

EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

OF

**MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES (EJMUDIS)
UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT**



VOL. 5, FEBRUARY 2016, ISSN:0796-8162

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**EFFECTS OF PROBLEM SOLVING AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
TRAINING ON VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Secondary school students in Delta State are increasingly engaging in violence which negatively affects their academic performance and health. Introduction of life skill into secondary curriculum is an effort at changing negative behaviour of students. However, previous studies have shown non-implementation of life skill training included in the school curriculum; hence the continued occurrence of violence among secondary schools students. This study therefore determined the effects of Life skill (problem solving and interpersonal skills) training on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State. A pre-test-post-test control group quasi-experimental research design was adopted in this study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one local government area from each of the three senatorial districts. Purposive sampling technique was used to select one co-educational school each from the selected three local government areas. Three secondary schools were randomly assigned to two experimental groups and control group. A sample of two hundred and sixteen students was used in the study. Four research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. Data collected were analysed using ANCOVA. Findings revealed that, there was a significant main effect of treatment on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta state $F_{(2,204)=34.67}$. There were no significant main effects of gender and religion on violent behaviour. Based on the findings, it was recommended that secondary school students should be exposed to problem solving and interpersonal skills which are components of life-skills regardless of gender and religion.

Keywords: secondary school students, lifeskill, problem solving skill, interpersonal skill, violent behaviour.

Introduction

Violent acts characterise modern societies as the incidents are reported almost every day around the world in print and electronic media. It is particularly worrisome that the youth who the society depends on as future teachers, health professionals, administrators, technocrats and technicians are major perpetrators and victims of violence. Human development is being threatened as school is the main target of violence.

Violence encompasses acts involving deliberately inflicting injury on victim leading to physical and emotional trauma or death. It is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, against another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation (WHO, 2002). Violence, most times is used to establish power and exercise control over another person. It often reflects unequal opportunities between the perpetrator and the victim. Negative effects of violence include brain injuries, bruises and fractures, poor interpersonal relationship and communication, learning problems, emotional and psychological problems like anxiety, depression, aggression or attempted suicide, use of drugs, sexual indulgence and health problems such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2006).

Socioeconomic factors consistently featured in researches as predictors of violence. Elliot and Menard (1996) found in a study that prevalence of self-reported assault and robbery among youth from low socio-economic class was about twice that of middle class youth. Hammed and Adebukola (2008) reported in a study that low socio-economic status of family significantly predicted youth violence among in-school secondary school students. Killick (1981) said that inequality, poverty and unemployment have been recognised as major blemishes to developing economies ever since economists began to take interest in the Third world economy. In Nigeria, larger percentage of crude oil comes from numerous producing fields located in the swamps of Niger Delta region. Consequently, exploration activities and frequent oil spills have led to severe environmental degradation with resultant destruction of farmlands and aquatic flora and fauna. It is believed that neglect by government and multi-national agencies have resulted in the experience of poverty and ill-health. It is estimated that 10 million people in Niger-Delta are destitute with 14 million people living in poverty in rural communities (Okonta, 2007). It is obvious that youth in Niger Delta are more prone to violence. Perhaps this is why Elliot, Robin and Beveley (2004) described violence as consequence of pain and discomfort, frustration provocation and reciprocation, social exclusion, aggression and imitation.

School violence includes incidents in which any member of the school community suffer physical assaults from a student, teacher or staff member. Centre for Disease Control (2010) described school violence as a subset of youth violence which is a broader public health problem. Sanni, Udoh, Okediji, Mobo and Ezeh (2010) in Animasahun (2015) identified manifestations of violent behaviours in secondary schools in Nigeria to include cruelty, bullying, fighting, vandalism, roughness during games, use of foul language, stealing, lying, cheating, examination malpractice, gambling, truancy, drug abuse, noise-making, disobedience, stubbornness, apathy, untidiness, failure to wear correct school uniform, reading of pornographic material, sexual immorality, mob action, loitering and carrying of weapon.

According to Babatunde (2015) students that experience school violence can suffer physical symptoms (e.g. headache, stomachache, backache and dizziness), psychological distress (e.g. bad temper, nervous, anxious, depressed, passive and overly cautious), and experience negative educational outcomes (e.g., lower grades absenteeism and absence of bonding with peers teachers in schools). Schools with

high levels of violent behaviour may have a negative impact on the already low levels of neighbourhood cohesion and contribute to the crime rate in the larger society.

Problem solving and interpersonal skills are the two treatments in this study. Both problem solving and interpersonal skills are components of life skills. Problem solving skill helps an individual to identify a problem and produce appropriate strategy through critical thinking to solve the problem. Development of problem solving is important because it can help to reduce destructive behaviour in youth. Problem behaviours arise because the individuals who lack constructive ways to deal with negative thoughts and feelings resort to dysfunction ones (California Evidence Based Clearing House, 2015). Youth should be taught that when they are faced with multiple problems they should be patient enough to think deeply to generate solution to the problems. Interpersonal skills are skills a person uses to communicate and interact with other. Ability to interact positively and get along well with other is a function of interpersonal skill. Perform well (2014) described interpersonal skills/social competence as a set of positive social skills necessary to get along well with others and function constructively in groups, including (a) respecting and expressing appreciation for others (b) being able to work and communicate well with others and listen to other's ideas; (c) demonstrating context-appropriate behaviour that is consistent with social norms; and using a range of skills or processes aimed at resolving conflict.

Gender and religion are the two moderating variables in this study. Gender is relevant in education. This is because boys and girls differ in some ways. These differences often manifest in the way they think and act in school. In recognition of assumed gender differential in education the researchers have included in this study gender as moderating variable. The issue of religion is very important in Nigeria. At every nooks and crannies, urban and rural settlements religious houses abound with majority of worshippers being youths. The experience of religious teachings at worship centres is expected to have impact on values as well as attitude and practice regarding moral.

In this study, problem solving and interpersonal skills trainings were carried out among secondary school students in Delta State, Nigeria with the aim of reducing violent behaviour. Based on the concept of Social Learning Theory (SLT) individuals learn through modelling. The researchers and the research assistants served as models by empowering the participants to act positively towards achieving healthy lifestyles as adults. The intervention also addressed self-efficacy of the students in order to increase the ability to make their own decision. During the intervention, emphasis was laid on interactive teaching methods such as dramatization, role playing, open discussion and small group activities. Programmes based upon the principles of SLT have successfully promoted social problem-solving competence, enhanced perceptions of self-efficacy, outcome expectation and reduced high risk behaviours (Caplan, Weissberg, Grober, Sivo, Grady and Jacoby, 1992).

Statement of the Problem

In a nationwide situation analysis survey of school violence in Nigeria conducted by Federal Ministry of Education (2007), it was revealed that physical violence and psychological violence accounted for 85% and 50% respectively of the bulk of violence in schools. It is worrisome that there are increased reports of principals, teachers and students who have been insulted, teased, harassed or verbally abused in schools. Schools are becoming unsafe as there are increasing incidences of gang-rape, hostage taking, cult activities, car snatching, kidnapping and robbery. Obviously educators cannot carry out their mandate of educating in a violence ridden environment.

The tide of violent upsurge can be stemmed with the teaching of reproductive health education, alcohol and drug education and peace education. However, the

teaching approach employed by teachers has remained conventional with little or no impact. Therefore this study examined effects of problem solving and interpersonal skills training on violent behaviour of secondary school students in Delta State, Nigeria.

Main Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to determine the effect of problem solving and interpersonal skills training on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State, Nigeria.

Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the effects of treatments on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.
2. To determine moderating effects of gender and religion on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the course of this study:

1. There is no significant main effect of treatment on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.
2. There is no significant main effect of gender (male and female) on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.
3. There is no significant main effect of religion (Christianity and Islam) on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.
4. There is no significant three-way interaction effect of treatment, gender and religion on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.

Methodology

Research Design

A pretest-posttest, control group, quasi-experimental research design was adopted for this study. Two experimental groups and one control group were used. Experimental groups were given treatments which are modes on problem solving skills and interpersonal skills while the control group got instruction on personal and environmental health. Pre-test questionnaire was administered on all the three groups, treatment given to experimental groups and all the groups received post-test questionnaire.

Population

The population for the study comprised all public secondary school students in Delta State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study adopted the multistage sampling technique to choose the sample. Simple random sampling of fish bowl with replacement was used to select one local government area from each of the three senatorial districts. The selected local government areas were: Uwie local government that represented Delta Central Senatorial district; Oshimili South represented Delta North senatorial district and Isoko South local government represented Delta South Senatorial district. Purposive sampling technique was used in the second stage to select one co-educational public secondary school from Uwie, Oshimili South and Isoko South local government areas. In the third stage random selection was used to assign Saint Micheal's Grammar School Oleh to experimental group one. Osadenis High School Asaba to experimental group two, while institute of continuing Education Warri was assigned as control

group two, while institute of continuing Education Warri was assigned as control group. Using the violence tendency inventory as screening instrument, a sample of 216 senior secondary school students 2, with violence tendency were selected.

Table 1: Total number of participant selected Schools

S/N	Senatorial District	Name of School	Group Treatment	Number of students selected in classes		Total	Total number of students who completed the study		Total
				SS 1	SS 2		SS 1	SS 2	
1.	Delta South	St. Michael Grammar School, Oleh	Problem solving Skill	51	52	103	37	37	74
2.	Delta North	Osadenis High School, Asaba	Interpersonal skills	51	51	102	33	39	72
3.	Delta Central	Institute of Continuing Education Warri	Personal and Environmental Health	53	51	104	21	39	70
	Total			155	154	309	91	115	216

Research Instruments

The instruments used for this study are the following:

1. A compendium of assessment tools on violent-related attitude, behaviour and influences among youths. Edited by Dahlberg, Toal, Swahn and Behrens (2005) second edition and published by Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The instrument has four sections that include Attitude and belief assessment, environmental assessment, violent behaviour assessment and Health risk behaviour assessment. In this study violent behaviour assessment was adapted.
2. The training manual (problem solving skills, interpersonal skills and personal and environmental health).
3. Secondary school student violent behaviour questionnaire.

The violent behaviour questionnaire was subjected to validation and tested for reliability by administering it on another sample different from the study areas but with the same characteristics. The exercise produced a reliability coefficient of 0.88 and considered suitable for use in this study.

Procedures for Treatment Packages

A letter was written to Teaching Service Commission Delta State requesting for permission to conduct the research. The schools selected were visited before the commencement of the study to familiarise with the school and their environment. The students used as sample were served consent forms through which permission was obtained from their parents. The researchers with the assistance of six people and class teachers in each of the schools used held 1 hour sessions for each of the experimental groups for eight weeks, while the control group was also engaged in personal and environmental health.

The intervention sessions are briefed below

Experimental Group 1: Problem Solving Skill

Session I: Pre-test administration and general orientation on problem solving.

Session II: Values and goal setting

Session III: Identification of problem situations, conflicts, frustration, obstacles in achieving goals.

Session IV: Negative effects of using violence to solve problem. Physical and emotional consequences of violence.

Session V: Problem solving tools, methods and strategies.

Session VI: Common barriers to problem solving.

Session VII: Decision making – Definition, importance and processes.

Session VIII: Revision of all activities in previous sessions and re-administration of instrument to collect post-test scores.

Experimental Group 2: Interpersonal skill

Session I: Administration of instrument to obtain pre-test scores and general orientation on interpersonal skills.

Session II: Social competence: meaning and importance.

Session III: Communication: types, importance and barriers

Session IV: Concept of negotiation as process of arriving at peaceful agreement. Processes of negotiation.

Session V: Assertiveness: Meaning, advantages and technique. Distinctions between assertiveness and aggressiveness.

Session VI: Conflict resolution strategies.

Session VII: Finding help. Situations when we need help. Help seeking skill and agencies that provide help.

Session VIII: Revision of all activities in previous sessions and re-administration of instrument to collect post-test scores.

Control Group: Personal and Environmental Health

Session I: Administration of instrument to collect pre-test scores and general orientation on personal and environmental health.

Session II: Personal Health: Meaning and qualities

Session III: Factors that affect personal health: Physical and social factors.

Session IV: Care of body

Session V: Safety consciousness

Session VI: Food hygiene

Session VII: Environmental sanitation Waste disposal

Session VIII: Revision of all activities in previous sessions and re-administration of instrument to collect post-test scores.

Data Analysis

Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the research hypotheses to determine the significance of the hypotheses set at 0.05 levels.

Results

There is no significant main effect of treatment on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.

Table 2: Effect of treatment on violent behaviour among students

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Square
Main Effect:						
Pre-test of violence related behaviours	16230.145	11	1475.468	62.582	.000	.771
Treatment	2.873	1	2.873	.122	.727	.001
Gender	1634.785	2	817.392	34.670	.000	.254
Religion	63.310	1	63.310	2.685	.103	.013
	35.630	1	35.630	1.511	.220	.007
2-way Interactions						
Treatment * Gender	237.922	2	118.961	5.046	.007	.047
Treatment * Religion	11.916	2	5.958	.253	.777	.002
Gender * Religion	.719	1	.719	.031	.862	.002
3-way Interaction:						
Treatment * Gender						

* Religion	1.409	1	1.409	.060	.807	.001
Explained	16230.145	11	1475.468			
Residual	4809.629	204	23.577			
Total	21039.773	215				

Significance at $p < 0.05$

The table one above shows that $F_{(2,204)}$, indicating the main effect of treatment on violent behaviour is 34.670; $p < 0.05$. The P value (0.000) is less than 0.05 alpha level of significance therefore there is significant main effect of treatment on violent behaviour among secondary school students. The null hypothesis was not accepted. There was significant main effect of treatment on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta state. The partial Eta squared estimated was 0.254. This implies that treatment accounted for 25.4% of the variance observed in the violent behaviour after treatment.

Table 3: Estimated Marginal Means analysis of treatment on violent behaviour among secondary school students

Grand Mean = 53.28	N	Mean	Std Error	95% confidence interval	
Treatment group				Lower bound	Upper bound
Problem solving skill	74	64.040	.594	62.869	65.210
Interpersonal skill	72	51.807	.603	50.618	52.997
Control	70	43.428	.611	42.224	44.631

Table three above shows that experimental group 1 (problem solving) had the highest mean score of 64.04 followed by experimental group II (interpersonal skills) with a mean score of 51.81 and control group with a mean score of 43.43. This show that problem solving was more effective compared to the group exposed to interpersonal skill training.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant main effect of gender (male and female) on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.

The result presented in table one shows that $F_{(1,204)}$ indicating the main effect of gender on violent behaviour is 2.685; $p > 0.05$. The P value (0.103) is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. There is no significant main effect of gender (male and female) on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State. Partial eta squared of 0.013 implies that gender accounted for 1.3% of the observed variance on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.

Hypothesis three

There is no significant main effect of religion (Christianity and Islam) on violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State. The result presented in table one shows that $F_{(1,204)}$ indicating the main effect of religion on violent behaviour is 1.511; $p > 0.05$. The p value (0.220) is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance; hence, the null hypothesis is retained. There is no main effect of religion (Christianity and Islam) on violent behaviour of secondary school students in Delta State. Partial eta squared of 0.007 implies that, gender accounted for 0.7% of the observed variance on violent behaviour among secondary students in Delta State.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant three-way interaction effect of treatment, gender and religion on violent behaviour among secondary school in Delta.

The result presented in table one shows that $F_{(1,204)}$ indicating the main effect of three way interaction effect of treatment, gender and religion on violent behaviour is 0.060; $p > 0.05$. The P value (0.807) is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hence, the null

hypothesis is retained. There is no main effect of three way interaction effect of treatment, gender and religion on violent behaviour. Partial eta squared of 0.001 implies that three way interaction effects of treatment, gender and religion accounted for 0.1% of the observed variance in violent behaviour among secondary school students in Delta State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding showed that there is significant main effect of treatment on violent behaviour among secondary school students. This implies that the students given problem solving and interpersonal skills trainings were more favourably disposed to not exhibiting violent behaviour compared to the group not given the trainings. The two treatments are effective in reducing violent behaviour among secondary school students. This finding is in agreement with Olweus (1993) who found that Bullying Prevention Programme, had success in Norway, as it reduced bullying by fifty percent. Also, Ayodele and Sotonade (2014) found the effectiveness of self-management, emotional intelligence and assertiveness training programmes in reducing the potentials for terrorism, violence and maladaptive behaviours among adolescents in Nigeria.

This study found that there was no significant main effect of gender on violent behaviour of the secondary school students. This implies that being a male or female did not influence the effectiveness of the intervention. This is probably because both male and female participants were taught under the same condition.

The result of this study showed that there was no significant main effect of religion on violent behaviour of secondary school students. In other words, being a Christian or Muslim did not influence the effectiveness of the intervention. The finding is in contrast with that of Crockett, Bingham, Chopak and Vicary (2004) whose study revealed that females who attended religious services more frequently were more likely to delay sexual debut. Certainly, religious teachings in mosques and churches should play a good role in the formation of attitude, values and decision regarding moral.

It was found in this study that there was no significant three-way interaction effect of treatment, gender and religion. This result is in contrast with the study of Jacob (2013) who found that there was a three way interaction effect of treatment, gender and religion on health attitude among in-school adolescents in Kogi State.

Implications of the study

In this study problem solving and interpersonal skills are effective in reducing violent behaviour among secondary school students. This is a pointer to the fact that the much needed violent reduction in Niger Delta can be achieved through health education at secondary school level using appropriate approach. The use of participatory and interactive strategies of teaching has been proved in this study to be effective in producing good learning outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that problem solving and interpersonal skills had significant main effect on secondary school students' violent behaviour. It was also concluded that there was no significant main effect of gender and religion on the students' violence related behaviour.

This study has proved that violent behaviour reduction can be achieved among vulnerable students using appropriate health education strategies. It is along this line that the following recommendations were made:

1. The problem solving and interpersonal approaches to violent behaviour reduction that have been found in this study to be effective should be used in secondary schools to teach health education topics.

2. Equipment and materials needed for effective problem solving and interpersonal training should be made available in schools.
3. Teachers are encouraged to use participatory and interactive methods of teaching which have been found effective in this study.
4. In this study religion did not influence the effectiveness of the treatments. However, religion should be responsive to the problem of the society. Religious teaching should be encouraged in school and made to focus on the solving societal problems.
5. Secondary school teachers should be exposed to new methods, strategies and approaches to teaching by attending conferences, seminars and workshop both home and abroad.

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