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Grounded Theory on Bullying and Academic Performance: A Real Experience

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Abstract

This study evaluates the perception of the participants regarding the growing problem of bullying at Bignay National High School. Interview was used to gather data and information; this allows the participants to share their own experiences regarding bullying that happened in the school. In order to conduct this research, the study involves 6 participants, which includes two (2) students, two (2) teachers, and two (2) parents. This study analyzes the effects of bullying on academic performance of students.

To answer these questions, we observed and asked questions to the participants at Bignay National High School who had experience and witness bullying. The participants have a deep comprehension regarding bullying and how it affects the students mentally, physically, and socially.

These findings specified that developing an environment where students are learning without any restriction from bullying. It specifies developing an environment where students are learning without any restriction from bullying. The study also indicates that the participants' academic performance has rapidly decreased that caused them to behave differently and unusually.

Introduction

Being bullied can lead to a negative effects that impact a person emotionally, physically, socially, and academically. Many victims has been experienced anxiety, sadness, and low self-esteem because they get bullied. Which can make them feel isolated and afraid to interact with others. In school, bullying often causes a lack of motivation, poor concentration, declining grades, and frequent absences because victims may feel unsafe. Over time, these effects can grow more serious, leading to long-term emotional struggles, difficulty trusting people, and challenges in forming healthy relationships with others, they may also feel unsafe or afraid to create friends with others. It is also the repeated, intentional use of power over another person to cause distress and harm, whether it's physical, verbal, or social. Some of the characteristics include an imbalance of power (real or perceived), repetitive actions, and the intent to cause harm. This can happen in person or online and takes many forms, such as physical attacks, name-calling, spreading rumors, and excluding someone from a group. It impacts psychological aspects like low self-esteem or the need to dominate, family dynamics like inconsistent discipline or past abuse, and social elements including peer pressure, social structures, and differences in background, culture, or identity.

Background of the Study

Bullying remains to be a significant issue on the international scale, as it has been hurting the learners in various regions and cultures. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports that violence and bullying, in schools, is still prevalent as millions of learners get harassed annually in one way or another. These cases include the physical attacks and verbal abuse and social exclusion, all of which adversely affect the safety and well-being of students at school. According to the report by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the issue of bullying is not a phenomenon of certain countries; it is common in all countries. The statistics indicate that close to every

third of students across the world is bullied at least once per month. Such a continuity shows that even with the current policies and awareness, bullying is still long established in the school settings, which is to be expected since existing intervention might not be extensive and implemented universally.

Moreover, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), states that bullying has severe long-term effects on the learners. The repeated victimization leads to anxiety, depression, low performance and a lowered sense of belonging on the part of the student.

The report reminds the world that there is an urgent need to have a solid international response, which is in the form of reinforcing school policies, improving reporting measures, and facilitating safe learning environments to safeguard children and adolescents. United Nations Scientific, educational and cultural organization (UNESCO), Violence and bullying in schools: United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) proposes an improved security of students.

The issue of bullying at the Philippine schools remains a burning topic, and, as recent statistics indicate, cases of bullying have maintained the same tendency in terms of the number of cases reported. The Department of Education (DepEd) estimated that there were 2,500 cases of bullying related to the 2024-2025 school year in the National Capital Region (NCR) compared to 2,268 cases last year. This increase is a pointer to the fact that students, educators, and school administrators are still struggling to ensure safe learning environments. The preponderate of the cases of bullying is one of the major problems and can inhibit efficient intervention. Department of education (DepEd) reiterates that proper reporting is the key to determining at-risk students and taking relevant actions. To counter this, the agency has strengthened the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 which contains more precise directions regarding reporting, investigating, and resolving the cases of bullying in schools.

Besides the policy, Department of Education (DepEd) has also facilitated the provision of support to victims, such as the introduction of Mental Health and Well-Being Offices (MHWO) in schools with high incidences of bullying.

With these offices, the task of these offices, along with the aid of the guidance counselors and discipline officers, are to ensure the support of emotional and psychological assistance to the students and create awareness and preventive programs to minimize cases of bullying in schools. Department of Education Angara holds the biggest executive committee to fight bullying.

Bullying in Metro Manila is a timely issue, especially in the National Capital Region (NCR) whereby school population grows at a high rate, thus making social life quite intricate. The Department of Education (2025) reported that the number of bullying cases has increased significantly within the National Capital Region (NCR) and this has indicated the need to emphasize child protection and school climate. There are a number of aspects that make it difficult to resolve bullying in schools in the National Capital Region (NCR). In the report, it is mentioned that most students do not want to report any form of harassment because they are afraid of retaliation as well as stigma or lack of confidence in the available systems. Such absence of transparent and trusted reporting systems compromises the collection of accurate data and interventions by administration of schools

and counselors. As a reaction to these struggles, Department of Education (DepEd) has declared intensified prevention and support systems specifically designed to National Capital Region (NCR). This can be achieved through improved reporting systems, sensitization on the same and better avenues through which students can get assistance.

These programs are a demonstration of being committed towards a safer and more conducive school environment across Metro Manila, in institutions where cases of bullying have been long under-reported.

Statement of the Problem

The Department of Education (DepEd) has partnered with Save the Children Philippines to help teachers address bullying by understanding and supporting the mental health of learners — not just punishing those who misbehave. In a statement, Save the Children said the partnership was formalized through a memorandum of understanding signed on November 5, by Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Sonny Angara and Save the Children Philippines Chief Executive Officer Atty. Alberto Jesus Muyot. Bullying cases rising in schools citing Department of Education (DepEd) data, Save the Children Philippines noted that bullying cases in the National Capital Region (NCR) climbed to 2,500 in School Year 2024–2025, up from 2,268 the previous year — a 10 percent increase. "These numbers are alarming and remind us that protection issues inside schools remain a serious concern.

And this is only in Metro Manila," said Muyot, a former Department of Education (DepEd) undersecretary. "When a child bullies another, both the victim and the perpetrator need support. The goal is not to punish them, but to help them heal and learn better ways to express themselves", she added. Training teachers to respond with care under the partnership, Save the Children will co-develop a teacher training program on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

The Philippines faces a growing education and economic crisis due to rampant school bullying, with research showing that bullying significantly undermines student achievement and could cost the country up to PHP20 billion in annual economic losses. New findings from the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) and the Longitudinal Cohort Study on the Filipino Child (LCSFC) revealed that the Philippines has one of the highest school bullying rates globally, based on the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results.

Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) Senior Research Fellow Dr. Michael Abrigo, lead author of the study "School Bullying Contributes to Lower PISA Achievement among Filipino Students: "Who Gets Bullied? Why Does It Matter?" Presented their findings during a webinar on April 10, 2025.

"Bullying exposure explains around 0.05 standard deviation of the achievement gap between proficient and non-proficient students, translating to a projected PHP10-20 billion annual loss to the economy," Abrigo said.

Bullying remains a significant global challenge that affects millions of school-aged children each year. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization *UNESCO* (2024) [22] reports that nearly one in three students worldwide experiences bullying at school on a monthly basis, highlighting its widespread and persistent nature. Despite ongoing awareness campaigns and policy initiatives,

traditional bullying—including physical, verbal, and social exclusion—continues to be prevalent across different countries.

The rapid increase in digital technology has also contributed to the rise of cyberbully, creates a new dimension of the problem. Online harassment allows bullying to extend beyond school boundaries and reach students at home, amplifying its psychological and emotional impact.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization *UNESCO* (2024) [22] emphasizes that this trend complicates efforts to prevent and address bullying, as interventions must now consider both in-person and online environments.

Furthermore, variations in national policies, school-level enforcement, and reporting practices have created inconsistencies in how bullying is identified and managed worldwide. These disparities hinder a comprehensive understanding of bullying prevalence and its impact on learners' well-being. Therefore, research is needed to examine how policy frameworks, school interventions, and digital exposure interact to influence bullying and its outcomes among students globally *UNESCO*, (2024) [22].

Review of Related Literature
Students' Experiences, Reactions and Opinions on Bullying at Esperanza National High School, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat, Region XII, Philippines
This study aimed to determine students' experiences, reactions, and opinions regarding bullying using a descriptive research design and an online survey questionnaire distributed through purposive and snowball sampling via Messenger.

Findings showed that Esperanza National High School maintained a healthy school environment where bullying was less evident, and its occasional occurrence led students to rarely report incidents.

Students seldom experienced bullying from individuals they regularly interacted with and typically responded only to minor bullying incidents at school or at home. They also believed that bullying had minimal impact on their personal development.

The study recommends that the school continue fostering a positive environment and sustain its zero-tolerance policy toward any form of bullying. *Lapada, R. O., & Lapada, E. S. (2021)* [14].

The study was connected to this research because they highlight how students actually experience and perceive bullying in their everyday school environment. By showing that bullying occurs only occasionally and is sometimes seen as having little effect on students' personal development, the study provides real-world insights that can be used to build or enhance a grounded theory about how bullying may or may not shape academic outcomes. These genuine student accounts help reveal patterns of behavior, manage school culture, and influence both well-being and learning.

The Silent Epidemic: The Bullying Among Children in Philippine Schools
This systematic literature review investigates the intricate landscape of bullying in Philippine schools, focusing on prevalence, cultural dynamics, mental health implications, and the effectiveness of anti-bullying interventions.

Drawing on diverse studies spanning various regions 196 of the Philippines, our findings reveal a pervasive pattern of bullying encompassing physical, verbal, and relational aggression.

Cultural factors, including 'hiya' or shame, hierarchical structures, and collectivist norms, emerge as influential determinants shaping bullying dynamics.

The study underscores the significant impact of bullying on the mental health of Filipino students, with consistent associations between victimization and heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and even suicidal idealization. In response, we advocate for integrated mental health support structures within the educational framework to proactively address the psychological consequences of bullying. Evaluation of anti-bullying policies and interventions, including initiatives like the Child Protection Policy, highlights the need for comprehensive, school-wide approaches. However, the varying effectiveness of interventions emphasizes the necessity for continuous evaluation and adaptation to address the evolving nature of bullying. In conclusion, our study contributes to a nuanced understanding of bullying in Philippine schools, offering insights for the development of culturally sensitive interventions and comprehensive strategies that prioritize the well-being of students. *Elemino, Q. J., et al (2023).*

This study supports the topic by showing how bullying interacts with deeper emotional and social struggles among Filipino adolescents. The findings reveal that bullying does not appear in isolation—it connects to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and peer relationships, all of which can affect a student's overall functioning in school.

These real experiences help build a clearer understanding of how bullying fits into a larger pattern of risks that may influence a learner's motivation, focus, and academic outcomes.

Impact of bullying on |academic performance of Grade 4 students at San Bartolome Elementary School
This study analyzed how bullying affects the academic performance of Grade 4 learners. Researchers found that verbal, physical, and social bullying caused lower self-esteem, weaker study habits, and increased absenteeism. The participants reported feeling unmotivated and afraid to attend school regularly. *Capoy, L. M., et al. (2020)* [7].

The results highlight bullying as a major factor that disrupts classroom behavior and learning. This RRL supports the present research by showing that bullying has direct academic repercussions even at early grade levels. It affirms that bullying affects not only emotional well-being but also cognitive performance, reinforcing the need to explore lived experiences. The findings enrich the framing of academic performance as a core variable in bullying research.

Examining the role of bullying on schooling outcomes: Findings from the longitudinal cohort study on the Filipino child
The 2018 PISA results revealed that the Philippines ranked close to the bottom in reading, mathematics, and science but ranked at the top in terms of bullying in school.

Analyses of PISA 2018 data found that bullying has a negative effect on school performance. This study uses longitudinal data from the Longitudinal Cohort Study on the Filipino Child (LCSFC) to supplement existing PISA-based analyses on the role of bullying on schooling outcomes. For this study we examine schooling outcomes in terms of class

days missed, average school grade, and being on track with schooling.

Bullying variables include physical bullying by friends, classmates, adults, and parents, and emotional bullying by friends, classmates and by parents. Some forms of bullying do have significant association with schooling outcomes.

Of particular interest specific to the type of data the LCSFC has collected, is the role of bullying outside of the school, namely by adults and parents. Of further interest is the possibility that emotional bullying from friends or classmates may build resiliency and motivation contributing to positive schooling outcomes, a finding requiring further exploration. Finally, while the focus was on bullying, the role of background factors such as child, family, belonging, and community figured prominently as critical factors in schooling outcomes supporting stronger implementation of a broader set of policies. Many policies have already been enacted. Strategies for policy implementation are suggested. Areas for further research are noted. *Herrin, Alejandro N. et, al. (2024)* [11].

This research strengthens the current study's focus on students' real-life experiences by providing qualitative insights into the emotional and academic impacts of bullying. Its findings contribute to understanding how bullying shapes students' motivation and school participation, central to academic performance analysis.

Bullying and Schooling Outcomes among Filipino Adolescents: The Challenge of Policy Implementation

Analysis of longitudinal data reveals a strong link between bullying and various schooling outcomes, including class absences, average grades, and whether students stay on track for their age-appropriate grade level.

While there are policies in place to tackle bullying and enhance educational outcomes, the real challenge is making sure these policies are effectively implemented throughout the education system. Thus, this Policy Note maintains that strengthening key areas like governance, financing, human resources, and information management is essential to bridge this gap.

To effectively implement these strategies, this paper recommends a systems-strengthening approach. This includes focusing on prevention and intervention programs in the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, coordinating the implementation of anti-bullying and mental health policies, and designing targeted interventions that maximize synergy among critical background factors to increase their impact. *Herrin, A. N., et al. (2025)* [10].

This RRL contributes to the grounded theory orientation by highlighting the processes behind bullying experiences. Its qualitative nature aligns closely with the current study's aim to document real stories and academic impacts. The emphasis on school culture offers additional insights for comparison.

Attitude and exposure to bullying of junior high school students

The study examined attitudes toward bullying and the levels of exposure among junior high school students in Tacloban City.

It revealed that students frequently witness or experience verbal and social bullying. However, many remain hesitant to report incidents due to fear and lack of trust. *Hidalgo, M. J. A., & Español, A. C. (2021)* [12].

The findings support the present study because reluctance to report bullying contributes to prolonged academic and emotional difficulties. This aligns with the need to understand students' lived experiences and their academic implications.

Incidence of Bullying in Public Secondary Schools

This study assessed the incidence of bullying in public secondary schools concentrating on the types of bullying occurred and the frequency of occurrence. It also determined the common traits of bullied victims and the causes of their victimization. Utilizing a fourpoint Likert scale questionnaire, the study employs a quantitative-descriptive survey method.

Using the following inclusion criteria, four schools were specifically chosen: a sizable population, diverse income status, and approximately equal distribution of gender. A total of 320 junior high school students were selected through stratified random sampling across grade levels and gender.

Chi-square and non-parametric analyses were used to gather significant associations on multiple response sets of items in the survey, yielding analyses between frequencies. Results revealed occasional occurrences of bullying, mostly verbal in nature, to include teasing, hurling insults, badmouthing, and backstabbing. Physical bullying was also observed, such as being hit or beaten by groups, as well as cyber bullying through hurtful words and the uploading of bad pictures on social media sites. Students were bullied mostly due to their physical appearance, which was attributed to their sexual preference and economic status.

The common characteristics of victims were those with physical imperfections, slow achievers, and the poor. Further, the occasional incidence of bullying among four selected schools provides evidence that bullying still exists in high schools, creating continuous hostility toward bullied victims. Thus, there is a need to review the disciplinary courses of action in public secondary schools and adopt preventive measures and intervention strategies to thwart bullying in schools. *Teves, M. M.G. (2025)* [19].

This study relates to the topic by showing how bullying demonstrate and affects students' daily school life.

The outcomes show that bullying, whether verbal, physical, or cyber targets students' personal traits, which can weaken their confidence, engagement, and overall school participation. This kind of negative experiences are likely to influence academic performance, supporting the need to explore students' lived experiences through a grounded theory approach. By identifying common victim traits and causes of bullying, this research provides more understanding on how bullying form both behavior and learning outcomes, which is central to analyzing its impact on academic performance.

Bullying and grades: Insights from junior high students

The study examined how different forms of bullying predict academic performance among junior high students. Results showed emotional bullying had the strongest negative effect on academic achievement. Students reported difficulty concentrating and reduced motivation. *Calonia, J. T., et al. (2024).*

This RRL directly supports the current study's variable relationship between bullying and academic performance.

It validates the need to understand the emotional aspects of bullying through real experiences. This study presents qualitative insights into how bullying affects victims' emotions and school participation. Narratives revealed fear, social withdrawal, and academic difficulties. Students also described long-term psychological effects. The focus on personal narratives aligns with the grounded theory approach of the current study.

It validates the importance of understanding bullying from the victims' perspective to examine academic impacts.

High incidence of bullying in PH public schools alarming
This national report presents data showing high levels of bullying among Filipino students. The findings include frequent verbal, physical, and cyberbully incidents.

The report warns that bullying severely impacts academic performance and school engagement nationwide. *Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM 2). (2024)*.

The report highlights the alarming incidence of bullying in Philippine public schools, showing that a significant number of students experience it regularly. Findings show that Filipino students report higher rates of bullying compared to international averages, with verbal, physical, and social forms. This evidence highlights the negative impact that bullying can have on students' well-being, social relationships, and engagement in school activities.

Such a high incidence of bullying provides a strong reason for its effects, examining academic performance through grounded theory, capturing the real experiences of students. The report also emphasizes the need for effective policy execution and preventive interventions to lower the risk of bullying in schools.

School Bullying Contributes to Lower PISA Achievement among Filipino Students: Who Gets Bullied? Why Does It Matter?
The Philippines has one of the highest school bullying rates in the world.

While its nature, causes, and impacts are well-documented in international literature, local evidence remains limited and at times conflicting. This study assesses the contribution of bullying exposure to student achievement in a large-scale international student assessment and infers its potential long-term implications.

Differences in bullying exposure explain around 0.05 standard deviations of the gap in average student achievement between proficient and non-proficient students, which could potentially cost the Philippines around PHP 10–20 billion annually in foregone economic activity. Important risk factors for being the "most bullied" around the world are also documented, along with highlighting spatial disparities in bullying risks. *Abrigo, M. R. M., Lingatong, E. E., & Relos, C. M. L. (2025)* [1].

This report highlights the negative effects of bullying on Filipino learners' academic progress. It emphasizes increased absenteeism, poor performance, and psychological strain. The report calls for stronger policy implementation.

It reinforces the academic consequences of bullying, supporting the theoretical foundation of the current study. This report adds weight to the necessity of investigating learners' real experiences.

Disclosing or hiding bullying victimization. School Mental Health
Disclosing or hiding bullying victims. This grounded theory study examined how students decide whether to disclose or hide bullying experiences. Factors influencing disclosure include trust, safety, and anticipated consequences.

The theory developed explains emotional struggles and coping mechanisms. *Wójcik, M., & Rzeńca, K. (2021)* [23].

This supports a grounded theory approach by illustrating how complex and personal bullying experiences can be. It helps frame how disclosure decisions affect academic performance.

School bullying and fitting into the peer landscape
Research on school bullying has its roots in the field of developmental and educational psychology and appeals to the need for a theoretical and methodological widening in order to grasp its ambiguity and complexity. The article draws on ethnographic fieldwork in which 144 pupils and seven teachers participated from seven school classes in three public primary schools. A constructive grounded theory guided data gathering and analysis. This article offers an interpretative portrayal of school bullying. It paints a picture of the core process of "misfitting" and how this process involves the selective use of normative from the macro-, meso- and micro- levels. When bullying is conceptualized as simply caused by individual characteristics, teachers and others become blind to gender norms, heterosexuality, racism and a range of other oppression's taking place in bullying — and this limited view fails to provide an appropriate knowledge base for how to counteract or reduce bullying. *Thornberg, R. (2020)* [21].

This shows how school bullying is deeply linked to social norms and social expectations, showing that students who do not "fit in" are most often targeted.

By using grounded theory, the study explains that bullying is not only an individual problem but a reflection of wider social processes, including gender roles, LGBT discrimination, and other core basis.

Students' had a hard time to adapt can negatively affect their confidence, participation, and engagement in school activities or any social interaction, which may indirectly influence their academic performance. This perspective matches with the study about grounded theory approach to understand bullying more, emphasizing real student experiences and the involved social interactions that shape them. It emphasizes the need for interventions that address both individual behavior and the wider peer and school values.

Experiences and perspectives of bullying
The study explores both traditional bullying and cyberbully among adolescents: characteristics of those targeted or perpetrating bullying; causes of bullying in middle school; victims' and bystanders' reactions and coping strategies; and effects on psycho social well-being. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants involved as perpetrators, victims, or bystanders. Findings point to high prevalence of various forms of bullying, complex causes (social, individual, contextual), and significant psycho social impact on victims — highlighting the need for targeted policy interventions. *Li, J., & Hesketh, T. (2021)* [15].

This qualitative study explored adolescents' views on traditional and cyberbully.

It showed that both forms lead to anxiety, poor concentration, and reduced academic motivation. The

findings support the study's focus on academic consequences and emotional strain among bullying victims.

Bullying and cyberbully are associated with low levels of motivational beliefs toward learning in youth
This study analyzed how both bullying and cyberbully (as victimization or aggression) relate to adolescents' use of learning strategies. It used standardized instruments among 1,330 students aged 10–16, assessing cognitive and meta-cognitive learning strategies.
The results showed a statistically significant negative association: students involved in bullying or cyberbully—especially victims—had lower scores in key learning strategies such as rehearsal, elaboration, organization, critical thinking, and meta-cognitive self-regulation. The authors conclude that bullying/cyberbully can impair students' motivation and learning behaviors, suggesting the need for interventions involving students, teachers, and families to support affected youths. *Solas-Martínez, J. L., et al. (2025)* [18].
This study provides contemporary evidence linking bullying and cyberbully to reduced learning capacity among adolescents. It shows that youth involved in such negative peer behaviors—whether victims or aggressors—are less likely to employ effective learning strategies, which may undermine academic performance.
The negative impact is especially pronounced among victims, who show lower self-regulation, organization, and critical thinking. These findings reinforce the argument that bullying is not just a social issue but also an educational barrier.

Bullying's negative effect on academic achievement
Bullying carries great harm for all involved, undermining academic achievement as well. The strength of such impact is yet to be clarified, existing many possibilities and variables to analyze — classroom behavior being one.
The present cross-sectional investigation goal was to study the impact of bullying (mediated by the classroom behavior) on the academic achievement. Participants consisted of 288 children (from the 1st to 4th school years), 51% females and 49% males, and an average age of: M = 8.09 years (SD = 1.193; Min = 7.94, Max = 8.21). Children filled out a self-report questionnaire on bullying; their teachers reported on classroom behaviors and academic achievement.
Results showed that the bullying situation itself didn't significantly explain the academic achievement of those involved. Indirect effects were found for both victims and perpetrators. Victims revealed worse school results through worse classroom behavior (specifically, excessive motor activity). Aggressors presented worse school results through worse classroom behavior (specifically, opposition behaviors, excessive motor activity, and hyperactivity).
These results highlight the importance of the educational agents' attention to the existing behaviors in their classrooms, not only to the disruption established in each classroom's environment, but as a possible sign of involvement in existing bullying dynamics. *Gomes, A. M., et al. (2020)* [9].
This 2020 study indicate that bullying—whether a student is a victim or culprit—can harm academic achievement, not always directly, but significantly through changes in classroom behavior. Victims often see worse due to

behavioral issues and affected well-being, while bullying themselves may also fail because of disruptive behavior. The results imply that bullying effect on grades or performance is intervened by behavior changes, highlighting the importance of monitoring behavioral signs in class. This supports the wider argument that bullying doesn't just affect mental health—it weakens students' academic success.

How can bullying victimization lead to lower academic achievement? A systematic review and meta-analysis of the mediating role of cognitive-motivational factors
This study systematically reviews and meta-analyses quantitative research to examine how bullying victimization contributes to lower academic achievement. It focuses on the mediating role of cognitive and motivational factors such as academic self-efficacy, school belonging, and academic motivation. The analysis across multiple studies indicates that bullying victimization is associated with reductions in academic self-efficacy and motivation, which in turn lead to lower academic performance.
The authors argue that these mediating factors explain much of the negative effect of bullying on academic outcomes, rather than a direct effect of bullying alone. *Samara, M., et al. (2021)*.
This analysis shows that being bullied weakens the students' belief in their own academic abilities and their motivation to engage in any schoolwork or activities, which then leads to lower academic achievement. The negative effects are not just instant but operate through decreases in self-confidence and motivation, psychological and cognitive factors that mediate performance. These studies support the idea that bullying impacts academic outcomes indirectly by developing resources essential for learning. This study reinforces the relevance of examining real student experiences to understand the complex pathways from bullying to academic achievement.

Resilience mediates parenting style associated school bullying victimization in Chinese children and adolescents
This cross-sectional study of 4,582 Chinese children and adolescents used measures for parenting style, bullying victimization, and resilience. It found that negative parenting styles increased the risk of being bullied, but higher resilience among youth mediated this effect—suggesting that resilience can buffer the link between harsh parenting and bullying victimization. *Xiaoyan Zhang, et al. (2022)*.
This shows that negative parenting or negligence increases students' vulnerability to bullying, which can cause stress, anxiety, and withdrawal—all of which may affect students' school engagement and academic performance.
Resilience was found to reduce in these negative effects, highlighting the role of personal and social support in coping with bullying. This study helps the research using these findings to help explain real student experiences and the processes by which bullying impacts learning. Having knowledge in these can inform strategies to protect students academically and socially, focusing on both school, family, or home situations.
It supports the idea that bullying effect on academic outcomes is not just direct, but intervened by psychological and environmental factors.

Grounded theory: A practical guide (3rd ed.).
This book provides a practical, step-by-step guide to conducting grounded theory research in qualitative studies. It explains the process from conceptualizing research questions, through data collection and coding, to generating theory grounded in empirical data.

The authors cover contemporary approaches, including constructive and Esoteric perspective, and discuss tools for ensuring rigor, transparency, and credibility in qualitative analysis. Real-life examples from social and health sciences illustrate how grounded theory can be applied to explore complex social phenomena. *Birks, M., & Mills, J. (2023)* [5].

This shows how grounded theory can be used to study real experiences, making it more relevant for research on bullying and academic performance. It explains how to systematically collect and analyze student narratives to easily identify patterns and themes.

Using this approach allows us to build different theories directly from students' experiences rather than imposing pre-exist assumptions. The methods described can guide the study in understanding how bullying affects students' learning and engagement. Overall, it supports the use of grounded theory as a precise framework for exploring social processes in schools.

Constructing grounded theory
This book presents a contemporary, constructive approach to grounded theory, emphasizing the co-construction of data between researchers and participants. It explains how to generate theory from qualitative data while acknowledging researcher subjectivity and reflexivity.

The text covers practical strategies for data collection, coding, memo writing, and developing theoretical insights, with examples from health, education, and social research. The constructive perspective emphasizes meaning-making, social context, and participants' experiences as central to the development of grounded theory. *Charmaz, K. (2022)* [8]. *Constructing grounded theory (3rd ed.).*

Its approach grounded theory is useful for studying bullying and academic performance because it emphasizes capturing students' real experiences. The useful method allows researchers to understand how bullying affects learning, motivation, and engagement from the participants' perspective. Using coding and memoing, researchers can easily identify patterns and processes that link bullying to academic outcomes.

This approach supports building a theory in actual student narratives rather than assumptions. This provoides a clearer and more practical framework for analyzing social behaviors in school.

Exploring the relationship between school bullying and academic performance: The mediating role of students' sense of belonging at school
In extending the understanding of how school bullying impacts student learning, this research explored the relationships among school bullying, students' sense of belonging at school, and academic performance in science, math and reading. Data analysis was conducted using Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Guangdong (China) data of the 2015 Programmed for International Student Assessment (PISA2015). The results showed that both bullying victimization and bullying climate had significant and negative relationships with students' science, maths and reading performance. Students' sense of belonging at school partially mediated the effects of both bullying victimization and bullying climate on academic performance in science, math and reading. Implications for bullying intervention and further research were also discussed. *Liang Huang. (2020)* [13].

This study explored the relationship between school bullying and sense of belonging of those students who get bullied and how it affects academic performance, mostly in math, science, and reading. It supports the idea that bullying affects academic outcomes is difficult to handle. It connects to this study because it was talking about how students cope with studying while facing bullying.

Theoretical Framework
This study will be anchored to several established theories that provide insight into behaviors, social environments, and academic outcomes related to bullying. One of these is the Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1986) [3], which emphasizes that individuals learn behaviors through observing others and that self-efficacy beliefs strongly influence motivation and actions. This theory helps explain how bullying behaviors are modeled in peer groups and how victims' perceptions influence their engagement and performance in school. Another theory anchored to this study is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) [6], which posits that human development occurs within nested environmental systems ranging from immediate settings such as family and school the "micro-system" to larger cultural contexts (the "macro-system". This theory situates bullying within broader social factors affecting a student's academic adjustment and well-being. A further theory supporting this study is the Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen (1991) [2]. This theory proposes that behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

It is useful for understanding the decision-making processes behind bullying behavior and how social influences can affect students' academic motivation and conduct.

The next theory incorporated in this study is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) [16], which illustrates that basic physiological and safety needs must be fulfilled before individuals can focus on higher-order needs such as belonging and self-actualization. Bullying threatens students' need for safety and belonging, which in turn negatively affects their academic achievement. Lastly, this study is also anchored to Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded Theory is a qualitative methodology that generates new theories rooted in participants lived experiences. It is often applied to explore the nuanced dynamics of bullying and its effect on academic performance, providing rich, context-specific understandings beyond standardized measures.

Purpose Statement
Bullying remains a common issue in many schools, yet its connection to students' academic performance is still not fully fixed from the point of view of those who experience bullying. This study asks what kind of bullying students go through, who is most affected, and why these kinds of experiences influence how they perform in school.

While there are some studies that mention the link between bullying and lower grades, many of them rely on general observations rather than real stories from students

themselves. Because of this, there is still a lack of clear explanation about how bullying changes a student's daily learning, confidence, attendance, and ability to stay focused in class.

Using grounded theory, this research aims to build an explanation based on students' actual experiences. Through their stories, the study tries to understand what really happens, who gets impacted, and why these kinds of situations lead to changes—positive or negative—in their academic performance.

Scope and Delimitation

This study focuses on the traits, origins, and consequences of bullying among Bignay National High School students in Grades 7–10 during the 2025–2026 academic year. It has four types of bullying—physical, verbal, social, and cyberbully—and it examines how these affect the students' emotions, academic performance, and social behavior. The researchers will gather the data through surveys and interviews within the school only. this study is only limited to students like grade 7-10 excluding other grade levels and other schools. It will not include incidents outside the 2025–2026 school year or discuss other forms of violence, long-term mental health issues, or family problems in detail. Teachers and parents will not serve as main respondents except for minor clarifications, if needed.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is to understand how bullying affects every student who gets bullied on their academic performance based on their real experiences.

Using grounded theory, the study gives voice to students and shows others how bullying affects their focus, motivation, and overall academic performance.

The findings can easily guide teachers, parents, and school leaders in creating better support systems for those students who are struggling. This may likewise help the schools, parents, future researchers, and other people who are one way, or the other wish to develop safer, more comfortable, and more caring environments where students can learn without fear. Such a study can open doors to meaningful changes that could really help improve students' well-being and academic performance, especially in Bignay National High School.

Definition of Terms

Academic disruption. refers to any event, behavior, or circumstance that interrupts, hinders, or negatively affects a student's learning.

At-risk. likely to experience harm or problems.

Awareness. Is to understand or recognize something that is happening around you.

Bullying. The intention and continuous act that causes harm.

Combat bullying. To take action or implement strategies that prevent, reduce, or stop.

Contextualizing. This means explaining something by connecting it to its situation, background, or real-life example, so it becomes clearer.

Cyberbully. Is a bullying that happens online or through digital devices, like hurtful messages, posts, or comments on social media.

Emotional impact. are the strong feelings or emotions caused in a person, such as sadness, stress, fear, or happiness.

Enforcement. making sure a law or rule is followed.

Guidelines. instructions or rules that show how something should be done.

Harassment. unwanted conduct that is threatening or humiliating, often related to a person's protected characteristics such as race, sex, or religion.

Hesitant. This means feeling unsure or unwilling to act or decide quickly.

Human development. This means the growth and improvement of a person in different areas—like physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and even in skills—so they can live a better life.

Identifying. recognizing or finding out who or what something is.

Implementing. Putting a plan or action into practice.

Incidents. events or cases, especially something negative or harmful.

Increased absenteeism. is when someone is absent more often than usual, especially from school or work.

Intervention. actions taken to improve or stop a problem.

Investigating. looking into a situation carefully to find out facts.

Long-term consequences. are the effects or outcomes that appear or continue over an extended period of time after an action, event, or decision.

Lower self-esteem. having a low opinion of yourself—feeling not good enough, less confident or doubting your own abilities.

Peer groups. groups of people who are around the same age or share similar interests and spend time together.

Physical aggression. is the intentional use of force that against to a person that causes physical pain.

Point of view. The perspective or angle from which a person sees, understands, or interprets a situation, event, or story.

Preponderating. being greater in number or amount; dominating.

Prevention. It is the act of taking steps or measures to stop something harmful from happening.

Rapid. This means happening very fast or quickly, such as sadness, stress, fear, or happiness.

Reinforced. strengthened or made stronger.

Resolving. Finding a solution to a problem or conflict.

Retaliation. a harmful or aggressive response to a previous harmful action by someone else, essentially to get even or punish them.

Safe learning environments. places where students feel protected and able to live without fear.

Self-actualization. This means becoming the best version of yourself by using your talents, abilities, and strengths to the fullest.

Social hierarchies. systems where people or groups are ranked from higher to lower based on status, power, or importance.

Stigma. a negative label or judgment people put on someone because of something about them, bullying behaviors, ensuring a safer and more respectful environment.

Support. help, assistance, or guidance given to someone to

make things easier, strengthen them, or help them succeed.

Threatens. expresses an intention to harm, scare, or cause trouble to someone.

Verbal abuse. Using negative words and language that cause harm.

Victim. a person who experienced/experiencing harm, hurt by some people that are doing abuse, crime or harmful situation.

Violence. The use of physical force, harm, or power against someone or something, which can result in injury, damage, or intimidation.

Weak parent–child. refers to a family connection where emotional closeness, communication, trust, and support between a parent to the Child are limited or lacking.

Weaker study habits. mean poor or ineffective ways of studying-like not reviewing, getting distracted easily, or not managing time well.

Widespread. happening over a large area or affecting many people.

Summary

This study explains the growing concern of bullying, affecting students in both national and international. The cases of bullying in Manila and across the Philippines continue to rise with thousands of cases being reported each school year. And yet, a lot of students feel reluctant of reporting bullying because of fear of retaliation or lack of trust in existing reporting systems.

The researchers present the main problem: DepEd partnered with Save the Children Philippines to help teachers address bullying by supporting learners' mental health. The partnership was formalized on November 5 by Secretary Sonny Angara and CEO Atty. Alberto Jesus Muyot. Bullying cases in NCR rose to 2,500 in SY 2024–2025 from 2,268 the previous year. Muyot noted the urgency of the issue and emphasized that both victims and perpetrators need support. The partnership will also develop a teacher training program on Mental Health and Psycho-social Support (MHPSS). This qualitative research compiles established theories, data, articles, and studies—both international and local—to show how bullying affects students' experiences and academic performance.

It investigates the impact of bullying on Grade 7–10 students at a Public School in Bignay during the 2025–2026 academic year. Using grounded theory, it focuses on students' experiences with four types of bullying and their effects, aiming to help teachers, parents, and school leaders create supportive environments and improve student well-being.

Data will be gathered through interviews limited to the specified grade levels and time frame, with minimal input from teachers and parents for clarification. A list of terms is also provided to ensure consistent understanding throughout the study.

2. Methodology

This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the research methods and procedures that was used in this study. It describes the overall research design, research setting, participants, and sampling techniques employed to gather more reliable and meaningful data. In addition, this chapter outlines the instruments and strategies used for data collection, as well as the step-by-step process of gathering information. The methods for analyzing the data are also discussed to show how patterns, categories, and themes were systematically developed. In addition, this chapter explains how the researchers ensured the trustworthiness of the findings through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Lastly, the ethical considerations observed throughout the research process are presented to ensure that the rights, safety, and confidentiality of the participants were protected. This chapter clearly explains how the study was carried out so that the findings are accurate, trustworthy, and based on real and reliable information.

Research Design

This study is qualitative research, it is a type of research that explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems. Instead of collecting numerical data points or intervening or introducing treatments, just like in quantitative research, qualitative research helps generate hypotheses to further investigate and understand quantitative data. Qualitative research gathers participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior. It answers the hows and whys instead of how many or how much. It could be structured as a standalone study, purely relying on qualitative data, or part of mixed-methods research that combines qualitative and quantitative data. This review introduces the readers to some basic concepts, definitions, terminology, and applications of qualitative research. This qualitative research study will going to use grounded theory style. Grounded theory is a research method concerned with the generation of theory, which is 'grounded' in data that has been systematically collected and analyzed. It is used to uncover such things as social relationships and behavior of groups, known as social processes. It was developed in California, USA by Glaser and Strauss during their study-'Awareness of Dying'. It is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data which is systematically gathered and analyzed. Awareness of dying is one of the famous research that use grounded theory, examines the dying patient and those about him in social interaction. It gives us a language and tools of analysis for understanding who knows what about dying, under what circumstances, and what difference it makes.

The authors use their finely detailed observations to develop theoretical constructs that will be of use in many other interactions and situations.

Research Setting

The conduct of this study took place at a public school institution for high school students in Bignay, Valenzuela City. Recognize for its commitment to providing quality education and guided by its vision, the school caters to learners from Junior High to Senior High School and is supported by a competent faculty dedicated to nurturing students' academic growth. This institution served as the setting for the research because it offers a natural and diverse learning environment where students' real academic experiences can be observed and explored. Such an environment is appropriate for grounded theory, which requires direct engagement with students and immersion in their actual context. The school's structured academic programs and active student population provided rich opportunities for identifying patterns, interactions, and experiences related to academic performance. The study was conducted starting November 3, during which the researchers asked the participants about students'

performance, bullying, and interaction. These observations, along with interviews and gathered insights, contributed to forming a grounded theoretical understanding of the factors influencing academic performance within the school.

Sample

In the study about Grounded Theory on Bullying and Academic Performance: A Real Experience, the researchers used purposive sampling for students, teachers, and parents who are able to share their experiences and give information related or connected to the study.

In Valenzuela City, Bignay Public High School has a population in junior high with a total of 2,730. While in senior high there are 312 students, with a total of 3,042 students, 150 teachers, and 6,087 parents. The researchers were able to choose two students, two teachers, and two parents. Some members of the research group know students who have experienced bullying, teachers who have encountered bullying, and parents who have been with their children who were bullied. Because of their experience and knowledge, they are directly related to the objectives of the study. The researchers chose educators teaching at Bignay Public High School in Valenzuela because they have encountered severe student bullying, such as students getting into fights outside the school, cyberbully, and other forms that affect students' academic performance as well as their parents. The study involved two student volunteers, one from Grade 12 and one from Grade 9, who participated by providing information for the study, as well as a parent of a student who has been affected by bullying.

Sampling Procedure

For this study, the researchers chose the participants because the researchers knew they had experiences related to bullying. They knew the participants had either experienced or witnessed it happening to students, their own children, or others, which made them the most suitable individuals to interview for the topic. Their personal experiences allow the researchers to better understand what it feels like to be in that kind of situation, which means they can provide deeper and more meaningful answers.

The researchers believe that interviewing people who have real knowledge about bullying will help collect information that is more accurate and honest for the study. Instead of choosing participants randomly, the researchers focused on selecting those who could genuinely contribute helpful details based on what they actually encountered or experienced. This strengthens the research because the data gathered comes from individuals who have lived through the issue being studied. Their stories and perspectives provide a clearer picture of how bullying happens, how it affects students, and what possible solutions can be made.

Data Collection Methods

The researchers visited the school where their study was conducted and looked for the teachers they had previously contacted. The teachers were willing to be interviewed. They shared that they had observed students being bullied and expressed their willingness to participate in an interview.

The researchers then approached the school guard for assistance. When the researchers asked the teachers where they could be found, they proceeded to locate them. The researchers ensured that the teachers were available at the

time to avoid interrupting their work. Once availability was confirmed, the researchers prepared the interview questions and ensured that the teachers felt comfortable. After the teachers agreed to be interviewed, they answered all the questions regarding the types of students they deal with. First, Teacher 1 was interviewed. Then, the researchers waited for Teacher 2 to finish his work before conducting his interview. The researchers attentively listened to the teachers' responses, confirming that the teachers do, in fact, observe their students closely.

As a sign of respect and gratitude for their participation, the researchers offered the teachers bread and coffee.

After interviewing the teachers, the researchers proceeded to interview the students. They first spoke with a student they knew who studied at the research location. They asked whether the student had ever experienced bullying; her answer was yes—they asked if it would be possible to interview them and determined a suitable time. They also requested permission to record the interview, explaining that the recording would serve as proof that the interview was conducted. The researchers assured the student that the recording would remain private and accessible only to the researchers, to which the student agreed. The researchers then conducted the interviews.

Two students scheduled for interviews were unavailable, so the team found other available students. They asked the first student the prepared questions and listened to her experiences with bullying. While waiting for Student 2 to finish her class, they prepared to interview her immediately after her availability. She answered the questions courageously and without hesitation. After completing the interviews, the researchers showed appreciation by providing ice cream as a small token of thanks.

Next, the researchers proceeded to interview the parents of children who had experienced bullying in school. On the scheduled day, the researchers visited the home of a group member's neighbor, who had a child that experienced bullying at the school where the research was conducted. They asked the parent if he was available for an interview and explained the purpose of the study. The researchers assured the parent that his identity and location would remain confidential.

They also asked for permission to record the interview, explaining that the recording would remain private and accessible only to the research team. After obtaining consent, they conducted the interview. Parent 1 answered all the questions, and the researchers noted the emotional impact bullying had on his child. The researchers offered him a snack as a token of appreciation, but he declined, stating that he agreed to participate without expecting anything in return.

Parent 2 was interviewed the following day due to unavailability on the first day.

The researchers followed the same procedure, obtaining consent for recording and assuring privacy. They prepared the questions in advance and listened carefully to each response. Like Parent 1, Parent 2 was deeply affected by the experiences his child had faced. After the interview, the researchers offered a small snack as a gesture of gratitude.

Data Collection Procedure

This study used a qualitative research approach based on Grounded Theory. The data were collected through interviews, observations, and document review. The

procedures followed in gathering the data are explained below.

1. Preparation
The researchers first asked permission from the school administration to conduct the study. After receiving approval, the researchers prepared the interview guide, consent forms for parents, and assent forms for student participants. The interview guide was reviewed to make sure the questions were clear and appropriate for the students.

2. Selection of Participants
Purposive sampling was used to choose students who had experienced or witnessed bullying. Teachers and parents related to these cases were also invited to participate.
As interviews progressed, the researchers applied theoretical sampling to add new participants who could help clarify or deepen the emerging themes. Data collection continued until no new ideas appeared, which signaled saturation.

3. Conduct of Interviews
Interviews were scheduled at a time convenient for the participants. Student interviews were done in private rooms within the school to ensure safety and comfort. Parents and teachers were interviewed either in school or in a suitable area agreed upon by both parties.
Before starting, the researchers explained the purpose of the study and reviewed the consent or assent forms. Participants were reminded that their involvement was voluntary. With their permission, the interviews were audio-recorded. Each interview lasted around 8 to 14 minutes and followed in a semi-structured format, allowing follow-up questions whenever needed.

4. Observation
Non-participant observations were conducted in areas where students commonly interact, such as hallways, classrooms, and the school grounds. The observations helped the researchers understand the environment and identify possible situations where bullying may occur.

5. Transcription and Data Management
All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim within a few days after each interview.
Pseudonyms were used in place of real names to keep the participants' identities confidential. The files were stored in password-protected devices, and backup copies were saved in secure storage.

6. Member Checking
After the initial analysis, participants were shown short summaries of their responses or the emerging themes. They were asked to confirm if the information accurately represented what they meant. Their feedback helped improve the accuracy and credibility of the findings.

7. Data Analysis and Saturation
Data collection and analysis happened at the same time. After every interview or observation, the researchers reviewed the data, compared it with other responses, and identified emerging patterns. Additional participants were interviewed when needed to clarify or expand these patterns. The process ended once no new information appeared, and the themes became consistent across participants.

8. Ensuring Trustworthiness
To maintain the quality of the research, the study used different methods such as interviews, observations, and documents for triangulation. An audit trail, which included memos, field notes, and documentation of decisions made during the study, was kept.

Data Analysis
The researchers used Grounded Theory to analyze the interviews about bullying and academic performance. First, the responses were read and listened many times to understand the experiences shared by the students and teachers. Then, using open coding, the researchers highlight important words and ideas, like "struggles", "trauma", and "anxiety". After that, similar ideas were grouped together in axial coding to show how bullying affects a student's motivation, confidence, and ability to communicate with others. In the last step, called selective coding, the researchers identified one main idea that connected everything: bullying can slowly weaken a student's emotional and academic strength. This whole process helped the researchers create a clearer explanation of how students' real experiences with bullying shape their performance in school (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).
To ensure the credibility of the findings, the researchers carefully compared the codes and categories across different interview responses. Patterns and recurring themes were continuously reviewed to make sure that the analysis was based on the participants' real experiences.

Trustworthiness
In qualitative research, establishing trustworthiness is crucial to ensure the credibility and rigor of the study's findings.
Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced the concept of trustworthiness criteria to evaluate the quality of qualitative research. These criteria include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.
Credibility, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), refers to the confidence in the truth of the findings and the extent to which the study accurately reflects the perspectives of the participants.
To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review and validate the themes derived from their input. A methodological triangulation was also employed by incorporating multiple data sources (interviews, focus groups, and document analysis) to corroborate findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The findings were reported in a narrative format that integrated quotes from participants and aligned with the identified themes.
This section expands and clarifies the factors that contributed to the trustworthiness of the participants' experiences and insights. The data analysis for this qualitative research involved a systematic approach rooted in the grouping of emerging themes. By utilizing a thematic analysis approach, the researchers ensured that the collection and organization of data were done carefully.
This research process provided valuable insights into how grounded theory on bullying and academic performance: a real experience, shaping how teachers and school leaders navigated institutional challenges and offered practical implications for improving institutional performance.

Dependability: The audit trail was maintained throughout the research process. This included detailed documentation of the research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures, allowing for an external review of the research process. Peer debriefing sessions were held to discuss the evolving findings and methodologies, ensuring that the research remained consistent and reliable overtime.

Credibility: To enhance credibility, this research employed techniques such as prolonged engagement and persistent observation to ensure that Bignay public schools were understood with depth and accuracy. The researchers spent ample time engaging with the school community, allowing the field to build rapport with participants and gather meaningful data with contextual understanding. Triangulation was used to verify the consistency of data collected across multiple sources. This involves comparing information gathered from interviews, focus groups, and document reviews to cross-check and corroborate emerging insights and preliminary interpretations. Member checking was also conducted as an ethical technique where participants were given the opportunity to validate the findings.

Transferability: The researchers ensured this by providing thick descriptions of the context and participants, allowing readers to determine the applicability of the findings to other settings. Detailing the specific characteristics of the schools and the participants involved, the study offered insights that could resonate with other institutions, thereby enhancing the potential for transferability of the results.

Confirmability: To address confirmability, the researchers maintained a reflexive journal to document personal biases and assumptions throughout the study. This transparency allows for critical examination of how the researcher's perspective may have influenced data collection and interpretation. Additionally, the use of triangulated data sources supported a more objective analysis, reinforcing the credibility of the findings.

Reflexivity: In conducting this qualitative study on "GROUNDED THEORY ON BULLYING AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A REAL EXPERIENCE," the researchers considered the importance of reflexivity in ensuring the credibility and authenticity of the research findings. Reflexivity entails a critical self-examination of the researcher's position, biases, and the influence that one may have on research processes and outcomes. As a student at the Graduate School, the researcher brought his own experiences, values, and beliefs into this study.

The researchers' background in education and familiarity within Bignay High-school context shaped the researchers understanding on the concepts of Bullying. The researchers recognized that educational experiences that had instilled a belief in the trans-formative power of education which may lead the researchers to favor narratives that align with this perspective.

The researchers had consistently reminded themselves to approach the data with an open mind, allowing the voices of participants to guide the findings rather than imposing the researcher's preconceptions. The researchers were aware that biases could influence various stages of this research, from data collection to analysis and interpretation. For instance, the enthusiasm for highlighting bullying may inadvertently overshadow challenges faced by the students.

To mitigate this, the researchers employed strategies such as member checking. Involving the participants in validating the interpretations through confirmation letters and seeking diverse perspectives from different students helped ensure a more balanced understanding of the bullying context.

The relationship that the researchers had established with participants plays a critical role in the data collection process.

The researchers were fully conscious that their identity as a researcher may affect how participants perceived and engaged with the researchers, potentially influencing the openness and depth of their interactions. Building rapport and trust was a priority, as the researchers created a safe space for participants to share their experiences. However, the researchers remained vigilant about the power dynamics at play; their role as a researcher may lead participants to feel compelled to provide socially desirable responses.

Ethical considerations were paramount in this study, as the researchers were with the guidance of the researchers' adviser, Cornelio S. Doloque and was fully committed in ensuring confidentiality and anonymity for all participants.

Summary
This study used a qualitative research design to understand students' experiences and views about bullying, because it helps the researchers learn more about students' personal stories, feelings, and opinions. The study was conducted in a school. This setting allowed participants to talk about their real-life experiences related to bullying. Gathering data in the school environment helped ensure that the information shared by the students was based on their actual experiences. The participants of the study were people who had experienced bullying or had witnessed bullying in school.

They were chosen using purposive sampling, which means the researcher selected students who could provide meaningful and relevant information about the topic. This helped the study focus on people who were familiar with the issue of bullying. The main data collection method used was interviews. The interview questions were open-ended so the participants could freely share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This method allowed students to explain what they went through and how it affected them in their own words. The data collection procedure followed steps. First, permission was asked by the school.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that their answers would be kept confidential. The interviews were conducted at a time convenient for the participants. Their responses were recorded, written down, and reviewed carefully. After that, the data was organized and analyzed. Reflexivity, trustworthiness, and credibility were also considered in the study.

3. Results
In an increasingly complex and volatile educational landscape, institutions must demonstrate resilience and grit to sustain performance and achieve long-term success. Grounded Theory on Bullying and Academic Performance: A Real Experience has emerged as a transformative approach that emphasizes organizational strengths, positive core capacities, and collaborative envisioning of future possibilities. At the heart of Grounded Theory on Bullying

and Academic Performance: A Real Experience is a Grounded Theory—which provides a structured yet flexible framework for facilitating organizational change by focusing on what works and building upon existing strengths.

Applying the Grounded Theory within Bignay National High School offers valuable insights into how these institutions can harness their inherent strengths to foster resilience and develop grit among stakeholders. Given the socio-economic challenges, policy shifts, and evolving Grounded Theory demands faced by Bignay National High School one of educational institutions in the Philippines, a strengths-based approach like Grounded Theory on Bullying and Academic Performance: A Real Experience can catalyze sustainable growth and enhance institutional performativity (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017).

This study utilized Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss as a Grounded Theory framework to explore institutional strengths of Bignay National High School.

Through high performance thereby monitoring strategic initiatives that promote sustainable development and educational excellence. The Grounded Theory facilities a transformative process that aligns with the aspirations of Bignay National High School to cultivate resilient, grit-oriented educational communities capable of navigating future challenges.

Operational Data Collection

The questions for the interview had been formulated keeping in mind the research objectives and had been approved by our research adviser. The interview was carried out with the consent of the participants in a time and place convenient for them so they can relax, be comfortable, and be ready for the answers. Before holding the interview session, we explained the objectives of the research and gave them small instructions. The duration of the interview took around 8-14 minutes. During the interview, the participants were encouraged to answer honestly, and we assured them that their responses would be kept confidential and used solely for academic purposes.

After the interview, we expressed our gratitude to our participants for their time and their cooperation. The data that was gathered were carefully reviewed to ensure accuracy for the research analysis.

The interview was conducted in a polite manner while the participants shared their experiences so that they feel safe and comfortable around us. In order to prevent some misunderstandings or confusion, we made sure that all guide questions were easy to comprehend by the participants. Furthermore, we faced difficulties in moving from place to place because of different participants with different schedules of leisure time.

Operational Data Analysis

Following Van Manen (2014) recommend method of data analysis in Grounded Theory, participants recorded statements and responses were repeatedly listened and their statements were transcribed verbatim. The researchers analyzed the data as a whole by wholistic reading and taking the wholistic theme from each transcript. The essential statements and phrases that revealed the experience being described were highlighted.

Participants' Profile

	Subject Taught	Year/s of Teaching	Age
P1-T1	Araling Panlipunan	5 years	31
P2-T2	English	9 years	38

This teacher is a social studies teacher in a public school in Valenzuela City with 5 years of teaching experience. He holds a Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in Social Studies and is currently sharing lessons in the classroom.

And he is a hardworking, understanding, and caring person for his students. He is able to teach clearly and organized so that the lessons are easy to understand. Aside from knowledge, he has patients and dedication in fulfilling his duties.

This teacher II graduated with a Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English and is trained to teach English at the third level of Junior High, with nine years of teaching experience in Valenzuela City. He is willing to devote time and effort to help students learn and grow. Through his knowledge and experience, he becomes a path to shaping the future of the students. Despite early financial and personal challenges in life, he strives to become a successful teacher.

	Occupation	Age
P3-S1	Grade 12	17
P4-S2	Grade 9	14
P5-P1	Call Center	35
P6-P2	Factory Worker	37

This student 1 is a Grade 12 learner at Bignay National High School who initially performed well academically. However, after being bullied, they lost interest in studying and her grades started getting lower.

This student before of being subjected on bullying, her grades is good, but the bullying affects her emotional distress, confidence and anxiety resulting from these experiences have affected her focus, participation, and motivation highlighting the significant impact bullying can have on both academic performances.

This student 2 is a Grade 9 learner at Bignay National High School. She is willing to learn from her teachers and from her own experience. Although there are challenges, she remains diligent and positive in facing school tasks. With each lesson and challenge, her ability, discipline, and self-confidence have been shaped. But she experienced a failure in grades due to bullying. With this, she seemed to have lost the courage to cooperate in her class.

This parent 1 spends the day taking care of his child, making sure their needs are met, and assisting them with everyday tasks while working night shifts at a call center. To make sure his child has a good life, he is prepared to give up time and effort at work.

He shows accountability in his work by giving family security and support. Moreover, he can pay for his kids' schooling.

Parent 2 is an individual without having completed formal education, working as a seller of various items, such as clothes and other useful items. He can also be described as a hard worker and works hard at his job to provide for the needs of the family but often faces financial challenges.

Even though he works diligently, sometimes the income is

still not enough for the daily expenses and education of his children. Despite financial problems, he continues to show dedication, responsibility, and love for his family, always taking of ways to improve their situation.

Discussion, Presentation, and Interpretation
The following section presents the primary themes and categories resulting from the analysis of qualitative data conducted after interviews were held with the participants in this study. The identity of each participant was protected by the use of numbers and letters to protect their anonymity when using direct quotes as supporting evidence for each theme, 7 major themes and 14 categories emerged following the researcher's analysis of 173.

For Feedback to Participants, the researchers offered to share the study findings with participants and schools involved in the research. The researchers believed that this would help to create a sense of ownership and reinforce the value of their contributions to the study.

RQ: *How can bullying influence a students' motivation to study or attend school?*

Theme 1: Students' Learning Effects
Students' Learning Effects describe how bullying can negatively influence students' learning by affecting their own motivation, focus, participation, academic performance, and their confidence in school.

Category 1: Academic Performance Issues
Bullying affects the students' academic performance, such as grades and understanding of the lessons of their teachers, showing how learning outcomes are negatively impacted. One parent **(P5-P1)** noted that *"his grades dropped"* (Line 1-2), which means the grade is also affected, the same parent added that *"he could not absorb the lessons and information properly anymore"* (Line 2-6), later on the same parent said "his performance really dropped "(Line 1-2).
Proving that bullying really weakened the students' academic performance. **(P3-T1)** narrates that *"there are actually decreases in their grades and in their final grades"* (Line 1-6). This response indicates that bullying causes these poor results in students' academic grades, and this might potentially last if bullying continues, and they may lose confidence in their abilities.

Category 2: Learning Difficulties
It leads students to leave learning activities, resulting in reduced participation, loss of interest, and avoidance of schoolwork.
That is why **(P3-T1)** a teacher state *"there is really no focus; there is no focus happening"* (Line 1-4), Another teacher **(P4-T2)** mentioned *"bullying makes students more distracted and anxious, so they participate less and have trouble focusing on class activities"* (Line 1-9). One more parent **(P6-P2) noticed** this behavior of their child "*he is losing interest in school when he stops asking questions, avoids doing homework, participates less in class, or is seen tired and distracted "(*Line1-9). This indicates that distraction and anxiety stop the students' motivation to study, because students prioritize emotional survival rather than academic effort.

Theme 2: Navigating Emotional Pressure
Navigating Emotional Pressure describes how students deal with emotional stress caused by bullying and how it affects their behavior and school experiences.

Category 1: Emotional Distress
It shows how bullying influences the students' emotional states, such as sadness, fear, and anxiety, that affect their daily school behavior.
One Parent **(P6-P2)** described *"It really hurts my child's emotional well-being"* (Line 1-4), Another parent **(P5-P1)** notes that *"he often stayed in the bathroom. He would lock himself in there and run the water in the pail, and according to him, that is where he usually cried" (*Line 1-8). The parent again added *"his grades went down"* (Line 1-2). The same parent also said, *"it is kind of difficult to handle"* (Line 1-3). It means that the parents also feel the pain of their child that they have been trying to hide from their parents.
A student **(P2-S2)** expressed their fear *"afraid that they will do the things they used to do to you again, that it might happen again"* (Line 3-8). The same student stated that *"Upset because I cannot defend myself"* (Line 1-3). Which can result in absenteeism as students dread entering the school environment. It means that this trauma may create a cycle where fear stops the students from participating and potentially may cause a higher risk of students dropping out.

Category 2: External Stressors
Outside experiences that negatively affect students, such as bullying at school. These stressors cause fear, anxiety, sadness, and feelings of being unsafe or isolated, which lead to poor focus, low motivation, reduced participation, frequent absences, and declining academic performance.
A student **(P1-S1)** mentioned *"bullying has made me feel less confident as a student. It sometimes makes me think I'm not good enough, even when I try hard or do well in school"* (Line1-9). Another student **(P2-S2)** also said *"bullying has made me feel less confident as a student"* (Line 1-4). Bullying not only damages the victim's academic performance but also their own confidence; they felt little and less confident in their own eyes.
A participant **(P4- T2)** said *"students skip class because, you know, they feel scared or unsafe"* (Line 1-4). This indicates that skipping classes because bullying not only harms grades, but it can also lead to dropping out, as the threat continues to rise.

RQ: *How do you usually feel or react after experiencing bullying in school?*

Theme 3: Lose of motivation
Loss of motivation describes how students do not have any energy, and courage to do better in academic performance due to low self-esteem, confidence, and stress.

Category 3: Lack of motivation
This category is connected to the theme because students often lose their motivation due to sensing humiliation, unworthy efforts, and wasting time. One of the participants stated **(P3-T1)** *"Those who are bullied, the first things that can happen, their confidence drop,"* (line 1-6) that this

convey of how will the student lost their enthusiasm and desire to learn and difficulties with how they see themselves because of constant hatred criticism.

Theme 4: Affective Behavioral Dynamics
The affective Behavioral Dynamics is where how easily the emotion affects the persons behavior.

Category 8: Behavioral Changes
Behavioral Reactions is how a person will react when facing a certain situation like problems.
When a student is constantly facing criticism, it affects the behavioral action of a student, one of the parents said **(P5-P1)** *"they just stay quiet in one corner"* (line 1-3). This indicates that they act based on the emotions they feel.

Category 11: Avoidance Behavior
Behavioral changes occur when a student is slowly changing attitude differently than the usual behavior. One of the respondents stated that **(P3-T1)** *"In communicating, they no longer speak. They become; they just stay quiet in one corner. So, when the teacher asks why they are like that, that is the only way they express themselves. They lose the means to express because their ability to express vanish"* (Line 1-20) and another respondent also stated that **(P5-P1)** "I have noticed my child becoming quieter, more sensitive and easily upset since the bullying started." (Line 1-7) this indicates that simultaneously criticism from others can change a student's way of acting.

RQ: *Can friends and family help you deal with bullying?*

Theme 5: Emotional Stability
Emotional Stability is able to maintain balance and resilience to manage stress without any difficulties or extreme mood swings.

Category 5: Anxiety and Fear Responses
Anxiety and fear responses are how the body responds to a certain feeling such as anxiety, stress, and nervousness.
One of the participants stated that **(P3-T1)** *"Uhm, it helps the teacher because they become quiet, but you know, it is not a quiet in a positive way"* (line 1-7) this indicates that when a students is sensing a threat to its surroundings they responds in the way it is not usual that made them unable to focus to the lessons, activity and performances.

Category 6: Identity and Self-Perception Struggles
Identity and Self-Perception Struggles is where a student that constantly receives criticism, humiliation, and stress often resulting in a struggle to understand what their values are as a person. As one of participants said **(P1-S1)** *"I feel down and lose confidence."* (Line 1-3) and other respondents stated **(P1-S1)** *"I think students who experience bullying usually feel less confident in their academic skills. When someone keeps putting them down, they start doubting themselves, even if they are actually smart or capable."* (Line 1-14) The statement of the respondents indicates that students that horrid criticism and shaming make them doubt themselves and as a result they stop trying their best in academics.
Especially with their friends, family, or any love once that makes them feel safe. One of the students **(P1-S1)** said *"they help me cope with what I am feeling without them knowing*

by being there for me." (Line 1) It indicates that having a positive environment lessens the emotional burden and pressure that the students feel.

RQ: *Do students see a connection between bullying and their confidence in school?*

Theme 6: Affective Interactions Barriers
Affective interaction barriers are factors that make it hard for people to understand, express, or respond to emotions during interactions, they also block emotional connection and empathy that can lead to misunderstandings, conflict, or weak communication. And it can also have many factors that can weaken communication.

Category 1: Limited Interactions
Category 1 is closely connected to the theme of affective interaction barriers because they reduce opportunities for emotional exchange and understanding between individuals. **(P4-T2)** said *"students who experience bullying lose confidence and don't participate much in their class"* (line 1-7). This indicates that bullying can affect the way students interact with other people.

RQ 5: *Do students see a connection between bullying and their confidence in school?*

Theme 7: Affective Health Management
Affective health management refers to how students cope with emotional difficulties, seek support, and rebuild confidence after experiencing bullying. This theme focuses on the strategies and support systems that help students manage emotional distress and regain confidence in the school environment.
The findings show that students clearly see a connection between bullying and their confidence, and that managing their emotional health through support, encouragement, and reassurance plays a vital role in restoring that confidence.

Category 12: Seeking for Help
Category 12 is closely connected to affective health management because seeking help allows students to address emotional distress caused by bullying and begin rebuilding their confidence. When students feel safe sharing their experiences, they are more likely to regain emotional stability and self-belief.
One teacher **(P3-T1)** stated that bullied students struggle to seek help because *"they feel like they are not safe to explain the bullying..."* (line 2–3).
This shows that fear and lack of emotional security prevent students from managing their emotional health effectively, which affects their confidence in school. Another teacher **(P4-T2)** observed that students often turn to trusted adults instead, saying *"usually... they go to the class adviser or they just go home."* (line 1–3) This indicates that when students do seek help, it becomes an important step in coping emotionally and restoring confidence.

Category 13: Encouragement and Motivational Support
Category 13 relates to affective health management because encouragement helps students rebuild confidence and emotional strength after bullying.
Positive reinforcement from teachers, family members, and peers plays a crucial role in motivating students and helping

them believe in themselves again. A teacher emphasized this by saying that support **(P3-T1)** *"helps them feel safe, less alone, and more confident to face school"* (line 1–3).

This highlights how encouragement directly supports emotional recovery and confidence rebuilding.

From a parent's perspective **(P3-P1),** encouragement was also evident when one shared, *"we bonded, talked, shared stories… we tried to show positivism and support"* (line 1–2). This suggests that emotional encouragement at home strengthens students' confidence and ability to cope with bullying.

Category 14: Reassurance and Personal Growth
Category 14 is directly linked to affective health management because reassurance helps students feel valued and supported, while personal growth enables them to regain confidence and self-trust after bullying experiences.

One student **(P1-S1)** explained their coping strategy by stating, *"I just try to trust myself and think about my future"* (line 1). This reflects how reassurance and future-oriented thinking help students manage emotional pain and rebuild confidence. A parent **(P3-P1)** further reinforced this by saying, *"positive words, positive guidance, motivation"* were used to help their child recover (line 1–2). This shows that reassurance from family supports emotional healing and confidence restoration.

Summary
This chapter presented the findings from in-depth interviews with selected teachers, students, and parents.

The data were analyzed through verbatim transcription and thematic coding, resulting in 173 significant statements grouped into seven major themes: Students' Learning Effects, Navigating Emotional Pressure, Loss of Motivation, Affective Behavioral Dynamics, Emotional Stability, Affective Interaction Barriers, and Affective Health Management.

These themes explain how bullying affects students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and school engagement. The results show that bullying leads to decreased motivation, difficulty focusing, reduced participation, and declining grades. Emotional distress, fear, and anxiety further interfere with students' willingness to attend school, often resulting in low self-esteem and social withdrawal.

The findings also highlight the vital role of support from family, friends, and teachers in helping students manage emotional distress, rebuild confidence, and regain motivation.

Overall, the study demonstrates a clear connection between bullying, emotional experiences, and academic performance, emphasizing the need for supportive school environments and effective intervention strategies to promote students' resilience and academic success.

4. Discussion
The results of this research, "Grounded Theory on Bullying and Academic Performance: A Real Experience", which aimed to comprehend deeper of how bullying impacts students based on their actual experiences, are covered in this chapter. The researchers used grounded theory to find trends demonstrating detrimental effects of bullying on academic achievement and emotional achievement. The findings of this study show that students who were

frequently humiliated, shameful, and hatred criticism often experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. As one of the respondent stated that "those who are bullied, the first that can happen, their confidence drop." because they find it challenging to show up because they are aware of what they are about to face, they also find it difficult to concentrate in the class, to take part in activities and maintain their motivation to learn, because of this emotional difficulties. Many students consequently displayed symptoms of academic disengagement, which results in deteriorating academic performance.

Additionally, the study implies that emotional distress hinders learning. However, support from teachers, parents, and peers can help students to rebuild their confidence and reconnect with their studies. Overall, the results emphasize how critical it is to establish a secure and encouraging school environment in order to lessen the negative effects of bullying and foster academic achievement.

Summary of Findings
Studies show that bullying affects the academic performance of those who experience it. Based on the interviews with teachers, parents, and with the victims, it was found that they are often struggling to concentrate in class and lose interest in school. Physically, some students experience tiredness, loss of appetite, and stress. Mentally and emotionally, bullying causes fear, low self-esteem, and sadness. Teachers and parents also observed changes in their behavior, such as isolation and lack of participation. These physical conditions can worsen students' ability to concentrate and engage in school activities. On a mental and emotional level, bullying instills fear, reduces self-esteem, and leads to anxiety and extended sadness. Victims may start to question their abilities and self-worth, which adversely affects their confidence both in and out of the classroom. Teachers and parents have also noted significant changes in the behavior of students who are bullied. These changes often manifest as social withdrawal, isolation from peers, decreased class participation, and less interaction with others. Some students may become quieter and more reserved, while others exhibit signs of emotional distress. Overall, the evidence clearly shows that bullying has severe and lasting impacts on students' academic performance, physical health, and mental and emotional well-being, underscoring the critical need to address bullying within the school environment.

Implications
The findings of this study have an important implication toward future researchers as they gather information on how bullying can affect the student indirectly or directly. The study demonstrates that bullying does not only decrease their motivation and being able to focus but also impacts the students' emotional beings that led to poor participation in classroom, activities, and performances. This study implies that school regulation should strengthen anti-bullying policies and create a school program for students that are experiencing bullying that focuses on emotional support and guidance to help them recover from their trauma. Furthermore, the future researchers may use the Grounded theory on bullying and academic performance: a real experience as a basis for developing a beneficial strategies or research that aim to decrease bullying and helping the students to heal alongside with improving their academic

performances.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, bullying has a negative effect on students' emotional well-being and academic performance. The students who experience bullying often feel stress, fear, and low self-confidence, which may affect their focus and participation in school activities and also the way they interact with others. Also, those students who experience bullying need support from teachers, parents, and peers in preventing bullying.

Although this study has a limited number of respondents, it still provides valuable information about the impact of bullying on students' daily lives.

It also provides important insights into the importance of promoting respect and empathy for each other for a better environment for all students who experience bullying.

Recommendations

The researchers recommend improving reporting systems for bullying, schools should create safe ways for students to report bullying, the school should also strengthen anti-bullying programs, to prevent bullying and promote respect among students. These recommendations help the students that are victims of bullying to be heard and valued, this also help future researchers by providing insights that can be used as a basis for further studies related to bullying, student motivation, emotional well-being, and academic performance. Schools should provide guidance and counseling to support students who experience emotional trauma due to bullying. Teachers should also be trained in how to handle and respond appropriately in this kind of situation. Parents and school administrators are important in addressing bullying cases and maintaining a safe, supportive, and positive learning environment for all students.

Limitations

The limitations of the study include the following; only 6 respondents, 2 parents, 2 teachers and 2 students who study at Bignay National High School would be the subjects of this research, which may not represent the experiences of all students affected by bullying and its impact on academic performance.

Since the study was conducted in only one school, the findings may not be applicable to learners who do not fall into this category. The time frame of this study is up until the end of the second semester of academic year 2025-2026. The data gathered are based on the respondents' personal experiences, which may have been influenced by their emotions and willingness to share. Additionally, we gathered the data through a survey questionnaire.

Reflection

Bullying is a social process that seriously causes problems in a student's academic and emotional life, rather than being an isolated incident. These real experiences show that accepting oneself as a victim, where students lose confidence in their own abilities, is often the cause of a decline in academic performance. It is necessary to prevent bullying because it is not acceptable for an individual to do it because it is not helpful, and it only damages studies and the images of both the bully and the person who got bullied. Reflecting on this research study, working on the research paper on bullying and academic performance was a real challenge.

Gathering data from the students was tough, but their individual stories highlighted the impact of bullying on their mental health and also their grades, which so many struggled with. The research found a clear answer between the bullying experiences and declining academic performance. Students need awareness and especially support systems.

By conducting the surveys, we realized how important it is to approach topics like bullying with sensitivity.

The school and also the students need to implement anti-bullying programs once a month and have counseling. These ideas help create a more supportive environment. All of these research studies show the need for action against bullying.

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