
INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR ON AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigated influence of personality and demographic factors on aggressive behavior among secondary school adolescents. The design for the study is ex-post facto. The population for the study is 180 participants who showed tendency to be aggressive. Two instruments named the NEO-personality and Buss-Perry Scale for aggressive behavior were used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the instruments is 0.83, and 0.78. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested. Hypotheses one was tested with a multiple regression analysis while hypotheses two was tested with a t-test statistics. The data analysis showed that the joint influences of the independent variables were found to be significant. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that, seminars/workshop should be organized for students and teacher about personality traits and their impacts on students' academic achievement. This is suggested in order to reduce the incidence of aggressive behavior incidence among secondary schools.*

KEYWORDS: Personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion and Openness to Experience) family type (nuclear and extended) Aggressive Behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behaviour among students is considered a behavioural disorder; such behaviour involves physical violence against students and the teacher, abusive language, bossiness, tantrums and emotional outbursts. Aggressive behaviour does not only disrupt classroom instructions, but also affects the physical and professional well-being of a teacher. Paul-Cookey & Iwuama, (2011) observe that aggression is one of the major worldwide concerns in all segments of societies. People frequently read or hear about gang battles, shootings, bombings or actually become victims of such actions. These events are some of the most extreme examples of the aggression that take place every day. Cookey & Iwuama (2011) explained that, aggression among secondary school students refers to all forms of youth violent acts perpetrated within the school setting which affects the schooling process. The state of aggressiveness in Nigeria and in Rivers State in particular has reached alarming stage that they have become worrisome to genuine stake-holders in the educational sector. Research has clearly shown that mother's high level of antisocial behaviour before the end of high school tends to be followed by their children's high levels of physical aggression in early childhood (Anderson, Murray and Brownley, 2002). Children that exhibit a lack of empathy and who are fearless are more prone to aggressive behaviour. Researchers have come to a conclusion that, aggressive adolescents at school show a very strong need for social recognition; they would like to be considered as powerful, socially accepted, different, and rebellious by their classmates. In other words, some authors suggest that the desire for popularity, leadership, and power leads to the involvement of many adolescents in disruptive behaviours,

providing them the opportunity to construct the social reputation they desire. In fact, it has been documented that aggressive adolescents normally show somewhat negative attitudes to institutional authorities such as the police, the law, and also the school and teachers Amanda & Monica, (2004).

Poju (2002) maintained that, violent adolescents show a pattern of childhood aggressive behaviour, which is often missed or disregarded as a passing phase in their developmental stages. Bono, & Judge (2004), found that adolescent from father-absent households usually harbour feelings of hostility, associate with deviant peers and get involved in negative activities. The increased risks of adverse outcomes for adolescent who live apart from their biological fathers appear to occur regardless of race, education. Carver & Scheier (2000) explained that, by a year and half, children are physically aggressive toward siblings, peers, and adults, but the vast majority will unlearn this attitude based on the cues they receive from their environment. This fact is important because it establishes the possibility of transferring behaviour from one generation to the other, which places the quality of parental care at the heart of aggressive behaviour. This aggressive behaviour has declined as the family unit disintegrates from the dissembling force of modern society that places personal rights and privileges above the family's collective wellbeing. Children that exhibit a lack of empathy and who are fearless are more prone to aggressive behaviour. Researchers have come to a conclusion that, aggressive adolescents at school show a very strong need for social recognition; they would like to be considered as powerful, socially accepted, different, and rebellious by their classmates. In other words, some authors suggest that the desire for popularity, leadership, and power leads to the involvement of many adolescents in disruptive behaviours, providing them the opportunity to construct the social reputation they desire. In fact, it has been documented that aggressive adolescents normally show somewhat negative attitudes to institutional authorities such as the police, the law, and also the school and teachers Amanda & Monica, (2004).

Researchers have come to the conclusion that personality should be considered as one major factors influencing aggressive behavior among secondary school adolescents. Neuroticism; a fundamental personality trait in the study of psychology is an enduring tendency to experience negative emotional states. Individuals who score high on neuroticism are more likely than the average to experience such feelings as anxiety, anger, envy, guilt, and depressed mood. They respond more poorly to environmental stress, and are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening, and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult. Extroverts are not as concerned with themselves and thus do not focus much on their own thoughts or feelings. Extroverted people are often emotional, impulsive (doing something suddenly based on an urge), confident about themselves in social situations, and are involved in the lives of others. Extroverts also appear to have a shorter pathway in the brain for neurotransmitters to send messages from the original stimulus (arriving from the spinal cord) to the actual reaction to the stimulus. This explains extroverts' quick, easy conversations, reactions, and decision-making. Extroverts become more energetic or charged up by social events and large group activities. They enjoy being busy and surrounded by people (Wikipedia, 2012).

Openness to experience, one of the personality traits of the personality theory indicates how open-minded a person is. Ashton & Lee (2001) found that, a person with a high level of openness to experience in a personality test enjoys trying new things. They are imaginative, curious, and open-minded. Individuals who are low in openness to experience would rather not try new things. They are close-minded, literal and enjoy having a routine. Openness means being creative and open to new ideas.

One other factor of aggressive tendencies is the family types. Globally children involved in violence usually belong to families having conflicts in various aspects in their lives rooted in family structure and family environment. Different forms of aggression are interrelated and clear distinctions are difficult to express. Aggression can be physical or relational. According to Baillargeon, Tremblay & Willms, (2002) physical aggression runs in families. Poverty and unemployment has affects parent-child interactions. Low social groups impair the quality of parenting leading to child misbehaviour. Single parenthood, divorce and split families have been associated with children's aggressive behaviours. A large, joint family and strong family environment are protective factor against children`s aggressive behaviour in a rural community (Santangelo, Pauls, Goldstein, Faraone, Tsuang, 1994). Sixty-two percent children had behaviour problem (self-injurious, aggressive behaviour). Therefore the prevalence of aggressive behaviour was 80.3 per 100,000 populations (Lundqvist, 2013). Recent studies have shown that the family context is critical for children's social behaviours and their social competence (Dumais, Lesage, Alda, Rouleau, Dumont, 2005). From the above literature, the present study examined the influence of personality (NEO) and demographic factor (family type) on aggressive behavior of Nigerian secondary school adolescents.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of personality and demographic factor on aggressive behavior among secondary school adolescents. But in specific terms, the study intends to:

1. Examine whether personality factors (neuroticism, extraversion and openness to experience) jointly influence aggressive behavior among secondary school adolescents
2. Investigate whether demographic factor (family types) influence aggressive behavior among secondary school adolescents

Hypotheses

1. Personality factors (neuroticism, extraversion and openness to experience) do not jointly and independently influence aggressive behavior
2. Demographic factor (family type) does not influence aggressive behavior among secondary school adolescents

Research Method and Procedures

This study involved 180 participants from among senior secondary school II students (SS2). They were randomly and independently selected for the study using the purposive sampling technique. Two adopted instruments were used to collect data for the study. They include; Buss-Perry Scale for aggressive behavior and the (NEO) personality Inventory. The test had the following reliability Buss-Perry scale for aggressive behavior $r = (0.83)$ and Personality inventory (NEO) $r = 0.78$.

Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed multiple regression statistics for hypotheses one, while hypotheses 2 was tested with an independent t-test statistics.

Ho1: Personality factors (Extraversion, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience) do not jointly and independently influence aggressive behavior among secondary school adolescents.

Table 1: Showing the joint and independent influence of personality to aggressive behaviour

Variables	F-Ratio	R	R ²	Adj. R ²		T	P
Extraversion	21.266	.516	.266	.254	.307	4.405	.000
Neuroticism					-.226	-3.187	.002
Openness to Experience					-.157	-2.262	.025

The table above showed that the linear combination effect of Personality factors (Extraversion, Neuroticism and Openness to Experience) on the development of aggressive behaviour among secondary school Adolescents was significant ($F(3,176) = 21.266$; $R = .516$, $R^2 = -.266$, $Adj. R^2 = -.157$; $P < .05$). This implies that, the independent/predictor variables jointly accounted for a variation of about 27%. Furthermore, the result of the study shows the relative contributions of the independent variables: Extraversion ($\beta = .307$), Neuroticism ($\beta = -.266$) and Openness to Experience ($\beta = -.157$) and this shows that, the results of data analysis of all the independent variables were found to be significant ($P < .05$).

Ho2: There is no significant difference between male and female adolescents on the influence aggressive behaviour among secondary school adolescents

Table 2: Showing the influence of family types on Aggressive Behaviour

Family type	N	\bar{X}	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t	df	P
Nuclear	89	30.28	5.07	1.96	5.765	178	S
Extended	91	34.24	4.09				

The result of data analyzed showed that, nuclear family had $\bar{X}=30.28$, $SD=5.07$, while extended family had $\bar{X}=34.24$, $SD=4.09$, with a cal. t. 5.765, $df=178$, crit. t. =1.96. Since cal. t is higher than the crit. t. it therefore means that the hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. That is, there is a difference between nuclear and extended family on aggressive behaviour among secondary school adolescents (see table 2 above).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study showed that extraversion and neuroticism personality traits were significant to the development of aggressive behaviour among secondary school adolescents. The findings of the study further revealed that, openness to experience personality does not influence the development of aggressive behaviour among participants. The result of this study however is in agreement with an earlier study by Lee-Baggley, Preece, & DeLongis, (2005) who explained that, neurotics react emotionally to events other people consider insignificant. Their negative emotional reaction tends to persist for unusual long periods of time, which means they are often in a bad mood. These problems in emotional reaction can reduce a neurotic ability to think clearly make decisions and cope effectively with stressful situation. Supporting this view, Santrock (2006) maintained that, neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotions such as anger, aggressive or violence. He further explained that, those who score high in neuroticism are highly reactive to stressful situation. They are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening or minor situations as too difficult or as impossible, people in neuroticism show greater activity in those brain areas that control the sympathetic branch of the automatic nervous system, which responds to stressful or dangerous events by increasing breathing rate, heart rate blood flow to the muscles, and release adrenalin. Conversely, those who are low on the trait of neuroticism find it easier to “shake off” stressful events. In another research, findings by Lauterbach & Vrana (2001) revealed that, neuroticism often exaggerate the impact of an event. For example, when under stress, people respond in habitual ways that is, people scoring high in neuroticism might be easily predisposed to aggressive behaviour as they could become anxious, nervous, and depressed. The Neuroticism dimension is characterized by those who have a tendency to experience negative affectivity and psychological distress.

It should be recalled that, the result of this study rejected the null hypotheses of no significant difference between nuclear and extended family. That means, extended family type influences aggressive behaviour among adolescents. This findings support the result of Silverman (2007) who stated that, extended family type where high levels of parental negativity and/or the absence of parental warmth, and frequent parental attempts at rigidly controlling the child’s behavior have been frequently linked to child anxiety symptomatology and display of aggression. Higher levels of familial conflict and lower parental expectations regarding their adolescent’s ability to cope with stressful situations have also been linked to symptoms of anxiety and consequently, the manifestation of aggressive behaviour.

Conclusively, although a growing body of literature suggests that, to understand aggressive behavior, researchers must study the distinct influences of personality, much research on these issues is needed. Because problems with aggression and violence continue to plague people’s

interpersonal lives, their inter-group interactions, and society in general, it is incumbent on social scientists to develop a better understanding of the complex dynamics among personality variables, situational variables, and aggressive behavior. Doing so not only will enrich the field of theoretical understanding of human aggression but also promises to refine therapeutic and policy interventions aimed at reducing aggression and violence among adolescents.

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