

AGGRESSIVE TENDENCIES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UYO URBAN

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between aggressive tendencies and students' academic performance among secondary school students in Uyo Urban of Akwa Ibom State. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested using Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (PPMC). Five hundred (500) male and female students were selected from all the public secondary schools in Uyo to constitute the study sample, while a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Aggressive Tendencies and Students' Academic Performance" (ATSAPQ) was used for data collection. The result of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between physical aggression and students' academic performance; there was a significant relationship between verbal aggression and students' academic performance. It was recommended among other things that the Ministry of Education should include courses or subjects like Anger and Aggressive Behaviour Management in the secondary schools.

Introduction

A school is an institution that provides education for young people. Monthana, Lemmer, Mda and Pretorius (2000) explained that school is a site where children of school going age are taught. Such schools can be public or private. The school environment is expected to be one in which students feel safe and comfortable, and are encouraged to learn. In order to achieve this, there are sets of people who work with students within the school environment. They are the school principals who are the administrators of the schools, the Vice-Principals who assist the principals in the day-to-day running of the school, the teachers who are facilitators of sound learning among the students and the counselors whose primary aim is to assist the individual students in making decisions that ensure their efficient and orderly progression throughout the various stages of their growth and development. They are also to assist the individual student in solving their various personal adjustment problems.

The duties of counsellors in schools are of paramount importance because students encounter problems which may be emotional, personal, social and educational and it is the counsellors who can assist them to overcome these problems. If these problems are not properly managed and solved, they may cause emotional instability in the students, affect negatively their educational and social life, lead to crisis and make the school environment uncondusive for learning. Aggressiveness is one of such problems students can encounter in school and it is the duty of counsellors to plan series of programmes that will help in modifying this behaviour among students and in assisting them to cultivate acceptable behaviours.

Students tend to feel less safe and unsatisfied with school life in a school with high level of aggressive display. For such students, and particularly the victims, the school is no longer a place of concentrated work and learning. This may affect the quality of students. This poses a serious challenge to school counsellors whose responsibility it is to help the students resolve the conflicts within them, do away with maladaptive behaviours and learn the accepted ways of behaving in the society.

Aggressive tendencies are exhibited by both boys and girls though boys are believed to be more aggressive than girls. Coon (2000) opined that mostly boys of larger physical stature typically engage in physical aggression. They tend to bully boys and girls who are weaker and smaller than them. Mundia (2006) claimed that boys are more aggressive than girls who often exhibit verbal aggression. Both sexes can exhibit aggressiveness from childhood stage to adulthood. Physical aggression, just like verbal aggression and any other behaviour, is a learned behaviour which can be learned as early as at two years of age.

School children, irrespective of sex, age and class level, engage in these behaviours. Funk (1998) discovered that the problem of violence in schools is prevalent in the highest classes of primary school as well as the lowest secondary classes. It has also been discovered that 13 – 15 years olds are the most violent in schools. Olweus, Limber, and Mihalic (1999) pointed out that a great deal of bullying was carried out by older students towards younger students.

Aggressive tendencies stem from different factors. Students biological make-ups, family background, community, school and value systems are some of these. If a student is unstable due to any of the above factors, he or she may suddenly be disturbed and exhibit destructive tendencies. Felson and Tedeschi (1993) observed that frequent exposure to aggressive people may involve any individual in aggressive episodes, and the presence of aggressive models increases the likelihood of imitation. Gasa (2005) also observed that the highest rates of aggressive behaviours are found in environment where aggressive models abound and where aggressiveness is regarded as a highly valued attribute.

In a study conducted by Lyznicki, Mc Caffee and Robino Witz (2004) in united state of the prevalence of bullying among students, the research design was survey design and the method of data analysis was descriptive statistics. The result they had showed that at least 1 in 10 is built on regular basis. From the results of these studies, it is clear that students engage in physical aggression either as bullies or victims. Moreover, Gwen (2005) conducted a study on the impact of verbal aggression among 204 students in Midwestern American middle and high schools and found that 90% of them said that they had a drop in grades, an increase in anxiety and loss of friends as a result of verbal aggression.

Also, Mundia's (2006) study was conducted a study with the purpose of determining the behavioural problems prevalent among students in Swazi upper primary and junior secondary schools. He had 300 students from 15 schools as sample. Survey design was used in collecting data from respondents and the descriptive statistics was employed in analyzing the result. From the analysis, Mundia discovered that bullying behaviour and fighting had greater percentage than other forms of behaviours, bullying had 93% and fighting 89%. Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that physical aggression is prevalent in schools. From the same study, Mundia discovered that there were about 73% of students with moderate aggressive behaviour among males of 16 – 20 years in urban schools.

The question arises whether there is any relationship between aggressive behaviour and quality of students. Do boys and girls have tendencies to be aggressive? Is it only the students intellectual ability self concept, aptitude and availability of learning materials that are responsible for either good or poor quality of student? Can exhibiting aggressive behaviours affect someone's academic performance either positively or negatively? This study is therefore to determine the relationship between aggressive tendencies and quality of students in secondary schools in Uyo urban.

Statement of the Problem

Aggression at school is an age-old problem and until recently, many people took the “children will be children” attitude towards the problem but the frequent unrest among the students in schools highlight the serious and sometimes deadly consequences of aggressive behaviours.

Secondary school students of both sexes exhibit aggressive behaviours within and outside the school environment. They have frequently and systematically harassed and attacked one another. These frequent attacks have a lot of negative effects on the students and their right to learn in a safe and quiet environment because many of them are injured physically and are emotionally disturbed and are unable to settle down for serious learning activities in school.

School is supposed to be a place where students feel safe and secure and where they can count on being treated with respect. The reality, however, is that a significant number of students experienced aggressive episodes that resulted in serious, long-term academic, physical and emotional consequences. Unfortunately, school personnels often underestimate the extent of aggression and the harm it can cause.

Recently, parents, school authorities and students started demanding investigations and intervention to conquer this seemingly large and serious problem. Since the students have tendencies to exhibit aggressive behaviour which lead to poor and low academic performance, the disturbing questions are: do boys and girls engage in this aggressive behaviour? To what extent does the behaviour affect their quality as school leavers? The problem of this study therefore is whether there is any significant relationship between aggressive tendencies of students and their academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine the relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.
2. To determine the relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.

Research Questions

The following research questions became necessary for this study:

1. To what extent do physical aggressive tendencies affect academic performance among public secondary school students' in Uyo Urban?
2. Is there any significant relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students' in Uyo Urban?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.

Method

Research Design

The design used in this study was the survey design.

Area of Study

The area of study was Uyo Urban in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.

Population

The population for this study comprised all the junior secondary two (JS2) students and senior secondary two (SS2) students in all the secondary schools in Uyo Urban of Akwa Ibom State.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study consisted of 500 JS2 and SS2 students in all the secondary schools in Uyo Urban. The technique used for drawing the sample was the stratified random sampling technique. The students were stratified based on gender after which the simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for the study. 260 boys and 240 girls were finally selected for the study.

Instrumentation

The Aggressive Tendencies and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (ATSAPQ), a researcher – developed instrument was used for data collection. This was to enable the researchers test the hypotheses stated at the beginning. The questionnaire has been identified as a significant instrument in gathering data the respondents there by allowing greater economy of effort. The instrument, ATSAPQ consisted of part A and B, and part A was designed to obtain personal data from the respondents, part B, captioned Aggressive tendencies of students. There are ten (10) items on aggressive tendencies of students. On the whole a, 30 item structured questionnaire

Respondents were expected to indicate by ticking the extent to which they agree or disagree to statements that were stated in the questionnaire. The items were short and simple to avoid any misunderstanding. Their responses were measured by means of a four category rating system as follows:

Strongly Agree	4 Points
Agree	3 points
Disagree	2 points
Strongly disagree	1 point

Scoring of the Instrument

Each of the items had 4 responses weighted as follows:

Strongly Agree (SA)	4 Points
Agree (A)	3 points
Disagree (D)	2 points
Strongly disagree (SD)	1 point

Validation of the Instrument

The research instrument designed for the study Aggressive Tendencies and Students Academic Performance Questionnaire (ATSAPQ) was submitted to 3 experts of educational test and measurement in the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counselling University of Uyo.. They examined its face and content validity. The opinions, comments and criticisms of these experts were brought to bear in the final revision and modification of the instrument before it was administered to students in the selected secondary schools.

Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was pretested on 50 JS2 and SS2 students who were not part of the sample in Uyo Urban. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was used in determining the reliability of the instrument. The Cronbach alpha enabled the assessment of the internal consistency of the instrument which options were strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The data were subjected to cronbach alpha coefficient analysis and the reliability of 8.38 was obtained.

Method of Data Analysis

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine the degree of relationship between aggressive tendencies and quality of students and among male and female students. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent do physical aggressive tendencies relate to academic performance among public secondary school students' in Uyo Urban?

Table 1: Mean Standard Deviation and Pearson (r) relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and students' academic performance.

Variable	X	SD	r	Remark
Physical Aggressive Tendencies	17.84	4.66	.800	Significant
Academic Performance	62.45	11.62		

The value of the computed correlation coefficient (.800) revealed that there is a positive relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and students' academic performance.

Research Question 2

Is there any significant relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students' in Uyo Urban?

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson (r) relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and students' academic performance.

Variable	x	SD	r-cal	Remark
Verbal Aggressive Tendencies	30.50	2.62	4.39	Significant
Academic Performance	28.35	2.10		

$P < .05$; $df = 498$, $r\text{-crit} = 1.96$

Table 2 revealed that the observed r-value stood at 4.39 while the r-critical value stood at 1.96 at .05 level of significance and 498 degree of freedom. Hence, the result was significant.

Hypothesis One

There is no statistically significant relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.

Table 3: Result of Pearson Product Moment Coefficient between physical aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal	Remark
Physical Aggressive Tendencies	4951	103766			440136	.958*	Ho
Academic Performance	15612	4241379					

$P < .05$; $df = 498$; $r\text{-crit} = .195$

+Since computed r (.958) was greater than the critical r (.195), the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.

Hypothesis Two

There is no statistically significant relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and students' academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.

Variables	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$	$\sum xy$	r-cal	Remark
Verbal Aggressive Tendencies	4462	103599			504199	.805*	Ho
Academic Performance	15664	4241299					

$P < .05$; $df = 498$; $r\text{-crit} = .195$

Since the computed r of .805 was greater than the critical r of .195, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban.

Discussion of Findings

The result as shown in Table 3 revealed that the calculated “ r ” value of .958 is greater than the critical “ r ” value of .195 at .05 levels of significance and df of 498. The implication is that the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, there is a statistically significant relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary schools in Uyo Urban. This result is in total agreement with the study of Felson and Tedeschi (1993) who found that frequent exposure to aggressive people may involve any individual in aggressive episodes and that the presence of aggressive mothers increases the likelihood of imitation.

Furthermore, the result in Table 4 also revealed that the calculated “ r ” value of .805 was greater than the r -critical value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance and df of 498. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. The interpretation reveals that there is a statistically significant relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban. This result is in total agreement with the study of Gwen (2006) who stated that verbal aggression increases anxiety in academics.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that there is a significant relationship between physical aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo Urban, and that there is a statistically significant relationship between verbal aggressive tendencies and academic performance among public secondary school students in Uyo urban. Furthermore, the researchers strongly believe that if aggressive tendencies are properly curbed, the quality of education in terms of students’ performance would improve.

Recommendations

The following recommendations become necessary, these are that:

- 1) The Ministry of Education should include courses or subjects like Anger and Aggressive Behaviour Management in secondary schools.
- 2) Both Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities should be improved and enriched in order to curb students’ aggressive tendencies.
- 3) Government should also improve its supervision mechanisms to ensure that policies related to education are implemented to the fullest.

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