Counselling Strategies for Modifying Bullying Behaviour in Nigerian Schools

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Abstract. Bullying is an aggressive behaviour that is very rampant at both primary and secondary levels of Nigerian educational system regardless of the size and type of the schools. It is a worrisome practice in schools and it deserves special attention. Bullying is a form of deviant behaviour that is usually ignored by many teachers, counsellors and school administrators due to its salient but adverse effect. Recently, there has been a growing concern for the increasing level of students' unrest, violence, sexual victimization and cultism in Nigerian schools, all of which are extensions of bullying behaviour which makes it necessary to examine the counselling strategies for modifying it. This paper therefore identified the various strategies that can be used in reducing bullying in schools, while suggesting the comprehensive whole school approach. There is the need for school counsellors to acquire skills in using the various strategies as well as sensitising the principals, teachers, parents and students to the phenomenon of bullying so that they can take roles in bullying prevention as specified in the whole school approach. The paper also made suggestions on how counsellors can seek collaborations among various stakeholders and meet with them in planning and implementing the various strategies related to their roles.

Keywords: Bullying, Bullies, Bully Victims, Counselling Strategies, Nigeria, Schools

1. Introduction

Bullying is an aggressive behaviour that is highly overlooked. It is very rampant at both primary and secondary levels of Nigerian educational system regardless of the size and type of the schools. Bullying according to Asonibare (1998) is a conscious, willful, deliberate, hostile and repeated behaviour by one or more persons with the intention of harming others. It has two key components: repeated harmful acts and imbalance of power, (Sampson, 2009). It has been described as a common experience among school children with 10 to 15 percent of children experiencing it, (Pepler & Craig, 2000). Rutter (1995) described the school as an institution for the transfer of knowledge and culture to the future generation. It is a dynamic human system dedicated to the nurturing of mutual growth and understanding between children and adults. Learners are the centre of focus in schools and there is need to take necessary measures to ensure meaningful learning in schools. Guidance and counselling services have been established in schools to ensure that educational goals are achieved. Various factors affect learning and teaching in schools and these include child growth, age, heredity, interest, home and social effect and violence in school including school bullying and peer victimisation.

Bullying, according to Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike and Afen-Akpaida (2008) means 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 according to them, can be aggressive physical

contact in the form of fighting and shoving, and can also be direct verbal bullying such as teasing, verbal threats and mockery. Bullying occurs when a person willfully and repeatedly exercise power over another with hostile or malicious intent. A situation can be identified as bullying if a student is harmed, intimidated, threatened, victimized, undermined, offended, degraded, or humiliated.

Bullying is a common international phenomenon which occurs to some extent in all schools, small or large, single sex or co-educational, private or government (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike, & Afen-Akpaida, 2008). Bullying occurs in both primary and secondary schools and verbal form of bullying is the commonest among boys and girls. Bullying in schools across the world is beginning to assume a serious dimension, (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Afen-Akpaida, 2008). There is the need to stem this ugly incidence in Nigerian schools.

In view of this, the paper has examined the prevalence rate of bullying, the various forms of bullying found in schools and the effects that bullying has on bullies, bullied and the bullied-victims. This is necessary to show the importance of reducing this deviant behaviour in our educational system. It is not enough to understand the nature of bullying, its prevalence rate and effects without finding means of addressing the problem which is the focus of this paper. The paper therefore reviewed various strategies that have been used by various schools and researchers and suggested other strategies that can be used.

Global Prevalence Rate of Bullying in Schools

Bullying as earlier stated is a common phenomenon in schools worldwide. Available data in America (Hoover, Oliver and Hazler, 1992) suggested that bullying is quite common in US schools. For instance, in a national study by Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton and Scheidt (2001) it was found that about 30% of 6th through 10th grade students had been involved in bullying incident with moderate or frequent regularity. Lumsdem (2002) also reported that there are approximately 2.1 million bullies and 2.7 million victims in American schools. Similarly in Australia, Rigby (1997) reported that one student out of six between the ages of 9 and 17 is affected by bullying at least once a week. Similar prevalence rates were found in the state of Florida. For example, in a report by Bully police, USA found that over 16 percent of the 2,701,022 school age children in Florida were involved in bullying.

In Israel, a survey of 2,972 students in 21 schools by Rolider (*Awake*, 2003) revealed that 65% of the participants complained of being smacked, kicked, pushed or molested by fellow students. In Netherlands, the finding was not different as one out of twelve secondary school students is "very regularly" or "regularly" bullied, (McEachern, Kenny, Blake & Aluede, 2005). In the same vein, Wet (2005) also reported that in a study carried out by Johannesburg Centre for school Quality and Improvement (CSQI), it was found that 90% of the learners at a Johannesburg school told CSQI that they were bullied in the previous year.

In Nigeria, there are few adequate statistical data to show the number of students affected by bullying. Nevertheless, Umoh (2000) noted that cases of bullying have been reported in many schools in Nigeria. Report from Command Secondary School, Ipaja, Lagos, Nigeria, also indicates that deviant acts are not usually given the desirable attention it requires, (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Afen-Akpaida, 2008). However, Popoola (2005) in his study revealed that 70.6% of 385 secondary school students in ten selected schools in Osun state Nigeria, reported high level of bullying or peer victimization while 27% and 2.1% reported moderate and low levels of peer victimization respectively. The form of peer victimization that ranked first is attack on property followed by physical victimization and then social manipulation.

Bullying has most of the time been ignored by many teachers, counsellors and school administrators because of its silent but adverse effects. Some school personnel even see it as not being a serious problem and consequently pay little or no attention to the behaviour. This lukewarm attitude promotes the deviant behaviour and discourages researchers into investigating bullying behaviour, and this may

be responsible for the few existing literature on bullying among secondary school students in Nigeria, (Idowu & Yahaya, 2006).

2. Effects of bullying

Studies of bullying suggested that there are short-and-long-term devastating consequences on both the bullies and the bullied. For the victims of bullying they are anxious, insecure and lack confidence; they go to school every day with the fear of harassment, taunting and humiliation. Kerlikowske (2003) enumerated some of the negative effects of bullying which include:

- depression in bully victims- He found that 26% of girls who were frequently bullied reported depression as opposed to 8% of girls who were not. The boys are also reported to be 16%, as against 3% who were not. Even as adult, they may be at increased risk of depression, poor self-esteem, and other mental health problems including schizophrenia, (Olweus, 1993; Parker & Asher, 1987).
- Victims are more likely to be suicidal, with 8% for girls and 4% for boys, compared to 1% overall for non-victims of bullying.
- Bullied have difficulty concentrating on their school work, and their academic performance tends to move from "marginal to poor" (Ballard, Tucky & Remley, 1999). Typically, bullied students feel anxious, and this anxiety may in turn produce a variety of physical or emotional ailment, (Idowu & Yahaya, 2006).
- Rate of absenteeism are higher among victimized students than rates among non-bullied peers, as are drop-out rates. According to Rigby 16% of boys and 31% girls reported being absent from school in attempt to avoid being victimized.
- Long-term effects on victims many years after school (Olweus, 1993). The psychological scars left by bullying endure for years. The feeling of isolation and the loss of self-esteem that victims

experience last into adulthood (Clarke & Kiselic, 1997).
- Drake (2003) found that victims of bullies tend to be less popular in school than other students not involved in bullying.
- It can cause physical, academic, social and psychological problems for the bullied.
- Verbal/indirect bullying can leave victim hurt more than a cut with a knife.

Also the bullied who experience chronic intimidation may learn to expect this from others. He/she may develop a pattern of compliance with the unfair demands of those he perceives as stronger. He may become anxious or depressed. Finally, he may identify with the bully and become a bully himself, (Watkins, 2007).

It is not only victims who are at risk for short and long-term problems; bullies also are at increased risk for negative outcomes. The consequences of bullying for the bullies are enormous as highlighted by Watkins, (2007). If the bullies are allowed to continue the behaviour, it becomes habitual. Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviours into adulthood thus influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships (Oliver, Hoover & Hazier, 1994). In support of this assertion, Idowu & Yahaya (2006) stressed that one major effect of bullying is its "carry over syndrome". Children who display aggressive characteristics have been found to exhibit at adult stage deviant behaviours, such as sexual harassment, date violence, wife battering, gang attack or cultism and child abuse. (Pepler & Craig, 2000).

Watkins, (2007) noted that bully is more likely to surround himself with friends who condone and promote aggressive behaviour. Aluede, (2006); Wet, (2005) maintained that bullies are seldom able to conclude friendships; their friendships are primarily with other bullies (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brook, 1999). He may not develop a mature sense of justice. Bullies are often anti-social adult and bullying is sometimes the first stepping stone to juvenile crime and criminal activities. They are likely to engage in anti-social or delinquent behaviours such as

vandalism, shoplifting, truancy, frequent drug use, transfer and arrest by adult, (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike & Afen-Akpaida, 2008; Idowu & Yahaya, 2006). If he intimidates others to cover up his own insecurities his own anxiety may increase. Kerlikowske, (2003) also stated that bullies are more likely to carry weapons with 43% carrying weapons to school at least once a week; they are also more likely to be injured.

The bystanders are not left out of the consequences. They may become frightened as they observe the interaction and may find it difficult to express himself openly. They may also adopt the behaviours of either the bully or the victims, (Watkins, 2007).

Researchers, such as Nansel, Haynie and Simons-Morton (2003); Ireland & Powell, (2004); and Unnever, (2005) lamented that the effects of being a bully victim were worse than that of the victims or bullies. The bully victim groups were found to have fewer friends than bullies, they are more hyperactive, and the most stigmatized by their peers. They have poor academic achievement, they exhibit conduct problems and a lack of bonding to school (Haynie, Nansel, Eitel, Crump, Saylor, Yu & Simons-Morton, 2001).

3. Strategies Used in Modifying Bullying Behaviour

Since Olweus (1982) first alerts the world of the incidence of bullying in schools, researchers from several nations – Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, Japan, and the United States – have started to explore the nature, prevalence, and effect of bullying among school children. Their findings provide compelling reasons for initiating interventions to prevent bullying. As a result, various strategies have been designed by different researchers and schools to prevent bullying. These strategies include: Systemic approach designed by Pepler and Craig (2000), Befriending Strategy developed by Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli and Cowie, (2003); Peer mentoring advocated by Newman, Holden and Delville (2005).

Other strategies used in preventing bullying are Non-challance i.e. encouraging bullied to be non challant to bullying which was develop by Salmivalli, Kharunen and Lagerspetz (1996); provision of Support Services for the bullied developed by Smowkowski and Kopasz (2005); developing and enforcing Anti-bullying policy; Social Development Model of Catalano and Hawkin, (1996) among others.

Sampson, (2009) enumerated various strategies in preventing bullying in schools. These include enlisting the school principal's commitment and involvement; using a multifaceted comprehensive approach; using the whole school approach; increasing students reporting of bullying; developing activities in less-supervised areas, reducing the amount of time students can spend less supervised, staggering recess, lunch and release times, monitoring areas where bullying can be expected. Other strategies enumerated are assigning bullies to a particular location or to particular chores during release times, posting classroom signs prohibiting bullying, having high level school administrators inform late enrolling students about school's bullying policy, peer mediation, zero tolerance policy, group therapy, encouraging victims to stand up to bullies among others. However using only one of the strategies may be limiting and Sampson (2002) stressed that an effective strategy in handling bullying should involve implementing several responses. Hence, the need for comprehensive, whole school approaches such as Olweus (1993) approach, which is eclectic in nature.

Sampson (2002) evaluated the effectiveness of various strategies in bullying prevention. The first strategy evaluated is enlisting the school principal's commitment and involvement in addressing school bullying. Roland (2000) in his research suggested that principal's investment in preventing and controlling bullying contribute to low rates of bullying in school. However, Sampson (2002) stressed that in some situation only a crisis will galvanise the principal's attention in involving and investing in preventing and controlling bullying.

In addition, Sampson (2002) evaluated another strategy, which is increasing students reporting

of bullying. This strategy increases bullies risk of getting caught. The strategy works best if students are convinced that reporting is an appropriate behaviour. To use this strategy, schools need to establish a hot line, or install a bully box where students can leave notes alerting school personnel to bullying. He stressed that anonymous reporting should be encouraged to lessen student's fear of reprisal.

Another strategy used in responding to bullying as highlighted by Sampson (2002) is to develop activities in less supervised areas. This approach increases the effort bullies must make by decreasing their opportunity to bully. This strategy according to her works best if the activities developed interest bullies, and were designed to limit their ability to victimise others. It however requires staff or volunteers such as students, parents and seniors and age-appropriate programming.

Also, the amount of time students spend without supervision can be reduced. This strategy increases the risk that bullying will be exposed and reduces the amount of time for it to occur. This requires that supervisors be trained to spot and respond to bullying. It also requires scheduling changes. When recess or lunch and or class release are staggered, it ensures fewer bullies and victims are together at the same time and increases supervisor's ability to spot bullying, however if some bullies are in the same classes with their victims, other remedial are also needed.

"Zero tolerance" policy is a useful approach in response to bullying advocated by Smokowski and Kopasz (2005). This guarantees that bullies who are caught will be penalized on the first offence. The strategy is used as a last resort, after other responses have failed. Sampson (2002) submitted that bullying is too widespread, longstanding and complex for it to stop simply due to such a policy. This approach may result in high level of suspensions without full comprehension of how behaviour can be changed. This will not solve the problems and may make the bully join gang or other violent group in the society since they spend more unsupervised time in the home or community if suspended or expelled.

Group therapy is another strategy which is intended to build self-esteem of bullies. This strategy is useful if bullies suggest that they have low self-esteem and is the cause of their bullying. He emphasised that most bullies do not lack in self-esteem. Encouraging victims to simply "stand up" to bullies is another strategy which directly pits victims against bully. This method works best if it is accompanied by adequate support or adult involvement. It may however be harmful or physically dangerous to victim of bullying (Limber, Flerx, Nation & Melton, 1998).

Bullies can also be assigned to a particular location or to particular chores during release times. This will increases the effort bullies must make to bully since the approach separate bullies from victims. To make the programme effective, there should be careful consideration to determine which of the two approaches is more appropriate for each particular bully. Sampson, (2002) however noticed that isolating bullies may further anger them and cause additional problems for their victims.

Educating students is another strategy used in responding to bullying. This is done through posting classroom signs prohibiting bullying and listing the consequences for engaging in bullying. This strategy removes the excuse of ignorance and underscores the risks. The strategy works best if signs are posted in all classrooms. The signs and consequences should be age-appropriate. Another way of educating student is for high-level administrators to inform late enrolling students about the school's bullying policy. The school may let them (late-enrolling students) to sign "bullying free agreements" acknowledging the rules and the consequences for violations (Sampson, 2002). Providing teachers with effective classroom management trainings is another approach used in handling bullying in schools. This approach ensures that all teachers in schools have effective classroom management training.

3.1 Systemic Strategy

Systemic strategy is another counselling strategy in handling bullying as earlier mentioned. It is

an organised set of theories designed to achieve positive behaviours (Idowu & Yahaya, 2006). The approach designed by Pepler and Craig (2000) requires the collective participation and active involvement of the community, school, parents, peer group, bullies, victims and counsellors in modifying behaviour.
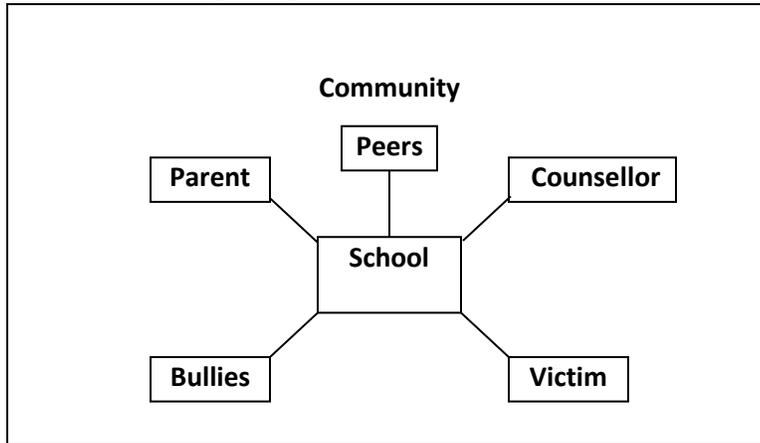

Fig. 1. A systemic strategy to Bullying

Adapted from: Pepler, D.J. & Craig, W. (2000)

The approach highlighted the various roles that the community, schools, parents and peer groups (as socialization agents) have to play in preventing and reducing the rates of bullying. It also highlights various roles that counsellors can play in assisting the bullies and victims towards making positive change. Counsellors in addition to facilitating active involvement of other stakeholders can also employ peer support/mentoring as advocated by Robinson and Maines (1994). Sampson (2002) noted that this strategy allows students to play key roles in resolving bullying problems. She however noted that the strategy works best if conflicts are between students of relatively equal status and not between bullies and weaker victims but may be more appropriate for other problems other than bullying.

Whole-School Strategy in modifying bullying behaviour in schools

Addressing bullying in schools requires an approach that acknowledges the complexity of the problem. Effective violence prevention approaches in schools, including those addressing bullying are characterized by interventions at multiple levels aimed at changing individuals and systems and which are supported by collaboration among stakeholders (Cunningham & Whitten, 2007). Erickson,

Mattaini and McGuire (2004) noted the importance of "Constructing cultures incompatible with violence and threat" rather than relying on curricular add-ons and narrow skills-training approaches. Various approaches that are designed for the prevention of a number of adolescent problem behaviours are comprehensive and address the behaviours through both system and individual intervention. Therefore, addressing bullying should follow this suit. The other approaches earlier discussed are easily combinable in this whole school approach, as it can be integrated with other school-based comprehensive plans to promote healthy prosocial behaviour (e.g. safe and Drug-free schools plans),(Cunningham & Whitten, 2007).

The Whole-School Approach is comprehensive in nature and this is why it is also known as the Comprehensive Approach, because it involves, the entire school community. It involves a variety of strategies that are related to the roles of various members of the school community. School administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, and parents are normally included in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the strategy to create ownership and investment in success. There is need for all the stakeholders to work together so as to

maximise impact and avoid duplication of efforts (Cunningham & Sandhu, 2000).

The Whole-School Approach, which is comprehensive in nature, was first introduced by Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme, (Cunningham & Whitten, 2007). It has however been improved recently, in 2003. The approach was based on a foundation of awareness and involvement on the part of adults, it includes school level, classroom level and individual level components that work together to maximise impact on bullying (Olweus, 2003).

The Olweus programme has been recognized as a Blue print for violence prevention (University of Colorado, Centre for the Study and Prevention of Violence) due to its proven effectiveness in lowering levels of bullying and victimization, (Cunningham & Whitten, 2007). This approach includes:
- Awareness and problem assessment.
- Environmental/school climate strategies.
- Classroom-based strategies.
- Interventions aimed at individuals involved in bullying.

3.2 Awareness and Assessment

This is the first step in addressing bullying in school. The teachers and other stakeholders are likely to adopt and implement anti-bullying measures if the school gave attention to bullying problem. The role of the school counsellor is to help the school principal understand the importance, of investing the energy of the school community in addressing bullying. This can be achieved by providing information about the prevalence of school bullying, and its harmful effects on school climate and academic achievement as well as on individual students. This vital information can help in convincing the principal that time, energy and funds spent on reducing bullying are worthwhile investments of resources. This same information used by the principal can help win support among school staff. Counsellor can use strategies such as; educating all members of the school community, institutionalisation of a coordinating committee to keep attention focused on bullying, and regular and ongoing assessment of bullying and

victimisation in the school: to create awareness for action.

In-service education: Teachers and other school personnel need to be educated on how to prevent bullying and on interventions with those involved in bullying. This is to make them effective in addressing the problem. The counsellor can help develop educational experiences for school personnel who will cover areas such as how to recognize signs of bullying such as obvious sign of distress, attendance problem, among others, types of bullying, negative effects of bullying on individuals and school environment; assessment and use of assessment information to design interventions and monitor progress. Education should also include follow-up consultation or technical assistance to ensure effective implementation of what is learned. The school counsellor can also recruit key people from the community to be included in in-service education and subsequently involved in planning and implementation of anti-bullying strategies. Such key people include mental health professionals who can provide counselling services for those students who have been identified as bullies, victims and bully victims. In addition, parents are another key people from the community who need to be provided with education to create awareness. The counsellor can work with teachers to develop the most effective approach for educating parents and involving them in anti-bullying efforts in the school.

Bullying prevention coordinating committee: - This committee is to provide ongoing guidance for school efforts, through keeping attention and energy focused on bullying. They are to ensure that the school's efforts are well coordinated and comprehensive; the school counsellor can help to organise the committee and recruit members in such a way to ensure broad representation. Members should include administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students, mental health professional and other community service providers who can support anti-bullying effort in the school. The heterogeneity in the membership provides a variety of unique viewpoints for understanding and addressing the problem (Cunningham & Whitten 2007). For instance

teachers, vice principal, students and cafeteria may view bullying differently in relation to the social environments where they witness the act, which vary.

Assessment: - This aspect is an essential component of raising awareness and creating energy to take action. There is need to gather data that describes bullying and victimisation in your own school. The assessment should covers; the measures of the types of bullying and victimisation that occur (physical, verbal, indirect/relational, sexual); the extent of each type. It should also include breakdowns by sex, class and other variables relevant to the school where bullying occurs, role of bystanders in bullying situations, feeling of safety in the school, and negative outcome experience as a result of bullying or victimisation. Such information will serve various purposes, which include:

- Provision of baseline measures of bullying and victimisation in the school before implementation of anti-bullying strategies.
- Provide relevant information for selection of appropriate interventions.
- Post implementation assessment measures can indicate whether changes in bullying and victimisation have occurred in the school.

All stakeholders should share data from the assessment regularly to have concrete evidence of changes that has taken place in the school as well as use the information to guide further planning and evaluation.

3.3 Environmental/school climate strategies

Prevention efforts, which aim at changing specific students' behaviours, should not be narrowly focused. Such approach should take into consideration the larger ecological context of the school. Bullying is a social behaviour, which occurs within the peer group in school and classroom environment. Students operates within a complex world of influence of school-wide and classroom level rules and policy as well as by both adult and peer norms for behaviour. If strategies are to successfully

reduced problem behaviours such as bullying and other related behaviour problems, such strategies should work systematically at changing the climate of the school in ways that support the development of prosocial behaviours that underlie academic and social success.

The work of Hawkins, Catalano and others in the prevention of adolescent problem behaviours emphasizes the importance of creating healthy environment that support the development of prosocial behaviours in youth (Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterie, Fleming & Hawkins 2004; Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). Their Social Development Model (SDM) posits that healthy behaviour develops when youth are bonded to system with healthy normative beliefs. Bonding results from having the skills necessary to succeed in the system, opportunities for meaningful participation in the system and reinforcement for participation. Due to the connection between academic success and social/emotional health (Becker, & Luthar, 2002; Cohen, 2006), it is important for schools to help students achieve success socially, emotionally and academically. School authority should create a positive school climate by establishing and enforcing clear anti-bullying policy, reinforcing healthy norms for behaviour, supporting policy and norms through expectations for adult behaviours that are consistent with policy (modelling) and setting up systems for surveillance and supervision.

Anti-Bullying policy: - School policy should specify behaviour expected of students, the policy should be developed, implemented and enforced. Anti-bullying policy should give clear message about the importance and seriousness of bullying specifically i.e. specifying the types of bullying behaviour. The policy should include various characteristics that distinguish bullying from other aggressive behaviours as well as defining indirect/relational bullying to be able to recognize and address it when it occurs. All types of bullying should be survey, to ensure that they are detected and addressed by school staff.

The policy should make bullying a priority, educate school staff about how to intervene with

all types of bullying and provide follow-up consultation and technical assistance to ensure that staff will follow through with appropriate interventions.

Promoting healthy norms, standards and beliefs: The Social and Development Model (SDM) maintained that healthy norms and beliefs serve as a protective factor against the development of antisocial behaviour in youth (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). Schools should therefore provide clear and consistent norms for behaviour through formal and informal messages beyond official policy. Vision and mission statements should be used to emphasize the importance of creating culture of respect and recognition where bullying is not tolerated and is not even necessary (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005).

School should adopt human rights approach to bullying as advocated by Green (2006). This approach explicitly addresses what bias-based bullying (attacks motivated by a victim's actual or perceived membership in a legally protected class) as well as bullying that is not so motivated e.g. bullying based on looks, social status, class, envy and jealousy, personality, and personal idiosyncrasies (p.69). School should reinforce for both staff and students values, attitude and behaviour that encourage the development of constructive relationships. School staff should create norms for behaviour through the messages they give in their day-to-day interactions with students. It is very important that adult values, attitudes and behaviours related to bullying be consistent with both school policy and with those values, attitudes and behaviours expected of students. Teachers should avoid characteristics of bully teachers. School administration should ensure that students are not subjected to behaviours such as: repeatedly punishing the same child, humiliating students to stop disruptions, putting students down to punish them, setting up students to be bullied, and making fun of special education students; in the hands of teachers. Also teachers should avoid the characteristics of bully victim teachers which include allowing him/her self to be bullied, watching as students bully each other, using needless physical force, failing to set limits, and allowing disruptions without intervening.

Surveillance and supervision: - Observation and staff supervision in high-bullying areas in the school building, and on the school playgrounds; has been identified by Olweus (2003) as approach which helps reduce bullying in trouble spots for victims. Students who are perpetrators or victims of bullying appear to be much more aware of areas where bullying is prevalent than students who are not involved in bullying (Cunningham, Look, Thompson, Wahl & McCane, 2004). There is the need to create awareness, and enlist the cooperation of these students to report and help prevent bullying. Continuous assessment of bullying can provide information about which locations are "hot spots" for bullying and whether bullying in those locations has changed due to interventions.

3.4 Classroom-Based Strategies

Teachers have contact with students every day; this put them at advantage to play vital role in preventing and intervening in bullying incidents that occur in the classroom. The classroom environment provides teachers with opportunities to observe and intercede when bullying situations arise within the peer group. Teachers can also structure their classrooms in ways to discourage bullying and encourage prosocial behaviours. Teachers were found to be the key agents of change in the adoption and implementation of classroom measures to address bullying and they were likely to intervene if they perceived bullying to be a problem, and it found that implementation of classroom interventions was related to a reduction in bullying (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003).

Counsellors with the teachers in the in-service education workshop should deliberate on information about developing classroom rules to address bullying, understanding the dynamics of bullying in the classroom, and adopting classrooms strategies to reduce bullying.

Classroom Rules: - Teachers can prevent bullying through the development,

implementation and enforcement of classroom rules, which support school anti-bullying policies. This coupled with regular class meetings with students to discuss various aspect of bullying including adherence to consequences for violations. The rules should exist within "a culture of respect and recognition" where "everyone works to ensure that there are no social payoffs for bullying" (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005). They stressed that the rules should entails guides on how those who have previously been involved in bullying can discover alternative forms of personal power and more ways that are effective to obtain recognition or vent their frustrations.

Development of prosocial skills: Prosocial skills provide students with the means to follow classroom rules successfully, and to interact with their peers. Young people according to Catalano and Hawkins (1996) in their SDM will be successful within a given system if they have opportunities for meaningful participation, the skills to succeed and recognition (reinforcement) for performing those skills successfully. The teacher's primary role is to provide the appropriate opportunities, skills and recognition for students to succeed academically. However, in discharging his duty, he can provide guides for social and emotional growth along with the academic growth. Providing students with the three conditions i.e. opportunity, skills and recognition to succeed socially can prevent bullying and help students function better socially and emotionally.

Development of prosocial skills can be incorporated into regular academic teaching or through guidance curriculum as developed by CASSON Kwara State chapter. Skills such as initiating friendships, managing anger, acting assertively can be taught through group counselling. In addition, school counsellor can organize workshops for teachers to help them address bullying situations that arise as a regular part of student interaction in the classroom. Identifying the social status of students in the classroom, (through sociometric method) members of social groups or cliques and typical roles played in bullying interactions (bully, victim, assistant, reinforcers, defender, outsider)

can help the teacher analyze the dynamics of the bullying situation and decide how to intervene. Teachers can also make use of group work, circle time and project work by mixing those who are isolates, mediator and bully to work together in other to discourage exclusion and social isolation of particular students.

Befriending, mentoring and mediating are other strategies that are related to our indigenous forms of preventing or managing conflict between older and smaller individuals (bullying). A "befriending" strategy has been implemented in two Italian middle schools (Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli & Cowie, 2003). This strategy illustrates how encouraging support for victims among classmates can change the dynamics of bullying in the classroom.

The goals of the program were to:
- Reduce bullying by making bullies aware of their own and other people's behaviour
- Increase student support for victims of bullying.
- Enhance bystander responsibility and involvement in bullying situations, and
- Improve the quality of relationships among class members.

Evaluation showed that the program prevented the increase in favourable attitudes toward bullying and lack of support for victims that was found in the control students who did not receive the intervention and that has been reported in the research literature (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004). Also, the role of outsider decreased with more students indicating empathy for and willingness to take action on the part of the victim. The opposite was true for those students who did not receive the befriending intervention – they showed less willingness to get involved and less willingness to provide support for the victim.

The intervention had effects that are more positive for those students who had previously played pro-bullying roles and for outsiders than for the victims. Although the victims were provided peer support, they appeared to need

more intervention than that provided by a single classroom strategy. In follow-up interviews, victims indicated that the class climate has changed and some bullying had been eliminated, but they were still bullied. The authors concluded that victims need additional forms of intervention such as those described in this article. An interesting point gleaned from the interviews was that bullies sometimes used bullying to come to the aid of victims. Although their intentions had changed, they had not learned the social skills to intervene in a prosocial manner. This finding highlights the importance of giving bullies, as well as victims and bully victims, the skill they need to act appropriately.

Victims can be encourage to form friend and teacher ensures that he create interest for such victims so that other students would also like to associate with him. These interventions could be reiterated among students in their daily social integration in the classroom and school surroundings. They are natural processes of responsibility toward others and they will enhance emphatic feelings, communication, emotional support and reciprocal interventions that children spontaneously display in their everyday interactions. Students are enjoined to be their brothers' keepers, and research findings have shown that the strategies work since it changes the roles of reinforcers and bystanders (Menesini, Codecasa, Benelli & Cowie 2003, Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Salmivalli & Voeten, 2004).

The counsellors need to educate teachers on the various strategies and ways to utilize them. Teachers thereafter introduce these strategies to students, they then proceed to select peer supporters or mediators in each class through self and or peer nomination. Teachers then train the selected peer supporters and mediators to improve skills and attitudes that will facilitate positive interaction with other children. Such skills include listening and communication skills. They then organize classroom activities such as class assembly, circle meetings etc. of the whole class to identify the needs of students who are victims of bullying, seek the consent of victims to work with peer supporters, and

specific activities between peer supporters and victims. Teachers need to supervise peer supporters weekly in group. Then they should train more peer supporters or mediators. Counsellor also need to encourage the use of classroom based curriculum by providing leadership in researching and selecting appropriate programmes and then providing training and follow-up technical assistance to teachers in using all these interventions. Administration can sanction these programs as a regular part of the curriculum by providing teachers with the resources necessary to deliver them such as time and funding.

4. Counselling Strategies for helping Individuals Involved in Bullying

This is the major focus of this paper. Some students that are involved in bullying may not respond to school wide and class-level interventions. There may be the need to refer them to the counsellor for individual counselling, to address behavioural and emotional deficits that are related to their bully or victim behaviours. For counsellors to be able to help them effectively and appropriately, he/she needs to recognize the unique problems of each of the groups. This is necessary to determine the appropriate strategy to use. The strategies that the counsellors can use could be classified into three:
- Strategies for helping bullies,
- Strategies for helping victims
- Strategies for helping bully victim.

These strategies have been recommended in the bullying literature because they make logical sense ad have some validity in addressing related problem areas or symptoms (Cunningham & Whitten, 2007). The strategies are used by counsellors when working with clients who have social, emotional and behavioural problems. They are consistent with school-wide and classroom-level anti-bullying efforts and build student capacity to function successfully in the school environment academically and socially.

4.1 Strategies for helping bullies

*Awareness***:** Bullies must be made aware of classroom rules and policies on bullying and be held accountable for violations. They must be made accountable for physical, verbal, relational and sexual bullying. The individual awareness or education may be necessary for the bullies in order to enhance their ability to identify and take ownership of their own bullying behaviours. They need education in recognising behaviours that fit the definitions of various forms of bullying and on appropriate social behaviours for interacting with opposite and same sex peers.

*Confrontation***:** Confrontation can be used to address their problem behaviours within the overall context of a school environment that communicate non-tolerance of bullying behaviour consistently in a multiple of ways. However, the confrontation should be passionately made. Counsellor should provide necessary therapeutic conditions such as empathic understanding for the bullies, positive regard and genuiness. Other strategies are social skill training, assertiveness training, peace education, and behaviour contract. However, the strategy that counsellor will employed depends on the type of bullying. For instance, the aggressive bullies have the need to dominate others and use bullying as means of getting what they want without showing empathy. This class of bullying may not need social skills or empathy training since they have cognitive understanding of empathy but lack affective aspect, which is the core component of empathy. They are also assertive/over assertive and if such training is further provided, they may use their skill to cheat other as posited by Cunningham & Whitten (2007). They stress that empathy training may not be a helpful strategy to use with proactive bullies as it may better prepare them to hurt rather than understand others.

Behaviour contract may be used and bullies are reinforced when they act appropriately. They also need peace education. However, if the various strategies failed to work, they may need referral to mental health practitioner on time. For the *passive bully* who engages in bullying for self-protection and for achieving status, they may need social skills training and education on how to achieve positive status without bullying others. Skills such as decision-making skills and assertiveness training can be taught, counsellors can help the bullies by:
- Making it clear to them that it is their behaviour that is inappropriate not them.
- Help them consider why they might be bullying and what it might feel like to be bullied.
- Making them consider if anything or anyone is troubling them.
- Trying to find a restorative way they can amends and rebuild the relationship with the bullied person if possible.
- Rewarding good behaviour i.e. reinforcement.
- Set boundaries within which the students must work.
- Making them aware that other may encourage them to bully, and the need for them to resist such courage.

4.2 Strategies for helping Victims

The strategies could be divided into two:

- Skill training: to help them develop successful social behaviours.
- Counselling: to address cognitive and affective aspects of victimisation.

On skill training, victims need to develop skills to gain and maintain social support among their peers. Such skills include:

Social Skills Training, e.g. (1) initiating friendship since it has been found that lack of close friends may predispose a child to be bullied. Bullied can be taught how to initiate friendship. (2) Assertiveness training and (3) stress reduction strategies such as managing anger. These can help victims develop skills to form friendship and to respond to bullying using a considered choice of response rather than responding in a reactive and dysfunctional manner. Victims should be helped to avoid responding to bullying with helplessness such as crying, running away, staying home from school or with counter aggression like calling the bully names, harassing someone else, attempting to get others to bully the bully; as these are likely to make bullying continue.

Non-Challance: This is another strategy that counsellor can use. It involves encouraging victim to be non-challant to bullying i.e. appearing and staying calm and should not take bullying seriously or of not caring: victim can even be playing with phone or other thing or texting someone on their phone. This approach according to Cunningham & Whitten (2007) has been found to be an effective strategy to get bullying to decrease or stop. Teach victim how to remain calm and remove himself or herself from the bullying situation.

Peer mentoring, buddying **or** *befriending* are other strategies. These could be used to help build social support networks for victims. Also, students identified as "defenders" have been found to have social status in the peer group and can be recruited to provide support to victims through structured approach as highlighted above under the classroom strategies and also in every day school environment (Goosens, Olthof & Decker, 2006).

To address the victim's subjective feeling in bullying situation, *individual* or *group counselling* can help victims work through cognitive and emotional responses to being victimised and *Rational Emotive and Behavioural Therapy* REBT of Albert Ellis can be used to help victim. Smokowski & Kopasz (2005) stressed the importance of seeking out and identifying victims that need support services since they do not readily self-identify. Signs that could help identify bullied include obvious signs of distress. These include tearfulness or constant miserable expression, attendance problem, frequent headaches, stomach aches or complaints of feeling generally unwell. Other signs are bruising on face or body, isolation from other children, sudden deterioration in standard of work, reluctance to leave the classroom after lesson/closing, tendency to stay close to staff during breaks, damage to child's property/losing money and belongings etc.

Victims should be encouraged to report bullying and school personnel should, listen and respond to bullying effectively. School staff should be aware of these special groups and provide support and assistance.

Strategies for helping Bully Victims

These groups are easily identified by staff due to their impulsivity and inability to regulate their behaviours, which result into disruptive behaviours in school. They can benefit from strategies specified for bullies and victims such as social skill training, self-management skills, assertiveness training, and anger management. These strategies would help bully victims to engage in more appropriate behaviours in the classroom. Anger management skill can also help victim to manage negative emotions. Bully victims would also need individual or group counselling to deal with their problem behaviours and to work through their negative emotions and if they do not respond to school counselling, they may be referred to the mental health practitioner.

5. Conclusion

In addressing bullying effectively, comprehensive approaches should be employed; the Olweus Bullying prevention programme includes four components: awareness and problem assessment, school climate change strategies, classroom-based strategies and strategies for individuals involved in bullying. This paper has presented the Whole-School Approach as the best strategy for handling bullying in schools. Other strategies, that are part of the Whole-School Approach, but not necessarily Olweus Bullying prevention programme have also been presented.

However, Cunningham & Whitten, (2007) opined that for the strategies to work i.e. to prevent/manage bullying, it is very important to ensure that programme components are well planned; and truly implemented as planned. Therefore, for best results, these strategies should be comprehensive, varying in intervention strategies employed, giving sufficient dosage, should be theory driven, have positive relationships, appropriately timed, have socio-cultural relevance, evaluated and supported by well trained staff. School counsellors are crucial in supporting the integration of a comprehensive approach to bullying into the school environment and have

vital roles to play in encouraging all staff members of the school community to get involved in the work of bullying prevention. Counsellors, who are advocates of healthy psychological development of students, can be a major force in ensuring that students are safe from the physical and psychological effects of bullying. These counselling strategies if well-conceived and effectively implemented can help support a school environment that facilitates the academic, social and emotional development of all student.

The comprehensive whole school approach suggested in this paper has been found to be highly effective in reducing bullying and other antisocial behaviour (such as truancy, vandalism and theft) among students in primary and secondary schools in Norway and Sweden (Limber, & Nation, (1998). Countries such as Canada, England, and the United State have also adapted core components of the Olweus (1993) anti-bullying program for use. Results of the anti-bullying efforts in these countries have been similar to the results experienced in Norway and Sweden. In addition, schools that were more active in implementing the programme observed the most marked changes in reported behaviours. This approach can also be adapted to the Nigerian environment and it is believed that it will work.

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