

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL-RELATED BULLYING ON THE  
PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS**



**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS**

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**A thesis in the Department of Psychology and Education,  
Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Guidance and Counselling)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**JUNE, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Agnes Araba Akyere Adantwi, declare that this dissertation, except quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

### Supervisor's Declaration

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

Mr. Samuel Richard Ziggah (Supervisor)

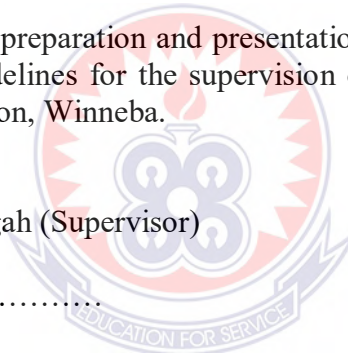
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**Date:**.....

Dr. Paul Kobina Effrim (Co-Supervisor)

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....



## **DEDICATION**

To my parents, Mr. Emmanuel K. Adantwi and Mrs. Mercy Eva Adantwi.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Mr Samuel Richard Ziggah and Dr. Paul Effrim for their steadfast support, constructive comments, and great sense of humour during the period of this study. I say a big thank you for pushing me to excel and helping me to become a better writer and effective researcher. I would not have successfully navigated this educational journey without your guidance and encouragement. I also appreciate the help, advice, and support given to me by my mentors Dr. Rev. Kwesi Nkum Wilson, Dr. Patricia Amos, Mrs Christina Ammah, and Mrs Theresa Antwi throughout the coursework and the writing of this thesis. I am very grateful for your initial encouragement, persistent push, inspiration, and support to proceed.

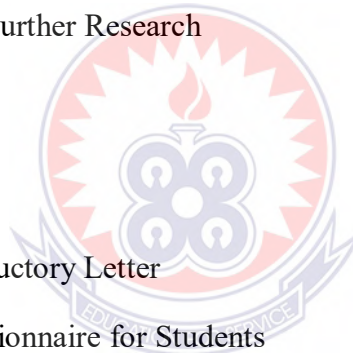
To my family, the Adantwi and Acquah-Paynes', I say a big thank you for all the unconditional love and encouragement during the period of my coursework and thesis. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of all my friends and classmates whose friendly reviews from time to time have confirmed to me the importance of "being there" for each other.

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of school related - bullying on the psychological wellbeing of senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis using the concurrent triangulation mixed methods design. A sample of 342 senior high school students and 5 school counsellors was selected using purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques. A structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect the data. Mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, bivariate correlation, and linear regression were statistical tools employed to analyze the quantitative data while thematic analyses were used for the qualitative data. It was found that the prevalence rate of school-related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis was 46.0%. Verbal-related bullying is commonly experienced while sexual-related bullying is the least form of school-related bullying. Those who bully others lack empathy for others, demonstrate a strong need to dominate others, and are usually hot-tempered. Students who are bullied experience moderate depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. It further emerged that senior high schools in the metropolis are managing the incidence of school related bullying by offering guidance and counselling on bullying, establishing strict rules and regulations in schools, and frequent random checks at dormitories. Also, it was found that a statistically significant difference exists in the perceptions of male and female students regarding reported school related bullying. Most victims end up experiencing moderate depression, anxiety and low self-esteem. It was concluded that bullies have unique characteristics which motivate them to bully others. There should be stringent rules and regulations regarding verbal bullying as we have for physical bullying in schools and through orientation, school authorities should assist bullies to sublimate their abusive behaviors to more satisfying behaviors. Instead of causing psychological harm to others, bullies should be encouraged by school authorities to join clubs such as the debaters club, scripture union, etc. during orientation.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Bullying among school children is a universal problem that has generated extensive coverage in public and private educational discourse globally (Antiri, 2015; Chalton, 2009; McEvoy, 2005; Twemlow, Fonagy, Sacco & Brethour, 2006). According to Hazen (2016), bullying behaviours start at home as children pick on each other or parents beat their children in the name of discipline. Likewise, adults believe that children fought only to be “best friends at the end”. Hazen (2016) concluded that the idea of “boys will be boys” and “girls will be girls” has given rise to this unacceptable negative social behaviour in our educational institutions. This position of Hazen (2016) conforms to prejudiced social norms like sex stereotyping of men and women.

The concept of bullying in use today was adopted from the scholarly works of Roland (1989) and Olweus (1991). Roland (1989) for instance conceptualised the term bullying to include all long-standing violence, physical or psychological, perpetrated by an individual or a group, directed against an individual who cannot defend himself or herself. Similarly, Olweus (1991) defined bullying as the repeated, negative actions over time, including hitting, kicking, threatening, locking inside a room, saying nasty and unpleasant things, and teasing. Howard, Johnston, Wech & Stout (2016) sees bullying as a form of aggression in which a person repeatedly harasses another person physically or psychologically. Bullying is a conflict between opposing individuals who do not share equal physical and psychological power. Bonds and Stoker (2000) also reiterate that bullying include an imbalance of power,

repeated actions, intentional actions and unequal levels of effect. Darmawan (2010) supports that there is an element of “pain” and “unpleasantness” experienced by victims when bullying occurs. Darmawan (2010) added that the pain and unpleasantness may be due to direct bullying involving hitting, kicking, insults, offensive and sneering comments, or threats in schools.

Studies further indicate that the rate of bullying among adolescents is a growing concern and needs to be addressed immediately (King et al., 2016; US Department of Education, 1999). At the international level, investigations on bullying prevalence highlight a wide variation across countries in the hemispheres. A large study comprising 202,056 students in 40 countries in Europe and North America found that bullying rates were 8.6% in Sweden and 45.2 % in Lithuania among boys and 4.8% to 35.8% in these countries respectively for girls (Craig & O’Connell, 2014). Due and Holstein, (2008) found the lowest rate of 6.3% among Swedish girls and the highest was 41.4% for boys in Lithuania. In the Caribbeans, Ruprah and Sierra (2014) reported the highest prevalence rate for bullied youths in Jamaica (42%) and the lowest rate in Guyana (37%).

Furthermore, in Trinidad and Tobago, a Global Health School-based Survey in 2007 recorded 20.8% of students being bullied in the past 30 days, at least once (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Due and Holstein (2008) found a 22% prevalence rate for bullying in Trinidad and Tobago, although, the estimate of bullying is approximately 30% (Trinidad & Tobago Newsday, 2014). The rise in bullying rates indicates that the bullying in Trinidad & Tobago is similar, on average, to other developed countries and also relatively similar to that of the entire Caribbean. This rise is seen in a Global Health School-based Survey (2007) which recorded 20.8% of students being bullied in the past 30 days at a frequency of one day or more (Solberg & Olweus, 2003).

A similar study in Norway found that bullying behavior is more common at the secondary school level with 6-16% of students participating in bullying as compared to the primary level where they estimated 1-12% of students participate in bullying (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Victimization appears to occur more at the primary level with 4-20% of students estimated to be victims then at the secondary school level where 4-17% of students are estimated to be victims (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). The wide variations among countries may be reflective of several social and cultural differences including economic status.

In Ghana, Bosomtwi, Sabates, Owusu and Dunne (2010) indicate that bullying is a common phenomenon in many Ghanaian schools. Hammond (2013) adds that fresh students or juniors in senior high schools are subjected to all forms of bullying. A study carried out by the Commissioner for Human Rights and Justice (CHRAJ) in 2010 showed that bullying, corporal punishment and harassment continue to occur in Ghanaian pre-tertiary schools. A study by Antiri (2015) on bullying of the male-child in selected senior high schools in Ghana revealed that physical and verbal bullying was rampant in the various schools in the country. The senior high schools in the Central Region are not immune to this maladjusted behaviour as models of bullying behaviour are prevalent throughout human institutions, even though there is no statistical index on the prevalence of school-related bullying in the Cape Coast Metropolis (Kyere, Kumah & Adutwum, 2017).

The Cape Coast Metropolis is regarded as the hub of Ghana's education as the metropolis is the first to experience formal education, especially secondary education. The Metropolis attracts all manner of students, with different personality traits and parenting upbringing. Some enrolled with bullying intent or acquired the same after being enrolled. Bullying in schools has created an atmosphere founded on dread and

impertinence for students, thereby undermining their abilities to achieve their full creative potential (McEvoy, 2005).

Teachers need to be assisted by school counsellors to practice and model pro-social behaviours with their students, as well as with the colleagues that they work with. Therefore, all staff members must create and maintain a positive working community to ensure the success of a positive climate at school. Without the full support of the school community we are helpless to effectively fight the war against bullies and bullying behaviours (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006). Teachers and students are not the only ones, who need to be aware of bullying behaviours and how to change them. It is also essential for parents to be aware of their child's school policies and philosophies about bullying behaviours (Howard, 2014). It is upon this background that this study sought to investigate the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of Senior High Schools students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There is a general perception that school-related bullying is a normal school ritual that all students ought to go through irrespective of sex, age, and religious inclinations. Mangope, Dinama, and Kefhilwe (2012) were of the view that perception perpetuates bullying behaviour as bullies think that what they are doing is right and acceptable while victims think it is a normal school life they have to endure. Kaar (2009) estimates that 10-16 percent of Ghanaian students are under constant fear and some easily fall sick and are unable to concentrate on their studies as a result of bullying. This estimated figure could be underestimated as victims hardly report issues of bullying to school authorities for redress due to its subtle manner. This

agrees with general perception that bullying (more specifically, verbal bullying) is a silent epidemic in our educational institutions (Antiri, 2015).

Studies documenting the impact of bullying on students have shown that 15 percent of victims are “severely traumatised or distressed” by their encounters with bullies (Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert, 2006; Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Twenty-two percent of grades 4-8 students and 14 percent of grades 8-12 students report having difficulties they attribute to mistreatment by their peers, and 10 percent of students who dropped out of school say they did so because of bullying (Card, Stucky, Sawalani & Little, 2008). Children and adolescents who are victims of bullying suffer the sort of low-grade misery usually described as “poor psychosocial adjustment” in the literature.

Eyiah (2012) confirmed that school related bullying is at its worse form in senior high schools in Ghana. He concluded that new students who enter the boarding house suffer unnecessary harassment and intimidation from their seniors. Banks (2014) claimed that the rate at which students are bullied reduces in the Senior High Schools as students go higher but the picture seems different in Senior High Schools (SHSs) in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Kyere et al. (2017) confirmed that bullying in second-cycle institutions in the Cape Coast Metropolis exists to some extent as students’ report being harassed before.

Sadly, school authorities rate some school-related bullying (e.g. verbal bullying) as less perilous and upsetting to victims as compared physical bullying. But it should be noted that when students are intimidated, manipulated, or stalked, they develop the feeling of despondency and insecurity (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008; Coloroso, 2011; Boulton & Underwood, 1992). These feelings have more devastating effects on the psychological well-being of students which may transcend into their



adult future behaviours and their relationships with the rest of the world (Shellard, 2002; Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 2001).

Further experiences of being bullied was evidenced poorly in students' academic work and eventually dropping out of school out of frustration (Muro & Kottman, 2015). Still, others may choose a more stogy response to having been bullied, such as committing suicide (Lawrence & Adams, 2006; Olweus, 2005; Smith, 2011). What makes bullying even worse in our second cycle institutions is that it moves beyond senior-junior relationship to more a subtly, junior-senior, junior-junior and senior-senior relationships.

Informal discussions the researcher held with some teachers, school management and students revealed that the issue of bullying is not attracting much attention in Cape Coast Metropolis like issues on teenage pregnancy, sexual harassment, destruction of school properties, among others. More surprisingly, evidence in support of its influence on psychological wellbeing of students is hardly available. Could lack of extensive research on the psychological wellbeing of bullying in SHS be responsible for the perceived prevalence? But will adolescent boy and girl report similarly or differently to the issue of bullying? What counselling interventions are adopted to manage incidence of bullying in SHS in the Cape Coast Metropolis? Would the use of mixed methods research provides holistic picture of the influence of school related bullying on psychological wellbeing of students? Answers to these questions are not readily available in the literature. This study is therefore conducted to fill this knowledge gap and to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the influence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **1.3 Theoretical Frameworks**

Two theoretical perspectives on bullying and three theoretical perspectives on psychological wellbeing guided the study. On bullying the Sensation Seeking Theory and Differential Association Theory were used. For psychological wellbeing, the researcher relied on Cognitive Behavioural Theory of Depression and the Behavioural Theory of Anxiety and Needs Theory.

#### **1.3.1 Sensation Seeking Theory (Zuckerman, 1994)**

This theory provides a basis for understanding the human tendency to abuse to satisfy biological need. Specifically, Marvin Zuckerman's fundamental thesis is that sensation seeking is based on individual differences in the optimal level of feelings, which are the result of differences in the biological nervous system (Zuckerman, 1994). Along with traits like extraversion and impulsivity; sensation seeking is associated with the enzyme called Monoamine Oxidase (MAO), suggesting a role for the central monoamine systems in this trait. In turn, MAO enzyme is associated with dangerous activities.

According to Healy (1997), damage to the area of the brain responsible for controlling aggressive impulses, the amygdala and the imbalance of the testosterone hormone can also affect the activity of neurotransmitters in the brain. This lowers serotonin levels, creating a neurological state which is associated with indifference, impulse actions and seeking excitement and stimulation in the environment. Another argument is that, as a result of brain damage at birth, individuals may develop a series of symptoms that could render them incapable of moral control, and because of this subcortical explosion, they are constantly seeking stimulation.

The theory states that chronically low arousal is an ambiguous physiological state, so people seek out activities and experiences that satisfy their need for

sensation. It is also assumed that there are different levels of emotion (high or low) that can be applied (Eysenck & Gudjonsson, 1989). Individuals with low arousal stress seek excitement, often in the form of violent or disruptive behaviour to bring their motivation levels to their personal optimum (Eysenck & Gudjonsson, 1989). Under arousal is assumed to cause individuals to be less sensitive to signals of punishment in the presence of cues for reward (Knyazev et al., 2002). A high positive correlation was found between low arousal and antisocial and criminal behaviour in both longitudinal and cross-sectional studies (Raine, Venables & Williams, 1990; Coren, 1999).

However, individuals with high levels of arousal tend to avoid stimulating situations, in an involuntary effort to reduce anxiety and escape potential punishment (Connor, 2002). This accounts for the reasons why such individuals are usually picked on by others and seen as safe targets for bullying. In addition, high levels of stimulation are assumed to predispose individuals to having increased sensitivity to signals of punishment and non-reward (Knyazev, Slobodskaya & Wilson, 2002). This level of stimulation produces a number of common behavioural problems, such as emotional maladjustments, anxiety, avoidance behaviour, disgust, irritability, shyness and embarrassment (Matthews & Deary, 1998; Knyazev et al., 2002).

Therefore, it can be deduced that people deliberately bully others to satisfy the physiological need for excitement. Bullies are highly sensitive because they are likely to derive stimulation (arousal) from the ecstasy of bullying others (Knyazev et al., 2002). Such bullies have relatively low-level nervous system activation and therefore would seek stimulation from their external environment to accommodate their heightened sensitivity. Hence, sensation seeking theory offers a very reasonable

explanation for the characteristics of bullies in Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **1.3.2 Differential Association Theory (Sutherland, 1947)**

This theory explains why there seems to be psychologically abusive students in our second cycle institutions. Differential Association Theory (DAT) is the coinage of criminologist Edwin H. Sutherland in 1947 (Reid, 1987; Moon, Hwang, & McLuskey, 2008). Sutherland held the belief that criminal behaviour develops in the same way as noncriminal behaviour, and that both may be explained by a learning process rather than concerned with the structure of society (Reid, 1987). Reid explained that through the process of communication within small groups, people learn definitions that are either favourable or unfavourable to violating the law.

Moon et al. (2008) in Danyoh (2014) argued that individuals are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviours when exposed to delinquent peers or delinquent parents. Sutherland advocates that by interacting with close others (i.e., parents and friends) who exhibit antisocial behaviours and/or have positive attitudes toward law violations, individuals learn ways to engage in delinquent or criminal behaviours (Danyoh, 2014). This theory provides the idea that bullies are socialised into the culture of bullying by their peers, significant others and also through institution's inaction. For instance, when the institution fails to sanction a psychologically abusive student, a non-abusive student may perceive the act as appropriate worth emulating. Secondly, most students unconditionally recognise the authority and power of bullies as compared to non-bullies (Danyoh, 2014). So other students emulate these maladaptive behaviours in order to be recognised as such.

### **1.3.3 Theories of psychological wellbeing**

Three theories were used to situate the extent to which the senior high school students developed their psychological wellbeing. For the purposes of this study, the theory of depression, theory of anxiety and the theory of self-esteem were used.

### **1.3.4 Cognitive-Behavioural Theory of Depression**

This theory posits that individuals with certain negative cognitive styles are more likely to develop depression when face with negative or stressful life events when faced with negative or stressful life events, such as bullying at school (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000). According to Lakdawalla, Hankin and Mermelstein (2007), depression is an unstable self-concept that involves maladaptive attitudes that include loss, inadequacy, failure, and worthlessness. Lakdawalla et al. (2007) further hypothesised that these maladaptive attitudes are likely to be activated after a negative life event occurs (e.g. school related bullying) and generate specific negative knowledge and lead to an increase in depressive symptoms.

According Beck (1987), depressed people have a negative self-concept schema that causes them to process personal information in a negatively biased and distorted way. Such people focus mainly on the negative aspects of their lives and interpret events in self-destructive manner. According to Seligman (1974), depression occurs when a person realises that trying to escape negative situations makes no difference as a result they may become more passive (McLeod, 2015). In the case of the bullied, experiences of school related bullying is the manifestation that he/she cannot influence the hostile environment. A depressed person may eventually give up trying to influence others because they realise they are powerless and have no control over what happens to them.

### **1.3.5 Behavioural Theory of Anxiety**

Behavioural theory of anxiety was proposed to describe how people, especially the bullied feels anxious in school. The underlying assumption of this theory is that organisms learn to avoid aversive stimuli through mediated mechanism, and this mediated mechanism is fear (Strongman, 1995). The theory proposed that when a conditioned stimulus which is paired with an unconditioned stimulus (e.g. events that are aversive and cause pain) after several pairings, will lead to a conditioned response, fear (Strongman, 1995). It can be reasoned that the senior high school student who experienced school related bullying (e.g. insulting, hitting, negative sexual comments, etc.) from a bully, is more likely to develop panic disorder that may trigger some hormones to be alert for future events of bullying (Strongman, 1995). Subsequently, the presence of a bully may trigger similar fear in the victim.

### **1.3.6 Self-Esteem Theory**

Self-esteem is the sum total of self-confidence or sense of personal worth, personal capacity, self-respect of an individual (Branden, 1994; Rosenberg, 1965). We can better understand self-esteem by placing it within the context of the Abraham Maslow's "Needs Theory" (Maslow, 1987). According to Maslow (1987), without meeting the need for self-esteem, individuals are driven to seek it and cannot develop and achieve self-actualisation. Carl Rogers said that the root of many people's problems, including young people, is that they underestimate themselves and see themselves as worthless and unworthy of love (Rogers, 1986).

It is recognised that every person, without exception, deserves the unconditional respect of all others; deserves to be honoured and respected. However, school related bullying has the tendency of compromising the sense of self of the bullied. Those who are bullied may develop negative appraisal of the self and may

lose social connections in the school (e.g. friends may be afraid to be their acquaintances to avoid being targeted by bullies). Their dignity may not be respected.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The study investigated the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of Senior High School students in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

Objectives of the study was to:

1. Find out the prevalence of school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.
2. Identify key characteristics of bullies in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.
3. Assess the sex differences in the prevalence of school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.
4. Assess the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of Senior High school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.
5. Ascertain strategies to manage the incidence of school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

#### **1.6 Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. How prevalent is school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis?
2. What are the key characteristics of bullies in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis?

3. What strategies are to be adopted to managing the incidence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis?

### **1.7 Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses are formulated;

1.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant gender difference in the prevalence of school related bullying among SHS students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.
2.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of SHS students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The findings from this study would assist senior high school heads to have a clear awareness of the specific impact of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of students and the school climate in general. Based on this evidence, appropriate counselling strategies in our senior high schools in the metropolis would be reexamined (if any) and new ones formulated to address the impact of this unacceptable behaviour in our senior high schools.

Secondly, the findings would add to the knowledge based of school counsellors, teachers, parents and various organisations in the metropolis that seek the total development of the individual, with regard to the nature and extent of the real hurts, pains and sufferings that students experience as a result of psychological bullying. It would help to enlighten teachers, parents, administrators and even students on the appropriate reciprocal roles they are expected to play in order to prevent or even deal effectively with devastating menace of psychological bullying in schools. From the literature so far espoused, there are some bullying intervention programmes in schools. But these interventions are not the same across schools and



across continents in the world. If diversities are found in these interventions, then it is curious to know what strategies exist currently in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis for managing related bullying. The findings from this study will help provide evidence to expand our knowledge of interventions for mitigating bullying in schools.

Finally, the results of the study would help the Ghana Education Service and other policy makers come out with policies and programmes that would serve as useful guide to all teachers in schools on how to deal appropriately with bullies while finding psychological interventions for victims of school related bullying.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

The study targeted only SHS 2 and SHS 3 students. Though there are various types of school related bullying in senior high schools, this study was delimited to physical, verbal, and sexual related bullying and students psychological wellbeing is delimited to depression, anxiety and self-esteem. Themes covered in this study are: prevalence of school related bullying, characteristics of bullies, sex differences regarding school related bullying, influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of students and strategies to be considered in managing the incidence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **1.10 Assumptions of the Study**

The study was conducted based on the following basic assumptions;

1. All respondents have either experienced school related bullying as either as victims, bullies, bystanders or from working as school counsellors.

2. The respondents gave reliable information on the prevalence of school related bullying, characteristics of bullies and victims, and influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of students.

### 1.11 Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined below;

**School related bullying:** It refers to as any kind of repeated intentional and purposeful mental abuse that intended to cause pain and humiliation to victims. Behaviours that constituted school related bullying are hitting, pounding, teasing, name calling, social exclusion, making sexual gestures, etc. These behaviours are grouped into physical, verbal and sexual bullying.

**Psychological well-being:** It is the subjective interpretation of mental state of students as a bully or bullied. For the purposes of this study, psychological wellbeing of students included in the study are self-esteem, anxiety, and depression.

**Bullies:** It refers to students who commit bullying acts due to domineering tendencies, or lack of empathy.

**Victims:** Victims as used in the study denotes students who are direct recipients of school related bullying.

### 1.12 Organisation of the Study

The study has five chapters. Chapter one presents the background to the study, theoretical framework, statement of the problem, conceptual framework, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and organisation of the study. Chapter two deals with the related literature review. Chapter three presents the methodology of the study which includes research paradigm, design, population of the study, sample and sampling

techniques, research instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures, data analyses procedures and ethical considerations. Chapter four presents and discusses the results and Chapter five presents the summary, conclusion, implications for counselling, recommendations and areas of further research.



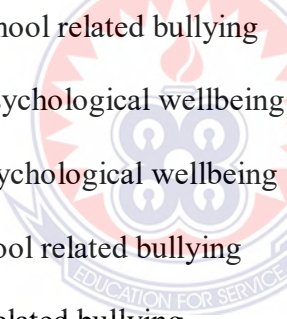
## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter reviews some related literature on the research problem under consideration. Scholarly works published in academic journals, reports, and theses related to the study were reviewed. The review created familiarity with the 21st century research thinking by highlighting what had been done and the knowledge gap to be filled by this research. The literature was reviewed under the following sub-heading:

##### **1. Conceptual Review**

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- (a) The concept of school related bullying
  - (b) The Concept of psychological wellbeing
  - (c) The concept of psychological wellbeing
  - (d) Prevalence of school related bullying
  - (e) Forms of school related bullying
  - (f) Characteristics of school related bullies
  - (g) Psychological wellbeing of students

##### **2. Empirical Review**

- (a) Sex differences in the reported prevalence of school related bullying
- (b) Sex differences in the reported effects of school related bullying
- (c) Influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of students
- (d) Strategies use to manage school related bullying

##### **(e) Conceptual Framework**

##### **3. Summary of the Review of the Related Literature**

## 2.1 Concept of School Related Bullying

School related bullying is any behaviour that occurs repeatedly over time and is aimed at harming or hurting another person or group of people, and in which there are signs of a power imbalance, with a more powerful person or group attacking a very weak person or group (victim). School bullies usually target victims who show some form of vulnerability. For example, the way a person dresses or looks could be an open target for bullies. Victims are usually not among the "crowd". They are usually not in the popular group. The most common definition for every victim of bullying is "difference" (Ziemann, 2016). Whether a person looks, acts, thinks, learns or dresses differently can be a valid reason to belittle, ridicule and torment the victim for bullying. Other factors that can influence whether a person becomes a victim of bullying are poor social skills (Harris & Petrie, 2013). For example, their reactions to dealing with others and their lack of social awareness can make others perceive them as different or strange. Unfortunately, instead of avoiding peers who exhibit these traits, bullies tend to single out these individuals as prey for bullying.

According to the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2010, up to 32% of students between the ages of 12-18 were victims of bullying. Similarly, the American Medical Association (AMA, 2002) found that approximately 23% of students in grades 4 to 6 had experienced bullying incidents and 9% of these students were victims of frequent bullying, occurring one or more times per week. The Josephson Institute of Ethics (2010) in the United States of America also found of 47% of 43,000 young people had been bullied, and 50% of same young people surveyed had bullied, teased, or taunted other students. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2013) reports that, in every 7 minutes, a child is bullied on the schoolyard. Also, in every month, 3 million students miss school

because they feel unsafe in the school. These statistics support Davis's (2007) assertion that bullying is the most common form of violence in our communities, including schools.

## **2.2 Concept of Psychological Wellbeing**

Psychological wellbeing is a combination of well-being and functionality (Huppert, 2009). Dzuka and Dalbert (2000) also define psychological wellbeing as general satisfaction and happiness or the subjective report of a person's mental state of being healthy, satisfied or prosperous and generally reflecting quality of life and mood. The emphasis is on the individual being happy and experiencing positive emotions. For the purpose of this study, three psychological wellbeing components are presented in the study as the dependent variables. These include Depression, Anxiety and Self-esteem.

### **2.2.1 Depression among Students**

Depression is one of the serious mental disorders of adolescents, affecting all aspects of social and academic life (Kovacs, Obrosky, & George, 2016). The increasing prevalence of depression among adolescents has become a major mental health concerns worldwide (Thapar, Collishaw, Pine, & Thapar, 2012). People with depression develop signs and symptoms including loss of interest in activities that were once interesting or fun, including sex; loss of appetite, with, or overeating, with weight gain; loss of emotional expression and regularisation. It is often characterised by a persistent sadness, anxiety, or empty mood; feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness (Shiel, 2013). Those who are depressed tend to be socially withdrawn; develop unusual fatigue, have low energy levels, and develop a feeling of being lethargic. They also suffer from sleep disorders such as insomnia,

early morning awakening or oversleeping; difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions; unusual restlessness or irritability. Persistent physical problems such as headaches, indigestion or chronic pain, thoughts of death or suicide attempts, are all manifestations of depression (Shiel, 2013; Bully statistics, 2010).

A study conducted among middle and high school students in Malaysia showed that the overall depression was 42.6% (Abdul Latiff, Tajik, Ibrahim, Abu-Bakr & Ali, 2016). In Nepal, Bhattarai, Shrestha and Paudel (2020) conducted a cross-section survey to examine the prevalence and associated factors of depression among adolescents attending secondary schools in Pokhara Metropolitan City, Nepal. The study showed the prevalence a high prevalence of depression among high school students, with more than 44.2% students having depression. The study further revealed that about 25.3% of students have mild depression and 18.9% of students have severe depression.

Khasakhala, Ndeti, Mutiso, Mbwayo and Mathai (2012) conducted a study to determine the prevalence of depressive symptoms among adolescents in secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya. The study found that the prevalence of clinical depressive symptoms among adolescents was 26.4% and incidence was higher in girls than boys. According to Chinawa, Manyike, Obu, Aroun, Odukela and Chinawa (2015), about 7.4% of adolescents attending secondary schools in the South East Nigeria are diagnosed with depressive symptoms. In Ghana, Kugbey, Osei-Boadi and Atefoe (2015) examined the impact of social support from family, friends and significant others on the levels depression, anxiety and stress among undergraduate students of University of Ghana using the Depression, Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21). The study found that 57% of the respondents reported mild to extremely severe depression. However, there is paucity of knowledge regarding how senior high school

students in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area rate their level of depression using the depression component of the DASS-21 scale.

Assessment of students' depression is necessarily imperative to know the quantum of sadness, loss of interest, super-sensitive to scolding and criticisms, mood swings, hopelessness, general disconnect, fatigue, appetite change, suicidal thoughts among others in the students.

### **2.2.2 Anxiety among students**

Anxiety among college students in the United States has increased from 6.7% in 2000 (American College Health Association, 2000) to 12.9% in 2013 (American College Health Association, 2013). In 2014, the American College Health Association reported that 23% of college students cited anxiety as a factor hindering their performance in the past year (Bisson, 2017). LeBlanc and Marques (2019) indicated that anxiety is very common among college students. According to the American Health Association (2018), approximately 63% of college students in the United States have experienced severe anxiety in the past year. In the same survey, 23% said they had been diagnosed or treated by a mental health professional for anxiety in the past year. In Sweden, Calling, Midlöv, Johansson, Sundquist and Sundquist (2017) reported an increase in anxiety young people. In their study, they found the overall prevalence of self-reported anxiety to around 8.0 to 12.4% in men and 17.8% to 23.6% in women during a 25-year follow-up study.

Anxiety symptoms are related to feelings of dread and fear, often accompanied by physical sensations such as nausea, vomiting, feeling nervous, tense, dizzy, sweaty, and shaky or breathlessness in people. It is suggested anxiety is a normal psychological condition necessary for humans as protection against harm (Rector, Bourdeau, Kitchen & Joseph-Massiah, 2008). For instance, when a bully approaches,



a potential victim will perceive danger, feel alarmed and jump back to avoid the bully. This is a normal fear response known as the “fight or flight” response (Rector et al, 2008). Imagined or perceived threat is transmitted through the brain to the nervous system, which responds by releasing adrenaline. Increased adrenaline causes us to feel alert and energetic, and gives us a spurt of strength, preparing us to attack (fight) or escape to safety (flight). Increased adrenaline can also have unpleasant side-effects.

However, from the empirical evidence provided, there is limited knowledge on the level anxiety of students in senior high school in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area. Besides, the study areas where these anxiety levels were reported could have some bullying mitigation services, either mediating or moderating its effects. There is the need for further considerations on the students’ reported level of anxiety to complete knowledge gap in the local and international literature.

### **2.2.3 Self-Esteem among students**

Zoabi (2012) conceptualised that self-esteem is synonymous with concepts like “self- concept”, “self-image”, “self-presentation”, or “self-evaluation”, which represents the sum of a person’s subjective perceptions, attitudes, emotions, physical characteristics and behaviours toward themselves (Levine & Smolak, 2002; Neziroglu, Khe- mlani-Patel, & Veale, 2008). According Zoabi (2012), self-esteem is about being who you are, being able to appreciate the positive and negative aspects, and continuing to feel good about yourself. Self-esteem is further conceptualized as the global feelings and attitudes that children and adults have about themselves (Prihadi & Chua, 2012). It is a person’s self-evaluation and is also defined as the value that each person places on his or her own characteristics, abilities, and behaviours (Von Der Haar, 2005).

According to Mruk (2006), self-esteem is the sum total of one's values and one's competence. Brown and Marshall (2006) view self-esteem as the ability and capacity to interpret events in a way that reinforces, maintains, and protects self-confidence. This means that individuals with high self-esteem have strong self-confidence, which leads them to focus on their positive attributes and react to events in a way that maintains their self-confidence. This implies that persons with high self-esteem have a strong love for themselves which makes them dwell on their positive qualities and react to events in such a way as to maintain feelings of self-worth. Crocker and Park (2003) indicate that self-esteem is the main driving force behind people's successes and avoidance of harmful labelling. Gender is the main factor influencing the development of self-esteem (Veselska, Geckova, Gajdosova, Orosova, van Dijk & Reijneveld, 2009) as boys are likely to develop high self-esteem than girls (McMullin & Caimsey, 2004).

In Ghana, the concept of adolescent self-esteem has featured prominently in parenting literature, (Sankah, 2007). However, there is paucity of self-esteem literature with respect of school related bullying. This concept therefore received attention from the researcher in examining whether school related bullying could influence self-esteem of students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

#### **2.2.4 Prevalence of school related bullying**

Bullying behaviour is frequent reported among school going children and this frequency among secondary school students has been recorded and investigated by many researchers across the world. In the advanced countries, the reported prevalence of school related bullying has generally varied from 7.2-24% (Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara & Kernic, 2005). A study by Shahrour, Dardas, Al-Khayat and Al-Qasem (2020) on the prevalence, correlates, and experiences of school bullying among

adolescents in Jordan revealed that about 7% Jordanian adolescents are victims of school bullying, 7.6% as bullies and 1.7% as both. Verbal bullying was the most common form of bullying among victims and bully-victim, while relational bullying was the most prevalent bullying for bullies.

A Korean study has demonstrated that as many as 40% students surveyed played some role in bullying with at least 23% being victims or victim-perpetrators (Kim, Koh & Leventhal, 2004). However, in India, Kshirsagar, Agarwal and Bavdeka (2007) found that 157 (31.4%) out of 500 children interviewed claimed they were bullied. In the United States, one in five school children report being bullied. A higher percentage of boys than girls report being physically bullied, while a higher percentage of girls than boys report being the subject of rumors and being excluded for targeted activities (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 2019). This is contrarily to Marsh (2018) claims that bullying has been on the decline in many schools for the past two decades even though. In Brazil, a cross-sectional study by de Moura, Cruz, and Quevedo (2011) found a prevalence figure of 17.6% with verbal, physical, emotional, racial and sexual bullying topping the list of most perpetrated forms of school related bullying.

In Africa, the reported prevalence fall above 50% threshold. For instance, in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Alex-Hart, Okagua, and Opara (2015) found that 82.2% of senior secondary school students were victims of bullying, whereas 64.9% agreed that they were bullies. It was further found that bullying is common among all-boys (90.8%) and all-girls (82.9%) secondary schools than in the mixed schools (73.5%). Physical bullying was the most prevalent form of bullying reported by the students. In Zimbabwe, Zindi (1994) reported that 16% of students were bullied occasionally while 18% were bullied weekly or more often.

In Ghana, Kaar (2009) found that about 10%-16% of school going children are under constant fear, which perhaps may be due to the incidence of school related bullying. Kaar failed to conclude that the reported figure of 10-16% was the actual prevalence rate. Owusu, Hart, Oliver and Kang (2011) found that out of the total of 7137 students who participated in the survey, 40.1% are bullied.

From the available literature, it can be observed that the prevalence rate of school related bullying varies in reported studies across the globe as reviewed. Differences in the reported cases might be influenced by culture and policies regarding anti-bullying behaviours in schools. Findings from this study would provide another alternative for perceiving the prevalence rate in the victimization and perpetration of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis area.

### **2.3 Forms of School Related-Bullying**

Bullying may appear in many forms, including direct or indirect, physical or psychological, verbal harassment (such as cruel teasing, name calling), negative gestures and peer isolation (Coy, 2001; Owusu, Hart, Oliver & Kang, 2011).

#### **2.3.1 School related physical bullying**

Physical bullying is the most obvious form of school related bullying. Examples of physical bullying include kicking, hitting, punching, slapping, shoving, rude hand gestures, spitting, stealing or damaging property, hazing, inappropriate touching, tickling, headlocks, pinching, school pranks, fighting, and use of available objects such as weapons (Ada, Okoli, Obeten & Akeke, 2016). Owusu, Hart, Oliver and Kang (2011) state that some of the physical bullying activities are: threatening with violence, pushing, pulling by the hair, slaps, punching, kicking, tripping,

stamping on and spiting on. These sometimes lead to food taken away from victims, school bags taken or properties, such as books, clothes and shoes, damaged. Sometimes, money is demanded from the victims and some are made to fight each other. Some victims are also beaten with sponges and electrical wires. Physical bullying is the easiest to identify and has received more attention from school authorities.

### **2.3.2 School related verbal bullying**

Verbal bullying leaves deep seated emotional scar on victims remains a contemporary issue in the bullying literature (McEvoy, 2005; Chalton, 2009 Twemlow et al., 2006). Anderson (2007) proffered that words are powerful tools that can break and dampen the spirit of the child who is on the receiving end. According to Antiri (2015), verbal bullying is when someone, or a group of people, repeatedly and intentionally uses words or actions which cause psychological harm to an individual. Anderson (2007) suggested that perpetrators of verbal abuse use words, statements, taunts, insults, insults, personal slander, and name-calling to gain power and control over the target. These verbal acts always degrade, humiliate and hurt the victims, leave deep emotional wounds, weaken their ability and willingness to pay attention in class and create a sense of insecurity.

According to Gordon (2019), a bullying verbally is difficult to identify unlike physical bullying as the effects are not immediately visible. According to Wang, Iannotti, and Nansel (2009), verbal bullying is perpetrated about 37.4% of the time in bullying situations is most often used form of perpetration for female bullies. Gadin and Hammarrstorm (2005) also found verbal bullying as the most common form of school related bullying. This is consistent with the results of research conducted in Norway (Due, Holstein, Lynch, Diderichsen, Gabhainn, Scheidt & Curie, 2005) and

in England (Due et al., 2009). Among the categories of verbal bullying that commonly occur among students are name calling, threatening, teasing, unfounded criticism, insulting remarks, taunting, belittling, personal defamation, sexually suggestive or sexually abusive remarks (Lee, 2004; Bolton et al., 2002; Coloroso, 2008).

Verbal related bullying may further include abusive phone calls, threatening e-mails, anonymous notes with threats of violence, gossip, false accusations, malicious rumours (Lee, 2004). It is also noted that, in many cases, teachers and parents will not deal with verbal bullying and, if this behaviour is condoned, it may allow the targeted child to become more dehumanised (Coloroso, 2008). Some of the signs that the student might be experiencing verbal bullying include an aversion of going to school, failing grades, sleep problems and stomach complaints.

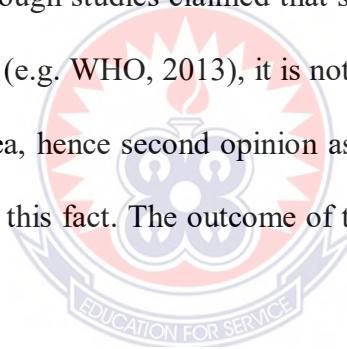
### **2.3.3 School related sexual bullying**

Sexual bullying is the repeated, harmful and humiliating acts a person's sexuality (Gordon, 2019). Some of the degrading acts that target a person's sexuality include sexual name calling, uninvited touching, sexual propositioning and watching of pornographic materials. Ada et al. (2016) also indicate that acts such as offering of sexual favours in exchange for good grades, sexual contacts, asking for sexual favours; making sexual comments, sexual jokes, and sexual gestures also constitute sexual bullying. In extreme cases, sexual bullying opens the door to sexual assault and girls are often the targets of sexual bullying both by boys and other girls (Gordon, 2019).

Sexual bullying is the second most frequent type of bullying with global estimate of children who had been sexually standing at 1.2% (UNESCO, 2018). In Central America, the Middle East and North Africa Provinces, a Global School Health Survey conducted by the World Health Organisation (2013) revealed that sexual

bullying is one of the top two most common types of bullying. However, bullying statistics from the Asia, Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa show sexual bullying is the second most frequent type of bullying experienced by girls in schools in those countries, with head teachers, teachers and schoolmates as perpetrators of this act. Digitization also creates new forms of sexual bullying. In support of this claim, UNESCO (2018) conducted a study in five countries (Argentina, Brazil, the Philippines, Serbia, and South Africa) and found that 12% and 22% of children had received sexually explicit messages in the past year.

In Ghana, the issue of sex and sexual related issues is considered as a taboo. This prevents victims from reporting and perpetrators see this as an avenue for increase perpetration. Though studies claimed that sexual bullying is the second most frequent type of bullying (e.g. WHO, 2013), it is not clear whether this claim could be extended to the study area, hence second opinion as in the case of this study, is very important in establishing this fact. The outcome of this study will provide knowledge on this regard.



## **2.4 Characteristics of Bullies**

The question, “What makes someone a bully?” continues to generate interest among scholars and social scientists. For instance, Warren (2011) sees a bully as someone who shows impulsivity to dominate others. Such people may have challenges with academic activities in the school and usually become impulsive as a way of covering their weaknesses academically (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim & Sadek, 2010). Furthermore, bullies have negative self-concept, possess negative attitudes and have trouble with conflict resolution (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). Thornberg, Rosenqvist, and Johansson (2012) assessed how teenagers explain the causes of bullying. From the study, it was found that the highest occurring cause

attributed to bullies was psychosocial problems of the bully. Factors such as the bully's home life, inner flaws, and previous victim experience were significantly mentioned.

Some studies suggest that the nature of parenting has an impeccable influence on bullies (Cook et al., 2010; Olweus, 1993; Warren, 2011). According to Olweus (1993), individuals who are raised by parents with a negative attitude and a lack of warmth have an increase chance of becoming bullies due to the exposure of harsh punishment. Parents with high levels of tolerance towards children's abusive behaviours may raise them to show increased aggression on safer targets in schools. Such bullies have positive outlooks towards bullying (Olweus, 1996). Others bully as a way of obtaining high self-esteem towards peer approval and also demonstrate lack of empathy and develop strong desire to dominate and subdue peers (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Bradshaw, Sawyer & O'Brennan, 2007).

According to Olweus and Limber (2010), bullies possess anti-social personality due to their physical strength. Bullies are hot tempered, physically aggressive, defiant, oppositional and easily enraged (Olweus, 1996). Scarpact (2006) adds that bullies are usually loud, assertive and hostile. Bullies belong to a particular deviant social cliques. According to Ada et al. (2016), bullies may not come from intense disciplinary homes rather they gain acceptance from the peer group by bullying. Furthermore, Coloroso (2015) sees bullies as possessing deceptive behaviour towards others, react aggressively and also blame others for whatever has been committed.

Olweus (2010) in his study found that bullies do not usually have cycle of friends because of their ingenious way of masking their behaviours. Dedman (2011) adds that such bullies are always very few, operate at places where they will not be



noticed. They are also vindictive and vicious in character towards others. To Adomako-Ampofo (2011), bullies possess male characteristics that are approved or encouraged by society. These characteristics include; virility, strength, authority, power and leadership qualities. In a masculinity society, the male child needs to be strong to take up responsibilities in the near future. However, being strong is misinterpreted to be being aggressive with less sensitivity to people.

## **2.5 Sex Differences in the Reported Prevalence of School Related Bullying**

On reported sex differences in school related bullying, literature is inconclusive as two positions were reported and evidentially argued (Lerner & Lerner, 2001; Garrett, 2013). In the first literature position, it was reported that there is no difference in the way male and female students report, either as victims or perpetrators of bullying. Lerner and Lerner (2001) indicate that boys and girls were equally harassed. Kshirsagar et al. (2007) found no statistically significant difference in the prevalence of school related bullying amongst boys and girls in co-educational schools in India. Finally, Fanti and Kimonis (2012) found that sex does not play a significant role in patterns of bullying and conduct problems. Other studies further revealed that the number of boys and girls being victimised is about the same (Beldean-Galea et al., 2010; Fekkes et al., 2005; Kristensen & Smith, 2003; Peskin, Tortolero & Markham, 2006).

A study by Hoertel et al. (2011) found similar results. In their study, the probability of being involved in bullying was significantly higher for men than women. Additionally, Chapell et al. (2006) established that males bully significantly more in elementary and high school than females. These findings made Crick and Grotpeter (2015) to conclude that, “both girls and boys are aggressive but tend to exhibit distinct forms of the behaviour” (p. 721). This proposes that both males and

females do bully at comparable rates, but the styles in which they use to bully may be different.

However, some studies conducted among adolescents revealed that there are sex differences in the reported forms of bullying (Fekkes, Pijpers & Verloove-Vanhorick 2005; Guerra, Williams & Sadek, 2011; Yen, Huang, Kim, Shin, Wang, Tang, Yeh & Yang, 2013; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Iyer-Eimerbrink, Scieizee, & Jensen-Campbell, 2015). According to Garrett (2013), in a general sense, males tend to bully often as well as be on the receiving end of bullying behaviour more than females (Garrett, 2013). Additionally, Athanasiades and Deliyanni-Kouimtzis (2010) confirmed that males bully much more frequently than females. In an international survey of 35 countries, Due and colleagues (2009) found that more boys than girls were victims of bullying.

In Turkey, it was established that boys are more likely to bully others than girls and are often more victimised than girls (Dölek, 2002; Pekel, 2004; Piúkin & Ayas, 2005; TakŎú, 2007; Alikasifoglu, Erginoz, Ercan, Uysal & Albayrak-Kaymak, 2007; Malkoc & Ceylan, 2010; Sahin & Sari, 2010). The reason for this finding is that the researchers focused more on the perpetration of physical bullying as this is most visible form of school related bullying.

However, both Nordhagen, Nielsen, Stigum and Köhler (2005) and Beldean-Galea, Jurcau and Tigan (2010) found that girls tend to bully more often than boys and boys are often victimized. With this contrarily view, one is attempted to look at various forms of school related bullying based on the sex of students. A study conducted by Garrett (2003), it was found that girls are fond of using relational/social, rumours and verbal types of bullying. In describing the significance of this findings, Paul and Cillesen (2003) explained that since girls are more socially perceptive than

boys, they internalise events more prominently than boys, hence using relational or verbal form of bullying.

The most common type of bullying among adolescent boys is verbal and physical bullying and verbal and social bullying among girls (Nansel et al., 2001; Wang, Iannotti and Nansel (2009). This means that boys are prone to verbal and physical bullying while girls are prone to verbal and social (relational) bullying. The reported results further revealed that verbal bullying or victimization go beyond the sex of the perpetrator or victim. In support of this claim, some studies indicate that boys perform and also are victimised more in forms of direct bullying such as physical bullying than girls (Card, Stucky, Sawalani & Little, 2008; Elliott, 2002; Espelage, Bosworth & Simon, 2000; Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2007; Smith & Sharp, 2003) whereas girls enact and also were victimised more often in types of social/relational bullying (Borntrager, Davis, Bernstein & Gorman, 2009; Price, 2004; Rigby, 2007).

According to Craig (1998), when engaging in bullying, boys are aggressive towards boys and to lesser extent - girls, while girls seldom bully boys. In Iran, Mahemmedkani (2002) reports that boys usually engage more in physical bullying and criminal activities than girls, whereas girls bully others by verbal forms and rumor spreading in Iran. In the study which used the BVQ in Germany, it was found that boys reported higher rates of being physically bullied than girls (Scheithauer et al., 2006).

Similarly, a study conducted among grade 6 to 8 students in the Midwest found that girls were more likely to experience relational bullying and boys were significantly more likely to experience verbal and physical forms of bullying (Rueger & Jenkins, 2014). Subsequent studies support the idea that boys show more physical

bullying patterns while girls are more likely to engage in relational bullying behaviours (Crapanzano, Frick, Childs & Terranova, 2011; Archer, 2004). Additionally, a study conducted by Griezel, Finger, Bodkin-Andrews, Craven and Yeung (2012) aimed to determine if the rates of bullying differed between sexes among some 803 students, ages ranging from 12 to 17 years old. It was found that, boys engaged in and were the target of traditional (physical) bullying more than girls” (Griezel et al., 2012). This finding suggests that boys not only bully more but also fall victim to bullying more than girls.

Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz and Kaukiainen (2012) measured the bullying behaviours of two different age groups of children with approximately an equal amount of boys and girls per group. In both age cohorts, males scored higher on items related to direct aggression and females scored higher on items related to indirect aggression (Bjorkqvist et al., 2012). In a similar study conducted by Rivers and Smith (2014), the bullying differences between males and females in both primary and secondary school were measured. The researchers found that direct-physical behaviours such as hitting, kicking, and stealing were more common among boys than girls and more girls than boys reported incidents of indirect bullying. Similarly, other studies supported these findings on the styles of bullying used based on one’s sex (Chapell et al., 2006; Wang, Iannotti & Nansel, 2009).

A study by Prinstein, Boergers and Vernberg (2001) found that boys are significantly more likely to report overt aggression than girls. However, boys and girls reported equal use of relational aggression (Prinstein et al., 2001). In their study, Crick and Nelson (2002) report that males use physical and relational aggression with similar frequency while females mainly use relational aggression alone. These two studies support the view that females use indirect/relational aggression more so than

direct aggression during bullying. This study sheds light on the idea that females are more likely than male to use indirect/relational aggression during bullying.

Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist and Peltonen (1988) report that females use indirect/relational aggression due to their social structure. This is because there a close and strong relationship tends to emerge among females while for males broader and more pervasive social networks exist (Owens, Shute & Slee, 2000; Rivers & Smith, 2014). Thus, threatening or manipulating these friendships may harm more females than males (Bjorkqvist et al., 2012; Lagerspetz et al., 1988). In addition, females tend to be more preoccupied with interpersonal problems, which may make them more likely to react negatively to relationship problems (Crick et al., 2001). Females may also be predisposed to use indirect aggression because they mature faster verbally than males (Lagerspetz et al., 1988). It is reasoned that females tend to acquire verbal skills at an early stage, prompting the use of indirect aggression (Bjorkqvist et al., 2012).

However, it is a social norm for males to be aggressive and domineering, therefore may display more direct aggression style of bullying (Lagerspetz et al., 1988). Giles and Heyman (2005) reveal that even preschoolers viewed relationally aggressive behaviours to be linked to girls and physically aggressive behaviours to be linked to boys. Similarly, Athanasiades and Deliyanni-Kouimtzis (2010) report that in their study with fifteen and sixteen year olds, the students agreed that sex played a role in the styles of bullying used. It was found that girls are aggressive with words' (meaning verbal or indirect bullying) and boys are aggressive with certain acts' (meaning physical bullying).

In providing reasons for the sex differences in the forms of school related bullying, Naylor et al. (2006) suggest that boys are inclined to focus on the

externalising bullying behaviour while females focus on the internalising or concealed effects on the victim. Athanasiades and Deliyanni-Kouimtzi (2010) reveal that males typically denied any underlying motive behind bullying and tried to justify their bullying actions as a joke and by so doing, they fail to recognise the negative effects that bullying may have on the victim. Females on the other hand expressed disapproval of bullying and focused on the negative effects it can have on a victim. Owens et al. (2000) obtained similar results and suggested females express sympathy and disapproval of bullying to attempt to justify their own bullying actions. Boys are more often perpetrators and victims, and they are more likely to use physical abuse as a bullying technique. Girls are also strong participants but are mostly on teasing, spreading rumours and intentional isolation of victims (Davis, 2011; Epstein, 2001).

Having established contradictory positions with respect of how male and female students perceive, engage or suffer from school related bullying, there is the need to test these findings among students in some selected senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The available literature scarcely provide evidence to that effect. Therefore, findings from this study would ensure that enough knowledge is provided on how male and female students in some selected senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis perceive the perpetration and victimisation of school related bullying.

## **2.6 School Related Bullying and Psychological Wellbeing of Students**

Bullying is a worldwide problem that is negatively affecting students' right to learn in a safe environment (Piskin, 2013). The scars associated with bullying can be deep and long-lasting, affecting not only the bullied but also the society at large. The effect of school related bullying on the mental health of children have been reported in studies. For instance, the WHO (2014) establishes links between victimisation and

problems with low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and adjustment. Benedict, Vivier and Gjelsvik (2014) conclude mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders are all strongly linked to bullying. Rigby (2012) found that bullying compromises victim's self-worth and happiness, social adjustment psychological comfort and physical wellness. So for the purposes of this study, the effect of school related bullying is related to students' depression, anxiety and self-esteem have been reviewed.

### **2.6.1 School related bullying and depression of students**

There is strong association between victimisation and being a bully leads to depression in later years (Klijakovic, Hunt & Jose, 2015; Zou, Andersen & Blosnich, 2013). Bullies are at risk of developing wide range of maladaptive and anti-social behaviours and like victims, they have an increased risk of depression and suicidal ideation (Kumpulainen, Rasanen & Henttonen, 2016). Also, victims of bullying are more likely to be shy, withdrawn, and hesitant to talk to others (Boulton & Smith, 1994; Cook et al., 2010). Victims also tend to have little to no friends, are usually abandoned at school, and thus have no one to defend them when they are bullied (Hanish & Guerra, 2000; Olweus, 1996).

Furthermore, it has been found that individuals who are victims of bullying during adolescence are at a higher risk of having difficulties with psychosis, depression, substance and alcohol abuse, suicidal ideation, and attempted and actual suicide (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010; Rigby, 2003; Salmon, Jones & Smith, 1998). They may have problems with making social and emotional adjustments, difficult making friends, and having poor relationships with classmates (Rigby, 1996). Furthermore, studies on peer victimisation found that children who are target of bullying lack friends and support networks, are often more vulnerable to being

targeted by other individuals, and are often rejected and socially isolated by peers (Cheng, Newman, Qu, Mbulo, Chai, Chen & Shell, 2010; Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010). Also, Nansel et al. (2001) stated that when students are bullied on a regular basis, they become depressed, suicidal or even homicidal.

Hazler, Miller, Carney, Green (2001) and Baier (2007) believe that even low levels of harm inflicted again and again over an extended period of time, will diminish the victim's sense of hope. In the words of Sullivan et al. (2004), the extreme negative response to bullying is attempted suicide. Other difficulties associated with bullying include: substance and alcohol abuse, suicidal ideation, attempted or actual suicide as well as developing feelings of worthlessness, alienation, isolation, loneliness or helplessness (Farmer, 2011; Konishi, Hymel, Zumbo & Li, 2010; Wei & Jonson-Reid, 2011; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004; Yoon, Bauman, Choi & Hutchinson, 2011).

According to Olweus and Limber (2012), victims of bullying are at risk of developing depression or think about suicide later on (Olweus & Limber, 2012). A study in England, based on health data and annual interviews with 6,437 children, found that those who were repeatedly bullied at ages 8 or 10 were almost twice as likely as others to experience psychotic symptoms as adolescents (Olweus & Limber, 2012). Furthermore, students who are targets of bullying experience significantly more somatic complaints of headache, sleep disorders and abdominal pain than students who are not targets (Olweus & Limber, 2012).

According to Adair (2000), victims of prolonged incidence of bullying would initially experience normal depression but if no measures are taken the situation could aggravate to a moderate and to extreme levels which is closer to death. A cross-sectional survey by Kelly (2009) suggests that being victimized and victims of



bullying is significantly related to comparatively high depression. A retrospective study by Adair (2000) suggests that bullying may contribute to moderate depression in victims of prolonged bullying with difficulties with health and well-being (Farrow & Fox, 2011; Kuyendall, 2012; Dombeck, 2012; Allison, Roeger, & Reinfeld-Kirkman, 2009; Aricak, 2016). Similarly, Wolke, Copeland, Angold and Costello (2013) revealed that victims of bullying are at risk of negative health, wealth and social relationships in adulthood.

In Ghana, a study by Antiri (2015) on “Bullying of the male-child in selected senior high schools in Ghana” revealed that both bullies and victims are equally affected. For instance, it was established by Antiri (2015) in his survey that bullies felt bad, lost respect, felt sad and unhappy, disliked by others, made strong, bullied by others, had lost friends, and made them happy. On victims, it was revealed that bullies are withdrawn from society, made the victims more masculine, punctual always, not interested in school, felt timid and humiliated, felt sad and unhappy, etc. Although Antiri (2015) provided some evidence that sought to link bullying to depression in Ghana, the researcher failed to subject the relationship to rigorous statistical analysis. This study will move beyond the association into finding out the cause and effect relationship between bullying behaviours and reported depression of senior high school students. Besides, the time lapse in Antiri’s study could not explain the prevailing situation. Therefore, findings from this study will fill this knowledge gap.

### **2.6.2 School related bullying and anxiety of students**

Students who are chronic victims of even mild bullying are likely to view school as an unhappy setting and are likely to avoid places within the school setting or the school completely (Batsche & Knoff, 2014). For some children, bullying can affect them so much that they try to commit suicide, run away, and refuse to go to

school or develop chronic illnesses (Elliot, 2014). It is logical to assume that victims would be fearful and anxious in the environment in which the bullying took place. They might respond with avoidance behaviours (skipping school, avoiding certain places at school, running away and even being suicidal), more aggressive behaviours (such as bringing a weapon to school for self- defense or retaliation), and poor academic performance.

In Banks' (2014) study, it was ascertained that as many as 7 percent of America's eighth-graders stay home at least once a month because of the fear of being bullied in school. Thornberg (2011), Totura, Green, Karver and Gesten (2009) found that victims of school related bullying experience panic attacks, mistrust of others, withdrawal, aggression, poor social adjustment, interpersonal violence. Rigby (2003) has indicated victims of school related bullying exhibit the feeling of anger and sadness. They also develop the feeling of aversion toward one's social environment by expressing dislike, loneliness and isolation in one's environment and have high levels of anxiety. Farmer (2011), noted that individuals who are involved in bullying can develop psychological and social difficulties, such as anxiety, stress, insecurity, and post-traumatic stress disorder. In addition, the outcomes of bullying can have negative somatic effects which include headaches, stomach aches, bodily pain, dizziness, disturbed sleep, insomnia and tiredness (Farmer, 2011). A situation like this does not enhance the mental health of school children.

Swearer and Hymel (2015) state that being bullied and bullying others are stressful events intensified by biological vulnerabilities. It has been noted that bullies and victims display cognitive vulnerability in the face of aggressive behaviours (Swearer & Hymel, 2015). In other words, the bodily challenges (puberty) and the psychology examines how individuals perceive stressful events in their life (Sarafino

& Smith, 2014). When power and control is established through aggression and psychological abuse, victims feel distress. Therefore, individuals who bully others lack understanding of others mental state, poor self-control and judgment which facilitate in impulsive aggressive behaviour (Swearer et al., 2009). Students who experience extreme cases of bullying may develop a wide range of anxiety symptoms which include pounding heart, sweating, stomach upset or dizziness, frequent urination or diarrhoea, shortness of breath, tremors and twitches, muscle tension, headaches, fatigue, and insomnia (Swearer & Berry, 2011). A study by Swearer and Berry (2011) further demonstrated that victims who experience severe forms of bullying are at danger of experiencing normal, mild, moderate and severe cases of anxiety.

Antiri (2015) also revealed that even bystanders do not want to walk alone and felt uncomfortable when alone, were careful not to become victims, wished they had completed school, not interested in school, not able to concentrate on studies, looked sober and worried (8.5%); did not want to socialise again and afraid of seniors. But could this knowledge be extended to what pertains among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis? There is the presence of external validity as evidence from the literature cannot be extended to the current setting of the thesis.

### **2.6.3 School related bullying and self-esteem of students**

Since bullying influence social withdrawal, there is strong connection between bullying and reported self-esteem of both victims and bullies (Salmivalli, Lappalainen & Lagerspetz, 2015). Being bullied has been linked to lower self-esteem, worse mental health, staying away from school or defining the school as “never” or “hardly ever” a safe place (King et al., 2016; Rigby, 2014; Rigby, 2010). At the same, those who bully others have the tendency to dislike school and are more likely to be

engaged in health-risk behaviours, such as smoking or excessive drinking (King et al., 2016; Scheidt et al., 2011). Similarly, Rodkin, Espelage and Hanish (2015) states that adolescents who bully others have low self-esteem, have emotional problems and maybe have been prior victims of abuse.

The effects of being bullied at school can persist into young adulthood (Isaacs, Hodges & Salmivalli, 2016). Olweus and Solberg in Darmawan (2010), have said that there is an element of “pain” and “unpleasantness” experienced by the victim when bullying occurs. They explained that the pain and unpleasantness may be due to direct bullying and victims tend to have higher levels of self-blame (Carrera et al., 2011). Research on bullying and health revealed that students who were victims had inferior self-concept, more psychosomatic disorders and high level of posttraumatic stress (Houbre et al., 2016). According to Garret (2003), the impact of bullying on students are many and among such impact is shattered self-confidence. Victims of school related bullying are generally unhappy with low self-esteem, avoiding places such as the school due to the social interaction taking place there.

The effects of bullying on a child’s self-esteem can be dire even long after the bullying stops. Children who experience bullying are likely to exhibit even more severe self-esteem issues. Bullying creates loss of confidence as the child may feel incompetent in many activities as compared to peers. Secondly, when a child is constantly belittled, he or she comes to believe that he or she is less of a person. Children who are prone to bullying tend to be more prone to wetting the bed. According to Choi and Park (2021), bullying experiences in adolescents could cause maladjusted developments like low self-esteem. Choi and Park’s (2021) longitudinal study revealed that low self-esteem positively predicted subsequent victimisation of bullying acts and not its perpetration.

Though evidence abounds in support of the link between bullying and self-esteem of students, there seems to be no evidence was established in Ghana. Secondly, different designs were used to establish this relationship. For instance, Choi and Park (2021) used longitudinal study to establish the relationship between bullying and self-esteem of students. It is argued that how people rate their self-esteem vary with time so it is prudent to find out the current causal-effect relationship between reported school related bullying and self-esteem from the perspectives of senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

## **2.7 Strategies Use to Manage School Related Bullying**

The feeling of being loved gives security and can protect children from negative life experiences such as bullying (Baldry, 2004; Gini & Pozzoli, 2013; Hong, Espelage, Grogan-Kaylor & Allen-Meares, 2012). Therefore, children should be protected from all forms of abuse. Protection is expected to start from home. It has been reported that children with low family ties and poor parental supervision may be at risk of developing mental health problems such as depression and anxiety disorders (Gini & Pozzoli, 2013; Hong et al., 2012; Swearer & Hymel, 2015). Negative life events and how a person perceives these events (internalization or externalization) create tension and contribute to bullying and victimization.

Olweus and Solberg in Darmawan (2010) had suggested that school counsellors should develop effective anti-bullying strategies to reduce the menace of bullying in schools. Since bullying behaviours are a common problem in schools today, it is essential that all schools create an active and ongoing prevention and intervention programme to combat bullying. Even though it is ideal to prevent bullying behaviours before they start, it is also fundamental to intervene when incidences of bullying occur. It is also essential to include an intervention policy that

is not solely based on punishment (Elias & Zins, 2013). It is important to provide consequences for bullying behaviours, but it is also crucial to incorporate a counselling component that provides bullies with the tools to learn a new behaviour. Since many bullying behaviours are learned, bullies need to learn a new set of pro-social behaviours that do not negatively impact those around them (Epelage & Swearer, 2014).

For any bullying prevention programme to be successful, it is necessary for schools to have a clear and easily understood philosophy that promotes a safe and positive environment. This philosophy should start during the early childhood years and continue throughout senior high school. Three values which promote a positive climate and develop a basis for a bullying prevention programme include the belief that all children can learn, people should be treated with respect and dignity, and there is no place for violence in the school (Orpinas & Home, 2016). Even bullies who have repetitive patterns of bullying can change when given proper resources. On the other hand, students who are not supplied with new effective tools will use what they know and they will continue to use aggressive tactics (Garrett, 2011).

The second value that schools need to maintain to reduce bullying is that “all people in the school community deserve to be treated with respect and dignity” (Orpinas & Home, 2016, p. 86). Children who are not treated with respect will in return treat others with disrespect. If children are expected to be respect other students and teachers, then they must also be treated by teachers and other students with the same respect and dignity. To reduce bullying behaviours, teachers and other adults must model and set the tone for reciprocating behaviours that show respect and dignity for all people in the school community (Hoover, 2010). Finally, the third school value that helps promote a positive school climate is to adopt a zero tolerance

policy for violence, aggression, and bullying. These types of behaviours are not acceptable in school. Both students and teachers are held accountable for maintaining a pro-social environment. Aggression towards teachers and students is an unacceptable behaviour for both students and teachers alike (Harris & Petrie, 2013).

Since many of these bullying behaviours are learned, it is crucial that school counsellors rely on families to help reinforce pro-social behaviours. Many times many parents are unaware of the child's school policies or the fact that their child may be a bully or a victim of bullying (Olsen, 2006). Also, many times, victims of bullying do not inform their parents of abuses that they are suffering at school. Many times these students do not want to be viewed as incompetent of fixing their problems or as inadequate. They may also worry about the threat of the bullying finding out and retaliating against them, or perhaps they do not want to burden their parents or make them worry. It is clear that a school approach must be taken to combat bullying behaviours that involves administrators, teachers, school staff, parents, students, and even community members. The support of the entire community is required. The parents of the bully and the victim of bullying need to be included to provide training and education (Papazian, 2022).

Awareness creation is another critical requirement for school counsellors to reduce bullying behaviours in schools (Ross, 2013). If a school is unaware of a bullying problem, it is impossible for such an incident to be resolved. Whether teachers or administrators are in denial about a problem or whether they are unaware of a problem; it still remains an unresolved issue for students. To simply be aware of the problem is also futile in an attempt to resolve issues with bullying (Dulmus & Sower, 2014). Unfortunately, many schools may believe that awareness means a resolution. This erroneous thought only identifies that there is a problem. It obviously

does not solve the problem. Schools need to be honest with themselves and the ability of their school to create a safe and peaceful environment for the students (Roberts, 2010). School administrators and teachers must also take an active approach to physical monitoring of children and remain constantly vigilant to prevent bullying behaviours within their schools (Cleary, Sullivan & Sullivan, 2014).

Not only do teachers need to have a clear understanding of bullying behaviours, but students need to be aware of bullying behaviours and how to combat them in their school. Children need to be provided with the training to become socially competent. Children who are more socially competent have skills that allow them to be more competent to solve conflicts without violence, resist negative peer pressure, make friends, and have future plan. (Orpinas, Home, 2016). Children who are socially competent have an awareness of unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying. They also have the emotional base to recognise and empathise with other's feelings and the character development to show respect for others (Sturz, 2010). Children who are socially competent are also able to identify positive and negative consequences for their choices. Socially competent children are obviously less likely to engage in bullying behaviours. Therefore, it is important to provide training, resources, and other tools to enhance and nurture social competence in all children (Sexton-Radek, 2015).

Ross (2002, p.120), summarising Olweus' work, states "bullying is intentional, a purposeful act, and consequently, one that can be controlled provided that there is strong commitment and willingness to work together on the part of all involved: school personnel, other professionals, parents, and students". However, as stated above, before schools can effectively put a whole-school plan into place some groundwork must be securely laid down first. In this groundwork, principals are vital



in the success of the programme they implement in their schools (Ballard, Argus & Remley, 1999; Harris & Hathorn, 2002). They are the conductors of each category needed in a successful programme. Principals must hold students and staff accountable for their roles in changing the climate of the school and they must allow for the time and manpower implementing a new program will take. Ross (2002, p. 120) explains that first a solid code of conduct must be in place and operating smoothly. These clearly stated rules communicate to all students and staff what the expectation is for behaviour and they must be “enforced without exception”.

Bradshaw et al. (2007) state that teachers' failure to act may also be attributable to school level factors (for example, perceived lack of administrative support, lack of a school-wide policy regarding bullying, the culture of the school), which can lead to passive intervention strategies when dealing with bullying situations (p.376). Moreover, this hesitation to intervene after the fact may contribute to students' perception that staff is not doing enough to prevent bullying and not responding appropriately when an incident is reported to them...Staff members should increase communication with students, particularly student victims, regarding their efforts to manage bullying situations.

Furthermore, this means that specific procedures must be in place if negative behaviour occurs. All staff must be on board, supervising and monitoring their hallways and classrooms and acting on any inappropriate behaviours taking place. It also means that staff members have a responsibility and procedure in place if a student reports an incident to them. Harris, Petrie and Willoughby (2012) state that many students feel that reporting to staff members is unhelpful because they feel either nothing is done on the staff member's part or that the intervention is ineffective and the bullying may get worse (p. 7). They go on to state that in order for students to

feel safe reporting unacceptable behaviour, the school's environment must be ~~(a)~~ warm, positive, and include involved adults; ~~(b)~~ committed to setting firm limits on unacceptable behaviour; ~~(c)~~ committed to consistent application of non-hostile, nonphysical sanctions on offenders; and ~~(d)~~ characterised by authoritative (not authoritarian) adults" (2002, p. 7).

Harris and Hathorn (2006) state that ~~although~~ teachers understood the social context of bullying, they did not understand the best way to intervene in bullying and many times considered this a personal problem of the individual rather than a problem requiring a cooperative response" (p. 55). They continue stating ~~there~~ must be increased efforts for staff development and opportunities for students and teachers to engage in class discussions about bullying". A recommendation before implementing a program into the school is to complete a comprehensive survey with the entire school; all students, all staff, all parents, and even the community around the school. This survey will provide vital information about percentages of bullying incidents, effects of victimization, locations of incidents, types (physical/relational), sex of bullies and victims, et cetera. It will also give vital information about the differences in perception of bullying taking place between students, staff, and parents.

Also, Bradshaw et al. (2007) state that their study shows evidence ~~that~~ students and staff perceive the school differently (p. 376). Rather than relying on just one group's perspective, the perceptions of both students and staff should be addressed when evaluating the need for or impact of a prevention programme".(p.376) The survey will address how safe the school's environment feels, what practices are working well and what needs to be revisited. This survey will act as the initial building blocks of the prevention program, addressing the deficient areas through education and training for students and staff. But the survey

cannot stop there. It should be an annual requirement, especially in the early stages of a programme. Assessing and evaluating what is and is not working well for staff and students is essential in moving the program forward to become the climate of the school. The information determined in the survey year to year will also indicate to the school what kind of outreach programs and presentations they can bring in for parents of the school children. Building a team atmosphere between school and home is essential in every prevention programme.

In furtherance, Dupper and Meyer-Adams (2012) recommend that the focus of intervention should not be the perpetrators and victims alone. They feel “effective intervention must happen at multiple levels, concurrently” (p. 361). Along with joining forces with parents, they suggest school-level interventions such as conflict resolution and diversity training for staff and students. They also suggest classroom-level interventions such as allotted time for classroom discussions, role playing, and other activities promoting awareness to character education, citizenship and community building, and conflict resolution. While this particular recommendation works well in elementary settings because of the format of classroom settings, high schools need to be diligent in planning and enforcing this through Teacher Advisory Programmes, grade-level meetings, workshops and presentations to the school, or to a particular grade, and getting students involved to run programs such as Peer Support and Peer Mediation (Casella, 2010, p. 325).

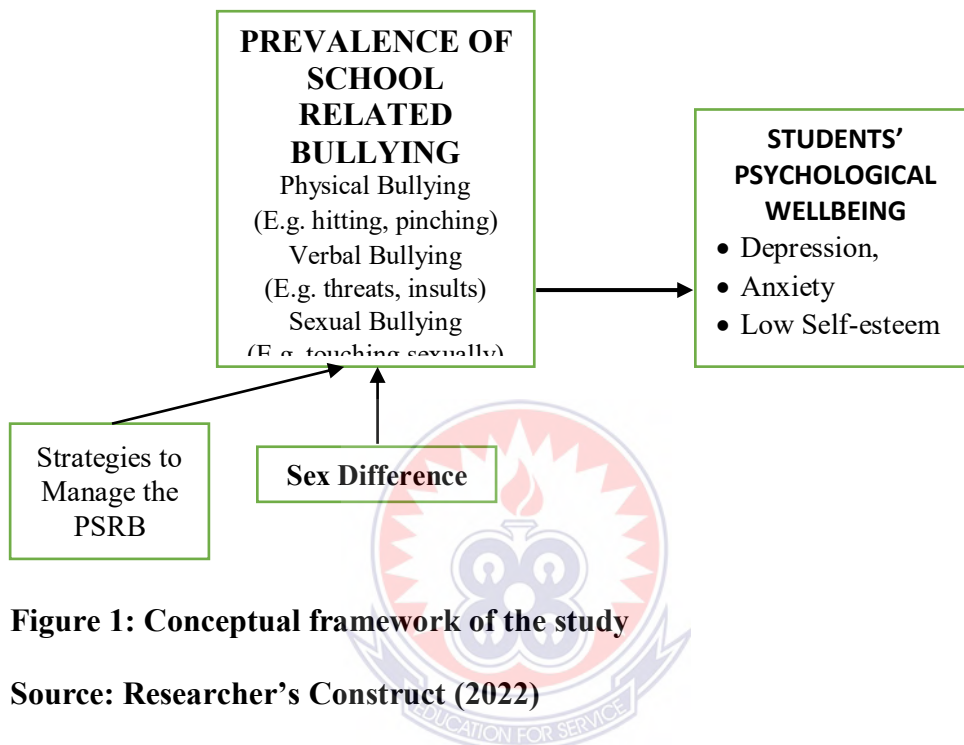
According to Mangope, Dinama and Kefhilwe (2012), the available and most common strategy used to address bullying is school’s disciplinary policy and it appears that most of the research participants in different studies are in support of this type of intervention. The majority of research participants in prior studies viewed corporal punishment as a deterrent of bullying (Moswela, 2005; Tjavanga & Jotia,

2012). However, Mangope and colleagues highlight that the intervention has proved to be ineffective. Ross (2012) states that counselling for bullies and victims has been found to be most effective when part of each session focuses on having each participant begin to understand the motivation and feelings of the other one (p. 124). Bullies need to consider why their victims behave as they do, as well as how they feel as victims; victims also need to have some insight into what has brought the bullies to their current unacceptable level of behaviour in addition to considering ways (if any) in which they could try to handle the bullying problem themselves.

These interventions will take place individually and possibly in a group as well (for example, assertiveness training for victims of bullying). The counsellors will work closely with parents as well providing information and possible referrals for further counselling services either through the divisional clinicians, such as the school's social worker or psychologist, or to outside agencies focusing on family counselling. The counsellors may also be in charge of running programmes such as Peer Support and Peer Mediation. These programmes give students the opportunity to resolve minor incidents with the help of other students who have been trained in conflict resolution, empowering students to handle their own conflicts and discourage bullying with positive peer pressure (Ballard et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2012). Antiri (2015) recommends the need for the schools to set up a system which will stop bullying in schools. Vigorous counselling should go on among the students, especially the bullies and the victims, to overcome these difficulties. Students should be made to understand the long- term effects of bullying on the individual and society.

## 2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in the study was coined from the research problem and literature view to understand how the various variables interact and how data on the variables were collected. The framework is illustrated in Figure 1 of the study.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study**

**Source: Researcher's Construct (2022)**

The researcher conceptualised that prevalence of school related bullying is initiated by the characteristics of bullies. It was proposed that bullies are usually physically and verbally than victims. A typical bully being guided by lack of empathy and impulsivity may not view bullying as a problem and this can be an effective way to gain the respect and recognition from peers. At senior high school level, students are exposed to mainly three forms of school related bullying (thus, physical, verbal and sexual bullying).

Physically, a bully may subject victims to pinching, hitting, and some rare cases hazing. Verbally, some students are under constant teasing from seniors, colleagues and even teachers. Some are given demoralizing names, yelled at, swear at

and insulted at school. Sexually, some students are exposed to sexual name calling, uninvited touching, sexual propositioning and watching of pornographic materials. Others, especially girls, are forced into sexual favours in exchange for protection and good grades in school. All these are the manifestations of school related bullying.

Victims of school related bullying are at risk of compromising their psychological wellbeing. They may have problems with depression, anxiety and self-esteem. In terms of depression, victims may feel sad, develop mood swings, and lose interest in school activities, among other things. Regarding anxiety, the victim may experience dryness of the mouth, trembling with or without the presence of the bullied. With respect of self-esteem, the victim may score poorly on the global assessment on self-esteems. The victim lack self and others' respect necessary for academic activities in the school.

## **2.9 Summary of Review of the Related Literature**

From the literature, it was established that school related bullying is prevalent globally. Also, both victims and bullies have different characteristics regarding victimisation and perpetration of school related bullying. However, there seem to be no literature actually concentrated on senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Also, sex differences regarding school related bullying were reviewed extensively, mainly from Western literature. Perhaps, Ghanaian literature on bullying in schools are at germinal stage. Though the conclusion drawn from literature is that both male and female students suffer from bullying similarly little is known in the study area. On the psychological wellbeing, it was established that bullies, bullied and even bystanders experience depression, anxiety and self-esteem as a result of bullying. But many researchers incorporate both psychological and non-psychological effects into a single study. This integration has the tendency of obliterating the

psychological discomfort acts of bullying produce. This study concentrates on only psychological wellbeing with the understanding that sound mind in a healthy body is needed for sound academic gains. On the strategies to reduce bullying, limited knowledge from the Ghanaian literature were presented.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

The chapter deals with the methodology for the study which includes the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

The study was underpinned by pragmatism school of thought. Creswell (2013) contends that pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality, thus, making it possible for researchers to draw from both quantitative and qualitative assumption. Additionally, Creswell (2014) stated that pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity which is comparable to mixed method researchers looking to many approaches for collecting and analysing data rather than subscribing to only one way. The author goes further to say that pragmatism brings to the forefront multiple methods, different worldviews, different assumptions as well as different forms of data collection and analysis.

The study was located within this philosophical stance as it applied different approaches in data gathering and analysis to achieve the set purpose and objectives of the study. The researcher believed that the influence of school related bullying on psychological wellbeing of students are multi-dimensional constructs that require evidence from different perspectives and sources. Also, quantifying human attributes without examining the issues behind these figures would provide inconclusive findings. These data sources would provide complementary claims with quantitative



data providing numerical descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation while qualitative data gives an in-depth description of the phenomenon under study.

### **3.2 Research Approach**

The study employed a mixed methods approach. Mixed methods research involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). Johnson and Turner (2003) posit that the fundamental principle of mixed methods research is that multiple kinds of data are collected with different strategies and methods in ways that reflect complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to study the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. To achieve this, the measuring instruments (thus questionnaire and interview schedule) and research strategies were aligned and complementary to collect quantitative and qualitative data of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Both quantitative and qualitative findings were used for the purposes of confirmatory, complementary, improving data quality and understand why participants act or reported the way they do. The approach gave a voice to the study participants and ensured that study findings are grounded in participants' experiences. Though practical issues with respect of time was a concern to the study, the approach allowed the researcher to gather more data that is richer in depth and detail using questionnaires and interview schedules.

### 3.3 Research Design

The study employed Concurrent Triangulation Design (CTD), mixed methods using parallel phases. According to Morse (1991), The CTD enables researchers to obtain different but complementary data to understand the research problem. The intention was to bring together the differing strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative method with those of qualitative method. According to Kroll and Neri (2009), CTD involves a single study containing quantitative and qualitative data collection which is conducted at the same time. Equal weight was attached to the two data sources. This design was adopted to validate the findings generated by each method through evidence produced by the other.

In this study, quantitative and qualitative data were concurrently collected and analysed separately. However, the results were compared, integrated and interpreted at the analysis stage of the data collection process. The design enabled the researcher to use questionnaires and interview schedules as data collection instruments to increase credibility of findings (Bell, 2010; Hawtin & Percy-Smith, 2017). This was confirmed by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) who opined that multiple sources or methods of data gathering increased the credibility and dependability of the data since the strengths of one source compensate for the potential weaknesses of the other.

This study's concurrent triangulation approach enables researchers to examine the impact of bullying at school on senior high school students' psychological wellness from a variety of perspectives, resulting in a more comprehensive and nuanced knowledge of the phenomena. As such, the intrinsic complexity of the research topic justifies the use of a Concurrent Triangulation Design in examining the impact of bullying at school on the psychological well-being of senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Bullying in school is an issue that has multiple

dimensions, such as the frequency of incidents, the psychological effects on victims, and the larger contextual elements that shape the dynamics in learning environments. By using a concurrent triangulation approach, quantitative and qualitative data may be collected and analyzed simultaneously, leading to a more thorough and nuanced knowledge of the complex problem.

An important argument in favor of this research methodology is the requirement for a methodological triangulation strategy. Researchers can improve the validity and reliability of their findings by combining quantitative methods like surveys and questionnaires with qualitative methods like focus groups and interviews. This methodological triangulation ensures a more robust interpretation of the data and strengthens the study's overall dependability by mitigating the constraints associated with any one research strategy. Contextualizing quantitative results is also made possible by the concurrent triangulation approach. Although quantitative data can provide statistical insights into the frequency of bullying occurrences, qualitative data offers a more in-depth examination of the background, personal experiences, and psychological fallout of bullying at school. Researchers may better tailor their recommendations and interventions to the specific requirements of the local community by understanding the unique dynamics within the Cape Coast Metropolis thanks to this contextualization, which is especially important.

Furthermore, an additional significant argument in favor of this study approach is the incorporation of participant perspectives. Through focus groups and interviews, among other qualitative techniques, researchers are able to record the experiences and perspectives of senior high school students who are directly impacted by bullying. This study's participant-centric method adds depth and complexity by providing insights into people's actual experiences and advancing our understanding

of the psychological effects of bullying in a more compassionate way. Finally, the concurrent triangulation design aids in the development of strong policy implications. The basis for evidence-based policy recommendations is strengthened when quantitative trends and qualitative narratives are combined. A thorough grasp of the incidence of bullying as well as the complex experiences of students can help policymakers make better decisions and create focused initiatives that specifically address the issues facing the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### 3.4 Population of the Study

The study targeted senior high school students and school counsellors in all the public SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. However, the accessible population comprised 6,142 students and 5 school counsellors drawn from five (5) public senior high schools in Cape Coast Metropolis. The 5 schools were selected based on the consideration that they adequately represent mission versus non-mission schools and mixed versus single-sex schools. Also, these schools possess similar conditions in terms of academic facilities, academic traditions and academic performance.

**Table 1: Students' population of the study**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
Academy of Christ the King Senior High School	835	380	455
Saint Augustine College	1,332	1,332	-
Wesley Girls Senior High School	857	-	857
University Practice Senior High School	1,244	526	718
Ghana National College	1,874	738	1,136
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,142</b>	<b>2,976</b>	<b>3,166</b>

**Source:** Cape Coast Metropolis Education Directorate Report, (2019).

From Table 1, the total of 835 students (380 males and 455 females) came from the Christ the King SHS, 1,332 male students from the Saint Augustine College, 857 female students from the Wesley Girls SHS, 1244 students from the University Practice SHS (526 males and 718 females), and 1,874 students (738 males and 1,136 females) from the Ghana National College formed part of the study population. The students were drawn from SHS 2 and SHS 3 class since it was assumed that these students have either experienced or witnessed, or had been a bully or victim or victim-bully of school related bullying. The SHS 1 students were excluded because at the time of data collection, they were not placed into these schools.

The population of the school counsellors was deduced from the five (5) schools used as the accessible population. The school counsellors were part of the study because of their unique position in helping students to address their psychological wellbeing.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample for the study was 347 respondents, comprising 342 students and 5 school counsellors. The 342 students were selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) criteria for determining sample sizes in quantitative data collection. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the recommended sample for a population of 6,142, at the confidence level of 95 %, and a margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 0.05 percent was three hundred and forty-two (342). The sample size for each school has been estimated and presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Sample of students used for the study**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
Academy of Christ the King Senior High School	46	21	25
Saint Augustine College	74	74	-
Wesley Girls Senior High School	48	-	48
University Practice Senior High School	69	29	40
Ghana National College	105	41	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>177</b>

**Source:** Cape Coast Metropolis Education Directorate Report, (2019).

As shown in Table 2, a total of 46 students (21 males and 25 females) were selected from the Christ the King SHS. In Saint Augustine College, 74 male students were selected while in Wesley Girls SHS, 48 female students were selected. From University Practice SHS, 69 students (29 males and 40 females) were selected and 105 students (41 males and 64 females) were selected from Ghana National College.

The participants were recruited using purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. First and foremost, five (5) public senior high schools were purposively selected. These schools were considered because they met the criteria of single sex versus mixed sex schools. However, in selecting the participants, a sample frame was developed for each school. A list of all SHS 2 and SHS 3 students was obtained from the respective school authorities for other phases in the sampling process. Based on the list obtained from the three mixed schools (thus, the Christ the King SHS, University Practice SHS and Ghana National College), stratifications of the names into sex groupings were done. The process ensured equal proportion of students' participation in terms of sex difference.

After the stratification was done, the researcher used simple random without replacement method to recruit the participants from each stratum (Male and Female).

Simple random sampling technique was used to give each student equal chance of being selected and also to reflect representativeness of the individual school population. The without replacement method was used to prevent over-sampling of a unit for the research. For instance, in selecting the male participants from the Academy of Christ the King Senior High SHS, numbers 1 - 380 were written on pieces of papers, folded and placed in a bowl. From these numbers, 21 numbers were drawn randomly from the bowl (e.g. 32, 2, 55, 90, 342, etc.). These numbers were drawn only once without replacement. Similarly, in selecting the female participants, numbers 1 – 455 were written on pieces of papers, folded and placed in a bowl. From these numbers, 25 numbers were drawn randomly from the bowl without being replaced (e.g. 394, 100, 402, 33, etc.). The same process was used to sample participants from the remaining schools for the study.

Simple random sampling was used to select students from single sex schools. The lottery method (without replacement) was used to prevent over sampling of units. With this method, each of the participants had even chance of being selected to participate in the study. The choice of simple random sampling technique further reduced the sampling error. In using this technique, the researcher wrote numbers “1 – 1,332” for Saint Augustine College and “1 - 857” for Wesley Girls SHS on pieces of papers, folded and placed in a container. These numbers present the participants in the population. Those whose numbers were randomly picked from the bowl formed part of the sample from the respective schools.

All the 5 school counsellors were purposively chosen for the interview session. Though selection of the participants using purposive sampling is opened to selection bias and error, the technique was useful in picking participants, who on daily basis, attend to students' bullying behaviours in the school. Their interactions with

students would enable them give accurate information on the problem under investigations.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

Two research instruments were used to collect data concurrently for the study. These included a questionnaire and an interview schedule.

#### **3.6.1 Questionnaire for quantitative data**

Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the students. The questionnaire had five sections, thus Section A, B, C, D, and E. The Section A of the questionnaire focused on the demographic information of the students. The information sought from this section included the sex and age of students. Section B assessed the prevalence of school related bullying with 12 items (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14) organized under three sub-constructs (physical, verbal and sexual bullying) with four statements each. The responses to these items were arranged on a continuum scale of 0 to 7. However, for ease of analysis, these responses were further categorized under a 4-point Likert scale. This include, Never = (0), Hardly = (1-2), Often = (3-4), and Very Often = (5-6). In terms of scoring, total scores (in terms of percentages) for “Often” and “Very Often” responses were used to determine the prevalence rate. This was used because, school related bullying is perceived to be a repeated action targeted at an individual with the intention of inflicting psychological harm on him/her. The higher the score, the higher is the reported prevalence of school related bullying.

Section C assessed the characteristics of school related bullies in senior high schools with nine item statements (15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 22). A 5-point Likert scale was used for the questionnaire which was weighted as: Strongly



Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Uncertain=4, Agree=4 and Strongly Agree=5. Some of the statements used include; *Lack of empathy or concern for others, demonstrate a strong need to dominate, they are usually hot tempered, etc.*

Section D measured the state of students' psychological wellbeing in senior high schools. Two sets of standardised instruments were adopted for the study. To measure the anxiety and depression levels of students, the DASS scale developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) was adapted. The scale has reliability coefficient of 0.93. It had 7-item (31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37). The anxiety scale also had 7 items (24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30). A 5-point Likert scale was used for the questionnaire which was weighted as: Not at all = 0, rarely = 1, to some extent = 2, to large extent = 3 and to very large extent = 5. In terms of scoring, four levels of severity were adopted. For depression levels, we have Normal (0-9), Mild level (10-13), Moderate (14-20), Severe (21-27) and Extremely Severe (28+). For anxiety levels, we have Normal (0-7), Mild level (8-9), Moderate (10-14), Severe (15-19) and Extremely Severe (20+).

Self-esteem was also assessed with the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965). The 10 items (38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47) of the RSES assess a student's overall evaluation of his/her worthiness as a human being (Rosenberg, 1979). Responses range on a 4-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). In terms of scoring, items 39, 42, 43, 45, and 46 were reverse scored. The scores were on a continuous scale. The sum of the scores ranged from 10 to 40. A higher score indicates higher self-esteem. Cronbach's alpha for global self-esteem was 0.76 (Rosenberg, 1979).

### **3.6.2 Interview schedule**

Interview schedule was used to gather data from the school counsellors. The schedule was segmented into two sections. The first section centered on the demographic information of the participants (sex, age and working experience). The second section addressed issues related to the research questions with four semi-structured questions. Item 4 of the interview schedule elicited responses on the prevalence of school related bullying in the school. Item 5 of the interview schedule elicited responses on the characteristics of bully students. Item 6 elicited responses on the perception of participants in relation to the differences between boys and girls with regard to psychological bullying. Item 7 of the interview schedule requested participants to describe the effects school related bullying on psychological wellbeing of students. And item 8 elicited responses on the strategies that can be put in place to reduce incidence of psychological bullying in senior high schools.

The interview schedule was used to explore the problem from the perspectives of the school counsellor in the selected schools for the purposes comparing, contrasting, cross-validating, confirmatory and complementary of findings. Also, to generate new knowledge with respect to characteristics of bullies in senior high schools. Interview schedules allowed for interaction between the researcher and participants. The advantages were; while they were reasonably objective, they also permitted a more thorough understanding of the participants' opinions and reasons behind them.

### **3.7 Validity of the Questionnaire**

Questionnaire was taken through content validity procedures. Content validity of the instruments was established by giving the prepared instruments to the researcher's colleague students pursuing the same programme. They considered the

structure, layout, alignment and configuration of the instruments in relation to the research objectives. Comments from them on the instruments were used to effect the necessary corrections before they administered to students. It was further determined by the researcher's supervisors. They examined the research questions alongside each item of the instruments in order to determine whether the instruments actually measured what they were supposed to measure. Comments from them on the instruments were used to effect the necessary corrections before the instruments were administered to students.

### 3.8 Reliability of the Questionnaire

The internal consistency of the questionnaire items were ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Reliability index**

Scale	Number of items	Reliability index
Prevalence of school related bullying	12	.724
Characteristics of bullies	9	.765
Psychological Wellbeing: <i>Depression</i>	7	.789
Psychological Wellbeing: <i>Anxiety</i>	7	.761
Psychological Wellbeing: <i>Self-esteem</i>	10	.774
Strategies to reduce bullying incidence	10	.705
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>.753</b>

**Source:** Field survey (2021).

Data from Table 3, the total reliability index for the 55 items is 0.753. Also, each of the scales had reliability coefficient of above 0.70. According to Tech-Hong and Waheed (2011), reliability coefficient between 0.70–0.90 is generally found to be

internally consistent. Hence, the questionnaire items were found to be highly reliable for this study.

### **3.9 Trustworthiness and Credibility of the Interview Schedule**

To ensure trustworthiness of the interview guide, the study relied on credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability of the results. For data credibility, member checking was used. The participants were allowed to peruse their responses and indicate whether or not they represented what they said. Audit trail was also used to enhance credibility of the results. The methods triangulation was used. The researcher utilized different data collection methods in order to check the consistency of the findings. Both questionnaire and interview schedules were used to provide complimentary results to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon at hand.

Transferability was established by providing evidence that the study's findings could be applicable to other contexts, situations, times, and populations. This was contained in the counselling implications in Chapter five (5). There was thick description of the information gathered and readers and future researchers who seek to transfer the findings to their own site can judge transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure dependability, all study methodology including procedures for selection, data collection, and data analysis were documented throughout the study. Additionally, journaling was used throughout the research process and was used to document unpredicted occurrences (if any).

### **3.10 Data Collection Procedures**

Permission from the school authorities and participants was sought using an introductory letter from the Head, Department of Counselling Psychology, University

of Education, Winneba. One week from the day of presenting the permission letter was agreed upon by the researcher and school authorities for the administration of the instruments. After securing the consent of the headmasters/headmistress, preparations were made to administer the instruments on the agreed dates. The venue and time for the administration of the instruments were planned in advance and agreed upon by the researcher and participants. On the day of administration, the participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, the right of participants and the issue of confidentiality. Participants were given the questionnaires to respond to in the classroom and after which they were retrieved. All the 342 questionnaires administered were retrieved, giving 100% return rate.

Interviews were conducted among school counsellor. Face-to-face approach was used and this allowed the researcher to listen empathetically to the views of the counsellor. With the permission of the participants, the interview processes were recorded, play back to the participants at the end of the interview for correction, emphasis and additional information. However, to alleviate their anxiety over the use of the tape, participants were assured of confidentiality. The transcribed data were further presented to the participants for validation of content induced from the narratives.

### **3.11 Data Analysis Procedures**

Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed separately. For the quantitative data, descriptive (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data. For instance, frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the demographic information of respondents. For research question 1, frequency and percentage counts and means and standard deviations were used to estimate the prevalence and dominant school related bullying among senior

high school students. For research question 2, frequency and percentage count was used to analyse the characteristics of bullies in senior high schools.

Similarly, research question 3 was analysed using frequency and percentage counts to analyse the strategies put in place to manage the incidence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Independent t-test was used to test hypothesis 1 which sought to establish whether or not statistical significant difference exist in the victimization of school related bullying in senior high schools. For hypothesis 2, multiple linear regression was used to test for the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

Qualitative data was analysed using thematic content analysis. According Rice and Ezzy (1999), thematic analysis involves the identification of themes and the emerging themes become the categories for analysis. In this study, the researcher categorised the major themes and identified the related issues that arose from the themes in line with research questions. In some cases, verbatim quotations were made to support issue as they merged.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations for the study took the following procedures: access, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and plagiarism.

The study's methodology is covered in great detail in Chapter 3, covering important elements such the population, sample, instruments, research paradigm, approach, design, data collection methods, analysis strategies, and ethical considerations. Based on pragmatism, the research paradigm integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods to enable an adaptable investigation of the impact of bullying at school on kids' psychological health.

The Concurrent triangulation design (CTD), which allows for the simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, was used in the mixed methods approach. The study's target audience comprised senior high school students and school counselors throughout the Cape Coast Metropolis. Specifically, five public SHSs were selected to represent a range of characteristics. Using basic random sampling methods that were stratified and purposeful, 342 kids and 5 school counselors made up the sample.

Research tools included an interview schedule for qualitative data and a standardized questionnaire for quantitative data. Topics covered included the prevalence of bullying, traits of bullies, psychological well-being, and tactics to lessen bullying. Extensive protocols were implemented to guarantee the authenticity and dependability of the tools, and moral principles such as informed permission, privacy, and anonymity were scrupulously adhered to during the entire data gathering procedure.

In order to evaluate the hypothesis, the analysis used multiple linear regression and t-tests in conjunction with descriptive statistics for the quantitative data and thematic content analysis for the qualitative data. This thorough approach creates a solid basis for the investigation and analysis of the study results that follow.

### **3.12.1 Access to research participants**

An introductory letter from the Head, Department of Counselling Psychology, University of Education, Winneba was obtained to enable approval from gate keepers and participants. Thus, a copy of the introductory letter was sent to the gate keepers to

seek approval for data collection. After permission was granted by the gate keepers, dates, time and venue were fixed for data collection.

### **3.12.2 Informed consent**

Participants need to be furnished with accurate and complete information on the goal(s) and procedures of the investigation so that they fully understand and in turn decide whether to participate or not (Bryman, 2012). This makes informed consent a necessary prerequisite to any research in which human beings are involved as participants. In this study, the researcher clearly spelt out the purpose, the intend use of the data and its significance to the participants. Each of the participants willingly decided to take part in the study.

### **3.12.3 Confidentiality**

According to Bryman (2012), confidentiality “indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner” (p. 67). In keeping with jealously guarded all the pieces information from the participant so that only the researcher had access to them. Before the commencement of data collection, participants were assured that data would be kept confidentially. In doing so, codes were assigned to the various questionnaires and were kept from the reach of other individuals.

### **3.12.4 Anonymity**

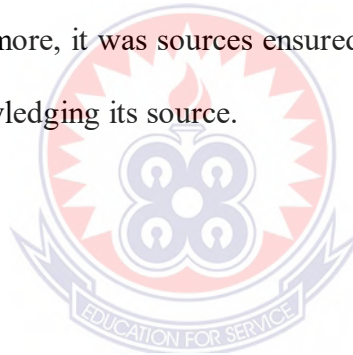
Research participants’ well-being and interests were protected. Participants’ identified in the study were masked or blinded as far as possible (Speziale & Carpenter, 2011). The people who read the research and the researcher should not be able to “identify a given response with a given respondent” (Bryman, 2012, p. 65). Participants were encouraged not to write any identifiable information (such as name of school, participants’ name, email address, house number and contacts) on the



questionnaire. Besides, codes were assigned to the interview data during the data analysis. For example, School Counsellor (SC) were coded as SC: 1 to SC: 5.

### **3.12.5 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism refers to presenting someone else's work or ideas as one's own, with or without his/her consent, by incorporating it into one's work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished materials, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition (Rubin & Rubin, 2003). Again, plagiarism is the unethical practice of using words or ideas (either planned or accidental) of another author/researcher or one's own previous work without proper plagiarism (Madugah & Kwakye-Nuako, 2016). The study acknowledged all in-text and end-of-text. Furthermore, it was sources ensured that no information was cited in the work without acknowledging its source.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### 4.0 Introduction

The study sought to investigate the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of Senior High School Students in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central region of Ghana. The study was conducted in 5 senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It included 342 students and 5 school counsellors. Out of the 342 questionnaires that were administered to the participants of the study, all the questionnaires retrieved by the researcher. The researcher used three (3) research questions and two (2) hypotheses. The research questions and hypotheses were answered and tested respectively using the available data collected. In the analysis of quantitative data, frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions, while t-test and multiple linear regression were employed in testing the two hypotheses. The qualitative data were presented in themes. Pseudo names were generated for all the participants who participated in the qualitative data. For instance, School Counsellor 1 was assigned –SC 1”, School Counsellor 2 (SC 2), respectively.

#### 4.1 Demographic Information of Participants

Demographic information of the participants were gathered using statements 1-2 (sex and age) under section A of the questionnaire for students and 1-3 (sex, age and working experience) under section A of the interview schedule for school counsellors. Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to analyse the data. Tables 4 and 5 show the results for students and school counsellors respectively.

**Table 4: Demographic information of students**

	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Sex	Male	165	48
	Female	177	52
	<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	16 years	61	18
	17 years	89	26
	18 years	102	29
	19 years and above	90	27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field data, (2020).

The result in Table 4 shows that 177(52%) female students and 165(48%) male students participated in the study. In terms of age distribution, 102(29%) students were 18 years, 90(27%) students were 19 years or more, 89(26%) students were 17 years while 61(18%) students were 16 years. Differences in the demographic information might be attributed to the sampling techniques used.

**Table 5: Demographic information of school counsellors**

	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Sex	Male	1	20
	Female	4	80
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>
Age (in years)	20-30	1	20
	31-40	2	40
	41-50	1	20
	51 and above	1	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>
Working Experience	1-10 years	1	20
	11-20 years	3	60
	21-30 years	1	20
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field data, (2020)

Results from Table 5 indicate that 4(80%) of the school counsellors were females and the while 1(20%) was a male. In terms of age, 2(40%) school counsellors were between 31-40 years, 1(20%) was between 20-30 years, 1(20%) was between 41-50 years and 1(20%) was 51 years and above. On working experience, 3(60%) school counsellors reported between 11-20 years of working experience, 1(20%) school counsellor reported between 1-10 years of working experience and the remaining 1(20%) school counsellor had 21-30 years of working experience. Demographic information of school counsellors implies that they have in-depth knowledge and experience in dealing with cases involving school related bullying among the senior high school students. Therefore, their inclusion and response corroborated and validated the quantitative information of the students.

## **4.2 Analysis of the Research Questions**

### **4.2.1 Research Question 1**

#### **How prevalent is school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis?**

The research question one (1), investigated the prevalence of school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The responses were scored –Never (0)”, –Hardly (1-2), Often (3-4) and Very Often (5-6). Frequency and percentage distributions have been computed. The result is presented in Table 6.

From Table 6, it could be observed that 28.2% of the students reported that they have never experienced school related bullying. About 25.8% of the students reported that they hardly experience school related bullying. The results further showed that 26.2% of the students reported that they often experience school related

bullying whilst 19.8% of the students very often experience school related bullying. From the results presented, it can be concluded that the prevalence rate of school related bullying is 46.0% (26.2% + 19.8%).

**Table 6: Prevalence of school related bullying in senior high schools**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Hardly</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very Often</b>
Received spanking on the palms.	65(19)*	71(21)	120(35)	86(25)
Received belt strokes.	71(21)	103(30)	100(29)	68(20)
Subjected to school rituals (homos night).	90(26)	131(38)	63(18)	58(17)
Provisions and belongings forcefully seized.	62(18)	82(24)	108(32)	90(26)
Being called by some mean names.	70(20)	62(18)	144(42)	66(19)
Character being defamed.	105(31)	68(20)	112(33)	57(17)
Received insulting remarks.	74(22)	72(21)	97(28)	99(29)
Yelled by people upon little provocations.	83(24)	88(26)	86(25)	85(25)
Forced to watch pornographic materials.	131(38)	93(27)	63(18)	55(16)
Provided sexual favours.	164(48)	117(34)	33(10)	28(8)
Received sexually gestures.	100(29)	79(23)	98(29)	65(19)
Touched sexually	143(42)	94(27)	51(15)	54(16)
<b>Sum of Scores</b>	<b>1158</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>1075</b>	<b>811</b>
<b>Percentage of Scores</b>	<b>28.2%</b>	<b>25.8%</b>	<b>26.2%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>
<b>Source:</b> Field data, (2020)	<b>*Percentages in Parentheses</b>			

The reported prevalence rate is higher than most of the studies reported in the advanced countries where school related bullying generally varied from 7.2%-40% (de Moura et al., 2011; Norghagen et al., 2005; Glew et al., 2005; Kim et al., 2004; Marsh, 2018). However, the prevalence rate is littler lower than what had been reported in a study in Nigeria by Alex-Hart et al. (2015) who found that about 82.2% of senior secondary school students reported being victims of bullying, whereas 64.9% reported being bullies. Though the result is a little higher than what Owusu et

al.'s (2011) reported in their study (about 40.1%), the reported prevalence rate in both studies fall within the threshold of 40%.

For qualitative data analysis, item 4 under section B of the interview schedule for the school counsellors was used to address the research question. The school counsellors were asked to express their perceptions regarding the prevalence of school related bullying in their respective schools. Three themes were developed to that regard. These themes include the seasonal nature of bullying, the commonality and frequency of bullying, and a focus on interpersonal dynamics, particularly the bullying involving seniors and juniors.

### **Theme One: Seasonal Nature of Bullying**

The narratives of the school counsellors are presented as follows;

*“...bullying is normally rampant during the arrival of fresh students. To be sincere with you, since most of these students are afraid to report it is quite difficult to quantify in percentage terms the actual prevalence rate” [SC: 1].*

The first statement indicates that bullying is normally rampant during the arrival of fresh students. This suggests a seasonal or event-driven aspect to bullying, where certain periods may see an increase in such behavior. According to the statement, bullying seems to occur more frequently when new pupils initially start attending the school. This could be due to a number of things, like how new students are adjusting to school, how social hierarchies are formed, or how they are not accustomed with school culture. "Rampant" refers to a marked rise in the number or severity of bullying events that occur within this particular time frame. The statement "difficult to quantify in percentage terms the actual prevalence rate" suggests that the school is having trouble putting a specific number (%) on how common bullying is when new students start. It is more difficult to determine the full scope of the problem

when there is a dearth of accurate reporting. Essentially, the statement highlights both the significant underreporting and the noted seasonal trend of increased bullying during the arrival of new students, which makes it difficult to accurately measure the prevalence of bullying during this particular period.

### **Theme Two: Widespread of Physical and Verbal Bullying**

*“...bullying in the school is common in the school. Students report of physical and verbal attacks on them often” [SC: 2].*

The second statement emphasizes the commonality of bullying within the school, stating that it is common and students often report physical and verbal attacks. This theme highlights the widespread and frequent nature of bullying incidents. According to the statement, bullying occurs frequently at the school. Students commonly report being the target of verbal and physical attacks. This implies that bullying which includes a variety of aggressive behaviors is a widespread problem in the school setting, and that kids are actively reporting or recognizing these instances. The brief statement that follows focuses on the frequency and kinds of bullying that students have reported. However, there might not be much room for further interpretation without providing more details or context. Feel free to add extra context or pose specific questions for a more focused interpretation if there are any particular elements or issues you'd like to discuss in further detail inside this statement.

### **Theme Three: Senior-Junior Bullying**

*“...school related bullying is not too frequent in the school but I won't deny the fact that it is prevalent. There are pocket of cases involving seniors molesting juniors” [SC: 5].*

The third statement introduces a specific type of school-related bullying involving seniors molesting juniors. This theme underscores the existence of a power dynamic within the school environment, with seniors exerting influence over juniors

through bullying. The declaration makes it clear that bullying at school is recognized as a problem. Although it isn't said to happen frequently, the word "prevalent" implies that bullying at school is noticeable and not infrequent. One particular and worrisome feature of bullying in schools is brought to light by the reference to "pockets of cases" in which seniors have molested juniors. This suggests that while there is a general perception that bullying at school may not occur very often, there are certain instances involving a power imbalance between seniors and juniors that warrant attention.

From the perception of students and school counsellors on the prevalence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis, it can be deduced that through school related bullying is a real phenomenon but its prevalence is low. The reported prevalence might be due to stringent rules and regulations against bullying. But with zero tolerance for bullying in schools and still the prevalence rate is hovering around 46% calls for further stringent punitive and behavioral modification approaches in dealing with the menace in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The study further investigated the dominant school related bullying experienced by senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Statistical mean and standard deviations were used. The result is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7: Forms of school related bullying among senior high school students**

<b>Forms</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Physical Related Bullying	3.18	.652
Verbal Related Bullying	3.52	.614
Sexual Related Bullying	1.46	.741

**Source:** Field data, (2020)

The data in Table 7 suggest that, verbal related bullying ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = .614$ ) was the main form of school related bullying experienced by senior high school



students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It was followed by physical related bullying (M = 3.18, SD = .652). The least form of school related bullying was sexual related bullying (M = 1.46, SD = .741). The narratives of the school counsellors are also presented in support of the quantitative findings. Two themes emerged. This includes; longstanding generational problem, and multifaceted nature of bullying.

### **Theme One: Longstanding Generational Problem**

*“...bullying in schools is an old generational problem. Some juniors often report that their provisions and personal belongings such as khaki trousers, slippers, gari, sardines, etc. have been taken by their seniors” [SC: 3].*

According to the first claim, bullying in schools has always existed and is not a new problem. It draws attention to a particular form of bullying in which juniors report seniors robbing them of their personal items and provisions. Bullying is presented as a persistent issue in schools, illustrating a historical trend that spans several generations.

The second declaration offers a more comprehensive viewpoint on bullying at school, covering a range of behaviors such offensive sexual gestures, remarks, name-calling, and character assassination. It emphasizes that bullying has verbal and social characteristics in addition to physical ones. The complex nature of bullying at school can take many different forms, from offensive remarks and actions to verbal altercations, indicating a complicated and multidimensional problem.

### **Theme Two: Multifaceted Nature of Bullying**

*“...my perspective on school related bullying is that bullying is a real phenomenon in the school. We have had cases where female students report that they have received inappropriate sexually gestures and comments from male students in the school. As for name-calling and character defamation among girls... is very common among the students” [SC: 4].*

The second statement adds a gendered perspective to bullying at school by citing instances of inappropriate sexually suggestive remarks and actions from female pupils. It also highlights how common it is for girls in particular to experience name-calling and character defamation. Bullying demonstrates patterns that are specific to gender, with different behaviors and dynamics seen in male and female students. This emphasizes the need for interventions and awareness that are sensitive to gender.

The findings support is not supported by the position of Alex-Hart et al. (2015) that physical bullying is the most prevalent form of bullying in senior high school. However, the findings supported Wang et al. (2009) assertion that verbal bullying is perpetrated about 37.4% of the time in bullying situations is most often used form of perpetration for female bullies. Also, Gadin and Hammarrstorm (2005) confirmed that the most common form of bullying is verbal bullying. Anderson (2007) argued that words are such powerful tools that can break and dampen the spirit of the child who is on the receiving end. Verbal related bullying is hard to identify yet it could leave deep emotional scars on victims (Gordon, 2019). Also, it appears there are no school regulations regarding verbal bullying as pertained in the case of physical related bullying hence its perpetration in the schools. In recent time, Ghanaian community at large appears to have accepted the culture of insults and gossip from the national level to our various communities. Sexual prevalence received less prevalence rate due to strong cultural system where sexuality are hardly reported and discussed. UNESCO (2018) report however suggests that sexual bullying is the second most frequent type of bullying.

#### 4.2.2 Research Question 2

##### What are the key characteristics of bullies in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis

The research question two sought to identify key characteristics of school related bullies in Senior High Schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Items 15-23 of the students' questionnaire were used to answer this research question using: Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Uncertain (U) = 3, Agree (A) = 4 and Strongly Agree (SA) = 5. The result is presented in Table 8.

**Table 8: Responses of students on key characteristics of bullies**

<b>Characteristics bullies posses</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
Lack of empathy or concern for others	147(43)*	120(35)	13(4)	39(11)	23(7)
Demonstrate a strong need to dominate	192(56)	87(25)	4(1)	32(9)	27(9)
They are usually hot tempered	162(47)	130(38)	7(2)	11(3)	32(10)
The bully has low self-esteem	143(42)	166(49)	4(1)	16(5)	13(3)
The bully has problems	210(60)	87(25)	2(1)	36(11)	7(3)
The bully is always jealous of others	220(63)	98(29)	4(1)	10(3)	11(4)
Bully lacks of respect	215(63)	98(29)	14(4)	8(2)	7(2)
The bully is also a victim	186(54)	116(34)	4(1)	13(4)	23(7)
The bully is physically fit most of the time	120(35)	186(54)	9(3)	23(7)	4(1)
<b>Sum of Scores</b>	<b>1595</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>146</b>
<b>Percentage of Scores</b>	<b>51.45%</b>	<b>35.78%</b>	<b>1.92%</b>	<b>6.12%</b>	<b>4.73%</b>

Source: Field data, (2020)

\*Percentage in Parenthesis

Results from Table 8 show that majority 215 (63%) of the students strongly agreed that bullies lack respect. While 98 (29%) students agreed, 14(4%) students were uncertain, 8 (3%) students disagreed and 7 (2%) students strongly disagreed. Moreover, the results show that 220(63%) students strongly agreed that bullies are always jealous of others, 98(29%) students agreed, 4 (1%) students were uncertain, 10 (3%) students disagreed while the rest 10 (3%) students disagreed. On whether bullies

have problems, 210 (60%) students strongly agreed, 87 (25%) students agreed, 2 (1%) students were uncertain, 63 (11%) students disagreed and 7 (3%) students strongly disagreed. More so, 192 (56%) students strongly agreed that bullies demonstrate a strong need to dominate, 187 (25%) students agreed, 4 (1%) students were uncertain, 32 (9%) students disagreed and 27 (8%) strongly disagreed.

In furtherance, 186 (54%) of the students strongly agreed that bullies are also victims. This statement was agreed by 120 (35%) students, 9 (3%) students were uncertain, 23 (7%) students disagreed while 4 (1%) students strongly disagreed with the statement. to the same statement. Regarding whether bullies are usually hot tempered, 162 (47%) students strongly agreed with the statement, 130 (38%) students agreed, 7 (2%) students were uncertain while 32 (9%) students disagreed and 11 (3%) students strongly disagreed with the statement.

Besides, 147 (43%) students strongly agreed that bullies lack empathy (or concern) for others. This claim was agreed by 120(35%) students, 13(4%) students were uncertain, 39(11%) students disagreed and 23(7%) students strongly disagreed to the assertion. Moreover, the results show that 143(42%) of the students strongly agreed that bullies have low self-esteem. While 166 (49%) students agreed, 4 (1%) students were uncertain, 16 (5%) students disagreed and 13 (4%) students strongly disagreed. Finally, the results show that 120 (35%) students strongly agreed that bullies are most of the time physically fit. Also, 186 (54%) students agreed, 9 (3%) students were uncertain, 23 (7%) students disagreed while the rest 4 (1%) students strongly disagreed with the statement.

The main findings are as follows: most respondents (81%) either strongly agree or agree that bullies exhibit a strong need to dominate, reinforcing the perception that bullying behaviors frequently involve a desire for control and power

over others; a significant portion of respondents (78%) either strongly agree or agree that bullies lack empathy or concern for others, indicating a prevailing belief that bullies may exhibit a deficit in understanding or caring about the feelings of their peers.

Most people (85%) agree or strongly agree that bullies typically have short fused tempers. This supports the widely held belief that bullies frequently lose their anger quickly and easily. The majority (91%) concur that bullies don't think well of themselves. This view is consistent with the theory that those who bully others can be doing it to deal with their own fears. Moreover, a sizable portion (85%) concur or strongly concur that bullies have issues. This suggests an understanding that bullying actions may be linked to the personal struggles or problems that the bullies are facing. The majority (92%) of people agree or strongly agree that bullies are inherently envious of other people. This suggests a general consensus that bullying activities are largely motivated by feelings of envy or jealousy.

For qualitative data analysis, item 5 under section B of the interview schedule for the school counsellor was used to address the research question. Themes, direct quotes and explanations were used to analyse the data. Some themes that emerged from the data include lack of respect, bullies have challenges they cannot solve, and bullies want to control others emerged as indicated by the analysis.

### **Theme One: Lack of respect**

On the issue of lack of respect, this is what SC 2 have to say:

*“...Most of the bullies are disrespectful. Thus, these individuals do not respect authorities. Sometimes, if you see them bullying others and you tell them to stop, they would not mind you. Again, others too have strong physic and that gives them upper hand over their colleagues”*  
[SC: 2].

The comments from SC 2 suggest that most bullies are rude and that makes them to bully their colleagues. The comments further connote that bullies disobey rules set by authorities. The outright disobedience of these students could emanate from lack of sensitivity to other students' emotions. The comments also imply that the nature of structure bullies carry also help them to succeed in bullying others.

### **Theme Two: Bullies have challenges they cannot solve**

Another theme that emerged from the narratives of the school counsellor was the challenging problems of bullies. Some bullies have issues they cannot deal with and therefore want to bully others. SC 5 have this to say:

*"...It will surprise you to hear that some of them have challenges they cannot solve. For example, some of them may lack some basic needs and when they realise that others have such needs, then they turn to bully them"* [SC: 5].

### **Theme Three: Bullies want to control others**

The need to dominate others also featured in the comments of some school counsellor.

SC 4 have this to say:

*"...I had a chance to interact with some bullies in this school. One thing I discovered was that majority of them wants to control their peers. In this sense, if they realise their peers are weak, they then take advantage of the situation and bully them"* [SC: 4].

The comments from SC 4 suggest that through her experience as a school based guidance and counsellor coordinator, she had come to realise that bullies want to dominate their peers. These comments were supported by SC 3 and SC 1 respectively.

SC 3 indicated that;

*"...Adolescents of today have different characteristics as compared to our time. For example, almost all the youths of today want to have control over their colleagues. So, if a colleague does not want to allow him/herself to be controlled, then, the one who want to control them is likely to bully them"* [SC: 3].

In collaborating the comment made by SC 3, the SC 1 reiterated that:

*“...I have realised that most of the bullies want to control their peers. This explains why they most of the time wants to bully their classmate or peers” [SC: 1].*

From the triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative data, it could be deduced that key characteristics of every psychological bully include lack of empathy for others, demonstrate a strong need to dominate others, usually hot tempered, have low self-esteem, have problems of themselves, always jealous of others and lack respect for authorities. The results of this study is consistent with Olweus (1993) who found that bullies lack of empathy or concern for others. Bullies also tend to demonstrate a strong need to dominate and subdue their peers. They are usually hot tempered and become enraged easily. Bullies usually tend to pick victims who are weaker and use intimidation such as threats or compromise one's reputation. Bullies are usually physically aggressive and they tend to be defiant, oppositional, and aggressive towards adults and authority figures.

The result of this study also agree with Larsen (2015) who that the confident bullies are usually many. Moreover, Olweus (2010) in a study found that bullies usually do not have many friends, and are also called “e-lever” bullies because of their ingenious way of masking their behaviours, and people who relate with them find it difficult to believe that they could have such negative behaviours. It is also not surprising to find in the study that the fully armoured bullies were the least among the bullies. In furtherance, Dedman (2011) notes that such bullies are always very few, operate at places where they will not be noticed, they are very vindictive and vicious in character towards their victims.

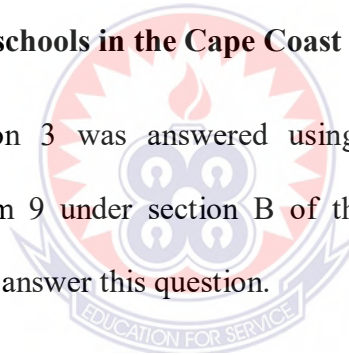
From the two set of data set presented, it can be deduced that position of the students with respect of bullies' characteristics had been validated by the school

counsellor‘ perspectives in many respects. Noticeable evidence from the data set include lack of respect, the need to dominate others and challenging problems of bullies. Experiences and psychosexual factors could have accounted for this maladjusted behaviour in our SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Basically, the id structure of some students has overridden their reality conscience. Hence they find pleasure in inflicting pain to less threatening objects, such as victims. The findings further implied that psychological bullying could be a defense mechanism for displacing painful experiences.

#### **4.2.3 Research Question 3**

**What strategies are to be adopted to managing the incidence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis?**

Research question 3 was answered using items 48-57 of the students‘ questionnaire. Also, item 9 under section B of the interview schedule for school counsellors were used to answer this question.





**Table 9: Responses by students on measures to reduce incidence of school related bullying**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Uncertain</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Bullies need to learn a new set of pro-social behaviours that do not negatively impact those around them	192(56)*	87(25)	4(1)	32(9)	27(8)
There should be a philosophy that promotes safe and positive environment	162(47)	130(38)	7(2)	11(3)	32(9)
All people in the school community should be treated with respect and dignity	186(54)	120(35)	9(3)	49(1)	23(7)
Teachers and other adults must model and set the tone for reciprocating behaviours	182(53)	106(31)	10(3)	14(4)	30(9)
The school climate should adopt zero tolerance policy for violence, aggression, and bullying	170(48)	143(42)	9(3)	16(5)	4(1)
Teachers should create and maintain a positive working community	186(54)	116(34)	4(1)	13(4)	23(7)
Parents should be made aware of their child's school policies on bullying behaviours	152(45)	128(37)	19(6)	11(3)	32(9)
Schools authorities should rely on families to help reinforce pro-social behaviours	166(49)	143(42)	4(1)	16(5)	13(4)
Parents of the bully and victims of bullying need to be included when providing training and education	210(60)	87(25)	2(1)	36(11)	7(3)
School administrators and teachers must take an active approach to physical monitoring of students	215(63)	98(29)	8(2)	17(5)	4(1)

**Source:** Field data, (2020)

\*Percent in Parenthesis (%)

Results from Table 9 indicate that 215 (63%) of the students strongly agreed and 98 (29%) agreed that school administrators and teachers must take an active approach to physical monitoring of students. While 8 (2%) students were not sure, 17 (5%) students disagreed and 4 (1%) students strongly disagreed with the statement. Also, 210 (60%) of the students strongly agreed parents of the bully and victims of bullying need to be included when providing training and education. Also, 87 (25%)

of them also agreed to this statement. Again, only 2 (1%) were not sure to this claim. But 36 (11%) disagreed and the rest 7 (3%) strongly disagreed to this same statement. From Table 8, the results reveal that 192 (56%) of the students strongly agree that bullies need to learn a new set of pro-social behaviours that do not negatively impact those around them. This was supported by 87 (25%) of them when they agreed to the statement, 4 (1%) were not sure about this statement, 32 (9%) of them disagreed and the rest, 27 (8%) strongly disagreed.

Also, 186 (54%) of them strongly agreed that teachers should create and maintain a positive working community. This statement was confirmed by 120 (35%) of the students when they agreed to it. However, 9 (3%) were uncertain to this statement. Also, 4 (1%) disagreed and 23 (7%) strongly disagreed. Similarly, 186 (54%) of them strongly agreed that teachers should create and maintain a positive working community. This statement was confirmed by 116 (34%) of the students when they agreed to it. However, 4 (1%) were uncertain to this statement and 13 (4%) disagreed and 23 (7%) strongly disagreed.

On whether the school climate should adopt zero tolerance policy for violence, aggression, and bullying, 170 (48%) students strongly agreed, 143 (42%) students agreed, 9 (3%) students were uncertain, 16(5%) students disagreed while 4 (1%) students strongly disagreed with the statement. More so, 166 (49%) strongly agreed that schools authorities should rely on families to help reinforce pro-social behaviours. This was endorsed by 143 (42%) of them also supported when they agreed to it. However, 4 (1%) were uncertain, 16 (5%) disagreed and 13 (4%) strongly agreed to this same proclamation. Additionally, 162 (47%) of the students strongly agreed that there should be a philosophy that promotes safe and positive environment. This statement was embraced by 130 (38%) students who supported this

statement by agreeing to it. On the other hand, 7 (2%) were uncertain, 11 (3%) of them disagreed and the rest 32 (9%) strongly disagreed to this same assertion.

In addition, 152 (45%) of the students strongly agreed that parents should be made aware of their child's school policies on bullying behaviours. This statement was embraced by 128 (37%) students who supported this statement by agreeing to it. Meanwhile, 7 (2%) were uncertain, 11 (3%) of them disagreed and the rest 32 (9%) strongly disagreed to this same declaration. Also, 182 (53%) of the students strongly agreed that teachers and other adults must model and set the tone for reciprocating behaviours. This statement was embraced by 106 (31%) students who supported this statement by agreeing to it. Meanwhile, 10 (3%) were uncertain, 14 (3%) of them disagreed and the rest 30 (9%) strongly disagreed to this same assertion.

The results indicate that students believe that school related bullying can be reduced in senior high schools. They are of the view that the role of school administrators, teachers, parents and bullies can help reduce the incidence of school related bullying in senior high schools. From the quantitative data presented so far, it can be deduced that addressing the menace of psychological bullying should have multi-dimensional approach. Team work, consultation and education on the effect of school related bullying is needed to reduce its menace.

The perspectives of the school counsellor were sought through interviewing. Responses to item 8 were used to answer the research questions. Themes that emerged from the qualitative data include school counsellor should help educate the students, school authorities should come with effective rules and regulations, school administration find ways in dealing with bullying and school authorities should punish bullies.

### **Theme One: School counsellor should help educate the students**

Parental role and responsibility was mentioned in the comments from SC 4 who stated that:

*“...Parents must also play a role in curbing bullying among SHS students. Thus, parents should be educated by counsellors on the need for them to monitor their children at home. This is because most of the bullying might have started from the home and if no steps are taken to stop it, it can be carried out to the school” [SC: 4].*

From the comments of SC 4 it is believed that when parents are able to keep an eye on their children while at home, it would help reduce school related bullying at home and the school at large. In support of this, SC 5 added that:

*“...As parents, majority of us have neglected our responsibilities of taking good care of our children. If we are able to handle this responsibility well, our children will not resort to bullying when they get to school. Also, I think there should be guidance and counselling meetings with students, especially the first years the very moment we get to the school, so that they will be able to go through this bullying without much pain and worry” [SC: 5].*

These comments from SC 5 imply that there is something missing out from parents' responsibilities and that is taking care good of their children. The comments further reveal that bullying can be minimised when parents are able to take up their responsibilities well. Again, the comments signify that counsellors should educate students on how to cope with psychological bullying.

Finally, SC 1 commented that:

*“...during orientation for form one students, we take time to educate them on nature of bullying and what they are supposed to do when it happens to them or become an eye witness of bullying” [SC: 1].*

It can be inferred from the comment from SC 1 that counsellors in the school have also been making efforts to assist in curbing the incidence of school related bullying. According to SC 1, they give talk to first year students during orientation in

school. Also, other sub-themes were obtained when analysing the qualitative data for research question four. For example, themes of severe punishment, rules and regulations must work, educating students on dangers of bullying, educating parents to monitor their children at home and effective parental roles emerged as indicated by the analysis. For example, SC 1 said:

*“...I do not understand why these bullies are not given stronger punishment. I mean something that will deter others from doing that again. I am very much worried about what the authorities do with these bullies”* [SC: 1].

Comments by SC 1 suggest that absence of strong punishment to bullies serves as a motivation for others to emulate bullying at another time. The comments from this school counsellor further connote that when strong punishments are given out to bullies, it deters others from copying bully behaviours.

### **Theme Two: School authorities should come with effective rules and regulations**

The SC 2 was also of the view that:

*“...we need to make the system work. I think the rule and regulations that are not working in most of the SHS is a contributory factor to bullying. So, if we have rules and regulations that are work working, I am not sure bullying can go on in this school as we are currently perceiving”* [SC: 2].

These comments from SC 2 suggest that rules and regulations that do not work in most schools is a key issue to school related bullying at the SHSs. The school counsellor is also of the view that enforcement of school rules and regulations is a factor in minimising school related bullying among students. Another strategy that emerged from the narratives of SC 3 was self-awareness of the dangers associated with school related bullying.

The SC 3 commented that:

*“...I am of the view that students have to be made to understand dangers of engaging themselves in bullying. This can help reduce the incidence of bullying especially at the SHS level” [SC: 3].*

Comments from SC 3 suggest that students are not made to understand the dangers of bullying; hence, the practice continues. Therefore, students should be made to understand the risks of engaging in bullying. When that is done, it can help minimise bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Theme Three: School administration find ways in dealing with bullying**

For example, SC 5 said:

*“...School administrators have supplied students’ handbook to students which spells out all the rules and regulations in the school, and bullying is also part of it. Also, prefects who were caught bullying were de-robed” [SC: 5].*

The comments of SC 5 suggest that since bullies are rude, it makes sense that management distribute rules and regulations for students to peruse as the saying goes, *“ignorance of the rule is not an excuse”*. Again, the comments show that student leaders who were engaged in bullying were dealt with by school authorities.

The SC 4 also said:

*“...The school administration is doing its part in dealing with bullying. But the main problem is that teachers do not stay with the students at the dormitory and also the students are afraid to report the bullies because they know they will one day be bullying others. I sometimes counselled victims of bullying” [SC: 4].*

These comments suggest that school managements are making frantic efforts to help reduce the incidence of school related bullying in senior high schools. The comments further denote that in the performance of this role, school authorities are faced with some challenges. For example, teachers are not staying with students at the dormitories where they can constantly monitor bullies at the dormitory. The comment

again implies that, sometimes school counsellors counsel students who experienced school related bullying and this is helping them to cope with their academic work.

#### **Theme Four: School authorities should punish bullies**

The SC 1 also said:

*“...For me, I know the school authorities are doing their part to stop bullying. However, the bullies are always too fast for the teachers because they know when the teachers come round to their dormitories and so they are not able to get them. More so, offenders were punished through internal suspension, some were dismissed from the school, others went on external suspension and still others brought their parents to school to sign a bond” [SC: 1].*

From the comments of SC 1, it could be acknowledged that school authorities are putting measures in place to curb the incidence of school related bullying. Interestingly, this counsellor is of the view that sometimes bullies are able to outweigh the plans and agenda of teachers and school management. The comments further denote that school authorities do not joke with offenders when caught. They were made to go on suspension and at time too made to sign a bond.

The SC 3 retorted that:

*“...one of the students secretly reported a bully to the Assistant Headmaster and the bully was severely punished. It is sometimes unfortunate that other students do not want to report those who bullied them” [SC: 3].*

These comments from SC 3 suggest that some students at times report bullies to school authorities while others feel reluctant to report bullies due to reasons personally known to them.

From the foregone findings, it was deduced that strategies to reducing school related bullying is multifaceted. It emerged from the findings that guidance and counselling on bullying should be more effective, there should be stricter rules and regulations in schools, victims should be encouraged to report bullies, frequent

random checks at dormitories, parents should be educated to monitor their children at home and severe punishment must be given to bullies were key measures that can be put in place to reduce incidence of school related bullying among senior high school students in Cape Coast Metropolis.

The results of the study confirm what Tamanini (2016) suggested that the best and most obvious way to stop bullying in schools is for the school authorities to introduce guidance and counselling, involving peer counselling, school counsellors and teachers who are capable of assisting. Hoover and Oliver (2016) also stated that stopping bullying in schools takes teamwork and concerted effort on everyone's part. They, therefore, suggest that schools should enforce the rules and regulations on bullying in the schools. Also, Kreidler (2016) notes that not only are school rules important but also frequent random checks in the dormitories will help to minimise, if not abolish, bullying in schools completely.

The findings of this study also run parallel with findings of Cleary, Sullivan and Sullivan (2014) run parallel with the findings of the study. According to these researchers, school administrators and teachers must also take an active approach to physical monitoring of children and remain constantly vigilant to prevent bullying behaviours within their schools. In furtherance, Dupper and Meyer-Adams (2012) recommend that the focus of intervention should not be the perpetrators and victims alone. They feel –effective intervention must happen at multiple levels, concurrently” (p. 361). Along with joining forces with parents, they suggest school-level interventions such as conflict resolution and diversity training for staff and students. They also suggest classroom-level interventions such as allotted time for classroom discussions, role playing, and other activities promoting awareness to character education, citizenship and community building, and conflict resolution. Casella



(2010) also found that while this particular recommendation works well in elementary settings because of the format of classroom settings, high schools need to be diligent in planning and enforcing this through Teacher Advisory Programmes, grade-level meetings, workshops and presentations to the school, or to a particular grade, and getting students involved to run programs such as Peer Support and Peer Mediation.

Moreover, Ma (2012) found that counselling services need to be provided for any student who is concerned with bullying at the school or in the community, whether they are a victim, a bystander, or a bully. Similar to the recommendation above, this service can happen on multiple levels. The school counsellors will need to take a lead role in a prevention programme so as to provide appropriate interventions for students who are being bullied, students who are doing the bullying and students who are witnessing the bullying and being affected by the atmosphere of bullying. Likewise, Ballard et al. (2014) found that these programmes give students the opportunity to resolve minor incidents with the help of other students who have been trained in conflict resolution, empowering students to handle their own conflicts and discourage bullying with positive peer pressure.

#### **4.3 Testing Hypotheses**

**Hypotheses 1: There is no statistically significant gender difference in the prevalence of school related bullying among SHS students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.**

To identify the sex differences in the prevalence of school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis, the first item (gender) on the first section of the questionnaire was used to solicit the relevant information to that effect. The results are presented in Table 10.

**Table 10: Sex differences in the prevalence of school related bullying**

Methods used	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t	Sig.																				
Physical Related Bullying	Male	165	3.363	.641	340	3.488	.008																				
	Female	177	2.988	.663				Verbal Related Bullying	Male	165	3.421	.660	340	-2.685	.038	Female	177	3.623	.567	Sexual Related Bullying	Male	165	1.264	.751	340	-2.856	.036
Verbal Related Bullying	Male	165	3.421	.660	340	-2.685	.038																				
	Female	177	3.623	.567				Sexual Related Bullying	Male	165	1.264	.751	340	-2.856	.036	Female	177	1.646	.731								
Sexual Related Bullying	Male	165	1.264	.751	340	-2.856	.036																				
	Female	177	1.646	.731																							

Source: Field data, (2020).

The results of the independent sample t-test indicated that there are significant differences in the perception of males and females on the prevalence of physical related bullying ( $t(340) = 3.888, p = .008$ ), verbal related bullying ( $t(340) = -2.685, p = .038$ ) and sexual related bullying ( $t(340) = -2.856, p = .036$ ). The alternative hypothesis is therefore accepted at an alpha level of .05. This suggests that differences in the reported means between the groups are not due to chance. In terms of specific findings, it was found that male students reported highly on physical related bullying ( $M = 3.363, SD = .641$ ) than female students ( $M = 2.988, SD = .663$ ). However, female students reported highly on verbal related bullying ( $M = 3.623, SD = .567$ ) than the male students ( $M = 3.421, SD = .660$ ). Also, the female students reported highly on sexual related bullying ( $M = 1.646, SD = .731$ ) than male students ( $M = 1.264, SD = .751$ ).

The outcome of the interview with the school counsellors with respect of sex specific perception regarding related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis is further presented. The item 6 under section B of the interview schedule for school counsellors was used. From the narratives, four (4) out of five (5)

participants subscribed that there are sex differences regarding school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. For example, SC 5 said:

*“...I think there is difference between boys and girls when it comes to school related bullying in the school. The boys mainly report that they have been hit and shoved whereas girls report that they have been verbally bullied in the school” [SC: 5].*

The comments by SC 5 suggest that boys and girls go through different forms of school related bullying. Also, SC 4, who have taught in both single sex and mixed senior high schools before collaborated the comments expressed by SC 5 by stating that:

*“...I have taught in single sex and mixed schools before and can confidentially say that boys suffer from physically related abuses. Among the girls, issues of insults, name calling, teasing and in rare cases sexual harassments are reported to the school authorities” [SC: 4].*

Similarly, SC 2 and SC 3 also shared their views by stating that:

*“...I personally believe that boys and girls receive different forms of bullying. Here, some girls reported attempted sexual harassment, being called by funny names, insulting remarks among others. Boys hardly report on sexual bullying. In fact, I have not sat on any sexual harassment case reported by male students. [SC: 2].*

*“...Hmm this is a dicey issue. But I can confidently say that victimization and perpetration of school related bullying differ with respect of the sex of the victim or bully ” [SC: 3].*

In summing up, SC 1 disagreed with the position of the majority by stating that:

*“...Those boys and girls could differ in some cases. However, when it comes to school related bullying, I am of the opinion that they are almost the same in terms of victimization and perpetration” [SC: 1].*

Based on the quantitative and qualitative evidence, it was concluded that there is a significant difference between boys and girls with regard to school related bullying. This is incongruent with the position of Fanti and Kimonis (2012) who found that sex does not play a significant role in the patterns of bullying and conduct

problems. Similarly, Kshirsagar et al. (2007) found that there was no significant difference in the prevalence of school related bullying amongst boys and girls in co-educational schools.

However, the findings support the position of Guerra et al. (2011) and Hymel and Swearer (2015) who argued that though both boys and girls engage in bullying equally but type of bullying that they are involved in differs. For Alex-Hart et al. (2015) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, it was reported that physical bullying was the most prevalent form of bullying among senior secondary school students. Also, the National Centre for Educational Statistics (2019) reported that there is a high percentage of male than of female students who reported being physically bullied whereas a higher percentage of female than of male students reported being the subjects of rumours and being excluded from activities on purpose. The notion that boys are physically strong and could endure physical pains than females might have contributed for this difference. Those with a tendency toward bullying will attack other people when they show weakness. This does not suggest that girls do not involve in physical bullying. The frequency at which they engage in such behaviour appear to lower than boys. Secondly, the perception that females are verbally sensitive to insults and defamation, they tend to suffer more than females. It is further suggested that females encounter difficulties in the society because of their sexuality. Everywhere they go, they become more vulnerable to sexual exploitations from irresponsible adults. Girls are more likely to have rumours spread about their sexual activity regardless of the validity of the claims.

**Hypothesis 2: There is no statistically significant influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis**

The second hypothesis sought to assess the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of the students in the Cape Coast Metropolis. To test for this hypothesis, the reported psychological wellbeing of the students was first established and presented in Table 11. In terms of scoring, four levels of severity were adopted (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). For depression levels, we have Normal (0-9), Mild level (10-13), Moderate (14-20), Severe (21-27) and Extremely Severe (28+). For anxiety levels, we have Normal (0-7), Mild level (8-9), Moderate (10-14), Severe (15-19) and Extremely Severe (20+). For self-esteem, Rosenberg's (1979) scoring and interpretation format was used. Basically, the sum of the scores ranged from 10 to 40. A higher score indicates higher self-esteem. A score of 20 and above indicates high self-esteem and while a score below 20 indicates low level of self-esteem. The result is presented in table 11.

**Table 11: Levels of psychological wellbeing of students**

<b>Forms</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Depression	14.63	7.38	Moderate
Anxiety	10.85	6.86	Moderate
Self-esteem	18.52	7.64	Low

**Source:** Field data, (2020).

The data in Table 11 indicate that senior high school students experience moderate depression ( $M = 14.62$ ,  $SD = 7.38$ ), moderate anxiety ( $M = 10.85$ ,  $SD = 6.86$ ), and low self-esteem ( $M = 18.52$ ,  $SD = 7.64$ ). However, to found out whether school related bullying is responsible for this current state of psychological wellbeing of senior high students, a Multiple Linear Regression using the enter method analysis

was conducted. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 12, Table 13, Table 14 and Table 15 respectively.

**Table 12: Model summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.382 <sup>a</sup>	.146	.132	.638

a. Predictors: (Constant), School related bullying (Physical, verbal and sexual bullying)

b. Dependent Variable: Psychological wellbeing (Depression, anxiety and self-esteem)

The result in Table 12 indicates coefficient of multiple R of .382 and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> of .146. The R=.382 talks about the relationship between school related bullying and psychological wellbeing of students. The R<sup>2</sup> = .146 suggests that about 14.6% of variances in psychological wellbeing of students in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis are accounted for by the school related bullying experienced. The significance of the contribution was tested at  $p < 0.05$  using the F-ratio at the degrees of freedom ( $df = 3/338$ ) as depicted in Table 13.

**Table 13: Analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21.544	3	7.181	20.694	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	117.183	338	.347		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>138.727</b>	<b>341</b>			

a. Dependent Variable: Psychological Wellbeing of Students

b. Predictors: (Constant), Physical, Verbal and Sexual related bullying

From Table 13, it can be observed that the regression yielded  $F(3,338 = 20.694, p = 0.000)$ . This implies that the difference between school related bullying

(physical, verbal and sexual bullying) and reported psychological wellbeing (depression, anxiety and self-esteem) was significant. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted an alpha value of 0.05. Table 14 presented correlational test on the relationship between schools related bullying and psychological wellbeing of students.

**Table 14: Correlation of school related bullying and psychological wellbeing of students**

School related bullying (Predictors)	Psychological wellbeing of students					
	(Depression)		(Anxiety)		(Self-esteem)	
	r	sig.	r	sig.	R	sig.
Physical related bullying	.332*	.000	.432*	.000	-.132*	.006
Verbal related bullying	.267*	.000	.167*	.004	-.147	.006
Sexual related bullying	.236*	.000	.217*	.000	-.226*	.000

\*  $p < .05$  (2-tailed)

The correlation test as shown in Table 14 revealed that there are significant positive relationship between physical related bullying and depression level of students ( $r = .332$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and anxiety level of students ( $r = .432$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The results suggest that an increase in the victimisation of school related bullying will result in an increase in depression and anxiety level of students. However, there is significant negative relationship between physical related bullying and self-esteem level of students ( $r = -.132$ ,  $p = .006$ ). This suggests that as bullying increases, self-esteem of students also decreases. Similarly, there are significant positive relationship between verbal related bullying and depression level of students ( $r = .267$ ,  $p = .000$ ) and anxiety level of students ( $r = .167$ ,  $p = .004$ ). But negative relationship was established for verbal related bullying and self-esteem level of students ( $r = -.147$ ,  $p = .006$ ). Similar relationship trends were observed between sexual related bullying and depression ( $r = .236$ ,  $p = .000$ ), sexual related bullying and anxiety ( $r = .217$ ,  $p = .000$ )

and sexual related bullying and self-esteem ( $r = .226, p = .000$ ). The positive relationship suggests that an increase in school related bullying (physical, verbal and sexual bullying) will result in an increase in students' depression and anxiety levels and lowers students' sense of belongingness, self-respect and others' respect in senior high schools. This can compromise their state of being, happiness and positive functioning in the school.

To test the predictive influence of the school related bullying (physical, verbal and sexual bullying) on psychological wellbeing of students (depression, anxiety and self-esteem), model coefficient statistics was carried and the result is presented in Table 15.

**Table 15: Coefficient of model regression**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	B		
1 (Constant)	3.161	.221		14.773	.000
Physical related bullying	.268	.040	.232	5.696	.000
Verbal related bullying	.174	.048	.202	3.782	.000
Sexual related bullying	.224	.045	.219	4.431	.000

*a. Dependent Variable: Psychological wellbeing*

The coefficient table shows the influence of every independent variable on the psychological wellbeing of students. The  $\beta$  value of physical related bullying ( $\beta = 0.232, p < .05$ ) shows that it accounted for 23.2% of the variability in the psychological wellbeing of students. The  $\beta$  value of verbal related bullying ( $\beta = 0.202, p < .05$ ) shows that there is statistically significant influence of it on psychological wellbeing of students as it accounted for 20.2% of variability in the psychological wellbeing of students. Similarly, the  $\beta$  value of sexual related bullying ( $\beta = 0.219, p < .05$ ) shows that there is statistically significant influence of it on students' psychological



wellbeing. This accounts for nearly 21.9% of the variability in students' psychological wellbeing. The quantitative results imply that school related bullying influence negatively the psychological well-being of students in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

For the qualitative phase of the study, item 7 under section B of the interview schedule for the school counsellors were used to address this question. Themes, direct quotes and explanations were used to analyse the qualitative data. For example, themes like feeling of sadness (Depression), fear (Anxiety) and negative self-esteem of victims emerged from the narratives or analysis. For example, SC 1 suggests that most students who sometimes sat quietly at lonely places could be experiencing bullying. The counsellor stated that;

*“...Sometimes some teachers refer students to the counselling centre. On some occasions too, these teachers complain that they saw these students sitting quietly in one of the lonely places in the school. When I interacted with some of them, it come to light that they were bullied by someone and that is causing them to be sad; hence, sitting alone at a quiet place within the school premises” [SC: 1].*

SC 2 also commented on the effect of school related bullying on the psychological well-being of students by retorting that;

*“...From experience, I can confidently say that some of the students here have low self-esteem because of the persistent bullying they have experienced from their childhood stage” [SC: 2].*

Comments from SC 3 centered on social efficacy of the bullied by stating that:

*“...I have come across some students who have been robbed of connecting with others all in the name of bullying. So, I personally believe that bullying can make one loose friends or associate with other students or even people in the community” [SC: 3].*

Similarly, loss of friends was also reported by SC 4 who narrative a counselling relationship with a bullied student by stating that;

*“...There was one girl who sought for counselling last semester. During counselling, it was discovered that she does not have any friend in the school. When I probed further, it was revealed that she went through some ridicules from this trusted friend while at the SHS 1 and she decided not to have a friend again...” [SC: 4].*

Finally, SC 5 indicated that school related bullying creates the feeling of loneliness by stating that:

*“...Seriously speaking, bullying can impede on someone’s life negatively. For example, it can make someone feel lonely though the person may be in the midst of a crowd or people” [SC: 5].*

Based on the quantitative and qualitative results, it was clear that school related bullying influences the psychological well-being of senior high school students in Cape Coast Metropolis. The findings of the study confirm the assertion of Shellard (2012) when he stated that victims often suffer emotionally from humiliation, insecurity and loss of self-esteem and may develop a fear of going to school. Also, Nansel et al. (2011) confirm that some victims sustain injuries serious enough for them to require treatment by a nurse or a doctor. Batsche and Knoff (2014) posited that it was logical to assume that victims would be fearful and anxious in the environment in which the bullying took place. They could respond with avoidance behaviours, such as skipping school, avoiding certain places at school, running away and even being suicidal. Elliot (2014) claims that chronic victims, who even receive mild bullying, are likely to view school as an unhappy setting and are likely to avoid places within the school setting or the school completely.

Besides, Hoover, Oliver and Hazler (2012) indicated that for some children, bullying can affect them so much that they try to commit suicide, run away, and refuse to go to school or even develop chronic illnesses. In his study on bullying in Ghana, Kaar (2009) found that 10-16 per cent of students in various schools were under constant fear, they easily fell sick and were unable to concentrate on their

studies. Also, Farmer (2011) found that individuals who are involved in bullying can develop psychological and social difficulties, such as low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, stress, loss of confidence, insecurity, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Also, Totura et al. (2009) found that panic attacks, mistrust of others, withdrawal, aggression, poor social adjustment, interpersonal violence. Konishi et al. (2010) further found that substance and alcohol abuse, suicidal ideation, attempted or actual suicide as well as developing feelings of worthlessness, alienation, isolation, loneliness or helplessness.

Furthermore, Cheng et al., (2010) found that peer victimisation found that learners who are targets of bullying lack friends and support networks, are often more vulnerable to being targeted by other individuals, and are often rejected and socially isolated by peers. Also, Vanderbilt and Augustyn (2010) found that individuals who were victims of bullying during adolescence are at a higher risk of having difficulties with psychosis, depression, low self-esteem, aggression, abuse, violence, substance and alcohol abuse, suicidal ideation, and attempted and actual suicide. Shellard (2012) contend abused students often suffer humiliation, insecurity, and loss of self-esteem. This implies that the impact of frequent bullying can accompany victims into adulthood, where they appear to be at greater risk of depression and other mental health problems. One reason accounting for this difference is that school related bullying will bruise the ego defense of victims and sometimes, bystanders. Psychologically, man is predisposed to avoid aversive stimulus and any threat to the self would trigger negative cognitive and behavioural reactions.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The chapter presents summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study. The summary presents the objective of the study, aspects of the methodology and the key findings of the study. The conclusions drawn from the findings of the study were presented as well as counselling implications for senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Finally, recommendations, and areas for further studies are suggested in this chapter.

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study

The study sought to investigate the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of Senior High School Students in the Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central region of Ghana. Specifically, the study sought to; 1) investigate the prevalence of school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis, 2) identify key characteristics of school related bullies in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis, 3) investigate sex differences in the prevalence of school related bullying among of senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis, 4) assess the influence of school related bullying on the psychological wellbeing of senior high schools students in the Cape Coast Metropolis, and 5) ascertain strategies to manage the incidence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

The study employed concurrent triangulation design (CTD) using parallel phases. In all, 347 participants, comprising 342 students and 5 school counsellors were selected from five senior high schools in the metropolis. Close-ended

questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data to answer the research questions posed and test for the hypotheses formulated. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data while thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data.

## 5.2 Key Findings

1. The prevalence rate of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis is 46.0%. Verbal related bullying is commonly experienced while sexual related bullying is the least form of school related bullying among senior high school students in the Cape Coast Metropolis.
2. The key characteristics of school related bullies include lack of empathy for others students, demonstrating a strong need to dominate others, usually being hot tempered, have low self-esteem, have problems of themselves, always jealous of others and lack respect for authorities.
3. The strategies to reduce school related bullying is reportedly multifaceted. It emerged from the findings that guidance and counselling on bullying should be more effective, There should be stricter rules and regulations in schools, victims should be encouraged to report bullies, frequent random checks at dormitories, parents should be educated to monitor their children at home and severe punishment must be given to bullies were key measures that can be put in place to reduce incidence of school related bullying among senior high school students in Cape Coast Metropolis.
4. The results of the independent t-test indicated that there are statistically significant differences in the perception of male and female students on the prevalence of school related bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

5. School related bullying negatively influence psychological well-being of students in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Students who are bullied experience moderate depression, anxiety and low self-esteem.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

School related bullying is prevalent but the number of cases appears to be reducing due to lack of prompt sanctions. It was concluded that bullies have unique characteristics which motivate them to bully others. Lack of control over these characteristics is the source of the numerous reported cases of psychological bullying. It was further found that both boys and girls have different perception regarding school related bullying. It is therefore important to be able to identify those differences otherwise, bullying will often go undetected in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

In terms of its influence, it was concluded the current psychological wellbeing of senior high schools in the metropolis is influenced by the exposure to school related bullying. It is argued that bullying has rippling effect on the intrapersonal and interpersonal relationship of the bullied, causes depression and anxiety among students. This could make the school uncomfortable place for such students to realize their creative potentials.

Finally, it was concluded that strategies to reducing psychological bullying is multifaceted in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Though some strategies are currently in place to reduce bullying, however, most of these strategies are applicable to physical and sexual related bullying. There are no effective counselling intervention to address the issues of verbal related bullying in the senior high schools. It is not surprising to see that verbal related bullying is prevalent in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

#### **5.4 Implications for Counselling Practice**

The study's findings have important ramifications for the counseling profession, especially when it comes to senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It is advised that counseling procedures in these schools include specific programs during orientation sessions to address the problem of bullying at school. The main goal of these initiatives need to be teaching children about the different forms of bullying and its negative effects. Orientation programs that incorporate anti-bullying measures can help staff and students recognize the telltale symptoms of bullying conduct. This increased consciousness is essential for spotting bullying incidents and taking swift action against them. These programs offer a chance to create an atmosphere in which people including bullies themselves understand that their behavior and responses can cause serious psychological harm to their peers. The ultimate objective is to advance a school culture that places a high value on compassion, comprehension, and each student's welfare.

Group counselling should be organized for bullies, victims and bystanders on psychological bullying. Specifically, heterogeneous group counselling should be organized in schools. Here, both boys and girls; bullies, victims and bystanders are put into a single group for the purpose of altering maladjusted behaviours of bullies. As part of the group process, role play technique should be emphasized where bullies, victims and bystanders change roles. This will enable each party understand how the behaviour of bullies is affecting victims and bystanders.

The school counsellors should realise that in psychological bullying situation, there is the presence of a power imbalance of some kind in which the victim always gets the worst of the interaction. Counselling intervention strategies, such as assertiveness, relaxation, problem-solving and decision-making, should be put in

place to assist bullies, victims and bystanders to develop appropriate coping strategies towards psychological bullying pattern. Consultation is very integral in our quest to reduce the incidence of psychological bullying in SHSs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. School counsellors should encourage strong working alliance between the school counsellor, teachers and parents to be able to identify students who are being bullied, or those who are bullies or those who witness psychological bullying so as to provide them with the necessary assistance.

It is advised that peer counseling be used as a preventative step to encourage peer-based psychological support for those who are bullying others. Putting peer counseling programs into place can be very important for helping adolescents develop empathy. Students can achieve a direct and instant cathartic release through peer therapy, which enables them to share their ideas and feelings in a safe space. One effective way to diffuse the psychological impacts of bullying is to incorporate peer psychological support. Students who bully others can reflect and alter their behavior for the better when they get support and understanding from their peers. Peer counseling fosters a culture of empathy and support among students, which benefits not only the individuals engaging in bullying behaviors but also the entire student body's mental health.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusions drawn:

1. There should be stringent rules and regulations regarding verbal bullying as we have for physical bullying. These rules should be applied equally without fear or favour. Since sexual related bullying is sometimes difficult to report, school



authorities should provide incentives for students to report any attempted sexual harassment on them.

2. Throughout all guidance and counselling services, the school authorities should assist bullies to sublimate their abusive behaviours to more satisfying behaviours. Instead of causing psychological harm to others, bullies should be encouraged by school authorities to join clubs such as the debaters club, scripture union, etc. during orientation.
3. School counsellors should give equal attention to students, irrespective of sex when remediating psychological bullying in senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Intervention strategies, such as assertiveness, relaxation, problem-solving and decision-making, should be put in place to assist the bully, victim and bystanders in order to stop psychological bullying pattern.
4. The behaviour of bullied students in the classroom, such as sadness, anxiousness, dullness, sleeping in class, having problems sitting comfortably in class, relational difficulties among others, should send a signal to the teachers, and authorities that the student needs attention and could be referred to the school counsellor for assistance.
5. School authorities should bring parents into the mainstream of school related bullying issues as parents can best handle their own children. School authorities should make students aware of the effect of bullying on the various aspects of life of any individual being it social, emotional, psychological and academic performance in schools.

## **5.6 Limitations of the Study**

In bullying research, multiple data sources is a ‘gold standard’ method for identifying bullies, victims and bystanders. Being able to confirm the accuracy of the findings through the use of peer, in addition to parent, and teacher reports would allow for more reliable conclusions to be drawn about the bullying status of students. Despite this concern, it must be recognised that if a student perceives that they are being bullied, and that they are experiencing psychological problems, then they are in need of assistance, regardless of the objective reality of their bullying situation.

Furthermore, the data from this study were generated from two data sources, and therefore temporal inferences were made. Also, the study failed to establish causal relationship between psychological bullying and psychological wellbeing of students. Longitudinal research is required to make such inferences about causality. In addition, the data from this study was derived from only five schools, which may cast doubt on the generalisability of the findings beyond these schools in the metropolis. However, the evidence from this study were generally consistent with previously reported data, which lends support to the generalizability of the results of the current study.

## **5.7 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study can be replicated in other regions since psychological bullying is not geographically specific. Future research should focus on examining school counsellors’ knowledge and treatment plans for remediating psychological bullying in schools. Further research is also needed to evaluate the effectiveness of various programme that deal with bullying, or programmes that address broader issues in hopes of creating climates where bullying does not occur.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX A

#### Introductory Letter

Dear Respondent,

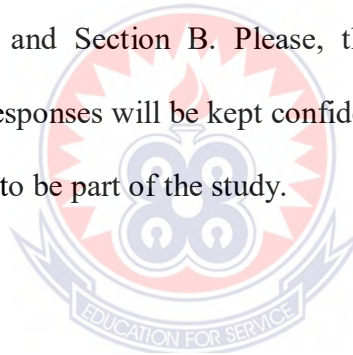
You are selected to participate in a survey “**Influence of school related bullying on psychological wellbeing of Senior High School Students in the Cape Coast Metropolis**”. The researcher would be very grateful if you could answer the questionnaire. Your answers will be kept confidential, meaning your responses won’t be shared with your teachers, classmates or parents. It will stay between us. Please, you are required to provide the most appropriate response as it applies to you in all the questions in Section A and Section B. Please, the questionnaire will be scored anonymously and your responses will be kept confidential by the researcher.

Thank you for accepting to be part of the study.

Yours faithfully,

Agnes A. Adantwi

(Researcher)





## APPENDIX B

### Questionnaire for Students

#### SECTION A: Demographic Information

Please tick where it's applicable to you.

1. Gender:

a. Male [ ]

b. Female [ ]

2. Age (years)

a. 15 and below [ ]

b. 16 years [ ]

c. 17 years [ ]

d. 18 years [ ]

e. 19 years and above [ ]

#### SECTION B: Prevalence of School Related Bullying

Kindly indicate the number of times you or your colleagues have repeatedly suffered from the following behaviours in the school.

S/N	Statements	Frequency of behaviour						
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Received spanking on the palms.							
4.	Received belt strokes.							
5.	Subjected to school rituals (homos night).							
6.	Provisions and belongings forcefully seized.							
7.	Being called by some mean names.							
8.	Character being defamed.							
9.	Received insulting remarks.							
10.	Yelled by people upon little provocations.							
11.	Forced to watch pornographic materials.							
12.	Provided sexual favours.							
13.	Received sexually gestures.							
14.	Touched sexually							

**SECTION C: Characteristics of Bullies**

Kindly respond to all the items by putting a tick (✓) in the appropriate space provided using the following scale: SD=Strongly Disagree (1), D=Disagree (2), U=Uncertain (3), A=Agree (4) and SA=Strongly Agree (5).

S/N	Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
15.	Lack of empathy or concern for others					
16.	Demonstrate a strong need to dominate					
17.	They are usually hot tempered					
18.	The bully has low self-esteem					
19.	The bully has problems					
20.	The bully is always jealous of others					
21.	Bully lacks of respect					
22.	The bully is also a victim					
23.	The bully is physically fit most of the time.					

**SECTION D: Psychological Wellbeing of students**

The following are list of statements describing your state of psychological wellness in the school. Indicate the extent to which you have experienced these reactions by using; 1 (not at all), 2 (rarely), 3 (to some extent), 4 (to large extent) and 5 (to a very large extent)

Statement	4	3	2	1	0
24. My mouth is dry.					
25. I experience breathing difficulty.					
26. I experience trembling (e. g. in the hands, legs etc.).					
27. I worry about situations in which I might make a fool of myself					
28. I feel I am close to panic.					
29. My heart beat increasingly fast.					
30. I feel scared in the school. .					
31. I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all.					
32. I find it difficult to work out initiatives in doing things					
33. I feel that I have nothing to look forward to in the school					
34. I feel down-hearted in the school.					
35. I am unable to become excited about anything in the school.					
36. I feel I am not worth much as a student in the school.					
37. I feel that life is meaningless in the school.					
38. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.					
39. At times, I think I am no good at all.					
40. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.					

41. I am able to do things as well as most other people.					
42. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.					
43. I certainly feel useless at times.					
44. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least with others.					
45. I wish I could have more respect for myself.					
46. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.					
47. I take a positive attitude toward myself.					

### Section E: Strategies to reduce psychological bullying in SHS

Please, respond to all the items by putting a tick (√) in the appropriate space provided using the following scale: SD=Strongly Disagree=1, D=Disagree=2, U=Uncertain=3, A=Agree=4 and SA=Strongly Agree=5.

S/N	Strategies	SA	A	U	D	SD
48.	Bullies need to learn a new set of pro-social behaviours that do not negatively impact those around them					
49.	There should be a philosophy that promotes safe and positive environment					
50.	All people in the school community should be treated with respect and dignity					
51.	Teachers and other adults must model and set the tone for reciprocating behaviours					
52.	The school climate should adopt zero tolerance policy for violence, aggression, and bullying					
53.	Teachers should create and maintain a positive working Community.					
54.	Parents should be made aware of their child's school policies on bullying behaviours					
55.	Schools authorities should rely on families to help reinforce pro-social behaviours					
56.	Parents of the bully and victims of bullying need to be included when providing counselling services					
57.	School administrators and teachers must take an active approach to physical monitoring of students					

## APPENDIX C

### Interview Schedule for School Counsellors

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in study on the topic: **“Influence of school related bullying on psychological wellbeing of Senior High School Students in the Cape Coast Metropolis”**. Your answers will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purposes. While the tape is transcribed, your name will be changed to something fictitious. Please, you are required to provide the most appropriate response as it applies to you in all the questions in Section A and Section B.

Thank you for accepting to be part of the study.

#### Section A: Demographic Information

1. Sex: Male [  ] Female [  ]
2. Age (in years): 20-30 [  ] 31-40 [  ] 41-50 [  ] 51 and above [  ]
3. Working Experience: 1-10 years [  ] 11-20 years [  ] 21-30 years [  ] 31-40 years [  ] 41 years and above [  ]

#### Section B: Items for answering the research questions

4. What is your perception on the prevalence of school related bullying in your school?
5. Kindly tell me some of the characteristics bully students have?
6. Please, do you think there are differences between boys and girls in relation to psychological bullying? Kindly share your perception with me.
7. How will you describe the extent of influence of school related bullying on psychological well-being of your students?
8. Please, what strategies do you think can be put in place to reduce incidence of school related bullying among SHS students?