

Perception of College Students on Teacher Bullying: Basis for Policy Inclusion in BulSU Student Handbook and BulSU Faculty Manual

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Abstract

The study describes the perception of college students on student bullying by teachers and on the existing university policies to prevent and eliminate student bullying by teachers. The study used focus group discussions (FGD) and a survey questionnaire answered by 284 college students. Results showed that participants perceive a low prevalence of teacher bullying in the university. This perception is similar across different forms of bullying included in the study. Survey results also revealed that most students are aware of university policies and programs on this matter. However, results from both survey and FGD reveal that students opt other forms of dealing with a bully teacher than what are stated in the university policies, i.e. Student Handbook. There is a perception among students that the existing policies and processes on teacher bullying is more protective of the teacher-perpetrator than that of the student-victim. These results emphasize the need of to evaluate existing policies and to create new ones specific to the elimination and prevention of teacher bullying in the university.

Keywords: *Teacher-perpetuated bullying, bullying incidence in university, perception of bullying, school policy on teacher bullying, teacher impact to students*

1 Introduction

The incidence of bullying in school settings is a growing concern of contemporary institutions forwarding the interests of human security and safety. The National Center Against Bullying (2019) defines bullying as, "an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behavior that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm". An act is considered bullying when someone is acting aggressively toward another person which is intentional and done repeatedly that causes another person injury or discomfort. This may be physical contact, verbal, or subtler actions (American Psychological Association, 2022). Bullying can happen in person or online.

Results of the poll conducted by UNICEF (2019) revealed that one in three young people in thirty (30) countries said that they have been victims of cyberbullying. As more students engage in internet activities, the incidence of cyberbullying has also risen. In the Philippines, children from all age groups experienced bullying thru physical, emotional, and sexual violence in school settings (Council for Welfare of Children, 2016). A study by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) published by the OECD (2018) reports that 65% of Filipino students surveyed have experienced bullying at school. The same study also stated that both aggressors and victims of bullying exhibit low class attendance and poor school performance. Among aggressors and victims, the experience of bullying in adolescence is linked to mental health problems experienced in adulthood. Bullying results in long-term mental problems (Sirgudson et. Al, 2015).

The prevalence of emotional and psychological maltreatment in educational settings and teacher bullying in different forms have been documented by recent studies (Benbenishi and Astor 2021; Kris, 2020; Lester et.al 2018; UNICEF 2018; Data et.al 2017; Sinkkonen, Puhakka, & Meriläinen, 2012), as well as in the previous decade (Pottinger & Stair, 2009; Twemlow & Fonagy, 2005). Nonetheless, there is still a considerable dearth in this area, as most studies dwell on the incidence of peer bullying. McEvoy (2014) defined teacher bullying as a "pattern of conduct, rooted in a power differential that threatens, harms, humiliates, induces fear in or causes students substantial emotional stress." In other studies, a bullying teacher is defined "as one who uses his or her power to punish, manipulate, or disparage a student beyond what would be a reasonable

disciplinary procedure” (Twemlow and Fonagy, 2005).

A bully teacher has a relative negative effect on the work environment, especially if the other teachers are aware of the attitude. Other teachers become bystanders for the fear of retaliation from colleagues, and to avoid conflict. Significantly, the experience of being bullied by the teacher can cause trauma to the students who have the propensity to do it to their siblings, or when they are in a position of their chosen profession (Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco, & Brethour, 2006). As discussed, college students have seen professors who bullied students and have experienced themselves as victims by the professors (Buxton & Prichard, 1973). Bullying as a phenomenon can be both vertical and horizontal. It is vertical when a person is in a position and bullies their subordinates. In cases like teachers who bully students, the student’s trust/perception in the university is affected negatively and their class experience gets fractured (Sinkkonen, Puhakka, & Meriläinen, 2012). Those teachers who are able to identify abuse of colleagues towards students and teachers who experienced bullying at a young age may contribute to the violent culture of problem schools. This could be linked to the transgenerational transmission of abuse (Twemlow & Fonagy, 2005). As seen in longitudinal studies, victims of bullying have the tendency to be perpetrators of bullying (Walters, 2020). From the perspective of Ecological Systems Theory, which this study uses as reference, the child’s development is shaped in a multi-level of surroundings or ecology: from immediate settings of family, the school, to the creation of his/her own values, adherence to customs and culture. (Bronfenbrenner mentioned in Guy-Evans, 2020). As part of the ecology of a student, the school through its policy must step in to break the culture of normalcy in teacher bullying.

This study aims to describe the perception of college students on teacher-bullying. This is a prerequisite to recommend interventions for prevention and elimination of bullying by teachers in the university. The study uses the perspective that bullying affects the academic performance and attitude of students, as evident in the literature discussed above. Teacher-bullying, as other forms of bullying, is a serious concern which is addressed thru policy intervention. RA 10627 or the Anti-bullying Act of 2013 covers primary, elementary and secondary schools. It does not cover tertiary educational institutions. This law covers student-to-student interaction and defines the perpetrators as the students. Senate bill 2793 filed by Senator Sonny Angara in 2015 aimed to supplement RA 10627 by penalizing teachers who were proven to be guilty of bullying students thru

physical, cyber, or verbal assaults. This bill is yet to be ratified. In the absence of national laws, it is pertinent that educational institutions have their policy on all forms of bullying.

2 Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study's conceptual framework was planned by the researchers based on the Ecological Systems Theory, where teachers are part of the ecology of the student. The perception of a student on bullying by teacher is shaped by her/his previous understanding of the concepts of bullying, school policies, and teacher's conducts, connected with her/his experiences in the school setting. Understanding of the student's ecological system is significant in creating an intervention policy and programs for the students who are considered victims, and the teachers who bully.

To gauge student awareness and comprehension of teacher bullying, a comprehensive review of relevant studies and theories was conducted. The researchers employed a data collection method that involved using structured survey questionnaires and conducting focus group discussions. This approach aims to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for a holistic understanding of college students' perceptions and experiences related to teacher bullying.

Participants/Respondents

The researchers utilized 284 college students in this study using stratified random sampling technique. The participants were 4th year students enrolled at Bulacan State University Sarmiento Campus during the Academic Year 2021-2022. For the focus group discussion, 8-10 participants were selected from the sample of 284 students using convenience sampling.

The demographic profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1. Majority of the respondents are female students. Most respondents age from 20 to 25 years. Majority of the students were from the Business and Management Department and General Academics and Teacher Education Department. These figures are simply indicative of the college's standard setup.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	109	38%
Female	175	62%
Total	284	100%
Age		
20-25	266	94%
26-30	13	5%
30 and above	5	2%
Total	284	100%
Department		
General Academics and Teacher Education (GATE)	105	37%
Business and Management (BM)	105	37%
Information and Industrial Technology (IIT)	74	26%
Total	284	100%

Instrument

The study used a structured survey instrument divided into two sections: (1) a profile of the respondents; and (2) their perceptions of bullying by instructors. The second section is subdivided into two parts. The first part contains questions on the perception of bullying incidents within the campus while the second part contains questions on bullying incidents in cyberspace.

The survey instrument was modified based on the questionnaire developed by *Marisa E. Marraccini, Lisa L. Weyandt & Joseph S. Rossi (2015)*, entitled *College Students' Perceptions of Professor/Instructor Bullying*, published in the *Journal of American College Health*.

For the focus group discussions (FGD), a semi-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers was used in mapping the themes of students' perceptions of the incidence, forms, and factors of teacher bullying.

Data Analysis

The study used Chi-square and frequency counts on the collected data from the survey. All data and details obtained were tallied together, tabulated, categorized, examined, and interpreted. All statistical computations were performed using Excel Spreadsheet and a free online Chi-square calculator. Thematic analysis was performed on the data obtained from the FGD.

Ethical Consideration and Confidentiality of data

To ensure a free, prior, and informed consent from the participants, a consent form was signed by each participant after the objectives of the study have been explained. To ensure confidentiality and privacy of participants' identities and responses, the researchers and the participants both sign a confidentiality agreement. All participant responses were coded in an alpha-numeric scheme.

3 Result and Discussion

Characteristics of Participants and Prevalence of Bullying

A total of 284 students participated in the study. Most participants are female (62%) and are 20-25 years old (94%), with the latter characteristic corresponding to the usual age of students on their 4th year. As seen in Table 1, the stratified sampling technique produced the number of participants for each department in Bulacan State University-Sarmiento Campus.

Based on the survey results, cases of teacher bullying are scarce. Most students (80%) in this study have never been the subject of bullying by teachers during their stay in the university, but a considerable number have witnessed other students bullied by teachers (44%). 32% have witnessed incidents more than once. Students also did not have an experience of acting against the bully teacher. Few have taken actions to stop a teacher bullying another student (11%). In a similar manner, few students have experienced of another student stopping the teacher from "bullying" them (10%), with only 6% who have experienced this more than once.

Analysis of the FGD points that incidences of teacher bullying happen in

public, as well as in private or one-on-one situations between the student and the teacher. Table 2 shows the responses of participants to questions pertaining to their experience of teacher bullying. The results show that incidents of teacher bullying are occasional. Conversely, FGD results also produced varied responses on student's understanding of bullying. Most students affirmed that for an act to be considered as bullying, it should happen more than once, done by the same perpetrator and to the same victim. This reverberates the following characteristics of bullying in most studies. First, bullying is an act of aggression in several forms. Second, it is intended to inflict harm on another. Third, it is repetitive. Random acts of aggressiveness or aggression or a single incident of social rejection or dislike are not considered bullying (stopbullying.gov, 2019). Fourth, it is done under the perception of an imbalance of strength (Olweus 1994). The bully is always someone perceived as more powerful or has more dominant characteristics than the bullied/victim. However, during the FGD, some students have asserted that even one incident of "aggression" or "negative behavior" of a teacher toward a student is considered bullying, as this may have long-term effects on the student.

Forms of Bullying by Teachers

The act that most participants reported to have experienced was "being (intentionally) ignored by a professor or lecturer" (33.8%), with 26 students ((18.7%) experiencing this more than once. From the FGD, these incidents are related to inquiries on grades or other class requirements that were not attended by the teacher, which was perceived as a personal attack to a student. Participants in the FGD acknowledged that they often experienced "being ignored" by their teachers during on-line learning, but this behavior is not immediately categorized as bullying. For this to be considered as a bullying act by a teacher, the student should have a pressing concern and the concern should have been asked politely.

Table 2. Respondents' Perception on Teacher Bullying

Statement	Never	Only Once	Sometimes	Frequently	Never	Only Once	Sometimes	Frequently
1. An instructor/professor withholding information that affects your performance.	214	29	37	4	75%	10%	13%	1%
2. Being humiliated or ridiculed by an instructor/professor in connection with your course.	213	40	29	2	75%	14%	10%	1%
3. Spreading of gossip and rumors about you by an instructor/professor	259	14	10	1	91%	5%	4%	0%
4. Having been intentionally ignored by the instructor	188	43	48	5	66%	15%	17%	2%
5. Being excluded by instructor/professor that affects your academic performance	234	24	25	1	82%	8%	9%	0%
6. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you by an instructor/professor	230	34	19	1	81%	12%	7%	0%
7. Crude and offensive sexual remarks directed at you, either publicly or privately by an instructor/professor	266	14	4	0	94%	5%	1%	0%
8. Being shouted at or being the target of spontaneous anger by an instructor/professor	209	54	20	1	74%	19%	7%	0%
9. Having an instructor/professor gossip about your sexual activities	278	5	1	0	98%	2%	0%	0%
10. Intimidating behaviors such as finger-pointing, invasion of personal space, shoving, blocking your way by an instructor/professor	264	13	7	0	93%	5%	2%	0%
11. Being told or hinted by an instructor/professor that you are incompetent	240	28	16	0	85%	10%	6%	0%
12. Being reminded repeatedly of your mistakes by an instructor/professor	236	27	17	4	83%	10%	6%	1%
13. Being ignored or facing a hostile reaction when approaching an instructor/professor	230	28	25	1	81%	10%	9%	0%
14. Having your comments intentionally ignored by a lecturer	234	29	19	2	82%	10%	7%	1%
15. Receiving persistent criticism of your mistakes by an instructor/professor	245	23	15	1	86%	8%	5%	0%
16. Having false allegations made against you by an instructor/professor	256	20	7	1	90%	7%	2%	0%
17. Being the subject of excessive teasing or sarcasm by an instructor or professor	247	27	10	0	87%	10%	4%	0%
18. Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse by an instructor or lecturer	279	4	1	0	98%	1%	0%	0%
19. Receiving acts of violence or physical abuse by an instructor/professor	280	2	2	0	99%	1%	1%	0%
20. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your private life by an instructor/professor	267	15	2	0	94%	5%	1%	0%

Verbal forms of bullying also received a significant number of responses. This is also the form that had several “anecdotes” pertaining to the participant’s experience of teacher bullying. As shown in Table 2, 19% of students have reported to receive insulting or offensive remarks, either once or multiple times from the teacher. 3.5% have more than one experience of excessive teasing and sarcasm by the professor. Based on the FGD conducted in this study, the most common contents of remarks range from comments on physical appearance to comments on the student’s academic performance and student’s aptitude. Some examples given by students are “hindi naman kagalingan”, “mukhang mabaho”, mukhang lalaki (towards a feminine student), etc. There are comments on academic works that are perceived to be negative and insulting to the student. These comments, usually delivered during class, intimidate the students and are perceived to negatively influence the students’ self-esteem and confidence, manifested in the students’ decreased participation and unwillingness to approach the teacher. As shown in Table 2, students have more than one experiences of the following: *being told or hinted by an instructor/professor that you are incompetent (5.6%)*; *being reminded repeatedly of your mistakes by an instructor/professor (7.4)* and; *receiving persistent criticism of your mistakes by an instructor/professor (5.7)%*. Verbal forms of bullying take place within the campus vicinity and at on-line platforms. When asked if they experienced the aforementioned incidents in social media platforms, online messaging applications and group chats, few students have experienced these more than once (See Table 3). Participants in the FGD shared their experiences of these incidents of bullying in verbal form. On analysis of the narratives, students give high importance to their teachers’ remarks about their academic performances, and take these remarks personally. Similar with previous contentions, these highly influence student’s self-image, which will in turn, influence how they view their school climate. Other studies (Sinkkonen, Puhakka, & Meriläinen, 2012) which analyzed bullying acts of teachers suggested that students may misinterpret academic criticism or humor as bullying, and the teachers are not aware that they are bullying students.

Acts categorized as gender-based sexual harassment based on Republic Act 11313 or The Safe Spaces Act, are understood in this study as sexual form of bullying¹. Based on the survey results, 6.3 % of the participants received “crude and offensive sexual remarks directed at them, either publicly or privately by an instructor/professor”, with 1.4% or four students who received similar remarks several times. Of this 4, 3 are males

¹Article 1 Section 4 of Republic Act No. 11313

and 1 is a female. These repetitive remarks towards the same person are considered as bullying acts. Out of the 14 students who experienced this only once, five (5) were males and nine (9) are females. 3% of the those who participated in Part 2 of the survey experienced this in the cyberspace. These remarks include statements like, “*Ang sexy mo naman... masarap ka ba?*”, “*Jowain na lang kita*”, “*Tignan mo si (female student), nakabukaka*” which the receiving students perceive as lauded with sexual insinuations. 1.8% of student participants experienced instructors gossiping about their sexual activities. This intensifies in the cyberspace, as 3% of the respondents mark their experiences. Although not included in the survey questionnaire, participants in the FGD also shared other behaviors that they witness and that think are acts of bullying, including intently looking/peering at a female student’s breasts by a male instructor, sending text messages that are not related to academics or school activities to a student, or gifting another student with food, etc. According to the FGD participants, students who experienced these employ different strategies to deflect the teacher’s action in an indirect manner. These strategies are subtle and non-confrontational; such as going out of the teacher’s way or approaching the teacher with other students. Students have the perception that if they confronted or openly call out their teachers, there will be a negative consequence to their grades.

Survey results shown in Table 2 and Table 3 both indicate a low prevalence of teacher bullying in physical form. Items pertaining to experiences of physical form of bullying (items number 10, 18 and 19 in Part 1 and item number 16 in Part 2) registered less than 5% of the participants who have more than one experience. Interestingly, one male respondent received, thru social media platforms and on-line messenger applications, frequent threats of violence from a teacher (i.e. “*Sasapakin kita*” translated as “I will hit you”).

Perception of Characteristic of the Bully Teacher and Sex as Factor in Bullying Incidents

Several studies identified the characteristics of the teachers who bully. In this study, FGD was used to come up with a common description of teachers who bully students. From the student’s perspective, teachers who bully are those who have high educational attainment and have many professional accomplishments.

Students see these characteristics as common among the teachers that they have experienced different types of bullying. As seen in the survey results, students receive derogatory remarks that are related to their abilities, courses, mistakes, and academic performances. One participant in the FGD said that their teacher always made them feel inadequate (in skills and knowledge) and nowhere near the outstanding abilities of their teacher.

Table 3. Respondents' Perception on Teacher Bullying in the Cyber Space

Statements	Never	Only Once	Sometimes	Frequently	Never	Only Once	Sometimes	Frequently
1. An instructor/professor withholding information that affects your performance.	107	15	22	2	73%	10%	15%	1%
2. Being humiliated or ridiculed by an instructor/professor in connection with your course.	119	10	15	2	82%	7%	10%	1%
3. Spreading of gossip and rumors about you by an instructor/professor	136	5	4	1	93%	3%	3%	1%
4. Having been intentionally ignored by the instructor	93	28	23	2	64%	19%	16%	1%
5. Being excluded by instructor/professor that affects your academic performance	120	12	13	1	82%	8%	9%	1%
6. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about you by an instructor/professor	110	24	12	0	75%	16%	8%	0%
7. Crude and offensive sexual remarks directed at you, either publicly or privately by an instructor	136	5	5	0	93%	3%	3%	0%
8. Being the target of spontaneous anger by an instructor/professor	127	12	6	1	87%	8%	4%	1%
9. Having an instructor/professor gossip about your sexual activities	138	2	6	0	95%	1%	4%	0%
10. Being told or hinted by an instructor/professor that you are incompetent	121	21	4	0	83%	14%	3%	0%
11. Being reminded repeatedly of your mistakes by an instructor/professor	124	13	9	0	85%	9%	6%	0%
12. Having your comments intentionally ignored by a lecturer	117	15	13	1	80%	10%	9%	1%
13. Receiving persistent criticism of your mistakes by an instructor/professor	125	13	8	0	86%	9%	5%	0%
14. Having false allegations made against you by an instructor/professor	128	12	6	0	88%	8%	4%	0%
15. Being the subject of excessive teasing or sarcasm by an instructor or professor	129	9	7	1	88%	6%	5%	1%
16. Receiving threats of violence or physical abuse by an instructor or lecturer	140	2	3	1	96%	1%	2%	1%
17. Having insulting or offensive remarks made about your private life by an instructor/professor	137	5	4	0	94%	3%	3%	0%

From the FGD, incidents of bullying in sexual form were between a male teacher and a female student. However, data from the survey show that there is no association between sex and sexual forms of bullying. This is also the same result for items that pertains to verbal and physical forms of bullying. A chi square test of independence was performed to assess the relationship between crude and offensive sexual remarks and gender. There was no significant relationship between the two variables, $\chi^2(2,$

$N=284$) = 2.33, $p = .312$. Likewise, a chi-square test of independence showed that there was no significant association between gender and receiving acts of violence or physical abuse by an instructor/professor, $X^2(2, N=284) = 3.358$, $p = .187$. Finally, a chi square test of independence was also performed to evaluate the relationship between gender and being the target of spontaneous anger by an instructor. There was no significant relationship between the two variables, $X^2(2, N=284) = 2.00$, $p = .367$.

Student's Perception of University Policies on Bullying

Results from the survey shows that most participants are aware of the university's policies and processes that related are related to bullying. There are no sections in both Faculty Manual and Student Handbook that state policies specifically on bullying and/or teacher bullying. Part III. H of the Student Handbook contains the student grievance intervention. A student who experienced an offense by any member of the BulSU community may file her/his grievance to the Director of Student Welfare under the Office of Student Affairs and Services (SAS). The case may be dealt under Informal Resolution or Formal Procedure for Complaint Processing (Bulacan State University Student Handbook 2016, p. 36). On the other hand, teachers of BulSU should adhere to the decorum stated in Article VIII-The Teacher and Learners of the Faculty Manual (2011, p. 53). The provisions state the rights and duties of the teacher.

Table 4 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents on their perception on school's existing policies. Statement 3 shows that 270 out of 284 of the respondents are aware of the university policies including the investigation process and penalties regarding teaching bullying. Table 5 shows the awareness of the respondents on where to report incidence of bullying. Statement 1 shows that 88% of the respondents will report any incidence of bullying to school authority.

Table 4. Respondents' Perception on Existing Policies Related to Bullying

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When I witness an instructor/professor doing actions to another student that I think are bullying, I immediately report it to any campus/university authority	154	106	19	5	54%	37%	7%	2%
2. When I think an instructor/professor is bullying me, I immediately report it to any campus/university authority	137	116	26	5	48%	41%	9%	2%
3. I am aware that there are university policies, including an investigation process and penalties regarding teaching bullying	157	113	14	0	55%	40%	5%	0%
4. Incidence of bullying by an instructor is investigated and addressed by the policies of the university.	148	113	21	2	52%	40%	7%	1%
5. The process and investigation in place for cases of bullying are fair for all parties involved.	147	111	21	5	52%	39%	7%	2%
6. The university campaigns against bullying, including bullying by teachers	155	110	17	2	55%	39%	6%	1%
7. I am aware of the programs and campaigns against bullying by teachers in the university	123	126	31	4	43%	44%	11%	1%
8. Our teachers and school officials discuss our policies related to bullying during class orientations and other related school programs	114	122	41	7	40%	43%	14%	2%
9. Teachers are generally approachable to confide with for instances of bullying	123	139	21	1	43%	49%	7%	0%
10. I think that the university's policies related to the prevention of bullying by teachers are effective	114	138	30	2	40%	49%	11%	1%
11. I feel that the university's campaign on bullying by teachers is given enough emphasis.	99	145	39	1	35%	51%	14%	0%

Table 5. Reporting of Bullying Incidents by Respondents

Statement	Another instructor/ professor	Adviser	SAS personnel	Campus Officials	I do not report to any school personnel
1. When I witness an instructor/professor doing actions to another student that I think are bullying, I immediately report it to	9%	26%	33%	20%	12%
2. When I experience any form of bullying by an instructor/professor, I immediately report it to	9%	27%	34%	18%	13%

The discussion with the students revealed that most of those who bullying by instructors did not seek help from the Office of the Student Affairs or the Guidance and Counseling office. They preferred to deal with it their way or with a passive response. This has affected their motivation and confidence, and have become low-spirited, especially towards the teacher. This is evident despite the result of the survey in which 95% of the 284 participants confirmed their knowledge of the process of grievance and complaints of the University. In the survey, 54% would report to any campus/university authority if they witness an instructor bullying a student. These ‘authorities’ were mentioned during the FGD including teachers and the student government council, but they were also aware of the university policy and that the Student Affairs and Services Office is the proper channel. Despite this result, only 34% will report to SAS if they experience bullying, and 33% if they witness an incident. As shown in Table 4, 13% will not report to any school personnel. There was the perception that their complaints will not get the ‘fair’ treatment: for one, their perception of the relationship among teachers could backfire on them if they file a complaint; and they were afraid that their grades will be affected.

During the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), only one participant shared that they (with classmates) sought the help of their adviser at the time of the incident, and they went through the Informal Resolution, as per BulSU Student Handbook. The case did not proceed as they would have wanted it and they felt that it was no use to proceed with the Formal Procedure of Complain process anymore. The participant shared the perception that the university process was not helpful with their concern.

From 2017 to 2022, the Guidance Office of Sarmiento Campus did not

receive a case pertaining to teacher bullying, either physical or done in cyberspace. That is considering the definition of bullying as that behavior that is repetitively done by one person with the intention to hurt or be mean to another person who has a tough time defending himself/herself (Olweus, 1994).

Survey results also show that students are aware of programs of the university to prevent and eliminate incidence of bullying. This is different from what were revealed during the FGD. FGD shows that there are recollections of one or two programs that students attended about bullying, but they were not aware of any intensive campaign on the matter. There was also no confirmation that university policies against bullying were consistently discussed in classes by subject teachers. This gives the impression that the notion of bullying was usually mentioned during class meetings and/or orientations, but since there is no specific program or policy in the university level, it was not clearly discussed. Students have varied and vague ideas on the notion of bullying. In Sarmiento Campus, based on accomplishment reports from 2017- 2022, only one specific program on about the prevention of bullying was done. This program was a webinar entitled *Safe Spaces Act and Anti-cyberbullying Act (bill)* facilitated by SAS External Campuses and Gender and Development Center in 2021.

4 Conclusion

The study is a description of the college students' perception on the prevalence of teacher bullying, based on the 284 participants from Bulacan State University-Sarmiento Campus. Results of the study shows that there is a low prevalence of teacher bullying in the campus. The results yield the same for each form of bullying included in this study. Having high educational attainment and many professional accomplishments are perceived to be the common characteristics of the bully teachers. In the case of sexual forms of bullying, male teachers are identified to be the perpetrators. On the other hand, results show that there is no association between the variable sex of the student, to verbal, physical and sexual forms of bullying.

The study also described the students' perception on policies related to teacher bullying. Survey results show that most students are aware of policies of the university regarding bullying. These include programs and processes for grievance and/or complaints. However, results from both

survey and FGD reveals that students opt other forms of dealing with a bully teacher than what are stated in the university policies, i.e. Student Handbook. Most students tell their assigned class advisers but do not proceed to resolving the case based on the university policies. Students have the perception that, if they report an incident, other teachers and administration officials will take the side of the bully teacher. There are no formal complaints regarding teacher bullying that was filed in the Office of Student Affairs in the recent school years. Similarly, there's a dearth of university-initiated programs or activities directly related to prevention and elimination of bullying. Students have varying and multiple interpretations of school policies on bullying.

5 Recommendations

The study identified recommendations based on the analysis of students' perception on the prevalence of teacher bullying and the policies of the university on the matter. First, an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of policies related to bullying should be made. The evaluation should be specific to, but not limited to bullying by teachers. As stated in the Student Handbook (2016), student grievances are filed and processed under the Office of Student Affairs and Services (SAS), and are dealt under the supervision of the Director for Student Welfare. Among the pertinent issues needed for evaluation are the clarity of the policies and the uniformity of implementation. As evident from the study, there is a perception that school processes and policies are protective of teachers and not of students. Students also do not report and do not pursue filing cases to the SAS. This situation is analyzed by the researchers as a result of unclear interpretation of the policies by the student, which necessitates actions to make the university policies more understandable and relatable to students.

This recommendation resonates with the thoughts of the students. When asked for recommendations to prevent and eliminate bullying, student responses are grouped into two themes. The first theme calls for a consistent implementation of rules and processes. This is related to the students' perception that case resolutions, if there are any, always favor the teachers. The second theme calls for anti-bullying programs including awareness campaigns and regular survey/monitoring of bullying incidents in the university. These actions are seen to make the students perceived their school climate as a safe space for learning and development.

In relation to the first, the university is also recommended to create new policies that are specific to the prevention and elimination of all types of bullying. Specific policies that deal on bullying acts by teachers are recommended to be included in the Student Handbook and the Faculty Manual. Unlike other incidents that involves offenses and/or abuses of rights, bullying does not pertain to a single act. It involves repetitive acts of aggression and is seen to inflict lasting damages to the victim. Bullying may also target one victim thru many forms and may be intensified with the forms of bullying enabled in the cyberspace. Hence, a set of policies particularly aimed to prevent and eliminate bullying by teachers is both necessary and timely.

It is also recommended to have sustainable programs or campaigns on ensuring the university as a safe-space for all stakeholders. The programs should address all forms of violence and discrimination in the university. It is recommended to have a system of focal persons from pertinent offices or stakeholders that will develop and implement the said programs. Lastly, further studies on the incidence of bullying, including identification and analysis of factors and long-term effects to students are recommended. Subsequent studies with similar topic are recommended to use other methods, e.g. inferential statistics as this study mainly used descriptive statistics. This study serves as an initiate action to more studies and programs that intends to create better policies and safeguards for the BulSU community.

6 Acknowledgement

The researchers are grateful for the support of the University Research Office of Bulacan State University for the financial and professional support provided in the accomplishment of this work.

7 Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in any aspect of this research undertaking.

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