

COUNSELLING AGAINST VIOLENT BEHAVIOURS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The study evaluated the impact of counseling on violent behaviours of senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. Key research questions guided the scope and length of the study and a survey method was used for designing the study. The population of the study were senior secondary class two students (SS2) and 10 counsellors drawn from each of the six education zones in Imo state, namely Owerri zone 1 and 2, Orlu Zone 1 and 2 and Okigwe zone 1 & 2. The sample and sample techniques were one hundred and thirty four (134) students and 60 counsellors drawn from the study population. The instrument of the study is a combination of primary and secondary self-made questionnaire and questionnaire drawn from literature review) named Counselling Against Violent Behaviours among Secondary School Students (CAVBASSS) The findings revealed that the secondary school violent behaviours reduced due to the roles of school counsellors in Imo State. Furthermore, based on the research findings from the study, the counsellors' responses indicated that counselling helped some students to stop verbal and physical fighting and scheduling time for counselling students to reduce violent behaviours was not an easy task to achieve. Most of the counsellors reported no increase in school violence in the recent time due to the increased availability and access to counselling services in the secondary schools. The following recommendations was made: (i) it is of benefit if future researchers use large sample size that covers the surroundings state (ii) comparative study of the variances of school violence in different states and regions.

Keywords: Counselling, violent behaviours, secondary school students

Introduction

There has been a striking change in most schools in Nigeria with a rise in violence, particularly in secondary schools. The increase in violence is not only commonplace in schools, but in the society as well. Studies indicate that this problem is taking endemic turn in all aspects of human life. The daily reports of violence in the daily news in Nigerian society are alarming. There are more reports of violence in the media reports than any positive events. Most media like the social media and television programmes seem to be exposing violence daily. The video games most people play especially children and adolescents are more of violence and graphic. The increased exposure to

bastardly form of violence has worrisomely made most children and adolescents exhibit act of aggression, rapes, fighting, lawlessness, banditry, armed robbery, killings and the like. According to Anderson (2014), the issue of school violence affects both younger primary and older students.

In Imo State, for example, a student attacked his female teacher for receiving punishment for not doing his assignments. There had been a report of some gang of students who killed their fellow students. The increased violent acts in schools have led to suspension of students, dismissal of violent students and sub-charging parents and guardians' huge sums of money for replacement of damages by students in some schools. The reports on increased violence in some schools in Imo State have generated worries among parents, school administration, teachers, stakeholders, government, and uninvolved students.

The reports going round intensified the need to set up preventive measures to avoid the situation getting out of hand. Students need to be counselled, trained, and educated on violence behaviours and its harmful consequences. Who should be responsible for directing the children and adolescents to this responsible behaviours? Lenhardt & Willert (2012) shared the opinion that the expectations of the society is that the issue of school violence should be curbed within the educational systems. Douglas, Geoffrey and Yank, (2012) on their own opined that there is the need to help students and staff who have experienced violent acts. According to them, if students who have experienced violent behaviours do not receive any counselling after the experiences, they may develop lifelong problems, for example, Daily paper in Switzerland reported of a bus load of children who were kidnapped and held in captive for 27 days. The children, when released were exposed to counselling, consequently, five years later, all of the children suffered from “fear, depression, and anxiety” (Poland, 2014). This happened because the ugly experience had already taken over their emotions. Poland suggested that a measures must be established to curb school violent behaviours. This means that counselling should be made available as preventive measure rather than a mere therapy by employing mainly professionals in counselling fields.

The question of who should be entrusted with this “honorius tasks” in secondary school systems and their capability to address the complex problems associated with school violence remains vital to be considered. The professional school counsellors have roles in handling circumstances of violence in the school and the question being asked are, how many are available to execute this critical task? Recently, it has been observed that school counsellors' jobs focus more on “careers and moral development”. However, the modern guidance counsellors training has incorporated such difficult situations like handling violent behaviours among students.

Looking at the history of school counselling, the role of the school counsellor during school violence could be understood. Counselling which emerged during the early 1900s has not fully been institutionalized in schools. It was first established in industries to correct lack of consideration for human rights. This demand for reform has led to school counsellors educating students on issues concerning morality, career, and personal relations (Schmidt, 2013).

The best way of discovering successful role the school counsellor plays in a violence, is to look at actual antecedents of present situations. To this end, Arman (2011) listed the following functions of a school counsellor which include: assisting parents to locate their children in time of problems,

counselling students who lost parents or relations during violence of any kind and establishing correctional group sessions for community miscreants. Types of school violence include; social violence, physical violence, psychological and emotional violence whose consequences ranged from anxiety to depression down to dropping of school.

Examples of school violence include the following; Bullying and cyber bullying, fighting (punching, slapping, kicking and so on, using weapon for gang violence, sexual violence, physical violence which includes fighting between students, corporal punishment, sexual violence, and psychological violence. Carrying of weapons in school is getting on the increase, weapons use during schools violence include knives, daggers, stones, fuel, sticks, among others. There are many works done by other researchers did which are related to the present study. The work done by Anderson (2014) was on school violence and the effect in guidance counsellors' roles. The study aimed to ascertain whether crises and school violence had any discernible effects on the roles and enjoyment of high school counselors. The study found that violence still exists among students in high schools. The type of violence prevalent includes cyber bullying and carrying of gun. The result revealed that counsellors need to spend more time with their students. The paper recommended that the result of finding could be used by stakeholders to improve management of violence in high schools. The work done by Thompson (2017) was on school related violence. The paper included a current assessment of what has and has not been effective in decreasing and preventing school-related violence as well as in responding to it when it occurs. The work found that if students are adequately involved in assignment and class works school based violence would be reduced. Edwin, (2022) worked on school reform and perspectives on the role of school counsellors: A century of proposal for change. He identified that students and those at risk of Physical and sexual violence, reduction of school vandalism, underachievement and school dropouts posited that school counsellors have risen to these challenges and met them efficiently. He contended that school counsellors are key factors in the success of school reform.

Ayuba, Oke & Jacks (2020) investigated on Counselling against domestic violence among primary school pupils in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The objectives of this study were to find out whether pupils are raised under violence conditions at home, identify forms of domestic violence pupils have witnessed at home and find out violence behaviours pupils manifest at home. The findings showed that physical and emotional violence are the most commonest forms of violence children exhibit at home which they carried in schools. Usman, Subair & Abdusalam, (2020) carried out studies on Counselling against domestic violence in Nigeria. The study saw domestic violence as a social problem in Nigeria and suggested that Nigerian laws against domestic violence should be put in use as well as utilizing UN article on elevation of domestic violence against women into implementations. In Borno State, Nigeria, Kpanja, Ngohi, and Tunde (2020) studied the negative impacts of domestic violence on adolescents and its implications during counseling. The study's goals included identifying the types and impacts of domestic violence against teenagers in the Borno state, Nigeria, as well as looking at how domestic violence affected both male and female teenagers' academic performance there. The study found about twenty types of domestic violence and eleven varying effects on the academic performance of the adolescents in Borno State. Adaola & Oholi, (2020) carried research works on teachers' perception of counsellors as prevention resource against violence in secondary schools in Bwari Area Council of FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. The purpose of this study determined teachers perception of counsellors as prevention resource against school violence,

it also identifies its prevalence, type of violence in Bwari and determined the strategies used by counsellors in preventing violence. The findings of the study saw counsellors as prevention resource persons.

Statement of the Problem

Secondary school students are generally characterized by violent behaviours especially during adolescent period however secondary school violent behaviours in Imo State school system have generated worrisome and disturbing issues to parents, teachers and the society at large in Imo State. Secondary school violence behaviours in Imo State School Systems have generated worrisomely to parents and schools stakeholders. This study therefore tries to examine how counselling in secondary schools could have positive impact on students' violent behaviours, and determine the capability of the counsellors who are responsible in dealing with the complex school violence problems that have cumulated in and outside school systems. However the school counsellor is meant to handle aftermaths of violent behaviours in the school. The statement of the problem for this study was put in the question form "what role has counselling against violent behaviours amongst Secondary school students have been successfully played in Imo State secondary schools?"

Despite all these attempts to make secondary school environments in Imo state violent free, the level of violent behaviours among senior secondary schools students and their neighboring state have given rise to high rise cultist groups, rape gangs, killings for rituals dangerous fights with dangerous weapons burning of school premises and other antisocial behaviours.

This study is therefore designed to achieve these objectives as stated below:

Positive social interactions. All above if properly handled will assist in using counsellors to help the students in training and educating them on how to work on campus visits, career counselling, study habits, scheduling time for counselling in order to address violent behaviours in schools as well as develop interest in friends relationships, family relationship and issues relating to friends and families.

In the face of these challenges it is very necessary to assist the senior secondary students to adjust their life, enhance their self-esteem and develop healthy relationship in any social environment they found themselves. This will not only improve their social environment or school environments but also minimize the frustration, angers and anxiety that push them to violent behaviours. It will also help them to promote school and social interactions among the violent and non-violent students, promote their healthy social life as well as help them to guide school facilities rather than destroy them through counselling services. Parental support is very necessary for promotion of peaceful co-existence among the students. Research also has shown that healthy relationships with parents, counselors, teachers and students help all of them to adjust to violent problems and behaviours thereby making positive contributions to the society at large. Healthy relationships is capable of making parents to contribute to the development of school facilities, enhance healthy behaviours and promote.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of the study was to examine the counselling impacts against violent behaviours among Secondary School Students in Imo State, the counselling implications, and

specifically to determine;

1. The changes in the violent behaviours of secondary schools, students in Imo State are based on counselling roles.
2. Whether Counsellors need to attend a special level of training/education to handle the school violent behaviours of students.
3. If there are changes in the functions of counsellors due to increased violent behaviours among senior secondary school students in Imo state.

Research Questions

The three research questions which guided this study included:

1. How has the school violent behaviours by students changed due to the roles of school counsellors in Imo State secondary schools?
2. How have training and education helped the school counsellors in dealing with school violence behaviours?
3. How have the counsellors' roles changed due to increased school violent behaviours exhibited by senior secondary school students?

Methodology

The survey method was used in designing the study. The area of study is Imo State and the researchers found out that the population of counsellors in Imo State secondary schools was about 134 for the public schools that have Guidance/Counselling units. The researchers used simple random sampling technique to draw 134 (SS2) students and 10 secondary school Counsellors from each of the six education zones in Owerri 1 & 2, Orlu 1 & 2 and Okigwe 1 & 2 in Imo State, from where ten (10) counsellors each were selected from the secondary schools in the zones. This gave a total of sixty (60) counsellors that represented the schools, Instrument used for the study was constructed by the researchers based on secondary literature titled "Counselling against Violent Behaviours among Secondary School Students' Questionnaire" (CAVBASSSQ). The instrument was made of 18 structured items to answer the three research questions. The response format for this questionnaire was rated on high and low. Any mean below 2.75 is rated low while any mean above 2.75 is rated high. The validation of the instrument was conducted by three professional lecturers from psychology/Counselling Department, Measurement and Evaluation Department in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike. Ten (10) counsellors from schools that were not part of those drawn for the study rated the instrument. After a two-week interval, the same counselors received the same instrument to evaluate. The collected data were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The result of the reliability was established as 0.78 which was suitable and adequate for the study.

Data Analysis and Results

The results from the three research questions were presented as follow:

Research Question One: How has the school violent behaviours of students changed due to the roles of school counsellors in Imo State secondary schools?

Table 1. Changes in the Roles of School Counsellors against Violent behaviours of Secondary School Students in Imo State.

S/N	Item Specification	$\sum X$	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Working with students on group counselling	147	2.45	Low
2	Counselling those involved in verbal fighting	193	3.21	High
3	Meet with students and their parents on career education options/Counselling	140	2.33	Low
4	Counselling those involved in bullying.	180	3.00	High
5	Working with students on individual counseling	187	3.12	High
6	Has your school had an increase in school violence behaviours in the recent school years?	145	2.42	Low
7	Counselling those involved in physical fighting	157	2.62	High
8	Time spent on consulting with other teachers	145	2.42	Low
	Pooled Mean		2.70	High

There is improvement on the overall performance of school counsellors' roles in the management of school violent behaviours of students over the period. The counsellors' responses indicated that they did well in Nos.2, 4, 5 and 7, the overall mean performance is 2.70 which is also high. This result showed that the school violent behaviours changed due to the role of school counsellors in Imo State secondary schools

Research Question Two

How have training and education helped the school counsellors in reducing violent behaviours among secondary school students?

Table 2. Impact of Training and Education impacts to violent behaviours of students

S/N	Item specification	Qualified counsellors Mean	Unqualified Counsellors Mean	Mean Difference
1	Take students to visit colleges in campus	3.05	0.95	2.10
2	Train students on study habits	3.13	0.87	2.26
3	Work with students on career counselling	2.95	1.15	1.80
4	Take students to visit friends	2.67	1.33	1.34
5	Working with students on friends' issues.	2.67	1.33	1.34
6	Working with students on relationship issues.	3.00	1.00	2.00
7	Working with students on family issues.	2.87	1.13	1.74
8	Working on schedule of time for counselling on school violence	3.05	0.95	2.10
	Mean	2.92	1.08	1.84

There is remarkable improvement of school counsellors roles in the trading and education of school violent behaviours of students over the time. The counsellors responses showed that they performed well in nos 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8 the overall mean performance is 2.92 which is also very high this result showed that the school violent behaviours of students changed due to the roles of the school counsellors in Imo State.

Research Question Three

How have the counsellors' roles changed due to increased school violent behaviours?

Table 3. **Change in the Counsellors' Roles Due to Increased School Violent behaviours**

S/N	Item Specification	ΣX	\bar{X}	Remarks
1	Working on school plans due to increased violence behaviours	205	3.41	VHE
2	Time is spent on engaging students on career work.	185	3.09	VHE
3	Work with students on school applications	167	2.78	HE
4	Compared to the previous years, reduction in school violence has reduced through counselling services.	152	2.54	HE
5	There is a step up in teaching of career lessons	190	3.17	VHE
6	Student received extra counselling on sessions for avoidance of crime and violence	158	2.63	HE
7.	Counsellors are relieved of other jobs to make more time for counselling students.	187	3.11	VHE
8	Counsellors interact with Parents and students	214	3.56	VHE
POOLED MEAN			3.04	VHE

The result of table 3 showed that the respondents rated all the items high. The overall mean is 3.04 which are also high. Hence, the result indicate that the counsellors' roles in secondary schools Imo State changed due to increased school violent behaviours.

Discussion of Findings and recommendations

The secondary school violent behaviours changed due to the roles of school counsellors in Imo State. Based on the research findings from this study, the counsellors' responses indicated that counseling helped some students to stop verbal and physical fighting and working with students on career counseling and scheduling time for counselling students to reduce violent behaviours was not an easy task to achieve.

Majority of counsellors reported no increase in school violence in the recent time due to the increased availability and access to counselling services in some modern.

However the counsellors spent less time on consulting with other teachers controlling with act of violence with mean rating of 2.07. This result raises the question about the capacity of guidance counsellors to address school violence issues. When the researchers questioned if the school experienced an increment in school violent behaviours in the recent school years. The mean score was low 2.37 indicating that it has been low. However, this data showed a conflicting pattern in the response from the counsellors surveyed. While most of the counsellors reported no increase in school violence in their schools a good number reported to have spent more time controlling school violence behaviours than before. Numerous reasons exist for the inconsistencies in the research findings. One major reason is that not all the teachers acting as counsellors are qualified to that position or have been given adequate training and education towards counseling. Secondly, sometimes the administration (principal and his vice) prevent counselors from going beyond their duties and school regulations. The third issue could be that the counsellors do not exactly know the exact time they are meant to spend on counselling. The work done by Anderson (2014) was on school violence and the effect in guidance counsellors' role. This work done by Anderson relates to the present work. His study aimed to determine the existence of any observable changes in the high school counsellors' roles as associated with crises and violence in these schools. The study found that violence still exists among students in high schools. The types of violence prevalent includes cyber bullying and carrying of guns. The result revealed that counsellors need to spend more time with their students.

Training and education help for school counsellors in controlling school violent behaviours

This research work made use of 43 qualified counsellors and 17 others who assumed the positions because there were no qualified guidance counsellors in the schools. Majority of the qualified counsellors took students to visit college campus, worked with students on career counselling, worked with students on family issues and spent time on scheduling counselling lessons/sessions. There could be difference between counsellors who were trained and educated and those who acted on the position as shown by teachers 1,84. This result clearly showed that secondary school counsellors are increasingly addressing acts of school violence in variety of ways. The list on table 2 showed related duties to keep students busy and get involved less of school violence. A similar work was done by Thompson (2017) on school related violence. The work provided an up to date report based on available evidence that assess what has worked or has not worked is not relevant but to reduce, prevent and address school related violence behaviours when it happens. The work found that if students are adequately involved in assignments and class works school based violence could be reduced or avoided.

The school counsellors' roles changed due to increased Secondary school violent behaviours of students.

The counsellors were asked if they have a school violent behaviours plans, result of this study indicated that trained and well qualified counsellors could adequately handle violence functional behaviours though with proper interventions as well as provide a school violence plan. This contains how to engage students on career work to keep them away from getting involved into crime and school violence. The respondents encourage their students to take up a career counselling. Some schools principals, their counselors and other personnels to allow them schedule more time for counselling. It was revealed that some of the counsellors visited the parents and interacted with them on the conduct of their wards and children. The study done by Edwin, (2022) on school reform and

perspectives on the roles of school counsellors: In century of proposal for change. He identified students as those at risk of Physical and sexual abuse, involving in school vandalism, underachievement and school dropouts are handled by the school counsellors, and posited that school counsellors have risen to handle these challenges efficiently. He concluded that school counsellors are key factors in the success of school reform.

Another study similar to the present study was done by Pietro, Giulia, Alberto & Giovanni (2013). The research work was on school violence of children, on the theme human rights and social problems of violence against children, is a study that provided physical violence perpetrated at school on children's level. It had a physical negative impact, causing psychological distress, permanent physical disability and long term physical or mental ill-health. Evidence from this study showed that nonviolent, positive, disciplined children, typically perform academically better than that of their violent colleagues.

Conclusion

The survey conducted revealed that counsellors are making strides in combating the issue of school violence in various ways. While this is not obtainable in every school yet within Imo state, the data collected showed that moderate resources and time is channeled into fostering activities that curb violent behaviours in Secondary schools. This list of related duties includes counselling students on physical and verbal abuse, as well as bullying. There is the need for school counsellors to realize these problems and focus on prevention counselling to keep secondary school violence behaviours from escalating any further.

Counselling Implications

Counselling enables individuals to recognize the influencing elements that contribute to their problems and effectively deal with the situational, behavioral, psychological, interpersonal causes of the problems. Guidance and counselling services faced a number of challenges. This includes insufficient time, uncooperative client attitudes, a lack of parental support, a paucity of skilled personnel, insufficient guidance counselling resources, and a bad attitude toward guidance counsellors from students to principals. Other obstacles include inadequate accommodations, a lack of tools, low emotions, bad social lives, and kids' inappropriate use of physical acts. The major role of guidance counsellors in secondary school services is to encourage students' to take academic social lives, emotional and personal developments seriously. To reach this aim guidance counselling services could help students to equip themselves better and find functional solutions to their daily problems. Counselling develops students' awareness of opportunities in the society through relevant and useful information. Counselling helps students develop the skills of self-potentials, self-creativity, self-concept, self-study, self-analysis and self-understanding. Through counselling students make appropriate, satisfactory personal, and educational choices and positive decisions that assist them to maintain crime free lives and succeed in life.

Recommendations

It is of benefit if future researchers should include using a large sample size that would include the surrounding States. Comparison could be made to the variances in school violence issues with different States. The outcome of such inquiry would hopefully lead to changes and additions to curriculum planning for graduate counsellors' training programmes. Seminars and conferences

should be better organized on counselling to prepare future school counsellors to meet the needs of the changing school environments, students behaviours positively, pre-violence counselling should be a watch word to counsellors for them to be watch word to students for them not to wait for violence before they could counsel cultural and social lives of students. It should be made to field healthy relationships amongst counselors, students, parents, teachers and the school authorities.

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