



Research Article

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« PEER GROUP INFLUENCE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS »

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Received Date: Aug 27, 2020
Published Date: Sept. 06 2020

Abstract:

The main thrust of the study was to investigate Peer Group Influence as a Correlate of Aggressive Behaviour among Secondary School Students in Abia State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The sample for the study consisted of 878 respondents drawn through two-stage sampling procedure from 8783 (4195 male and 4588 female) senior secondary school students in Abia State. Two instruments titled "Peer Group Influence Questionnaires" (PGIQ) and "Students Aggressive Behaviour Questionnaire" (SABQ) were developed by the researchers and used for the study. The instruments were face validated by three experts: one from Psychology, Guidance and Counselling and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation; all from the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike respectively. The stability of the instruments were determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which gave reliability indices of $r = .731$, and $r = .823$ for PGIQ and SABQ respectively. Data obtained were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, Linear regression and multiple regressions which revealed the following findings:

Peer group influence to a positive high and significant extent correlate with aggressive behaviour. A positive but very low and no significant gender differences exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behavior of the students. Among the educational implications of the findings was that aggressive behavior depends on group influence among senior secondary school students. It was thus recommended among other that there is need for periodic exposure of senior secondary school students to seminars on peer group influence as correlates of aggressive behavior among Secondary School Students to enable them be guided by the implications the concepts of Peer Group Influence as relate to aggressive behavior.

Keywords: Peer Group, Influence, Aggressive behavior, Secondary School Students.

1. Introduction:

The period of Senior Secondary School Schooling in Nigeria coincides with the period of adolescence. Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a period that the child encounters numerous problems from all areas of his growth and development such as physical, mental, social, psychological, cultural and spiritual growth problems. Such is the difficulties that confront the emerging child into adulthood that some psychologists have described as a period of "storms and stress". This period varies from society to society as a result of cultural variations and level of modernization. Generally, adolescents' period commences between ages of 11 or 12 years to 18 or 21 years. Girls begin transition earlier than boys, about 11 – 12 years. Boys start between 12 – 14 years.

It is pertinent to point out that the social behavior in adolescents is very crucial because it helps the adolescents to learn right and wrong in a particular society. Thompson (2008) postulated that adolescents acquire a sense of right and wrong partly through peer group who convey simple lessons about people's feelings, the consequences of breaking rules and what it takes to be a good boy or a good girl. Discipline is very important. Among the peer group discipline is aimed at the total developments to become responsible people in the society. Onyechi & Okere (2008) stated that, adolescence stage requires love, care and warmth. Generally, the social behaviour of the adolescents depends on the peer group. Utti (2010) observed that peer group is a major vehicle in socializing the child. Adolescents have some certain characteristics regarding their social behaviour. Steinberg (2008) reported that the adolescent experience some changes that have to do with self-consciousness and thinking of the person they want to be.

Adolescents involve themselves in so many negative activities such as association with bad peer group, lack of respect for elders, drug abuse and so on. In the long run if adolescents behavior are not handled well and checkmated it may lead to behavioural failure, uncontrolled and uncontrollable addiction and aggressive behaviour.

Peer group influence could be seen as the influence exerted by peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes, values or behaviour to conform to the group of people who are relatively of the same age and come from same social group such as, school, ethnic, and religion as postulated by Brown (2010). Vigdor (2011) defines peer group as collections of adolescents identified by interests, attitudes, abilities and personal characteristics they have in common. Peer group according to Burion & Mehta (2009), plays a role in the development of negative outcomes such as poor academic adjustment, social anxiety and so on. They also stated that research on peer group has demonstrated that the influence of peers' peaks in middle adolescence and begins a gradual decline in later adolescence.

Adolescence is a period in human development characterized by transition from childhood to adulthood. One of the most important transitions occurring during adolescence is the rise of peer group. Peer group influence provides an idea not only for the acquisition and maintenance of friendships, but also for the development of social skills such as good interpersonal relationship, social problem solving such as, lying, stealing, and cheating and so on. Brown (2010) observed that the study of peer group influence in adolescence has shown to be important to the development of adolescents as it open up to the society, the gravity of this peer on the adolescence. It also helps to understand adolescent friendships and their correlates on aggressive behavior, substance abuse among others, hence, peer group plays major role on adolescent behavior. For example, the antisocial peer groups are often seen as the correlates of aggressive behavior (Lipsey & Derzon, 2008).

The influence of peer group on aggressive behavior seems to be strong, regardless of ethnic group membership. Many ethnic group comparisons of peer influence on behavior have found that those with peers' group, participating in negative behavior are more likely to engage in this behavior as well, regardless of ethnicity (Choi, Harachi, Gillmore & Catalano, 2010); Walker Barnes & Mason, 2009).

Peer group provide adolescents with the attitudes, motivation that support aggressive behavior and they provide opportunities to engage in specific delinquent acts (Cashwell & Vacc, 2010). In ways similar to the community, the peer group becomes an agency of enculturation and learning. Even very young children develop a sense of self from their perceptions of important people in their surroundings, including relatives, teachers, and peers.

Socioeconomic status, ethnic identity and parents' occupations affect how families view themselves and the process by which they socialize their children (Bornstein, 2008). Later, as children leave the home setting, their self-perception and socializing skills become influenced by how their peer view them. As children move out from family to child-care centres, school, and the community at large, they begin to form attachments, and friendships emerge through their play. These relationships influence behavior even infants and toddlers are observed reacting to other infants by touching them, by crying when others cry, and later by offering nurturance or comfort. By about age three, early friendships begin to form and children's peers begin to have a more lasting influence (Berk, 2009).

Peer group influence on behavior gradually becomes more dominant. Harris (2008) & Rowe (1989) maintained that peer groups have an even stronger influence than that of the parents, although that extreme position has been refuted by other researchers (Berk, 2009). Gradually, children discover that others can share their feelings or attitudes or have quite different ones. The perspectives of others will affect how children feel about their own families. Children usually have a family view of their own

and of other cultures. So, when confronted with other perspectives, they often need to rethink their own view points. It is often difficult for children to adjust to the idea that other families can function radically differently from their own and yet hold many of the same attitudes and beliefs and be equally nurturing and secure. The peer group serves as a barometer for children examining themselves and their feelings about self and family.

The peer group also influences development of children socializing skills. These early friendships help children learn how to negotiate and relate to others, including their siblings and other family members. They learn from peers how to cooperate and socialize according to group norms and group sanctioned modes of behavior. The peer group can influence what the child values, knows, wears, eats, and learns. The extent of this influence, however, depends on other situational constraints, such as the age and personality of student and the nature of the group (Sirai, 2010).

Aggressive behavior has been defined by some educational psychologists in various ways. Wood, Wood and Boyd (2014), defined it as the intentional infliction of physical or psychological harm on others. From this definition, it is obvious that for an act to be classified as an aggressive behavior, the infliction of physical or psychological harm on others has to be intentional. Hence, unintended and accidental infliction of harm on others may not rightly be classified as aggressive behavior (Ifeagwzi, 2010).

Aggressive behavior among secondary school students takes various forms. It could be physical or verbal. Physical aggression refers to inflicting injury on others, while verbal aggression entails using words that are intended to harm another person (Ojukwu, Chukwuemeka & Awoke, 2020). Aggressive behavior among secondary school students sometimes take the form of over reaction, screaming, shouting or becoming very agitated as a result of a very minor setback (Eziyi & Odoemelam, 2008). It may also take the form of quarrelling, insubordination, bullying, revolution, destruction of school property, protest, angry shouts of rebellion and so on.

At times other terms are used that refer to unobservable internal states such as, 'angry' 'vengeful' 'over stimulated' and 'poor impulse control' (Sturmer, 2011). The term "aggression" may be applied to a specific behavior such as killing. It could mean causing another injury or creating destruction, attacking another, or simply engaging in fighting. It can refer to strong, assertive behavior (an aggressive lover), to self-imposition or an offensive-besetting manner (an aggressive salesman), or a particular quality or style (an aggressive commercial, an aggressive driving style, an aggressive chess player). It can equally refer to a disposition (an aggressive driving style, an aggressive chess player) or an action. It may be used to refer to a host of emotional and attitudinal states such as anger, hate and hostility. It may be conceived of as a personality trait, a learned habit, peer group influence, a stereotyped reflex, or an underlying biological process (Walsh & Ugumba-Agwunobi, 2012). It may refer to motivation or intention without regard to consequences, or to the consequences (example injury) without regard to motivation. It can be self-assertive, or sado-masochistic. It can be instrumental or ritualistic, playful or spontaneous. It can be benign or malignant, positive or negative.

In some disciplines, there is general consensus that 'aggression' implies 'approach behaviour', as the original Latin word, *agere* (advancing against) denotes. Aggression according to American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2018) is a reactionary and impulsive behavior, which is violent and unpredictable. Myers (2011) defined aggression as any verbal behavior intended to hurt or destroy, whether done reactively out of hostile or proactively as a calculated means to an end. Welsh & Buboltz (2010) refers to the original meaning of aggression as a tendency to go forward or approach an object. Allen, cited in Carson, Butcher & Mineka, (2010) describes it as the will to ensure and to test capacity to deal with external forces; which may or may not involve hostility to the vigour with which either constructive or destructive acts are carried out.

Sturmer (2011), revealed that aggression is more likely in persons with one or more of the following; greater degrees of intellectual disability, organic ethnology; organic brain damage; temporal lobe epilepsy, sensory disabilities, difficulties in language, poor coping skills, poor problem skills, poor social support, poor religious orientation, peer group influence and poor parenting styles. Some findings suggest that early aggression does not necessarily lead to aggression later on, although the course through early childhood is an important predictor of outcomes in middle childhood. In addition, physical aggression the continues is likely occurring in the context of family adversity, including socio-economic factors (Nwankwo, 2013).

According to Freud, cited by Ndirike (2016), stressed that the human species have a volcanic potential to erupt in aggression. Freud thought that one harbours not only positive survival instincts but also a self-destructive “death instinct,” which once usually displaces toward others as aggression or release in human being’ peaks at around (two-three) years of age, and then declines gradually on average (Phelam, 2013). These observation suggest that physical aggression is not only a learned behavior but that development provides opportunities for the learning and biological development of self-regulatory (Nwoke, 2014). However, small subsets of children fail to acquire all the necessary self-regulatory abilities and tend to show typical levels of physical aggression across development. These may be at risk for later violent behavior or, conversely, lack of Aggression that may be considered necessary within society (Ifeagwzis, 2010).

According to Ojukwu et al (2020) citing Onukwufor (2012) that researchers have discovered six major types of aggression which includes Hostile aggression that takes place when the aggressor’s primary intension is to harm the victim as a result of anger. Instrumental Aggression is aggression that is a means to some other end. Thus, instrumental aggression occurs when there is intent to injure, but the aggression is mainly a means towards achieving some other non-injurious goals such as to win social approval or to get money. Robbery, kidnapping and terrorism are examples of instrumental aggression (Onukwufor 2012). In emotional aggression harm is inflicted for its own sake. Emotional aggression is often impulsive and it is carried out at the heat of the moment. For example, the jealous lover strikes out in rage, while fans of rival soccer teams go at each other with fists and clubs (Brehm, Kassin & Fein, 2010). Relationship aggression is an aspect of indirect aggression. Relational aggression is mainly concerned with targeting a person’s relationships and social status such as threatening to end a friendship, engaging in gossip, backbiting and trying to get others dislike the target (Brehm, Kassin & Fein, 2010).

According to Sameer & Jamia (2011) the behavioural cases related to aggression can be divided into two broad groups namely: Physical and verbal aggression. This postulation is in consonance with Myers definition which sees aggression as “Physical or verbal behaviour intended to hurt someone. Physical aggression is hostile form of aggression. Its aim is to cause bodily damage. It includes kicking, molesting, harassing, biting, pushing, torturing, fighting, bullying, vandalism, destruction and gangsterism, shoving, hair pulling, stabbing, shooting (National Youth Violence Prevention Research Centre, 2002). Verbal aggression includes acts such as insulting with bad language, displaying anger, threatening, swearing and being sarcastic all in order to cause emotional and psychological pain (Sameer & Jamia, 2011), while National Youth Violence Prevention Research Centre (2012) state that verbal aggression includes such behaviours as threatening, intimidating others and engaging in malicious teasing and name-calling. Thompson, (2008) cited by Ojukwu, et al, (2020) maintained that aggression researchers have increasingly supported the notion of two specific types of aggressive behaviour: proactive and reactive aggression. Reactive aggression is usually fear-based and impulsive in nature (Thompson, 2008). We all remember the child that would cry at the sightless sense of threat or anxiety. In contrast, proactive aggression is a predictor and calculated – such as what you see in some types of bullying behaviours. Kids with high levels of proactive aggression are not necessarily reacting to the perception of threat, but instead may engage in aggression coldly to obtain rewards or impose their will. Studies with both humans and non-human primates have shown that these two types of aggression have distinct physiological profiles. For example, reactive aggressive children have significant higher endocrine response during a stress task while proactive aggressive children do not (Lopez & Duran, 2008).

However, the factors that could lead to aggression may include peer group influence, parenting styles, child’s location and a child’s gender. Gender is a factor that plays a role in both human and animal aggression. Males are historically believed to be generally more physically aggressive than females from an early age, and men commit the vast majority of murders (Buss, 2008). There is evidence that males are quicker to aggression (Frey, 2008) and more likely than females to express their aggression physically. Although females are less likely to initiate physical violence, they can express aggression by using a variety of non-physical means. Exactly which method women use to express aggression is something that varies from culture to culture. In eastern Nigeria, the Igbo culture is based on male dominance and physical violence; women tend to get into conflicts with other women more frequently than with men. When in conflict with males, instead of using physical means, they make up songs mocking the man, which spread across the land and humiliate him. If a woman wanted to kill a man, she would either convince her male relatives to kill him or hire an assassin. Although these two methods involve physical violence, both are forms of indirect aggression, since the aggressor herself avoid getting directly involved or putting herself in immediate physical danger (Anichebe, 2010).

Locality seems to account for the disparity in urban and rural children's aggressiveness (Ojukwu et al, 2020). Robert, Skipper and James (2016) investigated differential rates of rural urban aggression. Official studies indicate that rural areas generate lower rates of aggressiveness than do urban area.

However, developing countries today have a large urban population than the developed countries. Almost all the developing countries that have been concerned with the size and growth of urban population are constituted with serious problem. In most developing countries rural to urban migration puts even greater strains on cities such as youth restiveness, cultism, juvenile delinquency, sexual harassment by fellow students in the schools which has resulted in bullying and aggressive behavior of the students thereby destroying the student's effort towards achieving the basic objective of secondary education. This development has persisted despite the different types of parenting styles intervention implored (Adebayo, 2014).

A tremendous rise in urban population in the developing countries has often been the major source of both social, economic problem and high aggression and increase in crime rate (Albert, 2014).

In Africa most of the urban population are unstable and there are increasing aggressiveness and high crime rate as a result of high unemployment rate, uncontrolled and uncontrollable addiction, rape, fighting, and so on (Adebayo, 2014).

Strong gender differences in aggression have been found in virtually every culture that has been studied worldwide; about 99% of rape is committed by men as are about 90% of robberies, assault and murders (Graham & wells, 2009). Among children boys show higher rates of physical aggression than girl do (Loeber & Hay, 1997), and even infants differ, such that infant boy tend to show more anger and poorer emotional regulation in comparison to infant girls.

Ojukwu et al (2020) maintained that although these gender differences exist, they do not mean that men and women are completely different, or that women are never aggressive. Both men and women respond to insults and provocation with aggressiveness. In fact, difference between men and women are smaller after they have been frustrated, insulted or threatened (Bettencourt & Miller, 2008). Men and women are seen to use similar amount of verbal aggression (Graham & Well, 2009).

A major interest of this study was to establish relationship between peer group influence and aggression behaviour of Senior Secondary School students based on gender and locality (Rural and Urban). To the researchers' knowledge, no study correlating peer group influence has been carried out among secondary school adolescents. It is against this background that the researchers were motivated to carry out this study on peer influence as correlate of aggressive behaviour among secondary school students in Abia State, Nigeria.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Secondary school is a post primary education system that trains the student for useful living and as such imbues into the children or students the ethics of discipline to enable them survive in the society. The students' upbringing, peer group influence and locality are supposed to shape the students' discipline toward acquiring the basic ethics to ensure they are trained well for useful living in the society. This is because the peer group influence and locality will help to build the child into modesty or appropriate adjustment.

Also, researchers differ with regard to conclusion about gender differences in peer group influence on aggressive behavior; with the majority seeming to infer that male have higher levels of aggressive behaviour than female. Aggressive behaviour seems to be experienced by many as of male students, especially the senior students in Abia State Nigeria and seem to at least be partly responsible for recent development of youth restiveness, cultism, juvenile delinquency, sexual harassment by fellow students in the schools. This may likely result in bullying and aggressive behaviour of the students thereby destroying the student's effort towards achieving the basic objective of secondary education.

Aside this, a closer examination of existing studies specifies the fact that aggressive behaviour among secondary school students from developed nation could be accessed while the same could not be said of students in developing countries especially among senior secondary school students in Abia State. Since the existing studies on peer group influence on aggressive behaviour showed a wide variation from country to country there is the need to establish the range and percentage of how locality could correlate/contribute to aggressive behaviour in Abia State as well as the influence of gender. This will add

to existing literature and knowledge in this area. It is against this backdrop that the study examined peer group influence as correlates of aggressive behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Abia State, Nigeria.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Determine the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students.
2. Determine the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students based on gender.
3. Determine the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State based on locality (urban and rural areas).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State?
2. What are the gender differences in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State?
3. To what extent do differences in location (urban and rural areas) exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State?

1.5 HYPOTHESES

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State.

Ho₂: There is no significant gender difference in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State.

Ho₃: Differences in location (urban and rural areas) are no significant factor in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State.

2.0 METHOD

The study adopted correlational research design. Correlational design is the most appropriate research design for this study, because it tests the degree to which two or more attributes or measurements on the same group of elements shows a tendency to vary together. It is to measure relationship between two variables as numerical values (such as peer group influence and aggressive behaviour). (Montgomery, 2012).

The population of this study consist of all senior secondary school class II students in Abia State. Available statistics show that there were 8783 (4195 male and 4588 female) senior secondary class II students in Abia State (Abia State Secondary Education Management Board, 2018). The choice of senior secondary class two student was guided by the assumption that the students were in the middle class of senior secondary classes. They were neither adjusting to senior secondary syllabus as the SS 1 students were doing, nor were they preparing for external examination as the SS III students were doing.

A sample of 878 SS II students was used for the study. This sample was randomly drawn from a population of senior secondary school class II students through two-stage sampling technique. Initially, simple random sampling technique was used to draw two Local Government Areas from each of the three education zones that make up Abia State. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 10% of the entire population of senior secondary school class II students in the state. This was in line with Ali's (2006) recommendation which indicated that when the population was large (up to 2000), about 5 to 20% could be used for the study.

Three instruments were developed by the researchers from information got from literature. They were questionnaires titled "Peer Group Influence Questionnaires" (PGIQ); and "Students' Aggressive Behaviour Questionnaire" (SABQ). The Peer Group Influence Questionnaires (PGIQ) contained 15 items that elicited information on students' peer group influence on aggressive behaviour. The Students' Aggressive Behaviour Identification Questionnaire (SABIQ) elicited information on Students' Aggressive Behaviour. The SABIQ was subdivided into 3 clusters. (Cluster A, contains 10 items on physical aggression, cluster B, 6 items on emotional aggression while cluster C, had 8 items on verbal aggression. Each of the instruments was built on a four-point rating scale of: Very high Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very low extent which weighted 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

The "Peer Group Influence Questionnaires" (PGIQ) and "Students' Aggressive Behaviour Identification Questionnaire" (SABIQ) were face validated by three experts: one expert from Educational Psychology, one from Guidance and Counselling and one expert from Measurement and Evaluation; all from the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike respectively. These experts scrutinized the instruments with regard to the suitability of the language and the extent to which the items related to students' peer group influence and aggressive behavior. They were also to indicate whether the items covered the content areas and ability to supply answers to the questions. These experts made general comments on the applicability of the instruments. The experts suggestions and corrections were affected by the researchers and the views and suggestions helped to establish the face and content validity of the instruments.

The instruments were subjected to test-retest using 25 SS II students from one secondary school in Imo State. The instrument was administered to the students and after two weeks interval, the same instrument was re-administered to the same set of students. The stability of the instrument was determined using test re-test by analyzing the scores of the first and second administration of the instrument with the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) which yielded reliability coefficients (r) of 0.76 for (PGIQ) and $r = .84$ for SABIQ. Also the internal consistency of the items was determined using Cronbach Alpha method which yielded reliability estimates of $r = 0.73$ for (PGIQ) and $r = .84$ for SABIQ Cronbach's Alpha method was used since the items of the instrument were not dichotomously scored.

The Peer Group Influence Questionnaires" (PGIQ) and "Students' Aggressive Behaviour Identification Questionnaire" (SABIQ) were personally administered to the students by the researchers with the aid of the teachers in the participating schools. This was because the researchers believed that with the aid of the teachers the students would be reached and be made to adequately respond to the questionnaires. The highly aggressive students were selected among the ranges of aggressive behaviour students using students' behaviour aggressive identification scale with the help of teachers in the school. In other words, high, average and low aggressive behaviour students were sorted out. A student that scored 85 and above on the SABIQ was classified as high in aggression, 65 was classified as average aggression while 40 and below was seen as low in aggression respectively. Eight hundred and fifty-five sets of the instruments out of the 878 sets of the two instruments were returned which gave a 97% return rate.

The data generated from this study were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. Linear regression was used to test null hypotheses. In using Pearson's (r) Product Moment Correlation, the decision rule was that $\pm 0.00 - 0.20 =$ very low relationship; $\pm 0.21 - 0.40 =$ low relationship; $\pm 0.41 - 0.60 =$ moderate relationship; $\pm 0.61 - 0.80 =$ high relationship; $\pm 0.81 - 1.00 =$ very high relationship was used in the interpretation. The instrument with which the data was collected has four points' responses scale. The null hypotheses of significant difference was accepted if the calculated F-value has a p-value which was equal or greater than alpha value of .05 but rejected if the p-value was less than the alpha value of .05 level of significance.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER GROUP INFLUENCE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Research Question one-

The first research question of this study was. What is the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behavior of senior secondary school students in Abia State?

To determine the relationship that exist between peer group influence on aggressive behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Abia State, the respondents (students) responses and opinions were summed up according to their peer group influence and are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Peer Group Influence and Aggressive Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Abia State.

Source	R	R Squared	Adjusted R-squared
Peer Group Influence	.710 ^a	.504	.502

a. Predictor: (Constant), Peer Group Influence

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of .71 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.61 – 0.80. This indicates that peer group influence to a positive high extent correlates with aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State.

The Pearson R² of .504 also indicates that peer group influence predicted 50.4 percent of the variance observed in the aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students.

A corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is:

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State.

Data for testing hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis of Peer Group Influence and Aggressive Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students in Abia State.

Source	Sum of square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	126.443	1	126.443	334.505	.000b
Residual	322.741	854	.378		
Total	449.184	855			

Df = degree of freedom, F = F-calculated, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Data in Table 2 show that the calculated F-value of 334.505 has a p-value of .000 which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means that there is a significant relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State was rejected.

3.2 GENDER DIFFERENCE IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER GROUP AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Research Question Two

What are the gender differences in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behavior of senior secondary school students in Abia State?

Table 3: Gender Differences in the Relationship between Peer Group Influence and Aggressive Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students.

Source	R	R Squared	Adjusted R-squared
Gender differences	.074 ^a	.006	.004

Data in Table 3 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of .074 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of $\pm 0.00 - 0.20$. This indicates that gender differences to a positive very low extent exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State. The Pearson R^2 of .006 also indicates that gender

differences predicted only one percent of the variance observed in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students.

A corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is:

Hypothesis two

There is no significant gender difference in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State.

Data for testing hypothesis 2 are presented in Table 4

Table 4: Linear Regression on Gender Differences in the Relationship between Peer Group Influence and Aggressive Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students.

Source	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	.713	1	.713	4.722	.071 ^a
Residual	128.626	854	.151		
Total	129.339	855			

Data in Table 8 show that the calculated F-value of 4.722 has a p-value of .071 which is greater than the alpha value of .05. This means that there is no significant gender difference in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. Therefore, the hypothesis of no significant gender differences in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State was not rejected.

3.3 LOCATION DIFFERENCES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER GROUP INFLUENCE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Research Question three

To what extent do differences in location (urban and rural areas) exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State?

Table 5: Location Differences in the Relationship between Peer Group Influence and Aggressive Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students

Source	R	R Squared	Adjusted R-squared
Location differences	.414 ^a	.171	.169

Data in Table 5 indicate a correlation coefficient (r) of .414 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of $\pm 0.41 - 0.60$. This indicates that differences in location (urban and rural areas) to a positive low extent exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State. The Pearson R^2 of .171 also indicates that differences in location (urban and rural areas) predicted 17.1 percent of the variance observed in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students.

A corresponding hypothesis formulated to further address the research question is:

Hypothesis three

Differences in location (urban and rural areas) are no significant factor in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State.

Data for testing hypothesis 3 are presented in Table 6

Table 6: Linear Regression on the Differences in locality (urban and rural areas) in the Relationship between Peer Group Influence and Aggressive Behaviour of Senior Secondary School Students.

Source	Sum of square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	212.325	1	212.325	792.257	.000 ^a
Residual	228.826	854	.268		
Total	441.151	855			

Data in Table 6 show that the calculated F-value of 792.257 has a p-value of .000 which is less than the alpha value of .05. This means that there is a significant difference in location (urban and rural areas) exist in the relationship between peer group

influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that difference in location (urban and rural areas) are no significant factor in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students in Abia State was rejected.

DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS

The finding of the study indicated that peer group influence to a positive high and significant extent correlates with aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. Peer group influence had 50.4% contributions in predicting aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. According to the data from Federal Ministry of Education (2011, 2013), a total of 6, 580 (68%) secondary school students were involved in 2,996 violence incidents in the 257 public secondary schools in Nigeria. The report showed that occasional harm was (63%) bullying/threatening/interference (21%), gossiping/nicknaming (15%). In another study (Obi & Obikeze, 2013), observed that the act of getting involved in at least one physical fight was 27% among boys and 27% among girls in South-East, Nigeria. While previous studies tend to indicate that there is no gender difference in aggressive behavior as manifested by both boys and girls, recent ones tend to present a differing view, hence knowing that boys present more aggressive behaviours and engage in fighting, stealing, bullying and other criminal activities than the girls whose aggressive behaviours are more like verbal (Nwoke, 2014). Society has seen an increase in the incidents of aggression/violence among youth.

The result is also in line with the findings by Sekuku, Rimfat, & Ogbonna (2009) who opined that peer pressure is one of the determinants of adolescence's behaviours. The behaviour could be positive or negative depending on where this determinants swing. Research has supported the notion that friendship becomes increasingly important in early to middle adolescence, supplementing and perhaps exceeding the role that parents play (Brown, 2014). The research clearly reported increasing perceived importance and prevalence of cliques within their school over the parent's opinion. The finding of the study also supports the findings of Johnson & Fennell (2008), which indicated that research has linked the peer pressure to the development of individual delinquency in the late childhood and adolescence. The peer group representation in this case constructed using the social cognitive map procedure which asks all participants to report on the peer pressure on themselves as well as the rest of their class. Youth that were linked by their peers more were less influenced by their peer groups than were youth that disliked by their peers. The authors concluded that this study demonstrated the socialization influence of the peer group on future deviant behavior.

Eke (2014) observed that causes of delinquency tend to find theoretical explanations in the interaction between biological and social factors. The genetic makeup of individuals can predispose adolescent's engagement in delinquent activities.

Chromosomal abnormalities among the adolescent may predispose them to delinquent behaviours. She further emphasized the importance of extended family ties in other culture as well as the strong identification and attachment of individuals with their families. In Africa, parents expand beyond immediate mother and father to include members of the extended family, neighbours and every other persons who in one way or the other is involved in upbringing of the child (Okpako, 2008). Communication between parents and adolescents is very essential in molding the delinquent behaviour. One possible explanation is that findings may vary depending on when communication is initiated for example to correct a child, it is before or after parents discover their children are sexually active or using drugs. The quality of parent-child relationship or the family values available in the household matters.

The findings of the study further showed that a positive but very low and no significant gender difference exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. Gender difference had only one percent contributions in predicting the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. The findings also agree with the work of Sekuku Rimfat, & Ogbonna (2013) in their research found that there was no significant difference in delinquency between the two categories males and females. They noted that until recently male adolescents were by far more involved in delinquent acts than female. The researchers observed that times have changed more and more females are now getting involved in aggressive acts. These findings are consistent with Abdel-Khalek & Alansari (2014) who asserted that females had higher mean of verbal aggressive scores than their male counterparts. However, the salient gender differences were interpreted in the light of a socialization process; especially sex-typing and gender roles. The researchers understand that gender differences exist, they do not mean that men and women are completely different, or that women are never aggressive. Both men and women respond to insults and provocation with aggressiveness depending on aggressive eliciting situation.

The findings of the study also revealed that differences in location (urban and rural areas) to a positive but low and no significant extent exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students. Differences in location (urban and rural areas) had 17.1 percent contributions in predicting the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students.

The findings of the study support the finding of Okpako (2009) who in his own opinion suggested that beginning in early adolescence, individual peer pressure begin to grow in complexity and size. So, at this stage, adolescent tilt toward friendship and if bad friends, it leads to delinquency. Johnson and Fennell (2008). Revealed that research has linked the peer pressure to the development of individual delinquency in the late childhood and adolescence. In a study of 665 in 5th through 8th grade

children, in four Canadian elementary schools. Individual youths self-reported deviant behavior was significantly predicted by the mean level of deviant behaviour reported by the other individuals within their peer group about 95 days earlier. This effect remained after taking into account the individual youth's initial report of deviant behaviour. The peer group representation in this case constructed using the social cognitive map procedure which asks all participants to report on the peer pressure on themselves as well as the rest of their class. Youth that were liked by their peers more were less influenced by their peer groups than were youth that disliked by their peers. The authors concluded that this study demonstrated the socialization influence of the peer group on future deviant behaviour. The researchers observed that aggressive behaviour is not only dependent on location or school type but could relatively be linked with an individual upbringing, family type and parenting styles. Students in secondary schools located in urban areas tend to present more aggressive tendency than those in located in rural areas. A possible explanation of the more aggressive behaviour tendencies of the students in the urban areas than those in the rural areas could be that in the rural areas, every child is known by the names of the parents and any abnormal behaviour exhibited by any child is readily corrected by the adults around. Besides, adolescents in the urban areas are more exposed to television and other mass media institutions where they learn more from the media institutions and emulate what they watch by practicing such.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Summarily, factors such as peer group influence have been shown to have significant relationship with aggressive behaviour. From result findings, the research attempted at providing explanations to this phenomenon. Of primary importance to this study is social learning theory postulated by the behaviourists Albert Bandura which explains that aggression is caused by observing and learning from aggressive models in the environment. Because peer group influence have learning components, it is meaningful to propose that students with aggressive behavior might have learnt that through peer group influence.

Significant relationship exists between aggressive behaviour of senior secondary school students located in urban and rural areas in Abia State. Students in secondary schools located in urban areas tend to present more aggressive tendency than those located in rural areas.

Significant gender differences do not exist in the relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behavior among students in Abia State. Gender of secondary school students had only one and eight percent contributions in correlating peer group influence on aggressive behaviours respectively. Therefore, students could be exposed to aggressive behavior without gender discriminations.

4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Based on the significant level of peer group influence as correlate of aggressive behaviour as established in this study, it is highly recommended that parents and teachers assess the existing levels of peer group influence of their children and

pupils both in school and at home. If higher levels are identified, then appropriate measure should be taken to help lower students peer group influence.

2. The primary factors that predict child's future performance in multiple areas include: behaviour problems, emotional functioning, academic achievement, psychosocial development, and social skills. Hence, parents, teacher and psychologist should encourage schools to create greater overlap among home, school, and community through the implementation of activities across six types of involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with community. By implementing activities across all six types of involvement, educators may help reduce student's aggressiveness.
3. Practicing counsellors should be more proactive in helping their clients, especially students to overcome aggressive behaviour using appropriate behaviour modification techniques.
4. Also, parents, teachers and counsellors should counsel the female students against aggressive tendencies as the study has shown no significant gender difference in aggressive behaviour. Hence, counsellors, teachers and parents should help the students to be calm and parents should encourage them to avoid bad friends and tendency of engaging in abuse of substance that could trigger their mood. Teachers, parents and counsellors should guide the students in building their confidence, avoid bad and negative friends, and focus in their students, set realistic goals which would consequently reduce their aggressiveness.
5. Additional area that can be addressed to help reduce aggressive behaviour would be goal setting and rewarding active learning among public school students. Finally, parents should as matter of urgent importance check the type of parenting style they are using in raising their wards and monitor closely the type of friends their children relate with both in school and at home and possibly know them and their parents. Education and psychologists should give continuous advice and develop techniques that will help reduce aggressive behaviour.

Educational implication of the finding

The findings of the study have far-reaching implications for students, teachers, psychologists, counselors, policy makers and parents.

1. The implication of these findings is that aggressive behavior could be counterproductive to learning as it can affect negatively the academic performance of students and lead to maladjustment.

2. With regard to peer group influence as correlate of aggressive behavior among secondary school students, the findings revealed that there exists a significant relationship between peer group influence and aggressive behavior. This suggest that students' aggressive behavior could be accounted for by their peer group influence.
3. With regard to relationship between students in schools located in urban and rural areas and aggressive behavior, the finding indicates that significant difference exist in aggressive behavior especially among the students in secondary schools located in urban areas. The implication of the findings is that closer monitoring is given to students in the rural areas than those in the urban areas.
4. Also, with regard to the relationship of gender on peer group influence and parenting style as correlate of aggressive behavior among secondary school students, the finding indicates that no significant gender difference exist in aggressive behavior. The implication of the findings is that male and female students do not differ significantly in aggressive behavior.
5. Finally, the implication of the study should be viewed from the significant impact of aggressive behavior on students' attention and focus in school lessons, particularly in class and in sporting activities. The results could be useful in checking the ugly trend of aggressiveness, attention deficit hypoactive disorder (ADHD). Thus, students' parental guidance should be raised by various methods suitable to the parents, teachers and counselor as peer group influence correlate aggressive behavior. Also, students could be assisted in maintaining calm and focus against provocations in order to reduce high temper tantrum.

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