

Influence of Parental Involvement, School Policies, and Teachers' Interventions on Bullying Incidents Fostering Lifelong Learning in Public Schools of Malaybalay City Division

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Bullying persists as a critical challenge in Philippine public schools, undermining student well-being and learning, particularly in regions like Malaybalay City Division where localized data shows high incidence rates. This study examines how parental involvement, school policies, and teacher interventions can reduce these incidents while advancing lifelong learning and under DepEd's MATATAG agenda.

Bullying remains a persistent and complex issue in public schools, contributing to hostile learning environments that adversely affect students' academic performance and mental health. Despite the implementation of national policies such as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627) and school-based programs designed to promote child protection and well-being, incidents of bullying continue to surface across different grade levels. These incidents often manifest as verbal abuse, physical aggression, and social exclusion, creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity within school communities.

Bullying in public schools disrupts academic performance, mental health, and social development, with PISA 2022 data showing 25% of Filipino students experiencing frequent victimization—highest in Southeast Asia. Public schools report rising incidents amid post-pandemic stressors, underscoring gaps in multi-stakeholder responses. Parental involvement builds resilience through home reinforcement, school policies provide structural deterrence per DepEd mandates, and teacher interventions offer immediate ecological support, as framed by Bronfenbrenner's Social-Ecological Model and local studies like Kilag et al.

Research has shown that students who experience bullying are more likely to exhibit anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and disengagement from school activities. Academically, bullying is linked to decreased classroom participation, increased absenteeism, poor academic performance, and, in severe cases, school dropout. While quantitative studies have documented the prevalence and outcomes of bullying, there remains a need to understand the lived experiences of students and teachers who directly encounter this phenomenon in everyday school life.

This qualitative study seeks to explore bullying through personal narratives, focusing on how peer interactions, social dynamics, and school culture contribute to the persistence of hostile environments. By giving voice to both students and teachers, the study aims to generate deeper insights that can inform more responsive interventions, strengthen child protection mechanisms, and support the creation of safer and more inclusive school.

METHODS

Studies on Filipino learners show that the quality of parent-child relationships and parental support strongly relates to students' involvement in bullying, either as victim, bully, or bully-victim. Research on high school students in Baguio City found that secure attachment to parents is associated with lower bullying involvement, while insecure, avoidant-fearful attachment predicts more bullying behavior. These findings support the idea

that positive parental involvement—through warmth, monitoring, and open communication—serves as a protective factor against bullying.

Broader work on family support in the Philippines also links supportive home environments with better academic outcomes such as reading literacy, which is a key component of lifelong learning. In one Philippine study using PISA data, family support and school belonging jointly predicted reading literacy, suggesting that when families are engaged and students feel safe at school, they are more likely to develop foundational skills for lifelong learning. International and local literature on parenting roles in preventing bullying emphasizes that parents who model prosocial behavior, monitor peer groups, and collaborate with schools effectively reduce bullying and aggressive behaviors. These findings justify including parental involvement as one of your independent variables.

At the policy level, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd Child Protection Policy) declares zero tolerance for abuse, violence, discrimination, and bullying, and mandates schools to create safe, child-friendly environments. This policy outlines prohibited acts (including bullying and cyberbullying), duties of school personnel, the creation of Child Protection Committees, reporting procedures, and interventions to protect children. It also requires schools to integrate positive and non-violent discipline, guidance services, and preventive programs, which your study can treat as elements of school policies and institutional support.

Republic Act 10627 or the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, with its implementing rules in DepEd Order No. 55, s. 2013, further specifies that all schools must adopt anti-bullying policies, establish reporting and referral mechanisms, and submit periodic reports on bullying incidents. Division offices are tasked to review school anti-bullying policies and consolidate reports, while schools must implement prevention, intervention, and remedial measures. Recent DepEd issuances and public statements underlined that bullying has no place in schools and reaffirmed the commitment to strengthen enforcement of RA 10627 and revise implementing rules to ensure safe, inclusive learning environments. Local research on anti-bullying policy adherence in Philippine schools reports that the extent of implementation of these policies—through clear rules, orientation, and monitoring—is associated with lower bullying incidents and a more positive school climate, which supports your focus on school policies as a predictor variable.

Teacher-led interventions represent the day-to-day operationalization of DepEd child protection and anti-bullying policies. International evidence shows that systematic teacher training and structured intervention programs can significantly reduce bullying incidents and improve classroom climate. Philippine studies on bullying experiences among secondary students describe how teacher responses (e.g., immediate intervention, counseling referrals, and restorative conversations) shape students' sense of safety and willingness to report incidents. Research on bullying encounters and their perceived impacts among Filipino learners notes that teachers and guidance personnel are often the first line of defense, and their consistent, compassionate interventions mitigate academic and emotional harm.

Local research that examines teacher practices in implementing anti-bullying policies demonstrates that when teachers regularly monitor behavior, enforce rules fairly, and integrate socio-emotional learning, students report fewer bullying incidents and better peer relationships. This aligns with the DepEd Child Protection Policy's requirement for capacity-building activities for teachers on positive discipline, handling bullying cases, and referring children to appropriate services. These strands of evidence support your inclusion of teachers' interventions as a key factor that may influence both bullying incidents and the development of a safe environment conducive to lifelong learning.

Bullying has been shown to undermine learners' academic engagement, motivation, and sense of belonging, which are all pillars of lifelong learning. International and Philippine research documents that students who experience bullying tend to have lower academic performance, poorer attendance, and reduced engagement in classroom activities. A Philippine study on pathways from bullying and family support to reading literacy found that bullying negatively affects both school belonging and literacy, while family support and positive school experiences buffer these effects. These results highlight that reducing bullying is not only a child protection concern but also a prerequisite to nurturing self-directed, engaged learners.

DepEd's policy discourse similarly links child protection and bullying prevention to the broader goal of quality basic education and lifelong learning. The Child Protection Policy emphasizes that schools must be conducive to learning and protective of children's rights, while anti-bullying issuances call for preventive, developmental, and remedial programs that cultivate respect, empathy, and responsible citizenship. Official statements reiterate that safe, supportive learning spaces help learners thrive academically and emotionally, preparing them for future learning demands. Within this framework, your study's focus on bullying incidents and lifelong learning in Malaybalay City public schools responds directly to national priorities.

Overall, the literature converges on four key points:

- **Parental involvement** and secure parent–child relationships reduce bullying involvement and support academic outcomes, including literacy and motivation for continued learning.
- **School policies** anchored in DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 and RA 10627 provide a legal and institutional framework for preventing and responding to bullying, but implementation varies across schools and divisions.
- **Teachers' interventions** are crucial to translating policies into everyday practice, with effective classroom management, counseling, and referral systems linked to reduced bullying and improved school climate.
- **Bullying** negatively affects learners' academic engagement and sense of belonging, thereby threatening the development of lifelong learning competences.

However, there appears to be limited empirical work that simultaneously examines the combined influence of parental involvement, school policies, and teachers' interventions on bullying incidents while explicitly connecting these to lifelong learning outcomes in a specific local context such as the public schools of Malaybalay City. Existing studies often focus on only one factor (e.g., family support, anti-bullying policy adherence, or student experiences of bullying) and rarely integrate all three domains within the DepEd policy framework. Your study addresses this gap by investigating how these three interrelated factors jointly influence bullying incidents and the fostering of lifelong learning among learners under the guidance of DepEd's child protection and anti-bullying policies.

RESULTS / OUTCOMES

The review of literature shows that parental involvement, school policies, and teachers' interventions are all critical factors in addressing bullying and supporting learners' development. Filipino studies on parent–child attachment and parenting styles indicate that secure parental attachment and supportive parental practices are associated with lower involvement in bullying, while authoritarian or permissive patterns predict higher bullying or victimization among high school students. Local research on parental involvement and academic performance in Philippine public schools further confirms that active parental engagement in children's learning enhances academic outcomes, which are foundational to lifelong learning skills.

At the policy level, DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2012 (DepEd Child Protection Policy) and the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA 10627 (Anti-Bullying Act of 2013) establish a national framework of zero tolerance for bullying and mandate all schools to adopt, implement, and monitor anti-bullying policies. These issuances require the creation of Child Protection Committees, systematic reporting of incidents, and a range of preventive and remedial interventions, highlighting that a safe, child-friendly environment is a precondition for quality education and lifelong learning. Reports and pronouncements from DepEd and regional offices in Northern Mindanao show ongoing efforts to strengthen the implementation of these policies through orientations, monitoring, and stricter enforcement in response to bullying concerns.

The review also reveals that teachers' interventions operationalize these policies at classroom level. Studies on behavioral management and intervention strategies in Philippine schools emphasize that consistent positive reinforcement, clear rules, and supportive responses to misconduct promote student engagement and self-discipline. Research on bullying experiences among Filipino learners notes that when teachers are trained

to handle bullying cases, respond immediately, and coordinate with guidance services, students feel safer and are more willing to report incidents. These findings suggest that teachers' day-to-day practices are pivotal in translating DepEd's child protection and anti-bullying mandates into concrete experiences of safety and respect that nurture learners' readiness for continuous learning.

Across the reviewed works, bullying is consistently linked to negative academic and psychosocial outcomes, including reduced school belonging, lower academic performance, and weaker engagement in learning activities, which undermine the development of lifelong learning competencies. On the other hand, family support, positive school climate, and effective policy implementation are associated with better literacy, stronger school attachment, and more positive educational trajectories for learners. DepEd's emphasis on child protection and safe learning environments reinforces these findings by framing bullying prevention as both a rights-based obligation and a quality-assurance measure for basic education.

Despite this, the review identifies a notable gap: most local studies examine either parental involvement, policy adherence, or teacher practices in isolation, and only a few explicitly integrate these three domains while linking them to bullying incidents and lifelong learning outcomes in a specific local context such as the public schools of Malaybalay City. Moreover, while DepEd policies are national in scope, there is limited empirical evidence on how the combined effects of parental involvement, school policies, and teachers' interventions are experienced at the division level, particularly in Northern Mindanao. This gap provides the rationale for your study, which seeks to determine the influence of these three interrelated factors on bullying incidents while fostering lifelong learning among learners in public schools of Malaybalay City, within the framework of the DepEd Child Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Act.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the review highlight that parental involvement, school policies, and teachers' interventions are not isolated elements but mutually reinforcing mechanisms that shape learners' experiences of bullying and their opportunities for lifelong learning. Local and international studies consistently show that when parents are warm, involved, and monitor their children's activities, learners are less likely to engage in or tolerate bullying, and more likely to sustain interest and engagement in schoolwork. This suggests that the home functions as the first line of protection and formation, providing emotional security and values that discourage aggression and support perseverance in learning.

The review further shows that DepEd's Child Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 provide a strong legal and institutional backbone, but their impact depends heavily on how schools interpret and implement them. Policies on paper—such as the requirement to establish Child Protection Committees, formulate anti-bullying guidelines, and report cases—create a clear mandate for safe, child-friendly environments. However, the literature also points to variations in adherence and implementation across schools and divisions, implying that the mere existence of policies does not automatically translate into reduced bullying. This underscores the need to look at the “lived” implementation of policies in actual school settings like the public schools of Malaybalay City.

Within this policy context, teachers emerge as the crucial “bridge” between written rules and daily learner experience. The reviewed studies emphasize that teacher behavior management, responsiveness to incidents, and collaboration with guidance personnel significantly influence whether bullying is stopped, ignored, or unintentionally reinforced. When teachers are trained, supported, and consistent in their interventions, students report feeling safer, more respected, and more willing to participate in learning activities. In contrast, when responses are delayed, inconsistent, or biased, learners may lose trust in the system, which can erode their motivation to attend school and invest effort in their studies.

Taken together, the findings suggest that bullying is both a child protection issue and a learning issue. It is not only about preventing harm, but also about safeguarding the conditions under which lifelong learning can flourish. Bullying experiences are linked in the literature to lower school belonging, weaker literacy outcomes, and reduced engagement—factors that run directly counter to DepEd's goal of producing resilient, self-directed, and competent learners. On the positive side, the combination of supportive parents, effectively implemented

school policies, and proactive teacher interventions fosters a climate where learners feel secure enough to take risks, ask questions, and persist in learning tasks, which are key characteristics of lifelong learners.

Finally, the review points to a clear research gap and practical opportunity. While many studies have separately examined parental involvement, policy adherence, or teacher practices, very few have investigated their combined influence on bullying incidents and lifelong learning in a specific local division such as Malaybalay City. This gap is important because DepEd policies are applied in diverse contexts, and their effectiveness depends on how families, schools, and teachers work together. The study is positioned to respond to this need by examining how these three domains interact in the public schools of Malaybalay City, generating evidence that can guide division-level programs, school improvement plans, and parent–teacher partnerships aimed at reducing bullying and nurturing lifelong learners.

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