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**Aggression And Violence As Correlates Of Adolescents Social Competence In Secondary Schools In Ogoja Educational Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria**

By

Florence A. Undiyaundeye Ph.D  
University of Calabar , Calabar  
[undiyaundeyeflorence@gmail.com](mailto:undiyaundeyeflorence@gmail.com)  
ORCID ID 0000 0002 6612 6488

Julius A Basake Ph.D  
R C M Primary School Bayasung  
[alochere77@gmail.com](mailto:alochere77@gmail.com)  
ORCID ID 0000 0001 9465 9022

Abanbeshie, Jeremiah A.  
Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies  
Email: [jerryabambeshie@gmail.com](mailto:jerryabambeshie@gmail.com)  
ORCHID – 0000 – 0002 – 8301 - 6384

**Abstract**

The study investigated the relationship between aggression and violence and secondary school adolescents' social competence. The research design for this study was a correlational survey research design. The study was carried out in Ogoja education zone of Cross River -State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of all the SS2 respondents. The sample for this study was 240 SS2 students. Three instruments used for the study were aggression Rating Scale (ARS), Violence Rating Scale (VRS) and Social Competence Rating scale (SCRS). The instruments were face validated by three experts. The research questions were answered using Pearson product moment correlation Analysis while regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study among others showed that there was a significant relationship between aggression and adolescents' social competence. This implies that aggression plays a vital role in predicting adolescents' social competence. It was also found that there was a significant relationship between violence and adolescents' social competence. This implies that violence is a significant predictor of adolescents' social competence. The results of the study also showed that the adolescents' social competence is statistically predicted by aggression and violence. The implications of the above findings were examined and it was recommended among other things that tteaching of skills-based health education can impact vital aggression and violence prevention skills such as conflict resolution skills, and social skills to students.

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Aggression Violence, Adolescents and Social Competence Introduction

**Aggression And Violence As Correlates Of Adolescents Social Competence In Secondary Schools In Ogoja Educational Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria**

By

Florence A. Undiyaundeye, Julius A Basake and Abanbeshie, Jeremiah A

**Introduction**

Aggression and violence behaviours among secondary school adolescents in recent times is a major concern to the teachers, parents, psychologists, counsellors and all others interested with the social, psychological and academic success of school adolescents. Adolescence is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood starting from approximately 10-12 years old, up to 18-21 years old (Sandrock, 2007). Sandrock went on to say that the transition period is characterized by rapid biological, physical, emotional and cognitive change that take place at this time. Biologically, it begins with the onset of puberty. This is the time of life during which the reproductive organ become capable of functioning. Physically, it is characterized with a growth spurt. The individual at this stage experiences a rapid increase in height. Cognitively, the stage is characterized by the increase in critical thinking, reasoning ability and the way the adolescent perceives the social environment. Emotionally, the stage is fraught with affection, aggression and fear. This could be as a result of the changes that take place in the body (Sandrock, 2007).

Adolescence as defined by Rideout, Mellisa, Nilson, Seeta and Betsy, (2013) is a time of life that is both exhilarating and daunting. It can be fraught with excitement and disappointment, self-confidence and insecurity that can directly result in aggressive and violent behaviours.

Aggression and violence are terms that are often used interchangeable, however, very destruct characteristics exist. Aggression is seen as an emotion that tends to hurt, harm or destroy something or someone. In case of persons, the intention of harm can be physical or psychological (Roland and Idosoe, 2001).

Violence is an extreme form of aggression that involve serious bodily injury or death (Cote, Vaillancourt, Barker, Nagin and Tremblay, 2007). Aggression and violence take various forms, it has been broadly classified into physical and psychological (Berger, 2007). Specific types or forms of aggression and violence that have been recognized in literature include verbal abuse, such as calling names, racial slurs, and cursing. Social violence, such as isolating a student or a group of students, indirect violence and aggression, including media-related victimization (e.g showing private pictures over the internet and spreading rumours through cell phones (cyber-bullying); physical assault, both moderate physical aggression and violence, such as pushing and shoving, and more severe types of physical aggression and violence such as serious beating (Hanish, Kochendderfer-ladd, Fabes, Martin & Denning, 2014).

Cote, Vaillancourt, Barker, Nagin and Tremblay, (2007) observed that highly aggressive students tend to be rejected by peers and do poorly in social relationship (social competence) and academic performance in school. Cote, Vaillancourt, Barker, Nagin & Tremblay, (2007) went on to say that even in less extreme cases, aggressive violent students often grow up to be aggressive adults who have trouble getting along with others in both the workplace and the world at large (Berger, 2007). This could be the major cause of the recent high rate of aggressive and violent

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behaviours in Nigeria and world at large such as kidnapping, banditry, destruction of government properties as in the case of unknown gun men, destruction of school properties, raping and killings and the more recent sit- at- home enforcers that burnt teachers motorcycles, suspended and forced the students of comprehensive secondary school, Nkume in Njaba Local Government Area of Cross River state, to stop the English Examination for the WAEC on Monday, September 13, 2021. Other widely publicised incidents of aggression and violence include Columbine massacre in 1999, in which 12 students were killed, the red lake, Minnesota, tragedy in 2005 that resulted in the death of 5 students and among others (Pellegrino, 2010). It is not surprised that all these unwholesome behaviours affect teaching and learning and students' academic achievements in school. This is because learning and development suffer whenever students and teachers do not feel safe in school.

Several theories of aggression and violence explain causes of aggressive and violent behaviours. Some of them are the drive motivational theory, evolution theory and social learning theory (Uda, 2017). The drive motivational theory holds that aggression and violence is an impulse created by an innate need which is rooted in accumulated frustrating experiences. The frustrating experience induce anger which leads to ones readiness to respond aggressively or violently; the evolution theory by Charles Darwin holds that aggression and violence behavior results from the adaptive behaviours which helps the individuals to survive as they interact in the society, the social learning theory propounded by Bandura holds that aggressive and violent behaviours are acquired through ones interaction with others and by observing other people's behaviours (Bandura, 2001). The causes of aggressive behaviours are multidimensional ranging from exposure to social media, socio-economic pressure, biological factors (brain-dysfunction, birth complications, nutrition deficiency and genetics (Mgboro, Otubo & Uda, 2019).

However, Cote *et al.*, (2007) identified home environment as the primary cause of aggression and violence. Parents are often authoritarian, punitive, and inconsistent and they commonly use physical punishers, such as slapping, hitting, and spanking for unacceptable behavior so, aggressive and violent behavior. The family, being the first agent of socialization, can impact on a child both negatively and positively. One negative impact is the child being socialised to aggressive behaviours and tendencies. Research shows that aggression in adolescents is as a result of little identification of boys with their fathers, often seen in single parent 'mother headed' families where there is no father figure and a lack of father-son bonding (Coomarsingh, 2011; Schwartz, 2014). This is seen as well in children who grow up in homes where they witness conflicts between both parents and the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles employed.

Parents who are not assertive enough or who use permissive parenting styles and parents who are very assertive and rigid, or who use authoritarian parenting styles in the rearing of their children are more likely to raise aggressive adolescents than authoritative parents (Archer, 2013; Megargee & Hokanson, 2007, Storr & Lane, 2007). Increased aggression in children has been seen in children who experience lack of love from caregivers and other significant persons with whom they come in contact (Montagu, 2016). Furthermore, an only child without siblings, playmates and other peers or relatives may be more susceptible to developing aggressive behaviours (Storr & Lane, 2007). The display of aggressive behaviours in adolescents is

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associated with their environment, socialization, gender, physiological development and their frustration level.

The environment, which is the surroundings and conditions in which adolescents live, plays a significant role in the development of aggression in adolescents. They learn new behaviour by observation, models, reinforcements and punishment. These behaviours that are learnt contribute significantly to the development of aggressive or non-aggressive and violence or non-violence adolescents (Bandura, 1965). This implies that adolescents exposure to aggressive or non-aggressive behaviours could be determined by the individuals social skill (competence).

Social competence according to Rubin and Rose-Krasnor (2001) is an adaptive behaviour and broadly consists of possessing social skills, being cooperative, adapting to change and difficulties, and possessing leadership skills. In early research it was thought that aggressive behaviour and social skills were at opposite ends of a competence continuum, with aggressive and violent behaviour representing impairments in social information processing and possessing social skills indicating higher levels of social competence (Hawley, Little, & Pasupathi, 2002). Crick and Dodge (2014) proposed that behaviourally aggressive children had lower levels of social competence because they lack the social cognitive capacities of their nonaggressive peers. Using a model of social information processing, which focused on children's cognitions when navigating social situations, Crick and Dodge (2014) suggested that aggression and violence results from deficits in understanding and responding to social cues. Proponents of this view suggest that aggressive and violent behaviour is indicative of atypical encoding of social cues in addition to deficits in social skills for responding to conflict.

Over the past decade, a number of studies, linking behavioral indicators and interpersonal challenges, have reported an inverse relation between violence or behavioural problems and social competence in children; that is, high levels of problems(violence) seem to associate with low levels of social competence, or vice versa (Montroy, Bowles, Skibbe, & Foster, 2014). Findings suggest that poor social competence, which often include difficulties with social information processing, problems with adapting to a situation, and rejection by friends, may contribute to the development and maintenance of aggressive and violent behaviour problems (Coie & Dodge; Loeber & Ferrington, 2001). Apparently, not all children who show poor social competence exhibit behavioural problems (aggression and violence), and not all children who display these problems are socially inept. It is of great interest to understand the strength and nature of this correlation to reveal how these concepts are connected, in order to develop effective early intervention programs for children with aggressive and violent behaviour problems and accompanying impairment in social functioning.

This implies that aggressive and violent behaviours reflect poor social skills. This means that aggressive and violent behaviours could be determined by the individual's social skills (competence). In the light of the above, this study is set out to investigate the relationship between aggression and violence as a correlate of adolescent's social competence in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Social interaction has been effective not only on improving one's relationship with others, but also reduces aggressive and violent behaviours among school adolescents. It is worthy to note that in some schools today, there have been cases of bullying, destruction of school

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properties, fighting of teachers by students, vocalization, abnormal health conditions and other forms of anti-social behaviours. This is believed to be exhibited by socially withdrawn individuals. Studies have revealed that social incompetence may reflect underlying difficulties of a social, academic, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural nature.

Regrettably, despite efforts by schools, counsellors, psychologists, parents and guardians to address these anti-social behavioural problems emanating from socially incompetent adolescents, the menace still perpetuates the system.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of this study, therefore, is to determine the relationship between aggression and violence in the home and social competence of secondary school adolescents in Ogoja education Zone, Cross River State.

### **Research questions**

1. What is the relationship between aggression and adolescents' social competence?
2. What is the relationship between violence and adolescents' social competence?
3. To what extent does aggression and violence jointly predict adolescents' social competence?

### **Hypotheses**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between aggression and adolescents' social competence

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between violence and adolescents' social competence

H0<sub>3</sub>: Aggression and violence do not significantly predict adolescents' social competence

### **Literature Review**

#### **Methods**

The population of the study comprised all the senior secondary school class two (SS2) students in Ogoja L.G.A. of Cross River State. Simple random sampling of balloting was used to select a sample of 240 respondents in Ogoja L.G.A. of Ogoja Education Zone, Cross River State. The researcher purposively sampled Ogoja L.G.A in Ogoja Education, using purpose sampling technique, the researcher drew two schools with the highest number of aggressive and violent behaviour.

Three instruments were used for data collection. Schutz (1967) Social Competence Rating Scale (SCRS) was adapted, Buss and Perry (1992) aggression questionnaire (ARS), and Bosiwortt and Espelage, (1995) Violence Rating Scale (VRS).

The instruments were face validated by three experts, two from Educational Psychology Unit of Education Foundations Department and Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Faculty of Education, University Calabar. Reliability was established using the Cronbach Alpha Statistics with reliability co-efficient of 0.82, for Social Competence Rating Scale (SCRS) 0.88 for Aggression Rating Scale (ARS) and 0.78 for Violence Rating Scale. These results indicated that the various instruments were reliable to be used for the study.



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The researcher with the help of three research assistants administered copies of the questionnaire to the respondents. The data generated were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics while multiple regression was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

The research design for this study is a correlational research design. Nworgu (2016) describes correlational design as one which seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables or phenomena being investigated.

### **Presentation of Results**

This section presents the results of data analysis based on data collected for the study. The presentation follows the sequence of the research questions and the null hypotheses that guided the study.

**Research Question One:** What is the relationship between aggression and adolescents’ social competence?

**Table 1:** Relationship between Aggression and Adolescents’ Social Competence

<b>Variables</b>	<b><math>\bar{X}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
Aggression	30.69	9.76	240	0.35	0.12
Social Competence	38.30	15.50			

**KEY:** N = Number of respondents, R = Correlation coefficient, R<sup>2</sup> = Coefficient of determination  
Source: Field Data 2022

Results in Table 1 shows the relationship between aggression and adolescents’ social competence. The results indicates that the correlation coefficient (R) obtained between aggression and adolescents’ social competence was 0.35. This shows that there is a moderate and positive correlation between aggression and adolescents’ social competence. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.35 was 0.12. This coefficient of determination explains that 12% of adolescents’ social competence is predicted by their aggression. This implies that 88% of adolescents’ social competence is predicted by other variables other than aggression. To check whether aggression is a significant predictor of adolescents’ social competence, see hypothesis one.

### **Hypothesis One**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between aggression and adolescents’ social competence

Table 2: Regression ANOVA test of Significant Relationship between Aggression and Adolescents’ Social Competence

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Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Dec.
1	Regression	2707.277	1	2707.277	32.099	0.00	S
	Residual	20073.519	238	84.343			
	Total	22780.796	239				

a. Dependent Variable: Social Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Aggression

Source: Field Data 2022

Results in Table 2 shows that an f-ratio of ( $F(1, 239) = 32.099, p = 0.00$ ) was obtained for the significant relationship between aggression and adolescents’ social competence. Since the associated probability ( $p$ ) value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance at which the result is being tested, the null hypothesis one ( $H_{01}$ ) is therefore rejected. Hence, inference drawn is that the relationship between aggression and adolescents’ social competence is statistically significant. This implies that aggression plays a vital role in predicting adolescents’ social competence.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between violence and adolescents’ social competence?

Table 3: Relationship between Violence and Adolescents’ Social Competence

Variables	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	R	$R^2$
Violence	32.72	11.33	240	0.64	0.41
Social Competence	38.30	15.50			

**KEY:** N = Number of respondents, R = Correlation coefficient,  $R^2$  = Coefficient of determination  
Source: Field Data 2022

Results in Table 3 shows the relationship between violence and adolescents’ social competence. The result indicates that the correlation coefficient (R) obtained between violence and adolescents’ social competence was 0.65. This shows that there is a moderate and positive correlation between violence and adolescents’ social competence. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.64 was 0.41. This coefficient of determination explains that 41% of adolescents’ social competence is predicted by their violence. This implies that 59% of adolescents’ social competence is predicted by other variables other than violence. To check whether violence is a significant predictor of adolescents’ social competence, see hypothesis two.

**Hypothesis two**

$H_{02}$ : There is no significant relationship between violence and adolescents’ social competence

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Table 4: Regression ANOVA test of Significant Relationship between Violence and Adolescents’ Social Competence

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9539.706	1	9539.706	171.470	0.00
	Residual	13241.090	238	55.635		
	Total	22780.796	239			

a. Dependent Variable: Social Competence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Violence

Source: Field Data 2022

Results in Table 4 shows that an f-ratio of ( $F(1, 239) = 171.470, p = 0.00$ ) was obtained for the significant relationship between violence and adolescents’ social competence. Since the associated probability ( $p$ ) value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance at which the result is being tested, the null hypothesis two ( $H_{02}$ ) is therefore rejected. Hence, inference drawn is that the relationship between violence and adolescents’ social competence is statistically significant. This implies that violence is a significant predictor of adolescents’ social competence.

**Research question three:** To what extent does aggression and violence jointly predict adolescents’ social competence?

Table 5: Model Summary of the Joint prediction of Adolescents’ Social Competence by Aggression and Violence

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1				
1	0.65	0.42	0.42	7.4307

$R$  = Correlation coefficient,  $R^2$  = Coefficient of determination

Source: Field Data 2022

Result in Table 5 shows the model summary of the joint prediction of adolescents’ social competence by aggression and violence. The result indicates that the correlation coefficient ( $R$ ) obtained was 0.65. This shows that aggression and violence moderately predict adolescents’ social competence jointly. The coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.65 was 0.42. This coefficient of determination explains that 42% of adolescents’ social competence is predicted by aggression and violence jointly.



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### **Hypothesis Three**

H0<sub>3</sub>: Aggression and violence do not significantly predict adolescents’ social competence

Table 6: Regression ANOVA test of the Joint Prediction of Adolescents’ Social Competence by Aggression and Violence

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	9694.677	2	4847.339	87.789	0.00
Residual	13086.118	237	55.216		
Total	22780.796	239			

- a. Dependent Variable: Social Competence
  - b. Predictors: (Constant), Violence, Aggression
- Source: Field Data 2022

Result in Table 6 shows that an f-ratio of ( $F(1, 239) = 87.789, p = 0.00$ ) was obtained for the joint prediction of adolescents’ social competence by aggression and violence. Since the associated probability ( $p$ ) value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance at which the result is being tested, the null hypothesis three (H0<sub>3</sub>) is therefore rejected. Hence, inference drawn is that the joint prediction of adolescents’ social competence by aggression and violence is statistically significant.

### **Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

The results of the study as presented in Table 1 showed the correlation aggression and social competence of adolescent students in secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The result of the study showed that the correlation coefficient (R) obtained between aggression and adolescents’ social competence was 0.35. This shows that there is a moderate and positive correlation between aggression and adolescents’ social competence. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.35 was 0.12. This coefficient of determination explains that 12% of adolescents’ social competence is predicted by their aggression. This implies that 88% of adolescents’ social competence is predicted by other variables other than aggression. The result from the test of hypothesis one revealed that there was a significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between aggression and adolescents’ social competence. This implies that aggression plays a vital role in predicting adolescents’ social competence.

The finding of the study is consistent with Crick and Dodge (2014) who proposed that behaviorally aggressive children had lower levels of social competence because they lack the social cognitive capacities of their nonaggressive peers. The result of the study as presented in table 2 showed the relationship between violence and adolescents’ social competence in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The results indicate that the correlation coefficient (R) obtained between violence and adolescents’ social competence was 0.65. This shows that there is a moderate and positive correlation between violence and adolescents’ social competence. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.64

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was 0.41. This coefficient of determination explains that 41% of adolescents' social competence is predicted by their violence. This implies that 59% of adolescents' social competence is predicted by other variables other than violence. The result from the test of hypothesis two revealed that there was a significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between violence and adolescents' social competence. This implies that violence is a significant predictor of adolescents' social competence. The finding is in tandem with Montroy, Bowles, Skibbe, and Foster (2014) who reported that there is an inverse relation between violence or behavioural problems and social competence in children; that is, high levels of problems (violence) seem to associate with low levels of social competence, or vice versa.

Result in table 3 shows the joint prediction of adolescents' social competence by aggression and violence. The result indicates that the correlation coefficient (R) obtained was 0.65. This shows that aggression and violence moderately predict adolescents' social competence jointly. The coefficient of determination associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.65 was 0.42. This coefficient of determination explains that 42% of adolescents' social competence is predicted by aggression and violence jointly. The result from the test of hypothesis three revealed that the joint prediction of adolescents' social competence by aggression and violence is statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The finding of the study is consistent with Crick and Dodge (2014) who suggested that aggression and violence result from deficits in understanding and responding to social cues. Proponents of this view suggest that aggressive and violent behavior are indicative of atypical encoding of social cues in addition to deficits in social skills for responding to conflict.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings and discussion of the study, the conclusion made was that: aggression and violence significantly predict the school adolescents social competence. This implies that there is an inverse relationship between aggression and violent behaviors and adolescents social competence. That is to say that high levels of aggression and violence is associated with low levels of social competence, or vice versa.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Proactive measures should be taken in the development of pertinent school policies, such as the inclusion of aggression and violence prevention in schools curricula and employment of counsellors and/or psychologist in schools for behaviour modification.
2. Teaching of skills-based health education can impact vital aggression and violence prevention skills such as conflict resolution skills, and social skills to students.
3. Government at all levels, through relevant stakeholders like health and education officials should embark on public enlightenment or education on the deleterious effects of aggression and violence.

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