

**EFFECT OF BULLYING ON BASIC SCIENCE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN
EBERI-OMUMA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE**

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of bullying on Basic Science students in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State. The study is guided with three (3) objectives and research questions. A descriptive survey research design is adopted, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data from a randomly selected sample of 50 students across five secondary schools in the study area. The research investigated the types and extent of bullying behaviors, their impact on students' academic performance, and potential strategies for effective management. Findings revealed that while bullying behaviors exist among students, they are generally of low extent, with common forms including pinching and punching, mocking, and verbal attacks. However, bullying significantly affects students' psychological well-being and academic performance, leading to fear, anxiety, reduced school attendance, and decreased study motivation. The study also identified various strategies for mitigating bullying, including punishment for offenders, counseling services, fostering a supportive school environment, and encouraging students to speak against bullying. Based on these findings, the study recommends the adoption of effective classroom management techniques by teachers, the establishment of safe and supportive school environments, targeted counseling programs for both victims and perpetrators, and appropriate disciplinary measures for persistent offenders.

Keywords: Effect, bullying, basic science students, academic performance

INTRODUCTION

Academics being a sine qua non to human existence in this digital age of computation, the behavior of some teachers have salubrious effect on academic performance. Hence the researcher had to step on the issue to examine whether these have glaring effect in Basic Science Students in Eberi Omuma local Government Area of Rivers State.

The societal yearning of both educated and uneducated is good, progressive academic performance of our citizenry which some teachers are the architect of some student's woe in their academic performance, due to their ill-behaviors, suffice to mention some of the variables involved are scolding student

ts, harassing students, shouting on students, cursing even their parents, flogging them unnecessarily, see them as good for nothing, giving them ugly names and what have you.

Peretomode, (2022) in reaction to the appropriate use of teaching method, blames the poor performance of students and the fallen standard of Education in Nigeria on the attitude of teachers towards their work which I also saw bullying as some of the ingredients that can accelerate poor academic performance in our educational system in most of Universal Basic Education (UBE).

Bullying occurs in all sectors of schooling. It can happen almost everywhere in or around the school, but it usually happens during playtime, hallways, bathrooms, on school buses and while waiting for buses, classes that involve group effort or after school events.

Bullying at school might involve a group of students taking advantage of or isolating one student in particular and winning the devotion of bystanders, who may desire to avoid becoming the next victim. School bullying is a pervasive problem that impacts secondary school students on three levels: mentally, educationally, and professionally (Owuamanam and Makinwa, 2022).

(Baron and Bryne, 2019) Bullying is an aggressive conduct against others that can be verbal, physical, or social. It might be verbal by calling unpleasant names, physical by kicking, pushing, or tripping up, or social by everyone not talking to you.

The first factor that influences bullying in school is academic achievement.

As a result, bullied children live in dread, self-blame, and weakness, which affects their personality and self-confidence. As a result, they are unable to study well and may dislike attending school. Furthermore, kids will miss out on opportunities to interact with others and participate in school activities (Tambawal and Umar, 2017). As a result, individuals will achieve worse academic achievement and educational accomplishment. Bullying has a substantial correlation with school quality factors such as class size, a lack of a library, and sports facilities. Bullying makes both bullies and victims dislike school more, and it can lead to stress and depression.

Bullying can cause stress, low self-esteem, hopelessness, and social isolation. Children miss classes or are afraid to go to school. When they do attend, they lose concentration. Some of the consequences of bullying endure long after they have grown up. (Owuamanam and Makinwa, 2022) Bullying has the unintended consequence of leading to suicide. While suicide is uncommon in harassed youngsters, the negative repercussions of bullying are terrible and persist long after the child is bullied. Many schools have a zero tolerance policy for bullying, but it can be difficult to identify the victims and offenders because children are frightened to speak up.

Bullying leads to long-term issues like sadness and anxiety. In his essay "The Long Term Effects of Bullying," psychologist Mark Dombek recounts his own bullying experiences as a child, as well as the experiences of his patients, and asserts that the anger, anxiety, and depression of that moment frequently lingers into adulthood, causing problems with keeping a job, forming relationships, and even continued victimization in abusive relationships or work environments.

Students that are bullied find it difficult to concentrate in school, therefore their grades may be a warning sign that they are being bullied. If a youngster misses a lot of school due to bullying, his or her CGPA may suffer as well. Bullied children will complain of headaches, stomachaches, and general exhaustion. These problems are typically induced by emotional suffering, which manifests as physical diseases. Bullied students frequently utilize physical problems to get out of school. Furthermore, they may keep infectious from committing crime throughout the day. One particularly sad side effect of bullying is that some tormented youngsters go on to victimize and harass other children.

Children who are bullied at school will seek out children who are more susceptible than they are to bully, just as some students begin to bully at school because they are bullied at home. It's an attempt to use whatever influence they have over someone more susceptible. A mistreated child may become a bully to another child at the request of his own aggressor. At light of this issue, the study is intended to help students, teachers, parents, and concerned entities avoid bullying at some selected secondary schools in Eberi Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State.

According to the free encyclopedia dictionary, bullying is the act of intimidating a weaker person to make them do something. Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the right of students to learn in a safe environment without fear (Arseneault, 2018). Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences. Bullying is comprised of direct behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim.

Ethics of Bullying

The ethics of bullying is centered around the principles of respect, empathy and kindness. Bullying is a harmful behaviors that violates these principles causing physical, emotional and psychological harm to individuals especially children and adolescents. Ethical considerations include;

1. Respect for others' autonomy and dignity
2. Empathy towards who are vulnerable or different

3. Kindness and compassion towards all individuals

PEACE: Peace in terms of bullying refers to a state of safety, security and well-being of individuals are free from fear, intimidation and harm caused by bullying behavior. It involves

1. Absence of bullying behavior
2. Respectful and inclusive environment
3. Emotional and psychological safety
4. Education and awareness about bullying

Peace in the context of bullying means that individuals can;

1. Feel comfortable and secure in their environment
2. Express themselves without fear of ridicule or judgement
3. Form positive relationships and connections.

Characteristics of Bullies and Victims

Students who engage in bullying behaviours seem to have a need to feel powerful and in control. They appear to derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others, seem to have little empathy for their victims, and often defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way. Studies indicate that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used, where the children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems and where parental involvement are frequently lacking (Arseneault, 2010). Students regularly display bullying behaviours are generally defiant or oppositional towards adults, anti-social, and apt to break school rules. In contrast to prevailing myths, bullies, appear to have little anxiety and to possess strong self-esteem.

Perception of Bullying

Oliver, Hooker and Hazler (2019) found out that a clear majority felt that victims were at least partially responsible for bringing the bullying on themselves., students surveyed tended to agree that bullying toughened a weak person, and some felt that bullying "taught" victims appropriate behaviour. Charach, Pepler and Ziegler (2022) found that students considered victims to be "weak", "needs" and "afraid" to fight back. Parents are often unaware of the bullying problem and talk about it with their children only to limited extent (Olwerns, 2020) students surveys reveals that a low percentage of students seem to believe that adults will help. Students feel that adult intervention is infrequent and ineffective and that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bullies. Students report that teachers seldom or never talk to their classes about bullying (Charach, Pepler and Ziegler, 2021). School personnel may view bullying as a harmless right of passage that is best injured unless verbal and psychological intimidation crosses the line into physical assault or theft.

Intervention Programs

Bullying is a problem that occurs in the social environment as a whole. The bullies aggression occurs in social context in which teachers and parents are generally unaware of the extent of the problem and other children are either reluctant to get involved or simply do not know how to help (Charach, Pepler and Ziegler, 2020). Given this situation, effective intervention must involve the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone. Smith and Sharp (2018) emphasized the need to develop whole-school bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the students ground environment, and empower students through conflict resolution, peer counselling and assertiveness training. However, there is now widespread support for the view that schools should take action to counter bullying among students.

On the basis of longitudinal studies, it has been concluded that repeated exposure to being bullied can, and indeed often does, undermine the health and well-being of vulnerable students (Egan and Perry, 2020, Rigby, 2022). It is also known that the perpetrators of bullying not only tend to experience depression and engage in suicidal thinking, but also, if not corrected at school are

more to act violently as adults, in the home and workplace (Fsarrington 2023). Children who are both bullies and victims are seen especially prone to mental illness. Social science research findings often make little impact on what goes on in society, unless there is a social movement that actively seeks to make use of them. Bullying was, and still is in many minds, bracketed with harassment whose roots are in social prejudice.

Bullying is happening everywhere and the chances that your child, or you will encounter it are high. Around the world, statistics are being collated on the impact and prevalence of bullying, particularly within school, and on-line in cyber-space. With all schools talking about bullying and the media regulatory reporting on latest research, it could seem like we are in a bullying epidemic (DeRosier, 2022). But, it is not all the incidence of bullying, particularly the traditional face-to-face style, according to expert Dr. Toni Noble, is not increasing. It is a controversial area but with the effective communication of the message that bullying is unacceptable, it is just now more likely to be reported, says Doctor Noble, a member of the national centre Against Bullying, who works with the Federal Government on National Safe schools framework being rolled out into all schools.

Statement of Problem

This study seeks to identify the reasons of bullying in the school setting and to propose solutions. The issue will be investigated into bullying by some pupils and the victims. If there are better supervisions during playtime, launch time and break time, if there are class rules against bullying and if there are class meetings. Whether classroom teachers come up with creative ideas to support pupils, and whether there are discussions with targets, bullies, and their parents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of bullying behavior on students' academic achievement. After examining the problem to be researched in the study, it is necessary to declare the aim of this investigation, which includes;

1. To determine what constitutes bullying behavior among basic science students in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma Local government Area, Rivers State.
2. To investigate the detrimental effects of bullying on Basic science students in Eberi Omuma Local government Area of Rivers State.
3. To determine the expected strategies for effective management of bullying behavior in Eberi Omuma Local government Area, Rivers State.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the kind and extent of bullying behavior among Basic Science students in Eberi-Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State?
2. What are the detrimental effects of bullying on the Academic performance of Basic Science students in Eberi -Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State?
3. What are the expected strategies for effective management of bullying among Basic Science students in Eberi -Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State?

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no significant difference to the extent of bullying behaviour differ in the academic performance among basic science student in Eberi -Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State.

HO₂: There is no significant detrimental effect of bullying on the academic performance of basic science students in Eberi -Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State.

HO₃: There are no significant expectation strategies for effective management of bullying among basic science students in Eberi -Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State.

The Significance of the Study

This study will help everyone involved understand how to cope with the problem of bullying and its evident implications for school children. These are some examples:

It will teach victims why they are bullied and how to prevent being bullied in the future.

Classrooms in Eberi Omuma will now implement the specified methods to prevent bullying in their classrooms.

Bullying's effects on pupils in Eberi Omuma will be effectively addressed, resulting in improved overall academic achievement.

Scope of the Study

This study is generally focused on the effects of bullying on Basic Science students' Academic performance in Eberi Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State precisely. This study is focused on determining the extent to which Basic Science students are bullied and the effects of bullying on student's Academic performance.

10 students from 10 mixed secondary Schools in Eberi Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State will serve as participants for the survey of this study.

METHODOLOGY

Efforts are made to explain the methods, used in gathering the needed information for the research work, because collection is a choice and important aspect of successful research work.

Research Design

This research work is designed to ascertain the effect of bullying on Basic Science students in Eberi Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State and some selected secondary schools in Eberi Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State would be used. The research took into consideration the importance of using the research questionnaire which is constructed to enhance or elicit answers on the awareness of the aims and objectives of the study.

Sampling Techniques

For convenience and effectiveness, five (5) schools will be sampled and they will be selected from Eberi Omuma Local Government Area of Rivers State. The schools include;

1. Community Secondary School Amaji
2. Community Secondary School Umuogba
3. Community Secondary School Obiaha
4. Community Secondary School Umuajuloke
5. Community Secondary School Eberi

A sample random sampling techniques will be employed to sample fifty (50) students from the selected schools.

Questionnaires

The Questionnaire to be used in the research will contain twenty (20) questions, the respondents are to tick the appropriate answer to each of the questions.

Validity OF Instrument

The questionnaire is designed in Eberi Omuma Local Government Area to reflect the purpose of the study. The research supervisor could screen, approve and certify the questionnaire whether they contain adequate and relevant information.

Method of data collection

The questionnaire will be administered by personal contact added to respondents. The instrument will all be collected back on the same day after the respondents might have responded into them.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be mainly from the questionnaire, extracted and grouped into tables by using simple percentage and frequencies.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: What are the kind and extent of bullying behavior among students in Eberi-Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State?.

Table 4.1: Kinds and extent of bullying behaviours in schools

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1.	Pinching and punching	3.06	1.04	HE
2.	mocking	3.10	0.99	HE
3.	sexual harassment	1.81	0.11	LE
4.	taking another learner's belonging forcefully	1.31	0.16	LE
5.	Threatening	1.12	0.02	LE
6.	Exclusion from peer groups	2.06	1.00	LE
7.	Verbal attack	2.91	0.92	HE
AVERAGE MEAN		2.20	0.61	LE
CRITERION MEAN = 2.5				

Table 4.1 shows the mean extent of the kind of bullying behaviour in secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA. From the table, it can be observed that with the exception of items 1, 2, and 7 which had mean higher than the criterion mean (2.5) indicating high extent (LE), every other items addressing the kind of bullying behaviour in school had mean lower than the criterion mean (2.5) which reveals low extent. Also, from the table the average mean of the extent of bullying of 2.20 which is lower than the criterion mean (2.5). This indicates that there is low extent (LE) of bullying in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA.

Research Question Two: What are the detrimental effects of bullying on the Academic performance of Basic Science students in Eberi -Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State?

Table 4.2: Extent of detrimental effect of bullying

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	DECISION
8.	I don't feel safe about bullying in school	3.21	0.19	HE
9.	sudden decrease in academic performance can be due to bullying in school	2.67	0.08	HE
11.	bullying in school doesn't scare me its just an excuse for failure	3.51	0.21	HE
12.	kids tend to be depressed after a bullying scenario	3.09	0.12	LE
13.	bullying is the most common form of violence in my school	2.74	1.01	HE
14.	I sometime don't go to school because of fear of bullying in my school	2.90	0.08	HE
15.	bullying always affect my study habit in school	2.66	0.90	HE
16.	a bully may like not be intelligent	1.82	0.63	LE
17.	I hardly go for preps or participate in many school activities because of phobic anxiety and fear of bullying	2.57	0.13	HE
AVERAGE MEAN		2.79	0.37	HE
CRITERION MEAN = 2.5				

Table 4.2 shows the mean extent of detrimental effect of bullying behaviour in secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA. From the table, it can be observed that with the exception of item 16 which had mean lower than the criterion mean (2.5) indicating low extent (LE), every other items addressing detrimental effects of bullying behaviour in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma had mean higher than the criterion mean (2.5) which reveals higher extent. Also, from the table the average mean of the extent of detrimental effects of bullying (2.79) is higher than the criterion mean (2.5). Thus the detrimental effect of bullying in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA is on the high extent (HE).

Research Question Three: What are the expected strategies for effective management of bullying among Basic Science students in Eberi -Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State?

Table 4.3: Extent of the expected Strategies for effective management of bullying

S/N	ITEM	MEAN	SD	DECISION
18.	punishment should be given to students who bullied others.	3.52	0.11	HE
19.	counselling can help to reduce bullying in school	3.16	0.01	HE
20.	building a safe and supportive environment reduces bullying behaviour in school	2.73	0.04	HE
21.	Teaching students to speak up when they witness bullying behaviour and to take a stand against it can reduce future bullying situations.	2.58	0.02	HE
AVERAGE MEAN		3.00	0.45	HE
CRITERION MEAN =2.5				

Table 4.2 shows the mean extent of the expected strategies for effective management of bullying behaviour in secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA. From the table, it can be observed that all the items addressing the expected strategies for effective management of bullying behaviour in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma had mean higher than the criterion mean (2.5) which shows high extent. Also, from the table the average mean of the extent of the respondents' opinion on the expected strategies for effective management of bullying (3.00) is within and higher than the criterion mean (2.5). Thus the strategies expected for effective management of bullying in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA is on the high extent (HE).

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the respondents on research question one shows that low extent of bullying behaviours among junior secondary school students in Eberi-Omuma LGA, Rivers State. Nonetheless, there are some kinds of bullying behaviours (like pinching and punching, mocking, and verbal attack) in the schools. This finding of the presence of some kinds of bullying behaviour in the schools affirms the finding of Green and Owo (2020) and Gradin and Hammarrstrom (2015). Green and Owo (2020) found bullying to include pinching and punching, mocking (ridiculing), sexual harassment, slapping, verbal attack, extortion, taking another learner's belonging forcefully, exclusion of peers from group, threatening, and humiliating.

On research question two, findings show high extent of detrimental effects of bullying among basic science students. It shows that students bullying don't allow students to feel safe, causes fear, anxiety and depression among students, affects students' study habits and attendance to school and. This revealed that bullying in schools have detrimental psychological and academic effects on students. This finding agrees with the findings of Green and Owo (2020) and A-Raqqad et al. (2017).

SUMMARY

- i. Pinching and punching, mocking, exclusion of peers from group and verbal attack are the most common kinds of bullying behaviour among basic science students in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA, Rivers State.

- ii. Bullying behaviour has detrimental effects on both psychological well-being and students' academic performance.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that certain kinds of bullying behaviour exist among basic science students in junior secondary schools in Eberi-Omuma LGA, Rivers State. Bullying behaviours in schools does not allow the school environment to be safe for students to effectively engage in academic activities because of its psychological effects on the victims.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should adopt classroom management skill that can control bullying in class.
2. The school should build a safe and supportive environment to reduces bullying behaviour in schools.
3. Counselling of students who engage in bullying behavior can reduce bully in schools.
4. Students who persistently engage in bullying should be punished.

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