

Peer Influence, Perceived Self-Efficacy, Family Style and Parental Monitoring as Correlates Affecting Bullying Behaviour Among In-School Adolescents in South-West Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Bullying as an anti-social behaviour among in-school adolescents have lately become a significant concern for teachers, parents, psychologists and society in general due to the negative consequences these behaviour has on the teaching-learning process. In view of this, the study adopts a descriptive survey research design of ex-post factor type. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 12 local government areas out of 137 local government areas in South West Nigeria, making two each from the six states. Also, simple random sampling technique was used to select 2300 participants for the study from 60 public secondary schools across the 12 local government areas in South Western States used for the study. Five instruments used were Bullying Prevalence Questionnaire (BPQ), Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI), General Self-Efficacy (GSE), Parental Monitoring and Family Parenting Style. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression. The independent variables made a joint contributive effect of variation in the prediction of perceived bullying among in-school adolescents. Also, there was significant relationship between peer influence and perceived bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. Likewise, there was significant relationship between self-efficacy and perceived bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. Similarly, there was significant relationship between parental monitoring and perceived bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. Furthermore, there was significant relationship between family style and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. Therefore, it was recommended that Adolescents should be given appropriate orientation on the danger of negative peer influence on their well-being and the need to avoid the expression of violence in their relationship with their peers. Also, schools should endeavour to organize social reawakening activities that will enable in-school adolescents appreciate the need to develop friendly attitude instead of being a bully.

Keywords: *Bully, School, Adolescents, Self-efficacy, Peer-influence, Parent, South-West, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in the intellectual development and normative character formation of students. This aspect of development is the cardinal focus of educational systems of countries globally and Nigeria is not an exception. Thus, much emphasis is given to this expectation considering the fact that it is a necessary pre-requisite for success in school, employment settings and the society at large. However, it could be said that the attainment of this goal could be a mirage as most in-school adolescents struggle with the negative impacts of some psychosocial factors influencing expressed anti-social behaviour as bullying. Consequently, a keen observation of what is happening in Nigeria today seems to indicate that anti-social behaviour is on the increase among in-school adolescents despite the fact that the manifestation of anti-social behaviour as bullying could hinder their ability to concentrate in classroom teaching and learning situation and prevent them from developing required functional competencies for academic success. This could have grave consequences across their developmental lifespan. Thus, bullying as an anti-social behaviour among in-school adolescents have lately become a significant concern for teachers, parents, psychologists and society in general due to the negative consequences this behaviour has on the teaching-learning process (Estévez, Musitu and Herrero, 2005).

Furthermore, bullies, as proactive aggressors, tend to attach a positive value to the use of aggressive behaviour. They have a strong need to control others and enjoy themselves subduing others. The above point of view gives credence to Whitted and Dupper's (2005) assertion that bullying is an unprovoked aggressive behaviour repeatedly carried out against victims who are unable to defend themselves. Bullying can take many forms such as physical aggression, threats, insults, spreading rumors, social exclusion, and mocking the victim's culture, disability, or sexual orientation (Craig and Pepler, 2007). Rigby (2008) suggests that bullying is the systematic abuse of power in interpersonal relationship. In other words, bullying is when a person is picked on over and over again by an individual or group with more power, either in terms of physical strength or social standing.

Thus, past research shows that peer influence has emerged over the last 50 years to be the chief source of values and behavioural influence in adolescence, replacing the influence of adults. Along with this new trend has come a rise in bullying and other anti-social behaviour (Neufeld and Mate, 2005). Subsequently, it is of note that families of disturbed adolescents are characterized by continuous and severe conflict that negatively affects communication patterns and interaction within the family (Nickel, Bohlen, Nickel, Mitterlehner and Rother, 2004). Some research reports have shown that a large percentage of anti-social adolescents come from homes that lacked normal parental love and care. Attention, love and warmth go a long way in assisting the child's emotional development and adjustment (Odebunmi, 2007). Otuadah (2006) posits that when the relationship between the parents and the adolescent is warm, it creates a healthy environment for the development of the adolescent. Adolescents exhibiting traits of friendliness, cheerfulness, positive emotions and good maturity traits, show evidently, that such adolescents come from homes where they are accepted and loved (Otuadah, 2006). Therefore, parental monitoring is a key

factor in youths' development. Nevertheless, adolescents who feel close to their caregivers tend to value their opinions more highly and are more likely to seek guidance for difficult situations (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, Story and Perry 2006). They also spend more time with their family and have less opportunity to engage in anti-social behaviour (Crawford and Novak, 2008) which is a core dynamics underlying social control theories of adolescent delinquency. Thus, parent–youth connectedness has been linked to decrease risk for a host of problems such as substance use, depression, bullying, early sexual relations, and suicide attempts, and is associated with increased youth success and development of self-confidence in handling challenging situation(s) (Ackard et al., 2006). According to Redmond (2010), self-efficacy is also influenced by encouragement and discouragement pertaining to an individual's performance or ability to perform; such as peers encouraging their friends saying, "You can do it. I have confidence in you." Using verbal persuasion in a positive light leads individuals to put forth more effort; therefore, they have a greater chance at succeeding. Thus, self-efficacy is the term used to describe how one judges one's own competence to complete tasks and reach goals (Ormrod, 2006).

Bullying at school remains a major problem and one that is desperately in need of a solution. School bullying is responsible for much unhappiness, and many children do not achieve their potentials because of it. A child can be made so unhappy by bullying to the extent that the child will be unable to enjoy what should be some of the happiest years of his lives and instead, the child may spend his childhood or adolescence in an anxious and depressed state. Children's experiences in school are fundamental to their successful transition into adulthood. In school, children negotiate and re-negotiate their relationships, self-image and independence. They cultivate interpersonal skills, discover and refine strengths and struggle with vulnerabilities. As such, schools have an obligation to provide a safe environment for children to develop positively in their academics, in their relationship with others, and in their behavioural dispositions. Therefore, in view of this perception, this study investigated peer influence, perceived self-efficacy, environmental influence and parental monitoring as correlates affecting bullying behaviour among in-school-adolescents in South-West Nigeria.

This study is anchored on Robert Agnew's (1985) General Strain Theory. Agnew's general strain theory is based on the general idea that when people are treated badly they may get upset and engage in crime. Thus, the theory pays a special attention to an individual's immediate social environment. Also, it posits that individual's actual or anticipated failure to achieve positively valued goals, actual or anticipated removal of positively valued stimuli, and actual or anticipated presentation of negative stimuli all result in strain. Furthermore, General Strain Theory contends that anger and frustration which are characteristic features of bullies confirm negative relationships which further contribute to their alienation and rejection from society. Therefore if particular rejections are generalized into feelings that the environment is unsupportive, more strongly negative emotions may motivate bullies to engage in crime. This is most likely to be true for younger individuals, who are bullies, aggressors and deviant. The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 margin of error.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between peer influence and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents.
2. There is no significant relationship between perceived self-efficacy and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents.
3. There is no significant relationship between parental monitoring and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents.
4. There is no significant relationship between family style and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents.

METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive ex-post factor survey design to investigate peer influence, perceived self-efficacy, family style and parental monitoring as correlates affecting bullying behaviour among in-school-adolescents in South-West Nigeria. The population for this study consists of all in-school adolescents in secondary schools in South-West Nigeria. The samples for this study are two thousand three hundred (2,300) in-school adolescents (male and female) in secondary schools in South-West Nigeria. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to select twelve local government areas from among one hundred and thirty seven (137) of the entire South West (Lagos 20, Ogun 20, Ondo 18, Oyo 33, Osun 30 and Ekiti 16) through the hat picking method. Similarly, sixty public schools (five from each local government area) and two thousand three hundred in-school adolescents were randomly selected for the study.

The Bullying Prevalence Questionnaire (BPQ) by Rigby and Slee (1994) was used to measure incidence of bullying among in-school adolescents. It is a twenty item instrument that has been used across culture and proven to be reliable. It has items such as: I like to get in fights with someone I can easily beat: I like to make others scared of me etc. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.84. Peer influence was measured using a well-validated measure of peer pressure developed and validated by Brown and Clasen (1985). The Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI) was designed to assess the perception of peer pressure in a number of domains, including peer social activities, misconduct, conformity to peer norms etc. Responses are made on a 4-point scale. Responses to all 11 items are summed up to yield the final composite score, with a range from 10 to 48. It has a Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.69 to 0.91 for all measures.

Perceived self-efficacy was measured using the General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scale by (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995). This scale is created to predict coping with daily hassles as well as adaptation after experiencing various kinds of stressful life events. It is a ten item standardized instrument that requires 4 minutes on average to answer the questions. Responses are made on a 4-point scale. Responses to all 10 items are summed up to yield the final composite score, with a range from 10 to 40. It has Cronbach's alphas ranged from .76 to .90.

Parental Monitoring Scale by Small and Kerns, (1993) was used to measure parental monitoring of in-school adolescents movement, activities and conduct. It is six item standardized instrument. It contains items such as: 1) "My parent(s) know where I am after school"; 2) "If I am going to be home late, I am expected to call my parents to let them know". It has a five point Likert response format of: "never", "rarely", "sometimes", "a lot of times" or "always". The scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .84. Family style was measured using Family Parenting Style scale by Kandel, Denise and Lessor (1972). It is a seven item standardized instrument. This scale assessed adolescent's perception of their family parenting styles by asking about decision making processes in the home. The items read: My parents or an adult are always at home: They tell me exactly what to do; etc. It has a five point Likert response format of: "never", "rarely", "sometimes", "a lot of times" or "always". The scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .92.

Permission was obtained from Principals of schools. The consent of the students and the assistance of class teachers were sought in schools selected for the study. The instruments were given to students selected through random process so that each student would have equal opportunity to participate. They were instructed that their responses will be for research purpose and the researcher will treat them confidentially. After necessary instructions, the instruments were administered to the students. Two thousand three hundred questionnaires were administered and collected back. This number was used for the analysis of data for the study. Data were analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. Multiple regressions were used to find out the combined and relative contribution of the ten independent variables on the dependent variable. Also, PPMC was used to determine if the relationship between the variables were statistically significant to warrant rejection or acceptance of the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that the independent variables had significant combined effects (peer pressure, self-efficacy, parental monitoring and family style) on the prediction of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions. This suggests that the above four factors accounted for 9.5% variation in the prediction of perceived bullying among in-school adolescents. It was revealed that the above variance is the explained variances within the scope of this study. This implies that the above independent factors contributed significantly. The other unexplained factors could be variables that are not within the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there was a significant combined effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. It is observed from table 2 above that there was significant relationship between peer influence and perceived bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. This implies that peer influence is a significant factor in the occurrence of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. It is observed from table 3 above that there was significant relationship between self-efficacy and perceived bullying behaviour

among in-school adolescents. This implies that self-efficacy of adolescents is an important and significant factor in the prediction of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. It is observed from table 4 that there was significant relationship between parental monitoring and perceived bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. This implies that parental monitoring is a significant factor in the prediction of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. It is observed from table 5 that there was significant relationship between family style and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. This implies that family style is a significant factor in the prediction of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. The findings of the study reveal that there was significant joint effect of the independent variables (peer pressure, self-efficacy, parental monitoring, family style) on the prediction of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions R of .539, multiple R -square = .291 and Adjusted R square = .280. It further reveals that the independent variable accounted for 9.5% variation in the prediction of bullying among in-school adolescents. This implies that the independent variables have great impact on the dependent variable.

The reason for this could be the fact that the school environment is an academic and social setting that requires and accommodates in-school adolescent's interpersonal relationship and these give room for verbal and physical contacts that can pre-dispose act of bullying among in-school adolescents. In view of this, bully can take place and can be experienced by any in-school adolescents at any age and in diverse circumstances because none of them is immune to it. Based on these contexts, bullying is observed to have increased in frequency and severity as it has in today's school environment reached an epidemic proportions. In support of this assertion is Rigby (2008) who suggests that bullying is "the systematic abuse of power in interpersonal relationship" as experienced among in-school adolescents. Further reason for this development is that in school the act of bullying has become a common and daily activity expressed among in-school adolescents. In congruence, Whitted and Dupper (2005) assert that bullying is an unprovoked aggressive behaviour repeatedly carried out against victims who are unable to defend themselves. Thus, bullying can take many forms such as physical aggression, threats, insults, spreading rumors, social exclusion, and mocking the victim's culture, disability, or sexual orientation (Craig and Pepler, 2007).

The result of the study revealed that peer influence correlates significantly with bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. The reason for this development could be that it is a common site in schools for peers to influence or pressure their friends to bully other adolescents as a means to subdue them and gain control over them. Also, in some instances, friends support their peers in combining forces to bully others. Thus, it is observed that at this stage of development, the act of friendship/peer association is an essential component of development for in-school adolescents. They provide safe venues where in-school adolescents can explore their identities, where they can feel accepted and where they can develop a sense of belongings. Friendships also allow youth to practice and foster social skills necessary for future success. Thus, past research shows that peer influence has emerged over the last 50 years to be the chief source of values and behavioural

influence in adolescence, replacing the influence of adults. Along with this new trend has come a rise in bullying and other antisocial behaviour (Neufeld and Mate, 2005). The result of the study shows that the variable self-efficacy correlates positively with bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. The possible reason for this development could be that when adolescents feel confident in the fact that they have enough strength in them to suppress others or are more masculine than their peers, they tend to bully their peers more often. This gives them the confidence that they can beat their peers to a fight and subdue and put them under control. Thus, self-efficacy is the term used to describe how one judges one's own competence to complete tasks and reach goals (Ormrod, 2006). This result therefore, gives credence to Redmond's (2010), assertion that self-efficacy is also influenced by encouragement and discouragement pertaining to an individual's performance or ability to perform; for example, when in-school adolescents encourage their peers to bully other students in school saying words such as "You can beat him/her, I have confidence in you" etc., they tend to be more efficacious and engage more in the act of bullying. This further explains why the variable self-efficacy correlates significantly with in-school adolescents' bullying behaviour.

The result of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between parental monitoring and expressed bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. The reason for this could be aligned to the fact that when parents fail to supervise and correct the violent and aggressive behavioural misconduct of in-school adolescents at home, they then to transfer such misconduct to their school environment and in actual sense put them to practice in the form of bullying other children in school. For example, when parents fail to regulate the kind of violent films children watch at home, they tend to put into practice the violent acts they watch in films at school against their peers through bullying by fighting, kicking, shouting, etc. This implies that parental monitoring can play an important role in bullying. Furthermore, the result of this study implies that parental monitoring is a key factor in youths' development. Thus, adolescents who feel close to their caregivers tend to value their opinions more highly and are more likely to seek guidance for difficult situations (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, Story and Perry 2006). They also spend more time with their family and have less opportunity to engage in antisocial behaviour (Crawford and Novak, 2008). Therefore, parent-youth connectedness has been linked to decrease risk for a host of problems such as substance use, depression, bullying, early sexual relations, and suicide attempts, and is associated with increased youth success (Ackard et al., 2006).

The findings of the study indicate that there is significant relationship between family style and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. The reason for this could be that the type of family environment a child grows up in, determines to a great extent the child's pattern of social interaction and interpersonal relationship with others. Thus, a child that grows up in a violent oriented family set up would be prone to bully others since the child would have learned through social modeling that violence and aggression are acceptable norms. Also, a child that is from an autocratic or authoritarian family could tend to be aggressive in order to assert self. This is in accordance with the fact that a child's social development and competence are largely influenced by family life style and family

relationships as a child well-being continues to depend on the quality of family interactions. Thus, family type plays an integral role in children's development. Therefore, it is of note that families of disturbed adolescents are characterized by continuous and severe conflict that negatively affects communication patterns and interaction within the family (Nickel, Bohlen, Nickel, Mitterlehner and Rother, 2004). Furthermore, some research reports have shown that a large percentage of antisocial adolescents who are bullies come from homes that lacked normal parental love and care. Attention, love and warmth go a long way in assisting the child's emotional development and adjustment (Odebumi, 2007). Therefore, adolescents exhibiting traits of friendliness, cheerfulness, positive emotions and good maturity traits, show evidently, that such adolescents come from homes where they are accepted and loved (Otuadah, 2006).

The findings of this research provide reasonable information that can be applied in counselling and social psychology to the better understanding of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents considering the fact that a keen observation of what is happening in Nigeria today seems to indicate that antisocial behaviour is on the increase among in-school adolescents despite the fact that the manifestation of anti-social behaviour as bullying could hinder their ability to concentrate in classroom teaching and learning situation and prevent them from developing required functional competencies for academic success. This could have grave consequences across their developmental lifespan. Thus, bullying as an anti-social behaviour among in-school adolescents has lately become a significant concern for teachers, parents, psychologists and society in general due to the negative consequences these behaviour has on the teaching-learning process (Estévez, Musitu and Herrero, 2005).

Table 1: Summary of regression for the joint contributing effect of independent variables to the prediction of bullying behavior among in-school adolescents.

R=.314

R Square =.099

Adjusted R square =.095

Std. Error =12.736

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|------|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 40615.718 | 10 | 4061.572 | 25.039 | .000 ^a |
| | Residual | 371143.4 | 2288 | 162.213 | | |
| | Total | 411759.1 | 2298 | *P<0.05 | | |

Table 2: Pearson Correlation summary showing relationship between the variables

| Variables | Mean | Std. Dev. | r | Df | Sig. | P |
|--------------------|-------|-----------|------|------|------|-----|
| Peer influence | 27.29 | 8.71 | .187 | 2298 | .000 | Sig |
| Bullying behaviour | 44.79 | 13.39 | | | | |

Table 3: Pearson Correlation summary showing relationship between the variables

| Variables | Mean | Std. Dev. | r | Df | Sig. | P |
|--------------------|-------|-----------|------|------|------|-----|
| Self-efficacy | 19.44 | 6.373 | .100 | 2298 | .000 | Sig |
| Bullying behaviour | 44.79 | 13.39 | | | | |

Table 4: Pearson Correlation summary showing relationship between the variables

| Variables | Mean | Std. Dev. | r | Df | Sig. | P |
|---------------------|-------|-----------|------|------|------|-----|
| Parental monitoring | 18.33 | 6.571 | .182 | 2298 | .000 | Sig |
| Bullying behaviour | 44.79 | 13.39 | | | | |

Table 5: Pearson Correlation summary showing relationship between the variables

| Variables | Mean | Std. Dev. | r | Df | Sig. | P |
|--------------------|-------|-----------|------|------|------|-----|
| Family style | 20.77 | 6.62 | .210 | 2298 | .000 | Sig |
| Bullying behaviour | 44.79 | 13.39 | | | | |

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Nigeria, adolescents are often exposed to conflicting value systems that serve as stimuli that reinforce the disposition of bullying behaviour. These negatively impact on their interpersonal relationship with others, and the incidence of bullying among in-school adolescents has made lots of students to become helpless, confused, frustrated and to become truants. In view of this, the possibility of these adolescents attaining and maximizing their full potentials in contributing to Nigeria's political, social, economic and technological development in this 21st century seems a mirage. Based on the findings of this study, the study makes the following recommendations:

- i Family members should take time to understand the developmental trend of in-school adolescents as to be able to serve as good models to them and positively support their development.
- ii Parents should endeavour to monitor the activities of in-school adolescents so that their negative attitude would be corrected on time before it would be too late.
- iii Adolescents should be given appropriate orientation on the danger of negative peer influence on their well-being and the need to avoid the expression of violence in their relationship with their peers.
- iv Schools should endeavour to organize social reawakening activities that will enable in-school adolescents appreciate the need to develop friendly attitude instead of being a bully.
- v Adolescents should be encouraged to make use of the media positively to enhance their development in order to be functional and productive members of the society instead of using it as a medium to foster act of bullying.
- vi The government should endeavour to establish counseling centers in schools to assist in the attainment of functional and capacity development of in-school adolescents and reduce the occurrence of bullying in school.

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