

# **YOUTHS VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: FACTORS AND CONSEQUENCES AS PERCEIVED BY SOME NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES UNDERGRADUATES: COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS**

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## **Abstract**

*One of the major problems facing the world is youth violence with its attendant consequences bestriding the globe like a colossus. It is the concern of this study to investigate the perceived factors and consequences of youth violence in Nigeria by some Nigerian universities undergraduates. In fact two federal and four states universities were sampled. The population for this study consisted of all the 300 and 400 levels students of the six selected universities of this country. The purposive sampling techniques was used in selecting the sample size of 600 undergraduates for this study. Three out of the four research questions and two out of the eight hypotheses were used to gather information from the undergraduate respondents of the universities. The design used for this study was the survey. A questionnaire titled "Predisposing Factors for and Consequences of Youth Violence" was validated and used for the study data collection. The statistic used for the study were the mean score and mean ranking, t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). After all these, the results showed that family and peer groups were the major predisposing factors of youth violence. On the other hand, the least factor was the media. Thus, the major consequences of youth violence include; wasting of a generation and untimely death of youths in the long run. The major counselling implication of the study include the wastage of a cream of generation that would have been our future leaders. The major recommendations arising from the study include numbered intervention programmes suggested in this study.*

**Keywords:** Youths, violence, consequences, universities, undergraduates, counseling, factors

Globally, one of the excruciating social problem is youth violence. Infact, its scope is immeasurable and quite debilitating (Bukoye, Adeoye and Oyinloye, 2012). Countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, U.K., U.S. and France are experiencing these effects and devastating punch on their societies.

The act is an intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, exerted by or against children, adolescents or young adults which results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm and deprivation (WHO, 2010).

Types of youth violence include: homicide and suicide, school violence, dating violence, gang violence and home bullying (WHO, 2010). But back home in Nigeria, the kinds of violence we have include robbery, kidnapping. Particularly, assault sexual acts, destruction of property and killing of students are mostly practiced in the universities. Studies have shown that there are over a hundred cases of students' violence in the universities since the past fifty years in Nigeria (Mercy, 2009). In addition, Boko Haram (European Education is Evil) insurgency in North Eastern Nigeria has destroyed lives and properties with ignominy, acts indulged in by youths violence. Some years back, precisely 2013, a researched estimate was made that about four hundred and thirty youths between the age of ten and thirty daily dies out of interpersonal violence in Africa. While over forty young ones are hospitalized for possible related injury on daily basis (John, 2009). From the Western world, specifically United States Institute for Inter-Governmental Research (2009) recorded that such violence gangs of about sixty youths die daily in the United States of America. Youth's violence in the Asiatic world and the pacific is not as violent as it is in central and southern America and Africa. That is to say that these violences among youths is low in Western Europe (Bukoye, Adeoye and Oyinloye, 2012).

According to these authors above in North America, homicide is 11:1,000,000 and 1:7 in Canada showing that homicide is global and not limited to Africa particularly Nigeria. Be that as it may, the Nigeria cases are quite alarming. In fact, the youth violence in Nigeria is more of business and it is a do or die affair. What motivates the youths to engage in violent criminal behaviours are the predisposing factors such as inordinate material ambition for wealth acquisition, children's exposure to scenes of violence (electronic media)/print media and crime bursting books (Hardley Chase). Again, Children of violent parents model their parents and turn out to be criminals. Two different approaches to youth violence development are the one that focuses on the onset of violence behaviours and its frequency as well as patterns and its continuity over the life course of the youth. The second one is that which focuses on the emergence of risk factors at different stages of life's course of the youth (Dawes, 2007). Accordingly, Dawes described two developmental factors causing the onset of youth violent behaviours. These include; violence that begins in childhood before puberty and continues into adolescence. The second one is that which begins at adolescence till adulthood. Other excruciating factors responsible for youth violence include; school located in socially disorganized neighbourhood. Next, violence among youths can be caused by emotional distress, learning disorder arising from frustration deficits and cultism activities in schools.

There are both long term and short-term effects of youth violence. These are physical, psychological and social effect on both the youth and the society. Bye and large, according to Dawene (2010) youth violence not only cause global burden of

premature death injury and disability, but also serious lifelong impact on behaviour, psychological and social functioning of the victims' family, friends, communities and wider societies in their both devastating and excruciating in the societies of their victims.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Without mincing words, youth violence is quite endemic and undesirable because of the unpleasant effects associated with it all over the world. An estimate of 300,000 youth violence cases involving adolescents below age 20years occurred in more than 33 conflicts around the world. In the study carried out by Dawes (2007), it was discovered that in the US, over 877,700 youths (10-29 years old) were seriously injured in youth violence in 2002. In fact, more than 5000 were killed in that violence. Painfully, 80 percent of those killed were armed robbers. Youth violence recorded between 2005 and 2010 in Nigeria showed that 1.4million violent crimes resulting from land disputes, political thuggery, secret cults and religious crises took place (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2011). The study was eminently made necessary because of the incessant youth's rape, arson, murder, campus cult clashes, armed robbery, Boko Haram and Ansaru groups. The priceless question left unanswered is "What factors prompt these youths into violent crimes? What are the dastard consequences of these violent acts? To find lasting solutions to the phenomenon of this youth global violence, it is worthwhile to investigate the predisposing factors and consequences.

Basically, this research study will be of immense importance to parents, communities, teachers and government because it will give the needed information that necessitate this anderous youth violence in our society globally.

Lastly, school counsellors will be equipped form the findings on how to curb this devastating acts of violence among students when they used the appropriate remedial counselling techniques in schools.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions posed below acted as a guide to this study:

1. What are the predisposing factors of youth violence as expressed by the undergraduates in the selected Nigerian universities?
2. What are the consequences of youth violence as expressed by undergraduates in the selected Nigerian universities?
3. Will there be differences among the undergraduates on the basis of course level, faculty and religion?
4. Will there be differences among the undergraduates with respect to the consequences of youth violence on the basis of university type, course level, faculty and religion?

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference among undergraduates in the three selected Nigerian universities with respect to their views on the predisposing factors of youth violence.
2. There is no significant difference among undergraduates of different course levels with respect to their views on the predisposing factors of youth violence.
3. There is no significant difference among undergraduates of different faculties with respect to their views on the predisposing factors of youth violence.

4. There is no significant difference among undergraduates of different religions with respect to their views on predisposing factors of youth violence.
5. There is no significant difference among undergraduates from the selected federal, state and private Nigerian universities with respect to the views on the consequences of youth violence.
6. There is no significant difference among undergraduates of different course level with respect to their views on the consequences of youth violence.
7. There is no significant difference among undergraduates of different faculties with respect to their views on the consequences of youth violence.
8. There is no significant difference among undergraduates of different religions with respect to their views on the consequences of youth violence.

### **Methodology**

The survey research design was used for this study with 600 sampled size purposively selected from the three chosen universities. This means that 200 undergraduates were drawn from each university. These undergraduates were stratified into course level, faculties and religion.

To collect data, a validated questionnaire made from studies was used. After three weeks, a test-retest method was employed. A reliability co-efficient of .78 was obtained using the Pearson Product Movement Correlation Statistics. The scoring of the instrument was based on a 4 point Likert-type scale of strongly Agree, Agree and Strongly Disagree and Disagree responses with scores of 4,3,2 and 1. The statistical tables used include frequency count percentage, mean score and mean ranking. The others used include mean of the mean analysis for answering research questions in tables 1,2,3,4. Meanwhile, the t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for the hypotheses. The decision rule is 3.00 and above.

### **Results**

**Table 1: Respondents Distribution by University Students, Course Levels, Faculties and Religions**

S/N	Variables	Freq.	%
<b>A. Universities</b>			
1	Niger Delta University students (State)	200	33.3
2	University of Port Harcourt students (Federal)	200	33.4
3	Novena University students (Private)	200	33.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>B. Course Level</b>			
1	400	280	60
2	300	240	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>C. Faculty</b>			
1	Arts	50	8.33
2	Biological Science	120	20
3	Education	98	16.33
4	Engineering	100	16.67
5	Law	80	13.33
6	Mechanical Science	80	13.33

7	Social Sciences		72	12
		<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>D. Religion</b>				
1	African Traditional Religion		NIL	0
2	Christianity		328	54.67
3	Islamic		272	45.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

**Research Question 1:** What are the predisposing factors of youth violence as expressed by undergraduates in the selected Nigerian Universities?

**Table 2: Showing Mean and Mean Ranking of Responses on Predisposing Factors of Youth Violence Items by Items**

S/N	Items	Freq.	Mean (x)	Rank Order
<b>A. Family predisposing factors</b>				
1	Parental neglect of children	520	3.46	8 <sup>th</sup>
2	Single parental syndrome	518	3.62	4 <sup>th</sup>
3	Parents as single role models	540	3.73	2 <sup>nd</sup>
4	Poor parental upbringing	560	3.81	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>B. Societal Factors</b>				
5	Inability to obtain gainful employment	480	3.25	11 <sup>th</sup>
6	High level of poverty	520	3.46	8 <sup>th</sup>
7	In-fighting among political rivals	360	2.80	20 <sup>th</sup>
8	The get-rich quick syndrome in Nigeria	520	3.46	8 <sup>th</sup>
<b>C. Media Factors</b>				
9	Visiting internet sites which show youths doing exploits of peer group	380	3.00	18 <sup>th</sup>
10	Reading of crime-boosting literature	430	3.10	16 <sup>th</sup>
11	Listening to crime stories on radio	380	3.00	18 <sup>th</sup>
12	Watching of violence film	440	3.21	14 <sup>th</sup>
<b>D. Peer Group Factors</b>				
13	Need for affiliation (i.e sense of belonging to a group that is making things happen in society).	500	3.60	5 <sup>th</sup>
14	Urge to be recognized and respected among peers	480	3.25	11 <sup>th</sup>
15	Feeling of being of age	530	3.48	7 <sup>th</sup>
16	Desire to be like the big boys	540	3.73	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>E. Educational Factors</b>				
17	Lack of interest in school	400	3.05	17 <sup>th</sup>
18	Lack of a programme of self-development in the school system	460	3.22	13 <sup>th</sup>
19	Poor academic performance in school	440	3.21	14 <sup>th</sup>
20	Drop-out syndrome	516	3.50	6 <sup>th</sup>

Table 2 above shows that respondents responded positively to all of the items as factors that make youths to engage in violence (i.e mean = 3.00 and above). Be that as it may, items, 4,3 (under family factors) and item 16 (under peer group factors) were rated highest. This shows that youths are actually engaged in violence in societies or schools

**Research Question 2:** What are the consequences of youth violence as expressed by undergraduates in the selected Nigerian universities?

**Table 3: Showing Mean of the Mean of Responses of Youth Violence**

S/N	Items	Mean (x)	Mean of Mean	Rank Order
<b>A. Family Parental Upbringing</b>				
1	Parental neglect of children	3.46		
2	Single parental syndrome	3.62		
3	Parents as single role models	3.73		
4	Poor parental upbringing	3.81		
	<b>Mean Total</b>	<b>14.62</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>D. Peer Group factors</b>				
9	Need for affiliation (i.e. the sense of belonging to a group that are making things happen in society).	3.60		
11	Desire to be recognized and respected among peers	3.25		
15	Desire to be like the big boys	3.73		
12	Feeling of being of age	3.48		
	<b>Total of Mean</b>	<b>14.06</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>
<b>E. Educational Factors</b>				
17	Lack of interest in schooling	3.05		
20	Dropout syndrome	3.50		
19	Poor academic performance in school	3.21		
18	Lack of a programme of self-development in the school system	3.98	3.25	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>B. Social Factors</b>				
5	Inability to obtain gainful employment	<b>3.25</b>		
8	The get rich quick syndrome in Nigeria	3.46		
7	In-fighting among political rival	2.80		
6	High level of poverty	3.46		
	<b>Total of Means</b>	12.97	3.24	4 <sup>th</sup>
<b>C. Media Factors</b>				
13	Reading of crime busting novels	<b>3.10</b>		
10	Visiting internet sites which show youths doing violent exploits	3.00		
16	Watching of violent films on Radio	3.20		
14	Listening to crime stories on Radio	3.00		
	<b>Total of Means</b>	<b>12.31</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>

The table 3 above ranked family 1<sup>st</sup> showing that the main predisposing factor for youth violence is the family. This was followed by peer group factors (2<sup>nd</sup> ranking). The 3<sup>rd</sup> ranking was educational factors followed lastly by the 5<sup>th</sup> ranking which is media.

**Table 4: Showing Mean and Mean Ranking of Responses on Consequences of Youth’s Violence**

S/N	Items	Freq.	Mean (x)	Rank Order
<b>A. Family predisposing factors</b>				
1.	Wasting of a generation	540	3.64	1 <sup>st</sup>
2.	Untimely death of youths	540	3.64	1 <sup>st</sup>
3.	Destruction of property and lives	500	3.58	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4.	Disruption of family life	496	3.50	4 <sup>th</sup>
5.	Inability of the youths involved to fulfill their destinies	494	3.45	5 <sup>th</sup>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Family instability</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>
7.	Depression by victim of youths violence	480	3.21	7 <sup>th</sup>
8.	Threat to community peace	480	3.21	7 <sup>th</sup>
9.	Imprisonment	478	3.18	7 <sup>th</sup>
10.	Poor national image for Nigeria	476	3.10	10 <sup>th</sup>
11.	Stunting of national development	470	3.02	11 <sup>th</sup>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Stress for both victims and the youths involved</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>
13.	Contributes to downward turn of the economy	420	2.80	13 <sup>th</sup>
14.	Guilt feelings by youths involved	412	2.62	14 <sup>th</sup>
15.	Fear and anxiety on the part of victims	400	2.55	15 <sup>th</sup>

The respondents in table 4 above had same opinions about the identified items as the consequences of youth violence as shown on the means table (i.e., 2.50 and above). The highest rankings include 3.64, 3.64 and 3.58 for items 1, 2 and 3 above. On the other side of the coin, the lowest rankings on the table were items 13, 14 and 15.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference among undergraduates in the three selected Nigerian Universities with respect to their views on the predisposing factors of youth violence.

Table 5 below shows the expressions by the three selected universities with the ANOVA (Analysis of variance on Predisposing Factors for Youth’s Violence)

	Sum of Variance	Sum of Sqs.	df	Mean of Sqs.	Cal. F. Value	Cri. F. Value	Decision
Model		25.33	2	8.4100000			
Error		1894.65	297	9.6665816	0.87	2.60	NS
Correct		1919.88	299				
Total							

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant difference among undergraduates from the selected federal, state and private Nigerian universities with respect to the views on the consequences of youth violence.

**Table 9: ANOVA Showing Responses to Consequences of Youth Violence as Expressed by the three Universities' Undergraduates**

Sum of Variance	Sum of Sqs.	df	Mean of Sqs.	Cal. F. Value	Cri. F. Value	Decision
Model	41.97	2	20.985009			
Error	12013.53	297	60.988010	0.34	3.00	NS
Correct Total	12055.50	299				

NS = Not Significant at .05 level

Table 9 above shows that the cal. F. Value 0.34 is less than critical f.value of 3.00. Therefore, hypothesis is hereby not rejected making the responses valid.

**Hypothesis 6:** There is no significant difference among undergraduates of different course level with respect to their views on the consequences of youth violence

**Table 10: t-test Analysis showing Responses towards Consequences of Youths Violence as Expressed based on Course Level by the three Universities Undergraduates**

Sum of Variance	Sum of Sqs.	df	Mean of Sqs.	Cal. F. Value	Cri. F. Value	Decision
Model	23.231	6	7.4183333	2.48	2.60	NS
Error	417.653	293	2.1308826			
Correct Total	440.884	299				

NS = No significant at .05 level

Hypothesis 6 is not rejected because the calculated f.value of 2.48 is less than the critical F.value of 2.60 on the table above.

**Hypothesis 7:** There is no significant difference among undergraduates different faculties with respect to the views on the consequences of youth violence.

**Table 11: The Calculated of ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) showing the Responses of Youth's Violence as Expressed by the Selected Universities based on Faculties of Study**

Sum of Variance	Sum of Sqs.	df	Mean of Sqs.	Cal. F. Value	Cri. F. Value	Decision
Model	23.231	6	7.4183333	2.48	2.60	NS
Error	417.653	293	2.1308826			
Correct Total	440.884	299				

NS = Not Significant at .05 level

The Null hypothesis 7 is hereby accepted since the cal. F.value of 2.48 is lesser than the critical F.value of 2.60 shown on the table above.

**Hypothesis 8:**

**Table 12: t-test Analysis showing Responses to Consequences of Youths Violence as Expressed by the Selected Undergraduates of the Universities based on the Religions of the Students**

Religion	No. of cases	Mean (X)	SD	df	Cal. t-value		
Christian	304	18.37	1.44				
Muslim	296	19.20	1.63	298	-2.68	1.96	S

NS = Not significant at 0.05 level

From the table above, the shown result is not significant. Thus, hypothesis 8 is rejected because cal. t-value of 2.68 is lesser than the critical t.value of 1.96.

**Discussion of Findings**

From the findings and results of this research, it is crystal clear that the major predisposing factors of youths' violence is the family and the peer group. On the other hand, media was seen as the least predisposing factor shown in table 3. Again, the major consequences of the youth's violence are wasting of a generation, untimely death of youths, destruction of lives and property and disruption of family life. The least of the consequences include; downward turn of the economy, guilt feelings by youths involved and fear/anxiety were on the minor.

On the hypotheses that were tested, the results revealed that there was a remarkable indifference from the respondents' responses as far as the predisposing factors for youths' violence is concerned on the basis of the respondents' course level, faculties and religions, there was also indifferences to the predisposing factors causing youths' violence. Next, the results on the responses of the selected universities' undergraduates course levels, faculties and religious beliefs, there were insignificant differences to the consequences of youths' violence. Infact, from tables 5,6,7,8,9, 10,11 and 12 it was clear that these hypotheses were not rejected.

This study has shown clearly that all Nigerian universities students have the same opinion with the factors identified to be the causes of youth violence and the consequences that follows:

Youths' violence is a very serious issue globally. From the study, it was crystal clear when non of eight tested hypotheses were found not to be significant in differences. The peculiarity of problems faced by the youth all over the nation attest to this. Such problems include unemployment and lack of viable/sustainable means of livelihood which gingered their frustration pushing them into deviancy (Johnson, 2005).

The findings further observed that certain preceding factors must have caused the manifestation of violent traits in youths. This revelation counter the opinion of COECD (2011) that state that the individual traits such as poor behaviour controls, impulsiveness, attention and hyperactivity as the major causes of youth violence.

Another factor which did not make this study to lack significant differences in the results is the fact that many of the respondents may have fallen prey to violence acts sometimes ago and would not want or repeat of such actions again.

The results of this study were in consunnance with the study of Dawene (2010) wherein the respondents were not significantly different in their responses toward the factors as consequences of youths' violence from their schools, course levels, faculties and

religions. Yet again, this study was in alignment with that of Stephen (2009) which gave positive reaction to the consequences of youths' violence by respondents who were involved in the acts. Finally, on the issues of death, depression, injury, anxiety, poor educational achievements, disability, isolation and imprisonment, Dawes (2010) study was in agreement as major youths' violence consequences.

On preventive measures firstly, pre-school enrichment programme that provides youths with academic and social skills at early age is suggested. Secondly, in advanced countries, there are the provision of life acquired in social development programmes such as building youths behavioural, emotional and social capabilities can reduce reasonably youths' violence in their communities.

### **Implication for Counselling**

The findings from this study pose big tasks for counsellors and the challenges for them is the ability for them to involve these Nigerian youths in counter violence programmes. Be that as it may, the Nigerian counsellors can formulate these programmes below as measures to minimize youths' violence in the country.

1. Counsellors should take a multi-level approach to violence prevention with linkages at the local, community and national levels.
2. Regular workshops, seminars should be organized by counsellors in each states of the country.
3. Violence prevention at the local and school levels should be embarked upon in the country.
4. Counsellors should find out and understand the scope/nature of problems facing the youths so as to proffer solutions.
5. Align important members of the community against violence conduct in their communities. Infact, this is building partnership and co-ordinating initiatives between the counsellors and the coalition agents.
6. Expose the risk that face youths in such violence when committed.
7. Counsellors should employ cross-sector programming in checking youths' violence.
8. Counsellors should identify risk and protective factors for the family and communities. These include parental involvement with their children, behavioural outcomes. Collaboration with Faith based organization should be attracted to build youth resilience against violence.
9. Youth resilience programmes should involve girls and women to ensure that the programmes meet needs effectively which will be brought by gender friendliness.
10. In the programmes, the counsellors should focus on both ex-combatant youths and non-combatant youths in their environments throughout the country.

### **Conclusion**

The predisposing factors of youth's violence in the family and the peer group, while the major consequences of the youth's violence is the wasting of a generation, untimely death of youth, destruction of lives and properties and disruption of family life. Since these are the factors and consequences of youths' violence, the various bodies such as the government, family, society, and the school counsellors should be proactive in redeeming these youths to avoid these dastard consequences.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing, the following recommendations are proffered:

- (1) This study has brought to the limelight some interesting major findings. The mean of their means are 3.66, 3.32, 3.25, 3.24 and 3.06 for the following variables; family predisposing factors, peer group factors, educational factors, societal factors and media factors for youths' violence all over the country respectively. With these high mean of means, all the factors were very predisposing to youth violence in the universities of Nigeria.
- (2) All Nigerian Universities must put a counselling and Human Development Centre as one of the NUC benchmark. It is hoped that professional counsellors will put in practice in the centres to help ameliorate the incidences of youths' violence. Imagine the huge consequences on the country such as the "wasting of a generation" and untimely deaths of youths" which were seen by this research as top most factors or outcome of youths violence. Nigeria cannot withstand such colossal loss on our National human resources yearly. Infact, this is why the federal, state and local governments of this country must encourage the putting up of different youth programmes in all nooks and crannies of the country.
- (3) Finally, the giant steps by the Buhari/Osibanjo administration in the setting up of youth Economic Empowerment programmes must be applauded. And when this is added to various media enlightenment programmes throughout the country, it will become hopeful that youth's violence will in no distant time become a thing of the past in Nigeria.

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