including rural areas)

Psycho-social impact of cyber bullying

Conduct insightful research on youth’s comprehension levels of ‘cyber bullying’

Intervention strategies

Early age-appropriate intervention programs

Appropriate reporting structures

Empowerment and proactive intervention strategies of child care practitioners
Thank you

Mrs G Zulu & Prof DH Tustin

University of South Africa (Unisa)
Bureau of Market Research (BMR)
Youth Research Unit (YRU)