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Influence of family violence on the maladaptive behaviors of secondary school students in Kogi State, Nigeria

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This study explored the influence of family violence on the Maladaptive Behaviours of Secondary School Students in Kogi State, Nigeria. The design for this study is correlational research design. The population of the study consists of 29,570 students in secondary schools in Kogi State, Nigeria. A sample of 378 respondents was selected for this study. Stratified random sampling procedure was used in selecting the students. The instrument for data collection was the family violence and characteristics of Maladaptive Behaviour Questionnaire (FVMBQ). The FVMBQ is a 24-item instrument designed along a modified four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was validated by a team of experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. The reliability of the instrument was established via a pilot test conducted using the test-retest method of reliability, which yielded the reliability (r) value of 0.86. The data collected was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and linear regression. The study found incidences of family violence and maladaptive behaviour and also revealed that family violence significantly predicts maladaptive behaviour of secondary school students in Kogi State. It was recommended among others that parents must develop the right attitude of love, trust, tolerance and patience towards their children; parents need to step in before sibling rivalry turns into abuse and teachers should provide a caring, compassionate, supportive environment for the school child to rebuild trust that has probably been destroyed by an abuser at home.

Key words: Adolescents, family violence, maladaptive behavior, students.

INTRODUCTION

Violence within a family has received an increasing amount of attention from the media in recent years. It has become an issue of global concern. Hillis et al. (2016) stated that it is globally estimated that up to 1 billion children aged 2-17 years have experienced physical,

sexual, or emotional violence or neglect in the past year. This shows that family violence is not a rare phenomenon. All families do have conflicts but some families may occasionally resolve these conflicts inappropriately. Even the best parents and the most
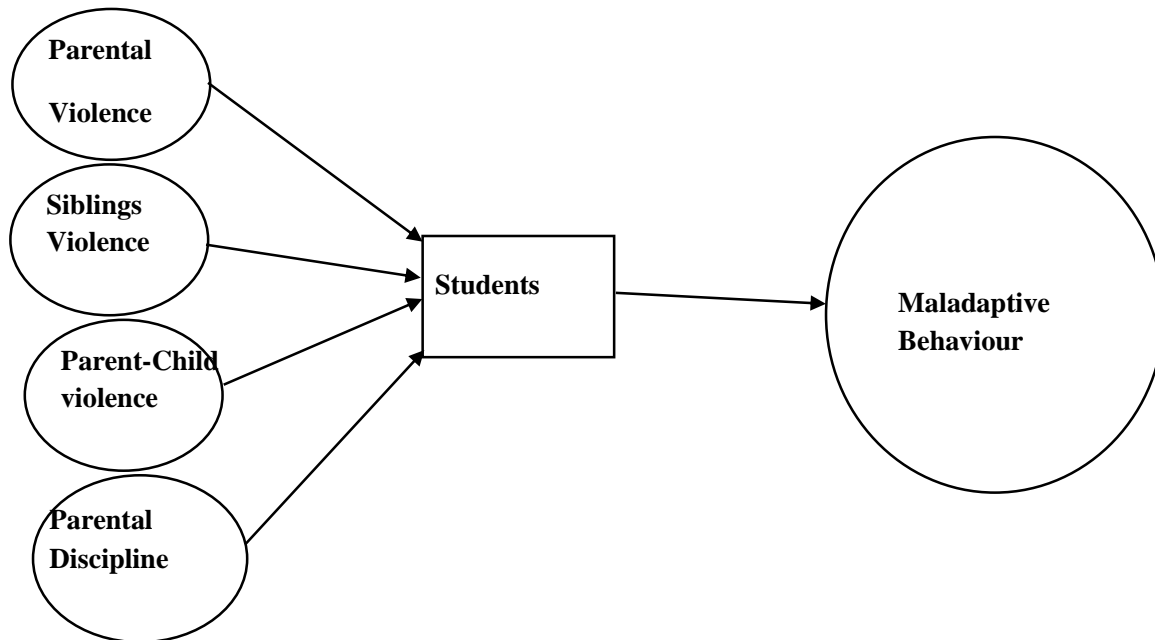
Figure 1. Family violence-maladaptive behavior framework.

loving couples do display inappropriate behavior. They sometimes lose their tempers, say intentionally hurtful things to one another, raise their voices when arguing, and even lash out physically. In many respects, aggression is common and could culturally be approved as part of family life.

Family violence is a problem that involves father, mother, children, elderly or sibling in any family relationship. Global reports on the problem reveal that the main victims and vulnerable group of family violence are women and children. In the past, most of the focus was on the grave harm that family violence cause to the battered woman and very little attention is made on the harm suffered by millions of children who witness it. However, in the twentieth century there is a growing concern on how exposure to violence in the family impacts or influences children.

Central to many behaviorists' studies according to Bandura in Fryling et al. (2011) have given the concepts of social learning by modeling. It suggests that violent behavior is learned in interaction with others, especially intimate individuals who assault their spouses, carry out patterns of behavior learned in childhood from other violent models. In other words, violence is learned through role models provided by the family (parents, siblings, relatives, and boyfriends/girlfriends), either directly or indirectly (that is, witnessing violence) reinforced in childhood and continues in adulthood (Bandura in Fryling et al. 2011). When children witness violent behavior in the home they are learning more than it's acceptable. Children that live in homes with repeat violence will act out by hitting, biting, and pushing friends,

siblings, and classmates. The family environment is the pedestal on which every society is built therefore it is foundational to the stability or instability of the society.

Family violence as it affects its victims could take different forms. Communities and Justice (2019) identified the following five forms of violence experienced within the home as; physical abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, religious abuse, image-based abuse, reproductive abuse and financial abuse. Throughout childhood, children and adolescents experience patterns of assault that adults do not, such as sibling assault. Källström et al. (2020) found differential patterns of abuse based on the perpetrator; parents were most likely to use physical aggression, whereas siblings typically perpetrated property crimes and partners committed sexual assault. Peers were the most likely perpetrator of both physical and verbal victimizations and also most often committed poly-victimization by subjecting youth to multiple forms of violence. While males were more likely to be victimized by peers, females were more likely to be victimized by parents, siblings, and partners. These events are rarely studied, but they should be because so many children experience them and reports fears about them.

Conceptual framework

Family violence is conceptualized in this study as violence between parents, violence between siblings, violence between parents and the child as well as negative parental disciplinary actions. Figure 1 depicts

the relationship between family violence and maladaptive behavior. Previous studies have investigated marital violence, single parenthood (Animasahun, 2014) or broken home (Aboh et al., 2014) as independent variables, while either antisocial behavior, psychological functioning or maladaptive behavior were considered as dependent variables respectively, none examined the influence of patterns of family violence as independent variable and maladaptive behaviors of student dependent variable. It is against this backdrop that this researcher intends to investigate the influence of family violence on the maladaptive behavior of secondary school students in Kogi State.

Theoretical framework

The social learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977) states: "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action" (p 22). Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, an environmental influence. The component processes underlying observational learning are: (1) Attention, including modeled events (distinctiveness, affective valence, complexity, prevalence, functional value) and observer characteristics (sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set, past reinforcement); (2) Retention, including symbolic coding, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, motor rehearsal); (3) Motor Reproduction, including physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction, accuracy of feedback; and (4) Motivation, including external, vicarious and self-reinforcement.

In Bandura's famous Baby doll experiment, he demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. The children in Bandura's studies observed an adult acting violently toward a baby doll. When the children were later allowed to play in a room with the baby doll, they began to imitate the aggressive actions they had previously observed.

Social learning theory as applied to family violence suggests that violent behavior is learned during interaction with others, especially intimate individuals who assault their spouses, carry out patterns of behavior learned in childhood from other violent models. Violence can be learned through role models provided by the family (parents, siblings, relatives, and boyfriends/girlfriends), either directly or indirectly (that is,

witnessing violence) reinforced in childhood and continues in adulthood. The social learning theory therefore stipulates that maladaptive behavior results from interaction of couples as well as the influence of significant others in their life. Their actions or activities are product of their interaction with the environment as well as the behavior of the individuals/ couples. The actions of members of the family according to the theory results from interaction of couples with the significant others in their life. The theory emphasizes imitation as a major means of learning and when one of them exhibits such learnt negative behavior there is every tendency that it might not be accepted by the other, this will result in maladaptive behavior.

Statement of the problem

A major concern in Kogi State and in many other communities today is the increased disobedience of students to school authorities, students' refusal to go to school, students refusing to do tasks assigned by teachers, indecent dressing, aggression towards teachers and peers, truancy and unnecessary disruptions during classes. Painfully, students indulge more in examination malpractices ranging from cheating, leakage of papers, and external unauthorized persons to copying from handset. The prevalence of these behaviors could constitute great threat to the peace and stability of the school and the future society at large since such behaviors go against the norms and values of our society.

Many have attributed these behaviors to lack of adequate teaching facilities and unqualified teachers, without actually finding out what other related factors could be contributing to student's poor performance in school. The society is quick in pointing accusing fingers at teachers forgetting that the time spent by these students in school is only about 25% of 24 h that make up a day. Obviously the remaining 75% is spent outside the school environment which could be at home. The foundation of every child's development and socialization is laid at home because children spend more time at home than in school.

With the foregoing, one is forced to ask, what factors in the home could be influencing the maladaptive behaviors of secondary school students. Researches, have found many factors that could influence how well a student behaves in school and the amount of self-confidence. The experience from the family is a factor that could possibly affect student's maladaptive behaviors. In line with this assertion is Durojaiye (2003) as cited in Aboh et al. (2014), who argued that maladaptive behavior is believed to result from under socialization and inadequate training of children which make them to proffer reasons for indulging in unacceptable behaviors.

In view of the observed low level of awareness in the

study area of the extent to which exposure to family violence disrupts a child's behavior at school, the researchers were motivated to carry out this study. This study therefore investigated how exposure to family violence can influence the behavior of adolescents by predisposing them to maladaptive behavior. The following research questions were raised to guide the research:

1. What is the pattern of family violence among secondary school students in Kogi State?
2. What maladaptive behaviors are exhibited by secondary school secondary school students in Kogi State?
3. To what extent do family violence influence maladaptive behaviors of secondary school students in Kogi State?

The study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between family violence and maladaptive behaviors of secondary school students in Kogi State.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is descriptive survey. A descriptive survey attempts to establish the range and distribution of some characteristics, in this case family violence and to discover how these characteristics may be related to maladaptive behavior of students. The population of the study consists of 29,570 senior secondary school students in Kogi State registered as at 2016/2017 academic session. A sample of 378 respondents was selected for this study. Stratified random sampling procedure was used in selecting the students from the different Government-owned Secondary schools so as to cut relatively across the population. This sample was considered appropriate for an approximate population of 29,570 using the table provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for determining sample size from a given population. Stratified random sampling technique was implemented by subdividing the entire population into three strata on the basis of three educational zones (Kogi Central, Kogi East and Kogi West). A random sample from each stratum is taken in a number proportional to the stratum's size when compared to the population. These subsets of the strata are then pooled to form a random sample of senior secondary students from the different secondary schools.

The instrument for data collection was entitled: Family Violence and Characteristics of Maladaptive Behavior Questionnaire (FVMBQ). The FVMBQ was a 24-item instrument designed along a modified four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was validated (face, content and construct validity) by a team of experts in the Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. During this process, items that were considered to be vague, ambiguous or irrelevant were removed to ensure that the questionnaire serve the purpose for which it was designed. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted. Using the test-retest method of reliability, the two set of scores obtained from the pilot test were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The reliability (r) value of 0.86 was obtained for the scores which implied a high reliability of the instrument. To collect the data required for the study, the researchers collected a letter of introduction from the authorities in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria to the principals of various schools. The letter explained the purpose of the study and sought the consent of the participants. They were assured of confidentiality of the information provided. Consent was granted before the researchers proceeded to administer the questionnaire.

The statistical tools that were used in analyzing the collected data include mean, standard deviation and Linear Regression. To answer the research questions, the researchers adopted a decision rule based on the midpoint of 2.50. This is because the research instrument was created on a 4-point Likert scale with options/score as Strongly Agree/4 points, Agree/3 points, Disagree/2 points and Strongly Disagree/1 point. The sum of 4+3+2+1= 10/4= 2.50. Items whose mean scores were equal to/ above 2.50 were considered as agreed while items with mean scores below 2.50 were considered as disagree.

Linear regression was used as a linear approach to modeling the relationship between maladaptive behavior (dependent variable) and one explanatory independent variable (family violence). Usually, linear regression applies in the case of one explanatory variable. To achieve the goal of prediction, linear regression was used to fit a predictive model to the observed data set of values of maladaptive behavior and family violence (dependent and independent variables respectively). For the purpose of explaining variation in maladaptive behavior that can be attributed to variation in family violence, linear regression analysis was also applied to quantify the strength of the relationship between the two variables.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the pattern of family violence among secondary school students in Kogi State?

Table 1 presents data with respect to the pattern of family violence among secondary school students in Kogi State. The study identified the pattern of family violence such as siblings' assault, parent-child abuse and spouse battery. The analysis shows disagreement with the items on patterns of family violence in the study population. The sectional mean of 1.87 (below the midpoint of 2.5) indicates low incidence although all types of family violence were identified in the study area. This implies that the incidence of family violence occurs but relatively low in the study area.

Research Question Two: What maladaptive behaviors are exhibited by secondary school students in Kogi State?

Table 2 presents data with respect to the maladaptive behaviors exhibited by secondary school students in Kogi State. The analysis shows disagreement with the items on maladaptive behaviors in the study population. The sectional mean of 2.05 (below the midpoint of 2.5), implies low incidence although different maladaptive behaviors were identified among secondary school students in the study population. This implies that the maladaptive behavior was found among students but was not widespread. This finding may be due to lack of willingness of participants to divulge personal information about family and self especially when portrayed negatively. So, mild reporting of the incidences of family violence and maladaptive behavior might have occurred. Nonetheless, both variables were found to occur in the study area.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between family

Table 1. Pattern of family violence among secondary school students.

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	My parents do have serious quarrels	1.65	0.95
2	When my parents quarrel, they end up fighting each other	1.7	0.92
3	When my parents quarrel, they keep malice with each other and I don't like it	1.2	1.03
4	I often receive physical beating from my father	2.09	0.94
5	I often receive physical beating from my mother	1.78	0.95
6	My parents frequently punish me by denying me food.	1.53	0.81
7	My parents punish me by locking me outside over the night	1.94	1.04
8	As a male/female there is too much parental expectation from me	2.43	1.05
9	My sibling(s) and I often quarrel	2.31	1.08
10	When my sibling(s) and I quarrel, we end up fighting	2.05	1.1
	Sectional Mean	**1.87**	

N=379.

Table 2. Maladaptive behavior of secondary school students.

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	I have difficulty maintaining good relationship with my peers	2.02	1.04
2	I lack good talking relationship with my teachers and peer	2.26	1.05
3	I experience fear, shock and nervousness, like something bad wants to take place	2.29	1.01
	I often withdraw from people to be alone		
4	I am often unhappy even when others around me are happy	1.95	0.96
5	I easily feel pain, tired, weak and depressed	2.1	0.99
6	I over react to issues negatively	1.99	0.96
7	I do get aggressive towards people and things around me	2.01	0.93
8	I depend on my friends to assist me do my school work	1.81	0.92
9	My grades in school have not been very good	2.01	1.09
10	**Sectional Mean**	2.04	1.1
		2.05	

N=379.

violence and maladaptive behavior of secondary school students in Kogi State.

Linear Regression was used to carry out this test and the result is presented on Table 3. The R value, correlation coefficient is a measure of the quality of the prediction of the dependent variable. An R- value of 0.641 indicates relatively high level of prediction. The R Square called the coefficient of determination shows the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable. The R square value of .410 indicates that 41% of the variability of the dependent variable (maladaptive behavior) can be explained on the basis of the family violence experienced. This implies that students' who experienced family violence stood a chance (41%) of exhibiting maladaptive behavior.

To determine the statistical significance of predictability of students' maladaptive behavior by family violence experienced, analysis was carried out and results as presented on Table 4. Table 4 shows whether the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable. A significant value of .000 (less than the 0.05 level of significance) shows that the independent variables significantly predict the dependent variable. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that family violence significantly predicts maladaptive behavior of secondary school students in Kogi State. Thus, the hypothesis is therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION

The first finding in this study on the pattern of family violence reveals parent verbal abuse, spouse battery, parent physical abuse (father and mother), child neglect, parents' high expectation from children (parents emotional

Table 3. Model summary for test of predictability of maladaptive behaviors by family violence.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.641	0.410	0.409	0.48945

Table 4. ANOVA table for test of predictability of students' maladaptive behavior by family violence.

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	60.047	1	60.047			
Residual	86.263	377	0.252	238.064	0	Rejected
Total	146.311	378				

a. Predictor: (Constant), Family Violence. b. Dependent Variable: Maladaptive Behavior.

abuse), sibling rivalry and sibling assault in the study area in varying extents. The analysis made from the responses of students showed "parental high expectation from children" to be the most common with mean of 2.43 followed by sibling assault (2.31), closely followed is physical assault by father 2.09, while parents keeping malice from each other had the smallest mean of 1.20. Other facts reported on patterns of family violence were sibling rivalry and assault. From the findings of this study, sibling rivalry is a very common pattern of family violence. In general, though, low prevalence of family violence was reported. This result supports the findings of Boyse (2012) who affirmed that violence between siblings is quite common and probably even more common than parent child abuse or spouse abuse. Turner et al. (2010) in their study reported that exposure to multiple forms of victimization was common. They also found that almost 66% of the sample was exposed to more than one type of victimization, 30% experienced five or more types, and 10% experienced 11 or more different forms of victimization in their lifetimes. It was also noted in many cases, that sibling abuse occur as "second hand abuse" in which children who have been harmed or maltreated by parents go on to harm siblings (Boyse, 2012). Siblings naturally have squabbles and class with each other. However, if one child is always the victim and the other child is always the aggressor, it becomes an abusive situation. This study believes that behaviors among siblings that cross the line into abuse deserve more recognition.

With regards to types of maladaptive behavior, the most prevalent in the study area are; experiences of fear, shock and nervousness (anxiety) and students' lack of good relations with teachers and peers (poor interpersonal skills/low social competencies). This was followed by feeling unhappy irrespective of the happy mood of others around (low self-esteem). This result is consistent with the assertion of Iwuoma in Kwaja and Mormah (2008) who identified eight variables that characterizes an individuals' maladaptive behavior namely,

inability to build or maintain satisfactory relationship with peers and teachers, generally moody or unhappy in situations where other children express excitement and happiness, truancy, exhibition of inappropriate behavior under normal conditions, overdependence on teachers and peers, anxiety, task avoidance and negative over reaction.

It is important to point out that the various forms of family violence and maladaptive behavior were found to be of low prevalence in the present study. However, since there is ample indication of family violence and maladaptive behavior, the study further sought to establish the predictability of maladaptive behavior on the basis of children exposure to family violence. The null hypothesis which states that: there is no significant relationship between family violence and maladaptive behavior of secondary school students was rejected. The test of predictability reveals that family violence significantly predicts maladaptive behavior of students. This result agrees with the research findings of Animasahun (2014) which affirmed that adolescents of conflict-oriented families were more than twice as likely as other adolescents to engage in antisocial behaviors due to the disharmony between the father and mother (spouse battery). Al-Odhayani et al. (2013) had also stated that child abuse is a common problem worldwide and its physical and psychosocial effects are felt by abused children, their families, and their communities. It has been linked to changes in the victims' mental and behavioral development throughout their lives, putting them at risk of engaging in potentially dangerous behavior in the future.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that there is low prevalence of patterns of family violence in Kogi State, although various patterns of family violence such as parent-child abuse, sibling assault and spouse battery still exist in the study area. The study established also that maladaptive

behaviors exhibited among secondary school students in Kogi State is of low incidence although maladaptive behaviors were identified among students in the study area. Family violence was also found to significantly predict maladaptive behavior of secondary school students in Kogi State. This study has thus established that even the least levels of family violence may predispose students to indulging in maladaptive behavior (a socially acquired behavior).

Although, low levels of family violence and maladaptive behavior were reported in this study, it was shown that students who experience family violence may also unwittingly be disposed to exhibiting behavior that is maladaptive. Apparently, even low incidence of family violence can negatively impact on adolescent behavior. This finding benefits a number of stakeholders, namely teachers, students, counselors and parents. The study benefits the teachers as it exposed them to the fact that the maladaptive behavior of a student may be connected to violence in the home thereby helping teachers plan efficient strategies that could assist students overcome traumatic experiences. School counselors are also enabled to plan appropriate counseling strategies that involves partnership with students and their parents in addressing maladaptive behavior. The study provided necessary information that could help parents to modify the approach they employ in resolving disagreements between themselves and among siblings so as to provide opportunity for modeling acceptable behaviors. In view of the findings in this study, the following recommendations are made:

(1) Parents must develop the right attitude of love, trust, tolerance and patience towards their adolescent children instead of scolding, shouting and judging them.
2) Forum should be created whereby administrators could give enlightenment talks on family violence, emphasizing its behavioral, psychological, emotional and academic consequences and the need for families to avoid it for a better society.
3) In view of the significant prediction between the two variables, it is important for administrators, teachers and the school counselor to provide and promote a caring, compassionate, supportive environment for the school child to rebuild trust that has probably been destroyed by an abuser at home.
4) Teachers, school counselors and other stakeholders are required to legally report suspected and eye witnessed abuse to the law enforcement agencies.
5) Civic and religious organizations are also required to promote proper dispute resolution mechanisms in the family; they are expected to encourage parents to imbibe positively-oriented disciplinary approaches for behavior modification of their wards.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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