

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AS CORRELATE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU STATE

Eze Chika Emmanuel, Adimora Dorothy Ebere, Adene Friday Mamudu and Ekwueme Hope
Uchechukwu

Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

Email: connectchika@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population of the study comprised all (356 Junior secondary school students two (JSS 2) identified with bullying behaviour consisting of 206 males and 150 females) from all the 50 public secondary schools in the Zone, which also formed the sample size for the study. Parental Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ) and Students Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (SBBQ) were used in collecting data for the study. The internal consistency reliability of the instruments were calculated using Cronbach Alpha and reliability estimates of 0.80 and 0.86 whereas obtained for PIQ and SBBQ respectively. The data whereas analyzed using linear regression to answer research question one, while multiple regression was used to answer research question two. Then, Regression analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypothesis one, while Fisher's Z-test was used to test hypothesis two at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the findings amongst others showed that there exists a significant positive moderate relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo Afor education zone. The findings also revealed that gender significantly moderates the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that, principals/Teachers should lay emphasis on developing school programmes such as open day-conference between parents, teachers and students and that Parents should know that irrespective of the students' gender, they can still achieve positive behavioural outcomes through their personal effort.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Bullying Behaviour, Students

Introduction

Bullying among school children is certainly a very old phenomenon. It is a serious issue in schools due to the potential negative consequences of victimization. It is a behaviour which its rate of manifestation has increased over the years as well as a behavioural challenge that cuts across every school. Thus, these numbers of students have become the target of bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour according to (Nwokolo, Anyameme & Nzerem 2020), is a form of aggression, a particular kind of violence manifested in the course of social relationship by a stronger individual (the bully) to a less dominant (the victim) with the intention to cause distress to the victim.

The authors further stated that such behaviour may include name-calling, verbal or written abuse, exclusion from activities, social situations, physical abuse or coercion. (Adekeye, et al., 2016) assert that bullying is a global problem among school children, which has been reported in the United States of America. Bullying is a behaviour that occurs in many schools and is perhaps one of the most under-reported safety problems (Adekeye, et al., 2016). (Blake, Lund, Zhou, Kwok, and Benz (2012) described bullying as characterized by aggressive

acts with the intention to cause physical harm, psychological distress, or humiliation. It is a physical, verbal or psychological harassment intended to instill fear, and distress by the bully to the victim. (Nwokolo, Ayamene & Efobi, 2011).

Bullying can also be described as negative events, that are directed at particular individuals and which are carried out by one or several other people who are stronger than the victim (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike and & Afen-Akpaide, 2008). Such individuals who are recipients of such negative behaviour could suffer emotional instability and social withdrawal (Misopoulou & Giovazolias 2013).

Empirical studies in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State indicated a high rate of the prevalence of bullying behaviour in the area (Chinweuba & Onyia 2023; Ononuju, Kato & Eminike, 2023). Similarly, a study in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State also showed that bullying behaviour of secondary school students was experienced in the zone (Dikenta, 2023). The researcher has often observed similar characteristics of bullying behaviours exhibited by students in the area of the study, comparable with those reported by the scholars cited above.

It has been indicated that those who are bullied reported fear of going to school, manifestations of anxiety, and physical symptoms of illness and lower levels of self-esteem (Olweus, 2003). Thornberg (2010) stated that students affected by bullying will be at higher risk of developing depression, anxiety, loneliness, school phobia, truancy, low self-concept, mistrust of others, low self-esteem, poor social adjustment, poor academic achievement and even poor health as compared to others. Thornberg (2010) further, explained that bullying could finally lead to criminal behaviors such as armed robbery, theft, arson, kidnapping and rape among the perpetrators if not curtailed at the onset. Aluede in (2006) carried out a study and discovered that students who experienced high level of bullying behavior from their peers are likely to drop out of school. Beane (2012) in another study indicated that students who are bullied experience psychological problem like borderline personality disorder later in life.

Regrettably, all the aforementioned characteristics of the bullying behaviours like hitting and kicking, harassing someone within and outside the school premises, calling of names, teasing, spreading rumors about someone among others, have often been observed by the researcher to be manifested by students in various schools in Obollo-Afor Education Zone in Enugu State, through mere observation. All of these negative behaviours exhibited by some students in the zone under study could have relationship with how parents get involve with their children at home. Although not empirically proven.

Nevertheless, literatures have shown that when parents are positively involved in the affairs of both bullying and bullied students, they will engage effectively in school (Chima, 2017; Singh, 2017; Okereke, 2016; Konishi, 2015; and Kristin Corsaro, 2014). This implies that some social-ecological and environmental factors, such as parental relationships, peer relationships, school climate, school policies, teacher-student relationships and broader societal factors can contribute to bullying behaviour of students (Huang, Lewis, Cohen, Prewett and Herman 2018). Therefore, when parents ensure their children attend schools and other social activities at home it can be linked to the students' relationship and behaviour in school (Cook, Guerra, Kim, and Sadek 2010). Thus, one could suffice it to say that the manner parents relate with their children at home as it pertains to their overall aspects of life could be referred to as parental involvement. Parental involvement according to Molly (2014) can generally be referred to as parents' participation in their children's education with the purpose of promoting their academic and social success. Additionally, Parental involvement can equally be referred to as "parents working together to improve the development of children and adolescents" (Strait & Rivera, 2013).

The scholars further categorized parental involvement into positive and negative involvement. Positive involvement entails parent's establishment of positive communication to understand children's "concerns" and "problems", or skills to make children offsets some

negative feelings in order to feel better and consequently protect them from bullying. Such family communication and contact can help adolescents to be protected from the harmful effects of bullying and other psycho-social factors (Elger, Anthony, Saul, Melanie, Craig, Paul, Holt, and Brian, 2014). The scholars asserted that such positive communication help to create trust and allow the adolescents are aware that they can rely on family members in helping them provide an adaptive way to cope with bullying. When parents exhibit positive communication by giving rules or orders to their children, at the same time explaining to them the reason for such rules and regulations as well as caring and giving listening ears to their personal problems, it constitutes a protective factor for bullying (Papanikolaou, Chatzikosma and Kleio 2011)). Okereke (2016) further discovered that positive involvement of parents were capable of eradicating learners' sense of bullying in school. Parent's involvement increases academic and behavioural performance of students (Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2003).

Parents play a crucial role in intervening and preventing bullying and other behavioural problems as indicated in the work of Laster et al (2017) that parent's responsiveness to a child's victimization is related to the child's ability to cope with bullying and engaging well in school. Negative involvement entails parents' constitution of an environment full of uncertainty for their children (Wang, Jang, Ronald and Tonja, 2009). Such parents' involvement creates risk factor for peer aggression including bullying (Scaramella and Leve, 2004). Seemingly, it is believed that boys are more susceptible than girls in exhibiting behavioural problems like bullying in school; therefore, it becomes necessary to determine if gender is a factor in the manifestation of bullying among students in the zone.

Gender is a social-cultural factor that indicates the position or place of men and women in the society. According to world health organization (2017) gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men. There is much speculation as to whether gender differences exist in bullying. A study performed by (Griezel, Finger, Bodkin-Andrews, Craven, and Yeung, 2012) aimed to determine if the rates of bullying differed between genders. The researchers used 803 students, ages ranging from 12 to 17 years old, to complete this analysis. These researchers discovered that, "overall, boys engaged in and were the target of traditional bullying more than girls" (Griezel, Finger, Bodkin-Andrews, Craven, and Yeung, 2012). The finding suggests that boys not only bully more but also fall victim to bullying more than girls.

Statement of the Problem

The school environment is expected to be free from any physical, social and psychological factors that will hinder effective teaching and learning. Unfortunately, certain anti-social behaviours, such as bullying behaviour has become a huge area of concern several years and most people have seen or experienced bullying at some point in their lives. Bullying has been observed as one of the psycho-social factors that tremendously affect the school system and the students across the world.

In Obollo Afor Education Zone, it has been observed by the researcher during inspection and sometime while within the school's environment that students exhibited a high rate of anti-social behaviour such as bullying within classrooms, school premises and on students' way home in Enugu State, especially in Obollo Afor Education Zone. Also loitering about in the streets during school hours and also involved in other social vices like Alcohol abuse, indecent dressing, drug abuse, smoking and hooliganisms among others. Specifically, older students beat the younger ones in the class and within the school premises, engaged in fighting especially when on their way home after school. However, this may negatively affect students' active participation in group tasks and consequently their academic achievement.

Besides these, it may affect the students' social adjustment and their overall behavioural dispositions, though it is not yet justified with empirical evidence.

All in all, it appears there is no literature or empirical evidence to show the correlation between parental involvement and the bullying behaviour amongst secondary school students in Obollo-Afor Education Zone. Furthermore, gender have been considered by many studies as a significant factor that account for variations in students' behaviours, but the moderating relationship of gender on parental involvement on the bullying behaviour of male and female students of the education zone under study has not been clearly established by researchers. Based on the forgoing, this study investigates parental involvement as correlates of bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor Education Zone?
2. What is the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students as moderated by gender?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor Education Zone.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students as moderated by gender.

Methodology

The study employed a Correlational Research design. Correlational research seeks to establish the direction and magnitude of the relationship that exists between two or more variables (Nworgu, 2019). The study was carried out in Obollo-Afor Education Zone of Enugu State. The population of the study comprised all the 356 JSS 2 students identified with bullying behaviour consisting of 206 males and 150 females from all the 50 public secondary schools in Obollo Afor education zone. population of the study formed the sample size of the study since it is small and manageable. A researcher developed instruments titled: Parental Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ); and Student Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (SBBQ); containing 20 items, each were used in the collection of data for this study. The PIQ was divided into two sections; section A and section B. Section "A" elicited personal information of the respondents, such as; Name of the school and gender. While section "B" consisted of a total of twenty items that elicited data on parental involvement.

The SBBQ also had two sections; section A and B. Section "A" elicited personal information of the respondents, such as; Name of school and gender, while section "B" contained a total of twenty items that elicited data on students' bullying behaviour. Both PIQ and SBBQ were modeled on a Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD) with corresponding numerical values or points of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The respondents were expected to choose the option that best expresses their opinion with respect to parental involvement. Preliminary survey student questionnaire on bullying behaviour (PSSQBB) was developed by the researcher to identify students with bullying behaviour before the researcher went back to distribute the main questionnaire for the study. The two instruments (PIQ and SBBQ) were face validated by three experts; two from Educational Psychology unit, Department of

Educational Foundations, and one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit, Department of Science Education, all from Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts were requested to assess the instruments with respect to clarity of items, simplicity of vocabulary, adequacy of the columns, and relevant of the items to the purpose of the study. In addition, the experts were requested to make relevant input on any useful information that would help to ensure the validity of the instruments.

The reliability of the (PIQ) and (SBBQ), were ascertained by administering the instruments to 30 JS 2 students from Nsukka education zone of Enugu State, who are not part of the study but share similar characteristics. The reliability coefficients of 0.80 and 0.86 were obtained for (PIQ) and (SBQ) respectively through Cronbach Alpha method of estimating the internal consistency of an instrument. The instruments were administered and collected by the researcher with help of one research assistant. Data gathered were analyzed using linear regression analysis in answering research question one, while multiple regressions was used in answering research question two. Regression ANOVA was used to test the null hypothesis one, while Fishers Z- test was used to test hypothesis two at 0.05 levels of significance.

Results

Results are presented in Tables based on the research questions and null hypotheses guiding the study.

Research Question One: What is the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone?

Table 1: Linear regression analysis of relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Parental Involvement and Bullying Behaviour	.52	.27	.26	.36

(R²) = Coefficient of Determination

Result in Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students was 0.52. The result implies that there exists a positive moderate relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students. The result also revealed that the coefficient of determination (R²) associated with the correlation coefficient of .52 was .27. The coefficient of determination (R²) of .27 implies that parental involvement accounts for up to 27% of bullying behaviour of secondary school students. This is an indication that 72% of the variation in bullying behaviour is attributed to other factors other than parental involvement.

Hypotheses One: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone.

Table 2: Regression analysis of relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	16.906	1	16.906	128.097	.000 ^a
Residual	46.721	354	.132		
Total	63.628	355			

The result in Table 2 shows that F-ratio of 128.097 with an associated exact probability value of 0.00 was obtained. This probability value of 0.00 was compared with 0.05 set as level of significance for testing the hypothesis and it was found to be significant because 0.00 is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected. The researcher, therefore, concludes that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone as moderated by gender?

Table 5: Regression analysis of the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone as moderated by gender

Model	Gender	n	R	R ²	Fisher's Z score	Sig
1	Male	170	.59	.35	2.009	.045
2	Female	186	.43	.19		

The result in Table 5 revealed that the correlation coefficient (r) of .59 and .43 with associated coefficients of determinant (r²) of .35 and .19 were obtained for male and female secondary school students in Obollo Afor education zone of Enugu state respectively on their bullying behaviour with respect to parental involvement. The obtained coefficients of determination of .35 and .19 indicate that 35% and 19% variation in students' bullying behaviour is attributed to parental involvement for male and female students respectively. The difference in the variation of male and female students is jointly 16%. Hence, gender moderates 16% variation in secondary school students' bullying behaviour with respect to parental involvement.

Hypotheses Two: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone as moderated by gender

Result in Table 5 was also used to test hypothesis three. The Table revealed that Fisher's z-transformation score of 2.009 with an exact probability value of .045 was obtained. Since the exact probability value of .045 was less than the level of significance set at 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected. The researcher therefore concludes that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone as moderated by gender.

Discussion of the Findings

The study was mainly focused on parental involvement as a correlate of bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Enugu State. The findings of the study showed that there exists a positive moderate relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students. The findings further explain that when parents exhibit positive communication by giving rules and regulations as well as caring and giving listening hears to their problems this could be said to be positive involvement. This is consistent with the result of the study by Papanikolaou, Chatzikosma and Kleio (2011). Similarly, the result also corroborates the findings of Fajoju (2017) which shows that parental involvement has a positive relationship with students' bullying behaviour. Additionally, the findings also revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected. The result is line with the findings of Okereke (2016) which indicated that there was a significant relationship among parental involvement and bullying behaviour of students. The findings by Elger, Anthony, Saul, Melanie, Craig, Paul, Holt, and Brian, (2014).

The findings of this study also showed that there was a significant relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour of secondary school students in Obollo-Afor education zone as moderated by gender. The finding lends support to the findings of Silva, Pereira, Mendonca, Nunes and Oliveira (2013) which found that boys and girls are both victims and aggressors and there are significant differences in involvement in bullying between genders and the roles played. Hanani and Piskin (2020) further accentuated this finding by revealing that girls and boy are vulnerable to bullying. But those boys are found to be more bullied than girls. Similarly, the study by Popp, Peguero, Day and Kahle (2014) concluded that there were significant differences between girls and boys. Those girls reported higher incidents of indirect bullying behaviour than boys, while boys have higher tendencies in direct bullying behaviour than girls. These findings could be interpreted to mean that the manner of relation that parents exhibit towards the affairs of their children can positively have significant relationship with the bullying behaviour of students as well as all behavioural dispositions of the students. The study also shows that gender significantly moderates the behaviour of the students, more especially, their bullying behaviours.

Conclusion

Parental involvement is potentially correlated with the bullying behaviour among secondary school students. Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that there is a significant moderate relationship between parental involvement and the bullying behaviour of students. Also, gender significantly moderates the relationship between parental involvement and bullying behaviour among students. There is an urgent need, therefore, to sensitize parents to adopt positive types of parental involvement in the affairs of their children in whatever for the school authorities may deem fit.

Recommendation

Consequent upon the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Principals/Teachers should lay emphasis on developing school programmes such as open-day-conference between parents, teachers and students.
2. There is also, need to let parents and students know that irrespective of their gender, that they can still achieve positive behavioural outcomes if they make their own personal effort.

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