

Influence of Bullying on Academic Performance of Boarding Secondary Students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria

By

Ibrahim Nuhu Saidu

Department of Education,
Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

Abstract

Many students in secondary schools in general to pursue and academic career experienced a challenging career with up and downs on the way. Thus, the study examined influence of bullying on academic performance of boarding secondary students in Minna Metropolis. Three research questions and two hypotheses were used. Ex-post factor design was used. Population is 1,118 boarding secondary schools' students. A sample of 224 students selected using purposive and proportionate sampling procedures. A researcher- designed questionnaire tagged "Student Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire" (SBBQ) and academic performance scores of terminal examinations in English-Language, Mathematics and Biology for 2020/2021 academic session were used. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentage, mean, standard deviation and ranking to answer research question and independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings showed that school bullying behaviours still exists in most senior boarding secondary schools and it influences students' academic performance, there is no significant difference between male and female bullied students on their academic performance and lastly there is no significant difference on the academic performance of the male and female bullies students. It was recommended that school should provide counselling and support for students at risk of being involved in bullying and there should be school-wide education, training and bullying prevention programs through behaviour modification by the school counsellor.

Keywords: *Bullying Behaviour, Academic Performance and Boarding Secondary School Students.*

Introduction

The quest for a safe school environment has increasingly been the focus of many educational stakeholders such as administrators, teachers, psychologists and counsellors over the past decade, partially as a result of widely publicized acts of violence within our public schools. Within this quest, many educators, psychologists and counsellors have begun to address the issue of bullying within the school. Olweus (1993) a leading researcher on bullying, uses the following to define the concept: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students." According to studies conducted by the National Institute of Health (2007); United States Department of Health and Human

Services (2003) on the problem of bullying revealed that as many as one in seven students report that they have been victimized by bullying. Another study conducted by the American Medical Association (2003) revealed that almost 11% of students in the United States in grades 6 (which is equivalent to primary 6) through 10 (equivalent to Senior Secondary 1) reported that they were frequent victims of bullying.

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Also 13% reported that they frequently bullied others (Davis, 2007). National Centre for Education Statistics (2013) noted that nearly 50 million students are enrolled in schools in the United States, which means more than 5 million students in our nation are frequently bullied.

Consequently, over 6 million students are frequently the instigators of bullying acts. These numbers make bullying the most common form of violence in our society (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2013). National Education Association (2003) reported that, students who are the targets of repeated bullying behaviour can, and often do, experience extreme fear and stress. They may be afraid to go to school or even to board the bus to school. Once there, they may be afraid to be in certain places in the building, such as bathrooms. They may exhibit physical symptoms of illness and may not be able to concentrate on school work.

A school is an institution designed for the teaching and learning for students enrolled in it. The main purpose of the school is to develop the learner through knowledge acquisition so that he/she may become a social being. By this, the learner is expected to learn how to relate with fellow students, teachers and significant others in the school, live in a harmonious way (by blending with societal values) in the society (Davis, 2007). The school is also expected to be a place where learners should feel safe and secure, and where they can count on being treated with decorum. The reality, however, is that only few students or pupils can harmoniously relate with their school mates without experiencing violence in the school (Fajoju, 2009). Although the school had always remained one of the safest places, next to the home in a child's life, one wonders if this still holds sway in our present society given the ever-increasing spate of violence in our schools. Violence in schools is an issue that has become more prominent in the last few years, as new articles about violent deeds within the school setting is now on the increase. Despite the increasing rate of violence in schools, the society still expects that the school should be a safe place for students. Thus, in order to maintain a peaceful and safe school environment, stakeholders in education have tended to concern themselves with the problem of violence in our schools. Stevens (2000) viewed bullying as a situation in which a person uses their strength or power to frighten or hurt weaker people; it can also be seen as a conscious attempt to control another person through verbal abuse using threats, harsh tones and teasing.

Yunusa (2012) defined bullying as the most common form of violence in schools where the bigger boys frighten and even hurt the smaller boys. Thus, research studies have shown that the bullies sometimes are not bigger or stronger, they play on the weakness of others, claiming some sort of superiority they wish they had. In schools, bullying occurs in all areas. It can occur in nearly any part in or around the school environment, though it occurs more often during recess, in hallways, bathrooms, school buses, during classes that require group work or after school activities. Bauer

(2006) opined that school bullying is a widespread issue that affects secondary school students in three essential parts of their lives; psychologically, educationally and socially. The researcher maintained that, bullying is a sort of aggressive behaviour against others such as, verbal by calling nasty names; physical by kicking; pushing or tripping up and social by isolating everyone from oneself.

Jelinek (2004) expressed that academic performance is the first aspect which bullying at school influences. Therefore, bullied children live with fear, self-blame, feel weak and it affects their personality traits and self-confidence, such situation makes them unable to study well and they might hate going to school. Furthermore, they will lose their opportunities to participate with others or enjoy school activities. Hence, they will gain less academic performance and low educational attainment. Bauer (2006) believed that, there is a strong relationship between bullying and school quality such as class size, lack of library, sports facilities. He asserts that both bullies and victims feel more negative about school and persistent bullying may lead to stress and depression. Charach, Pepler and Ziegler (1995) noted that bullying can lead to anxiety, low self-esteem, hopelessness and isolation. The researchers further asserted that, children miss lessons or are scared to attend school.

Bauer (2006) stated that students who are bullied cannot concentrate in schools, so their grades may be a warning sign that a student is being bullied. The researcher further asserts that a child's grade may also suffer if he or she misses a lot of school due to bullying. Therefore, children who are bullied will complain of headaches, stomach-aches, and overall fatigue. These issues are usually caused by mental anguish that manifest in physical ailments. Similarly, Yunusa (2012) opined that a particularly unfortunate effect of bullying is that some children who are bullied go on to victimized and harass other children.

Omoteso (2010) conducted a longitudinal study on the prevalence and nature of bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Nigeria. It also investigated the factors associated with bullying and its psychological consequences. The study adopted a survey design. A sample of 750 secondary school students were selected through stratified random sampling technique using sex, age and class level as strata from five randomly selected secondary schools in Ile- Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. Information was collected from the students through the administration of an instrument titled "Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire" (BBQ). Results showed that the prevalence of bullying among the students was 67.2%. From this, 88.1% had been bullied and 33.1% were bullies. Many students (64.7%) had been involved in relational bullying. Watching violent films (57.5%) and retaliation for being bullied in the past (51.2%) were some of the factors associated with bullying. The bullied students exhibited fear (63.6%) and depression (58.1%).

Egbochuku (2007) examined the bullying in Nigerian schools: prevalence study and implications for counselling. School bullying is becoming a threat that no school can afford to dismiss. Although many demographic variables associated with bullying have been examined, there has been no study in Nigeria, which has looked into comparison between Government and Private/Mission schools. This neglected demographic variable in addition to establishing the incidence of bullying in schools in Benin City, Edo state. It was found that 78% of the children have been victims of bullying on at least one occasion and 71% have lashed out at others at least once. However, more boys than girls were found to be both bullies and victims ($\chi^2= 18.570$, $p<0.01$). Boys reported

being kicked or hit more often than girls ($\chi^2 = 13.302, p < 0.01$). The result shows that it was more common for bullying to take place in the classroom in government schools than in private schools ($\chi^2 = 43.773, p < 0.05$). The result demonstrated significant differences between the schools investigated.

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However, significantly more private schools reported kicking and hitting taking place in the playground than in the government schools, whereas bullying is more likely to take place in the classroom in government schools. It is recommended that counsellors play a significant role in combating the patterns of unhappiness and violence out of which much bullying arises.

Adeyemi (2013) investigated the effectiveness of self-instructional and bully-proof strategies on the management of school violence among transitional students in Junior Secondary Schools in Ibadan, Nigeria. The study adopted a pre-test, post-test, control group experimental design using a 3x2x2 factorial matrix. 108 Junior Secondary One students were selected through purposive sampling technique from three local government areas in Ibadan. The scales used in the study were the School Violence Scale ($r = 0.68$) and Locus of Control Scale ($r = 0.71$) while Seven hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Analysis of Covariance and Scheffe Posthoc were used for data analysis. Hypothesis one revealed a significant main effect of treatments ($F_{2, 95} = 18.29; p < 0.05$) while bully-proof strategy ($=25.57$) was more effective than self-instructional ($= 27.86$). In addition, hypothesis 5 which examines the interaction effect of treatments and locus of control on the management of school violence was significant ($F_{2, 95} = 3.98; p < 0.05$). Further results revealed that hypotheses 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7 were not significant. In view of the findings, suggestions and recommendations were raised for effective utilization of counselling strategies on the management of school violence.

Adegboyega, Jacob, Uyanne and Jacob (2016) carried out a study that examined the relationship between school climate and bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Yagba West, Kogi State, Nigeria. The research design employed for this study was a descriptive research method of the correlational survey type. The target population consisted of all SSS II secondary school students in Yagba West of Kogi State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 300 students as sample for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect relevant data. Frequency counts and percentage were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Also, summated mean rating was used to answer the research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and the t-test statistical tools were used to test the formulated hypotheses. Finding revealed that there was a significant relationship between school climate and bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Yagba West of Kogi State. Another finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the bullying behaviour of secondary schools' students in Yagba West of Kogi State based on gender. Hence, it was recommended that School management should create a conducive environment for students to feel safe and victims of bullying should be encouraged to report and not to stereotyped and lastly cases of bullying should also be referred to the school counsellors.

Statement of the Problem

An emotionally stable environment can influence the good academic performance of the learners. However, learners who are being bullied will definitely show or manifest abnormal behaviour via truancy or joining bad peers in order to misbehave in the school. Thus, bullied learners are likely to become frightened and emotionally threatened and it may influence intellectual capability, creating tension and difficult in performing task.

Nevertheless, bullying is a very hazardous to learner intellectual capabilities, emotion, academic performance and physical nature of its victim. The National Centre for Education Statistics (2013) explains that victims often feel anxiety throughout the school day and worrying about when the bully will strike while such anxiety affects academic performance, lead to truancy, and disruption of learning. The victims might also respond with avoidance, withdraw and escape behaviours and might become more aggressive by bringing a weapon to school for self-defence or retaliation.

The presence of a bully in school creates a climate of fear and intimidation. The students who are victims see school as an unhappy setting. In a study conducted by National Association of Secondary School Principals (2014) noted that 25% of students surveyed revealed that one of their most serious concerns is fear of bullying in school. It was also reported that about 10% of the respondents were characterized by extreme victims of bullying. In Nigeria it was discovered that 22.5% of the junior secondary school students in Ibadan that were below 15 years of age; bullying behaviour was common among them and 21% of male students had bullied other students. This indicates that, male students are more aggressive in bullying behaviour as the female counterparts are in most cases the victims of bullying.

Consequently, bullying has devastating impacts on the academic performance of the learners in school and the society at large. It causes forgetfulness or loss of memory and reduces their intelligence level. It is also observed that when the students fear for the safety and feel that they have little or no peers' or teachers' support, they therefore make some learners tend to commit suicide. In the light of the problem above, the study is designed to determine the influence of bullying on academic performance of boarding secondary schools students' in Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in this study:

- i. What are the bullying behaviours of students in selected boarding secondary schools in Minna Metropolis?
- ii. Is there any significant difference in the academic performance of male and female bullied of boarding secondary schools students in Minna Metropolis? iii. Is there any significant difference in academic performance of male and female bullies of boarding secondary schools students in Minna Metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance and they are:

HO₁ There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female bullied of boarding secondary schools students in Minna Metropolis.

HO₂ There is no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female bullies of boarding secondary schools students in Minna Metropolis.

Research Methodology

The Ex-Post Factor research design was used. This design gives the researcher avenue to gather information, summaries, present and interpret it as it occurred for the purpose of clarification. Thus, the design was used to produce statistical information about the influence of bullying on academic performance of students. The population was 1,118 boarding secondary schools students (Niger State Ministry of Education, 2021). However, in identifying the bullies and bullied the researcher visited Niger State Ministry of Education Minna and a letter was sent to various boarding secondary schools requesting the authority concern to provide the researcher with the records of bullies and bullied students. A sample of 224 boarding secondary schools students was selected and it is 20% of the entire population. The researcher used many routes to arrive at the identification of the bullied and bullies through classroom teachers and offence register. Purposive sampling technique was used to select six (6) public boarding secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. The schools include College of Arts and Islamic Studies, Tudun Fulani, Minna, Government Technical College, Minna, Maryam Babangida Girls' Science College, Government Vocational Training Centre, Ahmadu Bahago Secondary School and Government Girls' Secondary School, Minna while proportionate sampling technique was used to select 224 bullied and bullies students according to the population of each school. There were 49 male bullies, 44 female bullies, 80 males bullied, 51 females bullied. Hence, a total of 93 bullies and 131 bullied students.

A researcher designed instrument titled "Student Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire" (SBBQ) with part 'A' deals with the demographic data while 'B' focus on statements regarding bullying behaviours of students and was rated on (4) point modified Likert scale of strongly agree (SA) 4, Agree (A) 3, disagree (D) 2, and strongly disagree (SD) 1. However, English Language, Mathematics and Biology terminal session examination for 2020/2021 academic performance scores of the bullied and bullies were collected. Thus, average of three combined were sorted and 50 marks above is considered as high and below 50 marks was a low score respectively. However, the instrument was face and content validated by five (5) experts, two from Faculty of Education and Arts, Department of Counselling Psychology, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai and three (3) from School of Science and Technical Education, Department of Science Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna and was good enough for the study. Test re-test method was used and the instrument was administered on (30) students from Brighter Secondary Schools, Minna twice within two (2) weeks interval and scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and 0.82 reliability index was obtained which was seen high enough to confirm and was good for the study. Six research assistants were trained on how to administer the instrument for two days and they facilitated the identification of students that filled

the questionnaire. Afterward the administered instrument was retrieved for further coding and analysis. The study used frequency counts, percentage, mean, ranking and independent t-test to analysed data collected.

Results

This section presents the respondents demography information with the use of frequency distribution tables.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

S/N		Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Male	141	62.9
2	Female	83	37.5
	Total	224	100
1	Bullies	131	58.4
2	Bullied	93	41.5
	Total	224	100

Table 1 shows that 141(62.9%) were males while the remaining 83(37.5%) were females. It shows that 131 (58.5%) were bullies and 93(41.5%) were bullied.

Research Question 1: What are the bullying behaviours manifested by boarding secondary schools students in Minna Metropolis?

Table 2: Bullying Behaviours Manifested by Students

S/N	Bullying Behaviors	£FX	Mean	Rank
1	Called me names	890	3.97	1 st
2	Making others scared of me	890	3.97	1 st
3	Always fights with someone I can easily beat	890	3.97	1 st
4	Laughed at me horribly	780	3.48	2 nd
5	Tried to break something of mine	780	3.48	2 nd
6	Shouted at me	730	3.26	4 th
7	Kicked me/hit me	600	2.68	5 th
8	Was nasty about my family	505	2.25	6 th
9	Was unkind to me	505	2.25	6 th
10	Said they'd beat me up	505	2.25	6 th
11	Laughed at me	505	2.25	6 th
12	Told a lie about me	505	2.25	6 th
13	Spoiled my work	430	1.92	11 th
14	Hid something of mine	430	1.92	11 th
15	Frightened me stopped me playing a game	390	1.74	13 th
16	Tried to make me give them money	350	1.56	14 th
17	Made me fight	350	1.56	14 th
18	Hurt me/ tried to hurt me	350	1.56	14 th
19	Took something off me	350	1.56	14 th

20	Tripped me up	350	1.56	14 th
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Table 2 indicates that the boarding secondary school students exhibited high bullying behaviours that include: always fights with someone I can easily beat, making others scared of me, called me names, tried to break something of mine, laughed at me horribly, shouted at me, kicked me/hit me, told a lie about me, was unkind to me, said they'd beat me up and laughed at me. This indicates that mean score of students' assessments as far as engagement in bullying behaviours are concerned and various ratings have been provided; however, a mean score of 3.26 shows a high occurrence of bullying behaviours among students in boarding secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. One therefore adopts the position that bullying behaviours exhibited among boarding secondary school students in the study area was high.

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female bullied of boarding secondary schools students in Minna Metropolis.

Table 3: T-test on Academic Performance of Male and Female Bullied Boarding Secondary School Students in Minna Metropolis

Group	No. of Sample	Df	Mean	Std. Dev.	T-cal	T-crit	Sign Level
Female Bullied	74	129	17.29	2.16	1.24	1.96	0.05
Male Bullied	57		23.35	2.31			

Not Significant at 0.05 Level

The result of table above shows that the t-calculated value of 1.24 was less than the t-critical value of 1.96. Therefore, hypothesis one which states that there is no significant difference on the academic performance male and female bullied of boarding secondary schools students in Minna metropolis was accepted.

HO₂: There is no significant difference on the academic performance of male and female bullies of boarding secondary schools students in Minna Metropolis.

Table 3: Showing the t-test Analysis of Academic Performance Male and Female Bullies Boarding Secondary Schools Students in Minna Metropolis

Group	No. of Sample	Df	Mean	Std. Dev.	T-cal	T-crit	Sign Level
Female Bullied	33	90	14.21	2.12	1.14	1.96	0.05
Male Bullied	60		23.46	2.39			

Not Significant at 0.05 Level

The result in table shows that the t-calculated value of 1.14 is less than the t-critical value 1.96. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on the academic performance of male and female bullies of boarding secondary schools students based on gender was accepted.

Discussion of Results

The result in table 2 showed that always fights with someone I can easily beat, making others scared of me, called me names, tried to break something of mine, laughed at me horribly, shouted at me, kicked me/hit me, told a lie about me, was unkind to me, said they will beat me up and laughed at me are among bullying behaviours exhibited by senior boarding secondary school students. However, a mean score of 3.26 shows a high occurrence of bullying behaviours among students in boarding secondary schools in Minna Metropolis. One, therefore, adopts the position that bullying behaviours exhibited among boarding secondary school students in the study area is high. This finding is in consonance with that of Stevens (2000) and Bauer (2006) who found high manifestation of bullying behaviours as perceived by bully students that are involved in the bullying activities. Furthermore, researchers such as Adegboyega, Jacob, Uyanne and Jacob (2016); Fajoju (2009) and Egbockukwu (2007) have ascertained that bullying behaviours is increasing in secondary schools in Nigeria with the possibilities of aggressive actions that can result into a vicious cycle of aggression and negative school environment. On the contrary, Davis (2007) found a low rate of bullying behaviours exhibited among respondents in studies carried out with many pre-schooler children.

The result in table 3 showed that the t-calculated value of 1.24 was less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at degree freedom of 129 and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on the academic performance of the bullied boarding secondary schools students based on gender was accepted. The finding of this study corroborated with that of Adeyemi (2013) revealed that rating of respondents based on their responses collected on academic performance of the bullied were found to have a significant difference among the respondents. Again, in a post comparison study conducted by Olweus (1993); Jelinek (2004) revealed no significant differences in the ratings of respondents on their responses regarding academic achievement.

The result in table 4 showed that the t-calculated value of 1.14 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96. Hence, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference on the academic performance of the bully students based on gender was accepted. The finding of this study was in disagreement with that of Fajoju (2009) who found out that despite all forms of bullying boys were still predominant and victims from both genders claimed that it was boys who physically bullied, picked on or teased the most. Girls admitted to higher levels of bullying than boy, victims reported and also to being bullied at a higher level than boy bullies

Conclusion

The study indicated that majority of the boarding secondary school students bullying behaviours exhibited was high. The study also concludes that there was a significant relationship between bullying behaviours and academic performance of students. Again, the study revealed that there was a significant difference between bullying behaviours exhibited by male and female students. The study concludes that there is no significant difference on the academic performance of male and female bullied and bully students. Also, the study finds out that there is no significant difference between in the academic performance of male and female bullied students and lastly, the study concludes that there is no significant difference on the academic performance of the male

and female bully students in selected boarding secondary schools in Minna Metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria.

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