

PREDICTORS OF BULLYING AMONG ADOLESCENTS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE PARENTING PROCESSES, NEIGHBOURHOOD INFLUENCE, AND THE SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Bullying has been connected to poor school environments and unsafe learning environments. This study therefore examined parenting processes, neighbourhood influence, and school factors as predictors of bullying among secondary school adolescents. Five Local Government Areas in Ibadan were purposively selected for the study. The researchers considered this because of the school violence cases reported in the area over time. The study used a random sample of 283 students across 10 secondary schools. The data for this study were gathered using reliable and standardized instruments. The results demonstrated that 16.61% of the respondents were below 12 years, 48.76% were between 13–15 years and 34.63% were above 15 years old; 38.52% of the respondents were from nuclear families, 55.48% were from extended families, and 6.00% were undecided. The strongest predictor of bullying among secondary school adolescents was school factors ($\beta = .498$; $t = 11.369$; $p < 0.05$), followed by neighborhood influence ($\beta = .381$; $t = 8.957$; $p < 0.05$) and parenting processes ($\beta = .172$; $t = 3.834$; $p < 0.05$). It was decided that policy makers, school administrators, instructors, students, parents, and community members must all work together to reduce and prevent bullying.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Parenting processes,
Neighbourhood influence,
School factor, Bullying,
Secondary school adolescents

Article History:

Received: 18th Aug 2023
Accepted: 24th Sep 2023
Published: 02nd Oct 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

With more research-based knowledge regarding school bullying becoming more widely available through journal articles and professional publications, one may anticipate a considerable decrease in school-based bullying. Instead, the current status of school-based bullying is concerning, and it is just growing worse. Bullying refers to any unwelcome, aggressive action among adolescents that involves a real or perceived power imbalance that is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time (Cooley, Navarro, & Takahashi, 2016). Bullying is the repeated aggressive behavior perpetuated by a bully or a group of bullies who victimize weaker peers systematically" (Olweus, 2013). Bullying can be classified into physical, verbal, and social. Bullying among adolescents has gotten much attention through research studies focusing on peer-to-peer bullying in academic contexts. It is believed that between 15% and 20% of the school the population has been bullied at some point in their lives (Ungruhe & James, 2017). Bullying has become a significant source of fear and concern in schools, and it is now regarded as one of the most common kinds of school violence (Arseneault, 2017). Bullying is extremely costly and should not be considered a standard component of an individual's lifelong social grouping (NAS, 2016). Bullying is considered one of the most common and possibly harmful kinds of violence in elementary and high school classrooms, corridors, and grounds (Omoponle & Olanrewaju, 2019). Bullying affects over a quarter of middle and high school students yearly (Ayanwale, et al., 2023; Hagquist et al., 2019).

Bullying among school adolescent is unquestionably an ancient phenomenon. According to research,

bullying has been connected to poor school environments and unsafe learning environments (Copeland, Wolke, Angold, & Costello, 2013). This means that for bullying to occur, someone must have planned to cause harm. Physical bullying can involve beating, punching, kicking, tripping children, stealing money, or destroying personal properties (Kanmodi et al., 2020). In adults, psychological bullying includes intimidation, compulsion, and social exclusion (MacIntosh, 2005). Bullying is associated with approximately 160,000 adolescents missing school every day in the United States (15% of those who do not show up to school every day); 1 one out of every ten students drops out or changes schools because of bullying (Baron, 2016); homicide perpetrators are twice as likely as homicide victims to have been victims of bullying; suicidal thoughts are two to nine times more prevalent among bullying victims than among nonvictims (Gunnison, Bernat, and Goodstein, 2016).

According to studies, this behavior renders schools hazardous for students and contributes to the feeling that some schools are no longer safe (Galal et al., 2019). Bullying is a widespread issue that is becoming more prevalent in many aspects of society, including schools. Bullying incidents have continually occurred occasionally and have detrimental effects, particularly on students' academic, emotional, and social development during the school term. Some involve a gradual increase in violence that leads to some fatalities (Fleming & Jacobsen, 2010). According to Turner et al. (2013), transition periods are troublesome for secondary school adolescents because they encounter two significant transitions: hitting puberty and beginning a new school. As a result, they have a new peer group and a new school system. Bullying researchers have focused their efforts on understanding the nature, prevalence, and impact of school-based violence; as a result, these concerns have received the international attention they deserve. Data from multiple countries, including Canada, show that between 5% and 30% of students attending school have been identified as bullies or have been the target of bullying peers; 20% to 43% of children are bullied (Sigurdson et al., 2015; Health Canada, 2002); and 8% are regularly harassed by other students (Klomek, Sourander & Elonheimo, 2015; Omoniyi, 2013; Omoponle & Dwarika, 2023).

Furthermore, studies on bullying in Turkey show that approximately 30% of kids are involved in bullying as a bully, a victim, or both a bully and a victim (Chui & Chan, 2013). Bullying was reported to occur at a rate of 15% to 20% in studies conducted in the United States (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009), England, and Germany (Holt & Bossler, 2014). According to Asamu (2006); Omoponle & Olanrewaju, (2019), bullying is common in Africa, 22.5% of the pupils investigated in Ibadan, Nigeria, were under 15. According to studies conducted in South Africa, bullying affects as many as 61% of high school pupils in Tshwane (Neser, Ovens, van der Merwe, Morodi & Ladikos, 2013) and 52% of Cape Town's Grade 8 students (Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lombard & King, 2008) 41% of high school students in a national sample, 36.3% of Grade 8 and 11 students in Durban, 24.3% of Grade 9 students in Port Elizabeth, 16.49% of students in rural high schools in the Eastern Cape, and 11.8% of students in rural high schools in Mpumalanga (Taiwo & Goldstein, 2006).

The socioecological theory is the foundation of this work. No single explanation of bullying has, according to Swearer & Hymel (2015), being able to account for the various findings reported in research. Espelage and Swearer's (2004) and Swearer and Hymel's (2015) socioecological approach to bullying is arguably the most thorough and well-respected theory. This theory contends that bullying is best understood as the outcome of various causes and risk factors, including personal traits, educational environments, and broader social contexts. Based on this perspective, the Triangle Board that governs adolescent growth and behavior comprises the school, the home, and the neighborhood. Given this context, educational stakeholders in Nigeria, such as parents, teachers, and policymakers, have various perspectives on bullying. For instance, one of the most common and potentially harmful types of school violence is this behavior among adolescents in different schools. More than a quarter of junior and senior high school adolescents experience bullying yearly; this has been linked to both short-term and long-term outcomes that may be damaging. As a result, this study looks at how parenting processes, neighborhood influences, and school-related factors affect bullying among secondary school students.

Parenting Processes and Bullying

Parenting is a psychological concept representing standard methods parents employ when raising their children. It suggests a range of typical parental efforts to train and socialize their children (McClanahan et al., 2014). The ideal parenting style has been viewed as one that offers a variety of parental warmth and support, strong limit setting, open communication, and high levels of supervision. According to DeVore and Ginsburg's (2005) explanation of the connection between family and adolescent bullying behavior, children form their first social connections with their parental figures. The nature of these parent-child connections and the environment in which they are maintained may influence the social skills and relationships the child will form with others

later in life. It has also been discovered that parental negligence and permissiveness, defined by a lack of or insufficient monitoring of the kid throughout their early years and inconsistent disciplinary procedures, are predictors of antisocial (bullying) behavior among adolescents. According to Owuamanam & Victoria (2015), inattentive parents reject their kids or are bad caretakers, running the chance of having their kids engage in bullying.

Adolescents with parents who use positive reasoning to solve problems and who described their families as being very cohesive are more likely to report higher levels of perspective-taking when attempting to understand another person's feelings or emotional states, disengaging from bullying behavior, according to research by Le et al. (2019). On the other hand, studies by Vukojevic et al. (2019) and Omojonle (2019) have discovered that a low-income family environment has a significant and detrimental impact on the development of specific social skills in children, such as the ability to recognize non-violent solutions to interpersonal conflicts. There seems to be general agreement that violent behavior is influenced by birthing mode. For instance, some aggressive parenting practices teach kids that using violence to satisfy their demands is a good strategy (Hagquist, 2013).

According to Christle, Nelson, and Jolivet's (2005), if the family model for problem-solving emphasizes aversive and punitive reactions to conflict situations, the characteristics of authoritarian parenting, then the child is more likely to resort to negative behaviors to address problems they encounter outside the home. Kelly et al. (2019) also emphasized that interactions between parents and children frequently involve adverse exchanges in which children learn to comply with their expectations by acting out. As aversive stimuli are exchanged, established patterns of coercive engagement develop over time. According to Zeebari et al. (2017), children who experience these coercive interactional patterns at home are likelier to replicate them in school, increasing their risk of bullying and academic failure. In conclusion, when discipline and punishment are applied excessively strictly, adolescent bullying behavior is more likely to occur.

School Factors and Bullying

One of the main tripods of this study, the school factors, is demonstrated by the attitudes and feelings that students, teachers, staff, and parents express about a school, as well as by how students and staff "feel" about going to school each day. The physical and psychological characteristics of the school, which are more changeable, reflect the school's environment and set the circumstances for effective teaching and learning (Tsaousis, 2016). Kelly et al. (2019) claim that parental and societal demands prevent some schools from achieving their mission and objectives. Unhealthy schools lack an effective leader, and instructors are frequently dissatisfied with their positions and coworkers. In addition, academic accomplishment is not highly valued in disadvantaged schools. Neither teachers nor pupils are academically motivated, and antisocial conduct like bullying becomes common. A healthy learning environment fosters high academic standards, suitable leadership, and collegiality (Aluede, 2011). School atmosphere and culture were among the significant factors influencing improved student behavior, according to McClanahan et al. (2014).

The foundation for a child's effective adjustment to the social and academic environment is built when they first enter formal school settings, whether in junior high or senior high schools (Olweus, 2013). This is true of interactions with teachers and other significant members of the school environment. Children who develop strong bonds with their instructors are more likely to enjoy school, get along better with their peers, and avoid bullies. Although it is well acknowledged that tight friendships between adolescents who participate in social bullying are frequently characterized by heightened conflict and jealousy and can lead to feelings of loneliness (Chui & Chan, 2013), this is not always the case. When bullying conduct interferes with instruction and learning and negatively affects the school atmosphere, this can also have adverse effects on the greater school community. Evidence reveals that adolescents are more likely to believe their schools are less secure when exposed to high levels of bullying at school, either as a target or a bystander. According to Modecki et al. (2014), students who experienced bullying at school frequently felt terrible about their social interactions and their school atmosphere.

Neighborhood Influence and bullying

In today's society, neighborhood impact is a significant issue in all ramifications. However, it is generally agreed that neighborhood influences have received significantly less research than family's or peers' impact on teenage antisocial behavior (Veldkamp et al., 2019; Foshee et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the results of a rising number of studies conducted over the previous ten years show that it is becoming more and more significant. Neighborhood impacts can be considered as societal and cultural (i.e., contextual) risk factors for bullying, in

that they provide legal and normative expectations for behavior (UNESCO, 2018). Teenagers' violent behaviors and neighborhood bullying highlight not only a direct influence but also an interaction between environmental and other factors, neighborhood features, particularly poverty levels, and perceptions of problems in the neighborhood, were related to childhood aggressiveness and physical aggression. The size of the neighborhoods where kids lived was also linked to their levels of worry and emotional difficulties (Animasahun, 2014).

Neighborhood disadvantage is a significant risk factor for rural teenagers engaging in bullying, according to Zdemir & Stattin (2019). Most studies examining how a particular neighborhood affects bullying behavior among adolescents evaluate a wide range of potential interactions between the neighborhood and, for instance, personal traits, family, peer, and educational factors. In a longitudinal study, Jewkes et al. (2015) looked at the relationships between cooperative behavior, family and home management techniques, and the context of violence in a neighborhood. This study is an excellent example of the value of comprehensive initiatives to reduce the risk of violent behavior by focusing on the community and the family, considering that parents often 'buffer' children from the effects of dangerous situations. Protective family management behaviors also grow as neighborhood risk increases, as is the case, for instance, when commercial alcohol is more readily available. This is particularly true in the formative years of adolescence, contributing to the rise in bullying behavior among adolescents.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study.

- i. What is the relationship pattern between the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors) and bullying among secondary school adolescents?
- ii. What is the combined effect of the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors) on bullying among secondary school adolescents?
- iii. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors) to bullying among secondary school adolescents?

2. METHODOLOGY

Design

This study used survey research design as its methodology. It is a research study in which a group of people, things, or objects are investigated by gathering and evaluating data from just a number of those things, people, or objects that are thought to be clear examples of the entire group.

Population

All in-school adolescent in Ibadan, Oyo State's capital, comprise the study's population. The population consists of secondary school adolescents from both public and private colleges.

Sample and sampling techniques

The multi-stage sampling technique was employed in this investigation. Five Local Government Areas in Ibadan were purposively selected for the study. The researchers considered this because of the school violence cases reported in the area over time. The study used a random sample of 283 students across 10 secondary schools, including two private and 8 public schools.

Instrumentation

Data gathering involved the use of a structured questionnaire. There were two sections to the questionnaire (A and B). The respondents' demographic data were collected in Section A, including age and parental background, which were some of these demographic traits. The other standardized tests employed in the study

were included in Section B and explained below.

Bullying Behaviors Scale (BBS)

Bullying behavior was measured using the modified Bullying behavior Scale by (Dahlberg, Toal, and Behrens, 2005). The questions on the final bullying scale accurately captured the psychological and physical dimensions of bullying. They were congruent with the definition of bullying utilized in the current study, as was expected. In the last 30 days, participants were asked how frequently they had done the following: (a) "I called other students names," (b) "I teased students," (c) "I said things about students to make other students laugh," (d) "I threatened to hit or hurt another student," and (e) "I pushed, shoved, slapped, or kicked other students." Response choices included (1) = never, (2) = 1 or 2 times, (3) = 3 or 4 times, (4) = 5 or more times, (5) often; the scale reported a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = .86).

Parenting Behaviour Scale (PBS)

Parenting processes were assessed using the validated parenting styles inventory developed by Nancy Darling and Teru Toyokawa (1997). The scale contained 15 items structured on a five-point Likert format of 1- strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree. A typical item on the scale read: my parents give me a lot of freedom; my parents spend time just talking to me; when I do something wrong, my parents do not punish me, and my parents make most decisions about what I can do. The coefficient alpha of responsiveness, autonomy granting, and demandingness subscales were (Cronbach's alpha: .74, .75, and .72, respectively).

Neighbourhood Influence Scale (NIS)

The Learner's Aggressive Questionnaire, created by Mujahid et al. (2007), also includes the Neighborhood Influence Scale. The neighborhood's influence led to the adaptation of 10 objects. The response format for this scale is as follows: SD for strongly disagree, D for disagree, U for uncertain, A for agree, and SA for strongly agree. For the pilot testing the ten items on neighborhood influence, 50 (fifty) respondents were recruited outside of the targeted group. However, before the instrument was used, the instrument's reliability was determined through pilot research and the scale's internal consistency resulted in = .71, demonstrating that the scale is dependable for use. In addition, the strong construct validity of the instrument is shown by the Cronbach alpha.

School Climate Scale (SCS)

School factors was measured using the Student Connection Survey (SCS) developed by Bochner et al. (2022) To assess how students feel about the emotional and social environment that supports learning. The safety, expectations, support, and peer social climate constructs were the four ones that were measured. There were 64 total items in the high school version, 55 of which matched the four constructs assessed by the SCS. Nine additional questions assessed students' involvement in extracurricular activities. A 4-point Likert scale was used to grade each response, with the options being "Strongly Disagree" and "Strongly Agree." Each of the four constructs, safety ($\alpha = .83$), Expectations ($\alpha = .81$), Support ($\alpha = .77$), and Peer Social Climate ($\alpha = .79$), had adequate reliability (American Institutes for Research, 2007).

Data analysis

Simple percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and multiple regression statistical methods were used to examine the study's data at the 0.05 significance level.

3. RESULTS

Table 1: Respondents distribution based on age range.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 12 Years	47	16.61
13–15 Years	138	48.76
Above 15 Years	98	34.63
Total	283	100.0

Table 1 indicates that 16.61% of the respondents were below 12 years, 48.76% were between 13–15 years, and 34.63% were above 15 years old.

Table 2: Family structure distribution among respondents

Family structure	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear	109	38.52
Extended	157	55.48
Others	17	6.00
Total	283	100.0

In Table 2, 38.52% of the respondents were from nuclear families, 55.48% were from extended families, and 6.00% were undecided.

Research question one

What is the relationship pattern between the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors) and bullying among secondary school adolescents?

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the variables

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Bullying	283	71.50	40.25	1.00			
Parenting processes	283	94.81	27.43	.419**	1.00		
Neighborhood influence	283	29.75	9.96	.436**	.224**	1.00	
School factors	283	67.10	38.39	.567**	.325**	.034	1.00

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 lists the study variables' descriptive statistics and cross-correlations. According to Table 3, there is a strong relationship between bullying among secondary school adolescents and parenting processes ($r = .419$; $p < .05$), neighborhood influence ($r = .436$; $p < .05$), and the school factors ($r = .567$; $p < .05$). There were also significant correlations between the independent variables.

Research question two

What is the combined effect of the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors) on bullying among secondary school adolescents?

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis demonstrating the combined effects of the independent variables on bullying among secondary school adolescents.

Analysis of variance				
	Sum of Square (SS)	DF	Mean Square	F
Regression	300450.525	3	79373.060	101.284
Residual	292848.194	279	783.948	
Total	593298.718	282		

- a) $R = .722$
- b) $R^2 = .521$
- c) Adjusted $R^2 = .516$
- d) Standard error of estimate = 27.999

Table 4 demonstrates that the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors) significantly impact bullying among secondary school adolescents when combined. The R^2 value was .521, while R^2 adjusted value was .516. With 51.6% of the independent factors accounting for bullying among secondary school adolescents, the analysis of variance conducted on the multiple regressions produced an F-ratio value of 101.284, which was significant at the 0.05 level.

Research question three

What is the relative effect of each independent variable (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors) on bullying among secondary school adolescents?

Table 5: Relative Contribution of Independent Variables to the Prediction

Model	Unstandardize	Standardized coefficients		t	p
	d coefficients	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	-37.584	7.205		-4.626	.000
Parenting processes	.253	.066	.172	3.834	.000
Neighborhood influence	1.539	.172	.381	8.957	.000
School factors	.522	.046	.498	11.369	.000

Table 5 demonstrates that in Ibadan, Oyo State, the independent factors substantially impacted the prediction of bullying among secondary school adolescents. The most significant contribution to the prediction in terms of magnitude was made by school factors ($\beta = .498$; $t = 11.369$; $p < 0.05$). Neighborhood influence ($\beta = .381$; $t = 8.957$; $p < 0.05$) and parenting processes ($\beta = .172$; $t = 3.834$; $p < 0.05$) were the other significant variables, in that order.

4. DISCUSSION

The first research question showed a strong relationship between bullying among secondary school adolescents, parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors. That is, parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors have a high probability of contributing to bullying among secondary school adolescents. With this outcome, it is evident that researchers need to begin to see bullying as a socioecological and multifactorial problem that requires a multifaceted approach. This suggests that different methods should be taken to address bullying behaviors among secondary school adolescents. For example, while fostering a positive school climate where caring and pro-social behaviors are promoted, and students are given opportunities to develop their social skills free from bullying, home factors such as parental and neighborhood influence should not be ignored. As Holt et al. (2009) note, parents who pay attention to their kids, keep an eye

on them and want the best for them play a crucial role in lowering violent behavior both inside the family and outside of it.

In accordance with the findings mentioned earlier, it was determined by O'Malley, Katz, Renshaw, and Furlong (2014), Adewuyi & Dwarika (2023), Orpinas & Horne (2010), Espelage & Swearer (2010), O'Malley, Katz, Renshaw, and Furlong (2012), and Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano (2009) that school policies, teacher attitudes, and the overall school culture can improve students' social and emotional development and lessen bullying among students. According to their research, there is a link between students' positive attitudes and various outcomes, including those directly related to school support, when those students have good opinions of school support. According to O'Malley et al. (2012), children who perceive their school climate as supportive are less likely to encounter bullying or engage in high-risk behaviors. This result supports the previous research. The findings of this study, which revealed that students could escape the negative impacts of bullying in schools by attending schools with suitable environments, are supported by Rethon, Head, Klineberg, and Stansfeld (2011). They looked into how much school support could protect students from the possible adverse effects of bullying on academic performance and mental health and discovered a strong correlation.

The investigation also shows that neighborhood influence significantly impacts bullying behavior prediction. The studies of Barnes, Belsky, Broomfield, Melhuish (2012), and Gaffney et al., (2019) further lend credence to this conclusion. These studies have discovered that school issues, such as bullying, are common in underprivileged regions, indicating that particular neighborhoods are linked to adolescents engaging in bullying. Problems with the neighbors were only ever reported by bully-victims. As seen from earlier studies, where a measure of community economic conditions was connected with groups of kids engaged in bullying, this impact might be interpreted as general neighborhood socioeconomic disadvantage. One possible explanation is that youngsters are exposed to unpleasant encounters in their communities, which helps them model bullying practices for their classmates. However, having issues with your neighbors wasn't always a sign of being a bully or victim. A particularly susceptible population of people are bully-victims. The relationship between having problems with neighbors and bullying victims that this study observed may indicate more widespread social issues in the bully-victim group (Fagbule et al., 2020; Cosma et al., 2020).

The results also showed that many parenting practices, such as parent-child conflict, parental supervision, and child self-disclosure, directly correlate with bullying propensity. In this regard, Hensums et al. (2022) and Rigby (2014) confirm the current study by pointing out that children of permissive parents often struggle to control their impulsive violence. Weak parental monitoring and insufficient connection with the child are linked to peer aggression. In other words, violent behavior, including bullying, adversely correlates with meeting the child's needs, having a warm, accepting connection, being available to discuss the child's concerns, and providing support. These studies have repeatedly demonstrated that children of authoritarian parents frequently engage in bullying. Children who bully their classmates are more likely to have parents who employ authoritarian, strict, and punitive methods of child parenting (Omoponle & Veronica, 2023; Troop-Gordon, 2012).

According to the answers to the second research question, bullying among secondary school adolescents is significantly influenced by a combination of the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influences, and school factors). The analysis of variance using multiple regressions found that 51.6% of the independent factors were responsible for bullying among adolescents in secondary schools. The study's findings support those of other comparable studies, including those by Yang & Salmivalli (2013) and Onyemah & Adewuyi (2022), which found that family management and parenting practices influenced people's behavioral traits and indirectly caused aggressive behavior like bullying. They concluded that discipline interactions are co-constructed by the parent and the child rather than being "top-down" imposed by the parent. In other words, children actively create their relationships with their parents, and these relationships are uniquely influenced by the behaviors of the children. According to another study, families with authoritarian, harsh, and punishing parenting styles are likelier to have kids who bully their classmates. Children who see their parents as authoritative (i.e., setting boundaries while respecting their children's independence and being sensitive to their needs) are less likely to engage in bullying behavior. Bullies regard their families as authoritarian, more conflict-oriented, and less organized.

This outcome is also consistent with the empirical and theoretical works by Ashiabi & O'Neal (2015) and Birkett, Espelage & Koenig (2009), who both believed that school expectations had a negative relationship with students' bullying behaviors. They added that the school's and teachers' high expectations prevent kids from engaging in antisocial behavior. The association between high expectations and reduced antisocial behavior emergence during adolescence among those who had not previously displayed behavioral issues. The standards of their school for how students should treat one another were frequently and initially taught in several methods.

Studies done in the past, such as Berger, Brotfeld & Espelage (2022) and Farina (2019), showed that many ways of expressing the rules existed. Some of them were very detailed and tied to specific actions. These tend to be stated negatively, instructing students on what they should avoid doing rather than what they should accomplish. Others have more to do with interpersonal interactions, such as treating or including others as you would like to be treated. These were known as the "golden rules" at many schools, signifying that students saw them as the cornerstone of the institution and a manifestation of its essential principles (Omoponle, 2023).

Additionally, the position of students was occasionally highlighted by a physical sign, like donning a different-colored tie or sweater to signify status as a mentor or monitor. The secondary school adolescents were more likely to define being a role model as following the rules rather than speaking about how they interacted with other students. Therefore, school risk factors may exacerbate individual risk factors, raising the possibility that young people would engage in antisocial and violent behavior (Reaves, McMahon, Duffy & Ruiz, 2018, Adewuyi et al., 2020). In a similar vein, the most important cause of bullying behavior among adolescents who attend school was discovered to be a demanding parenting style. Accordingly, Fagbule et al., (2021); Thapa et al. (2013) found that adolescents with parents who use positive reasoning to solve problems and who described their families as being very cohesive were more likely to report higher levels of perspective-taking when attempting to understand another person's feelings or emotional states. They indicated that if the home model for handling problems emphasizes unpleasant and punitive responses to conflict situations, which are traits of demanding parents, then the child is more likely to employ negative behaviors to resolve issues in the neighborhood.

The outcome indicated in the third research question that the independent factors substantially impacted the prediction of bullying among secondary school adolescents. The most considerable contribution to the prediction in magnitude was made by school factors followed by neighbourhood influence and parenting processes. This finding is consistent with Wang & Degol's (2016) research, which indicated that a positive school atmosphere was linked to a lower probability of bullying after adjusting for other school environmental characteristics. According to these studies, bullying victims had a special relationship with the school climate. This finding is consistent with earlier studies of adolescents by Farina (2019) and Baldry (2003), who found that bullying behaviors among children are significantly influenced by school climate, teacher behavior, teacher-student relationships, and teacher-teacher relationships, even after controlling for more immediate factors like learning environment and class size. This suggests that a welcoming school atmosphere may significantly affect a child's chances of experiencing bullying. The climate of indiscipline in schools may increase the likelihood that older students would bully younger children, according to one possible reason.

In line with the current study's findings, Birkett et al. (2015) provide evidence that people with behavioral issues congregate in particular neighborhoods and that behavioral problems and their unfavorable effects reverberate throughout those communities. Children that live in underprivileged areas are under more stress than others, which is linked to increased aggression. It was also discovered that the worst neighborhoods are where bullying first appears. These researchers found a persistent link between children's future conduct issues and social skills deficiencies at home, in school, and in high-risk neighborhoods. Young children are most frequently exposed to hostile peers in a neighborhood setting. Furthermore, Fox, Lane, and Akers' (2010) research backed up the current study's assertion that irresponsible parents reject their kids or provide poor care run the chance of having aggressive behavior in their kids. Children who grow up traumatized often have permissive parenting practices. Male cyberbullying is more likely to occur in families with dismissive parenting practices. Additionally, studies have demonstrated that children who have parents who watch over them are less likely to engage in bullying of any kind, and parents who have reasonable expectations for their kids tend to have kids who are the least likely to bully, particularly in interpersonal situations (Adewuyi, 2021; Low & Espelage, 2012). The authoritative parenting style is characterized by children monitoring and setting reasonable expectations. Therefore, it would seem to reason that adolescents who grow up with authoritarian parents would be less likely to engage in bullying or victimization and would judge bullying to be more severe than those who grow up with parents who use other parenting approaches.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policymakers, educators, and parents were the target demographic for the advice. The legislators, school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members must work together to reduce and eliminate bullying. Thus, the following suggestions are suggested to lessen bullying:

- Schools should create anti-bullying policies that specify that bullying will not be permitted in the school

setting and that there will be penalties for bullying others.

- The stakeholders must stay on top of technological advancements. Given that bullying frequently occurs in places where adults are not present and that young people are using social media and new technology to bully others. Programs for preventing bullying and suicide must be aware of the realities of technological forms of bullying.
- Early intervention can assist students in developing the social and emotional skills that will help prevent later bullying behaviors and help lay the groundwork for healthy social connections. Bullying behaviors can begin in preschool.
- Counselors are urged to take the initiative in creating comprehensive strategies for bullying prevention and enhancing the climate at the school because they frequently interact with kids, staff, parents, and administrators. School counselors can play a direct role in preventing bullying through direct and indirect services provided to kids, families, and schools.
- Teachers must be aware of nonaggressive alternatives to disciplining children, and students must be taught the best methods to communicate with one another at school.
- Finally, parents must know the advantages of educational investments in their kids. To help their children develop strong moral principles and appropriate behavior, parents must be taught the harmful repercussions of bullying.

Limitations and future work

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. One limitation is that the data collected through the questionnaire may have been subjected to social desirability bias, potentially leading participants to overstate their beliefs, practices, and attitudes. Future research could consider incorporating observations and interviews alongside self-report measures to obtain more accurate information. Another limitation is related to the sample of adolescents drawn from a metropolitan city. This restricts the generalizability of the findings to a broader population. To enhance the validity of the conclusions, future researchers should aim to include more extensive and diverse samples from different educational contexts, allowing for comparisons across various settings. Also, during this work, the researcher found it difficult to gain the attention of the school principals and heads, particularly at the initial stage.

6. CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the present understanding of bullying behavior among adolescents in secondary schools as a problem that needs a suitable response. Adolescents and even adults can be negatively affected by bullying in a variety of ways. The effects on children and young people could be disastrous if schools and communities do not address bullying behaviors. This study showed that bullying among secondary school adolescents is significantly influenced by the independent variables (parenting processes, neighborhood influence, and school factors), with school factors having the largest impact, followed by neighborhood influence. The result made it evident that bullying doesn't happen in a vacuum. Its existence is due to a variety of causes, including educational impacts. What determines bullying behavior among adolescents in a school is how teachers manage their classes and react to unwanted student behavior. Therefore, initiatives to support teachers in developing their subject-matter expertise and pedagogical subject-matter expertise (i.e., how to present material in ways that actively engage learners and promote deep understanding rather than rote memorization) are essential contributors to a culture that deters bullying.

However, there will likely be an environment predisposed to bullying issues unless teachers enter the classroom with the ability to create a culture that proactively minimizes student behavior problems while also allowing them to intervene when students are disruptive in positive, educative, and practical ways. Parents' homes and neighborhoods must also be safe and healthy places for teenagers to live, learn, make friends, and develop socially and emotionally.

Ethics Statement

All practices in this study involving human subjects adhered to the National Research Committee's ethical guidelines, the Declaration of Helsinki of 1964 and any later revisions, or other comparable ethical standards. To participate in this study, the subjects provided written, informed permission.

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates the students who replied to their instruments and the authors whose works they used as resources.

Availability of Data Statement

The article and supplementary materials contain the original contributions to the study; for further information, contact the corresponding author.

Funding

The study was carried out without financial support.

Competing Interests

The study's author declares that there were no businesses or financial connections that may be interpreted as having a potential conflict of interest.

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