

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Bullying in Nigerian Secondary Schools: Strategies for Counseling intervention

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**School bullying is a serious problem for young people in the society and Nigeria at large. It is a threat that no school disregards or dismisses. It can have negative consequences on the general school climate and on the right of students to learn in a safe environment without fear. Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences both for students who bully and for their victims. This paper defined the concept of bullying, forms of bullying; prevalence of bullying; causes of bullying in both the bullies and bullied; effect of bullying; and the strategy for handling bullying in school children. Increasing public awareness and knowledge about bullying behaviour problem can be a sure way of reducing it.**

**Key words:** Bullying, forms of bullying, bullied, bullies, intervention strategy, systematic approach.

## INTRODUCTION

School has always remained one of the safest places, next to the home in a child's life. One wonders if this still holds sway in our present society given the ever increasing spate of violence in our schools. Violence in schools is an issue that has become more prominent in the last few years, as news articles about violent deeds within the school setting are now on the increase. Despite the increasing rate of violence in schools, the society still expects that the school should be a safe place for students. Thus, in order to maintain a peaceful and safe school environment, stakeholders in education have tended to concern themselves with the problem of violence in our schools (Aluede, 2011).

Violence, as defined by the World Health Organization (2002), cited in Federal Ministry of Education (2007), is the intentional use of physical force or power, and threat against oneself, another person, or against a group of

community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. Violence, broadly speaking, includes any condition or act that creates a climate in which the individual feels fear or intimidation in addition to being victims of assault, theft or vandalism. This, as a matter of fact, is becoming a growing problem in our schools (Aluede, 2011).

Bullying is a pervasive problem in schools that affects a lot of students. In recent times, it is becoming a bigger crisis with vicious consequences. Bullying is not just a child's play, but a terrifying experience many school children face every day (Aluede, 2006; Beran, 2005; Thornbery, 2010). Schafer and Korn (2000) pointed out that in psychological studies, violence is regarded as a subset of aggression, whereas educational scientific studies see aggression as subset of violence. In

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sociological and criminological contexts, violence is regarded as a form of deviant behaviour. In everyday life, violence is usually associated with physical assaults or criminal acts. Actions that are perceived as violence by school heads, teachers, pupils, and parents are physical attacks, threatening with weapons, blackmailing and vandalism, verbal aggression and bullying.

Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences on the general school climate and on the right of students to learn in a safe environment without fear. Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences both for students who bully and for their victims. Although much of the formal research on bullying has taken place in the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain and Japan, the problems associated with bullying have been noted and discussed wherever formal schooling environments exist (Egbochukwu, 2007). Therefore, the main interest of this paper is to look into the meaning of school violence in the context of bullying, forms of bullying; the prevalence of bullying problems; causes of bullying; effect of bullying; and finally provide some strategies for counseling interventions in Nigerian secondary schools.

### **Concept of bullying**

Bullying can be described as repeated negative events, which over time are directed at special individuals and which are carried out by one or several other people who are stronger than the victim. Negative events can be aggressive physical contact in the form of fights and shoving, verbal threats and mockery, grimacing or cruel gesturing (Aluede, Adeleke; Omoike and Afen-Akpaida, 2008). Adewale (2004) defined bullying as a hostile behaviour displayed by an individual in order to harm another person or a group of people. According to him, bullies engage in the act in order to establish power and control over their colleagues, whom they consider to be "weaker" world. Bullying, a subcategory of aggressive behaviour, is encountered regularly by children and adolescents in the context of schools, worldwide.

Although bullying is a common experience for students around the world, it is a complex social problem that can have severe negative consequences for both bullies and victims (Hymel et al., 2005), especially as bullying has the potential to cause either physical or psychological harm to the victim. However, the most widely used definition of bullying is that coined by Olweus (1978): a person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Negative actions are considered to be when someone purposefully inflicts or tries to inflict injury or discomfort on another person. Negative actions may be both verbal (e.g. threatening,

degrading, teasing) and non-verbal (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping, pushing, vandalizing property, rude gestures, and making faces).

Bullying may be carried out by a single person (the bully) or by a group against a single person (the victim) or a group of people. Langevin (2000) claimed that this definition requires that negative actions must be carried out repeatedly and intentionally to be considered bullying, which excludes occasional and less serious negative action. In order to be considered bullying, there should also be an actual or perceived power imbalance. That is, the person experiencing the negative actions has trouble defending him/ her and is helpless to some degree against the harassing person or persons (Rigby and Slee, 1993). Olweus (1993) opined that another distinction that is sometimes made in defining bullying is that of direct and indirect bullying. Direct bullying is defined as open attacks on the victim, while indirect bullying consists of social isolation and exclusion from the group. Smith and Sharp (1994) submitted that a further criterion is that bullying must be unprovoked on the part of the victim.

### **Forms of bullying**

The most common forms of bullying, according to Gradin and Hammarrstrom (2005), are verbal harassment like teasing and name calling. This is consistent with the findings of studies conducted on students in Norway (Due et al., 2005) and in England (Due et al., 2009). In Nigeria, Egbochukwu (2007)'s and Ometeso (2010)'s studies identified forms of bullying as kicking and hitting, extortion of money from victims, locking inside a room, sending of nasty note, isolation, teasing and threat to beat others. Pepler and Graig (2000) identified five major forms of bullying as physical violence and attacks, verbal taunts, name calling and put downs; threat and intimidation; extortion or stealing of money or other possessions and exclusion from peer group. Table 1 presents general information on the type of aggression and the targets of aggression that emerge from bullying.

### **The characteristics of students who are bullies**

There are many common characteristics found in most bullies. Bosworth et al. (2001) opined that most bullies are males, popular, and often athletes. They have excellent social skills, with the ability to attract many followers, and easily manipulate others. Bullies are psychologically strong and very popular among their peers. However, the peer status is important in terms of boosting their well-being. Bullying behaviour is self-reinforcing. When students find that putting others down give them approval from their peers, they are likely to do

**Table 1.** Types of aggression by developmental stages.

	<b>Childhood</b>	<b>Adolescence</b>	<b>Late adolescence</b>
	Ages 4-9	ages 10 – 13	ages 14-18
Form of aggression	Context of aggression	Context of aggression	Context of aggression
Verbal	Same-sex peers	Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers	Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers
Physical bullying	Same-sex peers	Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers	Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers
Social		Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers	Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers
Sexual harassment		Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers	Same-sex peers Opposite-sex peers
Date of violence			Romantic relationships
Gang behaviour			School and community
Delinquency			School and community

Source: Pepler and Craig (2000). *The Counselor* (2006) Volume 22.

it repeatedly. Sometimes, they can easily butter up to adults, making them unsuspecting bullies (Bosworth et al., 2001). Generally, a bully is someone who teases and intimidates other students, although there are many other ways to bully a fellow student. Many people feel that the typical bully comes from a broken home, but this is not necessarily true. Still, the less supervision a child gets at home, the more likely he is to be a bully. Different studies have proved that most bullies look for a victim who is smaller, younger and weaker. As a practice, bullies have more aggressive attitudes towards their social surroundings and a positive attitude about violence. Furthermore, it has been shown by different surveys that bullies are steered by impulses; they need to dominate others and do not show any empathy for the victim.

Rigby (1996) discussed two possible conceptualizations of the bully. One is a child who is vicious and uncaring, the product of a dysfunctional family. This bully has an aggressive temperament, and he/she is hostile and un-empathic in relations with others. The second conceptualization suggests that some bullies are in fact members of a group that builds its strength on harassing vulnerable children who are not members of their group. The bully may or may not be malicious in intent, and the members reassure themselves that no real harm is being done. Rigby (1996) called this type of bully a "passive bully" or "follower". As for girls, they experience a different form of bullying. Although it is a more indirect form of bullying, social manipulation is very prevalent within females. Social manipulation can include many actions, including spreading gossip, telling lies, betraying trust,

passing notes, ignoring the victim, or excluding the victim (Anonymous, 2001; Kenny, McEachan and Aluede, 2005).

**The characteristics of students who are victims of bully**

Victims of bullying are described as more anxious, careful and insecure, compared to other students in general. They are not aggressive but have a negative self-image. Olweus (1993) stated that bullying victim often lacks friends in the class and at school. Students exposed to long-term bullying can see the school environment as unfriendly, frightening, and go through a major part of school with anxiety and insecurity. The major dependence which bullying victims feel towards their families can also be explained by their vulnerability and their otherwise insecure situation. With respect to physical attributes, victims are physically weak than non-victims. Bosworth et al. (2001) asserted that 30 to 40% of bullies show some level of depression, and their bullying is often a cry for help. Most likely the victims will be both less confident and unpopular. Therefore, many victims react by becoming upset or cry as a way of dealing with their anger or fear. Victims have a tendency to be depressed, anxious, shy and lonely (Drake, 2003).

Rubin (2003) maintained that from previous research, victims tend to have a lower self-esteem and a high level of depression. Victims tend to be physically smaller, more sensitive, unhappy, cautious, anxious, quiet and

withdrawn than other children (Bryne, 1994). Most victims of bullying can be termed "passive" or "submissive" victims (Olweus, 1994). They are generally insecure and non-assertive, and react by withdrawing and crying when attacked by other students. In this sense, they are vulnerable to being victimized, as bullies know these children will not retaliate. A less common characteristic, the "provocative victim", has also been described. Olweus classified this type of victim of bullying as a combination of both anxious and aggressive traits, and these students sometimes provoke classmates into victimizing them by their overactive and irritable behaviour.

### Prevalence of bullying problems

Bullying among school children occurs worldwide. It takes place in small schools, large schools, single sex, co-educational schools, traditional and progressive schools. It occurs in both primary and secondary schools. The most common form of bullying for both sexes is verbal and includes teasing, harassment and name-calling. It is the most painful form and has the longest-lasting impact. However, extortion, physical violence, nasty rumours, exclusion from the group, damage to property and threats are also regarded as bullying. The playground is the most common place for bullying to occur and most children believe that bullying cannot be stopped. For instance, in U.S., in a national study, Nansel et al. (2001) found that about 30% of 6th through 10th grade students had been involved in bullying incidents with moderate or frequent regularity. Similar prevalence rates were found in the State of Florida. For example, in a study by Bully Police, USA (n. d.) found that of the 2,701,022 school age children in Florida, approximately 442,157 students representing 16.37% were involved in bullying.

Nansel et al. (2001) added that limited available data show that bullying is much more common among younger teens than older teens. As teens grow older, they are less likely to bully others and to be the targets of bullies. Rigby and Slee (1991) remarked that bullying occurs more frequently among boys than girls. Teenage boys are much more likely to bully others and also to be the targets of bullies. While both girls and boys say others bully them by making fun of the way they look or talk, boys are more likely to report being hit, slapped or pushed. Teenage girls are more often the targets of rumour and sexual comments. Also, in a study of fourth-through eight-graders, above 15% of the respondents reported being severely distressed by bullying and 22% reported academic difficulties stemming from maltreatment by peers (Hoover and Oliver, 1996).

Gallagher's study (as cited in Nansel et al., 2001) reported that one out of four children is bullied, and one out of five defined himself/herself as a bully. In all,

approximately 282,000 students are physically attacked in secondary schools every month. In the same view, Vail (2002) claimed that many students avoid public areas of the school such as the cafeteria and restrooms in an attempt to elude bullies. For some students, the fear is so great that they avoid school altogether, hence everyday approximately 160,000 students stay home from school because they are afraid of being bullied.

Olweus (1993) opined that teenage boys target boys and girls; teenage girls most often bully other girls, using more subtle and indirect forms of aggression than boys. For example, teenage girls, instead of physically harming others, are more likely to spread gossip or encourage others to reject or exclude another girl. In addition, a survey published in "Pediatrics in Review" reveals that in Norway, 14% of children are either bullies or victims. In Japan, 15% of primary school pupils say that they are bullied, while in Australia and Spain, the problem prevails among 17% of the students. In Britain, one expert figures that 1.3 million children are involved in bullying. In Israel, Professor Amos Rolider of Emek Yizre'el College surveyed 2,972 pupils in 21 schools. According to the Jerusalem post, the professor found that "65% complained of being smacked, kicked, pushed or molested by fellow pupils" (Anonymous, 2003). Wet (2005) reported that in 1985, investigation on bullying conducted by the University of California, Los Angeles, it was found that 7% of the youths who took part in the investigation victimized their fellow learners; 9% indicated that they were victims of bullies. Furthermore, 6% indicated that they were victims and bullies. Similarly, in a Norwegian study, in which 568,000 learners participated during 1983-1984, it was found that 9% of the participants were "now and then" "relatively regularly" or "regularly" victims of bullying; 7% were found guilty of bullying (Olweus, 1994).

According to Limber et al. (1996 cited in McEachern et al., 2005), one out of 12 secondary school children in the Netherlands is "very regularly" or "regularly" bullied. Nansel et al. (2001) found that 60.9% of the 207 participants in a research project in Gauteng indicated that they were bullied during the 2002 school year. Northmore's study (as cited in Wet, 2005) of Johannesburg Centre for School Quality and Improvement (CSQI) points out that 90% of the learners at a Johannesburg school told CSQI that they were bullied in the previous year. In Canada, self-report data indicate that 8 to 9% of elementary school children are bullied frequently (i.e., once or more a week) and about 2 to 5% of students bully others frequently. In addition, among adolescents, at the secondary school level, rates are somewhat higher, with 10 to 11% of students reporting that they are frequently victimized by peers, and another 8 to 11% reporting that they frequently bully others (Hymel, Rocke-Henderson and Bananno, 2005).

In Nigeria, Egbochukwu (2007) findings revealed that most obviously, younger students at school are more inhibited physically than older students and therefore represents ideal "target" for bullies. Aluede and Fajolu's (in press) study on secondary school students in Benin metropolis of Nigeria revealed that majority of the respondents (62.4%) have been victims of bullying, while (29.6%) of the respondents indicated that they have bullied others within the academic session. In a somewhat first ever nation-wide situational analysis survey of school violence in Nigeria conducted by the Federal Ministry of Education (2007), it was revealed that physical violence and psychological violence accounted for 85 and 50% respectively of the bulk of violence against children in schools. Across school location, physical violence is more prevalent in the rural (90%) than in the urban areas (80%). Across region, physical violence in schools is higher in the Southern Nigeria region (79%). So is the case of psychological violence, which is 61% in Southern Nigeria and only 38.7% in Northern Nigeria. Furthermore, across gender, physical and psychological violence is almost evenly distributed among males and females in Nigerian schools (Aluede, 2011).

### Causes of bullying

Umoh (2000) noted that the effectiveness of any remedial action depends on the extent to which it adequately deals with the causal factors of the problems. It is therefore necessary to identify the causes of bullying among secondary school students in Nigeria. The causes of bullying can be categorized into four factors.

(a) Societal Factor: This comprises early experiences, which influence the behaviour of the child. They include parental neglect, family instability, and aggression within the home or in the society, family stress, rejection, isolation, and exposure to violent movies, marginalization, child abuse, antisocial acts and inconsistent reinforcements (Asonibare, 1998).

(b) Biological Factor: Science has proved that some individuals behave aggressively due to malfunctioning of the body organs or imbalance in the production of body hormones. Aggressive behaviours such as bullying can also be attributed to poor state of mental health (Jekayinfa, 2004).

(c) Peer Group Influence: Secondary school students spend most of their time with their age-mates than they do with their parents and teachers. Salawu (2003) described a peer group as the group that the child interacts and plays with within his/her immediate environment. According to him, while in the group, the child enjoys a free world, more independent in thought and action and

he/she has freedom to discuss matters of interest, which may be contrary to the interest shared by adults.

Thus, the peer group has a considerable influence on a child's actions or inactions.

(d) Environment factors: Environmental influences such as teachers' attitude behaviour and supervisory routines play a crucial role in determining the extent to which these problems will manifest themselves in a classroom or a school. Lack of appropriate resources within schools is also associated with higher levels of school bullying. Bullying often occurs when there is little or no supervision, such as the school playground (Olweus, 1993; Pepler and Craig, 1997). Bullying often occurs when there is little or no supervision, such as school playground lack of attention and warmth toward the child.

### Effects of bullying

Bullying is pervasive and terribly harmful for bullies, victims, schools and communities. One of the major effects of bullying is its "carryover syndrome". Children who display aggressive characteristics usually exhibit at adult stage, deviant behaviours such as sexual harassment, date violence, wife battering, gang attacks, child abuse and elder abuse (Pepler and Craig, 2000). Bullying can have devastating effects on victims. For the victims of bullying, they go to school every day fearing harassment, taunting and humiliation. For all potential educators, it is very important to realize that bullying is a problem, so that we can work to prevent it now or in the future (Anonymous, 2005).

There are many repercussions of bullying that are quite shocking. According to Kerlikowske (2003) these include:

(1) Children who are bullied are more likely to be depressed; 26% of girls who were frequently bullied reported depression as opposed to 8% of girls who were not. Similarly, the boys who were bullied and reported depression were 16% as against 3% who were not.

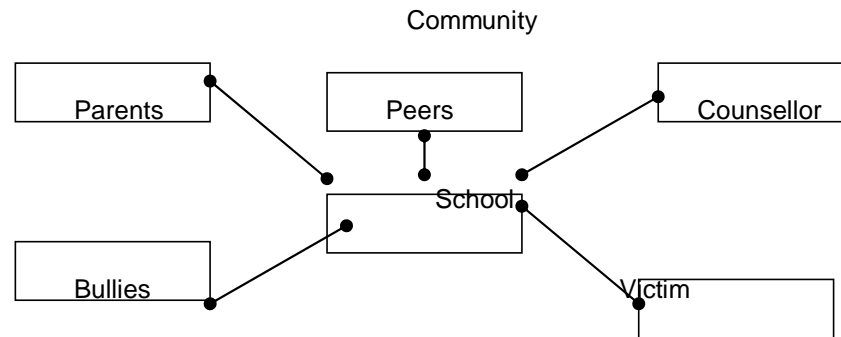
(2) Victims are more likely to be suicidal, with 8% for girls and 4% for boys, compared to 1% overall for non-victims of bullying.

(3) Bullies are more likely to carry weapons, with 43% carrying weapons to school at least once a week, compared to 8% who were not carrying weapons.

(4) 46% of bullies are more likely to be injured while 16% of bullies are not likely to be injured.

(5) As one middle-school student expressed it "there is another kind of violence, and that is violence by talking. It can leave you hurting more than a cut with knife. It can leave you bruised inside" (National Association of Attorneys General, 2000).

(6) Students who are targeted by bullies often have difficulty concentrating on their school work, and their



**Figure 1.** A systemic approach to bullying. Adapted from Pepler and Craig (2000).

academic performance tends to move from "marginal to poor" (Ballard et al., 1999). Typically, bullied students feel anxious, and this may in turn produce a variety of physical or emotional ailments

(7) Rates of absenteeism are higher among victimized students than rates among non-bullied peers, like drop-out rates (Omotoso, 2010). Nansel et al (2001) observed that "youths who are bullied generally show higher levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, physical and mental symptoms, and low-self-esteem.

(8) Long-term effects on victims--persistent bullying during the school years may have long-term negative effects on the victims many years beyond school (Olweus, 1993). Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviours into adulthood thus influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships (Oliver et al., 1994).

(9) Drake (2003) found that victims of bullies tend to be less popular in school than other students not involved in bullying. As a result of being bullied, 16% boys and 31% girls reported being absent from school in attempt to avoid being victimized (Rigby, 1997).

(10) Bullying does not just affect the victim, but it also has consequences for the bully. First, for the victim, bullying can cause physical, academic, social and psychological problems. Some of the physical symptoms include headaches and migraines, skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis, athlete's foot, ulcers, sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations and panic attacks, irritable bowel syndrome, aches and pains in the joints and muscles; and frequent illness such as viral infections and second, for the bully, they are seldom able to conclude friendship, they are often anti-social adults and the bullying is sometimes the first stepping stone to juvenile crime and criminal activities (Aluede, 2006; Wet, 2005).

(11) The psychological scars left by bullying often endure for years. For instance, the feelings of isolation and the loss of self-esteem that victims experience seem to last into adulthood (Clarke and Kiselica, 1997).

### Counseling intervention strategies to bullying

A counseling approach that can be employed in handling bullying is systematic approach. Systematic approach is an organized set of theories designed to achieve positive behaviours (Figure 1). It was designed by Pepler and Craig (2000), as cited in Idowu and Yahaya (2006). This intervention strategy requires the collective participation and active involvement of the community, school, parents, peer groups, bullies, victims and counselors.

## SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO BULLYING

### Community

The community plays a crucial role in modifying the behaviours of the children in conformity in compliance with the approved norms or standards of the society. It is the responsibility of the community to provide conducive atmosphere to children to acquire useful skills necessary for effective living.

### School

It is essential for schools to develop and review school policy to address bullying, consistently enforce school policy, promote communication and provide educational services, training and favourable school climate.

### Parents

It is the responsibility of the parents to provide appropriate climate for the growth and development of their children. They are required to serve as good models who engage in open and sincere communication with their wards. They should attend Parents-Teachers Association meetings, have contact with their children and be watchful.

## Peer group

The members of the group should engage in educative and productive social programmes. They should obey rules and regulations, participate in conflict mediation, and enforce school policy (Asonibare, 1998).

## Bullies

They need to be enlightened by school counsellors and other stakeholders on the dangers inherent in their behaviours and the need to make positive change.

## Victims

They need to seek support, keep records, monitor events, and assess the level of support enjoyed, avoid being careless, protect themselves, inform their parents about their concerns, identify strengths, and seek the assistance of school counselors, and acquire skills in interpersonal relationship especially on ways of handling bullying.

## Counselors

The counselors should provide all children the opportunities to develop good interpersonal skills and create a social context, which is supportive and inclusive, in which aggressive bully behaviour is not tolerated by the majority. The counselors could use peer support as a strategy in handling bullying.

According to Robinson and Maines (1994), peer support is employed when bullying has been observed or reported. It involves the following steps:

Step One: Interact with the victims: Do not question the victim or the bully about the incident but try to know those who are involved.

Step Two: Convene a meeting with the people involved: This includes the bully, the victims and some bystanders or colluders. A group of six or eight is better.

Step Three: Explain the problem: Tell the group about the way the victim is feeling. You can use poem, story writing or drawing to buttress your points. Do not discuss the details of the incidents or blame any member of the group.

Step Four: Share responsibility: Do not attribute blame but acknowledge that the group is responsible and can do something about the incident.

Step Five: Ask the group for their ideas: Each member of the group should be encouraged to suggest ways by which the victim could be helped to feel happier.

Step Six: Leave it up to them: The counselor ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group and encourages them to solve the problem. He/she should arrange to meet with them again to see how things are going (follow-up).

Step Seven: The counselor should meet the group again about a week later and discuss with each student, including the victim, on how things have been going. This allows the counselor to monitor the bully and keeps the young people involved in the process.

Kenny et al. (2005) observed that since bullies tend to show little empathy for their target, school counselors will need to provide interventions to improve students' level of compassion and empathy. These may include activities that foster sensitivity for the feelings of others. Role reversal techniques where students' role play situations in which they place themselves in the position of others may help increase empathic understanding. In addition, training school children early in life to be emphatic can help prevent them from turning into bullies (Aluede, 2006). Therefore, school counselors can be of great assistance to both bullies and victims by teaching them a new style of education called "empathy training". This teaches students as young as five years old to understand the feelings of others and to treat people with kindness. Expectedly, those who go through this empathy training, when compared with those who have not, are more likely to be less aggressive.

Another intervention strategy that has been found to be helpful in bullying management in the literature is developing and distributing a written anti-bullying policy to everyone in the school community and also consistently applying the policy (Peterson, 2005). He suggested mapping a school's "hot spots" for bullying incidents so that supervision can be concentrated in designated areas; having students and parents sign contracts at the beginning of the school year acknowledging that they understand it is unacceptable to ridicule, taunt, or attempt to hurt other students; and teach respect and non-violence beginning in primary schools. Additionally, teaching bullies positive behavior through modeling, coaching, prompting, praise, social skills, conflict management, and anger management, character education, signing anti-teasing or anti-bullying pledges will no doubt reduce bullying incidents in schools.

Increasing public awareness and knowledge about bullying behavior problem can be sure way to reduce bullying. This can be achieved through: (a). active involvement of teachers and parents in prevention programme; (b). vigilance by school personnel for incidents of bullying; (c). the development of firm sanctions and consequences for students who engage in bullying; and (d). teaching assertiveness skills to the bullied (Aluede, 2006; Kenny et al., 2005). Bullying problem can be managed in schools if school counselors faithfully follow

the seven strategies under the acronym "SCRAPES" provided by Fried (1996, as cited in McEachern et al., 2005). These are S- Self- esteem and social skills enrichment; C-Conflict resolution and mediation skills; R- Respect for difference, de- prejudicing exercises; A- Anger management and assertiveness training; P- problem -solving skills; E- empathy training; and S- Sexual awareness training.

In all intervention geared towards bullying reduction, the ones provided by the Federal Ministry of Education (2007 as cited in Aluede 2011) as the national strategic framework for violence in free basic education in Nigeria seem exceptionally and particularly instructive. They are as follows

1. Deliberate efforts at establishing/strengthening counselling services in schools must be initiated with a view to protecting children from violence. Therefore, pre-service and in- service capacity of guidance counselors and school psychologists must be prioritize. In issues on violence, especially physical violence (bullying) against children must be incorporated into guidance and counseling curriculum.
2. Violence free consciousness must be promoted among students, teachers and other members of the school communities including parents. Therefore, school counsellors and psychologists should on a regular basis organize seminars on violence prevention and also cause publications to educate students and teachers on acceptable non-violent behaviours.
3. School counselors should as a matter of priority endeavour to ensure the promotion of life skills to prevent violence against students in schools. Where appropriate, co-curricular activities in school clubs focusing on violence prevention should be encouraged.

## Conclusion

Bullying often takes place in schools and is seen as a serious problem for young people in any society that should not be ignored. If a school fails to deal with bullying, it can endanger the safety of all students, teachers, community and the society. Increasing public awareness and knowledge about bullying behaviour problem can be a sure way of reducing bullying.

## Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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