

## INFLUENCE OF VIOLENCE ON MALE DROPOUT SYNDROME IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ORLU EDUCATION ZONE, IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The present study was carried out to determine the influence of aggression on male dropout syndrome in secondary schools in Orlu. The researcher posed three research questions and formulated a hypothesis to guide the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was made up of five thousand three hundred and fifty-five (5,355) male students in Junior Secondary School two (JSS2) while the sample constituted two hundred (200) male dropout students from three local governments areas: Njaba, Nkwere, Nwangele. Two instruments were employed in data collection namely, Aggressive Bachelor Questionnaire (ABQ) and School Dropout Rate Questionnaire (SDRQ). The instruments had a reliability index of 0.75 and 0.89 respectively. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics: to answer research questions while t-test of was used in testing hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that aggression among students was high, the rate of withdrawal of male students from secondary schools was high and that there was a strong support to show that aggression was the main reason why male students in JSS2 dropped out of school. By implication, the recent trend is likely to hamper educational development in Orlu Education zone. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that school authorities should improve in teaching ways to resist aggressive behaviour in secondary schools in order to abate the on-going withdrawal of male students.*

**Keywords:** *Aggression, Dropout, Syndrome, School, Discipline, Antisocial*

### Introduction

Orlu Education Zone occupies an enviable position in Imo State as the zone with the highest number of local governments (12), and with children within the age bracket of eleven to fourteen years (11-14). A survey carried out by the researcher from the records of Secondary School Management Board, Owerri (SCMB 2019) revealed that only sixteen thousand three hundred and fifty-eight (16,358) male students were enrolled in all the junior secondary

school classes in Orlu Education Zone, from JSS 1 – 3, in 2019 academic year. A further survey revealed that the number of male students who enrolled in 2019 from Njaba, Nkwere and Nwangele Local Government Areas were 480, 560 and 569 respectively. These three local government areas contributed only 7.5% of the total population of male students in Orlu education zone and only 1.4% of the total population of male (JSS1-3) students in Imo State (SSCMB, 2019).

Orlu Education Zone with the highest number of local government areas in Imo State and the number of children within the age bracket, expected to be in junior secondary school as at 2019 (Census 2018), should have increased this number on the enrollment of the students. The disappointment of Orlu Education Zone producing the highest number of male (JSS1-3) students in the year in question, is a negative impact in the drive to improve on the education of the male child in South East States of Nigeria. A possible explanation for this trend in low enrollment may be because of the inclination of the males to business and merchandise in the zone. However, Ogazi (2014) disagrees with the researcher's assumption. Drawing examples from other areas in South East States with similar trends, Nwaebo (2017) attributed the low enrolment strength of male students in junior secondary schools in South East Zone to insecurity and violence. Similar explanation was given by Atsau and Umaru (2015) on the impact of Boko Haram attacks in secondary schools in North East states of Bornu, Adamawa, Yobe, Gombe, Taraba and Bauchi states respectively.

While south eastern states may not have experienced full-blown aggression as in the case of Boko Haram insurgency, the reduced number of male children in junior secondary schools in Orlu education zone may be attributed to other forms of violence in school environment. Specifically, Bahago (2016) considered aggression as the possible reason for the low number of male children in secondary schools in Plateau State. Isolating every other variable, the present study may agree with Bahago's projections that aggression in school may be the reason for the low population of male students in JSS1-3 in Orlu Education zone.

Aggression is a complex social behaviour with multiple causes. It is a behavior characterized by strong self-assertion with hostile and harmful tones (Ogazi, 2014). Aggression is an abnormal, unproved or reactive behaviour. It may be a product of anger, confusion, discomfort, fear, over stimulation and tiredness. It can be physical, mental and verbal. There are two broad categories of

aggression which include hostile, effective or retaliator aggression and instrumental – predatory or goal-oriented aggression. These types of aggression present the predator in two ways: as having intent to harm or aimed at obtaining privilege or space with no deliberate intent to harm another person. The present study is delimited to hostile aggression where the predator has intent to harm another person; such as hitting, bullying, kicking or threatening to beat up someone. Relational aggression is a form of hostile aggression that damages another peer's relationships. Social exclusion or rumour-spreading is also evaluated in the present study as an aspect that may result in students abruptly ending their educational aspirations.

Relationally, aggressive students are hard to communicate with. They take advantage of every situation to foment problems and make victims suffer psychologically and physically. Aggression is a personality defect, with potential symptoms of a disease, disorder or conditions that interfere with thought processes. It may be orchestrated by brain tumours, dementia, post-traumatic stress disorder, Schizophrenia and any other personality disorder.

Aggression may be verbally directed to a victim as in the case of bullying (Agulanna, 2014). Aggressors label mates or spread malicious rumours aimed at dehumanizing victims. It eats deep into the emotional stability of victims hence, rendering them vulnerable to psychological discomfort, effective demobilization and disenchantment. It may not be physically observed but the victim is psychologically terrified. Victims may not seek help or counsel in order not to be labeled weak, inferior and unfit in the committee of mates. Aggression may have a permanent damage on victims' emotions leading to truancy, inordinate withdrawal behaviour, absenteeism and dropping out of school. It may result in a victim abusing drugs, challenging the predator (Eneremadu, 2010). Victims may also resort to cults for help in adverse situations.

Parents and care givers share in the adverse effects of aggression as their children may come home infuriated, downcast and displaced. Home climate is often challenged by aggressive victims, such as isolation from family conversation and interaction to avoid discussing their misfortune. Careful and watchful parents are quick to intervene while Laissez-faire and inattentive types, mope, while victims slid into depression. Intervention instances predict parents over reactions by withdrawing their children and wards from incident schools. At the extreme, withdrawal from secondary school metamorphoses

into a search for endeavours other than education. This may be the situation in Orlu Education Zone.

Aggression as a personality defect, with potential symptoms of a disease, disorder or condition and may interfere with thought processes. According to Akume Mayange and Vershima (2015) delinquency, which results from aggression may interfere adversely with career aspirations of students. Pronounced behaviour problem succeed incidence of aggression but many victims use a cover “defence mechanism” as adjustment strategy.

Adolescents who are victims of aggression at one time or the other may become socialized in violent behaviours. Anger and despondency accompanying victims may equally be transferred to parents or other children. It could blur aspiration, create confusion and result in crimes orchestrated by long period of bottled rage (Musa, Bwala and Danladi, 2019). Aggression is therefore a tool in the hands of miscreants to further delay the long dream of affordable education for all Nigerian children. The major concern of all school heads should be to ensure that admitted students stay in school until completion.

Dropping out of school is a serious problem because it denies individual students their fundamental human right to education. Etenga, Ikwen, Ukpabi and Abu (2014) opined that internationally, the individual right to education has been repeatedly affirmed in many treaties and conventions such as the 1948 convention on the right of the child and the 1999 world conference on education for all (UNESCO 2000). It is not only in Orlu Education Zone that the problem of dropping out of schools by students has gained endemic proportion, but it is an international phenomenon (Shadreck, 2013). Dropouts are students who withdraw from the school before completion or prematurely without being certificated (Ajaja 2012). Consequence of withdrawing out of school has social implications, such as: increased crime rates, mental depression; reduced intellectual potentials; limited economic and social wellbeing in future and manifold manifestation of transferred aggression to unborn children.

Orlu Education Zone is a case in hand on the consequences of students drooping out of school prematurely. There is high rate of crime, cultism, political thuggery, robbery and other social vices (Eejlivim 2018). Dropping out of school with its numerous consequences should be a concern of the public, stake holders in education and parents. It therefore means that dropout

is not a mere problem that affects or impacts individual, but it is a problem that affects the entire nation proved by Entenga, et al 2014). Understanding reason behind students dropping out of school is very important and a step toward mapping a remedial programme by concerned authorities. However, identifying the cause of dropping out of school is extremely difficult because conflicting findings have been published by different authors on reasons for students dropping out of school. Understanding the influence of aggression on students dropping out of school in Orlu education zone is the essence of this study.

No study has researched on the reason why areas such as Njaba, Nkwere and Nwangele local government areas should have only 220, 148 and 220 in Jss2 in all the juniors' secondary schools in the local governments. Additionally, why Orlu Education Zone with twelve local government areas should have only 16,358 male students in Jss1 to 3 is equally a concern to the researcher. These two stated reasons are the gaps the present study stand to fill. The continued appearance of school aged children hawking along streets when schools are in session is a source of worry. The sight of children within the age bracket of 13 to 15 years manning business outfits in popular markets in Orlu is equally a source of worry.

The present study was anchored on Leonard Berko wikz, "negative affect theory" the theory states that negative feelings or experiences are the main cause of anger and aggression. Frustration, pain, loud noise, foul odours and crowding may cause negative feelings. School environment in Orlu Education Zone epitomizes these factors of aggression such as overcrowded classrooms, location of schools near motor parks, market and noisy areas. Refuse dumps are common sights in public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone. Frustrations arising from incessant strike actions by teachers is prevalent in Orlu Education Zone. Corporal punishment is an aspect of disciplinary measures in secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone. These practices as enumerated above are endemic features that may result in aggression among students. The present study may help in stemming the high rate of dropout among students in south east states of Nigeria.

Education is the key to national development and youth discipline. Giving children sound education may help develop their potentials and guarantee self-reliance. Education is a process where a student is taken through series of guided instructions that end in certification. However, dropping out of school phenomenon presently observed among male students in Orlu Education Zone

may frustrate the objectives of the National Policy on Education, if students are not taken through the desired period of instruction. Consequently, the students are likely to end up as half-baked, unproductive and aggressive social nuisance, which may compound the inherent socio-economic challenges in society. The way out is to define areas in need in order to stem the present trend where male students in junior secondary school in Orlu Education Zone are unceremoniously dropping out of school.

The study was carried out in three local government areas in Orlu Education Zone with the purpose of determining the influence of aggression on dropout syndrome amongst male students in secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of aggression in public secondary school in Orlu Education Zone.
2. Determine the magnitude at which male students drop out of public secondary school in Orlu education zone.
3. Ascertain the relationship between aggression and dropout phenomena among male students in public secondary school in Orlu Education Zone.

Three research questions guided the study and they were:

1. What is the level of aggression in public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone?
2. What is the rate of dropout phenomenon among male students in Orlu Education Zone?
3. How does aggression encourage decision of male Jss2 students to drop out of school?

The researcher formulated a hypothesis that was tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between aggression and dropout phenomenon among male students in public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone.

### **Method**

The study employed a correlational survey. The design was considered suitable for the study because the researcher was interested to know whether aggression is associated with male dropout syndrome. The population of the

study was 13,358 male students in public junior secondary schools in Orlu education zone. The sample of the study was 200 Jss2 male students who had dropped out of school from the worst hit local governments of Njaba, Nkwere and Nwangela respectively. The sampling technique was purposive based on the fact that the area of interest was considered in sample selection.

The instruments used for data collection was a questionnaire titled Prevalence of Aggression Questionnaire'' (RAQ) and Dropout Phenomenon Questionnaire (DPQ) prevalence of aggression questionnaire (PAQ) has 10 items soliciting data on the aggression level in secondary schools in Njaba, Nkwere and Nwangele local government area of Imo state. The focus of this sector was to determine the nature of aggression, magnitude and direction.

Respondents were asked to respond on a 4-point Likert scale of ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree as follows: Strongly Agree = 4 points; Agree =3 point, Disagree = 2 points; Strongly Disagree =1 point. The responses for each section were calculated and expressed in mean value. The DPQ has 10 items soliciting data on the magnitude of dropout phenomenon in Orlu Education Zone. Similarly, respondents were asked to respond on a 4-point Likert scale Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted in Onuimo (Okigwe Education Zone) with a sample of fifty students who had dropped out of school in JSS3 the previous years. The pilot study was conducted to ensure usability, validity and reliability of the questionnaires. The instruments were face validated by three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Guidance Counselling. A pilot study enabled the researcher to determine the reliability of the research instruments, using Cronbach Alpha, which gave the coefficients of 0.69 and 0.76, respectively. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, whereas the hypothesis was tested using the t-test to test the significance of the mean differences.

The research was conducted in Njaba, Nkwere and Nwangele Local Government Areas of Orlu Education Zone. Information about students who had dropped out of school was provided by the school authorities and class teachers using past class registers. The researcher explained the reason for the study to participants. After the explanation, the instruments were administered to them. Data collection lasted for two months since the participants were not in a particular location. A mean of 2.5 and above was regarded as high aggressive behaviour, and below this cut-off point, it was taken as low aggressive behaviour. The hypothesis was analysed through t-test statistics.

**Results****Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation on level of aggression in public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone.**

S/N	Item Statement	N	SA	A	D	SD	EFX	X	SD
1	Cases of aggression were reported Daily in secondary schools	200	70	80	10	40	580	2.90	0.65
2	There were many cases of students being bullied	200	90	80	20	10	550	2.75	0.81
3	Students go home in groups to avoid attacks from mates after school.	200	80	50	30	40	570	2.85	0.84
4	Fighting was rampant in school Premises	200	90	60	20	30	610	3.05	0.76
5	Over grown grasses in school compound are left for students who verbally insult mates.	200	100	40	20	40	600	3.00	0.62
6	Cases of labeling were rampant in my school	200	100	60	20	20	610	3.05	0.54
7	Many students were in cult groups	200	50	60	30	60	500	2.5	0.70
8	Class prefects (monitors) were regularly beaten up for writing & Submitting names of noise makers to form masters	200	70	60	40	30	570	2.85	0.71
9	I disliked the company of my school mates because they were wicked.	200	90	60	20	30	610	3.05	0.61
10	P.T.A meetings were held monthly in my school because of many cases of bullying and fighting among students.	200	80	70	20	30	600	3.0	0.79
<b>Cluster Mean</b>								<b>2.90</b>	<b>0.70</b>



Data on table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the responses on aggression related behaviours in secondary schools in Njaba, Nkwere and Nwangele Local Government areas in Orlu Education Zone. The cluster mean scores is 2.90 and standard deviation score is 0.70. The cluster mean is well above the criteria value which is the basis for judgment. These show high incidences of aggressive behaviours in secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone. The even distribution of standard deviation reflected in the little margin amongst standard deviation scores.

**Table 2: Mean Scores and standard deviation scores on the rate of dropout among male students in Orlu Education Zones.**

S/ N	Item statement	N	SA	A	D	SD	EFX	X	SD
Dropout phenomenon in Orlu Education zone is									
1	A product of increased violence in schools	200	80	70	30	20	610	3.05	0.60
2	Caused by rampant cases of bullying among students.	200	90	40	20	40	560	2.80	0.70
3	Because antisocial behaviours were not seriously tackled by administration.	200	100	50	20	30	610	3.05	0.78
4	Caused by rampant cases of verbal attack and labeling among students	200	100	60	20	20	640	3.20	0.65
5	Because discipline is not enforced in Public secondary schools	200	90	60	20	30	610	3.05	0.61
6	Because weak students are not Adequately protected	200	80	60	20	40	580	2.90	0.82

7	Because physical insecurity is on the increase with cultists rampaging School environments	200	100	70	20	10	660	3.30	0.85
8	Caused by weak parenting where children are not adequately trained to be responsible.	200	100	80	10	10	670	3.35	0.67
9	Caused by massive aggressive behavior among male students	200	100	80	10	10	670	3.35	0.69
10	Because fighting in schools is rampant creating fear in weak students	200	90	70	30	30	660	3.30	0.85
<b>Cluster Mean</b>								<b>3.14</b>	<b>0.72</b>

Data on table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of responses on male dropout phenomenon on Orlu education zones (Njaba, Nkwere, Nwangele). The cluster mean is 3.14 and standard deviation, 0.72. The cluster mean is well above the criterion value (2.5) which is the basis for decision. Cluster mean score of 3.14 signifies high rate of dropout phenomenon among male students in Orlu education zone. Fairly even distribution of standard deviation scores represent consistency in responses from students who dropped out of school few years back.

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on How Aggression Encouraged Dropout Phenomenon Among Male Students in Orlu Education Zone**

S/ N	Item statement	N	SA	A	D	SD	EFX	X	SD
Dropout of male students has been encouraged									
1	Through massive bullying activities in secondary schools	200	90	90	10	10	660	3.30	0.65
2	By unabated indiscipline among male students	200	70	90	20	20	610	3.05	0.71
3	Through violent behaviours of male students.	200	80	70	30	20	610	3.05	0.71
4	Through cult activities in secondary Schools	200	70	60	20	50	550	2.75	0.63
5	Through bodily harm on weak students	200	60	60	40	40	540	2.70	0.72
6	Because schools administrators are weak in tackling aggression.	200	90	70	20	20	630	3.10	0.82
7	Through physical insecurity propagated by host communities	200	90	80	20	10	650	3.25	0.70
8	Because weak students are not Protected thus exposing them to danger	200	70	60	30	40	560	2.80	0.74
9	Because some students label the Personality of others	200	70	60	20	50	550	2.75	0.64
10	Because some students are beaten up in school without	200	80	70	20	30	600	3.00	0.84
<b>Cluster mean</b>								<b>2.98</b>	<b>0.623</b>

Data on table 3 shows the mean scores and standard deviation of responses on how aggression encouraged male dropout from secondary schools in Orlu education zone. The cluster mean is 2.98 and standard deviation score 0.623. The cluster mean is more than the criterion mean of 2.5. Therefore, aggression substantially promoted male dropouts from secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone. The consistency in responses pattern was explained in the even distribution of the standard deviation scores.

**Table 4: t-test of significance of the relationship between aggression Mean and Dropout phenomenon Mean among students**

Variables	N	Mean	Std Dev.	R	L.S	df	tcal	t-crit	Dis
Aggression	200	2.98	0.623	0.67	0.05	198	2.80	1.960	Sig
Dropout Phenomenon		3.05	0.740						

Data in table 4 shows the mean scores on aggression and dropout phenomenon and the Standard Deviation scores were also presented. The table shows a calculated “t” value of 2.80 (tcal) and table value of 1.96 (t-crit). In comparison, tcal = 2.80 is greater than t-crit = 1.96. Hence, the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference the means of the aggression and dropout phenomenon among JSS2 students in secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone.

### **Discussion**

The finding of research question one shows that the level of aggression in public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone was high. This shows that aggressive behaviours were practised extensively in public secondary schools. The reason for the present finding was inferred from the responses received from the respondents, which revealed that school authorities were weak in enforcing discipline in public secondary schools. Secondly, parents were unable to give their children adequate and proper home training, which resulted to increase in anti-social behaviours. Consequent upon this, the weak and responsible students tend to be frustrated to the point of dropping out of schools. This finding is supported by Eteng, Ikwen, Ukpabi and Abu (2014) whose findings revealed association between high rate of dropout of secondary school students in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State and school factor (indiscipline). In agreement with the finding of the present study

is also Ogazi (2014) whose findings revealed that secondary school students in South East experienced physical and domestic violence that affected them psychologically. However, Jon riles, McDonald, Norwood & Ezell (2001) disagreed with the finding of the present study. The contrasting finding was carried out in Europe where school discipline is highly promoted. There, aggressive behaviours are countered by government policies and administrative prowess which are lacking in Nigerian Secondary Schools.

The finding of research question two shows very high and unabated male dropout rate in secondary schools in Orlu Education zone, which was exacerbated by the inability of the school principals in Orlu Education Zone to effectively counter or tackle anti-social behaviours among the students. Other reasons for high rate of male school dropout may be as a result of increasing rate of unemployment in Imo State. Male students may have decided to pursue entrepreneurial ventures or apprenticeship since many university graduates are still roaming the streets unemployed. However, Orlu's case is peculiar as similar withdrawal syndrome was not observed in other education zones (SSMB, 2020) in Imo State. The finding of the present study is supported by Leas and Methor cited in Okoye and Aguanunu (2013), whose finding revealed that depression and frustration might result in risk-taking behaviour such as leaving school without questioning what the future holds.

Furthermore, the finding of the study was also supported by Dibia and Ajoku (2020) whose study revealed that students who felt insecure in school environment opted for suicide or running away from school. On the contrary, the findings by Okoye, Nwogu and Okereke (2015) showed that parental support fostered the emotional stability of in-school adolescents. Fear has always been the reason for sudden decision of male students to drop out of school. The reason for the contrasting findings would have been due to resilience and perseverance exuded by subjects in Okoye et al (2012) study. Students with resilient behaviour may refuse to leave school even when bullied or subjected to aggression by mates in the school environment.

The finding of the third research question reveals that aggression was the reason male students dropped out of school. This finding reveals that aggression in school environment had a negative impact, therefore, prevented male students from completing their education in secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone. The reason for the present finding could be attributed to absence of resilient behaviour among the students, and the lackadaisical

attitude of school administration in tackling violence, aggression and insecurity of any sort in the school environment.

Students develop emotional conflicts when exposed to any form of insecurity. In agreement with this, the findings by Ogazi's (2014) revealed that violence, aggression and delinquency psychologically impacted on students' wellbeing in Secondary Schools in Abia State. Further support for the finding of the present study came from Nwaoba, (2018) whose finding revealed that students felt challenged, depressed, disturbed, disillusioned and anxious when faced with aggression. Adene, Offordille, Ojonugwa an'd Ugbo (2019) however, had a contrasting view. Their finding revealed that task persistence and resilience improved students' adjustment in the school environment. It is evident that contrasting result would have been due to positive emotions exhibited by the subjects in the study. Resilience and perseverance are behaviours that may counter activities of bullies, aggressors and violent students in the school environment. These behaviours therefore, should be encouraged to check dropout syndrome amongst male students in Orlu Education Zone.

### **Conclusion Recommendations**

The study concludes that aggression has much influence on male dropout syndrome experienced in Orlu Education Zone. There is also a significant difference between aggression and dropout phenomenon amongst junior secondary school students, which shows that aggression significantly promoted dropout syndrome among male students in Orlu Education Zone.

### **Recommendations**

1. The present study only ex-rayed aggression in public secondary schools delimiting the study to public secondary schools alone may have compromised what was obtainable in private secondary schools where discipline seems to be improving. Therefore, a further study is necessary in private junior secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone to get a better picture of dropout phenomenon.
2. The three local government areas: Njaba, Nkwere, Nwangele should also be used in the study for a conclusive statement on the state of affairs in relation to male dropout syndrome in Orlu Education Zone.
3. Parents should give good home training to their male children.

4. School authorities should pay adequate attention to male students' behaviours in school.
5. Government should provide adequate recreational facilities in schools for the students to play and relax.
6. School guidance Counsellors should be responsive to their duties to avert any misbehaviours in schools.

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