Title: Physical Bullying Intervention Strategies – Teachers' Perspectives: A Guyanese Study

Author's Name and Affiliations: Maureen Ann Bynoe
+Tain, Corentyne
Berbice, Guyana
maureenbynoe@yahoo.com

Corresponding Author: Maureen Ann Bynoe
30 Kildonan Village
Corentyne, Berbice
Guyana
592-658-1270
maureenbynoe@yahoo.com

Abstract
The study sought to determine the three most common strategies that the teachers in Guyana had used within the last year to combat physical bullying in their schools. Additionally, it investigated the effectiveness of the three most commonly used strategies and whether the strategies that the teachers used varied based on their gender. The study revealed that the three most commonly used strategies to combat physical bullying were discussions with learners about school rules relating to physical bullying, discussions with parents about physical bullying incidents, and the teaching of social skills to learners. The results also showed that teachers felt that all three strategies were positively effective in reducing physical bullying and that the intervention strategies used did not differ based on their gender. The results of this study have provided valuable initial data on intervention strategies that teachers in Guyana have used successfully to deal with physical bullying.

Key words: teachers, intervention, strategies, physical bullying, effectiveness, school.

1.0 Introduction
1.1 Background to the Study
Numerous studies have recognised the fact that school bullying is a serious universal problem (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005). Reducing this phenomenon continues to be a challenge for most educators, thou many intervention strategies have been in use (Jones & Augustine, 2015). In 2012, Kennedy, Russom, & Kevorkian claimed that bullying is a threat to classroom safety. This claim is in accordance with a UNICEF study that was conducted in 2006. This study was conducted in the Caribbean and the findings showed that 60.8% of the students who participated, stated that they had observed school violence and either became fearful, stayed away from school or dropped out (as cited in Jones, Moore, Villar-Marquez, & Broadbent, 2008). Furthermore, Lackram (2013) noted that parents were protesting against the level of bullying incidents at a particular Government

secondary school in Guyana. One of the parents of the same school claimed that her child had to be away from school after he was cuffed, kicked, and had his money taken away because he refused to hand over $100 Guyana dollars that was demanded by his attackers. According to Dake, Prince, Telljohann, & Funk (2003) teachers are in frequent contact with students at school and based on their perceptions about school bullying, this phenomenon can be reduced. Consequently, there is a need for teachers to employ strategies that will effectively reduce this grave global problem. Existing studies, such as Roberts (2011) and Ttofi & Farrington (2011) have focused on effective intervention strategies in reducing school bullying in general but not specific to physical bullying. Additionally, nearly all of the studies reviewed, have sampled participants from other countries, except Guyana. Further, none of the studies examined dealt specifically with effective intervention strategies that teachers in Guyana have used to combat physical bullying. The specific problem is that physical bullying is prevalent in schools in Berbice, Guyana. However, there are insufficient research findings on effective strategies that teachers in Guyanese schools have used to successfully deal with this phenomenon. Thus, a need existed for a study to be conducted on the effectiveness of the intervention strategies which teachers in Guyana have used to combat the serious occurrence of physical bullying among students.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to find out the three most common strategies that teachers used to combat physical bullying and to examine the effectiveness of the three intervention strategies in reducing physical bullying. Additionally, the study sought to determine whether teachers' use of intervention strategies varied based on their gender.

In 1993, Olweus noted that bullying occurs when someone is continually being taken advantage of by another. According to Olweus advantage occurs when someone deliberately hurts or tries to hurt someone else either verbally (teasing), physically (kicking) or without the use of words or physical contact (exclusion). These actions are executed for a period of time and repetitively by one person or by a group of persons. Bullying includes a "power imbalance (physical or psychological)" (p.10).

School bullying can be placed into various forms (Byers, Caltabiano, & Caltabiano, 2011). Some forms of bullying are physical (fights), verbal (teasing, name calling), relational bullying (exclusion from group activities and spreading rumours), and cyber bullying (using electronic communication instruments to send threatening text messages or e-mails) (Olweus, 1993; Shore, 2005; Juvenon & Gross, 2008). Another form of bullying is sexual bullying which can be defined as acts that deliberately embarrass or set out to control another based on the person's sexual orientation or gender (Beaty & Alexeyer, 2008; Lipson, 2001).

Whitson (2015) acknowledged that it is indeed difficult for teachers to reduce bullying but there are interventions that have been found to be effective in its reduction. Bullying is a serious threat to classroom safety and negatively affects learning (Beaty & Alexeyer, 2008; Kennedy et al., 2012). According to Byers et al. (2011) teachers play a very important role in reducing school bullying and if not effectively dealt with the problem is likely to increase (Mc Adams & Schmiat, 2007).

1.2 Bullying Intervention Strategies

Several intervention strategies have been used by teachers to combat school bullying (Nickerson, Mele, & Princiotta, 2008). One such strategy is having class rules relating to bullying (Dake et al., 2003). However, these researchers posited that this strategy was not very effective in reducing bullying in schools. Gleason (2011) however, postulated that classroom rules against bullying are effective in preventing school bullying.

Thompson and Smith (2011), Dake et al. (2003), and Fresen & Holmqvist, (2010) argued that meeting with the parents of the bully and the victim to discuss the bullying incident is a

successful strategy in reducing school bullying. However, Rigby (2014) found that it was not a very successful strategy. Parental involvement that details discussing the bullying incident involving their children with teachers or having parents input on ways in reducing school bullying has been posited as a strategy to reduce school bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2010; Sahin, 2010; Ttofi & Farrington, 2011).

Several studies have confirmed that adult supervision is an effective strategy in reducing school bullying (Cunningham, Cunningham, Ratcliff, & Vaillancourt, 2010). It was found that there is the need for increased supervision in certain areas, such as playgrounds, restrooms, hallways, and classrooms (Curelaru, Iacob, & Abalasi, 2009; Smokowski & Kopas, 2005). Fekkes et al., (2005) confirmed that supervision is needed in playgrounds and classrooms because they are the two places where students are frequently interacting with each other. According to Whitson (2015) when adults are visible, children who are prone to being bullied, feel safe. According to Dake et al. (2003) schools should improve their supervision at recess. The studies confirmed that adult supervision is necessary in schools, especially in areas where bullying is likely to occur, such as classrooms, playgrounds, restrooms, and hallways.

Both Gleason (2011) and Sahin (2010) have established that speaking with the bully and the victim is an effective strategy to reduce school bullying. Gleason claimed that teachers should have dialogue with the students instantly in order to find out what the problem is and to remind them of school values, rules, and consequences of bullying. Sahin, on the other hand noted that speaking with the victim is likely to result in the development of feelings of security and safety. Other researchers, such as Dake et al. (2003); Olweus and Limber (2010) acknowledged that it is important that teachers communicate with the bully and the victim.   When teachers communicate with both the bully and victim, whether together or separately school bullying is reduced.

According to Peterson & Skiba (2001) separating the victim from the bully is an effective anti- bullying strategy. These authors claimed that the victim should be in close proximity to the teacher so that a watchful eye can be kept. Olweus argued that separating the bully from the victim is a successful strategy to reduce bullying (as cited in Frisen & Holmqvist, 2010).

Another intervention strategy that have been used by teachers to combat school bullying is teachers teaching learners social skills, such as emotion management, conflict resolution, problem solving, assertiveness, and friendship building (Whitson, 2015). Social skills enable students to deal with school bullying and develop their interpersonal associations. This point was made by Hirschstein, Edstrom, Frey, Snell, & Mac Kenzie (2007) when they reported that teaching student friendship skills can reduce school bullying.

In 2014, Rigby noted that corporal punishment has been used by some schools to reduce bullying. According to Rigby and Australian Council for Education (2010) this strategy sends a message to the learners that bullying is not acceptable and that bullies will be punished within the confines of the school rules. He claimed, however, that the use of punishment to reduce bulling is more effective with younger children than with adolescents. On the other hand, Thompson, Smith, & Goldsmith (2011) posited a large majority of teachers believe that this method is an effective anti bullying strategy.

It has been suggested that when teachers discuss with their learners what constitutes bullying, such as bullying behaviours and suitable strategies that they can use in response to bullying, bullying is reduced (Peterson & Skiba, 2001; Milsom & Gallo, 2006). In support of this strategy, Thompson and Cohen (2005) noted that this strategy will help students to be knowledgeable about behaviours that are peculiar to bullying.

1.3 Teacher's Gender and Use of Bullying Intervention Strategies

Xie, Farmer, and Cairns (2003) and Espelage and Swearer (2008) argued that the role of gender in the perceptions of bully is very essential. This argument is supported by Kennedy, Russom, & Kervorkian (2012) who noted that male and female teachers responded differently to school bullying. However, Craig, Bell, Leschied (2011) claimed that there is no significant sex difference regarding teachers' perceptions of bullying. According to them both male and female teachers showed equality in their views concerning bullying and response to it. Hirdes (2010) found that female teachers were more liable to use bullying intervention strategies than male teachers. The researcher also found that when teachers and the victims were of the same gender, the teachers would intervened more frequently and would scold the bully. When there was a difference in the gender of the teachers and the students, the victim is more likely to be scolded, ignore the bullying behaviour, or send away victims.

2.0 Method
2.1 Participants

The participants included primary and secondary school teachers who were students enrolled in a Bachelor of Education programme at a local university. A total of 106 trained primary and secondary teachers volunteered to participate in the study. To facilitate ethical considerations an approval was given by the Deputy Registrar of the University. Additionally, informed consent was gained from the participants and they were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time, if they so desired. Furthermore, they were given all assurances that their responses would be anonymous. A total of 71 teachers returned the questionnaires, a response rate of 66.9%. Of that amount 18 (25.4%) were males and 53 (74.6%) were females. Thirty five (49.3%) of the participants were within 19 to 29 years of age and 31 (43.7%) were within 30 to 40 years old. A further five (7.0%) participants were within 41 to 51 years old. Most of the teachers were Assistant Masters/Mistresses (77.5%) a status given to teachers who have completed teachers training college. The remaining 22.5% of the participants were senior teachers ranging from Senior Assistant Masters/Mistresses to a Head teacher. The participants' teaching experience ranged from under five years (18 - 11.3%), 5 to 15 years (40 – 56.3%), 16 to 25 years (21 – 29-6%), and 27 to 35 years (2 – 2.8%).

2.2 Measures

The questionnaire used in this study contained two sections. Section One consisted of four Bio-data questions that polled data on the participants age range, gender, status on the job, and years of teaching experience. Section Two contained items on teachers' perception on the bullying strategies that they had used within the last year and their level of effectiveness. In order to guarantee that all participants were exposed to a standardised definition of physical bullying, Jacobsen & Bauman (2007) definition was used. Physical bullying was defined as "being hit, kicked, pinched, pushed or slapped by another student." In order to poll data on the bullying intervention strategies that teachers had used within the last year and their effectiveness, the questionnaire was formatted after one used by Thompson, Smith, & Goldsmith (2010). To collect data on strategies used, participants were asked to tick either yes or no. The questions were modified to suit the research questions and data from literature that was reviewed. The participants were asked to rate on a five point Likert scale, the success of the strategies that they had used within the last year. The scale was rated: 1 - a very negative effect, 2 - a negative effect, 3 - no effect, 4 - a positive effect, and 5 - a very positive effect. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to find out the three intervention strategies that

teachers most likely to used to combat physical bullying. Frequencies and percentages were also calculated to determine teachers' perception on the effectiveness of the three intervention strategies in reducing physical bullying? To establish whether the intervention strategies used by teachers differed according to their gender, mean and standard deviations were calculated.

In order to ensure validity in this study, the researcher included a definition of physical bullying in the questionnaire so that each participant was likely to have a common understanding of the term. Additionally, participants were asked to indicate the strategies that they had used with a specified timeline (one year). This according to Fowler (2002) allowed for a large enough window for participants to remember and give reliable data. Furthermore, a pilot study was used to assess if the questions were clearly understood by the respondents or if they needed adjustments. Consequently, a pilot study was conducted with ten participants who were not members of the sample. From the results of this study, minor modifications were made to the questions on the questionnaire with the help of experienced researchers.

To ensure reliability in the study each participant was exposed to the same questionnaire. This was done to ensure that the participants had related experiences in the completion of the items in the questionnaire.

2.3 Procedures

The participants were invited to participate in the study through class visits that were done by the researcher. The researcher visited the classes during the first semester of the academic year with permission from the course lecturers and informed students of the purpose of the study. Those students who volunteered were given questionnaires. The participants were given one week to complete and return the questionnaire to the secretary at the Faculty Office. The total sample size was 106. The final response rate was 71 participants, or 66.9%. After all questionnaires were collected the data was analysed using SPSS 20. To analyse data for research questions one and two, frequencies and percentages were used and for research question three mean and standard deviations were used.

3.0 Results
3.1 Research Question One: When dealing with physical bullying which three intervention strategies are teachers most likely to use?

To answer research question one, teachers were asked to respond to eight intervention strategies they likely used to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. They had to indicate by ticking yes or no.

Table 1:

Frequencies and percentages on the intervention strategies used by teachers to combat physical bullying

Items	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	69	97.2	2	2.8
2	65	91.5	6	8.5
3	49	69.0	22	31.0
4	63	88.7	8	11.3
5	51	71.8	20	28.2
6	66	93.0	5	7.0
7	35	49.3	36	50.7
8	63	88.7	8	11.3

Data in the table above revealed that item 1 gained the highest percentage of teachers (97.2%) who indicated that they reminded learners about school rules relating to physical bullying as an intervention strategy to combat physical bullying in secondary schools while item 7 gained the least percentage of teachers (49.3%) who indicated that they had administered corporal on the bully as an intervention strategy to curb physical bullying in secondary schools. The second and the third highest percentages (93.0% and 91.5%) were gained by items 6 and 2 respectively. This meant that the teachers taught learners social skills and informed/discussed with the parents of both the bully and the victim the bullying incident as intervention strategies to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. In addition, items 4 and 8 gained the same percentage of teachers (88.7%) who indicated that they talked to the victim and the bully about bullying, its effects and how they can respond to bullying in acceptable ways, as well as, they spoke to the entire class on what constitutes physical bullying as intervention strategies to combat the problem of bullying in secondary schools. The findings suggest that when dealing with physical bullying teachers used intervention strategies 1, 2 and 7 the most to combat physical bullying in schools.

3.2 Research Question Two: Based on teachers' perception, how effective are the three intervention strategies in reducing physical bullying?

To answer research question two, teachers were asked to respond to the effectiveness of the intervention strategies they likely used to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. They had to indicate by ticking 1-very negative effect, 2-negative effect, 3-no effect, 4-positive effect and 5-very positive effect. Only, items 1, 2 and 7 were used to answer this research question.

Table 2*:*
Frequencies and percentages on the effectiveness of item one to combat physical bullying in secondary schools

I remind learners about school rules relating to physical bullying.

		Frequency	Percent		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	2	2.8	2.8	2.8	
	Negative effect	4	5.6	5.6	8.5	
	No effect	15	21.1	21.1	29.6	
	Positive effect	38	53.5	53.5	83.1	
	Very positive effect	12	17.0	17.0	100.0	
	Total	71	100.0	100.0		

Table 2 reveals how effective was item one as an intervention strategy to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. The data in the table revealed that 70.5% of the teachers indicated that reminding learners about school rules relating to physical bullying had positive effects on students, 21.1% said there were no effects while 5.6% indicated that it had negative effects on students towards physical bullying in secondary schools.

Table 3:
Frequencies and percentages on the effectiveness of item two to combat physical bullying in secondary schools

I inform/discuss with the parents of both the bully and victim the bullying incident.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	5	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Very negative effect	1	1.5	1.5	8.5
	Negative effect	2	2.8	2.8	11.3
	No effect	12	16.9	16.9	28.2
	Positive effect	40	56.3	56.3	84.5
	Very positive effect	11	15.5	15.5	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 reveals how effective was item two as an intervention strategy to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. The data in the table revealed that 71.6% of the teachers indicated that informing/discussing with the parents of both the bully and victim the bullying incident relating to physical bullying had positive effects on students, 16.9% said there were no effects while 4.3% indicated that it had negative effects on students towards physical bullying in secondary schools.

Table 4:
Frequencies and percentages on the effectiveness of item seven to combat physical bullying in secondary schools.

I teach learners social skills (empathy, conflict resolution, assertiveness and friendship building).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No response	5	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Negative effect	1	1.5	1.5	8.5
	No effect	2	2.8	2.8	11.3
	Positive effect	40	56.3	56.3	67.6
	Very positive effect	23	32.4	32.4	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 reveals how effective was item six as an intervention strategy to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. The data in the table revealed that 88.7% of the teachers indicated that teaching learners social skills (empathy, conflict resolution, assertiveness and friendship building) relating to physical bullying had positive effects on students, 2.8% said there were no effects while 1.5% indicated that it had negative effects on students towards physical bullying in secondary schools. The findings suggest that of the three intervention strategies that teachers mostly used to combat physical bullying in secondary schools item six was the most effective.

3.3 Research Question Three: Do teachers' intervention strategies differ according to their gender?

   To answer research question three, teachers were asked to respond to the effectiveness of the intervention strategies they likely used to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. They had to indicate by ticking 1-very negative effect, 2-negative effect, 3- no effect, 4-positive effect and 5-very positive effect.

Table 5: Means and standard deviations by gender on the effectiveness of 8 items to combat physical bullying in secondary schools

Strategy	Sex	N	Mean	SD	Effect
I remind learners about school rules relating to physical bullying.	Male	18	3.94	.539	same
	Female	53	3.66	1.108	positive
I seek parental help on ways to reduce physical bullying	Male	18	3.78	1.353	same
	Female	53	3.55	1.218	positive
Increased supervision is requested during non teaching time	Male	18	2.78	2.045	same
	Female	53	2.94	2.014	no
I speak to the victim and bully about bullying and ways of responding	Male	18	3.39	1.335	same
	Female	53	3.49	1.409	no
I try to separate the bully and the victim (placing them to sit away from each other)	Male	18	2.67	1.815	same
	Female	53	2.75	1.890	no
I teach the learners social skills (empathy, conflict resolution, assertiveness, friendship building)	Male	18	4.00	1.283	same
	Female	53	3.98	1.248	positive
Corporal punishment is administered	Male	18	2.50	2.149	no
	Female	53	1.79	2.079	negative
I speak with the entire class on what constitutes physical bullying	Male	18	3.00	1.847	no
	Female	53	3.89	1.187	positive

   Scale: 1 - very negative effect, 2 - negative effect, 3 - no effect, 4 - positive effect, 5 - very positive effect

   Data in the table above revealed the means and standard deviations on teachers' perceptions on bullying strategies that they have used in the last year to combat physical bullying. The means and standard deviations are compared by gender to determine their similarities and differences. Scrutiny of the table revealed that there are more similarities than differences in perceptions according to gender on the strategies used to combat physical bullying in secondary schools. The means for strategies 1, 2 and 6 showed that teachers had the same views on the use and positive effects of these interventions. However, the standard deviation (0.539) for the males on strategy 1 revealed that the responses were clustered around the mean while the standard deviation (1.108) for the female revealed that the responses were dispersed around the mean. This meant that while the males' views were similar, the females had varying views. In addition, strategies 3, 4, and 5 indicated that teachers did not differ according to their gender on the strategies they use to reduce the incidents of physical bullying in schools. The means revealed that teachers claimed that strategies 3, 4, and 5 had no effects when they were used to combat physical bullying in secondary

schools. The standard deviations for these strategies revealed that the responses of both gender of teachers were homogeneous. Interestingly, of the 8 strategies used there were gender differences in only two of them. Male teachers claimed that neither strategy seven nor eight was effective as none had any effect when used to combat physical bullying. However, the female teachers said that strategy seven had negative effective, while strategy eight had positive effects when used to combat physical bullying.

Overall, the findings of the study appear to suggest that there was no remarkable difference about the perceptions of teachers on the bullying strategies used to combat physical bullying. Hence, it may be concluded that teachers' intervention strategies did not differ according to their gender.

4.0 Discussion

Research question one sought to investigate the three most common intervention strategies teachers used when dealing with physical bullying. The study found that discussing with learners school rules relating to physical bullying, discussions with parents about physical bullying incidents, and teaching learners social skills were the three most common strategies that teachers used to fight against physical bullying. One of the roles of teachers in Guyana in the maintenance of order and discipline in school is to "implement class and school rules in a firm, consistent, and prompt manner" p. 7 (Ministry of Education Guyana, 2002). Thus, it is not surprising that many teachers discussed with learners school rules dealing with physical bullying. It is the view of many educators that parental involvement is a key element in children's academic performance and conduct. As a consequence, teachers who perceive parents as partners may have sought parental help to reduce physical bullying. All of the teachers who participated in the study were trained teachers. They have completed courses in educational psychology and thus aware that one of the roles of a teacher is to socialise learners in acceptable behaviours. Consequently, many of them in dealing with physical bullying may have taken the time to teach the students social skills, such as empathy, conflict resolution, assertiveness, and friendship building. The findings for this research question are in accordance with those of Dake, Prince, Telljohan, & Funk (2003) who argued that having school rules against bullying is a strategy that teachers use to combat bullying. The result is also similar to those of Thompson & Smith (2011) who posited that the involvement of parents is a successful strategy to reduce bullying. Whitson (2015) noted that teaching learners social skills is a successful strategy used to reduce bullying. This result is comparable to the result in this study. It can be concluded from the similarity in findings in this research with that of other researchers is that discussing with learners rules relating to physical bullying, having dialogue with parents about bullying incidents, and teaching learners social skills are interventions that are used by teachers internationally.

Research question two investigated teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the three most commonly used physical bullying intervention strategies. The results indicated that teaching learners social skills was the most effective strategy in reducing physical bullying. Teachers discussing with parents bullying incidents was seen as the second most effective strategy to reduce physical bullying. While, teachers having discussions with learners classroom rules relating to physical bullying was the third most effective strategy used to combat physical bullying. All three of these strategies were considered as being very effective in reducing physical bullying in the schools. One aim of teaching learners social skills, such as empathy, friendship building, and conflict resolution is to get them to develop good relations with each other. It can be reasoned that learners who get along well with their peers are likely to be better able to deal with conflict and persons who behave differently to them. According to Hirschstein et. Al. (2007) teaching learners

social skills, such as empathy is very effective in reducing bullying. From the result that when teachers discussed with parents about bullying it can be concluded that parents play a key role in reducing physical bullying. When teachers have dialogue with parents about the bullying behaviours of their children or on ways to reduce physical bullying, there is awareness created in the parents about the type of behaviour that their children exhibit at school or of bullying in general. Parents in turn are able to use the information to develop strategies at home to modify their children's behaviour, thus, a reduction in physical bullying. This perception is worthy of further investigation for this study did not focus on reasons for the effectiveness of the strategies. This finding is similar to those of Ttofi & Farrington (2011) who confirmed that parental involvement was a very effective strategy in reducing school bullying. Furthermore, it can be construed that when teachers discussed with learners school rules relating to physical bullying it is reduced because a message is sent to the learners that physical bullying is not tolerated at the school, thus it becomes a deterrent. The finding that discussions with learners school rules about physical bullying is an effective strategy in its reduction concurred with those of Gleason (2011). Gleason claimed that teachers should have dialogue with the students instantly in order to find out what the problem is and to remind them of school values, rules, and consequences of bullying. An important point to note here is that while this study focused on the effectiveness of the three strategies in reducing physical bullying, the other researchers whose studies were compared with this study looked at the effectiveness of the strategies to reduce school bullying in general and not specific to physical bullying. However, because physical bullying is a type of bullying, it is safe to assume that these findings can be concurred with those of Hirschstein, Ttofi & Farrington, and Gleason.

Research question three sought to examine whether the intervention strategies used by teachers to combat physical bullying differed according to their gender. The findings indicated that the intervention strategies used by the teachers did not differ according to their gender. This finding is in accordance with those of Craig et al. (2011) who found both male and female teachers showed equal concern about bullying and used strategies to prevent it. However, Espelage & Swearer (2008) and Russom, & Kervorkion (2012) claimed that the gender of the teacher has an effect on how they perceive bullying. Espelage and Swearer (2008) none the less noted that such a claim is inconclusive. One conclusion for a difference in the finding in this study with that of Espelage & Swearer (2008) and Kennedy et al. (2012) may be that in this research a small sample size of males (25.4%) responded to the questionnaires when compared to females (74.6%). The disparity in the percentage of male teachers with that of female teachers may have influenced the results. Another possible reason could be that the culture of the teachers in this sample is as such that they respond to bullying incidents regardless of their gender. The finding suggested that when considering intervention strategies that teachers should use to reduce physical bullying, the characteristic of gender differences should be considered.

5.0 Conclusion

It can be concluded that teachers used a variety of interventions to combat physical bullying in the schools in Berbice, Guyana. Among them being strategies that have been found to be very effective by other researchers. Although, this study did not seek to investigate the frequency in which teachers responded to physical bullying incidents, it can be concluded that teachers take physical bullying seriously. Teachers realise that their interventions send the message to students that physical bullying behaviours are not an acceptable in the schools. This is very important for according to Byers et al. (2011) teachers are very important stakeholders in bullying prevention. Another conclusion that can be drawn from the result of the study is that both male and female use similar strategies to reduce physical bullying.

One constraint of this study is that the sample size was small which may indicate results that cannot withstand scrutiny. A small sample of 71participants was used in this study. Additionally, the participants were primary and secondary school teachers who were students of a local university. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to the perceptions of all teachers in Guyana. Another constraint of this study is that there was a dearth of information relating to physical bullying intervention strategies that teachers have used. The studies reviewed dealt with intervention strategies that teachers have used to combat bullying in general, but not particular to physical bullying. Consequently, the researcher discussed the findings of this study and compared them with the finding in the literature. Furthermore, it is suggested that other studies can focus on students' perception on the effectiveness of intervention strategies used to deal with physical bullying and those results can be compared with these.

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