



PEER INFLUENCE AS A SOCIAL MECHANISM FOR FOSTERING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AGAINST BULLYING TENDENCIES AMONG STUDENTS IN BASIC EDUCATION, DELTA STATE

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of peer influence as a social mechanism for fostering positive behaviour against bullying tendencies among students in Upper Basic Education, Delta state. Two research questions were answered and two hypotheses tested. The study employed ex post facto, descriptive and correlational research. 40,204 students in Upper Basic II Education in Delta State constitute the population of the study. 380 students were sampled for the study. Two instruments were used for data collection titled: Peer Influence Scale and Bullying Behaviour Scale. The collected data were analyzed with descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation), Multiple Correlation and Multiple Regression Statistics. The study revealed that on the basis of components of peer influence, yielding to Peer Pressure significantly increase bullying among the students while resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement can mitigate bullying behaviour problem. The findings also show a significant difference in bullying tendencies between male and female students, with female students exhibiting higher bullying behaviours compared to their male counterparts. The study concludes that resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement can mitigate bullying behaviour problem. The study advocate for development of social resistance skills, since encouraging young adolescents to build resistance to negative peer pressure is essential for their personal and social development. Programmes that enhance decision-making, assertiveness, and self-confidence will equip young people to make independent and positive choices.

Keywords: Bullying behaviour, Influence, Peer Encouragement, Peer pressure, Resistant to Peer Pressure, Yielding to Peer Pressure.

Introduction

Bullying behaviour is a form of conduct problem commonly observed among adolescent students that has a negative impact within the school system and society at large. From an educational perspective, bullying disrupts the fundamental objectives of pedagogy, which emphasize holistic student development, social learning, and moral education (Demaray et al., 2014). This is to say, the schools should function as structured environments that cultivate not just academic excellence but also social and emotional intelligence, ensuring that students develop the necessary skills for ethical decision-making and social responsibility. In the school system, bullying is a form of discrimination or abasement towards other defenceless students (victims). Unknown to bullies, bullying another student is a violation of the victim's rights. Some researchers assert that bullying tendencies involve the systematic abuse of power through repeatedly and deliberately harming others with the express purpose of intimidating, isolating, or gaining control (Haobo, 2021; Blaylock, 2017). Bullying is a common experience for many adolescents and constitutes negative treatment of an individual over an extended period in situations where they have difficulty defending themselves (Rosander et al., 2020). Studies by Panwar (2023) and Reed et al. (2019) notes that bullying is a type of harassment that harms health, contributing to psychological problems such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts.

However, a lack of emotional intelligence can make a victim more vulnerable to suicide. Emotional intelligence skills, which align with constructivist learning theories and socio-emotional learning (SEL) models, help individuals effectively navigate their environments and are widely applied to solve academic and organizational problems (Joseph et al., 2023). Pedagogical models suggest that schools should integrate social intelligence training into the curriculum to reduce bullying-related emotional distress and empower students to manage conflicts constructively. Bullies are expected to exhibit the lowest levels of moral judgment as well as the highest levels of self-serving cognitive distortions (Brugman et al., 2023). Egbule and Ozuri (2022) observed that bullying behaviours can encompass both physical and verbal abuse, including kicking, punching, biting, strangling, teasing, ridiculing, and spreading gossip. The methodology of education advocates for proactive teaching strategies that integrate moral reasoning, social learning, and character development into the curriculum to counteract aggressive behaviours (Bandura, 1977). Educational efficiency ensures that all students can learn and thrive in a conducive environment, free from disruptions caused by bullying. School should be a place of hope and opportunity, where children are safe to learn and develop the skills and experience, they need to thrive (UNESCO, 2019).

Responsibilities within the school system involve administrators, teachers, students, and parents collectively working to create a safe and inclusive environment. These responsibilities include establishing clear policies against bullying, educating students on the consequences of bullying, and equipping teachers with the skills to identify and address bullying behaviour promptly. As Hashimoto et al. (2022) note, ethical frameworks like utilitarianism and deontology can guide the moral responsibilities of all stakeholders in curbing bullying. The theory of moral education suggests that developing students' ethical reasoning through discussions, role playing, and experiential learning can significantly reduce bullying behaviours. Most adolescent students' bullying behaviour is sustained because they receive praise from peers who observe the bullying. This behaviour can be analyzed based on the principles of utilitarianism and deontology, which are fundamental to moral pedagogy. Utilitarianism emphasizes the consequences of actions and posits that actions leading to the greatest happiness for the greatest number are ethically right. In contrast, deontology defines ethics based on right and wrong, positing that the ethical rightness of an action depends not on its consequences but on whether it is done in accordance with duty (Hashimoto et al., 2022).

Moral and character education within pedagogy suggests that bullying interventions should not only enforce rules but also cultivate intrinsic ethical values through classroom discussions, ethical dilemmas, and real-life case studies. Nasti et al. (2023) note that the school context is expected to be a safe space for education, socialization, and protection; however, it is often one of the places where bullying and

violence are most perpetrated (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Educational theories emphasize that schools should implement whole school approaches, where every stakeholder actively participates in preventing bullying through curriculum-based interventions, teacher training, and parental involvement. In this case, victimization has been linked to anxiety (Parveen & Tehreem, 2023; Obregón-Cuesta et al., 2022; Doehne et al., 2018; Cosma et al., 2022). Some studies stress that adolescents involved in bullying are at risk of developing behavioural problems, physical health problems, and suicidal ideation (Sabramani et al., 2021).

In a study conducted by Olaoye and Osundina (2024) among secondary school students in Osun, Nigeria, it was revealed that 33.6% of the sample experienced bullying, while 63.4% were bullies. On a gender basis, boys had more direct experience with and manifestations of bullying than their female counterparts, with emotional bullying being the most common form. A study by Onotume et al. (2023) revealed prevalence rates of bullying among secondary school students in Yenagoa, Nigeria, with statistics showing perpetration at 40.3%, victimization at 81.3%, and bystander involvement at 86.3%. By incorporating restorative justice practices in school disciplinary measures, educators can engage students in meaningful conversations to reduce aggressive behaviours and reinforce positive social interactions. Samara et al. (2021) noted that short- and long-term consequences of bullying depend on the roles played in the experience, such as victim, perpetrator, or both (bully-victim). However, the role of peer influence in modifying bullying behaviour is the focus of this study. Verma and Bansal (2019) noted that peer pressure is when a person's attitude, behaviour, or activities are changed under the influence of peers.

According to Odunjo-Saka et al. (2018), the more subtle form of peer pressure is known as peer influence, which involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others. Schools that apply pedagogical strategies such as peer-led interventions, cooperative learning, and mentorship programmes can significantly reduce bullying prevalence. When educational systems prioritize peer led initiatives, such as mentorship programmes and collaborative learning groups, students are encouraged to adopt positive behaviours. These approaches connect with the findings of Liu et al. (2022), Opara (2014), and Ramasamy et al. (2020), which highlight how positive peer pressure promotes academic excellence, high morality, and reduced behavioural issues. On the other hand, failure to address negative peer pressure can undermine the moral fabric of the school system and lead to inefficiency.

Problem of the Study

Bullying has been one of major deviant behaviours observed among students in secondary schools, and is an increasing concern worldwide. Victims of bullying can suffer severely, both in the short and long run. As noted in the literature, the school context is expected to be a safe space for education, socialization, and protection. However, it is one of the places where bullying and violence are mostly perpetrated, which can hinder peaceful coexistence among students. Despite the school rules and regulations guiding the conduct of the students, where students who violated may be severely punished, yet many students are still bullying, and this has a lot of negative impact on the learning of the victims. Many concerned individuals, researchers, policymakers, teachers, school counsellors, and the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) have devised different means to curb the issue of bullying, yet the problem remains unsolved. This present study intends to investigate the role of Peer influence as a social mechanism for fostering positive behaviour against bullying behaviour among students in Basic Education in Delta state?

This purpose of this study is to examine the role of peer influence (encouragement, resistance to peer pressure, and yielding to peer pressure) as a social mechanism for fostering positive behaviour and enhancing educational efficiency within the context of bullying among students in Basic Education in Delta State.

Research Questions

1. What impact do peer influence (peer encouragement, resistant to peer pressure and yielding to peer pressure) have on expressed bullying behaviour tendencies among students in Upper Basic II Education Students in Delta State?
2. What is the difference in the bullying behaviour between male and female students in Public Upper Basic II Education students in Delta State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant impact of peer influence (peer encouragement, resistant to peer pressure and yielding to peer pressure) have on expressed bullying behaviour tendencies among students in Upper Basic II Education Students in Delta State.
2. There is no significant difference in the bullying behaviour between male and female students in Public Upper Basic II Education students in Delta State

Literature Review

Social Learning Theory

The study is anchored on Social Learning Theory (SLT), which was developed by Albert Bandura in 1977. This theory provides valuable insights into how learning takes place in social contexts. It suggests that individuals learn by observing others, modelling their actions, and experiencing the consequences of those behaviours. SLT combines elements of behaviourism and cognitive psychology, highlighting the role of cognitive processes in learning. The theory can be employed to understand the impact of peer influence in mitigating bullying behaviour.

When it comes to peer influence, SLT offers a framework for understanding how it can be used to mitigate bullying problem. Adolescents are greatly influenced by their peers, observing their good behaviours, good attitudes, kindness and social interactions may have a positive impact in modifying bullying. If peers discourage bullying behaviours, these actions are likely to be observed and replicated. Individuals internalize the behaviours and attitudes of their peers. If a peer group demonstrates encouragement and resistance towards attitude in school, these values are likely to be adopted. Positive peer influences can lead to improved study habits, increased participation in school activities, and enhanced academic performance. Negative peer pressure, however, may lead the individual to adopt harmful behaviours, such as truancy, lack of effort in school, fighting, cheating, rude to others and overall disengagement from academic responsibilities.

Concept of Bullying Tendencies

Demaray et al., (2014) noted that bullying is characterized by actions such as calling another student bad names, making fun of another student, pushing, punching, or slapping another student, lying about another student, stealing things from another student, joining in while verbally threatening another student, pinching another student, throwing something at another student, and laughing while intentionally tripping, teasing, humiliating, or hitting another student (Ulfah & Gustina, 2020). Demaray et al., also highlighted that if the victims are being purposely left out of activities, pushed around, threatened by others, have things taken and they are also being ignored when someone else pinched or poked them, ignored when someone else threw something at them, ignored when someone else tricked them, and pretending not to notice situations that purposely left them out are common practice by outsiders. In contrast, a victim defender is someone who tries to become friends with a victim after they were picked on, encourages them to tell an adult, defends someone being called mean names, and helps someone whose books were knocked out of their hands on purpose. Bullying composed of five components: the bully, the assistant bully, the victim, the defender, and the outsider, according to Demaray et al. (2014). The assistant bully is the extent of the willingness to encourage, join in, or aid a bully in bullying others. The victim is the one who experiences being bullied, while the defender defends a victim, and the outsider is the student who acknowledges bullying but chooses to actively ignore it (Demaray et al., 2014). These components comprise the domain of bullying tendencies that some adolescent students exhibit towards others.

Concept of Peer Influence

Peer influence is a significant force that can impact on adolescents' behaviour, having a strong impact on their social and emotional development. This study classifies peer influence into three categories: yielding to peer pressure, resistance to peer pressure, and peer encouragement (Palani & Mani, 2016). Peer pressure can exert emotional or mental forces on individuals to act or behave similarly to their peers, leading to changes in attitudes, values, or behaviours to conform to group norms (Wachukwu & Amadi, 2021). Bhattacharyya et al. (2020) stressed that due to the strong influence of peers during adolescence, it is challenging for adolescents to resist peer pressure. Consequently, they often make decisions based on group norms, prioritizing group acceptance over their personal preferences. McCoy et al. (2019) noted that adolescent risk-taking behaviours often occur in social settings among peers. However, it is unclear whether there are gender differences in susceptibility to deviant peers, an antecedent to risk-taking behaviour. Abdelrhheem et al. (2024) defined gender as the widely accepted social rules about roles, traits, behaviours, status, and power associated with masculinity and femininity in a specific culture. A study by Herry and Mulvey (2023) asserted that those with prior experience as victims of gender-based discrimination and those encountering male transgressors were more likely to support a victim of gender-based cyberbullying. Zhang (2023) suggested that peer pressure is a component of peer interaction. Additionally, Peer pressure is described as the stress experienced when one sacrifices their individuality to comply with the decisions of their peers for fear of exclusion (Xu et al., 2023).

Empirical Review

This present study reviewed previous studies conducted by other researchers, for instance Umashankari et al. (2020) assessed peer pressure levels among adolescents aged 16-18, examining differences by gender, age, birth order, education stream, family income, and parents' occupation. Data were collected from 123 students (67 boys, 56 girls) using the Peer Pressure Scale by Sandeep Singh & Sunil Saini (2010). Key findings included: Peer pressure levels were consistent across different age groups and family income levels, fourth-born adolescents experienced higher peer pressure than first, second, or third-borns, adolescents with working mothers faced more peer pressure compared to those with homemaker mothers, and boys experienced higher levels of peer pressure compared to girls. The study suggests educating adolescents about peer pressure's effects and teaching coping skills to promote healthier lifestyles.

Tinuke et al. (2023) examined how financial instability and peer pressure predict bullying among private secondary school students in Ilorin. A descriptive survey design was employed, with 300 respondents randomly selected from 15 private secondary schools. Data were collected using standardized scales and analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression analysis. Results showed a significant relationship between peer influence and bullying ($r = .736$; $p < 0.05$) and between financial instability and bullying ($r = .671$; $p < 0.05$). The study recommended that counselling psychologists organize workshops for educational stakeholders to address the implications of these findings. Ibimiluyi (2023) examined the link between peer pressure and bullying behaviour among teenagers in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey method, the research involved 120 secondary school students (46 boys and 74 girls) aged 12 to 17. Data were collected using a self-designed questionnaire, the "Peer Pressure and Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire" (PPBBQ), which had sections on demographics, peer pressure, and bullying behaviour, rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Statistical analysis revealed that bullying is prevalent and significantly related to peer pressure. The study concluded that peer pressure significantly influences bullying behaviour. It recommended that school counsellors implement comprehensive anti-bullying programmes to mitigate peer pressure's impact and promote empathy and pro-social behaviours among students. Keletsositse (2021) investigated and discussed findings of a qualitative study of students aged between 15 and 17. The study mainly focused on factors that fuelled a bully to persistently carry out the activity. The theoretical perspective used to guide this study was the Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977), which stated that aggression and violence are learned responses, and perpetrators of aggression and violence in bullying have learned from witnessing it in school. The study found that the pressure to conform to peer groups coerced students to do anything to pass the loyalty test, influencing

them to persistently bully others. The study recommended that schools intensify school-based bullying prevention and intervention programs and equip teachers with effective intervention strategies.

Usman et al. (2023) examined the relationship between school bullying (peer and teacher bullying) and academic achievement of students in government elementary schools of Lahore. The study employed a quantitative research methodology with a sample of 400 elementary school students selected through random sampling. Data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS, including both inferential and descriptive statistics. The findings showed a low negative relationship between school bullying (peer and teacher) and academic achievement. Regression analysis revealed that school bullying had an effect on students' academic achievement, whether as victims or perpetrators. Fadare et al. (2021) explored the effect of peer group pressure on the academic performance of adolescent students at Government Senior Secondary School, Lamingo, Jos North L.G.A. A sample size of one hundred was determined using Yaroyamene's formula, and probability sampling techniques were adopted. The data collected were analyzed using simple tables and percentages. The study revealed that 80% of peer group members liked all their friends, 75% did not lack self-confidence among their peers, 60% had been sent out of the class before, and 65% agreed that peer influence on behaviour lowered academic performance. The hypothesis was tested using chi-square, showing no association between peer group pressure and the academic performance of adolescent students. The research recommended that teachers, with support from parents, provide adequate guidance and intervention programmes to adolescents.

Abdurrahman (2020) investigated the influence of peer groups on adolescents' academic performance. Descriptive research design and random sampling technique were adopted to select 200 in-school adolescents from five secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis of Kwara State. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that peer groups could positively or negatively influence the academic performance of in-school adolescents. It was recommended that parents and teachers provide adequate guidance to adolescents to help them understand the influence of their friends. Zainab et al. (2023) investigated the links between the quality of peer interactions and the degree of peer pressure with academic performance. This study adopted a quantitative survey design with random sampling to select a representative sample of 600 university students from diverse faculties and academic years. The analysis revealed a positive association between peer relations and peer pressure, showing that as peer relations improve, peer pressure tends to grow. A positive link was found between peer pressure and academic achievement, suggesting that students confronting higher levels of peer pressure tended to perform better academically. This conclusion urges additional inquiry into the mechanisms by which peer pressure can contribute to improved academic achievement. Furo & Kagu (2020) investigated the influence of peer groups on the academic performance of undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. A total of 125 students were selected through systematic random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, complemented by interviews and group discussions, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results showed that the majority of the students were males, mostly slightly above the age of 22 years, and affiliated with campus social peer groups. Almost all learners' utilized information provided by peers and adopted peer group behaviors. The study concluded that peer group interactions positively influenced learners' academic performance

Methodology

This study employed descriptive, ex post facto and correlational research. According to Okorodudu (2013), as cited by Joseph et al. (2023a), a correlational method is used to establish the degree of relationship between or among variables by examining their correlation. This study seeks to determine the degree of correlation between peer pressure in relationship to its components (yielding to peer pressure, resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement) and bullying tendencies among students in upper basic education in Delta State. The population of this study was 40,204 students. The sample size of 380 comprising students in the three senatorial districts of Delta State. The sample size was adapted from Peretomode and Peretomode (2015), as cited by Egbule and Joseph (2024). Simple random and stratified sampling techniques were adopted in the study. The instrument for this study was a questionnaire, titled: Peer Pressure Scale, (PPS), this scale was constructed by Palani and Mani (2016),

it was made up of 27 items but 15 items were scale, and Bullying Tendencies Scale (BTS), this scale was developed by Demaray et al. (2014) and it was made up of 51 items but 25 items were adapted. These two scales were revalidated by the research due environmental differences that exist among nation in other to appeal to the cognitive reasoning pattern of the sampled students

This study used four-point format to score the items with options of strongly agree (SA) = 4, agree (A) = 3, disagree (D) = 2, strongly disagree (SD) = 1. The questionnaire (instrument) was validated through experts' judgment and factor analysis. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was established using SPSS vision 23. The reliability co-efficient obtained peer pressure scale was 0.74 and bullying tendencies scale was 0.77. Daud et al. (2018) as cited by Joseph et al. (2023b) stated that Alpha Cronbach's value above 0.6 is considered high reliability and acceptable index. Since the two-scale had Cronbach alpha value above 0.6, the researchers conclude that the s two scales have good measure of internal consistency. The researcher and his assistant administered the questionnaire to the sampled students. The collected data were analyzed with descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation), Bivariate Statistics, Multiple Correlation and Multiple Regression. The analysis was done with SPSS vision 23.

Results

In this section, the results were presented reflecting the research question and the corresponding hypothesis.

Research question 1: What is impact of peer influence (peer encouragement, resistant to peer pressure and yielding to peer pressure) on bullying behaviour tendencies among students in Upper Basic II Education Students in Delta State?

In order to answer this research question, mean, standard deviation multiple correlation and coefficient determination were computed.

Table 1: Correlation and Descriptive statistics of mean and standard Analyses of component of Peer Influence (Yielding to peer pressure, Resistance to Peer pressure and peer encouragement) and Bullying Behaviour among students in Upper Basic Education II in Delta State of Nigeria.

Model	Mean	SD	R	R ²
Bullying Tendencies	59.38	7.97		
Yielding to Peer Pressure	13.92	2.42	.16	.02
Resistant to Peer Pressure	15.22	3.43		
Peer Encouragement	15.43	2.69		

The mean score for bullying tendencies is 59.38, while the standard deviation is 7.97. This indicates some variation within the mean. Higher score shows higher tendencies to bullying behaviour. This indicate that that there is a high tendency of bullying among students in this study. On account of predictor variables, the mean score for yielding to peer pressure was 13.92, and a standard deviation of 2.42. On average level, students moderately yield to peer pressure, with quite low variability in responses. For the resistance to peer pressure, the mean score was 15.22, and a standard deviation of 3.43. This demonstrate that, on mean level, students tend to resist peer pressure, with a moderate amount of variability. For the peer encouragement, the mean score was 15.43, with a standard deviation of 2.69. This shows a moderate level of encouragement from peers, with some disparity among students. Statistically, the mean indicates the central tendency for each variable, showing the typical level of the representative in the sample. While the Standard Deviation Measures the total of variation from the mean. A high level of SD shows more disparity in the data set, while a lower standard deviation show that the data points are closer to the average.

Furthermore, R value of 0.16 represents the correlation coefficient, showing the degree and direction of the relationship between the independent variables (Yielding to Peer Pressure, Resistant to Peer

Pressure, and Peer Encouragement) and the outcome variable of Bullying Tendencies. However, the R value of 0.16 indicates that there is a weak positive relationship between the independent variables and bullying tendencies. This shows that as the predictors change, there is a slight, but not strong, increase in bullying tendencies among the students. The R^2 known as the Coefficient of Determination has a value of 0.02 showing the proportion of adjustment in the dependent variable of Bullying Tendencies which can be explained by the predictor variables. This indicates that only 2% of the variability in bullying tendencies was accounted by the three predictor variables. This is a very low value, suggesting that the model does not explain much of the variability in bullying tendencies and there are likely other factors influencing bullying tendencies that are not included in the model.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant impact of peer influence (peer encouragement, resistant to peer pressure and yielding to peer pressure) on bullying behaviour tendencies among students in Upper Basic II Education Students in Delta State.

In order to test the hypothesis 1, ANOVA, and multiple regression were computed.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analyses of peer influence (Yielding to peer pressure, Resistance to Peer pressure and peer encouragement) and Bullying Tendencies

Model	SS	df	MS	F	P
Regression	585.09	3	195.03	3.12	.03
Residual	23,490.09	376	62.47		
Total	24, 075.18	379			

Dependent Variable: Bullying Tendencies

Predictors: (Constant): Yielding to Peer Pressure, Resistant to Peer Pressure and Peer Encouragement.

Table 2 show the ANOVA and regression analysis of the variables in the equation. It indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship peer pressure (yielding to peer pressure, resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement) and bullying Tendencies. The F-value is a statistical used in Analysis of Variance to compare the variances between groups to understand if at least one group mean is significantly different from the others. The F-value of 3.12 is moderately high, revealing that the variance between the groups (yielding to peer pressure, resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement) is significantly greater than the variance within the groups. However, A p-value of .03 less than .05 indicates a low probability that the observed correlation happened by chance. This implies that the results are statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no between peer pressure (yielding to peer pressure, resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement) and bullying tendencies is rejected. This indicates that changes or differences in peer pressure is related with changes in its components (yielding to peer pressure, resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement) on bullying tendencies. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected as shown in table 2.

Table 3: Coefficient tables

variables	B	SE	β	t	P
(Constant)	49.98	3.31	15.09		.00
Yielding to Peer Pressure	.37	.17	.11	2.18	.03
Resistant to Peer Pressure	.22	.13	.09	1.65	.09
Peer Encouragement	.06	.17	.02	.38	.70

Table 3 also show the correlation of each of the peer pressure component components (yielding to peer pressure, resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement) and bullying tendencies. Below is the reveal of the relationship.

The first result in the table 3 indicate a statistically significant relationship between yielding to peer pressure and bullying tendencies, as demonstrated by the t-value of 2.18 and a P-value of .03 (≤ 0.05). The t-value measures the size of the difference comparative to the variation in the sample data. A t-value of 2.18 is quite high, indicating that the observed correlation between yielding to peer pressure and bullying tendencies is strong and not likely due to random chance. However, a P-value of .03 less than 0.05, means there is a very low probability that the observed relationship is due to random variation. In statistical, this result is highly significant. Since the P-value is less than the alpha of 0.05, the relationship between yielding to peer pressure and bullying tendencies is significant.

The second result in the table 3 show t that the relationship between Resistant to Peer Pressure and bullying tendencies is not statistically significant. The coefficient (β) of .09 demonstrates that for each unit increase in Honesty, there is an expected decrease of 0.01 units in bullying tendencies. The standard error (Std. Err) is .13, representing the precision of the coefficient estimate. The beta coefficient (Beta) is -0.00, suggesting that Honesty does not have a significant impact on bullying tendencies. The t-value is 1.65, which is low indicates that the coefficient is not significantly different from zero. The significance level (Sig.) of .09 indicate that Honesty is not a statistically significant predictor of bullying tendencies among the students.

The third result in the table 3 indicates that the correlation Peer Encouragement and bullying tendencies is not statistically significant. The coefficient (β) .02 demonstrates that for each unit increase in Honesty, there is an expected decrease of 0.01 units in bullying tendencies. The standard error (Std. Err) is .17, representing the precision of the coefficient estimate. The beta coefficient (Beta) is .06, suggesting that Honesty does not have a significant impact on bullying tendencies. The t-value is 1.65, which is low indicates that the coefficient is not significantly different from zero. The significance level (Sig.) of .70 indicate that Peer Encouragement is not a predictor of bullying tendencies among the students

Research question 2: Is there differences in the bullying behaviour between male and female students in Public Upper Basic II Education students in Delta State?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the bullying behaviour between male and female students in Public Upper Basic II Education students in Delta State

To answer research question 2 and test hypothesis 2, mean, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test were computed

Table 4: Independent T-Test Analysis of difference between Male and Female Bullying Tendencies (BT) among students in Upper Basic Education in Delta State

Gender	N	Mean	SD.	Std. Error	t	Sig.	df	MD	Std. D	95% Confidence Interval	
										Lower	Upper
Male	185	57.64	6.71	.49	-4.22	.04	378	-3.38	.80	-4.95	-1.8
Female	195	61.02	8.70	.62				-3.37	.79	-4.94	-1.81

Table 3 show that the sample size (N) is 380 comprises the male and female students. It revealed that the Male students were 185, while the Female students were 195. Furthermore, the Degrees of Freedom (df) is 378. The mean bullying tendency score for males is 57.64, while the mean bullying tendency score for females is 61.02. In addition, the standard deviation for male students is 6.71, while the standard deviation for females is 8.70. The standard error of the mean for males is .49, while the standard error of the mean for females is .62. The calculated t-value is -4.22. The significance value (p-value) is 0.04. On the other side, the mean score of bullying tendencies for females is 61.02 and is greater than that of males 57.64. This indicates that, on average, females exhibit higher bullying tendencies than males. The t-value of -4.22 indicates the magnitude and direction of the difference between the two groups. Since the value is negative, it confirms that the mean score for males is lower

than that for females. The p-value of 0.04 indicates that the difference in bullying tendencies between males and females is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This means that there is only a 4% chance that the observed difference is due to random variation, thus providing strong evidence that the difference is real.

From the t-value and p-value, the result shows that there is a significant difference in bullying tendencies between male and female students, with females having higher mean scores.

The mean difference between male and female bullying tendencies is -3.38 in the first row and -3.37 in the second row. This negative value indicates that, on average, females have higher bullying tendencies than males by approximately 3.38 and 3.37 points, respectively. The standard deviation of the differences is 0.80 for the first row and 0.79 for the second row. This indicates the variability in the differences between male and female bullying tendencies. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference is given for both rows. For the first row, it ranges from -4.95 to -1.80. For the second row, it ranges from -4.94 to -1.81. This interval means that we are 95% confident that the true mean difference in bullying tendencies between males and females lies within these intervals. Since the entire interval is below zero, it reinforces the conclusion that female students tend to have higher bullying tendencies than males. The independent t-test analysis indicates a statistically significant difference in bullying tendencies between males and females, with females showing higher tendencies.

Discussion

The first hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between peer influence and bullying behaviour tendencies. On the basis of peer influence components, the findings shows that there is a degree of relationship between different components of peer pressure and bullying tendencies. Present study findings indicate that yielding to Peer Pressure significantly increase bullying behaviour tendencies, while resistant to peer pressure and peer encouragement could mitigate bullying behaviour tendencies. In comparison with previous studies, these findings align with Tinuke et al (2023), Ibimiluyi, (2023), Whose studies revealed that bullying is prevalent and significantly related to peer pressure ($r = .671$; $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, peer pressure significantly influences bullying behaviour. This is also in line with Keletsositse (2021) whose study found out that the pressure to conform to their peer groups coerced them to do anything to pass the loyalty test. This perceived pressure influenced many students to persistently bully, even to the extent of initiating others to bully. However, Both the current study and the previous studies by Tinuke et al. and Keletsositse highlight the significant influence of peer pressure on bullying behavior. Precisely, the current study's finding that yielding to peer pressure is significantly correlated with bullying tendencies is similar with Keletsositse's observation about the pressure to conform leading to bullying behaviour

The present research focus on different components of peer influence (yielding to peer pressure, resistant to peer pressure, and peer encouragement) have provided more detailed analysis of how various facet of peer influence impact bullying behaviour tendencies. The findings from the current study add depth to the understanding of how specific components of peer pressure increases bullying behaviour tendencies, aligning with previous studies while also distinguishing the unique impact of Yielding to Peer Pressure. The differences in correlation with Resistant to Peer Pressure and Peer Encouragement indicate it could be used to modify bullying behaviours. However, Keletsositse's study stresses on the coercive nature of peer pressure to conform, which directly agrees with the finding that yielding to Peer pressure is significantly increase bullying behaviour tendencies.

The second findings, shows a significant difference in bullying tendencies between male and female students, with female students exhibiting higher bullying tendencies compared to their male counterparts. In contrast, Umashankari et al. (2020), Herry and Mulvey (2023) in their different study found that boys experienced higher levels of peer pressure compared to girls. The Discrepancies of previous research to the present finding, as revealed that boys are more vulnerable to peer influences, which could lead to some degree of bullying tendencies typically associated with peer conformity. This also means that boys, influenced by peer pressure and previous experiences, might demonstrate higher tendencies towards bullying, particularly in cyber environments.

Implication of the study

1. The study has demonstrated the development of Social Resistance Skills, since encouraging youths to build resistance to negative peer pressure is essential for their personal and social development. Programmes that enhance decision-making, assertiveness, and self-confidence will equip young people to make independent and positive choices
2. The findings promote positive peer influence since peer encouragement can reduce bullying; youth development initiatives should focus on fostering supportive peer networks. This can include peer mentoring, teamwork-based activities, and leadership training to promote pro-social behaviour.
3. The finding has implication for gender-inclusive approaches to behavioural development since the female students showing higher bullying tendencies, youth development programmes should consider gender-specific needs and behavioural patterns. Developing strategies that address aggression and relational bullying among girls can lead to more effective outcomes.
4. The study has implication for Integration of Anti-Bullying Education in Youth Programmes which is importance of including bullying prevention and peer relationship management as core components of youth development initiatives. Teaching empathy, respect, and emotional regulation can reduce bullying and promote healthier interpersonal relationships among young people.

Conclusion

The study clearly establish that peer influence plays a significant role in shaping bullying behaviour tendencies among students. Precisely, yielding to peer pressure was found to significantly increase students' involvement in bullying, indicating that students who conform easily to peer expectations are more likely to engage in negative behaviours. In contrast, resistance to peer pressure and positive peer encouragement were shown to reduce bullying tendencies, suggesting that not all forms of peer influence are harmful, and that supportive peer relationships can serve as protective factors. In addition, the study revealed a significant gender difference, with female students exhibiting higher bullying tendencies than their male counterparts.

Recommendations

1. Schools should implement and enforce comprehensive anti-bullying policies that explicitly address the role of peer pressure in influencing bullying tendencies.
2. School Psychologists/Counsellors should organize regular workshops and training sessions on assertiveness skills to equip students with the ability to resist negative peer pressure and make independent decisions.
3. School psychologists should encourage and facilitate collaborative group activities that reinforce positive behaviours, mutual respect, and teamwork, rather than conformity to negative peer norms
4. The school should introduce programmes that enhance decision-making, assertiveness, and self-confidence that will equip young people to make independent and positive choices since encouraging youths to build resistance to negative peer pressure is essential for their personal and social development.

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