

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND BULLYING BEHAVIOUR OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

BY

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Abstract

This study aimed at finding out the relationships between family background and bullying behaviour of in – school Adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis. Family background in this study entails: parenting styles, family structure, parent’s socio-economic status, parents’ educational qualification. This study adopted correlational survey design. The population consist of all in-school adolescents in secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis with total population of about one hundred thousand. A sample of 400 adolescents in 20 randomly selected schools in Ilorin Metropolis participated in the study. The data for the study were gathered using questionnaire titled “family background and bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents”. The data were analysed using frequency count, check list and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result of the study revealed that relationship exists between parenting styles and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents ($R = 0.352$). Result also shows that adolescent’s involvement in bullying behaviour did not relate with family structure ($R = -0.038$). Negative relationship exists between in – school adolescents bullying behaviour and parents’ socio – economic status ($R = -0.323$). The study finally revealed that there is relationship between parents’ educational qualification and in – school adolescents bullying behaviour with that of mother’s educational qualifications been negatively related. The implication of these findings is that parents employed defective parenting styles in rearing in – school adolescents thereby leading to adolescents’ involvement in bullying behaviour. Counsellors in schools should therefore organise workshop for parents on the need for effective parenting style to stem the tide of bullying behaviour among in- school adolescents.

Key Words: Bullying behaviour, Family background, Family structure, In-school Adolescents, Parenting-style,

Introduction

Bullying behaviour has been described as an intentional, continual aggressive behaviour towards a person, the victim, who cannot defend himself, and this usually involves an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim (Mitsopoulou & Giovazolias, 2013). Any behaviour a person exhibits, with the intention to hurt another person physically or psychologically, for no just cause, is considered an act of bullying (Nwokolo, Ayamene & Efobi, 2011). Bullying consists of

various behaviours ranging from verbal (e.g. name-calling, abuse, verbal threat, harassment, teasing, insult, mobbing and verbal intimidation) physical violence (these include behaviours such as fighting, punching, strangling, spitting, hitting, shoving, kicking, pushing, demand for money, tripping, vandalising properties, rude gesture, and destruction of another's work (Ross, 1998) and relational (e.g. slander, exclusion from the group, damaging victim's property). Relational aggression has also been recently perpetrated using technology such as e-mail, chat rooms, cell phones, pagers among others. Bullying behaviour has physical, emotional, social and educational consequences that can never be underestimated. In a study conducted by Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Sahya and Ruan (2004), it was revealed that great correlation exists with involvement in bullying behaviour (whether as a victim, bully or bully-victim) with greater health problems, school functioning difficulties (including poor peer relations), and diminished psychosocial capacities such as emotional and social adjustment.

A number of researchers have enumerated various factors responsible for the development of bullying behaviour in adolescents. For instance Neto (2005) opined that the world outside the school is reproduced within the school. Also Cook, Guerra, Kim and Sadek (2010) considered that issues like family, living environment, situation of the school, factors within the community, peer reputation and peer inspiration are linked to bullying behaviour. Fielder (2008) believed that the development of bullying can be viewed as part of a large process of interaction, with the home at its root. Thus he opined that bullying behaviour is to a great extent believed to be a by-product of family dynamics. Similarly, scholars noted that the feature of the environment and the family can be associated to the adolescents' interaction and actions at the school (Joronen & Astett.kurki, 2005; Fielder, 2008, Cook, et al, 2010). All these point to the possible link between bullying behaviour and familial factors. Thus the present study seeks to specifically look into the relationship between family background and bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents.

Lauer and Lauer (2004) defined family as a group united by marriage, blood and/or adoption in order to satisfy intimacy needs or bear and socialise children. According to *Preserve Article*

Survey (2011), family is an institution, performs some functions which are basic in nature and which cannot be performed successfully by other institutions. Therefore, Osunloye, (2008) described family background in – terms of family structure, size, socio – economic status and educational background which play important role in students’ educational attainment and social integration. It is the foundation for children’s development. Family background’s components include family structure, child rearing practices, educational background, social economic status of the parents, location of parent’s residence, mode of residence, and whom the children live with.

Biopsychosocial/developmental theory assumed that genetic factors, harsh treatment, rejection, failure, poverty, neighbourhood, family instability, limited parental education, excessive early exposure to media violence can lead to a dysfunctional pattern of social information processing which consequently linked the broad life experiences to the individual display of aggression. This theory demonstrates the multiple focal points of observational learning, social information processing and reinforcement in all of the major aggression theories (Hudly, 2009).

Bullies are commonly unhelpful, and are from dysfunctional families low on love, their parents tend to criticise them frequently and control them strictly (Rigby & Slee, 1999). Junger, Tas and Van Kasteren (1999) found a correlation between harsh physical punishments such as beating, strict disciplinarian parents and bullying behaviour. This supports the social learning theory of aggressive behaviour. Similarly, Harachi, Catalano and Hawkin (1999) revealed higher bullying behaviour rates among boys whose parents use physical punishment or violence against them.

Researchers such as (Bower, Smith & Binney, 1992; Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 1994; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003, Spriggs, 2007) have asserted that some family incentives influenced adolescents’ involvement in bullying behaviour. General family characteristics which include: low involvement with parents, low parental warmth, low family cohesion and single parent family structure have been found to be related to greater bullying behaviour among adolescents especially among white ethnic group than in black students. Similarly, studies such as (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000; Loeber & Stouthammer-Loeber, 1986; Olweus, Limber & Mihalic, 1999) have identified stakes

within the family environment that are peculiar to adolescents who bully. These factors include excessively lenient parenting, (with a lack of clear limits for the child's behaviour); deficient parental regulation; and severe corporal correction as well as incidence of child maltreatment (physical or sexual abuse) and bullying behaviour (Shield & Cicchetti, 2001).

It was revealed that family risk factors are greatly related to bullying behavior among white ethnic group than in black students. Based on this, this study therefore aims at finding out whether significant relationship exist between family background and bullying behavior of in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria. However, some questions were raised and answered on which the study's hypotheses were set and tested. The questions include:

- Is there any relationship between parenting style and bullying behavior of in – school adolescents?
- Is there any relationship between family structure and bullying behavior of in – school adolescents?
- Is there any relationship between family's socio – economic status and bullying behavior of in – school adolescents?
- Is there any relationship between parent's educational background and bullying behavior of in – school adolescents?

The hypotheses tested were:

H₀₁: there is no significant relationship between parenting style and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis

H₀₂: there is no significant relationship between family structure and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis

H₀₃: there is no significant relationship between parent's socio – economic status and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis

H₀₄: there is no significant relationship between parent's educational background and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis

Methods

This study adopted correlational survey research design. The population for the study are all in-school adolescents in secondary schools across the three Local Government Areas that constitute Ilorin metropolis. The target population are all the in-school adolescents in the secondary schools proportionately selected across the LGAs in the ratio of 9:7:4 in Ilorin West, South and East respectively making a total of 20 schools. Six private schools were selected in a ratio of 3:2:1, while fourteen public schools were selected using simple random sampling technique across the three LGAs. Similarly, the simple random sampling technique was used to select twenty students in each of the earlier selected schools. This made a total of 400 students that participated in the study.

The instrument used for the study is a questionnaire titled “Family Background and Bullying Behaviour of In – school Adolescents”. The instrument has four sections, the first consist of demographic data of the respondents such as gender, religion, parent’s educational background, location of residence and family structure. Section B consists of 14 items on parenting style experienced by the respondents. Section C is a list of 10 items possessed by parent to depict their level of economic status; these include radio, mobile phone set, television, satellite, computer, car, self-owned house among others. Students that ticked items such as radio, television, living in family house, squatting, public water facilities, parent little or no formal education are classified under low socio-economic status, those that added computer, car, rented apartment, public water facilities, one self own house are classified as middle socio economic status while those that choose satellite, many cars, houses, self-owned borehole, living in G.R.A. etc. were classified as high socio-economic level. Section D is on bullying behaviour of respondents with 10 items. The instrument was validated by 3 experts from Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin. Questionnaire forms were administered to in-school adolescents by trained research assistants who waited to collect the forms after completion. The data obtained were analysed with the use of descriptive statistics such as frequency count, mean, rank order, check list and Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the null hypotheses earlier set at 0.05 alpha levels.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents based on demographic data

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Father's Educational qualification:	SSCE	101	25.2
	ND	159	39.8
	N. C. E	96	24
	Degree	44	11
	Total	400	100
Mother's Educational qualification	SSCE	257	64.2
	ND	27	6.8
	N. C. E	85	21.2
	Degree	31	7.8
	Total	400	100
Respondents Parents' Socio – Economic Status			
Location of Residence:	GRA	52	13
	Typical Area	348	87
	Total	400	100
Mode of Residence:	Rented Apartment	264	66
	Family House	17	4.2
	Parent – owned house	113	28.2
	Squatting	6	1.5
	Total	400	100
Parents owned properties	Low	97	24.2
	Middle	210	52.5
	High	93	23.3
	Total	400	100
Respondents' Family Structure			
Family Type	Monogamous	237	59.2
	Polygamous	108	27
	Single Parent	55	13.8
	Total	400	100

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1:- *There is no significant relationship between parenting styles and bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis*

To test this hypothesis, the responses of the participants to sections B and D of the “Influence of Family Background on Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (IFBBBQ)” were scored, cumulated and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level.

Table 2: Pearson Correlations Co – Efficient on Parenting Styles and Bullying Behaviour.

Variable	df	Calc. r-	p-value	Remark
Parenting Style	398	.352*	.000	Sig.
Bullying Behaviour				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 2 shows the relationship between parenting styles and bullying behaviour of the in-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis. From the table above, it can be seen that the value of Pearson Correlation shown in the test is 0.352 at $P=0.000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, since the P – value is less than 0.05 levels of significance. Hence, it could be inferred that parenting style, a component of family background influences bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents. In other word, the relationship that exists between parenting style and bullying behaviour is positive and significant.

Hypothesis 2:- *There is no significant relationship between family structure and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis*

To test this hypothesis, participants’ scores on the “Influence of Family background on Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (IFBBBQ)” were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 levels of significance.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Co-efficient on Family Background and Bullying Behaviour on the Basis of Family Structure

Variable	df	Calc. r	p-value	Remark
Bullying Behaviour Family Structured	398	.038	.451	Not Sig.

The table revealed that there is no significant relationship between family structure and bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents. Since, the test is 0.038 at P – value of 0.451, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. Similarly, the magnitude level at which the insignificant relationship between family structure and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents exist is taken to be higher as Pearson Correlation is greater than 0.04.

Hypothesis 3:- *There is no significant relationship between parent’s socio-economic status and bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents.*

To test this hypothesis, the participants’ scores in sections C and D of the “Influence of Family Background on Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (IFBBBQ)” were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 levels of significance.

Table 4: Pearson Correlations Co-efficient on parent's socio – economic status and Bullying Behaviour

Variable	df	Calc. r	p-value	Remark
Bullying Behaviour Socio-economic	398	-.323*	.000	Sig.

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 4 above, shows an inverse relationship between parents' socio-economic status and bullying behaviour of the in-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis. From the table above, it can be seen that the value of Pearson Correlation showed in the test is -0.323 at $P = 0.000$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, since the P – value is less than 0.05 levels of significance. In other word, the negative relationship indicates that as parent's socio – economic status scores increases, bullying behaviour scores of in-school adolescents' decreases.

Hypothesis 4: *There is no significant relationship between parents' educational background and bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis*

To test this hypothesis, respondents' scores on "Influence of Family background on Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (IFBBBQ)" were subjected to Pearson Products Moment Correlation to test the postulated null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels.

Table 5: Pearson Correlations Co – Efficient on Parent's Educational Background and Bullying Behaviour

Variable	df	Calc. r	p-value	Remark
Bullying Behaviour Father's Educational qualification	398	-0.333*	0.000	Sig.
Bullying Behaviour Mother's Educational qualification	398	0.122*	0.014	Sig.

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 5 above, shows the test's result of relationship between Parent's Educational Background and bullying behaviour of the in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis From the table above, it can be seen that the value of Pearson Correlation of Father's Educational qualification is $R = -0.333$ at $P = 0.000$ while that of Mother's Educational qualification is $R = 0.122$

at $P = 0.014$. Therefore, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected, since the P – value is less than 0.05 levels of significance. In other word, the relationship that exists between father’s educational background and bullying behaviour is inverse but positive with mother’s educational qualification.

Discussion

The first hypothesis stated that parenting styles has no significant relationship with bullying behaviour of the in – school adolescents. The result on table 2 above revealed there is significant positive relationship between parenting styles and bullying behaviour of the in – school adolescents. The finding is similar to previous studies such as (Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000; Olweus, Limber & Mihalic, 1999) that identified familial risk factors to be common among children who bully. These factors include overly permissive parenting, (with a lack of clear limits for the child’s behaviour); lack of parental supervision; and harsh corporal discipline as well as experience of child maltreatment (physical or sexual abuse) and bullying behaviour (Shield & Cicchetti, 2001). This goes along with Olweus (1993) and Crothers and Kolbert, (2008) who asserted that those who bully may come from families where there is lack of attention and warmth towards the child, poor supervision, and the use of physical and verbal aggression. Children who bully others at school frequently have parents who teach them how to retaliate and to hit back when attacked. Therefore, children living in homes with violence between their parents are at a greater risk of themselves displaying violent, aggressive and bullying behaviour outside the home. Respondents in this study indicated that their parents adopted authoritative (effective) parenting style and are less involved in bullying behaviour.

The second hypothesis shows there is no significant relationship between the family structure and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents. The hypothesis is accepted which reveal that family structure does not has any significant relationship with bullying behaviour of the in – school adolescents. This finding corresponds with HBSC *survey* (2001) who indicated that bullying involvement prevalence did not significantly differ among adolescents living with step-parents, single parents, or with other configurations, they were combined into “other” living

arrangement. Consistent with previous HBSC analyses (Gage; Overpeck; Nansel & Kogan, 2005). This finding is not the same with that of Nwachukwu (1998) who reported that bullying behaviour affect children from single parent homes and these students tends to be more hostile, hyperactive and aggressive in nature. Similarly, it also differed from finding of Pepler and Craig (2000) who said that the type of family a child comes from determined to a large extent the way he or she sees bullying as a social act or behaviour.

The third hypothesis revealed significant inverse relationship between bullying behaviour and parental socio – economic status. The implication is that as socio-economic status scores increases the bullying behaviour scores increases. The finding is similar with Rican (1995) who maintained that children who bully significantly are more likely than others to perceive their family as being less concerned about each other's problems and needs. Also the same with the findings of Fite, Greening and Stoppelbein (2008) that bullying behaviour can be the consequences of parental stress. The finding as well corresponds with the General strain theory which holds that stress or strain experienced by an individual can manifest itself in problematic emotions that lead to deviant behaviour such as bullying behaviour.

The fourth hypothesis which also revealed that there is significant relationship between parent's educational background and bullying behaviour of in – school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis. There exist an inverse relationship between father's educational background and adolescents' bullying behaviour which implies that as father's educational qualification increases, bullying behaviour decreases. The finding is similar with the assertion of developmental theory which postulated that limited parental education and other significant factors can lead to a dysfunctional pattern of social information processing that consequently link the broad life experiences to the individual display of bullying behaviour (Hudly, 2009).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that components of family background such as parenting styles, parents' educational qualification and socio-economic status influence in – school adolescents bullying behaviour. It can also be inferred that family structure does not influenced in-school adolescents' bullying behaviour. The following recommendations have been made based on the findings and implications of this study. Counsellors in schools should organise workshops for parents on the need to sustain effective parenting as part of the school guidance programme. This could help in total prevention of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents. Government should continue in the struggle to reduce poverty in the society as this was found to be closely related to bullying behaviour. Empowerment of citizens through sound and effective education should be prioritised as this has significant impact in the development of appropriate behaviour devoid of aggression in children as well as adolescents.

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