

Bullying: An Exploration of the Manobo's Experiences

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Abstract:- This study has been made to describe and analyze the bullying experiences of the Manobo's of Agusan del Sur. The respondents of this study were enrolled at St. Francis Xavier College, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur. A researcher made questionnaire was utilized to gathered the data in this study.

This study utilized a qualitative – descriptive research design. An interview was conducted with the respondents utilizing the aid of an interview guide. Cellular mobile phone was used as a means of recording the conversation during the interview.

Findings of the study revealed that there is an existence of unintentional institutional bullying but were handled in a very positive manner that even encourages the students to strive more on their studies. This is an indication that Manobo students of Saint Francis Xavier College are matured enough to handle concerns and issues on bullying.

Keywords:- Bullying; Manobos; Qualitative; Philippines.

I. INTRODUCTION

World Health Organization defines bullying as a threat or physical use of force, aiming at the individual, another person, a specific community or group which can result in injury, death, physical damage, some development disorders or deficiency. The concept of bullying at school is not new; however, it has been increasing in recent years. Bullying in schools is an issue that continues to receive attention from researchers, educators, parents, and students. Despite the common assumption that bullying is a normal part of childhood and encompasses minor teasing and harassment, researchers increasingly find that bullying is a problem that can be detrimental to students' well-being (Linsley, 2016).

There are an estimated 14 million indigenous people in the country, subdivided into around 110 linguistic groups or tribes. Most are based in the northern part of the main island, Luzon, and in the southern island of Mindanao. Among the prominent groups are the Badjao, B'laan, Bagobo, Mangyan, Manobo, T'boli, and Teduray. The indigenous peoples in the Philippines also face many challenges in the context of development, peace and security, and human rights. Although there are quite a number of indigenous tribes or ethnic groups in the country,

they remain some of the most poor, least privileged and impeded members of society. They mostly reside in the mountains, and hence were not affected by Spanish or American colonization, which is the primary reason they were able to retain their customs and traditions. The Philippines is commonly referred to as melting pot of western and eastern cultures. They have their own religion, festivals, holidays, music, dance, literature, arts, cuisine, clothing and sports (Reyes, Mina & Asis, 2017).

Indigenous Peoples/Indigenous Cultural Communities (IPs/ICCs) are comprised by ethnos linguistic groups in the country. They are located in seven (7) ethnographic areas as follows: 1) Cordillera Administrative Region and Region I; 2) Region II; 3) Region III and the rest of Luzon; 4) Island Groups and the rest of Visayas; 5) Northern and Western Mindanao; 6) Central Mindanao; and, 7) Southern and Eastern Mindanao. Prior to the arrival of Spaniards in 1521 and the introduction of a Western form of governance, the IPs/ ICCs maintained their autonomous communities in their respective ancestral domains. These are small and independent communities with their respective socio-political and economic systems such as the Muslims of Mindanao with their feudal system; the Igorots of Cordillera with their semi- primitive communal structure; and the Aetas with their primitive communal set-up. They adopt the customary concepts and practices of land use and ownership through collectivism and assume the care of their resources.

Additionally, Hirai (2015) stated that there are five tribes that could be located in Agusan Del Sur namely: Aeta, Mamanwa, Bagobo, Banwaon and Manobo. Researchers decided to take some members of the Manobo tribe as the respondents of this study since this is the common tribe of students here at St. Francis Xavier College. Particularly, the main issue in this study is to determine whether these members of the Manobo tribe were able to experienced bullying at school and what type of bullying was experienced by them.

1.1. Definition of Terms

Bullying. Refers to both physical and psychological bullying.

Manobos. They are members of the Manobo tribe.

Manobo Tribe. One of the tribes at Caraga region specifically at Agusan del Sur.

Physical bullying. Refers to the act of physically hurting someone such as kicking, punching and throwing things towards him.

Relational bullying. Refers to the act of excluding someone from the group because of his physical appearance, tone of voice, or any indifference from the majority of people.

Verbal bullying. Refers to the uttering of discriminatory words to someone that in effect makes him ashamed, degraded, and lost his self- confidence.

1.2. Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

This study was conducted in order to explore the bullying experiences of the Manobo tribe in Agusan del Sur. The respondents of this study are limited only to the Manobos who expressly admit of having a bullying experience. There are 5 respondents of this study and they are chosen purposively. They are students of St. Francis Xavier College in the school year 2018-2019.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized a qualitative – descriptive research design. Qualitative in the sense that the researchers used an interview guide in order to collect data from the participants. At the same time it was descriptive, since this study would like to determine present information as to the experiences of the Manobos on the aspect of bullying (Bengsston, 2016).

This study was conducted at Saint Francis Xavier College, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur. **Saint Francis Xavier College (SFXC)** is private educational institution that offers tertiary education in the municipality of San Francisco, Agusan del Sur and is duly approved and recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). It offers undergraduate programs in Information Technology, Business Administration, Teacher Education and Criminal Justice Education.

The participants of the study were the selected IP students of Saint Francis Xavier College in Agusan del Sur who are identified as Manobo. There were 5 participants in this study and were chosen purposively.

The researchers utilized an interview guide as the primary tool in order to collect data from the participants. This was a researcher’s -made interview guide. The instrument was composed of two parts. The first part pertains to the profile of the participants namely: age and gender. The second part pertains to the main issue of this study which is on the participant’s experiences on bullying.

Identification as to the qualified participants of this study was the very first thing taken by the researchers in order to gather the necessary data. This was being done through the conduct of inquiry from the researcher’s set of friends and classmates. Researchers take their aid by asking them as to who are those students that they knew as members of the Manobo tribe. After reaching the desired number of participants, researchers then began the conduct of interview.

Identified participants were asked to answer the questions contained on the interview guide. Their willingness to participate on the research study were also taken into consideration and fortunately, all of those prospects’ participants cooperated and unselfishly shared their experiences. Participants were also informed that the interview will be recorded for the researcher’s reference but will be deleted after the completion of this study.

After all data were taken, researchers then transcribed its recordings. Since the medium of communication during the interview is native and Visayan, researchers translated those transcribed data to English in order to satisfy the aspect of universal understanding. Then, data were subjected to interpretation and analysis that form part on the findings of this study.

III. RESULTS

Problem 1. What is the profile of the participants in terms of age, and gender?

Table No.1: Distribution of participants in terms of age and gender

	Number of Participants	Frequency
Age		
15 – 18	3	60%
19 – 21	2	40%
Gender		
Male	2	40%
Female	3	60%

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents in terms of age and gender. Participants around 15 – 18 years old gains the percentage of 60% and 2 or 40% are around 19-21 years old.

As to the gender, it could be gleaned from the data that there are 2 or 40% participants who are male and 3 or 60% are female.

The prevalence of bullying appears to be high at age 7 and ages 10 to 12 with boys as the more likely perpetrators and victim than girls (Tingco, 2010).

Problem 2. What are the bullying experiences of the members of the Manobo tribe?

Below is the narrative story of the participants stipulating their experiences on bullying.

Respondent no. 1

Jim, (pseudonym) shared to the researchers that her bullying experience started when she moved to secondary school. One of her classmates often call her “Manobo” and it appears as he is teasing her. Every time their path crossed, he is mentioning that term to her and would also let his peers to join him in teasing her. She shared also that there is this one time wherein she had a new pair of shoes and this classmate of her step on her shoes leaving a dirt on it.

According to Jim, after her classmate do it to her shoes, he ran fast and laugh. Jim was very devastated at that time and cried. She was even discouraged to continue attending classes because of the presence of her classmate who keep on bullying her.

Bullying is found all over the world (Wang, 2013). It is another form of aggressive conflict. It's about repeatedly harassing a vulnerable, lower-status victim. Aggressiveness in schools is a universal problem. Bullying and victimization represent different types of involvement in violent situations during childhood and adolescence. Bullying is a form of interpersonal power affirmation by means of aggression. By victimization is meant aggressive behavior performed towards a less powerful person by a more powerful one. Both bullying and victimization can have immediate and long-term adverse outcomes on all involved individuals: aggressors, victims and observers (Craig &Harrel, 2014). Aggressive acts that take place in the school environment are traditionally admitted as natural, ignored or taken for granted both by teachers and parents.

Her misery due to bullying ended when a friend of her approached her and encouraged her to report the incident to the School Principal. Her friend accompanied her and the Principal was able to do the necessary action to settle the incident. Her classmate who bullied her was asked to appear at the principal's office and there they were settled. During the settlement, she cried out loud and burst all her negative emotions on the things done by her classmate. Her classmate was just silent with his eyes kept looking on the direction of the floor. From then, Jim was not anymore subjected to bullying and she find acceptance every time she went to school to attend her classes.

The school has an important meaning to children and adolescents. Those who do not enjoy it are more likely to show an unsatisfying performance, physical and emotional problems or unfulfilling feelings towards life. Positive interpersonal relationships and academic development are directly interconnected; students that realize such a relationship are more likely to reach a good learning level. Therefore, acceptance by peers is fundamental for the development of children's and adolescent's health, it helps them to refine their social abilities and strengthen the capacity of reacting against tense situations (Davis, Randall, Ambrose &Orand, 2015).

Respondent no. 2

Biboy (pseudonym), shared that since he was in the elementary level, he was already bullied. His classmates would often teased him saying' "where have you been? Why is it that your skin looks like a charcoal?" According to him, almost everyday he heard those statements form his classmates. Due to that, he lost his confidence and he always avoided the crowd. Biboy added that he even attempted to commit suicide because of depression. Depression due to rejection. Rejection because he realized that it is true that his skin looks like a charcoal and the skin of his classmates is not the same with his skin and that is the reason why he was disliked by his classmates. He felt that no one would ever

accept him. Every night he keeps on thinking whether to pursue his plan of committing suicide or not.

The effects of bullying especially to the fragile state of children cannot be ignored. Victims of bully including bully victims (those victims who also bullies others) are at increased risk of poor health, wealth, and social relationships outcomes in adulthood (Wolke, 2013). Students who are victims of bullying and bully themselves have experienced reduced life satisfaction and support from peers and teachers compared to those who are by standers. Other effects include depression and suicidal ideation of bullied boys and girls (Flaspohler, 2017).

The problem of bullying has received increased public attention in the U.S. and across the world over the past decade. In response to being bullied by their peers, adolescents have often taken drastic measures – including committing suicide (Davis, Randall, Ambrose &Orand, 2015).

Amidst of this, he still continued attending his classes and was able to graduate from the elementary level. The time when his parents mentioned to him his enrolment for high school, he told them that he doesn't have any plan to enroll. His parents disagreed on his decision and told him that they don't want him to be like them. That, they are doing their best in order to support him so that he will become professional. When he heard it, tears suddenly fall down from his eyes. His parents asked him as to what is his problem. Biboy told his parents the bullying done by his classmates to him. His parents told him to disregard it and prove to them that he will still succeed even if he is a Manobo. That, through his hardwork, he will be able to give pride to their tribe. Those statements from his parents were able to motivate and inspired Biboy to continue achieving his ambition of becoming a teacher. From that time, he did not anymore mind those classmates of him who will be making fun on his physical appearance.

Respondent no. 3

May (pseudonym), shared that being a Manobo makes her subjected to bullying because of their peculiar physical appearance. Her classmates when she was still in the Elementary level were telling her that she is ugly and fat. She even remembered that there was this one time that they have a pair dance presentation. Their teacher instructed their boy classmate to choose their partner and no one chose her. She was very ashamed that time and just sited at the corner until her teacher called her and one of her boy classmates and assigned them as pair.

May struggled to surpass the bullying that he experienced from her classmates. She even thinks of quitting school because she cannot anymore handle the teasing made by her classmates. But May was able to regain her self-confidence and take her bullying experiences her means of proving to them that she will be able to finish her studies even if she is Manobo. May added that her being a Manobo does not make her different from others nor make her ugly because she is also a God's creation. She than disregarded

the teasing of her classmates and considered them as they do not exist.

May also shared to the researchers that, “if you are ever called anything that can be accounted as teasing, don't take it to your heart, whoever is bullying you is probably jealous of you. One day you are going to become more successful than that person and you may end up being there boss. Just try your best so stay strong and don't forget that people in this world love you and if you are being bullied and you think you don't have friends, I'm your friend. It might sound ridiculous but it's true. No one deserves to feel worthless, and ugly and fat. Everyone is beautiful in their own way, everyone is perfect. It might sound strange but believe it and trust me, everything happens for a reason and things will get better and something better is going to happen to you if you experience being bullied. Be patient and just wait for that thing to happen. Just wait and it will. Hope this made you feel better”.

Respondent no. 4

Lyn, (pseudonym) shared her story to the respondents telling, “My girl classmates were the only students in our class that does not bully me. This is maybe because they personally know me and are aware of my tribe as well.

“One week had passed since I started attending my classes in high school when my classmates started bullying me, make fun of me and tease me because of my skin color. I was even hesitant to go to the school canteen to eat or buy foods for my snacks because I am afraid that my bullied classmates were there and I will get embarrassed because they will be teasing me. It is an experience that is full of agony.

Kids who get bullied are more likely to suffer from clinical anxiety, depression, and feelings of social isolation. They are more likely to avoid school, and the chronic stress makes them physically ill. As adults, they are 3-5 times more likely to suffer from anxiety, panic disorder, and agoraphobia. And while we often think of bullies as aggressive peers on the playground, some bullies are much closer to home. In a recent study of more than 3500 American kids, researchers found that one third of all children had been victimized by a sibling in the past year, and these kids experienced higher rates of mental health problems (Graham, 2016).

My bullying experiences makes me less confident and a loner. I feel like nobody wants to be with me because I am different from them in appearance and in the way I speak. I am also having difficulty talking using the English language that is why every time my teacher will call me to answer for an oral recitation, I will just stand and will not talk because I am afraid that my classmates will be laughing at me upon hearing my English diction, Lyn added.

I started gaining my self- confidence just last year. It was because of my Math teacher. He was still new at our school. I am personally impressed on the way he teaches us and make our lessons appear lively and jolly. He makes sure that all of us will participate in our class. I always sit at the

back every time we have our class. This teacher of us, let me transfer my sit in front. According to him, he wants to clearly see me appointed me as the class secretary. Every time there is a problem to be solve for our class activity, he will ask me to write it on the board. At first, I feel ashamed on going to the board to write because I am not used to it. But our teacher said that he doesn't want to be refused by any of his students because every time he assigned someone with a task, it is a proof that said student has the potential to do the task completely. So, when he mentioned my name and give me the task, although I am ashamed, I still perform the task. That is the time that I feel that I belong to our class and that I am part of the class because I am engaged in our class. I heard them mentioning my name as if I am doing an important task in the class. My teacher also asked me to answer some Math problems which most of my classmates find it difficult. My teacher was able to see my potential in Math. Yes! I can say that I am good in Math and it is my favourite subject. I am very thankful to my teacher because he really plays a big part on boosting my self- confidence and motivating me to excel amidst of my insecurities.

Now, I am already on my Senior year and will continue to pursue my goal of earning a degree for my family and for myself also. I guess bullying is already part of our life. All of us can be bullied but it is just a matter on how we will take it. Definitely, we should not allow other people to ruin our focus on achieving our goals. We must not be affected by those people bringing negative things to our life because at the end of the day, they have their own business and we have our own business also.

To those who also experience bullying because of our tribe, just bear in mind that “bilog ang mundo”(the world is round). Time will come that those who bullied you will be asking help form you because you have the potential which they don't have. That, there are a lot of people who believe on our potential. People who see our positive sides and people who are supportive to us aside from our family. If I have my teacher who was the one being used as n instrument to end my agony because of bullying, you will also be having your own instrument and that instrument maybe your own self. After experiencing all of those negativities, I was able to realized that believing in yourself is the primary key to have self- confidence.

Respondent no. 5

If I were to recall, my bullying experience started when I was still in Grade school. I have a male classmate who is so arrogant and annoying. Every time he saw me, he keeps on pushing me and he will then run fast after doing it. Our teacher keeps on scolding him because I am not the only one whom he bullied but my other classmates also. So, if our teacher is there, he will not be making fun of me but if our teacher will is not there, he keeps on doing it to me. Until now, I still remember him and I can't forget what he did to me although maybe it is just part of our being a child.

In high school, still I have a male classmate who keeps on bullying me. He is tall and good looking. I even had a crush in him. He keeps on teasing me and telling negative

things to me. He told me that my nose is like a tomato and my other classmates laugh at me after hearing him telling it to me. I got so embarrassed that time but still managed not to cry and just leave the scene as if I heard nothing.

On the study conducted by Teo and Yuhyun (2019) in Singapore involving 5,825 students, randomly selected from 168 public schools, and 290 students from nine private schools, took the computer-based test. The most common form of bullying experienced by students there was being made fun of by other students, with 18.3 percent saying they experienced this at least a few times a month. Singapore has third highest rate of bullying globally.

Now that I am in College, still I got bullied because of my height. They told me that I got the wrong course because I am too short and that the rifle is taller than me. Honestly, I am not anymore affected by them. I believe that all of us have issues. If they're telling me that I am lacking of height, yes, it is true but I got the brain. I will study hard so that I will prove to them that I will succeed even if I am under height and that, my height is not a hindrance for me to achieve my goals.

To my co- Manobos who are also being bullied, my advice is, just disregard them. We have talent that they don't have and always take note that we are better than those people who bullied us. Those who bullied us are insecure people. There is a need for us to be confident with ourselves because we are the one who can help our ourselves and even if we are IP's we also have special talents and skills.

IV. CONCLUSION

Bullying still exist amidst of the laws developed by each country as based on the studies conducted by researchers from different countries in the world and to note, it still exists in our country amidst of the implementation of R.A. 10627. Manobos are victims of bullying because of their indifference in color, tone of voice and height. There is persistency on bullying during childhood and adolescent since majority of the respondents experienced bullying during their elementary years and still being bullied during high school. One respondent is already on his college years and still being bullied but given his mental maturity, he was able to take it calmly and even take it as his source of motivation to become a successful person.

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