EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON LEARNING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MUBI EDUCATIONAL ZONE OF ADAMAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

The study examined the effects of bullying on learning among secondary school students in Mubi Educational Zone. It also investigated the factors associated with bullying and its psychological consequences. The study adopted a survey design. The population consisted of all the secondary school students, out of which a sample of 400 students were selected from four secondary schools through stratified random sampling technique using sex, age and class level as strata. The instrument was adapted from Omoteso (2010) and Asiyai (2015). The validity of the instrument was carried out by two experts both in Counselling Psychology and Test and Measurement, while test-retest method was carried out to determine the reliability of the instrument, and the reliability coefficient was 0.82. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as simple percentage and t-tests analysis. Results showed that the forms of bullying among the students were hitting/ flogging, injuries, threatening, and rumour spreading. Many students had been involved in relational bullying. Watching violent films and retaliation for being bullied in the past were some of the factors associated with bullying. The results also showed that bullying has a lot of effects on students learning. There was a significant difference between the behaviour of male and female students. The study also showed that there was a significant difference in the bullying behaviour of junior and senior secondary school students. In conclusion, bullying has a lot of negative consequences on the children. The children suffer torments and harassments and it can cause life-long damage to the bullied and the bullies. If a school fails to deal with bullying, it can endanger the safety of all the students and teachers. The study recommended that there should be a school-wide education, training and bullying prevention programmes. The teachers should have skills and knowledge in classroom management and control, as a result, a student friendly environment should be established in the classroom.

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1. Introduction

A school is an institution designed for the teaching of students enrolled in it. The school is there to develop the student intellectually and otherwise through knowledge acquisition so that he/she may fit into the society. By this, the student is expected to learn how to relate with fellow students, teachers and significant others in the school on the one hand, live in a harmonious way by blending with societal values in the society on the other hand (Aluede, 2011). The school is also expected to be a place where students should feel safe and secure, and where they can count on being treated with respect. However, a study by Fajoju (2009) indicated that only few students or pupils can blend harmoniously with their school mates without experiencing violence in school. Bullying is one form of violence that has been threatening the life of students in school in Nigeria.

About a decade ago, media headlines in Nigeria appeared to heighten public interest in this sensitive area of bullying. Schools, parents and children alike started demanding investigations and intervention to conquer this seemingly large and serious problem. Bullying is a pervasive problem in schools that affects a lot of students. In recent times, it is becoming a bigger crisis with vicious consequences. Bullying is not just a child's play, but a terrifying experience many school children face every day (Beran, 2005; Aluede, 2006; Thornbery, 2010). As Beran (2005) further noted, in spite of school officials, teachers, parents and students exerting great efforts to make schools friendlier and safer places, a reduction of bullying is not always evident, as threats of attacks in schools often leading to breakdown of rules and orders are often the case in many Nigerian schools.

Defining bullying has been a very difficult task, as no single definition can cover all aspects of bullying. Notwithstanding, bullying is a form of aggression, a particular kind of violence to which students are exposed. It is a form of social interaction in which a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behaviour intended to cause distress to the less dominant individual (the victim). In some studies, bullying has been conceptualized as acting in any way that threatens or hurts someone less powerful (Aluede, 2011).Bullying does not occur when there is conflict between people of equal or similar power. This distinction is important because of the effects of being repeatedly attacked or threatened by a more powerful person or group are likely to differ from the effects of being threatened or attacked by someone of equal power. In the former case, one is apt to feel more helpless (Fajoju, 2009).

Bullying, a subcategory of aggressive behaviour, is encountered regularly by children and adolescents in the context of schools worldwide. Although, bullying is a common experience for students around the world, it is a complex social problem that can have severe negative consequences for both bullies and victims (Hymel, Rocke-Henderson & Bananno, 2005), especially as bullying has the potential to cause either physical or psychological harm to the victim (Bosworth, Espelage & Simon, 1999).

Aluede, 2011 has described association between bullying by peers and a number of different dimensions of internal distress and social problems, especially as a single student who bullies can have very far reaching effects on the school thus creating a climate of fear and intimidation not only in his/her victims, but also on bystanders. Therefore, students affected by bullying will be at higher risk of developing depression, anxiety, loneliness, mistrust of others, low self-esteem, poor social adjustment, poor academic achievement and poor health as compared to others (Thornberg, 2010).

Bullying as a sub-set of school violence among school age children occurs in many schools across the globe (McEacherin, Kenny, Blake & Aluede, 2005). School Bullying (2012) reviewed the statistics of bullying according to the American Psychological Association (APA). Approximately 40% to 80% of school age children experienced bullying at some point during their school careers (APA.org). Regardless of the grade level, socio-economic environment, gender, religion or sexual orientation, bullying can happen to anyone. However, various studies point out that students from lower socio-economic background were more bullied than students from higher socio-economic background (Agirdag, Demanet, Van Houtte, Van Avermaet& Bettelheim, 2011).

In Nigeria, the prevalent rate of bullying has not been fully established though Egbochukwu (2007) has revealed that in Benin City, Nigeria almost four in every five participants reported being bullied and 85% of the children admitted to bullying others at least once. In a study, Omoteso (2010) reported that 88.1% of the participants had been bullied, 33.1% were bullies and 64.7% had been involved in relational bullying while retaliation for being bullied in the past was 51.2%. In another study, Owoaje and Ndubisi (2009) examined the 2007/2008 session admitted students in six public secondary schools in Odo Ota Local Government Area of Ogun State and reported that the students were bullied as follows: 1-2 days within a month 29.5%, 3-5 days 9.1%, 6-9 days 5% and 10-30 days 4.3%.

Researchers have found variations in the prevalence of bullying among boys and girls. Asamu (2006) found that 21% of the students studied in Ibadan who had bullied other students were male. Omoteso (2010) discovered that 48.8% male and 51.2% female were involved in bullying; Bosworth, Espelage & Simon (1999) found that 85.5% of male students and 77% of female students were bullies. Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim &Sadek (2010) discovered that boys appeared to be more involved in bullying than girls across all bully status groups.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Bullying as a maladaptive behaviour, is encountered regularly by children and adolescents in schools worldwide. It is a complex social problem that can have severe negative consequences for both bullies and victims especially as bullying has the potential to cause either physical or psychological harm to the victim. According to Aluede 2011), a single student who bullies can have very far reaching effects on the school thus creating a climate of fear and intimidation not only in his/her victims, but also on bystanders. Therefore, students affected by bullying will be at higher risk of

developing depression, anxiety, loneliness, mistrust of others, low self-esteem, poor social adjustment, poor academic achievement and poor health as compared to others (Thornberg, 2010). Bullying is pervasive and terribly harmful for bullies, victims, schools and communities. One of the major effects of bullying is its "carryover syndrome". Children who display aggressive characteristics usually exhibit at adult stage, deviant behaviours such as sexual harassment, date violence, wife battering, gang attacks, child abuse and elder abuse. Bullying is a common antisocial behaviour which is being exhibited in schools and the dangers inherent in it can hinder the glorious educational goals of in-school adolescents, hence this study.

1.3 Objectives of the Study
The objectives of the study are to:
1. Investigate the nature of bullying among the students;
2. Identify the factors associated with bullying behaviour among the students;
3. Find out the effects of bullying on students and their learning.
4. Identify strategies for effective management of bullying.

1.4 Research Questions
1. What is the nature of bullying behaviour among the students?
2. What are the factors associated with the bullying behaviour among the students?
3. What are the effects of bullying on students and their learning?
4. What strategies can be effective in managing bullying in school?

1.5 Research Hypotheses
HO_1: There is no significant sex difference in the level of involvement of the students in bullying behaviour.
HO_2: There is no significant difference in the bullying behaviour of the students in junior and senior secondary school classes.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design
The study adopted a descriptive survey design and assessed bullying among secondary school students in Mubi Educational zone. This design is chosen because Fajonmi (2003) says that survey is used for descriptive, explanatory an exploratory purpose, and of course, this survey is descriptive in nature and therefore is more appropriate for this study. However, descriptive survey design is considered appropriate because it allows for collection of data from a group of people at the same time for the purpose of describing phenomena under study. Descriptive study also allows the investigator to discuss the phenomenon under study as it exists at the time of the study.

2.2 Population and Sample

The target population for the study comprised of junior and senior public secondary school students in Mubi North Local Government Area of Adamawa State. The sample size of 400 was chosen from four secondary schools by stratified sampling technique using age, sex and class as strata. 100 students were chosen from each of the four schools.

2.3 Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument titled "Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire" (BBQ) was adapted from Omoteso (2010) and Asiyai (2015). The instrument comprised of 39 items divided into 5 sections. Section A contained the demographic characteristics of the respondents which constituted age, sex, class, name of school and Local Government Area. Section B contained six items that assessed the nature of bullying in secondary schools. Section C contained nine items which measured the factors associated with bullying behaviour. Section D contained nine items which measures the effects of bullying on students and their learning while Section E contained nine items which measured the strategies for effective management of bullying.

2.4 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

The face and content validity of the instrument was established by two experts in Counselling Psychology and Test and Measurement in the Department of Science Education, Adamawa State University, Mubi. The reliability of the instrument was carried out in Adamawa State University Demonstration School using test-retest reliability method. First test was administered on 30 students, while the second test was administered on the same set of students after two weeks. The reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained.

2.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers administered the questionnaires and collected them on the spot. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentages and t-test analysis.

3. Results

Research Question 1: What is the nature of bullying behaviour among the students?

Table 1: Nature of Bullying Behaviour among Students

Items	SA	%	SD	%
Hitting/flogging	218	567	168	43
Kicking	115	30	271	70
Injuries	308	80	78	20
Extortion	103	27	283	73
Threatening	251	65	135	35
Rumour spreading	232	60	154	40
Slandering and name calling	180	47	206	53

From the data in table 1, the common types of bullying in secondary schools in Mubi Educational zone are hitting/ flogging 218 (57%), injuries 308 (80%), threatening 251 (65%), and rumour spreading 232 (60%). It can therefore be concluded that kicking, extortion and slandering and name calling are not very common forms of bullying taking place in Mubi Educational Zone.

Research Question Two: What are the factors associated with the bullying behaviour among students?

Table 2: Factors Associated with the Bullying Behaviour among the Students

ITEMS	SA	%	SD	%
Individual from a broken home	128	33	258	67
Individual from a monogamous family	150	39	236	61
Individual from polygamous family	170	44	216	56
Copying parents aggressive behaviour	190	49	196	51
Watching violent films	222	58	164	43
Teacher's poor classroom management	134	35	252	65
Retaliation for being bullied in the past	198	51	188	49
Feeling older than others	255	66	131	34
Feeling stronger than others	209	54	177	46

From Table 5, 128 (33%) agreed that individuals from a broken home could be associated with bullying behaviour, 258 (67%) disagreed with this. Individuals from a monogamous home was considered by 150 (39%) of the students to be associated with bullying behaviour, 236 (61%) disagreed with this; 170 (44%) of the students believed that individuals from a polygamous family could be lead to bullying while 216 (56%) disagreed. About half 190 (49%) of the students agreed that copying parents' aggressive behaviour could be responsible for bullying among the students, 198 (51%) did not agree with this. Watching violent films was considered as a factor associated with bullying behaviour by 222 (58%), 164 (43%) did not agree with this. Also from the table, 134 (35%) agreed that teachers' poor classroom management could be responsible for bullying behaviour while 252 (65%) did not agree with this. The students who agreed that retaliation for being bullied could be responsible for bullied were 198 (51%), 188 (49%) did not agree with this. Further, 255 (66%) of the students agreed that feeling older than others could lead to bullying while 131 (34%) did not agree with this. Feeling stronger than others was considered to be associated with bullying behaviour by 209 (54%), 117 (456%) did not agree with this.

Research Question 3: What are the effects of bullying among students on learning?

Table 3: Effects of Bullying among Students on Learning

Items	SA	%	SD	%
Bullying can make the bullied fearful looking in school	279	72	107	28
A student who is often bullied can stay in isolation always	346	90	40	10
Bullying can trigger nonattendance at school among students	322	83	64	17
The bullied frequently complaints of being sick	201	52	185	48
Bullying can make the bullied to be always looking unhappy	274	71	112	29
Bullying can make the bullied to hate going to school to learn	304	79	82	21
Bullying can make the bullied to always ask for extra money from his/her parents to give to bully in school	280	73	106	28
A bullied student can have unexplained bruises on the body	324	84	62	16
Bullying can make a student to complain frequently of missing items being taken by the bully	358	93	28	7

From table 3, all the items are the effects of bullying as perceived by students. The effects are bullying can result to fearful looking 279 (72%), 346 (90%) students are of the view that bullying can lead to isolation, 322 (83%) said that bullying can result to students nonattendance at school, 274 (71%) said that bullying can make a student to always look unhappy, 304 (79%) said that bullying can make a student to hate going to school, 280 (73%) students said that bullying can make students to always ask for extra money from parents, 324 (84%) students are of the opinion that bullying can result to the appearance of unexplained bruises on students body while 93% students said that bullying can make a student to frequently complain of missing items.

Research Question 4: What strategies can be effective in managing bullying in schools?

Table 4: Strategies for Effective Managing Bullying in Schools

Items	SA	%	SD	%
Use of school rules and regulations	270	70	116	30
Teaching empathy	264	68	122	32
Use of school hot spots to detect bullies	252	65	134	35
Reporting cases of bullying to PTA	242	63	144	37
Suspension of bullies	189	49	197	51
Use of modeling to teach bullies positive behaviour	275	71	111	29
Students to take anti bullying oaths	236	61	150	39
Place fliers on bullying in classroom walls, hostels and on trees in the school compound	245	64	141	37
Use of corporal punishment	189	49	197	51

From table 4, the effective strategies that can be used to manage bullying in school are 270 (70%) students said that bullying can be effectively managed through the use of school rules and regulations, 264 (68%) students said that teaching of empathy can help to manage bullying effectively in school, 252 (65%) students said that use of school hot spots to detect bullies is an effective strategy for managing bullying, 242 (63%) students said that reporting cases of bullying to Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) can be an effective management strategy, 275 (71%) students said that teaching bullies positive behaviour through the use of modeling can be an effective strategy for managing it. 236

(61%) students said that bullying can be effectively managed by making students to take anti bullying oaths and 245 (64%) students said that placing posters of bullying on classroom and hostels walls as well as on trees in the school compound can help to manage bullying effective in schools.

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant sex difference in the level of involvement of the students in bullying behaviour.

. **Table 5:** Sex Difference in Bullying Behaviour of Students

Sex	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	185	18.016	3.217	385	59.73	1.57	Rejected
Female	201	21.504	3.230				

*Significance: (P<0.05)

From Table 5, showed that the t-cal of 198.148 was obtained which is higher than the critical t-critical of 1.57 at P<0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is a difference in the bullying behaviour of the students. Therefore, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative accepted.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the bullying behaviour of the students in junior and senior secondary school classes**.**

Table 6: Class Difference in Bullying Behaviour of the Students

Class	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
JSS	197	38.53	3.29	385	58.47	1.44	Rejected
SSS	189	30.02	3.22				

*Significance: (P<0.05)

Table 6 shows the difference in bullying behaviour of junior and secondary school students. The analysis shows the t-calof 58.47 was obtained which is higher than critical t-value of 1.44 at P<0.05 level. The results show that there is a significant negative difference in the bullying behaviour of the students in JSS and SSS classes. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative accepted.

4. Discussion

The main aim of this study was to find out the effects of bullying among secondary school students. The finding of this study for research question one indicates that the common types of bullying in secondary schools are hitting/ flogging, injuries, threatening, and rumour spreading. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Egbochuku (2007) and Asiyai (2015) who similarly reported bullying behaviours such as being threatened, kicking, hitting and extortion as types of bullying for public and private schools in Edo state Nigeria.

The study in the second research question also attempted to find out factors influencing bullying among students. The study found some factors associated with bullying behaviour. Watching violent films was the most serious factor that was associated with bullying behaviour by these students. The result is expected since many ills have been associated with watching violent films. The stakeholders in education have also been against watching of violent films on the television and the internet because of their negative influence on the behaviour of children and adolescents who watch them. This supports the findings of Omotoso (2010. It has also been found to be the major source of many anti-social behaviour in many societies today.

Another serious factor was retaliation; it was believed that many students bully because they want to retaliate for being bullied in the past. This may be as a result of bitterness and bitterness may lead to revenge. Copying parents' aggressive behaviour could also lead to bullying. Parents' aggressive behaviour can be copied by the children. The children whose parents are aggressive are likely to become aggressive in later years. This finding supports that of Omotose (2010).Another factor that was highlighted by more than half of the students was feeling older than others. It is possible that if there is a wide gap in the age of the students in the same class, it is more likely that the older students will bully those who are young. The older students may feel the younger students are rude and disrespectful while the younger ones may be teasing the older one because they are in the same class. Consequently, the older students may bully these young ones to force them to respect them.

Finding for research question three indicated that a good proportion of students said that bullying can make a student to be fearful looking, while a very significant proportion of students are of the view that bullying can lead to isolation with students saying that bullying can result to students nonattendance at school. This corroborates with the findings of Asiyai (2015) which found out that bullying can make a student absent from class in fear of being bullied. When students hate going to school and do not attend school as a result of fear of being bullied their education is in danger as their academic development will be seriously hampered. In addition, the result of this study revealed that bullying results in a student isolating from other students and make a student to always look unhappy. This behaviour can have serious impact on the emotional development of the bullied student as he/her may begin to develop depression and low self-esteem. In agreement with this findings,

Thornberg (2010) lamented that students affected by bullying would be at risk of developing depression, anxiety, mistrust of others, loneliness, low self-esteem, poor social adjustment, poor health and poor academic achievement. The findings of this study on bullying capable of making students not to attend school corroborates that of Alika (2012) whose finding showed that a significant relationship existed between bullying and drop out from school. Furthermore, the findings revealed that bullying can make students to always ask for extra money from parents. A student who forms the habit of demanding extra money from parents in order to give to bullies may end up becoming a liar and may eventually steal money if he/she is not being given by the parents.

The finding also revealed that 77.5% staff and 71.0% students are of the opinion that bullying can result to the appearance of unexplained bruises on student's body. This could be the reason why Vickers (2001) and Westhues (2004) noted that the consequences of bullying can be quite damaging to individuals in terms of physical, psychological and emotional damage. When children continue to miss the items they already have because of such items being forcefully taken from them by bullies, they suffer in school especially when the items are needed for their academic use. Some of the students find it difficult to tell their parents and may continue to suffer lack in school. All these negatively impact on their academic growth and development.

For research question four, the findings showed that effective strategy for managing bullying are the use of school rules and regulation, teaching of empathy, use of school hot spots to detect bullies, reporting cases of bullying to Parents Teachers' Association, teaching bullies positive behaviour through the use of modeling, teaching empathy to bullies, making students to take anti bullying oaths and placing posters of bullying on classroom and hostels walls as well as on trees in the school compound. This also corroborates with Asiyai (2015).

From the test of hypothesis, there also existed a significant difference in bullying behaviour of male and female students. This means that the types of bullying the male students get involved in are different from that of girls. Past studies had also shown that male bullying tends to be physical while that of female is relational or indirect Asiyai (2015). Female students get involved in less physical violence. They tend to use subtle method like spreading rumours and manipulations and manipulations of friendship while boys can be involved in hitting and kicking. Contrary to the general belief, female students were also involved in bullying alongside their male counterparts. This is a unique finding unlike the findings of researchers on bullying that male students get involved in bullying more than girls.

The truth about this is that girls get involved in indirect or relation bullying and it can be more difficult to discover. There is a lot of this going on in Nigerian schools. This type of bullying involves excluding others from a group, spreading rumours and backbiting Asiyai (2015). Younger students also took part in bullying more than the older students. This is another finding unique to this study. Many studies conducted in the past had shown that older students bullied more than the younger ones. A study conducted by Asamu (2006) found that older students bullied the younger ones. As a result, the students in JSS classes bullied more than the students in the SSS classes because they are younger.

5. Conclusion

Bullying is a global problem and it can be found in every school all over the world. It is too often seen a way of life for young people in any society. When nothing is done about bullying, it has a lot of negative consequences on the children. The children suffer torments and harassments. It can cause life-long damage to the bullied and the bullies. If a school fails to deal with bullying, it can endanger the safety of all the students and

teachers. Consequently, bullying should be seen as the responsibility of everyone including the government, educators, policymakers, police, parents, community organizations, religious organizations and students themselves to see to it that bullying is reduced to a minimum or is terminated permanently from secondary schools.

5.1 Recommendations

- The schools should provide counselling and support for students at risk of being involved in bullying
- The teachers should have skills and knowledge in classroom management and control. As a result, a student friendly environment should be established in the classroom
- Students who bully often need intensive support or intervention, so it is important for schools and social service agencies to work together.
- The parents and teachers must recognize the danger of violent films and discourage their children/students from watching them.
- The schools and home should work collaboratively to instill good values in their children/students

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