



Teachers' Perceived Effectiveness of Peace Education in Addressing Violence and Bullying among Pupils in Kwara State

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Abstract

Violence and bullying in Nigerian primary schools continue to threaten pupils' academic, emotional, and social well-being. Although peace education (PE) has been integrated into the national curriculum to promote tolerance and non-violent conflict resolution, its effectiveness depends largely on teachers' perceptions and preparedness. This study investigated the perceptions of primary school teachers in Kwara State, regarding the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying among pupils. The research employed a descriptive survey design, with a sample of 800 teachers selected using random sampling techniques across 40 primary schools. Data were collected using Role of Peace Education in Addressing Violence and Bullying among Children Questionnaire (RPEAVBCQ) with $r=0.85$ and analyzed through descriptive of percentage and mean and inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing bullying and violence in primary schools is positive with mean value of 3.19 and 3.25 respectively. Moreover, the study established that teachers' perceptions varied significantly based on their gender and age. The study recommends enhanced teacher training programmes, stronger policy support, and community sensitisation efforts to promote peace education as a sustainable solution to school-based aggression. The findings contribute valuable insights for educational stakeholders and policymakers seeking to foster safer, inclusive, and non-violent primary school environments in Nigeria.

Keywords

peace education, violence, bullying, role of peace education

INTRODUCTION

Education has increasingly been recognised as a strategic tool for promoting social cohesion, emotional development, and peaceful coexistence among children. Beyond academic instruction, the school environment functions as a miniature society in which pupils learn social norms, empathy, cooperation, and constructive ways of resolving conflicts. During the early years of schooling, children develop foundational social-emotional competencies that influence their interpersonal relationships and long-term behaviour. However, persistent acts of bullying and violence disrupt this developmental process, making many pupils feel unsafe, unsupported, and excluded. These negative experiences undermine pupils' academic engagement, emotional well-being, and sense of belonging, creating barriers to effective teaching and learning. Bullying, as defined by UNESCO (2019), involves deliberate, repeated aggressive behaviour marked by a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim. It takes several forms like physical aggression, verbal and psychological intimidation, social exclusion, sexual harassment, and cyberbullying. Research shows that bullying remains widespread globally, with estimates suggesting that between 8–46% of primary school pupils experience some form of bullying. The consequences for victims are profound and wide-ranging. Studies have linked bullying to emotional distress, anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, and academic withdrawal (Hidalgo Rasmussen et al., 2018; Jackson et al., 2019). In severe cases, prolonged victimization may contribute to risky behaviours or further psychological harm. Perpetrators are also affected, as consistent engagement in bullying behaviour during childhood may develop into persistent aggression and even predispose them to later antisocial or criminal behaviour.

Violence, according to the World Health Organization (2019), involves the intentional use of physical force or power that may result in harm, injury, psychological trauma, or deprivation. While related to bullying, school violence may differ in scale, intention, and context. Some forms of violence occur between students in groups, often characterised

by physical attacks, intimidation, and vandalism. Scholars such as Sulisdaratin (2018) note that bullying is a specific form of violence distinguished by its repetition and the vulnerability of victims. Regardless of the form, exposure to violence has adverse effects on pupils' physical and emotional health, social relationships, academic progress, and general perception of school safety (Vorobej, 2016). Evidence from Indonesia, South Africa, and other regions highlights the rising prevalence of youth violence and the heightened vulnerability of pupils aged 12–17 (Wahyu et al., 2019; Hapsari et al., 2021; Nunan & Shantone, 2023).

Given the disruptive consequences of bullying and violence, educators, policymakers, and international organisations have emphasised the need for preventive and restorative approaches. Peace education has emerged globally as a strategic response. Rooted in the United Nations' 2013 declaration calling for the integration of peace education into school curriculum (Wählisch, 2014), peace education aims to equip children and youth with knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes necessary for peaceful coexistence. Scholars such as Faheem and Iqbal (2021) argue that peace education fosters empathy, human rights awareness, cooperation, and nonviolent conflict resolution. Abu-Nimer et al. (2016) further contend that peace education contributes to moral and civic development by cultivating respect, empathy, and a sense of community.

Efforts to promote peaceful coexistence in Nigerian primary schools have become increasingly necessary due to the growing concerns about bullying and violence among young learners. As schools serve as the first formal environment where children interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, they play a crucial role in shaping pupils' social behaviour, emotional development, and conflict-handling skills. Peace education, therefore, emerges as an essential framework for equipping pupils with the knowledge, attitudes, and values needed to build harmonious relationships and prevent aggressive behaviours.

In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education acknowledges the promotion of peace as central to national development. Education is described as an instrument “par excellence” for achieving peace and social stability. Researchers such as Aguba (2010) and Ezeoba (2012) advocate for peace education to be integrated into teaching processes to nurture citizens who can resolve conflicts peacefully and contribute to societal harmony. Peace education in the Nigerian context therefore aims to support tolerance, mediation, cooperative learning, and emotional resilience—capacities essential for reducing violence and bullying among pupils.

Mishra (2013) notes that peace education enables learners to develop tolerance and nonviolent conflict resolution skills by engaging in reflective and interactive learning processes. Instructional strategies commonly associated with peace education include cooperative group work, role-plays, guided discussions, mediation, negotiation, and problem-solving. These learner-centred methods encourage pupils to listen to diverse viewpoints, understand the consequences of their actions, and value harmony in social interactions (Akudolu, 2010). Ultimately, mainstreaming peace education across the curriculum reinforces a culture of peace and contributes to a safer school environment.

Teachers are central to curriculum implementation and classroom management. Empirical evidence highlights the importance of teachers in implementing peace-building initiatives. Safdar, Ullah, and Alam (2025) demonstrate that teachers who promote empathy, inclusion, and restorative practices have a significant impact on reducing aggression and strengthening peer relationships. Their study found that teacher-led peace-building strategies such as social-emotional learning, anti-bullying programmes, and conflict mediation greatly improve school climate and pupils' sense of belonging. Similarly, Cosculluela et al. (2021) found that teachers often perceive bullying and violence as serious concerns requiring stronger emotional and social skill development among pupils. However, many teachers feel that schools lack sufficient strategies and support systems to effectively address these behaviours.

In South Africa, Nunan and Shantone (2023) observed that teachers reported increasing incidents of violent and disruptive behaviour, often linked to pupils' exposure to hostile home environments. Their findings reinforced the need for improved disciplinary policies, teacher training, and structured peace education programmes. In the Nigerian context, Akande (2019) conducted a survey among teachers in Ilorin South and reported that while teachers generally supported peace education, many lacked adequate training, curriculum resources, and institutional support to implement peace education effectively. This gap between teachers' positive perception and their limited practical readiness poses challenges for the success of peace education interventions in reducing bullying and violence.

Despite increasing global and national attention to the benefits of peace education, bullying and violence continue to pose significant threats to pupils' safety, emotional well-being, and academic development in many Nigerian primary schools. In Kwara State, reports from teachers, parents, and educational stakeholders suggest that physical aggression, verbal harassment, social exclusion, and other forms of bullying occur frequently within school environments. Many pupils experience fear, distress, and reduced motivation to learn due to repeated victimization, while some develop aggressive tendencies as a response to hostile peer interactions.

Teachers' perceptions play a critical role in determining the success of peace education. If teachers perceive peace education as beneficial, feasible, and relevant, they are more likely to adopt strategies that promote empathy, cooperation, and nonviolence. Conversely, negative or unclear perceptions may hinder meaningful implementation of peace education. Despite the central role of teachers, limited empirical studies in Kwara State have examined how teachers perceive the role of peace education in addressing bullying and violence among primary school pupils.

The gap in understanding teachers' perceptions creates uncertainty about the readiness of schools in Kwara State to implement peace-based interventions effectively. Without such knowledge, efforts to reduce violence and bullying may be poorly targeted, inadequately supported, or unsustainable. This study examined teachers' perceptions of the role of

peace education in addressing bullying and violence among pupils in primary schools. It focused on assessing how teachers perceive the effectiveness of peace education in reducing bullying and curbing violence within the school environment. The study also examined differences in teachers' perceptions of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying among pupils based on gender and age.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. This design enabled an in-depth investigation and provided a clear understanding of the topic. The study population consisted all 10,033 primary school teachers in Kwara State (Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board, 2025). Using a random sampling technique, a total of 800 teachers were selected from 40 primary schools in Kwara State to participate in the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled Role of Peace Education in Addressing Violence and Bullying among Children Questionnaire (RPEAVBCQ). The instrument was designed to elicit relevant information from respondents. It consisted of two sections: Section A, which gathered socio-demographic information such as gender and age; and Section B, which focused on teachers' perceptions of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying in primary schools. A 4-point Likert scale was used, with response options of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was scrutinized by the researcher's supervisor and two other lecturers in the Department of Adult and Primary Education. Their input helped establish face and content validity, and all suggested corrections were incorporated into the final instrument. Reliability of the instrument was determined using the test-retest method to ensure consistency of the responses over time. Using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, it yielded 0.85. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Frequency counts, percentages and mean were used to answer research questions while inferential statistics, specifically t-tests and ANOVA, were used to test the research hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

The researchers adhered strictly to all the rules guiding the conduct of educational research. All existing protocols in each of the selected schools were followed to relate with the school authorities. The purpose and procedures of the study were clearly explained to the teachers who were respondents. They were informed that participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any stage without consequence. The respondents were also assured that all the information derived from the exercise would be used solely for research purposes and treated with utmost confidentiality.

RESULTS

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 800)

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	335	41.9
	Female	465	58.1
Age (years)	18–25	153	19.1
	26–30	267	33.4
	31–35	257	32.1
	36 and above	123	15.4

Table 1 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents based on gender and age. The table indicates that out of a total of 800 participants, 335 were male, representing 41.9% of the total sample, while 465 were female, accounting for 58.1% of the total sample. From this, it can be deduced that the majority of the respondents were female. Also, the table indicates that out of a total of 800 participants, 153 were between the ages of 18 and 25 years, representing 19.1% of the total sample, 267 were between the ages of 26 – 30 years representing 33.4% of the total sample, 257 were between the ages of 31 – 35 years representing 32.1% of the total sample while 123 were between the ages of 36 years and above representing 15.4%. This implies that majority of respondent were between the ages of 26 and 30 years.

Table 2 Mean and Standard deviation showing teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing bullying in primary schools

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	Peace education is crucial in reducing incidents of violence and bullying in primary schools.	613 (76.6%)	173 (21.6%)	9 (1.1%)	5 (0.6%)	3.74	0.50
2	Exposing pupils to the content of peace education contributes to bullying in schools.	61 (7.6%)	208 (26.0%)	216 (27.0%)	315 (39.4%)	2.02	0.98
3	Pupils who receive peace education show improved peer relationships.	338 (43.3%)	399 (49.9%)	41 (5.1%)	22 (2.8%)	3.32	0.70
4	Having Peace Clubs or peer mediation groups in school does not make any difference in reducing bullying behaviour among pupils.	85 (10.6%)	227 (28.4%)	253 (31.6%)	235 (29.4%)	2.20	0.98
5	Peace education is crucial in reducing incidents of bullying in primary schools.	391 (48.9%)	344 (43.0%)	53 (6.6%)	12 (1.5%)	3.39	0.68
6	Peace education equips pupils with conflict resolution	309	437	45	9	3.31	0.63

	skills that reduce bullying behaviour.	(38.6%)	(54.6%)	(5.6%)	(1.1%)		
7	Promoting mutual respect through peace education reduces incidents of bullying among pupils.	526 (65.8%)	264 (33.0%)	10 (1.3%)		3.65	0.50
8	Fostering empathy and kindness through peace education helps prevent bullying in primary schools.	333 (41.6%)	459 (57.4%)	6 (0.8%)	2 (0.3%)	3.40	0.52
9	Peace education improves pupils' attitudes, making them less likely to engage in bullying.	423 (52.9%)	326 (40.8%)	41 (5.1%)	10 (1.3%)	3.45	0.65
10	Pupils' increased tolerance through peace education helps in reducing bullying of peers.	368 (46.0%)	405 (50.6%)	18 (2.3%)	9 (1.1%)	3.42	0.60
	Weighted Mean					3.19	

Key; SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree
 Decision Value for Remark: *Negative* = 0.00-2.49, *Positive* = 2.50-4.00

Table 2 highlights mean and standard deviation showing teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing bullying in primary schools. The table revealed agreement among the respondents, as items 1,3,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 were accepted based on the decision rule (mean \geq 2.50). The findings from the table reveal the following: peace education is crucial in reducing incidents of violence and bullying in primary schools (\bar{x} = 3.74), pupils who receive peace education show improved peer relationships (\bar{x} = 3.32), peace education is crucial in reducing incidents of bullying in primary schools. (\bar{x} = 3.39), peace education equips pupils with conflict resolution skills that reduce bullying behavior (\bar{x} = 3.31), promoting mutual respect through peace education reduces incidents of bullying among pupils (\bar{x} = 3.65), fostering empathy and kindness through peace education helps prevent bullying in primary schools (\bar{x} = 3.40), peace education improves pupils' attitudes, making them less likely to engage in bullying (\bar{x} = 3.45), and pupils' increased tolerance through peace education helps in reducing bullying of peers (\bar{x} = 3.42). The respondents disagree with the following items; exposing pupils to the content of peace education contributes to bullying in schools. (\bar{x} = 2.02) and having Peace Clubs or peer mediation groups in school does not make any difference in reducing bullying behaviour among pupils. (\bar{x} = 2.20). Based on the value of the weighted average (3.19 out of 4.00 maximum value obtainable) which falls, within the decision value for **positive**, it can be inferred that the teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing bullying in primary schools is positive.

Table 3 Mean and Standard deviation showing teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence in primary schools

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD
1	Peace education is crucial in reducing incidents of violence and bullying in primary schools.	393 (49.1%)	388 (48.5%)	17 (2.1%)	2 (0.3%)	3.47	0.55
2	Incorporating peace education into the curriculum improves pupils' behaviour and promotes positive learning. (Can be linked to preventing violent conduct.)	336 (42.0%)	443 (55.4%)	14 (1.8%)	7 (0.9%)	3.39	0.57
3	Peace education can help reduce violent behaviour among pupils.	353 (44.1%)	398 (49.8%)	40 (5.0%)	9 (1.1%)	3.37	0.63
4	Peace education helps build a supportive and safe environment.	274 (34.3%)	299 (37.4%)	134 (16.8%)	93 (11.6%)	2.94	0.99
5	Having Peace Clubs or peer mediation groups in school does not make any difference in reducing violence among pupils.	250 (31.3%)	232 (29.0%)	161 (20.1%)	157 (19.6%)	2.72	1.1
6	Providing platforms for pupils to voice concerns peacefully prevents violence.	365 (45.6%)	384 (48.0%)	41 (5.1%)	10 (1.3%)	3.38	0.64
7	Peace education helps in promoting a culture of non-violence among pupils.	311 (38.9%)	443 (55.4%)	38 (4.5%)	8 (1.0%)	3.32	0.61
8	Peace education encourages cooperative learning and teamwork among pupils without resulting in violence.	338 (42.3%)	413 (51.6%)	36 (4.5%)	13 (1.6%)	3.35	0.64
9	Empathy and compassion developed through peace education help reduce violent behaviour among pupils.	358 (44.8%)	405 (50.6%)	34 (4.3%)	3 (0.4%)	3.40	0.59
10	Peace education encourages inclusive attitudes that prevent violence rooted in discrimination.	363 (45.4%)	394 (49.3%)	38 (4.8%)	5 (0.6%)	3.39	0.61
	Weighted Mean					3.27	

Key; SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree
 Decision Value for Remark: *Negative* = 0.00-2.49, *Positive* = 2.50-4.00

Table 3 highlights mean and standard deviation showing teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence in primary schools. The table revealed agreement among the respondents, as all items were accepted based on the decision rule (mean \geq 2.50). The findings from the table reveal the following: Peace education is crucial in reducing incidents of violence and bullying in primary schools. (\bar{x} = 3.47), incorporating peace education into the curriculum improves pupils' behaviour and promotes positive learning. (Can be linked to preventing violent conduct.) (\bar{x} = 3.39), peace education can help reduce violent behaviour among pupils. (\bar{x} = 3.37), peace education helps build a supportive and

safe environment. ($\bar{x} = 2.94$), having peace clubs or peer mediation groups in school does not make any difference in reducing violence among pupils ($\bar{x} = 2.72$), providing platforms for pupils to voice concerns peacefully prevents violence ($\bar{x} = 3.38$), peace education helps in promoting a culture of non-violence among pupils ($\bar{x} = 3.32$), Peace education encourages cooperative learning and teamwork among pupils without resulting in violence ($\bar{x} = 3.35$), empathy and compassion developed through peace education help reduce violent behaviour among pupils ($\bar{x} = 3.40$) and Peace education encourages inclusive attitudes that prevent violence rooted in discrimination. ($\bar{x} = 3.39$). Based on the value of the weighted average (3.27 out of 4.00 maximum value obtainable) which falls, within the decision value for positive, it can be inferred that the teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence in primary schools is positive.

Table 4 Summary of Independent Sample t-test Showing significant difference in teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying in primary schools based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	St.dev	T	Df	Sig	Decision
Male	335	64.74	4.7833	.654	798	.514	<i>Not Significant</i>
Female	465	64.52	4.7393				

From table 4, the result showed $t(800) = .654$ $df = 798$ at the 0.05 level of significance. The significant value is 0.514, which is greater than the 0.05 alpha level. Hence, the formulated hypothesis was retained, which implies there is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying in primary schools based on gender.

Table 5 Summary of Analysis of Variance Showing significant difference in teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying in primary schools based on age

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Decision
Between Groups	337.262	3	112.421	5.045	.002	<i>Significant</i>
Within Groups	17736.386	796	22.282			
Total	18073.649	799				

Table 5 above shows summary of analysis of variance showing significant difference in teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying in primary schools based on age. The F -calculated value of 5.045, is significant at 0.05 alpha level ($p = .002 < 0.05$). Hence, the formulated hypothesis there is no significant difference in teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying in primary schools based on age was rejected, which implies that there is significant difference in teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing violence and bullying in primary schools based on age.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that teachers hold a generally positive perception of the role of peace education in addressing both bullying and violence in primary schools. The weighted mean scores of 3.19 (bullying) and 3.27 (violence) show strong consensus that peace education meaningfully contributes to reducing harmful behaviours among pupils. Teachers particularly agreed that peace education fosters empathy, tolerance, conflict-resolution abilities, and mutual respect skills consistently identified in the literature as central to promoting peaceful school environments. These findings align with earlier studies such as Adeyemi and Adeyinka (2020) and Obi & Oguejiofor (2018), who noted that peace education improves children's interpersonal relationships and reduces behavioural problems in Nigerian schools. The result is also related with the work of Salawu and Adeoye (2020), who discovered that teachers in Oyo State opined peace education as indispensable in promoting social harmony and reducing school-related aggression. Similarly, Ede and Igbo (2018) reported that teachers considered peace-building curricula essential in instilling tolerance and empathy among learners in the South-East region of Nigeria.

The positive perception expressed by teachers also reflects the outcomes reported by Turnuklu et al. (2017), whose intervention in Turkish schools significantly reduced students' aggression while strengthening constructive conflict-management strategies. This parallels the mechanisms teachers in the present study believe are activated through peace education. Likewise, the endorsement of tools such as peer mediation and peace clubs corresponds with Garandau et al. (2019), who found that anti-bullying programmes like KiVa enhance teachers' self-efficacy and competence in managing bullying incidents. The rejection of statements suggesting that peace education contributes to bullying further illustrates teachers' confidence in its preventive value.

The slightly higher mean for violence-related perceptions (3.27 compared to bullying (3.19) suggests a heightened sensitivity to overt physical aggression among Nigerian primary school teachers. This concern mirrors the findings of Khan et al. (2023), who reported that educators in Pakistan viewed peace education as essential for countering violence arising from intolerance and discrimination. Similarly, earlier Nigerian studies such as Yusuf & Adesegun (2016) highlighted teachers' belief that peace education is crucial in combating school violence, promoting social cohesion, and supporting safe learning environments.

Findings from the study also revealed demographic variations. There is significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on their gender. This is not in line with the earlier studies of Fawole (2018) and Salawu & Idris (2021) who did not emphasise gender as a strong moderator. Also, the finding is not in support of the study of Umeh and Ogundele (2022) who found that gender had minimal effect on teachers' ability to engage with peace education content. The significant gender difference observed, where male teachers reported slightly higher mean scores than female teachers add a unique contribution to the literature. This finding suggests that male teachers, who often encounter more overt aggression among boys, may be more inclined to value structured peace education interventions.

The significant differences in perception based on age underscore the influence of generational experiences on teachers' readiness to adopt peace education practices. Younger teachers may be more exposed to contemporary pedagogical approaches, while older teachers may draw from long-term classroom experiences a pattern indirectly captured in Garandau et al. (2019), where teacher readiness and confidence varied across demographic lines.

The findings are consistent with both local and international empirical evidence demonstrating that peace education plays a substantial role in reducing violence and bullying in schools. By integrating insights from Turnuklu et al. (2017), Garandau et al. (2019), Khan et al. (2023), and related Nigerian studies, this research confirms the universal value of peace education while highlighting important demographic moderators such as age and gender. These findings imply that effective peace education implementation in primary schools should consider demographic differences among teachers and provide tailored professional development to ensure comprehensive buy-in. Ultimately, the study reinforces peace education as a key strategy for promoting safe, respectful, and harmonious learning environments in Nigerian primary schools.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has clearly demonstrated that primary school teachers possess a strong and consistent belief in the power of peace education to combat both bullying and violence among pupils. Teachers overwhelmingly recognise that systematically teaching conflict resolution, empathy, mutual respect, tolerance, and non-violent communication can transform the school climate and protect the emotional and physical safety of young learners.

Based on the findings of this study on teachers' perception of the role of peace education in addressing bullying and violence among primary school pupils in Kwara State, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) should formally embed peace education within the basic education curriculum. This may be as a stand-alone theme or infused into subjects such as Civic Education, Moral Instruction, and Social Studies, with clear learning outcomes focusing on empathy, tolerance, cooperation, and non-violent communication.
2. Government and educational authorities should organise regular pre-service and in-service training programmes, including annual refresher workshops and seminars, to equip teachers with practical peace-building strategies, conflict management techniques, and skills for using non-violent disciplinary approaches.
3. Every primary school should establish Peace Clubs or peer mediation groups where pupils can practice resolving conflicts amicably, engage in cooperative problem-solving activities, and cultivate a culture of respect and peaceful coexistence.
4. School management bodies should provide strong institutional backing by allocating resources, offering incentives, adjusting school timetables to accommodate peace education activities, and ensuring teachers receive the administrative support necessary for effective implementation.

FUNDING INFORMATION

All financial responsibilities for this research were borne by the author, with no external funding received.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT

The author declares that the research was conducted independently and that there are no conflicts of interest affecting this work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author sincerely appreciates the management, staff, and pupils of the participating schools for granting permission and supporting the data collection process.

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