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Youth Violence among Households in Southwest Nigeria: The Impact of Family Background

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Abstract:
Youth violence represents a complete interplay of negative sociocultural and socioeconomic factors; having its burden approaching a pandemic level worldwide. It is not only interesting but also pathetic to know that adolescents, who are the building blocks of any nation, are strictly affected. The study aimed at determining the influence of family background on youth violence in the environment of study. It was a mixed-method study realized through a questionnaire-based survey and in-depth interviews of members of households in Ado-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State; conducted over a 6-week period. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 and thematic content analysis were used to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The leading family influences cited by the respondents to be responsible for youth violence were lack of parental care or support, 191(47.8%); imitating bad behaviour of parents, 173(43.3%); and negative media influence 168(42.%). The family factor cited to be the least cause of youth violence was poor academic standard of parents, 56(14%). The study revealed that poor parental care with bad parents' behaviour is a key determinant of youth violence. Advocacy should be geared toward the need for parents not only to give children more attention in all ramifications in the course of upbringing but also making themselves a good behavioural template.

Keywords: Youth violence, households, family background, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Youth violence represents a complete interplay of negative sociocultural and socioeconomic factors; having its burden approaching a pandemic level worldwide (Golshiri et al., 2018). It is not only interesting but also pathetic to know that adolescents, who are the building blocks of any nation, are strictly affected. The field of violence perversion is advancing towards making use of concepts like the ecological model to identify and conceptualize risk and protective

factors at various levels of our community systems spanning from individual, family, school, to other communities (Glackin & Gray, 2016). In addition, youths are currently inundated with violence images from a variety of today's social media platforms; persistence access may lead to negative behaviour and influences mediated by desensitization to our normal core values and observational learning of bad social attributes. The determinants of youth violence may manifest within individuals, family/close relations and community or wider society. These include lack of parental control/poor family background, parental substance abuse or criminality, unemployment, bad peer influence, poverty, use of illicit drugs/substance abuse; bad governance and so on (Bushma, Coyne, Anderson, Bjorkqvist, Boxer, Dodge, & Lansford, 2018; Sigel, Mattson & Mercado, 2019).

Family background has been shown to be a strong determinant of youth violence by various studies (DeCamp & Ferguson, 2017; DeCamp, 2019; Bacchini, & Esposito, 2020).   The youth who receive little or no supervision from their parents are prone to engage in aggressive behaviors or criminal activity (Booth & Shaw, 2020). Without adequate adult supervision, they do not have the resources needed to make good choices or to recognize risks. Consequently, these youth tend to associate with the wrong people, take unnecessary risks, and experiment with things an involved parent would never allow. When parents are permissive, their kids often have no motivation to do well in school and may even stop caring about their future, culminating in frustration and violent tendency. Generally, children need fair and firm discipline and consistent interaction with and direction from their parents. When parents take an active role in children's lives, it reduces the likelihood of violence in the children.

Much more rigorous evaluation research is needed in community-based violence prevention programs to determine which strategies are most effective. Recent research is presently focusing on cultural differences and their implications for violence prevention strategies. Researchers have come out with different theories to explain the basis of violence among the youth, but no single theoretical approach appears to explain the difference (Hawkins, 1995). As the burden of poverty in the United States disproportionally affects members of underrepresented minority groups, a large number of studies have focused on social and economic factors to explain the high prevalence of violence among minority youth (Bruce, 2004; Sampson, 1995). Some studies have linked racial disparities in violent outcomes with differences between white and minority economic situations (Thornton, Craft, Dahlberg, Lynch, & Baer, 2000; United Nations Children's Fund, 2014).According to this concept, ethnic minority youth may be more prone to violence because they are more likely to live in abject poverty and have access to fewer resources, as well as face ethnic discrimination, both of which result in increased risk for engaging in violent acts (Kramar, 2000; Sampson, 1995).

In preventing youth violence in a multicultural society, Guerra and Smith (2006) noted that ethnicity and culture could influence the risk for youth violence, stressing the interplay between individual risk factors and environmental conditions associated with ethnicity and culture. Recent studies revealed that culture could be seen as both risk and protective factors for youth violence across different ethnic groups (Mark, 2006; Mirrabal, 2006; Smith, 2006). The main focus of this evolving field is to reduce risk factors and strengthen the cultural protective factors in the lives of at-risk youth. Hudley and Taylor (2007) reported how cultural competence could be adopted into youth violence prevention strategies and provide a guideline on how to come up with an effective program.

Various studies in Nigeria have advanced strategies for youth violence prevention using sociocultural perspectives of the interactional bodies (Abdullahi, Seedat-Kham &Abdulraman, 2016;Inyang& Abraham, 2013). The various measures recommended ranged from youth re-integration process, transparency of decision-maker with right political will, poverty alleviation, slum upgrading process to zero tolerance to any violent act and urban planning for effective policing of the neighbourhood (Abdullahi, Seedat-Kham &Abdulraman, 2016; Ikuteyijo, 2020; Inyang& Abraham, 2013).

The study aimed at determining the influence of family background on youth violence in the environment of study. Various studies have been conducted on youth violence in Nigeria but there is paucity of data on this concept in the environment of study. As anecdotal reports have shown youth violence to be of great burden in the environment, it has become important to carry out the study to be able to add to the existing body of knowledge which will go a long way in helping the community, relevant stakeholders/government to mount the appropriate preventive strategies against youth violence ; using family background approach. For our community to be free of violence, the involvement of parents, relatives and other members of the community in this type of fact-finding research is important; as the community has a lot of influence on the youth development.

2. Method

2.1. Study Design

A mixed mode method was adopted for this study (quantitative and qualitative). The quantitative employed the descriptive survey design while the qualitative made use of deep in-depth interviews. Descriptive survey design was used for this study to obtain appropriate information about the factors influencing youth violence. The quantitative aspect involved the use of a questionnaire-based survey and the qualitative component employed in-depth interviews to elicit factors influencing youth violence from household members (the youth, parents and key informants like community leaders, clergymen, educators and security personnel) of Ado-Ekiti local government area of Ekiti State.

This integration provided a better and more comprehensive understanding of the research problem than using either of the methods. Also, the research questions were viewed from different perspectives to clarify potential contradictions.

2.2. Setting and Samples

The study was carried out among households in Ado-Ekiti local Government Area of Ekiti State, Nigeria. The State comprises 16 local government areas and is subdivided into 3 senatorial districts. The state is largely youth- dominated and is endowed with agricultural resources.

Ado-Ekiti Local Government is the largest of the 16 local governments in the State with a population of 313,690 according to 2006 population census and projected to about 427,700 in 2016, with an area of 6325m^2 and density of 514811/SQKM. It comprises 13wards. The inhabitants are a mixture of artisans, civil servants, farmers, primary, secondary and tertiary schools' students. Subjects for the study included members of the various households in Ado Local Government area; parents/guardians, the youth and other key informants in the household. Ado-Ekiti local government with a population of about 427,700 (2016 census) is expected to have a youth population of about 299,390 (from 70% population projection for youth population).

2.3. Sample Size Determination

Using the Cochran's formula, sample size was calculated using a prevalence of physical fighting with the assumption that half of the youth were involved in physical fighting (maximum variability is 0.5, this implies that p=0.5).

$$\text{Sample size (N)} = \frac{Z^2 PQ}{d^2}$$

Where: level of significance = 1.96
P = prevalence of 50% (0.50)
Q = 1-p= 0.50
d = error margin = 5%

$$N = \frac{1.96 \times 1.96 \times 0.63 \times 0.37}{0.05 \times 0.05} = 384$$

If a 10% non-response rate is added, the sample size will then be
N=384+(0.1 x384)
=422

The qualitative data were obtained within the households of Ado-Ekiti local government area. In order to give robustness to the study, 10% of the population was used for the qualitative in-depth interviews. Forty (40) individuals from different households in Ado local government areas were   interviewed .They were randomly distributed as follows; 20 youths (10 males, 10 females), 10 parents, and 10 key informants (including clergymen, traditional/community leaders, educators and security personnel).

2.4. Sampling Technique

Ado-Ekiti local government has 13 administrative wards with about 72,000 households (NPI, as at 2019). In order to select the households for the study, a multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. The first stage was the purposeful selection of the wards, in which four wards were chosen especially those with high number of households due to their volatility and overcrowding which could make them prone to violence. The second stage involved a simple random selection of households with selection of respondents from each household for sampling. Four hundred and twenty two (422) questionnaires were distributed in each of the four wards and the selected households. For qualitative sampling, ten individuals were randomly interviewed in each of the four wards, comprising 5 youths, 2 parents and 3 key informants.

2.5. Research Instrument

A well-structured questionnaire was employed to gather information from the respondents, using the study objectives and research questions. Also, an in-depth interview question guide was developed. The content of the questionnaire for the quantitative aspect included 3 main sections; section A that focussed on the core sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents and contained age, gender, employment status , religion, educational status, marital status and ethnicity ; section B that focussed on the influence of family background on youth violence .

The qualitative aspect with the in-depth interviews allowed for probing and delving in-depth into major issues under the study. The questions with guide (lead) were used .The questions were written in English but translated into Yoruba language for the benefit of those who could not speak or write the English language .The questions explored the respondents' general knowledge about youth violence, types of violence, perpetrators/ victims of youth violence.

The validity of the instruments was established through face and content validity criteria, the questionnaire was subjected to scrutiny. Also, the items in the questionnaire were presented to experts in test and measurement and in nursing field for necessary corrections to make it appropriate for use. The quantitative questionnaire was pre-tested for further reliability before final administration.

2.6. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher   requested a letter from the School of Nursing, Babcock University introducing her to the appropriate office in the local government for approval. The research assistants primarily employed for the study were drilled on quantitative data collection, in-depth interviews and ethical conduct guiding research. Face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted with each participant using a semi-structured interview schedule, each lasting fifteen minutes per person. An audio recorder and field notes were used to collect the data. The participants consented to tape the interview with audio recorder expressly on the informed consent. Data saturation was a major guide during the process of

the field work. The narratives from the participants were constantly assessed to see that new pieces of information were derived and when there were very frequent repetitions, data saturation was said to be reached and the fieldwork was concluded. Audiotapes were transcribed by the researcher and interview transcripts and summaries were checked with participants to ensure that their narratives were well captured and not distorted in any way.

2.7. Data Analysis

The Quantitative data made use of descriptive and inferential statistics of frequencies, percentages, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 23 (SPSS 23). Multivariate regression model was used for the hypothesis tested/other variables to be able to examine the relationship between the variables in the study.

The qualitative data were analysed using thematic approach technique by compressing inferences, systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages by grouping them into themes and then sorting them out. In doing this, the in- depth interviews recorded into tapes were transcribed from a local language (i.e. Yoruba, Igbo or pidgin) to English language. Responses to each question were summarized and important answers reported verbatim to complement the quantitative findings.

2.8. Research Ethics

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Babcock University Health Research Committee. An introductory letter was collected from School of Nursing Science, Babcock University, Ilisan-Remo, Ogun State, introducing the researcher to the local government authorities for the purpose of getting their permission to carry out the research in the environment.

3. Results

Four hundred (422) questionnaires were administered into the selected wards and households, while 400 were recovered. The quantitative data analysis was based on the 400 (94.79%) questionnaire correctly filled and returned. Forty (40) of the respondents participated in the in-depth interviews; which was subjected to thematic analysis.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the study respondents. Most of the respondents, 281 (70.3%), were below the age of 30years. The larger populations of them were females, 239(59.8%); unemployed 275(68.8%); and of Christian faith, 321(80.3%). While majority of the respondents had tertiary education, 333(83.3%); only 1.5% (6) were not educated. Most of the respondents 346(86.5%) were of Yoruba extraction.

Table 2 displays the influence of family background on youth violence. The leading family influences cited by the respondents to be responsible for youth violence were lack of parental care or support, 191(47.8%); imitating bad behaviour of parents, 173(43.3%); and negative media influence 168(42.%). The family factor cited to be the least cause of youth violence was poor academic standard of parents, 56(14%).

Table 3 shows the distribution of perpetrators or victims of youth violence. Of the respondents, 170(42.5%) knew youths in their households who had perpetrated violence. Almost one-third of that number was accounted for by street fight or bullying, 112(65.9%); with suicide or homicide being the least, 1(0.6%)

Almost one-quarter of the respondents had been victims of youth violence, 95(23.8%); with 42(44.2%) having experienced street fighting and 26(27.4%) having suffered bullying, about thirteen percent (12.8%) of the respondents had had to be interrogated by law enforcement agents.Table 4 shows the research hypothesis tested: 'there is no association between having a youth in the household that had perpetrated violence and the occurrence of youth violence among the respondents'. The regression analysis exploring the association between having a youth in the household that had perpetrated violence and the occurrence of youth violence among the respondents gave a p value < 0.001. Since this association is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		
≤ 19	63	15.8
20 – 29	218	54.5
30 – 39	79	19.8
40 – 49	23	5.8
≥ 50	17	4.3
Total	400	
Gender		
Male	161	40.3
Female	239	59.8
Total	400	
Employment status		
Unemployed	275	68.8
Employed	125	31.3
Total	400	
Religion		
Christianity	321	80.3
Islam	79	19.8
Total	400	
Educational level		

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
No formal	6	1.5
Primary	7	1.8
Secondary	54	13.5
Tertiary	333	83.3
Total	400	
Marital status		
Single	283	70.8
Married	112	28
Divorced	5	1.3
Total	400	
Ethnicity		
Yoruba	346	86.5
Hausa	20	5
Igbo	34	8.5
Total	400	

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

No.	Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
I	Lack of parental care or support	191 (47.8)	193 (48.3)	5 (1.3)	9 (2.3)	2 (0.5)
Ii	Imitating parents' bad behaviours	173 (43.3)	192 (48)	15 (3.8)	17 (4.3)	3 (0.8)
iii	Negative media influence	168 (42)	168 (42)	26 (6.5)	35 (8.8)	3 (0.8)
iv	Failure to teach morals	163 (40.8)	189 (47.3)	21 (5.3)	25 (6.3)	2 (0.5)
V	Poor family functioning	145 (36.3)	218 (54.5)	14 (3.5)	18 (4.5)	5 (1.3)
vi	Divorce	140 (35)	208 (52)	14 (3.5)	36 (9)	2 (0.5)
vii	Poor upbringing or over-pampering	135 (33.8)	214 (53.5)	19 (4.8)	27 (6.8)	5 (1.3)
viii	Violent traits can be inherited	131 (32.8)	177 (44.3)	33 (8.3)	51 (12.8)	8 (2)
ix	Any form of discrimination	111 (27.8)	198 (49.5)	50 (12.5)	36 (9)	5 (1.3)
X	Parent's poor academic standards	56 (14)	157 (39.3)	35 (8.8)	127 (31.8)	25 (6.3)

Table 2: Influence of Family Background on Youth Violence

	Frequency	Percentage
Violence caused by any youth in your household?		
Yes	170	42.5
No	230	57.5
If YES, which form of violence? (n = 170)		
Street fighting	89	52.4
Bullying	23	13.5
Sexual assault	15	8.8
Media / cybercrime	10	5.9
Suicide / homicide	1	0.6
Robbery	13	7.6
Electoral violence	5	2.9
Kidnapping	11	6.5
Rioting	3	1.8
Have you been a victim of youth violence?		
Yes	95	23.8
No	305	76.3
If YES, which form of violence? (n = 95)		
Street fighting	42	44.2
Bullying	26	27.4
Sexual assault	13	13.7
Media/cybercrime	4	4.2
Suicidal ideation	3	3.2
Others	7	7.4
Have you been interrogated by the law enforcement agency?		
Yes	51	12.8
No	349	87.3

Table 3: Distribution of Perpetrators or Victims of Youth Violence

Youth perpetrator	Youth Violence		Crude odds ratio (95% confidence interval)	p-value
	Yes	No		
	n (%)	n (%)		
Yes	65 (38.2)	105 (61.8)	0.242 (0.148 – 0.397)	<0.001*
No	30 (13)	200 (87)		
*significant at p < 0.05				

Table 4: Research Hypothesis: There Is No Significant Relationship between Having a Youth in the Household That Had Perpetrated Violence and the Occurrence of Youth Violence among the Respondents

4. Discussion

The leading family influences on youth violence cited were lack of parental care (47.8%) and imitation of bad behaviour of parents (43.3%); these findings are in line with the findings of Bushman et al and Sigel et al. Most of the respondents, in the in-depth interviews, also stressed the strong relationship between family background and youth violence. A work by Steinberg (2000) gave poor family relationship as a very strong predictor of mental health problem among children and adolescents, and stressing further that children with mental health challenges are prone to developing various forms of violent behaviour. Studies have also shown parents' positive involvement in their children's lives results in bringing up children with agreeable psychosocial status devoid of violent behaviour. Most of the respondents believed that the causes of youth violence are complex and are difficult to define at times and these factors interact with one another to precipitate youth violence. Notable among this is poor parental care; most parents are weak in correcting their children and that some of these parents even worship some of their children like gods.

'A common cause of youth violence is failure of father or mother to correct a derailing child early in life, the child now grows up with all these behavioural defects.' (Male, 64years, retired headmaster).

'Some parents are bad eggs, their behaviour is horrible; so children copy these behaviour helplessly; they grow wild'. (Female, 44years, law enforcement agent).

It is interesting to find out that some of the respondents agreed that violence in youth could be genetic or run in the family and that this variant may not have a solution.

'I have seen some families in which violence runs from generation to generation; the forefathers were thieves; and that all their children were hardened criminals; nobody could help them! How do we explain this or what do we do to this?' (Male, 70years, community leaders).

Negative media influence was also ranking high in the result. This is in agreement with similar studies that have implicated internet/media influence in youth violence (Aborisade & Adedayo, 2018; Van de Weijer, Leu & Bernasco, 2018).Studies in Nigeria have shown that, considering the length exposure, psychological challenges such as traumatic stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, antisocial behaviours and academic difficulties may ensue among adolescents who consume so much of violent media contents. (Eseadi, 2016; Bala et al, 2016; Nwgiuba et al, 2019). Aborisade and Adedayo (2018) argued that young people's exposure to social media violence played an important role in the aetiology of violent behaviour in Nigeria and recommended more sustained research in the area of media and youth violence. Most respondents in in-depth interviews stressed the influence of parents, media/internet in youth violence. Poor academic standard of parents was shown to be the least factor influencing youth violence; this is not surprising as none of the available similar recent studies gave poor academic standard of parents as a high-ranking factor influencing youth violence.

In this study, there was a general consensus that all age groups are involved in violence and that violence is however, perpetrated most by the youth. This finding is in consonant with the findings of Okey-Orji and Asogwa (2020)

'Violence is not limited to the youth alone, I know of a 70-year-old man that sexually violated a 15-year-old school girl, having deceived her that he would sponsor her school education.' (Male, 60year, educator).

'Most times the youth are perpetrators of violence because they are bold, agile and energetic to carry out any act; that is why most politicians prefer to use these youths for their evil operations.' (Female, 42years, law enforcement agent). This study is strengthened by the fact that it would be the first work in the environment of study adopting a mixed method approach to explore the area of youth violence and would also be part of the few available data on youth violence in southwestern Nigeria. A major limitation encountered during the course of the study was the difficulty encountered in getting questionnaire- based and deep in-depth interview information on youth violence probably for fear of unknown, possible police arrest, inversion of privacy and so on. In addition, as it was a self-sponsored research conducted on just a fraction of Ekiti State, interpretation of the result with a view to generalizing it should be done with caution; a larger study on youth violence in the state may, therefore, produce a new more objective and a new set of findings.

5. Conclusion

The study revealed that poor parental care with bad parents' behaviour is a key determinant of youth violence. There should be strict monitoring of children in the area of media/internet activities; with a viewing to preventing them from watching or associating with activities that bring about moral corruption. Advocacy should be geared toward the need for parents not only to give children more attention in all ramifications in the course of upbringing but also making themselves a good behavioural template.

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