

Abstract

Bullying is a problematic phenomenon in South African schools, affecting victims and bullies in various ways. These can have far reaching consequences that can last for years. This research sought to investigate bullying in rural schools. It sought to investigate the existence of bullying in rural schools and to explore the nature of bullying in rural schools, with regards to gender. Using a cross-sectional survey research design, 200 learners from high schools in the Eastern Cape completed the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire. Data obtained from the participants was analysed using Chi-Square Test of Independence for each question in the questionnaire. The results confirmed the existence of bullying in rural schools. All three forms of bullying (physical, verbal, psychological bullying) and cyberbullying were present in the schools. Both boys and girls are experiencing bullying. The implications of this study include feelings of a lack of safety in the school environment, which will invariably affect learners' academic and social progress. As such, more interventions should be designed to combat adverse effects of bullying.

Keywords: Bullying, rural schools, South Africa