

Influence of Bullying Behaviour and Academic Pressure on Mental Health of Secondary School Students in Oyo Zone, Oyo State

Ayeleke Ayegbola Tunrayo¹, Taiwo. A. Ola (PhD)², Shofolahan Paulina Olubunmi³

¹Agodi secretariat Ibadan, Oyo State

²Department of kinesiology, sport Science and Health Education, Lead City University. Ibadan

³Department of kinesiology, sport Science and Health Education, Lead City University. Ibadan

Email address: Oyindamutiat@gmail.com / shofolahan.paulina@pgstudent,lcu.edu.ng

Abstract—Mental health issues among Nigerian secondary school students are a growing concern due to factors like academic pressure, family problems, socio-economic challenges, bullying, and exposure to violence. This study explores the Influence of bullying behaviour and academic pressure on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone, Oyo State. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised all public and private secondary school students in Oyo Senatorial Districts, with a sample size of 231, using Taro Yamane's sampling size technique. A standardized instrument was used to collect data. The Cronbach Alpha was used for internal consistency of all the items in the questionnaire; with reliability 0.73. Research questions was analysed using frequency counts, mean and standard deviation. Multiple linear regression was used to test hypotheses 1-4, independent t-test was for hypothesis 5 at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that revealed a strong positive relationship between bullying behaviours verbal, physical, social and cyber as well as the mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone and that all forms of bullying behaviours contribute differently to the mental health of the students. It was also revealed that a very strong and significant relationship between academic pressure and the mental health of the students and that the different dimensions of academic pressure time pressure, performance pressure and social pressure contributed differently to students' mental health and that there was no significant difference in the mental health of students attending public and private secondary schools in Oyo Zone. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the authorities of secondary schools in Oyo Zone should sustain and strengthen existing mental health programmes, enforce strong anti-bullying policies and continuous awareness campaigns to maintain the high mental health among students. Teachers and counsellors should monitor all forms of bullying closely, provide early interventions through counselling and peer-support programme Schools should regulate academic workload, introduce stress management initiatives to reduce pressure on students' mental health.

Keywords— Bullying, Mental health, Academic pressure.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health issues among Nigerian secondary school students are a growing concern due to factors like academic pressure, family problems, socio-economic challenges, bullying, and exposure to violence. These issues often manifest as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and behavioural disorders, but they are frequently overlooked due

to stigma, lack of awareness by parents and caregivers and inadequate mental health services in schools. WHO (2022), asserted that globally, mental health disorders account for 16% of the global burden of disease and injury in students aged 10-19 years.

Mental health is defined as a state of harmony among emotional, social, and psychological wellbeing. It is a state of well-being in which individuals use their potentials to perform their duties properly, use the coping skills to deal with the stressors of life, and become an influential member of his community (GBD 2023). Mental health has however remained neglected especially in resource-limited countries like Nigeria which has a grossly deficient budget for health (WHO 2022). It was documented in Mental Health Education Years 1-13, (2022), that Students with mental health disorders are at risk of developing myriads of clinical conditions. Prominent among these are depression (4th leading cause of illness and disability among students aged 15-19 years), anxiety (6th leading cause of illness and disability among students aged 10-14 years), and suicide (3rd leading cause of death among students aged 15-19 years).

Ahulu, Gyasi-Gyamerah, & Anum (2019), listed the effects of these mental health problems on students to include social exclusion, discrimination, educational challenges, risk-taking habits such as human rights infringement, mental health-related physical ill-health, depression, anxiety, irritability, frustration, anger, attention deficit hyperactive disorder, and conduct disorder.

Anxiety is a common mental health disorder characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, and fear that are persistent and overwhelming. Anxiety can interfere with daily life, relationships, and overall well-being. Also is depression which is also known as major depressive disorder (MDD). It is a mental health condition characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in activities. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is another mental health condition that develops in response to a traumatic event, such as physical or emotional abuse, natural disasters, combat, or accidents. It includes recurring, distressing memories of the traumatic event, sudden, vivid memories of the traumatic event, recurring, disturbing dreams related to the traumatic event, avoiding people, places, or activities that

remind them of the traumatic event, excessive alertness, difficulty sleeping, or exaggerated startle response and feeling disconnected from others, difficulty experiencing positive emotions. Suicidal ideation is the last component of mental health problem and it involves thoughts about self-harm or ending one's life, ranging from fleeting thoughts to detailed planning. It is a precursor to suicide attempts and a critical indicator of mental health challenges in adolescents. Studies in Nigeria report varying rates of suicidal ideation among adolescents, with higher prevalence in urban areas due to stressors like academic pressure, bullying, and family issues⁸. Reports suggest a significant under reporting of suicide-related behaviours due to stigma and cultural beliefs surrounding mental health.

Bullying has been observed as the most common form of violence in schools. Bullying is redundant, monotonous, and destructive, power-based behaviour of students. Broadly, bullying is the repetitive misuse of power in relationships through verbal, physical, or social behaviour intended to cause harm. Students are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure, which can lead to bullying behaviours like making fun of others, online taunting, or exclusion from activities. Bullying is a severe form of negative peer pressure, which can severely damage a teenager's self-esteem and potentially cause long-term emotional harm. In the Study of Vaillancourt, Brittain, Farrell, Krygsman, & Vitoroulis (2023), they reported that bullying can lead to serious behavioural disorders, requiring professional counseling and, in severe cases, medication.

Fenny & Falola (2020), as described School bullying is a widespread issue that affects school students in many parts of their lives psychologically; emotionally and educationally and this act goes on in many schools unnoticed. Almost all public and private schools have some type of bullying. Oluyemi's research (2020) revealed that bullying negatively affects students' academic performance, whether they have been the victim of bullying or have bullied others. School bullying impairs academic performance because bullied youngsters experience fear and helplessness, while simultaneously damaging students' self-esteem and personality traits.

Vasanthakumari, Singh, Almashagbeh, Kumar & Ramesh (2022), Raji, Sabitu & Bashir (2019), in their studies revealed that bullying makes schools to be unsafe places for students and it contributes to the belief that some schools are no longer safe anymore.

In Nigeria, Fenny, & Falola (2020) investigated the effects of bullying on school-age children's psychosocial adjustment, focusing on schools in Lagos State's Education District, the research showed that bullying significantly impacted students' anxiety and social isolation, although it did not have a significant effect on student' weapon ownership or school absenteeism. The study recommended collaboration between families and schools to instill moral values, offering counseling Services, and implementing disciplinary measures to reduce bullying.

According to an Okagbue, Wang, & Ezechikulo (2022) research conducted among junior secondary school pupils in Benin City, Nigeria, 78% of students reported being bullied, with "kicking and hitting" being the most frequent sort of

bullying (50%), followed by threats of beatings (25%), and with bullying being more common in the playground (40%) and classroom (25%). Bullying was also found to be more common among boys than girls.

For decades, academic pressure has been a consistent factor in education, adding to the enormous strain on students, the amount of work they have to do, and the high rates of student stress that now show the pressures facing teenagers. Students have faced tremendous academic challenges and an academic load that has had a negative impact on their academic achievement since the days of intense tests and demanding coursework through today's fierce competition for college acceptance. Mental health can be impacted by this extreme stress.

Olabiyi (2021), has identified a factor that has recently gained a significant amount of attention in relation to bullying, especially at an individual level, to be school type. The term "school type" refers to whether a school is privately or publicly owned. The connection between school kind and the psychological well-being of secondary school pupils is complicated. In this study, we attempted to understand how bullying and academic stress, as well as the kind of school (private or public), in the Oyo Zone of Oyo State, Nigeria, are thought to impact the mental health of senior secondary students. It is crucial to acknowledge that several things contribute to mental health.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed a disturbing surge in violence and bullying within educational institutions, raising serious concerns about the safety, psychological well-being, and overall development of students in both secondary and tertiary settings. High-profile cases have drawn national attention to this escalating crisis: the widely circulated video of physical assaults on students at Lead British International School, Abuja; the tragic death of 12-year-old Sylvester Oromoni at Downen College, Lagos, allegedly resulting from severe bullying and initiation-related violence; the fatal beating of a student by a teacher at Government Secondary School, Kwali, Kwara State, for failing to complete an assignment; and the brutal mob killing of Alex Timileyin, a 200-level engineering student at Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo State, by fellow students over an accusation of phone theft. Concurrently, intense academic pressure, driven by high-stakes examinations (Junior and Senior WAEC, NECO, and JAMB), parental expectations, and a hyper-competitive educational culture, has been linked to rising rates of anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, sleep disturbances, and somatic complaints among adolescents. Therefore, this study sought to address these shortcomings by analyzing the prevalence of bullying behavior (physical, verbal, relational, and cyber), evaluating the extent of perceived academic pressure, and looking at the individual, combined, and moderating impacts of both variables on the mental health (specifically depression, anxiety, and stress) of students in junior and senior secondary schools in the Oyo Senatorial Districts of Oyo State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study sought to determine how bullying behavior and academic stress affected the mental well-being of secondary school pupils in Oyo Zone, Oyo State.

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. Ascertain the level of mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Senatorial District.
- ii. Examine the joint influence of bullying behaviour (verbal, physical, social, cyberbullying) on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Senatorial District.
- iii. Analyze the comparative impact of verbal, physical, social, and cyberbullying on the mental health of high school pupils in the Oyo Senatorial District.
- iv. Analyze how academic expectations (time, achievement, and social pressure) jointly affect the mental health of secondary school pupils in the Oyo Senatorial District.
- v. Determine the relative impact of academic stress (time, performance, and social pressure) on the psychological well-being of secondary school pupils in the Oyo Senatorial District.
- vi. Determine the variation in the psychological well-being of secondary school pupils in the Oyo Zone according to the kind of institution.

Research Questions

This research question was answered in this study:

1. What is the level of mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant joint influence of bullying behaviour (verbal, physical, social, cyberbullying) on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.
2. The mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone is not significantly affected by verbal, physical, social, or cyberbullying.
3. The academic demands on secondary school pupils in Oyo Zone—time, performance, and social pressure—have no discernible combined effect on their mental health.
4. There is no significant relative influence of academic pressure (time, performance and social pressure) on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.
5. There is no significant difference in mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone based on school type.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised all public and private secondary school students in Oyo Senatorial Districts. This study involved a sample size of 231, using Taro Yamane's sampling size technique. Oyo Central Senatorial District comprises eleven local government areas (Four Local Government was purposefully selected in Oyo Town from which eight (8) senior secondary schools were drawn. (2 schools from each LGA). A standardized instrument which was divided into three sections A, B, C and D was adapted to collect the needed data from the response. The Cronbach

Alpha was used for internal consistency of all the items in the questionnaire; with reliability 0.73. Research questions was analysed using frequency counts, mean and standard deviation. Multiple linear regression was used to test hypotheses 1-4, independent t-test was for hypothesis 5 at 0.05 level of significance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

TABLE 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	128	55.4
Female	103	44.6
Total	231	100.0

The result in table 1 shows that out of the 231 respondents, 128 (55.4%) were male, while 103 (44.6%) were female. The distribution, however, reflects a fairly balanced representation of both genders, suggesting that the views and experiences captured in the study are inclusive of both male and female secondary school students in Oyo Zone.

TABLE 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
14 – 15 years	98	42.4
16 – 17 years	56	24.2
18 years and above	77	33.3
Total	231	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows the age distribution of respondents. The result reveals that 98 respondents (42.4%) were in 14-15 years, 56 respondents (24.2%) fell into the 16-17 years, while 77 respondents (33.3%) were 18 years and above. This indicates that the largest proportion of respondents were between 14-15 years.

TABLE 3: Distribution of the Respondents by School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percent
Public school	134	58.0
Private school	97	42.0
Total	231	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents by school type. The result shows that 134 respondents (58.0%) were drawn from public secondary schools, while 97 respondents (42.0%) attended private secondary schools. This indicates that a greater proportion of the respondents were from public schools compared to private schools. The distribution suggests that the study sample included students from both school types, ensuring a fair representation of secondary school students in Oyo Zone across different educational settings.

Research Question One: What is the level of mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone?

The results showed that while the majority of respondents report low levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation, a non-negligible proportion experiences mild to moderate psychological distress. It was further revealed that, on the average, the respondents' responses on the level of mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone had a weighted mean of 3.38; indicating that it was very high, based

on decision rule. This implied that the level of mental health was very high among secondary school students in Oyo Zone, of Oyo State.

TABLE 4: Descriptive Analysis on Level of Mental Health

S/n	Statement	NA	SD	MD	ND	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have been bothered by the following problems over the last two weeks:							
1.	Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge	134 (58.0%)	47 (20.3%)	31 (13.4%)	19 (8.2%)	3.28	0.93
2.	Worrying too much about different things	93 (40.3%)	70 (30.3%)	68 (29.4%)	0 (0%)	3.11	0.77
3.	Being so restless that it's hard to sit still	91 (39.4%)	70 (30.3%)	66 (28.6%)	4 (1.7%)	3.08	0.81
4.	Becoming easily annoyed or irritable	98 (42.4%)	74 (32.0%)	57 (24.7%)	2 (0.9%)	3.16	0.79
5.	Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen	82 (35.5%)	70 (30.3%)	56 (24.2%)	23 (10.0%)	2.93	0.97
6.	Little interest or pleasure in doing things	81 (35.1%)	76 (32.9%)	74 (32.0%)	0 (0%)	3.03	0.79
7.	Feeling down, depressed or hopeless	129 (55.8%)	75 (32.5%)	27 (11.7%)	0 (0%)	3.44	0.69
8.	Feeling bad about yourself, or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	107 (46.3%)	74 (32.0%)	50 (21.6%)	0 (0%)	3.25	0.79
9.	Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading the newspaper or watching television	122 (52.8%)	51 (22.1%)	46 (19.9%)	12 (5.2%)	3.23	0.91
10.	Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or thoughts of hurting yourself in some way	103 (44.6%)	72 (31.2%)	48 (20.8%)	8 (3.5%)	3.17	0.87
11.	I have thought that life is not worth living.	125 (54.1%)	79 (34.2%)	27 (11.7%)	0 (0%)	3.43	0.70
12.	I have wished I were dead.	231 (100.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.00
13.	I have had thoughts of harming myself.	196 (84.8%)	27 (11.7%)	8 (3.5%)	0 (0%)	3.81	0.49
14.	I have considered ways to end my life.	231 (100.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.00	0.00
15.	I have tried to harm myself.	196 (84.8%)	27 (11.7%)	8 (3.5%)	0 (0%)	3.81	0.49
Very high						Weighted mean=3.38	

Decision Rule: 1.00-1.74=Very low, 1.75-2.49=Low, 2.50-3.24=High, 3.25-4.00=Very high

TABLE 5: Summary of Regression Analysis of Joint influence of Bullying Behaviour on Mental Health

R=0.797
R²=0.636
Adj. R²=0.629
Std. Error=3.48487

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	4791.616	4	1197.904	98.641	0.000	Significant
Residual	2744.617	226	12.144			
Total	7536.234	230				

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant joint influence of bullying behaviour (verbal, physical, social, cyberbullying) on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis (H₀₁) was therefore rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that there was a significant joint influence of verbal, physical, social, and cyber bullying behaviours on the mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.

H₀₂: There is no significant relative influence of verbal, physical, social and cyberbullying on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.

TABLE 6: Summary of Regression Analysis of Relative Influence of Bullying Behaviour on Mental Health

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	3.845	2.224		1.729	.085	
Verbal bullying	-14.722	.996	-3.553	14.788	.000	Significant
Physical bullying	.066	.163	.026	.404	.687	Not Sig.
Social bullying	11.959	.760	3.178	15.729	.000	Significant
Cyber bullying	8.497	.541	2.701	15.702	.000	Significant

Since three of the four predictors (verbal, social, and cyber bullying) showed significant effects (p < 0.05), the null

hypothesis (H02) is rejected. This means there was a significant relative influence of bullying behaviours particularly verbal, social and cyber forms on the mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.

H03: There is no significant joint influence of academic pressure (time, performance and social pressure) on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.

TABLE 7: Summary of Regression Analysis of Joint influence of Academic Pressure on Mental Health

R=0.826						
R ² =0.683						
Adj. R ² =0.679						
Std. Error=3.24430						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	5146.949	3	1715.650	163.007	0.000	Significant
Residual	2389.285	227	10.525			
Total	7536.234	230				

Since the p-value (0.000) is less than **0.05**, the null hypothesis (H03) is rejected. This means that academic pressure had a significant joint influence on the mental health of students. This implied that higher levels of academic pressure are associated with greater changes in mental health outcomes.

H04: There is no significant relative influence of academic pressure (time, performance and social pressure) on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone.

TABLE 8: Summary of Regression Analysis of Relative influence of Academic Pressure on Mental Health

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Remark
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	-5.893	4.544			-1.297	.196	
Time pressure	-.207	.115	-.071		-1.806	.072	Not Sig.
Performance pressure	1.696	.333	.226		5.100	.000	Significant
Social pressure	2.110	.100	.915		21.109	.000	Significant

The constant term (B=-5.893, p=0.196) is not statistically significant, implying that when all the predictors are held constant, mental health scores are not significantly different from zero. Among the predictors, time pressure (B=-0.207, p = 0.072) shows a negative but non-significant relationship with mental health.

Performance pressure (B=1.696, p=0.000) has a positive and significant influence on mental health, indicating that as performance expectations increase, mental health scores also rise. Similarly, social pressure (B=2.110, p=0.000) demonstrates a strong positive and statistically significant influence on mental health, with a very high standardized beta coefficient (β=0.915). This shows that social factors such as peer comparison, competition, and social expectations contribute substantially to changes in students' mental health.

H05: There is no significant difference in mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone based on school type.

TABLE 9: T-test Analysis of Difference in Mental Health Based on School Type

Mental Health	School Type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-test value	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Private	97	39.47	5.58					

The analysis shows that students in public schools had a mean mental health score of 39.31 with a standard deviation of 5.84, while their counterparts in private schools recorded a slightly higher mean score of 39.47 with a standard deviation of 5.58. The independent samples t-test value (t = 0.220, df = 229, p = 0.826) indicates that the difference between the two mean scores is not statistically significant, since the p-value (0.826) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the observed difference in mental health between students from public and private schools could have occurred by chance and is not meaningful statistically. Since p > 0.05, the null hypothesis (H05) was accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study on socio-demographic analysis shows a diverse and fairly balanced sample of secondary school students in Oyo Zone. The finding in research question one indicated a very high level of mental health concerns among secondary school students, with anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation being the most prevalent. The results also showed that many students experienced restlessness and irritability, reflecting emotional instability that may stem from stress, peer influence, and the demands of school life. The finding of this study in research question one was in line with the finding of Gureje, Oladeji, Araya, Montgomery, & Zelkowitz (2020), which revealed that mental health, like physical health, is a concern that can impact any student, whether male or female, young or old, wealthy or impoverished.

The findings in hypothesis one revealed a strong positive relationship between bullying behaviours verbal, physical, social and cyber as well as the mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone. This indicated that the various forms of bullying jointly exerted a significant influence on students' psychological well-being. The regression analysis confirmed that bullying behaviours collectively accounted for a substantial proportion of the variation in students' mental health outcomes. The outcome of this study in hypothesis question one was in line with the finding of Ighaede-Edwards, Liu, Olawade, Ling, Odetayo, & David-Olawade (2023) which revealed that bullying is typically repetitive and involves a power imbalance between the bully and victim where the victim is unable to defend himself from the bully. Similarly, it was established that students who bully others may seek dominance, control or retaliation, often perpetuating a cycle of aggression and victimization within school communities (Raji, Sabitu, Bashir, Lawal, Kaoje, Raji & Usman 2019).

In hypothesis two, the findings revealed that different forms of bullying behaviours verbal, physical, social and cyber bullying contribute differently to the mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone. Among these, verbal

bullying emerged as the most significant and detrimental predictor of students' mental well-being. The findings of this study in hypothesis two was in congruence with the finding of Li, Sha, Luo, Zhou, Dong, & Zhang (2023) study which revealed that bullying affects the bullied persons as they do not concentrate in class and they also feel afraid to attend classes. Furthermore, the outcome of this study was in agreement with the outcome of Shah, Dodd, Allen, Viner & Bonell (2022) study, which established that the goal of cyberbullying is to socially embarrass or isolate the victim by having information witnessed publicly.

The findings of hypothesis three revealed a very strong and significant relationship between academic pressure and the mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone. This indicates that academic-related demands, expectations, and stressors have a considerable impact on students' psychological well-being. In essence, as academic pressure increases, students tend to experience corresponding declines in their mental health, manifesting in symptoms such as anxiety, restlessness, low mood, and reduced motivation. The findings of this study in hypothesis three was in line with the outcome of Luo, Yun, et al (2024) study which revealed that building support networks with peers, family and mentors normalizes stress and fosters resilience. Also, it tallies with the finding of Della Vedova, Anna Maria, et al.(2024) which established that parental expectations play a significant role, as students internalize the need to excel to gain approval, increasing anxiety over potential disappointment.

In hypothesis four, the findings revealed that the different dimensions of academic pressure time pressure, performance pressure and social pressure contributed differently to students' mental health in Oyo Zone. Time pressure was found to have a negative but non-significant influence on mental health, suggesting that while limited study time, deadlines, and overlapping academic tasks may create stress, their effect on students' overall psychological well-being was not strong enough to produce a measurable change. The findings of this study in hypothesis four was in line with the outcome of McCloud, Tara, and David Bann (2019) study which revealed that signs of excessive stress manifest in behavioral, physical, and emotional forms; and that students may withdraw socially, procrastinate or lose interest in previously enjoyed activities. Institutionally, schools can alleviate academic pressure by shifting focus from grades to holistic development, offering mental health resources like counseling, and adopting flexible teaching methods (National Collegiate Athletic Association. 2024)

The findings of hypothesis five revealed that there was no significant difference in the mental health of students attending public and private secondary schools in Oyo Zone. Although students in private schools recorded a slightly higher mean score, the difference was not statistically meaningful; indicating that school type does not significantly influence students' mental well-being. This suggests that both groups of students experience similar emotional and psychological challenges regardless of the nature of their school environment. The findings of this study was in congruence with the outcome of previous studies which established that,

some stressors which include bullying can lead to development or worsening of a wide spectrum of mental health problems (Olabiya 2021), (Shah, Dodd, Allen, Viner, & Bonell 2022).

IV. CONCLUSION

It was concluded in this study that, the level of mental health was very high among secondary school students in Oyo Zone. There was a significant joint influence of bullying behaviour (verbal, physical, social and cyberbullying) on mental health of secondary school students in the study area. Conclusion was made that there was significant relative influence of verbal, social and cyberbullying on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone, while physical bullying did not. Conclusion was further made that there was a significant joint influence of academic pressure (time, performance and social pressure) on mental health of secondary school students in the study area. Conclusion was made that there was a significant relative influence of academic pressure of performance and social pressure on mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone, while time pressure did not. It was established that there was no significant difference in mental health of secondary school students in Oyo Zone based on school type

Recommendations

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

1. The authorities of secondary schools in Oyo Zone should sustain and strengthen existing mental health programmes and to maintain the high mental health among students.
2. The authorities of secondary schools in Oyo Zone should enforce strong anti-bullying policies and continuous awareness campaigns.
3. Teachers and counsellors should monitor all forms of bullying closely and provide early interventions through counselling and peer-support programmes.
4. Schools should regulate academic workload and introduce stress management initiatives to reduce pressure on students' mental health.
5. Educators should promote balanced academic expectations and mentor students on effective time, performance and social pressure management.
6. The management of both public and private schools should ensure equal access to mental health services and standardized psychosocial support programmes for all students.
7. The Oyo State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, should develop and enforce a "School Time-Pressure and Workload Policy" that sets maximum weekly instructional hours, caps extra-mural lessons, and mandates at least one free period daily for relaxation, clubs, or sports

REFERENCES

- [1]. Akanni O. O. (2020) Predictors of bullying reported by perpetrators in a sample of senior school students in Benin City, Nigeria. *National Library of Medicine: National Center of Biotechnology Information.*

- Available online
: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7059440/>
- [2]. Ahulu, L. D, Gyasi-Gyamerah, A. A., & Anum, A.,(2020). Predicting risk and protective factors of generalized anxiety disorder: A comparative study among adolescents in Ghana, *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), 574-584. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2019.1698440>
- [3]. Della. V, Anna, M. et al. (2024) Effect of Physical Exercise on Negative Emotions in Chinese University Students: The Mediating Effect of Self-Efficacy, *Heliyon* 10(17), e37194. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e37194>.
- [4]. Fenny O., & Falola. M. I. (2020).Prevalence and correlates of bullying behaviour among Nigerian middle school students. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 64(5), 564–585.
- [5]. Gureje, O., Oladeji, B. D., Araya, R., Montgomery, A. A & Zelkowitz ,P. (2020). Why the need for integration of mental health into primary care is imperative in sub-Saharan Africa. *Psychological Medicine*, 50(6), 961-966.
- [6]. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation(2019). Data from: Global Burden of Disease study(2023). Available online at: <https://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-2019>
- [7]. Li, J., Sha, S., Luo, W., Zhou, W., Dong, Y., & Zhang S. (2023). Prevalence and associated factors of bullying victimization among Chinese high school students in Shandong, China. *Journal of affective disorders*, 323, 667-674. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.12.016>
- [8]. Luo, Yun, et al. (2024). Academic Pressure and Mental Health Among Vietnamese High School Students, *Social Science and Humanities Journal* 8(8),4721–4732. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.18535/sshj.v8i08.1290>.
- [9]. Ministry of Education.(2022). Mental Health Education Years 1-13: A guide for teachers, leaders,and school boards. available online: <https://hpe.tki.org.nz/guidelines-and-policies/mental-health-education>.
- [10]. McCloud, T & David, B. (2019) Financial Stress and Its Impact on University Students' Mental Health. *Journal of Public Health* 41(4), 2019, 789–796.
- [11]. National Collegiate Athletic Association.(2024).Mental Health Best Practices Document.(NCAA) .Available online:<https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2024/4/mentalhealth-best-practices>.
- [12]. Okagbue, E. F., Wang, M., & Ezeachikulo. U. P. (2022). Does school bullying show lack of effective multicultural education in the school curriculum?. *International journal of educational research open*, 3, 100178. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2022.100178>
- [13]. Olabiyi. O. B. (2021). Impact of Bullying on Psychosocial Adjustment of School-Aged Children in Nigeria. *Electronic Journal of Social and Strategic Studies*, 2, 229-241. https://www.ejsss.net.in/article_html.php?did=13285&issueno=0
- [14]. Raji , S. Sabitu ,K. & Bashir, S. (2019). Prevalence and predictors of bullying victimization among in-school adolescents in Sokoto Zone, North-Western Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Medical Research* 6(9), Available online: <https://doi.org/10.21276/ijcmr.2019.6.9.25>
- [15]. Raji, A A., Sabitu, K., Bashir, S. S., Lawal, B. B., Kaoje, A. U., Raji M. O., & Usman ,A. A.(2019).Prevalence and predictors of bullying victimization among in-school adolescents in Sokoto Zone, North-Western Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Medical Research*, 6(9), 11-18. Available online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21276/ijcmr.2019.6.9.25>
- [16]. Shah, R., Dodd, M., Allen, E., Viner ,R & Bonell. C. (2022). Is being a victim of bullying or cyberbullying in secondary school associated with subsequent risk-taking behaviour in adolescence? A longitudinal study in secondary schools. *Journal of adolescence*, 94(4),611-627. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.12050>
- [17]. Vaillancourt, T., Brittain, H., Farrell, A.H., Krygsman, A., & Vitoroulis, I. (2023) Bullying involvement and the transition to high school: A brief report. *Aggressive behaviour*, 49(4), 409-417. Available online: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ab.22082>
- [18]. Vasanthakumani, B., Singh S., Almashagbeh, H.A., Kumar, T. & Ramesh. , P. (2022). The impact of bullying on academic performance of students in the case of parent communication at Lebanon. *International Journal of Early Childhood special Education*. 14 (1), 2325-2334.
- [19]. World Health Organization(WHO),(2022).Mental Health Fact Sheet. Available online: <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening>