

Prevalence of Gender-Based Violence and Public Health Issues among Senior Secondary School Students in Lagos East Senatorial District, Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study on Gender-based violence (GBV) and public health issues prevalence among secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District, Lagos, Nigeria employs a socio-ecological approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay of individual, interpersonal, and societal factors in shaping Gender-based violence (GBV) experiences. These insights inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at preventing GBV and public health issues among secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District, Lagos State. Demographic data showed that the overall mean age was 15.4 years, with public school students predominantly aged 15-19 (87.2%) and private school students mostly aged 10-14 (45.5%). Females constituted the majority in public and private schools (64.3% overall). The findings appraise the prevalence of GBV among senior secondary school students in senior secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District Lagos. The findings of this study revealed that psychological violence is prevalent in secondary schools in Lagos, with friends or classmates identified as the primary perpetrators. Additionally, sexual violence is more common in public schools compared to private schools, with similar patterns of perpetration by friends or classmates. Although the overall prevalence of GBV is slightly higher in public schools, the difference is not statistically significant.

Keywords: Adolescents, Gender-Based Violence, public health Issues and senior secondary school students.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) among adolescents is a growing public health concern globally, with the WHO African region reporting a prevalence of 33%. In Nigeria, the prevalence of: Gender-based violence reached 48% in 2021, with Lagos State reporting 3,193 cases in 2020 (UNHCR, 2021). A recent argument on GBV as the most prevalent violation of human rights globally has situated it as a ‘shadow pandemic’ (Center for Global Development, 2020). Similarly, Dlamini asserted that GBV is another pandemic, which exists in all societies at varying degrees of prevalence as well as severity, and which expression is gender inequality and toxic masculinity (Dlamini, 2020). In the new global economy, adolescents have become a central issue for national growth and development. In recent times, there has been a clarion call to invest in the health and well-being of adolescents worldwide. This call could be associated with the growing population, of which a considerable proportion (20%) of them are adolescents globally. In Nigeria, adolescents represent nearly 22% of the population (Federal Ministry of Health, 2021). This age group is associated with physical, social, and psychological changes, which could increase their vulnerability to risky behaviours and cause them to encounter tremendous challenges to their sexual and reproductive health and rights needs (Wado, 2020).

Gender-based violence is directed against a person because of gender. Gender-based violence is considered a critical infringement of victims’ human rights and life-threatening issues, which takes different forms such as sexual violence, physical violence, mental violence, and lots more (UNHCR, 2021). A recent argument on GBV as the most prevalent violation of human rights globally has situated it as a ‘shadow pandemic’ (Dlamini, 2020). Similarly, Dlamini asserted that GBV is another pandemic, which exists in all societies at varying degrees of prevalence as well as severity, and which expression is gender inequality and toxic masculinity. In the new global economy, adolescents have become a central issue for national growth and development. In Nigeria, adolescents represent nearly 22% of the population (Federal Ministry of Health, 2017). This age group is associated with physical, social, and psychological changes, which could increase their vulnerability to risky behaviours and cause them to encounter tremendous challenges to their sexual and reproductive health and rights needs (David et al., 2018).

One of the major challenges of young people is gender-based violence (GBV), which is increasingly becoming a public health issue (Oladebo et al., 2011). Gender-based violence can occur in different forms such as physical violence, sexual violence, or psychological violence. Physical violence is a pattern of physical assaults and threats used to control another person. It includes punching, hitting, choking, biting, and throwing objects at a person, kicking, pushing, and using a weapon such as a gun or a knife (Oladebo et al., 2011). Sexual violence has been defined as any sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances or acts to direct a person’s sexuality, using coercion, forced sex, rape, and threats of harm or physical force by any person regardless of relationship to the victim in any setting.

Psychological violence is any kind of non-physical abuse imposed from one person on another. Victims of psychological violence are subjected to repeated verbal threats, manipulation, intimidation, and isolation that cause them to feel anxiety, fear, self-blame, and worthlessness (Stark, 2015). It was reported that in the pre-COVID-19 era, about 35% of women globally suffered from either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence (Dlamini, 2018). A report showed that before the COVID-19 pandemic, 1 in 3 women globally faced one form of violence or the other, which was mostly inflicted by an intimate partner (Center for Global Development, 2020). World Health Organization indicated that one in four young women between 10-19 years have been victims of one form of violence or the other before they reach their mid-twenties (WHO, 2021). A study conducted in a South African city among grade 8 girls and boys in high schools, revealed a high level of GBV among them. The study showed a significant likelihood of boys reporting all types of GBV experienced compared to girls, excluding the following physical GBV indicators: using a knife or gun during a fight against the opposite sex and beating up someone of the opposite sex (Rasool, 2017).

GBV is reportedly traced to the following factors subsuming gender inequality, harmful norms, and abuse of power (UNHCR, 2021). A study documented that factors associated with the prevalence of GBV mostly in the African context include male children's preference fuelling gender inequality, resulting in low self-esteem among women and giving room for an increasing incidence of violence against; substance abuse; and alcohol intake. However, Chime et al. explored the prevalence and patterns of GBV among survivors in Nigeria, focusing on survivors seeking care at a hospital's GBV unit. While their study differs in scope, it underscores the pervasive nature of GBV across different contexts, aligning with the socio-ecological perspective adopted in the current study (Chime, Obinna and Orji, 2022).

The implications of these findings indicate that peer dynamics and school environments, significantly shape senior secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District's experiences of GBV. Moreover, the disparities between private and public schools underscore the importance of contextual considerations in designing interventions to combat GBV among senior secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District. By comparing and contrasting with previous research, this study contributes to the growing literature on GBV prevention and intervention strategies, emphasizing the necessity for context-specific approaches to tackle this pervasive issue.

2.0 METHOD

2.1 Sampling Site

The study was conducted in Lagos State. The state has three senatorial districts (Lagos Central, Lagos East, and Lagos West). The metropolitan status of Lagos as well as its being

a major commercial hub in Nigeria makes it an ideal location for this study because of its fair representation of different strata of the society.

2.2 Research Plan

A cross-sectional analytical study design centered on senior secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District, Lagos was adopted.

2.3 Study Population

The study population consisted of all senior secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District, Lagos State.

2.4 Sample Size Calculation

The total sample size (N) was 602. To accommodate potential non-response, the study implemented a contingency of 20%. This adjustment involved multiplying 602 by 20%, resulting in 120.4. To obtain the final sample size, 120.4 was added to 602, yielding 722.4, which was rounded to 723. Thus, the final minimum sample size stood at 723.

2.5 Sampling Technique

The study employed a multistage sampling technique to recruit senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria. The sampling process was conducted as follows:

Stage 1: Selection of Senatorial District

One senatorial district, the Lagos East Senatorial District, was randomly selected from the three senatorial districts in Lagos State (Lagos Central, Lagos East, and Lagos West).

Stage 2: Selection of Local Government Area (LGA) and LCDA

Yaba LCDA and the Mainland local government area were randomly selected from the Lagos East Senatorial District.

Stage 3: Selection of Schools

A comprehensive list of all public and private secondary schools in the selected LGA was obtained. The schools were stratified into two groups: public and private schools. Using proportional allocation, nine schools were selected, with four from the public schools and five from the private schools. The selection of schools within each stratum was done using a simple random sampling technique.

Stage 4: Selection of Participants

A systematic random sampling technique was employed to select participants from each school, ensuring a proportional representation based on the school's population size. During the data collection period, a total of 709 senior secondary school students in Lagos East Senatorial District were selected, with 430 from public secondary schools and 279 from private secondary schools.

2.6 Data Collection Method and Instrument

First, community entry was made to the four selected LGAs, and the different heads of schools were met for data collection. The intention of the research was communicated to them to solicit their cooperation and support during the study. Eleven (11) research assistants were engaged for assistance in administering the instruments. This group included five in-school OND students in Community Health, two educators holding BSc degrees in Education, one undergraduate studying medical laboratory science, and three graduates with BSc in Public Health. The eleven research assistants were trained over three days on the content and method of administration of the questionnaire, including the maintenance of ethical standards by the researcher. The researcher and the trained research assistants administered the questionnaire to the participants and ensured a hundred percent retrieval from respondents after filling out the instrument. The data was elicited from in-school adolescents. The data collection mode was cross-sectional.

2.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical approval was sought from the Ethical Review Committee of Lead City University and Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, Health Research Ethics Committee. Approval was obtained from Lagos State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB) and Lagos State Ministry of Health. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Ministry of Education and the principals of selected secondary schools in Lagos State. Informed written consent was sought from participants recruited for the study. However, any participants who were less than 18 years old were given assent forms to be signed by them while their guardians or parents signed the informed consent before they could take part in the study. The researcher ensured that participants' data were processed following the Data Protection Bill 2020 as well as the Nigeria Data Protection Regulations 2019 (NDPR).

2.8 Data Gathering Tool

The research instrument for the study was a semi-structured questionnaire. Concerning the assessment of psychological and sexual violence, the study adapted and modified the instrument used by Walakira et al's baseline study in Uganda (Walakia, 2013). The research instrument consisted of data about participants' socio-ecological information, and GBV prevalence-related information on GBV. In total, the questionnaire consisted of 61 items.

- i. Section A: Socio-ecological factors: This section has 28 items covering individual factors (9 items), family factors (10 items), community factors (7 items), and societal factors (2 items).
- ii. Section B: Prevalence of GBV: This section has 33 items, with the first part focusing on psychological information (16 items) and the second part on sexual information (17 items).

2.9 Analysis of Data

Numbers were used to code each response category, open-ended questions were grouped and coded as appropriate, and frequencies, percentages, and means of variables were generated. Data collected from questionnaires were checked for errors, cleaned, coded, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 28. Data checking and cleaning were carried out daily to ensure that missing items were accounted for and variables not properly entered were corrected. Descriptive statistics (tables, charts, frequencies, and percentages) were used to analyze the data. At the 5% level of significance.

3.0 Results

Table 1: Prevalence of psychological violence-related question items (A)

Variables	Public school (n = 430)		
	Yes	No	No response
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Threaten me with telling my secrets to others	156(36.3)	246(57.2)	28(6.5)
Insults me by saying that I am useless	275(64.0)	133(30.9)	22(5.1)
Insults my family	249(57.9)	160(37.2)	21(4.9)
Lock me in a room, toilet, basement, or a scary place as punishment	88(20.5)	315(73.3)	27(6.3)
Threaten me with hurting me physically or using violence against	143(33.3)	267(62.1)	20(4.7)
Threaten me with abandoning me	125(29.1)	278(64.7)	27(6.3)
Threaten me with hurting someone or something I love	197(45.8)	207(48.1)	26(6.0)
Humiliates me in front of other people	241(56.0)	185(38.4)	24(5.6)
Give me offensive, hurtful nicknames	257(59.8)	150(34.9)	23(5.3)
Does not listen to me when I speak	216(50.2)	190(44.2)	24(5.6)
Reward my aggressive behaviours towards my friends or others	192(44.7)	206(47.9)	32(7.4)
Talks me into doing things that make me feel bad afterwards	188(43.7)	215(50.0)	27(6.3)

Table 1 presents the prevalence of psychological violence among secondary school students in Lagos, Nigeria. In the public school sample, varying proportions of respondents indicated experiencing different forms of psychological violence. Notably, a considerable proportion (64.0%) reported being insulted by being told they were useless, followed by insults directed towards their families (57.9%). Additionally, a significant number of respondents reported being given offensive or hurtful nicknames (59.8%) and being humiliated in front of others (56.0%). Threats of physical harm or violence were also prevalent, with 33.3% reporting threats of physical violence and 29.1% reporting threats of abandonment. Furthermore, a notable proportion (45.8%) reported being threatened with hurting someone or something they love.

Table 2: Prevalence of psychological violence-related question items (B)

Variables	Private School (n = 279)		
	Yes	No	No response
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Threaten me with telling my secrets to others	112(40.1)	156(55.9)	11(3.9)
Insults me by saying that I am useless	169(60.6)	97(34.8)	13(4.7)
Insults my family	154(55.2)	111(39.8)	14(5.0)
Lock me in a room, toilet, basement, or a scary place as punishment	42(15.1)	224(80.3)	13(4.7)
Threaten me with hurting me physically or using violence against	90(32.3)	171(61.3)	18(6.5)
Threaten me with abandoning me	77(27.6)	190(68.1)	12(4.3)
Threaten me with hurting someone or something I love	102(36.6)	162(58.1)	15(5.4)
Humiliates me in front of other people	170(60.9)	97(34.8)	12(4.3)
Give me offensive, hurtful nicknames	137(49.1)	127(45.5)	15(5.4)
Does not listen to me when I speak	130(46.6)	137(49.1)	12(4.3)
Reward my aggressive behaviours towards my friends or others	83(29.7)	177(63.4)	19(6.8)
Talks me into doing things that make me feel bad afterwards	111(39.8)	152(54.5)	16(5.7)

Table 2 illustrates that in private schools, similar patterns of psychological violence were observed, albeit with some variations in prevalence rates. Insults regarding personal uselessness were reported by 60.6% of respondents, while 55.2% reported insults directed at their families. Moreover, a substantial proportion of respondents reported being given offensive nicknames (49.1%) and being humiliated in front of others (60.9%). Threats of physical harm or violence were reported by 32.3% of respondents, while 27.6% reported threats of abandonment. Comparatively, in public schools, a higher proportion of respondents reported being threatened with telling their secrets to others (36.3%) compared to private schools (40.1%). However, private school respondents reported a higher prevalence of being rewarded for aggressive behaviours towards friends or others (29.7%) compared to public schools (44.7%).

Table 3: Prevalence of psychological violence-related question items (C)

Variables	Overall (N =709)		
	Yes	No	No response
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Threaten me with telling my secrets to others	268(37.8)	402(56.7)	39(5.5)
Insults me by saying that I am useless	444(62.6)	230(32.4)	35(4.9)
Insults my family	403(56.8)	271(38.2)	35(4.9)
Lock me in a room, toilet, basement, or a scary place as punishment	130(18.3)	539(76.0)	40(5.6)
Threaten me with hurting me physically or using violence against	233(32.9)	438(61.8)	38(5.4)
Threaten me with abandoning me	202(28.5)	468(66.0)	39(5.5)
Threaten me with hurting someone or something I love	299(42.2)	369(52.0)	41(5.8)
Humiliates me in front of other people	411(58.0)	262(37.0)	36(5.1)
Give me offensive, hurtful nicknames	394(55.6)	277(39.1)	38(5.4)
Does not listen to me when I speak	346(48.8)	327(46.1)	36(5.1)
Reward my aggressive behaviours towards my friends or others	275(38.8)	383(54.0)	51(7.2)
Talks me into doing things that make me feel bad afterwards	299(42.2)	367(51.8)	43(6.1)

Table 3 outlines various question items related to psychological violence, along with the corresponding frequencies and percentages. Among the participants surveyed, a significant proportion reported experiencing psychological violence in various forms. For instance, 37.8% of respondents indicated that they had been threatened with the disclosure of their secrets to others, while 62.6% reported being insulted by being told they were useless. Similarly, 56.8% stated that they had experienced insults directed towards their families.

Regarding more severe forms of psychological violence, 18.3% of respondents reported being locked in a room, toilet, basement, or other scary places as a form of punishment. Furthermore, 32.9% indicated that they had been threatened with physical harm or violence, while 28.5% reported threats of abandonment. Emotional manipulation and humiliation were also prevalent among the surveyed adolescents. For instance, 42.2% stated that they had been threatened with hurting someone or something they love, and 58.0% reported being humiliated in front of others. Additionally, 55.6% indicated that they had been given offensive or hurtful nicknames.

Communication dynamics were also highlighted in the survey results, with 48.8% of respondents reporting that they were not listened to when they spoke. Furthermore, 42.2% stated that they had been talked into doing things that made them feel bad afterwards. The table also highlights behaviours related to aggression and reinforcement of negative actions. For example, 38.8% of respondents reported that their aggressive behaviours towards friends or others were rewarded. Additionally, 42.2% indicated that they had been encouraged to engage in activities that had negative emotional consequences. The findings from Table 4.12 underline the prevalence of psychological violence among secondary school students in Lagos State. These results emphasize the importance of addressing and mitigating such forms of violence to ensure the well-being and mental health of adolescents within educational settings.

Table 4: Prevalence of psychological violence-related question items (D)

	Public school (n = 430)	Private School (n = 279)	Overall (N =709)
Variables	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
The person(s) who did any of these behaviours listed above to you, was it, someone, you knew?			
No	110(25.6)	68(24.4)	178(25.1)
Non	29(6.7)	16(5.7)	45(6.3)
Yes	291(67.7)	195(69.9)	486(68.5)
If you knew the person, how are you related?			
Father	19(4.4)	10(3.6)	29(4.1)
No response	75(17.4)	58(20.8)	133(18.8)
None	20(4.7)	23(8.2)	43(6.1)
Mother	29(6.7)	12(4.3)	41(5.8)
Brother/sister	21(4.9)	6(2.2)	27(3.8)
School teacher	9(2.1)	12(4.3)	21(3.0)
Friends/Classmates	158(36.7)	117(41.9)	275(38.8)

Neighbour	65(15.1)	22(7.9)	87(12.3)
Family relatives	19(4.4)	7(2.5)	26(3.7)
Strangers	2(0.5)	5(1.8)	7(1.0)
Others	13(3.0)	7(2.5)	20(2.8)
Have you ever done any of these behaviours listed, was it someone you knew?			
No	220(51.2)	160(57.3)	380(53.6)
Non	40(9.3)	26(9.3)	66(9.3)
Yes	170(39.5)	93(33.3)	263(37.1)
If you have done such to anyone, how are you related?			
Father	9(2.1)	2(0.7)	11(1.6)
No response	162(37.7)	112(40.1)	274(38.6)
None	51(11.9)	47(16.8)	98(13.8)
Mother	20(4.7)	3(1.1)	23(3.2)
Brother/sister	12(2.8)	5(1.8)	17(2.4)
School teacher	10(2.3)	8(2.9)	18(2.5)
Friends/Classmates	109(25.3)	82(29.4)	191(26.9)
Neighbour	42(9.8)	9(3.2)	51(7.2)
Family relatives	5(1.2)	3(1.1)	8(1.1)
Strangers	1(0.2)	2(0.7)	3(0.4)
Others	9(2.1)	6(2.2)	15(2.1)

Table 4 shows that 68.5% of respondents reported experiencing psychological violence. Among Public school students, 67.7% reported experiencing psychological violence, while 69.9% of private school students reported similar experiences. Regarding familiarity with the perpetrators, most respondents from public and private schools indicated that the individuals who engaged in the listed behaviours were known to them. Specifically, 67.7% of public school students and 69.9% of private school students reported knowing the perpetrators. In terms of the relationship between the respondents and the perpetrators, the data reveal several patterns. Among those who knew the perpetrators, the most frequently cited relationships were friends/classmates, accounting for 38.8% of responses in the overall sample. This was followed by neighbours (12.3%) and family relatives (3.7%). A noteworthy proportion of respondents chose not to specify their relationship with the perpetrator, with 18.8% and 20.8% of respondents from public and private schools respectively opting for "no response."

Regarding the perpetration of psychological violence, 37.1% of respondents overall admitted to engaging in such behaviours. This was slightly higher among public school students (39.5%) compared to private school students (33.3%). Like the victimization data, the majority of perpetrators reported knowing their victims. Among those who admitted to perpetrating psychological violence, friends/classmates were again the most frequently cited category of victims, comprising 26.9% of responses in the overall sample. The data also shed light on the relationship between the perpetrators and their victims. Among those who admitted to perpetrating psychological violence, friends/classmates were the most common victims, accounting for 26.9% of responses in the overall sample. This was followed by

neighbours (7.2%) and family relatives (1.1%). A notable portion of perpetrators did not specify their relationship with the victim, with 38.6% and 40.1% of respondents from public and private schools respectively choosing "no response." The findings from Table 4 underscore the high prevalence of psychological violence among adolescents in public and private secondary schools in Lagos State. The data highlight the significant role of interpersonal relationships, particularly among peers, in victimization and perpetration of psychological violence. Additionally, the high rates of non-response regarding the relationship between victims and perpetrators suggest potential barriers to disclosure and further emphasize the importance of addressing psychological violence in school settings.

Table 5: Prevalence of sexual violence-related question items (A)

Variables	Public school (n = 430) n(%)	Private School (n = 279) n(%)	Overall (N =709) n(%)
Have you already had sexual intercourse?			
No	319(74.2)	239(85.7)	558(78.7)
Non	25(5.8)	22(7.9)	47(6.6)
Yes	86(20.0)	18(6.5)	104(14.7)
If you have had sexual intercourse, at what age did you have your first sexual encounter?			
<15 years	27(6.3)	11(3.9)	37(5.2)
15 years and above	31(7.2)	0(0.0)	32(4.5)
No response	372(86.5)	268(96.1)	640(90.3)
Mean	13.4±3.685	10.3±3.849	12.9±3.858
Was the sexual encounter something you?			
Longed for that time	30(7.0)	6(2.2)	36(5.1)
Did not want but wished you accepted	20(4.7)	9(3.2)	29(4.1)
Were forced to do it against your will	30(7.0)	7(2.5)	37(5.2)
Did not want	17(4.0)	4(1.4)	21(3.0)
Not applicable to me	291(67.7)	228(81.7)	519(73.2)
No response	42(9.8)	25(9.0)	67(9.4)
If forced, how were you forced to indulge in the sexual act?			
Use of physical force	27(6.3)	6(2.2)	33(4.7)
Threat to use a weapon such as a knife	10(2.3)	3(1.1)	13(1.8)
Threat to use a weapon such as a gun	4(0.9)	4(1.4)	8(1.1)
Intimidation or blackmail	12(2.8)	7(2.5)	19(2.7)
Not applicable to me	299(69.5)	233(83.5)	532(75.0)
Others (Not forced; I was confused; Threatened to leak her secret)	4(0.9)	1(0.4)	5(0.7)
No response	74(17.2)	25(9.0)	99(14.0)
Where did the incidence occur?			
Home	60(14.0)	16(5.7)	76(10.7)
School	16(3.7)	6(2.2)	22(3.1)
In a car	10(2.3)	3(1.1)	13(1.8)
Others	31(7.2)	4(1.4)	35(4.9)
No response	211(49.1)	164(58.8)	375(52.9)
Not applicable to me	102(23.7)	86(30.8)	188(26.5)

Table 5 presents the prevalence of sexual violence-related question items among secondary school students in Lagos State. Looking at the first question item, which asks if the respondents have had sexual intercourse, the data shows that a higher percentage of students in private schools (85.7%) answered "No" compared to those in public schools (74.2%). Conversely, a greater percentage of students in public schools (20.0%) reported having had sexual intercourse compared to those in private schools (6.5%). When considering the overall prevalence, 78.7% of students reported not having had sexual intercourse, while 14.7% reported having had sexual intercourse. Moving to question the next item, which asks about the age of first sexual encounter for those who have had sexual intercourse, the data reveals that more students in public schools (7.2%) had their first sexual encounter before the age of 15 compared to those in private schools (3.9%). However, a significant portion of respondents did not respond to this question, particularly in private schools (96.1%). The mean age of first sexual encounter was slightly higher among students in public schools (13.4 years) compared to those in private schools (10.3 years).

The table explores the circumstances surrounding the sexual encounter. Fewer students in private schools (2.2%) reported being forced to engage in sexual activity against their will compared to those in public schools (7.0%). Additionally, a higher percentage of students in public schools (4.7%) reported not wanting the sexual encounter but wished they had accepted it compared to those in private schools (3.2%). Most respondents in public and private schools indicated that the question did not apply to them, with higher proportions in private schools (81.7%) compared to public schools (67.7%). Regarding question item on mode of sexual act, which investigates the methods of coercion used in the sexual act, the data indicates that a greater percentage of students in public schools (6.3%) experienced physical force compared to those in private schools (2.2%). Other methods such as intimidation or blackmail were reported by 2.8% of students in public schools and 2.5% in private schools. The majority of respondents across public and private schools indicated that the question did not apply to them.

Finally, the table examines the location of the sexual incidents. A higher percentage of incidents occurred at home for students in public schools (14.0%) compared to those in private schools (5.7%). However, a significant proportion of respondents did not respond to this question, particularly in public schools (49.1%). A notable proportion of respondents in public and private schools indicated that the question was not applicable to them. The prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) among secondary school students in Lagos State varies across different question items. While certain aspects, such as the incidence of sexual intercourse, show disparities between private and Public school students, other factors like coercion methods and incident locations demonstrate similarities across both school types.

Table 6 Prevalence of sexual violence-related question items (B)

Variables	Public school (n = 430)			Private School (n = 279)		
	Yes	No	No response	Yes	No	No response
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Has anyone ever asked you to have sex with him/her when you were not willing (Whether vaginal or anal)?	122(28.4)	294(68.4)	14(3.3)	41(14.7)	223(79.9)	15(5.4)
Has anyone ever forced you to undress?	64(14.9)	344(80.0)	22(5.1)	11(3.9)	253(90.7)	15(5.4)
Has anyone ever forced you to touch their private parts or be touched on your private parts?	94(21.9)	322(74.9)	14(3.3)	35(12.5)	227(81.4)	17(6.1)
Has anyone ever been forced to kiss you on the mouth?	126(29.3)	287(66.7)	17(4.0)	37(13.3)	233(83.5)	9(3.2)
Has anyone ever been forced to hug you?	167(38.8)	248(57.7)	15(3.5)	73(26.2)	195(69.9)	11(3.9)
Has anyone ever made you watch a sex video or look at sexual pictures in a magazine or computer when you did not want to?	119(27.7)	294(68.4)	17(4.0)	28(10.0)	238(85.3)	13(4.7)
Has anyone ever made you look at their private parts or wanted to look at yours?	84(19.5)	328(76.3)	18(4.2)	39(14.0)	228(81.7)	12(4.3)
Have ever experienced any other sexual act without penetration?	72(16.7)	334(77.7)	24(5.6)	36(12.9)	230(82.4)	13(4.7)

Table 6 shows the prevalence of various forms of sexual violence among secondary school students in Lagos State. In public schools, 28.4% of respondents reported being asked to have sex against their will, while 14.7% of those in private schools reported similar experiences. Regarding being forced to undress, 14.9% of students in public schools and 3.9% in private schools reported such incidents. Additionally, 21.9% of students in public schools and 12.5% in private schools reported being forced to touch or be touched on their private parts. Notably, 29.3% of students in public schools and 13.3% in private schools reported being forced to kiss on the mouth.

Moreover, 38.8% of students in public schools and 26.2% in private schools reported instances of being forced to hug, indicating a substantial prevalence across both types of institutions. Regarding exposure to sexual content against their will, 27.7% of students in public schools and 10.0% in private schools reported being made to watch sex videos or view sexual pictures. Additionally, 19.5% of students in public schools and 14.0% in private schools reported being made to look at private parts or having others want to look at theirs. Furthermore, 16.7% of students in public schools and 12.9% in private schools reported experiencing other sexual acts without penetration. The findings highlight significant levels

of sexual violence experienced by adolescents in private and public secondary schools in Lagos State. These experiences encompass a range of coercive behaviours, including unwanted sexual advances, forced physical contact, and exposure to sexual content, suggesting a pressing need for interventions and support mechanisms to address and mitigate the prevalence of gender-based violence in school settings.

Table 7: Prevalence of sexual violence-related question items (C)

Variables	Overall (N =709)		
	Yes n(%)	No n(%)	No response n(%)
Has anyone ever asked you to have sex with him/her when you were not willing (Whether vaginal or anal)?	163(23.0)	517(72.9)	29(4.1)
Has anyone ever forced you to undress?	75(10.6)	597(84.2)	37(5.2)
Has anyone ever forced you to touch their private parts or be touched on your private parts?	129(18.2)	549(77.4)	31(4.4)
Has anyone ever been forced to kiss you on the mouth?	163(23.0)	520(73.3)	26(3.7)
Has anyone ever been forced to hug you?	240(33.9)	443(62.5)	26(3.7)
Has anyone ever made you watch a sex video or look at sexual pictures in a magazine or computer when you did not want to?	147(20.7)	532(75.0)	39(4.2)
Has anyone ever made you look at their private parts or wanted to look at yours?	123(17.3)	556(78.4)	30(4.2)
Have ever experienced any other sexual act without penetration?	108(15.2)	564(79.5)	37(5.2)

In Table 7, the initial query asked if the respondent had been pressured into engaging in sexual activity against their will, either vaginal or anal. Findings showed that 23.0% of respondents replied affirmatively, 72.9% responded negatively, and 4.1% did not offer a response. Concerning being coerced to undress, 10.6% of respondents answered positively, 84.2% responded negatively, and 5.2% did not provide a response.

When inquired about experiences of unwanted touching on private parts, 18.2% of respondents answered affirmatively, while 77.4% responded negatively, and 4.4% did not provide a response. Regarding instances of being coerced into kissing on the mouth, 23.0% responded positively, 73.3% responded negatively, and 3.7% did not respond. To being compelled to hug someone, 33.9% of respondents answered affirmatively, 62.5% answered negatively, and 3.7% did not respond. When inquired about being forced to watch sexual content against their will, 20.7% answered affirmatively, while 75.0% responded negatively, and 4.2% did not reply. About being coerced to view or show private body parts, 17.3% acknowledged such experiences, whereas 78.4% denied it, with 4.2% choosing not to answer. In response to a question about engaging in non-penetrative sexual activities, 15.2% answered affirmatively, 79.5% answered negatively, and 5.2% did not provide a response.

Table 8: Prevalence of sexual violence-related question items (D)

	Public school (n = 430)	Private School (n = 279)	Overall (N =709)
Variables	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
The person(s) who did any of these acts listed above to you, was it, someone, you knew?			
No	212(49.3)	154(55.2)	236(33.3)
Non	66(15.3)	41(14.7)	366(51.6)
Yes	152(35.3)	84(30.1)	107(15.1)
If you knew the person, how are you related?			
Father	10(2.3)	3(1.1)	13(1.8)
No response	153(35.6)	122(43.7)	275(38.8)
None	66(15.3)	51(18.3)	117(16.5)
Mother	16(3.7)	9(3.2)	25(3.5)
Brother/sister	11(2.6)	6(2.2)	17(2.4)
School teacher	6(1.4)	4(1.4)	10(1.4)
Friends/Classmates	95(22.1)	51(18.3)	146(20.6)
Neighbour	54(12.6)	19(6.8)	73(10.3)
Family relatives	4(0.9)	8(2.9)	12(1.7)
Others	15(3.5)	6(2.2)	21(3.0)
Have you ever done any of these acts listed above, was it someone you knew?			
No	247(57.4)	189(67.7)	436(61.5)
Non	77(17.9)	48(17.2)	125(17.6)
Yes	106(24.7)	42(15.1)	148(20.9)
If you have done such to anyone, how are you related?			
Father	9(2.1)	1(0.4)	10(1.4)
No response	190(44.2)	153(54.8)	343(48.4)
None	88(20.5)	74(26.5)	162(22.8)
Mother	11(2.6)	1(0.4)	12(1.7)
Brother/sister	4(0.9)	8(2.9)	12(1.7)
School teacher	11(2.6)	6(2.2)	17(2.4)
Friends/Classmates	66(15.3)	23(8.2)	89(12.6)
Neighbour	26(8.4)	10(3.6)	46(6.5)
Family relatives	1(0.2)	0(0.0)	1(0.1)
Others	14(3.3)	3(1.1)	17(2.4)

Table 8 displays the prevalence of sexual violence-related question items among students in public and private schools. The table provides detailed insights into various aspects related to sexual violence, including the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, as well as the perpetration of such acts by the respondents themselves. First, concerning the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, it is observed that a significant portion of the respondents, 33.3% overall, reported that the perpetrator was someone they knew.

This finding is consistent across public (49.3%) and private (55.2%) schools. Notably, a higher percentage of respondents from private schools reported knowing the perpetrator compared to those from public schools. When examining the specific relationships between the victim and the perpetrator among those who knew the perpetrator, it is notable that the most reported perpetrators were friends or classmates, with 20.6% of respondents overall identifying them as such. Additionally, a considerable proportion of victims reported that the perpetrator was a neighbour (10.3%) or a family member (1.7%).

Regarding perpetration, 61.5% of respondents overall reported never having committed any of the listed acts of sexual violence. However, a significant proportion (20.9%) acknowledged having engaged in such acts, with 24.7% of respondents from public schools and 15.1% from private schools admitting to it. Among those who admitted to perpetrating sexual violence, a majority (48.4%) chose not to specify the relationship between themselves and the victim. However, for those who did provide information, friends or classmates were the most reported victims (12.6% overall), followed by neighbours (6.5%). Table 4.17 underscores the prevalence of sexual violence among students, with a substantial portion reporting victimization by someone they knew. Moreover, a notable proportion of respondents admitted to perpetrating such acts, with friends or classmates being the most frequently reported victims.

Table 9: Prevalence of GBV

Variables	Public school (n = 430)		Private School (n = 279)		Overall (N =709)	
	Did experience	not Experienced	Did experience	not Experienced	Did experience	not Experienced
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)
Prevalence of Psychology Violence	111(25.8)	319(74.2)	71(25.4)	208(74.6)	182(25.7)	527(74.3)
Prevalence of Sexual Violence	177(41.2)	253(58.8)	151(54.1)	128(45.9)	328(46.3)	381(53.7)
Overall Prevalence of GBV	214(49.8)	216(50.2)	159(57.0)	120(43.0)	373(52.6)	336(47.4)

Table 9 illustrates the prevalence of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) among students, disaggregated by school type (public and private) and overall. The table encompasses the experience and non-experience of psychological violence, sexual violence, and overall GBV, providing a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence rates within the sampled population. Regarding psychological violence, the data reveal that a substantial proportion of students experienced this form of violence, with 74.3% of the overall sample reporting such experiences. Specifically, 74.2% of students from public schools and 74.6% from

private schools reported experiencing psychological violence. Conversely, 25.7% of the overall sample did not report experiencing psychological violence.

Turning to sexual violence, the findings indicate that a significant portion of students reported experiencing this form of GBV, with 53.7% of the overall sample reporting such experiences. Notably, 58.8% of students from public schools and 45.9% from private schools reported experiencing sexual violence. Conversely, 46.3% of the overall sample did not report experiencing sexual violence. Examining the overall prevalence of GBV, which encompasses psychological and sexual violence, the data reveal that more than half of the sampled students, accounting for 52.6% of the overall sample, reported experiencing GBV. Specifically, 50.2% of students from public schools and 43.0% from private schools reported experiencing GBV. Conversely, 47.4% of the overall sample did not report experiencing GBV. Table 4.18 highlights the widespread prevalence of GBV among students, with a considerable portion of the sampled population reporting experiences of psychological and sexual violence.

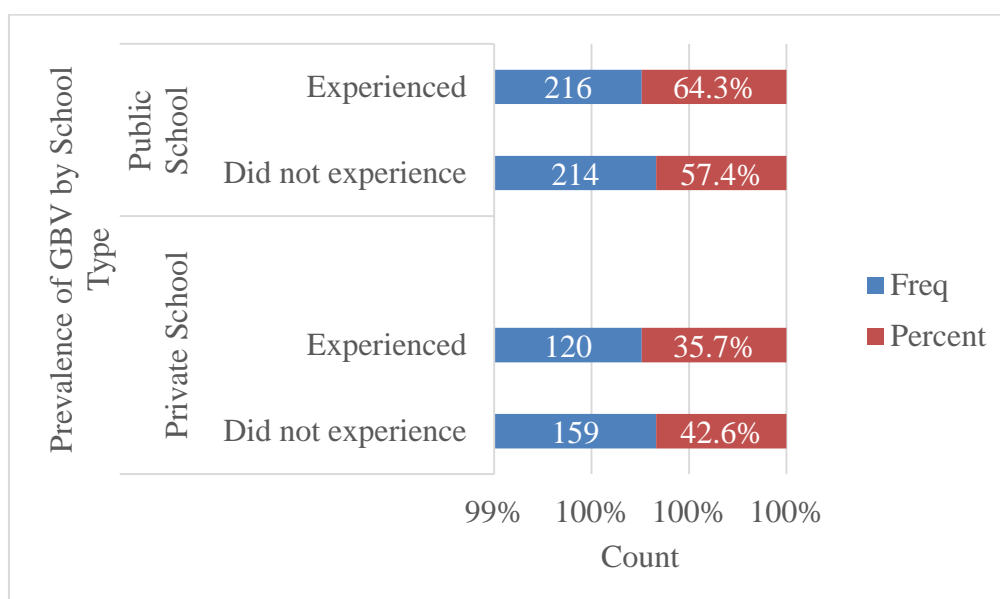


Figure 1: Stacked bar showing the Prevalence of GBV by School type

In the interpretation of Figure 1, the report employed a stacked bar chart to illustrate the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) across different school types. The visual representation was categorized into two distinct categories: "Did not experience" and "Experienced," further stratified by the nature of the educational institution, namely public and private schools. For public schools, the data indicated that 216 respondents, constituting 64.30% of the sample, did not experience GBV incidents. Conversely, 214 respondents, accounting for 57.40%, reported experiencing GBV within the public secondary school setting.

Regarding private schools, the findings revealed that 120 respondents, or 35.70% of the sample, did not encounter GBV situations. However, a substantial proportion of 159 respondents, representing 42.60%, acknowledged experiencing GBV within a private secondary school setting. The stacked bar chart facilitated a clear comparison of the prevalence of GBV between public and private schools. It highlighted the contrasting patterns, wherein public schools exhibited a slightly higher percentage of respondents who did not experience GBV, while private schools demonstrated a higher percentage of respondents who reported experiencing GBV incidents.

In this current study, the second question was determined to appraise the prevalence of GBV among secondary school students in Lagos State. The findings of this study revealed that psychological violence is prevalent in private and public secondary schools in Lagos, with friends or classmates identified as the primary perpetrators. Additionally, sexual violence is more common in public schools compared to private schools, with similar patterns of perpetration by friends or classmates. Although the overall prevalence of GBV is slightly higher in public schools, the difference is not statistically significant.

Comparing these findings with previous studies provides valuable insights into the broader context of GBV among adolescents. For instance, Patel et al. examined the connection between exposure to GBV and depressive symptoms among adolescent girls in India, highlighting the global significance of GBV as a public health issue. While the prevalence rates reported in the current study are higher, similarities exist in terms of the perpetration of GBV by peers (Patel, 2021). Similarly, Mingude and Alemu identified determinants of GBV among high school female students in Ethiopia, emphasizing the importance of socio-demographic factors in shaping GBV experiences. These findings resonate with the current study's observations of varying prevalence rates across different educational settings (Mingude & Dejene, 2021). However, Chime et al. explored the prevalence and patterns of GBV among survivors in Nigeria, focusing on survivors seeking care at a hospital's GBV unit. While their study differs in scope, it underscores the pervasive nature of GBV across different contexts, aligning with the socio-ecological perspective adopted in the current study (Chime, Obinna & Orji, 2021).

The implications of these findings indicate that peer dynamics and school environments, significantly shape adolescents' experiences of GBV. Moreover, the disparities between private and public schools underscore the importance of contextual considerations in designing interventions to combat GBV among adolescents. This study offers valuable insights into GBV prevalence among adolescents in Lagos, Nigeria, employing a socio-ecological approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay of individual, interpersonal, and societal factors in shaping GBV experiences. These insights can inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at preventing GBV and promoting gender equality in educational settings. By comparing and contrasting with previous research, this study contributes to the growing literature on GBV

prevention and intervention strategies, emphasizing the necessity for context-specific approaches to tackle this pervasive issue.

3.3 Study Limitation

The study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the scope of the investigation primarily focused on sexual and psychological violence, neglecting a comprehensive examination of other forms of gender-based violence (GBV). This limitation restricts the generalizability of the findings, as the broader spectrum of GBV remains unexplored. Additionally, the study encountered challenges related to respondent cooperation, including instances of unwillingness or indifference to discuss experiences of GBV. Such reluctance may have introduced bias and affected the accuracy of reported data. Furthermore, as a cross-sectional survey, the study faced an uneven distribution of respondents between public (430) and private (279) schools, potentially impacting the representativeness of the sample. However, efforts were made to mitigate this limitation through rigorous community engagement to secure the cooperation of key stakeholders within the study setting. Despite these limitations, the study still provides valuable insights into the prevalence, determinants, and coping mechanisms of GBV among adolescents in Lagos State, allowing for some level of generalization of findings within the studied population.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Gender-based violence (GBV and public health issues including psychological violence was prevalent in public (74.2%) and private (74.6%) schools, with known perpetrators predominantly friends or classmates (38.8%). Sexual violence prevalence was higher in public (58.8%) than private (45.9%) schools, with friends or classmates being the most common perpetrators (20.6%). Overall GBV prevalence was 52.6%, slightly higher in public (50.2%) than private (43.0%) schools, though not statistically significant ($p=0.0712$). The prevalence of GBV, encompassing psychological and sexual violence, was significant among public and private school students.

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