

School-based Violent Behaviors among Secondary School Students in Katsina State, Nigeria: Causes and Origins

By

Shehu Yahaya Tsagem (PhD)
Department of Educational Foundations
Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto
shehu.yahaya@udusok.edu.ng

Abstract

The study looked into the possible causes and origins of violent behaviour among secondary school students in Katsina state by focusing on learner related, school and home based factors. Objectives of the study were to determine the learner related, school and home based factors that lead to violent behaviour in students, based on which questions were raised that guided the conduct of the study. With a population of 102, 778 and using a multistage judgmental sample of 500 respondents, the study utilizes the survey approach. A validated researcher developed instrument tagged “Student Violent Behaviour Inventory” with a reliability index of 0.73 was used in gathering the required data which was analyzed by Spearman Rank Order procedure based on the mean average. Results indicated that all the main factors related to learner, school based and home based proved significant to resulting in violent behaviour in students. Some suggestion made include that love, care and supervision of children is given the required attention, teachers should serve as positive role models to their students, it is also of utmost importance if drug and alcohol usage among parents and students are stopped and rehabilitation process engaged and finally it is strongly advised that parents and teachers should stop putting undue pressure on children to excel beyond their capabilities.

Keywords: *School, Violent Behaviors, Students, Causes, Origins*

Introduction

Violent behavior as the tendency of aggression among individuals is as rampant as they are also multifaceted. Often times, such behaviors are discerned among children at tender ages which, if not appropriately taken care of, may manifest into more serious behaviour issues at later stage in life. Teachers, parents, the school and the society in general have to put all efforts to stem this problem that often times hampers the achievement of an individual and sometimes that proves to strangulate the positive and desirable life of the individual as an effective element in the survival of the society to which he belongs.

Since in recent years when the dimension of school-based violence has encompassed so many other concepts, the teachers and the schools, as important role players in the life of an individual, have been grappling with such situations at schools and mostly wondered how

students came to be affected so? Such violent behavior among school children have been a source of concern to all those interested in the education of the learners (Bardick & Bernes, 2008). Thus, the increasing school violence noticed as of recent has become a problem that hinders the perception and reality of the school as a safe place for both pupils and teachers (Husain, 2004). The focus of such violence can be individuals, objects or the school itself and the nature of the damage can be psychological, physical or material.

School-based violence is a problem that affects all countries; developed and developing alike. Many factors, in combination or singly, have been found to result into school violence: school characteristics, administration practices in the school, student teacher ratio and the location of the school (Husain, 2004) and neighborhood environment and violence exposure clearly affect student's development (Frey, Ruchikin, Martin and Schwabston, 2009). Others are learner to learner and learner to teacher verbal and physical abuse, verbal abuse to female genital mutilation (Delliet, 2007; Olaogyn, Ayandrian & Oyelele, 2008) as cited in Gudyanga, Gudyanga, Matamba (2015). Thus, Engbochuku's study (as cited in Aluede, 2011) revealed that in Nigeria almost four in every five participants, (78%), reported being bullied and 85% admitted to bullying others at least once.

Such and many more examples were what gave impetus for arguing that in most circumstances there were interplay of numerous factors that results in such observed behaviour. Burton (2007) argued that a series of interrelated factors impact negatively on young people in different ways. Furthermore, Benavente, (2008) indicated that no single factor causes an individual to engage in violent behaviour. The causes of violent behaviour are complex and are often unique to the personal history of the individual as well as the situational characteristics of the setting in which the behaviour occurs (SACE, 2011). Thus, causes of violent behaviour among students can be classified into three forms; learner related, family based and school based.

Reasons as to why students' exhibit tendencies for violence has received attentions from researchers in recent times and it is quite interesting to note the numerous factors that may, singly or in combination, result in such behaviour. Thus, a look into such literature reveals that the development stage the learner is operating within may be a reason for violence as observed by Marais and Meier (2010). This may explain sometimes why adolescents are notoriously known for being bullies. Marais and Meier (2010) also pointed out another important factor as that of inexperience or ignorance of the school's or class's rules and regulations or when a child

is inexperienced in handling relationship with others and behaves as he saw best. This may lead to behaviour unacceptable to others and also inappropriate to the laid down rules and regulations governing the general atmosphere of the school.

Mental pressure on the child is also found to be another factor that may warrant exhibiting violence as noted by Barbour (2011). The amount of psychological and mental pressure a child may be exposed to could lead frustration and its eventual let out in the form of aggression. Such pressure may be from home, peers, school itself or the society in general and being not matured enough in dealing and tackling such experiences may lead to the child expressing his denial and protest through violence. Thus, Gasa (2005) and Poipoi, Agak and Kabuka (2011) studies indicated that a depressed child shows tendency of often being violent.

A very interesting factor is that of Resnick, Ireland and Borowsky (2004) when their study indicated that sometimes students became violent because they want to seek attention. As baffling as this may seem, the fact remains that some children maintain being violent because it gets them into the spotlights they sought. Some children that are ardent attention seekers but has no outstanding performance that may literary push them into the glare of recognition, may resort to such violent behaviour that may earn them the attention they crave by whatever means. For this category, they may not hesitate to unleash their behaviour on others, the school, properties, or any constituted authority.

Another important factor found to result in violent behaviour among learners is that of poor academic performance and learning difficulties as explained by Difonzo, Gall and Quante (2008). It was documented that learners who found it difficult to cope academically and/or those experiencing learning difficulties may resort to violence in order to 'retaliate' on the system and those it 'favours'. Though, an unexplainable intrigue is that some of their victims may not necessarily be those pairing well academically.

A revelation that is quite interesting is that made by Bester and Plessis (2010) that retaliation against provocation and bullying at school may lead to violence. Until recently, it was not easily cognizable that individuals showing violent behaviour are doing it because of provocation and bullying that they experienced at school which lead them to practice the same thing. Sometimes, because of provocation by others with the same ilk or of the constant bullying they are subjected to such individuals may form a psychology acceptance of the behaviour and felt that it is 'normal' to behave as such. Thus, Burton (2007) pointed out that in most cases

perpetrators of violence may be victims of bullying over an extended period of time such that these students will display this kind of behaviour as a way of getting back or revenging their bad experiences.

Another factor for violent behaviour pointed out by Paterson (2012) and Poipoi, Agak and Kabuka (2010) is that of experiences in language and communication difficulties. Their studies indicated that students who have difficulties in expressing themselves when it comes to language and communication abilities, may resort to violence in order to make up or mask their inability to properly and adequately be understood verbally. Furthermore, lack of self-regulation skills was also found to be another factor for violent behaviour as pointed out by Paterson (2012) and explain that learners who are unable to employ self-regulation skills to deal with situations adequately as they arise may exhibit tendency for violent behaviour as they are weak in such tendencies when it comes to inter-personal relations.

Another important risk factor associated with violent behaviour is involvement with drugs (Reddington, 2007). There is no doubt as to the negative effects of drug abuse and as such some violent behaviour exhibited by some students has to do with drug involvement. This is one single factor that has proven immensely to negatively impact on the behaviour of individuals (Tsagem and Tambawal, 2016). Thus, most of times, violent behaviour discerned in individuals can easily be explained away due to involvement in drugs and other substance use and abuse.

Negative self-concept is another risk factor associated with violent behaviour documented by (Resnick, Ireland and Borowski, 2004). Individuals that suffer from negative self-concepts were found to be involved mostly in behaviour that are unacceptable to the norms of the society. This factor may be explained as because such individuals may eventually developed a deep resentment to all and every process as they may realize in many instances their shortcoming to operate acceptably in the society to which they belong. Thus, exhibiting violent behaviour may be an avenue to express such resentment.

Parents play an essential role in modelling behaviour. If children are exposed to violence at home they tend to model that behaviour (Barbour, 2011; Paterson, 2012). If they see constant fighting in the house they will learn to judge violent behaviour as the appropriate manner to deal with conflict (Ward, 2007 cited in Burton, 2008). This is buttressed when Frey, Ruchkin, Martin and Schwob–Stone (2009) found out that violence-exposed students reported significantly high

levels of antisocial behaviour and willingness to use physical aggression than their non-exposed counterparts.

Over time, there were studies carried out that show students in the study area being involved in violent behaviour situations (Yahaya, 2014). Such behaviour include fighting, weapon carrying and fighting with weapons, arson, assault on other students and staff, theft, willful vandalization of school properties and properties of others, unnecessary “seniority”, verbal abuse and many more. Many incidences of violent behaviour were documented by school authorities while some had to be reported to higher decision bodies or referred to the police. Interestingly, such behaviour were found to involve students in all the classes in the society and cut across the genders and the conclusion that such kind of behaviour must be triggered and maintained by many factors which had been hitherto neglected. These and many such reasons are what prompted the conduct of this study.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to find out how factors, singly or in combination, results to school-based violent behaviour among students, but specifically to:

- i. Determine the learner related factors that lead to school-based violent behaviour in students.
- ii. Determine the school-based factors that that lead to violent behaviour in students.
- iii. Determine the home-based factors that lead to school-based violent behaviour in students.

Research Questions

The following questions were asked to guide the conduct of the study:

- i. What are the leaner related factors that result to school-based violent behaviour in students?
- ii. What are the school-based factors that result to violent behaviour in students?
- iii. What are the home-based factors that lead to school-based violent behaviour in students?

Methodology

The study utilizes the survey approach as the design to collect data from students in the area of the study. This is as result that responses were sought from the students because the study aimed at finding out how factors results to school-based violent behaviour among the students.

The population of the study was all the 102,778 senior secondary school students in Katsina state (Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Katsina State Ministry of Education, 2019). As for the sampling, four schools were selected from each of the educational zones in the states, thus 28 schools were selected for the study. Five hundred (500) subjects were drawn from the total population by the multistage judgmental sampling technique. The selection was carefully done through proportional distribution (See Table 1). This constructs a 95% confidence interval with a Margin of Error of about $\pm 4.4\%$ (<http://research-advisors.com/>, 2006). The study decided on using this technique based on the fact that it aimed at only those students with record of violent behaviour.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

SN	Selected School	SS Students' Population	Sample
1	GCK (P) KTN	1589	22
2	GGSS JIBIA	692	9
3	GCK (DW) KTN	3523	48
4	GGC (SNR) KTN	2759	37
5	GPSS DAURA	802	11
6	GGSS ROGOGO	893	12
7	GSSS DAURA	1701	23
8	GGSSS DAURA	1557	21
9	GGASS D/MA	966	13
10	GGDSS D/MA	712	10
11	GPSS BATSARI	1012	14
12	GRBSS KURFI	1034	14
13	GGASS KABOMO	884	12
14	GSS FUNTUA	2517	34
15	GGSSS FUNTUA	3128	42
16	GSS FASKARI	892	12
17	GGSS KAIKAI	935	13
18	GSS KANKIA	873	12
19	GPSS KANKIA	942	13
20	GSSS INGAWA	732	10
21	GSS M/FASHI	846	11
22	GGSSS M/FASHI	1051	14
23	GSS KANKARA	1808	25
24	GSSS KARFI	1655	22
25	GGSS MANI	1005	14

26	GGSS SHARGALLE	782	11
27	GPSS MANI	706	10
28	GPSS MASHI	843	11
Total		36,839	500

Planning, Research and Statistics Department, Katsina State Ministry of Education (2019)

Instrument used for collecting data for the study was researcher developed tagged “Student Violent Behaviour Inventory”. The instrument was adjudged to possess both construct and content validities by experts in the field of psychology and guidance and counselling who went through it and made necessary adjustments and corrections. When the instrument was subjected to a test re-test reliability analysis, it yielded an index value of 0.73. Thus, both the validity and the reliability of the instrument were considered satisfactory for use in this study.

Data for the study was gathered by the researcher visiting the selected schools and administering the instrument on sampled students, this was done by the help of the school authority and some staff attached to help who also served as research assistants.

In analyzing data, Spearman Rank Order was used in ascertaining the causes and origins of violent behaviour among the students. Likewise, average means were also used to strengthened decisions taken based on the rank order. For any item to be considered good and expressive enough, it must meet the required average mean of 2.50 that serves as the cut-off point.

Results Presentation and Analysis

Results of the collected data are hereby presented I tabular forms and them amalyzed based on the research questions raised.

Research Question One: What are the learner related factors that result to school-based violent behaviour in students?

Table 2: Learner Related Factors that Result to School-Based Violent Behaviour

Items	Mean	Rank
I have to ensure that nobody failed to notice me	3.51	1 st
I have poor grades so I don’t care much about schooling	3.35	2 nd
I feel that others consider me not so important	3.34	3 rd
I am a matured adolescent, I am not a small boy anymore	3.31	4 th
I can’t always express and explain myself adequately to others	3.31	4 th
I don’t know that it is against the rule to behave like that in the class	3.27	6 th
I find it OK to use other substances and take alcohol	3.07	7 th
My problems are too much upon me and I am eager to be free of them	3.06	8 th

Most of the times I am powerless to control myself	3.00	9 th
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A look at table 2 shows that learner related factors played vital roles in resulting violent behaviour among students in the area of study. This is because all the items in the section passed the threshold of being accepted as causes and origins of violent behaviour among the students.

As it is, the table shows that the respondents mostly exhibit violent behaviour to ensure that nobody failed to notice them as indicated by a mean of 2.28 and this ranked as the highest. It also revealed that most of the respondents exhibit violent behaviour because most of them have poor grades and don't care much about schooling (Mean = 3.35), felt they were not considered as important (Mean = 3.34), felt they are big and are not small boys anymore (Mean = 3.31) and also couldn't express and explain themselves adequately to others (Mean = 3.31). Furthermore, other factors indicated were that most of the respondents are ignorant of the rules (Mean = 3.27), felt it is okay to use other substances and alcohol (Mean = 3.07), indicated that they have problems that they are eager to be free of (Mean = 3.06) and finally, most of them confess of being powerless to control the behaviour (Mean = 3.00).

Research Question Two: What are the school-based factors that result to violent behaviour in students?

Table 3: School Based Factors that Result to Violent Behaviour

Items	Mean	Rank
I always make any girl/boy pay for refusing my romantic advances	3.37	1 st
Our lessons are always very interesting, enjoyable and easy to understand	3.27	2 nd
The school's curriculum is highly loaded and very hard to comprehend	3.27	2 nd
The school's discipline mostly favours others; it is somehow biased	3.21	4 th
I only knew that the principal and a few staff engage in the control of my school	3.20	5 th
We have no adequate guidance services and our teachers are not positive role models	3.15	6 th
Teachers' discipline is always consistent and with no favour to anybody	3.14	7 th
The school administration did not gave us the necessary support to succeed	3.12	8 th
Our school is not situated in a serene, peaceful area	3.05	9 th
I always struggle to please my peers and friends in meeting their expectations	3.02	10 th
The humiliating remarks teacher(s) made to me makes me extremely angry	3.00	11 th
With more than three students sitting per desk, there isn't any more chair space in our class	2.94	12 th

A look at table 3 shows that school-based factors played significant roles in resulting violent behaviour among students in the area of study. This was significant when all the items in

the section passed the threshold of being accepted as causes and origins of violent behaviour among the students.

As it is, the table shows that the respondents mostly exhibit violent behaviour as payback to persons who refused their romantic intentions as indicated by a mean of 3.37 and this ranked as the highest. It also revealed that the respondents exhibit violent behaviour because lessons in the schools were mostly uninteresting, non-enjoyable and generally difficult (Mean = 3.27), felt that schools' curriculum were highly loaded and very hard to comprehend (Mean = 3.27), felt that discipline in the school mostly favours others and that it is somehow biased (Mean = 3.21) and also knew only that the principal and a few staff engage in the control in the schools (Mean = 3.20). Furthermore, other factors indicated that there were no adequate guidance services and teachers do not serve as positive role models (Mean = 3.15), respondents also believed that discipline by teachers was always consistent and with no favour to anybody (Mean = 3.14), they also indicated that it was because school administration did not give them the necessary support to succeed (Mean = 3.12) and also because their schools were not situated in a serene and peaceful area. Likewise, other factors indicated that it was because they always struggle to please their peers and friends in meeting their expectations (Mean = 3.02), they also indicated that humiliating remarks teacher(s) made to me makes me extremely angry and me to sometimes behave so (mean = 3.00) and finally revealed that sometimes it was because that the classes were overcrowded (Mean = 2.94).

Research Question Three: What are the home-based factors that lead to school-based violent behaviour in students?

Table 4: Home-Based Factors that Result to Violent Behaviour

Items	Mean	Rank
I can do whatever I want outside the home, because I knew my parents will always be there to protect me	3.47	1 st
My parents are always on my head to perform wonderfully and to excel in everything	3.35	2 nd
My parents neither show interest in my activities nor get involved in my affairs	3.33	3 rd
You just have to be tough to live and survive in my community	3.31	4 th
My parents do not show me much love and affection	3.29	5 th
At home, I am free to watch films, movies and other media of violent nature	3.27	6 th
My parents have attained only secondary education and are low income earners	3.22	7 th
I often see my parents verbally or physically fighting	3.21	8 th
My parents never come to my school to discuss my behaviour even when invited	3.18	9 th
My parents are harsh disciplinarians	3.16	10 th

A look at table 4 shows that home-based factors played substantial roles in resulting violent behaviour among students in the area of study. This was essential because all the items in the section passed the threshold of being accepted as causes and origins of violent behaviour among the students.

As it is, the table shows that the respondents mostly exhibit violent behaviour because they knew that they can do whatever they want outside their homes, as they knew their parents always protect them as indicated by a mean of 3.47 and this ranked as the highest. It also revealed that the respondents exhibit violent behaviour because they felt that their parents are always on their heads to perform wonderfully and to excel in everything (Mean = 3.35), because they knew that their parents neither show interest in their activities nor get involved in their affairs (Mean = 3.33), because they just have to be tough to live and survive in their communities (Mean = 3.31), because they felt that their parents do not show them much love and affection (Mean = 3.29) and also because they are free to watch films, movies and other media of violent nature at their homes (Mean = 3.27). Furthermore, respondents also indicated that their parents have attained only secondary education and are low income earners (Mean = 3.22), they also revealed that they often witnessed their parents verbally or physically fighting (Mean = 3.21), they also indicated another factor that their parents never went to their school to discuss their behaviour even when invited (Mean = (3.18), the respondents also revealed another factor that their parents are harsh disciplinarians (Mean = 3.16) and finally, the respondents also revealed that their parents use drugs and alcohol (Mean = 3.12).

Discussion

The study revealed that learner related factors played vital roles in resulting violent behaviour among students in the area of study. Among others, results indicated that persons with this behaviour dispensation engage in doing so to ensure that nobody failed to notice them, because most of them have poor grades and don't care much about schooling, because they felt they were not considered important by many, and because they felt it is okay to use other substances and alcohol. These findings are in line with other findings in the literature which pointed to almost the same things. Notable among such are studies by Resnick, Ireland and Borowsky (2004), Reddington, 2007), Difonzo, Gall and Quante (2008), Marais and Meier

(2010), Barbour (2011), Gasa (2005), Poipoi, Agak and Kabuka (2011), Bester and Plessis (2010), Burton (2007) and Paterson (2012). Thus, the present study lent its voice and contributed by upholding already existing literature in this context.

The study also revealed that school-based factors played significant roles in resulting violent behaviour among students in the area of study. Among others, results show that the respondents mostly exhibit violent behaviour as payback to persons who refused their romantic intentions, they also exhibit violent behaviour because lessons in the schools were mostly uninteresting, non-enjoyable and generally difficult, felt that schools' curriculum were highly loaded and very hard to comprehend, felt that discipline in the school mostly favours others and that it is somehow biased and also there were no adequate guidance services and teachers do not serve as positive role models, they also indicated that it was because school administration did not give them the necessary support to succeed and they also indicated that it was because they always struggle to please their peers and friends. These findings are also in line with previous findings in other studies and notable among them are that of Bester and Plessis (2010), Burton (2007), Paterson (2012), Barbour (2011), Gasa (2005) and Poipoi, Agak and Kabuka (2011).

Finally, the study shed more light that home-based factors played substantial roles in resulting violent behaviour among students in the area of study. Among others, results exposed that respondents mostly exhibit violent behaviour because they knew that they can do whatever they want outside their homes, as they knew their parents always protect them, because they felt that their parents are always on their heads to perform wonderfully and to excel in everything, because they knew that their parents neither show interest in their activities nor get involved in their affairs, because they just have to be tough to live and survive in their communities, because they are free to watch films, movies and other media of violent nature in their homes, because they often witnessed their parents verbally or physically fighting, because that their parents are harsh disciplinarians and because their parents use drugs and alcohol. These findings are in line with other findings in the literature notable among which are Barbour (2011), Paterson (2012), Burton 2007) and Frey, Ruchkin, Martin and Schwob–Stone (2009).

Suggestion

It is suggested that all concerned with the upbringing and training of children should bear in mind that it would be best if love, care and supervision of children is given the required attention and also that parents should know how to conduct themselves whenever children are

involved. It would also be best if teachers should serve as positive role models to their students. It is also pertinent to sanction what media children will be interacting with by both parents and teachers. It is also of utmost importance if drug and alcohol usage among parents and students should be stopped and rehabilitation process engaged. It is strongly advised that parents and teachers should stop putting undue pressure on children to excel beyond their capabilities.

Conclusion

Conclusively, It is pertinent to note that learner related, school based and home based are quite revealing as factors that result in violent behaviour among students in the area of study. Henceforth, these factors should be given consideration by all in order to understand other reasons why violent behaviour among students has continued to become a recurring menace and the possible ways to ameliorate the problem.

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