

Article

Bully and Schools in Nigeria: Implication for Decision Making by School Administrators in Nigeria

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Abstract: The research explores both behavioral changes and academic results because of student bullying in Nigerian educational facilities. Educational research does not extensively document the long-term consequences of bullying even though everyone recognizes its harmful effects in the Nigerian school environment. This authors analyze bullying consequences on students' mental health and school life through an assessment of bullying causes from dominant behavior and depression to weak governmental intervention and parental supervision. The study examines secondary data from publications to show that bullying creates major negative effects on students in areas of mental health as well as social relationships and academic performance. Bullied students experience lower self-perception together with higher anxiety symptoms coupled with academic failure. Additionally, the absence of national anti-bullying policies exacerbates the issue. The author proposes both state and national anti-bullying policies while suggesting that administrators provide specific rules against bullying. This research creates a strong urgency for broad national policy change alongside community awareness programs to fight bullying effects on student population. This research enhances academic knowledge by showing that legislative policies alongside parental support represent vital elements for controlling school bullying.

Keywords: Schools, Academic Performance, Non-Teaching, Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

A school is a social institution that conducts extracurricular activities in addition to teaching and learning. A school is an establishment created with the purpose of teaching knowledge. For the purpose of teaching and learning, schools are a microcosm of society. For the goal of teaching and learning, schools are both formal and informal establishments that bring together educators, learners, and school officials. Teachers are viewed as a second set of parents, and students as a second home at school [1]. The school is a structured social entity designed to teach information. The school's goal is to create a venue for teachers to meet with students and influence their behaviour. The school offers a space where professors, students, and others can engage in productive teaching and learning. School administrators, instructors, and non-teaching personnel are examples of service providers, whereas learners are examples of service recipients. According to Ogunode et al., school stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and non-teaching personnel, provide services that require them to constantly improve their knowledge and abilities. For teaching and learning to proceed successfully, the school setting should be safe and secure for both instructors and pupils. Bully issues are a major problem in Nigerian schools. (Punch editorial team 2024) stated that cult groups intimidate and coerce their classmates to join their evil organisations against their will starting in elementary school.

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The secondary and tertiary levels exhibit a greater degree of this. In the case of the Abuja International School, following the first video featuring female students, a plethora of others appeared online. In the video, the female students were repeatedly slapping a classmate. The subsequent recordings showed how senior students physically and verbally harassed junior students over trivial issues. Some students claim that issues like these are handled lightly when they are brought to the attention of the police or school administration. According to Science Direct, 51.9% of secondary school pupils in Nigeria report bullying, and 27.9% of them acknowledge that they have bullied others. Seventy-five percent of instances take place in the classroom, and 58.3 percent of bullies were peers [2]. The editorial crew of Punch noticed that senior pupils were allegedly bullying an SS2 kid. In a horrifying moment seen on camera, he was told to lie on the ground as a chain was fastened around his neck. As a light-hearted performance that was misunderstood, the school minimised the situation. It stated that several pupils saw the footage, which was captured on a school-provided equipment.

The editorial team of Punch noted in 2021 that a well-known private college in Lagos was allegedly the scene of bullying. Senior students allegedly beat the victim till he was hurt; the victim passed away later. In spite of this, bullying incidents committed by other students at the school went unchecked (Punch editorial staff). According to the Punch editorial staff, a story about Don Davis, an 11-year-old junior secondary school pupil at Deeper Life High School in Uyo, broke the previous year. The public learnt about Davis's ordeal after his mother, Deborah Okezie, shared his images and videos on social media, detailing how the young man was starved by the school administration for bedwetting and subjected to physical and sexual abuse by his elders. By transferring him from his dormitory to a more senior hostel, where he was often beaten by his seniors, the school administration allegedly went beyond the call of duty. Sadly, Don passed away. An 11-year-old child was sodomised and made to engage in oral sex with older classmates in 2018 at a special school for the deaf in Kuje, Abuja. Using sign language, the boy described how he was escorted from school at night to a meeting where men performed rituals, extracted children's blood, and had them perform sensual activities or face death. The youngster claimed that every time he disobeyed orders, he was brutalised. In August 2021, news broke that a teacher at the Government Secondary School Kwali, Abuja, had beaten and killed a 13-year-old JSS 2 student. Even though the youngster was believed to have become ill, his teacher reportedly severely reprimanded him for not finishing his assignment. Based on this context, the purpose of this paper is to investigate how purchasing affects Nigerian schoolchildren.

1.1 Literature Review Findings Conclusion and Recommendations

1.1.1 Concept of Bully

Bullying is defined as unwelcome, violent conduct with a perceived or actual power disparity among school-age youth. Over time, the behaviour occurs or has the potential to occur again. Children who harass others or are bullied themselves may experience severe, long-lasting issues [3]. According to Stopbully.gov.com, bullying must involve an imbalance of power. Children who bully others use their advantages—like popularity, physical strength, or access to private information—to manipulate or hurt others. Even when they include the same individuals and repetition (bullying behaviours occur more than once or have the potential to occur more than once), power imbalances can shift over time and in new contexts. According to Humanright.com, bullying happens when someone or a group of people is the target of repeated, deliberate acts or comments that cause them anguish and jeopardise their wellbeing. People who wish to make someone else feel weaker or less powerful, or who have more influence or control over them, typically take these behaviours [4]. According to Stopbully.gov.com, bullying encompasses behaviours including threatening someone, spreading untruths, physically or verbally assaulting someone, and purposefully removing someone from a group.

Bullying occurs when someone or a group of people is repeatedly and purposefully targeted with words or actions that cause them grief and jeopardise their welfare. People who wish to make someone else feel weaker or less powerful, or who have more influence or control over them, typically take these activities. Although people may bully one another due to conflict or dislike, bullying is not the same as disagreement between people (such as a fight) or hating someone. Humanright.com defines bullying as the following types of repeated behaviour: excluding someone from a group (online or offline); acting unpleasant around or towards someone, hurling nasty looks, making rude gestures, calling names, being impolite and rude, and continuously teasing someone negatively; spreading rumours or lies, or misrepresenting someone (for example, by posting messages on Facebook that appear to be from their Facebook account), mucking about that goes too far; harassing a person because of their gender, colour, sex, religion, or disability; purposefully and persistently causing bodily harm to another person; purposefully following someone and abusing any authority over another person, such as a student representative or prefect. Humanright.com states that bullying can occur anywhere. It can occur through email, text messaging, online social networks, homes, workplaces, or schools. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse are all possible, as can public remarks, messages, and actions taken online with the intention of upsetting or hurting someone (also known as cyberbullying). However, bullying can have the same effect on the victim, causing them great anguish and misery regardless of the form it takes.

Bullying can happen during or after school hours, according to Humanright.com and Stopbully.gov.com. The majority of bullying incidents that are reported take place in school buildings, although a sizable portion also occur on the playground or the bus. Additionally, it may occur online, in the youth's neighbourhood, or while going to or from school. According to Niyi, bullying can take many different forms [5]. Inappropriate sexual remarks, name-calling, mocking, and threats of damage are examples of verbal bullying, which is when someone says or writes hurtful things. Social bullying, also known as relational bullying, is when someone's relationships or reputation are harmed. Leaving someone out on purpose, urging other kids not to be friends with someone, spreading rumours about someone, and making someone look bad in public are all examples of social bullying. Physical bullying entails causing harm to someone's body or belongings.

The following are examples of physical bullying: spitting, tripping, pushing, hitting, kicking, pinching, removing or damaging someone else's belongings, and using cruel or offensive hand gestures. Pacer claims that cyberbullying occurs. Using technology, including social media, online gaming, texting, email, and images, to repeatedly and uninvitedly injure someone else is known as "kids against bullying". This includes sending cruel texts, making cruel remarks online, sharing someone else's photos, liking or sharing posts about painful content, spreading rumours or gossip online, and endorsing someone who publishes hurtful content. According to the definition given above, bullying is any deliberate act of behaviour that involves physical, verbal, and emotional aggression towards a person. Examples of this include threatening, spreading rumours, attacking, hitting, pushing, fighting, tripping, name-calling, and making fun of someone in order to make them feel inferior or unwelcome in a setting, institution, or school. Bullying can also be defined as unwelcome, hostile behaviour directed against a person that includes verbal and physical abuse, as well as emotional attack, and that is repeated over an extended period of time with the intention of making the victim feel horrible.

Bullying is defined as a systematic, planned behaviour that involves the frequent use of derogatory language with the intention of causing emotional and psychological harm to individuals or groups of individuals [6]. Bullying is a deliberate act of aggression that essentially entails using force or compulsion to threaten or hurt someone who is thought to be less powerful or inferior. Bullying can take many different forms, such as verbal, physical, and online. The victim's mental and emotional health can be severely impacted by bullying, which can result in suicide thoughts, anxiety, and sadness. It is a severe

problem that is common in online communities, businesses, and educational institutions [7]. Bullying occurs in Nigerian schools for a variety of reasons. Dominance, melancholy, the lack of anti-bullying legislation, and parental failure are some of these issues.

1.1.2 Dominance factors

These individuals bully others in an attempt to gain power. Persistent bullies are probably motivated by a desire to control others and elevate themselves in society. They might not view bullying as ethically reprehensible, have a high sense of self-worth, and express no remorse for their bullying actions.

1.1.3 Depression factor

An additional reason why people bully is because they are experiencing stress and dissatisfaction. Other people may bully because they are angry or frustrated, have social difficulties, or have been bullied themselves.

1.1.4 Absence of anti-bullying laws

In Nigerian schools, the lack of an anti-bullying policy exposes children to mistreatment and compromises their entitlement to a secure and encouraging learning environment. A strong anti-bullying policy would give schools the structure they need to deal with bullying situations quickly and skilfully, foster an environment of empathy and respect, and give kids the confidence to report harassment.

1.1.5 Parental failure

Some parents have not done a very good job of training and raising their children. They purposefully refused to train their wards in socially acceptable ways and lavished them with attention. Conversely, some parents unintentionally or intentionally foster bullies by overindulging their kids or consistently ignoring accusations against them, according to the Punch editorial team. Without intervention, these juvenile bullies may grow into more serious individuals in the future.

2. Materials and Methods

This essay takes a stance. Secondary data was used in the paper. The information was gathered from both online and print sources. International organisation reports, government publications, bully documentaries, abstracts, CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib SAGE, Nebraska, and Springer are some of the sources of the resources. The sample size that was ultimately used in the paper was determined by applying content analysis to the gathered materials.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Data analysis on impact of bullying on students

Numerous studies have examined how bullies affect school stakeholders. In Nigeria, for example, bullying affects up to 85% of teenagers enrolled in school, according to a study conducted by Ismail Abdullateef Raji et al. [8]. It poses a potentially dangerous risk to the normal development of adolescents. They came to the conclusion that bullying among teenagers in Sokoto City is very common, particularly among males, students attending boarding schools, and those who frequently deal with parental disputes. Mictec International School also examined the impact of bullying on kids and found that bullies can lead to the following [9]:

Mental Health Issues: Depression, anxiety, loneliness and consistent feeling of sadness are mental issues that can be demonstrated by the bullied when left for long without attention.

Physical Health Problems: Children who are victims in such cases may develop unhealthy change of eating or sleeping pattern. What happens when a child fails to have enough sleep or food? Your guess is as good as mine.

Dwindling Academic Performance: No one likes to be where they are not loved. A child with so much passion and interest for school may suddenly start hating the mention of it because of the thought of the bad experience they get every time from the bully at school. In turn, this lack of interest will reflect in decreased academic performance and increased school absenteeism.

Social Difficulties: In deed, Fear of reject or attacks from their oppressor will make any child keep to themselves. Such child may enter into their shell and may struggle to make friends.

Depleted Self-Esteem: A bullied child who consistently endures psychological, emotional and physical pains without early respite may suffer serious damage to their self-esteem.

Self-injury and Suicide ideation: In extreme cases, the bullied may consider taking their lives as a permanent solution to the unending trauma and harassment (Mictec international school 2024).

According to research by Abubakar and Niyi, bullying has an impact on students' social lives, emotions, psychology, and academic performance [10], [11], and [12]. Bullying in schools has a devastating impact on victims, their families, and society as a whole. Emotional wounds frequently persist, affecting social development, academic achievement, and mental health. In the tested states of Benin and Port Harcourt, Omoteso and Egbochuku claim that the detrimental effects of school bullying in Nigeria vary from academic difficulties to physical and mental disease [13], [14].

4. Conclusion

This study looked at how bullying affects students' conduct and academic achievement in Nigerian schools. The study found that bullying had a lasting effect on students. In particular, the study found that bullies have an impact on children' social, psychological, and academic development in the classroom. The study also demonstrated that parental failure, depression, dominance, and the lack of anti-bullying legislation are the main causes of bullying in Nigerian schools. The study suggests that the federal and state governments create national and state anti-buying regulations for the nation and its various states based on these findings. All school officials ought to establish anti-bullying policies for their schools [15]. To raise awareness of bullying and its negative social and psychological impacts on students, the government, through its agencies, should start a nationwide awareness campaign in all educational institutions. In order to combat bullying, parents and guardians should teach their children morals and appropriate social values.

Implication for Decision Making by School Administrators in Nigeria

Follow-up to research showing that bullying has an impact on students' emotions, psychology, and academic achievement in classrooms. Nigerian school authorities ought to create a nationwide anti-bullying policy in light of this study. An anti-bullying policy should be developed, according to the Punch editorial team, and it should include a number of essential elements, such as a precise definition of bullying, reporting protocols, investigation and intervention, victim support, education and awareness, and sanctions for offenders. Bullies should be expelled when cases are proven against them as part of the penalty. To safeguard students' rights and welfare, establish a secure and welcoming learning environment, and foster a respectful and empathetic culture, it is imperative to put in place an anti-bullying policy. The government needs to impose strict anti-bullying regulations. These ought to hold schools responsible for carelessness and contain explicit disciplinary measures for violators. Penalties, ranging from fines to loss of accreditation, should be imposed on institutions that fail to protect students or try to hide instances. Schools will be forced by such repercussions to put student welfare ahead of reputational considerations. Second, the administration of the school should establish a technologically

checked environment. The editorial staff of *Punch* stated that schools need to take immediate, proactive steps to combat bullying. Leadership is essential; housemasters, teachers, and principals must keep a close eye on students' actions using both technology resources like CCTV cameras and physical supervision. By holding students accountable and offering unambiguous proof in cases of wrongdoing, surveillance serves as a deterrent. Third, a club on anti-bullying should be established by the school administration. The goal of this club is to combat bullying in schools. According to the editorial team of *Punch*, peer groups, prefects, and students can all play a crucial role in anti-bullying initiatives. By empowering them to act as whistleblowers, incidents can be reported early and don't escalate. These actions motivate kids to advocate for a safer environment and foster a sense of communal responsibility. In order to prevent bullying, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment in schools, governments and school administrations should work with parents and guardians to teach their children about appropriate social values.

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