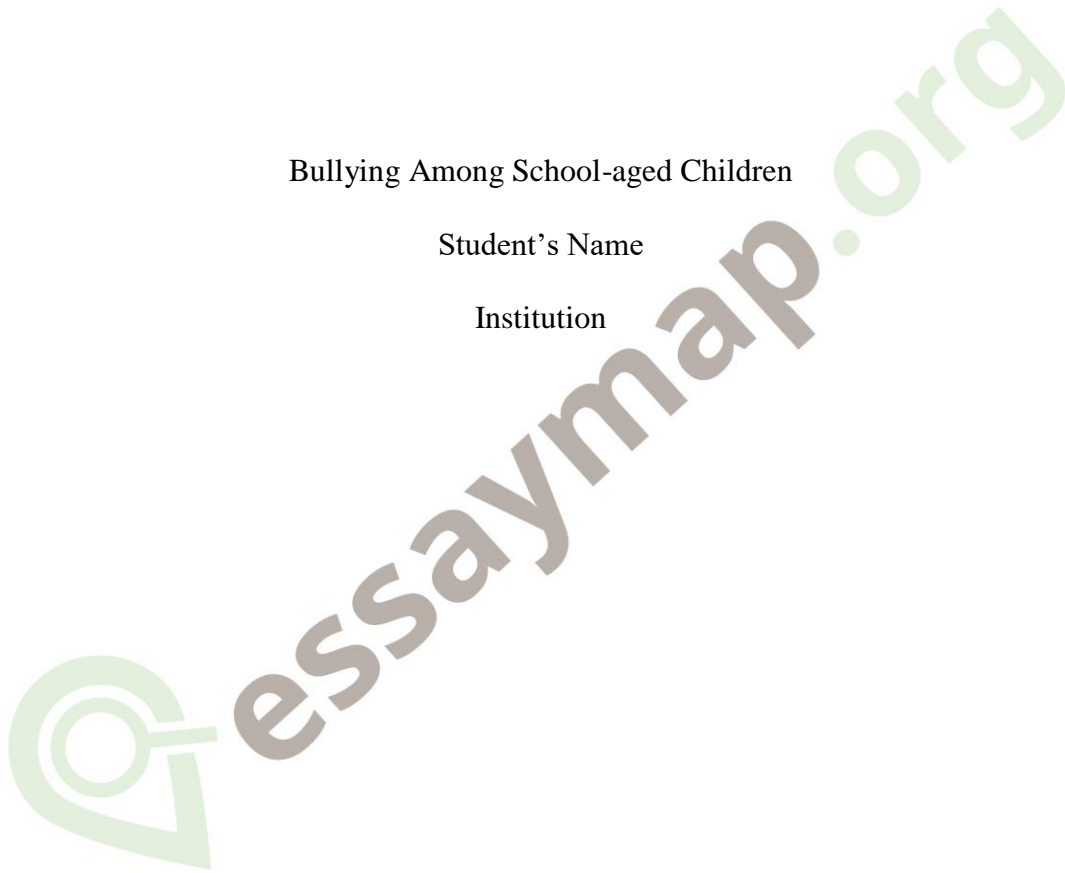Bullying Among School-aged Children

Student's Name

Institution

Bullying Among School-aged Children

Introduction

During the adolescent stage, children encounter different life circumstances that significantly affect their childhood development. It is in this phase of life that most school-age and teenagers are profoundly affected by harmful social interactions. According to Andrade, Gomes, Granville-Garcia, and Menezes (2019), bullying refers to any violent acts, involving intentional aggression without any apparent reason, that results in pain and suffering. There is very little difference between the causes and effects of bullying in educational institutions around the world. However, the highest rates of bullying have been reported in schools in developed towns and cities as compared to rural areas. According to Andrade et al. (2019), such cases have been attributed to the increased exposure to social technologies among school-age children in urban areas than in rural surroundings. The recent establishment of research to investigate the extent of bullying among school-age children, has enabled the society to make significant steps in setting up measures that ensure the protection of children likely to be victims, both within and outside the school environment. Besides, the findings have been vital in reducing the increasing incidences of suicides among teenagers and young adults. In this context, the paper addresses the common types of bullying, their causes and effects, and the prevention measures that have so far been adopted in educational institutions to curb bullying and protect its sufferers.

Types of Bullying

The most common incidences of bullying reported in almost all schools in the world include nicknaming, abuse through verbal expressions and gestures, stealing, physical aggression, and threats. The National Centre Against Bullying categories the various types of bullying into four main categories: physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying. Some of the

instances of physical bullying include intentionally hitting, pinching, kicking, tripping, or destroying another person's property without any apparent reason. Verbal bullying, on the other hand, includes incidences such as insulting, teasing, intimidating, verbal abuse, or making racist remarks to offend the victim. Zimbardo and Rosemary (2017) state that often verbal bullying is characterized by perpetrators relentlessly insulting the victim to belittle or demean them. Furthermore, they tend to select their subjects based on physical size, appearance, and behavior. As a result, children with special needs have recorded the highest number of victims of verbal bullying, as stipulated in Shore's (2014) research.

Social bullying, also known as covert bullying, refers to any act aimed at harming one's social reputation or humiliating one behind their back. Examples of incidences grouped under social bullying include lying, spreading rumors, mimicking another person unkindly, and lobbying other people to exclude another person socially. Others involve making negative physical, facial gestures, or contemptuous looks and carrying out nasty jokes that eventually humiliate or embarrass another person. Zimbardo and Rosemary (2017) argue that social bullying is the hardest to single out since it is occasionally not directed to the victim.

Moreover, with the recent advancement in technology, cyberbullying has spread around the world either as an overt or covert type of bullying, supported by digital technologies such as software, websites, and instant messaging and texts. It tends to occur at any time, in public or private, and is often only known by the victim. Examples of incidents of cyberbullying include uploading embarrassing photos, making hurtful comments, or posting threats on another person's social page.

Causes and Effects

There are various reasons perpetrators of bullying molest their victims. They range from physiological factors to merely the desire to get attention. According to Kwang and Yin (2016), bullies molest their victims to have them realize their superiority. Some consider it fun and means to take out their feelings on others. Additional reasons include revenge, jealousy, aggressive personality, and absence of adult supervision. Furthermore, people bully others to get noticed and be perceived as 'cool.' Others, especially those without pity, do it because they like to see their victims being hurt or crying. Moreover, Kwang and Yin's (2016) research links motives of bullies to aggressive personality, highlighting the fact that they take out there stress on their weaker peers with the hope of boosting their self-esteem. Surprisingly, Zimbardo and Rosemary's (2017) study capture victims of bullying as the perpetrators, since they are highly likely to molest other people out of frustrations and anger originating from their social problems. In this case, they bully others to reacquire their lost confidence.

Furthermore, the effects of bullying vary from physical pain to psychological disorders, such as depressions, anxiety, low self-esteem, and suicidal tendencies. Zimbardo and Rosemary (2017) point out that bullying can also affect the perpetrators, and those witnessing the act. School-age children who are victims of bullying have reported instances of feeling depressed, lonely, sad, poor eating habits, and a decrease in their interests in the activities they like doing. According to Andrade et al. (2019), these issues persist further to the child's adulthood when they are continuously bullied throughout their adolescent stage. Another significant effect evident among most victims of bullying is the decline in their academic performance, low GPA scores, and participation in school activities. There is a high number of school dropouts and students reporting to have skipped school because of the fear of being bullied in school.

Thompson and Kyle's (2005) research has linked some of the cases of mass shootings in schools to bullying, as a number of the perpetrators have reported having once been molested in school.

Kids who bully others also tend to have their share of negative consequences as some of them end up as drug addicts, convicts, and divorced in their adult life. A high percentage of cases involving abusive romantic partners have either both or one of the partners reported to have been a bully in school. Furthermore, the fear arising from witnessing acts of bullying has made some of the children to opt from going to school or develop depression and anxiety.

Prevention measures

In an attempt to try and curb bullying among school-aged children, several school managements have installed surveillance cameras throughout the institution. Additionally, strict regulations against bullying have been established, most involving suspension and even expulsion of any student reported or caught on camera molesting another student. Schools have also made efforts to establish clubs and programs aimed at creating awareness on the adverse effects of bullying and the importance of schooling in harmony. The rest of the school staff have also been included in the fight against bullying by supervising support groups and looking out for any potential case of bullying.

Conclusion

In summary, bullying has been a social practice, always causing low self-esteem and psychological suffering among teenagers around the world. Consequently, most victims of bullying have recorded a decrease in academic performance, suffered from antisocial personality disorders, and showcases violent behaviors in adulthood. Schools around the country have, therefore, made reforms aimed at reducing the instance of bullying, involving the entire school community in discouraging the act and severely punishing any perpetrator.

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