



Bullying Behaviours and Scholastic Adjustment of Students in Public Senior Schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational design. The population of the study comprised all 3,286 public senior secondary school students (SSS 1, 2 and 3) in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. The sample comprised 400 students selected for the study through stratified random sampling technique and Taro Yemene sample size determination. The researcher developed a self-structured questionnaire titled "Bullying Behaviour and Scholastic Adjustment Questionnaire". The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The data analyzed showed that there was a strong negative significant relationship between physical bullying behaviour, emotional bullying behaviour, sexual bullying behaviour, verbal bullying behaviour, cyber bullying behaviour and social bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that school authorities, teachers and parents should create a conducive learning environment that will promote greater scholastic adjustment. School rules that prohibits all forms of bullying behaviour should be in-scribed on the walls of the schools. Finally, that school counsellors should help student to have a positive self-evaluation of themselves.

Keywords: Bullying Behaviour, Scholastic Adjustment, Physical, Emotional, Sexual Bullying

INTRODUCTION

Bullying among school children is a very old phenomenon which has persisted despite efforts put in place to curb it. The school is perceived to be a place where students should feel safe and secure but the opposite seems to be the case. The reality is that a significant number of students are targets of the bullying. The manifestation of bullying behaviour is one of the major problems associated with adolescents in secondary schools today. The pervading incidence of bullying behaviour among secondary school students is prevalently alarming. Adewale (2016) described bullying as a hostile behaviour displayed by an individual in order to harm another person or a group of people.

Bullying can be described as repeated negative events such as aggressive physical contact, fighting and shoving, verbal threats and mockery, grimacing or cruel gesturing, which over time are directed at a person or persons and which are carried out by one or several individuals who are stronger than the victim (Neto, 2015). A bully as a person who instead of facing his problem with those of his own size and age, prefers to test his strength on less-able person or persons by harassing and attacking them. A bully is also person who wilfully and repeatedly exercises power over another with hostile or malicious intent. In line with this, bullying as the intentional, unprovoked abuse of power by one or more children to inflict pain or cause distress to another child on repeated occasions. It is the

experience among children of being a target to violence, threats and aggression of other children who are not siblings and not necessarily age mates.

Generally, bullying occurs when one or more persons repeatedly say or do hurtful things to another who has problems defending himself or herself. Bullying behaviour among students in secondary schools takes various forms. It can be direct or indirect. Direct bullying usually involves hitting, kicking, inflicting injury or making insults, offensive and sneering comments or threats. Repeatedly teasing someone who clearly shows signs of distress are also recognized as bullying. Indirect bullying on the other hand, is the experience of being excluded from a group of friends, being spoken ill of and being prevented from making friends (Neto, 2015). There are three forms of bullying behaviours that exist in our schools: physical, verbal and relational. Bullying behaviour is increasing on a daily basis in most schools in Abia State. Students returns from schools with one complain or the other, some agitating not to return to school due to molestations and teachers' indifferent attitude towards bullying behaviour. The researcher is therefore motivated as to why bullying behaviour is on the increase. Are there no longer school rules and regulations that should guide students' behaviour or no more disciplinary committees in schools anymore?

Adjustment is a holistic aspect of human development, involving an individual's ability to adapt to their environment across various domains, including academic, personal, social, and family spheres. It involves the ability to adapt to challenges and to develop strategies to manage them effectively. This process of adjustment is particularly vital during the adolescent stage, when physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development are at their peak. Scholastic adjustment is a specific type of adjustment that refers to the ability of students to adapt to academic demands of school. It encompasses various aspect, including academic achievement, social relationship, and emotional well-being. Scholastics adjustment is a vital psychological process that enables in-school adolescents to cope with the daily challenges they face in school and also determine the extent to which they are able to access and engage learning materials, develop positive relationships with teachers and peer, manage learning and school-related activities (Nwamadi, 2020).

Scholastics adjustment is a crucial concept in understanding how students with hearing impairment cope with the challenges of schooling, including communication difficulties, social isolation, and accessibility barriers. The ability of students to cope with school environmental challenges is reflected in the degree of scholastic adjustment, which measures their functional learning level and academic performance in areas such as classwork, attention and learning pursuits. In other words, effective scholastic adjustment is essential for academic success and the development of essential life skills, such as time management, problem solving, and self-regulation. If an in-school adolescent with hearing impairment fails to make a good academic adjustment, their school experience may not be impactful, thereby hindering their overall development and success.

Physical bullying is a type of bullying that involves the use of aggression or causing physical harm on an individual. Physical bullying is the most obvious type of bullying that cause a lot of damage to their victims, physically. Bullies use force and body strength to overpower their victims. Most of this type occurs in and around the schools. Physical bullying includes kicking, punching, hitting, and other physical attacks. Emotional bullying is any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth. Social bullying is name calling and abuse on someone's body physic. It also involves refusing such a person to belong to a group. It could take the form of spreading false rumor about a person (Bolarinwa, 2024).

Sexual bullying is any form of sexual harassment includes spreading gossip of a sexual nature. Maybe through technology to harass someone sexually (like sending inappropriate text messages or videos). Sometimes harassment and bullying can even get physical. Sexual bullying doesn't just happen to girls. Boys can harass girls, but girls also can harass guys, guys can harass other guys, and girls may harass other girls. Isn't limited to people of the same age, either. Adults sometimes sexually harass young people (and occasionally, teens may harass adults, though that's pretty rare).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Bullying Behaviour

From the psychological perspective, bullying as a behavioural characteristic can be conceptualized in a number of ways. It can also be taken to be a subset of aggressive behaviours. As with aggressive behaviour generally, bullying intentionally causes hurt to the recipient. This hurt can be physical and psychological. Bullying behaviour infringe on the child's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom and security. It has an influence on the victims' physical, emotional, social and educational wellbeing (Wet, 2018). Basically, two parties/categories of people are involved in bullying behaviour namely, the bully and the victim. There could be a third party known as the bystander or witness. These are discussed briefly;

Types of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can take place in a number of ways. Neto (2015) explained that bullying can include physical attacks, verbal attacks and severe, but subtle, psychological bullying. Victims of bullying experience behaviours such as hitting, kicking, pushing, name calling, abusive language, spreading rumours, manipulation of friendships, being excluded or ignored, and being threatened by individuals who are older, stronger, and more powerful. There are various types of bullying, some of them are as cited below:

Physical Bullying: This is also known as aggression or causing physical harm on an individual. Physical bullying is a serious problem, affecting not only the bully and the victim, but also the other students who witness the bullying. Parents, teachers, and other concerned adults and young people should be aware of what physical bullying is and some of the ways to handle it. Physical bullying is the most obvious type of bullying that cause a lot of damage to their victims, physically. Bullies use force and body strength to overpower their victims. Most of this type occurs in and around the schools. Physical bullying includes kicking, punching, hitting, and other physical attacks. Bullying can start at any age (Neto, 2015). It is a form of aggressive behaviour that involves an imbalance of power manifested by the use of force. It is often a warning sign that children and teens are heading for trouble and are at risk for serious violence. Teens, particularly the boys who bully are likely to engage in other anti-social/delinquent behaviour like vandalism, shoplifting, truancy and drug use which will lead into adulthood. Bullies have a strong need to dominate others and usually have little empathy for their targets. Male bullies are often physically bigger and stronger than their peers. Bullies tend to get in trouble more often, and do more poorly in school than teens who do not bully others. They are also more likely to fight, drink and smoke than their peers (bullyingstatistics.com).

Emotional Bullying: The saying, if sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me was ever true, it sure isn't true today (Gaul, 2022). Bullying in and out of schools is getting out of control. In today's world, bullying is nothing out of the ordinary. Bullying is a worldwide epidemic, like a virus or cancer it picks and gnaws into the bone of our youth. It leaves its victims tattered to the very soul. Students who are bullied have lasting fears that their torment will continue to harass them. Various reports and studies have established that approximately 15% of students are initiators of bullying behaviour (Olweus, 2019). However in our schools we have never been able to see much harassment through physical or mental forms. Emotional Bullying is any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, or any other treatment which may diminish the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth. (Tracy, 2022)

Sexual Bullying: Sometimes schools and other places use one term or the other legal reasons. For instance, a school document may use the term "Bullying" to describe what's against school policy, while a law might use the term "Harassment" to define what's against the law-same behaviour might be against school policy and also against the law. With sexual bullying, the focus is on things like a person's appearance, body parts or sexual orientation includes spreading gossip or rumours of a

sexual nature (Wet, 2018). Maybe verbal (like making rude comments to or about someone), may we technology to harass someone sexually (like sending inappropriate text messages or videos). Sometimes harassment and bullying can even get physical. Sexual bullying doesn't just happen to girls. Boys can harass girls, but girls also can harass guys, guys can harass other guys, and girls may harass other girls. Isn't limited to people of the same age, either. Adults sometimes sexually harass young people (and occasionally, teens may harass adults, though that's pretty rare). Most of the time, when sexual harassment happens to teens, its being done by people in the same age group.

Causes of Bullying Behaviour in School

The factors that cause school bullying are many and they can be classified into two: environmental and psychological factors. Bello (2022) opined that the home background or environment the child has grown up in can determine how he or she behaves and interact with others. The following are some of the causes.

1. **Defective/Wrong Child Upbringing:** Bello (2022) postulated that causes of school bullying are many and they can be grouped into two: environmental and psychological factors. One of the major factors that cause school bullying is defective or wrong upbringing. In society there are often found homes in which discipline is either too harsh, especially if corporal punishment is frequently resorted to, or too lenient, if the child is always permitted to do all that he wishes especially bad deeds without any one deterring him, these extreme cases of upbringing are defective because they lead to lack of internalization of unacceptable behaviour by the child. Consequently the child: grows up unable to distinguished right behaviours from wrong ones. Children can become bullies because they want to fit in or perhaps they have a difficult situation at home, so in order to feel better about themselves they inflict misery on someone else. This means home environment is a determinant of how the child behaves and interacts with others. Therefore, a stable home life and good adult role models can really affects how a child behaves and interact with others in school and in other places outside of their home and even how he or she will be as an adult.
2. **Poor Parent-Child Relationship:** Another environmental cause of bullying which psychologists identified is poor parent-child relationship. Omoteso (2021) maintained that children who are not very well attached to their parents are more likely to bully their peers. While children who have positive relationships with their parents are less likely to participate in bullying. Another important factor that causes bullying in school is peer group influence. Children and adolescents are known to move about with their mates known as peer group. The composition of peer group is made up of children from different background, for this reason it is likely that ill-behaved or bad eggs is often found in the group whose influence often leads to criminal tendencies by the group like bullying, petty stealing etc.
3. **Personality Factor of the Child:** Students who possess certain personality traits are more prone to bullying. Researchers have suggested that the following personality issues may trigger bullying exhibiting low self-esteem was identified by Fraiser-Thill (2019). Young children tend to have relatively high measures of self-esteem, but with the onset of the teen years, low self-esteem may become more of an issue. There are a number of interrelated reasons why low self-esteem begins to appear during pre-adolescence. From psychological point of view, there are certain personality traits that make a child to become bully. These personality traits include anger, jealousy, aggression, insensitivity, low self-esteem, cruelty, the desire to control others by all means and lack of self-confidence (Williams, 2019). Another personality trait is lack of social skills that leads to difficulties in managing positive relationship (James, 2017). Another personality traits associated with bullies is impulsiveness (Cheever, 2019). This means if a child is impulsive; the tendency is that he/she will be a bully.
4. **Socioeconomic Risk Factors:** It is imperative to say that most researchers have many variables that they include as parental background factors but a common ground among these researchers has included socio economic status. Children from low socio-economic

background are found to be bully in nature the reason being that when their needs are not met, they exhibit anger, aggressiveness and nervousness (Cheever, 2019). Ololube (2016) cited Hawkins et al and stated that poverty is associated with risky health behaviour which implies that parental level of income and other parameters that could measure poverty could be said to impact on positive or negative behaviour. Researchers at the Joseph Rowntree foundation has mentioned that bad parenting has been blamed by policy makers and commentators for children and young people's troublesome behaviour. They also pointed poverty, single parenting and race as contributors to behavioural problems (Utting, 2017).

5. **Comparisons with Others:** Somewhere between six and eleven of age, children begin to actively compare themselves to their peers. This newfound social comparison occurs for both cognitive and social reasons. Psychologist Erik Erikson believed that self-comparison sets the stage for the greatest struggle faced by kids this age. Their major conflict, he believed, centers on developing a sense of industry or a feeling of competence, while avoiding a sense of inferiority.
6. **Feeling Incompetent:** As Erikson noted, some children come to realize that their efforts are not as good as those of their peers and begin to feel inferior. Notably, though feeling incompetent does not universally lead to low self-esteem. If a child's poor performance occurs in a domain he doesn't value, such as athletics, his self-esteem is unlikely to be affected. If, however, he's incompetent in an area he finds important, such as academics, he is at risk of developing low self-esteem.
7. **Relating to Others Negatively or Peer Pressure:** Bully-prone kids often make negative comments about a person's appearance, intelligence or abilities. They may also be intolerant of other races, cultures or lifestyles. Much of this prejudicial bullying comes from fear, a lack of understanding and is often learned at home. Work with students to learn how to be more accepting of one other,
8. **Craving Power:** Students who always want to be in charge are also prone to bullying. They only work with others when it's on their terms. If things don't go their way, then they resort to bullying. Additionally, teens who are striving to be popular also are prone to bullying. If you have a student that is bossy, controlling or demanding look for outlets in the classroom. Teach the student how to be a leader in a respectful way.

Scholastic Adjustment

Scholastic adjustment is the process of adapting to the role of being a student and to various aspects of the school environment. Scholastic adjustment plays a vital role in a child's life, and it is like a pillar on which a child's entire life is based. It is not only related to a child's progress and achievement but also their attitudes towards school, anxieties, loneliness, social support and academic motivation. Interpersonal relationships affect children's academic motivation relationship with peers and teachers in powerful motivator. It was noted that school learning can be promoted by learning contexts that enhances student involvement with others. Research shows that children loneliness and social dissatisfaction relate negatively to school achievement. Friendship supports children in the school environment and helps with their adjustment. Peers can be a source of support to deal with problems and the child is able to deal with alienation (Wet, 2018).

School adjustment is a broad construct which consists of many different aspects, such as academic achievement, overall school satisfaction, school engagement and pro social behaviour at school. Well-adjusted students usually value what they are learning, are positively involved in classroom activities, are rarely disruptive, learn what is taught at school and also receive high grades and test scores. Scholastic adjustment can be assumed to reflect students' overall resources for school work. School adjustment is an important indicator of how well adolescents have been able to cope with the challenges and expectations presented by school. Classwork, assignments, homework and exams on the one hand and making new friends and being a member of a peer group, on the other hand, are typically ranked as the most important challenges at school (Neto, 2015). Such challenges

can be particularly demanding after the educational transition to a new school environment, such as senior secondary school. Adjustment is a popular expression used by people in a day to day life. For example while travelling in a bus or a train, we often hear or use this term; even when a guest comes to stay with us for a few days we have to adjust him/ her in our house. Though sometimes we face problems in making these adjustments, they are important to maintain personal as well as social peace and harmony. Thus adjustment maintains peace and harmony in home, school, society and other in the country. Adjustment can be defined as a psychological process. It frequently involves coping with new standards and values. In the technical language of psychology, getting along with the members of the society as best as one can is called adjustment. Put differently, adjustment, in psychology, refers to the behavioural process by which humans and other animals maintain equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environments. Human beings are able to adjust to the physical, social and psychological demands that arise from having inter-dependent ability with other individual, Ogoemeka (2012) explained adjustment, as a process that describes and explains the ways and means of an individual's adaptation to himself and his environment without reference to the quality of such adjustment or its outcome in terms of success or failure.

Scholastic adjustment is the process of adapting to meet academic demands in the school environment. Every individual from the time he or she steps out of the family and goes to school makes a long series of adjustment in his/ her environment. Adjustment is totally based on the pattern established by earlier adjustment. The quality of adjustment in the early years of life determines the quality of adjustment in later years. The young adolescents make the transition from primary school to secondary school; they are caught up in the web of transitional experiences. The transition usually confronts adolescents with new social and educational demands. As pointed out by Adefunke (2018) noted that the transition into high school can be an unpleasant experience. The transition to higher secondary school is also a challenge in the development of adolescent students. Many adolescents are inadequately prepared for the psychological, emotional and academic realities of higher education. The students are confronted with the adaptation challenges of living apart from family and friends, adjusting to the academic regimen, assuming responsibility for the task of living and developing a new array of social relationship with peers. Such transitions require the student to create new coping styles, overcome initial anxiety and adopt new behaviour. Those children who fail to cope can negatively influence their adjustment in school which in turn affects their academic performance adversely. School is one of the important pillars on which the child's personality is formed. It is the place where children have contacts with peers, form friendship and participate in social groups with other children. Through adolescence, peers become increasingly important in their lives. Their interaction becomes more complex with age. In this stage, social support from friends assists the children to adjust well in school and to be able to handle situations related to school environment.

Tinto (2017) described scholastic adjustment of students as the degree of students' adaptation to academic activities within their educational environment. The degree of success accomplished by students in their studies display their scholastic adjustment. Students adjust scholastically well if they are motivated and have the necessary capabilities and abilities to achieve the requirements by the University for their Chosen Discipline.

Statement of the Problem

Bullying behaviour among senior secondary school students has become a pervasive and disturbing phenomenon in Abia State, Nigeria, with far-reaching consequences for mental health issues, academic performance, and social well-being of affected students. Despite efforts to address this issue, bullying persists, suggesting that underlying factors contributing to this behaviour have not been adequately explored. The prevalence of bullying in Abia State secondary school is alarming, with studies indicating that approximately 70% of students experience bullying monthly. This trend underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing bullying behaviour among secondary school students in the state.

The consequences of bullying behaviour are multifaceted and far-reaching, leading to increase dropout rate, decreased academic achievement, and heightened risk of mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. Bullying behaviour can perpetuate school violence, undermining the creation of safe and supportive learning environments. The lack of empirical evidence on specific factors contributing to bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State hinders the development of effective interventions. Bullying behaviour may play significant roles in shaping scholastic adjustment of students which could be responsible for many psychosomatic disorders among students, poor school attendance, poor classroom participation and poor academic performance. It is on this background that the researcher sought to investigate bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment among students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. Specifically, the objectives of study were to:

1. Determine the extent to which physical bullying relates to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State.
2. Find out the extent to which emotional bullying relates to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State.
3. Determine the extent to which sexual bullying relates to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of this study:

1. To what extent does physical bullying relate to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State?
2. To what extent does emotional bullying relate to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State?
3. To what extent does sexual bullying relate to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to further guide the study and were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between physical bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State.
2. There is no significant relationship between emotional bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State.
3. There is no significant relationship between sexual bullying and scholastic adjustment of Students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the correlational research design as it investigated the relationship between bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary school students in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria. Correlational study is the research concerned with determining the relationship between two or more variables and also used in testing hypothesis of significance. The population of the study consisted of three thousand, two hundred and eighty six (3,286) students covering SS1 to SS3 from the schools in Bende Local Government Area of

Abia State (Source: Planning, Research & Statistics Department, Abia State Senior Secondary School Board, 2024/2025 academic session). A sample of 400 students constituted the sample size for the study. Taro Yemene sample size determination was used to determine the sample size. A figure of 357 was obtained but the researcher increased it to 400. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select twenty (20) schools, and, twenty students were purposively selected who possessed the characteristics studied. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled “Bullying Behaviour and Scholastic Adjustment Questionnaire” (BBSAQ). It consisted of two parts, A and B. Part A provide demographic data of the respondents such as gender, class, name of school and address. Part B is further divided into two: (a) “Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire” (BBQ) which contains 30 items designed to measure impact of bullying behaviour on scholastic adjustment and (b) “Scholastic Adjustment Scale” (SAS) which contains 15 items designed to identify some of the impact of bullying on scholastic adjustment. The instrument was structured in a four (4) point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Agree (SD) = 1. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer research questions 1-3 and also be used to test hypotheses 1-3. Results of the hypotheses was tested at the 0.05 alpha level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: To what extent does physical bullying relate to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State?

Table 1: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Physical Bullying Relate to Scholastic Adjustment of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State

Correlations		Physical Bullying	Scholastic Adjustment
Physical Bullying	Pearson Correlation	1	-.741**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
Scholastic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	-.741**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350

** . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between physical bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State is ($r = -.741$; $p = 0.000$). This implies that there is a negative relationship between physical bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. Since the r-value is significant with $p < .05$, therefore the null hypothesis one is rejected. Hence, there is a negative and insignificant relationship between physical bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. This means that the increase in physical bullying will result in the decrease in scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State and vice versa.

Research Question Two

To what extent does emotional bullying relate to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State?

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between emotional bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Emotional Bullying Relate to Scholastic Adjustment of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State

Correlations		Emotional Bullying	Scholastic Adjustment
Emotional Bullying	Pearson Correlation	1	-.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
Scholastic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	-.692**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350

** . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between emotional bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State is ($r = -.692$; $p = 0.000$). This implies that there is a negative relationship between emotional bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. Since the r -value is significant with $p < .05$, therefore the null hypothesis two is rejected. Hence, there is a negative and insignificant relationship between emotional bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. This means that the more students experience emotional bullying, the more students will difficulty in adjusting adequately to their school/learning environment which could lead to poor academic performance among students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State and vice versa.

Research Question Three

To what extent does sexual bullying relate to scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State?

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between sexual bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State

Table 3: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Sexual Bullying Relate to Scholastic Adjustment of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State

Correlations		Sexual Bullying	Scholastic Adjustment
Sexual Bullying	Pearson Correlation	1	-.608**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
Scholastic Adjustment	Pearson Correlation	-.608**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350

** . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 shows that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between sexual bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State is ($r = -.608$; $p = 0.000$). This implies that there is a negative relationship between sexual bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in

Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. Since the r -value is significant with $p < .05$, therefore the null hypothesis three is rejected. Hence, there is a negative and insignificant relationship between sexual bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. This means that the increase in sexual bullying will result in the decrease in scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State and vice versa. This result could also mean that the more students experience sexual bullying, the more they experience inadequate scholastic adjustment especially the female counterpart. Sexual bullying may affect poor classroom concentration, lead to anxiety disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and poor academic performance.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship Physical Bullying and Scholastic Adjustment of Students

The result in table 2 revealed that the extent of relationship between physical bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State is weak. Furthermore, the result of hypothesis one indicated that there is significant negative relationship between physical bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. The implication of this result is that the increase in physical bullying behaviour among students tends to decrease their scholastic adjustment because victims of physical bullying may feel insecure in their school environment due to intimidation and violence. The finding of the present study is in agreement with the finding of Olabiyi (2021) that physical bullying has a significant negative impact on students' anxiety and isolation in school environment. The study also revealed that physical bullying behaviour significantly impact on student's school absenteeism. The finding of this current study is in agreement with the finding of Wet (2018) that there was a negative significant relationship between physical bullying behaviour and students' school adjustment. The study also revealed that physical bullying behaviour significantly had negative relationship with students' academic performance among boarding secondary school students in Niger State ($p=0.000$ $r=0.874$), ($p=0.001$ $r=0.854$). Finally, the finding of this recent study has a link with the finding of Oluwamumibori et al. (2022), their study revealed that there was a negative relationship between physical bullying behaviour and students' scholastic adjustment. The study found that there was a negative relationship between physical bullying behaviour and academic performance of students in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. The study also revealed that addiction to alcohol and loss of concentration was the major effect of bullying on students' academic performance and poor school adjustment. The finding of this study is not surprising because students who have experienced physical bullying behaviour will demonstrate classroom anxiety, poor attention and examination phobia which will result in poor academic performance.

Relationship Emotional Bullying and Scholastic Adjustment of Students

The result in table 3 showed that the extent of relationship between emotional bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State is weak. While, the result of hypothesis two indicated that there is significant negative relationship between emotional bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. This present finding is also in agreement with the finding of Bolarinwa (2024) that there was a significant negative relationship between emotional bullying and school adjustment among junior secondary school students in Jos South Local Government Area of Plateau State. The investigation revealed that there are consequences of emotional bullying on victims and perpetrators. Types of bullying and the impacts on school adjustment and academic performance. The study found that social bullying has a significant negative impact on the student's academic performance and school adjustment. Again, the present finding is in collaboration with the finding of Neto (2015) that there was a negative relationship

between emotional bullying and students' academic adjustment. The study found that more than half of the students under the study (55.75%) sometimes perform social bullying behaviour, nearly half of them (44.75%) perform verbal bullying behaviours and less than half of students under study (41.75%) sometimes perform emotional bullying behaviours. Also, about two fifth of students under the study (39.75%) sometimes exposed to physical bullying behaviours and more than fifth of them (45%) exposed to emotional bullying and 69% of them have moderate physical effect, 59.25% of them had moderate psychological effect and 42.5% of them had moderate social effect and moderate impact on academic achievement. The present finding could be explained based on the fact that emotional bullying will negatively affect the student motivation to learn. This is because emotional well-being of the students are touched negatively. Teacher and senior students are most times responsible for emotional bullying in our school system.

Relationship Sexual Bullying and Scholastic Adjustment of Students

The result in table 4 revealed that the extent of relationship between sexual bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State is strong but negative correlation. While the result of the tested hypothesis three indicated that there is significant negative relationship between sexual bullying and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. . This is true due to the fact that sexual bullying could affect students motivation to learning and higher academic performance. This finding is corroborated by the study by Olaitan (2023) that there was a significant influence of sexual violence on the physical health of female university students, there was a significant influence of sexual violence on mental health of female university students as well as significant influence of sexual violence on economic stability of female university students in North Eastern states of Nigeria. The study concluded that sexual violence affects the scholastic adjustment and academic achievement of female university students in the North Eastern State of Nigeria as victims suffer degrees of abuse ranging from physical, emotional and economic instability to smoothly run their academic programmes. This study is also supported by the finding of Ako (2017) which revealed that there was significant negative relationship between sexual bullying and students' academic adjustment of senior secondary school students in Benue State. Finally, the present finding is in agreement with the finding of Neto (2015), they examined the impact of sexual harassment on psychosocial adjustment of female undergraduate students in higher institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that sexual harassment was associated with increased risk of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as diminished self-esteem, self-confidence and psychological well-being. This finding is not surprising because sexual harassment can affect the psychological wellbeing of secondary school students preventing them from meaningful scholastic engagement due to psychological trauma associated with rape, which could result in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), poor school attendance, school dropout and poor academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. However, the findings of the study indicated that there was a strong and negative significant relationship between bullying behaviour and scholastic adjustment; among the variables studied; physical bullying, emotional bullying, sexual bullying, verbal bullying, cyber bullying and social bullying was revealed to have very strong negative correlation with scholastic adjustment of students in public senior secondary schools in Bende Local Government Area of Abia State. These results could be tied to the fact that bullying behaviour and the foregoing variables (physical bullying, emotional bullying, sexual bullying, verbal bullying, cyber bullying and social bullying) are prominent and more prevalent with students' scholastic adjustment related issues and poor academic performance. As such, steps ought to be taken to build the prevalent nature of the variables under review.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that to achieve proper scholastic adjustments of students, an appropriate measure must be taken by school authorities, government, teachers and school guidance counsellors to ensure that school environment is friendly and accommodating to all students despite their home background and physical conditions. Adequate protective environment will lead to greater learning motivation which will result in higher academic performance and increase school enrolment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings, discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Physical bullying is negatively related to the scholastic adjustment. Students must stop every form of physical bullying behaviour to create conducive and friendly learning environment that respect individual differences. School authorities and teachers ensure that school environment is safe and school counsellors should engage students on acceptable school behaviours.
2. Emotional bullying is negatively related to the scholastic adjustment. School authorities, teachers and students must ensure that they care for the emotional needs of other students to develop positive self-esteem which can help students to experience higher learning motivation and academic performance.
3. Sexual bullying is negatively related to the scholastic adjustment. School guidance counsellors must discourage students to stop every form of sexual harassments within the school premises to create a safe and healthy school environment. The school authorities must include certain rules and regulations on sexual harassments to serve as a deterrence on perpetrators.

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