
EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAM AND FREQUENCY OF BULLYING INCIDENTS AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

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DOI: <https://doi-doi.org/101555/ijrpa.1401>**ABSTRACT**

This study examined the level of effectiveness of the implementation of the school anti-bullying program and the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners in the Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, for the School Year 2025-2026. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were gathered from secondary teachers using an adapted version of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ). The statistical tools utilized included the mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's r (Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient). Findings revealed that school policies are perceived as very highly effective across all dimensions, including quality, implementation, supervision, student awareness, and school climate. However, despite these high ratings, the frequency of bullying remains high, occurring often. Correlation analysis showed no significant relationship between policy effectiveness and incident frequency, suggesting a decoupling between administrative compliance and actual student conduct. The study concludes that while a robust administrative foundation exists, high-quality policies alone do not guarantee lower victimization. The persistent frequency of bullying reveals a critical disconnect between formal mandates and behavioral reality. Consequently, it is recommended that school heads pivot toward student-centered interventions such as restorative justice, and that teachers move beyond procedural compliance to reinforce active anti-bullying norms. Furthermore, learners must be empowered to lead a culture-based shift toward empathy and upstander behavior. To truly eradicate aggression, the district must transition from formal documentation to transformative, lived strategies that address the human side of school safety.

KEYWORDS: *Anti-Bullying Program, Bullying Frequency, School Climate, Junior High School, Quezon II District, Pearson r, Policy Effectiveness*

INTRODUCTION

Bullying remained a persistent and significant challenge within junior high schools, where it profoundly impacted the welfare, academic advancement, and general well-being of the learners. The existence of such behavior fostered an insecure and antagonistic atmosphere, which forced victims to endure anxiety, diminished self-esteem, depression, and, occasionally, suicidal ideations. This psychological and emotional distress frequently causes learners to withdraw from school functions, avoid their scheduled classes, and achieve poor academic results. These negative consequences damaged the victims' experiences and compromised the school's collective climate. Consequently, the researcher recognized the need to investigate the effectiveness of implementing an anti-bullying program and to determine the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners to ensure a safer and more encouraging environment.

A substantial body of literature examined the prevalence and outcomes of bullying while assessing the impact of various school regulations. For instance, Bernardo (2024) indicated that the rates of bullying in Philippine schools stayed at an alarming level, which negatively influenced the mental health and classroom performance of the learners. Investigations by Cordel et al. (2024) found that robust adult support and favorable school settings were associated with reduced exposure to bullying among learners. Additionally, the Department of Education (DepEd, 2025) reported a rise in cases, underscoring the urgent need for strengthened policy implementation. Earlier research further established that those who experienced bullying often struggled with emotional and behavioral difficulties that hindered their school participation and success (Mundbjerg, 2014; Espelage, 2004). These collective insights confirmed that successful school protocols played a vital role in mitigating these issues.

Even with the presence of established laws such as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, notable gaps persisted regarding the practical effectiveness of the implementation of anti-bullying programs at the junior high school level. Many previous studies focused on broad national or regional statistics rather than on localized environments where specific implementation hurdles varied. The researcher found limited evidence on the actual enforcement of these rules, learners' and staff perceptions, or the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners within individual campuses. Furthermore, the learners' attitudes toward these

regulations and the sufficiency of school support structures required deeper inquiry. These existing deficiencies emphasized the need for school-centered research to guide the development of more precise interventions.

The execution of this study served an essential purpose by providing empirical data regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of anti-bullying programs and tracking the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners. The findings offered meaningful perspectives for school administrators, teachers, and policymakers as they worked to refine or recreate methods for learner protection. By addressing bullying effectively, schools created a secure and productive learning environment that fostered the success and well-being of every learner. This research also sought to elevate the general understanding of the lasting effects of bullying while strengthening the movement toward a school culture defined by respect, inclusion, and emotional security, which ultimately aided the comprehensive growth of the learners.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study was anchored in the Social Learning Theory (SLT) developed by Albert Bandura (1977), which proposes that individuals acquire both aggressive and prosocial behaviors through observation, imitation, and modeling within a social environment. Within the school context, the effectiveness of the anti-bullying program and the existing policies served as environmental cues and mechanisms for vicarious reinforcement. By observing the specific consequences authorities imposed on bullies and the rewards granted for positive bystander actions, junior high school learners gained an understanding of the actual social costs of aggression and the inherent value of respectful conduct.

The quality of school anti-bullying policies and the specific effectiveness of anti-bullying program implementation served as structured models for learners' behavior. From the perspective of SLT, high-quality policies provided explicit standards that learners needed to notice and retain. At the same time, the actual program implementation offered practical opportunities for observational learning through methods such as role-playing and active modeling. The success of these various initiatives depended heavily on their capacity to strengthen the clarity of these behavioral models, which ultimately enhanced the ability of the learners to internalize and execute the desired anti-bullying responses.

Furthermore, the supervision and intervention provided by teachers and staff, alongside learners' awareness and attitudes, served as critical reinforcement mechanisms. The teachers served as powerful adult role models, whose decisive interventions served as vicarious

punishment for bullies and deterred observers from engaging in future aggression. Simultaneously, learners' awareness helped them retain these models. At the same time, positive attitudes increased self-efficacy and motivation to adhere to prosocial norms, reinforcing the belief that reporting or intervening would lead to positive outcomes.

Finally, the school climate, as a broader social environment, influenced the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners through reciprocal determinism. A positive and inclusive climate provided a steady stream of prosocial models and collective reinforcement for empathy, which made it difficult for bullying behaviors to persist. Ultimately, the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners served as the observable outcome of this theoretical framework. A measurable decrease in this frequency indicated that the school successfully shifted its social norms so that bullying no longer received reinforcement but instead faced successful inhibition through consistent modeling and consequences.

Significance of the Study

The researcher believed that this study would yield significant advantages for the following stakeholders.

For junior high school learners, this study was significant because its findings directly led to the improvement and enforcement of anti-bullying policies, creating a safer, more positive school environment. By identifying which policies worked best, the research helped ensure that the school better protected learners from harm, made them feel more secure, and enabled them to focus on their education without the distress associated with the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners or victimization.

The research provided teachers with specific, evidence-based feedback on the effectiveness of implementing anti-bullying programs and which initiatives currently work to mitigate incidents. This insight enhanced their ability to intervene confidently, improved their supervisory practices, and informed their requests for professional development, which ultimately allowed them to become more effective protectors and promoters of a healthy classroom and school climate.

To the Department of Education (DepEd), this study offered crucial data to evaluate the practical success of mandated national anti-bullying frameworks, such as the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, within a specific school context. The findings served to refine and standardize school-level policy guidelines, allocate resources more efficiently for training and programs,

and establish best practices for the effective implementation of anti-bullying programs across the entire educational system.

To parents, this study remained important because it directly assessed the school's commitment and success in protecting their children from bullying. The results provided transparency into the effectiveness of the anti-bullying program, empowered parents to advocate for specific changes where necessary, and increased their confidence in the school's ability to maintain a nurturing and secure setting for the academic and social growth of their children.

To Valencia Colleges (Bukidnon) Inc., the research served as a vital internal evaluation tool for its junior high school department, offering a comprehensive look at the effectiveness of the implementation of anti-bullying programs and climate initiatives. The results guided administrative decisions on resource allocation, justified investment in teacher training, and strengthened the school's public commitment to providing a safe, values-driven educational environment.

To future researchers, this study contributed to the academic field by providing a context-specific framework and baseline data on the relationship between policy effectiveness and the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners in a Philippine setting. Future researchers can use this questionnaire as a patterned instrument, replicate the study across different schools or regional contexts, or expand upon the findings by investigating moderating variables such as parental engagement or specific cultural factors that affect bullying dynamics.

Definition of Terms

To provide clarity and context, the following terms are operationally defined as used within this study:

Anti-Bullying Program. Anti-Bullying Program refers to the structured set of school-wide initiatives and interventions that the school implemented to prevent and address aggressive behaviors among learners. The researcher measured the effectiveness of the anti-bullying program through the perceived thoroughness of staff training, the adequacy of resources, the integration of prevention lessons into the curriculum, and the active participation of teachers and parents in supporting all involved parties.

Frequency of Bullying Incidents. Frequency of Bullying Incidents referred to the perceived prevalence of various forms of bullying, such as verbal, social or relational, physical, and

cyber actions among junior high school learners. The researchers measured this variable using teachers' average scores on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting the estimated frequency of these incidents over the previous month.

Implementation of Anti-Bullying Programs. The Implementation of Anti-Bullying Programs section described the perceived diligence and thoroughness with which the school carried out prevention and support activities. The study measured this through the average scores of the teachers on items regarding the provision of comprehensive staff training, the allocation of sufficient resources, the integration of lessons into the curriculum, the consistent delivery of follow-up support to all involved parties, and the active involvement of parents.

Quality of School Anti-Bullying Policies. Quality of School Anti-Bullying Policies referred to the perceived structural integrity and clarity of the school's formal anti-bullying guidelines. The researcher specifically measured this by averaging teachers' scores on items related to the policy's written clarity, accessibility, appropriateness of consequences, ease of reporting procedures, and frequency of review and updating.

School Climate. School Climate represented the perceived general atmosphere and the quality of interpersonal relationships within the junior high school setting. The study measured school climate by averaging teachers' scores on items assessing the promotion of a sense of belonging and inclusivity, the overall feeling of safety and support, the level of mutual respect among learners, the administrative prioritization of prevention, and the acceptance of diverse learners.

Student Awareness and Attitudes toward Bullying Policies. Student Awareness and Attitudes toward Bullying Policies described learners' perceived levels of comprehension and compliance with the school's rules and procedures regarding bullying. The researcher measured this through the average scores of the teachers on items assessing learners' understanding of the definition of bullying, their awareness of reporting methods, their belief in teachers' protectiveness, their perception of policy fairness, and their willingness to act as active bystanders.

Teacher and Staff Supervision and Intervention. Teacher and Staff Supervision and Intervention represented the perceived capability and consistency of the adult response to bullying situations. The study measured this variable by averaging teachers' scores on items assessing their personal confidence in intervening, their consistent physical presence and vigilance in high-risk areas, the perceived swiftness and consistency of administrative follow-up on reported incidents, and the modeling of respectful behavior by the staff.

The Methodology

This study used a descriptive-correlational research design. It delved into the effectiveness of school policies against bullying among junior high school learners and the frequency of bullying incidents in Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, School Year (SY) 2025-2026. Data on the effectiveness of school policies against bullying among junior high school learners were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire, and the frequency of bullying incidents for School Year 2025-2026 was based on records from the school guidance counselor and/or PSSB Coordinator.

Research Locale

This research was conducted in Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, School Year (SY) 2025-2026. The Municipality of Quezon was a landlocked First-Class municipality situated in the southern portion of Bukidnon Province, Northern Mindanao. It sat strategically on the Bukidnon–Davao Road. It bordered Valencia City to the north, Kitaotao to the south, Maramag and Don Carlos to the west, and San Fernando to the east. The overall topography appeared diverse, featuring an extensive inland valley that transitioned into mountain ranges and rolling hills, including Mount Tangkulan. While the western and northern sections contained level lowlands suitable for agricultural activities, the southern and eastern areas remained steeper and more mountainous.

Quezon gained popularity as the Sugar Capital of Bukidnon, as the sugar milling industry heavily powered the local economy. The municipality housed Busco Sugar Milling Co., one of the nation's largest sugar mills, which served as a primary economic driver and employer. Agriculture dominated the local financial landscape, leading to a high labor force participation rate among farm workers and farmers. Major crops included lowland rice, corn, pineapple, and sugarcane, with companies such as DAVCO and Del Monte operating within the area. Additionally, swine and cattle production represented significant economic activities, as large ranches contributed to the meat industry.

The Municipality of Quezon maintained the status of a First-Class municipality during the period of the study. Its local governance functioned under a Sangguniang Bayan structure, with the Municipal Mayor as its head. The municipality comprised 31 politically subdivided barangays and was part of the 3rd Legislative District of Bukidnon Province. Its administrative efficiency ranked relatively high in national competitiveness indices, particularly in terms of the accessibility of government services and compliance with national directives, such as the ARTA Citizens' Charter.

As a specific district within the provincial system, Quezon II District operated under the direct supervision of the Division of Bukidnon within the Department of Education. Similar to the rest of the Philippines, the education system followed the K–12 Basic Education Program, which covered Kindergarten, six years of Elementary, four years of Junior High School, and two years of Senior High School. The district was responsible for managing and overseeing the public junior high schools and elementary schools within its designated barangay cluster. This mandate included implementing the national curriculum and the department's policies, specifically those concerning the effectiveness of anti-bullying program strategies and the reduction in the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners. The large, youthful population of Quezon placed significant demand on public schools to provide accessible education.

Respondents of the Study

The junior high school teachers in Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, during the School Year 2025–2026, served as the respondents of the study. Selecting these specific professionals as participants remained crucial because they served as the primary observers, implementers, and first-line interveners regarding school policies and learners' behavior. These teachers were directly responsible for the effectiveness of anti-bullying program implementation in the classroom. Furthermore, these staff members provided direct supervision during school hours and were the individuals most frequently involved in or managing various bullying incidents. Their daily interactions with the youth enabled them to gauge the overall school climate and learners' actual attitudes and awareness of existing policies with high accuracy.

Sampling Procedure

Moving from participant selection to the specific selection method, this study used complete enumeration as the sampling procedure. Choosing complete enumeration meant that this research included every teacher in the junior high school who was actively working in all the schools designated under the Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, at the time of the investigation. The researcher identified complete enumeration as a sampling procedure where the entire population served as the sample for the study.

Furthermore, instead of using statistical methods to select a representative subset, the researcher aimed to collect data from 100% of the individuals who met the study's defined criteria. By involving the entire population, the research ensured a comprehensive assessment

of the effectiveness of anti-bullying program implementation strategies. This exhaustive approach enabled highly accurate measurement of the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners, as observed by the district's total faculty.

Research Instrument

This study gathered the data using a survey questionnaire adapted from the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ) by Dr. Dan Olweus (1996). Part I was about the level of effectiveness of the implementation of the school anti-bullying program among junior high school learners. Columns for the choices were based on the Five-Point Likert Scale. Part II was on the frequency of bullying incidents in Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, School Year (SY) 2025-2026.

Validity of the Instrument

Transitioning from the sampling procedure to the evaluation of the research tools, the research instrument underwent thorough validity and reliability testing prior to its official use. This process involved the execution of a pilot test in which the researcher provided the questionnaire to a separate group of at least 30 teachers in the high school who possessed characteristics similar to those of the target population but were not part of the final respondents from Quezon II District. The primary goal of this initial test was to evaluate content validity by ensuring that all questions remained clear, suitable, and easily comprehended by respondents.

Furthermore, the researcher analyzed the collected data using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of .819. This statistical outcome indicated that the instrument met the internal consistency and reliability required for the study. By establishing this level of precision, the researcher ensured that the tool accurately measured both the effectiveness of anti-bullying program strategies and the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners.

Scoring Procedure

The data were interpreted using the rating scales below. To assess the effectiveness of the school anti-bullying program's implementation among junior high school students, the mean was calculated using the Five-Point Likert Scale.

Data Gathering Procedure

Following confirmation of the instrument's reliability, the study followed a step-by-step institutional approval process to ensure formal compliance. Initially, the researcher secured

an official endorsement and approval letter from the Graduate School Dean. This document was then forwarded to the Bukidnon Division Superintendent for the necessary divisional authorization. After the superintendent granted this approval, the researcher sought consent from the Public Schools District Supervisor of Quezon II District for local clearance. Next, the researcher requested permission from the school heads of the participating junior high schools to conduct the study on their respective campuses.

Only after the researcher secured all necessary institutional permissions were the survey questionnaires distributed to the selected teacher respondents for data collection. This systematic approach ensured proper compliance with local and institutional protocols within the Philippines. By following these formal channels, the researcher maintained the integrity of the study while investigating the effectiveness of implementing anti-bullying program strategies. Furthermore, this structured process enabled the systematic collection of data on the frequency of bullying incidents among junior high school learners across the entire district.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were used in this study:

The mean and standard deviation were used to determine the effectiveness of the school anti-bullying program among junior high school students.

The mean and standard deviation were used to estimate the frequency of bullying incidents.

Pearson r Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, or Pearson r, was used to assess the significant relationship between the effectiveness of the implementation of the school anti-bullying program among junior high school learners and the frequency of bullying incidents in the locale.

Findings

The data collection and analysis produced the following key results:

The respondents strongly agree that there is a very highly effective level of the implementation of the school anti-bullying program among junior high school students in terms of quality of school anti-bullying policies, implementation of anti-bullying programs, teacher and staff supervision and intervention, student awareness and attitudes toward bullying policies, and school climate in Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, School Year (SY) 2025-2026.

Despite the implementation of school policies against bullying, incidents of bullying in junior high schools in Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon, during School Year (SY) 2025-2026 still occur frequently. Bullying is noted in 4 of 5 instances.

There is no significant relationship between the level of effectiveness of the implementation of the school anti-bullying program and the frequency of bullying incidents in junior high schools in Quezon II District, Division of Bukidnon.

CONCLUSIONS

In light of the results discussed above, the study arrives at the following conclusions:

This study evaluated the effective implementation of the school anti-bullying program in the Quezon II District for SY 2025-2026, specifically examining policy quality, program execution, staff intervention, learner awareness, and overall school climate. The findings indicate a very high level of implementation across all dimensions, with respondents strongly agreeing that the program consistently fosters a safe environment in 9 to 10 out of 10 instances through proactive supervision and robust policy adherence. These results are highly relevant as they demonstrate that a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach successfully fosters a protective school climate conducive to learner development; however, the study is limited by its localized scope and the potential for social desirability bias in self-reported data. To sustain this success, schools should institutionalize periodic climate audits and provide ongoing professional development for teachers to prevent complacency. Overall, the program serves as a model of excellence, proving that when policy quality is matched by dedicated staff intervention, it creates a transformative and secure learning environment for every learner.

This study sought to determine the frequency of bullying incidents within junior high schools in the Quezon II District for SY 2025-2026, specifically assessing the persistence of these occurrences despite existing anti-bullying policies. The findings reveal that bullying incidents occur often, with such behaviors noted in 4 out of 5 instances, indicating that current school policies have not yet achieved a significant reduction in these occurrences. These results are highly relevant, as they highlight a critical gap between policy formulation and the actual safety of the learning environment, suggesting that mere regulatory existence is insufficient without stronger enforcement and behavioral interventions. However, the study is limited by its specific geographic focus and reliance on the frequency of reported or observed incidents, which may not capture the underlying social dynamics or the specific types of bullying. It is suggested that schools move beyond administrative compliance by implementing more

intensive, empathy-based programs and by increasing teachers' presence in high-risk areas to disrupt this frequent pattern. Overall, the high frequency of these incidents underscores an urgent need for schools to re-evaluate their current strategies, ensuring that anti-bullying measures are not just documented but are actively and effectively curbing negative behaviors to protect every learner.

This study investigated the potential correlation between the effectiveness of anti-bullying program implementation and the frequency of bullying incidents within junior high schools in the Quezon II District. The findings reveal no significant relationship between these two variables, indicating that a very highly effective rating in program administration does not correlate with a reduction in bullying frequency. These results are highly relevant, as they suggest that the current implementation may be achieving administrative or procedural success without effectively addressing learners' complex social behaviors, implying that policy compliance alone is not a sufficient deterrent to bullying. It is suggested that schools and teachers shift from purely structural program management to more targeted, psychological, and peer-led interventions that address the root causes of aggression. Overall, while the anti-bullying programs in the district are robust in their execution, the lack of a significant relationship with incident reduction underscores the need for a more nuanced approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the insights gained from this study, the following actions and areas for future research are proposed:

Teachers may capitalize on this strong administrative foundation by moving beyond mere compliance toward active, daily reinforcement of anti-bullying norms. They must maintain continuous vigilance through proactive supervision and consistent classroom integration, ensuring that these highly rated policies are not just documents but lived experiences that actively shape and sustain positive student interactions.

School heads may pivot from mere policy monitoring to spearheading intensive, student-centered programs like peer-led mediation and restorative justice circles. By prioritizing the human side of implementation over administrative compliance, leaders can bridge the behavior-policy gap and disrupt the recurring cycle of victimization that persists despite having high-quality formal frameworks.

Learners may take an active role by moving beyond mere knowledge of school rules toward practicing genuine empathy and upstander behavior. Since policies alone cannot stop

bullying, students must lead the shift in school culture by refusing to participate in hidden aggression and choosing to support peers, effectively making kindness a daily student-led standard.

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