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Strategies for controlling aggression among secondary school students in Bayelsa State

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Abstract

The study evaluated the strategies for controlling aggression among secondary school students in Bayelsa State. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Three research questions and corresponding hypotheses were raised to guide the study. The population of the study was all students and teachers in the 192 public secondary schools in Bayelsa state. A sample of 567 comprising of 100 teachers and 467 SS3 students were randomly selected from the population. The instrument for data collection was a "Strategies for Controlling Students' Aggression Questionnaire (SCSAQ)" developed by the researcher and validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha formula and a coefficient of 0.87 was obtained which was considered appropriate for the study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. It was revealed that the extent of implementation of strategies for controlling students aggression in secondary schools was low. It was recommended amongst others that the school management should be encouraged to implement the strategies for controlling students' aggression in secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Introduction

The school is still regarded as the system that has the responsibility of molding the character of children. Monthana, Lemmer, Mda and Pretorius (2000) explained that school is a site where children of different background and age are taught. Such schools can be public or private as well as boarding or day. 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 serve as chief executive 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.

These stakeholders in the school system are of paramount importance because students encounter problems which may be emotional, personal, social and educational and at such they would need help to overcome these problems. If these problems are not properly managed and solved, they may lead to emotional instability in the students, affect negatively their educational and social life, lead to crisis and make the school environment unconducive for learning. Aggressiveness is one of such problems students can encounter in school and it is the duty of school managers 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 managers 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 School children, irrespective of sex, age and class level, engage in these behaviours. Funk (2018) reported that the problem of aggression 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.

Aggression can be defined as an emotion that tends to hurt, harm or destroy something or someone. In case of persons, the intention of harm can be physical or psychological. Aggressive behavior involves conflict between individuals of equal level (Roland & Idsoe, 2011) [8]. The manifestation of such emotion is known as aggressive behavior which is usually overt, and varies from mild to severe and it can be manifested against oneself or others around. According to Nelson (2016), whenever there is a conflict of interests between individuals there is a chance of aggressive behavior to be observed. Generally the terms aggression and aggressive behavior are used to refer negative emotions and behaviors respectively. They are considered part of antisocial behavior; something morally, ethically or legally unacceptable (Moeller, 2011).

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 (2013) [1] 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 (2015) [2] 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 (2014) 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) [3] 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 (2016) [7] 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.

To mitigate the problem of aggression in public secondary schools, various strategies have been employed. Schwartz and Davis (2016), noted that aggression and violence in our schools today can be minimized through the following measures: creation of legitimate institutions, strengthening access to justice, extending economic opportunities and employment, especially for young people and fostering societal resilience, both through institutions as well as by considering the sustainability of interventions, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Despite the various strategies and interventions in place to control aggression among secondary school students, incidences of aggressive tendencies still exist with a marked increase in cases of fights, sexual violence, corporal punishment, arson attacks and verbal abuse and others within the school system. This study therefore is aimed at evaluating the strategies for controlling aggression among secondary school students in Bayelsa state

Purpose of study
The main purpose of this study is to examine the strategies for controlling aggression amongst secondary school students in Bayelsa state. Specifically, the study achieved the following:
1. To identify strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state.
2. To determine the extent to which the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students are implemented in secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

Research Questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
1. What are the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state?
2. To what extent are the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students implemented in secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

Hypotheses
The following hypothesis were raised to and tested at 0.05 level of significance:
H01: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state.
H02: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent to which strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students are implemented in secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

Methodology
This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design, according to Lawrant (2018), is a design in which a group of people or item is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few individuals or items considered to be representatives of the entire group. This design is appropriate for this study since information will be gathered from a sample of the population (SS3 students and teachers in Bayelsa), who are familiar with the ideas relating to the purpose of study with the aim of generalizing the results for the entire population. The

population of the study consisted of 7854 teachers and 35,515 SS3 students in the 192 Government owned secondary schools located across the 8 educational zones of Bayelsa State. This choice of students was appropriate because they are the oldest students' in the system. Stratified random sampling techniques based on the three senatorial districts in the state, was used to sample 3 out of the 8 Local Government Areas. Simple random sampling was used to select three (3) schools from each of the local government areas, making it a total of nine (9) schools. All 100 teachers and the 467 Senior Secondary School 3 (SS3) students from the 9 schools formed the sample of the study. The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire developed by the researchers, tagged; *"Strategies for Controlling Students' Aggression Questionnaire (SCSAQ)"* It consists of three (3) sections, namely; Section A, B, C and D. Section A measured the demographic variables of the respondents, Section B consist of 10-items on the aggressive actions displayed by students in Senior Secondary School. Section C consist of 10-items on the strategies for controlling aggressive actions in secondary schools and section D measured the extent to which the strategies are implemented. The content and face validity of the instrument was done by one expert from measurement and evaluation and two others from educational psychology. Their corrections and suggestions resulted to the final draft used in the study. The instrument was trial tested using twenty (20) teachers and twenty (20) SS3 students that did not participate in the research but possess the same characteristics of the population of interest. The reliability co-efficient of 0.87 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha formula which was considered appropriate for this study. The researcher administered questionnaire to the respondents during class with the assistance of the form teachers. In all, 100% return rate was achieved. The data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and z-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance to test the research hypotheses.

Results and Analysis
Research Questions
Research Question 1
What are the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on aggressive actions displayed by students

S/N	Items	Teachers (n = 100)			Students (n = 467)		
			St.D₁	Remarks		St.D₂	Remarks
1.	Orientation of new students	3.19	0.31	Major	3.01	0.71	Major
2.	Punishment for defaulters	2.77	0.67	Major	2.99	0.61	Major
3.	Teaching/preaching against aggressive during classes/devotions	3.07	0.76	Major	3.00	0.36	Major
4.	Provision of suggestion box were incidence of aggression can be reported	2.23	0.34	Minor	2.50	0.51	Minor
5.	Employing the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers	3.11	0.31	Major	3.05	0.41	Major
6.	Organizing workshop/talk shows where the dangers of aggression is exposed.	2.44	0.73	Minor	1.78	0.13	Minor
7.	The use of prefects/house captain in each hostel, class or prepping hall	3.45	0.43	Major	2.67	0.77	Minor
8.	Creating effective channels of communication where the appropriate authority can be reached with ease	2.67	0.51	Minor	2.50	0.41	Major
9.	Teachers are properly motivated to be committed to effective implementation of the strategies for controlling aggression	2.14	0.34	Major	2.00	0.21	Minor
10.	The school infrastructure is adequate for the provision of basic students' school needs.	2.16	0.44	Minor	2.07	0.31	Major

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Results presented in Table 1 above indicated that orientation of new students, punishment for defaulters, teaching/preaching against aggressive during classes/devotions, employing the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers, the use of prefects/house captain in each hostel, class or prepping hall, and motivating teachers to be committed and effectively implement the strategies for controlling aggression are major strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students. Also, provision of suggestion box were incidence of aggression can be reported, creating effective channels of communication where the appropriate authority can be reached with ease and making school infrastructure adequate for the provision of basic students' school needs are minor strategies for controlling aggressive actions. The mean of each item was greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

Research Question 2
To what extent does the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students implemented in secondary school students in Bayelsa state?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the extent to which the strategies are implemented

S/N	Items	Teachers (n = 100)			Students (n = 467)		
			St.D₁	Remarks		St.D₂	Remarks
1.	Orientation of new students	2.89	0.31	HE	2.01	0.71	LE
2.	Punishment for defaulters	2.37	0.67	LE	2.49	0.61	LE
3.	Teaching/preaching against aggressive during classes/devotion	2.47	0.76	LE	2.40	0.36	LE
4.	Provision of suggestion box were incidence of aggression can be reported	2.43	0.34	LE	2.50	0.51	HE
5.	Employing the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers	2.41	0.31	LE	2.50	0.41	HE
6.	Organizing workshop/talk shows where the dangers of aggression is exposed.	2.04	0.73	LE	1.78	0.13	LE
7.	The use of prefects/house captain in each hostel, class or prepping hall	2.45	0.43	LE	1.67	0.77	LE
8.	Creating effective channels of communication where the appropriate authority can be reached with ease	2.67	0.51	HE	2.50	0.41	HE
9.	Teachers are properly motivated to be committed to effective implementation of the strategies for controlling aggression	2.14	0.34	LE	2.00	0.21	LE
10.	The school infrastructure is adequate for the provision of basic students' school needs.	2.16	0.44	LE	2.07	0.31	LE
	Grand Mean	2.45		LE	2.36		LE

Table 3 revealed that the grand mean score for teachers on the extent of implementation of the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students in secondary school in Bayelsa state was 2.45, while that of students was 2.16. The decision rule in this study was pegged at 2.50 for acceptance. The grand mean score was below the criterion mean; hence, the extent of implementation was low as perceived by teachers and students.

Testing hypotheses
H01: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

Table 3: t-test analysis on causes of aggressive actions displayed by secondary school students

Categories	N	mean	St.d	df	z_{cal}	z_{crit}	Decision
Teachers	100	2.74	0.69	565	1.67	1.960	Accept Ho2
Students	467	3.24	0.75				

Source: Field work (2021)

The table above shows that the z_{cal} value is 2.41 while the critical value (z_{crit}) at 565 df and 0.05 level of significance is 1.960. Since the z_{cal} is greater than the z_{crit}, then the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

H02: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent to which strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students are implemented in secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

Table 4: z-test analysis on extent to which strategies for controlling aggressive actions is implemented

Categories	N	mean	St.d	df	t_{cal}	t_{crit}	Decision
Teachers	100	2.74	0.69	565	1.67	1.960	Accept Ho3
Students	467	3.24	0.75				

Source: Field work (2021)

The table above shows that the z_{cal} value is 2.41 while the critical value (z_{crit}) at 565 df and 0.05 level of significance is 1.960. Since the z_{cal} is greater than the z_{crit}, then the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent to which strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students are implemented in secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

Discussion of Findings
The study revealed that orientation of new students, punishment for defaulters, teaching/preaching against aggressive during classes/devotions, employing the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers, the use of prefects/house captain in each hostel, class or prepping hall, and motivating teachers to be committed and effectively implement the strategies for controlling aggression are major strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students. Also, provision of suggestion box were incidence of aggression can be reported, creating effective channels of communication where the appropriate authority can be reached with ease and making school infrastructure adequate for the provision of basic students' school needs are

minor strategies for controlling aggressive actions. The result in hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state.

The result revealed that the extent of implementation of the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students in secondary school students in Bayelsa state was low. Also, results revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of teachers and students on the extent to which strategies for controlling aggressive actions among students are implemented in secondary school students in Bayelsa State. Findings of the present study are consistent with results of previous researches like Shores, Jack, Gunter, Ellis, DeBriere, & Wehby (2013); Van-Acker, Grant, and Henry (2016); Moeller, 2011; Poggenpoel & Myburgh (2012); Spaulding, (2015). Nelson (2016) and Zirpoli, (2012).

Conclusion
The study has established the strategies for controlling aggressive actions among secondary school students in Bayelsa state. Also the study has affirmed the extent to which these strategies are implemented was low.

Recommendation
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:
1. The government through the ministry of education in corroboration with community based organizations should develop policies aimed at enhancing more responsibility from students.
2. The study also recommends that the school board of management in corroboration with parents' teachers association organize regular seminars on parenting for the parents to enable them to practice good parenting.
3. The study further recommends that the guidance and counseling in schools should be strengthened in order to engage parents whose children are involved in violence.
4. The schools in conjunction with religious organizations to mount regular mentorship programs for both parents and students separately aimed at helping parents and their children to address their challenges.
5. The schools administration should initiate clubs in school such as students against violence to help create awareness of dangers of violence in and out of schools.

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