

# ***Minimizing School Violence through Conflicts Resolution Education in Day Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi Town, Nigeria***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims at determining the causes, effects and solutions to school violence through conflicts resolution education in day senior secondary schools in Bauchi town. Survey research design is used for the study while questionnaire is used for data collection. The population of the study consists of all teachers in day senior secondary schools in Bauchi town. The sample of the study was 100 teachers who participated in the study. Simple random sampling was adopted to sample teachers in all the schools. Piloting is carried out in one school. A sample of 10 teachers participated in the pilot study. Test re-test method of reliability was used to ensure the reliability of the instrument. Data obtained were computed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics comprising frequency distribution and percentages were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study reveal among others that use of alcohol, aggressive behaviour, poor academic performance, lack of effective school management, and bullying behaviour were the causes of school violence. Hence, the study among other things recommends that government should introduce conflict resolution education in all senior secondary schools and schools should also re-introduce clubs and societies that will portray good and sound morals among students.*

**Keywords:** *School violence, conflicts resolution education, secondary schools, conflict management*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Violence in the secondary schools and colleges has today become a very serious menace in Nigerian system of education despite the various measures that are being taken to remedy the incidence. In secondary schools, violence has remained a tradition by students despite all effort by the management of the school to curtail/eradicate the act. Students' affairs office and parents' teachers association (PTA) have also been carrying out lectures/mobilization on the dangers of school violence, yet students fall victims of school violence all the times. This could be evident from the school records of students involved in the incidence. Agnich (2010) reports that due to the threat of violence in US, both teachers and students were less eager to go to school; he further reveals that students report that violence lessened the quality of their education. Anderson (1998) puts forward that teachers worldwide report high levels of classroom disruptions due to violence and misbehaviour. Another study carried out by Zeira, Astor and Benbenishty (2004) reveals that teachers in

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Israel report being exposed to great deal of verbal and physical violence and regarded it as serious problem in schools. A study by Chen and Astor (2009) reports that 71.2% of males and 48.5% of females were involved in at least one violent act or the other while in school. A report by UNICEF (2010) on school violence in West and Central Africa reveals that the Ministry of Education of Senegal at a UNESCO Conference in 2007 stated that in West Africa, violence was the primary reason why students abandon school, suggesting that 67% of boys and 57% of girls abandon schools because of violence. In Benin, students from secondary schools identified school drop-out (14.93%) as a direct consequence of school violence. Agnich (2010) reports that in 1996, 60% of students in Ethiopian schools reported that violence had negative impact on teaching and learning process as well as their emotions; and fully 40% of Ethiopian students reported dropping out or repeating classes as a result of violence.

School violence is any activity that can create a disturbance in an educational environment (Branco, 2012). It can also be defined as physical or verbal altercation on the way to school, on the way home from school, or at a school. School violence has occurred at primary schools, secondary schools and even in tertiary institutions. Nigerian schools should be safe havens for teaching and learning free of violence or any action that may affect the smooth running of the school affairs. School violence does not only affect the individuals involved but also disrupts the educational process and affects other students, the school itself and the surrounding community. School violence is a part of the larger societal problem of youths which includes bullying, punching, slapping and using weapons to threaten others in schools. School violence no doubt is a very critical issue for teachers, school heads and parents of the students but it is the other students who get affected by the situation most. The violent students create a very difficult situation for other students. School violence often times reaches a point where the violent students use dangerous weapons such as guns, knives, axe, etc. on fellow students. The use of these weapons creates fear among other students which affect their attendance and academic achievement in schools.

The World Health Organization (1996) cited in report on school-based violence in West and Central Africa defines violence as use of physical force, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation. Considering this definition critically, various categories of violence were identified which include; physical, sexual, psychological and deprivation. Schools are social settings within which the power relationships, domination and discrimination practices of the wider society are reflected (UNICEF, 2010). Violence against students in schools draws from violence in other parts of students lives, in the family, in the community and in society. Students are socialized in different environments ranging from home, school, community and the wider society. They experience various forms of violence in the society including school violence. The violent child harms not only the students and teachers but creates trouble for the school environment. The act of school violence disrupts the learning process and has negative effects on students learning. School violence threatens or negates the

right of students to education. It also prevents students from accessing education, receiving quality education and from being respected and not discriminated against in schools (UNESCO, 2010). Violence in school is a unique public health because it primarily affects children, youths, adults, and the negative consequences undermine the primary purpose of education (Center of Disease Control and Prevention, 2004). Thus, the existence of violence in schools significantly affects teaching and learning. The consequences of school violence are obvious in terms of the bodily injury and death of victimized individuals as well as the mental and emotional harm to victims classmates, families and communities (Agnich, 2010). Victims of school violence exhibit high level of truancy and were more likely to drop out of school and experience difficulty in social and sexual relationship. The purpose of this study therefore is to establish the causes of school violence and identify the possible strategies that could be adopted to minimize the act through conflict resolution education. In the light of the above, this research identifies the following objectives:

- To establish the causes of school violence in secondary schools
- To identify the effects of school violence in secondary schools
- To identify strategies that could be adopted to minimize school violence through conflict resolution education.

As a result of the above, the study formulated the following questions:

- What are the causes of school violence?
- What are the effects of school violence?
- Are there strategies that could be adopted to minimize school violence through conflict resolution education?

The scope of this study focused on the causes, effects and the strategies that could best be adopted to minimize school violence through conflict resolution education in secondary schools. In line with the consideration of imperatives of the feasibility in research procedure, the study sampled Bauchi town day senior secondary schools. One significance of this study is to provide to the policy makers and educational planners, the necessary information required on the importance of adopting conflict resolution education in secondary schools in minimizing school violence. This will enable government to enact laws that will enable the introduction of conflict resolution education in school curriculum. In spite of its limitations, this study would serve as a roadmap to other States of the federation to introduce conflict resolution education in their curriculum.

## **METHOD**

The study adopted a survey research design. The design is suitable for this study because it allows the collection of data which could be used to assess the current practice and condition and make intelligent plan to improve standard or performance. The target population of this study comprises of all the 1000 teachers in Day Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi town. This target population was arrived at by obtaining the list of all the teachers from the Day Senior Secondary Schools within Bauchi town. The choice of the location was due to the fact that cases of school violence were rampant in Day Senior Secondary Schools. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the teachers

for the study. A sample of 10% was sufficient since it is equal to the recommended proportion of 10% of the population (Mugenda, O. and Mugenda, A. 1999). The sample size therefore consists of 100 teachers (participants). The sample size was representative enough since it was equal to recommended proportion (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). For simplicity and ease of eliciting feelings, dispositions, experiences, opinions of the sampled respondents in the study, structured questionnaire was designed for teachers on causes, effects and strategies to adopt to minimize school violence. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher based on the research questions raised. The questionnaire contains 15 questions, which are related to the three research questions. Respondents were required to tick on the response option of Agreed or Disagreed as it applies to them. The instrument was validated by expert in test and measurement. All corrections and suggestions were considered and used in arriving at the final instrument which was used for the study. Test-retest reliability method was adopted to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The procedure for conducting the test-retest was as follows:

- i Copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents.
- ii The answered copies of the questionnaire were scored manually
- iii The same questionnaire was re-administered to the same group of subject after a period of two weeks.
- iv The questionnaire responses was scored manually
- v A comparison between answers obtained in two and four was made.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation formula for test-retest was employed to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish whether the content of the questionnaire was consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument is administered. A correlation coefficient of 0.80 was obtained and considered high enough to judge the reliability of the instrument. The pilot study was carried out in one Day Senior Secondary School. A sample of 10 teachers participated in the pilot study since the respondents in the school have the same characteristics with the actual respondents in the schools. The pilot school however, was not involved in the main study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 reveals that out of the total participants of the study, 96.2% agreed that the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco by students in schools caused serious school violence while only 3.8% of the respondents did not agreed with the statement. Hence, the finding establishes that use of drugs is a cause of school violence. The study also establishes that aggressive behaviour is one of the factors that cause school violence with a mean score of 92.3% while only 7.7% of the respondents did not agreed with the statement. 76.9% of the respondents agreed that being bullied by other students caused school violence while 23.1% did not support the statement. Therefore the findings establish that being bullied by other students caused school violence because most students involved in bullying because they want to take revenge or undue advantage over other students who may not be physically strong or violent as they are. The study further establishes that poor academic performance

of students caused school violence as 70.5% of respondents did not agree with the statement. Lastly, the study establishes that lack of effective school management contributes tremendously to school violence (76.8%) while 23.1% of the participant did not support the assertion. Table 2 reveals that 86.0% of the total participants in the study agreed that school violence disrupts the peaceful atmosphere of the school hence affect students retention. Only 14.0% of the respondents did not agree with the statement. The study further established that school violence affect students academic achievement (97.4%) while only 2.6% did not agree with the statement. In another way round, school violence cause truancy in schools. The table indicated that 84.6% of the participants agreed with the statement while only 15.4% did not support the statement. Further, the study reveals that 88.5% of the respondents agreed that school violence causes the destruction of school property while 11.5% did not support the assertion. It has also been established in the study that 83.3% of participants in the study agreed that school violence ruins community's peaceful atmosphere while only 16.7% did not agree.

Table 3 reveals that 97.4% of the respondents agreed that introduction of conflict resolution education in secondary schools curriculum will significantly help in reducing school violence. The study also reveals that out of the total number of the participants in the study only, 2.6% did not agree with the statement. The table also indicates that training of teachers in conflict management and resolution (91.0%) will be a strategy that helps in reducing school violence while 9.0% did not agree. The finding establishes that 75.6% of the respondents agreed that enhancement of students social and emotional development will help to minimize school violence in schools while 24.4% did not support the statement. Further, the study reveals that 80.8% of the respondents agreed that one of the strategies that could be used to minimize school violence is by way of training of students leaders in conflict management. Only 19.2% did not agree. The result reveals that 83.3% of the respondents agreed that cooperative problem solving will significantly help minimize school violence in secondary schools.

**Table 1:** The causes of school violence in secondary schools

<b>Teachers' perceived causes of school violence</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>
Use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs in school	96.2%	3.8%
Aggressive behaviour	92.3%	7.7%
Being bullied by others	76.9%	23.1%
Poor academic achievement	70.5%	29.5%
Lack of effective school management	76.8%	23.1%

*Source:* Survey, 2014

**Table 2:** The negative effects of school violence

<b>Teachers perceived Effects of school violence</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>
Disrupts school peaceful atmosphere	86.0%	14.0%
Affects students academic achievement	97.4%	2.6%
Causes truancy among students	84.6%	15.4%
Causes destruction of school properties	88.5%	11.5%
Ruins community's peaceful atmosphere	83.3%	16.7%

*Source:* Survey, 2014

**Table 3:** Strategies that could be adopted to minimize school violence through conflict resolutions

<b>Teachers' perceived strategies</b>	<b>Agreed</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>
Introduction of conflict resolution education in secondary schools curriculum	97.4%	2.6%
Training of teachers in conflict management and resolution	91.0%	9.0%
Enhancement of students' social and emotional development	75.6%	24.4%
Training students leaders to become conflict managers	80.8%	19.2%
Cooperative problem-solving	83.3%	16.7%

*Source:* Survey, 2014

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is established that factors such as use of drugs and alcohol, aggressive behaviour, being bullied by other students, poor academic performance and lack of effective school management cause school violence. From the result of the study, it has been revealed that school violence disrupts school peaceful atmosphere, affects students' academic performance, causes truancy among students and causes destruction of school property and ruins community's peaceful atmosphere. The study further identifies some strategies that could be adopted to minimize school violence through conflict resolution education. These strategies include introduction of conflict resolution education in secondary schools curriculum, training of teachers on conflict management, enhancement of students' social and emotional development, training of students to become conflict managers and ensuring cooperative problem solving.

Considering the findings of this study, it is concluded that school violence is caused by numerous factors such as bullying, poor academic performance, ineffective school management, drugs, alcohol etc. Based on the above results, it is recommended that government should ensure the introduction of conflict resolution education in secondary schools curriculum. School authorities should introduce clubs and societies that will be charged with responsibilities of managing conflict among students in schools. Government should train teachers of secondary schools in the area of conflict resolution and management. Schools should strengthen the law that prohibits drugs abuse. Since school violence can dampen a student's prospect or career, the place of counseling in conflict resolution among students should not be taken for granted. Sometimes, teachers quarrel among themselves and in some occasions, engage in physical assault thereby setting the wrong example for the students. Teachers should have that self discipline. Also parents should be cautious of what action they exhibit before their children as they are likely to experiment it on their fellow students in school. The happening in the family represents in microcosm the happenings in the larger society.

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