



Assessment of the Effects of Violence on Students' Academic Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

***OBILOR, Ezezi Isaac (Ph.D.) & IKPA, Augustine Ikechukwu**

**Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education,
Rivers State University
Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
*esezirukanimgboh@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT

The study assessed the effects of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of this study is 66,164 students which is the total population of senior secondary school students in Rivers State, while a sample size of 399 (152 male and 247 female) students was fixed using the TsaroYamen formula. The stratified simple random sampling technique was adopted for the study. Data was collected through a rating scale developed by the researcher titled "Assessment of the effects of Violence on Students' Academic Performance Rating Scale" (AEVSAPRS) with a reliability coefficient of 0.82 obtained using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using the z-test. It was found that the types of violence that hinder academic performance include physical, sexual violence, and emotional violence. It was further revealed that the causes of violence that deter academic performance of students to include desperation, despair, fear of failure, alcohol and drug abuse, hatred, jealousy; consequences of violence as reduction in academic progress, diminishing of academic performance, increased disruptive classroom behaviour, and low social and emotional competence; and the measures to minimize or eliminate school violence to include creation of legitimate institutions, provision of access to justice, fostering of societal resilience and more. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that teachers, counsellors, and mental health providers should establish effective partnerships to educate teachers, students and parents on the prevalent types of school violence, the causes and consequences, and possible remedies; various relevant legislations of Government on violence should be enforced to the letter to serve as deterrent to would-be offenders.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Assessment, Effects, School, Students, Violence.

INTRODUCTION

Violence among students of secondary school occur worldwide. Among all the problems of secondary schools, none is as debilitating as violence because of its effect both on the perpetrator of the violence and the victim. Violence is a pattern of behaviour in which one individual is chosen as the target of aggression by one or others; the targeted person (the victim) generally has less power than those who engage in aggression (Baron & Bryne, 2015). In the opinion of Paszkiewicz (2010), violence in the school is the use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy a student. The World Health Organization's defined violence in the school as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either

results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation in the school environment (World Health Organisation, 2002).

According to Jungmeen, Talbot and Cicchetti (2014), the major forms of violence prevalent in secondary schools today include; physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence and others. Physical violence in the school occurs when students use part of their body or an object to control another's actions. Physical violence and abuse happen in the school when a teacher or student uses physical force against another. It can include direct assaults on the body using objects or weapons; assault on children, being denied access to the hostel, deprivation of sleep or food, and kidnapping. Physical violence and abuse can start slowly and inconspicuously, for example with throwing an object or a slap, and get more intense or worse over time. A student can experience many different types of abuse that are physical. These include: shaking, slapping, pushing, punching or scratching, kicking, spitting or beating and even kidnapping (Jungmeen et' al. 2014). Today, exposure to school violence as well as injury due to violence have contributed to both increased disruptive or unfocused classroom behaviour for children, adolescents, and teenagers and reduced academic progress (Carlson, 2010).

Sexual violence in the school is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a student or acts directed against a student's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 2019). It occurs in times of peace and armed conflict situations, is widespread and is considered to be one of the most traumatic, pervasive, and most common human rights violations. Sexual violence is a serious public health problem and has a profound short or long-term impact on physical and mental health, such as an increased risk of sexual and reproductive health problems, increased risk of suicide, prevalence of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Death occurring either during a sexual assault or as a result of deflated honour in response to a sexual assault is also a factor of sexual violence. Students affected by sexual violence in the school suffer from lowered social and emotional competence, diminished academic performance and fear of more abuse (Burnham, 2019). Sexual violence in the school remains highly stigmatized in all settings, thus levels of disclosure of the assault vary between regions. In general, it is a widely underreported phenomenon, thus available data tend to underestimate the true scale of the problem. In addition, sexual violence in the school is also a neglected area of research, thus deeper understanding of the issue is imperative in order to promote a coordinated movement against it. The WHO's World Report on Violence and Health lists the following ways in which sexual violence against students (male and female) can be committed: Systematic rape during armed conflict, rape within marriage or dating relationships, rape by strangers, unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, including demanding sex in return for favours, sexual abuse of mentally or physically disabled people, sexual abuse of students and forced marriage or cohabitation, including the marriage of children (Aisenberg, Trickett, Mennen, Saltzman, & Zayas, 2017).

In the view of Fusco and Fantuzzo (2011), emotional violence in the school is any kind of non-physical abuse imposed from one student to another. Victims of emotional abuse in the school are subjected to repeated threats, manipulation, intimidation, and isolation that cause them to have anxiety, fear, self-blame, and worthlessness. Emotional abuse is a form of interpersonal violence that encompasses all forms of non-physical violence and distress caused through non-verbal and verbal actions in the school. Emotional abuse is deliberate and manipulative and is a method of control. It often occurs in conjunction with other types of abuse, but it may also occur in isolation. Like other types of violence, emotional abuse most often affects those with the least power and resources. Emotional abusers have a need to dominate and feel in charge of their victims. Threatening or coercive tactics like intimidation, humiliation, harassment, and embarrassment have often led to intrapersonal, interpersonal, and academic limitations (Jungmeen, et' al, 2014).

The underlying causes of school violence according to Close (2012) include; desperation and despair, mob spirit, hatred and jealousy, alcohol and drug abuse, lax criminal-justice systems, false religion, low self-worth, witnessing violence in the home and many others. The consequences of school violence on students include reduced academic progress, increased disruptive or unfocused classroom behaviour,

intrapersonal, interpersonal academic limitations, lowered social and emotional competence, and diminished academic performance (Bostock, Plumpton & Pratt, 2017). According to Schwartz and Davis (2016), 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.

In relation to academic functioning, students who experience higher levels of violence in the school have lower abilities in Reading, Mathematics, English, Physics, Chemistry, General Knowledge and others (Silverstein, Augustyn, Cabral, & Zuckerman, 2016). Students exposed to school violence may be more likely to imitate, and transfer learned behaviours to the classroom setting (McGahaGarnett, 2018). The effects of exposure to school violence on students are prevalent in the classroom setting, and have the tendency for reduced academic ability and performance. Students who are victims or witnesses of bullying within their school environment or neighbourhood by their teachers are more likely to associate bullying as a preferred or acceptable style of communication. Students who bully their juniors have increased expectations of negative outcomes (Champion, 2019). For example, a student with an increased desire to fight physically is more likely to expect the targeted student to reciprocate aggressive interactions.

Thus, there is an increased need for school personnel to address the process of healthy imitation in young victims of abuse in the school as the higher the likelihood of witnessing school violence, the higher the risk of academic decline and problematic relationships (Haeseler, 2016). In an academic and social environment, the reactions to school violence may differ basically among various age groups. Some students may internalize abuse-related distress as a harsh consequence to poor or inadequate performance. Fusco and Fantuzzo (2011) found that students lack the ability to understand the dynamics of inter-parental violence and thus may blame themselves. Self-blame for most students can result in feelings of guilt, worry, and anxiety that may affect academic output and healthy social interactions among them. Other students exposed to school violence are at a greater risk of experiencing delayed physiological, emotional, language, and cognitive development (Carpenter & Stacks, 2011). Students exposed to school violence are more likely to report stressful life events than non-exposed students. When faced with adversity, junior students who reside within problematic environments may exhibit fewer prosocial emotions and increased personal problems (Sternberg, Lamb, Guterman, & Abbott, 2016).

When examining the types of school violence most likely witnessed by students, Ceballo, Dahl, Aretakis, and Ramirez (2011) reported that junior students are more likely to witness school violent interactions than to experience physical abuse. In addition, students tend to witness fewer crime-related traumas such as shooting, shoving, and punching. Given the realistic educational consequences of exposure to school violence on students, it is likely they will need additional resources within the supportive structures of the school environment to address their needs and improve educational outcomes. The effects of school violence on academic performance and classroom behaviour may differ for adolescents. Youth reared in abusive environments are more likely to exhibit behaviours of concern (Wright & Steinbach, 2011). For example, abused adolescents are more likely to display a lack of interest in social activities, have lowered self-esteem, avoid peer relations, maintain unhealthy relationships, exhibit increased rebellion and defiant behaviours in the school environment.

Students are within a hostile school environment and lack healthy outlets of support are more likely to witness negative mood provocations with others. Peer victimization and provocation may lead to weapon use, injuries, and multiple abusers (Finkelhor, Turner, & Ormrod, 2016). Increased violence and its severity can have an impact on school matters as the majority of school violence is reported in secondary and tertiary institutions.

Despite the internal and external effects of school violence, students are more likely to seek help when school violence occurs than are preschool or school-aged students (Fusco & Fantuzzo, 2011). In sum, this study focused on the assessment of school violence on academic performance. Students exposed to school violence may suffer academically, personally, and socially. Thus, this study was carried out to assess the effects of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Today, violent behaviours are replete in our secondary schools. School violence ranges from bullying, sexual abuse to murder. Recently school violence includes kidnapping of students by bandits for ransom or rape or outright murder. Unarguably, teaching and learning can only successfully take place in a conducive environment devoid of intimidation, harassment, fear and insecurity. The consequences of school violence on students include reduced academic progress, increased disruptive or unfocused classroom behaviour, intrapersonal, interpersonal academic limitations, lowered social and emotional competence, and diminished academic performance. It is to curb these maladies that the researcher assessed the effects of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Identify the types of violence that hinder academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Investigate the causes of violence that deter academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Determine the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Find out the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the types of violence that hinder academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. What are the causes of violence that deter academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. What are the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
4. What are the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were developed and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- iv. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the types of violence that hinder academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- v. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the causes of violence that deter academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- vi. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

- vii. There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

METHODS

Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of this study is 66,164 students which is the total population of senior secondary school students in Rivers State, while a sample size of 399 (152 male and 247 female) students was fixed using the TsaroYamen formula, and the stratified simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Data was collected through a rating scale developed by the researcher titled “Assessment of the effects of Violence on Students’ Academic Performance Rating Scale (AEVSAPRS)” with a reliability coefficient of 0.82 obtained using the test-retest method and the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation test statistic. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using the z-test.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *What are the types of violence that hinders academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Types of Violence that Hinder Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

| S/No. | Items | Male (n ₁ = 152) | | | Female (n ₂ = 247) | | |
|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 1 | Physical violence (slapping, pushing, punching or scratching, kicking, spitting or biting and others) | 3.23 | 1.21 | Agreed | 3.33 | 1.24 | Agreed |
| 2 | Sexual violence (rape, unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, including demanding sex in return for favours, sexual abuse of mentally or physically disabled people, sexual abuse of children and forced marriage or cohabitation) | 3.01 | 1.17 | Agreed | 3.05 | 1.16 | Agreed |
| 3 | Emotional violence (intimidation, humiliation, harassment, embarrassment) | 3.14 | 1.09 | Agreed | 3.20 | 1.30 | Agreed |
| Grand Scores | | 3.13 | 1.16 | Agreed | 3.19 | 1.23 | Agreed |

Table 1 shows grand means of 3.13 and 3.19, and standard deviations of 1.16 and 1.23 for male and female students of public senior secondary schools respectively indicating an agreement that items 1 – 3 constitute the types of violence that hinders academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Thus, the various types of violence that hinder academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State include physical violence (slapping, pushing, punching or scratching, kicking, spitting or biting and others), sexual violence (rape, unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, including demanding sex in return for favours, sexual abuse of mentally or physically disabled people, sexual abuse of children and forced marriage or cohabitation) and emotional violence (intimidation, humiliation, harassment, embarrassment).

Research Question 2: *What are the causes of violence that deters academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the Causes of Violence that Deter Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

| S/No. | Items | Male (n ₁ = 152) | | | Female (n ₂ = 247) | | |
|-------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 4 | Desperation and despair | 3.13 | 1.20 | Agreed | 3.22 | 1.24 | Agreed |
| 5 | Fear of failure | 3.01 | 1.15 | Agreed | 3.10 | 1.19 | Agreed |
| 6 | Alcohol and drug abuse | 2.80 | 1.24 | Agreed | 2.98 | 1.07 | Agreed |
| 7 | Hatred and jealousy | 2.66 | 1.09 | Agreed | 3.11 | 1.12 | Agreed |
| 8 | Mob spirit | 3.10 | 1.43 | Agreed | 3.17 | 1.19 | Agreed |
| 9 | Lax criminal-justice systems | 2.92 | 1.19 | Agreed | 2.99 | 1.20 | Agreed |
| 10 | False religion | 3.00 | 1.08 | Agreed | 3.24 | 1.24 | Agreed |
| 11 | Low self-worth | 3.22 | 1.11 | Agreed | 3.03 | 1.16 | Agreed |
| | Grand Score | 2.98 | 1.19 | Agreed | 3.11 | 1.18 | Agreed |

The data presented in Table 2 shows the mean ratings of the responses of male and female students on the causes of violence that deter academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. From table 2, the grand mean score of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 1.19 were gotten from male students, while the grand mean score of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 1.18 were gotten from the female students indicating a consensus that items 4 – 11 on Table 2 are the causes of violence that deter academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Thus, Table 2 reveals the causes of violence that deter academic performance of students to include desperation, despair, fear of failure, alcohol and drug abuse, hatred, jealousy, and many others as listed above.

Research Question 3: *What are the consequences violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Male and Female Students' Rating on the Consequences of Violence on Academic Performance of Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

| S/No. | Items | Male (n ₁ = 152) | | | Female (n ₂ = 247) | | |
|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 12 | It reduces academic progress. | 2.88 | 1.25 | Agreed | 3.24 | 1.10 | Agreed |
| 13 | It increases disruptive or unfocused classroom behaviour | 3.21 | 1.33 | Agreed | 2.99 | 1.19 | Agreed |
| 14 | It brings about intrapersonal, interpersonal academic limitations. | 2.92 | 1.20 | Agreed | 3.07 | 1.25 | Agreed |
| 15 | Lowers social and emotional competence. | 3.16 | 1.17 | Agreed | 2.80 | 1.30 | Agreed |
| 16 | Diminishes academic performance. | 3.23 | 1.21 | Agreed | 3.11 | 1.18 | Agreed |
| Grand Score | | 3.08 | 1.23 | Agreed | 3.04 | 1.20 | Agreed |

The data presented in Table 3 shows the mean ratings of the responses of male and female students on the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. From table 3, the grand mean score of 3.08 and a standard deviation of 1.23 were gotten from male students, while the grand mean score of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.20 were gotten from the female students indicating a consensus that items 12 – 16 on Table 3 constitute the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question 4: *What are the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?*

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Male and Female Students' Rating on Measures to Minimize the Rate of Violence and Improve Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

| S/No. | Items | Male (n ₁ = 152) | | | Female (n ₂ = 247) | | |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | \bar{x} | SD | Decision | \bar{x} | SD | Decision |
| 17 | Creation of legitimate institutions | 3.10 | 1.31 | Agreed | 2.71 | 1.18 | Agreed |
| 18 | Providing and strengthening access to justice | 2.97 | 1.26 | Agreed | 3.22 | 1.22 | Agreed |
| 19 | Extending economic opportunities and employment | 3.18 | 1.28 | Agreed | 3.15 | 1.20 | Agreed |
| 20 | Fostering societal resilience. | 2.69 | 1.32 | Agreed | 3.08 | 1.17 | Agreed |
| 21 | Considering the sustainability of interventions. | 3.19 | 1.09 | Agreed | 3.16 | 1.33 | Agreed |
| 22 | Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development | 3.04 | 1.22 | Agreed | 3.10 | 1.14 | Agreed |
| 23 | Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. | 3.11 | 1.13 | Agreed | 3.02 | 1.13 | Agreed |
| Grand Score | | 3.04 | 1.23 | Agreed | 3.06 | 1.20 | Agreed |

The data presented in Table 4 shows the mean ratings of the responses of male and female students of on the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. A grand mean of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.23 for male students and grand mean of 3.06 and a standard deviation of 1.20 for female students. This implies male and female students in public senior secondary schools agreed that measures 17–23 of Table 4 can minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the types of violence that hinders academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test Analysis on the Types of Violence that Hinders Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

| Gender | \bar{x} | SD | N | df | α | z-cal. | z-crit. | Decision |
|--------|-----------|------|-----|-----|----------|--------|---------|--------------------------------|
| Male | 3.13 | 1.16 | 152 | 397 | 0.05 | 1.09 | 1.96 | H ₀ Not Rejected |
| Female | 3.19 | 1.23 | 247 | | | | | |

Table 5 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.09 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 using degree of freedom of 397 at 0.05 level of significance which indicates that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the types of violence that hinders academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is hereby accepted. This implies that students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State are in agreement that the listed types of violence [physical violence (slapping, pushing, punching or scratching, kicking, spitting or biting and others), sexual violence (rape, unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, including demanding sex in return for favours, sexual abuse of mentally or physically disabled people, sexual abuse of children and forced marriage or cohabitation) and emotional violence (intimidation, humiliation, harassment, embarrassment)] hinder academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the causes of violence that deters academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 6: z-test Analysis on the Causes of Violence that Deter Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

| Gender | \bar{x} | SD | N | df | α | z-cal. | z-crit. | Decision |
|--------|-----------|------|-----|-----|----------|--------|---------|--------------------------------|
| Male | 2.98 | 1.19 | 152 | 397 | 0.05 | 1.21 | 1.96 | H ₀ Not Rejected |
| Female | 3.11 | 1.18 | 247 | | | | | |

Table 6 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.21 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 using degree of freedom of 397 at 0.05 level of significance which indicates that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the causes of violence that deters academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is hereby

accepted. This alludes that students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State are in accord that the causes of violence which deter academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State include desperation, despair, fear of failure, alcohol and drug abuse, hatred, jealousy, false religion, low self-worth, and others.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 7: z-test Analysis on the Consequences of Violence on Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

| Gender | \bar{x} | SD | N | Df | α | z-cal. | z-crit. | Decision |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Male | 3.08 | 1.23 | 152 | 397 | 0.05 | 1.04 | 1.96 | H_0 |
| Female | 3.04 | 1.20 | 247 | | | | | Not Rejected |

Table 7 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.04 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 using degree of freedom of 397 at 0.05 level of significance which implies that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is accepted. This indicates that students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State are in consensus that the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State encompass reduction in academic progress, increased disruptive classroom behaviour, low social and emotional competence, diminished academic performance, and more.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 8: z-test Analysis on the Measures that could be adopted to Minimize the Rate of Violence and Improve Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State.

| Gender | \bar{x} | SD | N | Df | α | z-cal. | z-crit. | Decision |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Male | 3.04 | 1.23 | 152 | 397 | 0.05 | 1.12 | 1.96 | H_0 |
| Female | 3.06 | 1.20 | 247 | | | | | Not Rejected |

Table 8 shows that the z-calculated value of 1.12 using degree of freedom of 397 at 0.05 level of significance is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 which indicates that the null hypothesis that “there is no significant difference in the mean perception of male and female students on the measures that could be adopted to minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State” is accepted. This implies that students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State are agree that the following measures: Creation of legitimate institutions, provision and strengthening access to justice, extension of economic opportunities and employment, fostering of societal resilience, promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, building of effective and inclusive institutions at all levels and establishing sustainability of interventions, if adopted could minimize the rate of violence and improve academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study assessed violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State and found that the major forms of violence prevalent today include physical violence, sexual violence and emotional violence. This result agrees with the study conducted by Jungmeen, Talbot and Cicchetti (2014) that physical violence and abuse happen when a person uses physical force against another person. It can include direct assaults on the body using objects or weapons; assault on

children, being denied access to your home, deprivation of sleep or food. This finding is also consistent with that of Fantuzzo and Mohr (2019) who asserted that sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person or acts directed against a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim. It occurs in times of peace and armed conflict situations, is widespread and is considered to be one of the most traumatic, pervasive, and most common human rights violations which hinder academic performance of students of all ages. Emotional abuse is any kind of non-physical abuse imposed from one person to another (Fusco & Fantuzzo, 2019). Victims of emotional abuse are subjected to repeated threats, manipulation, intimidation, and isolation that cause them to feel anxiety, fear, self-blame, and worthlessness, all of which are threats to students' learning and performance.

The study further found that the causes of violence in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State include desperation and despair, mob spirit, hatred and jealousy, alcohol and drug abuse, lax criminal-justice systems, false religion, low self-worth, witnessing violence in the home and many others as indicated in table 2. This result is supported by the findings of Close (2012) who opined that children exposed to violent home and community environments may be more likely to imitate, and transfer learned behaviours to the classroom setting, and that there is an increased need for school personnel to address the effects of violence on the academic performance of their students.

The results of the study also showed that the consequences of violence on academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State include reduced academic progress, increased disruptive or unfocused classroom behaviour, intrapersonal, interpersonal academic limitations, lowered social and emotional competence and diminished academic performance, and more. Bostock, Plumpton and Pratt (2017) corroborated this finding when they posited that children exposed to violence are more likely to report stressful life events than non-exposed children, exhibit fewer pro-social emotions and increased personal problems, lack the ability to understand the dynamics of inter-parental violence, experience self-blame which result in feelings of guilt, worry, and anxiety that may affect academic output and healthy social interactions among children and adolescents. This result is in line with the findings of Schwartz and Davis (2016) who revealed that in relation to academic functioning, students who experience higher levels of violence have lower abilities in Reading, Mathematics, English, Physics, Chemistry, general knowledge and others. Children who notice their presence within a hostile environment and lack healthy outlets of support are more likely to witness negative mood provocations with peers. In other words, peer victimization and provocation may lead to weapon use, injuries, and multiple abusers.

Finally, the study proffered measures that can minimize violence and improve the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. These measures include 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 building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have revealed the types of violence prevalent in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, the causes of such violence, their consequences, and measures to minimise the violence. Given the enormous consequences of violence, it is pertinent that children and adolescents exposed to violence may suffer academically, personally, and socially. Despite the internal and external effects of violence, adolescents are more likely to seek help when violence occurs than are preschool or school-aged children. Thus, exposure to violent home and community environments, as well as injury due to violence, contribute to both reduced academic progress and increased disruptive or unfocused classroom behaviour for children and adolescents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Even though, various educational institutions, government, individuals and group have at different times tried to provide solution to curb this heinous crime, little have been achieved in the fight against violence. It is recommended therefore that:

1. Teachers, counsellors, and mental health providers should establish effective partnerships to educate teachers, students and parents on the prevalent types of school violence, the causes and consequences, and possible remedies.
2. The various relevant legislations of Government on violence should be enforced to the letter to serve as deterrent to would-be offenders.
3. Guidance and counselling services, disciplinary and other committees should be established in secondary schools to nip in the bud the causes of school violence, and thus improve the teaching-learning environment and by extension students' academic performance.
4. Educators and counsellors can collaborate to maintain a supportive school environment for students and school personnel to minimize school violence and improve the academic performance of students.

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