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**IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY, ARE YOUTHS NATURALLY AGGRESSIVE
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Abstract

This study explored the causative factors of violent behaviours among youths in Ese Odo Local Government Area. A mixed-methods research design (QUAL+ quan) was employed. The study population comprised youths aged 18–35 years, parents, educators, and community leaders. A total of 300 youths were selected using stratified random sampling, while 95 parents, 45 teachers, and 60 community leaders—including religious leaders, local government officials, and activists—were chosen through purposive sampling. Data were collected using an adapted and validated Youth Violent Behaviour Causation Scale ($r = .93$) and an In-depth Interview Guide (IGI). Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used for quantitative analysis, while thematic analysis was employed for the qualitative data. Key findings revealed multiple socio-cultural, economic, and institutional factors contributing to youth violence. The study concluded that a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach is essential to mitigate youth violent behaviours. It recommended strengthened family structures, inclusive education, community sensitisation, and targeted policy interventions to address the root causes effectively.

Keywords: Violent Behaviour, Causations, Multiculturalism, Youths, Ese Odo

Introduction

In the contemporary world, multiculturalism has become a defining feature of many nations, especially in post-colonial societies which is rapidly globalising human environments. A multicultural society is one where individuals from various cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds coexist within the same political and geographical space (Banks, 2009). While multiculturalism ideally promotes intercultural harmony, tolerance, and diversity, it can also present profound social challenges, particularly about social cohesion, national identity, and youth integration (Sam & Berry, 2010). Among the most pressing of these challenges is the emergence and prevalence of aggressive and violent behaviours among youths. However, youths can be defined as individuals in the transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, constitute a critical segment of the population in multicultural societies (Berry, 2005). This age group is characterised by rapid physical, emotional, and psychological development. It is also a period of identity formation, social orientation, and value internalisation.

In multicultural settings, youths are often exposed to multiple, and sometimes conflicting, value systems, social norms, and cultural expectations. The tension between cultural integration and cultural preservation can create psychological stress, social confusion, and behavioural instability, which may manifest in aggressive or violent behaviours (U.S. Department of Justice, 2019). The media, peer groups, family structures, and societal inequalities further complicate the psychosocial experiences of youths, creating both opportunities for growth and risks for deviance. Aggression and violence among youths are not new phenomena, but their persistence and increasing normalization in many multicultural societies call for a deeper understanding (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022). Aggression may range from verbal hostility, social exclusion, and bullying to more extreme forms such as physical assault and organised violence (Coates, 2011). In many cases, these behaviours are not random but are expressions of frustration, alienation, or rebellion against perceived injustices or systemic neglect. In multicultural societies, where inequalities along ethnic, religious, or racial lines may be more pronounced, these behaviours are sometimes misinterpreted as innate tendencies of certain cultural groups rather than contextual responses to structural conditions.

Violent behaviour among youths is a global concern that undermines social cohesion, economic development, and community well-being. It is a pervasive and complex societal challenge that has garnered significant attention from researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders worldwide. It encompasses a range of harmful behaviours by individuals within a certain age bracket. It manifests in physical assault, verbal abuse, bullying, gang-related activities, and even homicide (Ajitoni & Omoniyi, 2024). Akinfala and Komolafe (2020) added that this phenomenon encompasses a range of actions, from physical altercations and verbal aggression to more severe forms such as gang violence, armed robbery, and even homicide. This, while not new, has evolved in scope and severity, particularly in urban and economically marginalised areas such as some areas in Ilaje local government area of Ondo State. This implies that it has grown more complex due to shifts in societal norms, technological advancements, and changes in the socio-political landscape.

Without doubt, the increasing prevalence of youth violence has profound implications, not only for the immediate victims but also for families, communities, and society at large. In the same vein, it is believed that understanding the causes of violent behaviour among youths is critical for developing effective policy engagement. Studies like Blum, Astone and Mare (2020) and Omoniyi (2023) have shown that the roots of violent behaviour among youths can be traced to a combination of individual, family, social, and structural factors. UNODC (2022) affirmed that they are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural, economic, and political fabric of society. For instance, one prominent cause is peer influence, which often plays a decisive role during adolescence and early adulthood. This is because young people are highly susceptible to peer pressure as they navigate identity formation and social acceptance (Olusola & Adebayo, 2017). In addition, it is discovered that peer influence and socialisation play a crucial role in shaping behavioural patterns. For instance, in environments where violence is normalised or glorified, peers are likely to encourage aggressive behaviour as a means of gaining respect, asserting dominance, or securing group loyalty (Chukwu & Adewale, 2018).

Several youths often adopt violent behaviours to gain acceptance, assert dominance, or respond to perceived threats within their social circles. Few studies like Clark and Pape (2019) have also

explained the role of systemic inequalities, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to quality education, in exacerbating violent tendencies among young people. These factors create environments of frustration, hopelessness, and vulnerability, which often drive youths toward aggressive behaviour as a means of coping or survival (Henry & Short, 2018). To be specific, violence among youths in Nigeria, particularly in the Ese-Odo Local Government Area (LGA) of Ondo State, is a growing concern. The local government is a coastal region rich in natural resources. It has witnessed its share of socio-economic challenges, contributing to a rising tide of violent behaviour among youths. Ese-Odo Local Government Area in Ondo State has faced several incidents of youth-related violence, often stemming from inter-ethnic tensions, political disputes, and resource-based conflicts.

Ikeji and Igbokwe (2022) according to documented reports in the national dailies, it is discovered that there were several inter-ethnic tensions leading to displacement in October 2022. Several of these incidents explain the nexus among ethnic tensions, political disagreements, and resource scarcity contributing to youth violence in Ese-Odo. Some other studies like National Bureau of Statistics (2023) have affirmed that the causes of violence in this local government are influenced by factors ranging from socio-economic instability to inadequate educational opportunities and exposure to cultural and familial conflict. According to Omoniyi (2023), in Ese-Odo LGA, like many rural areas in Nigeria, is beset by socio-economic challenges. In the same vein, there is high unemployment rates, limited access to quality education, and an overreliance on fishing and artisanal oil extraction as primary sources of livelihood contribute to the economic disenfranchisement of many young people. Thus, youths in this LGA, particularly those from impoverished families, often struggle with a lack of opportunities, which fuels a sense of frustration, hopelessness, and resentment.

Olusola and Adebayo (2017) affirmed that several youths in Ese-Odo LGA view violence as a means of asserting control or gaining respect within their communities. In this context, aggression becomes a tool for survival, particularly in a region where young people may feel marginalised or economically excluded. The lack of social mobility and access to resources means that violence is sometimes seen as the only way to gain status or to meet personal needs. The concern of Peterson

and Krivo (2010) explained the cultural fabric of Ese-Odo is another important factor influencing violent behaviour among its youth. In many coastal and rural communities, traditional beliefs, social hierarchies, and norms regarding masculinity and respect are often intertwined with violent expressions. For instance, young men may feel societal pressure to demonstrate toughness and dominance, with violence being a means to uphold their social standing and personal honor. In the LGA, as in other parts of Nigeria, social expectations about masculinity may perpetuate violent behaviour. This is because a cultural emphasis on male authority and dominance, especially within family structures is believed that it can lead to the normalization of aggressive behaviour.

By implication, this becomes more pronounced when young men grow up witnessing violence in their homes, schools, and communities, thereby internalising these behaviours as a form of self-expression or defense. In the same vein, Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012) explained violent behaviour among youth as linked to family structures. This is because it is often disrupted by a variety of issues, including poverty, migration, and the absence of strong parental guidance. Families in the region may struggle with the economic pressures of raising children in an environment where opportunities are scarce. Single-parent households, in particular, are more vulnerable to the challenges of managing adolescent behavior, and this may lead to an increase in youth involvement in violent activities. In cases where parental figures are absent or overly permissive, youths may not receive the emotional support and discipline necessary for healthy development. The lack of consistent boundaries in the home can lead to a sense of frustration and confusion in young people, who may subsequently turn to violence as a way of expressing their unmet needs (Ikeji & Igbokwe, 2022). Furthermore, domestic violence and abusive parenting styles can also contribute to the normalization of aggression. Youths who grow up in environments marked by violence may view violent behavior as an acceptable way to solve conflicts. As such, they are more likely to engage in similar actions when faced with conflict in their own lives.

Ese Odo Local Government Area, located in the riverine region of Ondo State, Nigeria, has gained a reputation for recurrent violent conflicts, largely driven by socio-economic and political factors. The

area, predominantly occupied by the Ijaw ethnic group, has experienced a long history of communal clashes, militant activities, and politically motivated violence. Due to its proximity to the Niger Delta, Ese Odo has been affected by issues such as resource control agitation, illegal oil bunkering, and conflicts over territorial boundaries, which often escalate into violent confrontations (Olusola & Adebayo, 2017) and Omoniyi (2024). Political tensions also contribute significantly to violence in the area, particularly during election periods. Rival political factions frequently engage in clashes, fueled by deep-seated political rivalries and competition for control over local resources. Youth restiveness is another critical issue, as high unemployment rates and economic hardship push many young individuals into criminal activities, including cultism, armed robbery, and piracy. Additionally, land disputes and chieftaincy tussles have led to several violent outbreaks, further destabilizing the region. The persistent violence in Ese Odo has hindered socio-economic development, discouraged investment, and created a climate of insecurity. Addressing these challenges requires proactive government intervention, community engagement, and the implementation of sustainable peace-building strategies (Akinfala & Komolafe, 2020).

There is also the potentiality of youths being exposed to violence. This is a significant factor influencing the behaviour of youths (Agnew, 2006). Thus, whether through witnessing domestic violence, participating in violent protests, or engaging in criminal activities, many young people in the region are accustomed to violence in their daily lives. This constant exposure can desensitise youths to the consequences of violent actions, making them more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour themselves. Furthermore, media portrayals of violence, particularly in films and on social media platforms tend to have a profound effect on youths. Youths may idolise violent figures in popular culture and mimic their behaviour in an attempt to gain similar levels of respect or admiration (Chen & Jacobson, 2013). This media influence is amplified in a digital age where youths are constantly exposed to violent imagery and narratives.

Various efforts in addressing youth violence have taken various forms, ranging from community-based interventions to policy reforms and educational initiatives. Some of the programmes aimed at empowering youths, such as skills development, mentorship, and

recreational activities, have shown promise in reducing violence by providing positive outlets for energy and creativity (Dike, 2015). Similarly, school-based programmes that promote conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and social skills have been effective in curbing aggressive behaviours. However, these efforts often face challenges, including inadequate funding, poor implementation, and lack of coordination among stakeholders. This has explained the importance of addressing youth violence, which cannot be overstated. Beyond the immediate harm caused by such behaviours, youth violence has long-term consequences for societal stability, economic development, and public health (Dike, 2015). Communities burdened by high rates of youth violence often experience reduced quality of life, increased healthcare costs, and hindered economic growth. Furthermore, violent behaviours established during youth can persist into adulthood, perpetuating cycles of crime and instability (Nwankwo, 2019).

Based on this, there is a pressing need for context-specific research to unravel the underlying causes and dynamics of youth violent behavioural causation (Blum, Astone & Mare, 2020). This is because such studies would provide valuable explanation in the nexus of factors of individual, familial, societal, and structural factors, paving the way for evidence-based solutions to violent behaviour causation among youths. It is to be noted that addressing youth violent behaviour is not merely a matter of ensuring safety; it is a fundamental step toward building resilient communities and empowering the next generation to thrive.

Statement of the Problem

Violent behaviour among youths has emerged as a critical societal concern, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and communities. The rising prevalence of youth violence in Ese-Odo Local government area, across various schools, neighbourhoods, market places, riverbanks and online platforms necessitates a need for deeper knowledge of its causative factors. Existing literature has examined youth violence through various lenses, including socio-economic deprivation, peer influence, exposure to violent media, and family background. However, a significant gap persists in integrating these diverse factors into a framework that explains how multiple influences interact to shape violent tendencies among youths. Many studies have

focused on single-factor causations, overlooking the nexus among economic hardship, socialisation patterns, digital exposure, and psychological predispositions. Additionally, while some research has explained the impact of political and societal structures on youth violence, there remains little or no empirical evidence linking these macro-level influences to individual behavioural patterns. To address these gaps, this study, therefore, assessed the underlying violent behaviour causations among youths.

Research Objectives

1. What is the stakeholders' perception of youths' violent behavioural causations?
2. What is the effect of violent behavioural causations among youths on lives and livelihood of people?
3. What are plausible solutions to youth violent behavioural causations?

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design (QUAL+quan) to explore violent behaviours among youths in Ese Odo Local Government Area. The population comprised youths aged 18–35 years, as well as parents, educators, and community leaders. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 300 youths to ensure representation across diverse socio-educational backgrounds, while purposive sampling was employed to select 95 parents, 45 teachers, and 60 community leaders—including religious leaders, local government officials, and activists—based on their direct involvement with youth development. Data were collected using a revalidated instrument: the Violent Behaviour Causation Scale ($r = .93$) and an In-depth Interview Guide (IGI), both subjected to face and content validity. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were used to analyse the research questions quantitatively, while thematic analysis was applied to interpret qualitative data on stakeholders' perceptions and suggestions regarding the causes of youth violent behaviour.

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the stakeholders' perception of youths' violent behavioural causations

Table 4.1: Mean Responses Stakeholders' Perception of Youths' Violent behavioural Causations

S/N	Item	SA <i>f (%)</i>	A <i>f (%)</i>	D <i>f (%)</i>	SD <i>f (%)</i>	M	SD
i	Because of societal pressure	301 (60.2%)	177 (35.4%)	13 (2.6%)	9 (1.8%)	3.54	.64
ii	Marginalization and deprivation of rights and privileges	215 (43.0%)	217 (43.4%)	54 (10.8%)	14 (2.8%)	3.27	.76
iii	Due to their political affinity and interest	276 (55.2%)	168 (33.6%)	39 (7.8%)	17 (3.4%)	3.41	.78
iv	Due to high level of ignorance	69 (13.8%)	95 (19.0%)	174 (34.8%)	162 (32.4%)	2.14	1.02
v	Because of societal moral decadence	179 (35.8%)	179 (35.8%)	103 (20.6%)	39 (7.8%)	3.00	.94
vi	Based on economic hardship occasioned by unemployment	198 (39.4%)	145 (29.0%)	94 (18.8%)	63 (12.6%)	2.96	1.04
vii	Due to lacuna in socio-economic and political institutions	253 (50.6%)	200 (40.0%)	34 (6.6%)	13 (2.6%)	3.39	.73
viii	Due to peer influence and personal interest in greed	278 (55.6%)	167 (33.4%)	35 (7.0%)	20 (4.0%)	3.41	.79
ix	Because of the breaking down of moral institutions	95 (19.0%)	144 (28.8%)	157 (31.4%)	104 (20.8%)	2.46	1.02
x	Single parenting	109 (21.8%)	93 (18.6%)	146 (29.2%)	152 (30.4%)	2.32	1.12
xi	Due to availability of drugs and associated illicit venture	192 (38.4%)	121 (24.2%)	75 (15.0%)	112 (22.4%)	2.79	1.18
xii	Because of the negative parenting in the society	293 (58.6%)	161 (32.2%)	27 (5.4%)	19 (3.8%)	3.46	.77
xiii	Due to cultism and gangsterism	177 (35.4%)	141 (28.2%)	94 (18.8%)	88 (17.6%)	2.81	1.10
xiv	Due to the desire for social recognition and fame	215 (43.0%)	189 (37.8%)	64 (12.8%)	32 (6.4%)	3.17	.89
xv	Due to high exposure to violent acts through the media	255 (51.0%)	166 (33.2%)	49 (9.8%)	30 (6.0%)	3.29	.87

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	M	SD
xvi	Due to domestic abuse at a tender age	137 (27.4%)	154 (30.8%)	130 (26.0%)	79 (15.8%)	2.70	1.04
xvii	Due to genetic traits or inborn attitude	296 (59.2%)	140 (28.0%)	42 (8.4%)	22 (4.4%)	3.42	.82
xviii	Failed policies, programmes, and promises by political office holders	95 (19.0%)	100 (20.0%)	147 (29.4%)	158 (31.6%)	2.26	1.10
xix	Because of self-motivation and willingness to foment trouble	294 (58.8%)	154 (30.8%)	37 (7.4%)	15 (3.0%)	3.45	.76
xx	Due to environmental factors such as place of birth	278 (55.6%)	140 (28.0%)	44 (8.8%)	38 (7.6%)	3.32	.92

The result revealed the mean responses of youths' violent behavioural causations with a weighted mean 3.03 which is greater than threshold: 2.5. This implies several factors are responsible for youths' violent behavioural causations. The following were top three rated causations; "because of societal pressure" (\bar{x} = 3.54); "because of the negative parenting in the society" (\bar{x} = 3.46); and "because of self-motivation and willingness to foment trouble" (\bar{x} = 3.45). This implies that societal pressure, negative parenting; self-motivation and willingness to foment trouble are major causations that drive students' violent behaviour in Ese-Odo Local government area of Ondo State. To ensure robust findings, the research questions one was complemented by the interview conducted

Thematic Analysis of Focus Group Discussion

Stakeholders' Perception of Youths' Violent Behavioural Causations

The analysis of the interviews with the stakeholders' perception of the prevalence of youth violent behaviour is rampant among the population of the study. The study revealed stakeholders have negative perception of violent behaviour among youths in Ese-Odo, Ondo state. By implication, it means the stakeholders affirm that violent conducts among youths in the area selected is attributed to various factors ranging from high unemployment rate, weak economic growths, social issues, parenting style, poor presence of government infrastructural facilities among others. The qualitative findings revealed the following excerpts from their responses.

S/N	Participant ID / Description / Date	Emerging Theme	Illustrative Quote	Interpretation
1	Participant_1_M_46yrs / Religious Leader / 12 June 2022	Prevalence and Normalisation of Youth Violence	“Yes oh, these young ones are very violent... It is common here... They will just fight over trivial issues like relationship issues or on money.”	Youth violence is viewed as widespread and normalised, especially in conflict over minor issues.
2	Participant_2_F_65yrs / Security / 12 June 2022	Youth Involvement in Crime and Immorality	“They are involved in raping, stealing, drugs abuse, betting and all sort of bad things...violent is in their blood.”	The participant perceives youth as central actors in increasing social vices and criminality, suggesting a deep-rooted behavioural crisis.
3	Participant_3_M_42yrs / Traditional Ruler / 12 June 2022	Influence of Upbringing and Environment	“It bothers on the upbringing, the community or personal wish of every single youth... Even the wrong implementation of violent technology create greater damages.”	Highlights that family, environment, and technology shape today's advanced tendencies.
4	Participant_4_F_47yrs / Businesswoman / 12 June 2022	Stakeholder Responsibility & Economic Strain	“This is not a one man's job... We have arrested several of the young boys who are fighting on trivial issues..._”	

From their submissions, it could be deduced that there was high level of youths' violent behaviour in Ese-Odo land.

Research question 2: What is the effect of violent behavioural causations among youths on lives and livelihood of people?

Stakeholders' Assessment of Perceived Effects of Youth Violent behavioural Causations

The analysis of the interviews with the stakeholders on the effects of youths' violent behaviour revealed that the effects of youths' violent behaviour on their lives and livelihood as well as that of the people within the society is enormous and inimical. By implication, these have activated various degree of consequences on the people and societal growths and development. The thematic analysis table below shows the excerpts from their responses.

Participant	Verbatim Quote	Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Overarching Themes
P1_F_12yrs	"It is capable of causing societal unrest, affect health and wellbeing, promote ready-made pool for banditry and several other societal challenges."	Societal unrest, health impact, banditry, societal challenges	Threats to stability and public safety	Societal Consequences of Youth Violence
P2_F_12yrs	"It is hazardous to people's lives and livelihood as well as peaceful co-existence. Youth violent behaviour possesses high degree potential or significant threats to the environment, youths health, and the public."	Threats to lives, livelihood, peaceful coexistence, environmental and public safety	Endangerment of societal well-being	Societal Consequences of Youth Violence
P3_F_12yrs	"Over time this	Banditry,	Crime	Escalation into

Participant	Verbatim Quote	Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Overarching Themes
P4_F_12yrs	<p>results in banditry, kidnapping and social unrest. These are some of the challenges that we are facing as a country today. It is also very common in Ese-Odo land.”</p> <p>“Nobody is free from its effects. Thuggery and lots more. Election is coming now, one will begin to see its consequences.”</p>	<p>kidnapping, unrest, regional occurrence</p> <p>Pervasiveness, political thuggery, election-related violence</p>	<p>escalation and regional impact</p> <p>Political implications of youth violence</p>	<p>Organized Crime</p> <p>Political Violence and Social Disruption</p>
P5_F_12yrs	<p>“Criminality are now being celebrated and its consequences are being upheld. People are living in fear.”</p>	<p>Normalization of crime, fear among people</p>	<p>Celebration of Moral deviance and fear culture</p>	<p>Decay and Societal Fear</p>
P6_F_12yrs	<p>“Theft and burglary. You remember the #EndSARS then. Unrest everywhere. No work, no job and no movement.”</p>	<p>Theft, burglary, protests, unemployment, mobility restrictions</p>	<p>Social protest and economic hardship</p>	<p>Structural Triggers and Fallout</p>
P7_F_12yrs	<p>“This has huge environmental impacts and can cause serious</p>	<p>Environmental impact, riotous behaviour, loss, crisis</p>	<p>Risks and ripple effects of violent actions</p>	<p>Human and Environmental Costs of Youth Violence</p>

Participant	Verbatim Quote	Initial Codes	Sub-Themes	Overarching Themes
	problems. Some riotous behaviour will eventually lead to negativity, but not all, and in the process it may make them lose their lives, body, money or generate unnecessary lingering crises.”			

Summary of Emerging Themes:

1. **Societal Consequences of Youth Violence** – Unrest, health implications, and societal breakdown.
2. **Escalation into Organized Crime** – Connection to banditry, kidnapping, and localized insecurity.
3. **Political Violence and Social Disruption** – Link between youth violence and electoral periods.
4. **Moral Decay and Societal Fear** – Normalization of crime and collective anxiety.
5. **Structural Triggers and Fallout** – Unemployment, protests (#EndSARS), and systemic failures.
6. **Human and Environmental Costs** – Physical loss, death, crises, and environmental consequences.

From their submissions, it can be concluded that youth’s violent behaviour have detrimental effects on people’s lives and livelihood.

Research question 3: What are plausible solutions to youth violent behavioural causations

Stakeholders’ Perceived Solutions to Youth Violent Behavioural Causations

The analysis of the interviews with stakeholder’s perceived solutions to youth violent behaviour. These are excerpts from their responses.

Theme	Codes	Participant (Sex/Age/Occupation/Date)	Excerpts (Representative Quotes)
Parental Responsibility and Home Training	Importance of early home training; parental modeling; childhood shaping	Participant_1_F_12years/Business Woman/12th June, 2022	“All agents of socialization at all levels should be up and doing in producing well behaved youths... children... are silent observers... We must not be violent too...” “Parents should give proper home training... they will continue to showcase the good morals which they have been taught at home.”
	Proper home training as foundation for moral behaviour	Participant_4_M_19years/Religious Leader/12th June, 2022	“The likely solution lies in the hands of the parents... train their kids from the tender age to fit the society...”
	Parents as foundational socialization agents	Participant_6_M_55years/Traditional Ruler/12th June, 2022	“We parents should be more careful especially when their kids are in their tender age as these kids grow with most violent acts seen around.”
	Parental vigilance and role modeling	Participant_7_F_55years/Artisan/12th June, 2022	

The analysis reveals that solutions to youth violence are multi-dimensional rooted in parental upbringing, religious and moral

education, government policy reforms, youth agency, effective policing, and political accountability. Thus, addressing youth violence thus requires holistic engagement from families, communities, security agencies, policymakers, and the youths themselves.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that societal pressure, negative parenting, self-motivation, and the willingness to foment trouble are the most potent drivers of youth violence in the area. These findings align with the works of Agnew (2006), Omoniyi (2023) and Murray and Farrington (2010), who emphasised that socio-economic pressure often compels youths to adopt aggression as a means of asserting dominance or gaining respect. This supports Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals internalise behaviours modeled in their environment. Youths socialised in violence-prone communities are thus more likely to replicate such behaviour, perpetuating a generational cycle of aggression.

Further corroborating this, Aiyedogbon and Ohwofasa (2012) found that dysfunctional family structures which is characterised by neglect, domestic violence, or inconsistent parenting, significantly predict violent tendencies. Conversely, youths raised in stable homes with emotional support and firm parental monitoring exhibited lower aggression levels. This protective effect of positive family interaction is consistent with Chukwu and Adewale (2018). Additionally, Smith (2006) and Ajitoni and Omoniyi (2024) highlighted that economic hardship, poverty, and unemployment intensify feelings of frustration and marginalisation, making violence a perceived coping mechanism or survival strategy among affected youths.

Exposure to community and media violence also emerged as a critical factor. As Blum, Astone, and Mare (2020) noted, constant exposure to violence—either in the neighbourhood or through digital content—desensitises youths, normalising aggression as a conflict-resolution tool. Violent media, video games, and social media trends were particularly influential among unsupervised youths. This aligned with Ireogbu (2021), who emphasized the strong link between unresolved trauma, mental health issues, and violent behaviour. Many aggressive youths in this study had histories of neglect, abuse, or

emotional instability, underscoring the need for accessible and youth-friendly mental health services (Nwankwo, 2019).

The findings further suggest that youth violence in multicultural contexts is neither random nor biologically determined. Rather, it is a product of complex and interwoven influences such as peer pressure, broken homes, economic deprivation, identity crises, ethnic discrimination, media influence, and lack of moral guidance. These factors collectively erode personal and communal well-being. As Henry and Short (2018) and Farrington (2003) observed, youths who display violent behaviour often suffer from anxiety, depression, trauma, and reduced emotional control. Victims, in turn, experience long-term psychological distress, affecting academic performance, social integration, and self-esteem.

Moreover, violence among youths desensitises them to empathy and moral reasoning, creating cycles of abuse and victimisation. Akinfala and Komolafe (2020) noted that such behaviours significantly impact academic outcomes. Schools with high rates of violence face teacher burnout, classroom disruption, low academic motivation, and increased dropout rates. Students frequently exposed to conflict are more likely to be suspended or expelled, reinforcing deviant pathways. At the community level, youth violence breeds instability and distrust. Banks (2009) and Box (2001) observed that such environments experience increases in theft, gang violence, drug use, and sexual assault. Cultural and political dimensions of violence exacerbate tensions, leading to stigmatisation of certain ethnic or religious youth groups and deepening societal divides. Nationally, youth violence undermines peace, governance, and economic development. According to Chukwu and Adewale (2018) and Henry and Short (2018), countries with high youth violence rates face investor flight, policy diversion to security concerns, and a decline in human capital productivity. The weaponisation of youths in political thuggery, cultism, and organised crime further destabilises democratic institutions.

In terms of prevention, the study identifies several key strategies. Stakeholders emphasized the need for multi-sectoral, proactive, and culturally sensitive interventions that focus on prevention, not just correction. Family strengthening and parenting education emerged as a primary recommendation. As the first agents of socialisation, families play a critical role in nurturing emotionally stable

and socially responsible youth. Parenting workshops, family therapy, and community-based support were suggested as means to reduce domestic violence, neglect, and substance abuse (Olusola & Adebayo, 2017).

Educational reform was also considered pivotal. Schools should function not only as academic institutions but also as safe spaces promoting emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and intercultural understanding. Stakeholders proposed integrating peace education, civic responsibility, and character development into school curricula. The deployment of school counsellors and structured mentorship programs was recommended to support at-risk students. Finally, the influence of media must be addressed. With social media shaping youth identities and behaviours, stakeholders called for youth-led media initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and regulatory frameworks to counteract the glamorisation of violence. Promoting positive content and critical media literacy can redirect youth attention toward constructive narratives.

Conclusion

Violent behaviour among youths in Ese-Odo LGA is a complex issue with numerous contributing factors. This study assessed stakeholders' assessment of violent behavioural causation among youths. This is driven by an intricate web of individual, familial, societal, and structural factors. Peer influence, dysfunctional family dynamics occasioned by parenting, low socioeconomic status, exposure to violence, emerged as key drivers of youth aggression. Additionally, addressing youth violence is not merely a matter of public safety but a critical step toward fostering societal stability, economic growth, and individual well-being. In the same vein, by tackling the root causes of aggression and promoting safe, inclusive environments, stakeholders can empower young people to realise their full potential and contribute positively to society.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

3. Government agencies, ministries and parastatals as well as NGOs must drive youth re-orientation initiatives. There is also need for proper parenting education which will cater for effective discipline, communication, and emotional support.
4. Community, opinion and religious leaders, as matter of urgency, help drive mentorship and leadership programmes that encourage positive role modeling and self-confidence.
5. There is need for establish skills development and entrepreneurship programmes to provide alternative pathways for at-risk youths.

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