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Teachers' Perception of Adolescents Violence in Anambra State Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The study which was a survey investigated teachers' perception of adolescents' violence in secondary schools in Awka Education zone of Anambra State. The study was guided by three research questions and two null hypotheses stated at .05 level of significance. A sample of 400 out of 1,863 teachers responded to the questionnaire items. The data generated through the questionnaire were statistically analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. The study found out that such forms of violence as destruction of school property, fighting, kicking, bullying, pushing, breaking and destroying other students' lockers and personal belongings, cultism, riots, beating teachers, flogging the junior students by the senior ones are prevalent in secondary schools. Again the study revealed that the degree of adolescents' involvement in violence is relatively very high. In view of the findings of the study, recommendations of the study were highlighted.

Introduction

Secondary education is a form of education offered to children between the ages of 11 years to 18 years plus. The National Policy on Education (2004) defined secondary education as education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. The broad goals of secondary

education shall be to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education. To achieve the stated goals, secondary education shall be of six years duration, given in two stages – a junior secondary school and senior secondary school stages, each shall be of three years duration.

As a matter of fact, secondary education occupies a very strategic position in any nation's educational system. With its consumer and producer status, secondary education not only determines the fate but also dictates the pace of education at the primary and tertiary levels. First it consumes the products of the primary system. The number of primary school leavers who would receive secondary education is determined by the absorptive capacity of the secondary education system itself. Wastage and effectiveness of the primary level are clearly reflected in the growth and development of secondary school leavers from where various higher educational institutions draw their entrants.

In Nigeria, secondary education has been taken seriously from its earliest times not only as an acceptable qualification for good jobs but also as the gateway to a sound higher education both for academics and professional. It is pertinent to note that most of the children found in secondary school are adolescents; aged between 11 and 20 years.

Adolescence is the period in the developmental stage of a human being when an individual is faced with the problem of shedding of the relatively comfortable role of a child or that of a reasonable adult (Berger, 1991) It is a transaction between childhoods and adulthood. To Chukwu (2003) it is a transition stage, a difficult stage and a delicate stage that needs to be handled with caution by both the adolescent and all those who have influence over him, especially the parents. Hall in Shertzer and Stone (1976) described adolescence as a period of storm and stress. Adolescence is a period when people begin to assert themselves in various ways by throwing away "tradition in general and questioning the teachings of parents, teachers and other authority figures." The adolescents are very eager and desirous to learn from the adults and siblings. In the process the watch films and televisions where violence are demonstrated. In the actual life, they unleash harm on one another.

The adolescent wishes to control his own life but finds life full of frustrating obstacles. He may be aggressive or rebellious one day and co-operative and affectionate the next. Adolescents care about how they look and can go to the

end of the world to initiate what is regarded as a fashion in vogue. They regard this fashion good for the new millennium. Adolescents also like to enjoy what adults regard as good life. They are ever ready to steal the parents car key and drive out to show-case themselves. If they have no normal access to items of comfort, they may attempt to get them through non-conventional ways such as robbery, killings, gangsterism and fighting. This situation most of the time leads to violence of various kinds.

Violence is the use of physical force to accomplish an action. Tamuno (1991) defined violence as the unlawful use of threat or force. Demenach (1978: 718) views the term from three analyses:

- Psychological, involving irrational and murderous use of forces,
- ethical involving the vandalism of a neighbours property or an abuse of his liberty; and
- political, involving forceful seizure of power or the illegitimate use of political power.

Okunade (199:19) identified individual violence as consisting of undesirable acts such as fighting, bullying, aggression, murder, street disturbances, battery and others between individuals, whole group or mass violent acts, resulting from mass actions, cultism, riots, demonstrations, agitation and sexual violence, as physical assault, gang or individual rape, verbal assault , and use of supernatural power eg juju to harm victims, who refuse love advances or are perceived as being unfaithful.

Incidence of violence in our tertiary, secondary and primary schools in Nigeria is no longer a news. Evidence of violence abound in our society and institutions of higher learning. Only a few minutes of reading from the print media or listening to the electronic media will amaze a modest observer at the extent violence occur in this country. Chukwu (2003) observed that violence is prevalent in the primary school which is the foundation level of our education system. Holtzman and Reyeslagunes (1981) show that violence is widespread and greater number of violent acts are caused by adolescents. It is not clearly known whether violence is prevalent in secondary schools if the response is in the affirmative, what then is the degree of the adolescents' involvement in violence? What implications have this for Guidance and Counselling? This study therefore seeks to provide answers to these questions.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions

1. What forms of Violence are prevalent in secondary schools?
2. To what extent are adolescent in secondary schools involved in violence?
3. To what extent are male and female adolescents involved in violence?

Hypothesis

The study is further guided by this null hypothesis.

H01: There is no significance different between male and female adolescents in their involvement in violence.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey design aimed at finding out the prevalence of violence among adolescents in secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State. The population of the study comprised 1,863 secondary school teachers, in Awka Education Zone . A sample of 500 secondary school teachers were selected for the study through simple random sampling technique involving balloting. Out of this sample, 285 were females whereas 115 others were males. A total of 20 teachers were sampled from 25 selected secondary schools in the study area. This gave a total of 400 teachers.

A 20 item structured questionnaire designed by the researcher and face validated by experts was employed to gather data. The questionnaire has three major sections A,B and C. Section A dealt with the personal data, section B treated the forms of violence prevalent in secondary schools while section C discussed the incidence or degree at which violence occur among adolescent boys and girls. The instrument was structured or a four point Likert-type of scale of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Agree and in some cases, always, often, sometimes and never rated 4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

A trial testing was carried out on the instrument. The questionnaire was administered on 25 teachers (15 females and 10 males) in a school in Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State Data collected were

analysed using Kuder-Richardson (21) and a coefficient of internal consistency of 0.76 was established.

The researcher with the help of two trained research assistants administered the questionnaire on 400 respondents. The respondents were given sufficient time (10-30 minutes) to complete and return the questionnaire. The data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. A mean rating of 2.55 indicated acceptance of items while mean rating below 2.55 indicated rejection. The null hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significant.

Results

The results of the study were based on three research questions and one null hypothesis that guided the study.

Research question 1: What forms of violence are prevalent in Anambra State secondary schools?

Table 1 shows the various forms of violence prevalent in secondary schools. The result of the analysis showed that items 2-3, 6, 8-16 had means score above 2.55 which indicates acceptance while items 1,4,5 and 17 indicates non-acceptance. With a grand mean of 2.72 and a standard deviation of 0.89 the respondents' responses had indicated that most listed items above are prevalent in secondary schools.

Research Question 2

To what extent are adolescents in secondary schools involved in violence?

Table 2 above shows the incidence of violent acts often or sometimes exhibited by Adolescents in secondary schools. The analysis of data revealed that violent behaviours such as physical assault, rioting, agitation, fighting, bullying, battery, pushing, destruction of personal and school property, and beating occur very often. These factors recorded mean scores that are above 2.555. Other violence acts which are observed to be prevalent in schools but which occur sometimes includes, cultism, murder, demonstration, rape, aggression, gangsterism and kidnapping. These items had mean scores below 2.55 which is the cut off score upon which decisions are based. Above all, incidence of violence is prevalent in schools?

To what extent are male and female adolescents involved in violence in secondary schools.

Table 3 displays the opinion of the respondents on the incidence of violence among male and female adolescents in secondary schools. According to the

table, the male teachers recorded a grand mean of 46.63 while their female counterparts had a grand mean of 39.66. This indicates that the male adolescents are more involved in violence than the female adolescents.

Hypothesis H₀1:

There is no significance difference between male and female adolescents in their manifestation of violence as perceived by teachers.

Since the calculated t-test score is (4.54) greater than the critical/table value of 1.960, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative. This means that gender is significant factor in determining the incidence of male and female adolescents as perceived by teachers.

Discussion of results

In view of the analysis of data, the results/findings of the study are discussed in accordance with the basis research questions and hypothesis that guided the study thus:-

The first research question tried to ascertain the forms of violence prevalent in secondary schools as perceived by teachers. The result of the study as presented in table 1 showed that violence such as fighting, destruction of school property, beating, kicking, bullying, pushing, cultism among others are prevalent in secondary schools. These items had average mean score of 2.75 which is above the acceptable mean of 2.55. It is quite obvious that human society is in continuous conflict situation as argued by conflict theorists such as Carl Marx. School as a segment of a larger society is therefore in a state of conflict to achieve equilibrium. The Behaviourist theorists such as Watson (1913), Erickson (1950) and Skinner (1971) believes that the child's behaviour is determined by the societal influence. It is therefore not surprising that violence which prevails in the wider society and institutions of higher learning is also found in secondary schools among adolescents.

This study is also inconsonance with Smith (2001) who observed that secondary school system has become a place for students to display their aggressive behaviour since most of them are fond of hitting one another or bullying while in most issues students fight unnecessarily to exhibit act of superiority over one another. This development tends to be the situation in Anambra State Secondary Schools.

The second research question dealt with the incidence of violence among adolescents in secondary schools. The outcome of the study revealed that violence in secondary school is very rampant and occur frequently. The items listed in table 2(1-17) had mean scores whose average (12.72) is above the acceptable mean of 2.55. The responses of the respondents show that the degree of the adolescents' involvement in violence is quite high since they are involved in violence always. However, there are some violent acts which occur sometimes but not always. They include; Murder, kidnapping cultism, demonstration and rioting.

The results of this study agree with Chukwu (2003), Okunade (1999) and Onyejiaka (2005) who argued that violence is very common in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In situations like stress, conflict, anxiety and unacceptable treatment from the school management/authorities and poor school achievement resulting from poor teaching make the adolescents become violent.

Research question three was asked to find out the incidence of violence between male and female adolescents. The findings of the study showed that the male students more than their female colleagues are more involved in violent acts such as fighting, bullying, pushing damaging school property, gangsterism, physical assault, and aggression. The reason could be attributed to the fact that men tend to take more risks than their female colleagues. The results of the present study agree with Brown (1986) Garwin & Furman, (1989) who contended that male adolescents are involved in violence as they want desperately to "fit in". Maxavid (1971) argued that the females confirm to existing rules and regulations with less resistance unlike the males. The ability of the female to confirm to rules might also be attributed to the fact that females are generally considered as the weaker sex. The findings of this study disagree with Okoye (2005) who asserted that both male and female adolescents are involved in violence. He argued that there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents in their involvement in violence. This makes the findings of this study inconclusive.

The study was also guided by a null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female adolescents in their involvement in violent acts. The analysis showed that the male adolescents are more involved in violence than their female colleagues as perceived by the teachers. The outcome of this study agrees with Okoye (2005) and

Onyejiaka (1991) who contended that male adolescents are more involved in violence than their female counterparts.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

Violence was defined as consisting of undesirable acts such as fighting, bullying, aggression, murder, street disturbances, battery and others between individuals, whole group or mass violent acts, resulting from mass actions, cultism, riots, demonstrations, agitation and sexual violence, as physical assault, gang or individual rape, verbal assault, and use of supernatural power e.g. juju to harm victims, who refuse love advances or are perceived as being unfaithful. The present study has confirmed that these unwanted behaviours adversely affect learning in our secondary schools. To this end, some suggestions have been made to eradicate the menace in our secondary school

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

1. The adolescents should be counselled in all aspects of life including sex education. According to Eke (1984) comprehensive sex education encompasses the provision of relevant information and the development of healthy attitudes which empower individuals to take appropriate gender beneficial decisions in their cultural environment.
2. The school should occasionally organize workshops, seminars and conferences on the evil consequences of adolescents' involvement in violence.
3. There is need to introduce the teaching of peace education in schools. This will enable the adolescents to appreciate the relevant of peace in their lives.
4. The parents, churches, town unions and non-governmental organizations should join hands with the school in the fight against students' involvement in violence and other social vices.
5. The school authorities should be consistent in their application of school rules and regulations. The school should be objective, fair and equal in handling all disciplinary problems of the school.
6. The school should endeavour to maintain an environment that is very conducive, congenial, challenging and threat free so that the students will thrive.

7. The school should join the recent "Re-branding Nigeria Project" which emphasis a change of value among all Nigerians. The adolescents who are leaders of tomorrow need to be assisted by the schools to review their values in line with the current and rapid changes in the society. This will assist the adolescent in ensuring that there is cohesion in what they learnt earlier as social values and what is encountered as the adolescents try to search for identity.

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Table 1: Teachers responses on forms of violence in secondary schools (N=400)

S/N	FORMS OF VIOLENCE	X	SD	DECISION
1	Murder	1.43	0.72	Disagree
2	Cultism	2.79	0.81	Agree
3	Physical assault	2.78	0.99	Agree
4	Rioting	2.34	0.68	Disagree
5	Demonstration	2.28	0.69	Disagree
6	Agitation	2.86	0.98	Agree
7	Individual rape	2.01	0.84	Disagree
8	Fighting	3.28	0.95	Agree
9	Bullying	3.14	0.97	Agree
10	Battery	2.74	1.20	Agree
11	Aggression	2.86	0.89	Agree
12	Pushing	2.72	0.96	Agree
13	Destroying school property	3.30	0.88	Agree
14	Beating	3.20	0.84	Agree
15	Gangsterism	2.66	1.24	Agree
16	Damaging own and other students properties.	3.52	0.74	Agree
17	Kidnapping	1.92	0.72	Disagree
	TOTAL	2.72	0.89	

Table 2: Teachers responses on the incidence of violence in secondary schools

S/N	FORMS OF VIOLENCE	X	SD	DECISION
1	Murder	1.43	0.64	Sometimes
2	Cultism	1.95	1.00	Often
3	Physical assault	3.02	0.88	Sometimes
4	Rioting	2.06	0.87	Sometimes
5	Demonstration	1.96	0.88	Often
6	Agitation	2.69	1.00	Sometimes
7	Individual rape	1.79	0.71	Sometimes
8	Fighting	2.9	1.23	Often
9	Bullying	2.80	0.95	Often
10	Battery	2.50	1.05	Sometimes
11	Aggression	2.35	1.26	Often
12	Rushing	2.53	1.13	Often
13	Destroying school property	2.63	1.09	Often
14	Beating	2.69	1.12	Often
15	Gangsterism	2.33	1.15	Often
16	Damaging own and other students property.	2.53	1.13	Often
17	Kidnapping	1.81	0.78	Sometimes

Table 3: Teachers response on the incidence of violence between male and female adolescent

S/N	FORMS OF VIOLENCE	MALE = 115			FEMLE = 285		
		X	SD	DECISIO N	X	SD	DECISION
1	Murder	1.67	0.66	Sometimes	1.34	0.61	Sometimes
2	Cultism	2.03	0.90	Often	1.95	1.04	Often
3	Physical assault	2.16	0.88	Sometimes	2.85	0.89	Sometimes
4	Rioting	2.26	0.86	Sometimes	1.98	0.87	Sometimes
5	Demonstration	2.31	0.73	Often	1.81	0.89	Often
6	Agitation	2.98	0.77	Sometimes	2.75	1.10	Sometimes
7	Individual rape	2.03	0.70	Sometimes	1.69	0.69	Sometimes
8	Fighting	3.45	0.63	Often	2.69	1.33	Often
9	Bullying	3.08	0.90	Often	2.60	0.86	Often
10	Battery	2.93	0.72	Sometimes	2.82	1.10	Sometimes
11	Aggression	3.32	0.94	Often	2.50	1.26	Often
12	Pushing	3.19	0.79	Often	2.70	1.14	Often
13	Destroying	3.17	0.70	Often	2.62	1.05	Often

	school property						
14	Beating	3.10	0.87	Often	2.52	1.16	Often
15	Gangsterism	3.13	0.96	Often	3.07	1.01	Often
16	Damaging own and other student	2.38	1.25	Often	2.59	1.07	Often
17	Kidnapping	2.04	0.70	Sometimes	1.68	0.77	Sometimes

Table4: t-test statistics on the teachers’ perception on the incidence of violence between male and female adolescents.

Sources of variation	No	X	Sd	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	115	46.63	13.28	398	4.54	1.960	H ₀ 1 Rejected
Female	285	39.66	15.83				