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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR AND READING ACHIEVEMENT AMONG STUDENTS WITH READING DISABILITIES IN IBADAN, OYO STATE

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Abstract

*This study investigated the relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement of students with reading disabilities in Ibadan, using the descriptive survey design. Two hundred and eighty-two (282) students with reading disabilities from seven secondary schools were randomly selected in four local government areas in Ibadan. The study used an adapted version of the Learning Disabilities Screening Inventory by Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (LDAO, $r=0.63$), the Reading Disabilities Screening Test (RDST, $r=0.70$), the Students' Test of Reading (STR, $r=0.72$), and the Beliefs about Aggression and Alternatives (BAA, $r=0.72$). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer one research question generated, while *t*-test statistics was used to test the three hypotheses generated at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement ($r= -0.719$, $P<.05$). This portrays that high aggressive behaviour would definitely lead to decreased reading achievement among students with reading disabilities, and vice versa. Also, there were significant differences in aggressive behaviour and gender ($F=5.049$, $df=280$, $p< 0.05$); family type ($F=11.004$, $df=280$, $p< 0.05$); and school type ($F=9.280$, $df=280$, $p< 0.05$). It was recommended that general and special educators working with students with reading disabilities should consciously implement effective strategies to control, manage and curb aggressive behaviours of the students so as to improve their reading and academic achievement.*

Keywords: Aggressive behaviour, family type, gender, reading achievement, reading disabilities, school type

Introduction

Aggression is a social menace prevalent among children, adolescents and youths. It is commonly exhibited within the school and elsewhere in the society. Nowadays, incidences of aggression are reported repeatedly among individuals as well as communities. The United States Department of Justice (2012), as cited in Rahman and Nahar (2013), reported 1,203,564 cases of violence in 2011. In the same year, there were 83,425 forcible rapes and 751,131 assaults that resulted in injury to the victims. A national survey of crime and safety by Cleen Foundation (2012) found that aggressive behaviour is on the increase in Nigeria: physical assault increased by 19% between 2011 and 2012, armed robbery incidents increased from 11% in 2010 to 17% in 2012, while domestic violence increased from 17% in 2010 to 31% in 2012.

According to Cankaya (2011), an aggressive behaviour is a hazardous behaviour intended to hurt, bully, or harm. It can be external or internal, direct or indirect. It is one of the most pervasive acts. Obikeze, Ikwumelu and Eluu (2014) observed that aggression in schools and colleges can take many forms, such as violence, fighting, hitting, bullying, verbal or physical abuse, and arson infliction of harm on a person. Most common types of aggression observed in school settings are physical, verbal and psychological aggression (Popp, 2003). These types are commonly observed, especially physical aggression, due to the ease of spotting. Eweniyi, Adeoye, Ayodele and Raheem (2013) opined that the most frequent aggression found in school surroundings was physical and verbal aggression. In the same vein, Çinkir (2006) maintained that common problems of individuals who are subjected to aggression include loneliness, introversion, and mal-adaptation to the environment, rebellion, low motivation, and learning difficulties.

Interestingly, one major type of learning disabilities that can be affected by the display of aggression is reading disabilities. Reading disabilities is a condition that is characterized by difficulties with decoding, fluent word recognition, rapid automatic naming, and/or reading comprehension skills. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonologic component of language that makes it difficult to use the alphabetic code to decode the written word (Handler and Pierson, 2011). In fact, research has consistently shown that if children do not learn to understand and use language well to read and write, to calculate and reason mathematically, to solve problems and communicate their ideas and perspectives, their opportunities for a fulfilling and rewarding life are seriously compromised (Lyon, 2003). Consequently, scholars in the field of reading disabilities have not

ceased to search for solutions to improving reading achievement among their students. This explains the need for this study.

Davis, Byrd, Arnold, Auinger and Bocchini (1999) studied three hundred and eighty-sixty (386) adolescents. Forty-three percent of the adolescents tested had below-grade reading levels (≥ 2 grades). The researchers also found that participants with below-grade reading skills had higher rates of self-reported violent behaviours compared with those reading at grade level. When gender, race, and age were controlled for, adolescents reading below grade level were significantly more likely to report being involved in violent behaviours. Stipek and Miles (2008) found that the relationship between aggression and achievement is complex and reciprocal.

Furthermore, in a study involving high school students, Loveland, Lounsbury, Welsh, and Buboltz (2007) established that aggression is negatively related to grade point average (GPA) and that aggression is uniquely predictive of academic performance. Further, the authors concluded that aggression accounts for significantly more variance in the GPA of females than for males, even when controlling for personality factors. Moreover, Finn and Frone (2003) also concluded that aggressive students tend to exhibit low academic achievement.

Besides, Johnson (2009) found a negative correlation between overall average and suspensions for the number of aggressive acts displayed at school. As overall average decreased, the number of suspensions for acts of aggression increased. The presence of a specific learning disability label did not significantly correlate with aggression. Neither did the presence of both a low overall average and a specific learning disability label prove to be significant. When both factors were present for a subject, the low overall average was shown to be the more important correlate with aggression.

In addition; while a number of researchers think a learning disability may help in predicting aggression, others believe that the converse may be true (Schaeffer, Petras, Jalongo, Poduska, and Kellum, 2003). Some found a high number of concentration problems among boys who exhibit high and increasing levels of aggression. Boys with low, stable aggression levels experience fewer cognitive problems. Also, Condon, Morales-Vives, Ferrando, Vigil-Colet, (2006) indicated that gender differences exist due to different ways of expressing aggression. In this context, men usually use more direct forms of aggressive behaviour and women more indirect forms. The same trends of gender differences were found in German studies indicating that boys took precedence in physical aggression and girls in verbal aggression (Popp, 2003).

Similarly, Rahman and Nahar (2013) found that regardless of gender, boys expressed more aggression than girls and regardless of academic achievement; students with high academic grade will show more aggressive behaviour than low academic grade students. Within the Nigerian context, Obikeze, Ikwumelu and Ebluu (2014) discovered that male students appear to be more aggressive than their female counterparts. In the same vein, the present study investigated the relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement among students with reading disabilities based on gender variable.

Another demographic characteristic of students with reading disabilities of interest in this study is family type, that is, either monogamy or polygamy. A monogamous family is a family type that involves a man being married to only one woman, while a polygamous family can be described as a family system wherein a man is married simultaneously to two or more women. Wilkins (1976), cited in Igwesi (2003), emphasized that in the monogamous family, degrees of agreement and violent disagreements are worked out by both husband and wife. Both also share the same losses and griefs.

Moreover, Elbedour, Hektner, Morad and Abu-Bader (2003) found no significant differences between these monogamous and polygamous family structures with regard to the frequency of parent-child conflict. The results also showed similar conflict management styles between these two family structures within each of the following five domains (privacy, school and career, money spending, going out and leisure, and physical appearance. Additionally, Ebbenuwa-Okoh (2011) studied family violence and sibling abuse in Nigerian families and found that family types do not affect experiences of sibling abuse. This is because children from monogamous and polygamous homes do not differ in their experiences of sibling abuse.

Several researchers have studied school characteristics—such as type of school (public or private) and school size and their relationship to students' academic outcomes. Crosnoe, Johnson and Elder (2004) noted that private schools tend to have both better funding and smaller class sizes than public schools. According to them, these characteristics lead to students' better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement.

Furthermore, while Iqbal (2012) found that in Pakistan, public schools have better facilities, spacious buildings, highly qualified staff and people oriented management styles as compared to private schools, Sander (1999) disagreed that private schools directly raise the standard or quality of education through

competitive pressures but not in doubt that low quality public schooling increases the demand for private schooling. On the relationship between aggression and school type, Shujja, Atta and Shujjat (2014) found that children in public schools were more involved in bullying, fighting and victimizing others as compared to children in private schools. They also reported that boys were engaged in more bullying, victimization and fighting than girls.

Undoubtedly, many students with learning and reading disabilities are prone to aggressive behaviours due to the frustration they experience with learning tasks. These students grow ashamed as they struggle with skills that their classmates master easily. This shame may cause a loss of motivation to learn to read that can further compound the situation. Sometimes, poor self-esteem may arise, which substantially increase the risk of developing more psychological and emotional problems. Thus, the current study is considered significant as it investigated the relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement among students with reading disabilities. The study further investigated this relationship based on the selected demographic variables (gender, family type and school type). The research question answered in this study was: is there significant relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement of students with reading disabilities? The hypotheses tested were:

1. There is no significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on their gender.
2. There is no significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on their family type.
3. There is no significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on students' school type.

Methodology

The design for the study was descriptive, which means that there was no manipulation of participants or treatment. The multistage sampling technique was adopted to select the participants. In the first stage, there was a random sampling of four local government areas out of the thirty-three local government areas in Oyo State. The selected local government areas were: Ibadan South-East, Ibadan North, Akinyele and Oluyole local government areas. The second stage involved the random selection of seven secondary schools from both public and private schools in the selected local government areas of Oyo State. The selected schools were: Ajibode Grammar School, Ajibode (Akinyele), Community High Secondary School, Sango (Ibadan North), Humani Alaga High School, Sango/Samonda

(Ibadan North), Immanuel College, University of Ibadan (Ibadan North), Yinbol College, Orogun (Akinyele), Idikan Baptist College, Felele (Oluyole), and Ibadan Grammar School, Molete (Ibadan South-East). From these schools, two hundred and eighty two (282) Senior Secondary School 1 (SS1) students with reading disabilities were purposively selected. The inclusion criterion was the presence of reading disabilities. The demographic characteristics of participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Showing demographic characteristics of respondents

S/N	Variable/ Status		No.	School Type	No.	
	Gender	Family background				
1.	Male	132	Monogamy	198	Public	193
2.	Female	150	Polygamy	84	Private	89
Total		282		282		282

Four research instruments were used for the study, namely, the Learning Disabilities Screening Inventory (adapted version), the Reading Disabilities Screening Test, the Beliefs about Aggression and Alternatives Scale and the Students' Test of Reading. An adapted version of the Learning Disabilities Screening Inventory by the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario was used to screen for learning disabilities ($r = 0.63$). It consists of fifteen questions on a four-point rating scale. Students were asked to rate each item in each question on a 4-point scale from 4 to 1: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). SA has the highest point of 4, while SD has the least (1).

The Reading Disabilities Screening Test (a self-designed achievement test) was used to screen students with learning disabilities for specific reading disabilities. It consists of twenty questions on reading basically: comprehension, spelling, vocabulary and recognition of sounds. Five questions were taken from each sub-skill of reading indicated above. The pass mark was set as ten correct answers out of twenty. Though a score of 9-6 was regarded as failure, only those who scored 0-5 were included in the study. The split-half coefficient using Spearman Brown method was found to be .70. The Students' Test of Reading constructed by the researcher was also used to assess respondents' reading achievement. It has fifteen questions. To design this test, two reading comprehension passages were taken from the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (Intermediate Level). This is a standardized test developed by the Psychological Corporation, a subsidiary of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Incorporation (1978). Respondents were asked to read the passages and answer the questions on them.

There were five questions on each passage that solicited responses based on the content of each passage. In addition, five questions on written expression (spelling) were included. The researcher got 0.72 reliability coefficient using the Kuder Richardson formula 20.

The Beliefs about Aggression and Alternatives Scale was developed by Multisite Violence Prevention Project, 2004, and adapted for use in this study by the researcher. It is a twelve item structured scale designed to measure student beliefs about the use of aggression and endorsement of non-violent responses to hypothetical situations. Two subscales are included in this assessment: Beliefs about Aggression (items 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 19) and Use of Nonviolent Strategies (items 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8). The scale has an internal consistency: Beliefs about aggression .72; Use of non-violent strategies .72. But the researcher reduced the questions to seven because she was interested only in measuring respondents' beliefs about aggression. All items are reverse coded before summing. A high score indicates more favourable beliefs supporting the use of aggression.

The researcher obtained permission to administer the instruments from the various school principals. Then, five trained research assistants were employed to assist with the administration of research instruments. This exercise lasted for four weeks: screening for learning and reading disabilities was done within two weeks, while administration of achievement test and questionnaire was done in two weeks. Three hundred (300) questionnaire copies were distributed, but only two hundred and eighty-two (282) were used for the study because eleven were either filled incorrectly or incompletely and were, therefore, discarded. The data generated were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistics, at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Q1: Is there a significant relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement of students with learning disabilities?.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient on aggressive behaviour and reading achievement

No.		Aggressive Behaviour	Reading Achievement
Aggressive Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	-.719
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	282	282
Reading Achievement	Pearson Correlation	-.719	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	282	282

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (2-tailed).

The data in Table 2 show that there is a significant inverse relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement of students with reading disabilities ($r=-0.719$, $p<0.05$). This implies that as aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities increases, the reading achievement of these students decrease, and vice versa.

H01: There is no significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on their gender.

Table 3: T-test summary of the differences in aggressive behaviour based on gender

Variable		N	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	F	Df	P
Aggressive Behaviour		132	29.27	2.65	4.55	5.049	280	.024
Male		150	24.72	2.73				
Female								

The data in Table 3 reveal that there is a significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on their gender ($F=5.049$, $df=280$, $p<0.05$). The data show that the mean difference between the male and female students was high (4.55).

H02: There is no significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on their family type.

Table 4: T-test result on the differences in aggressive behaviour based on family type

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	F	Df	P
Aggressive Behaviour	198	12.68	1.89		11.004	280	.001
Monogamy				6.90			
Polygamy	84	19.55	2.42				

The data in Table 4 revealed that there is a significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on family type ($F=11.004$, $df=280$, $p<0.05$). The data show that the mean difference between the two types of family was high (6.90).

H03: There is no significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on students' school type.

Table 5: T-test result on the differences in aggressive behaviour based on school type

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean diff.	F	Df	P
Aggressive Behaviour	193	25.67	2.01				
Public				6.690	9.280	280	.002
Private	89	18.98	2.33				

The data in Table 5 reveal that there is a significant difference in aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities based on school type ($F=9.280$, $df=280$, $p< 0.05$). The data also show that the mean difference between the two types of school was high (6.690).

Discussion

The findings clearly show that there is a strong relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement. This result reveals that aggressive behaviour is a strong predictor of reading achievement and vice versa as reported by some earlier studies. It corroborates the findings of Davis, Byrd, Arnold, Auinger and Bocchini (1999) that participants with below-grade reading skills had higher rates of self-reported violent behaviours compared with those reading at grade level. The present result also supports Finn and Frone's (2003) submission that aggressive students tend to exhibit low academic achievement.

Furthermore, the present findings showed a significant relationship between aggressive behaviour among students with reading disabilities and the three selected demographic variables: gender, family type and school type. The findings agreed with previous studies that revealed that gender-wise, boys took precedence in physical aggression, and girls in verbal aggression (Popp, 2003). Similarly, Rahman and Nahar (2013) and Obikeze, Ikwumelu and Eluu (2014) found that male students seem more aggressive than their female counterparts.

However, the present finding is not in consonance with Ibenuwa-Okoh (2011) report that showed that family types do not affect experiences of sibling abuse and that children from monogamous and polygamous homes do not differ in their experiences of sibling abuse. According to this present finding, students with reading disabilities from polygamous homes obtained 19.59 mean score while those from monogamous homes obtained 12.68. Likewise, with a higher mean score of 25.67 by public school students and a mean score of 18.98 by private school students, the present finding support earlier finding by Shujja, Atta and Shujjat (2014) that children in public schools were more involved in bullying, fighting and victimizing others as compared to children in private schools.

The findings of this study have colossal implications to the government, teachers, special educators, counsellors, parents, and students with learning/

reading disabilities, researchers and the society at large. To each of these categories of professionals and students mentioned, this study has provided in depth understanding into the relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement. It has contributed to the existing body of literature in the field of reading disabilities as well as behavioural studies. This study is very informative in explaining what aggressive behaviour entails and in proffering suggestions on how to curb this maladaptive behaviour. As aggressive behaviour can cause reading difficulties, so also, reading disabilities can lead to frustration and consequently aggression and other antisocial behaviours.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings clearly revealed that as the level of aggression manifested by students with reading disabilities increases, the students' reading achievement decreases. Thus, there is a strong relationship between aggressive behaviour and reading achievement. More so, this study has shown that there are significant differences among aggressive behaviour of students with reading disabilities based on gender, family type and school type. In view of the findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. Teachers of students with learning disabilities should consciously implement strategies to effectively control, manage and/or curb aggressive behaviours of these students. This is because the more aggressive behaviours are controlled, the higher the reading achievement of students will be.
2. Teachers of students with learning disabilities should ensure that they utilize effective reading strategies to foster their students' reading skills, regardless of manifestations of aggression by the students.
3. Bearing in mind the gender, family type and school type differences in the manifestation of aggressive behaviours, all teachers of students with learning disabilities should monitor students with reading disabilities closely, especially both boys and girls, those from polygamous and monogamous homes and those from public and private schools, for appropriate behaviour management in order to reduce aggressive behaviour and school failure.

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