Family Values and Verbal Bullying among Secondary School Adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee

Gertrude Jeremiah Udoh*

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Nigeria
*Corresponding author, e-mail: gertrudeaarchibong@uniuyo.edu.ng

Abstract
This study was to determine the relationship between family values and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee. Two research questions were raised, and two hypotheses formulated and tested at .05 level of significant. A correlational survey design was adopted while the population of the study comprised all 6,613 senior secondary Two (SS2) students in the fifteen (15) public secondary schools in the study area. A sample size of 378 senior secondary two (SS2) was selected for the study using Taro Yamane sampling formulae. To get adequate sampled schools, balloting method of random sampling was used to select 9 public secondary schools out of 15. Thereafter, 42 students were selected from each of the sampled schools using the same random sampling method for instrument administration. The researchers' structured questionnaire titled "Family Values and Verbal Bullying among Secondary School Adolescents Questionnaire (FVVBSSAQ)" was used for data collection, with reliability co-efficient of .72 and .85 respectively for the independent and dependent variables, using Cronbach Alpha statistics. Data generated from the field was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics, and the study findings revealed a very low negative and insignificant relationship between mutual respect, tolerance, and verbal bullying secondary school adolescents. Conclusion was drawn from the findings while the research recommended among other things that, parents should cultivate the attitude of mutual respect in the family by addressing members with a polite, cheerful, and amiable voice so that young ones can speak to others with dignity and respect while in school.

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1. Introduction

The family is socially recognized group usually formed by marriage adoption that forms an emotional connection and serves as an economic unit in the society. The family has the duty of protecting, providing, caring and socializing the child with expected roles in the society. The bedrock of a child's education starts in the family. Parents are obliged to teach the children certain belief and values morally accepted by the society. This is because family is the primary institution that socializes the young and provides surveillance over their behaviour. Moral values and standard of behaviour inculcated into the minds of children has the ability of shaping children, response to certain actions. Agbakwuru (2012) noted that as a social setting, the moral values structure and dynamics of the family significantly affects its member's behaviour, attitudes, interest as well as general well-being. All these lessons of morality and good manners help to up-build the behaviour of young ones and serve as deterrent to any unusual forms of abuse, be it physical, verbal abuse or bullying, emotional abuse and many others.

Verbal bullying in the school are slanderous statements or accusations that cause the victim undue emotional distress. Perpetrators of verbal bullying use words on students and name calling to gain power and control over a target (Ada & Anake, 2015). Typically, bullies use relentless insults to belittle, demean and hurt another person. Abuses are often used to control, exploit, or maltreat a

receive person without respecting his integrity and feelings. Among all the abusive conduct prevalent among secondary school students is bullying behaviour, which Irozuru and Eno (2015) noted to be the root cause of aggressive behaviour and physical violence among students.

According to Campo and Klijn (2018), abuses occur when people maltreat or exploit other people, without considering their emotions, feelings, integrity and respect as individual. The author added that verbal bullying seems to be most dangerous among all abuses; because it leaves no visible scars, but damages the emotions and feelings of the victims, and distresses the inner core of the victim's self. Abusers frequently are interested in the use of abusive behaviour to manipulate their victim into submission or compliance with their will. As observed by Teicher, Samson, Sheu, Polcari and McGreenery (2010), the high causes of verbal bullying of students are mostly attributed to family values. The author further explained that most parents have not been so committed towards educating their children on moral values and principles that are beneficial to individual and societal progress. This means that verbal bullying prevails among students due to parents' failure in teaching and modeling acceptable moral values for their children to imitate.

Parents need to teach young ones how to show mutual respect to one another. Mutual respect is also about everyone being valued, accepting differences in a respectful manner, promoting communication, and maintaining healthy relationship. An individual who treats each other in a courteous and affable manner could be referred to as having mutual respect. According to Sultania (2022), mutual respect in a relationship is as important as love and trust which are the foundations for a strong bond between romantic partners. The author added that fathers who treat the mothers of their children with respect in words and deeds and deal with conflict within the relationship in an appropriate manner, without physical threat to life and abusive languages, will likely have children who will treat others the same way. They are less likely to bully fellow students; but the opposite will be the case to children whose parents do not have mutual respect in the family.

Tolerance is one of the best values that help young ones to live together in harmonies and stability irrespective of one's race, tribe and complexion. Pauley and McPherson (2010) stated that tolerance involves both caring and doing, kindness combined with appropriate action. In the school system where students are sometimes faced with physical, academic and behavioural problems, some students who are fortunate to study without any form of abnormality always abuse the unfortunate ones on a slight provocation. This sometimes brings about social isolation, poor self-image, sadness and disappointment on the part of the victims. Borgonovi (2012) proposed that teasing, bullying, disrespect, and other negative behaviours are common in children who never learned about the importance of being tolerant. The author added that parents can raise their children better by teaching tolerance and other good values from an early age. Such teaching can help a student to have balance view of themselves, their action and behaviour towards the others. Hence, children whose parents transmit values such as tolerance in them may likely avoid unnecessary discussions that may bring about verbal abuse and bullying.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Social Dominance Theory (1999)

The theory of social dominance was proposed by Sidanius and Pratto in 1999, which emphasized on a motivation for verbal bullying or abuse. The social dominance theory (SDT) focuses on group-based social hierarchies. The fundamental tenet of SDT is that all societies consist of group based social hierarchies that are based on gender, age, and arbitrary-set system. The gender has to do with the males having more power than females; age involved adults having more power than children while arbitrary-set system is concerned with a socially significant group differences such as ethnicity or social class that create hierarchies. These group-based social hierarchies are formed through the mechanisms of oppression, discrimination, and injustice.

Dominant groups oppress less-powerful groups to form a hierarchy with one or a few dominant groups at the top while subordinate groups are forced to the bottom. The dominant group possesses a disproportionate amount of positive social value, whereas the subordinate groups possess disproportionate amounts of negative social value. In group-based social hierarchies, the social

status and power that individual possess is divided from their group membership rather than individual characteristic. Interpersonal traumas, such as verbal abuse, erode victims' abilities to form social and emotional attachments to others such as an inability to successfully attach to a peer group or to a school (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Further, verbal abuse threatens the physical well-being of victims, who often report feeling afraid and helpless.

The social dominance theory (SDT) provides inside into the verbal abusive dynamics of students. The theorists argued that the desire for power and dominance is a central motivating factor that fuels verbal abuse; and that verbal abusers use intimidation and humiliation as a means of obtaining power. The theory indicates that youths engage in verbal abuse in their attempts to gain group social dominance, and then maintain their social status through ongoing bullying. In other words, verbal bullying or abuse is used as a means of establishing and maintaining dominance. To maintain social dominance, this group would use ongoing bullying as a means of oppressing less powerful members of the class. Indeed, youth who desired dominance act aggressively and bully others to gain social status.

The relevant of this theory to this work is that it has explained the causes and effects of verbal abuse on students learning. It is observed from this theory that the urge to maintain social dominance increases the tendency of verbal abuse or bullying among students. Verbal abuse exacerbates interpersonal conflicts and results in strong, negative emotions. It is understood from the theory that higher experience of verbal abuse can result in students' use of substances, increase attendance problems, dropping out of school and suicidal thoughts. The fear of becoming a victim of verbal bullying or abuse creates atmosphere of trepidation and mistrust that further erodes relationships and disrupts social cohesion.

2.2. Mutual Respect and Verbal Bullying Tendencies of Students

All human beings have value and are worthy of being treated with respect. Mutual respect is the ability to show due regard for another person feelings, wishes and right. It is the reciprocity of respect between two or more people. It is an essential foundation for every healthy relationship. According to De Figueiredo and Dias (2012), parents play significant role in students' attitude, behaviour and lifestyle; hence, if the students are to show mutual respect in their communication and actions in the school, parents are expected to be exemplary in this regard. The author added that a lack of mutual respect among family members can make young ones develop negative thought and behaviours such as name calling, gossip and bullying.

According to Kraynak (2013), children learn to respect the dignity of others when they are treated with respect in their homes. Constant criticism of a child, negative comments, and failure to praise children achievement can lead the child to be disrespectful to others. Treating children with respect pays large dividends both to families and to societies. As noted by Taylor and Gebhardt (1986), parents must teach their children how to practice respectful ways of communicating with people and help children learn to resolve conflicts nonviolently. The author added when facing a conflict, parents should encourage their children to resolve conflict peacefully by suggesting different ways a child might to resolve conflict. For students to cultivate the attitude of mutual respect, parents should teach their children to respect the valued traditions of their heritage, talk about family customs for showing respect, for honoring elders and helping the community.

Dixon, Graber, and Brooks-Gunn (2018) conducted a study on the roles of respect for parental authority and parenting practices in parent-child conflict among African American, Latino and European American Families. One of the major findings revealed that the display of mutual respect through the observance of individuals rights and dignity by parents significantly deter students from exhibiting verbal bullying behaviour in the school. The reason for this is that through social interaction in the home, young ones are called to promote the sanctity and dignity of human persons irrespective of their socio-economic background. This finding is in tandem with the finding of the study conducted by Nyorere and James (2019), which revealed a very high positive and significant between mutual respect for human dignity and students' low tendency to involvement in bullying. Students whose parents treat family members with dignity are most likely to understand the

different strengths and weakness of their school mates; hence, having high expectations for them, both in academic and personal growth.

2.3. Tolerance and Verbal Bullying Tendencies of Students

Tolerance is an essential lifelong skill that is carefully learned through lessons and action. Since the home is the first contact of socialization to young ones, Ababneh (2015) argued parents are expected to teach tolerance as a virtue at home so that young ones can learn how cope with cultural diversity and respect the individual right of students irrespective of the students' race. The author added that parents can encourage students to shun abusive behaviour such as verbal bullying, by always holding discussions on the need to observe the different rights of the human and share their understanding of personal identity. Al Sadi and Basit (2013) stated that one of the easiest and most affordable ways to inculcating tolerance in the minds of children is by providing story books and riddles that contained observance of people rights and tolerating individual shortcomings. Such practice can create social awareness and cooperation which are critical aspect of tolerance. When young students know that they are expected to treat one another equally, Al-Zyoud, Brown, and Morgan (2013) observed that it helps lay the foundation for acceptance as they grow up; hence, guiding against abusive tendency.

Tolerance is an important concept that helps people to live together peacefully. Tolerance also means that you don't put your opinions above those of others, even when you are sure that you are right (Rapp & Freitag, 2015). Tolerant people show strength in that they can deal with different opinions and perspectives. The virtue of tolerance is crucial in that it can expose an individual to other way of thinking and ideas from around the world for better understanding of diverse culture and peaceful co-existence. Rahman and Khambali (2013) argued that tolerance is the based gift that parents can give to children, and that the principle of tolerance should be taught to children at early stage of life to avoid abusive conducts in school. Safina and Abdurakhmanov (2016) added that children should not grow up with feelings of hate and suspicion. Children who grow up with hate and jealously of others turn into unhappy people and are most likely to render insulting and foul words on other children who seem to be weaker. If children experience love and tolerance at home, they will be able to grow up and lead a happy and peaceful life that is devoid of verbal abuses.

Ofodile and Ofole (2018) conducted a study on domination by aggressive behaviours among students in Orumba North, Anambra State, Nigeria. The authors found that parental tolerance behaviour significantly influence students' sympathetic behaviour in secondary schools. This finding is also in agreement with that of Alokan and Osakinle (2015), which revealed a significant relationship between verbal abuses by parents and verbal bullying and aggression behaviour among secondary school students. This shows that lack of parental tolerance increases students' likelihood of involving in verbal aggression. Hence, it is observed from this finding that even though children can not speak, they usually see and imitate their parents' behaviour. Therefore, if students are to do away with derogatory words in school, parents must nurture young ones with the understanding of how to respect and appreciate the differences and shortcoming of other students.

3. Statement of the Problem

Verbal bullying is a common social problem observed among students in Uyo Local Education Committee. This situation is very alarming in the study area as most students often carry out different forms of verbal abuses like name calling, yelling, scolding, spreading gossip, slandering, and rendering of accusations and insulting language. As commonly observed by the researcher, the most annoying part is that most students usually use offensive expressions which contained swear and rude words against their fellow classmates, friends as well as teachers. Insulting expressions like "God punish you, son of a bitch bastard, idiot, big head, coconut head, rubbish" among other derogatory statement are often used by the students to express their annoyance over a conflicting issue. Abuses are always used by students to control or maltreat recessive classmates and to disrespect their integrity, feelings and emotions. This situation seems to be very worrisome as schools keep producing graduates without good morals and sound ethical values, exhibiting abusive behaviour tendencies that are inimical to the peaceful existence of the school and society. Therefore,

it is on this premise that this study aimed to investigate the relationship between family values and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee.

4. Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What is the relationship between mutual respect and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee?

2. What is the relationship between tolerance and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee?

5. Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between mutual respect and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee.

2. There is no significant relationship between tolerance and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee.

6. Method

6.1. Design of the Study

The correlational survey design was adopted for the study. This design is used whenever a researcher wants to find out the magnitude and direction of relationship that exists between the dependent and independent variables (Udoh & Joseph, 2005). Therefore, this design was considered suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to measure the relationship between family values and bullying tendencies among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee.

6.2. Population of the Study

The population of this study consisted of all the 6,613 senior secondary Two (SS2) students in the fifteen (15) public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State (Department of Planning and Research Statistics, State Secondary Education Board, Uyo, 2023).

6.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 378 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students which represents 5 percent of the study population was selected for the study using Taro Yamane sampling formula. To get adequate sampled schools, random sampling method was used to select 9 public secondary schools out of 15. Thereafter, hence, 42 students were selected from each of the sampled schools using hat and draw method of random sampling, which gives a total of 378 sampled respondents.

6.4. Instrumentation

A self-structured questionnaire titled "Family Values and Verbal Bullying among Secondary School Adolescents Questionnaire (FVVBSSAQ)" was used for data collection. The items were framed in line with the research questions and hypotheses. The instrument had two parts. Section (A) contained 10 items, that is, 5 items each on family values while section (B) contained 8 items measuring verbal bullying of students. The FVVBSSAQ was measured in a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The respondents were requested to give their own opinions or views to the instrument using the symbol ($\sqrt{}$).

6.5. Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the face validity of the instrument, three copies of the questionnaire instrument were given to experts in instrument validation. Two of the experts were from the Department of Psychological Foundations of Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit) while the remaining one was from Guidance and Counselling, all in the University of Uyo to assess the suitability or otherwise of the items in the instrument. The inputs and corrections made by the evaluators were used to form the final copy for administration.

6.6. Reliability of the Instrument

To establish the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used. Here, the instrument was administered 35 SS2 students in a selected school not included in the population sample. The instrument was administered and data were collated. Data was subjected to correlation and Cronbach Alpha statistics was applied for test of internal consistency of the instrument. This yielded the overall reliability coefficient of .81 for family values and .72 for items measuring verbal bullying among students respectively. This index according to Udoh and Joseph (2005) is a high reliability index since the reliability coefficient is above .50. Therefore, the instrument was deemed reliable for use in the study.

6.7. Method of Data Analysis

Data generated were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions. The same statistical tool (PPMC) was used for testing of the null hypotheses by comparing the r-value with the critical r-value, to determine the significance of the relationship between variables all at .05 level of significance. The research questions were answered using the decision rule presented by Nunnally (2011) as follows:

00 to -0.09 - Zero relationship (ZR)

-0.1 to -0.22 - Very weak negative relationship (VWNR)

-0.23 to -0.34 - Weak negative relationship (WNR)

-0.35 to -0.49 - Negative relationship (NR)

-0.50 to -0.70 – Low negative relationship (LNR)

-0.71 to -0.99 – Very low negative relationship (VLNR)

7. Results and Discussion Findings

7.1. Research Question 1

What is the relationship between mutual respect and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee? Result in Table 1 shows a very low negative relationship between mutual respect and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee. This is evidence on the correlation coefficient of -0.71. The implication of this result is that students are most likely to use derogatory or insulting language in schools if mutual respect is not maintained in the family by parents.

Table 1. Summary of Analysis of Relationship Between Mutual Respect and Verbal Bullying among Secondary School Adolescents

n = 378

Variables	$\sum x$ $\sum y$	$\sum x^2$ $\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal Remark
Mutual Respect (x)	8457	36092	735119	-0.71 VLNR
Verbal Bullying among Students (y)	8304	34602		

7.2. Research Question 2

What is the relationship between tolerance and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee? Result in Table 2 shows a very low negative relationship between tolerance and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee. This is evidence on the correlation coefficient of -0.82. This result implies that students are less likely to tolerate the existence of varied opinions and behaviour of one another in the school if their parents are not exemplary in this regard.

Table 2. Summary of Analysis of Relationship Between Tolerance and Verbal Bullying among Secondary School Adolescents

n = 378

Variables	∑x ∑y	∑x² ∑y²	∑xy	r-cal Remark
Tolerance (x)	3533	62939	14663	-0.82 VLNR
Verbal Bullying among Students (y)	8304	34602		

7.3. Testing of Hypotheses

7.3.1. Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between mutual respect and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee. Table 3 shows that the calculated r-value of -0.71 is less than the critical value of 0.196 at the degree of freedom of 376 and at .05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore retained, while the alternate hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between mutual respect and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee.

Table 3. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Mutual Respect and Verbal Bullying among Secondary School Adolescents

Variables	n	df	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Mutual Respect (x)					
	378	376	-0.71*	0.196	Not Sig.
Verbal Bullying among Students (y)					

7.3.2. Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between tolerance and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee. Table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of -0.82 is greater than the critical value of 0.196 at the degree of freedom of 376 and at .05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis is therefore retained, while the alternate hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between tolerance and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee.

Table 4. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship Between Tolerance and Verbal Bullying among Secondary School Adolescents

Variables	n	df	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Tolerance (x)					
	378	376	-0.82*	0.196	Not Sig.
Verbal Bullying among Students (y)					

7.4. Discussion of Findings

The researcher made a combined discussion of findings from the research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Results from the research question one and hypothesis one revealed a very low negative and insignificant relationship between mutual respect and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee. This finding is in tandem with the finding of the study conducted by Nyorere and James (2019), which revealed a very high positive and significant between mutual respect for human dignity and students' low tendency to involvement in bullying. This finding also conforms to the earlier finding of Dixon, Graber and Brooks-Gunn (2018), which revealed that the display of mutual respect through the observance of individuals' rights and dignity by parents significantly deter students from exhibiting verbal bullying behaviour in the school. The reason for this is that through social interaction in the home, young ones are called to promote the sanctity and dignity of human persons irrespective of their socio-economic background.

Results from the research question two and hypothesis two revealed a very low negative and insignificant relationship between tolerance and verbal bullying among secondary school adolescents in Uyo Local Education Committee. This finding is in tandem with the finding of the study conducted by Ofodile and Ofole (2018), which showed that parental tolerance behaviour significantly influences students' sympathetic behaviour in secondary schools. This finding is also in agreement with that of Alokan and Osakinle (2015), which revealed a significant relationship between verbal abuses by parents and verbal bullying and aggression behaviour among secondary school students. This shows that lack of parental tolerance increases students' likelihood of involving in verbal aggression. Hence, it is observed from this finding that even though children can not speak, they usually see and imitate their parents' behaviour. Therefore, if students are to do away with derogatory words in school, parents must nurture young ones with the understanding of how to respect and appreciate the differences and shortcomings of other students.

8. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that students' tendency to be involved in verbal bullying if parents are exemplary in the display of good morals and values such as mutual respect and tolerance.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings:

1. Parents should cultivate the attitude of mutual respect in the family by addressing members with a polite, cheerful, and amiable voice so that young ones can speak to others with dignity and respect while in school.

2. Parents should practice tolerance with the disagreeable aspects of family life so that young ones will learn how to respects and appreciate the differences or weakness of other people in the school.

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