BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AND COUNSELLING INTERVENTION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract
Bullying is a source of concern to parents, counsellors, teachers, school personnel and families in the society today. This study examined the bullying behaviour and counselling intervention among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The research was a descriptive survey using 710 respondents from 10 randomly selected senior secondary schools in Kwara State. Adapted questionnaire entitled bullying behaviour and counselling intervention questionnaire was used with a reliability index of 0.73. The findings of the study revealed that the major type of bullying behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State were exposure to physical bullying. The counselling interventions applied mostly by the school counsellors were to give report on each students with bullying behaviour as a way of preventing reoccurrence, encourage students to be their brothers' keeper, talk about the effect of bullying on the assembly ground and encourage students to say no to violence within and outside the school. In addition, there was a significant difference on the bullying behaviour and counselling intervention based on gender, but there was no significant difference on the bullying behaviour and counselling intervention based on age. Based on the finding, researchers recommended the school authority put in place effective sanctions against any type of bullying behaviour and their perpetrators.
Keywords: Bullying Behaviour, Students, Counselling Intervention

Introduction
Violence is a disturbing concern across the world today. It is a subject of great concern in homes, schools, workplaces, and social places, rural and urban areas. Bullying is an unjust force or injury that is done to that which is entitled to respect or observance. Violence is evident in educational, social, family and political scenarios. Bullying has become rampant in the society for the simple reason that when students are exposed to so many acts of violence, they begin to believe that violence is acceptable. Violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, and threat against oneself, another person or against a group of community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (World Health Organization, 2002) as cited in Federal Ministry of Education (2007). Violence is any act or condition that makes individual fear of being a victim of assault, vandalism or theft. This is becoming a growing problem in our schools (Aluede, 2011).

School violence is seen as a central issue of concern for school personnel, researchers and families. Rigby (2003) stated that violence and misbehaviour negatively impact on the learning environment, and promote a climate and a culture of concern and fear among teachers and administrators in the school environment. Students' education depends on an environment that supports learning and the rate at which bullying occurs in schools can affect students education. Bullying can occur during or after school hours. While most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in places like the playground or the bus. It can also happen travelling to or from school, in the youth's neighborhood, or on the Internet. Bullying behaviour has been defined as a repeated, intentional, harmful, and aggressive behaviour inflicted by a person or group with seemingly more power on a person or group with lesser power (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simon-Morton & Scheidt, 2001).

Olweus and Limber (2010), defined bullying behaviour as the exposure, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. Such negative actions may include attempting or intentionally inflicting injury or discomfort on others. The injury or discomfort may be physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing, choking) or verbal (e.g., calling names, threatening, taunting, malicious teasing, spreading nasty rumors) or may manifest itself in other ways, such as making faces or obscene gestures or the intentional exclusion from a group. The latter (usually more subtle) forms are usually termed "indirect bullying," whereas "direct bullying" includes behaviours that represent relatively open (usually verbal or physical) attacks on the victim. In general, Nansel et al. (2001) argued that bullying occurs where there is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. Bullying behaviour can also be perpetrated by teachers and the school system itself. There is an inherent power differential in the system that can easily predispose someone to subtle or covert abuse (relational or passive aggression), humiliation, or exclusion, even while maintaining overt commitments to anti bullying policies (Whitted & Dupper, 2007). Today, bullying behaviours at school are recognized as dangerous and harmful acts that victimize the targeted students and bystanders. Bullying behaviour can no longer be dismissed as harmless teasing or as a normal yet undesirable behaviour. Rather, bullying behaviour is a pattern of deliberate, negative, hurtful, aggressive acts that works to shift the balance of physical, emotional, or social power (Safe School, 2002).

There are different types of bullying; it could be verbal, physical, psychological, and cyber (Garby, 2011). Bullying can be categorized into two: direct bullying and indirect bullying. Direct bullying is a relatively open attack on a victim that is physical and/or verbal in nature, it involves a great deal of physical aggression, such as shoving and poking, throwing things, slapping, choking, punching and kicking, beating, stabbing, pulling hair, scratching, biting, scrapping and pinching (Olweus, 2010). Indirect bullying, which is also known as a social aggression and relational bullying, is characterized by threatening the victim into social isolation. This isolation includes, among others, spreading gossip, refusing to socialize with the victim, bullying other people who wish to socialize with the victim, criticizing the victim's manner of dressing. Other forms of indirect bullying as outlined by Ross (2011) include name calling, giggling, mocking and laughing at the victim. The most common and frequent forms of bullying according to Owens, Shute and Slee (2000) are; insults, name-calling and nicknames, hitting, direct aggression, theft, threats, and social exclusion or isolation. The levels of cyber bullying appear to be increasing day by day, as it is very difficult to measure among individuals because image or

message displayed on screen have different meaning to the viewer every time (Department for Children, Schools & Families, 2009).

Although researchers have found that bullying can occur in different social settings such as the workplace, but it is typically found in school settings among students and adolescents. According to Boulton, Smith, and Cowie (2010), peer-to-peer abuse, such as bullying, is a distressing reality in schools and more common than child abuse. The 2001 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey reported that 14% of teens between the ages of 12 and 18 disclosed being bullied (Rigby, 2002). About half of those reporting being bullied claimed that it was indirect bullying, nonphysical social exclusion; whereas the other half of those being bullied faced direct violence or threats (DeVoe, Dean, Traube, & McKay, 2005). Studies have been conducted on various issues and topics; however, conclusion has not been reach on whether or not gender has any influence. For instance, researchers have investigated gender differences in bullying behaviours among children and adolescents (Dake, Price & Telljohann, 2003; Farrington, 2005). The types of bullying that male and female engage in vary. The literature confirmed that males are more often than females involved in direct physical forms of bullying (kicking, pushing etc), and that male and female are equally likely to become involved in direct verbal bullying, though females are more often involved in this indirect verbal bullying (rumour spreading, social and ostracism), (Farrington, 2005). However, little consensus existed regarding gender differences with indirect bullying such as social exclusion and subject of rumours. Boys are found to be generally being bullied by boys but not by girls, while girls reported being bullied by both genders equally (Dake, Price & Telljohann, 2003).

It is no more news that bullying is rampant in our schools, therefore, there is need for systematic interventions to be implemented in schools by counsellors (Omoniyi, 2013). To reduce the incidence of bullying and prevent its occurrence, the counsellors need to provide all students the opportunities to develop good interpersonal skills and create a supportive and inclusive social context, in which aggressive bully behaviour will not be tolerated by the majority. Kenny, McEachern, & Aluede, (2005) opined that since bullies tend to show little empathy for their target, school counsellors will need to provide interventions to improve students' level of compassion and empathy. Peterson, (2005) was of the opinion that developing and distributing a written anti-bullying policy to everyone in the school community and also consistently applying the policy was found helpful in managing bullying behaviour in school. Kenny, McEachern, & Aluede, (2005) and Aluede, (2006) worked independently from each other and discovered that increasing public awareness and knowledge about bullying behaviour problem can be sure way to reduce bullying. This can be achieved through: (a). active involvement of teachers and parents in prevention programme; (b). vigilance by school personnel for incidents of bullying; (c). the development of firm sanctions and consequences for students who engage in bullying; and (d). teaching assertiveness skills to the bullied.

Studies over the past four decades on school bullying have added to the understanding of the problem as well as the encounters faced in addressing it. There is no conclusion to the counselling intervention used by the counsellors in school. It is on this premises that the researcher examined the bullying behaviour and counselling intervention among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Haney (2001), Bully (2008), Ibrahim (2009) and Duncan (2010) found that those

involved in prolonged and serious bullying of others experience a wide range of mental problem, psychological malfunctioning, psychopathic complaints, low self-esteem, low academic achievement, feeling of sadness, sleeping difficulties, unhappiness, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation and absence from school. However, if such deviant behaviours are identified early, they are quick to comply with treatment, but if not treated earlier, they grow into more serious chronic disorders and criminal activities in adult life. Adewale (2004) studied the incidence of bullying in primary and secondary schools in Ogun State, and Omoteso (2010) worked on the prevalence of bullying behaviour, its associated factors and psychological effects among secondary school students in Ife. The studies showed that there is a high prevalence and incidence of bullying behaviours among students in South Western Nigeria.

Unfortunately, little is known about what schools, in general, are doing, both proactively and reactively, in addressing school bullying behaviour. Nor is it known what counselling intervention used in schools by the counsellors to assist the students as far as bullying in secondary schools in Kwara State is concerned. Hence the need for this study on bullying behaviour and counselling intervention among secondary school students in Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of this study was to examine bullying behaviour and counselling intervention among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Furthermore, the study also investigated the influence of age and gender.

Research Questions
To guide the conduct of this study, the following research questions were answered:
1. What type of bullying behaviour do students exhibit frequently among secondary school students in Kwara State?
2. What counselling intervention does the school counsellor apply in reducing bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses
The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:
1. There is no significant difference in the type of bullying behaviour exhibited by secondary school students based on age.
2. There is no significant difference in the type of bullying behaviour exhibited by secondary school students based on gender.

Methodology
The study adopted a descriptive research using questionnaire. The senior students constituted the target population for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of 710 students from 10 secondary schools from where students were sampled for the study. An adapted questionnaire titled "Bullying Behaviours and Counselling Intervention Questionnaire", with psychometric properties of content validity and reliability index of 0.73 to collect data for the study after a pilot study and a test-retest correlation. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using percentage and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient

(PPMC) in testing the hypotheses in the study and to measure the degree of correlation between the variables.

Results

Research Question 1: *What type of bullying behaviours do secondary school students in Kwara State exhibit?*

Table 1: Type of Bullying Behaviours Exhibited by Secondary School Students in Kwara State

I have been deliberately	Very Often (%)	Often (%)	Rare (%)	Never (%)	Grand Total (%)
Physical Bullying Behaviour					
hit by those that are stronger than I am	29.4	62.3	4.8	3.4	
fought by those that are stronger than I am	51.4	31.4	11.1	6.1	
beaten by those that are stronger than I am	34.1	29.3	27.9	8.7	
given derogatory nickname because of my size by those stronger than I am	27.6	22.8	30.3	19.3	
touched in sensitive part of the body by others who are stronger than I am	33.8	31.5	20.4	19.3	
					25.24
Psychological/Emotional Bullying Behaviour					
hurt by stronger student(s) by not talking to me	32.6	28.9	22.0	16.5	
teased in nasty ways/ was called hurtful name by stronger student(s)	21.0	17.7	26.1	35.1	
insulted / put down by stronger student(s)	6.6	9.8	68.5	15.1	
threatened by those that are stronger than I am	26.8	10.2	40.9	22.1	
made to tolerate offensive sexual expression from stronger student(s)	26.5	8.4	42.8	22.3	
					24.99
Social Bullying Behaviour					
sexually embarrassed by those that are stronger than I am	23.0	13.8	45.4	17.9	
excluded from the group by someone stronger than I am	55.2	35.4	5.4	4.1	
receiving nasty cell messages from social media being sent by the stronger student(s)	37.1	44.8	13.8	4.3	
receiving nasty cell phone texts from stronger student(s)	52.3	38.5	5.0	3.7	
receiving irritating images on my phone by those that are stronger than I am	31.9	42.8	14.4	10.9	
					24.98

Table 1 showed the responses of Kwara State students on the type of bullying behaviours exhibited by the students in the State. It showed that, 62.3% of the respondents are often hit by those that are stronger than they are, 51.4% are very often fought by those that are stronger than they are, 34.1% are very often beaten by those that are stronger than them, 33.8% are very often touched in sensitive parts of the body by others who are stronger than them, while 30.3% are rarely given derogatory nickname because of my size by

those stronger than them. It is also noted that the physical bullying behaviour is 25.24, this means that, majority of the learners are exposed to physical bullying behaviour. It also revealed that 32.6% of the respondents are very often hurt by stronger student(s) by not being talked to, 35.1% are never teased in nasty ways/ was called hurtful names by stronger student(s), 68.5% are rarely insulted/put down by stronger student(s), 40.9% are rarely threatened by those that are stronger than them, and 42.8% are rarely made to tolerate offensive sexual expression from stronger students. It is noted that majority of the items chosen in psychological/emotional fall on rarely and never, also the grand mean of psychological/emotional bullying behaviour is 24.99. This means that, majority of the learners are not exposed to psychological/emotional bullying behaviour with more than 80.0% of the items having either rare or never response.

It also revealed that 55.2% of the respondents are very often excluded from the group by stronger students, 44.8% often receive nasty messages from social media being sent by the stronger student(s), 52.3% very often receive nasty cell phone texts from stronger student(s), 42.8% often receive irritating images on my phone by those that are stronger while 45.4% are sexually embarrassed by those that are stronger than them. It is also noted that the grand means of social bullying is 24.98. This means that, majority of the learners are exposed to social bullying behaviour with more than 80.0% of the items common among the respondents. It can therefore be concluded that, Kwara State students were exposed to physical and social bullying but not psychological bullying.

Research Question 2: *What counselling intervention does the school counsellor apply in reducing bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Kwara State?*

Table 2: Percentages of Respondents on Counselling Intervention to Bullying Behaviour

S/No	As far as I am concerned, our school counsellor always	Yes	%	No	%	Rank for Yes
15	gives report on each students with bullying behaviour as a way of preventing reoccurrence	705	99.3	5	0.7	1st
7	encourage students to be their brothers' keeper	694	97.7	16	2.3	2nd
1	talk about the effect of bullying on the assembly ground	684	96.3	26	3.7	3rd
12	encourage students to say no to violence within and outside the school	684	96.3	26	3.7	3rd
8	encourage students to show love or care to one another instead of bullying	678	95.5	32	4.5	5th

5	notify parents of bullies of their children bullying behaviour as a way of curbing bullying	671	94.5	39	5.5	6th
6	take immediate action when bullying behaviour is reported	671	94.5	39	5.5	6th
10	teaches us anger control techniques as a way of preventing bullying behaviour	655	92.3	55	7.7	8th
11	encourage students to always support one another as a way of curbing bullying behaviour	645	90.8	65	9.2	9th
14	go round the classes for routine check to harvest complain about bullying behaviour	623	89.0	78	11.0	10th
9	encourage students to say 'leave me alone' to bullies	604	85.1	106	14.9	11th
2	paste information to curtail bullying behaviour on the notice board	595	83.8	115	16.2	12th
4	give talk on techniques for handling bullying behaviour	562	79.2	148	20.8	13th
3	encourage the students to speak out when bullied	557	78.5	153	21.5	14th
13	always visit the 'hot spot' areas where bullying incident takes place within one school	511	72.0	199	28.0	15th

Table 2 revealed all the counselling intervention applied by the school counsellor to reduce bullying behaviour. The counselling intervention applied most by the school counsellors was give report on each students with bullying behaviour as a way of preventing reoccurrence which was ranked 1st, encourage students to be their brothers' keeper was ranked 2nd and talk about the effect of bullying on the assembly ground and encourage students to say no to violence within and outside the school was ranked 3rd, while the least used counselling intervention was give talk on techniques for handling bullying behaviour, encourage the students to speak out when bullied and not always visit the 'hot spot' areas where bullying incident takes place within one school. The least counselling interventions were as important as others which need the counsellors attention and monitoring.

H$_{O1}$:   *There is no significant difference in the type of bullying behaviours as perceived by secondary school students based of age.*

Table 3: ANOVA Summary of Difference in the Type of Bullying Behaviours exhibited by Secondary School Students Based on Age

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean of Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	278.840	2	139.420	2.28	0.103	**H$_{02}$**
Within Groups	43295.499	707	61.238			**Not Rejected**
Total	**43574.339**	**709**				

ρ>0.05

Table 3 shows an F-value 2.28 with calculated significant 0.103 at 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated significance 0.103 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis two is thus not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in the type of bullying behaviours among secondary school students based on age.

H$_{O2}$:   *There is no significant difference in the types of bullying behaviour exhibited by secondary school students based on gender.*

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis of Difference in the Types of Bullying Behaviour exhibited by Secondary School Students Based on Gender

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	df	Cal.t-Value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	385	41.29	8.52				**H$_{05}$**
				708	2.12	0.04	**Rejected**
Female	342	42.53	6.96				

ρ>0.05

As shown on Table 4, the calculated t-value was 2.12 while its calculated significance value is 0.04 of df 2/708 at alpha level of 0.05. On this basis, null hypothesis two was therefore rejected. This means that there was a significant difference in the type of bullying behaviour among secondary school students based on gender. The reason was that the calculated significance value (0.04) was lower than 0.05 alpha level (0.04< 0.05). This is against female students with a mean score of 42.53 greater than the mean score of 41.29 of male secondary school students.

Discussion
Finding of the research question 1 revealed that the major types of bullying behaviours among secondary school students in Kwara State were exposure to physical bullying of which being hit by those that are stronger was the most common. This is consistent with the findings of studies conducted on students in Norway (Due, Holstein, Lynch, Diderichsen, NicGabhain, Scheidt & Currie, 2005) and in England (Due, Merlo, Harel-Fisch, Damsgaard, Holstein, Hetland & Lynch,

2009), in Nigeria, Egbochukwu (2007)'s and Omoteso (2010)'s studies identified forms of bullying as kicking and hitting, extortion of money from victims, locking inside a room, sending of nasty note, isolation, teasing and threat to beat others. This physical bullying behaviour may be seen by teachers as something that is not new and may go unnoticed for years, creating a sense of life-long worthlessness and affecting the self-esteem of students.

Furthermore, Pepler and Craig (2000) reported five major forms of bullying as physical violence and attacks, verbal taunts, name calling and put downs; threat and intimidation; extortion or stealing of money or other possessions and exclusion from peer group. Also, Owuamanam and Makinwa (2014) reported that emotional bullying was the most prevalent form of bullying behaviour. Furthermore, Bradshaw, (2015) reported that common types of bullying in boarding and day schools to include hitting/flogging and extortion. Whitney and Smith (1993) and Owens, Shute & Slee, (2000) worked independently from each other and discussed various forms of bullying. The most common and frequent forms of bullying according to these researchers are; insults, name-calling and nicknames, hitting, direct aggression, theft, threats, and social exclusion or isolation.

Table 2 revealed all the counselling intervention applied by the school counsellor to reduce bullying behaviour. The counselling intervention applied most by the school counsellors was give report on each students with bullying behaviour as a way of preventing reoccurrence which was ranked 1st, encourage students to be their brothers' keeper was ranked 2nd and talk about the effect of bullying on the assembly ground and encourage students to say no to violence within and outside the school was ranked 3rd, while the least used counselling intervention was give talk on techniques for handling bullying behaviour, encourage the students to speak out when bullied and always visit the 'hot spot' areas where bullying incident takes place within one school. This finding is in agreement with that of Kenny, McEachern, & Aluede, (2005) and Aluede, (2006) who reported that increasing public awareness and knowledge about bullying behaviour problem can be sure way to reduce bullying. This will make the school counsellors have better understanding of bullying behaviour and areas where bullying takes place mostly in school and be able to draw a better programme on how to carry out the awareness for the students and schools in general. It was discovered from the study that there was no significant difference in the type of bullying behaviours among secondary school students based of age. This implies that age does not make any difference in any type of bullying behaviour exhibited by students.

Furthermore, finding shows that there was a significant difference in the type of bullying behaviour among secondary school students based on gender. This finding is in favour of the female gender who have a better appreciation of the types of bullying behaviour exhibited by students. Rigby and Bagshaw (2003) reported that both girls and boys are involved in bullying by making fun of the way they look or talk, boys are more likely to report being hit, slapped or pushed. While girls are more often the targets of rumour and sexual comments. Also, Stay Safe Research, DCSF (2009); and LSYPE (2010) indicate that the type of bullying experienced by boys and girls are of different kind and their reaction to bullying are of different type. Furthermore, Van der waal, De Wit and Hirsing, (2003) revealed that girls were more prone to indirect bullying in the form of social isolation, slandering and rumour spreading while boys tend to be more prone to bullying in the form of physical attack and exhibition of aggressive

behaviour. On the contrary, Aluede (2006) reported that physical and psychological violence is almost evenly distributed among males and females in Nigerian schools.

Implications for Counselling

The findings of this study will enable the school counsellor to have better understanding of school violence, especially bullying behaviour, and emphasizing the need for counselling intervention to reduce bullying behaviour. The counsellors can be of great assistance to both bullies and victims by teaching them a new style of education called "empathy training". This will help the students to understand the feelings of others and to treat people with kindness, also mass media can be used in creating awareness on the effects of bullying on the students so that parents, teachers, government and the general public will understand the need to correct students with bullying tendencies right from infancy so as to reduce the maladaptive behaviour exhibited by students. The more training given to students and the more awareness created the better the chances of reducing the number of victims and bullies.

Conclusion

This study examined bullying behaviour and counselling intervention in secondary schools and identified the common types of bullying in schools, the level of bullying and the frequency of its occurrence among ages, gender. The results of the study indicated that types of bullying behaviour have significant difference based on age but not on gender. Bullying has been found to affect the social, physical, intellectual and emotional development of students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended to be used by school counsellors as counselling intervention to bullying behaviour in school:
i. There should be an effective sanction against any type of bullying behaviour and their malefactor.
ii. Secondary school students should be more enlightened on tolerance so as to promote peaceful co-existence among the students
iii. Programme should be organize to involve motivational speakers on the risk of bullying behaviour.

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