



Perceived Impacts of Bullying on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in North Central States of Nigeria

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Abstract

Perceived Impacts of Bullying on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in North Central States of Nigeria. The focus of this paper is to concisely put into perspective the meaning of school violence in the context of bullying, the prevalence of bullying across the globe, situational analysis in north central Nigeria and lastly provide some functional strategies for adoption in the guiding of bullying problems in selected secondary schools in north central Nigeria. To this end, a descriptive survey research design was employed. The seven states that constituted north central states, includes Abuja (FCT), Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nassarawa, Niger and Plateau States respectively. Out of which four states were randomly selected, that is, Abuja (FCT), Benue, Nassarawa and Plateau states, in order to assess the opinions of students. Population of the study consists of 21,000 secondary school students. For the study sample, from the above N=21,000, a study sample of 370 respondents 185 males and 185 females respectively were drawn randomly from seven selected schools across the region. Researcher made Questionnaire title School Bullying Problems Questionnaire (SBPQ) was employed for data collection, while data collected were analyzed using Chi Square (X^2) Analysis. Findings revealed that there is a significant difference in the impacts of bullying on physical/psychological will being of bullied from non-bullied students, there is no significance difference in the impacts of bullying academic performance of bullied and non-bullied students, Also, there is no significant difference in the impacts of bullying on secondary school students between male and female. It was, therefore, recommended that schools should create enabling environment that would checkmate bullying problems among students. Class monitors, Schools prefects, form masters, house masters should wake up to their responsibilities to ensure that bullying in any form is reported to the school authorities.

Keywords: Bullying problems, Academic performance, Gender, Secondary school

Introduction

Education is a continuous experience that transcends boundaries and generations. Its primary purpose is to teach learners how to live in real life by developing their mind and equipping them to deal with reality. The main focus of the school is to develop the student through knowledge acquisition so he becomes a social being. The student is expected to understand how to mingle with his fellows, teachers, and paramount others stake holders in the school vise verse, live in a harmonious manner in the society on the hand and. The school is charge as a situation where a student is safe and secure and also valued and treated with respects. In real terms, however, only few students can harmoniously relate freely without experiencing violence in the school.

Although, the school was considered and remained one of the safest places aside home in a students' life. School violence is an important issue that has become prominent in recent



times, as social media is a washed with violent deeds within school the setting is alarming and on the increase. Upon all the school violence, the society still regards the school as a safe place for students. Therefore, in order to maintain a peaceful and secured school environment, stakeholders in education have showed significant concerned on the issues of violence in our schools. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm. Mal-development or deprivation. The definition also excludes any unintentional incident, such as road traffic injuries and burns (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007). Violence broadly speaking includes any condition or acts that create a climate in which the individual feels fear or intimidation and also being victims of assault, theft, or vandalism. This has become a reoccurring problem in our schools.

School violence takes many shapes and dimensions. It includes bullying, gang activity, locker theft, cyber bullying and intimidation, assault, gun use, just about anything that produce victim. Specifically, In Nigeria according to Federal Ministry of Education (2007), since the last decade, several cases of violence against children such as torture, kidnapping, shooting, sexual harassment, rape and so on have been reported in various newspapers, magazines and television stations all over the world. However, there is lack of documentation of most of the violent acts. This lack of documentation and increasing violence rate against children were parts of reasons of global in-depth study of violence against children by the UN Secretary General as directed by the General Assembly Resolution 57/90 OF 2002 provide a global picture Omoniyi, 2013. According to Elizabeth E. (2007) in Benin City, it was found that 78% 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 than girls ($\chi^2=13.302$, $p<0.01$).

Therefore, the main crest of this paper is to concisely present in perspective the meaning of school violence in the context of bullying, the prevalence of bullying across the world, Situational analysis of bullying in north central Nigerian secondary schools and finally provides some strategies for adoption in the management of bullying problems in north central Nigerian secondary schools.

Bullying is a pervasive problem in school that affects educational success of a lot of students. Recently, it has become an incessant crisis among students with advance consequences, Bullying is not just student's emotion but a terrifying experience man school student contained every day (Craig, 1998; Thornberry, 2010). According to Oluweus (2013) Bullying refers to unwanted aggressive behaviours enacted intentionally over time by an individual or group using some form of power to cause physical and/or psychological harm to another individual or in shared social context. Involvement in bullying as perpetrators, victims, bullying victims, and bystanders has been linked with deleterious outcomes by both cross sectional and longitudinal studies. Students who are bullied can experience immediate negative effects that include humiliation, sadness, rejection and helplessness (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2009). Bullying has been around as long as humans have had their differences. With the current proliferation of social media bullying has found a new way to thrive. One of the most effective ways to prevent bullying on social media is by paying attention to your students and their lives (www.risevision.com/blog/how-to-handle-bullying-in-school-and-social-media)

In addition, students who have been bullied may not feel safe at school and may disengage from the school environment due to fear and sadness, which may in turn, contribute to high rate of absenteeism and lower academic performance (Nakamoto and Schwartz, 2010).



Bullying usually involves more than bully and the victim: peers are present in 85 percent of bullying episode in a classroom and playground. Peers are drawn into bullying by arousal and excitement of aggression they are audience for the theater of bullying and provide the positive attention, imitation, deference and lack of opposition which reinforce the bully's dominance (Omoniyi, 2013). Although 80-90 per cent of students indicate that watch bullying makes them feel uncomfortable, observations indicate that the peer assume many roles: co-bullies, supporters, audience and interveners (Pepler, 2009). It was observed that peers tend to give positive attention to the bully, rather than the victim; there risk for peers who align with the victim, they may become the next victims (Smith, 2011) Clear difference emerges in the bullying research among female and male. Commonly, boys bully other boys and girls; whereas girls are bullied mainly by other girls. Where girls are bullies, they tend to use more indirect forms of bullying (van der Wal, 2008). Boys tend to use physical might and verbal threats. Girls use social and verbal threats, such as spreading rumors about one another and excluding one from the peer group. Girls bullying also, includes actions such as social isolation, ignoring, excluding, and backbiting. Others actions by girls' bullies include manipulating friendship and ostracizing peers (Bosworth, 2009). Adolescent girls are prone to name calling, and gossiping (Vail, 2010).

Although, social interaction is encouraged among students both males and females, due to its importance of predisposing the students to tape from individuals' potentials academically and otherwise, especially the weak students benefit from the better and best students in terms of academic performance. The same students tend to exerts aggression and deviant behaviour that hurt others which results to bullying. The consequences of involvement in bullying or victim problem are focused upon negative mental and physical health challenges. Resulting to low psychological well-being, this includes state of mind, low self-esteem and feelings of anger and sadness. Another problem is poor social adjustment, among students this manifests loneliness, isolation, and absenteeism in class particular or school in general. Psychological distress is considered more serious and it includes high levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thinking. All these are going on our schools, before the stakeholder and most times in Nigeria, even though the case of bullying had been reported in many schools, this deviant act is not given any desirable attention. Further, more there are no available statistical facts to prove the actual number of students that are bullied or victims in Nigeria school. This lack of statistical facts and absence of well documented evidence have made it difficult to for us degree of damage bullying racking in the well-being of our students.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to discover the impact of bullying on students' co exists within in an academic environment despite their diver's family background. Specifically, the study:

1. Examined the extent to which bullying impact on physical/psychological well-being of secondary school students in North Central States of Nigeria.
2. Examine the impact of school bullying on student's academic performance
3. Assessed the extent of school bullying among male and female secondary school students in North Central states of Nigeria.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the impact of bullying on physical/psychological well-being of secondary school students between bullied and their non-bullied counterparts in North Central Nigeria.



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2. There is no significant difference in the impact of bullying on academic performance of secondary school students between bullied and their non-bullied counterparts in North Central Nigeria.
3. There is no significant difference in the impacts of bullying on secondary school students between male and their female in North Central Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was the descriptive research of the survey type; that involves the collection of data from subjects on a particular phenomenon to describe the phenomenon the way it appears. The population of this study is two secondary schools from four sampled states that is Abuja (FCT), Benue, Nassarawa and Plateau out of the seven states that make up the north central Nigeria. From the study population (N=21,000), simple random sampling technique was used to sample 92.5 by four states equal 370 respondents, according to Research adviser (2006). The instrument used for the study was a researcher made questionnaire titled School Bullying Problems Questionnaire (SBPQ). The instrument was designed to elicit data on impacts of school bullying on academic performance, well-being and gender on students of selected secondary schools. The instrument has two sections, Section A elicit respondents Bio data such as State, School, Gender, and Age. Section B consisted of 15 items eliciting responses on impacts of school bullying on well-being, academic performance and gender. Three Likert scales was used as options form. Agreed (A), Undecided (U), Disagreed (D). The instrument was validated using face and content validity technique; this was arrived at through given the instrument to two experts of test and measurement from the department of education and Counselling Psychology, IBBU Lapai. The instruments were personally administered with the assistance of two research assistants on the respondents to ensure complete returned. A reliability co efficient of 0.73 was obtained for instrument. While, data collected were analyzed with chi square inferential statistics tool.

Results

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the impacts of bullying on physical/psychological well-being of secondary school students between bullied and their non-bullied counterparts in North Central Nigeria.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of the impacts of bullying on physical/psychological well-being of secondary school students

Variables	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
Bullied	127(127.74)	27(26.80)	57(56.46)	211
Non-Bullied	97 (96.26)	20(20.20)	42(42.54)	159
	224	47	99	370

Source: Questionnaire, $X^2 = 0.026$, $df = 2$, $P = 0.05$, $X^2 = \text{Critical value} = 5.991$.



Table 2: Chi square (X^2) Analysis of the impact of bullying on physical/psychological well-being of secondary school students

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo- Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² / Fe
A	127	127.74	-0.74	0.5474	0.004
B	27	26.80	0.2	0.04	0.002
C	57	56.46	0.54	0.291	0.005
D	97	96.26	0.74	0.547	0.006
E	20	20.20	-0.2	0.04	0.002
F	42	42.54	-0.54	0.291	0.007
Total	370	370			0.026

Summary of Chi square Analysis of Hypothesis One

X^2 Cal. = 0.026; X^2 Crit. = 5.991; df = 2; $P < 0.05$; Decision: Rejected

From the table 1 above Chi square (X^2) analysis, the critical value of 5.991 is higher than the calculated of 0.026 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis, which states that “there is no significant difference in the impact of bullying on physical/psychological well-being of secondary school students between bullied and their non-bullied counterparts in North Central Nigeria”, is hereby rejected.

Hypotheses 2

There is no significant difference in the impact of bullying on academic performance between bullied and non-bullied secondary school students in North Central Nigeria.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of the impact of bullying on secondary school students' academic performance

Variables	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
Bullied	100(12.07)	31(31.93)	80(76.41)	211
Non Bullied	79 (76.92)	26(24.06)	54(57.58)	159
	179	56	134	370

Source: Questionnaire, $X^2 = 0.319$, df = 2, $P = 0.05$, X^2 = Critical value = 5.991.

Table 4: Chi square (X^2) Analysis of the impact of bullying on secondary school students' academic performance

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo- Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
A	100	102.07	-2.8	7.84	0.076
B	31	31.93	-1.5	2.25	0.069
C	80	76.41	-3.58	12.82	0.167
D	79	76.92	2.1	4.41	0.057
E	26	24.06	1.5	2.25	0.092
F	54	57.68	-3.6	12.96	0.025
Total	370	370			0.319

Summary of Chi square Analysis of Hypotheses Two:

X^2 Cal. = 0.319; X^2 Crit. = 5.991; Df = 2; $P < 0.05$; Decision: Retained

From the table 2 above Chi square analysis, the critical value of 5.991 is higher than the calculated of 0.319 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that “there is no significant difference in the impact of bullying on academic performance between bullied and non-bullied secondary school students in North Central Nigeria” is hereby retained).



Hypotheses 3

There is no significant difference in the impacts of bullying on secondary school students between male and their female counterparts in North Central Nigeria.

Table 5: Frequency and percentage of the impact of bullying on male and female secondary school students

Variables	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Total
Male	127(127.88)	22(26.23)	65(59.87)	211
Female	95 (94.11)	24(19.76)	40(45.12)	159
	219	46	105	370

Source: Questionnaire, $X^2 = 2.624$, $df = 2$, $P = 0.05$, $X^2 = \text{Critical value} = 5.991$.

Table 6: Chi square(X^2) Analysis of the impact of bullying on male and female secondary school students

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo- Fe	(Fo-Fe) ²	(Fo-Fe) ² /Fe
A	124	124.88	-0.88	0.774	0.006
B	22	26.23	-4.23	17.89	0.682
C	65	59.87	5.13	26.31	0.439
D	95	94.11	0.89	0.792	0.008
E	24	1976	-4.24	17.97	0.909
F	40	45.12	-5.12	26.21	0.580
Total	370	370			2.624

Summary of Chi square Analysis of Hypotheses Three:

$X^2 \text{ Cal.} = 2.624$; $X^2 \text{ Crit.} = 5.991$; $df = 2$; $P < 0.05$; Decision: Accepted

From the table 3 above Chi square analysis, the critical value of 5.991 is higher than the calculated of 2.624 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that “there is no significant difference in the impact of bullying on secondary school students between male and their female counterparts in North Central Nigeria” is hereby retained).

Discussion of the findings

The result of analysis of null hypothesis one ($P < 0.05$, $df = 2$, $X^2 \text{ cal.} = 0.026$, $X^2 \text{ crit.} = 5.991$) revealed that the alternate hypothesis was accepted, which stated that students bullied always have effects on their wellbeing than those not bullied. This finding corroborates with work of Igbagri, (2018) opined those results from cross-sectional surveys suggested that being victimized by peers is significantly related to comparatively low level of psychological wellbeing and social adjustment and to high level of psychological distress and adverse physical health symptoms. Further, stated that longitudinal studies provide stronger support for the view that peer victimization is a significant causal factor in school children’s lower health and wellbeing and that the effects can be long lasting. This implies that constant bullying among school students can impede on both their physical and psychological wellbeing, especially among the under aged school students where such deviant activities if not nipped at the bud early enough, the effects can be devastating. Furthermore, the above finding reveals that the majority of the respondents come to terms that bullying affects student’s psychological wellbeing. According to www.ojjdp.gov/mpg (2013), psychological symptoms (such as bad temper, feeling nervous, feeling low self-esteem, difficulties in getting to sleep, morning tiredness, feeling left out, loneliness, and helplessness) are symptoms traceable to bullied.

The result of the data analysis of the null hypothesis two ($P < 0.05$, $df = 2$, $X^2 \text{ cal.} = 0.319$, $X^2 \text{ crit.} = 5.991$) revealed that the alternate hypothesis was retained, which stated that students who are bullied regularly will improved in their academic performance than their non-bullied



counterparts. This finding is in variance with other related finding such as the report by UNICEF (2007a) report also noted that the rapid increase in the level of bullying has a negative consequence on students' education, examples; decrease in school attendance, decrease in contact with peers, decrease in academic achievement etc. Still on the contraction of this study result. UNICEF, (2007). It further highlighted that kids who are bullied are more likely to experience: Decrease academic achievement standard test score and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school. In a related development, A study by Remy, (2020), The finding revealed that school bullying still exists in most schools and influences student's academic performance and school attendance. It was acknowledged that most students experienced bullying in their classes, and some students report cases of bullying to their teachers. Bullying still exists and continues to affect the academic achievement of most students in Cameroon.

The result of data analysis of the null hypothesis three ($P < 0.05$, $df = 2$, $X^2 \text{ cal.} = 418.77$, $X^2 \text{ crit.} = 5.991$) revealed that the alternate hypothesis was retained, which stated that student's gender will not impede on school bullying. This finding revealed that gender is not a determinant in school bullying among students across secondary and primary, private and public schools. This finding is in line with study of Seokjin, et al. (2013). A clear difference emerges in the bullying research among female and males. Commonly, boys bully other boys and girls; whereas girls are bullied mainly by other girls (Sampson, 2002). When girls are bullies, they tend to use more indirect forms of bullying (van der Wal, 2008). Boys tend to use physical might verbal threats. Girls use social and verbal threats, such as speaking rumors about one another and excluding one from the peer group (Hazler, and Oliver, 2007). Girls bullying also includes actions such as social isolation, ignoring, excluding, and backbiting (Sampson, 2002). Other actions by girl's bullies include manipulating friendship and ostracizing peers (Bosworth, 2009). Adolescent girls particularly, are prone to name calling, and gossiping (Vail, 2010). To further; scientifically support this assertion that some researchers have suggested there are biological differences in boys and girls, in that girls are biologically predisposed to value friendship, therefore, that is an arena in which they could express their emotions (vail, 2010).

Conclusion

Exposing children to social media such as television, video, and handset (phones) through which the students watch films that portrait deviant behaviours and characters enables them to practice what they saw on the weak students in the school in form of bullying. As a result, this, the students are both physical and psychological affected by the impact of school bullying from stress, injuries and trauma. Another available factor that encourages bullying is aggressive nature of some parents. Students from such parents (families) tend to learned nothing but being aggressive. This by implication affects the academic performances of the students, since students lack rest of mind to concentrate on their studies. When such students are opportune to be in senior class, they exhibited their deviant and aggressiveness on the junior students. That is no students escape them including girls. This makes the bullying syndrome in secondary schools a vicious circle. This study reveals that impacts of bullying problems in secondary schools have more negative than positive influences. Bearing in mind the data collected and analyzes, it can categorically be concluded that school bullying problems affects physical and psychological wellbeing and gender of the students negatively. An injured body and unstable mind can't concentrate in teaching and learning. It is therefore, recommended that



school authority should take stringent measures to ensure that bullying problems in schools especially secondary is adequately checked, or eradicated completely.

Recommendations

Sequel to the results obtained in the study and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Schooling is a very important aspect of human life. In fact, the bed rock upon of education is built. Government and school authority must ensure that students are safe from any form physical and psychological harms as result of school problems, bullying inclusive.
2. School management should find a scientific and reliable means of checking students with deviant or disruptive behaviour as study indicated that they are potential bullies and enroll them for corrective measure through psychological and counselling interventions.
3. Teachers and the school authority should ensure that persona-social disagreements among students are officially resolved by the school to avoid the senior students taken advantages of the juniors by consistently bullying them.

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