



## DETERMINANTS OF BULLYING AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MUSHIN, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract:

The rate at which bullying is been perpetrated in schools on a daily basis is alarming and worrisome. It is a big threat that should not be handled with levity. Bullying is not only dangerous to the victims but also to the perpetrators, parents, schools and the society. The consequences could have a life-long effect on the individual that is bullied. In view of this, this study, therefore, examined the school climate, peer influence, social competence and family cohesion as facilitators of bullying among public secondary school students in Mushin, Lagos State. Two hundred and two (202) public secondary school students from 6 (six) public schools in Mushin, Lagos State were randomly selected for the study. Standardized instruments were used to measure the variables. Three research questions were raised and answered. Data collected were analyzed using the Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study showed that bullying among the participants correlated positively with the four predicting variables and a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.812 and adjusted R square of 0.646 was noted. Family cohesion is the most potent contributor to the prediction ( $\beta = 0.308$ ,  $t = 6.938$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) followed by peer influence ( $\beta = 0.292$ ,  $t = 6.017$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), school climate ( $\beta = 0.126$ ,  $t = 2.466$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and finally, social competence ( $\beta = 0.015$ ,  $t = 0.343$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Based on the findings, it was recommended that counselling psychologists and allied professionals should endeavour to sensitize the government, school owners and public on the benefits of positive school climate and family cohesion in reducing bullying in the school system. Also, bullying may be reduced through anti-bullying programs in schools that serve to raise awareness of the problem. Lastly, cordial relationship should be established at homes among the siblings and between the parents and their children

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as this will go a long way in raising children with high social competence skills as well as promoting healthy relationship that fosters friendliness in school setting rather than bullying among the students.

**Keywords:** bullying, social competence, family cohesion, school climate, peer influence

## 1. Introduction

Bullying is a serious problem that could have a great influence on physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of those that are bullied as well as the perpetrators. There is cohesion between misbehaviour and bullying in so much as many physical aggressive manifestations of bullying characterize delinquent behaviour. Students who bully their peers at an early age may gain undue boldness and confidence to engage in more anti-social behaviour if they are not called to order later in life. School bullying can interfere with students' attention in their studies which could lead to a poor academic performance and school dropout. The problem of bullying is not a new phenomenon but seems to be on an increase in recent years in Nigeria. The problem has probably been ignored or regarded as a normal rite of passage for children, there is an urgent need to address the phenomenon, otherwise, it could lead to raising of maladjusted students who in turn could become leaders of tomorrow and thereby continue their bullying even as adults. Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour manifested by use of force or coercion to affect others particularly when the behaviour is habitual and involves imbalance of power. Olweus (1993) explained bullying as intentional, repeated hurtful act, word or other behaviour committed by an individual or group against another. According to him, bullying occurs when a student or several other students say harsh words on or call others hurtful names, completely ignore or exclude the individual from groups of friends or leave the fellow out of things on purpose; hit, kick, push, shove around, tell lies or spread rumours about him or her.

Konstantina (2010) defined bullying as the intentional, systematic and unjustified aggressive behaviour that is exercised by a student or a group of students more powerful, physically or psychologically towards another student or group of students less powerful. Aluede (2011) in the same way described bullying as a form of aggression, a particular kind of violence exhibited in the course of social interaction by a more dominant individual (the bully) to a less dominant individual (the victim) with the intention to cause distress to the victim. Bullying may include name calling, verbal or written abuse, exclusion from activities and social situations, physical abuse or coercion (Carey, 2003; Whitted & Dupper, 2005). Bullies may behave this way to be perceived as popular or tough or to get attention. They may bully out of jealousy or be acting out because they themselves are bullied (Crothers & Levinson, 2004). When students are bullied it could lead to poor academic performance or failure, school dropout, nightmare, school absenteeism, emotional trauma, psychological distress, depression, anxiety, sadness, sense of insecurity, etc. Several factors contributing to

bullying behaviour has been examined by different scholars from different perspective with diverse and inconsistent results. In view of this, this study therefore investigated the influence of school climate, peer influence, social competence, and family cohesion as determinants of bullying among secondary school students in public schools in Mushin, Lagos State.

School climate has been defined as “*the quality and character of school life*” which includes “*rules, values, and expectations that help people feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe*” (Cohen *et al.*, 2009). Despite the possibilities offered by the comprehension of the construct, a positive school climate is determined by rules, goals, ideals, interpersonal relationships, instructional practices, and organizational structures within a school, which achieve an environment of respect, support for individuals, high quality of social relations, positive emotional environments, and physical safety (Cohen *et al.*, 2009; Thapa *et al.*, 2013). Some of the most studied dimensions of school climate have been: the support that students perceive from their teachers, the clarity of the rules concerning bullying in schools, the communication channels enabled for students to report their problems, the student's perception of the acceptance of diversity within the people who live together in the schools, and the quality of the relationships between the students and their feeling of belonging to the school (Aldridge *et al.*, 2018).

Positive school climate has been associated with many adaptive consequences such as students' self-esteem, self-concept, physical health, mental health, effort, and academic achievement (Jamal *et al.*, 2013; Odedokun, 2016; Wang and Degol, 2016). School climate has also been shown to be an important predictor of emotional and behavioral consequences (Wang *et al.*, 2010). Changes in the school climate related to increases in discipline and order, as well as in the quality of the relationships between students and teachers, have been shown to be effective in reducing behavioral problems by helping to increase safety in school (Wang *et al.*, 2010). In this line, the negative relationships between positive school climate and the prevalence of bullying are well documented (Konishi *et al.*, 2017). Thus, some characteristics of school climate such as supportive peer-peer (Li *et al.*, 2011; Turner *et al.*, 2014) and student-teacher relationships (Li *et al.*, 2011), connectedness and commitment to the school (Li *et al.*, 2011; Turner *et al.*, 2014), sense of belonging in school (Chan and Wong, 2019), clear limits and consequences for unacceptable behavior, and normative beliefs concerning bullying in the entire school (Gendron *et al.*, 2011) have been related to a decrease in bullying.

School climate is important in determining the extent to which students exhibit bullying. School environment and the circumstances around and within the school setting could be a factor on bullying behaviour among the students, especially those in public schools. This is because there is little or no monitoring on the part of the significant stakeholders in public schools compare with religious or mission schools and private schools. Developing a safe and supportive school climate is an important starting point to realize that much bullying occurs without the knowledge of teachers and parents, and that many victims are very reluctant to tell adults of their problems

with bullying (Egbochuku, 2007). When a student find himself in a positive school climate where the environment is conducive for teaching and learning in terms of good relationship with their peers, teachers, and other significant stakeholders, clarity on the rules and regulations that govern all activities in the school system in term of dos and don'ts, and when such rules are broken, appropriate measures are taken to enforce the rules; also when there is a clear channels of reporting bullying without victimizing the complainants or when students feel safe when they report bullying behaviour, then there is a higher chances that bullying could reduce and the climate will be safe for all to live. In contrast, when all these are not in place, bullying could be inevitable. In view of this, this study therefore, investigated the role of school climate on bullying among public secondary school students in Mushin, Lagos State.

Social competence is another crucial factor in this study. Social competence showcases the ability of students to be able to relate appropriately in social situations. It is the ability to be able to interact very well in the presence of others. It is ability on the part of the individual to establish and maintain good socio-emotional skills, self-efficacy and adaptive behaviour. Bierman (2004) defined social competence as the *“capacity to coordinate adaptive responses flexibly to various interpersonal demands and to organize social behavior in different social contexts in a manner beneficial to oneself and consistent with social conventions and morals”*. Social competence has become so important today because of the profound influence it has on the personal and professional lives of individuals. Therefore special attention must be devoted to this domain so that individual will grow into adjusted, balanced and matured individuals who can live together with his fellow men and contribute immensely to the growth of the society. When students possess high social competence skills, it will help them to relate well with their fellow students, bonding with fellow students will not be difficult for them, empathy and consideration will be part of the individual lifestyles which will prevent bullying behaviour. It will also help the individual student to understand others and thereby increases their interpersonal skills. In a situation where all these are missing, there is a higher tendency of exhibiting maladaptive behaviour bullying inclusive.

While carrying out a research work on the relationship between social competence and big five factor, Odedokun (2023) found that personality is a good predictor of social competence among the in school adolescents. Also, Sargodha, Irshad & Attah (2013), found that self-control and social skills were significant predictors of bullying while self-control, empathy and social skills turned out to be the negative predictors for fighting. Communication skills and pro-social behaviour also predicted victimization in negative direction (Irshad & Attah, 2013). The findings confirmed and substantially extended the research endeavour on the relationship between social competence and bullying. While much has been written on social competence and bullying in develop nations only few studies have examined the concepts in developing nations especially in Nigeria where there is scanty of work on the influence of social competence on bullying among public schools. This study, therefore, saw this as a gap to fill.

Family cohesion is another factor that could affect bullying behaviour among the students. The level of bond among individual family members could be a determinant of bullying behaviour among the children, especially those in public junior secondary schools. This is because a majority of them are adolescents with an age range between 12 and 15 years. In a polygamous family setting, jealousy and unfair rivalry are common, leading to suspicion and jealousy along the mother-line; it becomes a matter of survival of the fittest, thus engendering bullying tendencies that might spill over into the school setting (Isangedighi, 2007). Single parents tend to have less time for their children especially in Nigeria where the economy is not friendly to the citizens, there is a high rate of inflation, the price of commodities has gone up, the poverty index has gone up and people have to struggle in order to make ends meet. If it is difficult for a family with two parents to survive the harsh economic policies, how much more a single parent? Parents are living their children for survival of the fittest in order to take care of their family members. The relationship between single-parent homes and an adolescent's risk of being involved in bullying can be explained through the lens of the lack of time the parent spends on interacting with their children, due to the fact that most of their time is spent on jobs and making ends meet (Odedokun, 2022). This can result in the parent having very little control over their adolescent and leave room for being bullied or exhibiting bullying behaviour. Also, a non-cohesive family is likely to use inconsistent discipline styles and have less parental control, hence unruly and maladjusted behaviour like bullying is inevitable.

Parental monitoring of adolescents was found to be a determinant of bullying behaviour among adolescents (Coley, Morris, and Hernandez, 2004). In another study by (Bor, McGee and Fagan, 2004), it was found that family discord correlated significantly with bullying behaviour. High levels of hostile sibling relationships and older sibling delinquencies have been linked with younger sibling bullying tendencies in both brother and sister pairs (Slomkowski *et al.*, 2001). Having delinquent peers greatly increases the risk of becoming a bully (Henry, Tolan and Gorman-Smith, 2001). A family is expected to be a place of love, refuge, affection and trust, this could only happen when every member of the family is bonded together. In a situation where there is no family cohesion, the home could be scattered and this could give room for unruly behaviour like bullying. It is on this premise that this study sought to investigate the influence of family cohesion on bullying among public secondary school students in Mushin, Lagos State.

Peer influence is another variable in this study. A peer group consists of individuals within ages that are close and the school serves as a primary setting for the membership of peer groups (Olalekan, 2016). On one hand, Bernard (2008) described a peer group as having members or individuals bound together by common purpose, goals, interests and motivations. Peer groups provide a sense of security and they help adolescents to build a sense of identity by not allowing teenagers to be themselves (Monyamane & Keletsositse, 2021). One important driver of bullying relates to peer influence, that is, the tendency of adolescents to adjust their attitudes and behaviour to

those of their close friends and peers (Pepler, Craig, & O'Connell, 2010). Rubin, Bukowski and Parker (2007), posited that peer groups persuade individual members to adopt group values, beliefs, goals and to participate in the same activities. Salmivalli 2010; Odedokun and Odekunle (2019) asserted that peer groups directly challenge individual members to comply with existing norms. Hence, members are inclined to take risks. Peer group members believed that risky behaviour increase their standing in the eyes of their peers and assured their acceptance in the group (Monyamane & Keletsositse, 2021). Furthermore, peer groups are among the most influential social structures affecting adolescent behaviour.

Friends, classmates and significant others in the life of a student in schools are essential in showcasing the level of susceptibility to bullying behaviour. Influence of peers and friends may be crucial in knowing the kind of life a child will adopt in school, whether as a bully or the bullied. Whitmore (2011) says it is possible that children and teenagers learn aggression from their peers. Peers may illicit aggression, or serve as role models to other children who have a predisposition to act aggressively. Moreover peers may reinforce aggressive behaviour through their interaction. There have been various studies that have established the relationship between peer pressure and bullying behaviour. Berry (2011) showed that gang members although they constitute a small portion of these samples (range 14-30) account for a disproportionately large share of the criminal behaviour reported. Research findings by Olanrewaju and Odedokun (2019) and Whitmore (2011), also indicated that peer relations somewhat predicted violent behaviour including drug use, anti-social behaviour, violent offences and early high risk sexual behaviour. Vishala (2010) also noted that one's individual rate of violence increases after entry into a gang and only drops when leaving the gang. The author states that adolescent misconduct most often occur in groups. Adolescents who are exposed to and associate with anti- social peers learn to participate in anti- social behaviour through the process of vicarious learning and principles of re- enforcement. This is because the individual would like to interact with his peers after all, nobody is an island. In the course of interacting with one's peer, there is tendency to learn one thing or the others. If he relates with peers that are oppressive and violent or that bullied others, the chances is higher that he might also learn to bully as a sign of belonging to the group and if he is not cautioned or helped, bullying could be part and parcel of the individual lifestyle as a result of peer influence. It is on this premise that this study sought to investigate school climate, peer influence, social competence, and family cohesion as facilitators of bullying among secondary school students in public schools in Mushin, Lagos State.

## **2. Research questions**

- 1) What is the relationship between the independent variables (school climate, peer influence, social competence, and family cohesion) and the dependent variable

(bullying) among secondary school students in public schools in Mushin, Lagos State?

- 2) What is the joint influence of school climate, peer influence, social competence, and family cohesion on bullying behaviour among secondary school students in public schools in Mushin, Lagos State?
- 3) What is the relative influence of climate, peer influence, social competence and family cohesion on bullying behaviour among secondary school students in public schools in Mushin, Lagos State?

### **3. Research design**

The research adopted a survey research correlational design. The choice of this design is the most appropriate for this study because, it was used to explore the relationship between variables, and does not involve in the manipulation of variables. Instead, it carries out its findings and records the information gotten from the research without any alteration.

#### **3.1 Population**

The population of the study includes all the public junior secondary school in Mushin, Lagos State. Mushin is located in Lagos State, Southwestern Nigeria. Mushin is a suburb of Lagos city, and its inhabitants are mostly Yoruba people. Mushin is the site of a large industrial estate. Commercial enterprises include spinning and weaving cotton, shoe manufacturing, bicycle and motorized-cycle assembly, and the production of powdered milk. Agricultural produce is brought for sale in the large central market. The town is served by secondary schools and hospitals. Mushin lies on the railway from Lagos and at the intersection of roads from Lagos, Shomolu, and Ikeja. It is largely a congested residential area with inadequate sanitation and low-quality housing. It had 633,009 inhabitants (NPC, 2006).

#### **3.2 Sample and sampling technique**

The sample of the study consists of 202 secondary school students from six public secondary schools in Mushin, Lagos State. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the participants.

#### **3.3 Instrumentation**

The Students' Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire developed by Hamburger, Basile and Vivolo (2011) was employed for this study. The instrument has four sub-scales of strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1. The questionnaire has 35 items, with higher level depicting higher level of bullying behaviour among the participants of the study. The items in the instrument contain statements based on various types of bullying behaviour such as physical, verbal or cyber bullying In Nigeria, Isiyaku (2016) found the reliability of (SBBQ) to be 0.70.

Family Delinquency Questionnaire (FADE) by Sanni, Udoh, Okediji, Modo and Ezeh (2010), was used to measure family cohesion of the participants. It dealt with information about the participant's family based on family arrangement and social climate (family composition, family cohesion, level of communication, and emotional climate). The third section (Section C) consisted 17 items numbered 14 – 30, which examined common symptoms of delinquency in the subjects. The subjects were required to tick from a list of options, the option to an item that was true in their case as individuals. Finally, the thirty items yielded a test-retest Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.88 for family stability, 0.67 for family cohesion, and 0.72 for family adaptability.

Peer Influence Scale was developed by Ronald and Osnat, (2000). It was an adopted 9-item scale, having 7-point Likert's response format of : 1 = Disagree very much; 2 = Disagree moderately; 3 = Disagree slightly; 4 = Neither agree or disagree; 5 = Agree slightly; 6 = Agree moderately 7 = Agree very much. The items on the scale are: My friends influence my beliefs about sexuality; it is very important that my friends approve of people I date. The reliability coefficient or Cronbach's alpha for the final version of the peer influence scale was .730.

Adolescent Multidimensional Social Competence Questionnaire (AMSC-Q) developed by Gomez-Ortiz *et al.* (2017) was used to measure the participant's social competence. It has 5 point Likert scoring scale ranging from from Strongly Agree = 5 to Strongly Disagree = 1 with reliability of 0.73.

The school climate scale was developed by Hoy, Smith and Sweetland (2002). It was used to measure the school climate of the participants. It is a 27-item on a 4 point Likert scale ranging from rarely occurs, sometimes occurs, often occurs and very frequent. It has four dimensions collegial leadership, teacher professionalism academic press and institutional vulnerability it has a reliability coefficient of 0.850.

### 3.4 Data analysis

Both the descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized by the researcher. The data collected was analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Regression Analysis. Statistical package for the social sciences was used for the analysis.

## 4. Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between the independent variables (school climate, social competence, family cohesion and peer influence) and the dependent variable (bullying) among public secondary school students in Mushin, Lagos State?



**Table 1:** Table showing summary of correlation matrix showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables among respondents

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Bullying behaviour	1.000				
School climate	0.0156	1.000			
Social competence	0.284**	0.012	1.000		
Peer influence	0.265**	0.343**	0.567**	1.000	
Family cohesion	0.266**	0.353**	0.276**	0.380**	1.000

The result of research question as presented on the table 1 above showed that bullying is correlated with school climate ( $r = .0015$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , social competence ( $r = 0.284$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; peer influence ( $r = .265$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and family cohesion ( $r = 0.266$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that the more the school climate is conducive for teaching and learning the lower the probability of exhibiting the bullying behaviour by the participants. Also, respondents who came from a cohesive and loving family will not be involved in bullying. The same interpretation could be said of social competence. When a student's social competence is high, he would be able to relate well with his peer and the thought of bullying will not cross his mind unlike the individual who possess poor socio competence skills, lastly, a learner who has his own mind will not be influenced by his peer to be involved in bullying and are also less likely to experiment with bullying behaviour.

**Research Question 2:** What is the joint contribution of school climate, social competence, family cohesion and peer influence to bullying among public secondary school students in Mushin Lagos State?

**Table 1:** Table showing summary of regression analysis of the combined prediction of bullying among participants by the four independent variables

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.812	0.659	0.646	3.40304

**Table 2:** Summary Regression ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P	Remark
Regression	3856.125	3	964.03	94.88	0.000	Sig
Residual	1991.875	198	10.16			
Total	5848.000	202				

Table 2 above showed that the prediction of all the four independent variables to the dependent (bullying) among the participants correlated positively with the four predictor variables. The table also showed a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.812 and a multiple R square of 0.646. This means that 64.6% of the variance in the bullying among the participants is accounted for by all the four predictor variables, when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at  $p < 0.05$  using the F-ratio at the degree of freedom ( $df = 4/196$ ). The table also shows that the

analysis of variance for the regression yielded a F-ratio of 94.88 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relative contribution of school climate, social competence, family cohesion and peer influence to bullying among secondary school students in public schools in Mushin, Lagos State?

**Table 3:** Relative contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable (test of significance of the regression coefficients)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	9.476	1.106	.	8.571	.000
School climate	.126	.051	.142	2.466	.015
Social competence	.015	.044	.020	.343	.002
Family cohesion	.308	.044	.416	6.938	.000
Peer influence	.292	.049	.336	6.017	.000

Table 3 reveals the relative contribution of the four independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. The partial correlation coefficients of school climate, social competence, family cohesion and peer influence have positive relationship with the bullying behaviour among junior secondary school students. The positive value of the effects of school climate, social competence, family cohesion and peer influence on bullying behaviour among participants is actually determined by positive reinforcement of these four variables. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables to the explanation of the dependent variables family cohesion ( $\beta = 0.308$ ,  $t = 6.938$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) is the most potent contributor to the prediction followed by the peer influence ( $\beta = 0.292$ ,  $t = 6.017$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), school climate ( $\beta = 0.126$ ,  $t = 2.466$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and finally, social competence ( $\beta = 0.015$ ,  $t = 0.343$ ,  $p > 0.0$ ).

## 5. Discussion

Research question one states that, what is the significant relationship that exists between the independent variables and dependent variable (bullying) among public secondary school students in Mushin, Lagos State? The result of research question as presented on the table above showed that bullying is correlated with school climate ( $r = .015$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , social competence ( $r = 0.284$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; peer influence ( $r = .265$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and family cohesion ( $r = 0.266$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that the more the school climate is conducive for teaching and learning the lower the probability of exhibiting the bullying behaviour by the participants. Also, respondents who came from a cohesive and loving family will not be involved in bullying. The same interpretation could be said of social

competence. When a student's social competence is high, he would be able to relate well with his peer and the thought of bullying will not cross his mind unlike the individual who possess poor socio competence skills, lastly, a learner who has his own mind will not be influenced by his peer to be involved in bullying and are also less likely to experiment with bullying. This is in line with the study of (Wang and Degol, 2016; Konishi *et al.*, 2017; Turner *et al.*, 2014) when they opined that the variables of discussion are strongly related to bullying.

In answering research question two, the result showed that school climate, social competence, family cohesion and peer influence are predictors of bullying among public secondary school students in Mushin, Lagos state. That is, bullying among public secondary school students correlated positively with the four predicting variables. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.812 and a multiple R square of 0.646. This means that 64.6% of the variance in the bullying behaviour among participant is accounted for by all the four predictor variables, when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at  $p < 0.05$  using the F- ratio at the degree of freedom ( $df = 3/198$ ). The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded a F-ratio of 94.88 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance. It indicates that if all the four factors are taken together, they jointly influence the level of bullying that is displayed by the public secondary school students in Mushin, Lagos State. This study was corroborated by the studies conducted by (Farrington, 2004; Coley, Morris, and Hernandez, 2004).

In answering research question three, the result showed that social competence, family cohesion, and peer influence had significant influence on bullying behaviour. The findings of this study were confirmed by the previous studies conducted by Elliot and Menerd, 2011; Adeyemi, 2013). Public secondary school students who have access to harsh and negative school climate tend to display bullying behavioural tendencies, while those with amenable school climate will display low bullying behaviour. This finding was corroborated by the studies conducted by (Guerra, Williams, and Sadek, 2011; Saarento, Kärnä, Hodges, and Salmivalli, 2013). By implication, school climate has been found to be responsible for the reduction in bullying behaviour among the public secondary school students. The more conducive the school climate the lower the propensity for exhibiting bullying among the secondary school students, and the more tense the school climate the higher the proclivity for displaying bullying behaviour among the public secondary school students. The important role school climate plays in modifying the behaviour of students is consequential. This indicates that school climate influence essentially the extent of bullying propensity among the students, especially the public junior secondary schools students.

Further, the level of cohesion that is experienced in the families of the public secondary school students would highly influence the level of bullying they display. In essence, emphasis should be placed on synergy in the families. Every member of the

family is expected to showcase a co-existence and there is need for a symbiotic relationship among the family members. This will ultimately facilitate interaction and communication among the family members culminating in actual reduction in the tendency for bullying behaviour. Communication among the family members reduces frictions, promotes love and camaraderie hence reduction in the level of bullying among the siblings and other family members and this basically reduces the tendency for bullying in the school. The influence of peers essentially impacts the level of bullying among the students. The nature of peers whether good or evil will determine the extent of bullying among the students, the reason student should make good choices of peers otherwise, it could lead to disaster.

### **5.1 Recommendations**

There should be a loving and caring relationship established in the homes, among the siblings and the parents as this will give room for synergy in the families. Every member of the family is expected to showcase a co-existence and there is need for a symbiotic relationship among the family members. This will ultimately facilitate interaction and communication among the family members culminating in actual reduction in the tendency for bullying. Communication among the family members reduces frictions, promotes love and camaraderie hence reduction in the level of bullying among the siblings and other family members and this basically reduces the tendency for bullying in the school. Also, government at all levels should brace up and provide necessary positive school climate that would stimulate teaching, learning, and promote friendliness. Lastly, secondary school student should choose friends cautiously and avoid friends that would influence them negatively. Lastly, student in public secondary schools should be exposed to social competence skills as this would not only promote togetherness but will also reduce bullying on our various schools.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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