

Socio-Demographic Disparities and Aggressive Behaviour of Secondary School Students in North-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated socio-demographic disparities and aggressive behaviour of secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was adopted. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 12 secondary schools in the region. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 400 students from the selected schools. An adapted instrument on Aggressive Behaviour was used for data collection. Face and content validity of the instrument was established by experts; and its test re-test reliability coefficient yielded 0.72. Results of this study showed a high level of aggressive behaviour among students in North-West, Nigeria. It was also revealed that the most common patterns of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria were hostility and physical aggressive behaviours. There is a significant difference in students' aggressive behaviour based on gender, parents' socio-economic status, parents' educational background and school type. Recommendations were made based on the findings that parents and teachers should inculcate good behavioural patterns such as tolerance, perseverance, and emotional control in students regardless of their socio-demographic disparities through behaviour modification techniques in order to reduce their aggressive behaviour, also periodic orientation should be given to students irrespective of their socio-demographic disparities by the school authority on emotional management this will eliminate or reduce students' aggressive behaviour.

Keyword: Aggressive Behaviour, Socio-Demographic Disparities, Students, North-West, Nigeria

Introduction

Aggressive behaviour exhibited by students in Nigerian institutions of learning has called for a serious attention of every stakeholder most importantly psychologists. The effect of aggression is not only affecting the students alone, but also teachers,

parents, guidance, school management and the society at large. This behaviour negatively affects the effectiveness of the school activities and makes the school climate uncomfortable for effective and efficient teaching and learning. As a result of this, students live in violent and risking environment and make the culture of learning and teaching very difficult and unfruitful. Regrettably, students are not immune to the aggressive behaviour, either as perpetrators or victims; there are numerous external forces traceable to their aggressive behavior, (Velisiwe, 2012). More so, various literature and empirical studies attested to the fact that students' aggressive behaviour is based on so many factors (Budhal, 2006; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2005; Preininger, 2007; Richardson, 2007). These factors are not unconnected and not limited to the following factors: students' family background; schools' environment; peer group; societal needs; and value systems. If the student is brought up in a disrupted family, in an unstable environment and in a school where the climate is not friendly and conducive for learning, these lead students to exhibit delinquent behaviour; be emotionally disturbed and display destructive behavior such as aggression (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2005, Preininger, 2007). The victims of aggressive behaviour and aggressors may display psychosocial problem maladjustment although the affected individuals are those that are harmed. While the affected people typically develop depression, social anxiety, problem of relationship with others and loneliness, aggressors develop high level of tension, sleeping disorder and hyperactivity (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike, & Afen-Akpaيدا, 2008; Rosen, Underwood, Beron, Gentsch, Wharton, & Rahdar, 2009; Evans, Fraser, & Cotter, 2014).

Aggression is a concept that takes different types, ranging from relatively minor acts for instance, such as nick naming or pushing to major acts such as hitting, kicking, or punching, stabbing, shooting, or killing. The fact that aggression appears in different types can sometimes make it difficult to determine whether aggression has occurred. According to Anderson and Bushman (2002), aggression is considered as any behavior directed toward another fellow being with the proximate intent to harm his fellow individuals. In the same vein, the perpetrator believes that the behaviour will harm the target, and that the target is stimulated to avoid the behaviour. The fore-going statements embedded several key points that help to differentiate aggressive behaviour from other behaviour such as violence among others. Firstly, aggression is considered as an

observable behaviour not a thought neither a feeling. Although there is also aggressive cognitions, example of hostile attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, or wishes and aggressive affect for example feelings of anger, rage, or desire for revenge can and frequently do serve as important precursors to aggressive behavior, neither aggressive cognition nor aggressive affect is considered aggression. Secondly, the act must be intentionally carried out with the purpose of harming another. This implies that accidental harm for instance unintentionally elbowing someone in a crowded room does not consider as aggression. Thirdly, aggression involves people, this means damaging inanimate objects such as kicking a wall, smashing plates, or pounding one's fists on a table is not considered aggression unless it is done with the intention of harming others. Lastly, the harmed person must be motivated to avoid that injury. This does not mean that some of these types of behaviour are totally unconnected with aggression (Johnie & Craig 2017).

More importantly, literature and empirical studies have been reviewed on gender differences and aggression. For instance, Marsh and Campbell, (1986) cited in Ugwu (2011) and the social Issue Research Centre, (2004) revealed that males are more aggressive and display aggression in different ways, than their female counterparts. The greatest disparities, according to the Social Issues Research Centre (2004) are seen from puberty to early adulthood although differences are evident from the age of two years. Crick and Grot (1995) cited in Ugwu (2011) challenged the allegedly simplistic account of aggression and gender differences based on measures of physical violence. They argued that aggression may also underline behaviors that do not involve physical aggressions e.g. manipulation, exclusion, gossip, etc. They revealed that levels of aggression as a whole may not be significantly different between male and female rather it is the manner in which it is expressed that is gender specific.

Parental educational background is considered an important intervening variable in this study, this implies parents' academic attainment. According to the structure of General Aggression Model (GAM; by DeWall, Anderson, & Bushman, 2011), parental level of education extends to the first stage as a person variable, this has been related to a variety of attainment such as academic achievement, and mental well-being (Sonego, Llácer, Galán, & Simón, 2013; Kallitsoglou, 2014, Gebremariam, Lien, Torheim, Andersen, Melbye, & Glavin, 2015). It has also been linked to fewer instances of

aggressive behavior in adolescents Nocentini, Menesini, & Pastorelli, 2010; Veronneau, Racer, Fosco, & Dishion, 2014). For instance, Nocentini et al, 2010) found that a lower level of parental educational achievement was related to higher level of physical dating aggression. Veronneau, Racer, Fosco, & Dishion, (2014) revealed that parental level of education was negatively related to behavioural problem such as aggression.

Family socio-economic background is also considered as one of the intervening variables in this study, family socio economic background is determined by family sources of income, and societal values. The seeming undependability of the family to curb the problem of delinquent behaviours is related to the unprecedented global economy inflation that has a significant effect on the family, leading to the breakdown of family ties. This is noticed in the aftermath effect this has on students' academic pursuit. Family poor socio-economic income affects parents' in giving their children well and better education; it also affects students' academic performance. According to Uche (1994) cited in Ekpo, and Ajake, (2013) students from high socio-status family were provided with good and quality education from lower to the higher level. And there are likely to be less delinquent than their counterparts from poor socio-economic family. Ekpo and Ajake, (2013) asserted that there is a relationship between family socio-economic status and students' juvenile delinquency. They stated further that students from low socio-economic parents are more delinquent than those from high socio-economic status. This implies that students' delinquency is determined mostly by financial condition of their parents. In other words, students exhibit delinquent behaviour when parents' socio-economic status is poor. When students are not provided with the school necessary needs by their parents, there is the tendency for them to find alternative ways to get their needs which may lead them develop and exhibit anti-social behaviours such as aggression, rape, street fighting, cultism etc.

According to Moeller (2001) there are two patterns of aggressive behavior, thus: physical aggression and verbal aggression. Physical aggressions connote all activities in which actual physical harm is intentionally done to other fellow beings such as shooting, throwing harmful objects, hitting, pushing kicking, stabbing, and shoving, breaking windows, defacing property, and setting fires. In the same vein, verbal aggression includes using derogative or abusive statements to harm others. It also include the

followings: making threats or writing threatening messages, spreading gossip, calling names, and teasing. Other patterns of aggression are hostile, reactive or instrumental. Hostile aggression has the main goal of harming others, reactive aggression on the other hand relates to an angry aggressive act in response to some precipitating environmental events or behaviour. Instrumental aggression connotes unprovoked aggression, whereas reactive aggression is a provoked aggression (Moeller 2001). Based on the above backdrop, several studies have been conducted on students' aggressive behavior in relation with other variables of interest, those previous studies left some gaps on fill and as a result of limitations observed in the past studies with particular reference to the variables covered, the area of their operation, sample size and location and based on the available studies at the researchers' disposal no study was conducted on socio-demographic disparities and aggressive behaviour of secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria. To make up part of this study therefore, this study examined socio-demographic disparities and aggressive behaviour of secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose and objective of this study is to examine socio-demographic disparities and aggressive behaviour of secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is set to examine:

1. differences in secondary school students' aggressive behavior based on parents' socio-economic status
2. differences in secondary school students' aggressive behavior based on parents' educational background
3. differences in secondary school students' aggressive behavior based on school type

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered to sharpen the focus of the study:

1. What is the level of aggressive behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria?
2. What are the patterns of aggressive behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour based on parents' socio-economic status

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour based on parents' educational background

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour based on school type

Methodology

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 12 secondary schools in four (4) states in North-West Nigeria, namely: Kano, Jigawa, Kaduna, Bauchi states respectively while simple random sampling technique was used to select four hundred (400) students from the selected schools. In doing these two hundred and fifteen (215) males and one hundred and eighty-five (185) females were selected respectively. To measure aggressive behavior of students' one instrument was adapted, namely: Aggressive Behaviour Questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts in educational psychology and it was found to be reliable for this study, it was also subjected to pilot study through test re-test method and found to have reliability coefficient of 0.72. The instrument was administered to the respondents with the assistance of six (6) research assistants. After the questionnaire administration process, out of the 400 copies of the instrument, 383 copies were recovered; the data were subsequently coded and analyzed.

The "Aggression Behaviour Questionnaire" was scored on five-point Likert scales, thus: All the time (ATT) = 5, B Often (O) = 4, C Sometimes (S) = 3, D Rarely (R) = 2, and E Not at All (NA) = 1. The respondents' level of aggressive behaviour was

determined as follows: The aggression instrument contains 27 items with scoring scale that ranges from 5 and 1. The highest possible score any respondent can obtain on a scale or instrument is 135 (that is, 27 items x 5); while the lowest score is 27 (that is, 27 items x 1). Thus, score range between 82-135 is classified as high level of aggression, scores between 55-81 is considered moderate level of aggression; while scores between 1-54 is categorized as low level of aggression. On the other hand, mean ranking was used to determine the patterns of aggressive behaviour among the respondents as follows: the scoring format range from 1 and 5. Thus, the mean score of 3.00 and above was considered the significant patterns of aggressive behaviour among the respondents; while mean values below 3.00 was classified as less involved patterns of aggressive behaviour by the students. The data collected was analysed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The percentage and mean ranking were the descriptive statistics used to presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents and to answer the research questions raised in the study. In the same vein, the independent t-test was employed as inferential statistic to test the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The SPSS Software of version 23 was the statistical tool used to run the data analysis.

Results

The demographic variables of the respondents are presented with frequency and percentage as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Percentage Distributions of Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

N	Variables		Frequency	Percentage %
1	Gender	Male	270	70.5
		Female	113	29.5
		Total	383	100.0
2	Parental Socioeconomic Status	High status	99	25.8
		Lower status	284	74.2
		Total	383	100.0
3	Parental Educational Status	Literate	96	25.1
		Non-Literate	287	46.0
		Total	383	100.0
4	School Type	Public	290	75.7
		Private	93	24.3
		Total	383	100.0

Table 1 shows that out of the 383 respondents who took part in the study, 270 (70.5%) were males; while 113 (29.5%) were females; hence, male secondary school students were more represented in this study than their female counterparts. Parental socioeconomic status of the respondents revealed that 99 (25.8%) of them were from high socioeconomic status; while 284 (74.2%) were from low socioeconomic background. This implies that many parents of the respondents that participated in this study were from low socio-economic background. With respect to parental educational status, 96 (25.1%) of the respondents indicated that their parents were literates; while 287 (74.9%) stated that their parents were non-literate. This suggests that majority of parents of the secondary school students that took part in this study were non-literate. In terms of school type, 290 (75.7%) of the respondents were from public secondary schools; while 93 (24.3%) were students from private secondary schools. This follows that public secondary school students were the more represented in this study than those from private schools.

Research Question 1: What is the level of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria?

Table 2: Level of Aggressive Behaviour among Secondary School Students in North-West, Nigeria

Response Range	Frequency	Percentage %	Remark
82-135	218	56.9	High aggression level
55-81	136	35.5	Moderate aggression level
1-54	29	7.6	Low aggression level

Table 2 contains the classification of aggressive behaviour levels among respondents that took part in this study. Out of the 383 respondents that participated in this study, 218 (56.9%) fall within 82-135 response range, 136 (35.5%) were within 55-81 response range; while 29 (7.6%) of the respondents' response range was between 1-54 on the aggression questionnaire items. This implies that there is high level of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria who participated in this study.

Research Question 2: What are the patterns of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean Ranking of Responses on Patterns of Aggressive Behaviour among Respondents

N	Patterns of aggressive behavior	Mean	SD	Rank
	Hostility aggression	4.60	2.50	1 st
	Physical aggression	4.09	3.31	2 nd
	Verbal aggression	3.36	1.83	3 rd
	Indirect aggression	3.08	1.88	4 th

The aggression behaviour instrument has four distinct segments of physical, verbal, hostility and indirect aggression, with 8, 5, 8 and 6 items under each segment respectively. Table 3 shows the mean ranking of the four dimensions or patterns of aggressive behaviour among the secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria. The table shows that hostility and physical aggression with mean and standard deviation values of ($x = 4.60; 4.09$ and $SD = 2.50; 3.31$) took precedence over others and were ranked 1st and 2nd respectively. Therefore, the most common forms of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria that participated in this study were hostility and physical aggressive behaviours.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent t-test Comparing Difference in Male and Female Respondents' Aggressive Behaviour

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. T	p-value
Male	270	76.88	14.78	381	2.43*	0.015
Female	113	72.96	13.29			

Sig., $p < 0.05$

Table 4 shows that at a degree of freedom (df) of 381, the calculated t-value of 2.43 is significant at 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria is rejected. This means that aggressive behaviour varied between males and females students. Meanwhile, male students are more aggressive than their female counterparts.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour based on parents' socio-economic status.

Table 5: Independent t-test Comparing Difference in Respondents' Aggressive Behaviour Based on Parents' Socio-Economic Status

PSES	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. T	p-value
High SES	99	75.96	16.96	381	2.18*	0.048
Low SES	284	75.64	13.77			

Sig., $p < 0.05$

Table 5 shows that at a degree of freedom (df) of 381, the calculated t-value of 2.18 is significant at 0.05 level of significance ($p = 0.048 < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria based on parents' socioeconomic status is rejected. This means that aggressive behaviour varied among the students with respect to the difference in their socio-economic background. Meanwhile, respondents from low socio-economic family background are more aggressive than those from high socio-economic status.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour based on parents' educational background.

Table 6: Independent t-test Comparing Difference in Respondents' Aggressive Behaviour Based on Parents' Educational Background

PEB	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. T	p-value
Literate	96	79.49	12.84	381	2.97*	0.003
Non-Literate	287	74.46	14.76			

Sig., $p < 0.05$

Table 6 shows that at a degree of freedom (df) of 381, the calculated t-value of 2.97 is significant at 0.05 level of significance ($p = 0.003 < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria based on parents' educational background is rejected. This means that aggressive behaviours vary among students from parents with

diverse educational background. Meanwhile, students from illiterate family background are more aggressive than those from literate family.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour based on school type.

Table 7: Independent t-test Comparing Difference in Respondents' Aggressive Behaviour Based on School Type

School Type	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. T	p-value
Public	290	75.20	14.68	381	2.25*	0.029
Private	93	77.35	13.65			

Sig. at $p < 0.05$

Table 7 shows that at a degree of freedom (df) of 381, the calculated t-value of 2.25 is significant at 0.05 level of significance ($p = 0.029 < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria based on school type is rejected. This means that aggressive behaviour varied among the students with respect to school type. Meanwhile, public school students are more aggressive than their counterparts in private school.

Discussion of findings

The result of this study revealed that there is high level of aggression among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria who participated in this study. Out of the 383 respondents that participated in this study, 218 (56.9%) fall within 82-135 response range, 136 (35.5%) were within 55-81 response range; while 29 (7.6%) of the respondents' response range was between 1-54 on the aggression questionnaire items. This shows that majority of secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria exhibits aggressive behaviour towards others regardless of their socio-demographic disparities in gender, parents' socio-economic status, parents' educational background and school type.

The finding of this study also revealed that hostility and physical aggression with mean and standard values of ($x=4.60$; 4.09 and $SD= 2.50$; 3.31) took precedence over others and were ranked 1st and 2nd respectively. Therefore, the most common patterns of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria that

participated in this study were hostility and physical aggressive behaviours. This implies that hostility and physical aggressive such as insults, assaults, among other were found to be manifested in secondary school students' attitude in North-West, Nigeria. The finding of this study corroborates the findings of Moeller (2001) who postulated two patterns of aggressive behavior, (physical aggression and verbal aggression). According to him physical aggression includes all activities in which actual physical harm is intentionally done to other fellow being examples include shooting, throwing harmful objects, hitting, pushing kicking, stabbing, and shoving, breaking windows, defacing property, and setting fires. While hostile aggression has the main goal of harming others.

The finding of this study revealed that there is a significant difference between male and female secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria. This means that aggressive behaviour varied between the male and female students. Meanwhile, male students were more aggressive than their female counterparts. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Marsh and Campbell (1986), cited in Ugwu (2011) and the social Issue Research Centre (2004) which revealed that male students are more aggressive than their female counterparts. The finding of this study against the finding of Crick and Grot (1995) cited in Ugwu (2011) who found that the level of aggression may not be significantly different between male and female students.

The finding of this study revealed that there is significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria based on parents' socio-economic status. This means that aggressive behaviours varied among the students with respect to the difference in their parents' socio-economic background. This connotes that students from poor family background were more aggressive than those from rich family background. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Ekpo, and Ajake, (2013) who found that students from poor family are more delinquent than those from rich family. This shows that students' delinquency is determined mostly by financial condition of their family. In other words, students exhibit delinquent acts when there is no financial support from the parents. By implication this may result to students' anti-social behaviours such as aggression, stealing, and other criminal behaviour. In the same vein, in the study conducted by Uche (1994) as cited in Ekpo, and Ajake, (2013) it was revealed that students from high socio-economic family background usually provided

with quality education. For this opportunity; they may likely be less delinquent than their counterparts from low socio-economic family status. Similarly, this finding is also supported with the finding of Coughin and Vuchimah (1996), in Ekpo, and Ajake, (2013) who revealed that there is a relationship between family socio-economic status and students' juvenile delinquency.

The finding of this study revealed that there is a significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria based on parents' educational background. This means that aggressive behavior varies among students from parents with different history of educational background. The finding of this study corroborates the finding of Nocentini et al, (2010) who revealed that poor level of parental education is related to higher level of physical dating aggression. It was also supported with the finding of Veronneau et al, (2014) who revealed that parental level of education was negatively related with attitudinal problem such as aggression.

The finding of this study revealed that there is a significant difference in secondary school students' aggressive behaviour in North-West, Nigeria based on school type. This means that aggressive behaviour varied among the students with respect to school type. It was revealed from this study that students from public secondary school in North-West, Nigeria displayed aggressive behavior than their counterparts in private secondary schools. Based on the available literature and empirical studies at the researcher's disposal, no findings were found to support or against this finding.

Conclusion

Based on the available data at the researchers' disposal, analyzed and interpreted and discussed, it was concluded that disparities were found in secondary students in North-West, Nigeria aggressive behavior in respect of their socio-demographic disparities such as gender, parents' socio-economic background, parents' educational background and school type.

Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of this study, the following recommendations were made that:

1. Parents and teachers should inculcate good behavioural patterns such as tolerance, perseverance, and emotional control in students regardless of their socio-

demographic disparities through behaviour modification techniques in order to reduce their aggressive behaviour.

2. Periodic orientation should be given to students irrespective of their socio-demographic disparities by the school authority on emotional management this will eliminate or reduce students' aggressive behaviour.
3. Parents and school administrators should work together to inculcate discipline in students and consider their socio-demographic disparities in designing programmes for reducing their aggressive behaviour.

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