

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**IMPACT OF PEER BULLYING ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
STUDENTS OF POPE JOHN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, KOFORIDUA**



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UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

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**A Dissertation in the Department of Educational Foundations,
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of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Post-Graduate Diploma
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MAY, 2023

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Yvonne Adwoa Micah**, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: _____

Date: Wednesday, 06 December 2023

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Mr. Eric Ofosu-Dwamena (Supervisor)

Signature:

Date: Wednesday, 06 December 2023

DEDICATION

To my family and well-wishers



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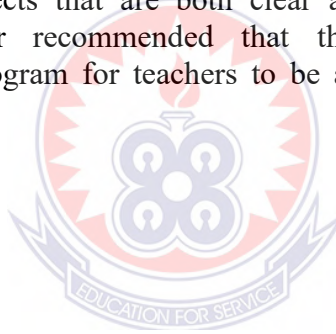
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ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of students of Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study employed quantitative descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 285 students was selected from a population of 1100 using a multi-staged sampling techniques comprising purposive and simple random sampling. The study used questionnaire to collect data from students and data were analyzed descriptively into frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations using SPSS (version 23.0). The findings of the study revealed that causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS were peer group influence, watching violent movies and obscene images and coming from a dysfunctional family. Also, the findings revealed that peer bullying has negative effects on students' academic performance; for it discourages students from attending class, creates a negative environment in the school, negatively affects students' academic level and cause students to perform poorly in school and then drop out. Finally, the findings from the study showed that some peer bullying mitigation measures in Pope John SHS include maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis, all teachers in the classroom collaborating with students to address bullying, involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program and making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable. Based on these findings, the researcher recommended that there should be a professional development training program for teachers to be able to handle issues of bullying effectively.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Numerous research conducted over the past 20 years has demonstrated that bullying is a widespread social issue (Bennett-Johnson, 2004; Hymel & Swearer 2015; Owusu, Hart, Oliver & Kang, 2011). Bullying rates ranged from 26.6% in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States to a high of 53.1% in the West and Central African region, according to a global survey by Richardson and Hiu (2018). Over the past ten years, there has been an increase in bullying at schools in Ghana, according to much research (Antiri, 2017; Owusu, 2020). One in five (20.2%) students in Ghana report being bullied, according to a study on bullying prevalence (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2019).

In addition to the rise in bullying incidences at schools, UNESCO (2017) highlights some general global trends discovered through a study with 100,000 young people across 18 nations. First off, UNESCO (2017) found that bullying was primarily caused by a child's physical characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or country of origin. Children who live with disabilities are economically and socially underprivileged, or who are refugees or asylum seekers are among the vulnerable groups targeted by bullies. Second, it seems that boys are more likely than girls to report physical violence (Walters, 2020). Bullying that is relational and indirect was more common among girls. Thirdly, bullying occurrences appear to decrease between the ages of 11 and 15 years, with primary schools having the highest rates of bullying.

Last but not least, it seems that emerging nations have a higher prevalence of bullying.

Bullying, according to Quiroz, Arnette and Stephens (2006), is the deliberate use of force, intimidation, or compulsion to maltreat, intimidate, or overpower others. This behaviour is often repeated and ingrained. It might be categorized as mature or peer. Juvonon, Yueyan and Espinoza (2011) claims that the latter incorporates responsible members of society including parents, teachers, employees, and neighbours. Peer bullying, in contrast to adult bullying, involves victims and perpetrators who have comparable social characteristics, such as age and educational attainment. The researcher focuses on bullying among peers.

Different types of peer harassment exist. Peer bullying can take six different forms, according to Quiroz et al. (2006): physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, relational abuse, and property abuse. Physical bullying, according to Pabian and Vanderbosch (2016), happens when peers use their physical dominance over another. It takes the form of striking, kicking, pinching, pushing, and stealing from or harming the property of the victims. Verbal bullying, on the other hand, is the use of words spoken or written to denigrate others. It shows itself through slurs, offensive sexual remarks, foul language, and threats. Relationships or another person's reputation may be harmed as a result of social bullying. It takes the form of purposefully keeping someone out of events, convincing people not to be friends with the victim, circulating rumours that aren't true, and shaming the victim in public. Contrarily, cyberbullying is carried out using electronic technology, including computers, mobile devices, and social media (Lehman, 2015). Lehman contends that

cyberbullying is a newer form of bullying that hasn't been thoroughly researched in underdeveloped nations.

In Africa, the issue of bullying by peers is not new. Physical bullying is the most common type of peer harassment in Botswana, occurring 60% of the time, followed by emotional bullying, which occurs 21% of the time. Bullies have been shown to pay less attention to their academic work and spend more time planning their next victims (Tjavanga & Jotia, 2012). In contrast, teachers in Namibia reported that engaging in peer bullying resulted in the suspension of bullies from school and the subsequent loss of academic hours. Out of terror, observers were also compelled to avoid the school (Aune, 2011). In Ghana, Kaar (2009) studied bullying and found that 10–16% of students were always afraid, susceptible to illness, and unable to focus on their studies. A study by the humanitarian organization Beat Bullying, mentioned in Ghana Business News (2009), revealed that 26 of the 59 child suicides reported in Ghana between 2000 and 2008 were linked to bullying, with school being the primary setting.

Bullying and its impacts continue to be a problem despite the introduction of numerous measures designed to lessen the issue. According to Bosomtwi, Sabates, Owusu and Dunne (2010), peer bullying is rife in Ghanaian schools, yet teachers there are still not taking bullying seriously enough to affect students' well-being or academic performance. According to a study by Eyiah (2012), bullying among peers is a problem in Ghana. Additionally, he claimed that in Ghana's senior high schools, peer bullying was at its worst and that freshmen who move into the boarding house experience unwarranted intimidation and harassment from their seniors. According to Hammond (2013), bullying occurs in senior high schools and new or junior pupils are

treated inhumanely in all manners. He claims that some victims have even developed a dislike for education, dropped out, and developed low self-esteem, which can cause timidity, uneasiness, and a lack of assertiveness.

Students spend the majority of their time at school working on their personal and academic development (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2019). Students who receive support from their teachers feel more involved, are more a part of the class, have fewer behavioural issues and perform better academically (Konishi, Hymel, Zumbo & Li, 2010). On the other hand, unfavourable school climates hurt a student's academic performance (Steinmayr et al., 2016). Academic attainment is important for education everywhere, and numerous research is being done on how peer bullying affects kids' academic performance. Poor academic performance is a direct or indirect result of bullying and peer victimization, which invariably affects the victims (Holt, Finkelhor, & Kantor, 2007). Excellent academic achievement is the end goal of all learning methods, and learning is ineffective if this goal is not met. Based on such presumptions, various efforts must be done to guarantee academic success.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Academic achievement is the result that displays a person's degree of performance as measured against objectives for the learning environment in schools, colleges, and universities (Steinmayr et al., 2016). Academic success is significantly influenced by all types of motivation (Effie, 2005). For instance, when students lack motivation and are forced to study in intimidating conditions, their academic performance suffers (Dweck, 2007).

Over the years, Ghana has paid a lot of attention to and media attention to the subject of peer bullying. This is because peer bullying causes significant harm to both those who engage in it and those who are victimized. Peer bullying has a detrimental effect on pupils' academic achievement, according to studies (Ponzo, 2013; Oliveira, De Menezes, Irffi & Oliveira, 2018). Although peer bullying has received a lot of attention in Ghana's schools and on other electronic media platforms, it is still a problem, particularly in our senior high schools (Eyiah, 2012). Therefore, by using Pope John as a case study, the researcher thinks it's fair to reiterate the numerous detrimental effects it has on students' performance. Additionally, it appears that not much has been done in New Juaben Municipality, particularly at Pope John Senior High School, despite similar research being carried out in Ghana and other regions of the world. By examining the effects of peer bullying on students' academic performance at Pope John Senior High School, the researcher hopes to close these knowledge and geographic gaps.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

It is essential to have a fundamental theoretical understanding of how an environment can affect his environment to assess the impact bullying has on students' performance. Because bullying does not occur in a vacuum and involves a number several it is crucial to understand how the environment (including friends, family, coworkers, institutions, society, culture, and time) affects the victim. It is also important to comprehend how the victim's environment—which may include friends, family, workplace, institutions, society, culture, and time—affects them because bullying does not happen in a vacuum and involves a lot of parties.

The ecological theory of development, which was first presented by Bronfenbrenner in 1979, demonstrates how a person's environment can affect their personal, social, and moral development. The concept evaluates environmental factors and centres on the unique child. The best way to visualize these influences is as concentric circles around the child, with the nearest having the greatest impact and the farthest having the least. Each system (figure 1) (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010) exerts influence on the others as well, and for healthy growth to take place, they must all function in concert. This model offers a framework for understanding how bullying might affect the individual, the immediate surroundings, and the individual's understanding of the notion.

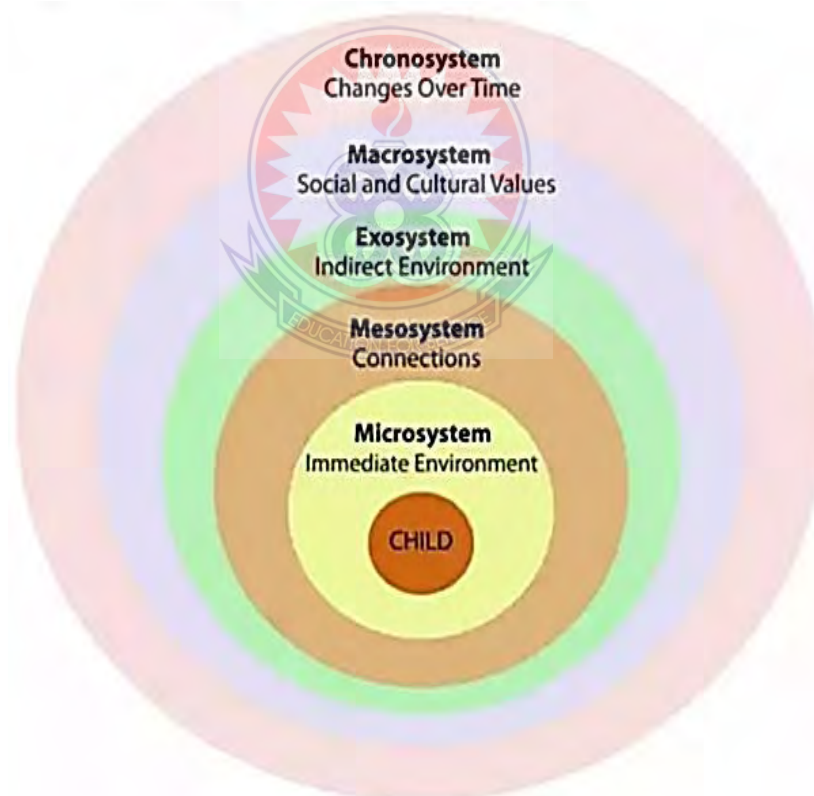


Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Socio-Ecological Model

Source: Bronfenbrenner (1979)

The second layer of the concept is the mesosystem of connections and interactions between the microsystems that are immediately surrounding the individual

(Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In this concept, Bronfenbrenner emphasizes the significance of roles within a setting that may differ in another—a person, for example, can be a student, daughter, or friend. The mesosystem is made up of the mesosystem between such roles and systems. The individual can compartmentalize the systems and inconsistencies emerge if the link, also known as written or spoken communications, meetings, and exchanges, is disrupted or constrained. Problems may develop, for instance, if parents, peers, and families define bullying and hazing differently from the school administration. In other words, because there are variations in how bullying and hazing are characterized by the many factors in a person's environment, their comprehension and perception of these behaviours become erratic. The connections that Bronfenbrenner identifies occur in bullying relationships as well as at all developmental levels. According to Hong and Espelage (2012), as a component of the mesosystem, the school setting and students' relationships with their schools are also important. Frequent contacts between the individual and other students, departments, and staff are crucial to feeling connected to the institution since the "mesosystem level demands a comprehension of the interrelations among two or more micro-systems, each comprising the individual" (p. 317).

The exo-system, which makes up the third layer of the model, is made up of "one or more settings in which events occur that have an impact on or are influenced by what takes place in that setting but do not actively engage the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 237). Links between the family and the parents' place of employment or between the parents and their higher education institution are two examples of the exo-system. Exo-systems mostly affect developing people through relationships with their families or peer groups (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The exo-system considers environmental factors not directly related to the immediate system.

According to Hong and Espelage (2012), media violence exposure is a crucial part of the system that affects bullying behaviour and perception. Additionally, they assert that bullying conduct may be influenced by a "risky neighbourhood environment due to insufficient adult supervision and peer influences" (p. 317). Although the person may not have any direct interactions with the community that surrounds a school's campus or the creators of films and media in either situation, both have an impact on people and their views.

The macro-system, the model's fourth layer, is made up of overarching themes and patterns that run across all the other layers and give rise to cultural norms, belief systems, knowledge systems, opportunities, dangers, and life possibilities. "The macro-system can be viewed as the social structure of a specific culture or subculture" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40). Within a bully-victim interaction, cultural influences and societal norms—perceived or actual—come under this system. Religion and cultural norms/beliefs are two macro-system elements that, according to Hong and Espelage (2012), are significant to bullying. Cultural norms influence how the campus community and society at large view bullying. For example, if the college has a religious association, religion may affect the cultural norms on campus.

Following the creation of the basic model, Bronfenbrenner (1994) introduced the chronosystem, which was initially mistaken for age and the passage of time, but study has revealed that time is truly a trait of the evolving person. "A chrono-system comprises change or consistency through time not just in the features of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives," claims Bronfenbrenner (p. 40). This approach would take into account a person's socioeconomic situation, level of stress or volatility in their life, place of residence, employment, or changes in their

educational levels. According to Hong and Espelage (2012), factors influencing school-aged students within the chrono-system include finishing high school and starting college, adjustments to the financial situation of the family, or an increase in stress. Because they put a person in unfamiliar social situations, can affect a person's self-confidence, or can affect how others perceive a person, for example, these influences have the potential to affect bullying behaviours and how the notion is perceived.

Researching the effects of bullying on students' academic achievement requires developing a theoretical framework for the issue at hand. In other words, because people cannot exist in a vacuum of their environment, it is difficult for them to escape being influenced by it. Development depends on a person's view of the world, which is influenced by the influences that affect them. In other words, a person's growth, including their academic life, is influenced by the systems around them.

According to Hong and Eamon (2012), bullying behaviour may be influenced by family, friends, teachers, administrators, the media, and the cultural expectations of societies. Accordingly, senior high students are influenced by the systems around them, including their friends, teachers, professors, living arrangements, campus culture, media, and general society. These factors affect how senior high school student perceives bullying and their academic performance in general.

1.2.1 Theoretical application

One can further apply Bronfenbrenner's concept to a bully-victim-bystander connection if they have a basic comprehension of it. Swearer and Espelage (2004; 2011) have modelled the bullying relationship model, which is developed from the ecological model of development, from this point of view (Figure 2). "To put it

briefly, bullying does not happen in a vacuum. The intricate connections between an individual, family, peer group, school, community, and culture foster and/or inhibit this phenomenon (p. 3). By using the ecological model and applying it to the bully-victim bystander interaction, it is possible to see how the various social systems interact with and have an impact on the person at the centre, whether they are the bully, victim, bully-victim, or bystander. The social-ecological framework of bullying among peers is illustrated in figure 2 below.

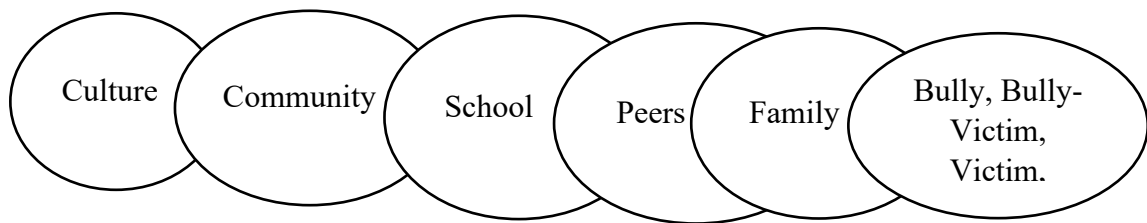


Figure 2: Bullying Relationship Model

Source: Swearer and Espelage (2004; 2011)

The school's campus, residence dormitories, homes, and families are only a few of the micro-systems that are created by the student's immediate environment. Students frequently live on their own for the first time while in high school, especially at residential high schools with traditional-aged students (ages 18 to 22), with little to no daily parental involvement (Light, 2001). Campuses of senior high schools offer a secure setting for learning and development, but they are not free from crime and hostility. On campus, violence can take many different forms, such as bullying, hazing, sexual assault, bodily damage, and, in some cases, death (Waits & Lundberg-Love, 2008). Violence is a component of both the micro-system of a person and the campus environment. Residence halls, courses, peer interactions, family life, connections with departments and employees, dining halls, and other areas of campus or off campus where the person routinely engages are possible additional components of the micro-system inside a peer's bullying relationship. Bullying, sexual assault,

teasing, hitting, punching, and the like can occur in the places described as well as among peers, therefore all these factors can affect how kids perceive and comprehend bullying as well as its effects and consequences. To put it another way, it can happen in a person's micro-system.

For instance, the interaction between the family and the secondary institution when it comes to combating bullying is an illustration of the mesosystem in a bullying relationship. Their differences will affect people and their ability to interpret the concept. Within Bronfenbrenner's (1979; 1994) theory, student interactions between classmates or roommates that are influenced by dialogues with parents and relatives are examples of the mesosystem on a senior high school campus. Similarly, interactions with a particular department or staff person may have an impact on how students behave in the classroom, and representatives from the resident dormitories may have an impact on how students behave in events outside of the dorms. For instance, if a bullying or violent incident takes place in the student's dorm, it might influence how the instructor or another member of the staff handles a situation elsewhere on campus.

The exo-system would consist of links that do not directly involve the central person but have an impact on that person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1994). For instance, how a parent perceives and reacts to aggressive conduct at home may be influenced by how their place of employment handles bullying behaviours in the workplace. The individual and the other surroundings in the individual's microsystem will then be impacted by this. The workplace environments of family members or friends, peer classroom environments for classes in which the individual is not enrolled, classmates' residence dormitories, and other elements where the individual is not an

active participant but could still be influenced are examples of exo-system components that could be found in a high school setting. For instance, if a student encounters harassment or violence at a senior high school, the encounter may have an impact on how that student's friend or sibling could react to a similar situation elsewhere or at a different institution entirely.

Cultural factors, such as how bullying is portrayed in the media and how society views bullying, have an impact on the individual in the macro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). The school's overall culture, including its attitudes toward aggressive or violent behaviour on campus, media influences, and similar factors, are included in the macro-system. In a high school environment, the macro-system would include the community blueprint of the school, which is influenced by the cultural and social norms of society. While, generally speaking, the macro-system is a societal blueprint, as Bronfenbrenner puts it. For instance, the change in attitudes toward gay rights in the United States affects how people see certain topics and may have a beneficial impact on how they react to other students who are different.

Finally, the chrono-system has a variety of significant effects on the person. This system takes into account qualities that evolve (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), such as how people perceive and characterize bullying and violence as they mature and develop. When talking about bullying and violence, the chrono-system is especially crucial.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main focus of the study was to assess the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of students of Pope John Senior High School, Koforidua in the New Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Investigate the causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS.
2. Examine the effects of peer bullying on the academic performance of students in Pope John SHS.
3. Assess the measures put in place to curb peer bullying in Pope John SHS.

1.5 Research Questions

Due to the comprehensive nature of the study, the following research questions guided the researcher in conducting the study:

1. What are the causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS?
2. What are the effects of peer bullying on the academic performance of students in Pope John SHS?
3. What measures are put in place to curb peer bullying in Pope John SHS?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Researchers may be better able to understand bullying at school and how it affects students' academic performance in senior high school according to this study. This study is expected to help all stakeholders (principals, teachers, parents, etc.) become more aware of school bullying and how to support these children in adjusting to school life, ultimately improving their academic performance. The study will be beneficial to the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Officers since the results could be utilized to develop rules regarding how bullying affects academic progress in senior high schools. The study will also be useful to educational planners because it will be one of the reference points for their development strategies to address educational inequities.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

Due to the scope of the study, it was only possible to look into the causes of peer bullying, the effects of peer bullying on students' academic performance, and strategies to be adopted to mitigate peer bullying at Pope John SHS. Geographically, the study was conducted in the New Juaben Municipality at Pope John Senior High School.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Bullying	The use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate.
Violence	The use of physical force to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy.
Physical Bullying	The use of physical actions to intimidate and gain control over a target.
Cyberbullying	The use of digital technologies to intimidate and gain control over a target.
Bystanders	One who is present but not taking part in a situation or event.
Bully-victims	Individuals who have not only been targeted by bullies but have also bullied others.
Victim	A person who has experienced bullying.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The entire research was structured into five chapters. The first chapter covered the introduction which consisted of the background to the study, a statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study. The second chapter also dealt with the review of related literature which re-examined theories, concepts and similar studies

carried out by other researchers. The third chapter discussed the methods employed in conducting the study. This comprised the research design, study population, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and methods of data analysis. The fourth chapter analysed and discussed the results from the data collected. The final chapter summarised the key findings of the study, drew conclusions and made recommendations and suggestions for further studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of students of Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The chapter is divided into two sections; namely, conceptual review and empirical review. The conceptual review deals with concepts underlying the topic under study such as the concept of bullying, the incidence of bullying, bullying in the school environment, types of bullying in senior high schools, risk factors of bullying in senior high schools, effects of bullying on academic performance and measures to mitigate bullying in senior high schools. The empirical review on the other hand re-examines works done by other researchers on the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of students.

2.1 Conceptual Review

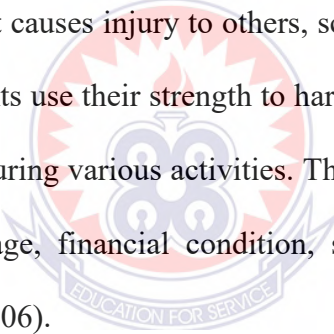
This section re-examines issues such as the concept of bullying, the incidence of bullying, bullying in the school environment, types of bullying in senior high schools, risk factors of bullying in senior high schools, effects of bullying on academic performance and measures to mitigate bullying in senior high schools.

2.1.1 Concept of bullying

Bullying is described as “repeated acts of unjustified hostility that are harmful to the victim's psychological or physical well-being and where the aggressor(s) and victim are of unequal strength” (Jankauskiene, Kardelis, Sukys & Kardeliene, 2008).

Bullying is a type of aggression that primarily takes place in peer group settings and in which there is no power imbalance between the bully and the victim (Mishna, 2003). Bullying is one of the most significant issues that students confront in the educational system, as well as one of the biggest health dangers (Raskauskas & Modell, 2011). These days, bullying is seen as a severe issue in schools (Rose, Monda-Amaya & Espelage, 2011). Teachers are aware of the dynamics and effects of bullying as well as what they may do to help students in such circumstances (Allen, 2010). According to Bauman and Del Rio (2006), bullying has three elements: first, there must be a desire to cause harm; second, it must occur frequently; and third, there must be an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim.

As a form of violence that causes injury to others, school bullying takes place when a student or group of students use their strength to harm other people or other groups. It can happen at school or during various activities. The foundation of a bully's power is their physical prowess, age, financial condition, social standing, or technological prowess (Quiroz, et al., 2006).

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a cross-like design, surrounded by a wreath. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA' is written around the top inner edge of the circle, and 'EDUCATION FOR SERVICE' is written along the bottom inner edge.

Bullying at school is defined as aggressive behaviour that frequently occurs over time and typically lacks an equivalent balance of power between the attacker and the victim. Bullying can take many different forms, including physical harm, verbal abuse, and non-verbal threats. Bullying also includes the use of contemporary communication tools to convey conflicting and threatening signals. Bullying is the term used to describe repeated acts of aggression committed by one or more bullies. Bullying also occurs when a student is often teased in an offensive manner (Omoteso, 2010). Bullying is recognized as a widespread, growing issue in all societies and

educational settings. Bullying can happen at any time, but it mostly affects students' intellectual, emotional, and social development during school period.

2.1.2 Incidence of peer bullying

Bullying is omnipresent, as shown by Osman (2016), who asserted that it has existed forever and across all geographical boundaries. Therefore, it is possible to contend that bullying occurs frequently and affects people of various racial and cultural backgrounds.

Bullying is not only widespread but is increasingly the most common form of aggressiveness and violence in many school settings around the world (Spiel, Salmivalli & Smith, 2011). Numerous studies conducted in various parts of the world have highlighted how this affects school safety (Malematsa, 2005; Ndetei, Ongecha, Khasakhala, Syanda, Mutiso, Othieno &, Kokonya, 2007; Smith, 2011). For instance, 40% of the 898 students who were bullied in six middle schools in the United States surveyed by Unnever and Cornell (2003) did not disclose the occurrences. A comparable study conducted in Bangladesh estimated the number at 30%, but there was no official program in place to reduce bullying incidents (Ahmed, 2005). Over 15 million (20%) of Britain's school-going population have experienced misery as a result of bullying, according to the Daphne II Programme poll from 2008.

In the African context, it was discovered that 60% of students in Zambia experienced bullying behaviours at least once each month (Jones, Moore, Villar-Marquez & Broadbent, 2008). Similar research in the Free State Province of South Africa found that 84% of students and 95% of teachers strongly agreed that bullying exists (Okwemba, 2007). According to a 2005 study by Moswela (2005) on the issue in Botswana, both the six primary schools and the 12 secondary schools under

investigation had high rates of victimization. The survey also showed that 21% of these bullying behaviours involved beating boys, while only 9% involved beating girls. Others included calling boys' and girls' names (22% and 15%, respectively). In Benin City, four out of every five respondents to the study reported either being bullied or have bullied others, according to Aluede (2011). Up to 98% of the students in a Zanzibar Island longitudinal research conducted between 2000 and 2007 engaged in the abusive language (Saito, 2011). Ndibalema (2013) added a new layer by revealing that teachers have also engaged in bullying behaviour. Ndibalema (2013) provided evidence for this claim with a study done in the Dodoma Municipality, which showed that a male student in form four was seriously hurt by the teacher. In research in Dar es Salaam, students experienced sexual harassment, humiliation, and corporal punishment from their teachers (Moris, 2012).

2.1.3 Peer bullying in the school environment

Bullying can occur in a variety of settings, including schools, particularly those with significant concentrations of teenagers and young adults. According to Tambawal and Umar (2017), bullying in schools is a pattern of conduct in which one person repeatedly hurts or humiliates another person, usually with the victim being weaker than the aggressor. Similarly, Mullvain (2016) views bullying as a behaviour that happens when a person is regularly exposed over time to unfavourable verbal and physical actions on the part of one or more students.

The definition of bullying used in this study is when someone is intimidated into doing anything, usually to get them to do something, using greater strength, the position of authority (due to experience or tenure), or influence. Since seniors are frequently given the responsibility of supervising juniors in the high school system

while teachers are not present, this act seems to be more common in senior high schools compared to other levels of the educational ladder. Seniors are also given the chance to assume leadership roles and manage specific school tasks. This allows the seniors to frighten the juniors into doing things violently in the name of finishing the job by using their superior power, position, or influence.

Bullying is typically carried out by someone who is in a position of control over their victims, according to Dillon and Lash (2005). In addition, according to Owusu et al. (2011), the World Health Organization (WHO) performed a study in Ghana utilizing the Global School-based Student Health Survey (GSHS) with assistance from the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The study examined the prevalence of bullying victimization among a sample of SHS students in Ghana drawn from throughout the country (Owusu, et al., 2011).

Bullying is reportedly a common occurrence in schools, in all of its manifestations. According to Tambawal and Umar (2017), who conducted a qualitative study in 2017, bullying is pervasive in Nigerian secondary schools and is not tough to find in any secondary school today. According to Tambawal and Umar (2017), bullying is prevalent in almost all secondary schools. However, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Association, out of more than 15,000 public school students surveyed in the United States, nearly 30% reported having engaged in bullying occasionally as either bullies or victims (Tambawal & Umar, 2017). Students in the United Kingdom and Australia attest to comparable circumstances when bullying occurs in the school setting (Tambawal & Umar, 2017). Additionally, bullying is also a problem that many schools face globally (Mullvain, 2016). For instance, Olweus (2003) determined using the Bully/Victim Questionnaire that over

5,000,000 American children in Grades 1–9 are involved in bullying problems over a given school year, according to Mullvain (2016). This is because kids frequently watch violent television shows and video games and engage in acts of violence themselves.

It is important to note that bullying in schools can take many different forms, even though it is common and a problem for many institutions. According to Mullvain (2016), bullying typically involves striking, kicking, and pushing other students. In addition to being bullied verbally, socially, and electronically, which is similar to verbal or social bullying that takes place online, they are also bullied verbally through name-calling, insults, and mocking, and socially through gossip, spreading rumours, and social isolation.

2.2 Types of Peer Bullying in Senior High Schools

There are five different types of bullying: cyberbullying, reactive victims, social bullying, verbal bullying, and physical bullying. Each of them has different context-based bullying that the offenders engage in (Seddon, 2007). The most prevalent form of bullying in Ghana is physical bullying, which is caused by stereotypes in schools and is the most prevalent type of bullying worldwide (Elamé, 2013). A victim of physical bullying may be struck or kicked, and their possessions may be taken or damaged. Bullying of this kind is fairly simple to spot because everyone in a school knows who the physical bullies are (Elamé, 2013). A larger definition of physical bullying, which is described as hitting, shoving, spitting, beating, stealing from, or causing property damage, is one of the other sorts of school physical bullying (Seddon, 2007). Other minor types of bullying, such as senior students punishing

younger ones, kneeling, and flogging, typically go unnoticed in Ghanaian schools in addition to the physical bullying that predominates there (Elamé, 2013).

Using certain names to jeer, tease cruelly, make racist remarks, humiliate, or threaten someone is considered verbal bullying (Naidoo, Satorius, de Vries & Taylor, 2016). It is simple to bully other youngsters in this way. It happens in the shortest length of time possible, and because it leaves no physical scars, its effects might be more devastating than those of physical bullying (Naidoo et al., 2016). Relational bullies often referred to as social bullies, are frequent among peers who aim to exclude the victim from their social circle. This is connected to the propagation of unfavourable stories about others and verbal bullying that affects young people, mainly girls (Stuart-Cassel, Terzian, & Bradshaw, 2013).

Reactive victims toe the line between victim and/or bully. Since they initially appear to be the targets of other bullies, they are frequently the hardest to spot. However, retaliatory victims frequently mock bullies and bully others as well. Such victims lash out in self-defence, such as by yelling and pushing in reprisal (Burton, Florell, & Gore, 2013).

Cyberbullying, this form of bullying also entails an imbalance of power, hostility, and persistently harmful behaviour, but it takes place online through chat rooms, emails, instant messaging, or texting (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2008). Cyberbullying aims to socially isolate or humiliate the victim by making information visible to the public (Dehue, Bolman, & Vollinkl, 2009).

2.3 Risk Factors of Peer Bullying in Senior High Schools

The causes of bullying in senior high schools have been grouped under parental factors, individual factors, school factors, neighbourhood risk factors and societal risk factors by the researcher.

2.3.1 Parental characteristics

Bullies are more likely to come from dysfunctional, cold, fatherless families with high power needs and a tolerance for violent behaviour, according to research. In addition to coming from low socioeconomic status families with authoritarian parents, they can have also been physically abused (Duncan, 2010). In contrast to their fathers, who were distant, critical, absent, indifferent, inattentive, and domineering, the moms of the male victims were overly warm, overprotective, controlling, restricting, coddling, and controlling. Contrarily, hostile mothers who rejected their devotion, intimidated them, and overpowered them, as well as negligent and carefree fathers, were the parents of the female victims (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim & Sadek, 2010).

2.3.1.1 Family discord

Being reared in a household where the parents engaged in physical or sexual abuse, drank excessively, used drugs, and fought was a predictor of bullying and bullying victimization in kids (Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt & Hymel, 2010). Bullies frequently have issues with their parents and family strife (Cook, et al, 2010).

2.3.2 Individual risk factors of peer bullying in senior high schools

2.3.2.1 Gender

Boys are more likely than females to be bullied, according to a study, because both girls and boys have the potential to bully and be tormented (Cook, et al, 2010). The gender gap in bullying is particularly pronounced for overt bullying behaviours like

physical assault or threats. For indirect bullying, such as spreading rumours or social isolation, this association is less relevant (Farrington & Baldry, 2010). Only 18% of males reported being bullied, compared to nearly 24% of girls. Similar trends were seen with rumours: 15% of women reported being targeted, compared to 9% of men. However, more men (5%) than women (3%) have reported threatening behaviour (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2019).

2.3.2.2 Gender level

From primary through high school, bullying is less prevalent among children (Smith, Madsen & Moody, 2013). Although data indicate that bullying is most prevalent in middle schools (between elementary and middle schools, and middle schools and high schools), it is also most prevalent in schools when children are preparing to enter high school (Pellegrini, 2009).

2.3.2.3 Ethnicity

Participation in bullying is a cross-cultural and racial phenomenon. For instance, studies have indicated that ethnic minority students at schools are more likely to experience harassment than their ethnic majority counterparts (Jimerson, Swearer & Handbook, 2009).

2.3.2.4 Body building and physical characteristics

According to powerful men's tendency, big men tend to bully (Farrington & Baldry, 2010). Bullies in the US are bigger and stronger than their peers (Unnever & Cornell, 2003). While female students did not, male students found a substantial quadratic connection (U-shaped) between overweight status and harassment (Unnever & Cornell, 2003). These findings suggest that overweight and obese males are more likely to be bullied than their average-weight friends, supporting the conflict

hypothesis of bullying because victims are frequently outcasts (Greenleaf, Petrie & Martin, 2014).

2.3.2.5 Externalizing behaviour

Bullying is frequently connected with externalizing behaviour (such as aggression, defiance, disruption, or delinquency), but victimization is typically related to internalizing behaviour (such as anxiety, sadness, or low self-esteem) (Cook et al., 2010).

2.3.2.6 Popularity and social skills

Bullying has been referred to as a “social relationship problem” (Pepler & Craig, 2008). Social skills are lacking in victims, bullies, and some bullies (Cook, et al., 2010). Bullies might come across as popular, powerful, and “cool” among their peers even though many of their classmates may not like them personally (Reeijntjes, Vermande, Thomaes, Goossens, Olthof, Aleva & Van der Meulen, 2016). Additionally, in their peer networks, bullies frequently hold key positions and are surrounded by pals. Teenagers can reinforce the coercive behaviour of others by acting like other people who participate in and connect with similar activities (Sentse, Kiuru, Veenstra & Salmivalli, 2014).

2.3.2.7 Academic achievement

It's challenging to draw a link between bullying and academic success. Bullies' academic performance may be slightly below average or much below average, depending on previous studies. Peer bullying was linked to reduced achievement, especially if taunted students missed school and missed educational opportunities, according to a study that looked at exam results from 46 schools (Barboza, Schiamberg, Oehmke, Korzeniewski, Post & Heraux, 2012). Students in a Trend

Studies in Mathematics and Science program from three African nations ranged in age from 12 to 16. Their data show that bullying is a substantial issue in each of the three nations and that it is frequently and significantly linked to subpar academic achievement (Anton-Erxleben, Kibriya & Zhang, 2016).

2.3.2.8 Physical disability

Bullying is more prevalent among students with conduct issues, but it can also be retaliatory (Rose, Monda-Amaya & Espelage, 2011).

2.3.3 Peer group risk factors of peer bullying in senior high schools

2.3.3.1 Peer group norms

When members of a peer group engage in bullying, the others are also bullied. Additionally, bullies were more likely to emerge from socially significant peer groups among students (Lodder, Scholte, Cillessen & Giletta, 2016).

2.3.3.2 Delinquency

Peer influence was a strong predictor of harassment participation, and negative peer influence was associated with bullying and victimization (Cook, et al., 2010). A delinquent history, such as vandalism, gang involvement, or carrying a weapon to school, is also linked to greater rates of bullying and victimization, according to a study (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Goldweber & Johnson, 2013). Students who exhibit high levels of pro-social conduct and low levels of social anxiety are more likely to achieve academically because they are less likely to be bullied or abused (Brewer, 2017).

2.3.3.3 Alcohol/drug abuse

Bullying and drug or alcohol abuse is known to go hand in hand. For instance, a study of American adults found a strong correlation between bullying and lifelong alcohol

and drug usage. However, bullying engagement is associated with current and future alcohol/drug usage (Gaete, Tornero, Valenzuela, Rojas-Barahona, Salmivalli, Valenzuela & Araya, 2017).

2.3.4 School risk factors of peer bullying in senior high schools

2.3.4.1 School climate

In creating a favourable or negative climate in schools, adults have a significant impact. If the educational climate is unhealthful and poor, bullying and other issues are common (Ropke, Hillebrandt & Kasen, 2010). On the other hand, bullying and victimization are less common when students are driven and challenged to perform well in school (Pörhölä, Almonkari & Kunttu, 2019).

2.3.4.2 Teacher attitude

In the fight against bullying in school, the teacher's involvement is crucial (Yoon & Bauman, 2014). Depending on their attitudes and beliefs, teachers' responses to bullying will differ. Because they do not feel sympathy for the victim, some teachers view bullying as a typical behaviour that may help kids develop social skills and do not feel the need to interfere (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008). Additionally, when teachers believe that behaviour is not bullying, when there are other instances of concealed forms of bullying, such as relational or verbal bullying, or when teachers do not believe the behaviour to be bullying, they are less likely to intervene in cases of bullying (Blitz, 2016).

2.3.4.3 Classroom characteristics

Schools are made up of a variety of classrooms, therefore creating a safe learning atmosphere in the classroom is encouraged. According to a study, the following four factors are highly predictive of bullying in schools: Students have low self-control,

poor peer interactions, poor teacher-student relationships, weak problem-solving skills, and bad teacher-student relationships (Doll, Song, Champion & Jones, 2011).

2.3.4.4 School belonging

In primary school, those who bullied others had lower rates of school affiliation than those who had either been bullied or had not been bullied (Swearer & Espelage, 2011).

Neighbourhoods and the media are two additional communal and societal aspects that contribute to bullying among peers. The qualities of a neighbourhood have a big impact on bullying behaviour (Cook, et al., 2010). For instance, bullying is more prevalent in hostile, disorderly, and hazardous communities. On the other hand, living in an area that is secure and well-connected was linked to reduced levels of victimization and bullying (Galal, Emadeldin & Mwafy, 2019). The question of whether being exposed to violent video games, television shows, and movies is associated with higher levels of aggression has been studied for many years. Indeed, these research meta-analyses demonstrate that media violence is linked to aggressive and antisocial behaviour (Mares, 2015).

2.4 Effects of Peer Bullying

Bullying is occasionally viewed as a sociological process that separates “the men from the boys” and as a critical component of human survival, claims Kaar (2009). Numerous members of society also contend that efforts to stop bullying are ineffective and wasteful because it is a normal part of a child's growth (Arora, 2014). People are starting to realize that something needs to be done to address bullying in schools as a result of increasing news reports on bullying-related suicides and catastrophes as well as the rise of cyberbullying.

2.4.1 Effects of bullying on victims

It makes sense to anticipate that victims would experience anxiety and apprehension in the setting where the bullying occurred. They might react by skipping class, avoiding certain areas of the school, running away, or even considering suicide. They might also act out more aggressively by carrying a weapon to school for self-defence or retaliation, or by performing poorly in class. Chronic abuse victims are more prone to perceive school as an unpleasant environment and to avoid certain areas of the school or the school altogether (Batsche & Knoff, 2004).

Bullying can have such a negative impact on some students that they attempt suicide, flee, stop attending school, or end up getting chronic illnesses (Elliot, 2006). According to Rigby (2007), persons who engage in bullying may have the following poor health problems and outcomes:

1. Low psychological well-being is characterized by mental states that are typically seen as unpleasant, including overall unhappiness, low self-esteem, and emotions of rage and melancholy.
2. Poor social adjustment typically manifests as a feeling of distaste toward one's social surroundings, as well as feelings of loneliness and isolation.
3. Psychological distress, which includes extreme anxiety, depression, and even suicidal thoughts, is seen as being more significant than the first two categories.
4. Physical ill-health: Bullied children are more prone than other kids to experience physical ill-health.

According to research, the accumulation of these negative consequences causes students to perform poorly in school and finally drop out (Swearer, et al., 2010;

Tenenbaum, Varjas, Meyers & Parris, 2011). These harmful outcomes can persist into adulthood and are not simply noticeable during adolescence (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). According to studies, victims as adults deal with higher degrees of anxiety, shame, and relationship issues (Carlisle & Rofes, 2007). Additionally, studies show that those who experienced bullying as adolescents are more likely to struggle with psychosis, melancholy, low self-esteem, hostility, abuse, violence, substance and alcohol abuse, suicidal ideation, and attempted and actual suicide (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010).

They frequently experience emotional embarrassment, insecurity, and loss of self-esteem, and they may grow afraid of going to school. Victims of persistent bullying may feel its effects well into adulthood when they tend to be more vulnerable to depression and other mental health issues (Shellard, 2002; Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 2001).

Bullying causes low-grade sadness which is typically referred to in the research as “poor psychosocial adjustment” in children and adolescents. As a result, they might skip class or avoid going to school, or they might use alcohol or narcotics to dull their emotional pain. Chronic bullying victims run the danger of developing longer-term issues. They are more prone to later experience sadness or consider suicide.

2.4.2 Effects on bullies

Few findings in bullying research have centred on the penalties for bullies. Contrary to the effects on victims, which can shed information on how bullies experience the effects of what they have been doing, there is no clear consensus. However, several studies have revealed some potential repercussions for bullies.

Olweus (2003) discovered throughout his research in Norwegian schools that individuals who were bullies in the classroom were four times more likely to appear in court as a result of delinquency. Other statements regarding the detrimental effects of bullying include that children who bully regularly significantly experience higher levels of sadness or even suicidal ideation (Salmon, James & Smith, 2008; Rigby, 2007). Additionally, persons that engage in bullying frequently perform poorly academically at school (Schwartz, Dodge, Pettit & Bates, 2002). Bullies also suffer unpleasant effects. When they enter high school, they are frequently less well-liked, have fewer friends, and are more likely to commit crimes.

Other antisocial behaviours, including vandalism, stealing, skipping and dropping out of school, fighting, and drug and alcohol usage, have all been connected to bullying behaviour (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 2001). Bullying other students while they are still in school has been linked strongly to adult legal or criminal issues. Bullies are more likely to use drugs, engage in domestic violence, and commit other violent crimes as adults (Ballard, Argus & Remley, 2009).

Long-term consequences for bullying behaviour also affect the bullies. Compared to other students, they are more prone to smoke or drink alcohol. Chronic bullies seem to continue their behaviour into adulthood, which adversely affects their capacity to establish and keep healthy relationships (Oliver, Hoover & Hazler, 2004).

2.4.3 Effects on bystanders

Bystanders are affected by bullying as well. Witnesses of bullying are more likely to experience higher levels of despair, anxiety, hostility, post-traumatic stress disorder, alcohol usage, and poor academic performance (Shellard, 2002). Students who experience bullying frequently at school have a less safe learning environment, worry

that the bully may target them next, and have the perception that teachers and other adults are powerless or unwilling to stop bullies' behaviour (Shellard & Turner, 2004).

2.4.4 Effects of bullying on the school environment

The academic, emotional, and social ramifications of bullying can last a lifetime for bullies, victims, and onlookers. Academically, bullying in schools has a detrimental effect on children's ability to learn in a setting where they are safe, secure, and treated with respect (Shellard & Turner, 2004). Bullying has an impact on the school climate because it has an impact on all students, whether they are bullies, targets, or bystanders.

2.4.5 Effects of bullying on the home and the wider society

Bullying has an impact on students' behaviour even at home. They begin to exhibit a variety of behaviours at home that were different from their pre-school behaviours as a result. Being a bully, a victim, or a bystander may have an impact on a child's life at home and in society as they get older.

Empirical research has already demonstrated that exposure to physical aggressiveness in the family frequently contributes to children's maladjustment and violent behaviours (Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001). Children who show signs of violence when they are young often run the danger of developing long-term behavioural and emotional issues, leading them to act out in front of their own families as adults (Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001).

Additionally, there is a probability that a child will have weak attachment abilities if they spend time in a home where the parent shows only very modest maternal responses to the child and exhibits signs of despair (Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001). The

lack of social skills that may result from this may subsequently have an impact on how the child interacts with his peers in a classroom. Bullying has a significant negative impact on a huge number of kids who are switching from primary to secondary education (Cullingford & Morrison, 2005). According to numerous academics, bullying in schools is often underreported since many adults are unable to recognize its early warning signs. Because of this, bullying frequently goes unreported by many adults, which provides the bully additional chances to make fun of the victim (Onyskiw & Hayduk, 2001).

2.5 Bullying Behaviour and Academic Performance

According to Dunne, John, Adcroft, Griffies, Hallberg, Shevliakova and Zadeh (2012), bullying aggression and other forms of violence in schools can harm students' formal educational experiences as well as their ability to make use of their opportunities. When analysing the effects of cyberbullying, Medlen (2012) expresses similar feelings, noting that "a lot of children will go home distressed from school, which is a shame because school should be a good component of a child's life." On the other hand, bullying in virtual entertainment has raised concerns from the West Australian School Teachers Union on its prevalence, the fact that it is a problem at schools, and how it should be handled at home. The majority of bullying incidences take place in facilities-challenged schools.

Additionally, students in unfriendly environments are adversely affected by their peers. According to Gendron, Williams and Guerra (2011), bullying is associated with schools that don't provide a safe and nurturing environment. Positive assessments of the school atmosphere essentially encouraged high levels of self-assurance among students and predicted fewer incidences of bullying. Schools' schedules must be

dramatically changed to remove spare time, which is when vandalism and altercations are most likely to take place. In a 2013 study by Ndambiri on the causes and methods used to curb indiscipline in Kirinyaga District, considerable disciplinary incidences of stealing, vandalism, rape, fighting, sneaking, and using drugs were identified. Bullying takes place covertly and without adult witnesses in schools.

In addition to being severe, bullying has negative social, physical, and psychological effects on its victims (MacNeil, 2004). Students who have been bullied not only view school as dangerous, but they also run a high risk of developing depression and abusing drugs. Bullied children are more prone to experience low self-esteem as they get older (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2001). According to MacNeil (2004), bullying-related incidents in schools further disrupt learning, leading to subpar academic performance.

Victims of bullying may experience depression, particularly if it lasts for a long time (Laneaux, 2010). It must be noted that the emotional effects of bullying affect bullies as well as those who are bullied. Omoteso (2010) asserts that those who harass others persistently and severely have a range of mental health, academic, and social problems. When a child is subjected to bullying regularly, they may begin skipping school. His lack of presence and lack of ability to think clearly could hurt his grades.

Violence harms everyone involved, including bullies, victims, schools, and communities (Omoteso, 2010). Victims' failure to concentrate on their academics may hurt their performance. Compared to the general population, they have higher absenteeism and dropout rates, and they may display signs of loneliness including trouble navigating social and emotional transitions, making new acquaintances, and interacting with peers (Lumsden, 2002). Bullying victims usually experience humiliation, insecurity, and fear of returning to school (Shellard, 2002).

According to a substantial body of literature, education is essential for corporate and public profits from human resources (Card, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to look at practical ways to raise educational quality. Literature is increasingly emphasizing variables including student gender, school quality, enrolment, region, instructor gender, experience, and education level (Dearden, Ferri & Meghir, 2002).

There are several ways that bullying affects academic performance. In addition to having wonderful friends, bullying victims frequently experience dissatisfaction and loneliness at school (Boulton & Underwood, 2012). Bullying victims are more likely than non-bullying teenagers to have new psychological and psychiatric illnesses, which can have a detrimental effect on loneliness, anxiety, and sadness at school and in daily life (Dearden, Ferri & Meghir, 2002). Neurobiological research suggests a connection between bullying and psychological problems. Physical abuse, for instance, has long-term effects on the HPA response, which is linked to social, enthusiastic, and behavioural difficulties (Ouellet-Morin, 2011).

Hemphill and Walrave (2011) found a significant correlation between bullying, binge drinking, and depression. School avoidance and poor attendance also hurt academic success. Based on a heterogeneous sample of 5730 LGBT high school students in the US, Kosciw, Greyta, Palmer and Boasen, (2014) found that victims of tormenting had lower academic success and more negative self-esteem. Barrett, Orlova, Maziarz and Kuchin (2012) make the case that students who are fearful of crime in school are more likely to leave class and less likely to strive for higher grades using the School Crime Supplement from the 2007 National Crime Victimization Survey. Several authors, including Ripski and Gregory (2009), have proven a connection between school violence and poor involvement. With a few exceptions, most research

discovered a direct link between intimidation and educational achievement, which can be attributed to the prevalence and severity of school bullying that has been extensively studied around the world. Most studies have found a connection between bullying behaviour and subpar academic performance.

2.6 Practical Strategies to Mitigate Peer Bullying in Senior High Schools

Any anti-bullying program's goal is to stop bullying before it starts. The study of how to stop bullying is still in its early stages, though. Due to the rising incidence of bullying in schools, educators must focus on enhancing the educational system to improve the school atmosphere (Brewer, 2017). The physical environment, social environment, school safety measures, comfortable means, and harmonious relationships between students and staff are all considered to be components of the school climate (Kosciw et al., 2014). In this situation, the mission of public education should prioritize the health and well-being of students.

Numerous realistic measures for bullying prevention and reduction were recommended by a study of the literature for programs to combat it (Olweus, 2003; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Busch et al., 2014; Brewer, 2017):

1. School policies must place a strong emphasis on increasing the school's social and emotional climate by substituting meditation for detention and enhancing students' mental toughness.
2. Schools must implement policies to support students' developmental resilience so they can interact with one another appropriately, learn good coping mechanisms, and discover the purpose of their lives.
3. Encouraging professional and educational personnel (teachers, administrators, school counsellors, and social workers), criminal justice practitioners, and

researchers to collaborate to uncover the physical, social, and psychological elements that contribute to bullying decrease in schools.

To lessen and prevent bullying in schools, it is essential to implement a thorough, evidence-based bullying prevention program. To determine the needs of the schools, use surveillance data at all levels—local, state, and federal.

1. Using behaviourally controlled skills and a positive behavioural support system in the classroom and at school to spot bullying incidents.
2. There should be zero tolerance for the use of weapons, discrimination, harassment, and gang participation, according to school policies.
3. Creating and enforcing a curriculum that is attentive to the differences of all students;
4. Consistently implementing anti-bullying measures to ensure students' safety across the board. The definition of bullying, its various forms, the victims of bullying, and prevention techniques ought to be covered in the curriculum.
5. Technical, psychological, social, and cognitive interventions are recommended to prevent cyberbullying, such as technical web-protection including blocking cyberbullying, changing the password, deleting messages, training students as cyber mentor-safety, designing cyber-safety resources for parents, and cyberbullying prof. Peer interventions should be used in anti-bullying school initiatives. High self-efficacy peers are more inclined to defend poor behaviour and to take action in cases of bullying.
6. By consistently and fairly enforcing all school rules, schools need to foster a culture that tolerates violence.

To aid in the teaching of mental resilience, schools must create a professional preparation and development program for teachers and employees.

1. School-based bullying programs should take advantage of the mental health resources available in schools (such as counsellors, school psychologists, and social workers) to recognize and comprehend the connections between bullying issues and students' mental health, such as depression, anxiety, and attendance issues.
2. Schools must put in place a methodical methodology for the early detection of students in difficulties and crises.

2.7 Empirical Review

The works of other researchers that are relevant to the current study are reviewed in this section. The section examines the works of Mwereke (2015), Al-Raqqad, Al-Bourini, Al Talahin & Aranki (2017), Tangi (2018), Antiri (2017), and Owusu (2020). This made it possible for the researcher to connect the findings of this study to those of earlier ones.

Mwereke (2015) did a study to look into the academic performance of children with disabilities enrolled in Tanzanian primary schools as well as bullying and helping behaviours. The study was carried out in the Temeke District and Morogoro Municipality in the Dar es Salaam and Morogoro Regions. The goal of the study was to determine the potential impact of bullying on Tanzanian students with disabilities' academic performance. Additionally, it looked at the causes of bullying, its impact, and methods for stopping it in schools. Bullying is often directed against students with disabilities. Government representatives, NGOs working in the field of education, head teachers, teachers, parents, students with disabilities, and their peers without disabilities were among the intended responders. Questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document reviews were all used in the data collection process. It

was discovered that primary schools in Tanzania that accept students with disabilities exhibit helpful behaviours. However, for a variety of cultural, social, and financial reasons, these students with disabilities also experience bullying in the same schools. As a result, there may be a negative or positive impact on these students' academic performance. Therefore, it was determined that bullying had an impact on how well students with disabilities do academically in Tanzanian primary schools. Finally, the study suggested that everyone should contribute to creating a supportive environment for students with impairments to prevent jeopardizing their academic achievement.

Another study by Al-Raqad et al. (2017) looked into the effects of bullying on students' academic progress in Jordanian schools from the instructors' perspective. A descriptive analytical methodology was employed in the investigation. All instructors in Amman West Area schools made up the research sample (in Jordan). 200 instructors were included in the sample, who were chosen from a variety of Jordanian schools in the Amman West region. According to the study's goals and hypotheses, a self-administrated questionnaire was created and given to participants in the research sample. Every questionnaire that was distributed was gathered. They were coded, and then SPSS version 22.0 was used for the analysis. According to the research findings, bullying occurs in schools of all types, whether they are public or private. The study came to the additional conclusion that both the victims and the bullies of school bullying suffer academically.

Once more, Oliveira et al. (2018) study used information from a survey conducted by the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation in 2013 to examine the impact of bullying on students' math grades in the sixth grade at a public school in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton & Scheidt, 2001). To compare

kids who reported experiencing bullying with a control group of students who did not experience bullying, the Propensity Score Matching (PSM) methodology was used. The researcher's specific goal was to comprehend the function of social-emotional skills and how bullying might be affected by them. The findings indicated that bullying hurt arithmetic ability and that social-emotional learning can assist students in coping with bullying. Endogeneity issues were solved using a variety of econometric methods. The researcher employed a factor model to determine personality traits and to account for prediction error bias. Potential issues with omitted variables were highlighted by the sensitivity analysis. The findings suggest that social-emotional skills should be considered in anti-bullying programs.

The study by Tangi (2018) also aimed to identify instances of physical and psychological bullying in secondary schools in Tanzania's Mwanza area. Approaches that used both quantitative and qualitative methods as well as descriptive survey design were used. Examining documents, conducting interviews, and using questionnaires were used to get the data. Tanzania's Mwanza region's 597 students in form four comprised the study's target group. Additional study participants included headmasters/headmistresses, discipline officers, school counsellors, and regular teachers from 13 different schools. The university teacher candidates attending field schools for practical training were among the regular educators. Participants in the study included bullies and victims, as well as police officers. Using SPSS software, the quantitative data were statistically evaluated. Data from interviews were also qualitatively evaluated using content analysis in terms of pertinent reported speech and justifications. The findings demonstrate that students are aware of bullying in schools. Bullying in schools includes both physical and psychological acts committed against students by both students and teachers. The main factors that contributed to

bullying were observed gender differences, disciplinary practices, classroom management techniques, poor student behaviour, and teachers' responses to students' subpar academic performance. Further findings indicate that bullying has an impact on students' academic performance on both their ongoing academic evaluation test and their national tests. Bullying has been seen to have an impact on students' behaviour. The findings also show that students believe that various forms of punishment, particularly corporal punishment, are a kind of bullying. It was advised that teachers and students should receive training on topics such as bullying and violence.

Additionally, Mbah (2020) investigated the impact of school bullying on academic achievement among high school students in Cameroon in general, as well as in the North West and South. Data was gathered from over 30 participants, of whom 24 were upper sixth-class students and 6 were teachers in secondary schools in the Northwest and Southwest areas of Cameroon. All of the interviews took place over WhatsApp, and after interrogating all of the participants, it was discovered that the majority of secondary school students experience bullying of some form and frequently keep it a secret. The results demonstrated that school bullying still occurs in the majority of schools and has an impact on students' academic success and attendance. The majority of kids reported incidents of bullying to their teachers, and it was recognised that most students dealt with bullying in the classroom. The majority of students in Cameroon continue to struggle academically as a result of bullying, which still occurs.

Additionally, the Muli (2022) study examined how bullying affected students' academic performance in Kenya's integrated public secondary schools in Kitui

County. Finding out the prevalence of bullying behaviour, the effect of bullying behaviour on academic achievement, and the strategies teachers use to stop bullying behaviour among students were the study's main objectives. The research was based on Social Identity Theory. This study employed a descriptive research design. In the Kitui Central District, the study was carried out. A total of 1302 persons were polled, including 1294 form three students, 31 principals, and 31 guidance and counselling professors. A stratified random sample approach was used first, followed by a straightforward random sampling method, to select respondents from various strata. There were 92 respondents in all, with the sample consisting of 64 forms three students, 14 principals, and 14 guidance and counselling teachers. Data were gathered using principal interviews, instructor and student questionnaires, and more. An appropriateness assessment of the content and a re-evaluation approach were used to test the validity of the tools and verify that they were reliable.

Quantitative data were examined using descriptive statistics like mild deviations and displayed using frequency distribution tables, pie charts, and bar graphs to effectively connect with consumers. The high-quality data was analysed using content analysis, after which it was presented narratively. The study discovered a high level of bullying behaviour among students from married households, social vulnerability as a result of leaving different homes, and the perception of strength varied among the students. The most frequent types of bullying behaviour were verbal and physical, and students claimed that every student in their school had experienced bullying. Some students, however, claimed that not all of these occurrences were reported to school authorities. These studies show that bullying happens in all schools, whether they are public or private.

Additionally, the study discovered that bullying at school affects students' academic success regardless of whether they are bullies or victims. School administrators and teachers were aware of the concept of bullying, although some kids did report bullying to their teachers after being bullied. The report suggests that administrators and teachers could take some steps to reduce the amount of torment. In addition, educators should assist bullied students. Instructors and school administration should assign threat tasks to lessen bullying in the classroom. Students can improve their academic performance by participating in extracurricular activities, which lessens the negative effects of bullying. Schools should also supply all essential equipment so that kids can take part in these activities.

Not to mention, Antiri (2017) investigated the consequences bullying has on students in Ghanaian senior high schools. The study was conducted using a descriptive research design. A sample of 400 respondents from four senior high schools in Ghana was chosen using the snowball and purposive sampling systems, and their responses were collected using a questionnaire. The data analysis revealed that some students dropped out, others developed low self-esteem, and others displayed personalities that could have an impact on their futures. The outcomes also demonstrated that bullying has impacted the academic performance of the majority of students in the school who could have been targets of bullying, perpetrators of bullying, or bystanders. As a result, it was determined that the Ghana Education Service and the schools needed a mechanism or strategy to completely eradicate bullying in senior high schools.

In certain chosen SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Owusu (2020) investigated the perspectives of students and school administration on the prevalence of bullying and its consequences on students' academic performance as well as their social lives. The

study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to gather information from 390 students and 10 teachers in managerial roles in five selected SHSs, as directed by the descriptive cross-sectional survey research design. Five schools from the city were chosen using the purposeful sampling technique, and students from Forms 1, 2, and 3 were chosen using the stratified and simple random sample technique. Additionally, the staff interview participants were chosen using the purposive sampling technique.

According to the survey, popular forms of bullying in schools include kneeling, pushing, kicking, and slapping. In addition, the study found that bullying occurred frequently each week in most SHS. It was determined from the perspective of the students that bullying did not affect their social and academic functioning. Teachers, on the other hand, believed that bullying wasted students' time, made them hesitant, and made them feel scared while they were in school, all of which had an impact on their academic performance. The report concluded by noting that administrators of SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis have put rules and regulations in place to discourage students from indulging in any form of bullying. Despite this, it was suggested that the Ghana Education Service create a broad anti-bullying policy as a foundation for the management of SHS to create their specific anti-bullying policies. To raise awareness, bullying education needs to be strengthened.

To sum up, each of the aforementioned research was carried out in a unique geographic setting with a distinct population. The current study, which was carried out at Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality, aims to compare or contrast the results of the studies mentioned above.

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

Chapter two reviewed concepts and other studies related to the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of senior high students of Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality of Ghana. Issues such as the concept of bullying, the incidence of bullying, bullying in the school environment, types of bullying in senior high schools, risk factors of bullying in senior high schools, effects of bullying on academic performance and measures to mitigate bullying in senior high schools were re-examined. Finally, works done by Mwereke (2015), Al-Raqqad et al. (2017), Oliveira et al. (2018), Tangi (2018), Mbah (2020), Muli (2022), Antiri (2017), and Owusu (2020) were thoroughly examined.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methods for data collection and a discussion of procedures that were followed to conduct the research. It covers research design, study population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instruments and techniques, sampling techniques and procedure used in collecting data for the study.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a strategy that justifies the methods employed in a study and how those methods relate to the research questions and objectives (Jupp, 2011). Therefore, the descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. Descriptive survey research refers to those studies which aim at collecting data and describing systematically the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. According to Leedy and Omrod (2019), it is a blueprint which outlines how data concerning a naturally occurring phenomenon must be collected and analyzed. Davis (2021) also stated that descriptive research involves the identification of attributes of a particular phenomenon based on an observational basis or the exploration of the correlation between two or more phenomena. According to McCombes (2019), this design aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon. The adoption of this design was deemed appropriate as the study aims at describing peer bullying and exploring its correlation with students' academic performance in Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality.

3.2 Population

According to Leedy and Omrod (2019), the population is the total number of individual entities within the target group about which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing a conclusion. Johnson and Christensen (2012) are of the view that population is the large group to which the researcher wants to generalise the sample results, the total group that one is interested in. Therefore, the study population was made up of students in Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality and the target population is first- and second-year students. Students were chosen for the study because the topic under study is the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of students of Pope John Senior High School. As a result, students were in the best position to provide the researcher with the data needed to conduct the study. Again, first- and second-year students were targeted because the third years had completed school at the time the study was being carried out.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Creswell and Hirose (2019) defined a sample as a subset or representative of the population such that important characteristics like age, gender, and status are distributed similarly in the group. Also, Creswell (2014) contends that a sample represents the selected participants from the population who partake in the study. Given this, the sample size for the study was made up of 285 students. The study adopted the multi-stage sampling technique which included purposive and simple random sampling. At the initial stage, purposive sampling was used to select students who are in their first and second years. According to Kelly (2010), purposive sampling is ‘used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information’ and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that will use

limited research resources effectively (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015). However, at the final stage, a simple random sampling technique was used. According to Taherdoost (2016), the simple random technique is a sampling technique where all people are believed to have the potential to participate as a study sample. This technique was used to sample 285 students from the total estimated 1100 first and second-year students. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to ensure participants have an equal chance to participate in the study, which would reduce selection bias during selection (Taherdoost, 2016). The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table (Kuforji, Egwakhe & Binuyo, 2019).

3.4 Research Instrument(s)

The main data collection instrument used in the study is a questionnaire. According to Ary (2010), a questionnaire is an instrument in which respondents provide written responses to questions or mark items that indicate their responses. Kothari and Garg (2014) add that a questionnaire consists of some questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms for participants to answer on a particular topic. Creswell and Hirose (2019) also assert that questionnaires are usually used in asking people questions to find out what they think about something or what people know about an issue. Leedy and Omrod (2019) view questionnaires as questions respondents are made to supply answers or tick answers that are provided. The researcher used a questionnaire because it promises a wider coverage since the researcher could approach respondents more easily and could be completed at the respondents' convenience. Closed-ended questions were used to design the questionnaire. The closed-ended questions were designed to elicit specific information from the respondents. The questionnaire consisted of four sections, that is, A to D.

Section A dealt with the background information of the respondents while sections B to D focused on the responses based on the research questions that guided the study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

First, the questionnaire was piloted in a school which has similar characteristics to the selected school to evaluate its efficacy in terms of validity and reliability. The validity of a research instrument assesses the extent to which the instrument measures what it is designed to measure (Robson, 2011). In other words, it is the degree to which a study tool measures what it purports to measure. Validity aims to ensure that there are no systematic sampling errors, which mainly occur when some populations' characteristics are under-represented or over-represented (Verhoeven, 2011). A research instrument is valid if its content is relevant and appropriate to research objectives. Reliability on the other hand is the extent to which measurements are repeatable when different people measure different occasions, under different conditions, supposedly with alternative instruments which measure the construct or skill (Drost, 2011).

Also, on the day of arriving at the school under study, the researcher obtained permission from the academic head of the school to administer the questionnaire in the school. Before the students started to fill out the questionnaire, the researcher gave detailed instructions and the students were allowed to ask questions in the process in case they did not understand something. The respondents were also assured that all the results of the study would be applied to research work only and that, their responses would have nothing to do with their teachers' evaluation of them. Respondents were given thirty (30) minutes to fill out the questionnaires and the questionnaires were taken immediately after completion.

3.6 Methods of Data Analysis

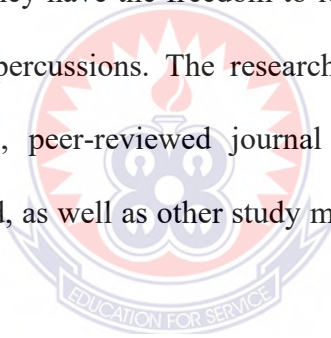
According to Burns and Grove (2011) data analysis refers to the reduction and displaying of the data, verification and drawing of conclusions. The purpose of data analysis is to organize, provide structure to, and elicit meaning from research data. Therefore, the data collected was edited to check the completeness and accuracy of filling responses. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 23.0 was used to analyse the data. The data were transformed into descriptive statistics based on the objectives of the study. The descriptive statistics ensured the comparison of frequencies and percentages and mean deviation of various responses. Finally, inferences were drawn from the frequency tables, percentages, mean deviations and the results.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Each research project has its inherent constraints, and this study is no exception. The researcher's inability to employ various research instruments, such as observations, interviews, etc., to obtain data from respondents due to time constraints and other associated reasons is foremost among these limitations. The respondents' ability to answer the questions would therefore be constrained if merely a questionnaire is used. Time restrictions along with the researcher's hectic job schedule are another restricting issue. The researcher's busy job schedule hampered the completion of the study because she is both a worker and a student. Finally, the researcher could not generalize beyond the study area because the study is specific to Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality of Ghana's Eastern Region.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

In conformity with ethical considerations, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the University of Education, Winneba to verify compliance with regulatory requirements. The researcher was able to obtain a research permit from the University of Education's Ethics Review Board with the help of the introduction letter. The obtained permit was delivered to the municipal education office of New Juaben to get a letter of clearance for the collection of data from the selected school. Data collection started after a prior visit to the school when rapport had been established with both students and teachers. The respondents were guaranteed complete anonymity and secrecy to uphold ethical considerations. Respondents were given the assurance that they have the freedom to leave the data-gathering process at any time and without repercussions. The researcher cited all of the information's sources, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, theses that have been published and unpublished, as well as other study materials, to respect copyrights and avoid plagiarism.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis and interpretation of results and the findings that emanated from study. The analysis and interpretations are based on background information of participants and the main research questions that guide the study. Responses of respondents on the causes of peer bullying, the effects of peer bullying on students' academic performance, and measures adopted to mitigate peer bullying at Pope John SHS are analysed and discussed. Thus, the chapter is sub-divided into two sections. The first section deals with the background information of participants whereas the second part deals with the findings that emanated from the study.

4.1 Background Information of Participants

This section presents information on the background of participants who are also students of Pope John SHS. The characteristics of the respondents which are discussed in this section include age and form or class. Table 1 below shows the age of the participants.

Table 1: Age of Participants

Age	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
12-14 years	14	4.9
15-17 years	105	36.8
18 years and above	166	58.2
Total	285	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

Results in Table 1 show the age distribution of the students. The results showed that 14(4.9%) of the students were between the ages of 12-14years, 105(36.8%) were between the ages of 15-17years and 166(58.2%) were 18 years and above. This implies that, majority of the students who participated in the present study were aged 18 years and above.

Table 2: Participants' Form or Class

Form	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Form 1	176	61.8
Form 2	109	36.8
Total	285	100

Source: Field Data (2023)

Results in table 2 also show participants' form or class. The results revealed that 176(61.8%) were in form 1 whereas as 66(22.8%) were in form 2. This means more form 1 students took part in the study than form 2 students.

4.2 Analysis of Research Questions

This section deals with the presentation of results and the major findings that emerged from the study. The results are organized and discussed in accordance with each research question.

4.2.1 Research Question One: What are the causes of peer bullying in Pope

John SHS?

This section investigates the causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS. The results are presented in table 3 below.

Table 3: Causes of Peer Bullying in Pope John SHS

Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Sd. Dev
Feeling more powerful than others	36 (12.6)	27 (9.5)	55 (19.3)	116 (40.7)	51 (17.9)	3.45	1.196
Alcohol/drug abuse	40 (14.0)	52 (18.2)	20 (7.0)	93 (32.6)	80 (28.1)	3.43	1.510
Peer group influence	68 (23.9)	84 (29.5)	46 (16.1)	60 (21.1)	27 (9.5)	3.37	1.306
Watching violent movies and obscene images	55 (19.3)	82 (28.8)	41 (14.4)	54 (18.9)	53 (18.6)	3.11	1.410
Coming from a dysfunctional family	49 (17.2)	103 (36.1)	37 (13.0)	54 (18.9)	42 (14.7)	3.22	1.336

Percentages are in brackets

Scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Source: Field Data (2023)

The results presented in Table 3 shows students' responses on the causes of bullying in Pope John SHS. From the results, 58.6% of the students disagree or strongly disagree that feeling more powerful than others is a cause of bullying. Only 22.1 % of the students agree or strongly agree to that assertion. The mean of students' disagreement of feeling more powerful than others as a cause of bullying is 3.45 and standard deviation is 1.196. This implies that many of the students do not agree that feeling more powerful than others is a cause of bullying in Pope John SHS. Though, according to powerful men's tendency, big men tend to bully (Farrington & Baldry, 2010), this is not the case in Pope John SHS. Out of the 285 respondents, 32.2% of the students either agree or strongly agree that alcohol/drug abuse is a cause of bullying in Pope John SHS whilst 60.7% disagree or strongly disagree to the statement, with a mean of 3.43 and standard deviation of 1.510. This shows that many of the students believe that alcohol and drug abuse is not one of the causes of

bullying in the school. In contrast with this, Gaete et al. (2017) reveal that bullying engagement is associated with current and future alcohol/drug usage. Majority of the students (53.4%) agree or strongly agree that peer group influence always causes peer bullying in Pope John SHS. Only a small percentage of 30.6 agree or strongly disagree to such assertion, with a mean of 3.37 and standard deviation of 1.306.

The results also revealed that majority of the students (48.1%) agree or strongly agree that watching violent movies and obscene images is another cause of peer bullying in Pope John SHS. However, only few of them (37.5%) disagree or strongly disagree. The mean of the responses is 3.22 and standard deviation is 1.336. The results further indicate that majority of the students (53.6%) agree or strongly agree that, coming from a dysfunctional family, also contribute to peer bullying in Pope John SHS whilst few of them 33.6% disagree or strongly disagree, with a mean of 3.22 and standard deviation of 1.336. This implies that coming from a dysfunctional family is one of the causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS.

From Table 3, it can be concluded that the main causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS include peer group influence, watching violent movies and obscene images and coming from a dysfunctional family. Lodder et al. (2016) contends that, bullies are more likely to emerge from socially significant peer groups among students. Bradshaw et al. (2013) add that, a delinquent history, such as vandalism, gang involvement, or carrying a weapon to school, is also linked to greater rates of bullying and victimization. Cook et al. (2010) agree that, peer influence is a strong predictor of harassment participation, and negative peer influence is associated with bullying and victimization. On the issue of coming from a dysfunctional family, Duncan (2010) stipulates that bullies are more likely to come from dysfunctional, cold, fatherless

families with high power needs and a tolerance for violent behaviour. In addition to coming from low socioeconomic status families with authoritarian parents, Duncan states that, they are mostly physically abused. The findings from the present study generally confirm the findings by Tangi (2018) which aimed to identify instances of physical and psychological bullying in secondary schools in Tanzania's Mwanza area, and found out that the main factors which contributed to bullying were observed gender differences, disciplinary practices, classroom management techniques, poor student behaviour, and teachers' responses to students' subpar academic performance.

4.2.2 Research Question Two: What are the effects of peer bullying on the academic performance of students in Pope John SHS?

This section discusses the effects of peer bullying on the academic performance of students in Pope John SHS. The results are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: *Effects of Peer Bullying on the Academic Performance of Students in Pope John SHS*

Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Sd. Dev
Bullying discourages students from attending class	69 (24.2)	108 (37.9)	28 (9.8)	31 (10.9)	49 (17.2)	3.41	1.408
Students have low motivation to learn	11 (3.9)	39 (13.7)	41 (14.4)	117 (41.1)	77 (27.0)	3.64	1.294
Peer bullying creates a negative environment in the school	83 (29.1)	115 (40.4)	23 (8.1)	31 (10.9)	33 (11.6)	3.65	1.315
Bullying negatively affects students' academic level	88 (30.9)	64 (22.5)	32 (11.2)	42 (17.7)	59 (20.7)	3.28	1.538
Students perform poorly in school and then drop out	83 (29.1)	60 (21.1)	44 (15.4)	60 (21.1)	38 (13.3)	3.32	1.424

Percentages are in brackets

Scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 above presents results on the effects of peer bullying on students' academic performance in Pope John SHS. The results show that majority of the students (62.1%) agree or strongly agree that bullying discourages students from attending class whilst few of them (28.1%) disagree or strongly disagree, with a mean of 3.41 and standard deviation of 1.408. This indicates that one of the effects of peer bullying on students' performance is that, it discourages students from attending class.

From Table 4, it was revealed again that majority of the students (68.0%) disagree or strongly disagree that students have low motivation to learn as a result of peer bullying. On the other hand, few of them (17.6%) agree or strongly agree to the assertion, with a mean of 3.64 and standard deviation of 1.294. This means that peer bullying has no effect on students' motivation to learn in Pope John SHS. This coincides with what Barrett et al. (2012) postulates that, students who are fearful of crime in school are more likely to leave class and less likely to strive for higher grades using the School Crime Supplement from the 2007 National Crime Victimization Survey.

Again, the results revealed that majority of the students (69.5%) agree or strongly agree that peer bullying creates a negative environment in the school whereas few of them (22.5%) disagree or strongly disagree. This has a mean of 3.65 and standard deviation is 1.315. This implies that one impact of peer bullying on academic performance is that, it creates a negative environment in the school.

The results further indicated that majority of the students (53.4%) agree or strongly agree that bullying negatively affects students' academic level. On the other hand, few of them (38.4%) disagree or strongly disagree to the assertion. The mean of the responses is 3.28 with standard deviation of 1.538. It can be deduced that peer

bullying affects students' academic level. Finally, majority of the students (50.2%) agree or strongly agree that students perform poorly in school and then drop out because of peer bullying whilst few of them (34.4%) disagree or strongly disagree.

From the analysis, it can be settled that peer bullying affects students' academic performance. Specifically, the study found out that it discourages students from attending class, it creates a negative environment in the school, it negatively affects students' academic level and it makes students perform poorly in school and then drop out. Omoteso (2010) supports that when a child is subjected to bullying on a regular basis, they may begin skipping school. His lack of presence and lack of ability to think clearly could hurt his grades. Shellard (2002) also adds that, bullying causes low-grade sadness that is typically referred to in his research as "poor psychosocial adjustment" in children and adolescents. As a result, they might skip class or avoid going to school, or they might use alcohol or narcotics to dull their emotional pain.

A study conducted by Lumsden (2002) again emphasized that, compared to the general population, victims of bullying have higher absenteeism and dropout rates, and they may display signs of loneliness including trouble navigating social and emotional transitions, making new acquaintances, and interacting with peers. On the issue of bullying creating negative school environment, Gendron, Williams and Guerra (2011) mentioned that bullying is associated with schools that don't provide a safe and nurturing environment. Batsche and Knoff (2004) also maintain that chronic abuse victims are more prone to perceive school as an unpleasant environment and to avoid certain areas of the school or the school altogether. On bullying and students' academic level, Dunne et al. (2012) opined that, bullying aggression and other forms of violence in schools can harm students' formal educational experiences as well as

their ability to take use of their opportunities. Tangi (2018) adds that, bullying-related incidents in schools further disrupt learning, leading to subpar academic performance. Also, concerning bullying and students' performance, Schwartz, et al. (2002) emphasized that, persons that engage in bullying frequently perform poorly academically at school. Generally, the current study confirms the study by Al-Raqqad et al. (2017) which looked into the effects of bullying on students' academic progress in Jordanian schools from the instructors' perspective and found out that both the victims and the bullies of school bullying suffer academically.

The study is also in line with the study by Oliveira et al. (2018) which used information from a survey conducted by the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation in 2013 to examine the impact of bullying on students' math grades in the sixth grade at a public school in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil (Nansel et al., 2001), and found out that bullying had a negative effect on arithmetic ability and that social emotional learning can assist students in coping with bullying. The present study is again in consonance with the findings of Tangi (2018) which aimed to identify instances of physical and psychological bullying in secondary schools in Tanzania's Mwanza area and found out that bullying has an impact on students' academic performance on both their ongoing academic evaluation test and their national tests. The present study again confirms the studies by Mbah (2020), Muli (2022) and Antiri (2017) which all concluded that bullying adversely affects students' academic performance. However, the findings from the present study contradict the findings of Owusu (2020)'s study, which revealed from the perspective of the students that bullying had no effect on their social and academic functioning.

4.2.3 Research Question Three: What Measures Are Put in Place to Curb Peer Bullying in Pope John SHS?

This section also assesses the measures put in place to mitigate peer bullying in Pope John SHS. The results are presented in table 5 below:

Table 5: Measures Put in Place to Curb Peer Bullying in Pope John SHS

Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Sd. Dev
Rewarding positive behaviour	35 (12.3)	38 (13.3)	67 (23.5)	72 (25.3)	48 (16.8)	3.11	1.477
Maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis	74 (26.0)	116 (40.7)	58 (20.4)	34 (11.9)	3 (1.1)	3.79	0.996
All teachers in the classroom should collaborate with students to address bullying.	101 (35.4)	106 (37.2)	36 (12.6)	24 (8.4)	18 (6.3)	3.87	1.172
Involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program.	84 (29.5)	62 (21.8)	11 (3.9)	63 (22.1)	65 (22.8)	3.13	1.588
Making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable.	141 (49.5)	78 (27.4)	21 (7.4)	24 (8.4)	21 (7.4)	4.03	1.254

Percentages are in brackets

Scale: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 5 above shows results on measures put in place to curb peer bullying in Pope John SHS. The results indicated that few of the students (25.6%) agree or strongly agree that rewarding positive behaviour is one of the measures adopted to mitigate peer bullying in Pope John SHS. On the other hand, majority of them (42.1%) disagree or strongly disagree. The mean of students' disagreement to the statement is 3.11 and standard deviation is 1.477. This results mean that, among the strategies adopted to deal with bullying in Pope John SHS, rewarding positive behaviour is not

part. Meanwhile, numerous recommended realistic measures for bullying prevention and reduction (Olweus, 2003; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Busch et al., 2014; Brewer, 2017), include rewarding positive behaviours. Therefore, management of Pope John SHS needs to adopt this strategy to help mitigate peer bullying and its accompanying adverse impacts.

The results also showed that, majority of the students (66.7%) agree or strongly agree that, maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis is another peer bullying mitigation strategy adopted in Pope John SHS whereas few of them (13.0%) disagree or strongly disagree, with a mean of 3.79 and standard deviation of 1.663. This implies that, maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis is a strategy adopted in Pope John SHS to curb peer bullying. According to Olweus (2003); Hymel and Swearer (2015); Busch et al. (2014) and Brewer (2017), this strategy is one of the most practical measures that can help mitigate bullying in the school environment.

In addition, the results indicated that majority of the students (72.6%) agree or strongly agree that, as a way of mitigating bullying, all teachers in the classroom should collaborate with students to address bullying whilst only few of them (14.3%) disagree or strongly disagree, with a mean of 3.87 and standard deviation of 1.172. This means that, to mitigate peer bullying in the study area, there is a policy which ensures all teachers in the classroom collaborate with students to address bullying. This is supported by Olweus (2003); Hymel and Swearer (2015); Busch et al. (2014) and Brewer (2017).

Furthermore, majority of the students (51.3%) agree or strongly agree that involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program is a strategy to deal

with peer bullying. On the other hand, few of the students (44.9%) disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. This has a mean of 3.13 and standard deviation of 1.588. This result implies that one of the practical strategies adopted in Pope John SHS to deal with peer bullying is by involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program. This is among the effective measures that have been recommended by scholars and other researchers when it comes to dealing with peer bullying in the school environment (Olweus, 2003; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Busch et al., 2014; Brewer, 2017).

Finally, majority of the respondents (76.9%) agree or strongly agree that making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable is a strategy that is adopted to mitigate peer bullying whilst few of them (15.8%) either disagree or strongly disagree to the assertion with a mean of 4.03 and standard deviation of 1.254. This means, in Pope John SHS, there is a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable to deal with peer bullying in the school. This is also supported by Olweus (2003); Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Busch et al. (2014) and Brewer (2017).

Finally, it has been revealed from the results that, measures that are put in place to mitigate bullying and its effects include maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis, all teachers in the classroom collaborating with students to address bullying, involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program and making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable. Most of these strategies are recommended by Olweus (2003); Hymel and Swearer (2015); Busch et al. (2014) and Brewer (2017). Similarly, the findings of Mwereke (2015) proposed that everyone should contribute to creating a supportive

environment in order to prevent jeopardizing their academic achievement. Again, to ameliorate bullying and its effects on students' academic performance, Tangi (2018)'s study advised that teachers and students should receive training on topics such as bullying and violence. Muli (2022)'s study also adopted similar measures to tackle bullying in schools as the current study revealed. Muli (2022) study suggested that educators should assist bullied students, instructors and school administration should assign threats tasks to lessen bullying in the classroom, students can improve their academic performance by participating in extracurricular activities, which lessens the negative effects of bullying and schools should also supply all essential equipment so that students can take part in these activities.

4.3 Summary of Results and Findings

From the analysis of data and results, it has been revealed that the main causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS are peer group influence, watching violent movies and obscene images and coming from a dysfunctional family. Also, it has been found out that peer bullying discourages students from attending class, creates a negative environment in the school, negatively affects students' academic level and cause students to perform poorly in school and then drop out. And finally, maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis, all teachers in the classroom collaborating with students to address bullying, involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program and making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable were found to be some of the measures put in place to mitigate bullying in Pope John SHS in the New Juaben Municipality.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research based on collected and analysed information in previous chapters.

5.1 Summary of Main Findings

The study findings showed that, the causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS are peer group influence, watching violent movies and obscene images and coming from a dysfunctional family.

It was also revealed from the study that peer bullying has negative effects on students' academic performance. Specifically, the study found out that, discourages students from attending class, creates a negative environment in the school, negatively affects students' academic level and causes students to perform poorly in school and then drop out.

Additionally, the study findings showed that some peer bullying mitigation measures in Pope John SHS include maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis, all teachers in the classroom collaborating with students to address bullying, involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program and making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable.

5.2 Implication to Stakeholders

1. The study will provide school administrators and management in-depth understanding of bullying at schools and how the phenomenon affects students' academic performance. This will cause them to develop proactive measures that will ensure the prevention and curtailment of the problems posed by peer bullying.
2. The study will also help teachers, parents, school heads, etc. to become aware of peer bullying and how to support these students in adjusting to school life, ultimately improving their academic performance.
3. The study will again be beneficial to the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Officers since the results could be utilized in developing rules regarding how bullying affects academic progress in senior high schools.
4. The study will help educational planners, as it will be one of the reference points for their development strategies to address educational inequalities.
5. Finally, the study findings will serve as a reference point for future researchers who wish to carry out similar research in other study areas.

5.3 Conclusions

The study sought to assess the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of students of Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Descriptive survey design is the research design employed in the study. Frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations were used to examine and interpret the data collected. In conclusion;

1. Research question one sought to investigate the causes of peer bullying in Pope John SHS. The study findings revealed that peer group influence,

watching violent movies and obscene images, and coming from a dysfunctional family were the main causes of peer bullying in the school.

2. Research question two also sought to examine the effects of peer bullying on students' academic performance. The study revealed that bullying generally affects students' academic performance negatively. Specifically, it discourages students from attending class, creates a negative environment in the school, negatively affects students' academic level and students perform poorly in school and then drop out.
3. Research question three sought to assess the measures put in place to curb peer bullying in Pope John SHS. The study findings indicated that, maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis, all teachers in the classroom collaborating with students to address bullying, involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program and making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable were the main measures put in place to mitigate bullying.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Management of schools should also focus on motivation as a way of reinforcing positive behaviours of students. This can be done by rewarding positive behaviours.
2. There should be a professional development training program for teachers to be able to handle issues of bullying effectively.
3. Mental health resources such as counsellors, psychologists, social workers, etc should be available in schools to attend to bullies and bully victims.

4. Schools should ensure strict adherence to laid down rules and regulations on bullying.
5. Students should be frequently and consistently reminded of the rules and regulations regarding bullying and their associated punishments.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

The following suggestions were made for further studies:

1. In order to have a broader view of the impacts of peer bullying on students' academic performance, the investigator recommends that further study should be conducted using other Senior High Schools students in other municipalities or regions in Ghana.
2. Studies should be conducted on the role of teachers in preventing peer bullying in schools.
3. Studies should be conducted on the extent to which violent movies and obscene images influence students' behaviour.
4. Studies should be conducted on students' mental state and the propensity to bully.

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APPENDICES

A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the impact of peer bullying on the academic performance of students of Pope John Senior High School in the New Juaben Municipality. The study is purely for academic purposes; hence, any information you give will be treated as confidential as possible.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Please tick [✓] appropriately

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 12-14 years [] 15-17 years [] 18 years and above []
3. Form: Form 1 [] Form 2 []

SECTION B: CAUSES OF PEER BULLYING IN POPE JOHN SHS

Please tick [✓] where applicable

- Key: 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral
 4=Agree 5= Strongly Agree

Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
Feeling more powerful than others					
Alcohol/drug abuse					
Peer group influence					
Watching violent movies and obscene images					
Coming from a dysfunctional family					

SECTION C: EFFECTS OF PEER BULLYING ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN POPE JOHN SHS.

Please tick [✓] where applicable

Key: 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral
4=Agree 5= Strongly Agree

Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
Bullying discourages students from attending class					
Students have low motivation to learn					
Peer bullying creates a negative environment in the school					
Bullying negatively affects students' academic level					
Students perform poorly in school and then drop out					

SECTION D: STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE PEER BULLYING IN POPE JOHN SHS.

Please tick [✓] where applicable

Key: 1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral
4=Agree 5= Strongly Agree

Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)
Rewarding positive behaviour					
Maintaining open lines of communication with students on a one-on-one basis					
All teachers in the classroom should collaborate with students to address bullying.					
Involving the parents of the youngsters in a bullying prevention program.					
Making a set of ground rules and prospects that are both clear and enforceable.					

C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

 UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
P.O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana | edufoundations@uow.edu.gh
030 290 0880

17th March, 2023

The Head
Pope John Senior High School
Koforidua,
New Juaben Municipality

Dear Sir/Madam,

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I write to introduce to you, **Ms. Yvonne Adwoa Micah**, the bearer of this letter who is a student in the Department of Educational Foundations of the University of Education, Winneba. She is reading Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) with index number **220014384**

She is conducting a research on the topic: **Impact of Peer Bullying on Academic Performance of Students of Pope John Senior High School**. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the above mentioned degree.

She is required to administer Questionnaires to help her gather data for the said research and she has chosen to do so in your outfit.

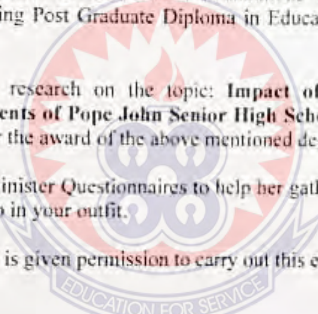
I will be grateful if she is given permission to carry out this exercise.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Charles N. Annobil
Head of Department





DEPT. OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
WINNEBA

Approved 29/03/23
Asst II - seen 18/4/23
Asst III - seen 18/4/23


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