

**TEACHERS' TECHNIQUES FOR CONTROLLING BULLYING
BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN
ORUMBA-NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,
ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.**

Mbaegbu Adachukwu N.
Primary Education Department
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe.
&
Akaneme, I. (Ph.D) & Ngwoke D.U. (Ph.D)
Educational Foundations
University Of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Abstract

Conducive learning environment is essential for effective teaching and learning. It is a fact that sometimes, pupils display certain bad behaviour that can threaten the learning environment and so disrupt academic learning activities. This study is a descriptive survey design which was carried out to determine the techniques used by teachers in controlling bullying behaviours among pupils. The study was carried out in Orumba-North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 200 teachers teaching in public schools. Four research questions guided the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire entitled "survey on teachers' techniques for controlling bullying behaviours". Data collected were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages. Among the findings, it was revealed that pupils engage in bullying behaviours as a means to conceal shame. Also, teachers establish rules and regulations in the classroom to control bullying. Among the recommendations, teachers should emphasize the importance of good behaviour and make it clear that they expect good behaviour from pupils.

Introduction:

An important skill a classroom teacher must possess for effective teaching and learning is the ability to provide a proper learning opportunity for everyone in the class. A safe environment, free of threat and bounded by the codes of treating members with dignity and respect promotes teaching and learning in the classroom. British Association for counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP, 2015) pointed that an environment characterized by threat, anger, anxiety and unusual dismissive create problems and hinder classroom teaching and learning. Certain bad behaviours of individuals can cause classroom threat and hinder academic learning activities. Hobbiss (2016) indicated that poor parenting and poor teaching can predispose an individual to certain bad behaviours which can be referred to as disruptive behaviours. Stressing further, Hobbiss explained that those disruptive behaviours

pose challenges to academic learning and can manifest in different types: conduct, immaturity and bullying. The author defined bullying as unwanted behaviour among school aged children that involve a real or perceived power imbalance which may be verbal or physical. Similarly, Glaisher (2016) sees bullying as when someone shows rude or mean behaviour to another person and describes the people who do bullying as bullies.

In addition, New South Wales, Department of Education (2015) defined bullying as repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Explaining further, they noted that verbal bullying involves name calling, teasing, abuse, putdowns, sarcasm, insults and threat. Physical bullying involves hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping and spitting. Social bullying involves ignoring, excluding, ostracizing, alienating, and making inappropriate gestures. Psychological bullying involves spreading rumors, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious Short Message Services (SMS) and email messages and inappropriate use of camera phones. They pointed that bullying can happen anywhere: at school, outside school, among sport teams, between neighbours, in the workplace, and can have long term effects on those involved including bystanders. In the same vein, United States, Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS, 2016) defined bullying as unwanted repeated behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and can exert serious lasting problems on the bullies and the bullied-victims of bully. USDHHS noted three types of bullying: verbal bullying which is saying or writing mean things like teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting and threatening to cause harm; social bullying sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships like leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone and embarrassing someone in public; physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions like hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping or pushing, taking or breaking someone's things and making mean or rude hard gestures.

Einarsen (2003) pointed that some individuals bully as a result of envy and resentment. In same vein, Levinson (2004) asserted that some bullies may bully out of jealousy or because they are bullied. In addition, Cardemil, Cardemil and O' Donnell (2010) opined that some bullies are arrogant and narcissistic but can use bullying as a tool to conceal shame, anxiety or to boost self-esteem. Also, Patterson (2005) identified that some individuals engage in bullying as a result of some factors: depression, personality aggressive, personality disorders, anger, quick temper, use of force, addiction to aggressive behaviour, misinterpreting others' actions as hostile, concern with preserving self-image and engaging in obsessive or rigid actions. In support of this view, Ball (2008) stressed that bullying may also result from a genetic predisposition or a brain abnormality in the bully and some environmental factors such as stressful home life, hostile siblings, poor parenting, peers influence and family conflict. Bennett (2006) explained that bullying ranges from one-on-one, individual bullying through to group bullying called mobbing, in which the bully may

have one or more “lieutenants” who may seem to be willing to assist primary bully in his or her bullying activities.

Moore (2016), stressed that those who have been the targets of bullying can suffer from long term emotional and behavioural problems. Also that bullying can cause loneliness, depression, anxiety, low self esteem and increased susceptibility to illness, maladjustment and social difficulties. In the same vein, Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim and Sadek (2010) pointed that children who are bullied often show physical or emotional signs such as: being afraid to attend school, complaining of headaches or loss of appetite, lack of interest in school activities and spending time with friends and family, and having an overall sense of sadness. The authors further explained that victims of bullying are likely to be aggressive, lack social skills, think negatively, experience difficulties in solving social problems, rejected and isolated by peers. The authors concluded that boys are more likely to be bullied directly while girls are more likely to be bullied indirectly. Henny Lee Lucas, a serial killer and diagnosed psychopath reported that the ridicule and rejection he suffered as a child caused him to hate everyone. Also, Kenneth Bianchi, a serial killer reported that he was teased as a child because he urinated in his pants and he suffered twitching and as a teenager was ignored by his peers. (Lynn, 2013).

Furthermore, Hobbies (2016) highlighted that sometimes, bullying prevents children from participating in educational activities and hinders learning, makes children to withdraw from their peers and reduces opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities, places excessive demands upon teachers, and other resources and makes future placement difficult. The author stressed that all these affect academic learning and as well hinder academic achievement, but noted that teachers may employ two approaches: corrective and preventive strategies in dealing with bullying behaviours. The author explained preventive strategies as effective preventive discipline used to stop bullying from occurring in the first place. Such strategies include commitment to work, stating clear rules and regulations that encourage good behaviour, establishing close ties with parents. While corrective strategies are behaviour modification techniques which aims at replacing disruptive behaviour with a more appropriate behaviour. The author explained that in behaviour modification technique, the problem must be defined and measured, the antecedents and consequences have to be determined and decided, the intervention has to be planned, implemented and followed-up.

Miamoh (2016), added that in dealing with bullying behaviour, the teacher, has to encourage the following principles: good teaching practices which includes responsibilities of the pupils and the teachers; defining unacceptable and acceptable behaviours in the class, teacher serving as a role model and exhibiting the type of behaviours expected of pupil’s, referencing the code of pupil conduct policies and procedures for dealing with bullying behaviours. In the same vein, Onyeachu (2006) asserted that negligence on the part of teachers to deal with bullying behaviour among primary school pupils have to some extent contributed to pupils low performance in examinations and poor self esteem, the author went on to suggest that teachers should employ not only punishment which is negative but also use rewards which are

positive, such as commending good behaviour, given prizes, and appointment of pupils to leadership positions as prefect to deal with bullying behaviour.

Apparently, in Orumba-North Local Government Area of Anambra State, the existence of bullying behaviour seems to be prevalent among primary school pupils; and have affected the teaching and learning of academic materials. Most teachers experience a lot of difficulties and distractions in delivering their lessons as a result of certain bullying behaviours exhibited by pupils during classroom instructions. These a times have frustrate teachers' activities and hinders them from reaching stated objectives of the topic being taught. Moreover, pupils' motivation and interest in academic learning activities are affected. Consequently, these may result in pupils poor academic achievement and adjustment in life and may lead to increase school dropout rates. Thus, bullies have troubles resolving problems with others and also have troubles academically. This demands that teachers should endeavour to deal with bullying behaviours to ensure significant academic achievement of primary school pupils. This study, sought the techniques adopted by teachers in controlling bullying behaviour among primary school pupils.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to determine the techniques used by teachers in controlling bullying behaviour among primary school pupils. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. Identify common bullying behaviours among primary school pupils.
2. Ascertain reasons why pupils engage in bullying behaviour
3. Ascertain the influence of bullying behaviour on pupils.
4. Ascertain various methods used by teachers in controlling bullying behaviour among pupils.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the common bullying behaviour among primary school pupils in Orumba North Local Government Area?
2. What are reasons that make pupils engage in bullying behaviour?
3. In what ways do bullying behaviour influence primary school pupils?
4. What methods are used by teachers in controlling bullying behaviour among primary school pupils in Orumba North Local Government Area?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey design carried out in Orumba North Local Government Area of Anmabra State. Santrock (2014) described descriptive survey design as the study which seeks to source information from people by asking them questions about the issue. The author further explained that in descriptive survey design, techniques such as interviews and questionnaires are used to obtain peoples self-reported attitudes or beliefs about a particular topic. Elliot, Kratowill, Cook and Travers (2000) pointed that in descriptive survey design, the investigator examines

and report things the way they are in an effort to understand and explain them. Also, the researcher collects data from a group of individuals to test hypotheses and answer questions concerning the status of some issues or problem. Elliot et al concluded that descriptive survey design is often used when the issue is related to public opinion, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. In this study, the researchers sought the opinion of teachers on the techniques used in controlling bullying behaviours among primary school pupils. The population of the study is consisted of 780 teachers teaching in government owned primary schools in the area. The sample consisted of 200 teachers' selected by simple random sampling technique.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire entitled: "Survey on teachers' techniques for controlling bullying behaviours". It consisted of two sections: A and B. Section A sought information on personal data of the respondents while section B consisted of 25 items placed on a two point response scale of Agree and Disagree which sought information on the opinion of the teachers on the techniques for controlling bullying behaviours in primary schools. The instrument was validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation and an expert in educational psychology. The experts vetted the research instrument to assess its relevance to the subject matter, coverage of the content areas, appropriateness of language used and adequacy of the items to solicit answers for the research questions. The initial instrument consisted of 32 items before validation and after the validation, 7 items were discarded while 25 items remained relevant to the study. All the corrections made by the experts were effectively implemented for the final drafting of the questionnaire. The instrument was administered to the respondents through hand delivery and were collected back immediately after the completion.

Decision Rule: Since the instrument was analysed based on simple percentages of 100 percent, any percentage score below 40% is unacceptable while any percentage score from 40% and above remains acceptable.

Results of the Findings

Table 1: Bullying behaviours common among primary school pupils.

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Pupils often pinch each other during classroom instruction	149	75	51	25
2	Pupils sometimes find it difficult to hit each other in the classroom.	44	22	156	78
3	Pupils do not bully others by kicking them.	70	35	130	65
4	Primary school pupils use threatening words to intimidate others.	170	85	30	15
5	Primary school pupils avoid the use of name-calling in bullying others.	46	23	154	77
6	Primary school pupils damage property to bully others.	161	80	39	20
7	Spitting occur among pupils.	153	76	47	24
8	Pushing does not occur among pupils.	52	26	148	74

Results from Table one revealed that pinching, hitting, kicking and use of threatening words, name-calling, property damage, spitting and pushing are bullying behaviour which are common among primary school pupils. Items 2,3,5,8 that are negatively worded had scores above 40 percent on disagree scale. Likewise, items 1,4,6,7 that are positively worded had scores above 40 percent. The answers to the negatively worded questions revealed that teachers agree that bullying behaviours such as hitting, kicking, name-calling, and pushing are common among primary school pupils. Likewise, the answers to the positively worded questions revealed that teachers also agree that bullying behaviours such as pinching, use of threatening words, damage of property and spitting are common among primary school pupils.

Table Two: Reasons pupils engage in bullying behaviour

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Pupils engage in bullying behaviour as a result of jealousy or envy.	153	76	47	24
2	Some bullies show signs of abnormality.	172	86	28	14
3	Some bullies do not use it to conceal shame.	38	19	162	81
4	Most bullies are not depressed.	24	12	176	88
5	Bullying can happen as a result of action misinterpretation.	142	71	58	29

Results from Table two revealed that pupils engage in bullying behaviour due to some reasons: Jealousy or envy, abnormality, as a means to conceal shame, depression and action misinterpretation. Items 1,2 and 5 that are positively worded had percentage scores above 40 percent. Likewise items 3 and 4 which are negatively worded had percentage scores above 40 percent on disagree scale. The answers to the positively worded questions revealed that teachers agree that pupils engage in bullying behaviour as a result of jealousy or envy, some pupils bully because they are abnormal and some bully as a result of action misinterpretation. The negatively worded questions revealed that teachers agree that some pupils use bullying to conceal shame while others bully because they are depressed.

Table Three: Influence of bullying behaviour on primary school pupils.

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Pupils are afraid of attending schools	183	91	17	9
2	Pupils lack interest in school activities.	181	90	19	10
3	Pupils always complain of being sick so as to keep away from the bullies.	171	85	29	15
4	Pupils who are victims of bully do not isolate themselves.	15	7	185	93
5	Pupils who are victims of bully are not always aggressive.	33	17	167	83

6	Pupils who bully are not rejected by their peers.	25	13	175	87
7	Pupils who are victims of bully suffer great fear and depression.	163	81	37	19

Results from Table three revealed that bullying makes pupils to become afraid of attending schools, lack interest in school activities, complain of being sick, isolate themselves, are always aggressive, are rejected, suffer great fear and depression. Items 4, 5 and 6 that were negatively worded had percentage scores above 40 percent on disagree scale. Likewise items 1, 2, 3 and 7 which are positively worded had percentage scores above 40 percent. The answers to the negatively worded questions revealed that teachers agree that victims of bully isolate themselves, are always aggressive and that bullies are rejected by their peers. Likewise the answers to the positively worded questions revealed that teachers also agree that pupils are afraid of attending schools, they also lack interest in school activities, they always complain of being sick so as to keep away from the bullies and they suffer great fear and depression. Therefore bullying influences primary school pupils.

Table Four: Methods used by teachers to control bullying behaviours.

S/N	Items	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Teachers reinforce good behaviour to discourage bullying.	171	85	29	15
2	Teachers discipline bullies with the use of punishment.	185	92	15	8
3	Teachers do not establish rules and regulation to guide pupils conduct in the classroom.	36	20	164	80
4	Teachers do not always take bullies aside to advise them on the consequences of bullying.	143	71	57	29
5	Teachers appoint bullies as leaders to arrest bullying among pupils.	169	84	31	16

Results from Table four revealed that teachers reinforce good behaviour, punish bullies, establish rules and regulations, and appoint bullies as leaders to discourage bullying behaviour. Items 1, 2, and 5 that are positively worded had percentage scores above 40 percent. Likewise item 3 that is negatively worded had percentage score above 40 percent on disagree scale. Whereas item 4 revealed that teachers do not always take bullies aside to advise them on the consequences of bullying. The answers to the positively worded questions revealed that teachers reinforce good behaviours to discourage bullying, teachers discipline bullies with the use of punishment and teachers appoint bullies as leaders to arrest bullying among

pupils, while the negatively worded questions revealed that teachers establish rules and regulations to guide pupils conduct in the classroom and do not always take bullies aside to advise them on the consequences of bullying.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study in Table one revealed that bullying behaviour common among primary school pupils include pinching, hitting, kicking, use of threatening words, name calling, property damage, spitting and pushing. These findings are in line with the explanations of New South Wales, Department of Education (2015) and United States, Department of Health and Human Services (2016) that identified various types of bullying; physical, social, verbal and psychological bullying to involve acts like hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, name calling, threatening and so on. This therefore revealed that bullying exist among primary school pupils and can be grouped into various types: physical, social, verbal and psychological bullying, because greater percentage of teachers agreed that bullying behaviours such as hitting, pinching, spitting, name calling are common among primary school pupils.

Moreover, Table two revealed that pupils engaged in bullying behaviour because of certain reasons: Jealousy, abnormality, as a means to conceal shame, depression and action misinterpretation. These findings agree with Einarsen (2003), Patterson (2005) and Ball (2008) who explained that bullies engage in bullying as a result of some factors like envy, depression, abnormality and action misinterpretation. Also, the study concurs with Cardemil, Cardemil and O'Donnell (2010) who opined that some individuals use bullying as a tool to conceal shame. Greater percentage of teachers agreed that pupils engage in bullying behaviour because of jealousy, abnormality, as a means to conceal shame, as a result of depression and as a result of action misinterpretation. Therefore, pupils engage in bullying due to these reasons which were revealed by teachers.

Table three revealed that the influence of bullying among primary school pupils include lack of interest in attending school and school activities, isolation, aggressiveness, rejection, fear, depression and always complaining of being sick. The findings collaborate with Cook et al (2010), Hobbiss (2016) and Moore (2016) explanations of bullying effects on children. The authors pointed that bullying can have disastrous effect of depression, isolation, loneliness, fear, rejection, maladjustment, social difficulties on the bullies and the bullied. Greater percentage of teachers indicated that bullying makes pupils to lack interest in attending school, makes them to isolate themselves from other pupils, makes them to be aggressive and be rejected, keeps them afraid and depressed and makes them to always complain of being sick so as to keep away from the bullies. Therefore, bullying among primary school pupils can have detrimental influence on them.

Finally, it was revealed in Table four that teachers use various methods: Reinforcing good behaviour, punishments, establishing rules and regulations, and appointing bullies as leaders to control bullying. The findings collaborate with the claims of Miamoh (2016) who explained that in dealing with bullying behaviour,

teachers have to define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the class. Defining acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the class is equivalent to establishing rules and regulations in the class. Consequently when behaviours are defined, rules are established. Also the findings concur with the assertion of Onyeachu (2006) who pointed that in dealing with bullying behaviour, teachers do not only have to use punishment but also reinforce good behaviour, and appoint bullies as leaders. Furthermore, the findings agree with Hobbies (2016) explanation of preventive strategies of dealing with bullying behaviour while it disagreed with his corrective strategies. This therefore revealed that teachers employ some measures in controlling bullying behaviours, because greater percentage of teachers indicated that teachers use various methods such as reinforcing good behaviour, punishments, establishment of classroom rules and regulations and appointing bullies as leaders in controlling bullying behaviours.

Summary and Conclusion

This study revealed that bullying behaviour are common among primary school pupils in Orumba-North local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria and that bullies have some reasons for engaging in bullying behaviour. Also, that bullying have detrimental influence on pupils, as a result, teachers employ various techniques in controlling bullying. Therefore, this study concludes that bullying is a wind that blows no good to the learning-environment and must be controlled to have a safe learning environment free of threat and treating members with dignity and respect to promote teaching, learning and academic achievement among pupils.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

Teachers should emphasize the importance of good behaviour and make it clear that they expect good behaviours from pupils.

Since involving bullies in leadership position can help in controlling bullying behaviours, teachers should involve pupils in establishing class rules and regulations guiding classroom behaviours.

Children can listen to teachers' advice and improve, hence, teachers should try and organize counseling forum for the class members at least once a week to explain the reasons why they should not involve themselves in the acts of bullying.

Teachers should establish close ties with parents to enable them advise parents on the best ways to handle any child that show signs of abnormality.

Teachers should reinforce good behaviours to discourage pupils' indulgence in bullying behaviours.

Teachers should punish any act of bully with the aim of replacing it with a good behaviour.

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