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BULLYING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSUN, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Bullying among secondary school students have been seen as a common anti-social behavior in our contemporary society. This pattern of behavior has negatively affected learning environment and the psychological nature of many students. Hence, if such pattern of behavior is not checked, it would be counterproductive to the citadel of learning where character, moral and knowledge are to be the focal points moderating the drive of such environment. The paper adopted a survey research design to depict this pattern of behavior to reach a position on the effect of bullying within the learning environment. 500 questionnaires were administered with the use of a multistage sampling procedure. Equally, the use of secondary data was used to support some of the findings of the research. It was discovered that less than half of the sample size used, 33.6% experienced bullying, while 63.4% were bullied by other students. Result also revealed that boys had more direct experience with and manifestations of bullying than their female counterparts and that the most common form of bullying was emotional. Therefore, paper recommended that most schools need to do more in the area of violence management if acts such as bullying is to be eradicated or reduced to the barest minimal in the school environment.

Keywords: Bullying, Behavior, Secondary School, Osun State, Nigeria

Introduction

In Nigerian secondary schools and various educational levels, there have been numerous reports of bullying among students; the school where the research was conducted was not an exception. In their encounters with parents, such as at Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and other events, school administrators indicate that bullying is on the rise and advise parents to warn their children. The act of bullying is a serious issue that can affect the physical and mental health of people who are targeted. Bullying and truancy may share some characteristics since many physically hostile

bullying manifestations often characterize delinquent behavior. Early peer bullying may give students excessive bravery and confidence to commit additional anti-social behaviors. Bullying in school can make it difficult for children to focus on their schoolwork, which can result in failure and eventual dropout. In Nigeria, bullying appears to be a long-standing issue rather than a recent one, as conversations with parents and other adults show personal memories of bullying from the adults' school years.

Therefore, in Osun State, Nigeria, some secondary schools were examined to ascertain the rampart nature, effects, challenges and the psychological distress that such anti-social behavior can caused to learning and emotional stability of a child within the school environment. The essence for this research is to find the cause factor of bullying whether it is a parental failure, school management, culture or just a natural youthful exorbitance tendency of the younger ones in social setting. However, while the paper may not labor to address all the issues stated above, but it would address the fact that such behavior exist in the school setting and examine how school management and the parents can form a synergy to curb such phenomenon in the school environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Most likely, the issue has been disregarded or seen as a typical stage of development for children. Bullying is a type of aggressive conduct that involves using force or compulsion to harm another person, especially when the action is repeated and involves a power disparity. Olweus (1996), defined bullying as a purposeful, recurrent act, word, or other behavior that one or more children perform against another. He asserts that a student is being bullied if someone, or a group of people, make fun of him or her, call him or her hurtful names, completely ignore him or her, exclude him or her from their friendship circles, leave him or her out of situations on purpose, hit, kick, push, shove, lie about him or her, or spread rumors about him or her.

Olweus (1993), for example, had previously outlined bullying as a series of unpleasant behaviors carried out over time against a target in which there is a power imbalance (either actual or perceived) between the target and the bully or bullies. Olweus changed the concept in 2003 to include repetitive conduct with the intent to annoy or cause distress to another person. According to a group of co-authors, it entails a power imbalance with a more strong individual physically or emotionally attacking a less powerful one and is provocative or a threat to the victim (Nansel, Overpeck, Philla, Ruan, Simons-Morton & Scheidt, 2001). Bullying is a deliberate and typically spontaneous effort by one or more people to cause bodily harm as well as mental anguish to one or more victims, according to Ross (2003). Strength differences must exist, either physically or mentally. Nickel et al. (2005) defined bullying as the "intentional" recurrent abuse of authority by one or more children to intentionally harm or disturb another youngster.In the words of Konstantina (2010), bullying is the deliberate, organized, and unjustified use of physical or psychological force against a weaker student or group of weaker students by a student or group of students.

In a similar vein, Aluede (2011) defined bullying as a type of aggression—a specific form of violence displayed during social contact between a more dominant person (the bully) and a less dominant person (the victim) with the purpose of upsetting the victim.

Name-calling, verbal or written abuse, exclusion from events and social interactions, physical harm, or coercion are all examples of bullying (Carey 2003; Whitted & Dupper 2005). Bullies may act in this way to appear tough, popular, or to attract attention. According to Crothers and Levinson (2004), people may harass out of jealousy or be acting out as a result of being bullied. Bullying can either be overt or covert. According to Ross (1998), physical violence such as pushing, prodding, hurling objects, choking, slapping, punching, and kicking, as well as beating, stabbing, pulling hair, scratching, biting, scraping, and pinching, constitutes direct bullying. Additionally, he contends that social aggressiveness, which includes an effort to socially isolate the victim, characterizes indirect bullying. This isolation is achieved using a variety of strategies, such as spreading rumors, shunning the victim, intimidating others who want to interact with the victim, and criticizing the victim's appearance and other social cues (such as their race, religion, disability, sex, or sexual preference). Bullying may involve coercion, physical harm, or verbal abuse directed repeatedly at a specific victim or victim, sometimes on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or ability. The "imbalance of power" could be either social or physical. harassing can range from straightforward one-on-one harassment to more sophisticated forms of harassment where the bully may have one or more "lieutenants" who appear eager to help the main bully with his or her harassing actions. Bullying can happen anywhere that people engage with one another, including schools, churches, families, workplaces, homes, and neighborhoods. Boys are more likely than girls to engage in verbal bullying and social exclusion of the target due to their talkative nature, while boys are more likely to engage in physical bullying and violence due to their physical strength, stature, physique, and masculinity (dominant spirit as boys). The first and by far the largest subset of the two categories of targets defined by Olweus (1993) are passive targets.

Prior to being bullied, these kids are typically described as apprehensive, insecure, and unassertive; these traits are likely to develop worse as a result of bullying. Provocative targets, a second smaller category, exhibit both fear and aggression. They are frequently tormented and despised by their entire class of peers, and they bully other kids in return, making them both targets and bullies. Although it may happen more frequently in physical education classes and activities, recess, hallways, bathrooms, on school buses and while waiting for buses, in classes that require group work, and/or in 329 after-school activities, bullying can happen anywhere in or around the school building. This is due to the possibility that the children are not supervised by adults in such settings ("School Bullying", 2012). Bullying in schools can occasionally take the shape of a group of students taking advantage of or isolating one student, winning the support of onlookers who don't want to be the next victim.

Before physically harassing their victim, these bullies may mock and tease the victim. Bullying happens in numerous schools all around the world as a subset of school violence involving students of school age (Mc Eacherin, Kenny, Blake & Aluede, 2005). The American

Psychological Association's (APA) data on bullying were examined in School Bullying (2012). Bullying affected 40% to 80% of students at school age at some point in their academic lives, according to APA.org. Bullying can affect everyone, regardless of grade level, socioeconomic status, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. The authors of several research (Agirdag, Demanet, Van Houtte, Van Avermaet & Bettelheim, 2011) note that pupils from lower socioeconomic origins experienced bullying at a higher rate than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

The figures below (from School Bullying, 2012) demonstrate how serious classroom bullying is. 20% to 40% of victims of bullying admitted to being bullied. 70% of pupils in middle school and high school report being bullied at school. Bullies typically persist and constitute a major threat to 7–12% of victims. 23% of 9. Recently, the third graders have brought a firearm to school. 5% to 15% of students experience persistent bullying. 27% of students experience bullying as a result of their refusal to partake in popular sexual behaviors. If they are not properly educated and supported in anti-bullying techniques, 25% of kids actively endorse bullying.

According to research, 10% to 11% of Canadian teenagers polled were bullied by peers, while 8% to 11% of them were bullies (Hymel, Rocke-Henderson & Bananno, 2005). According to Aluede (2011), there are 2.7 million victims and 2.1 million bullies in American schools. Although Egbochukwu (2007) found that in Benin City, Nigeria, nearly four out of every five participants reported being bullied and that 85% of the youngsters acknowledged to bullying others at least once, the prevalence rate of bullying in Nigeria has not yet been thoroughly determined. In a study, Omoteso (2010) found that 88.1% of the participants had experienced bullying, 33.1% had engaged in bullying themselves, 64.7% had engaged in relationship bullying, and 51.2% had experienced bullying in retaliation in the past.

In a different study, Owoaje and Ndubisi (2009) looked at the admitted students for the 2007–2008 school year at six public secondary schools in the Odo Ota Local Government Area of Ogun State. They found that the students had experienced bullying in the following ways: 1-2 days within a month, 29.5%, 3-5 days, 9.1%, 6–9 days, 5%, and 10–30 days, 4.3%. The Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria performed a statewide study on school violence in 2007, and the results showed that physical violence and psychological violence made up 85% and 50%, respectively, of the majority of violence against children in schools. Physical aggression was more common in rural areas (90%) than in urban areas (80%) across all school settings.

Regionally, the southern region (90%) had more physical assaults in schools than the northern region (70%). The same was true of psychological violence, which only affected 38.7% of northern Nigerians compared to 61% in southern Nigeria. Boys and girls experience bullying at different rates, according to researchers. According to Asamu (2006), 21% of the Ibadan pupils who had bullied other classmates were male. Bosworth, Espelage, and Simon (1999) showed that 85.5% of male students and 77% of female students were bullies, while Omoteso (2010) found that 48.8% of males and 51.2% of females engaged in bullying. In all bullying

status categories, boys were shown to appear to be more involved in bullying than girls, according to Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, and Sadek's (2010) research. This study set out to find out how common different types of bullying were in secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was used to examine the reason behind bullying activities among secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. In order to arrive at a position, a structured questionnaire as instrument was used to elicit information from the respondents. 500 questionnaires were administered along 250 to seniors and 250 to the junior students. The method of selection was based on a multistage approach technique (purposive, stratifies and random sampling to reflect acceptable representation by school type and gender). The pertinent question driving the information needed was based on respondent's experience in bullying activities as a victim or a perpetrator of such act. Data gathered were eventually analyzed through tabulated percentages format.

RESULTS

When the data were analyzed to establish the prevalence of bullying among the students, it was discovered that 64.8% of females and 68% of boys in the sample had been bullied (Table 1). This indicates that bullying is pervasive in schools, with both boys and girls becoming victims, however, boys were bullied more frequently.

Table 1: Bullying Experience.

Bullying Experience	Male	Female	Total
No	80 (32%)	88 (35.2%)	168 (33.6%)
Yes	170 (68%)	162 (64.8%)	332 (66.4%)

Table 2: The Manifestation of Bullying

Manifestation of Bullying	Males	Females	Total
No	100 (40%)	200 (80%)	300 (60%)
Yes	150 (60%)	50 (20%)	200 (40%)

Table 2 shows the percentage of the participants that are bullies. This shows that 40% of the sample had bullied other students and that 60% of boys and 20% of girls were bullies indicating that more boys were bullied than their female counterparts.

Further analysis was to segregate bullying prevalence according to the forms of bullying as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Experience of Forms of Bullying by Sex

Types of Bullying	Gender			
		Male	Female	Total
Physical	Not Experienced	150 (60%)	200 (80%)	350 (70%)
	Experienced	100 (40%)	50 (20%)	150 (30%)
Verbal	Not Experienced	125 (50%)	160 (64%)	285 (57%)
	Experienced	125 (50%)	90 (36%)	215 (43%)

Emotional	Not Experienced	100 (40%)	110 (44%)	210 (42%)
	Experienced	150 (60%)	140 (56%)	290 (58%)

The table shows the experience of various forms of bullying by male and female students. It shows that 30% of the sample experienced physical bullying, 43% verbal bullying, and 58% experienced emotional bullying. It further revealed that boys had the highest percentage in all the forms of bullying analyzed. Emotional bullying was the most experienced form of bullying, followed by verbal bullying while physical bullying was the least experienced.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the experience and manifestation of bullying showed that bullying was prevalent in the school and that both boys and girls were victims with more boys being involved than girls. It was further shown that emotional bullying was the most prevalent form of bullying. These results correspond with Omoteso's (2010) report, which stated that 88.1% of the participants in his study had been bullied while 33.1% were bullies. Bullying remains a serious threat to the entire school population. The gender differential in bullying is in support of Cook et al (2010), who discovered that boys appeared to be more involved in bullying than girls across all bullying status groups. This can be explained in terms of boys seeming to be more aggressive and bossy than girls, and relying more on their physical strength, status, and physique to bully others.

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