

## PARENTING STYLES, FAMILY TYPE AND PEER PRESSURE AS DETERMINANTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOUTHWEST, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Previous studies on bullying behaviour among students suggest that the family types and parenting styles are likely to influence different forms of students bullying behaviour. Different types of families with their competing styles of parenting are well illustrated in a multicultural and multi-religious society such as Nigeria where religious and cultural practices either encourage or tolerate polygamous marriages which create the environment for different types of family structure and competing styles of parenting. These create all patterns and forms of behaviour by children or students. The study assessed the relationship among parenting styles, family types and peer pressure on bullying behaviour of selected school students. It determined the level of bullying behaviour exhibited among students. The study assessed the frequency and types of family that exist among students. The study adopted survey design. The population of the study comprised all secondary school students in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample size comprised 728 students. A multistage sampling technique was used. Six Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected. From each LGAs, 4 secondary schools were randomly selected and 35 students were selected from each school by stratified sampling technique using age and class as strata. One research instrument divided into four sections was used for this study. Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (BBQ), Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) and Family type (FTQ) and Peer Pressure Questionnaire (PPQ) were used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using percentage and chi-square. Result showed that parenting styles significantly influenced bullying behaviour, 66.9% of the respondents exhibiting bullying behaviour through peer influence. It was also found that 50.5% and 35.7% respondents from broken homes and intact family were exhibiting bullying behaviour. Therefore, it was concluded that parenting styles, family type and peer pressure influenced bullying behaviour among secondary school students. Parents should put more effort to ensure that their children are morally trained and well monitored.

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**KEYWORDS:** Parenting Styles, Family Type, Peer Pressure, Bullying Behaviour, Secondary School, Students

### INTRODUCTION

Violence cuts across generations and bullying is a violent act being perpetrated by both the adolescents and youths. Bullying is a form of violence which has recently attracted the attention of researchers. Bullying is a global behavioural problem that occurs mostly in and outside schools and also on the way home from school. It is a phenomenon that has increasingly become a world problem that demands the attention of the stake holders in education. It can be observed that almost every student has been bullied or involved in bullying in one way or the other.

Bullying involves both direct and indirect-behavioural acts. Olweus (1999, Rigby, 2003), describe bullying as a distinct form of aggression characterized by a repeated and systematic abuse of power. According to Mitsopoulon and Giorazolias (2013) bullying is an intentional continual aggressive behaviour towards person, the victim, who are defend

less. Nwokolo, Ayamene & Efobi (2011) surmised that any behaviour a person exhibits with the intention to hurt another person physically or psychologically for no reason is considered as bullying. According to Obidi (1999) bullying is regarded as a normal childhood experience but in recent times it is observed that bullying is more than a childhood experience. When a child for example intentionally hurts another child/student regarded as the victim. It seems as if most teachers and parents do not yet recognize or regard this aggressive behaviour as a serious educational problem (Neto, 2005; Limber & Natum, 1997; Nwokolo, *et al*; 2011). Its implication for counselling is only gradually being recognized, Bullying is characterized as an aggressive behaviour that is intended to cause distress or discomfort or harm and it involves an imbalance of power or strength between the perpetrator and the victim and commonly occurs overtime. (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simmons-Morton and Scheidt, 2001). Bullying is the exploitation of

existing gradient or imbalance in power relations between an individual the perpetrator and another victim who is characteristically vulnerable to all forms of targeted aggressive physical and psychological behaviour.

Bullying has been defined by many researchers. The most widely used definition of bullying as opined by Olweus (1993) is when a person is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more students. Negative actions are considered to be when someone purposefully inflicts or tries to inflict injury on another person. Hawker and Boulton (2000) also defined bullying as the experience among children of being a target of aggressive behaviour of other children who are not siblings and necessarily age mates. Smiths (1991) described the act as an unprovoked attack that causes hurt of a psychological, social or physical nature. Also, Morrison (2002) for example surmised that bullying behaviour in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and the rights of students to learn in a safe and secure environment without fear or intimidation. Bullying is not a behavioural problem that is peculiar to a particular culture rather it is prevalent worldwide (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim & Shadek, 2010; Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002).

Studies have shown that male and female experienced bullying at one time or another but it was found to be prevalent among boys than girls, O'moore and Hillery (1989) observed 12.5% of boys and 5.6% of girls were frequently bullied. Hazler, Hoover and Oliver (1991) stated that boys were reported as victims 73% of the time and girls 27% of the times. It was reported that boys are more likely to experience direct bullying whereas girls more than boys are likely to experience indirect victimization. Mynard and Joseph (2000) reported that boys experienced higher physical bullying and attack on property than girls, girls on the other hand experienced social manipulation and verbal attack, bullying among girls mostly involves less physical violence and can be correct from that may not be known to the public. School bullying remains a major problem and the school environment being a learning centre ought to be free of fear for students. But it is not and this makes some children feel reluctant towards going to school.

According to Bamurind (1991) there are four types of parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved or neglectful parenting styles Greenwood (2013) stated that authoritative parents set clear expectations and high standards as well as monitor the children's behaviour using discipline based on reasoning. In authoritarian style of parenting, parents show high levels of control, supervision, harsh punishment, coercion and

moderate levels of love, withdrawal of support (Hoevel, Blockland, Dubas, Lhoerber, Gerris & van Der loan, 2008) in this type of parenting style, children are required to follow rules without any explanation from the parents (Cherry, 2013). Parents practicing this style are extremely strict and are highly controlling, they dictate how their children should behave without giving room for any opinion from their children while they seem to neglect their responsibility towards their children.

According to Kopko (2007) permissive parents are warm but not demanding, indulgent and passive. Such parents believed that the way to prove their love is to allow their children to have their ways without looking at the consequences. Permissive parents give their children high levels of independence which results in low level of parental guidance (Schaffer, Clerk & Jeglic, 2009) while neglectful parents exhibits a lack of control and lack of support and protection (Hoevel *et al*; 2008, 2009)

With different types of parenting, students who do not receive adequate care, warmth or love from their parents are likely to turn to friends for advice and may invariably adopt certain undesirable behaviour in order to fit in with others (Santor, Merservey, Kusuwakar, 2000). Studies/researchers have shown that support, empathy, protection, supervision and affection are needed in order to develop as a psychosocially mature, competent and responsible individual (Wright & Cullen, 2001; Steinberg *et al*, 2006). Parenting style is one of the major elements of the home system which has the potential to influence children's behaviour. Parenting style exhibited by each home influences the child behaviour. The family is an important socio-cultural institution in the life of a child especially an adolescent who faces different forms of transitions into adulthood and different types of challenges child. Families play an important role in the behaviour displayed by the children. Researchers (Steinberg *et al*, 2006) have found that family type, environment influence children behaviour. For example the type of family (such as Single, Polygamy, Monogamy, Broken etc) number of individuals in a family, inconsistent parenting, familiar problems, child neglect and children attachment to parent.

Studies shows that single parent families produce children with behavioural problems than two parent families. Studies have agreed that the foundation of crime related behaviour is rooted in the kind of home the adolescent is brought up. The type of family a child comes from goes a long way in determining the kind of behaviour such a child is likely to exhibit. The basis for good orientation and good adolescents' attitude development is founded on positive parenting. Carrabine, Lee, Cox, Plummer & South (2009) claimed that youths from intact or two parent

families are less likely to be involved in crime related offences than children from single parent families. The impact the family has on the child goes a long way in determining what the child would be as an adult or even the kind of parent- he/she would be in future.

Different parenting styles, family types and competing peer pressure groups influence and subsequently may determine the behaviour of and values held by adolescents. All of which ultimately reflect in students' learning and confronting the counsellor with considerable challenges. While previous studies have studied variables influencing bullying behaviour in general (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim & Shadak, 2010); (Kanetsuna & Smith, 2002); (Hawker and Boulton 2000); the specific influences of parenting styles, family types and pressure group on students behaviour within a non-western multicultural society is yet to be empirically explored. The formal and informal relationships embedded in parenting styles, family types and peer group pressures and compounded and sustained by the core values associated with the different styles and patterns of parenting including types of families is yet to be empirically studied. Invariably related cultural and religious practices associated with such styles of parenting and types of family generate different forms of complex and competing demographic compositions of peer pressure groups which combine trigger and influence aggressive bullying behaviours. In this context a multicultural and multireligion society such as Nigeria provides a rich source and setting to study the influence of parenting style, family and peer pressure on adolescents bullying behaviour. Previous studies have not specifically, contextualized adolescents' bullying behaviours in the cultural, religious and peer pressure settings of the families and parents of both perpetrators and victims of bullying. Such studies are required to provide the counsellor with relevant guidelines, and models to develop appropriate interventions to mitigate the possible negative impacts of bullying in the secondary school settings especially in non-western cultures.

Accordingly the objectives of this study are to (i) determine the level of bullying behaviour exhibited among adolescents(ii) assess the frequency and types of family that exist among adolescents. (iii) determine the influence of different types of family, parenting styles and peer pressure on bullying behaviour among secondary school students.

#### **Research Questions**

- a. What level of bullying behaviour is exhibited among secondary school students in Southwestern, Nigeria?
- b. What is the frequency and types of family that exist among secondary school students in Southwestern, Nigeria?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

- a. There is no significant influence of parenting styles on bullying behaviour of secondary school students.
- b. There is no significant influence of family types on bullying behaviour of secondary school students.
- c. There is no significant influence of peer pressure on bullying behaviour of secondary school students.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted survey design. The population of the study comprised all secondary school students. The sample size consisted of 728 students. Multistage sampling technique was used for the study. Six Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected. From each LGA, 4 secondary schools were randomly selected and 35 students were selected from each school by stratified sampling technique using age and class as strata. One research instrument divided into 3 sections namely Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (BBQ), Parenting Style Questionnaire (PSQ) and Family type and Peer pressure Questionnaire were used to collect data for the study. Bullying behaviour questionnaire was used to measure the frequency, types and incidence of bullying among secondary school students. The questionnaire was adapted from Mynard and Joseph (2000). The instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.84. Parenting style was used to measure the influence of different styles of parenting on bullying behaviour of students, the instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.76. Family types and peer pressure were used to measure the influence of the type of family and the kind of pressure received from peers to exhibit bullying behaviour among students. The psychometric properties are 0.80 and 0.76 respectively. Permission was obtained from principals of schools. The consent of the students and assistance of class teachers were sought in schools selected for the study. The instruments were given to students selected based on the age and class and were instructed that their responses would be for research purpose and the researcher will treat them confidentially. Data were analyzed using percentage and chi-square.

#### **RESULTS**

**Research Question One:** What level of bullying behaviour is exhibited among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria?

To answer this question, students were required to respond to 15 items that related to violent behaviour and the responses to those items were scored. Scores between the range of 15 to 30 were regarded as low bully behaviour, while 31 to 45 were regarded being high. Table 1 shows the level of bullying behaviour students exhibited.

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Levels of Bullying Behaviour among Respondents**

Levels of Bully Behaviour	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Low	241	33.1	33.1	33.1
High	487	66.9	66.9	100.0
Total	728	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows that 241 (33.1%) of the respondents claimed that they exhibited bullying behaviour, while 487 (66.9%) exhibited bullying behaviour among their mates. This showed that most of the students exhibited one form of bullying behaviour or the other on their mates in the school.

What is the frequency and type of parenting style used by parents as identified by the secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria?

To answer this question, students' responses were categorized as shown in Table 1.

**Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of Types of Parenting Styles**

Parenting Style	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Authoritative	93	12.8	12.8	12.8
Authoritarian	265	35.7	35.7	48.5
Permissive	114	15.7	15.7	64.1
Uninvolved	259	34.9	34.9	100.0
Total	728	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the frequency count and percentage of each parenting style identified by the respondents. The respondents revealed that 93(12.8%) claimed that their parents used authoritative style, 265 (35.7%) for authoritarian, 114 (15.7%) permissive, and 259 (34.9%). The results show that most of the

**Table 4: Influence of Parenting Styles on Bullying Behaviour**

Level of Violent Behaviour	Parenting Style				Df	$\chi^2$	p
	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Permissive	Uninvolved			
Low	33 (30.8)	88 (86.1)	33 (37.7)	87 (86.4)	3	1.198	>0.05
High	60 (62.2)	172 (173.9)	81 (76.3)	170 (170.6)			
Total	93 (93.0)	260 (260.0)	114 (114.0)	257 (250.0)			

Table 4 shows two levels of bullying behaviour (low and high) with their corresponding parenting styles. It showed that students with high level of bullying behaviour had parents who adopted authoritarian parents 172 (173.9) followed by uninvolved parenting style 170 (170.6), It further shows that students who exhibited low bullying behaviour had parents using authoritative 33 (30.8), authoritarian 88 (86.5), permissive 33 (37.7), and uninvolved 87 (86.4) respectively. However, the chi-square analysis carried out showed that there was significant

**Table 5: Influence of Family Types on Bullying Behaviour**

Level of Violent Behaviour	Family Types			df	$\chi^2$	P
	Single Parent	Intact	Divorced			
Low	72 (78.1)	131 (122.5)	38 (40.4)	2	1.814	>0.05
High	164 (157.9)	239 (247.5)	84 (81.6)			
Total	236 (236.0)	370 (370.0)	122 (122.0)			

parents used authoritarian style at one hand and uninvolved on the other hand.

**Research Question Two:** What is the frequency and types of family that exist among secondary school students in Southwestern Nigeria?

To answer this question, responses of the students were revealed in the Table 3.

**Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Family Types**

Family Types	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Single Parent	236	32.4	32.4	32.4
Intact	370	50.8	50.8	83.2
Divorced	122	16.8	16.8	100.0
Total	728	100.0	100.0	

The Table 3 shows the frequency count and percentage of family types identified by the respondents. Three family types were identified and used in the study namely: single parent (either mother or father take cares of the children), intact family (both parents stay and live together), and divorce (legally stay apart). Two hundred and thirty six of the respondents (32.4%) had single parent, 370 (50.8%) had intact family, and 122 (16.8%) had parents divorced. This shows that an average of 50% of the respondents have intact family.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant influence of parenting styles on bullying behaviour of secondary school students.

To test this hypothesis, students' bullying behaviour and parenting styles were cross tabulated as shown in Table 4.

influence of parenting styles on students' levels of bullying behaviour.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant influence of family types on bullying behaviour of secondary school students.

To test this hypothesis, family types were divided into three strands (single parent, intact and divorced), and bullying behaviour was categorized as low and high. This result was subjected to chi-square data analysis as shown below in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that students with low and high bullying behaviour were from different family types. Students with low bullying behaviour had single parent 72 (78.1), intact family 131 (122.5), and 38 (40.4) respectively. Students with high bullying behaviour were from single parent 164 (157.9), intact family 239 (237.5) and 84 (81.6) respectively. It showed that most of the students who exhibited high bullying behaviour 239 (237.5) had intact family. The chi-square analysis revealed that there was no significant influence of family types on bullying behaviour among students.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant influence of peer pressure on bullying behaviour of secondary school students.

To test this hypothesis, level of bullying behaviour and peer pressure were cross tabulated as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Influence of Peer Pressure on Bullying Behaviour

Level of Bully Behaviour	Peer Pressure		df	χ <sup>2</sup>	p
	Low	High			
Low	91(86.7)	150(154.3)	1	0.490	>0.05
High	171 (175.3)	316(311.7)			
Total	262 (212.5)	466 (435.0)			

Table 6 shows that students with low and high bullying behaviour were either influenced by low or high peer pressure. Students with low bullying behaviour were influenced by low 91(86.7) and high, 150 (154.3), peer pressure respectively. Students with high bullying behaviour were influenced by low 171 (175.3) and high 316 (311.7), peer pressure respectively. The chi-square analysis showed that there was significant influence of peer pressure on bullying behaviour among secondary school students.

## DISCUSSION

Bullying is one of the most common forms of violence in secondary schools. This makes the school environment rather unsafe for students. In recent times the phenomenon of bullying has topped the concerns of school administrators and counsellors primarily because of its potential to negate effective students learning in schools. Bullying behaviour occurs from time to time and has negative impacts on students' academic, emotional and social development during the school period. Victims of bullying are on the increase and fatalities have been reported (Kartal, 2005). Studies have shown for example that students exhibited one form of bullying behaviour or the other on their school mates. Studies have also shown that factors within and outside the school environment including the imbalance of power and status among students facilitate bullying in which perpetrators take advantage of vulnerability of real and potential victims (Maliki & Asagwara, 2009). It has been observed that parenting styles play a significant role in shaping the personality and

behaviours of individuals. Each of the parenting styles has effect on both students and their bullying behaviour. Results of this study showed that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were most frequently used by parents. The authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were found to increase the level of bullying among students. This result reflects the view of Kopko (2007) that adolescents experiencing this type of parenting style may become rebellious or aggressive. This shows that authoritarian type of parenting styles has negative influence on the behaviour of adolescents. This can do promote bullying behaviour among adolescents in secondary schools. Permissive type of parenting whereby children are allowed to have all they desire not minding the consequences, also encourage the development and dynamics of bullying as shown by the result of this study. This result is consistent with the views of Balry & Farrington, 2000; Georgiou,(2008) that permissive type of parenting predicts the experiences of victimization by the child while authoritarian parenting style best predicts bullying behaviour in adolescents.

It was found in this study that a high percentage of students were from both single parent and intact families. Students from such family background model and are model of good behaviour. This will enhance the good behaviour of students from that type of home. Students from single parent family are likely to show evidence of indiscipline and lack of control such that they exhibit. This view is also consistent with the view of Bamurind (1991) who asserted that the family is a socio-cultural economic arrangement that exerts significant influence on children's behaviour and the development of their characters. Any ignorance on the part of parents/family may lead to undesirable damaging effects on children's growth and thereafter may create misbehaviour problems in children. Most bullying behaviours which constitute problems and challenges to counsellors directly can be traced. It was also revealed that there was significant influence of peer pressure on bullying behaviour. This shows that any student copying or modeling the aggressive behaviour of his/her peer will exhibit bullying behaviour because students at this level are interested in the opinion of their peers than that of their parents.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parents should be encouraged to adopt the best parenting style in the training and upbringing of their children. It has been observed that authoritative parenting style is the method that yields result in child upbringing.
- Counsellors should organize regular seminars and conferences for parents and students to enlighten them on the best style to be adopted in training their children and the students to know the kind of friends or group to move with so as not to join bad

group and copy bad behaviour because bad group corrupt good behaviour.

- A good way of reducing bullying behaviour among students would be to ensure that students have a healthy home environment where there is peace among parents and children to encourage the development of good social skills. It is important for parents to pay adequate attention to their children as well as parental supervision helps to reduce aggressive behaviour.

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