CURBING STUDENTS' BULLYING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL BULLYING INTERVENTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper was to examine the effectiveness of bullying interventions in curbing students' bullying in secondary schools in Machakos County. The study was anchored on social learning theory which expounds on the role played by one's behavior and how this contributes to bullying among learners. The study used a descriptive survey research design to collect and analyse the primary data. A sample of 333 respondents was selected from a population of 116,053 respondents drawn from 36 schools. A questionnaire and interview guide were used as the key research instruments for the study. The collected data was analysed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The findings from the study revealed that students' bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County was prevalent despite the interventions. It was further revealed that disciplinary interventions such as suspensions and punishments were upheld in most of the schools. Moreover, restorative interventions, anti-bullying programmes, and supportive interventions were found not to be effectively utilized in most of the schools, thus their ineffectiveness in eradicating bullying. The study concluded that bullying among students in secondary schools was prevalent due to ineffectiveness of interventions as they were inadequately implemented. It is therefore recommended that there is need for the school principals and other decision-makers to implement school interventions so as to effectively curb students' bullying among secondary schools.

Keywords: Students' Bullying, School Bullying Interventions, Public Secondary Schools

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Students' Bullying is intentional and repeated acts of intimidating someone, acted by one person or a group of persons. This is mainly done repeatedly and usually targets victims who can hardly defend themselves (Olweus, 2013). According to Olweus, the intentions of bullying a student are to inflict injury, cause distress to him or her because of the inability to defend themselves against the bullying behavior. There must be power difference among the bullies

and the victims for the bullies to victimize the helpless victims. The difference in power and capability in terms of strength is as a result of physical strength of an individual, the social status of a person in the group, the size of the group for example a group targeting one person, and the vulnerability of the person based on the family background. Causes of bullying vary and they include revenge, peer pressure, school culture and dysfunctional family backgrounds (UNESCO, 2017).

The Government of Kenya in its efforts to reduce bullying cases in schools, introduced a policy where the school board of management was required to deal with bullying students by taking disciplinary action against the bullies. One of the proposed disciplinary actions was suspension or expulsion of bullies. However, this policy lacked a legislation support against bullying. This means that there could be no 03 disciplinary or penal action taken against the bullies, except if there is proof of harm in which case will be treated as assault under the Penal Code 36. This makes it harder for students to take their cases to the court especially where they are unable to prove harm as to the standards required by the Penal Code. Establishing how such an intervention measure is applied in schools and its effect on curbing bullying is essential.

The prevalence of bullying in schools in Kenya has been evident over the years, with recent cases being reported even in national schools. Njeru (2019) reported of a bullying incidence in Nairobi school that left the victim with brutal brain injuries. A report by the World Health Organization – WHO (2017) on bullying prevalence in adolescents agreed between 13 and 17 years revealed that Kenya was ranked among top countries with high prevalence of bullying in secondary schools. The report revealed that at national level, Kenya had a bullying prevalence of 57%, where students are bullied at least twice in a month. In other schools, the prevalence of bullying was 66% and the prevalence of bullying among girls was 57.4% (Kigithi, 2017). According to Gichuki (2022), while the world average bullying prevalence is 15%, Kenya has a bullying prevalence of between 50% and 63% in public secondary schools, with physical bullying, and verbal bullying being the highest forms of bullying at 82% and 72% respectively. In Machakos County, a report by Gumbihi (2021) revealed that public secondary schools in the county had a high prevalence of bullying among students. This is echoed by Nyaga (2019) who contemplated that there was high prevalence of students' bullying in Machakos County.

Mbah (2020) argued that punishments and amicably solving the students' differences reduced the cases of bullying in secondary schools. Naula, Muranga, Gulere, and Owor (2018) while analyzing the students' bullying among schools in Uganda established that the interventions by the management were only effective when upheld and undertaken continuously. This created a culture of discipline in schools thus reducing bullying incidences and their impact. The authors proposed supportive interventions as essential in curbing bullying in schools. These include interventions based on support from the school management, teachers, and parents to ensure the appropriate action is taken on bullies and the right support given on the victims. All these support interventions are aimed at ensuring the bully changes their behavior and the victims get the much needed support in regaining their self-esteem, safety and concentration to the school work and coexist well with the bullies.

Sekatawa (2019) assessed bullying and depression among adolescents in secondary schools in Uganda and established that bullying if not effectively controlled had negative impact on students' self-esteem and caused depression among students. In Tanzania, Kakuru (2020)

established that corporal punishments and government interventions were key strategies that had a significant impact on decline of bullying in Secondary schools in Tanzania. Restorative03 approaches on the other hand03 can03 provide03 a03 path03 between these two opposite approaches. The underlying principle here is to resolve conflict and repair harm by focusing on the perpetrator, who is made aware of the victim's 03 feelings, 03 encouraged 03 to 03 acknowledge 03 the 03 impact 03 of 03 what 03 they 03 have done and given an opportunity to make reparation; those who have suffered have the opportunity to have their harm or loss acknowledged and amends made (Menngan, 2016).

In Kenya, Lugulu and Katwa (2020) studied the effectiveness of administrative intervention to school bullying in secondary schools in Uasin-Gishu County. Their findings revealed that the management of the schools had a role of embracing punishment to curb bullying. They also established that through equipping students with skills on how to treat bullies, bullying was curbed in the schools. These are the restorative interventions that have been found to highly enhance curbing of students' bullying. As argued by Inamullah, Irshadullah, and Shah (2016), restorative approach of bullying intervention enables the victims of bullying to recover from the incidences, thus enabling them to evade any revenge plans, and breaks the bullying cycle. Inamullah et al. further indicate that restorative intervention is about arbitrating and bringing a better relationship between the bullies and the victims. In the long-run, this creates a friendly culture in the school, thus providing a long-term solution to bullying. The study will therefore focus on restorative approach as one of the intervention measures and assess this through guidance and counselling, appraisals and arbitration.

Okwemba (2018) proposes the need for anti-bullying programmes, which are defined as the programmes and sessions created to have schools adopt a given framework for curbing bullying. This is done in individual schools (intra-school) or several schools are included in the programme (extra-school programmes). According to Okwemba, the programmes are essential in creating awareness among the students on ways to avoid bullying incidences. The programmes also create a unified culture in schools across the country. Other studies locally have found bullying to be prevalent Kenyan schools particularly the secondary level, and recommended the need for speedy programmes and intervention measures to salvage the escalating cases of bullying (Manyibe & Anyona, 2018; Itegi, 2017; Musa, 2016).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Secondary school education remains integral to the country's socio-economic and political development. Its effectiveness highly determines the success and transformation of a society by equipping learners with the right skills not only academically but socially and mentally. However, the effectiveness of the secondary school education has been greatly affected by among other factors, increase in bullying among students. Public secondary schools have been called to developed stringent measures to curb the increasing bullying incidences among students. Reports indicate that Machakos County has among the highest prevalence of students bullying in Secondary schools in the region exceeding the other surrounding counties. This is against the Children Act of 2012 that upholds the right for children to be protected against harm including bullying. The Ministry of Education through the basic education

guidelines of 2016 directed the heads of schools to put across interventions to curb bullying and instill discipline among learners.

While studies have shown punitive measures and zero-tolerance strategies to have significant impact on curbing bullying in schools, some have found no significant effect on such reactive measures. The literature shows that use of more psychosocial and interactive measures to curb bullying in schools. This shows the need to establish whether these proposed intervention measures have been implemented in the schools, and whether they have played a role in curbing the students' bullying. The study therefore sought to03 assess03 the03 effectiveness03 of03 school03 interventions on students' bullying among secondary school learners in Machakos County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of school interventions on curbing students' bullying among secondary school learners in Machakos County, Kenya. This was aimed at describing the role played by bullying interventions in eradicating bullying among secondary schools. Through the study, the existing research gaps on how bullying interventions help in eradicating bullying were bridged. This is also expected to reduce the incidences of bullying public secondary school, thus promoting a more conducive learning environment.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by social learning theory. While the theory originates from Bandura's early work of 1963, more recent versions have been developed to conform to the modern world learning environment (McLeod, 2016). The theory highlights the process and key factors of influencing learning, and how these factors are linked with the individual behaviours (Bandura, 2004; Bandura & Walters, 1977). In a more recent version, Bandura (2004) introduced the aspect of observational learning as a driver to bad behavior. A more recent work by Ahn, Hu, and Vega (2020) indicate that social learning is not only embodied on copying bad behavior but also in instilling restorative measures to embrace and shape good behaviours. According to Miller and Morris (2016), in the same way students learn and copy bad behaviours such as bullying, they can also be tuned to copy good behaviours such as cohesion and living in harmony with their peers. Students learn a set of complex behaviors from others and then copy the same behavior as theirs. Observation of other people's behaviors, increase the chances of practicing the behavior copied as well as increasing the speed to learning (Carel & Burkart, 2011). According to Akers and Jensen (2017), again through observation, students can change from what they believe is right such as bullying and learn good behavior. This will depend on what they observe and the measures put in place to enable them learn what is expected of them. Although Bandura did not specifically put students' bullying as a case of modeling, the argument is that a behavior observed from another school or other types of media sources, family members and social groups such as Television programme, and the way parents solve problems at home may lead to bullying as a result of modeling.

The students might apply the behavior observed from either social media or family members particularly the aggressive way of solving problem hence inflicting pain to other students through bullying. Once students' bullying is practiced within a school, the bullied student becomes socially affected which eventually affects their academic performance. However, the educators can use modeling to reduce or eliminate the behavior of students' bullying within the learning institutions through positive !modeling, use of reinforcement and rewards and sometimes through persuasion. According to Hurd, Wittrup, and Zimmerman (2011), in order for an individual to attempt a modeled behavior, he must value the observed outcome and perceive it as successful.

2.2 Bullying Interventions
2.2.1 Disciplinary Intervention Approach and Students Bullying

Discipline refers to educating someone to acquire desired behavior for both remediation and prevention purposes (Cotton, 2016). The secondary schools principals can ensure disciplinary intervention approach through the following: suspensions of students from the schools who involve themselves in students' bullying, Punishment of the bullies as well as the expulsions of the bullies from schools. Gershoff, Lee and Durrant (2017) argue that through continued punishments, learners may over time resist and become more bitter, thus increasing the chances of bullying as opposed to reducing them. The authors also indicate that once administered, punishments could bring out anger, aggression, fear and bitterness to03 the03 affected03 student03 and03 should be avoided.

A study by Mehmet and Siddika (2021) sought to establish the school principals' perspectives towards bullying among middle (secondary) schools in Turkey. The results revealed that most of the principals considered disciplinary interventions through punishments and threatening bullies to be essential in eradicating bullying in their schools. The findings further revealed that disciplinary actions against the onlookers and other accomplices to the bullying incidences helped reduce the bullying incidences. This is in line with the findings by Manna, Colzone, Adinolfi, and Palumbo (2019) who while addressing the issue of bullying among pupils in schools in Italy revealed that to eradicate bullying, creation of a safe environment in schools by getting rid of bullies through punitive mechanisms was an essential move in the anti-bullying efforts. Ji-Kang, Zixin, and Li-Chih (2021) while assessing the parental believes on use of corporal punishments to curb bullying in schools established that bullies in some instances required corporal punishments to enable them change their behavior.

Pouwels, Lansu, and Cilessen (2016) assessed the participants' role in bullying among adolescents, and using a descriptive research approach examined major intervention strategies that were effective in reducing bullying in schools. Their findings revealed that punishments and expulsion of bullies was a good example-setting move that set the position of the school on bullying, thus reducing bullying in schools. According to Pouwels et al., most of school-going adolescents are likely to uphold bullying behavior on the basis that there are no punitive actions taken against bullies. This is also supported by Regmi, Gaihre, and Sharma (2019) who while analyzing bullying among secondary school students revealed that while bullying in schools may be blamed on psychological issues that require more friendly

mechanisms, punishments should be upheld as the short-term solution that sets the precedence on what is expected to the bullies.

2.2.2 Restorative Intervention Approach and Students Bullying

Restorative intervention approach prevents or resolves conflicts between students or between staff and students to prevent further harms. It enables victims to communicate to perpetrators the effects of the harm, and for perpetrators to acknowledge and amend their behavior to avoid further harms. The school managers can ensure restorative intervention approach through the following: guidance and counseling, arbitration and expert appraisals (Swank et al., 2019). Guiding and counseling plays a key role in restorative invention approach. Counselors play key roles03 in03 assisting03 the03 bullies03 and03 victims03 towards03 making03 positive03 change. Counselors 03 in 03 addition 03 to 03 facilitating 03 active 03 involvement 03 of 03 other 03 stakeholders 03 can 03 also 03 employ 03 peer 03 support/mentoring as advocated by Lui, Wong, and Roland (2018). Juan, Zuze, Hannan, Govender, and Reddy (2018) allude that the approach is significant in enabling the learner's participate effectively in coming up with the solutions to sole the bullying menace.

The intervention is also based on an educational anti-bullying program, which is delivered by teachers and other professionals, with an aim of ensuring a culture is established within schools on the need for friendliness and needless for bullying in schools. From the background, it has been established that the major interventions by schools to curb bullying include anti-bullying programmes, supportive interventions that aim at supporting both the victim and the bully to change their behavior and attitude, disciplinary interventions such as punishments aimed at reprimanding the bullies, and restorative interventions such as arbitration aimed at bringing peace and cohesion among the bullies and victims.

Arbitration is another restorative approach that can be used by03 both03 the03 teachers03 and03 administrators03 in03 secondary03 schools03 to eliminate students' bullying. This approach requires a readiness of the parties involved in the bullying to agree to meet and seek a solution through the assistance of a neutral practitioner (Cowie & Smith, 2010). Its application, however, is severely limited to cases in which both the bully and victim are genuinely interested in mediation and the practitioner can remain neutral. Often those who bully are not motivated to seek mediation and it is difficult to remain neutral when the bullying is seen as completely unjustified, as it normally is (Hu, Bao, Nie, Liu, & Zhu, 2019). Gutierrez, Molina, and Ñopo (2018) carried out a study on the school interventions to eradicate bullying among schools in Germany. The findings revealed that there were two major interventions that had better results in curbing bullying. These included: creation of awareness03 among03 students03 on03 the03 negative03 impacts03 of03 bullying03 and03 encouraging03 students to report any bullying incidences. This compares with the findings by Sarzosa and Urzúa (2015) who portrayed restorative approach through engaging students and supporting the victims as the only long-term solution to curb bullying in schools.

2.2.3 Anti-Bullying Programmes and Students Bullying

Anti-bullying laws are one prevention strategy that can change social norms. Students bullying can be addressed through the ant-bullying programmes which include: extra-school

programmes, intra-school programmes and classroom-based programmes. The extra school programmes and intra-school programmes can be used to reduce the students' bullying within the school. Garandeau et al. (2014) noted that the anti-bullying programmes that are meant to bring the students together and create the necessary awareness against bullying is an essential mitigation measure that can proactively eradicate bullying in schools. According to Cho and Chun (2018), the general assumption is that through the anti-bullying programmes, the bullying in secondary schools is reduced significantly. Further, Kakuru (2020) alluded that increased focus on anti-bullying programmes enhances the spread of a good behavior that is against bullying among students, thus enabling the continued coexistence between the parties as well as creating a generation that is more cohesive and embracing to one another. The findings concur with those by Burger and Bachmann (2021) who established that through integration of anti-bullying programs, schools become more successful in building bridges among students and creating a culture that is against bullying, thus successfully curbing the menace.

Gabrielli, Rizzi, Carbone, and Piras (2021) assessed the school interventions in prevention of bullying among students among schools in Italy. The study focused on cyberbullying and assessed how upright and creep methods influenced reduced bullying among students. The findings revealed that while cyberbullying similar to other forms of bullying affected the students, its control and intervention required school-based programmes organized by the schools and supported by key educational stakeholders. According to Gabrielli et al. (2021), upright intervention is a programme which involves training the learners to enable them to cope with bullying and develop resilience to bullying effects.

Muli, Nzoka, and Muthee (2019) analysed the prevalence of bullying and its effect on students' academic performance among public secondary schools in Kitui County. The study assessed how the identification of students with bullying behavior and measures taken by the teachers to curb bullying impacted the learners' academic performance. The findings revealed that bullying behavior had a significant effect on learners' academic performance. Through the identification of students with bullying behavior, the teachers were able to establish key measures to curb bullying which included classroom practices, open communication and parent's involvement.

2.2.4 Supportive Intervention Approach and Students Bullying

The supportive interventions where the students particularly the victim and the bully are put on a support system where they are monitored and their differences solved amicably has a potential role to play in curbing bullying. Moreover, Kakuru (2020) noted that supportive interventions are most effective in eradicating bullying as they ensure more involvement of other parties including parents, thus finding a lasting solution to the menace.

Elsewhere, Eriksen, Nielsen, and Simonsen (2014) did a study on the bullying in elementary schools in Chicago. The results revealed that intervention measures on bullying relied on the underlying issues pertaining the bullies, and the commitment by the schools to have the external parties through supportive approaches bring in their input to the interventions. Eriksen et al. further elaborated that collective interventions and individualized responses were essential interventions to minimize bullying in schools.

Mavisi, Mayaka, and Nabea (2019) assessed perception of teachers on03 the03 use03 of03 literature03 Bibliotherapeutic03 interventions03 in03 curbing03 students'03 bullying03 in03 public03 secondary03 schools03 in Kenya. Using a cross-sectional research approach, the study surveyed 44 respondents and established that most of the teachers perceived use of bibliotherapeutic as one of the essential ways that they could curb bullying among students. Bibliotherapeutic intervention is one of the supportive interventions where teachers use the available reading materials such as novels to counsel learners regarding bullying. This according to Mavisi et al. (2019) is an effective intervention in that it supports the learners to change their perception on bullying and help them become crusaders of anti-bullying.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design
The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive research approach systematically describes a phenomenon or a subject matter in a study by enabling collection and analysis of data that answers the questions what, when, where, and how. Through descriptive research design, it becomes possible for the researcher to collect and analyse data that responds to the level at which the interventions have been fruitful and how they can be enhanced further to eradicate bullying in secondary schools.

3.2 Target Population and Sampling
The03 target03 population for this study03 was the 351 public03 secondary03 schools03 in03 Machakos03 County. A population of 116,053 respondents comprising of 351 principals, 351 deputy principals, 351 teachers in charge of guidance and counseling and 115,000 students were targeted. Using a 10% threshold, 36 schools were selected. Stratified03 random03 sampling03 was used03 to03 select the 36 schools while purposive sampling was used to select principals, deputy principals and teachers in charge of guidance and counselling from the 36 schools. A sampling formula by Nassiuma (2000) was used to sample 225 students who were selected using proportionate random sampling from each of the 36 schools. The03 total03 sample03 size03 for03 the03 study03 was3 therefore 333 respondents.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure
A questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect primary data for the study. The deputy principals, teachers and students were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. An interview guide was used to collect data from the school principals. An approval was sought from Kenyatta University Graduate School, after which a research permit was obtained from NACOSTI. The permit and the introduction letter from the University were attached on the questionnaire through which permission to collect data from teachers and students were sought from the selected schools' management. Prior arrangements were made with the school principals for them to spare time from their busy schedules for the interviews.

3.4 Data Analysis
The collected data was analysed through qualitative (for the qualitative data collected through open-ended questions and interview schedules) and quantitative (for the quantitative data

obtained through closed-ended questions and other quantifiable data) methods. The data was first sorted, cleaned and coded where the qualitative data was coded in Microsoft excel and the quantitative data coded in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The qualitative data was then analysed thematically based on the key themes (objectives) in the study using content analysis technique. The quantitative data on the other hand was analysed using descriptive statistics which comprised of mean, standard deviation, percentages, and frequencies.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Response Rate of the Research Instruments

The study had a sample size of 36 teachers, 36 principals, 36 deputy principals and 225 students. The teachers, deputy principals and students were surveyed using questionnaires while the principals were interviewed using an interview guide. Table 1 shows the response rate. As the results portray, an overall response rate of 78.1% was obtained. This comprised of 61.1% for the school principals, 69.4% for the deputy principals, 86.1% for the teachers and 80.9% for the students. According to Saunders and Bezzina (2015), a response rate of 60% and above is considered adequate for a study.

Table 1: Response Rate

Target Respondents	Sample Size	Response	Return Rate	Non-response Rate
Principals	36	22	61.1%	38.9%
Deputy Principals	36	25	69.4%	30.6%
Teachers	36	31	86.1%	13.9%
Students	225	182	80.9%	19.1%
Overall	**333**	**260**	**78.1%**	**21.9%**

4.2 The status of Students' Bullying among Secondary Schools in Machakos County

The respondents' opinions on the status of students' bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County were sought. This was meant to examine the prevalence of bullying in the surveyed schools. The teachers and deputy principals were required to indicate the extent to which students' bullying was still being experienced in their respective schools, while the learners were asked to indicate whether they had been bullied or participated in any bullying activity in the school. The teachers and deputy principals were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement based on a 4-points Likert's scale. The findings are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Agreement with Statements on Students' Bullying

Statements	SD	D	A	SA	Mean
	%	%	%	%	
There have been fewer cases of students bullying their peers in the school for the past two years	68.0%	20.2%	5.1%	6.7%	2.56
The school has been recording fewer cases of bullied students over the recent past	23.0%	38.8%	10.7%	27.5%	2.81
The students have been more actively reporting any cases of bullying than it were before	47.8%	36.5%	5.1%	10.6%	2.15
The academic performance of bullying victims has increased in the recent past	21.8%	36.0%	25.2%	17.0%	2.34
There have been cases of students dropping out of the school after being bullied	30.4%	14.6%	26.4%	28.6%	3.05

As shown in Table 2, majority of deputy principals and teachers (88.2%) disagreed with the statement that there had been fewer cases of students bullying their peers in their respective schools for the past two years (Mean = 2.56). Most of the teachers and deputy principals (61.8%) also disagreed with the statement that the school had been recording fewer cases of bullied students over the recent past. This is tandem with the findings by Kesho Kenya (2018), who established that the status of bullying in most secondary schools in Kenya is still high. The teachers and deputy principals (84.3%) further disagreed the students in their respective schools had been more actively reporting any cases of bullying than it were before. On the other hand, 57.8% of the teachers and deputy principals disagreed that the academic performance of bullying victims had increased in the recent past, while 54.0% of the teachers and deputy principals agreed that there had been cases of students dropping out of the school after being bullied. The findings compare with those by Steyn and Singh (2018) who established that bullying was still prevalent in secondary schools.

4.3 Effectiveness of Bullying Interventions in Curbing Students' Bullying among Secondary Schools in Machakos County

The study sought to establish the effectiveness of key interventions in curbing students' bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County. The key interventions focused on in the study were disciplinary interventions, restorative interventions, anti-bullying programms, and supportive interventions. This was established using regression model. The results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients on the Effectiveness of Interventions on Curbing Students' Bullying

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.206	.262		.787	.432
	Disciplinary Interventions	1.038	.121	.542	8.561	.000
	Restorative Interventions	.358	.056	.434	6.385	.000
	Anti-Bullying Programmes	.674	.082	.524	8.168	.000
	Supportive Interventions	.581	.092	.429	6.307	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Curbing Bullying in Secondary Schools						

On disciplinary interventions, the results depicts that there was a statistically significant positive relationship (ß = 1.038; P < 0.05) between disciplinary interventions and curbing of students' bullying in public secondary schools in Machakos County. The findings are in line with what was confirmed by the principals that the ability of the schools to curb bullying was mainly determined by the disciplinary interventions that the schools put in place.

On restorative interventions, the results revealed that the restorative interventions significantly relate with cubing students' bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County (ß=0.358; P=0.000<0.05). The regression coefficient (ß) of 0.358 implies that restorative interventions are responsible for 0.358 of the eradication of bullying in the secondary schools in Machakos County. The P-value of 0.000 1is less than the standard p-value of 0.05, implying that restorative interventions would significantly influence the eradication of students'

bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County. The findings confirms that the embrace of restorative interventions was not effectively upheld in their schools, and that bullying was still prevalent in the schools. The results concur with those by Hymel and Swearer (2015) who established that while punishments and other disciplinary measures would reduce bullying, its eradication depends on the efforts made by the schools to enhance the coexistence between the bullies and the victims through restorative measures.

The other intervention was anti-bullying programmes on curbing students' bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County. The results revealed that regression coefficient (ß) for anti-bullying programmes is 0.674 and the p-value is 0.000<0.05. The regression coefficient implies that through anti-bullying programmes, the bullying eradication is achieved by 67.4%.With a P-value of 0.000 which is less than the standard p-value of 0.05, it implies that anti-bullying programmes significantly enhances the eradication of bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County. The findings concur with those by Burger and Bachmann (2021) who established that through integration of anti-bullying programs, schools become more successful in building bridges among students and creating a culture that is against bullying, thus successfully curbing the menace.

According to Inamullah et al. (2016), anti-bullying programmes are meant to instill good behavior among students that is against bullying and enable them to cope within the school environment and foster better relationships. These programmes can be school-based, they can have several school on board, or they can be class-based where the targeted students are from a given class, especially those with high prevalence of bullying.

On restorative intervention in eradicating students' bullying, the results shows that the regression coefficient (ß) for supportive interventions is 0.581 and the p-value is 0.000<0.05. The regression coefficient implies that supportive interventions would influence eradication of students bullying by up to 0.581. The P-value of 0.000 is less than the standard P-value of 0.05, implying that supportive interventions would significantly influence eradication of students' bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County. The findings imply that the increased bullying among secondary school in Machakos County could be as a result of ineffective embrace of supportive interventions to curb the menace. The findings concur with those by Ahn et al. (2020) who argued that without supporting both the bullies and the victims, the schools fall short of having a culture that is against bullying, and this increases the continuity of students' bullying. Moreover, Kakuru (2020) noted that supportive interventions are most effective in eradicating bullying as they ensure more involvement of other parties including parents, thus finding a lasting solution to the menace.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that bullying was still prevalence in most of the secondary schools in Machakos County. This exposed most learners to psychological and physical impacts which in turn affects their performance in academics. The prevalence of bullying in the schools was echoed by learners, the teachers, deputy principals and the principals.

It was concluded that the disciplinary interventions were significant in eradicating the students' bullying in the secondary schools in Machakos County. However, it was noted that the effectiveness of the disciplinary interventions was not long-lasting, as this did not focus on

changing the behavior proactively rather than forcefully instilling discipline among the students.

The study concluded that restorative interventions were integral in eradicating students bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County. The provision of guidance and counseling to both the bullies and the victims as well as arbitrating the peace between the two parties was concluded to effectively curb bullying in the schools. While most of the schools did not embrace restorative interventions, they were found to be more sustainable in eradicating bullying.

The study further concluded that anti-bullying programmes embraced by the schools were significant in curbing bullying among secondary school students in Machakos County. Through continued embrace of extra-school programmes to intra-school and classroom-based interventions, the learners were found to be more aware of the dangers and negative side of bullying, thus desisting from the behavior.

The study also concluded that supportive interventions had a significant effect on eradication of students' bullying among secondary schools in Machakos County. It was revealed that through engagement of parents and collective support system comprising of both the bullies and the victims, more sustainable results were obtained as far as eradication of bullying is concerned.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The study recommends that there is need for the government through the ministry of education to review its existing frameworks and policies in regard to bullying in secondary schools so as to bring a more long-lasting solution to the menace.

2. The government should update its policies to focus on more diverse interventions to the bullying menace in schools, through which the policy guidelines will be more clear and representative of the changing dynamics in the current world.

3. The school principals should be at the forefront of ensuring that the learners are well-disciplined by bringing-in key disciplinary measures that would shape the behavior of the learners. This will ensure that the school is in control of any bullying situation and the learners are discouraged from the menace.

4. The schools through the principals and the teachers should be more creative in implementing the restorative measures by putting more efforts in guidance and counseling, arbitration of learners and bringing-in experts to assess and control the bullying behavior among learners

5. The government in conjunction with the schools should design key programmes that cut across schools to raise awareness on bullying and discourage the menace among learners. The programmes should be extra-school based, intra-school based and classroom based so as to change every aspect of the society as far as bullying is concerned.

6. It is essential for the school principals to integrate parents in their efforts to curb bullying. They should embrace parent-based support where the parents are consulted to establish whether there are underlying issues that could lead to their children being bullies. The schools should also support the bullied learners so as to regain their confidence and break the chain of revenge due to unresolved differences between the bullies and the victims.

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