

Exposure to violent video and aggressive behavior among Public Secondary Students, Kwara State, Nigeria

Samuel Kolawole Ajiboye^{1*}, Oluwatoni Esorun², Bolaji Oladejo³

¹Department of Counsellor Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.

²Saskatoon Open Door Society, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

³Command Science Secondary School, Saki, Oyo State, Nigeria

Corresponding author: ajiboye.sk@unilorin.edu.ng, toniesorun@gmail.com, bolajioladejo2015@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Aggressive behavior is a range of acts that result in physical and psychological harm to the perpetrator, and other students, thus hindering learning activities. This study investigated the relationship between exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior among public secondary students in Kwara State, Nigeria. The survey method with a correlational design was adopted. A total sample of 381 participants was involved using the stratified random sampling technique. A research-designed questionnaire titled Exposure to Violent Videos and Aggressive Behaviour Questionnaire (EVABQ) was used to collect the data. Pearson's product-moment correlation and t-test statistics were used to analyze the hypotheses. Results revealed a positive relationship between exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior. The results showed statistically significant differences in exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior among public secondary students based on gender and age. Male respondents were more exposed to violent videos and had more aggressive behavior than females. In contrast, students below 15 years old were more exposed to violent videos and exhibited aggressive behavior than 15 years and above. Therefore, school counselors should sensitize public secondary students to the influence of exposure to violent videos on aggressive behavior, especially among males and students below 15 years old.

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Introduction

A conducive school environment is a major factor that enhances adequate teaching and learning among teachers and students, respectively. Therefore, the school is always expected to be a space where students can enjoy protection, calmness, and violence-free educational activities. However, the phenomenon of aggressive behavior among students has become an issue of concern to stakeholders because of the multiplier effects on the students (both the victims and perpetrators). While the victims may develop aversive behavior towards

attending school because of fear of being attacked, the aggressor, on the other hand, might be afraid of punishments due to involvement in aggressive behavior (Rakhmi, 2020).

Aggressive behavior is an antisocial, deviant, and unacceptable act that hinders students' teaching and learning activities. Aggression could be viewed as any behavior or action aimed at harming a person or damaging physical property (Rakhmi, 2020). It is characterized by acts of physical violence, shouting, swearing, harsh language, gossiping or spreading rumors about a classmate, and purposely breaking the classmate's property, among others. Aggression may involve deliberate and unjustified physical or emotionally violent actions directed at someone of the weaker ability to protect or defend self. Thus, aggression occurs when an imbalance in strength reflects enforced subordination and dominance. The stronger students could unjustly dominate weak colleagues, causing them (the latter) to develop fear and subsequent school avoidance behavior in some cases. Nevertheless, aggression could also be extended to someone of more strength and domination. In most cases, the purpose of aggression is to express anger toward another person.

Aggression is a form of maladaptive behavior among students with debilitating consequences on the victims' academic, social, and emotional performances. This phenomenon occurs more often among secondary school students owing to their levels of reasoning as young boys and girls in school. Aggressive behavior involves direct and indirect actions: direct form involves hitting, kicking, offensive sarcasm, and threat, while indirect action involves destroying relationships, humiliation, intimidation, and others. If factors associated with aggressive behavior could be identified, there can be opportunities for stakeholders in the education sector to proffer solutions to the phenomenon. The contents of violent videos, especially students' exposure to these movies and games, may predict their subsequent aggressive behavior. The impact of violent videos on maladaptive behavior among students cannot be overemphasized due to the imitation of characters in violence-focused scenes. Exposure to violent media can potentially influence many unpleasant behaviors, including aggressiveness.

Both online and offline videos have become major sources of entertainment, especially for school-age children. Videos could come in different ways depending on the producer's intention and the circumstances that motivated the production. Nevertheless, violent videos are prevalent in the film industry owing to the fact that young boys and girls enjoy viewing them because of curiosity. Violent movies and games are prevalent among young students because they like fantasy and enjoy imitation more than adults (Hassan et al., 2009). The crux is that the contents of most of these movies or games are violence-related. Thus, the term violent video (both movies and games) describes the phenomenon since violent movies or games dominate the sites.

In some cases, students might get exposed to violent videos unintentionally but as a way of catching fun with friends. However, how they get involved would not matter but how much they spend their time watching such movies or playing games. In addition, because of their age and stage of development, secondary school students are likely to be influenced by violent scenes they view and engage in for whatever reasons (Shao & Wang, 2019).

By way of description, video movies and games are considered violent when the activities therein depict intentional attempts by actors (human and non-human) to inflict harm on others. In some instances, the scenes may involve extreme violence, such as criminal acts, which the viewers may consider harmless since they enjoy watching the movies or playing the games. 80% of the most popular video or online movies or games in the market are violent in nature (Dietz, 1998). Different authors have categorized various types of video movies. These violent video movies can be viewed or played as games on various devices such as arcade machines, computers, home consoles, over the internet, mobile phone devices, and others. This condition makes the videos simply accessible to secondary school students because they can easily use various devices as much as they desire, especially in the 21st century's rapid knowledge of technology. Videos with social and educative or pure fun could

be worth viewing (Kubey & Larson, 1990). Still, movies that contain violent and offensive messages are useless to students because they could be influenced negatively. Twelve types of videos students use are Animation, Stop motion, Mixed media, Screencast, Animated demo, Live action, Live stream, Interactive, 360, VR, Whiteboard, and Videographic (Shao & Wang, 2019).

While the game can influence acts of sadism in the players owing to the pleasure of torture derivable from the game scenes. Another violent video game that students commonly play is Hitman, in which players of this game learn the art of cold-blood assassination because the Hitman would have to engage many destructive weapons, such as knives, guns, clubs, and explosives. There are many other violent video movies and games, but the common factor in video games' contents, which depict aggression, chaos, conflicts, destruction, and callousness, can induce trauma (Oskenbay et al., 2016).

The exposure of secondary school students to violent videos can potentially influence different maladaptive behaviors, especially aggressiveness (Shao & Wang, 2019). Initial viewing of violent videos may often persuade students to increase the amount of time spent watching because the horrors, actions, and unrealistic dramas contained which would continually trigger curiosity and subsequent obsession when viewing the movies, and even after, the students learn the behavior of the actors in the scenes regardless of its unacceptability. This influence occurs through imitation, demonstration, and internalization of violent acts. Thus, it becomes easier for students who view violent videos to be involved in aggressive behavior. This condition supports the view of the social learning movement that learning takes place through observation and imitation. Social learning theory proposes that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling and is influenced by factors such as attention, motivation, attitudes, and emotions (Cilliers, 2021). The theory accounts for the interaction of environmental and cognitive elements that affect people's learning. People observe behavior either directly through social interactions with others or indirectly by observing behaviors through media (Cilliers, 2021). Actions that are rewarded are more likely to be imitated, while those that are punished are avoided. Thus, students are likely to behave differently from the videos they watch and exhibit some of what has been learned, regardless of the acceptability.

Due to different factors, students in public secondary schools are more likely to be exposed to video viewing than their counterparts in private schools. First, most public schools have shorter school times, allowing students to engage in other activities such as video viewing to catch fun or play games. Secondly, the population of students in public schools is always large, making it difficult to monitor every student's activities; some of them could engage in video viewing on cell phones or even sneak out of the school to video viewing centers. Other factors predispose public secondary school students to video exposure, especially violent videos, such as accessibility to video centers and peer influence. A previous study on attitude and motivation for social networks among secondary school students in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State found that male respondents engaged more on social networks while younger students were motivated to engage on social networks owing to loose schedules (Omorogbe & Iguodala, 2018).

Literature has shown the association between exposure to video movies and maladaptive behaviors. A longitudinal study of 450 children about their media habits and aggressive behavior found that aggressive behavior in adulthood could be predicted by how many violent movies one has watched as a child (Huesmann & Taylor, 2014). Thus, exposure to violent videos by secondary school students could potentially put them at risk of exhibiting aggressive behavior in adulthood. A cross-sectional study in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, among public and private high school students on the relationship between video game use and aggressive behavior found a positive relationship between the use of video games and aggressive behavior, with a significant difference between male and female respondents as well as participants in different levels of education (Al-Harbi, 2019). A previous study also

found a positive correlation between media violence exposure and school aggression, with more male respondents alluding to exposure to media violence and perpetrating school aggression (Baker & Ayyd, 2018). Further, a study found that playing violent video games increased aggressive behavior, aggressive affect, aggressive cognition, and psychological arousal (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). Another study among Saudi Arabian youth in Riyadh found that playing video games increased aggressive behaviors (Aleissa et al., 2022).

Previous studies have different results on the difference in aggressive behavior based on gender. A study found no difference between male and female participants' exposure to violent media use (Northup, 2013). However, in another study, males chose more physically aggressive methods than females, though verbal aggression is prominent among females, in which male bullies assembled a group of followers and enjoyed a status fight (Rakhmi, 2020).

Several studies on aggressive behavior have been conducted in Nigeria. A study in six public secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria, found a high prevalence of aggressive behavior among students (Owoaje & Ndubusi, 2010). In Benin City, Nigeria, four in every five school children reported having suffered from the aggressive behavior of other schoolmates (Egbochuku, 2007). A study among the students of Babcock University Nigeria found an inverse relationship between the amount of time spent viewing violent movies and the level of aggressive behavior (Brown & Marin, 2009). A study among adolescents in Calabar municipality and Calabar South Local Government Areas, Cross River state, Nigeria, revealed that violent videos are significantly related to violent behaviors and substance abuse among adolescents (Nkang et al., 2015).

Previous studies revealed a correlation between violent video viewing and deviant behaviors (such as aggressiveness, aggression, substance abuse, and other behaviors). Therefore, this study deemed it fit to investigate the relationship between exposure to violent video games and aggressive behavior among Public Secondary School students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Thus, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior among public secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference in the exposure to violent videos among public secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria, based on gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the aggressive behavior of public secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria, based on gender.
4. There is no significant difference in exposure to violent videos among public secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria, based on age.
5. There is no significant difference in the aggressive behavior of public secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria, based on age.

Method

Research Design

The survey method with a correlational design was adopted for this study. The respondents' informed consent was obtained to fulfill ethical procedures.

Participants

The study population comprised all Senior Secondary School Students in Kwara State, which amounted to 25,618 students (Male= 13,760; Female= 11,858). Three hundred eighty-one samples were prescribed for a population of this magnitude at a 5.0% margin of error and 95% confidence level (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). The purposive sampling technique was used to select secondary schools with heterogeneous populations. Further stratified randomization was adopted to select the participants across the moderating variables of the study. Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on gender and age. The percentage of male

respondents is slightly higher than that of females. In contrast, the percentage of respondents below 15 years old is twice that of 15 years old and above.

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents based on gender and age

Variable		f	%
Gender	Male	209	54.9
	Female	172	45.1
	N	381	100.0
Age	Below 15 years	264	69.3
	15 years and above	117	30.7
	N	381	100.0

Instrument

The researchers-designed structured questionnaire type of instrument entitled “Exposure to Violence video and Aggressive Behavior Questionnaire (EVABQ)” was used to collect the required information from the respondents. Examples of the items are: “I watch videos that involve fighting”; and “I hit other students like the scenes I watched in videos.” After being subjected to the test-retest procedure, the 30-item (15 items on exposure to violence videos and aggressive behaviour each) questionnaire possessed a reliability coefficient of .83.

Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was applied to test hypothesis one. At the same time, the t-test statistic was used to test hypotheses two to five.

Results

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation results in [Table 2](#) reveal a calculated $r = .37$, critical $r = .19$, and $p = .00$. Since the calculated r is greater than the critical r at $p = .00$ ($p < .05$), the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. There is a significant positive relationship between exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior among Public Secondary School Students.

Table 2
Relationship between exposure to violent video and aggressive behavior among Public Secondary School Students in Kwara State, Nigeria

	\bar{X}	SD	df	Cal. r	Crit. r	p
Exposure to violent video	43.81	7.30	379	.37	.19	.00
Aggressive behavior	47.11	5.69				

The result in [Table 3](#) revealed a significant difference between males and females in their exposure to violent video ($p = .00$). Male respondents are more exposed to violent video than their female counterparts.

Table 3
The mean, standard deviation, and t-test on exposure to violent video based on gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	Cal. t	Crit. t	p
Male	209	44.58	6.13				

				379	2.16	1.96	.00
Female	172	38.70	7.42				

The result in Table 4 shows a significant difference in respondents' aggressive behavior based on gender ($p < .05$). Male ($\bar{X} = 47.56$) has more aggressive behavior than female ($\bar{X} = 45.03$).

Table 4

Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test on aggressive behavior based on gender

Gender	<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Cal. t</i>	<i>Crit. t</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	209	47.56	5.92				
				379	2.01	1.96	.04
Female	172	45.03	5.61				

Table 5 shows a significant difference in exposure to violent video based on age ($p = .00$). However, respondents below 15 years old ($\bar{X} = 50.37$) are more exposed to violent video than those 15 years old and above ($\bar{X} = 42.08$).

Table 5

Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test on exposure to violent video based on age

Age	<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Cal. t</i>	<i>Crit. t</i>	<i>p</i>
Below 15yrs old	264	50.37	6.26				
				379	3.12	1.9	.00
15yrs old and above	117	42.08	7.14				

The result in Table 6 reveals that the null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .00$). Hence, there was a significant difference in the aggressive behavior of Public Secondary School Students in Kwara State, Nigeria, based on age. Respondents below 15 years old ($\bar{X} = 48.79$) showed more aggressive behavior than those 15 years old and above ($\bar{X} = 43.06$).

Table 6

Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test on aggressive behavior based on age

Age	<i>N</i>	\bar{X}	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Cal. t</i>	<i>Crit. t</i>	<i>p</i>
Below 15yrs old	264	48.79	7.01				
				379	2.89	1.96	.00
15yrs old and above	117	43.06	5.57				

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed a positive association between exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior among Public Secondary School Students. This result implies that the more students are exposed to violent videos, the possibility of a higher exhibition of aggressive behavior, and vice versa. The contents of violent videos that the students are exposed to could significantly trigger different aggressive behavior as a way of imitating the violent characters in the scene. Thus, exposure to violence on television, cellular phones, movies, video games, or the internet would increase the risk of aggressive behavior,

especially among adolescents exuberance. This finding agrees with the results of a meta-analysis that exposure to violent movies and games is related to increases in aggressive behavior, aggressive affect, aggressive cognition, and psychological arousal (Anderson & Bushman, 2001). Further, this study's findings support the previous study's result that involvement in violent videos increased aggressive behaviors among youth in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (Aleissa et al., 2022).

The result of null hypothesis 2 revealed a significant difference between male and female public secondary school students in the exposure to violent video. Male participants are more exposed to violent videos than their female counterparts. One may attribute the reason to the fact that the masculine nature of male students would predispose them to hard tasks as contained in violent videos, hence the source of their motivation for seeking to watch such movies (Shao & Wang, 2019). On the other hand, females are likely to prefer movies that contain mild activities such as domestic activities and vocational training. The present study's finding negates the previous study, which found no difference between male and female participants' exposure to violent media use (Northup, 2013).

The result of null hypothesis 3 revealed a significant difference between male and female respondents in their aggressive behavior. The male has more aggressive behavior than the female. This result may owe to the fact that male students engage in violent physical activities more than female group probably because of masculinity's strength, which is more domicile in males. This result aligns with an earlier study that reported that males chose more physically aggressive methods than females, though verbal aggression is prominent among them (Rakhmi, 2020). Thus, aggressive behavior could be viewed as a phenomenon typical of male students.

The null hypothesis 4 revealed a significant difference in exposure to violent video based on age. Thus, respondents below age 15 were more exposed to violent videos than counterparts aged 15 and above. One may ascribe the reason to the fact that Public Secondary School Students aged 15 and above are much more likely to be in senior classes, which involves preparation for external examinations that determine the fulfillment of their aspiration in life, such as career since the result of such examinations are used for admission into higher education as well as job placements. Those below 15 years old are likely to still have the luxury of time to engage in violent video since they are only writing school-based examinations. Unlikely Private Secondary School Students who are adequately monitored and taught Public Secondary School Students may not likely be restricted or strictly engaged, promoting students' exposure to various videos (Omorogbe & Iguodala, 2018).

The result of null hypothesis 5 revealed a significant difference in aggressive behavior among Public Secondary School Students based on age. Respondents below 15 years old have more aggressive behavior than counterparts aged 15 years and above. As reflected in this study, where public secondary school students below 15 years old are exposed more to violent video, such conditions may be responsible for their involvement in aggressive behavior more than those of 15 years old and above. This finding suggests that younger students perpetuate aggressive behavior more than older ones. This result supports the findings of a previous study that aggressive behavior is exhibited differently across variables such as gender and age (Rakhmi, 2020).

This study's findings imply that school counselors sensitize public secondary school students to the positive correlation between exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior. When working on solutions to exposure to violent videos and aggressive behavior among students, attention should be placed more on males and students below 15 years. Counselors should collaborate with other agencies to develop regulatory policies on students' access to violent videos. However, this study has several limitations. This study was only concentrated on public secondary school students and left out their counterparts in private schools, thereby limiting the findings to the former. In addition, just a fraction (sample) of the population was used in the study, which could affect the generalization of the findings.

The instrument was developed by the self-developed by the researchers and not adopted nor adapted from existing types.

Conclusion

The study concluded that exposure to violent videos would increase the exhibition of aggressive behavior among students, which portends danger to teaching and learning in schools. Thus, the more students are exposed to violent videos, the higher the tendency for aggressive behavior, and vice versa. In addition, male students and those below 15 years old are likely always to be exposed to violent videos and aggressive behavior, which suggests that more attention is required on these students in relation to the phenomenon.

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Declarations

Author contribution. First author is the main coordinator of the team and originator of the topic and concept, developer of the background to the study, interpretation and discussion of findings as well as funding of publication fees. Second author Participated in the development of the research objectives, question, hypotheses, data analysis as well as funding of publication fees. Third author Participated in data collection, analysis, discussion of findings as well as funding of publication fees.

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