

ABSTRACT

An Investigation of the Perceptions Victims and Aggressors Have of Bullying and the Methods Used to Address It at Sunny Hill Secondary School: A Case Study

Krysta Rodriguez

This study sought to acquire descriptive information about the nature and incidence of bullying from the perspective of the victims and the aggressors. Data were collected through interviews with the guidance officer, the Dean of Form 3, and four students (two victims and two aggressors) at a secondary school in Port of Spain, Trinidad. Other data were collected through document analysis. The findings revealed that both aggressors and victims most commonly associated bullying with physical attacks on the victim, while victims also identified verbal attacks as bullying. Some participants also identified activities such as taxing and intimidation as bullying. With respect to the role of power in bullying, all participants agreed that physical size was an important factor in defining the imbalance of power in the bully-victim relationship. It was also found that bullies used the notoriety of their community to enhance their own infamy, and used that notoriety as power over other individuals. Both victims and aggressors perceived suspensions and expulsions as ineffective in addressing the issue of bullying. The study identifies several strategies to address bullying.

Keywords: Perceptions; Student attitudes; Secondary school students; Student behaviour; Student sociology; Case studies; Discipline problems; Discipline policy; Administrator attitudes; Bullying; Trinidad and Tobago