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Effects of Bullying on Elementary School Students

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Abstract

In the United States there are many schools, no matter the grade level, who still to this day struggle with dealing with bullies in their schools. This is something that is very concerning especially at the elementary level due to the fact that they are experiencing very strong emotions at a young age. With this in mind, school members such as teachers and administrators need to come up with a solution to resolve or lower the chances students get bullied at their schools. Research has shown that bullying greatly affects students in many different ways that many wouldn't really think. At such young ages it is crucial that students get support and encouragement in order for them to successfully succeed in their education. With bullies antagonizing other students it not only affects the victim but as well as the one doing it. Victims of bullies would be the ones affected the most since they are the ones who are being harassed. Experiencing depression and being excluded from others is something that will negatively affect their state of mind and their chances of being successful in their education due to the lack of self motivation and drive to push past these barriers, especially when they start off young. In order to alleviate this situation, schools can aim to have programs such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, or STAC, rather than just sticking to a “zero-tolerance policy.” Research done in this study was conducted via online surveys, in which three different groups were participating: teachers, current students, and past students.

Introduction and Background

In all schools around the country, there seems to be a general understanding of what bullying is, whether it be at the highschool level or at the elementary level, all students are aware of what it is. Bullying can be a lot of things for example excluding out people or having others be

mean to a specific person are forms of bullying. Physically hurting someone and name calling are the more known forms of bullying. Bullying has been a major issue in this country for quite some time now and there has to be more ways that the schools can do to help combat this issue that is still very much present to this day.

Growing up in school, I have seen some students getting bullied for being different. Whether it be if they were too skinny, too fat, or just looked different from the other students, bullies would tease the victims for that. Similarly, if they were to be wearing the same clothes again they'd get made fun of for that. These negative comments do really affect students, especially those students at the elementary level. Growing up, I noticed that those students that were victims of bullying sorta changed. In a sense they shut themselves in and are not as spoken as they once were. This leads me to believe that bullying affects students a lot more than just physically but mentally too and it can be seen in their work. For the most part, students who are under a lot of stress tend to do poorly with their academics so it would make sense that students who have been affected by some sort of bullying will also experience that. They will also be more to themselves and reserved from interacting much due to what they have experienced.

From learning about all of this, I decided to conduct a research that dives deeper into the detailed effects of bullying in elementary schools. This then leads to what I developed as my primary question to be for this research: How does bullying affect elementary school students? Questions that are related to this topic would be the following: What is bullying? What does it consist of? What types of bullying happen at the elementary school level and what and when caused students to bully others? What does research say about how bullying has affected elementary school students physically, emotionally, and psychologically? How can teachers tell that students have been bullied? To what extent does bullying affect elementary school students

and the bystanders? And what are the actions that teachers make to stop the bullying? Are there school policies in place to handle bullying issues? If there are, how do schools deal with the students who have bullied others? What can school and teachers do to prevent bullying from happening? And how could they reduce the rate of bullying in their schools to a minimum?

Literature Review

As bullying has been an ongoing issue in our society, especially within elementary schools, many individuals have conducted their own research into the matter with bullying, going into debt of what exactly is considered bullying, who goes through it, what are its effects and what is being done to fix it. An earlier study done by Dan Olweus gives us a concrete definition as to what bullying is, which is defined as the following, “It is a negative action when someone intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another, basically what is implied in the definition of aggressive behavior. Negative actions can be carried out by physical contact, by words, or in other ways, such as making faces or mean gestures, and intentional exclusion from a group” (Olweus, 1993, pp. 8–9). In simple terms, bullying is considered an aggressive behavior that is done towards another person either through physical contact, words or subtle actions (American Psychological Association 2024). Injury could either be physical or emotional/psychological, which also depends on what type of bullying is being carried out by a perpetrator. Many children act upon impulse and emotion the majority of times and it leads to several types of negative actions being carried out by some of them towards others. Because of the variety of actions that can be done by a bully, some researchers have put together a set of categories in which an act of bullying can fall under. Though subject to change overtime via disagreements, the categories found were as follows: indirect, relational, physical, verbal and

generic (Duy 2013). Though varying in details, some of these categories are almost similar to each other. One example that would fit one or two of these categories would be when a student who is physically stronger or more socially prominent abuses their power to belittle someone else. A second example would be more indirect, in which a child would voluntarily spread rumors, backstab or exclude another from a group, which in other words, could be considered relational manipulation. A third example would be more generic, in which a student can try to damage the image of another student in a generic way, which nowadays is seen through cyberbullying. (Juvonen et al. 2014).

Identifying the types of bullying that occurs in schools then leads to researching the type of effects and consequences that come about from being a victim, perpetrator or bystander of bullying, which many researchers have already begun investigating. A study done by Stanford Researchers done in 2007, mentions how, children who are constantly bullied and being victimized by other students, are more likely to develop depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts compared to students who are not being bullied (Science Letter 2007). The effect of bullying is something that shouldn't be taken lightly, especially when children are growing. Another study done by *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, mentions how if students who have been bullied for more than 5 years, whether they are the aggressor, victim, or simply a witness, will experience low levels of self esteem and even develop potential mental health symptoms. (Gomez et al 2020 p256-257). Another thing that is mentioned in this source is how these symptoms such as anxiety and depression, negatively affect the performance of students when it comes to the classroom environment and academic performance. (Gomez et al 2020 p 256-257). As one can see, these are symptoms that school administrators and educators

cannot leave unnoticed due to how much it impacts the students performance and mental stability.

As bullying continues amongst students, studies have also shown that children who have been bullied throughout their childhoods have experienced depression even decades after it occurred. For adults to still be experiencing trauma from their childhood years when they have been bullied, is something that nobody really stops and thinks about. Children when growing up are like sponges, they are more sensitive which makes sense that being in an environment where one is being constantly put down, teased or even physically targeted on a consistent basis, are going to develop some sort of trauma that might take them a long time to overcome. (Evans et al 2014).

When summarizing a lot of studies conducted with the effects of bullying on elementary students, it is evident that the effects of bullying are detrimental, no matter what type of bullying. The effects are very much there and aren't going anywhere if schools don't step in. It is noted that students tend to do worse on their academic performance tests and participation in class. Some students go as far as not even going to class, skipping the whole day entirely to avoid any confrontation with their bullies, further hindering their abilities to academically do better in their work. Depression and anxiety cause students to shut in when it comes to doing their work and as well as doing the activities they like doing, like their hobbies/sports. Bullying has such a negative impact in children's childhood lives that it can still affect them even after they reach their adulthood. (ASPA 2021). Effects like these continue to have a negative impact on millions of students across schools the more that bullying continues to happen without proper intervention being done.

As seen in many scenarios, the victim and perpetrator are not the only ones that play a role with the topic of bullying. Teachers play a massive role in whether bullying takes place in the classroom. If a teacher is keen enough to be able to identify bullying, signs of it, and be able to properly intervene when it happens, then that educator will be able to help prevent more cases of it happening and be able to help whenever necessary. To begin with, a teacher must be able to identify what are the signs that a student might be a victim of bullying. ProSolutions provides us with a list of signs that are prevalent among students who go through these traumatic experiences. The first one would be if a student has a frequent illness. It could either be fake as a way to avoid going to school or real due to the high stress that a child is going through from getting picked on. A second sign would be if a student suddenly reveals an aggressive behavior that is out of the normal, which goes hand in hand with the previous sign of being caused due to high stress. A third one would relate to the loss or damage of a student's possessions. Frequent cases like these with the same student could be due to them being caused by another student perpetrator. A fourth sign relates to sudden avoidance of social situations, as being bullied would cause a student to have a low self esteem, thus having low social skills. The fifth sign provided is power imbalance during play time. If a student is constantly being assigned to lesser roles by another student while playing, it would mean that the student in the lower roles is being negatively singled out, thus an act of bullying (ProSolutions).

Another person who would play a role in a situation of bullying would be a bystander. In many scenarios where bullying is taking place, other students either see or know what is going on other than just the perpetrator and the victim. Known as bystanders, usually these students unfortunately do not report these acts to a teacher or another authoritative figure out of fear that they might become targets themselves. However, some studies have shown that the real effects of

standing up for a bullied student are otherwise. Researchers have noted that when bystanders intervene and are able to defend the victim, the bullying behavior would begin to decrease (Midgett et al. 2016 p.173). This is due to how if everyone were to combat the bully together, then the bully would see that the majority is against them, so in turn they could potentially end their aggressive behavior. The only difficulty with this is that students that go from bystanders to defenders is that they need to be able to be emotionally empathetic towards the victim in order to come up with a proper solution as to how they will help the bullied student (Kim et al. 2021 p.751). If done improperly, the defender could possibly become a victim themselves, so it is always best to have a teacher intervene.

On the other hand, however, if the bystander sees themselves not doing anything or going as far as reinforcing the bullying, then the bullied student would be having increased social anxiety and feelings of rejection from their peers (Midgett et al. 2016 p.173). Furthermore, students who are considered bystanders have also shown to have side effects to their witnessing of bullying. For example, some students have shown that throughout time, they grow up to have increased use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, increased mental health problems like depression and even miss or skip school on frequent occasions (ASPA 2021).

The severity of bullying has become a big issue amongst students that schools have attempted to come up with several solutions so as to try to combat this behavior among children so they do not continue to behave like this in their older years of their academic trajectory. One very common form of intervention policy that is in place at the majority of schools is the “zero-tolerance” policy, in which any student is subject to appropriate consequences for any act of bullying that they have committed. However, these types of policies are considered to be reactive rather than proactive due to their nature of using punishment as a method of solution

rather than aid in molding a student's attitude and skills in trying to change the way they act with other students (Goodman et al. 2014 p 121). Some schools have tried to incorporate other types of policies to change students behavior rather than using fear of punishment as nearly all 50 states of the US have legislation that require schools to intervene with acts of bullying. One such policy that does that (mainly through the use of bystanders) is known as STAC. This method of intervention with anti bullying teaches students to act as defenders for victims of bullying. STAC (through its acronyms) teaches the young minds to "stealing the show," "turning it over," "accompanying others," and "coaching compassion" (Midgett et al. p174).

Another method that has gained popularity is known as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, which in short is known as PBIS. This type of method is based more with teachers and other school personnel, in which they are encouraged to provide counseling and discipline for children that bully other students. Next, it is recommended to always have adults in student populated areas such as hallways, cafeterias and most notably, playgrounds. Additionally, teacher and staff training is provided to demonstrate what exactly bullying behavior looks like and how to be able to respond to it. Furthermore, to have teachers give explicit instructions to students on what type of behaviors are expected out of them in schools in order to avoid any inappropriate acts coming out of them (Understood 2024).

With bullying cases going rampant, schools are demanded to do more to intervene with such acts as many people try to find ways in which the schools could do better. One way is to have teachers and administrators collaborate to develop some sort of bully prevention program that can be implemented for all grade levels. (Scott Goodman at el p120-129). Some schools have actually made a sort of bully prevention committee that teaches students how to identify bullying when it occurs, learn strategies in which they can deescalate the situation, and find an

adult administrator or faculty that they can trust to handle the conflict. (). Studies have shown “positive peer pressure” is a very effective way to stop bullying. What this strategy is, is when a student who is not involved, steps up to the bully and defends the victim, letting them know that what they are doing is not okay. By students setting up to the perpetrator it sends a clear and strong message that bully behavior is not going to be tolerated. (Stanford Researchers 2007) Another thing that schools should consider doing for the younger students is, reading more books to them about bullying and how to deal with it. Introducing students and showing how this behavior is very hurtful through picture books is also a great way to illustrate the feelings of the characters who are affected. Teachers then can follow this up by asking questions to their students on how this makes them feel, or how they would like it if someone were to be doing that to them. Showing this to students especially at a young age and explaining that this behavior is to not be tolerated, gives them a better understanding, when it comes to recognizing it when happening. (ProSolutions).

It seems that most schools are pushing for programs to be placed that discuss bullying prevention methods and strategies that can be taught to young students. Their goal is to hopefully encourage and motivate students to stand up for others when they see inappropriate behavior occurring on school grounds. Ways they think that this will help with the bullying situation in their schools is if students are encouraged to share their feelings and practice being empathetic to one another. By developing to be more empathetic, the students will be able to put themselves in other people's shoes, having a better understanding of what it's like to be in their situation. With this knowledge that students will gain, teachers will show the students some strategies when being confronted by their bullies, to deescalate the situation. (Kim et al p741-753). A study shows how depending on how the instructor or teacher reacts to addressing bullying behavior,

students will react differently. When students are confronted about their behavior directly it makes a much bigger impact on them which means there will be less incidents from occurring again. (Duy p987-1002). When it comes to teachers trying to assess the situation when there is a group of children as opposed to one child, the group will probably have more of a reason to continue picking on that student due to the students trying to fit in. With a one on one interaction with teacher and student, the student will feel more guilty knowing that what they are doing is not okay which will impact them more and make them not want to do it again. There are different ways that schools can help combat this issue, without the outlay effects of the victims. Schools should be careful when considering new changes to school policies, making sure that they don't negatively affect students who are victims of bullying. (Bullying Laws 2024). The point is to make sure that bullying does not occur again, which means that addressing the students who are the cause of bullying, is what the policies should be based on.

Methods and Procedures

The way I decided to go about this research project was via questionnaires designed for different groups of people: current students, past students and teachers. The population used for this project consisted mainly of people from my hometown of Salinas due to its distance convenience and for the fact that bullying takes place in almost any location. For past students, I took the liberty of going around my work place to ask various coworkers that I felt comfortable with asking to do a questionnaire with a sensitive topic in mind. For teachers, a colleague of mine was able to connect me to one teacher who were willing to take the time out of their busy schedules to answer the questionnaires, and as for current students, I also asked that same teacher if they would be willing to give them to their students to answer, to which both agreed to do so.

I created all of the questionnaires via Google Docs to which I then emailed them to the participants. Once they received them, they would make their own copies and then email them back to me. The questions on the forms were based on the secondary questions that I had for my paper. Each of the questionnaires were relatively similar to each other since they aim to collect the same data for the purposes of this paper, but I made minor adjustments to each. For example, with the current students' questionnaires, I made sure the questions were not too hard for their vocabulary to understand what was being asked of them. For teachers, I gave them questions that would be answered in a 3rd person perspective since the data collected is in regards to the students being bullied and not them.

I believe that this type of method for collecting data is sufficient for my research paper because of the fact that the questions given to the participants are almost the same as the secondary questions that are used to answer the primary question of my research paper. For example, one question that I included in the student survey was "1: Have you ever **been bullied** in school? If so, how? What types of bullying did you experience (whether it be physical, verbal, cyber, or psychological)?," which relates to the first secondary question (see Appendix A). Additionally, a question included in the adult survey was "3: Have you ever been a bystander to bullying? In other words, have you ever seen anyone get bullied but you never did anything about it?," relating to the third secondary question (see Appendix C). Furthermore, a question included in the teacher survey was "5. Is there anything that could be improved to deal better with the problem of bullying in elementary schools? Do you think you can improve with how you handle bullying incidents to reduce it to a minimum?What do you think?," which goes hand in hand with the final secondary question of this research (see Appendix B). After a month of

handing and sharing our surveys to potential participants, I was able to gather a total of 29 responses: 23 current elementary students, 5 adults and 1 teacher.

Results, Findings and Discussions

The results for this data were gathered from three different perspectives: current students, past students and teachers. Everyone's responses were collected through the use of Google Docs so they will be presented in a condensed manner so as to not elongate this paper with the responses of 29 people. After the data is presented, an elaboration will be made to analyze the responses in a deeper level through the "Discussions" section of this paper. The following data come from the point of views of current students, past students, and a teacher when it comes to issues that bullying creates in classrooms.

Current Students:

For student demographics, 9 of the students were male and 14 of them were female, with their ages ranging from 8-10 years of age.

Question 1: Have you ever **been bullied** in school? If so, how? What types of bullying did you experience (whether it be physical, verbal, cyber, or psychological)?

- 52% of the students have been bullied
 - 25% of them have been verbally bullied
 - 50% of them have been bullied physically

Question 2: If you have gotten bullied in school, how did it affect you physically, emotionally, and or psychologically? Also, how did bullying affect your grades in school? Did it affect you in your school work?

- 40% of these students were affected some way
 - 70% of those students that said they were affected mentioned that they were mostly affected in an emotional way

Question 3: Have you ever been a bystander to bullying? In other words, have you ever seen anyone get bullied but you never did anything about it?

- 34% of the students have witness some sort of bullying happening
 - Out of these students 75% of the witnesses are girls and 25% boys

Question 4: Have you ever **bullied** anyone? If so, be clear as to why and what do you think caused you to do that?

- 9% of the students said that they have bullied someone before
 - The rest never mentioned having any signs of ever bullying anyone else

Question 5: Have you ever seen a teacher stand up to bullying? Would they make sure that the bullied student is ok and would they make sure to have the bully be held responsible? If so, how?

- 61% of the students said that they have seen teachers stepping in when they see any bully
 - The rest mentioned never really seeing a teaching do much about the situation with the bully and the victim

Question 6: To your understanding, what policies/rules are in place at your school for anti-bullying? How would they bring awareness to bullying and what consequences would a bully face if they got caught?

- 100% of them said that they told the bullies to stop

Nothing else was really said besides them telling the bullies to stop which leads me to believe that they don't really know what else to say or do when it comes to these situations.

Question 7: What do you think teachers and administrators could do better at your school to deal with bullying?

This question was meant to see what different suggestions the students have when it comes to bullies. These are the top frequent answers that the students wrote down.

- Getting the parents involved and letting them know about their behavior
- Students who are bullying should sit on the bench as a punishment
- Having more staff like teachers outside during lunch and recess

- Giving out more write ups and harsher consequences to stop bullying

Past Students:

For the responses that I was able to get from here,

Question 1: Have you ever **been bullied** in elementary school? If so, how? What types of bullying experiences did you encounter (whether it be physical, verbal, cyber, or psychological)?

- % of respondents (60%) mentioned having been bullied before with one saying verbal, one saying physical and the other mentioning experiencing all of them

Question 2: If you have gotten bullied in elementary school, how did it affect you physically, emotionally, and or psychologically? Also, how did bullying affect your grades in school? Did it affect you academically?

- % of respondents (40%) mentioned that they were affected on some degree, with one mentioning emotional effects with self-conscious issues and the other mentioning how they were affected emotionally with being drained, physically with gaining weight and psychologically with having depression. Only the latter saw their grades being affected

Question 3: Have you ever been a bystander to bullying? In other words, have you ever seen anyone get bullied but you never did anything about it?

- % of respondents said yes to being a bystander, with each having different reasons for doing so such as social pressures or not knowing how to help them

Question 4: Have you ever **bullied** anyone? If so, be clear as to why and what do you think caused you to do that?

- 5/5 respondents (100%) said yes to having bullied someone else before

Question 5: Have you ever seen a teacher in elementary school stand up to bullying? Would they make sure that the bullied student is ok and would they make sure to have the bully be held responsible? If so, how?

- 60% (60%) of respondents said yes
- 20% (20%) of respondents said no
- 20% (20%) of respondents said not sure

Question 6: To your understanding, did your elementary school have any policies in place for anti-bullying? How would they bring awareness to bullying and what consequences would a bully face if they got caught?

- 60% of respondents (60%) said there were anti-bullying campaigns or rallies to bring awareness to bullying
- 20% of respondents (20%) said there was a zero-tolerance policy

Question 7: What do you think could have been done better by schools to deal with bullying? The following are the exact answers for each of the respondents since they were are fairly different in suggestions that they gave

Adult A: “It’s hard to say. During school there's a lot of times when kids are just interacting with each other with 1 to none adults around them. This could be a staffing issue, but also kids can be really cruel to each other. So maybe just weekly reminders during classes of the emotional and physical damage that can happen to their fellow students.”

Adult B: “Maybe teaching kids how to stand up for themselves not in a competition way but in a correct way and definitely show them how to express their feelings you know by talking to others or Consulting in others. but I think it would be most beneficial if we taught these kids how to stand up for themselves.”

Adult C: “Have more severe consequences that would make students actually learn their lesson. Also spread more awareness of bullying and how to spot it and prevent it.”

Adult D: “I could have possibly not bullied anyone and let her be.”

Adult E: “I think a program that works to not just understand the victim, but also the perpetrator would be a great way to start because we can’t just fix the symptoms if we never address the root of the problem.”

Teachers

The following are the responses given by the only teacher willing to participate in this study:

1: From your experience, what types of bullying have you seen in your classroom/school site?

How can you tell if a student is getting bullied?

From my experience, the type of bullying that I have seen in my classroom/school site are verbal and physical bullying. A majority of both types of bullying takes place in my school site rather than in my classroom because I have taught my students to *never* bully others and how to differentiate between bullying and “mean moments.” Therefore, they know better than to bully their classmates. However, on the playground, I sometimes see students (mine and others) using very mean words to insult each other or pulling/pushing on each other’s bodies when they get angry to try to force the other student to do something they don’t want to do

I can tell if a student is getting bullied by their body language, their facial expressions, and how they handle themselves when they’re in difficult situations.

2: How has bullying affected your students emotionally, physically and academically? Did their grades drop?

Bullying has affected my students emotionally by causing them to feel big emotions that they struggle coping with. For example, when my students are being bullied, they experience negative emotions (sadness, anger, frustration, annoyance, etc) that cause them to cry uncontrollably for short bursts of time or completely shut down and give up on whatever it is that they’re working on.

Bullying hasn’t affected my students physically. However, it has affected them academically in the sense that they sometimes have a very difficult time focusing on their learning. When their minds are consumed by the negative side effects of having been bullied, they are unable to process anything new that they are supposed to be learning. Fortunately, it hasn’t affected their grades, but it does affect their ability to concentrate on the curriculum, which therefore prohibits their ability to process/learn anything new.

3: How do you intervene with bullying incidents? Be as detailed as possible.

The way I intervene with bullying incidents include confronting the bullier and the bullied, having each student share their side of events, explaining to each student how/where they made their mistake, informing them of how to do things differently the next time, and enforcing a consequence on the bullier that matches with the severity of their bullying. After this conversation with the students, I inform the teacher of the students about the incident so that they are aware. If I see the same bullying incident occur with the same student (either 1 student or both of them), then I remind them about the conversation/consequence from the first incident, I increase the consequence as necessary, and I write up the bullier for documentation purposes. If it happens a third time, I inform the principal and she takes over the situation from there.

4. What policies are in place at your school in regards to bullying?

In regards to bullying, my school has a multi-step policy in place. The first step is for the student being bullied to tell the bully to “stop.” The second step is for the student being bullied to “tell an adult” if the bully doesn’t stop. The third step is for the bully to be written up (we use a paper form called “Minor Incident Report” to write down the details of the bullying incident). The fourth step is for the bully to go to the Thinkery (a version of detention where the student sits in a designated area of the cafeteria with a campus supervisor and “thinks” about what they did wrong) during their first recess. The fifth step is for the bully and their parents to meet with the principal and the vice principal to discuss possible further necessary consequences.

5. Is there anything that could be improved to deal better with the problem of bullying in elementary schools? Do you think you can improve with how you handle bullying incidents to reduce it to a minimum? What do you think?

In order to better deal with the problem of bullying in elementary schools, I believe that all elementary-aged students (5-11) should have no access to social media. Social media has become a severe problem and an increasingly negative influence on many young children in today's society. When young children are exposed to inappropriate, mean things on social media, they recreate what they see and hear and that leads to bullying in the classroom.

I also believe that the principals and vice principals of elementary schools should have a solid grasp on firm and effective discipline for any student who bullies other students. Corrective and effective discipline should start at the top of any elementary school system and should be reinforced at every level. Only then can we hope that students will put an end their bully-like behavior.

I do think that I can improve on the way in which I handle bullying incidents to reduce it to a minimum. I can reduce the amount of conversations that I have with the students (reducing from three or four conversations down to only one or two) and put firmer consequences in place sooner, leaving less room/time for the students to bully each other.

Discussions:

After analyzing the data gathered through this study, I have created a response for every secondary question made for this research paper

S1: What is bullying? What does it consist of? What types of bullying happen at the elementary school level and what and when caused students to bully others?

- Bullying has already been identified as being hurtful actions caused purposefully from a perpetrator to a victim, whether they be physical, emotional, verbal, psychological or cyber. Students who partake in acts of bullying do it with the intention of hurting another student at all grade levels, and it usually starts at the elementary level, especially with physical and verbal bullying. Students who bully others are typically the kind who weren't raised with the right morals of respect at home and/or a lack of education when it comes to a sensitive topic such as this one and its effects on other students who are made victims.

S2: What does research say about how bullying has affected elementary school students physically, emotionally, and psychologically?

- The majority of the content of this question has been written out previously in the literature review of this paper. Students who experience signs of being victims of bullying tend to become more quieter and socially outcast from the rest of the group. Elementary students especially undergo a phase in which they experience big emotions that they find it so hard to cope with due to lack of maturity in experience with life and the negativity of bullying. As seen by some student responses, it is possible that students may experience several types of effects with bullying such as gaining/losing weight, becoming socially drained and experiencing depression/anxiety from the trauma that the brain is exposed to at such a young age. For some students, being victims of bullying has led them to not be able to fully focus on their academics as much as they should be able to because of the

ongoing trauma that has been left to reside in their young minds. It has been noted, however, that the effects tend to be more towards the emotional and psychological side of things rather than physical.

S3: How can teachers tell that students have been bullied? To what extent, does the bullying affect elementary school students and the bystanders? And what are the actions that teachers make to stop the bullying?

- To answer the first part of this question with the responses from this research would not suffice completely as I was only able to get one teacher to fill out the survey. From what they wrote however, it is noted that students tend to have a different body language when they are victims of bullying, such as always being huddled within their desk or perhaps having their hoodie on constantly. Their facial expressions are also a given since they are either expressions of anger and sadness that they demonstrate. Bystanders also play a role in a bullying incident and based on the responses, the majority of students have been a bystander at least once in their lifetime. This is due to the tendency that the students are either hanging out with the wrong crowd or they are afraid of becoming victims of harassment themselves. When it comes to intervention by a teacher, the educator's response indicates that they confront both sides of the issue to try to get a better understanding of the incident. They also try to enforce consequences on the perpetrator depending on the severity of the issue as well as speak to the teacher of the student for any misconduct.

S4: Are there school policies in place to handle bullying issues? If there are, how do schools deal with the students who have bullied others?

- Based on the responses, the majority of schools have anti-bullying campaigns in which they promote taking a stance against bullying, especially with slogans like “be a buddy, not a bully.” Other schools are noted for having a “zero-tolerance” policy in which a bully receives immediate consequences for hurting another student, but it does not really take any steps forwards to help the bully change for the better. The school used for this study uses a method called the “multi-step policy” which ranges from 1. Telling bully to stop 2. Telling an adult about the incident 3. Give a write up known as a “Minor Incident Report” 4. Go to Thinkery “their form of detention” and 5. Bully and parents meet with the principal to discuss further consequences needed.

S5: What can school and teachers do to prevent bullying from happening? And how could they reduce the rate of bullying in their schools to a minimum?

- The data collected for this question ranges from different responses since this question is based more on individual experiences, thoughts and opinions rather than concrete facts. Some responses range from having more severe consequences for the bully to teaching the victim how to stand up for themselves in a healthy way so they can be strong enough to end an incident of bullying in the future. The educator participant of this study suggested that from ages 5-11, social media should be completely off limits to students so that they do not get influenced by the inappropriate influence that negatively affects the children of today;s society. Corrective and effective discipline should also be a top priority for teachers and administrators so that it is not just punishment that the bully is

receiving but also an understanding of how bad a person's actions can affect another. This ties with another student's response who believes in treating the root of the problem rather than the symptoms, in which the bully is taught ways of respect towards other students so that they do not bully any other people and end that streak of harm rather than individually helping every student who has been a victim. Help should be given to both sides, not one over the other, even if it is in different ways than one another.

Problems and Limitations

When I had made the surveys for the three different groups, I wasn't really too worried about the problems that I would face since I gave them out, little more than a month ago. However as the weeks went on, I did start to get concerned about not getting them back in time or at all. For the most part I was able to collect my data with the students and a teacher survey as well but I did come across a problem. When I made the survey for the students, I specifically constructed them to make the students elaborate on their answers and for them to be more vivid and detailed. Some of the students answered with a simple "yes" when the question was asking them to explain their answers more thoroughly. Also, I was supposed to have another teacher fill out the survey but they never got back to me in time when I needed to analyze the results of this research. Furthermore, there were some technological issues as I sent out the surveys to more adults than the ones I have in this study, but some claimed that the email never got to them so they ended up opting out of the research process.

Conclusions and Recommendations

With this information that has been gathered about the effects of bullying on elementary school students, it is evident that the effects are so profound in the sense that it impacts students

on an emotional level, as well as socially, and academically. Bullying creates an environment of fear which hinders students' abilities to be focused in class and makes them feel like they don't belong. This can potentially lead to long term consequences such as low self esteem, anxiety, and depression, which may persist into adulthood. With all the violence and aggression that comes with bullying, it not only affects the victim but also the bullies and the bystanders that are exposed to it. With this being said, it is of vital importance for educators, parents, and the community as a whole to actively address this issue and prevent bullying in elementary schools through a way of educating them, providing interventions and fostering empathy and respect for others.

What I would recommend for schools to do when it comes to bullying, is treating the root of the problem rather than the symptoms of the aftermath. While I do still think it's important for schools to provide support and interventions for the victims and bullies, however, solely focusing on these superficial “solutions” fails to address the underlying causes of bullying behavior. It would be very helpful to not just focus on the victim, but also get to understand the bully as to why they feel the need to hurt someone else and feel an urge to bully someone to see if it could be helped. Educating students about the consequences of bullying and teaching them alternative ways in which they can resolve and de-escalate the situation before getting out of hand. Furthermore I believe by addressing issues such as discrimination and inequality and social exclusion is vital for preventing bullying and If schools were to create an environment where diversity is being embraced, students will feel more welcomed no matter their differences. Which is why by addressing the root cause of bullying, it will create a more lasting change and the overall well being of students academic success in the elementary level.

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Appendix A: Elementary Students Survey

Age:

Grade:

Boy or Girl:

1: Have you ever **been bullied** in school? If so, how? What types of bullying did you experience (whether it be physical, verbal, cyber, or psychological)?

2: If you have gotten bullied in school, how did it affect you physically, emotionally, and or psychologically? Also, how did bullying affect your grades in school? Did it affect you in your school work?

3: Have you ever been a bystander to bullying? In other words, have you ever seen anyone get bullied but you never did anything about it?

4: Have you ever **bullied** anyone? If so, be clear as to why and what do you think caused you to do that?

5: Have you ever seen a teacher stand up to bullying? Would they make sure that the bullied student is ok and would they make sure to have the bully be held responsible? If so, how?

6: To your understanding, what policies/rules are in place at your school for anti-bullying? How would they bring awareness to bullying and what consequences would a bully face if they got caught?

7: What do you think teachers and administrators could do better at your school to deal with bullying?

Appendix B: Teacher Survey

Years of Teaching:

Current Grade Level:

1: From your experience, what types of bullying have you seen in your classroom/school site?

How can you tell if a student is getting bullied?

2: How has bullying affected your students emotionally, physically and academically? Did their grades drop?

3: How do you intervene with bullying incidents? Be as detailed as possible.

4. What policies are in place at your school in regards to bullying?

5. Is there anything that could be improved to deal better with the problem of bullying in elementary schools? Do you think you can improve with how you handle with bullying incidents to reduce it to a minimum?What do you think?

Appendix C: Adult Survey

Age:

Sex:

1: Have you ever **been bullied** in elementary school? If so, how? What types of bullying experiences did you encounter (whether it be physical, verbal, cyber, or psychological)?

2: If you have gotten bullied in elementary school, how did it affect you physically, emotionally, and or psychologically? Also, how did bullying affect your grades in school? Did it affect you academically?

3: Have you ever been a bystander to bullying? In other words, have you ever seen anyone get bullied but you never did anything about it?

4: Have you ever **bullied** anyone? If so, be clear as to why and what do you think caused you to do that?

5: Have you ever seen a teacher in elementary school stand up to bullying? Would they make sure that the bullied student is ok and would they make sure to have the bully be held responsible? If so, how?

6: To your understanding, did your elementary school have any policies in place for anti-bullying? How would they bring awareness to bullying and what consequences would a bully face if they got caught?

7: What do you think could have been done better by schools to deal with bullying?