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COMMUNITY VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION AS PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated community violence and aggression as predictors of psychosocial adjustment among adolescent students in Anambra State. The purpose of the study was to find out the predictive power of community violence and aggression on the psychosocial adjustment of adolescent students in Anambra state. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The researcher adopted a correlation research design. The population of the study was 31,170 SSII students and the sample size comprising 300 SSII students was obtained through simple random sampling techniques employing the balloting techniques. Questionnaires were the instruments used for the collection of data. The instrument was validated by three experts in the faculty of education NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and t-test of correlation. The results showed that community violence and aggression jointly predict adolescent students' psychosocial adjustment. The researcher recommends that elders in the community should try as much as they could to reduce the rate of violence and aggression in the community so that the school adolescents will emulate them and strive for a better psychosocial adjustment.

KEYWORDS

community violence, aggression, psychosocial adjustment and adolescent students



INTRODUCTION

Violence has always been part of human experiences. The impact of violence can be seen in various forms in every part of the world. If not every year, more than a millions of people lose their lives and many suffered severe and fatal injuries, as a result of self-inflicted, interpersonal or collective violence. Generally, violence has been identified as one among the leading causes of death worldwide for people between the age of 15-44 years. Although the cost of grief and pain in human beings cannot be calculated, yet in as much as it is almost visible and some are invisible technologies has made known certain types of violence which include terrorism, wars, riots and civil unrest and these are visible in television, movies, newspapers and magazines on a daily basis. Additionally, violence occurs out of sights in the homes, workplaces, communities, medical and social institutions set up to care for people. Unfortunately, many of the victims are too young, some are weak or ill to protect themselves whereas many are forced by social conventions or pressures to keep silent over the experiences. According to Butchart, Mikton, Dalilbeg, and Krug (2014) most of the victims in violence are not only heirs of adolescents, but also deeply affected their families, friends and communities. It is observed that for each death, many are hospitalized with injuries sustained during violence and most death, injuries, mental and emotional health problems, disability and increase health risk behaviours recorded are major consequences of community violence.

According to the world health organization's conceptual framework; community violence is a form of interpersonal violence perpetrated by strangers or acquaintances other than the family members or intimate partners (Krug et al 2002). In a study conducted by Finkelho et al (2013), in 2011 on US victimization survey, the study revealed that community violence is a widespread social issue. According to Hillery (1955) the fundamental problem with the term community is its multiple meaning recognized as early as 1955 and thus, the deep ambiguity around is understandings of community. Community therefore, is where people feel connected, supported and also have collective experiences. As Peterson, Speer and McMillan (2008) rightly put, belonging to a community where people feel connected, supported and influential has to do with a fundamental human phenomenon of collective experiences. Several studied for example; Allwood and Bell, (2008), Calvete and Orue (2011) noted that growing up in violence communities has many negative long-lasting effects. This is why; Bandura (1977) in Mcleod (2016) emphasized on the importance of observing, modeling, initiating the behaviours, attitudes and emotional reactions of others, the theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning behaviour. It states that individuals learn from people around them through observation, vicarious and self-regulation. The theory states that the individuals, others are observing are called models.

Basically in a community, adolescents are surrounded by many influential models, such as parents with other family members, characters on TVs, friends within their peer group and teachers at school. These models joined to provide examples of behaviour to observe and imitate for example, masculine and feminine, pro and anti-social behaviours among others. Having observing the model, the adolescent pay attention and encode their behaviour. They sometimes, at last imitate or copy the behaviours they have observed regardless of the appropriateness of the behaviour whether good or bad. In other words, people do not just imitate or copy a model without some thoughts prior to imitation which is considered as meditational process. These meditational process according to Bandura occurs in four different phases viz- attention, retention, reproduction and motivation phase. The individual adolescent pays attention to the model, he/she observed, retain what he observed as well try to perform the act or behaviour demonstrated by the model and finally be motivated with the behaviour irrespective of the effect or outcome of the behaviour which may as well result to violence.

Violence and its consequences in other words increases the costs of health and welfare of the community, decreases the value of property in areas where it occurs, disrupts a range of essential services, reduces productivity and generally undermines the fabric of community World health organization (WHO 2015). Studies revealed that psychological and social factors, predict behaviours where risk factors at different levels and at different stages of an individual are affected by community violence (WHO 2015, Jan sen pw, Verlinden, Dommiss-Van Berkel, Mieloo, Van der Ende, Veenstra 2012). These risk factors include community violence, aggressive behaviours, psychological conditions and psychosocial maladjustment (which

include the harmful use of alcohol and illicit drugs use). Hughes, Bellis, Hard castle, Butchart, Dahlberg and Mercy (2014) further observed that the burden of community violence is highest in low and middle income communities and high prevalence of both physical fighting and bullying is reported in these communities.

In education setting like schools, violence causes a lot of harm to adolescents and can last into adulthood and to the rest of their years. Increase on the aggressiveness among the adolescent students concerning both the families and communities have drawn attention to this study. Keya, Bilgin and Singer (2012) in a study has emphasized that violence in school has a negative impact on the school environment because most often, they are creating an atmosphere of anxiety, fear and insecurity and can as well violate the rights of the adolescent students including their right to education and health. For the fact that schools do not exist in social isolation from the communities, violence at home or within the community can affect the psychosocial adjustment of adolescent students in the schools (UNESCO (2007).

School adolescents according to the researcher are adolescents who are still in school and are under the direction and control of their teachers and parents. They are individuals between the age range/bracket 11-18 years. It is understood that this adolescent students before appearing in the school are first from a family and obviously belong to a particular community. Therefore, adolescent students growing up in a violent community or environment acquired many negative long-lasting effects. One of these is a higher risk for the development of aggression. Several studies for example Calvet and Orue (2011) confirmed this effect on the context of the family. From these studies it is confirmed that expensive violence events in a community either as a witness or as a victim increases the chances of developing aggressive behaviours (Allwood and Bell 2008).

Aggression is a familiar term in common parlance, as well as a key concept in the study of human behaviour. It is a behaviour whose intent is to harm another. It can as well be defined as any sequence of behaviour whose goal is to inflict injury to the person toward whom it is directed. According to Rodriguez (2004) in a study pointed that aggressive adolescents at school show a very strong need for social recognition and therefore would like to be considered as powerful, socially accepted, different and rebellious by their fellow students. On the other hand, Buelga, Ravenna, Musitu and Lila (2006) suggested that the desire for popularity, leadership and power lead to involvement of many adolescent students to maladjusted behaviours such as aggressive acts, illicit drug consumptions, bullying and so forth, thus, providing them with the opportunity to construct the psychosocial reputation they desire. Furthermore, some researchers for example Musitu and Garcia documented the association between aggressive behaviour in adolescence and particular individual and social factors which are later relating mainly to the family and social context and are the most important social context for development of psychosocial adjustment in this period of life.

Psychosocial adjustment however is described as a process in which the individual attempt to deal with stress, tension, conflicts and meet his/her needs while making efforts at the same time to maintain harmonious relationship with the environment (Kulshrestha in Ugodulunwa and Anakwe 2012). According to Erickson theory (1959), the theory states that interaction between biological factor and social factors are the important factors in personality development. Erickson lays emphases on social and environmental factors as major determinants of individual processes of development and this theory is in line with Malinauskas (2006) study which asserts that the psychosocial adjustment personality of an individual is a special phenomenon of his/her interaction which covers multiple aspects in itself while some are related with the standard of the society whereas others are connected with the behavioural norms of the personality. For the fact that adolescents are at the stage of adolescence period which is unique, they show the flash of the development of the social and psychological activeness of the personality. Furthermore, because of the rapid physiological alterations in the body and because of still underdeveloped psychological and social maturity, adolescents students age are less resistant to the impact of the stressors of the environment, and their psychosocial adjustment is disturbed more rapidly concerning their ability to adapt to the requirements which are set up at school, to the norms regulated by the society and to relate adequately with the environment under the conditions which are present in the current social system (Way et al 2007). Consequently, several studies have revealed the consequences of violence and aggression on adolescents' psychological adjustment however, the present study intends to sort out if community violence and aggression jointly predict adolescent students psychosocial adjustment in

Anambra State. Specifically, it tends to find out; (1), if community violence predicts adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment in Anambra State. (2), if aggression predicts adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment in Anambra State. (3), if community violence and aggression jointly predict adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment in Anambra State.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study and they are as follow:

1. What is the percentage of variance in adolescent students psychosocial adjustment accounted for by community violence and aggression?
2. To what extent does community violence predict adolescent students psychosocial adjustment?
3. To what extent does aggression predict adolescent students psychosocial adjustment?

Hypotheses

Three leading hypothesis also drove the study and they are as follow:

1. Community violence will not predict adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment.
2. Aggression will not predict adolescents psychosocial adjustment
3. Community violence and aggression will not jointly predict adolescents psychosocial adjustment

METHODS

The study adopted correlation research design which is a design that seeks to identify the relationship between two or more variables (Nwogu 2015). The study area was strictly on adolescent students in Anambra State with the population of 31,910, SS11 students according to the data collected from PPSSC 2019/2020 academic session. The researcher randomly sample 10 schools with the total number 300 SSII students for the study. Three instruments titled “community violence questionnaire (CVQ), aggression questionnaire (AQ) and psychosocial adjustment questionnaire (PSOA) was used for the data collection. The instruments were validated by three experts, one in guidance and counseling, one in educational psychology and one in measurement and evaluation all in the faculty of education NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the instrument was tested using comeback alpha coefficient which yielded 0.72, 0.68 and 0.79 and these considered the instrument reliable for use. The data was collected using direct delivery method which enabled the researcher to retrieve 100% of the instrument. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and t-test of correlation.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the percentage of variance in adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment is accounted for by community violence and aggression?

Table 1: Percentage of Variance in Adolescents’ Psychosocial Adjustment is Accounted for by Community Violence and Aggression (N = 300)

N	Correlation co-efficient (r)	r ²	Adjusted r ²
300	.665	0.443	0.439

Data presented in Table 1 revealed that the adjusted r² explains 43.9% of the total variability of adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment is accounted for by community violence and aggression.

Research Question 2: To what extent does community violence predicts adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment?

Table 2: Pearson r on extent to which community violence predicts adolescents' psychosocial adjustment

Source of variance	N	Community violence (r)	Adolescents' psychosocial adjustment (r)	Remark
Community violence	300	1.00	0.66	Strong positive prediction
Adolescents' psychosocial adjustment	300	0.66	1.00	

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that there is a strong positive prediction of 0.66 between community violence and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

Research Question 3: To what extent does aggression predicts adolescents' psychosocial adjustment?

Table 3: Pearson r on extent to which aggression predicts adolescents' psychosocial adjustment

Source of variance	N	Aggression (r)	Adolescents' psychosocial adjustment (r)	Remark
Aggression	300	1.00	0.74	Strong positive prediction
Adolescents' psychosocial adjustment	300	0.74	1.00	

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that there is a strong positive prediction of 0.74 between aggression and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

Hypothesis 1: Community violence and aggression are not jointly significant predictors of adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

Table 4: t-test of Correlation Analysis on Community violence and aggression as joint significant predictors of adolescents' psychosocial adjustment

Correlation co-efficient (r)	r ²	Adjusted r ²	p-value	Remark
.665	0.443	439	0.000	Significant

Data presented in Table 4 above shows that p-value of 0.00 is less than the alpha value of 0.05; this means that the null hypothesis of no significant prediction is rejected. Therefore, Community violence and aggression significantly predict adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

Hypothesis 2: Community violence will not be a significant predictor of adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

Table 5: t-test of Correlation Analysis on Community violence significant predictor of adolescents' psychosocial adjustment

Correlation co-efficient (r)	r ²	Adjusted r ²	p-value	Remark
.39	0.433	0.431	0.000	Significant

Data presented in Table 5 shows that p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05; this means that the null hypothesis of no significant prediction is rejected. Therefore, Community violence is significant predictor of adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

Hypothesis 3: Aggression is not a significant predictor of adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

Table 6: t-test of Correlation Analysis on Aggression significant predictor of Adolescents' Psychosocial adjustment

Correlation co-efficient (r)	r ²	Adjusted r ²	p-value	Remark
.39	0.433	0.431	0.000	Significant

Data presented in Table 6 shows that p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha value of 0.05; this means that the null hypothesis of no significant prediction is rejected. Therefore, aggression is a significant predictor of adolescents' psychosocial adjustment.

DISCUSSION

The result of the findings showed that community violence and aggression jointly predict adolescent students psychosocial adjustment in Anambra state. The result is in line with the findings of world health organization (WHO 2015), which revealed that psychological and social factors, predict behaviours where risk factors at different levels and at different stages of an individual are affected by community violence.

CONCLUSION

It has been observed that community violence and aggression is common all over the world. Adolescent students exposed to higher levels of violence either as a victim or as a witness tends to be more aggressive and tend to acquire poor psychosocial adjustment in the community, school and society at large. Therefore, this study provided information for families, schools and communities regarding the predictive power of community violence and aggression on psychosocial adjustment of adolescent student. The researcher recommend that elders in the community should try as much as they could to reduce the rate of violence and aggression in the community so that the school adolescents will emulate them and strive for a better psychosocial adjustment.

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