# Influence of Bullying and Anxiety on Academic Achievement Among Senior Secondary School Students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State, Nigeria

[1]Hadiza Hamza Bichi, Zainab Nura Sanusi[2] & Hajara Sani Yau[3]

[1,2&3]Federal Polytechnic Kabo, Kano State

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the influence of bullying and anxiety on academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone Kano State, Nigeria. Three objectives with corresponding research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Ex-Post Facto research design was used. The population of the study consists of 4436 senior secondary II students in Bichi Education Zone. A sample of 357 SS II students was selected as guided by research advisor (2006). Two Instruments were adapted for the Data collection; the modified instrument Bully Behavior Questionnaire (BBQ) and Brazilian State - Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) were used to collect data on bullying and anxiety respectively. The bullying variable had five levels based on an individual's scores on the BBQ these are bully, assistant to the bully, victim, defender of the victim and outsider. Anxiety was assessed as high or low. The BBQ has an original reliability of 0.72 while STAI has 0.79. To further ensure the validity of the instrument, face and content validity were established by researcher's supervisor and other experts from the Department of General Studies Federal Polytechnic Kabo, Kano. The reliability of the instrument was obtained through pilot testing. ANOVA and t-test for independent sample were used to test study hypotheses. It was found that, there is high level of bullying behavior among senior secondary schools students of Bichi Education Zone, Kano State with 23%, there is significant difference in academic achievement between bully, assistant to the bully, victim, defender of the victim and outsider students of senior secondary schools in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State Nigeria in favor of defender and outsider and there is no significant difference between academic achievement of high-anxiety and low-anxiety students of senior secondary schools in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State Nigeria. Based on the findings it was recommended that there is need for teachers and counselors to work hand in hand to improve academic achievement of victims of bullying among the students by regularly sharing students' progress report with parents/ caregivers.*

**Keywords:** academic achievement, anxiety, bullying

## INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a social problem, and one person in every three individuals randomly selected has been bullied physically, verbally, and socially (Misawa, 2010). Bullying influences both the individual and the perpetrator and may lead to present and long-term effects. Bullying and peer victimization always have either direct or indirect effects on the victims and may result in poor academic performance (Adewale, 2004). School harassment, peer victimization, and bullying have contributed to a decline in classroom activities and school engagement, which tend to impact academic performance and achievement negatively.

Bullying in school sometimes consist of a group of student taking advantage of or isolating one student in particular and gaining the loyalty of bystanders, who in some cases want to avoid becoming the next victim. School bullying is a widespread issue that affects secondary school students in three essential parts of their lives; psychologically, educationally and professionally. Bullying is a sort of aggressive behavior against others such as a verbal by calling nasty names, physical kicking, pushing or tripping up and social where everyone stopped talking to you. There are various forms of bullying in a school set up, which include teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing of property belonging to the victim, or causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. Bullying is considered a common form of violence in schools. Various studies indicated that bullying makes schools to be unsafe places for school students' and it contributes to fear of confrontation, which causes anxiety.

Anxiety is a common phenomenon of every day's life. Generally, anxiety can either be a trait anxiety or state anxiety. Trait anxiety is a stable characteristic or trait of the person. State anxiety is one, which is aroused by some temporary condition of the environment such as examination, accident, punishment, and bullying. Anxiety is complicated psychological situation, which means trouble in either presence or absence of psychological stress; anxiety can create a feeling of fear, worry, uneasiness and dread. It is considered a normal response to stress. It may help an individual to cope with the demands of life but in excess, it is to some extent considered as disorder. It is a global problem affecting children and adolescents (Huberty, 2012).

However, academic achievement of students are badly affected due to increase in anxiety in the society. Today, anxiety is a common phenomenon of every day's life many lack the motivation to study for exams, write papers or do daily assignment. A moderate amount of anxiety actually helps an academic achievement by creating motivation. Its symptoms are associated with impairments of memory and cognitive functions and can contribute to school poor performance. Student's academic performance is highly influence as a result to high anxiety (Huberty, 2012).

## #Statement of the Problem

Bullying and anxiety are pervasive issues that significantly impact the academic performance of students worldwide. In Bichi Zonal Education Directorate of Kano State, the incidence of bullying among senior secondary school students has raised concerns about its potential effects on their mental health and academic achievement. Despite existing studies on the general impact of bullying and anxiety on educational outcomes, there is a notable lack of localized studies that specifically examine these issues within the particular context. This research aims to explore how bullying behaviors both victimization and perpetration interact with levels of anxiety to influence academic performance among senior secondary school students in this zone. Given the unique sociocultural dynamics of Kano State, it is crucial to understand the specific manifestations of bullying and anxiety in this context and their correlation with students' academic success.

## Objective of the Study

1. To determine difference in academic achievement of bully, assistant, victim, defender of the victim and outsider, senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.
2. To examine difference in academic achievement between High- anxiety and low-anxiety senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

3. To determine gender difference in academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

## Research Questions

1. Is there difference in academic achievement of bully, assistant, victim, defender of the victim and outsider, senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State?
2. Is there difference in academic achievement between High- anxiety and low-anxiety senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State?

3. Is there gender difference in academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State?

### Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in academic achievement of bully, assistant, victim, defender of the victim and outsider, senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

2. There is no significant difference in academic achievement between High- anxiety and low-anxiety senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

3. There is no significant gender difference in academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Bullying can be described as repeated negative events which over time are directed at special individuals and which are carried out by one or several other people who are stronger than the victim. Negative events can be aggressive physical contact in the form of fight and shoving, verbal threats and mockery, grimacing or cruel gesturing (Aluede, Adeleke; Omoike & Afen-Akpaida, 2008). Adewale (2004) defined bullying as a hostile behavior displayed by an individual in order to harm another person or a group of people. According to him bullies engage in the act in order to establish power and control over their colleagues, whom they consider to be weaker. Although bullying is a common experience for students around the world, it is a complex social problem that can have severe negative consequences for both bullies and victims (Hymel, Rocke, & Bonanno 2005), especially as bullying has potential to cause either physical or psychological harm to the victim. According to Olweus (1978), a person is being bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other person. Bullying may be carried out by a single person (the bully) or by a group against a single person (the victim) or a group of people. Bullying is pervasive and potentially terrible, harmful, for bullies, victims, schools and communities. The consequences of bullying are far-reaching, ranging from lower attendance and students achievements to increased violence and juvenile crime. And not only does it harm both its intended victims and the perpetrators, it may affect the climate of schools, morale of teachers, and indirectly the ability of all students to learn to the best of their abilities.

Anxiety is a psychological and physiological state characterized by physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioral components. Anxiety means trouble in either presence or absence of psychological stress, anxiety can create a feeling of worry, uneasiness and dread. It is considered to be a normal response to stress. It may help an individual to cope with the demands of life, but in excess it may be considered as anxiety disorder.

Anxiety can also interfare with learning in that anxious students are more easily distracted by irrelevant or incidental aspect of the task at hand, having trouble in focusing on significant details. Some people view the behavior of anxious students who perceive the classroom experience to be threatening perhaps because of history and expectation of failure or because they anticipate negative consequences if they attempt to achieve. Some research has reported that highly anxious students often indulge in day dreaming. These behaviors make us think about way of protecting ourselves from a perceived threat but each interferes with our productivity and achievements. In general anxiety that is too high can block learning and teachers with high anxious students may need to concentrate on building relationship that allows the student to feel not threatened in that environment.

Achievement encompasses students' ability and performance; it is an ability test design to measure current proficiency in a given area of knowledge or skills typically administer in school setting. Akpochafo (2009) state academic achievement is one of the most important goals of education. The success or failure of a student is measured in terms of academic achievement it means development of skills in school subject. Academic achievement is the criterion for selection, promotion or recognition in various walks of life. It generally refers to the degree or level of success or proficiency attained in some academic work. It encourages the students to work hard and learn more. Academic achievement is the status of a student's learning and refers to knowledge attained and skills developed during their academic career which are assessed by school authorities with the help of teacher made or standardize tests. Academic achievement is the extent to which a student teacher or institution has attained their short long-term educational goals. Academic achievement is commonly measured through examination or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspect are most important, (wikipedia.org). Grading and Hammarrstom (2005) define academic achievement as the extent to which a learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning i.e, achievement is reflected by the extent to which skill or knowledge has been imparted to him.

Ecological theory was used as a framework to review the documented risk and protective factors - associated with involvement in school related bullying during childhood and adolescence. Microsystem such as peers (socialization during adolescence), family (violence, lack of parental monitoring), community (exposure to violence), and school (teacher attitude, climate contribute to the rates of bullying perpetrated or experienced by youth. The interaction between components of the Microsystem is referred to as the Microsystem, and offers insight into how contexts can exacerbate or buffer experiences for youth who are involved in bullying.

Ecological theory contains five components: children, Micro-system, meso-system, exo-system and Macro-system. According to him children are viewed as the center of their own ecological environments. This indicates that their behaviors are influenced by not only their own trait but also by the ecological context with which they are interacting. Microsystem refers to a pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships experienced by the children. Meso-system refers to interconnections among two or more Microsystem, and the children actively participate in this setting, such as relationship between parents, peers, teachers, or neighborhood. Exo-system refers to the social settings in which children can be influenced, but they do not necessarily actively participate. Finally macro-system refers to consistencies found at the level of the culture, which includes belief system, norm or ideology.

According to Bronfenbrebner (1979) opined children are a developmental entity that interacts with their ecological surroundings. Consequently their behaviours are outcomes of interaction as well as their own traits. An extensive review identified individual factors that were consistently found to be significant on bullying behaviour. These factors are age, prior experience of bullying, dominance, impulsivity, attitude toward aggression, and fun seeking tendency.

Micro-system: According to Bronfenbrebner (1979), the most important concept for microsystem is experience within interpersonal relationships. Through experience children can be influence by their counterparts, thus he argued that experience is the most powerful in shaping the course of psychological growth. There are four microsystems around children: experience in the family, experience with teachers, experience with peers and experience within the school environment.

Al-Raqqad, Al- Bourin and Al Talahin (2017) social ecological model, the development of psychological difficulties occurs through the interaction of an individual's biological and cognitive vulnerabilities and stressful life experience. Involvement in bullying is conceptualized as stressful life event influenced by multiple social stressors. However the presence of social stressors does not fully explain the development of psychological difficulties life depression anxiety and aggression, rather, stressful life events can be exacerbated by biological vulnerabilities, leading to more significant, negative outcomes, if negative events are attributed to global, stable, and interval cognitive schemas, and negative beliefs about self, world and future. Involvement in bullying results from interaction between the individual and their environment.

Micheal Eysenck's Attention control theory is an approach to anxiety and cognition representing a major development of Grading and Hammarrstom (2005) processing efficiency theory. It is assumed that anxiety impairs efficient functioning of the goal-directed attention system and increase the extent to which processing is influenced by the stimulus-driven attention control, anxiety increase attention to threat-related stimuli. Adverse effects of anxiety on processing efficiency depend on two central executive functions involving attentional control: Inhibition and shifting. Erica (2010) anxiety may not impair performance effectiveness (quality of performance) when it leads to the use of compensatory strategies (e.g enhanced effort, increased use of processing resources). Freud's earliest theory of anxiety goes back to the mid-1890s, predating even his use of the term 'psychoanalysis' itself. At this early stage he didn't consider anxiety to be related to thoughts or ideas, but he did observe that it was closely linked to sexuality, defining it as sexual excitement that has been transformed. At this time, Freud thought of this sexual excitement (or libido as he called it) as a hypothetical substance that we might compare to something like testosterone. Freud's argument was that when the path to satisfaction is blocked (for instance in coitus interrupt us, when sexual intercourse ends before ejaculation), the resulting build-up of unsatisfied libido takes on a toxic character, finding an outlet in anxiety. As he would later put it, "neutoric anxiety arises out of libido, and is thus related to it in the same kind of way as vinegar is to wine.

## METHODOLOGY

An ex-post facto research design was employed for the purpose of this research in order to determine the influence of bullying and anxiety on academic achievement. This is primarily because the variable under investigation that is Academic Achievement already exists in the schools examination office and hence was used in retrospect. Population consists of the entire SSII

students, from forty three (43) senior secondary schools in Bichi education zone with the total population of four thousand, four hundred and thirty six students (4,436). The population comprised of two thousand nine hundred and forty eight males (2948), and one thousand four hundred and eighty eight females (1,488) from different schools. The distribution of the population is shown in table below.

**Table 1: Students Population Distribution**

| S/N | LOCALGOVT. | M | F | NUMBER OF SCHOOLS | N |
|-----|------------|------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| 1. | Bichi | 1,168 | 896 | 15 | 2064 |
| 2. | Tsanyawa | 684 | 175 | 11 | 859 |
| 3. | Bagwai | 820 | 145 | 09 | 965 |
| 4. | Kunchi | 276 | 272 | 08 | 548 |
| Total | | 2,948 | 1,488 | 43 | 4,436 |

Source: Bichi Zonal Education Office

The sample size used for the purpose of this study is three hundred and fifty-seven (357) out of four thousand four hundred and thirty-six (4436) populations. A total of 170 female students and 187 male students were selected for the study.

**Table 2: Sample Size Table:**

| S/N | Schools | Gender | N | S |
|-----|---------|--------|------|-----|
| 1) | GGSS Bichi | Females | 378 | 63 |
| 2) | GSS Bichi | Males | 354 | 59 |
| 3) | GGAS Bichi | Females | 184 | 30 |
| 4) | GGSS Tsanyawa | Females | 125 | 21 |
| 5) | GSS Tsanyawa | Males | 138 | 23 |
| 6) | GSS Kabagiwa | Males | 120 | 19 |
| 7) | GSS Bagwai | Males | 332 | 55 |
| 8) | GGASS Bagwai | Females | 125 | 21 |
| 9) | GSS Kiyawa | Males | 80 | 13 |
| 10) | GSS Shuwaki | Males | 107 | 18 |
| 11) | GGSS Shuwaki | Females | 67 | 11 |
| 12) | GGASS U/Gyartai | Females | 140 | 24 |
| | **Total** | | 2150 | 357 |

The researcher adopted the following instruments for data collection, namely:
Bully Behavior Questionnaire (BBQ) by Demaray, Summers, Jenkins, Lisa. (2014 ). Brazillian State- Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) by Fioravanti-Bastos, Cheniaux, Fernandez (2011). The

Reliability index of the instruments calculated using Cronbach alpha, were recorded at 0.79 for Fioravanti-bastos, Cheniax and Fernandez (2011) and 0.85 was obtained for Brazillian State-Trait anxiety Inventory (2018) the reliability coefficient of 0.85.

**Presentation of Results**
The presentation of result is based on the statistical analysis of the data collected, which formed the basis for findings of the study. The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics, in form of simple frequency and percentage. ANOVA and t-test for independent samples were used to test all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference in academic achievement of bully, assistant, victim, defender of the victim and outsider, senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

**Table 3: Significance Difference in Academic Achievement of bully, assistant, victim, defender of the victim and Outsider among senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.**

| (I) Dimensions of Bullying | (J) Dimensions of Bullying | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Bully | Assistant | -.33490 | .21878 | .673 | -1.0124 | .3426 |
| | Victim | -.08422 | .19104 | .996 | -.6758 | .5074 |
| | Defender | -3.07666* | .20083 | .000 | -3.6986 | -2.4547 |
| | Outsider | -4.07245* | .20242 | .000 | -4.6993 | -3.4456 |
| Assistant | Bully | .33490 | .21878 | .673 | -.3426 | 1.0124 |
| | Victim | .25068 | .21728 | .856 | -.4222 | .9235 |
| | Defender | -2.74176* | .22594 | .000 | -3.4414 | -2.0421 |
| | Outsider | -3.73756* | .22736 | .000 | -4.4416 | -3.0335 |
| Victim | Bully | .08422 | .19104 | .996 | -.5074 | .6758 |
| | Assistant | -.25068 | .21728 | .856 | -.9235 | .4222 |
| | Defender | -2.99244* | .19920 | .000 | -3.6093 | -2.3756 |
| | Outsider | -3.98824* | .20080 | .000 | -4.6100 | -3.3664 |
| Defender | Bully | 3.07666* | .20083 | .000 | 2.4547 | 3.6986 |
| | Assistant | 2.74176* | .22594 | .000 | 2.0421 | 3.4414 |
| | Victim | 2.99244* | .19920 | .000 | 2.3756 | 3.6093 |
| | Outsider | -.99580* | .21014 | .000 | -1.6465 | -.3451 |
| Outsider | Bully | 4.07245* | .20242 | .000 | 3.4456 | 4.6993 |
| | Assistant | 3.73756* | .22736 | .000 | 3.0335 | 4.4416 |
| | Victim | 3.98824* | .20080 | .000 | 3.3664 | 4.6100 |
| | Defender | .99580* | .21014 | .000 | .3451 | 1.6465 |

**\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level**.

The table above shows that f- calculated value of 172.092 with p- value .000, tested at 0.05 level of significant, is less than 0.05 level of significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Meaning that significant difference was observed in academic achievement between bully,

assistant, victim, defender of the victim and outsider students of senior secondary schools in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State, in favour of defender and outsider.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in academic achievement between High- anxiety and low-anxiety senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

**Table 4: Significance Difference in Academic Achievement of bully High Anxiety and Low Anxiety among senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.**

| (I) Dimensions of Bullying | (J) Dimensions of Bullying | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Bully | Assistant | -.33490 | .21878 | .673 | -1.0124 | .3426 |
| | Victim | -.08422 | .19104 | .996 | -.6758 | .5074 |
| | Defender | -3.07666* | .20083 | .000 | -3.6986 | -2.4547 |
| | Outsider | -4.07245* | .20242 | .000 | -4.6993 | -3.4456 |
| Assistant | Bully | .33490 | .21878 | .673 | -.3426 | 1.0124 |
| | Victim | .25068 | .21728 | .856 | -.4222 | .9235 |
| | Defender | -2.74176* | .22594 | .000 | -3.4414 | -2.0421 |
| | Outsider | -3.73756* | .22736 | .000 | -4.4416 | -3.0335 |
| Victim | Bully | .08422 | .19104 | .996 | -.5074 | .6758 |
| | Assistant | -.25068 | .21728 | .856 | -.9235 | .4222 |
| | Defender | -2.99244* | .19920 | .000 | -3.6093 | -2.3756 |
| | Outsider | -3.98824* | .20080 | .000 | -4.6100 | -3.3664 |
| Defender | Bully | 3.07666* | .20083 | .000 | 2.4547 | 3.6986 |
| | Assistant | 2.74176* | .22594 | .000 | 2.0421 | 3.4414 |
| | Victim | 2.99244* | .19920 | .000 | 2.3756 | 3.6093 |
| | Outsider | -.99580* | .21014 | .000 | -1.6465 | -.3451 |
| Outsider | Bully | 4.07245* | .20242 | .000 | 3.4456 | 4.6993 |
| | Assistant | 3.73756* | .22736 | .000 | 3.0335 | 4.4416 |
| | Victim | 3.98824* | .20080 | .000 | 3.3664 | 4.6100 |
| | Defender | .99580* | .21014 | .000 | .3451 | 1.6465 |

**\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level**.

The table above shows that f- calculated value of 172.092 with p- value .000, tested at 0.05 level of significant, is less than 0.05 level of significant. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected. Meaning that significant difference was observed in academic achievement between bully, assistant, victim, defender of the victim and outsider students of senior secondary schools in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State, in favour of defender and outsider.

**Ho3:** There is no significant gender difference in academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.

**Table 5: Significance Gender Difference between Male and female mean Academic Achievement senior secondary school students in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State.**

| Variable | N | Mean Academic Achievement |
|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | |
| Male | 187 | 7.22 |
| Female | 170 | 6.75 |
| | | |
| **Bullying** | | |
| Bully | 82 | 3.28 |
| Assistant to the Bully | 52 | 3.61 |
| Victim | 85 | 3.36 |
| Defender | 70 | 6.35 |
| Outsider | 68 | 7.35 |
| | | |
| **Anxiety** | | |
| High Anxiety | 171 | 7.09 |
| Low Anxiety | 186 | 6.92 |

## CONCLUSION

1   There is high level of bullying behavior among senior secondary schools students of Bichi Education Zone, Kano State with 23%.
2   There is significant difference in academic achievement between bully, assistant to the bully , victim, defender of the victim and outsider students of senior secondary schools in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State Nigeria in favor of defender and outsider.
3   There is no significant difference between academic achievement of high-anxiety and low-anxiety students of senior secondary schools in Bichi Education Zone, Kano State Nigeria.

## Recommendations

1.  There is need for teachers and counselors to work hand in hand to improve the academic achievement of victims of bullying among students by regularly sharing students' progress report with parents/ caregivers and by offering counseling to students.
2.  Teachers need to enhance their relationship with the students to ensure early detection and management of anxiety and other psychological construct that may affect students' academic achievement.

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