

Prevention policy of Bullying in NZ Schools

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Abstract : This article examines the prevention policy of bullying in New Zealand (NZ) schools by comparing the range and reasons for bullying in Saudi Arabia (SA) and NZ, defining the KiVa program, conducting a literature review of the KiVa program in the NZ context, and discussing the implications for implementing KiVa in NZ and Saudi education. Bullying is a worldwide problem that affects students' mental health, academic achievement, and social development. The article compares the range and reasons for bullying in SA and NZ and highlights the need for prevention policies that address the unique cultural and social factors that contribute to bullying in each country. The KiVa program is a comprehensive anti-bullying program developed in Finland that has been implemented in NZ and other countries. The article defines the KiVa program and discusses its components, which include teacher training, student lessons, and intervention strategies. A literature review of the KiVa program in the NZ context shows that it is effective in reducing bullying and improving students' well-being. The article discusses the findings of several studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of the KiVa program in NZ schools. The article concludes by discussing the implications of implementing KiVa in NZ and Saudi education. While the KiVa program has been successful in NZ, it may not be directly applicable to the Saudi context due to differences in culture and social norms. However, the underlying principles of the KiVa program, such as empowering students and teachers to address bullying, can be adapted to the Saudi context to develop effective prevention policies. Overall, the article emphasizes the importance of prevention policies in addressing bullying in schools and highlights the potential of the KiVa program as a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention in NZ and Saudi education.

Keywords: Bullying prevention - KiVa program -Cross-cultural adaptation.

1 The statement of need

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggressive or harmful behavior against a person who cannot defend him/herself. In most cases, it involves children and adolescents around the world. The victims of bullying tend to have low self-esteem, and, in some cases, they may commit suicide. The victims, perpetrators, and witnesses of bullying may have long-term consequences on their social life and health. Children are bullied because of a lack of coping mechanisms, their appearance, and their speech. Their fellow children are the perpetrators because they like comparing themselves with each other. Worldwide, about 17-69% of 13-year-old students have reported that they have been bullied⁽¹⁾. People are bullied because the perpetrator perceives some vulnerability. Prevention programs have helped in controlling bullying cases in countries around the world.

(1) AlBuhairan, F. S., Al Eissa, M., Alkufeidy, N., &Almuneef, M. (2016). Bullying in early adolescence: An exploratory study in Saudi Arabia.

International Journal of paediatrics and adolescent medicine, 3(2), 64-70.

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In Saudi Arabia, bullying has been persistent, but the Ministry is working to address this. Adults in Saudi Arabia have reported that they were bullied during the first 18 years of their lives⁽²⁾. This shows that bullying has been there and had not been addressed for several years. Insufficient awareness has increased the likelihood of bullying of children. About 28.2% were men, and 14.7% of women reported that they experienced bullying either verbally, spreading rumors, being deliberately unkind, or even physically while they were children⁽³⁾. However, several prevention methods have been implemented in school because children are likely to be victimized while in school. Creating awareness is a critical aspect because children can know what steps to take when they experience peer violence.

Moreover, students in New Zealand schools often face bullying while they are learning, which affects their performance. A national survey in NZ revealed that 94% of teachers and principals highlighted that bullying is a problem in their schools⁽⁴⁾. The antibullying programs are not widely used in NZ schools. NZ students are more likely to experience bullying while in school as compared to other students in other countries⁽⁵⁾. This is alarming because children tend to stay in school for more hours as compared to the time they are at home. Therefore, the formation of children occurs in schools, and bullying may have long-term effects on their lives.

Compare Bullying Range and Reasons in SA and NZ

About 25% of the students in NZ schools find themselves being bullied. The situation in NZ is alarming because bullying may make children dislike school or even drop out of school. Most of the interventions used in NZ are not successful in schools. However, KiVa, which means kindness, is an effective prevention and intervention program that is aimed at reducing the causes of bullying in schools⁽⁶⁾.

On the other hand, bullying in SA is not as prevalent as compared to NZ. In SA, bullying is prohibited as a case in the ministry of education guidelines⁽⁷⁾. These guidelines are critical in ensuring that each student receives fair treatment while at school. Educational stakeholders should be involved in providing guidelines to avoid bullying in schools. Government policies and procedures are critical because all students receive a quality education with minimal disturbances.

Moreover, bullying in both countries has similarities because children are almost the same. Cyberbullying is likely to occur in NZ and SA because of the availability of electronic gadgets⁽⁸⁾. Students with mobile devices or computers are likely to have social media accounts, which may have a high rate of bullying. Also, students from both countries are in the adolescent stage, which makes them prone to bullying. The adolescent stage is tricky because the students are likely to compare with their peers in terms of their appearance and speech. This may later influence how they behave and trying to copy each other by faking some of their social life activities. As a result, some may end up being depressed because of negative comments from their peers.

Additionally, there are Bullying Prevention Guidelines in NZ – but teachers are left up to themselves as to how to implement them. Where KiVa is different is that It provided the lesson material for teachers. The burden is left to the school administrators, which is quite hard for the teachers and principals to follow up on each case. In SA, some of the students are not aware of the existing ministry of education

(2) AlBuhairan, (2016).**Opcit**

(3) **Opcit**

(4) Green, V. A., Woods, L., Wegerhoff, D., Harcourt, S., & Tannahill, S. (2019). An Evaluation of the KiVa Anti-bullying Program in New Zealand. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, 1-13.

(5) **Opcit**

(6) **Opcit**

(7) AlBuhairan, (2016).**Opcit**

(8) McPhee, R. (2014). Stick and stones may break my bones, but cyberbullying is illegal-Is cyberbullying a crime, and it should be.

guidelines on bullying. There is a reluctance on the part of schools to admit that there is a bullying problem. They make comments such as ‘This is just the way teenagers behave’ and ‘It’s just teasing people just need to learn to take it’. This makes the victim feel even more powerless and the bully feels as if the bullying behavior is acceptable.

Definition of the KiVa Program.

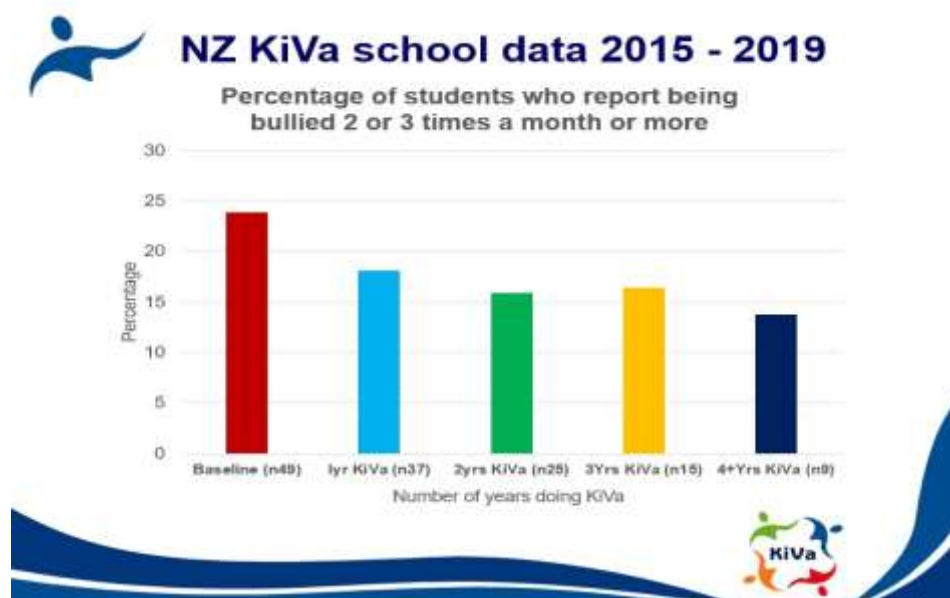


KiVa program is a program that helps in preventing bullying in schools. The students undertake various activities that are interactive and engaging to help them express themselves. Online games can be used to reinforce certain concepts that are useful in children’s life. The schools involved in the program are provided with a step-step guide on how to deal with bullying in schools. These steps are critical to guide the school administrators and students when they encounter bullying cases. The program has been implemented in about 57 schools, and several positive outcomes have

been reported. The participating schools must follow the lesson plans being provided by the program. The guidelines are critical in ensuring the program is successful.

Numerous bullying prevention mechanisms have been used in different schools. Bullies target on a child’s behaviour, and where they perceive that the child is weak. KiVa program was first introduced in the schools in Finland in a controlled trial in 2007-2009

It was quite successful in reducing bullying and victimization. The school-based program was quite efficient because it enhanced the empathy of peers through supporting them. About 90% of Finnish comprehensive schools are currently registered to the program⁽⁹⁾. The uptake of the KiVa program has been remarkable because of the success stories from different schools.



This graph shows the reduction of bullying cases occurring in KIVA⁽¹⁰⁾ schools within 4 years period of implementing KiVa program.

(9) Salmivalli, C., &Poskiparta, E. (2012). KiVa anti-bullying program: Overview of evaluation studies based on a randomized controlled trial and national rollout in Finland. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCIV)*, 6(2), 293-301

(10) KiVa School. New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://www.kivaprogram.net/nz>

Literature Review of KiVaProgram (NZ Experience)

KiVa is a prevention approach aimed at reducing bullying of students in the schools, while still improving on the safety and well-being of children. The program is critical because it allows teachers to concentrate on teaching various concepts in the class. KiVa was introduced in New Zealand in 2014 and have been introduced in several schools in the country (KiVa School)⁽¹¹⁾. Children between school years 2-9 are actively involved in the program because they are at high risk of being bullied. Students at that stage require extra care and support because they are always active and involved in extra-curriculum activities. KiVa program in schools has been successful because of the continuity of the program among the children.

KiVa program is an antibullying program that increases school liking and motivations of students towards the school. In the Finnish language, the word KiVa means something it is good or nice⁽¹²⁾. It originated from Finland, where it was implemented in various schools. A randomized control trial was done in the year 2007-2009 before its national wide implementation in 2009⁽¹³⁾. In NZ, the KiVa program was first adopted in schools in the year 2015 because of its successful history in other countries⁽¹⁴⁾. NZ has adopted other anti-bullying programs that seem not to be widely used in the country. By 2015, 14 schools had implemented the KiVa program for at least a year⁽¹⁵⁾. By the end of 2019, 57 schools had signed up. The ministry of education in NZ has highlighted some aspects of cultural diversity in the New Zealand curriculum⁽¹⁶⁾. The plans will be of great benefit towards curbing cultural divisions that may lead to bullying in schools.

In NZ, little progress has been experienced in the implementation of anti-bullying programs. However, the KiVa program has been penetrating the schools in NZ because of its holistic approach. Despite the success stories of the program, there are limited data regarding the suitability of the program in NZ⁽¹⁷⁾. Suitability of a program is arguable because most of the people will check on the

Result of the program versus the side effects. Green⁽¹⁸⁾ recorded that the implementation of the KiVa program helped in increasing the number of students who were not bullied at school from 10.5-5.83%. This is a significant move that encouraged the facilitators to continue with the program.

Moreover, several randomized control trials signified demonstrated that the KiVa program was successful in reducing bullying and victimization. The trials are significant because they help in providing a framework about the future of a program. The effectiveness of KiVa may vary in different schools because of different levels of teacher implementation in each one. Schools have limited financial resources and because they have to pay for KiVa this lack of money is having an impact on the uptake of the approach in New Zealand The cultural diversity of NZ may also have a direct impact on the implementation of the KiVa program in school⁽¹⁹⁾. Some of the cultural groups may have an individualistic ideology that affects how people behave. Most human behaviour is affected by the culture because culture dictates the norms that people should practice.

(11) **Opcit**

(12) Salmivalli, C., Voeten, M., &Poskiparta, E. (2011). Bystanders matter: Associations between reinforcing, defending, and the frequency of bullying behaviour in classrooms. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 40(5), 668-676

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(17) Green, (2017), **Opcit**

(18) **Opcit**

(19) Green, (2019), **Opcit**

Teacher's commitment to the KiVa program is critical towards its success. The teachers in schools are involved in directing the students about any progress of a program. Most of the students tend to trust their teachers, and they believe what they are told. Student's perceptions towards the teacher's commitment to reduce bullying are also critical in the success of the program⁽²⁰⁾. Teachers who emphasize the reduction and prevention of bullying and victimization tend to earn the trust of their students.

Additionally, children in NZ have a basic right to access education in a safe and secure environment. Bullying and victimization make the learning environment uncomfortable for the students. Therefore, the implementation of KiVa in NZ can be considered as suitable motive towards ensuring children get a quality education⁽²¹⁾. Student's perception of safety is vital because it forms a basis where the student is ready to learn. The perception may also affect the academic performance of students. Therefore, the KiVa program is effective in ensuring a safe environment by preventing and minimizing bullying in schools.

The benefits of KiVa have been felt by all the stakeholders in the educational sector.

KiVa program has helped students to have a positive perception of their teachers (KiVa School)⁽²²⁾. The program has helped them to understand the teacher's effort in controlling bullying in schools. Previously, some students felt that their teachers did not help in tackling bullying cases in schools. Therefore, they shied off from reporting to the school. After one year of KiVa, NZ experienced a 21% decrease in bullying. This is a great step towards reducing bullying and its consequences of stressed students who have been bullied.

Additionally, several schools have adopted the KiVa program because of the success rates experienced in other schools. Cyberbullying was reduced by 12% within one year of the KiVa program (KiVa School)⁽²³⁾. Cyberbullying has prevalent in recent years because of the advancement of technology. However, the KiVa program help in making the children busy playing online games rather than exposing them to social media accounts where there is a high rate of bullying. The KiVa program has also impacted positively on the academics of the children because they can interact freely with each other. The academic perspective is prioritized in the program because it is one of the core factors in the education sector

Moreover, the program has helped in enhancing the confidence and well-being of the children. Social support is vital in ensuring that bullying is reduced in school. Peers will either encourage or discourage fellow students through the comments made while socializing. The KiVa program increased empathy and also made students in NZ to enjoy schooling (KiVa School)⁽²⁴⁾. This a vital aspect because when students enjoy school, they will likely improve their academic performance. As a result, cyberbullying will be reduced because the students understand why they are in school. Students who know the primary role of education will not engage in cyberbullying activities. Instead, they will encourage others to read and participate actively in extra-curriculum activities.

KiVa programs have games that the students can play while undergoing the program. The online games help t children to think critically as well as improve their social well-being. The online games can be considered as tool for attraction for the students. However, the basic idea behind online games is to help the students ha critical thinking in dealing with bullying cases. The concepts involved must be holistic that must be solv through searching for solutions for certain problems.

(20) Opcit

(21) Opcit

(22) KiVa School. New Zealand. Retrieved from <http://www.kivaprogram.net/nz>, Opcit

(23) Opcit

(24) Opcit

Nevertheless, the lesson in the KiVa program focused on self-esteem and assertiveness among the students in NZ. Students with low self-esteem are affected by bullying because they do not know how to deal with such a situation. The KiVa program helped the students to have interpersonal skills that will help in improving their self-esteem⁽²⁵⁾. The activities in the KiVa program helped the students in improving their behaviour. Their anxiety can be reduced by involving the students in activities that are outside their academic activities. This will help in managing students who could be experiencing bullying in school.



Evidence from Schools

Green⁽²⁶⁾ researched the KiVa program, where they got information from 14 different primary and secondary schools. The researchers wanted to know the bullying rates and if KiVa program was successful in NZ. They collected the data via questionnaires, which were easy questions that would be answered by students.

Moreover, data can be collected through interviews, focus groups, and interviews. AlBuhairan⁽²⁷⁾ tried to understand bullying among the intermediate school students in SA. school professionals, parents, and students participated in the research, and they expressed their view. Bullying in schools target students who cannot defend themselves while at school. As a result, bullying prevails if preventive measures do not focus on the key factors affecting young people. AlBuhairan⁽²⁸⁾ collected data by analyzing the themes and subthemes of bullying in schools. This was essential because it helps in understanding why bullying occurs in schools.

A survey was done with Catherine Miller, John Weston and Matt Boucher from different KiVa schools to collect data about how the KiVa program is working and what are the positive changes happened there. I will report a sample of questions and answers:

(25) Green, (2019), **Opcit**

(26) Green. (2017), **Opcit**

(27) AlBuhairan, (2016). **Opcit**

(28) **Opcit**

1. How do the KiVa lessons work?

The KiVa lessons are a series of lessons which are delivered weekly, throughout the year. Our Year 3/4 and Year 7/8 classes complete all of the lessons. Our Year 1/2 and our Year 5/6 classes only do some of the lessons as they appropriate. This ensures that the lessons continue to be fresh for our children/

Each lesson builds on the previous one. They cover:

- what bullying is
- how bullying makes people feel
- the roles that people play in bullying situations
- strategies to deal with bullying and ways to become a defender

Lessons include a range of tools, such as discussion, role-plays, scenarios, picture prompts and the KiVa Game, to support learning.

The strength of the programme is that it supports ALL students to become proactive in preventing bullying. It is aimed at giving strategies to not only the victim and the bully, but the peer group.

2. How do students respond to the lessons?

Our students generally enjoy the programme. They show an increasing awareness of what bullying is, and can identify if different scenarios involve bullying, or are just disagreements or conflict. The main impact on the students from doing the lessons is that they have become far more aware of the role that is played by bystanders.

The children like the KiVa game and the range of resources used to support the concepts in the lessons.

3. Can you describe how you deal with incidents of bullying?

We have a KiVa team of 5 teachers who are responsible for dealing with reported cases of bullying in the school. They have had training in the process. They work in pairs to deal with each case.

If a teacher is made aware of a case of possible bullying (either by a parent, the victim or other children) they refer the case to the KiVa team. The KiVa team decides if it is bullying or not. If they think it is bullying, it is assigned to two members of the team to deal with. They follow the following process.

- A. One of the team meets with the victim to get more information
- B. Both then meet with the bully(ies) straight away, talk about what has happened, make sure they know it is bullying, and get them to set a goal to ensure it doesn't happen again. (If there is more than one bully, they meet with each individually, then as a group to share their goals)
- C. After a week, meet again with the victim to see if things have improved.
- D. Meet with the bully(ies) again also, to check on progress. The victim may not choose to be part of that meeting.
- E. If the bullying has improved, celebrate that with all. If not, the process may need to be repeated. Check-in with the students regularly to make sure they stay on track.

4. How do you stop bullies from bullying again?

The KiVa process seems to stop most of the bullying the first time at our school. For repeat bullying, we follow the same process again. If it then continues, we contact the parents and put consequences in place.

5. Tell me please about the main principles that must be followed to succeed in preventing bullying?

- A. Make it very clear what bullying is, how it affects people and that it is not accepted at our school
 - B. Have a whole-school consistent approach, and good home-school communication about this approach
 - C. Have a preventative programme (KiVa), which ensures that ALL children have strategies to prevent bullying happening and to deal with it when it does (the great power of the programme, I think, is the preventative side- building the students' understanding of the "bystander" and the recognition that we ALL have a role to play)
 - D. Have an intervention plan, which is consistent for all cases of bullying Ensure that staff delivering the interventions are well-trained
6. why did your school decide to take on KiVa?

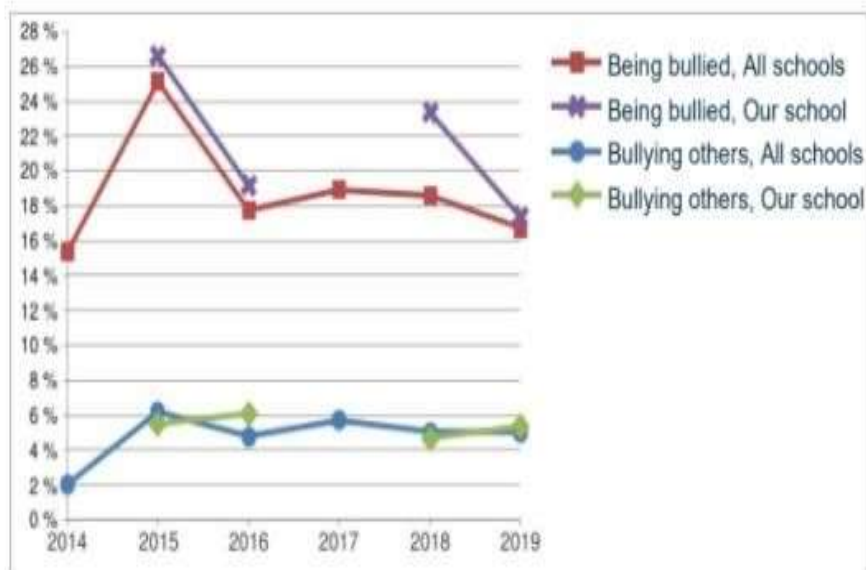
We know that bullying is a problem in New Zealand schools, and saw that it sometimes took place in our school. We liked that KiVa was an evidence-based approach to helping with this problem that had been shown to work.

. How has KiVa made a difference to your school? could you give some statistics?

KiVa has reduced bullying in our school. On the graph, 2015 is when we started. In 2017 the data was lost, but bullying was even lower, below the red line. In 2018 we had a lot of new teachers who had not been trained in KiVa, so bullying increased. In 2019 we trained new teachers, and bullying decreased again.

Bullying and being bullied 2014–2019

Number of students who have bullied others or have been bullied themselves 2 or 3 times a month or more often



Details about the questions: "How often have you bullied another student at school during the past few months?" ja "How often have you been bullied at school during the past few months?" Options: "I have not [bullied anyone]/[been bullied] during the past few months", "Only once or twice", "2 or 3 times a month", "About once a week" or "Several times a week".

8. Can you give me any examples of the influence of KiVa on attitudes to bullying?

Students are now more likely to stand up for other students who they see being bullied, and bullying is less acceptable to them. They are also more likely to tell a teacher about it. Besides, a greater understanding of what is and is not bullying has helped them to identify the difference between disagreement and bullying.

9-Please, tell me about parents' role as well as teachers during the program for both victim and bully?

The parents' involvement is limited. Mostly it is about assuring them that we have a program in place to deal with incidents of bullying and helping them to understand what bullying is and is not.

10- How do students respond to the lessons?

They enjoy them.

11-Can you describe how you deal with incidents of bullying?

Through the KiVa process, outlined in the manuals.

12-How do you stop bullies from bullying again?

Through the KiVa process, outlined in the manuals. Also checking in regularly with both the bully and victims and classmates to monitor the situation.

For more deep information, I interviewed Dr. Jessica Craig who is a trained KiVa facilitator. She explained me that antibullying mechanism must work on a circle. Prevention, intervention on bullying cases and monitoring annual schools' percentage of new cases. Prevention includes interactive lessons to develop student awareness of the definition of bullying. If all students and teachers are clear about the definition of bullying, then it is easy to identify bullying behaviours and to do something about it. KiVa is about changing the culture so that everyone is included and accepted. Intervention on the other hand, occurs once a case happened and it must be led by KiVa teachers or a trained leader who can deal with most of bullying incidents wisely. Most of the work in this step is built on meetings with both victim and bully separated along with organizing support for victim. Also what makes KiVa special is the way of getting bully to commit to change voluntarily rather than using punishment for discipline. After that becomes follow up meetings to see what has happened which is considered a major factor in KiVa progress. According to Jessica, 'try to get it as soon as you can' is another key component a KiVa teacher must do to control bullying. Last but not least comes the role of KiVa team for monitoring each school under their program, to figure out the change of bullying rates and the effectiveness of the program.

. Discussion of the Finding

The anti-bullying KiVa program has been partly effective in NZ because the frequency of bullying was reduced in KiVa school. Green⁽²⁹⁾ suggested that KiVa was successful in improving the student's feelings of safety in the school environment. This suggests that the program appeared to have initial fidelity and appeal. Individual students in the program were happy that KiVa helps in self-realization and improving



(29) Green, (2017), *Op cit*

their self-esteem⁽³⁰⁾. Therefore, implementing bullying prevention program is critical in reducing bullying and victimization with a new moral thought instead of reward /punishment old approach.

AlBuhairan⁽³¹⁾ et al. (2016) found that bullying preventive measures should target the factors that are conducive to bullying. Factors conducive to bullying include a lack of a secure learning environment, lack of recreation activities, poor parent-school relationships, unhealthy relationships between teachers and students. The school environment is critical because most students expect a secure environment in the schools. Sporting activities and other recreational activities may act as a motivator to students while at school. The positive teacher-student relationship is vital in tackling bullying in schools because students can find comfort in their teachers in times of need.

Additionally, AlBuhairan⁽³²⁾ et al. (2016) highlighted the types of bullying and the impact of bullying. Both students and adult participants' physical, verbal, cyber-bullying psychological, and sexual harassment are in most schools. This is alarming because some people may think it is the mischief of children. Long term bullying may affect the health and social life of the children.

Isolation, aggressiveness, dislike of schools, and racism could be impacts of bullying⁽³³⁾. Education and awareness of normal adolescent development are critical in reducing the rate of bullying in schools. School professionals are concerned with academic development and achievement; thus, the barriers to it should be eliminated. Prevention mechanisms can be effective if proper systems are adopted into the education sector.

Implications for KiVa in NZ and Saudi Education:

Policies have a direct impact on the programs that are to be implemented in the education sector. New Zealand ministry of education has guidelines that dictate the process of adoption of programs and KiVa is one of them. Green⁽³⁴⁾ found as an example that ethnic differences among Asian students were high, which is one of the great contributors to bullying. NZ recognizes multiculturalism, which is evident in the Zealand curriculum. NZ cultural diversity has a direct impact on KiVa program because the practices affect how people behave. KiVa program has a set of guidelines and policies on how to address bullying cases in school. They have impacted on the education sector in NZ because the students enjoy being in school.

In Saudi, for maximum impact, bullying prevention programs and policy must include essential elements. First, a parent guide booklet to clarify steps and criteria for successful prevention. Second, the Saudi government should investigate others experience such as KiVa, the Finland program that used in New Zealand. Third, bullying prevention program evidence must base on principles and it should become a community approach, all society members contribute to stopping this negative phenomenon. A successful anti-bullying schools mean focusing on prevention, intervention in perfect time and continuous monitoring. Moreover, bullying reporting system should be made confidential to make students report bullying incidents instantly. KiVa program changed some of KiVa school practices and will do the same in Saudi as well because of all the education stakeholders on their perception of bullying in schools who play a vital role in determining the academic development of students. However, the school environment must be conducive to effective learning.

Nevertheless, the student's well-being is vital in ensuring that schooling is enjoyable, and learning is developing. Socializing with classmates and interaction with teachers is an important aspect of a

(30)Opcit

(31) AlBuhairan, (2016).Opcit

(32) Opcit

(33) Opcit

(34) Green, (2019), Opcit

student's social well-being⁽³⁵⁾. Maintaining good physical and mental health is the role of all stakeholders in the education sector. Bullying in schools deprives victims of happiness and social satisfaction. OECD⁽³⁶⁾ suggested that PISA offers insight into education policy and practices. It worth's to mention that the PISA researchers found that KiVa is the most effective bullying prevention approach they have found. This can help in analyzing students' acquisition of knowledge and skills in different schools. Students' welfare should always be considered to ensure that they receive a quality education.

Conclusion

Bullying has been prevalent in several schools and has affected the social life as well as mental and physical health of students. The Anti-bullying KiVa program has been quite successful in most of NZ schools that have implemented it according to its engaging approach. It involves setting guidelines for tackling bullying in schools while having a holistic curriculum in the schools. Anti-bullying programs in SA should focus on the factors that are conducive for bullying. Adolescents are likely to be affected by bullying because of technology, vulnerability, and ethnic differences or more. Effective anti-bullying programs are critical in improving the academic, social, and mental health of the victims.



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