



The Impact of Peer Tutoring on the Reduction of Bullying Behaviour among Secondary School Students in the Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of peer tutoring as a method for mitigating bullying behaviours among kids. The investigation was driven by a specific purpose, which led to the formulation of the research question and the accompanying null hypothesis. The research design employed in this study was a non-equivalent control group, which is a type of quasi-experimental design. The study was conducted in the Wukari Local Government area of Taraba State, Nigeria. The population of the study had a total of 698 students, out of which 378 were selected as the sample for the study. The data collection tool employed was FBS, and the data was evaluated with an independent t-test.

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The study's primary conclusions suggest that instructors possess knowledge of peer tutoring as an effective method for mitigating anti-social behaviour in secondary school pupils. Furthermore, the study indicates that teachers have a considerable understanding of implementing these tactics inside their classrooms. According to this, it is recommended that teachers and parents should consider using peer tutoring as a technique to reduce bullying behaviour among secondary school students, as it has been found to be one of the most effective methods.

Keywords: Bullying behaviour; peer tutoring; secondary school students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a tool to foster a vibrant and efficient society, providing equity and access to everyone. Therefore, it is imperative that kids are provided with a thorough and well-rounded education that guarantees exceptional academic performance as well as emotional development [1]. A school is an establishment created for the purpose of providing formal education to the inhabitants of any nation. Students at school get pertinent knowledge, skills, positive conduct, competencies, values, and capabilities for practical adaptation in society. During their time at school, children engage in social interactions with their peers as they collaborate in groups, which contributes to their overall personal growth and well-being. The positive growth of kids in moral, social, intellectual, emotional, and physical aspects is hindered if they perceive the school environment as unfriendly, unsafe, and insecure.

It is anticipated that school will continue to be one of the most secure environments for children, second only to their homes. One questions the validity of that remark in our current society, given the escalating prevalence of violence in educational institutions. The prevalence of violence in schools has escalated in recent years, with a rise in news reports documenting acts of violence committed by students within the school environment [2]. Despite the escalating prevalence of violence in educational institutions, society maintains the belief that schools should provide a secure environment for kids. Therefore, in order to uphold a tranquil and secure school atmosphere, individuals involved in education have focused on addressing the issue of violence inside our schools [3].

The issue of problematic behaviour among secondary students has consistently posed a significant burden for academic institutions and parents alike, resulting in negative consequences for society as a whole. This problem can be resolved by promoting constructive relationships

inside the institution, raising awareness about the social conduct of the students, and implementing disciplinary codes that are favourable to the students. Kelly [4] as referenced in Aisha, Ambreen, and Muneeza [5]. In Nigeria, there is a rise in the frequency of recurring disruptive behaviours among secondary school students. Every day, there are several media reports documenting instances of students inflicting harm onto their peers, whether through physical, verbal, or cyber methods. These actions often result in the victims resorting to suicide as a means of escaping the relentless cycle of negative interpersonal behaviours. This situation highlights the urgent necessity to investigate negative behaviours between secondary school students that harm their well-being and academic performance. It is crucial to understand how these behaviours can be effectively addressed to ensure the safety of students and other members of the school community. Thus, the primary factors under investigation in this research are peer tutoring and bullying behaviours, respectively.

Olweus [6] as referenced in Metin [7] a leading figure in this field of study, defines bullying or victimisation as the recurrent and prolonged exposure of a youngster to unfavourable behaviours from one or more fellow classmates. This description emphasises the explicit physical aspects of the behaviour, such as punching, shoving, and dragging, as well as the explicit verbal aspects, such as teasing, threatening, and using cruel language. In addition, bullying can manifest as indirect behaviours such as social exclusion and the dissemination of rumours. The authors provided a more detailed explanation of bullying, outlining three specific criteria:

- 1) It involves violent behaviour or deliberate harm;
- 2) It occurs regularly and over a period of time; and
- 3) It takes place inside a relationship where there is an unequal distribution of power. Bullying can be defined as a persistent abuse of power within relationships, characterised by repetitive verbal,

physical, and/or social actions that result in physical and/or psychological injury. It can entail an individual or a collective abusing their authority over one or more individuals. Bullying can occur either in physical presence or through online platforms, and it can manifest in either overt or covert forms. OJJDP [8] suggested that bullying is present in all age groups but is particularly common during the middle school years. In the academic year 2010-2011, the prevalence of bullying among 6th students was 37 percent, while for 8th graders it was nearly 31 percent. Among 10th graders, the rate of bullying was 28 percent, and for 12th graders, it was 22 percent. Curiously, this general pattern is not reflected in cyberbullying, which typically reaches its highest point during the high school years. According to the data, approximately 7 percent of sixth pupils, nearly 9 percent of eighth graders, over 12 percent of tenth graders, and less than 8 percent of twelfth learners reported experiencing cyberbullying ("Indicators").

Bullying, as defined by Smith, Helen, Ranger, and Andy [9] Polanin (2012), and cited in OJJDP (2013), refers to a form of youth violence and aggressive behaviour. It can be distinguished from other types of aggression or violence based on three aspects: the behaviour is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm; it is repeated over time; and there is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim [10-12]. While many researchers offer general definitions of bullying, there are few jurisdictions where legislators are interested in adopting legal definitions of the term.

Another aspect examined in this study is peer tutoring, as investigated by the researcher. Peer tutoring is a highly effective instructional approach for all children. The majority of students find it engaging to engage with their peers, freely asking questions and feeling at ease when learning alongside their peer group. Peer tutoring has been implemented in an unsystematic manner, resulting in a lack of favourable outcomes for most pupils. Therefore, it becomes a focal point and innovative approach in the educational process. Teachers can alleviate the load of teaching and the number of students they have to handle. There is a growing opportunity to encourage the use of peer tutoring in schools through the implementation of systematic strategies. Peer tutoring is an instructional technique that involves utilising students as tutors. The student pairs may collaborate on several aspects such as academic,

social, behavioural, functional, or even social skills. Students can be paired using several criteria, including their ability level, mastery of skills, or age. Extensive research has been conducted on peer tutoring as a highly successful technique for engaging students and fostering academic achievement [13].

The peer tutoring method facilitates students to engage with their peers and resolve any uncertainties they may have. They will be relocated to a more comfortable area. The pupils will also get the chance to express their views and opinions. Peer tutoring can also serve as a catalyst for fostering creativity.

Here are five advantages that demonstrate the significance of peer teaching:

- **Enhanced literacy scores:** Based on a pilot study conducted by Ohio University, it was shown that students who engage in reading and discussing tale passages with their peers have better memory of the information and get higher scores on exams. The researcher grouped four 6th grade pupils with average reading abilities into pairs. The initial pair engaged in biweekly peer reading sessions, while the students in the second pair independently read the identical texts with the same frequency. The initial pair achieved superior scores on every reading evaluation.
- **Enhanced Reasoning and Critical Thinking Abilities:** A often referenced study on science education indicates that students who engage in collaborative work, namely in pairs and groups, tend to achieve higher scores on assessments that require reasoning and critical thinking. This is mostly due to the fact that students are required to actively engage in the learning process by discussing and justifying course concepts using their own language.
- **Enhanced Self-assurance and Interpersonal Competence:** Peer teaching contributes to the development of students' confidence and proficiency in communication. A groundbreaking study conducted in 1988 asserts that instructors enhance self-esteem and interpersonal skills through the provision of feedback. Tutees experience these advantages by posing enquiries and obtaining prompt elucidation. Subsequent research on pupils who are at risk confirmed these benefits.

- **Enhanced Comfort and Openness:** The aforementioned 1988 study reveals that students tend to relate more readily to peer helpers rather than adult authority figures. This fosters an atmosphere where students feel at ease to seek clarification and tackle difficult problems without fear of being ridiculed by their classmates.
- **Versatility:** You can conduct a variety of peer teaching activities focused on diverse subjects and goals, perhaps including participation from various grade levels and classes. A plethora of ideas can result in a multitude of enjoyable experiences for your pupils.

The following criteria serve as the foundation for selecting peer tutoring.

- This approach has been extensively investigated in many age groups, grade levels, and topic areas.
- The intervention enables pupils to receive individualized support.
- Students now have greater chances to participate in smaller group discussions.
- It enhances the academic and social growth of both the tutor and the tutee.
- Student involvement and duration of focused work are enhanced.
- According to Spencer [14] peer tutoring enhances individuals' self-confidence and self-efficacy.

The aforementioned technique is substantiated by numerous robust research foundations, including Calhoun, Cihak, & Avalos, 2007; Kunsch & Sood, [15] Vasquez & Slocum, 2012.

1.1 Research Objectives

The research objective is to;

Assess the effectiveness of peer tutoring in reducing bullying behaviour among secondary

The design structure is visually represented in the following diagram:

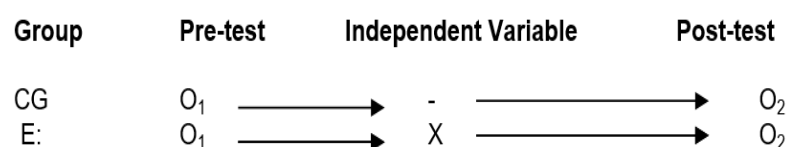


Fig. 1. Research Design Illustration, where:

O1: denotes the observation prior to treatment initiation (pre-test)

X: denotes a four-week treatment session

O2: denotes the observation after treatment initiation (post-test)

CG: denotes the control group

E: denotes the experimental group (peer tutoring).

school students in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State.

Research Question

The research question is:

To what extent does peer tutoring effectively reduce bullying behaviour among secondary school students in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State?

Research Hypothesis

The research hypotheses were formulated and tested at a significance level of 5% in accordance with the stated purpose.

Ho. There is no discernible disparity in the efficacy of peer tutoring in mitigating bullying conduct among secondary school students in the Wukari local government of Taraba State. When comparing the experimental and control groups.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a non-equivalent control group design as its methodology and research design. This research design is a form of quasi-experimental study in which two or more groups are pretested, given a treatment, and then post-tested [16]. This approach entails the arbitrary allocation of complete groups to treatments, rather than the arbitrary allocation of individuals. The selection of this research design was predicated on the objective of investigating the impact of positive reinforcement on mitigating the incidence of bullying among secondary school students in the Wukari Local Government area of Taraba State. Given the constraints of conducting true experiments, a non-equivalent control group design was deemed more suitable.

2.2 Population of the Study

The study population comprises all the pupils at public secondary school II in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba State. During the research, there were a combined total of 6,968 students enrolled in JSS II and SSS II across all secondary schools in the zone. Of these students, 3,610 were male and 3,358 were female. According to the guideline provided by Research Advisors (2006), a sample size of 346 students was selected from the complete population for this study.

2.3 Instrumentation

The study utilised the Instrumentation Forms of Bullying Scale (FBS), which was created and validated by Shaw, Dooley, Cross, Zubrick, and Waters [17] to gather data. A reliability coefficient of FBS-V, with a value of $r = .92$, was obtained, indicating a sufficiently high level of reliability for the data collection. The researcher obtained the data using a data collecting instrument, which was then delivered to the respondents as a pre-test. Subsequently, the responses were collected, evaluated, and calculated, and the treatment sessions for the experimental groups were scheduled for a duration of six weeks. The treatment offered to the experimental group was peer tutoring.

2.4 Data Analysis

Hypothesis Testing

In order to test the hypotheses, it was necessary to employ inferential statistics for data analysis and hypothesis testing. The researcher employed the independent sample t-test statistic for this purpose. The utilization of these statistics was predicated on the polytomous nature of the gathered data and the probabilistic sampling technique. Thus, the hypotheses were examined at a significance level of 0.5%. The utilization of these statistics is based on the viewpoint of Mcqueen & Knussen [18].

3. RESULTS

The null hypothesis (H_0) states that there is no statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of peer tutoring in reducing bullying behaviour between the experimental and control

groups among secondary school students in the Wukari local government area of Taraba state.

In order to evaluate this hypothesis, a statistic based on an independent sample was employed. The data was analyzed utilizing SPSS v.23.0, and the outcome was displayed in the following table:

From the Table 1, the difference in the effectiveness of peer tutoring in reducing bullying behaviour between experimental and control groups among secondary school students in Wukari Local government area of Taraba State was ($t = 22.935$, $df = 262$, and $P = .000$). Now since the p-value (.000) is less than the alpha value (.05), the null hypothesis is hereby rejected and the alternate hypothesis is adopted. So, the researcher concluded that there is a significant difference in the effectiveness of peer tutoring in reducing bullying behaviour between experimental and control groups among secondary school students in Wukari Local Government Area of Taraba state, in favour of the experimental group, who received peer tutoring as a treatment of reducing bullying behaviour among students.

4. FINDINGS

This study investigated the efficacy of peer tutoring in mitigating bullying among secondary school students in Wukari Local Government of Taraba State, Nigeria. During the analysis, the null hypothesis was tested at the significance level of 0.05. Statistical significance level. The results indicate a notable disparity in the efficacy of peer tutoring in mitigating bullying behaviour among secondary school students in the Wukari Local Government area of Taraba State. The experimental groups, who received peer tutoring as an intervention to reduce bullying behaviour, demonstrated a more favourable outcome compared to the control groups. The results of this study align with previous research indicating that peer tutoring effectively reduces instances of bullying among students Gaffney, Ttofi, & Farrington, [19] Farrington & Ttofi, [20] Adeyemi, [21] Kärnä, Voeten, Little, Poskiparta, Alanen, & Salmivalli, [22] Petit, 2013; Yashvinder & Sujatha, 2017; Metin, 2022).The research consistently showed that school-based anti-bullying programs, such as peer tutoring, effectively reduce both the act of bullying and the experience of being bullied [23,24].

Table 1. Disparities in the efficacy of peer tutoring in mitigating bullying conduct between the experimental and control groups among secondary school students in the Wukari local government area of Taraba state

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Df	T	P
Control Group	100	44.0400	11.77390	262	22.935	.000
Experimental Group: Peer Tutoring	164	15.0183	8.69981			

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the effectiveness of peer tutoring in reducing bullying among secondary school students, it is recommended that teachers and parents consider using this strategy when they witness bullying behaviour among students.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since peer tutoring was found to be effective in reducing bullying behaviours among Secondary School students, teachers as well as parents should take this into consideration and use the technique whenever they observe bullying behaviours among students.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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