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Psychosocial Factors as Determinants of Aggressive Behaviours among Early Childhood Care Education Pre-Service Teachers

BY

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Abstract

The study examines psychosocial factors as determinant of aggressive behaviours among early childhood care education pre-service teachers. Based on the purpose of the study two research questions guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A total of 200 respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self- constructed questionnaire titled Psychosocial Factors Scale (PFS). The Face and content validity of the instrument were done by two experts in measurement and evaluation and one expert in Educational Psychology. The instrument contains 15 items on school factors with reliability index of 0.75; Peer factor contains 10 items with reliability index of 0.86; Media factors contains 16 items with reliability index 0.81; gender and Age contains 12 items with reliability index of 0.91 The reliability of the instrument was achieved through test-retest method. Correlation statistics was used to analyze the data collected. The findings of the study revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between psychosocial factors (students and government factors) and aggressive behaviour. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the counselling psychologist should assist the students to adjust to challenging and threatening situations and reduce high psychosocial factors level which may expose them to aggression.

Keywords: Psychosocial factors, Aggressive Behaviour, Early childhood and Pre-Service Teachers

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Introduction

In present time, there are lot of anxieties, struggle, aggression, and frustration among the students as well as other common peoples. The complexities of modern life always resulted some stress, anxiety and after all, attacking behaviour in human being. Now-a-days, a number of students show aggression in various issues and make some harm to others. Generally, aggression is an imbalanced state of mind, hence it always chaotic in nature. Colman (2003) supported this idea by describing aggression as a behaviour whose primary or sole purpose or function is to injure another person or organism, whether physically or psychologically. Different classifications of aggression were given by different authors or psychologists. Moeller (2001) described two major categories of aggression, physical aggression and verbal aggression. Physical aggression includes activities in which actual physical harm is intentionally done to a person, animal or object. For example, hitting, kicking, stabbing, shooting, pushing and shoving, throwing objects, breaking windows, defacing property and setting fires. Also, Nansel, et al (2001); center for disease control and prevention (2000); US Department of Health and Human Services (2001) and Fox & Zawitz (2001) physical harm on another person include behaviours such as biting, shoving, slapping, shooting and hair-pulling among others. Verbal aggression involves the use of words to harm another person. Example of verbal aggression include behaviours such as making threats or writing threatening notes or letters, calling names, spreading gossip, and teasing. Nwachukwu (1995) delineated four forms of aggression which include physical attack, display of tantrums of temper, verbal attacks with threats, scolding and so on and indirect aggression, as when a child breaks something belonging to the person who has annoyed him/her. Kuppuswamy (2006) categorized aggression into two forms; sadistic and masochistic aggressions. Sadistic Aggression is also called externalized form of aggression. It is an aggression that is expressed on things, objects or people in the external world by doing some harm or damage to them. The individual that is afflicted is usually harmed and if it is an object, is damaged and in most cases destroyed. Masochistic Aggression is also referred to internalized form of aggression. This is where the individual does not express his anger on others. His/her aggression turns on his/herself. Szyndrowski (1999) viewed that children who witness violence often exhibit: pattern of general aggressiveness, Pattern of over-compliance and fearfulness, Low self-esteem, Fear and distrust of close relationships, Conflict concerning taking sides with parents, guilt at having escaped punishment and extreme fear for the future, Psychosomatic complains, Problems relating to authority, behaviour problems often blamed on the victim.

The most common types of aggression observed in school settings are physical and verbal aggression. Aggressive behaviour exhibited among students in Nigeria poses a serious challenge to the smooth running of school activities and also threatens lives and properties. Different psychologists have given various factors leading to aggressive behaviour. It appears that student's aggression stems from different factors. Akinade (2005) traced aggression among students from family backgrounds, community, school, peers, media, gender, age among others. Patricia, Peter and Moses (2015) attributed that there are other factors that cause aggression among students known as psychosocial factors. Psychosocial has been defined as a study that examines the relationship between a person's fears and how he relates to others in a social setting (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/psychosocial). Psychosocial refers to one's psychological development in an interaction with a social environment. Psychosocial factors are psychological and social factors that can influence behaviours. Some of such factors are, anxiety, attitude of learners, environment, low self-efficacy of students, self-concept, peer group influence, parental pressure, the society, the teachers and the government. These factors can influence students' decisions. This study therefore examines school factors, peer factors, media factors, gender and age factors as determinants of aggression among students.

School Factors: Social learning theories suggest that aggressive behaviour is earned and maintained through environmental experiences. Children and adolescents who are exposed to antisocial environment learn to participate in antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour is not only related to family but also to school environment. A school is an institution where children of school going age are taught. Students of different cultures attend to one school. They are placed in school with students and teachers who look, speak and behave differently than them. According to Irvine (1990) cultural misunderstanding may be expected among students. These misunderstanding may

result in conflict, distrust and hostility. Kvaraceus, Gibson and Curtin in Mansur (2005) opined that many students tend to react suspiciously, defensively, even aggressively towards individuals who differ in obvious physical characteristics. It is in the school setting where students learn new behaviours either positive or negative, depending on the school environment. The school expose children to new behaviours which were not acquired at home during the adolescent childhood. In school environment, the relationship among the teachers, school administrators and students does not seem to differ from that of the children and their parents at home. The hardships confronted by the parents are also experienced by the school teachers and other stakeholders in the education industry. School brings together large number of students from different backgrounds. These students were reared in a wide range of cultural environments with different models of development. The consequences of the above stated circumstance that characterize our homes, school's environment and peers are now vividly experienced in our tertiary schools in particular and the society in general. The greatest problem facing Nigerian tertiary institutions today is the issue of aggressive behaviour among students that brings about disruption in the normal and smooth running of school activities. Haggai (2003) noted that aggressive behaviour in schools intrudes not just on the rights of others but also impairs the normal functioning of school activities and other settings. Teacher educators and school administrators play a dominant role in shaping the student's behaviour positively or negatively.

Every teacher is responsible for the welfare of students under his care. If the teacher looks on silently while student needs assistance, it leads to destruction. Some teachers end up using harsh methods in trying to discipline the students who are showing antisocial behaviour such as excessive discipline which has a very harmful influence on students. It caused a stressful situation. Riak (2001) confirm that the stress causes negative feeling in a learner (student). These feelings in turn create certain thoughts leading to some kind of behaviour, particularly aggressive behaviour. Empirical research shows that offenders who are disciplined harshly are actually slightly more likely to commit further crimes (The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2003). Robbins (2000) reported that the more severe the physical discipline at preschool age, the higher the average level of physical assault in late adolescence. The effects of early physical maltreatment of children can extend across a span of many years, influencing adolescent assaultive behaviour. Riak (2001) has also confirmed that the more serious the punishment, the more violent they become. The frustration andexcessive discipline lead to hostility which encourages the student to become violent in adulthood. The teachers harsh discipline contributes to aggressive behaviour as Kemper (1978) cited in Gasa (2005)supports this idea by stating that if emotions are charged through severe punishment some people resort to aggression. School also brings together large number of students from different background reared in a wide range of cultural environments with different models of development. Zande (2005) reported that some students are aggressive probably because they have been unconsciously taught at home by their parents or siblings that intimidating and verbally abusing others are the best means of getting their own way and these sometimes work. Reinke and Herman (2002) observed that school environment being academically successful, perceiving peers in the classroom as friends or colleagues and having positive interactions with teachers have all recently been singled out as important for the adolescent psychosocial adjustment. A negative school environment damages children and adolescents' potential.

Peer Factors: Peer group pressure is a compulsion to do or obtain the same things as others in one's peer group (Robinson in Masur, 2005). Peer group influence the members to engage in aggressive behaviour. Students learn appropriate and inappropriate social behaviour through their interaction with other children. Budhal in Mansur (2005) revealed that students begin to form peer relationships in which there is equality, mutuality and reciprocity between members. He further reports that peer interaction plays a unique and essential role in developing sociability and attachment, socialization of sexuality and gender roles, moral development and developing empathy. Heavens (2001) found that the peer group has a significant influence on the teenager's social development because it sets the cultural norms or rituals for acceptable behaviour.

Adolescents are likely to do the same as their closest friends and will emulate the behaviour through observation and imitation. It is possible that students learn aggression from their peers: Peers may elicit aggression, or may serve as role models to other students who have a predisposition to act aggressively. McWhirter, McWitter, McWirter and McWirter in Mansur (2005) confirmed that peer

groups do not only provide positive settings but peer pressure can also lead to norms of risky behaviour and irresponsibility. Most students conform because they are afraid of being rejected by their peers. They become engaged in inappropriate behaviour so as to gain acceptance and approval of the group. These groups can be deviant groups consisting of antisocial gangs. But the students join them so as to find acceptance and status by being valued by others of their own age and to find reassurance that the perceptions and attitudes they have are right. Berkowitz (1993) confirms this by saying that the conversation and actions adolescents experience with other members strengthen their attitudes and reinforce aggression inclination. Kemper (1978) cited in Gasa (2005) also stated that peer interaction, acceptance or rejection is a central determinant of aggression. If students are rejected by their peer groups, they may follow unfavourable routes so as to gain acceptance. Their behaviour may be changed and they might become argumentative, disruptive and aggressive in the school. Maffitt (2015) confirms that the glamour associated with groups of delinquent peers may contribute to late onset of aggression in students with no prior history of serious problems. Cairns and Cairns (1994); Tremblay Masse, Vitaro and Dobkin in Mansur (2005) suggests that earlier onset aggressive students are often friends of other oppositional, aggressive students. The influence of delinquent peers on later-onset (adolescence-limited) antisocial behaviour appears to be much stronger. Association with antisocial peers was related to the emergence of antisocial behaviour at adolescence among youths who had not previously exhibited behaviour problems (Bartusch, Lynam, Moffitt and Silva, 1997). The glamour associated with groups of delinquent peers may contribute to the late onset of aggression in adolescents with no prior history of serious problems (Maffitt, 1993). It is therefore to say that by the onset of adolescence; most aggressive students have formed social networks with other deviant peers.

Media Factors: Many television programmes do not teach children and students acceptable social skills; rather they learn impatience and destructive means of solving problems. Through the media, one learns of a student who commits some horrifically violent act. Another student, for no apparent reasons or critical incident, seemingly erupts and seriously injures or kills someone. An emerging literature by Finkelhor (1995) indicated that online bullying is a significant issue for a number of students, with at least certain percentage of those who use the internet reporting being bullied online. Anderson and Carriage (2003) revealed that as many as eighty-nine (89%) of video games contain some violent contents. According to Mishra (2007), the amount of violence learners is exposed to on television is simply astounding. By the age of fourteen, a child will have seen as many as 11,000 murders on television. These children and adolescents who see violence frequently on television may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others and may view aggression as an acceptable way of solving problems. It is therefore to say that most aggressive students have formed social networks with other deviant peers. Positive reinforcement (token-economy) for violent actions is a dominant characteristic of many violent video games. Other video games punish some forms of violence. It is reasonable to suspect that reinforcement (token-economy) to violent actions in a game could increase adolescent's aggression. On the other hand, punishing such as time-out for violent action could also make the players and their supporters to become frustrated and act violently.

Gender and Age: Gender and age can also play a role in aggressive behaviour. It has been observed that boys were more often the victims of direct victimization, whereas girls were more often the victims of indirect victimization. Bjorqvist et al (1992) revealed that indirect or social aggression is the primary means by which female express aggressive tendencies, while boys are more likely to use physical or overt forms of aggression. Other studies have also shown gender differences in attitude to authority, with girls more likely to show positive attitude (Emler and Reicher, 1987). Social reputation has also been found to predict aggressive behaviour more strongly among girls (Carrol, Houghton, Hattie and Durkin, 2001).

Research evidence indicated that about 67% of children who were rated within the clinical range of conduct disorder at two were still conduct disordered at five and six years old, and almost one third of aggressive five years olds were still aggressive at fourteen (Shaw, Gilliom and Giovanelli, 2000; Bar, Najman, O"callaghan, Williams and Anstey, 2001). Similarly, Campbell (1995) revealed that where problem aggressive behaviours are present in tertiary students, as many as 50% of these

students maintain these behaviours into adolescence and a substantial number of these will engage in aggressive behaviour. At the age of two years, antisocial behaviours and hyperactivity were strong indicators at fourteen and sixteen years of age (Herrenkohl, 2007).

Farrington (1995) viewed that half the boys who were violent at ten years of age continued to be violent at sixteen years contrasted with eight percent of the girls who remained violent. Talbott (1997) has also indicated that at the age of eleven, girls and boys report similar incidence rates of physical aggression. Nwachukwu (1995) described the common causes of aggressive behaviour in young children as follows; Frustrations which predispose the child to attack a person or object that stands in his way. Displaced anger when the child cannot express anger directly toward the offending person or object.

Williams, Aderanti & Womiloju (2015) investigated socio-personological factors as determinants of antisocial behaviours among adolescents in Ikenne, Ogun state. The results show significant joint and relative contribution of the independent variables on adolescents' anti-social behaviour. The moderating effect of gender on self-control was also significant while gender did not moderate the effect of social skill on antisocial behaviour. Stoddard-dare, Mallett and Boitel (2011) studied a sample of 341 juveniles randomly drawn from a U.S. juvenile detention facility to investigate which specific mental health disorders predicted detention for committing a crime. There was a significant relationship found between mental health difficulties such as conduct disorder, ADHD, and bipolar disorder in adolescents and the crimes that they commit. Jurma, Tocea, Iancu, Ciocani and Nache (2014) investigated the presence of psychiatric symptoms in adolescents with delinquent behavior in Tiomiosara, Western Romania. The study revealed a strong correlation between psychiatric symptoms and delinquent behavior. Zuchi & Anetoh (2017) investigated Psychological Determinants of Aggressive Behaviour among Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Anambra State. The result obtained showed that stress significantly influenced aggressive behaviour among secondary school adolescents while self-concept and locus of control did not significantly influence aggressive behaviour among them. Therefore, this study intends to examine Psychosocial factors as Determinants of Aggressive Behaviours among Early Childhood Care Education Pre-Service Teachers.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study is to examine academic stress and test anxiety determinants of aggressive behaviours among early childhood care education pre –service teachers. Specifically, it seeks to examine;

I. The extent psychosocial factors (school, peer, media, gender and age factors) significantly determine aggressive behaviour among early childhood care education pre –service teachers.
II. The joint determination of the independent variables to the prediction of aggressive behaviours.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do psychosocial factors (school, peer, media, gender and age factors) significantly determine aggressive behaviour among early childhood care education pre –service teachers in mathematics.
2. What is the joint determination of the independent variables to the prediction of aggressive behaviour?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Questionnaires were administered to collect data from the pre-service teachers on psychosocial factors determinants of aggressive behaviour among early childhood care education pre-service teachers. The sample for the study consisted of 200 (two hundred) pre service teachers selected from 5 (five) colleges of education in south east. 40 (forty) pre –service teachers were selected from each of the schools using simple random sampling

technique. A self- constructed questionnaire titled Psychosocial Factors Scale (PFS) was used to collect data for the study. The instrument consists of two sections. Section A contained personal data of the respondents such as name of the school, level, sex and age while section B consisted of items on the study variables whose response format is of a 4-point rating scale: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A) and strongly Agree (SA). Section B contains 15 items on school factors with reliability index of 0.75; Peer factor contains 10 items with reliability index of 0.86; Media factors contains 16 items with reliability index 0.81; gender and Age contains 12 items with reliability index of 0.91 and the researchers adopted an Aggression Scale developed and standardized by Mathur and Bhatnagar (2004). It is a Likert type 5-point scale. In this scale, there are 55 statements. Each statement describes different forms of individual's aggression in different situations. In this scale statements are in two forms i.e. positive and negative. In 55 statements, there are 30 statements in positive form and 25 statements in negative form. The reliability of the instrument was achieved through test-retest method with a two-week interval between the two tests. The instrument was subjected to both face and content validity from two experts in measurement and evaluation. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson product Moment correlation was used to answer the research question one, while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to answer questions two.

Research Question 1: To What extent do psychosocial factors (school, peer, media, gender and age factors) significantly determine aggressive behaviours among early childhood care education pre – service teachers.

Table 1. Correlation Analysis among independent variables and Aggressive behaviours.

Variables	N	**r**	**r^2**	**Sig**	**Remark**
School Factor	**200**	0.403	0.162	0.001	Significant
Peer factor	**200**	0.538	0.289	0.003	significant
Media factor	**200**	0.672	0.452	0.021	significant
Gender factor	**200**	0.741	0.549	0.024	significant
Age Factor	**200**	0.683	0.466	0.001	Significant

The results from Table 1 showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between school, peer, media, gender and age factors and aggressive behaviours among early childhood care education pre-service teachers. In the order of magnitude, gender factor contributed 54.9 % of the variation in aggressive behaviour followed by media factor 45.2%, Age factor, peer factor and school factor contributed 46.6%, 28.9% and 40.3% respectively.

Research Question 2: What is the joint determination of the independent variables to the prediction of aggressive behaviour?

Table 2: Summary of regression analysis of the joint determination of aggressive behaviour among early childhood care education pre-service teachers

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig**	**Decisions**
Regression	4866.28	5	73.26	21.67	.024	significant
Residual	8715.24	194	44.92			
total	3581.52	199				

(R) of 0.599 and a multiple adjusted R square of 0.342.

The table 2 revealed a coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.599 and a multiple adjusted R square of 0.342. This means that 34.2% of the variance on aggressive behaviour of the participants is accounted for by all the five predictor variables when taken together. The other factors accounting for 64.2% variation in the prediction of examination malpractices of the pre-service teachers are beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result also showed that F- ratio was also significant F (21.67, df

=5/194, P<0.05). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant.

Discussion of Findings

The result indicated that there was positive significant relationship between (school, peer, media, gender and age factors) significantly determine aggressive behaviour among early childhood care education pre –service teachers and all the independent variables when taken together have a significant joint contribution to aggressive behaviours. This study supports the finding of Williams, Aderanti & Womiloju (2015) investigated socio-personological factors as determinants of anti-social behaviours among adolescents in Ikenne, Ogun state. The results show significant joint and relative contribution of the independent variables on adolescents' anti-social behaviour. Also, Zuchi & Anetoh (2017) investigated Psychological Determinants of Aggressive Behaviour among Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Anambra State. The result obtained showed that stress significantly influenced aggressive behaviour among secondary school adolescents while self-concept and locus of control did not significantly influence aggressive behaviour among them.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested at curbing aggressive behaviours among early childhood care education Pre-service teachers

1. Parents should train –up their children to imbibe the traditional values of honesty, hard-work, and unrighteousness at home and in schools.
2. The counselling psychologist should assist the students to adjust to challenging and threatening situations and reduce high psychosocial factors level which may expose them to aggression.
3. Both teachers and counselling psychologists should assist students not to attribute the causes of their failures to external factors but rather to themselves. This will motivate them to work harder and reduce their tendency for aggression.

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