



Family interaction patterns as correlates of bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents in Kwara State

Patrones de interacción familiar como correlatos del comportamiento de acoso entre adolescentes escolares en el Estado de Kwara

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Abstract

The involvement of parents in different roles in life sometimes affects their communication with their children, which can affect the bullying behaviour of adolescents in school. Therefore, this study examined the patterns of family interaction experienced by respondents and whether such experiences correlate with adolescent bullying in schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to investigate: (i) the perceived family interaction pattern adopted by parents of in-school adolescents; (ii) the prevalence of bullying perpetration and victimisation among in-school adolescents; (iii) the bullying roles of in-school adolescents and (iv) correlation between family interaction patterns, bullying behaviour and bullying roles. The study was a descriptive correlational type study. The sample was 410 adolescent students from 16 proportionally selected secondary schools in Kwara State. An adapted instrument “Family Interaction Patterns and Bullying Behaviour Questionnaire (FIPBBQ)” was used to collect the research data, which has a reliability index of 0.71. The collected data were analysed by frequency, mean rank and PPMC. The study found that school teenagers in Kwara State experienced a positive pattern of family interaction where parents were responsive to their needs and encouraged good behaviour. However, more teenagers in school reported being bullied in the past six weeks. Most of the

respondents (50.1%) are bully-victims, 24.0% are abusers and 18.5% are pure victims. Family communication was not significantly related to bullying behaviour. However, there was a significant relationship between family communication patterns and bullying-victimisation role, most especially for females. Based on these findings, recommendations were provided.

Keywords: Bullying Behaviour, In-school Adolescents, Family interaction patterns, Kwara State.

Resumen

La participación de los padres en diferentes roles en la vida a veces afecta su comunicación con sus hijos, lo que puede afectar el comportamiento de acoso de los adolescentes en la escuela. Por lo tanto, este estudio examinó los patrones de interacción familiar experimentados por los encuestados y si dichas experiencias se correlacionan con el acoso adolescente en las escuelas en el estado de Kwara, Nigeria. Los objetivos de este estudio fueron investigar: (i) el patrón de interacción familiar adoptado por los padres de adolescentes en la escuela; (ii) la prevalencia de la perpetración y victimización del acoso entre los adolescentes en la escuela; (iii) los roles de acoso de los adolescentes en la escuela y (iv) la correlación entre los patrones de interacción familiar, el comportamiento de acoso y los roles de acoso. El estudio fue un estudio de tipo correlacional descriptivo. La muestra está formada por 410 estudiantes adolescentes de 16 escuelas secundarias seleccionadas proporcionalmente en el estado de Kwara. Se utilizó un instrumento adaptado "Cuestionario de patrones de interacción familiar y comportamiento de acoso (FIPBBQ)" para recopilar los datos de la investigación, que tiene un índice de confiabilidad de 0,71. Los datos recopilados se analizaron por frecuencia, rango medio y PPMC. El estudio descubrió que los adolescentes escolares del estado de Kwara experimentaban un patrón positivo de interacción familiar en el que los padres respondían a sus necesidades y alentaban el buen comportamiento. Sin embargo, más adolescentes en la escuela informaron haber sido acosados en las últimas seis semanas. La mayoría de los encuestados (50,1 %) son víctimas de acoso, el 24,0 % son abusadores y el 18,5 % son víctimas puras. La comunicación familiar no estaba significativamente relacionada con el comportamiento de acoso. Sin embargo, había una relación significativa entre los patrones de comunicación familiar y el rol de victimización por acoso, especialmente para las mujeres. Con base en estos hallazgos, se brindan consejos y recomendaciones.

Palabras clave: Comportamiento de acoso, Adolescentes en la escuela, Patrones de interacción familiar, Estado de Kwara.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying behavior among in-school adolescents has become a pressing public health concern, particularly in Nigeria, where its prevalence has raised significant alarm among educators, parents, and policymakers. This research focuses on the intricate relationship between family interaction patterns and bullying behaviour among adolescents in Kwara State. The problem being addressed is the alarming rates of bullying, which not only affect the immediate well-being of adolescents involved in different bullying roles but also have long-term implications for their mental health and social development.

Globally, studies indicate that bullying affects approximately 20% of adolescents, with variations in prevalence across different regions and cultures (Zhang, 2024). In Nigeria, recent findings suggest that bullying behaviour is notably higher among male adolescents and those from divorced families, with private school students exhibiting more bullying than their public school counterparts (Aruoture & Adegoke, 2024). This highlights the urgent need to understand the underlying factors contributing to this phenomenon, particularly the role of family dynamics.

The implications of bullying are profound, leading to severe psychosocial issues such as anxiety, depression, and decreased academic performance (Febrianti et al., 2024). Victims often experience low self-esteem and social isolation, which can persist into adulthood (Zhang, 2024). Psychological challenges were more pronounced than social challenges among the bully-victims in Kwara State (Mustapha et al., 2024). The potential causes of bullying behaviour are multifaceted, encompassing individual, familial, and societal influences. Specifically, family interaction patterns, including parental responsiveness and interparental violence, have been identified as critical predictors of bullying behaviour (Obioha et al., 2024). Theories such as Social Learning Theory and Attachment Theory provide a framework for understanding how family dynamics influence adolescents' behaviour, suggesting that children learn aggressive behaviours from their home environments and that secure attachments can mitigate these effects (Aruoture & Adegoke, 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on bullying, there remains a significant knowledge gap regarding the specific impact of family interaction patterns on bullying behaviour among adolescents in Kwara State. While studies have explored various factors influencing bullying, the nuanced relationship between family dynamics and bullying behaviour has not

been extensively examined in this context. This gap underscores the need for targeted research that can inform interventions and policies aimed at reducing bullying in schools.

The significance of this research is underscored by the increasing recognition of bullying as a public health issue that requires comprehensive strategies involving families, schools, and communities (Zhang, 2024). The World Health Organization (WHO) has emphasised the need for effective interventions to address bullying, highlighting its impact on mental health and social dynamics (Febrianti et al., 2024). In Nigeria, the lack of effective anti-bullying policies in schools correlates with higher rates of bullying perpetration, indicating a critical need for research that can inform policy and practice (Onotume et al., 2023).

The consequences of bullying extend beyond the immediate effects on individuals involved in various bullying roles; they also impact the broader school environment and community. Bullying can create a culture of fear and mistrust, hindering the development of positive relationships among students and between students and teachers. For instance, a lack of perceived support from adults can lead to increased victimization, creating a hostile learning environment that hinders positive interactions (Strohmeier et al., 2024). Furthermore, the cycle of aggression can perpetuate itself, as victims of bullying may become perpetrators in the future, leading to a continuous cycle of violence (Obioha et al., 2024). This underscores the importance of understanding the root causes of bullying behaviour, particularly the role of family interaction patterns.

Family dynamics play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' behaviour and attitudes. The interaction patterns within families significantly influence the psychosocial health and behaviours of in-school adolescents, in Nigeria and globally. Research highlights various dimensions of family dynamics, including communication styles, family structure, and their associations with adolescent well-being. Bello et al., (2024) found that 53.7% of adolescents studied in Osun State, Nigeria experienced unhealthy family functioning, correlating with impaired psychosocial health. Bullying prevalence among Nigerian adolescents was reported at 51.9%, with family dynamics, such as parental discipline, influencing bullying behaviour (Ighaede-Edwards et al., 2023). Adolescents frequently beaten by parents were more likely to engage in bullying, indicating a cycle of negative family interactions. Family communication styles, particularly consensual and pluralistic patterns, were linked to internalising and externalising problems in adolescents (Sawitri et al., 2024). Effective communication can serve as a protective

factor against these issues. He et al. (2023) asserted that adolescents who experience positive family interaction patterns, characterised by high levels of parental responsiveness and low levels of interparental conflict, are less likely to engage in bullying behaviour. Conversely, those from families with high levels of conflict and low parental involvement are at a greater risk of becoming involved in bullying, either as victims or perpetrators (Obioha et al., 2024). This relationship highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how family interactions influence adolescent behaviour.

Theories such as Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, suggest that children learn behaviours through observation and imitation of their parents and peers (Bandura, 1977). This theory posits that aggressive behaviours can be learned in the home environment, where children observe and imitate the actions of their parents. Additionally, Attachment Theory, developed by John Bowlby, emphasizes the importance of secure attachments in childhood for healthy emotional and social development (Bowlby, 1969). Secure attachments foster resilience and positive coping strategies, which can mitigate the likelihood of engaging in bullying behaviour.

Despite the theoretical frameworks available, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of family interaction patterns on bullying behaviour among adolescents in Kwara State. While previous studies have explored various factors influencing bullying (Obioha et al., 2024; Mustapha et al., 2023), the nuanced relationship between family dynamics and bullying behaviour has not been extensively examined in this context. This gap underscores the need for targeted research that can inform interventions and policies aimed at reducing bullying in schools.

The existing literature highlights the importance of understanding the interplay between family dynamics and bullying behaviour. For instance, a study by Ede et al. (2020) found that family types and functioning significantly influence the psychosocial behaviours of adolescents, suggesting that family structure and interaction patterns are critical factors in understanding bullying behaviour. Similarly, research by Ighaede-Edwards et al. (2023) indicates that perceived parental responsiveness is a significant predictor of bullying behaviour among adolescents, further emphasising the need to explore this relationship in the context of Kwara State.

Given the significance of family interaction patterns in shaping adolescent behaviour, this study sought to answer the following research questions: How do family interaction patterns correlate with bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents in Kwara State? By investigating

this relationship, the research aims to contribute to the existing literature and provide insights that can help mitigate the prevalence of bullying in educational settings.

In hypothesising, it is proposed that adolescents who experience positive family interaction patterns, characterised by high levels of parental responsiveness and low levels of interparental conflict, will exhibit lower rates of bullying behaviour compared to their peers from less supportive family environments. This hypothesis guided the research, aiming to uncover the critical role that family dynamics play in shaping adolescent behaviour and ultimately contribute to the development of effective anti-bullying strategies.

In conclusion, the relationship between family interaction patterns and bullying behaviour among adolescents is a complex and multifaceted issue that warrants further investigation. Understanding how family dynamics influence bullying behaviour can provide valuable insights for developing targeted interventions and policies aimed at reducing bullying in schools. By addressing the knowledge gap in this area, this research aims to contribute to the broader understanding of bullying behaviour and its implications for adolescent development and well-being.

Main objective

This study explored and analysed the relationships between family interaction patterns and bullying behaviours among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, with a particular focus on understanding the prevalence of bullying, the roles that students play, and the influence of familial relationships on the bullying roles of male and female students.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the study examined the perceived family interaction patterns adopted by the parents of in-school adolescents in Kwara State, identifying the nature and characteristics of these interactions as reported by the adolescents. It assessed the prevalence of bullying perpetration and victimisation among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, providing a detailed overview of how widespread these behaviours are within the population. It investigated the specific bullying roles (e.g., perpetrator, victim, bully-victims) that in-school adolescents in Kwara State assume, clarifying the dynamics and roles involved in bullying incidents.

Research Questions

This study provided insights into family interaction patterns as perceived by in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This includes an in-depth exploration of how these adolescents view how their parents engage and communicate with them and the potential influence these patterns may have on their bullying behaviour.

Additionally, the study seeks to determine the prevalence of bullying among in-school adolescents, focusing on both bullying perpetration and victimisation. By identifying the extent to which bullying behaviours are present, the research will offer insights into how widespread these issues are within the school going adolescent population in Kwara State.

The study also provided analyses of the specific roles that in-school adolescents assumed in bullying situations. This includes identifying whether adolescents were primarily perpetrators, victims, or bully victims in bullying incidents.

Research Hypotheses

This research hypothesised that the patterns of family interaction observed among parents and their in-school adolescent children in Kwara State will not have a significant correlation with the bullying behaviour exhibited by the adolescents. The study anticipated that regardless of the nature of family interactions, there will be no meaningful relationship between how parents engage with their children and whether those children engage in bullying behaviours or become victims of bullying.

Similarly, the study proposed that family interaction patterns will not significantly influence the specific bullying roles that adolescents assumed, whether as perpetrators, victims, or bully-victims. This hypothesis suggested that the way parents interact with their children will not play a decisive role in shaping the adolescents' involvement in these various bullying roles.

Additionally, the study expects that the correlation between family interaction and the bullying roles of in-school adolescents will not differ significantly based on gender. This implies that both male and female students, regardless of the quality or type of family interaction, will exhibit similar patterns in terms of their roles in bullying situations. The research aims to determine whether these expectations hold true across the adolescent population in Kwara State.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study employed a descriptive correlational research design to investigate the relationship between family interaction patterns and bullying behaviours among adolescents. This design was chosen to facilitate the exploration of associations between the variables without manipulating them, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena in a naturalistic setting.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 410 in-school adolescents selected from a larger population of approximately 240,000 senior secondary school students in Kwara State. A proportional and simple random sampling methods were utilised to ensure that the sample was representative of the three senatorial districts in Kwara, encompassing 16 secondary schools.

Instrument

Data were collected using a modified “Family Interaction Patterns and Bullying Behaviours Questionnaire.” This instrument comprised three sections: Section A gathered demographic information (gender, age, and school type), Section B assessed family interaction patterns with 25 items (both positive and negative), and Section C evaluated bullying behaviours with 20 items (10 related to perpetration and 10 to victimisation). The items in Section B were scored on a four-point Likert-type scale, while Section C utilised a four-point ordinal scale. The instrument demonstrated content validity and reliability values of 0.71 and 0.67, respectively.

Procedure

The data collection process involved administering the questionnaire to the selected participants in their respective schools. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. After obtaining consent, the questionnaires were distributed, and participants were guided on how to complete them accurately.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics, including mean and aggregate mean scores, to address the research questions. A mean cut-off points of 2.5 was established to differentiate between positive and negative family interaction patterns. Additionally, frequency and percentage calculations were employed to assess bullying behaviours. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was utilised to test the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order Analysis of the Perceived Family Interaction Pattern Adopted by Respondents' Parents

S/N	As far as I am concerned, My Parent or Guardian;	Mean	S.D	Rank
Positive family interaction pattern				
8	are responsive to my needs	3.76	.429	1 st
2	always correct me whenever I make mistake	3.75	.431	2 nd
10	encourage me to be good to everyone	3.72	.449	3 rd
1	allow me to voice my opinion whenever we have discussions	3.68	.466	4 th
6	have a strong bond with me	3.65	.476	5 th
9	listen to my concerns	3.57	.495	6 th
11	provide me necessary guidance	3.56	.664	7 th
7	value me a lot	3.55	.594	8 th
13	educate me always not to trample on the right of others.	3.52	.591	9 th
5	are involved in my life	3.51	.75	10 th
4	engage me in various activities they do	3.41	.58	11 th
3	are always supportive of me	3.38	.579	12 th
12	allow me to participate in family discussion	2.41	1.04	13 th
Grand Mean		3.49		
Negative family interaction Pattern				
1	always find faults in what I do	2.54	1.08	1 st
8	and I find it difficult to reach common ground on matters	2.27	1.06	2 nd
12	always judge me before I say something	2.24	1.06	3 rd
9	somehow favour other siblings over me	2.20	1.09	4 th
7	always condemn my actions	2.04	.97	5 th
10	do not provide enough support in time of need	2.03	1.01	6 th
11	do not discuss sensitive topics with me	1.94	.862	7 th
4	do not respect my opinion	1.89	.707	8 th
3	are not supportive of my decisions	1.79	.872	9 th
6	are not very close to me	1.65	.791	10 th
5	do not provide the opportunity to discuss my fears	1.44	.497	11 th
2	do not correct me when I made mistake	1.29	.456	12 th
Grand Mean		1.94		

Table 1 presents the mean, standard deviation and rank order of the perceived family interaction pattern adopted by respondents' parents. The Table shows the grand mean scores of 3.49 and 1.94 for positive and negative family interaction patterns respectively. For positive family interaction pattern, the table indicates that items 8, 2 and 10 ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd. Item 8, stated that as far as I am concerned, my parent or guardian: are responsive to my needs; item 2, indicated that respondents' parents/guardians always correct them whenever they make mistakes; and item 10, stated that respondents' parents encouraged them to be good to everyone. The highly ranked items had mean scores of 3.76, 3.75 and 3.72 respectively. Similarly, for the negative family interaction pattern, respondents only attested to item 1 which stated that as far as I am concerned, my parent or guardian: always finds faults in what I do. Item 1 ranked 1st with a mean score of 2.54. while items 8, 12 and 9 stated that as far as I am concerned, my parent or guardian: and I find it difficult to reach common ground on matters ranked 2nd; always judge me before I say something ranked 3rd; and somehow favour other siblings over me ranked 4th, with the mean scores of 2.27, 2.24 and 2.20 respectively. Since the positive family interaction pattern had a grand mean score of 3.49 which is above 2.50 and the negative family interaction pattern has a grand mean score of 1.9 which is below the 2.50 cut-off mean score, this implies that respondents have a positive family interaction pattern as their parents or guardians were responsive to their needs; always correct them whenever they made a mistake; encourage them to be good to everyone; and the parents or guardians and the students did not find it difficult to reach common ground on matters; did not always judge students before they say something; their parents/guardians did not in any way favour other siblings over them among others. The perceived family interaction pattern adopted by the respondents' parents is positive.

Table 2

Percentage Distribution of the Prevalence of Bullying Perpetration and Victimization among the Respondents

S/N	In the last 6 weeks, how often have you;	5 times/ more	3/4 times	Once/ twice	Never
1	destroyed properties belonging to someone weaker than me	44(10.9%)	78(19.3%)	40(9.9%)	242(59.9%)
2	hit someone who is weaker than me	93(23.0%)	61(15.1%)	94(23.3%)	156(38.6%)
3	insulted someone weaker than me	38(9.4%)	67(16.6%)	97(24.0%)	202(50.0%)
4	called someone weaker than me derogatory names	103(25.5%)	59(14.6%)	19(4.7%)	223(55.2%)
5	excluded individuals weaker than me from group tasks	38(9.4%)	84(20.8%)	80(19.8%)	202(50.0%)

S/N	In the last 6 weeks, how often have you;	5 times/ more	3/4 times	Once/ twice	Never
6	told other people the personal details of someone in an hateful way	67(16.6%)	40(9.9%)	86(21.3%)	211(52.2%)
7	Sent threatening messages to people through phones	61(15.1%)	38(9.4%)	21(5.2%)	284(70.3%)
8	posted embarrassing picture of a peer on group page	40(9.9%)	21(5.2%)	76(18.8%)	267(66.1%)
9	made inappropriate sexual remarks about person weaker than me	-	61(15.1%)	19(4.7%)	324(80.2%)
10	made unwelcome sexual contact to someone weaker than me	19(4.7%)	78(19.3%)	40(9.9%)	267(66.1%)
	Total Perpetration	12.5%	14.5%	14.2%	58.8%
In the last six weeks, how often have you been					
11	insulted by someone stronger than you	40(9.9%)	57(14.1%)	120(29.7%)	187(46.3%)
12	threatened by someone stronger than you	40(9.9%)	84(20.8%)	118(29.2%)	162(40.1%)
13	called derogatory name(s) by someone stronger than you	19(4.7%)	80(19.8%)	80(19.8%)	225(55.7%)
14	hit by someone stronger than you	61(15.1%)	38(9.4%)	105(26.0%)	200(49.5%)
15	excluded from group tasks by someone stronger than you	-	59(14.6%)	99(24.5%)	246(60.9%)
16	exposed to gossiping by group of peers	21(5.2%)	40(9.9%)	78(19.3%)	265(65.6%)
17	embarrassed through postage of my pictures online	40(9.9%)	42(10.4%)	38(9.4%)	284(70.3%)
18	sent threatening messages on phones	21(5.2%)	19(4.7%)	59(14.6%)	305(75.5%)
19	exposed to inappropriate sexual remarks from someone stronger than you	27(6.7%)	42(10.4%)	78(19.3%)	257(63.6%)
20	receiving unwanted sexual proposal from someone stronger than you	-	40(9.9%)	19(4.7%)	345(85.4%)
	Total Victimization	6.6%	12.4%	19.7%	61.3%

Table 2 shows the percentage distribution of the prevalence of bullying perpetration and victimization among the respondents. The table indicates that 12.5%; 14.5% and 14.2% of the respondents have perpetrated bullying behaviours 5 times/ more, 3-4 times and once/ twice in the last 6 weeks respectively. Also, 6.6%, 12.4% and 19.7 of the respondents have experienced bullying victimisation 5 times/ more, 3-4 times and once/ twice in the last 6 weeks respectively.

This depicts the prevalence of bullying perpetration and victimisation among respondents.

Table 3*Percentage Distribution of Bullying Roles of the Respondents*

Bullying Roles	Frequency	Percentage
Perpetrators	97	24.0
Bully-victims	203	50.1
Victims	75	18.5
None-involved	30	7.4
Total	405	100

Table 3 revealed that the majority of the respondents (50.1%) were bully-victims, 97 (24.0%) were perpetrators, 75 (18.5%) were victims and 30 (7.4%) reported non-involvement in bullying roles. The table depicts the bullying roles assumed or experienced by the respondents.

Table 4*Pearson showing the relationship between Family Interactions and the Bullying Behaviour of the Respondents*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-value	p-value
Family interaction	404	68.82	6.73	403	-.088	.076
Bullying Behaviour	404	34.60	12.67			

Table 4 indicates that the computed R-value is 0.088, with a p-value of 0.076. The p-value is above the significance level of 0.05. Given that the calculated p-value is greater than the predetermined significance level; the null hypothesis is deemed accepted. These findings suggested no significant relationship between family interaction and bullying behaviour among in-school adolescents in Kwara State.

Table 5*Pearson showing the relationship between Family Interactions and the Bullying Roles of the Respondents*

Bullying Roles		Mean	r	p-value
Perpetrators	Family Interaction	68.18	-.094	.361
	Bullying Behaviour	28.88		
Bully-victims	Family Interaction	68.94	-.151*	.031
	Bullying Behaviour	42.26		
Victims	Family Interaction	69.43	.048	.684
	Bullying Behaviour	27.29		
None-involved	Family Interaction	68.90	-.250	.182
	Bullying Behaviour	20.50		

* Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 5 showed that there was a significant correlation between family interaction and bully-victimisation of in-school adolescents in Kwara State ($r = .151$, $p < 0.05$); no significant correlation exists between family interaction and bullying perpetration ($r = -.094$, $p > 0.05$), victimisation ($r = .048$, $p > 0.05$) and none-involvement ($r = -.250$, $p > 0.05$) of in-school adolescents. Therefore, the hypothesis that family interaction will not significantly correlate with the bullying roles of respondents is rejected.

Table 6

Pearson showing the relationship between Family Interactions and Bullying Roles of Male and Female Respondents

Gender	Roles		Mean	r	p-value
Male	Perpetrators	Family Interaction	68.37	-.150	.370
		Bullying Behaviour	29.42		
	Bully-victims	Family Interaction	68.58	-.104	.408
		Bullying Behaviour	41.06		
	Victims	Family Interaction	70.69	.050	.776
		Bullying Behaviour	28.26		
	None-involved	Family Interaction	69.82	-.407	.214
		Bullying Behaviour	20.18		
Female	Perpetrators	Family Interaction	68.05	-.069	.606
		Bullying Behaviour	28.53		
	Bully-victims	Family Interaction	69.11	-.178*	.036
		Bullying Behaviour	42.83		
	Victims	Family Interaction	68.33	-.016	.921
		Bullying Behaviour	26.45		
	None-involved	Family Interaction	68.37	-.190	.437
		Bullying Behaviour	20.68		

* Significant, $p < 0.05$

Table 6 showed that there was no significant correlation between family interaction and different bullying roles of male in-school adolescents in Kwara State. However, there was a significant correlation between the family interaction patterns and female bully-victims of in-school adolescents ($r = -.178^*$, $p < 0.05$) but no significant relationship between family interaction and female perpetrators ($r = -.069$, $p > 0.05$), victims ($r = -.016$, $p > 0.05$) and none-involved ($r = -.190$, $p > 0.05$) in-school adolescents in Kwara State. hypothesising that family interaction will not significantly correlate with the bullying roles of male and female respondents is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that in-school adolescents experience positive family interaction patterns. The respondents reported their parents or guardians were responsive to their needs; always corrected them whenever they made mistakes; and encouraged them to be good to everyone among others. The finding supports the study of Aldous (2003) whose findings revealed a consistent and noteworthy trend of positive family interaction patterns among in-school adolescents. These patterns encompassed various aspects, including communication, emotional support, and shared activities within the family unit. According to Muhwezi et al. (2015), participants reported open and effective communication with their parents or guardians, where they felt comfortable discussing various topics and sharing their thoughts and concerns. This could be that parenting styles adopted by parents or guardians lead to positive family interaction patterns. However, the finding is inconsistent with the findings of Bello et al. (2024) study in Osun State, Nigeria, which found that 53.7% of adolescents experienced unhealthy family functioning, correlating with impaired psychosocial health. The reason for the difference in the findings could be that the family functioning those researchers considered differed from the family interaction patterns considered in this research with family dynamics, such as parental discipline, influencing bullying behaviour. Adolescents frequently beaten by parents were more likely to engage in bullying, indicating a cycle of negative family interactions.

The finding also showed that more in-school adolescents have perpetrated bullying behaviours than in-school adolescents who have experienced bullying victimisation in the last 6 weeks. The reason for the finding could be that in-school adolescents do not only perpetrate bullying acts in school alone but also outside the schools. Also, the advent of social media might contribute to the prevalence of bullying perpetration among in-school adolescents rather than victimisation. The finding is in line with that of Ighaede-Edwards et al (2023) who reported a 51.9%, bullying prevalence among Nigerian adolescents. The present study aligns with Omoteso's (2010) research, which reported a significant prevalence of bullying. Approximately 88% of the participants experienced bullying, around 33% engaged in bullying behaviour, and 51% identified themselves as both bullies and victims. However, this finding contradicts the study conducted by Egbochuku (2007), which revealed that a greater proportion of the participants had experienced bullying, but a smaller percentage had engaged in bullying at least once a week. The distinction between this study

and the prior study is in the duration of the time frame employed, with the former utilising one week and the latter employing six weeks.

The finding also revealed that the majority of the in-school adolescents in Kwara State (50.1%) were bully-victims, 24.0% were perpetrators, 18.5% were victims and 7.4% were not involved in bullying roles. In the study conducted by Shiba & Mokwena (2023), it was discovered that 21.96% of learners were victims of bullying, 9.57% were offenders, and 42.39% fell into the category of perpetrator-victims. A disparity was seen between the current study and the study conducted by Igbaede-Edwards et al. (2023). The latter study discovered that 27.9% and 51.9% of teenagers attending school identified themselves as both perpetrators and targets of bullying. The difference between this study and that of Igbaede et al., (2023) could be that the present study investigated different bullying roles assumed by in-school adolescents in Kwara state while the latter considered the profiles of bullying perpetrators and victims among Nigerian students generally.

Findings also revealed that family interaction did not significantly correlate with bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This implies that the family interaction of the respondents does not influence their bullying behaviour. This could be due to the positive family interaction experienced by the respondents as earlier reported in the study. The finding supports the study of Bada et al. (2021) who found that parental communication did not significantly influence adolescents' bullying behaviour, indicating that effective communication within the family can help reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviour. Conversely, the finding does not corroborate with the study of Adegboyega et al. (2017) who found a significant relationship between family relationships and bullying behaviour among secondary school students.

The finding showed that there was a significant correlation between family interaction and bullying-victimisation role among in-school adolescents in Kwara State. There is no significant correlation between family interaction and bullying perpetration, family interaction and victimisation experience and non-involvement role in bullying among in-school adolescents. This implies that dual involvement as perpetrators of bullying and also experiencing bullying victimisation (bully-victims) was being influenced by family interaction while the reverse is the case among pure perpetrators, pure victims and those not-involved in bullying roles among respondents. The finding agrees with the study of Cenkseven Önder and Yurtal (2008) who showed that students with profile of bully and victims roles perceived their families to have more negative than positive

behaviours on communication. Similarly, Lereya et al. (2013) asserted that good communication between parents and children, parental support and involvement, as well as warmth and affection in interpersonal relationships are spaces where children acquire the resources and develop the necessary strategies to be free from becoming victims of school violence and not to become one. The significant relationship that exists between family interaction patterns and bullying-victimisation could be that parent-child communication might encourage victims of bullying to transfer aggression to someone else.

The finding also revealed that there was no significant correlation between family interaction and different bullying roles of male in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This suggests that factors outside of family dynamics may play a more prominent role in shaping the bullying behaviours of male adolescents. However, there was a significant correlation between the family interaction patterns and female bully-victims of in-school adolescents but no significant relationship between family interaction and female perpetrators, victims and non-involved in-school adolescents in Kwara State. This suggests that family dynamics alone may not be sufficient to explain or predict these specific roles in bullying among female students. the finding of the study is not in tandem with the studies of Curtner-Smith (2000); Dekovic et al. (2003); Kim et al. (1999); Stevens et al. (2002) who found that bullying behaviour roles of students were related to parents communication, familial relationship, and violence in family, parental supervision, discipline methods and behaviour control.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study conducted in Kwara State, Nigeria, revealed several important findings regarding the family interaction patterns and bullying behaviours of in-school adolescents. The findings showed that while in-school adolescents generally had positive family interaction patterns, there was a higher prevalence of bullying perpetration than victimization. Specifically, the majority of in-school adolescents were bully-victims, followed by perpetrators, victims, and those not involved in bullying roles. The study also found that family interaction did not significantly correlate with the overall bullying behaviour of in-school adolescents, but there was a significant correlation between family interaction and bullying-victimisation. Additionally, the study revealed that there was a significant correlation between family interaction patterns and female bully-victims, but no significant relationship between family interaction and female perpetrators, victims, and non-involved in-school adolescents. These

findings highlight the complex relationship between family interaction patterns and bullying behaviours among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Counselling Implication

The findings of this study have implications for counselling practice. Although the overall family interaction patterns did not significantly correlate with bullying behaviours, the specific correlation found with bully-victims suggests the importance of considering family dynamics in counselling interventions. Counsellors can explore and address any family issues or conflicts that may contribute to an adolescent's engagement in both bullying perpetration and victimisation. The study indicates a significant correlation between family interaction patterns and female bully-victims. Counsellors can adopt gender-sensitive approaches to address the unique challenges faced by female adolescents in the context of family interactions. Understanding and addressing gender-specific dynamics can enhance the effectiveness of counselling interventions.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, several recommendations emerged for addressing these issues effectively.

First, comprehensive anti-bullying programmes should be developed with a particular focus on bully-victims, who were the largest group identified in the study. These programmes should not only aim to reduce victimisation but also tackle perpetration behaviours by providing tailored support such as counselling and social skills training. Additionally, gender-specific interventions are necessary, especially for female students, as family interaction was found to significantly influence in-school adolescents' involvement in bullying-victimisation. Programmes for girls should incorporate strategies that improve family communication and emotional support, along with building resilience and conflict-resolution skills.

Parental engagement in schools is another crucial area. Although family interaction did not broadly correlate with bullying behaviours, there was a notable connection between family dynamics and victimisation. Schools should enhance parental involvement through workshops that educate parents on how their interaction patterns can help reduce bullying victimisation among adolescents. Family counselling services, offered through schools and community centers, would also be beneficial,

particularly for families with female adolescents who are at greater risk of becoming bully-victims.

Additionally, given the high prevalence of bullying-victimisation role, schools should prioritise mental health and psychosocial support services. These services should cater specifically to the needs of adolescents who play both victim and perpetrator roles. Conflict resolution and peer mediation programs would also be valuable in helping these students constructively manage disputes, thus reducing bullying behaviour.

Interventions aimed at female students should be particularly sensitive to their family dynamics. Gender-sensitive programs should include family-focused components that encourage healthy relationships within the home. Empowerment workshops that promote self-esteem and assertiveness in girls could further help reduce their involvement in bullying and victimisation.

Collaboration between schools and the wider community is also essential. Community leaders and organisations can extend the support system beyond schools, reinforcing positive behaviour and providing additional resources to families. Awareness campaigns can educate both students and parents on the complex nature of bullying, particularly the role of family interactions in preventing victimisation.

Finally, continuous monitoring of bullying patterns is important for ensuring that interventions remain effective. Schools and researchers should regularly assess bullying behaviours, particularly among bully-victims, to make necessary adjustments to the intervention programmes. Further research should also explore other factors influencing bullying, such as peer relationships and school environments, to gain a deeper understanding of the causes behind bullying behaviours.

Author Contributions

All the authors contributed to the preparation of the study, the first author, write out the introduction to the study, second and third authors prepared the research methodology, author 1, 2, 3, and 4 went to collect the data from four schools each, making a total of 16 secondary schools. The data were analysed by authors 1,2, and 3. While authors 2 and 4 compiled the discussion and all the authors worked on the conclusions, recommendations and References.

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Ethical and Legal Considerations

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University Ethical Review committee under approval code UERC/ASN/2024/2260. Informed consent was obtained from all the sampled schools and the respondents and the study was conducted in accordance with established ethical and legal standards.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this study

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