Types of Bullying in the Senior High Schhools in Ghana

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Abstract
The main objective of the study was to examine the types of bullying that were taking place in the senior high schools in Ghana. A multi-stage sampling procedure, comprising purposive, simple random and snowball sampling technique, was used in the selection of the sample. A total of 354 respondents were drawn six schools in Ashanti, Central and Northern Regions. The interview schedule was administered to three categories of respondents, these were bullies, victims of bullies and bystanders in bullying. The various types of bullying which were going on in the schools were; physical, social, verbal, cyber and psychological. Accordingly the study revealed that physical and verbal bullying were rampant in the various schools in the country. The study recommends the need for the schools to set up a system which will identify the various types and also stop the bullying in the schools. Students should be counselled and made aware of the harmful effects of bullying in the schools.
Keywords: Bullies, Victims, Bystanders, Physical, Social, Verbal, Cyber and Psychological.

BACKGROUND

One major phenomenon that is responsible for the setback in the development of human society is child abuse, specifically bullying. This global phenomenon, has, over the years, attracted the attention of governmental and non-governmental organisations all over the world (Farmer, 2011).   Researchers, educators, parents, and communities are struggling to understand how adolescents, most of whom are perceived to be good and caring individuals, behave in ways that condone and maintain bullying, with a substantial number of students engaging directly in bullying behaviour or failing to do anything to stop it.

The picture that has emerged is a complicated one. A growing body of research suggests that bullying and peer harassment emerge as a result of a number of different factors (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000; Pepler, Craig & O'Connell, 1999; Swearer & Doll, 2001). Such problems are not solely the result of individual characteristics of the students, poor home environments, ineffective parenting and school practices, "bad influences," peer pressure, or exposure to violent media. Rather, they reflect a complex interplay of factors such as the home environment, school environment, health and even heredity (Sagarese & Giannetti, 1999).

Bullying is as old as humanity. Almost everyone may have been bullied at one time or another. Homes, schools and workplaces are always bombarded by various incidents of physical bullying. This behaviour has affected the society as a whole to the extent that one can no longer find safe places to hide away (Olweus, 1993). Although youth are twice as likely to be victimised or bullied when compared to adults, a considerable gap in knowledge about violence perpetuated against youth still exists. While criminal victimisation and exposure to violence have dominated the adolescent literature for the past decade, the majority of studies, evaluating the prevalence of low level victimisation (bullying), have been conducted in European and the Western countries and not much in Third World countries.

Research on school bullying has found higher prevalence rates in the United States than in any other country (Duncan, 1999; Hoover, Oliver & Hazler, 1992). According to Hammond (2006), educationists are reporting that violence amongst school children is increasing. Teachers are complaining about the violent character and destructive habits of many of the children they are assigned to work with. Research has suggested that school bullying is so prevalent of late that it can be described as a normal feature of everyday life (Tyler, 2002).

In the Ghanaian perspective, even though the practice has been in existence for decades, there appears to be not much statistics to support it because no serious study has been done in the area. Kaar (2009) conducted a study in bullying in Ghana, and said that 10-16 percent of students were under constant fear, easily fell sick and were unable to concentrate in their studies. Ghana Business News (2009) cited a research finding by Beat bullying (a charitable organisation) reporting that of the 59 cases of child suicides reported in Ghana between 2000 and 2008, 26 were connected to bullying citing school as the place of bullying. Also, Bosomtwi, Sabates, Owusu and Dunne (2010) gave the view that bullying was rampant in the Ghanaian schools and only that teachers in the schools in Ghana were still not considering bullying as a serious problem in relation to students well-being or academic achievement.

A study by Eyiah (2012) showed that bullying was going on in Ghana. He also reported that bullying was at its worse form in the senior high schools in Ghana and that new students who enter the boarding house suffer unnecessary harassment and intimidation from their seniors. Hammond (2013) confirms the bullying in the senior high schools and says that fresh students or juniors are subjected to all forms of inhuman treatment. He says that it has even made some victims have hatred for school, become drop outs, have low self- esteem that could lead to

timidity, nervousness and lack of assertiveness. From what has been gathered so far, it is most probable that many schools in Ghana are facing similar bullying problems as evidenced in schools where various studies were conducted. This suggests that critical studies on bullying be carried out in Ghanaian schools to help unravel the types of bullying in the schools

The research questions which were formulated to guide the study were:
1. What types of bullying are going on in the senior high schools?
2. Which type of bullying is prevalent in the schools?

The study was conducted in four co-educational schools in Ghana.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Bullying can involve many types of behaviours. The following are some of the types of bullying that are identified in the literature. These include physical, social, verbal, cyber and psychological bullying. .

Physical bullying
According to Lee (2004), physical bullying is more than punching or kicking which is a direct form. It can assume indirect forms, such as taking one's possessions or damaging property. Coloroso (2008) states that, although physical bullying is the most visible and, therefore, the most readily identifiable form of bullying, it accounts for less than one – third of bullying incidents reported by children. Salivalli, Kaukiainen and Langerspertz (1998) stress that physical bullying involves behaviours whereby the perpetrator might punch, hit and/or steal money from the victim. Larsen (2005) will rather put it that the problem for a school is that physical bullying presents a challenge for that school to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment.

The researcher was once called to witness a male student who was asked to sleep in his trunk that he had brought to school for storage of his clothing at a school in which the researcher was teaching. Unfortunately, the time attention was drawn to the heinous crime, the boy was so weak that the authorities had to rush him to the hospital for medical care. This was just because he had a small body frame and also could not provide things requested by the bullies. To Limber and Small (2003), physical bullying tends to receive more attention from school personnel than other types of bullying. It is, therefore, not surprising that Garret (2003) puts it that physical bullying is a moderate risk factor for serious violence at ages 15-25 and that bullies are four times more likely to be convicted of crimes by the age of 24 than non-bullies.

Social bullying
Social bullying is also known as relational bullying (Coloroso, 2008). This involves psychological harm and manipulation of the social system. It involves situations where the perpetrator might spread rumours, back bite and/or exclude the victim from the peer group. Lee (2004) defines social bullying as one which includes deliberate exclusion from a social group or intimidation within the group. Social bullying is sometimes difficult to detect from the outside and could be direct with exclusion, ignoring, isolating or shunning experienced by the victim (Salivalli, Kankianen & Lagerspetz, 1998).

The goal of social bullying is to belittle and harm another individual or group. In senior high school, for example, bullying might take the shape of teasing unpopular children. Ridiculing another child's clothes, making fun of the way he speaks, and mocking his academic achievements or his race or culture are examples of behaviours that a bully might exhibit to gain power over another child (O'Moore & Minton, 2004). The negative consequences of social bullying are extensive. Victims often suffer from depression, anxiety, social isolation, and low self-esteem. Some victims turn to suicide or commit homicidal acts as a result of extreme mental and social pressures. Individuals bullied in childhood may carry the emotional wounds into adulthood, leading to depression, social isolation, and the inability to react appropriately to unjust situations.

Verbal bullying
Verbal bullying is seen as one of the most common types of bullying used by both boys and girls. Verbal bullying accounts for 70 per cent of reported cases which can have an immediate impact (Lee, 2004; Coloroso, 2008). Verbal bullying is referred to as name calling, teasing and verbal threats as stated by Olweus (1993). Words alone do have power. While the effects of physical bullying may be more obvious at first, verbal bullying is more insidious and, over long periods of time, works to destroy a child's self- image and self- esteem. This can lead to depression, anxiety and other problems. In extreme cases, several well-noted instances of teen suicide have been linked to prolonged verbal bullying of a classmate or peer. Verbal bullying should not be treated as kids simply being kids and should be dealt with seriously by parents, counsellors, teachers and school administrators (Lee, 2004).

Many victims of verbal bullying are affected in very real ways. Verbal bullying can affect one's self image, and affect someone in emotional and psychological ways. This type of bullying can lead to low self-esteem, as well as depression and other problems. It can aggravate problems that a victim may already be experiencing at

home or in other places (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008). In some cases, verbal bullying can reach a point where the victim is so depressed, and wants to escape so badly, that he or she may turn to substance abuse or, in some extreme cases, suicide. The realities of verbal bullying can have very physical consequences, even if the aggressor never lays a finger on the victim (Coloroso, 2008). Verbal bullying can be hard for teachers, counsellors and other school authorities to detect, since no physical harm takes place (Kaar, 2009).

Cyber bullying
Cyber bullying can be viewed as repetitive when a message, photograph or video-clip is taken once and sent to more than one individual who, in turn, forward this to other people, or alternatively upload the material onto a website. Every time someone accesses this site or material, it can be viewed as repetition (Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Cyber bullying means that a child or teen is subjected to text messages, emails or online posts, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs or other websites. These messages are sometimes cruel in nature, threatening, defamatory (saying things that are not true) and deliberately misleading (for example, claiming to be from someone other than the actual sender).

Even though cyber bullying seems small, the knowledge on this type of bullying is growing too fast because of the spread of technology around the world and the youth also becoming much interested in the internet where they can manipulate it any how they want it. This is likely to be a major form of bullying in the 21st Century, so we should all fight this together (Lee, 2004).

Psychological bullying
Psychological bullying is when someone, or a group of people, repeatedly and intentionally uses words or actions which cause an individual psychological harm. The psychological bully is the one who beats a person up emotionally to try to make him or her uncomfortable, disturbed and destabilised in mind. Intimidating someone, manipulating people and stalking a person are all examples of psychological bullying. People in popular groups or cliques often bully people they categorize as different by excluding them or gossiping about them (Lee, 2004).

Students, dealing with psychological bullying, view their schools as less safe, and they are less pleased with the atmosphere of the school. Boys are more likely than girls to carry weapons to school as a result of physical and psychological bullying (Coloroso, 2008). However, this type of bullying could be overlooked by schools, counsellors, parents and teachers. School authorities and teachers worry more about physical bullying and rate psychological bullying, such as being shunned by their classmates, as less serious and upsetting to the victim. Psychological bullying is linked to the feelings of victimization, depression, anxiety, loneliness, social dissatisfaction and low self-esteem (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008; Coloroso, 2008; Boulton & Underwood, 1992).

METHODOLOGY
The main objective of the study was to examine the types of bullying that were taking place in the senior high schools in Ghana. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach; a survey research design was used to explore their views as participants. The information gathered in qualitative study "reflects feeling or judgments of individuals taking part in the investigation of a research problem. (Vermma & Mallick, 1999, p. 27). A multi-stage sampling procedure, comprising purposive, simple random and snowball sampling technique, was used in the selection of the sample. A total of 354 respondents were drawn from six senior high schools in Ashanti, Central and Northern Regions in Ghana. Two senior high schools were selected from each region. The regions were chosen because of their centrality and location which made it appropriate for most parents to have their children and wards attend school there.   The interview schedule was administered to three categories of respondents, these were bullies, victims of bullies and bystanders in bullying.

The data from the survey was analyzed with the help of the statistical Product and Service solution (SPSS

RESULTS/DISCUSSIONS
Types of Bullying in Schools
Respondents were asked to indicate the type of bullying which was frequently practised among the students in their schools. The results in Table 1 show that the main types of bullying were: physical (47.5%); verbal (37.2%); social (8.1%); psychological (4.1%); and cyber (3.1%).

Table 1: Types of Bullying in Schools

Types	Number	Percent
Physical	324	47.5
Social	55	8.1
Verbal	254	37.2
Cyber	21	3.1
Psychological	28	4.1
Total	682*	100.0

*More than the number of respondents because of multiple responses.

Source: Field Data, 2012.

The study analysed the types of bullying in the schools as mentioned by the various personalities in bullying. The results are presented in Table 1.

Physical Bullying

The results in Table 1 show that the main type of bullying going on in the schools was physical bullying. This constituted 47.5 percent of all the types of bullying. A breakdown of the results show that 47.3 percent of the bullies used physical bullying on their victims, 47.9 percent of the victims indicated that they were bullied physically and 47.6 percent of the bystanders indicated that they observed physical bullying. It can, therefore be concluded that this was a bullying style which was rampant in almost all the schools. The study confirms the claim by Harris and Hathorn (2006) that physical bullying is the most obvious form of bullying that is used almost by all bullies. They say that this often causes visible harm in the form of cuts and bruises. Physical bullying, as opined by Coloroso (2008), can be seen as being very dangerous as the child who physically harms another child is seen as most likely to move towards more serious criminal offences in the future.

Physical punching is actually more than just punching or kicking which is a direct form, and can assume indirect forms, such as taking one's possessions or damaging one's property (Lee, 2004). Physical bullying actually presents a challenge to a school to deal with as it becomes difficult for the authorities to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment (Larsen, 2005). One needs to understand also, as it is stressed by Olweus (1996), that physical bullying, in the long- term, affects development as the harm done to an individual could make that person become handicapped and not be able to perform an act which he could have done easily, if not harmed. Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2011) claim that the experience of bullying in childhood can have profound effects on mental health in adulthood, particularly among youths involved in bullying as both perpetrators and victims.

In one of the interviews, a victim who had been bullied retorted:

> I was told to sleep under a senior's bed on the bare floor for two hours in the night. Later, l was caned with the net sponge that is used in bathing for the mere fact that l told the senior l was not having gari and sugar in my chop box.

There were other revelations also in the interview. There was a boy who gave this account:

> I was asked by a senior to iron his shirt for him. In the course of ironing, he said l had made his shirt dirty. He collected the iron from me and said l should open my palm. When l did, he placed the hot iron in my palm. I still have the scar there. Though he was dismissed, l still continue to have the effect.

A bully in one of the schools confessed:

> I used to whip them with my net sponge, I will always dip it in water for it to be heavy enough for me. I once used it on a junior where the sponge hit his eye, He still has a red eye after a year now. I always regret it when l see him coming. He is now my best friend.

Social Bullying

Respondents in the three personalities of bullying were interviewed on social bullying. Table 1 depicts the results for the respondents. The results showed that social bullying was not seriously practised in the schools. On the whole, 8.1 percent of the respondents indicated that social bullying was practised in their schools. Indeed, only 6.1 percent of the bullies declared that they used social bullying, 19.3 percent of the victims said they went through social bullying, and 8.2 percent of the bystanders claimed they witnessed social bullying in the schools.

The results of the study are contrary to what Coloroso (2008) found. According to Coloroso (2008), social bullying, which is also known as relational bullying and involves psychological harm and manipulation of the social system, is regularly used. He said that it involved situations where the bullies might spread rumours, back bite and/ or exclude the victim from the peer group. Furthermore, the results of the study do not support the

assertion by Bradshaw and Waasdorp (2011) that social bullying is devastating and occurs in almost all schools in these modern times.

The results of the study are, however, similar to what was found by Salivalli, Kankianen and Lagerspetz (1998) that social bullying is sometimes difficult to detect from the outside, and is manifested in exclusion, ignoring, isolation or shunning of the victim. This type of bullying is much associated with aggressive stances, rolling of eyes, sighs, frowns, sneers, snickers, hostile body language, shaking of fists, and looks and glances that contain nasty messages (O'Moore & Minton, 2004).

Table 2: Types of Bullying in the Schools by Category of Bullying

	Bullies		Victims		Bystanders		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Physical	86	47.3	128	47.9	110	47.6	324	47.5
Social	11	6.1	25	19.3	19	8.2	55	8.1
Verbal	74	40.6	98	36.4	82	35.5	254	37.2
Cyber	4	2.2	6	2.2	11	4.8	21	3.1
Psychological	7	3.8	12	4.2	9	3.9	28	4.1
Total	182	100.0	269	100.0	231	100.0	682	100.0

*More than the number of respondents because of multiple responses.

Source: Field Data, 2012.

It is not surprising that social bullying was not seen much among the respondents of the study. As Lee (2004) and Olweus (1993) claim, it is mostly exhibited by females. Garret (2003) also notes that males usually use physical and verbal bullying, while females use rumour (which is part of social bullying) and verbal bullying. Turkel (2007) further opines that females mostly use social bullying because parents and the society usually discourage direct physical aggression in girls, whereas the boys have more freedom to express their anger in direct physical ways. Boys are encouraged to kick and punch their negative feelings away, but girls are taught to avoid direct confrontation. Hence, they express their anger through ways, such as social ostracism, ignoring and sabotaging another's relationship.

Garret (2003) states that when social bullying becomes severe, it affects the self-esteem of the individual which is carried through adulthood. The individual then sees himself or herself as being inferior, not being able to associate with colleagues, or carries the notion that he or she is not accepted and wanted in the society.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is close to physical bullying. It is seen as one of the most common types of bullying used by both boys and girls. It may take the form of name calling, teasing and verbal threats (Olweus, 1994). There is the indication in Table 2 that verbal bullying was used extensively in the schools. The results show that, in all, 37.2 percent of the respondents indicated that verbal bullying took place in their schools. For the bullies, 40.6 percent said they had used verbal bullying. For the victims, 36.4 percent said they had been bullied verbally, while 35.5 percent of the bystanders said they had witnessed verbal bullying.

A victim claimed:

> I come from a very strict religious home. My parents will not sometimes
> allow us to watch some programmes on the television. A senior came to me
> with some pornographic pictures and asked me the one l liked most. I did
> not make a choice or comment on it. The senior and his friends claimed they
> found those pictures with me. I was humiliated, insulted and completely
> dehumanised for almost one week for something l had no knowledge of. I
> nearly stopped schooling and l knew that, if my parents had heard of it, that

would have been my end. I don't think l can ever forgive this wicked guy.
A young boy, who refused to give his shoes to a senior to wear when they
were going for a Sunday morning service, had this to say:

> It was announced in the dining hall that l should go to the hall and remove
> my mattress and put it in the sun because l had urinated on my bed the
> previous night. Something which was not true. It was a big disgrace to me
> and could not make friends and had to tell a lie and go home for some days.
> Infact, l didn't want to come back to school again. It was my mother who
> encouraged me to go back, and l had to go through counselling at the school
> for the whole term.

The results of the study confirm the assertion by Lee (2004) that verbal bullying accounts for 70.0 percent of reported cases, and that these can have an immediate as well as long- term effects on the individual. Coloroso (2008) also opines that words are such powerful tools that they can break the spirit of the child who is at the receiving end of verbal bullying, and can carry the victim through adulthood, still not recovering from what he/she received in his/her school days. He concludes that, if verbal bullying is not checked, it may dehumanise the targeted child.

Cyber Bullying
Cyber bullying occurs when someone does something mean to another on line or on a mobile phone. The results of the study showed that cyber bullying was not much recognised in the schools, as shown in the Table 2. Indeed, as low as 3.1 percent of the respondents stated that cyber bullying was used in the schools.
Even though cyber bullying was not much in use, a victim stated:

> I received many mails in my e-mail box from a senior. They were mostly
> threats of what could happen to me if l did not stop talking to a lady he, the
> senior, claimed was his girlfriend. He threatened that he would deal with me
> if I came to school the next term.

Cyber bullying might have become difficult to use in most of these schools because many of them did not have consistent internet services and constant electricity power. Furthermore, the students did not have access to phones whilst they were in school, except those publicly mounted by the telecommunication companies on the respective campuses, which, however, could not send messages. Though cyber bullying was not seen as being used extensively in the schools in the study, Lee (2004) claims that the growth of cyber bullying is becoming very fast because of the spread of technology around the world, and the youth are also becoming interested in the internet where they can manipulate it anyhow they want to their advantage. This is likely to be a major form of bullying in the 21st Century. Hence, it should be a concern to all.
According to Coloroso (2008), cyber bullying is becoming more dangerous day- in day- out because the ability to inflict pain anonymously, and with such a wide audience to reinforce the humiliation, often emboldens the individual who engages in cyber bullying to inflict far greater damage to the target than would have been imaginable in a face-to-face encounter.

Psychological Bullying
Psychological bullying is when someone or a group of people repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions which cause an individual psychological harm. It is a matter of beating a person up emotionally and trying to rob his/her peace of mind. Table 2 depicts the extent of psychological bullying in the schools. It can be realised that, in all, only 4.1 percent of the respondents said psychological bullying was in use in their schools. The results came from the bullies (3.8%), the victims (4.2%) and the bystanders (3.9%), showing that this was not common in the various schools. To Boulton et al (2002), examples of psychological bullying and social manipulation include: ostracising or ignoring peers, not inviting them to join groups or activities, spreading lies or rumours, name calling, and teasing hurtfully. According to Coloroso (2008), boys are even more likely to carry weapons to school as a result of physical and psychological bullying than their female counterparts.
The main findings of the study were:
1.	The main types of bullying were: physical bullying (47.5%); verbal bullying (37.2%) and social bullying (8.1%), psychological bullying (4.1%) and cyber bullying (3.1%).
2.	Three main types of bullying which are physical, verbal and social, were regular among the students always.

CONCLUSION
The purpose of the study was to find out the types of bullying that occur in the senior high schools in Ghana. This was important because the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, policy makers, stakeholders and various senior high schools will know what has been happening in their schools. Students expressed in no uncertain

terms what has been happening in their schools. It was realised that physical, verbal, social, psychological and cyber bullying have been going on.

COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS
- That counsellors make the effort to identify the victims and bullies and assist them.
- That programmes are organized to educate the senior high school populace the dangers in bullying.
- That students do not take the laws into their own hands when it comes to bullying.
- That counsellers in the various schools will be alert about bullying in the schools and the types that dominate in their various schools.

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