



Anger Management and Moral Interventions on Bullying among Senior Secondary School Students in Ijebu North East Local Government Area of Ogun State

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Abstract

With least provocation, bullying out of anger among secondary school students is a common practice in recent times. It has adverse effect on teaching and learning in the school system. Hence, this study experimented effectiveness of anger management and moral interventions on bullying among secondary school students in Ijebu North East Local Government Area of Ogun State. This research made use of a 3x2 pre-test, post-test experimental design. The population was all senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East Local Government Area of Ogun State and the sample size was 60 students who were simple randomly selected from three senior secondary schools. The Child Adolescent Bullying Scale (CABS) developed by Strout, Vessey, DiFazio and Ludlow (2018) of 0.97 reliability index yielded 0.91 reliability index when trial tested using Chronbach alpha statistics was adopted in this study and data obtained were analysed using the Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA) and Scheffe post-hoc test. Findings of the study revealed a significant effect of treatments on the bullying behaviour of students ($F_{(2, 57)} = 151.781$, partial $\eta^2 = .798$). Participants exposed to VCT ($\bar{x} = 61.42$) had the lowest bullying mean score, while the EIT group ($\bar{x} = 83.02$) and control group ($\bar{x} = 105.80$). Gender had a significant effect on bullying behaviour of students ($F_{(1, 77)} = 8.928$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .104$), female participants displayed lower ($\bar{x} = 87.479$) bullying behaviour mean score than those of male participants ($\bar{x} = 91.478$). The interaction effect of treatment and gender was not significant. Anger Management Intervention and Moral/ethical Intervention reduced bullying. It is therefore recommended that School Counsellors should make use of Anger Management Intervention and Moral Intervention in reducing bullying of senior secondary school students.

Keywords: Bullying, Anger Management Intervention and Moral Intervention, Gender

1. Introduction

The importance which Nigeria, like most other developing countries attributed to education as a major developmental tool can be seen in the priority given to human resource development in her policy statement and development plans. Building a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united and self-reliant nation, a great and dynamic economy, and a place of bright and full opportunities for all citizens are among the goals of the development plans (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). Unfortunately, these ideals are far from being realized because there has been an excessive rise in the prevalence of student participation in maladaptive behaviours. Most of such misconduct manifestations are more noticeable among secondary school students in such a way that is upsetting and troublesome. Thus, Tsagem (2021)

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observes that reasons as to why students' exhibit tendencies for violence have received attentions from researchers in recent times and it is quite interesting to note the numerous factors that may, singly or in combination, result in such behaviour. One of such maladaptive behaviours is bullying. Ali, Qasem and Aldwaikat (2025) stressed that bullying is a global issue with significant consequences. Rigby (2017) emphasized that bullying "is the repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of people. Bullying is a subset of aggressive conduct defined by three criteria: hostile purpose, power imbalance, and repeated action overtime (Burger, et al., 2015). Bullying is the act of repeatedly engaging in hostile behaviour with the intention of injuring another person physically, mentally, or emotionally. Overtime, the conduct is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated.

It involves things like issuing threats, spreading rumors, physically or verbally assaulting someone, and purposefully excluding someone from a group.

Therefore, School bullying can be physical, verbal or emotional and is usually repeated over a period of time. The corpus of literature has classified bullying into various categories. Nonverbal, verbal, and physical behaviour are examples of this. Individual and collective bullying are two types of bullying that are classified according to perpetrators or participants. Other interpretations include emotional and relationship bullying, as well as physical injury to another person or property (McGrath, 2017). Another form of bullying is cyber bullying which involves the use of digital technologies (Tryastuti, 2022).

Foreign and local reports indicate cases of school crimes caused by the occurrence of bullying within the school environment (Rastrullo & Francisco, 2015). There were about 2.7 million students being bullied each year by students taking on the role of the bully. According to WHO report, one (1) out of seven (7) students in kindergarten through 12th grade have participated in the bullying incidents either as a bully or as a victim (Ahmad, 2019). It is difficult to find a secondary school today where bullying does not exist among students (Sa'ad, 2016).

Social Exchange Theory (SET) by George Homans in 1958 posits that social behaviour is the result of an exchange process between individuals, where people seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs. In a senior secondary setting, Social Exchange Theory explains bullying as a behaviour where individuals weigh perceived rewards against costs. Bullies may engage in aggressive behaviour if they perceive rewards like social dominance, peer admiration, or attention outweighing potential costs like disciplinary action or social disapproval. It is therefore better for peers, teachers and school authorities to increase disciplinary action and discourage bullying among students regardless of gender.

Gender is another variable that needs to be paid attention to when making investigation about a construct. Gender influence is an essential moderating variable in checking bully behaviour as behaviour males and females may differ in the way and rate they display bully behaviour. For instance, Thornberg and Jungert (2014) examined school bullying and the mechanisms of moral disengagement and the findings revealed that boys expressed significantly higher levels of moral justification as compared to girls; boys also bullied others significantly more often than girls. School bullying and reasoning competence, the study classified children according to their bullying role and there was no gender difference (Grundherr, et al., 2017; Pouwels, et al., 2019). Parren, et al., (2012) found moral judgment to reduce bully among adolescent bullies regardless of gender. Caravita, et al., (2012) linked moral disengagement to girls. Tryastuti (2022) found anger management to be effective in school-age children and therefore recommends anger management training in reducing bullying behaviour among school-age children. They learn from movies, people, and angry situations in

their environment and sports that display anger and violence.

Anger can be both an expression and cause of bullying. Uncontrolled and unresolved anger can lead someone or a group of people to bully someone for expressing their feelings. Anger is the feeling and an intensely emotional state is induced by a strong sense of displeasure, hurt, hopelessness, helplessness, and powerlessness. The negative aspects of anger are that someone can have disruption of thinking, unnecessarily defend himself or herself, become aggressive and become known as an angry person. There are many adverse effects of anger individual display. One is bullying, which needs to be managed by a psychological intervention. The major of the cause of bullying is anger; therefore anger management intervention can be used in controlling bullying so as to instill good behaviours in the individuals who bully others without moral justification.

Morality can be described as a set of standards that enable people to live cooperatively and harmoniously in groups. Morality is what societies determine to be right, wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. It is a way of doing things or acting according to ideal or acceptable way of doing things irrespective of position or status. Although there is no general consensus on what constitutes morality across cultures and societies but certain actions are considered wrong. Actions like bullying and all forms of unprovoked violence are considered immoral and unacceptable. Individual who acts in an unacceptable way is considered immoral. When people act immorally, they go against the laid down rules and regulations of their environment. Immoral acts can take the form of shouting, fighting, lying, cheating and other negative acts including bullying. Bullying is an act that is unacceptable in many societies including our school environment. Bullying takes many forms as stated earlier above. De Olivera, et al., (2019) identified specific mechanisms of moral disengagement associated with bullying at school among Brazilian adolescents without identifying gender difference. Bullying has hindered academic growth and development among other effects it has on the bullied. This can be seen as a problem in the school system that needs to be addressed in order to foster academic progress. Ali, Qasem and Aldwaikat (2025) submitted that the programmes effectiveness varied based on factors like CGPA and grade level while overall bullying behaviours did not significantly change. Hence, the need for the researchers to confirm the effect of anger management and moral interventions on senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite increasing awareness about the negative impact of bullying, many secondary schools in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State still have reports of student harassment, intimidation, and social

exclusion. This has led to psychological distress, school avoidance, and in some cases, dropout which should not be. Scholars have severally discussed the negative effect of violence on human psyche; in the same vein, scholars have identified bullying as a major maladjustive behaviours affecting teaching and learning experiences in school. In proffering solutions to this problem, scholars have concentrated more on psychological dimension. This study attempts to combine moral and psychological dimensions in interrogating the problem of bullying in secondary school. It also attempts to solve this problem through moral and ethical interventions. The two approaches focus on morality in human action and the place of personality development. Hence, this study investigated effect of anger management and moral interventions on bullying among senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the effectiveness of anger management and moral interventions on bully behaviour among secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State. Specifically the study:

1. Ascertained the significant effect of anger management and moral interventions on bullying among secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.
2. Ascertained if there is significant gender effect on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.
3. Ascertained if there is significant gender difference in the effect of anger management and moral interventions on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.

1.3 Hypotheses

- H0₁:** There is no significant main effect of anger management and moral interventions on bullying among secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.
- H0₂:** There is no significant gender effect on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.
- H0₃:** There is no significant gender difference in the effect of anger management and moral intervention on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State

2. Methodology

This study employed a pre-test, post-test, control group, quasi experimental design with a 3 x 2. It consists of two treatment groups (Anger management and Moral interventions) and a control group in the rows, while the

columns have one moderating variable of gender, gender is at two levels of male and female students. The population of this study comprises all senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State. The sample size consists of sixty (60) SS2 students drawn from three schools in the local government area. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three (3) schools and classified into three different groups. SS2 students were simple randomly selected because they have spent significant period in school and are not preparing for any external examination. A representative of each group was selected to pick from three ballot papers labeled A1, A2, and A3. A1 was assigned to anger management intervention group; A2 was assigned to moral justification intervention group while those in A3 were assigned to control group respectively.

2.1 Instrument

The Child Adolescent Bullying Scale (CABS) developed by Strout, Vessey, DiFazio and Ludlow (2018) was adopted in this study. It consists of twenty-two (22) items. The instrument demonstrates strong internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's of 0.97. When the CABS was trial tested on twenty (20) students from another school that was not part of the study using Cronbach alpha, it yielded 0.91 reliability coefficient which means the instrument is reliable.

2.2 Procedure for Treatment

The researchers visited the 3 schools used for the study. Permission was obtained from necessary authorities and consent of the students was sought. The interventions were administered on the participants at their different schools according to the drafted time table. It was administered through intensive teaching, class work and assignments etc. for duration of an hour weekly for nine weeks according to the intervention outline.

Experimental Group I: Anger Management Intervention

The participants in this group were trained on Anger Management Intervention by the researchers. The outline of the training included: introduction to anger management, acknowledging anger, identifying triggers, calming down and regulating emotions, take timeout, use positive self-talk, engaging in physical activity, expressing anger constructively and closing remarks.

Experimental Group II: Moral Intervention

The participants in this group were trained on Moral Justification Intervention by the researchers. The outline of the training included: Introduction to Morality, Gathering of facts, Identifying the ethical issues, Determine relevant virtues and principles, Listing of alternatives, Comparing alternatives to virtues and principles, consider consequences, making

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	32	53.3%
Female	28	46.7%
Total	60	100.0%

Table 2: Summary of 3x2 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Showing the Significant Main and Interactive Effect of Treatment Groups and Gender among secondary school students in Ijebu North East Local Government.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	35240.116 ^a	18	1957.784	28.726	.000	.870
Intercept	2281.184	1	2281.184	33.471	.000	.303
Pre-test	59.104	1	59.104	.867	.355	.609
Treatment	20688.960	2	10344.480	151.781	.000	.798
Gender	608.467	1	608.467	8.928	.004	.104
Treatment group * gender	362.865	2	181.433	2.662	.076	.065
Error	5247.873	41	127.996			
Total	731201.000	60				
Corrected Total	40487.990	59				

a. R Squared = .860 (Adjusted R Squared = .820)

a decision and closing remarks.

Control Group: No Treatment

The participants in this group were not trained.

4. Presentation of Results.

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

Table 1 revealed that out of 60 respondents (32) 53.3% of them were males while (28) 46.7% of them were females.

3.2 Test of Hypothesis

The data were analysed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) statistical method at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented as follow:

H0₁: There is no significant main effect of anger management and moral interventions on bullying among secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.

The Table 2 shows that there was a significant main effect of treatment on bully behaviour of secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State ($F_{(2, 41)} = 151.781, p < .05, \eta^2 = .798$). This implies a significant difference in the bully behaviour of the treatment groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. For further clarification on the margin of differences between the treatment groups and the control group, a Scheffe post-hoc analysis was computed and the result is as shown in the Tables respectively.

From the Table 3, it was revealed that experimental

group I (Anger Management Intervention) (AMI) ($\bar{x} = 61.4222$) had the lowest mean while the experimental group II (Moral Intervention) (MI) ($\bar{x} = 83.0222$) and control group ($\bar{x} = 105.8067$). By implication, Anger Management Intervention (AMI) was more effective in reducing bully behaviour of secondary school students than Moral Intervention (MI). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2 = .820$) overall indicates that the differences that exist in the group account for 82% in the variation of bully behaviour of secondary school students.

H0₂: There is no significant gender effect on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.

Table 2 further shows that there is a significant main effect of gender on bully behaviour of secondary school students: $F_{(1,41)} = 8.928, p < .05, \eta^2 = .104$. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in the bully behaviour of secondary school students male and female students. The table further reveals that gender differences explained 10.4% variance in the bully behaviour of secondary school students. To further clarify where the difference lies, a pair-wise comparison was computed using bonferonni correction, the result is shown in table.

Table 4 reveals that after controlling for the effect of pre-test bullying score, female participants displayed lower ($\bar{x} = 87.479$) bully mean score than the male students ($\bar{x} = 91.478$). By implication males have high tendency of bully behaviour than female students.

Table 3: Scheffe Post-hoc analysis showing the significant differences of bully behaviour among two treatment groups and the control group

Treatment group	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Anger Management Intervention (AMI)	21	61.4222		
Moral Justification Intervention (MJI)	20		83.0222	
Control group (CG)	19			105.8067
Sig.		0.035	0.043	0.022

Table 4: Bonferonni correction pair-wise comparison showing the significant difference in bully behaviour of secondary school students based on gender.

Gender	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig. ^c
Female ($\bar{x}$ = 87.479)	7.888	.854	.003
Male ($\bar{x}$ = 91.478)	-7.888	.854	.003

H0₃: There is no significant gender difference in the effect of anger management and moral intervention on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State.

The results in table 2 indicates that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment (anger management and moral interventions) and gender on bully behaviour of secondary school students; ($F_{(2, 41)} = 2.662$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .065$). Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that gender did not significantly moderate the effect of treatment on bully behaviour of secondary school students in Ijebu North East.

4. Discussion of Findings

The first hypothesis which states that there is no significant effect of treatment on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East Local Government area of Ogun State shows that there was significant effect of treatment on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students. This implies that there is a significant difference in bully behaviour of senior secondary school students. The Scheffe post-hoc analysis further revealed that experimental group I exposed to Anger Management Intervention had the lowest bully behaviour post-test mean score, followed by experimental group II who were exposed to Moral Intervention and control group. By implication, Anger Management Intervention (AMI) and Moral Intervention (MI) were complementary in addressing bully behaviour of senior secondary school students. The findings of this study is line with that of Tryastuti (2022) which found anger management to be effective in school-age children and therefore recommends anger management training in reducing bullying behaviour among school-age children. It also corroborates the findings of Thornberg and Jungert (2014) which examined school bullying and the mechanisms of moral disengagement and the findings revealed that

moral intervention was effective in reducing bullying among school children. It is in the opposite direction with the findings of Ali, Qasem and Aldwaikat (2025) which posited that the programmes effectiveness varied based on factors like CGPA and grade level while overall bullying behaviours did not significantly change.

There is no significant gender effect on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State. The hypothesis was rejected; there is a significant main effect of gender on bully behaviour of secondary school students. This implies that there is a significant difference in the bully behaviour of secondary school students male and female students. This finding aligns with that of Thornberg and Jungert (2014) which findings revealed that boys bullied others significantly more often than girls. It also agree with that of Caravita, et al., (2012) which linked moral disengagement to girls. However the finding is against that of Grundherr, et al., (2017) and Pouwels, et al. (2019) which stressed that there is no significant difference in bullying based on gender.

The third hypothesis which states that there is no significant gender difference in the effect of anger management and moral intervention on bully behaviour of senior secondary school students in Ijebu North East local government area of Ogun State. The result indicates that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment (anger management and moral interventions) and gender on bully behaviour of secondary school students. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that gender did not significantly moderate the effect of treatment on bully behaviour of secondary school students in Ijebu North East. This finding corroborates the finding of De Olivera, et al., (2019) which identified specific mechanisms of moral disengagement associated with bullying at school among Brazilian adolescents

without identifying gender difference. It is also in line with that of Parren, et al., (2012) found moral judgments to reduce bully among adolescent bullies regardless of gender. It also aligns with that of Tryastuti (2022) which found anger management to be effective in school-age children and therefore recommends anger management training in reducing bullying behaviour among school-age children but goes conversely with the findings of Thornberg and Jungert (2014) which examined school bullying and the mechanisms of moral disengagement and the findings revealed that boys expressed significantly higher levels of moral justification as compared to girls; boys also bullied others significantly more often than girls

5. Conclusion

Following the findings of the study, it is concluded that Anger Management and Moral Interventions reduced bullying complementarily. Gender had significant effect on bullying behaviour but did not have a significant interaction effect.

6. Recommendations

The study recommended the following from its findings:

1. School Counsellors should make use of Anger Management and Moral Interventions in reducing bullying of senior secondary school students.
2. Counsellors should equip themselves with adequate knowledge of Anger Management and Moral Interventions.
3. School counselling program should be incorporated into the structure of senior secondary school curriculum.

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