

VIOLENCE AND REPRESSIVE TRAUMA AMONG STUDENTS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AWKA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

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Abstract

Violence cannot be shrouded in assumptive layers. This impression is deduced from increased exposure of adolescents in secondary schools to diverse forms of violence which are both domestic and public. This research has investigated verbal abuse, beating, intimidation, pestering from peers, sexual advances, fights or altercations as forms of violence with physical, psychosocial and psychosexual apparatus among students in selected Mixed Community-Based Secondary Schools in Awka North Local Government Area. The implication is that violent experiences have serious consequences which are often incubated in repression, denial, displacement, projection, regression and consistent sublimation—different forms of inherent conscious and unconscious defence mechanisms capable of causing anxiety, death, absent mindedness, low performance, absenteeism and heightened trauma (neurosis or dissociation). This study further highlights the gender binary perspectives—masculine and feminine identities as well as visible trends in the stimulation of violent culture within the context of study. The selected schools are investigated to ascertain the impact of violence on students' physical, psychological and emotional health. This research has employed the interview of persons, observation and completion of questionnaire as techniques for collecting data. 578 students have been surveyed using a structured format. The collected data has been analyzed using frequencies with descriptive interpretation. The research has ascertained that the common negative effects or impacts of violence impinge on mental wellness, academic success and school attendance—a form of internalized emotional strain. The study has further revealed the lack of institutional structures such as school safety committees, anti-bullying laws and surveillance intervention programmes—hence the need for enforceable and sustainable policies and structures.

Keywords: Violence; Repressive Trauma; Secondary Schools; Adolescents; Gender dichotomy; Sexual Harassment; Bullying; Verbal Abuse

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1. Introduction

Throughout human history, violence has been a serious issue often repeated consciously or unconsciously with daring consequences—both physical and psychological. Violence is incubated in attitude-behaviour characterized by context-based relationships (Lopez, Lopez-Nicolas, Lopez-Lopez, Puente-Lopez and Ruiz-Hernandes 2022). Vittorio Bufacchi (2005:193) further perceives “violence as an intentional act of excessive force and a violation of rights if viewed from the minimalist and broader conception”. Considering Randall Collins' ideology, it is possible to conceive “violence as the intertwining of human emotions of fear, anger and excitement, in ways that run right against the conventional morality of normal situations” (2008:24). Ifeoma Odinye (2021:1) observes that “violence seems to be very rampant in many societies because some fundamental human rights are abused without

any strict monitoring or form of severe punishment to the offenders. As a result, individuals are physically, emotionally and psychologically harmed through violent actions or behaviour such as cultism, rape, sexual harassment, battery, thuggery, bullying, kidnapping, verbal assault, discrimination, slavery, gender roles/ stereotype and forced relationship. It is therefore not out of place to say that “violence negates the need for justice, tolerance, mutual respect and dignity for human life” (ibid).

Violence has deep social and individual effects. It replicates a context-dependent options which suggest that school violence and bullying in public are issues associated with numerous risks and far-reaching negative consequences (Escuadra, Magallanes, Lee and Chung 2023). In many parts of the world, school violence affects children’s academic progress, mental wellness and the overall social development (Le, Le, Dao, Nguyen and Nguyen 2025). To this end, one would understand that violence in schools needs to be curbed. Therefore, we would also understand that no school violence prevention strategies or curbing processes can be successful without interpretation of victim-perpetrator conceptualized perspectives (Altun and Baker, 2010).

No doubt, secondary schools in Nigeria are faced with the unending challenge of increasing violence among students which has negative undertone with dangerous neurotic and behavioural impacts on individuals, schools, families, and communities at large. Therefore, it is important to note that the issue of consistent violence is one of the most challenging problems that face the GenZ students, teachers, and parents. Considering the widespread of violence in the Nigerian secondary schools, one may suggest incessant corruption, negative attitude, drug use, rigid conventions, hardship, peer group influence, lack of good parental upbringing, prejudice, domestic violence, religious fanaticism, materialism, cancel culture, media popular culture, stubbornness and others as factors that cause and promote violence among students.

In the recent past years in Anambra state, many schools in different towns have witnessed violence as a national phenomenon with varying degrees of influence after the emergence of COVID19 which further caused a kind of social distraction, economic imbalance and promotion of the digital world as spaces for escapes from boredom. There has been news of kidnapping, rape, battery, cult activities, abuse of drugs, killings, stealing, verbal violence and clashes within and around communities in Anambra State where different secondary schools are located. The devastating aspect is that some of these crimes are perpetrated by teenagers who should be secondary school students—those who are assumed innocent if not caught in the context of violence. It has thus become very worrisome with the increasing number of adolescents who are caught in the acts of violence within different Local Government Areas in Anambra state which has encouraged the proliferation of school-based violence among school children. According to A.G Omisore et al (2012:81), school-based violence is ruinous and “can give rise to injuries that may be devastating to children’s health”—a leeway to crippling their educational interest and attainment.

Notably, continuous violence among junior and senior secondary school students have deeply impinged on academic culture and acceptable behaviour leading to serious abuse—thoughts of suicide, low academic performance, anxiety, psychic split, hallucination, abstinence, truancy and in extreme form, death. Certainly, there have been attempts of physical and psycho-emotional abuse against many children which stem from deprivative and denigrating behaviour that could be patterned within and outside the school environments—an infringement and violation of rights collectively spurred by negative attitude of students, teachers, parents and carers. This violation is incubated in a power mentality—the need to continuously exercise superiority on those who are poorer, weaker or defenceless. The above orientation is a form of motivation for challenging violence and promoting good atmosphere of learning for students in secondary schools.

Significantly, Rajan Pokharel’s hypothesis on violence within a context is not merely based on cultural assumptions, but on Historical-Geographical perspectives. Rajan Pokharel (2009:14) understands the ideology of cultural similarities in the transmission of violence and has thus observed that “it starts from chaos and ends in creation. To Pokharel, violence creates destruction and disorders but finally a kind of order is shaped up through those disorders and that new order is naturally a new creation from where a new civilization begins” (Ibid). The worrisome part of this new creation is visible in the physical injury,

pain or impairment caused by violence. This lends credence to investigating the influence of violence among secondary school students in Awka North Local Government Area with the aim of exposing certain repressive apparatus or defence mechanisms incubated in human behaviour within the context of violence.

Obviously, Judefrancis Oruche (2021:57) has observed that the tradition of abuse or how violence influences the “level and quality of students’ academic achievement which usually falls below the average expectation—a challenge that faces students with threats of violence”. The implication is that any form of abuse popularizes unparalleled stages of psychic disunity and development; and there are conscious and unconscious behavioural markers that show in the effects and after effects of violence. The essential truism according to Oruche (2021:57) revolves around the influence of physical abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse and psychological abuse perpetuated by abusers at home, in the school or on the streets. The study further investigates the effects of violence on the academic performance of students with a special examination of psycho-social behaviour—the tendency of violence victims perpetuating a cyclic aura that triggers inherent and external conflicts. The study’s investigation on violence structures, patterns and effects aligns with the view that preventing violence is an “important aspect of violence education”—a yearning for effective policies and strategies in promoting safe and peaceful learning contexts for students (Budianti, Ruwaidah, Megawati 2023).

2. Problem of the Study

The problem of this study has investigated different forms of violence within the selected contexts and their negative impact on surveyed students. The study has surveyed the respondents to ascertain common violent behavioural outputs and how they affect students’ academic achievement, physical and emotional wellbeing in selected Mixed Community-Based Secondary Schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State. It has further examined how the repressive apparatus becomes a psychological defence mechanism for coping with violent actions. The above research problem is geared towards contributing to academic readership and scholarship in the areas of Education, Policy making, Gender Studies, Psychology and Sociology

3. Research Questions

1. Does violence occur in secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State? What forms are visible within the schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State?
2. Could the prevalence of violence among students in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State be ascertained by gender?
3. Do students fall victim of violence at school due to lack of knowledge of existence?
4. Are there needs for physical protection, engagement and policy implementation to curb violence?

4. Research Hypotheses

1. There is no vivid effective policy and groups within the schools that monitor and sanction violence.
2. There is no clear uniform strategy on awareness of students about programmes preventing violence among students in schools.
3. Continuous exposure to violence without checkmating measures has culminated into a massive adoption of repression as a coping strategy to cover violent behaviour with underlying psychological effect on student victims.
4. The functionality of violence does not offer vivid exposure for victim protection within the school environment.

5. Literature Review

Empirical Studies in the area of this research are reviewed to see the gap this research fills in academic readership and scholarship. No doubt, there is a plethora of research done in the area of violence and abuse within the contexts of secondary schools in Anambra State cum Nigeria. Significantly, some scholars have investigated violent situations that impinge on students’ academic achievement. Jude Francis (2021) in his research entitled “Influence of Child Abuse on the Academic Achievement of Anambra State Public Junior Secondary School Students” has observed that physical abuse, emotional

abuse and verbal abuse from teachers, friends, family and others significantly influence students' academic achievement in English Language negatively" (57).

Zita Chika Obi (2019) in the article "Awareness and Usage of Substances Among Public Secondary School Students in Anambra State, Nigeria: Implications for School Administrators" gives an adequate contemplative factor that promotes violence among students. In this regard he has observed that "girls and boys use drugs equally, but however showed that usage of alcohol and cigarette is higher among male students" (263). In a master-stroke of a well-made opinion, Olujide A. Adekeye et al. (2016) in "Bullying Behaviour Among High School Students: Analysis of Prevalence and Gender Differences" assert that bullying is a form of violence in secondary schools which has high prevalence in students' daily behaviour. The implication of the research claims that more males than females engage in bullying behaviour and that males bully more than the female respondents"—a perception wrapped in patriarchal mentality of male dominance and supremacy (0428). Notably, Egbochuku Elizabeth Omotunde, Oizimende Philomena and Josephine Oliha (2015) in "Effects of Self-Management and Social Skills Training on the Reduction of Adolescents' Conduct Disorder" have characteristically "contributed to the body of existing knowledge which reveals that conduct disorder among adolescents can be treated or corrected with both self-management and social skills to further assist professional, counselors, psychologists, clinicians, teachers and the community at large to have a better perception of conduct disorder among adolescents" (129).

Lawal Isiyaku (2016) has exposed a seemingly practicable purpose for real life situations in the article "Effectiveness of Social Skills Training Technique on Bullying Behaviour of Secondary School Students in Katsina State of Nigeria". According to Isiyaku, "students who bully others on regular basis face a wide range of mental health, safety and educational problems including injury requiring hospitalization and other juvenile crimes. School bullies are also more likely to have low academic achievement, are unhappier at school and demonstrate an increased likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviours" (157). This phenomenon epitomizes malleability with the perception of C. N. Nwokolo and A. I. Okocha (2022) in "Effect of Social Training Skill on Bullying Tendency among Secondary School Students in Nnewi North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria" who have observed that:

Bullying tendency among students in secondary schools forms a huge distraction to educational achievements in secondary schools within Nigeria and all over the world. The results of the study revealed that, social skills training technique is effective in reducing bullying tendency among secondary school students. More so, social skills training technique is more effective in reducing male secondary school students' bullying tendency. The effect of social skills training technique on the bullying tendency of secondary school students is significant. The study further revealed that the effectiveness of social skills training technique on the bullying tendency of male and female secondary school students do not differ significantly. (54)

Uju Egenti (2012) in "Teenage Violence in Secondary Schools in Anambra State: Causes, Effects and Possible Solutions" in their contextually-based research have asserted that "anti-social environments contribute a great deal to teenage violence. When teenagers live in a place where they see, eat and breath/experience nothing, but violent forms of living, they tend to pick up the best. This however, envelopes the school they are enrolled in, the place they live in and the kind of friends they keep" (6). Nwogwugwu, Nwamaka, Ozoh, Nwokoye and Ezenekwe (2017) have examined the negative effects of child abuse in Onitsha city, Anambra State which have reduced enrollment rate, obstructed mental wellness and physical agility among abused children. As evident in Nweze and Owo (2014), child abuse poses a fundamental problem with devastating physical and psychological consequences in the levels of academic achievement among children in schools. It need not be repeated that Odey, Ita and Nchor's (2017) research on child labour and levels of academic achievement in Junior secondary school students in Ogoja of Cross River State reveals a related component that victims of abuse perform poorly in education due to consistent predatory child labour. Gyong, Hellandendu and Kolo's (2015) research is responsive in investigating maltreatment as a form of violence suffered by students in secondary schools in Niger state which exposes a psychological and physical abuse with sequence of consistent hawking

of goods, lack of health care, hunger and starvation and lack of educational material for academic exercises.

Having reviewed the areas covered in the empirical studies on violence, this research is geared towards filling a scholarly gap that investigates different forms of violence and the factors responsible in promoting violent behaviours among students in selected secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State. The research further investigates the prevalent defence mechanism consciously or unconsciously employed among students in combating traumatic memory with a conceived pattern of 'speakability' and 'unspeakability'.

6. Methodology

Participant and Procedure

To ascertain the correctness of answers, this pilot study has been conducted on 578 students from 5 different selected mixed-community (boys and girls) Secondary Schools in Awka North Local Government of Anambra State, Nigeria. The reason for the choice of the selected schools is based on the consistent violent activities of teenagers within the locality where the schools are located. The study was conducted from October 2024 to March, 2025. Questionnaire and physical interviews have been employed as research instruments to gain feedback from different students as respondents. The study has adopted content analysis and tape recording approach of the qualitative research approach methodology, in undertaking a critical analysis of data collected in the selected secondary schools in Awka North Local Government of Anambra State. Significantly, the questionnaire and interviews have been structured in anonymity to protect the image of the students as well as the selected schools due to the sensitive nature of the topic on violence. Focus group discussions have been organised for both female and male students, randomly selected persons who show heightened interest for the purpose of obtaining information which have been used for effective study and appropriate findings.

The five selected secondary schools within the context of study are purposively selected. The use of Digital Camera, Compact Discs (CD), Digital Audio Compact Discs (DADC), other equipment and adequate manpower employed for the purpose of efficient research which are incorporated through physical interviews of persons, observation and completion of a questionnaire as techniques for collecting data. The justification for choosing secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State is necessitated by the increased violent behaviour among students in the selected local Government Area in the Post Covid 19 years. Secondary sources of data collection are textbooks, journals, theses, dissertations, magazines, newspaper articles, social media and the internet. Interviews have been conducted with all the key players in the domestic environment. Data analysis are interpretative and descriptive.

7. Findings and Discussion

Psychosocially, violence among students in the five selected schools in Awka North LGA of Anambra State has been captured from a dialogic or two-way perspectives— the victims' experiences and the perpetrator's perspectives. Basically, local contexts—environment, school types, individual mentality and structures—both in homes and schools have influenced social organization where school-based violence occurred. Most students surveyed, view violence as a visible trend with no ending cycle since individuals operate in a social space with diverse traits or temperaments. Here are the facts on demographic characteristics of the participants as captured in **Table 1**.

8.1 Table 1: Demographical Characteristics of the Participants

Items		Frequency (Proportion or Percentage)
Gender	Male	209 (0.362 or 36.2%)
	Female	369 (0.638 or 63.8%)
Age	Less than 14 years	464 (0.803 or 80.3%)
	More than 14 years	114(0.197 or 19.7%)
Student Categories	Junior	490 (0.848 or 84.8 %)
	Senior	88 (0.152 or 15.2%)

8.1.1 Research Question 1: Does violence occur in secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State? What forms are visible within the selected schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State? The regular happening of violence within the selected schools as disclosed by the student participants is not in doubt—from minor to major forms that have both physical and psychological effects such as **Bullying:** A deliberate hurtful pervasive action such as verbal (derogatory languages) or physical often leading to severe emotional distress and low self-esteem among student victims. **Physical Violence:** Frequent fights or altercations between students—sometimes driven by seniority, peer group affiliations or friendship tensions among students which create atmosphere of fear and instability within the school. **Sexual Harassment:** mostly Female students complain of persistent attack or deliberate pestering from peers who are older. These forms of intimidation cause worry, distress, fear, mistrust—both physical and mental disengagement among students. We find the students disliking school or skipping attendance on a daily basis. The frequency of violence forms in the selected schools is scaled from how frequent they are to how accidental or rarely they occur. This is captured in Table 2.

Table 2: Occurrence of Violence in Community-Based Schools in Awka North L.G.A

Table 2 below. This suggests that there is high occurrence of violence in the selected secondary schools.

S/N	Items/ Response	Frequency/Proportion
1. Form(s) of Violence reported	Derogatory language	187 (0.3237 or 32.37%)
	Beating, fights or altercations	103 (0.1783 or 17.83%)
	Intimidation/Pestering from peers	112 (0.1938 or 19.38%)
	Sexual advances	37 (0.0640 or 6.40 %)
	All of the above	94 (0.1627 or 16.27%)
	No experience	45 (0.0779 or 7.79%)
2. How do you encounter violence at school?	Very often	86 (14.9%)
	Often	207 (35.8%)
	Sometimes	224 (38.8%)
	Rarely	19 (3.3%)
	Never	42 (7.3%)
3. Have your classmates or schoolmates ever experienced any form of violence at school which you are aware of?	Yes	404 (85.5%)
	No	174 (30.1%)
4.Does violence affect academic growth and participation of students in secondary schools?	Yes	525(90.9%)
	No	53 (9.2%)

8.1.2 Research Question 2: Could the prevalence of violence among students in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State be ascertained by gender?

Table 3: This indicates that gender plays a huge role in the occurrence of violence in a mixed-community-based schools. The table shows that 79% of female student participants have perceived directly or indirectly that girls experience violence of different forms compared to the 34.5% of male participants. This simply indicates that female students in mixed secondary schools are very vulnerable to violence. This according to the students' insight is associated with gender perception, dominance and superiority replete with the local contexts and African male mentality—boys are usually powerful and stronger than girls who always cry at any slight provocation. According to the boys interviewed, “boys don't cry, they are the bosses”.

Table 3: Responses on Experiences of Violence by Gender

S/N	Items/ Response	Frequency (Proportion or Percentage)
1. Gender	Male	209 (0.362 or 36.2%)
	Yes	72 (0.345 or 34.5%)
	No	137(0.655 or 65.5%)
	Female	369(0.638 or 63.8%)
	Yes	292 (0.79 or 79%)
	No	77 (0.2087 or 20.87%)

Table 3: Gendered Perspectives on violence

Female students' report on the experiences of violence presents a high percentage. From the data collected, 79% of female respondents reported experiencing some forms of violence, compared to only 34.5% of males. This aptly suggests that female students in the selected mixed community-based secondary schools are significantly more likely to report being victims of violence. Notably, male students' report shows less exposure—a clue attached to African patriarchal mentality of male ego which resonates within the cultural contexts of the selected schools and the issue of male child syndrome as linked to gender bias perspectives. The data from male students' perspectives perceives that the majority (65.5%) had not experienced violence—a response that could intricately be linked to patriarchal mentality or superiority. This response could possibly be as a result of underreporting, different background or exposure, and a form of social or gender dynamics that encourage violence patterns targeted toward females' vulnerable sensibilities. Notably, the overall participation in the research is generally skewed due to the willingness of participation. The data presents obvious facts that more females (369) than males (209) participated in the survey. The reality of participation is not doubtful—while the higher female participation has the tendency of influencing the overall perception, the data collected points to the fact that a high percentage of female victims is a valid reason that shows female concern over the increasing negative consequences of violence. This fact points to a gendered pattern in violence experiences based on the participation and response.

Research Question 3: Do students fall victim of violence at school due to lack of knowledge of existence?

8.1.3 The student participants' responses on the awareness of violence and its varied forms are wrapped around four questions. The implication is that the students' awareness does not in any way curb any form of violence due to certain personal and structural issues in human connectedness and relationships within the academic contexts.

Table 4 indicates high awareness level among student participants—an affirmation which does not offer any direction to curb or protect them. The ideas behind this table are sipped from important questions to ascertain students' awareness of violence forms and their possible causes or triggers.

Table 4: Student participants' awareness of different forms of violence among students within their schools

S/N	Response	Frequency (Proportion or Percentage)
1. Have you heard of violence within your school before?		
	Yes	556 (0.964 or 96.4%)
	No	22(0.0381 or 3.81%)
2. How did you know or learn about violence and its forms?		
	Home/Locality	56 (0.097 or 9.7%)
	Classmates/friends	106 (0.183 or 18.83%)
	Social Media	127 (0.22 or 22 %)
	Traditional Broadcast Media	52 (0.09 or 9%)
	Official School Orientation	91 (0.157 or 15.7%)
	Personal Experiences	135 (0.234 or 23.4%)
	None of the Above	11 (0.019 or 1.9%)
3. What do you perceive as violence?		
	Verbal Abuse	126 (0.218 or 21.8%)
	Intimidation/ Beating/Fighting	214 (0.370 or 37%)
	Sexual Harassment	157(0.271 or 27.1%)
	Keeping Malice/False Accusation	71 (0.123 or 12.3%)
	None of the Above	10 (0.017 or 1.7%)
4. What are the visible factors that encourage violence at school?		
	Male Ego/Superiority	180 (0.311 or 31.1%)
	Lack of active punishment and law	51 (0.088 or 8.8%)
	Lack of adequate monitoring team	41 (0.071 or 7.1%)
	Students' repressive tendencies	29(0.050 or 5.0%)
	All of the above	263(0.455 or 45.5%)
	Not certain	14(0.024 or 2.4%)
5. Which is the most common negative effect of violence at school?		
	Poor academic performance	67 (0.116 or 11.6%)
	Abstinance from school	48 (0.083 or 8.3%)
	Repression/burdened tolerance	249 (0.431 or 43.10%)
	Unhappiness/Anxiety/Fear	62 (0.107 or 10.7%)
	All of the above	143 (0.247 or 24.7%)
	None of the above	9 (0.016 or 1.6 %)

Research Question 4: Are there needs for physical protection, engagement and policy implementation to curb violence?

8.1.4 Captured in **Table 5** shows that serious effort should be made to provide adequate monitoring measures, teams, policy and punishments for violence initiators to address and curb violence and its negative consequences within the selected community-based mixed secondary schools. The above concern is raised by the student participants in this research.

Table 5: Proportions or Frequencies to ascertain the need for measures and punishment of violence

S/N	Items	Frequency (Proportion or Percentage)
1.What is the best way or method of curbing violence?	Use of monitoring teams/Advisers	71(0.123 or 12.3%)
	Creating Policy and Rules	41(0.071 or 7.1%)
	Punishment	65(0.112 or 11.2%)
	All of the above	385(0.666 or 66.6%)
	No Need	16(0.028 or 2.8%)
2. Should there be groups and laws to monitor, identify and Punish violence perpetrators at school?		
	Agree	176(0.304 or 30.4 %)
	Strongly Agree	359 (0.621 or 62.1%)
	Neutral	24(0.0415 or 4.15 %)
	Disagree	6 (0.0104 or 1.04%)
	Strongly Disagree	13(0.0225 or 2.25%)

Hypothesis 1: There is no vivid effective policy and groups within the schools that monitor and sanction violence. The above data on Table 5 indicates the need to create groups and laws to monitor, identify, and punish violence perpetrators at school receives an overwhelming Support. The data shows that most students in mixed community schools yearn for change or improvement in curbing violence. Significantly, strongly Agree (62.1%) and Agree (30.4%) make up 92.5% of respondents. This aptly indicates near-universal support for creating functional structures (groups/laws) to tackle violence in mixed community schools. The respondents' affirmation signals that school safety is a high priority for the majority of secondary students surveyed. From the perspective of the data collected, the Neutral and Dissenting Voices are significantly Minimal compared to the agreed and strongly agreed. From the data presented, only 4.15% were Neutral — indicating that very few are undecided or indifferent. Also, Disagree (1.04%) and Strongly Disagree (2.25%) together form just 3.29%, showing that resistance to the idea is extremely low.

Hypothesis 2: There is no clear uniform strategy on awareness of students about programmes and patterns of preventing violence among students in the selected schools. From the data in **Table 5**, there is an overwhelming preference for a combined approach which signals that the sampled schools do not have any mapped out strategy for curbing violence. From the data, 66.6% chose "All of the above" — the implication hinges on the fact that the majority of students interviewed believe that a multifaceted strategy (monitoring, policies, and punishment) could be most effective in checkmating violence. This indicates a strong public perception that violence is complex and requires a combination of strategies. The data also indicates that individual perception on solutions is less favoured. Significantly, Monitoring (12.3%), punishment (11.2%), and rules (7.1%) are each supported by smaller groups. From the data, there is clarity in acknowledging that students interviewed feel that no single method is sufficient alone. There is also a minimal perspective on dismissal of the problem of violence within the sampled schools. From the supporting data, only 2.8% of the interviewed students believe that no action is needed. This is a strong indicator that violence is widely perceived by the majority as a problem that needs intervention.

Hypothesis 3: Continuous exposure to violence without checkmating measures has culminated into a massive adoption of repression as a coping strategy to cover violent behaviour with underlying psychological effect on student victims. **Table 4** shows the student participants' awareness of different forms of violence with negative psychological consequences. The data collected has captured 'Repression/Burdened Tolerance' as the most common negative effect of unchecked violence among students. With the affirmed high response rate of 43.1%, we could perceive 'Repression/Burdened Tolerance' as the most frequently identified negative effect. This is also an indication that since there are no measures for control or curbing violence, many students choose to internalize their experiences rather than expressing or reporting them to higher authorities. The reason is not far-fetched, these students yearn for less intimidation or pain, complication or humiliation resulting from acts of school-

based violence. The consequences have a negative effect which encourages a hidden emotional burden (anxiety/fear), potentially affecting academic performance and long-term physical or emotional well-being. There are also many recognize multiple effects in **Table 4**. In the response given by the respondents, 24.7% chose “All of the above” which is an indication that their level of awareness on violence deeply impacts students in many negative ways — emotionally, academically, and behaviourally. The response also draws the fact that the respondents perceive violence as a multifaceted problem with no single dominant consequence. Notably, Poor academic performance (11.6%) and Unhappiness/Anxiety/Fear (10.7%) account for over 22% of responses, suggesting that students’ cognitive and emotional functioning are commonly affected when violence of any form is incubated. We cannot also deny the negative consequence in students’ response which encourages ‘abstinence’ from school with (8.3%) and ‘None of the above’ (1.6%), although they have lower visibility and acceptance rate. This could suggest that consistent violence, causes and encourages truancy which may not be a visible negative impact, but we insist that it is relevant and important to be addressed.

Hypothesis 4: The functionality of violence does not offer vivid exposure for victim protection within the school environment. The questions in Table 5 are analyzed using **proportions and frequencies** to understand the **need for measures and punishment of violence in schools**. From the respondents’ response, 66.6% are of the opinion that a comprehensive approach based on monitoring, adequate/ firm policies and punishment are very important in curbing violence. This reveals a strong resolution and support for adopting multiple measures. The fact that only 2.8% accepted that ‘no action’ is needed, shows an overwhelming agreement that something must be done—a decision which also indicates possible indecisiveness in a few respondents due to overwhelming nature of the questions or anxiety levels. Without the idea of “all of the above” in the response box, individual strategies such as monitoring, rules and punishment still got a combined 30.6% — reinforcing significant support for intervention of the lingering violence. Again, with the question in **Table 5**: ‘Should there be groups and laws to monitor, identify and punish violence perpetrators at school?’, we have clearly perceived a massive support of 92.5% response on “Strongly Agree + Agree” for the establishment of monitoring teams or groups and laws. This confirms the students’ desire for adequate change laced with ingrained systemic measures and legal backing. Notably, we noticed that a few students declined any support for law enforcements against perpetrators, hence, very small proportions (3.3%) on support for “disagree or strongly disagree”. From that, we perceive a minimal opposition without so much strength for argument.

Conclusion

This study has provided empirical facts of the survey on violence and repressed trauma in the selected mixed-community based secondary schools in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. It has been highlighted that violence and repressed trauma within school environments have become critical issues globally, particularly in developing regions where institutional support structures may be so limited or not in existence. Notably, we decipher that challenges are strongly marked in secondary schools, where adolescents are vulnerable, highly and easily influenced negatively. In Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria, students are increasingly exposed to various forms of violence—ranging from bullying and physical aggression to sexual harassment—leading to significant psychological and emotional consequences. A clear outcome of such exposure is repressive trauma or anxiety caused by different forms of violence. This is a subtle condition where student victims consciously or unconsciously suppressed traumatic memories or emotions, often resulting in long-term less or heightened mental health issues commonly visible as phobias for attendance, educational interest or continuous anxiety. This trauma can severely hinder students’ academic performance, social interactions, and emotional development. The normalization of violence within the school setting further exacerbates these problems, making it difficult for victims to seek help or for institutions to respond effectively. Notably, this study has explored the prevalence, causes, and consequences of violence and repressive trauma among students in selected secondary schools within Awka North. By identifying key factors contributing to the issue and evaluating current institutional responses, the paper seeks to propose effective, community-based strategies for prevention, intervention, and support.

This research has advocated and outlined the implication for policy makers and school authorities. From the data collected, there is a strong agreement among the interviewed students and this provides a good foundation for implementing mapped out policies for consideration such as school safety committees, anti-bullying laws, surveillance and reporting strategies, counselling and intervention programmes. The study also provides implications for social contexts because, the data reflects a high rising concern about violence in the selected schools due to increased rate of incidents, media attention and anxiety within the locality where the schools are located. The data collected further indicates that students demand and value behavioural accountability with active enforcement laced with constructive approach from law firms or legal groups. It is noted that the most common negative effect as perceived from the data collection is “internalized emotional” strain which has already affected 43.1% of the interviewed students. From the data, it is obvious that 1 in 4 believes that the outlined negative impacts are very common in secondary schools. This clearly shows the complexity of the layered damage violence has caused—a deep negative impact which goes beyond the physical to impinge on mental wellness, academic success or interest.

This study found violence and repressed trauma to be the major challenges in secondary schools surveyed in Awka North Local Government Area which should not be left uncurbed. The need for measures and punishment is revealed in the collective affirmation of “All- of –the-Above (66.6%) and “Strongly Agree” (62.1%) in the data collected. This indicates that most of the students have advocated for diverse institutionalized approach. No doubt, the data collected for this study has provided a clear perspective built on policy implementation, monitoring systems and punishment processes from the respondents with enforceable and sustainable structures.

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