

Original Research Article

School-Based Violence amongst Students in Private and Public Boarding Secondary Schools in Bayelsa State

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Abstract: The study compared school-based violence amongst students in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa State. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Two research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was all students in the 21 boarding secondary schools (10 public and 11 private) in Bayelsa state. The instrument for data collection was a “School-based Violence in Boarding Schools Questionnaire” (SVBSQ) which was developed by the researchers and validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha formula and a coefficient of 0.75 was obtained which was considered appropriate for the study. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using Z-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that bullying, verbal abuse, corporal punishment, forceful collection of property, sexual violence, general beating and washing of toilets, sweeping the hostel are major forms of school-based violence displayed by students while killing and sexual violence are minor forms of school-based violence displaced by students in private and public boarding secondary schools and that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of students in private and public boarding schools in Bayelsa state. It was recommended amongst others that the school system should employ the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers, to reduce violence and school management should be encouraged to implement the strategies for controlling students’ aggression in secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Keywords: School-based Violence, boarding, school, private, public, secondary.

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INTRODUCTION

School violence is a global phenomenon that affects one of the core institutions of modern society to varying degree in virtually all nation-states. Violence is common in the school setting because schools bring together students from different background which has the tendencies to cause conflicts which may likely lead to aggression and violence. School violence is not limited to school type or location rather it is experienced in worrisome degrees in developed countries in Europe, USA, Australia and other developed countries. Patrick (2021) opined that school-based violence currently occurs at a high rate in developing countries and its impact on schooling, learning and living is grave, which refutes the commonly-held views that is primarily on an issue of

industrialized countries. School-based violence among school age children give rise to injuries that may be devastating to their health and crippling to the attainment of their educational goals. Aside from the physical injuries to students that may result from acts of violence, a lot of psychological social, emotional and behavioral problems usually arise from school-based violence. Oftentimes the consequences are serious and may include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), failure to acquire competence in peer relations, adoption of or highly aggressive behavior, use of psychoactive substances. School-based violence has also been frequently associated with wanton destruction of school properties; thus, it leads to wastage of scarce resources.

Pfeiffer and Pinguart, (2014) reported that the boarding school system has recorded the highest rate of

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school-based violence in recent times. Also, a survey on violence amongst young people conducted by Patrick (2020) and Dovieme (2019) revealed that school-based violence is predominant in boarding schools in Nigeria. Specifically, Patrick (2020) reported that school based is minimum in private boarding schools, while Dovieme (2019) reported that the issue of school-based violence among students is not significantly different in private and public boarding schools. The latter validated his claim citing the Deeper life high school rape saga (Vanguard, 2020), Abia gang rape (Guardian, 2011), Babbcock sex scandal involving two students (Sun news, 2019) and the Alu mob action against 3 male students of university of Port Harcourt (Punch, 2012) as instances where both private and public institutions recorded violence.

Aduwa (2020) conducting a study on the impact of boarding secondary schools on students' achievement in mathematics in Bayelsa State, reported that there were some problems associated with the boarding schools. One of such problems was bullying behaviour among the learners. This behaviour was common to both boarding and day students but was more among the students in the boarding schools. According to the researcher, one of the reasons why this bullying behaviour was common mostly among the students in the boarding schools was as a result of selecting effects. Pfeiffer and Pinquert (2014) further stated that if this ugly behaviour was not properly checked, it will have negative effect on the life of the learners during and after the secondary education. Hence, this study is aimed at comparing school-based violence amongst students in public and private boarding schools in Bayelsa State.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate school-based violence amongst students in public and private boarding schools in Bayelsa state. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following:

- 1) The forms of school-based violence in public and private boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.
- 2) The strategies for controlling school-based violence in public and private boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- 1) What are the forms of school-based violence in public and private boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state?
- 2) What are the strategies for controlling school-based violence in public and private boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the forms of school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

HO2: There is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the strategies for controlling school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Conceptual Review **School-Based Violence**

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, 2012).

Secondary School

Secondary education normally takes place in secondary schools, it takes place after primary education and is followed by higher education or vocational training. Secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before tertiary education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). It is the education given to children between the age of 12–18 (Kingdom-Aaron, 2018). In agreement, Ohia (2018) stated that a secondary school is a school which provides secondary education, between the ages of 11 and 16 or 11 and 19, after primary school and before higher education. Secondary school education in Nigeria, takes 6 years to complete and the language of instructions at the level of education is English. The first phase of the secondary education, which lasts for three years, is provided at the junior secondary schools (JSS). At the end of these three years, students sit for Junior Secondary School Examination (JSSE) and the successful ones are awarded Junior Secondary School Certificate (JSSC). A successful completion of the JSS is a prerequisite for the second phase – the senior secondary schools (SSS), which also lasts for three years. At the end of this period, students obtain the Senior Secondary school certificate (SSSC) after writing and passing the final examination, which is the Senior Secondary School Examination.

Private and Public Secondary School

Public schools are funded primarily by government (Federal, state and L.G.A.) and regulated and supervised by relevant government institutions like ministries of education. Private schools are funded by individuals or organizations usually without government input. Private schools are funded by individual or organisations usually without government input. Private schools are considered to be two sub

types which are registered and non-registered. For this study, only registered private schools were used.

Boarding School

Boarding schools are schools where the owners of schools take the full custodian of both upbringing and academic well-beings of the learners under their care during the academic session. The owners of schools may be governments or private individuals. Although, boarding schools owned by private individuals are relatively very expensive compared to the boarding schools managed by the governments (Keystone, 2016).

On the definition of boarding school, British Council (2020) defined boarding school as a residential school where pupils live and study during the school year. Based on this definition, the students in the boarding schools were accommodated in the school compound by the management of such schools. This implies that the school management takes full care of the students under their control, both academic and feeding during the academic session. Also, Linden Boarding School Tours (2020) saw boarding school as a college preparatory institution where students and teachers live and study together in a safe and secure school environment. Linden Boarding School Tours (2020) definition of boarding school indicated that staff of such schools should be equally accommodated alongside with the students in a more secure and conducive school environment. Boarding school is a school equipped with rooms where the students live instead of living in their homes (Cambridge Dictionary, 1996). Also, Merriam-Webster (n.d) viewed boarding school as a school that provides meals and lodging for students. In addition, Hornby (2010) saw boarding school as a school where students can live within the school academic year.

On the meaning of day school, it is a school where the students come directly from their homes to school and left back home when school has closed for the day during the academic year. Ode (2019) quoted Ajayi (2002) and stated that, the day school system was embraced by parents because it enables them the opportunity of helping children in their school homework which eventually resulted in the improvement of the students' academic achievement. Meanwhile, in the boarding schools, motivation, engagement, achievement, personality and psychological well-being of the students were put under control by the school management (Martin, Papworth, Ginns & Liem, 2014). According to the authors, boarding schools had all it takes to improve both the academic and well-being of the learners when compared to the day schools.

Theoretical Review

Total Institution Theory

Total institution, a theory proposed by Goffman (1958) seeks to explain violence as an

institution. The concept of total institution is akin to oppression. It has been described as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period, lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (Jones & Fowles, 2018, p. 103) in contrast to "basic social arrangement in modern society in that we tend to sleep, play and work in different places, in each case with a different set of co-participants, under a different authority, and overall without a rational plan" (Goffman, 1958, p. 45). The barriers between spheres of life are broken; instead, subjects are organized under strict rules and singular authority with a high propensity towards authoritarianism. Daily activities are carried out collectively on a rigid schedule of explicit order. The system of authority takes away people's control of their environment causing "chronic anxiety about breaking the rules and chronic worry about the consequences of breaking them" (Goffman, 1958, p. 52). Punishments for breaking rules are more severe than at home. Goffman (1952, p. 59) provides four human responses to total institutionalization: 1) Situational withdrawal where the people will withdraw attention from everything except events immediately around their bodies. In other words, they will avoid involvement in interactional events. 2) Rebellion, with which they intentionally challenge the institution, including fragrant refusal to cooperate with staff through intransigency and high rebel-morale. 3) Colonization, a process whereby staff uses undesirable experiences from the outside world to demonstrate the desirability of the inside. Colonizers use the humanist effort to make life in total institutions bearable to increase its attractiveness and colonization. 4) Conversion, which is a scenario where the institutionalized takes over completely the staff or official view of himself and tries to model the expectations of the staff. They take a disciplined moralistic disposition, presenting themselves as enthusiasts of the institution. Each of these responses represents a way of managing the tension between the home environment and the institution.

Boarding schools in Nigeria mirror total institutions in structure, functions, power relations, and outcomes. Cohorts of students live together under the same conditions, with rigid rules, consequences, and distinct authority (Cooper, 2016; Oduor & Kajilwa, 2016). School authorities, having "internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom" and thus authoritarian (Freire, 2013, p. 47). The central relationship between the staff and their subordinates is surveillance – "seeing to it that everyone does what he has been told is required of him, and this under conditions where one person's infraction is likely to stand out in relief against the visible, constantly examined, compliance of others" (Goffman, 1958, p. 59). The outcomes are predictable, "If lower-power people are continually subjected to harsh

treatment or lack of goal attainment, they are likely to produce some organized resistance to the higher power-people” (Hocker & Wilmot, 2014, 128). They may resort to aggression either against other oppressed individuals or the oppressors to reduce the anxiety that emanates from oppression.

Empirical Review

Ajuwon and Fawole (2011) investigated the experience and perpetration of violent behaviour among secondary school students in Ibandan, Nigeria. This cross-sectional survey assessed experience and perpetration of physical, sexual and psychological violent behaviours among school-based adolescents. A total of 1366 students (50.4% females and 49.6% males) randomly selected from six public secondary schools in Ibandan, Nigeria were interviewed using a 36-item questionnaire. Respondents answered questions regarding demographic profile, sexual behaviour, and the extent to which they had experienced or perpetrated physical, sexual and psychological violent behaviours. The lifetime experience of at least one of the three forms of violence was 97.9%: physical violence ranked first (94.4%), followed by psychological (77.6%) and sexual violence (34.9%). The most common types of these forms of violent behaviours experienced were slaps (84.5%), unwanted touch of breast and backside (22.7%) and being belittled (63.2%). Approximately 8% of the study group has had sex and 25% of sexually active respondents claimed that their first sexual encounter occurred in coercive circumstances. The predictors of experience of violence among males were use of alcohol, witnessing domestic violence, involving in work and parental use of alcohol. Among females parental use of alcohol and being young were predictors of violence. Reports of perpetration of physical, sexual and psychological violence among males were 75.3%, 44.9% and 13.3% respectively. Comprehensive interventions targeting students, teachers and parents are recommended to address this problem.

Gardner (2013) investigated the perceptions and experiences of violence among secondary school students in Kingston, Jamaica, and its environs. Data collection was carried out from September through December 1998. Two researchers administered questionnaires in 11 randomly selected secondary schools, to a total of 1 710 students who were in either grade 7 or grade 9 and who were aged 9–17 years old (mean of 13.2 years). Frequency distributions of the responses were compared by gender, age, grade level, socioeconomic status, and school type. Seventy-five percent of the students thought that someone who was reluctant to fight would be “picked on” more, 89% thought it generally wrong to hit other people, and 91% thought it wrong to insult other people. Eighty-four percent knew of students who carried knives or blades from such items as a scalpel or a utility knife to school, and 89% were worried about violence at school. Thirty-three percent had been victims of violence, and 60%

had a family member who had been a victim of violence. Eighty-two percent thought that violent television shows could increase aggressive behavior. Factor analysis of selected responses was carried out, yielding five factors: neighborhood violence, school violence, perceptions of acceptable behaviors, level of concern about violence, and general experiences and perceptions of violence. The factors varied with gender, age, grade level, socioeconomic status, and school type.

The issue of school-based violence has been comprehensively studied, but there is a scant research evidence comparing the forms and strategies for controlling school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state. Therefore, this study aimed at filling this gap.

METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design, according to Lawrant (2018), is a design in which a group of people or item is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few individuals or items considered to be representatives of the entire group. This design is appropriate for this study since information will be gathered from a sample of the population (SS3 students in Bayelsa), who are familiar with the ideas relating to the purpose of study with the aim of generalizing the results for the entire population. The population of the study consisted of 7,515 students in the 10 public and 11 private boarding secondary schools located across the 8 educational zones of Bayelsa State. This choice of students was appropriate because they are the oldest students’ in the system. Since one of the public secondary boarding schools are located at each LGA in the state, Simple random sampling techniques by balloting was used to select 3 out of the 8 Local Government Areas. All the 209 Senior Secondary School 3 (SS3) students from the 3 schools formed the sample of the public secondary school students study. Yenagoa LGA was purposively selected since all private boarding school is located there. Simple random sampling by balloting was used to sample 3 schools out of the 13 private boarding secondary schools. All the 200 and 209 SS3 students from the private and public boarding secondary school respectively formed the sample of the study. The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire developed by the researchers, tagged; “School-based Violence in Boarding Schools Questionnaire (SVBSQ)” It consists of three (3) sections, namely; Section A, B and C. Section A measured the demographic variables of the respondents, Section B consist of 10-items on the forms School-based violence displayed by boarding school students and Section C consist of 10-items on the strategies for controlling of school-based violence in boarding secondary schools. The content and face validity of the instrument was done by one expert from measurement and evaluation and two others from educational management. Their corrections and

suggestions resulted to the final draft used in the study. The instrument was trial tested using twenty (20) SS3 students that did not participate in the research but possess the same characteristics of the population of interest. The reliability co-efficient of 0.79 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha formula which was considered appropriate for this study. The researcher administered questionnaire to the respondents during class with the assistance of the form teachers. In all, 100% return rate was achieved. The data was analyzed

using mean and standard deviation for the research questions and z-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance to test the research hypotheses.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Research Questions

What are the forms of school-based violence in public and private boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state?

Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation of responses on the forms of school-based violence by boarding school students

S/N	Items	Private (n = 200)			Public (n = 209)		
			St.D ₁	Remarks		St.D ₂	Remarks
1.	Bullying	2.99	0.31	Major	2.99	0.71	Major
2.	Corporal Punishment	1.77	0.67	Minor	2.99	0.61	Major
3.	Verbal Abuse	3.07	0.76	Major	3.00	0.36	Major
4.	Forceful collection of property	3.13	0.34	Major	2.89	0.51	Major
5.	Discrimination	3.41	0.31	Major	2.50	0.41	Major
6.	Sexual violence	2.24	0.73	Minor	1.78	0.13	Minor
7.	Killings	2.45	0.43	Minor	2.47	0.77	Minor
8.	Arson attack/Burning of students' belongings	2.67	0.51	Minor	2.50	0.41	Major
9.	General beating	3.14	0.34	Major	3.00	0.21	Major
10.	Washing of toilets, sweeping the whole hostel	2.76	0.44	Minor	2.87	0.31	Major

Results presented in Table 1 above indicated that bullying, verbal abuse, corporal punishment, forceful collection of property, sexual violence, general beating and washing of toilets, sweeping the whole hostel are major forms of school-based violence displayed, while killing and sexual violence are minor forms of school-based violence displaced by students in public boarding secondary schools. Also, results presented in table 1 above indicated that bullying, verbal abuse, forceful collection of property, sexual violence, general beating and are major forms of

school-based violence displayed, while washing of toilets, sweeping hostel, corporal punishment, killing and sexual violence are minor forms of school-based violence displaced by students in private boarding secondary schools. This was based on the criterion mean of 2.5.

Research Question 2

What are the strategies for controlling school-based violence in public and private boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state?

Table2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on strategies for controlling school-based violence amongst by students

S/N	Items	Private (n = 200)			Public (n = 209)		
			St.D ₁	Remarks		St.D ₂	Remarks
11.	Orientation of new students	3.19	0.31	Major	3.01	0.71	Major
12.	Punishment for defaulters	2.77	0.67	Major	2.99	0.61	Major
13.	Teaching/preaching against aggressive during classes/devotions	3.07	0.76	Major	3.00	0.36	Major
14.	Provision of suggestion box were incidence of aggression can be reported	2.23	0.34	Minor	2.50	0.51	Minor
15.	Employing the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers	3.11	0.31	Major	3.05	0.41	Major
16.	Organizing workshop/talk shows where the dangers of aggression are exposed.	2.44	0.73	Minor	1.78	0.13	Minor
17.	The use of prefects/house captain in each hostel, class or prepping hall	3.45	0.43	Major	2.67	0.77	Minor
18.	Creating effective channels of communication where the appropriate authority can be reached with ease	2.67	0.51	Minor	2.50	0.41	Major
19.	Teachers are properly motivated to be committed to effective implementation of the strategies for controlling aggression	2.14	0.34	Major	2.00	0.21	Minor
20.	The school infrastructure is adequate for the provision of basic students' school needs.	2.16	0.44	Minor	2.07	0.31	Major

Source: Fieldwork (2021)

Results presented in Table 2 above indicated that orientation of new students, punishment for defaulters, teaching/preaching against school-based violence during classes/devotions, employing the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers, the use of prefects/house captain in each hostel, class or prepping hall, and motivating teachers to be committed are major strategies for controlling school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary school students. Also, provision of suggestion box were incidence of aggression can be reported, creating effective channels of communication where the

appropriate authority can be reached with ease and making school infrastructure adequate for the provision of basic students' school needs are minor strategies for controlling school-based violence. The mean of each item was greater than the criterion mean of 2.5.

Hypotheses

HO1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the forms of school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Table 3: t-test analysis on various forms of school-based violence in boarding school

Categories	N	Mean	St.D	df	t _{cal}	t _{crit}	Decision
Private	200	2.84	0.48	407	3.45	1.960	Accept Ho ₁
Public	209	2.53	0.57				

Source: Field work (2022)

The table 3 above shows that the z_{cal} value is 3.45 while the critical value (z_{crit}) at 407 df and 0.05 level of significance is 1.960. Since the z_{cal} is greater than the z_{crit}, then the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the forms of school-based

violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

HO2: There is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the strategies for controlling school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Table 4: t-test analysis on strategies for controlling school-based violence in boarding schools

Categories	N	mean	St.d	df	z _{cal}	z _{crit}	Decision
Private	200	2.74	0.69	407	1.67	1.960	Accept Ho ₂
Public	209	3.24	0.75				

Source: Field work (2022)

The table 4 above shows that the z_{cal} value is 2.41 while the critical value (z_{crit}) at 407 df and 0.05 level of significance is 1.960. Since the z_{cal} is greater than the z_{crit}, then the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the strategies for controlling school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

Also, the result from hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the forms of school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results from research question 1 indicated that bullying, verbal abuse, corporal punishment, forceful collection of property, sexual violence, general beating and washing of toilets, sweeping the whole hostel are major forms of school-based violence displayed, while killing and sexual violence are minor forms of school-based violence displaced by students in public boarding secondary schools. The results revealed that bullying, verbal abuse, forceful collection of property, sexual violence, general beating and are major forms of school-based violence displayed, while washing of toilets, sweeping hostel, corporal punishment, killing and sexual violence are minor forms of school-based violence displaced by students in private boarding secondary schools.

The result in research question 2 revealed that orientation of new students, punishment for defaulters, teaching/preaching against school-based violence during classes/devotions, employing the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers, the use of prefects/house captain in each hostel, class or prepping hall, and motivating teachers to be committed are major strategies for controlling school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary school students. Also, provision of suggestion box were incidence of aggression can be reported, creating effective channels of communication where the appropriate authority can be reached with ease and making school infrastructure adequate for the provision of basic students' school needs are minor strategies for controlling school-based violence. Also, the result from hypothesis 2 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of students on the strategies for controlling school-based violence in private and public boarding secondary schools in Bayelsa state. This finding agrees with that of Dovieme (2019) and Adua (2020) who

reported that the issue of school-based violence among students is not significantly different in private and public boarding schools. Dovieme (2019) validated his claim citing the Deeper life high school rape saga (Vanguard, 2020), Abia gang rape (Guardian, 2011), Babbcock sex scandal involving two students (Sun news, 2019) and the Alu mob action against 3 male students of university of Port Harcourt (Punch, 2012) as instances where both private and public institutions recorded violence.

CONCLUSION

The study has established that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of students on the forms of school-based violence and strategies for controlling school based violence in private and public secondary schools in Bayelsa state. The study identified bullying, verbal abuse, corporal punishment, forceful collection of property, sexual violence, general beating and washing of toilets, sweeping the whole hostel are major forms of school-based violence displayed, while killing and sexual violence are minor forms of school-based violence displaced by students in private and public boarding secondary schools.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) The government and other stakeholders should ensure that the campaign against school-based violence be encouraged in both private and public boarding school.
- 2) The school system should employ the services of matrons/warders/boarding house officers, to reduce violence and school management should be encouraged to implement the strategies for controlling students' aggression in secondary schools in Bayelsa state.

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