

**ASSESSMENT OF PARENT-CHILD ATTACHMENT AND CHILD NEGLECT LEVEL AS CORRELATES OF
STUDENTS' AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM
NORTH-WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess parent-child attachment and child neglect level as correlates of students' aggressive behaviour in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. The target population for the study comprises all 19,162 senior secondary school II students in all 87 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District during the 2017-2018 academic year. The sample of the study was 1,894 senior secondary II students selected randomly in multi-stages using a coin toss. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Parent-Child Relationship and Student Aggressive Behavior Questionnaire (PRASABQ)." To determine the reliability of the instrument, parent-child relationship, and students' aggressive behaviour questionnaire (PRASABQ), the researcher administered the instrument to 30 secondary school II (SS2) students drawn from the population who did not participate in the final study, and the reliability coefficient of .87 was obtained. The instrument was therefore regarded as reliable and good for the study since the coefficient was high. The r-value of the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) was used for answering the research questions by comparing the values with the scale of correlation, while the r-value was also used for testing the hypotheses by comparing it with the r-critical value. The entire hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance. It was discovered in the study that if the parent-child relationship is not secure, the child reacts badly to the parent's absence, which later on will lead to future anxiety, which is a major aspect of aggressive behaviour. Finally, it was concluded in the study that there is a significant relationship between parent-child attachment, child neglect, and students' aggressive behaviour in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District. One of the recommendations made was that government agencies, non-governmental organisations, churches, and schools should organize seminars and workshops to encourage parents to form a secure attachment with their children from childhood and treat them with love and care by providing the basic needs of life such as food, shelter, medical care, education, and supervision.

KEYWORDS: Parent-Child Attachment, Child Neglect Level, Students' Aggressive Behaviour, Public Secondary Schools, and Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

Introduction

A child that is sent to school by the parents is expected to learn patterns of behaviour that are accepted in both the school environment and society in general. Each child has a different background, which shows in his or her behaviour and performance at school. Most of the child's abilities depends to a large extent on his or her parental influence. Because of this, when students come together in the school environment, different kinds of behaviour are observed. Some students' behaviour affects their interactions with both other students and teachers. Education is the bedrock of any nation's development. Therefore, education is an instrument for reconstructing the state of a child's behaviour. It is believed that the parent-child relationship goes a long way in shaping a child's behaviour because children learn from observation, imitation, and picking role models that they can learn from. Kinger (2002) ascertained that the training of self-discipline begins in the home. Family heads ought to assist the children in developing characters for effective social interaction and effective academic performance. parents are not supposed to leave their children to an uncontrollable independence that could lead to various anti- social behaviour.

According to Moges and Weber (2014), most parents perceive care giving for to be just caring for a child's physical need like changing diapers and feeding the child. However, parenting goes beyond the requirements for meeting the child's basic survival needs. Parents have a significant influence on how children turn out, including their personal emotional development and behavioural habits, as well as a host of other factors. It is important for the overall development of a child that parents be present enough and provide a support system; this support fosters confidence and growth in many areas. Just being physically present is not enough. Some parents are nearby but are not emotionally interested or responsive enough to raise children who are more distressed and less engaged with their play or activities. Moges and Weber opined that there is a connection between a parent's investment and a child's emotional competence and regulation.

Parent-child attachment is one of the most important aspects of the parent-child relationship (Pichugin, 2014). Parent-child relationships can be maintained based on a strong foundation of attachment. Child neglect and physical abuse, in most cases, can be understood as problems in the parent-child relationship (Valentino, 2017). Child neglect can also affect parent-child relationships in that, a child who is neglected will often suffer from other forms of abuse as well. Child neglect is failure to provide a child's basic needs and it has the most common serious long-term damage. Reuters (2016) identified different forms of child neglect, which are physical neglect, educational neglect, psychological or emotional neglect, and medical neglect.

Child physical abuse is a factor in the parent-child relationship which involves deliberately hurting a child, causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns, and cuts. It is not accidental that children who are physically abused suffer violence such as being hit, kicked, poisoned, burned, slapped, or having objects thrown at them (Reuters, 2016). In essence, parents are expected to provide appropriate guidance to enable their children to build and develop positive moral behaviours that will enable them to socialise well in the school environment.

Statement of Problem

Children tend to perceive the world through their parents, and as they grow older, they do not only learn what and how their parents want them to learn; rather, they take their parents as role models, and every learning, reaction, or behaviour depends on what they have observed from their parents or caregivers. In as much as parents have tried to live an exemplary life worthy of emulation, they tend to lack the understanding that the quality of relationship that exists between them and their children could cause serious behavioural challenges in the observing child. Some parents have left their children in the hands of housekeepers, foster mothers, and relatives because they are too busy with their jobs and businesses in such a way that the child gets to form an attachment with a total stranger rather than the parents. It is in this regard that this study is carried out to expound on the relationship that exists between parent-child relationships and students' aggression.

Purpose of the Study

The following objectives were formulated for the study:

1. To determine the relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour in Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom North – West Senatorial District.
2. To ascertain the relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour in Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom North – West Senatorial District.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What relationship exists between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour in Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom North – West Senatorial District?
2. How does child neglect relate with students' aggressive behaviour in Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom North – West Senatorial District?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour in Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom North –West Senatorial District.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour in Public Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom North – West Senatorial District.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Parent-Child Relationship

Parent-child relationships refer to the unique and enduring bond between a carer and his or her child. It involves the way parents interact with their children either physically, emotionally, or socially (Dance-Schissel, 2017). The parent-child relationship is often considered to be the most enduring and significant relationship in one's life. It consists of a combination of behaviours, feelings, and expectations that are unique to a particular parent and a particular child. The relationship involves the full extent of a child's development (Singh, 2017). Parents are usually the first people a child learns to trust. Parents and family members are the most important people in a child's life. Out of the many different relationships people form over the course of their lifespan, the relationship between parent and child is among the most important. Singh pointed out the characteristics of a healthy parent-child relationship, which are flexible/adaptable, connected, appropriate boundaries, open communication, and discipline.

- i. **Flexible / Adaptable:** Good parents must be flexible and adaptable. They should have the ability to recognize and accommodate the child's needs. They should be able to help the child by giving clear directions and offering opportunities for negotiation.
- ii. **Connected:** Parents should have the ability to differentiate the child's worth from his or her behaviour and create a reward-oriented environment in which consequences have a positive outcome, and respond to a child's problems or feelings.
- iii. **Appropriate Boundaries:** The parent-child relationship includes various boundaries. Healthy boundaries consider what the parent and the child want in a positive way to find a mutually agreeable solution or limit.
- iv. **Open Communication:** The way the parent and the child communicate can set the tone for the relationship. The healthy parent-child relationship uses positive communication that separates the child's worth from behaviour.
- v. **Discipline:** For healthy relationships, discipline is also a very important aspect. Rather than punishing children in an attempt to teach, it is preferable to find solutions to conflicts and behavioural problems in order to encourage strong relationships.

Dance-Schissel (2017) pointed out four types of parenting styles that will help one to further understand the parent-child relationship. (i) Authoritarian parenting style: This might be compared to that of dictators because they are very strict and make the rules without regard for the child's needs or feelings. It is either way or the highway. (ii) Authoritative parenting style: Authoritative parents also have rules, but they listen to and respect the needs of their children. This is a form of mutual exchange where both parties' opinions matter. (iii) Permissive parenting style: Here, parents allow their children to be in control and set the rules. (iv) Neglectful parenting style: Parents in this group are uninvolved with their children altogether. They are not concerned with their children's affairs. The child has to make decisions for himself.

Children of authoritarian parents tend to be more fearful and more likely to rebel as teenagers, often leaving home as soon as they are able to. The children that are raised in this type of home tend to have a bad kind of relationship with their parents. On the other hand, children with authoritative parents tend to be more popular with peers and are generally happier and more successful in life because they have a good relationship with their parents.

Permissive and neglectful parenting styles may lead to immaturity, loneliness, and depression in adulthood. (Dance-Schissel, 2017). There are different types of attachment relationships that can be put into different categories. These categories can describe children's relationships with both parents and child care providers. According to Magana et al. (2013), research has found that at least four relationship categories exist. The categories describe the ways that children act and the ways that adults act with children. The strongest kind of relationship is called "secure." The manner in which a parent or care-giver responds to a child may lead to one of the four kinds of relationship categories. The way a child is attached to his parents also affects how he will behave around others when the parents are not around.

- i. **Secure Relationship:** This is the strongest type of relationship. A child in this category feels he can depend on his parents or provider. The child already knows that the parent will be there when he needs support, and he knows what to expect at any time. This secure child usually plays well with other children of his age. A secure, attached child is one who has learned that he can rely on special adults around him to be there for him. He knows that if he ever needs anything, someone will be there to provide for him. A child who believes this can then learn other things.
- ii. **Avoidant Relationship:** This is one category of relationship that is not secured. Avoidant children once they realize that depending on parents will not get them the secured feelings needed; they try to learn other ways of taking care of themselves. Avoidant children may seem too independent. They do not often speak out and ask for help, but they easily get fed up and frustrated with issues. They may not be able to play along with other children of their age and may be aggressive due to their circumstances. They do not mind if their parents are around or not because, when the parents are around, it seems the parents are ignoring them. On the other hand, avoidant parents respond to their children's needs, but it usually takes a while to do so. These parents feed their child only when the child has waited for the food for a long time. The child gets used to not having his needs met, so he learns to take care of himself.
- iii. **Ambivalent Relationship:** Ambivalence (not being completely sure of something) is another way a child may be insecurely attached to his parents. Children who are ambivalent have learned that sometimes their needs are met and sometimes they are not. They know the type of behaviour that got their parents' attention in the past and try to use it over and over. They are always looking for that feeling of security that they get sometimes. Ambivalent children tend to be too clingy, act mostly younger than their age, and seem overly emotional. They usually get frustrated easily and seek much adult attention using baby- talk.

- iv. **Disorganized Relationship:** Disorganized children do not really know what to expect from their parents. Children from other kinds of relationships have organized attachment because they have learned ways to get what they want even if it is not the best approach, but disorganized children do not. They do things that seem to make no sense; they speak really fast, and it is hard to understand what they are saying. They seem very hard to understand and may seem different from day to day. There are two types of disorganized attachment.
 - i. **Controlling-Disorganized:** Children who are controlling tend to be extremely bossy with their friends.
 - ii. **Caregiving-Disorganized:** Children who are care giving might treat other children in a childish way and act like the parents.

A parent-child relationship may look disorganized when a family is going through a major change (for example, a divorce, a death in the family, or a move), but this can only last for a short while. Permissive (indulgent) parents have little to or control over the behaviour of their children. Children of permissive parents may be disrespectful, disobedient, aggressive, irresponsible, and deviant. They are insecure because they lack guidelines to direct their behavior.

Concept of Students' Aggressive Behaviours

Aggressive behaviour is common among secondary school students currently. In fact, it has become one of the most troublesome issues in the school system. Aggressive behaviour is a behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm to others, or threatens to. (Lind, 2017). It can range from verbal abuse to the destruction of a victim's personal property. Children with aggressive behaviour tend to be irritable, impulsive, and restless. According to Lind, aggressive behaviour is intentional, meaning it is done on purpose to violate social norms and cause a breakdown in a relationship. Research has shown that emotional problems are the most common cause of aggressive behaviour. Robertson et al. (2012) opined that aggressive behaviour is frequently preceded by feelings of anger more than any other emotion. Individuals with high traits of anger are prone to be more aggressive in their behaviour across a number of domains, particularly following provocation (Wikowski and Robinson, 2010). Violent and bullying behaviours are some of the outcomes which can be interpreted as aggressive behaviour and sometimes functions as aggressive behaviours (Zirpoli, 2014). These functions include power and control, affiliation, escape, gaining attention, and self-gratification. Although there is no globally accepted definition of "aggressive behavior," some consensus seems to exist that aggressive behaviour is meant either to injure another, to gain something for the aggressor, or to result in both injury and extraneous gains. Aggressive behavior, according to Zirpoli, refers to those behaviours, verbal, nonverbal, or physical, that injure another indirectly or directly and/or result in extraneous gains for the aggressor. When students exhibit a high level of aggression, it makes people around them feel uncomfortable. In addition, even their parents and teachers are worried about the behaviour of these children. Thus, certain questions come to mind, for example, what is the problem? Why is the child behaving in this manner? What is contributing to and maintaining the aggressive behaviour?

Children with aggressive behaviour show distress, are upset, and are often hard to pacify. It is difficult to soothe them and assist them in managing their behaviours. This

behaviour constitutes problems for the aggressive child. The child is often written off as "naughty" or "bad" and is punished. A child who is aggressive may be argumentative and verbally aggressive. The aggressive child may have difficulties controlling his or her temper and may be easily upset and annoyed by others. The aggressive child may appear angry and always resentful. Some children are verbally aggressive, they call others names, threaten and tease them or they use emotional control to victimize and push other children around. Sometimes, they even ostracize and spread rumours about their victims. Children may not behave aggressively because they are "naughty" or "bad." Their aggressive behaviour may result from social experiences or relationship traumas (O'Connor, 2014). A child's aggressive behaviour may be traced back to the home that the child grew up in or is coming from. Parenting characteristics and parenting practices may bring out negative behaviours in a child because the parent-child relationship is essential to the character development of the child.

O'Conner (2014) noted that aggressively behaved children cause a lot of distress to others. They may be argumentative and verbally aggressive; they may have difficulty in controlling their temper and are easily upset and annoyed by others. They are often defiant and may appear angry and resentful. Their aggressive behaviour can disrupt lessons in school and hurt, intimidate, and frighten others. O'Conner explained that some children exhibit aggressive behaviours that are less extreme or problematic but still worrisome. They may slap or poke other children or pinch them. While some children throw small objects or bang and break things when they are angry or upset. Others have temper tantrums and kick or scream. Some children are verbally aggressive. They call others names, threaten and tease them or they use emotional control to victimize and push other children around, they might also ostracize and spread rumours about others.

Parent-Child Attachment and Students' Aggressive Behaviour

Attachment is one of the most widely accepted and empirically supported parenting theories. Attachment is one specific aspect of the relationship between a child and a parent, with its purpose being to make a child feel safe, secure, and protected. According to Benoit (2004), attachment is distinguished from other aspects of parenting such as disciplining, entertaining, and teaching. Parents play many different roles in the lives of their children, including teacher, playmate, disciplinarian, caregiver, and attachment figure. Benoit confirmed that of all these roles that parents play, their role as an attachment figure is one of the most important in predicting the child's later social and emotional outcome. The author further explained that attachment is where the child uses the primary caregiver as a secure base from which he explores, and, when necessary, as a heaven of safety and a source of comfort. Maccoby and Martin (2003) opined that the parent-infant bond is seemingly established and initiated by a primary care giver, often the mother. However, along with sensory motor development, the infant's ability to influence adult behaviour is enlarged in a more interactive sense. Once an interaction is embedded, two parties are connected more closely. As the infant enters toddlerhood and childhood, the reciprocal interaction becomes more salient. Research has shown that parental warmth and attachment may reduce the negative effects of stress and promote adaptive functioning in children (Gamezey, 2013). Conversely, insecure attachment has been identified as a risk factor that interacts with other factors within the family and the child to increase the likelihood of a childhood behaviour problem (Greenbery and Speltz, 2014). Paczkowski (2013) pointed out that children with insecure attachments are likely to believe that the people in their lives will not meet their needs. Basyouni (2018) ascertains that

attachment is essential for growth because the child's attachment to a parent affects one's future and relationships with others. Cassidy and Shaver (2008) argued that when initial attachment is lacking, such children do not develop the ability to form and maintain relationships. They grow up lacking the ability to trust that others will take care of them and that the world is a safe place. When children do not have a secure attachment, they grow up to be vigilant because they already have the opinion that they can look out for their own safety without relying on other people to do so. Ranson and Unrichuk (2006) revealed that there is substantial evidence that children with secure attachments in childhood develop more positive social-emotional competence, cognitive functioning, physical health, and mental health, whereas children with insecure attachments are at risk for negative outcomes.

Toth and Cicchetti (2007) proposed a similar idea, claiming that a "maladaptive pathway" may link early attachment to the development of negative models of relationship figures in later childhood. Bibi and Prem (2017) were of the opinion that the quality of attachment in early childhood has implications for children's future personalities. Early social interactions with an attachment figure shape children's cognitive and social development, sense of self, and their future attitudes and behaviours. It will affect their peer relationships in many respects. Individuals from insecure attachment relationships may lack effective emotional regulation strategies, as this is often developed primarily in the context of parent-child relationships. This deficit may result in engagement in externalizing behaviours in the face of overwhelming emotions (Golder et al., 2005; Burk and Burkhart, 2003). Among the many different relationships individuals form during their lives, that between mother and child is the most important. This relationship will mediate mother-child attachment. Mokhtar (2007) pointed out that research has demonstrated that upon birth, infants are far more competent, social, responsive, and able to make sense of their environment than one could have ever imagined. The infant is no longer regarded as passive, responding only to stimuli (Fantz, 2013). It is important to realize that a child can only be competent in the context of a relationship. Therefore, a child is born expecting a competent caregiver to pay attention to and care for him or her. A child who has developed a secure attachment with his or her caregiver tends to grow up with a positive image of himself or herself. (Elicker et al., 2002; Verschuere et al., 2015). According to Liable et al. (2000), in the adolescent years, the child begins to transfer the attachment behaviour learned in childhood to social situations and peer groups. Perceptions and experiences with perception become integrated into a person's verbal and non-verbal emotional reactions, thoughts, and behaviours across age as well as culture (Waters and Cummings, 2000). In essence, the individual bases all of the experiences of childhood and accommodates the new situations of adulthood. Mullies et al. (2015) add that an adolescent's attachment to friends will reflect the bonds formed with parents. Adolescence is a time of self-discovery when attachment is important for coping with negative situations and threats to oneself (Torquati and Vazsonyi, 2014). Kestenbaum et al. (2013) suggest that both the quality of care and the security of attachment affect children's later capacities of empathy, emotional regulation, cognitive development, and behavioural control. These adaptive capacities seem to be the outcome of a secure attachment. If the attachment is not secure, the infant reacts badly to the mother's absence (Stovall, 2000). This will lead to future anxiety, which is a major aspect of aggressive behaviour.

Child Neglect and Students' Aggressive Behaviour

Honor (2014) described neglect as a neglected form of child maltreatment and said it was the most common and deadliest form of child maltreatment. The World Health Organization (WHO, 1999) defined neglect as the failure to provide for the development of the child in all spheres: health, education, emotional development, nutrition, shelter, and safe living conditions. Child neglect is a form of child abuse and is a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs, including the failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition, and housing, as well as their physical, emotional, social, educational, and safety needs. Tracy (2012) opined that the most obvious sign of child neglect is when the child admits that there is no one at home to care for him or her or that he or she does not know where his parents are.

Johnson (2012:14) listed out other forms of child neglect:

- i. Allowing the child to witness violence or severe abuse between parents or adults.
- ii. Ignoring, insulting or threatening the child with violence.
- iii. Not providing the child with safe environment and adult emotional support.
- iv. Showing reckless disregard for the child's well-being.

According to Howe (2011), when a child is neglected, he usually does not have a good relationship or bond with his parents. A psychologist would describe this as poor attachment. The relationship or bond between children and their primary caregiver usually mum or dad or sometimes another member of the family is described by the attachment theory. Neglect can significantly alter the way a child's brain works. This can lead to an increased risk of depression in later life, as well as dissassociative disorders and memory impairments. Changes in the brain caused by neglect have also been linked to panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2009). Early child neglect may be as important as child abuse for predicting aggressive behaviour. Neglect accounts for nearly two-thirds of all child maltreatment (University of North Carolina, 2008).

Reuters (2016:25) identified different forms of child neglect which are;

- **Physical Neglect:** The most common form of neglect involves the failure of a caregiver to provide for the basic physical needs of the child, such as food, shelter, clothing, and even sanitary living conditions.
- **Educational Neglect:** Occurs when the caregiver does not enroll the child in school or otherwise encourages or allows the child not to attain school.
- **Psychological or Emotional Neglect:** includes a wide variety of behaviours such as humiliation, insult, failure to provide psychological care, a lack of affection, ignoring the child's basic attention needs, and threatening serious punishment. Another instance of emotional neglect is isolating behaviour (not allowing the child to form relationships with other children and adults) and encouraging the child to use drugs and alcohol.

- **Medical Neglect:** implies failure to provide needed medical care, either by delaying or outright denying the child the opportunity for treatment.

According to Nauert (2015), emerging research suggests that parents who chronically neglect their children increase the chance that the child will develop aggression and delinquency in adolescence. While neglect can include many different aspects, a study at the University of Buffalo examined two areas: a failure to provide for a child's basic needs and a lack of adequate supervision. Investigators discovered a failure to provide, which includes food, shelter, and clothing, was the key aspect of neglect linked to later aggression and delinquency. Research has also found that a lack of adequate supervision did not lead to the same outcome, even after accounting for the contributions of other forms of maltreatment. Hussey (2008) found out that children who are neglected before their second birthday display higher levels of aggressive behaviour between ages 4 and 8. The author said that a child was considered neglected if his parents or caregiver did not provide adequate supervision or failed to meet the child's minimum physical needs for food, clothing, and shelter. The researcher reported that aggression exhibited during this period included arguing, cruelty to others, destruction of property, disobedience, threatening people, and fighting or physically attacking others.

Empirical Review

Irozuru and Eno (2015) investigated home environments and aggressive behaviour among secondary school students. A sample of 600 students was randomly selected using the simple random sampling technique. The null hypotheses were tested using independent t-test analyses. The results of the study showed that family size, family structure, and family type significantly influenced students' aggressive behaviour. Irozuru and Eno concluded their findings by finding that family size, family structure, and family type significantly influence students' aggressive behaviour. Based on their findings, recommendations were made that parents should be encouraged to maintain a small family size that they are more likely to be able to cater for. Parents should also be encouraged to live together as partners and show love and concern for their children. The study confirmed that children learn through observation, and the manner in which parents communicate with their children can bring out aggressive behaviour in the observing child. While this work examines the influences of home environment factors as they affect students' behaviour, the present study examines factors of the parent-child relationship as they relate to students' aggressive behaviour.

McKee et al. (2007) investigated harsh verbal and physical discipline and child problem behaviours in a community sample of 2,582 parents and their fifth and sixth grade children. Participants were recruited from paediatric practices, and both parents and children completed questionnaire packets. The findings indicated that boys received more harsh verbal and physical discipline than girls, with fathers utilizing more harsh physical discipline with boys than mothers did. Both types of harsh discipline were uniquely associated with child behaviour problems after positive parenting was taken into account. Child gender did not moderate the findings, but one dimension of positive parenting (that is, parental warmth) served to buffer children from the detrimental influence of harsh physical punishment. The study is related to the fifth sub-variable of the present study in that it further explains how harsh discipline could bring out undesirable behaviours in children.

Methodology

A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District. The district is made up of 10 LGAs, namely, Ikot Ekpene, Essien Udim, Obot Akara, Ikono, Ini, Abak, Etim Ekpo, Oruk Anam, Ukanafun, and Ika. The target population for the study comprises all 19,162 senior secondary school II students in all 87 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District during the 2017–2018 academic year. The sample of the study was 1,894 senior secondary II students selected randomly in multi-stages using a coin toss. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Parent-Child Relationship and Student Aggressive Behavior Questionnaire (PRASABQ)." To ensure face validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were given to three experts, one in measurement and evaluation and two in sociology, for both face and content validity. To determine the reliability of the instrument, parent-child relationship, and students' aggressive behaviour questionnaire (PRASABQ), the researcher administered the instrument to 30 secondary school II (SS2) students drawn from the population who did not participate in the final study. The opinions on the questionnaire were on a scale of "strongly agree" (SA), "agree" (A), "disagree" (D), and "strongly disagree" (SD), so the data obtained was subjected to Cronbach's alpha statistic. For the instrument, a reliability coefficient of .87 was obtained. The instrument was therefore regarded as reliable and good for the study since the coefficient was high. The r-value of the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) was used for answering the research questions by comparing the values with the scale of correlation, while the r-value was also used for testing the hypotheses by comparing it with the r-critical value. The entire hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance.

Results and Data Analysis

Research Question One: What relationship exists between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour?

Table 1: The result of the relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour (N=1894)

| Variables | ΣX | ΣX^2 | ΣXY | r-value |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| | ΣY | ΣY^2 | | |
| Parent-child attachment | 21872 | 301264 | 888166 | 0.69 |
| Students' aggressive behaviour | 70469 | 2858811 | | |

Source: Field Survey

The result presented in table 1 reveals the r-value of 0.69, which indicates a high and positive relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour. This means that there exists a relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour since the items on parent-child attachment were negative; it implies that an increase in parent-child attachment will reduce students' aggressive behaviour.

Research Question Two: What relationship exists between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour?

Table 2: The result of the relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour (N=1894)

| Variables | ΣX | ΣX^2 | ΣXY | r-value |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| | ΣY | ΣY^2 | | |
| Child neglect | 23851 | 353895 | 967359 | 0.71 |
| Students' aggressive behaviour | 70469 | 2858811 | | |

Source: Field Survey

The result presented in table 2 reveals the r-value of 0.71, which indicates a high and positive relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour. This means that there is a relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour.

Hypotheses Testing

Research Hypotheses One

There is no significant relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour.

Table 3: The result of Pearson Product Moment Correction of the relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour (N=1894)

| Variables | ΣX | ΣX^2 | ΣXY | r-value |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| | ΣY | ΣY^2 | | |
| Parent-child Attachment (X) | 21872 | 301264 | 888166 | 0.69* |
| Students' Aggressive Behavior (Y) | 70469 | 2858811 | | |

*Significant at .05 alpha level, critical r-value = .062, df = 1892.

Source: Field Survey.

The result in table 3 reveals that the r-calculated value of 0.69 is greater than the r-critical value of .062 at .05 level of significance and at 1892 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour.

Research Hypotheses Two

There is no significant relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour.

Table 4: The result of Pearson Product Moment Correction of the relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour (n=1894)

| Variables | ΣX | ΣX^2 | ΣXY | r-value |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|
| | ΣY | ΣY^2 | | |
| Child neglect (X) | 23851 | 353895 | 967359 | 0.71* |
| Students' aggressive Behavior (Y) | 70469 | 2858811 | | |

*Significant at .05 alpha level, criteria r-value = .062, df = 1892.

Source: Field Survey.

The result in table 4 reveals that the r-calculated value of 0.71 is greater than the r-critical value of .062 at .05 level of significance and at 1892 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour.

Discussion of Findings

From the data analysis, the result from hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between parent-child attachment and students' aggressive behaviour in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District of the State. The findings revealed that a child's secure attachment with the parents will reduce the child's aggressive behaviour. This finding is in line with that of Garmezey (2013), who found that parental warmth and attachment may reduce the negative effects of stress and promote adaptive functioning in children. Also, Greenbery and Spelt (2014) found out that insecure attachment has been identified as a risk factor that interacts with other factors within the family and the child to increase the likelihood of childhood behaviour problems. Furthermore, the research by Bibi and Prem (2007) shows that the quality of attachment in early childhood has implications for children's future personalities and affects their peer relationships in many respects. Moges and Weber (2014) and Sroufe (2002) confirmed that early attachment relationships between parents and the child predict later emotional development in children. The findings of the present study also confirm earlier findings by Ranson and Urichuk (2006) that there is substantial evidence that children with secure attachments in childhood develop more positive social-emotional competence, cognitive functioning, physical health, and mental health. In contrast, children with insecure attachments are at risk for negative outcomes.

The result of hypothesis two revealed a significant relationship between child neglect and students' aggressive behaviour in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District of the State. This agrees with the findings of Nauert (2015), who found out that parents who chronically neglect their children increase the chances that the child will develop aggression and delinquency in adolescence. Dubowitz (2009), also found that neglected children are withdrawn, passive, and exhibit aggressive behaviour. However, Hussey (2008) found out that children who are neglected before their second birthday display higher levels of aggressive behaviour between ages 1 and 18. Also, Howe (2011) found out that when children are neglected, they do not have a good relationship or bond with their parents.

Conclusion

A child who has developed a secure attachment with his or her caregiver tends to grow up with a positive image of himself or herself. The positive image seems to be the outcome of a secure attachment. If the attachment is not secure, the infant reacts badly to the parent's absence, which later on will lead to future anxiety, which is a major aspect of aggressive behaviour. Additionally, child neglect is a form of child abuse and is a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs, including the failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition, and housing, as well as their physical, emotional, social, educational, and safety needs. On the other hand, the repercussions may also lead to future anxiety, another major aspect of aggressive behavior. Finally, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between parent-child attachment, child neglect, and students' aggressive behaviour in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North-West Senatorial District.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government agencies, non-governmental organisations, churches, and schools should organize seminars and workshops to encourage parents to form a secure attachment with their children from childhood and treat them with love and care by providing the basic needs of life such as food, shelter, medical care, education, and supervision.
2. The Federal, State and Local Governments should establish agencies that would be responsible for creating awareness and setting rules and punishment attached to persons that physically abuses a child.

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