

INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TYPES ON PEER VICTIMIZATION AND AGGRESSION AMONG STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of personality types on peer victimization and aggression among students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Type A and B personalities are the independent variables while peer victimization and aggression were the dependent variables of this study. Two null hypotheses guided the conduct of this study. The study adopted an analytical survey research design. 600 secondary school students were used for the study and were drawn through a combination of simple random sampling technique and stratified random sampling technique. Two instruments namely, Personality Type Assessment Scale (PTAS,) and the Peer Victimization and Aggression Assessment Scale (PVAAS,) with reliability coefficients of 0.67 and 0.70 respectively were used for data collection. The data collected were analyzed with multiple regressions as statistical tool. The results obtained indicated that the joint and independent influence of type A and type B personalities on peer victimization and aggression were statistically significant. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that classroom teachers should intensify effort to deal properly with students who exhibit aggressive behaviours among their peers. Also, a referral service should be made to school guidance counsellor for counselling services. Finally, the following are some of the counselling implications for conflict resolution. The students should be counselled to possess emotional awareness to enhance their understanding of themselves and others. Again, they should be counselled to clearly pay attention, and accurately read people's non-verbal signals.

Keywords: *Personality, Type A personality, Type B personality, Peer victimization, Aggression.*

Introduction

Peer victimization and aggressive behaviour are two abnormal or antisocial behaviours that seem to be plaques eating deep into the fabric of our nation. When secondary school students engage in

behaviours that are inimical to social norms, this could lead them to become miscreants. Some of them could grow up fighters, assassins, hoodlums just to mention a few. Again, if some of these excesses of these children are not tamed as

they grow up, they may end up becoming highly temperamental. They may not have ability of relating properly with people. Being that man is a social being, this could pose a great challenge to their adult lives in future.

Peer Victimization can be seen as either covert (relational victimization) or overt (physical victimization), in which a child is threatened or being a target of aggressive behaviour by other children who are not siblings and not necessarily age mates (Crick, 2011). The study of peer victimization was drawn from two major strands of research as identified by Seely, Tombari, Bannet and Dunkle (2009) called the bullying strand and the peer relationship strand. The victimization aspect of bullying strand focuses on what lead victims to disengage from school and suffer from negative outcomes, while others adjust. The peer relationship strand is more quantitative oriented, studying fundamental factors related to peer victimization and negative outcomes, paying attention to what factors mediate the relationship between them.

Research has proven that the problematic nature of peer victimization, identifying many negative outcomes such as low self-esteem, low school engagement, school avoidance, lower school achievement, learn helplessness and depression (Seals and Young, 2003). Peer victimization is especially prevalent and damaging in middle school as during this period children are defining themselves by creating self-schemas and establishing self-esteem, both which will create impact on their adult life. They are also more vulnerable to rejection from peer because of the need for belonging and intimacy may be especially strong during early adolescence,

when children are working to solidify their peer groups (Gaw and Beutler, 1995).

On the other hand, aggression is an intention to cause harm or an act intended to increase relative social dominance. It can be physical, verbal and non-verbal. Aggression may occur in response to social and non-social factors, and can have a close relationship with stress coping style. It may be displayed in order to intimidate (Williams, 2001). Kaufan (2002) opined that if a child stands out from his/her peers as being highly aggressive, we are doing the child and our society no favour by ignoring it. Engaging in aggressive antisocial behaviour is not good for any child (student); it does not help them develop appropriate behaviour, but increases the likelihood of further aggression, maladjustment and academic/social failure (Kauffman et al, 2002).

These behaviours among our adolescents are problematic and had introduced some worries among the social members. This is to the point that many factors are attributed to it. It is presumed that parenting styles, peer influence, teachers' factors, and students' factors may be behind this. While the researchers presumed that since the adolescents are made up of different forms of personality types, that personality type may be a contributing factor.

Personality according to Schacter, Gilbert and Wegner (2009) is an individuals' characteristic style of behaving, thinking and feeling which arises from within the individual and remains fairly consistent throughout life. Personality type on the other hand, refers to the psychological classifications of

different types of individuals, Personality types are sometimes distinguished from personality traits with the later embodying a smaller grouping of behavioural tendencies (Schacter et al, 2009). Personality type can also be defined as a collection of behaviours that are thought to occur together consistently, especially as determined by a certain pattern of responses to a personality inventory.

According to type theories, for example, introverts and extraverts are two fundamentally different categories of people. Furthermore, because of personality test scores usually fall on a bell curve rather than in distinct categories (Deraad, 2000). Other classification of personality types is a classification that classifies personality into type A personality and type B personality developed by Cardiologists Myer Friedman and Ray Rosenman in the 1950s.

Type A personality, concerns how people respond to stress. Type A individuals tend to be very competitive and self-critical. They strive towards goals without feeling of sense of joy in their efforts or accomplishments. Inter-related with this is the presence of a significant life imbalance. This is characterized by a high work involvement. Type A individuals are easily wound up and tend to overreact. They also tend to have high blood pressure (hypertension) (Bates, 2006). Type A personalities experience a constant sense of urgency; they seem to be in a constant struggle against the clock. Often, they quickly become impatient with delays and unproductive time schedule commitments too tightly, and try to do more than one thing at a time, such as reading while eating or watching television. Again, they tend to be easily aroused to anger or hostility, which

they may or may not express overtly. This appears to be the main factor linked to heart disease.

Type B personalities are generally patient, relaxed, easy-going and at times lacking an overriding sense of urgency. Because of these characteristics, type B individuals are often described as pathetic and disengaged by individuals with type A or other personality types (Myers 1997). Type B individuals are calm and have an easy going attitude. They are fun-loving and are relatively less competitive. They are also better at relaxing without feeling guilty and they work without getting anxious or agitated. They are laid back and not easily stressed. While type Bs can be achievers too, still they will not be as competitive as type As. They can delay work and do it in the last moment. Some of them can turn into procrastinators which is something that a type A can never do.

Friedman and Rosenman (1999) - both cardiologists found that people with type A personality run higher risk of heart disease and high blood pressure than type B. Their theory was based on an observation of the patients with heart condition in their waiting rooms. Unlike most patients, who wait patiently, some people seem unable to sit on their seats for long and wear out their chairs. They tend to sit on the edge of the seat and leaped up frequently. What was unusual was that the chairs were worn out on the front edges of the seats and arm rest instead of the back areas, which would have been more typical. They were as tense as racehorses at the gate. The two doctors labeled this behaviour type A personality.

Considering how important personality is to human behaviour, various

studies have been carried out on one form of personality influences behaviour. For instance, Odínko and Adeyerno (1997) carried out a study on influence of peer victimization and academic performance among secondary school students in two local government areas of Niger state and found out that female students like their male counterpart are also victims of victimization among their peers and that negatively affects their academic performance thereby having low grades at the end of their programme. In the same vein, Muazu (1999) carried out a study on peer victimization and academic achievement in Ilorin Metropolis in Kwara state. The findings of the study revealed that those who are subject to peer victimization usually absent themselves from school or refused entering class when there is no teacher in the class. This was noted by Olweus (2003), who revealed that children are considered victims of peer harassment when they are repeatedly exposed to negative behaviours on the part of one or more peers. The experience of being harassed by one's classmates is associated with wide range of adjustment difficulties.

A study by Storch, et al (2005) examined how physical and relational targeted peer victimization were related and measured, their effects of different types of positive and negative cognitions. Another study by Bond, Carlin, Thomas, Robin and Patton, (2001) found out that girls were not as affected compared to boys in terms of their change in teachers and parents behaviour. Other studies concerning the influence of personality types on peer victimization in schools include those of Crick (2011); Seals and Young (2003); Guerra and Williams (2007). With respect to

personality types and aggressive behaviour, McLeod (2011) showed that personality type A predicts greater levels of aggressive behaviour only under provocation. That is, where a particular personality type predicts greater aggressive behaviour across situations, others interact with level of provocation in their effects on aggressive behaviour.

It is against this background that this study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is there joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities on peer victimization among secondary school students?
2. To what extent is there joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities on aggression among secondary school students?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels

- 1: The joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities do not significantly influence peer victimization among secondary school students.
- 2: The joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities do not significantly influence aggression among secondary school students.

Methodology

The study adopted analytical survey design. The population of the study consisted of all senior secondary school students in the 10 public secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of

Rivers State. The number of students as at the time of this investigation were 5,331 senior students in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area. A combination of simple random sampling technique and non-proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 600 senior secondary students of mixed levels (SSI, SSII, and SSIII) from six schools with each contributing 100 students. Two instruments were used for this study. They were the Personality Type Assessment Scale (PTAS) and the Peer Victimization and Aggression Assessment Scale (PVAAS). The PTAS was made up of two sections A and B with each of the sections having 10 items. The PVAAS was also made up of two sections A and B elicited information on peer victimization and aggression respectively. The response format for both PTAS and PVAAS was the 4 point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The validation of the instruments revealed that the reliability coefficients through Cronbach Alpha for PTAS were 0.67 while that of PVAAS was 0.70. The instruments were administered directly by the researchers and the data collected were subjected to mean, standard deviation, multiple regression and analysis of variance associated with multiple regression analysis.

Results

Research 1: To what extent is there joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities on peer victimization among secondary school students?

Hoi: The joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities do not significantly influence peer victimization among secondary school students.

To test the hypothesis, multiple regression analysis was deployed and from the output of the analysis, the joint relationship between peer victimization and the personality types, the joint influence of the personality types on peer victimization and the individual influence of the personality types on peer victimization were all considered and the results are presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Multiple regression analysis on the joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities on peer victimization

Variable	N	Mean	SD	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Peer Victimization	600	9.35	2.30			
Type A personality	600	26.76	41.31	0.136	0.018	0.002
Type B personality	600	24.55	5.78			

SV	SS	df	MS	F	Sig	Decision
Regression	58.01	2	29.01	5.352*	0.004	Sig
Residual	3236.611	597	5.42			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	7,883	0.810	-	9.735	0.000
Type A	0.004	0.022	0.008	0.198	0.843
Type B	0.005	0.017	0.138	3.284	0.001

Dependent variable: Peer victimization

The results in Table 1 showed that the mean score of the students on peer victimization, type A and type B personality are 9.35, 26.76 and 24.55 respectively. The multiple regression coefficient (R) is 0.136 while R-square and adjusted R-square are 0.018 and 0.015 respectively. This means that type A and B personalities jointly had influence on peer victimization to some extent, and that only about 1.8% of the variations in the students involvement in peer victimization can be explained by their personality types, while the remaining 98.2% may be as a result of other factors outside the scope of the study.

The results in Table 1 also indicated that the calculated F-value 5.613 is significant at 0.004 level which is lower than 0.05, our chosen level of probability. Hence, personality type A and B jointly have significant influence on peer

victimization. This indicates that the null hypothesis that states: the joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities do not significantly influence peer victimization among secondary school students is rejected.

In addition, Table 1 also revealed that Beta values for type A and B personalities are 0.008 and 0.138 respectively. When Beta values were tested for significance, it was observed that the associated t-value for type A personality is 0.198 and that of type B personality is 3.284. Type B had a significant influence because its associated t-value 0.138 was at 0.001 levels which is less than our chosen level of probability (0.05), while type A was not because its associated t-value was significant at 0.843 which is higher than the chosen level of probability (0.05).

Research 2: To what extent is there joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities on aggression among secondary school students?

Ho2: The joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities do not significantly influence aggression among secondary school students.

To test this hypothesis, data from the personality scale for the two personality types and the scores for aggressive behaviour from PVAAS were subjected to multiple regression analysis and the results presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Multiple regression analysis on the joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities on aggression

Variable	N	Mean	SD,	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Peer Victimization	600	7.72	2.23			
Type A personality	600	26.76	4.31	0.15	0.02	0.019
Type B personality	600	24.55	5.78			

SV	SS	df	MS	F	Sig	Decision
Regression	67.172	2	33.586	6.885*	0.001	Sig
Residual	2911.946	597	4.878			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	7,840	0.787	-	9.932	0.000
Type A	0.076	0.022	0.146	3.943	0.001
Type B	0.005	0.017	-0.013	-0.317	0.752

Dependent variable: Aggression

The results in Table 2 revealed that the mean score of the students on aggression, type A and B personality scales are 7.72, 26.76, and 24.55 respectively. The multiple regression coefficient (R) is 0.15 while R-square and adjusted R-square are 0.02 and 0.019 respectively. This indicates that type A and B personalities had jointly influenced aggression to some extent, and that about 2% of the variations in the students involvement in aggression could be explained by their personality types, while the remaining 98% may be as a result

of other factors outside the scope of the study. Furthermore, the calculated F-value 6.885 was significant at 0.001 levels. Hence, the personality types A and B jointly have significant influence on aggression. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, the joint and independent influence of type A and B personalities do not significantly influence aggression among secondary school students was rejected with respect to joint influence of type A and B personalities on aggression.

In addition, Beta values for type A

and B personalities are 0.146 and -0.013 respectively. By this, type A personality has a greater influence on aggression than type B personality. When the Beta values were tested for significance, it was observed that the associated t-value for type A personality is 3.943 and that of type B personality is -0.317. These values 3.943 and 0.317 were significant at 0.001 and 0.752 levels respectively. Hence, type A had a significant influence because its associated t-value was significant at 0.001 which is lower than the chosen level of probability (0.05), but type B is not significant because its associated t-value was significant at 0.752 level which is greater than 0.05, chosen level of probability.

Discussion

The study revealed that personality type A and B jointly have significant influence on peer victimization. However, when considered individually, only type B personality significantly influenced peer victimization. This findings however supported the assertion made by Crick (2011) in his study on the role of victimization in the development of children behaviour problems. In his findings he found that peer victimization among students was associated with behavioural maladjustment.

A second concern of this study was on the joint and independent influence of type: A and B personalities on aggression among secondary school students. The findings revealed that type A and B personalities jointly and significantly influenced aggression among secondary school students. But when considered independently, type A personality was found to significantly influence aggression

while, type B personality do not statistically significantly influence aggression among secondary school students. This findings is in agreement with the findings of McLeod (2011) which revealed that students with type A personality have greater level of aggressive behaviours especially under provocation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that peer victimization and aggression among students are significantly influenced by the joint personality types of A and B. In addition, when the personality types A and B are considered individually, type B significantly influenced peer victimization while type A significantly influenced aggression among students. Consequently, the following are recommended:

1. Students who understand they belong to type A personality should learn to be tolerant and should not over-react whenever their peers make them angry. While those with type B personality should continue to be tolerant and approach issues boldly when they are victimized by their peers.
2. Classroom teachers should intensify efforts to deal properly with students who exhibit aggressive behaviours among their peers. Also, a referral service should be made to school guidance counselor for counselling services.

Counselling Implications

Conflict is a normal part of any healthy relationship, so learning how to

deal with conflict rather than avoiding it is crucial. When conflict is mismanaged it can cause great harm to a relationship but when handled in a respectful positive way, it provides an opportunity to strengthen the bond between the two people involved. Therefore counsellors should assist students to learn these skills for conflicts resolution during their counselling sessions.

1. Students should be counselled to understand the concept of cognitive resolution of conflict. They should be made to understand and view conflict in a positive light.
2. They should be counselled to actively communicate information about their conflicting motives or ideologies to the rest of the group.
3. The students should be counselled to possess emotional awareness to enhance their understanding of themselves and others.
4. They should be counselled to clearly pay attention, and accurately read peoples non-verbal signals.

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