



Incivility and its Impact on Students' Social Adjustment in Secondary Schools in Bamenda III Municipality, North-West Region of Cameroon

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Abstract: This study is designed to investigate “Incivility and its Impact on Student Social Adjustment in Secondary Schools in Bamenda III Municipality, North West Region of Cameroon”. Specifically, the study seeks; to investigate the impact of sexual harassment on students’ social adjustment and to determine the impact of bullying on students’ social adjustment. A mixed methods design was used for the study. Questionnaires for students and interview guide for teachers were the instruments used for data collection and a purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents. A sample of 320 student were selected and administered the questionnaire and 40 teachers were selected to administer the interview guide for the study. Data was analysed quantitatively with the used of frequency count and percentages and qualitatively where in interviews were analysed using direct reporting. The normality assumption test was computed using Shapiro-Wilk test of significance which showed that the data was not uniformly distributed, consequently, the Spearman’s Rho test was used to test the hypothesis. Chi-square test was used to compare students’ responses of the conceptual components against their demographic characteristics for significant differences. Finally, findings were presented using frequency distribution tables and charts and inferential statistic was presented 95% level of confidence interval with alpha at 0.05 levels accepting only 5% margin of errors. General findings indicated that; incivility has a significant and negative effect on students’ social adjustment. Physical assault has a significant and relatively strong and negative effect on students’ social adjustment (R-value = -0.506**, p-value 0.000<0.05). Also, sexual harassment has a significant, relatively strong and negative impact on student’s social adjustment (R-value = -0.501**, p-value 0.000<0.05). Based on the findings, some recommendations were made that policy makers should ensure proper creation, implementation and dissemination of policies to address incivility in schools. Also, parents, guardians and educators should assist students to behave in a civil manner in school by ensuring proper upbringing of the students, so as to inculcate integrity, morality, virtue and good values in the students.

Keywords: Incivility, Physical assault and Sexual Harassment and Students’ Social Adjustment.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Incivility in schools is not a recent phenomenon. But recently, schools have experienced an increase in physical assault, threat, sexual harassment, bullying, to name a few on their campuses. Incivility in school is the rude and disrespectful behaviours that occurs in the teaching and learning environment disrupting and hampering the process. Incivility is often a reciprocal process, that is both teachers and students can contribute to a climate of disrespect for one another or the teaching and learning process. To support the above assertion, Berger (2000), opines that incivility is any ‘speech or action that is disrespectful and rude’. Clark (2008), expands on this definition by noting that incivility indicates “disregard and insolence for others, causing an atmosphere of disrespect, conflict and stress.” Incivility in school is becoming a growing and visible phenomenon in Africa as a whole and Cameroon in particular.

Cameroon in recent years has cried aloud due to the high rate of incivility going on in secondary schools. According to an article published by Journal du Cameroon (2020), a 15-year-old form three student of the Government High school Nkolbisson in Yaounde, stabbed to death his mathematics teacher at the school premises. The minister of secondary education, Prof. Nalova Lyonga condemned this act of incivility in school and blames it on the lack of discipline in our schools. Yaboa, reported that a student was stabbed in Lycee Polyvalent on Tuesday October 13th 2015 and only survive after a successful surgery (Cameroon Tribune, 2015).

The Cameroon radio television (CRTV) on the 2nd of April 2019 reported a similar story that happened in GBHS Deido Douala of the stabbing to death of a form five student on the 29th of March 2019 at the school premises. Teachers are not left out in the practice of incivility in Cameroon. Journal du Cameroon reveals the confession of a teacher who sodomised his 14-year-old student to death in Madja Bangante, West region of Cameroon (published on September 12, 2020). Most recently all over the social media was a display of a teacher physically assaulting a child with a hammer in school.

In a seminar study conducted by the Center for Survey Research at Indiana University (2000), incivility was described as “contrary to the well-being of the school community, including behaviours that distract the instructor or other students, disrupt classroom learning, discourage the teacher from teaching and discourage other students from participating (as cited in Bjoraklund and Rehling, 2010). If the occurrences of these uncivil behaviours in our schools is not dealt with swiftly and effectively, it can have detrimental effect on the cordial relationship that has to invade the school environment as both the perpetrator and the victim may find it difficult to co-relate, thereby, playing on the students social adjustment.

Incivility in school has been defined by Clark, Farnsworth and Landrum (2009) “as a rude or disruptive behaviour which often results in psychological or physiological distress for the people involved and if left unaddressed, may progress into threatening situations” (as cited in Hildeguard and Oluyink, 2015). The spectrum of uncivil behaviour in schools was originally captured by Feldmann’s (2001) taxonomy, which he referred to as annoyances, classroom “terrorism,” intimidation and threats of violence (as cited in Lisa, Katherine, Joy and Randy, 2014). As indicators to this concept, the researcher proposes physical assault, threat, sexual harassment and bullying which will be conceptualized below.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Safety and security which were topmost priorities of schools are losing their place in our secondary schools today as you listen to children share or hear frightful stories of the barbaric happenings on school campuses. Parents prepare their strong and healthy children and send them to school only to receive dead bodies back from school due to the growing rate of uncivil behaviours such as physical assaults. Both teachers and students being stabbed to death or terribly wounded, a teacher in school with a hammer breaking the bones of a learner in the name of corrective measure, students and teachers scared to go to school because they are being threatened by bullies or sexually harassed by either party. Teachers and students who need to co-exist in a harmonious manner fighting and throwing their fist at each other. Teachers and students faced with these ordeals suffer from psychological trauma, emotional stress, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, fear to name a few. Looking at all these negative effects in a social setting like the school, the researcher begins to wonder how socialisation can be effective given that the school is that environment where adaptation in social relationships is exemplified and learned. She then raised questions like; how will perpetrators and victims of incivility interact with each other in school and even out of school given that life continues out of the school premises? Can such interaction ever be cordial? Can these behaviours even socially acceptable? The search for answers to these questions motivated the researcher to want to investigate into incivility and its impact on student social adjustment.

Main research question

- How does incivility impact students' social adjustment in secondary schools in Bamenda III Municipality?

Specific research questions

- What is the impact of physical assault on students' social adjustment?
- What is the impact of sexual harassment on students' social adjustment?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptually four concepts grounded this study. The concept of incivility, physical assault, sexual harassment and social adjustment

Incivility

Peters (2014) as cited in Anya (2015) defines incivility as a deliberate discourtesy towards another, that wounds one's self esteem and creates doubts about his or her abilities. Anya (2015) Stipulated that the word incivility has roots in the ancient Latin word *inciviliat* meaning a lack of civility, which means community. It may be expected that people who belong to a community treat each other with some degree of respect and courtesy. In the absence of respect and courtesy, incivility prevails. Incivility has been defined as low intensity, deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to cause harm (Anderson & Pearson, 1999, as cited in Anthony, Zopito & Andrew, 2016). These authors further view incivility as the willingness to attain one's objectives at the expense of others well-being.

Ryerson University (2004), opines that incivility is any unintended or deliberate conduct or comment, directed at another individual, that a reasonable person knows or ought to know is unwelcome or inappropriate (as cited in Lisa & Joe, 2017). Connell (2009), and Feldmann (2001) as cited in Anya (2015), theorized that incivility in higher education maybe demonstrated by rude, discourteous speech or behavior, bullying, threat that disrupt and show disregard for a cooperative learning environment. Feldmann suggested that incivility is rooted in as many as three psychological factors: a need to express power over another, a need for verbal release due to frustration over an apparently unsolvable situation, or a need to obtain something of value.

Also, displays of incivility directed towards an individual tend to leave victims feeling anxious, stressed, and dejected (Zauderer, 2002), while perpetration is associated with higher intensity antisocial behavior, such as bullying and aggression (Mariri, 2009) and has negative psychosocial implications. Biggs and Tang (2011), found out that classroom incivility negatively affect students' academic progress create disengagement from lessons and general learning, and influence bystanders to reduce critical thinking and involvement with the material presented in class.

According to Connelly (2009), some of the examples of less serious uncivil behaviours include: sleeping in class, disapproving groans and signs, acting bored and disinterested, challenging the instructor knowledge or credibility, eating in class while the teacher is teaching, moving in and out of class without permission just to name a few. Meyers, Bender, Hill, and Thomas (2006) as cited in Strassle and Verrecchia (2019), ascertained this category terming it passive categorization. Meyers et al. (2006), puts it that this category is characterized by inattentive in class, lateness to class or lack of attentive in class.

The second category of incivility is the more serious or hostile conflict. This category is more active and vocal on the part of the student (Strassle and Verrecchia, 2019). Knepp (2012), adds that more serious student uncivil behavior may involve expressions of hostility or threat. Albert and Colleagues (2010), claims that such threatening behaviours include stalking, intimidations, bullying, harrasments (as cited in Knepp, 2012). All these forms of incivility don't just happen on its own without, it is provoke by somebody or something.

Physical Assault

Physical assault according to the UN committee on the rights of the Child (2006), is any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain and discomfort, however light. Moreover, Anderson (1969) sees physical assault as “a demonstration of an unlaw in by one person to inflict immediate injury on the person of another (As cited in Vusumuzi, 2000). Vusumuzi (2000), believes that physical assault is one of the common forms of violence in schools either caused by students to teachers or vice versa.

According to Tjaden and Thonnes (1999), physical assault includes a range of behaviours, from slapping and hitting to using knives, guns and other dangerous weapons to inflict harm on another person. Moreover, Victoria State Government (2022), opined that physical assault occurs when a person uses physical violence and causes injury to another person’s body. They further stipulated that physical assault can happen in the family, school workplace etc. Furthermore, Council of Europe Portal (2022), views physical assault as beating, burning, kicking, punching, biting, maiming or killing, or the use of objects or weapons with the intention of causing harm. They further advance that physical assault sends a clear message to the victim from the perpetrator; “I can do things to you that you do not want to happen.”

According to Ngoran (2016), violence is a prevalent practice among students and teachers in many secondary schools Cameroon as is the case in many parts of the world. It is predominantly victimization of one person by another, expressed in the form of physical or verbal violence. Most at times, it is done as retaliation to earlier similar action and also as a show of physical strength amongst peers. This acts of violence or physical assault in school has many forms.

Forms of assaults in school

Physical assault in school constitutes acts such as bringing dangerous weapons (such as knives, guns etc) to school, committing aggravated injuries, fighting, robbery, stabbing and perpetrating school shooting (Turanovic & Siennick, 2022). Other forms of physical assault include slapping, kicking, punching all in a bit to inflict pain or injuries on the victim by the perpetrator who intend may be harm in the process.

Causes of physical assaults

Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2003), identified the following as causes of physical assaults in school: involvement in gang activities; lack of transformation in school; negative perceptions of crime amongst student; the present of knives, guns and other weapons in school; the consumption of intoxicated drugs in school; lack of counseling services in school; intolerance towards learners and teachers; parental apathy and the hero-worshipping of criminals and gang leaders (as cited in Safer Spaces, 2022).

Saferspaces (2022), advances the following as the root causes of physical assaults in school:

- 1. Individual, biological and demographic factors:** students who have a history of being abused either by family members or other members of society are likely to become violent towards others, more especially if they are teenagers. Substance abuses also contribute to persons becoming violent towards others.
- 2. Relationship factors:** an individual family is a form of a relationship, thus a relationship that one has with his or her family contributes to whether one shows attributes of violence or not. For example, students who come from home environments that a abusive are more likely to become violent to other students than those who come from homes that they are nurtured and love.
- 3. Societal norms and values:** cultural acceptance of violence in today’s society has become common practice in many communities. We live in a society where the violence that takes place is justified. This means that those who are violent has a certain level of power over other.
- 4. Particular to Cameroon,** due to the increased of stabbing in schools, Cawicameroon (2022),

report blames it on the eradication of corporal punishment in school. For the past 3years, Cameroon has witnessed an increase in violence action in school and teachers and onlookers say children behave in this manner because they claim that no one can punish them for their actions.

Impact of physical assault

This will be discussed under impact on victims and teachers;

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services (2004), students who are victims of physical assault experience both immediate and long-term consequences. Some immediate effects may include injuries on the body, interpersonal conflicts, withdrawal, dizziness, shock, anxiety or fear, confusion, poor concentration, self-criticism. Moreover, some of the long-term effects include; psychological trauma on children. Children may experience sleep disorder, nightmares, a belief that another event may occur (Shen & Sink, 2002 as cited in Daniels, Bradley & Hays, 2007).

According to Nims (2000), teachers who experience violence at school often display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. This fears and heightened level of stress that teachers feel leads to burnout and less effective work (Elliott, Hambury, & Williams, 1998 as cited by Daniels, Bradley, & Hays, 2007). Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta & Roth (2004), adds that when teachers who worry about their safety are more likely to leave the profession altogether.

Sexual Harassment

According to US Department of Education (2008), sexual harassment is conduct that; is sexual in nature; is unwelcome and limits a student's ability to participate or benefit from a school education program. Sexual harassment can take different forms depending on the harasser and the nature of harassment. The conduct can be carried out school employees, other students, and none employees such as visiting speakers. Both male and female students can be victims of sexual harassment and the harasser and the victim can be of the same sex. Sexual harassment is behavior that derogates, demean, or humiliates an individual based on that individual's sex (Berdah, 2007). Such behaviour may involve sexual force and degradation, sexist materials, comments and jokes, or other acts experienced by an individual because of his or her sex that ridicule, sabotage, threaten or undermine that individual.

According to the Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention Education Manual (2020), sexual harassment generally includes any repeated, unwanted verbal, behavioral sexual advance; sexually explicit or derogatory remarks, pictures, jokes or other non-verbal matter and or statements made in the classroom that are sexually offensive when submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly term or condition of an individual's grade; submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as a basis for grading decisions affecting the individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effects of substantially interfering with class performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive classroom environment.

Sexual harassment is another concept looked at in this study. Brandenburg (1997), conceptualized sexual harassment as involving subjecting someone to unwanted sexual attention. She further expanded that the vulnerability of students to sexual harassment is particularly high and its potential effects on them are severe. The United States of America's department for education and civil rights (2008), described sexual harassment as unwelcomed conduct of a sexual nature. These conducts can be categorized into verbal, physical and visual forms. According to Naom, Kisiw and Felicita (2019) sexual harassment include unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, unwanted touches, sexual comments, jokes or gestures, pictures or written materials, calling students sexually charged names and rating students on sexual activity. These conducts are believed to have dilapidating effects on students' academic performance.

Brandenburg (1997), theorized sexual harassment to involve subjecting someone to unwanted sexual attention. It includes a wide array of behavior ranging from verbal innuendo to overt sexual demands. The effects of sexual harassment can be devastating to individuals and to organizations. Sexual harassment can influence self-concept, emotional health, career path, interpersonal relationships and

the entire course of one's personal and professional life. The vulnerability of students to sexual harassment is particularly high and its potential effects on them are severe.

Different forms and categories of sexual harassment

Lewis & Hastings (1994) as cited in deWet & Oosthuizen (2010) posits that based on the various definitions of sexual harassment, different forms of sexual harassing behaviour can be classified in one of the following categories;

- Gender harassment, including generalized sexist statements and behavior that convey insulting, degrading and / or sexist attitude;
- Seductive behavior, involving unwanted, inappropriate and offensive physical or verbal sexual advances;
- Sexual bribery, including solicitation of sexual of activity or other sex-linked behavior by means of promise of reward;
- Sexual coercion, which entail coercion or sexual activity or other sex-linked behavior by threat of punishment;
- Sexual assault, comprising indecent and assault and /or rape.

The aforementioned five categories of sexual harassment suggest that they is a distinction between less severe and more severe categories of sexual harassment, ranging from gender harassment to sexual assault.

VanMeelis (1999), RSA (2005), as cited in de Wet and Oosthuizen (2010) postulates that sexual harassment can take place in many different forms, including the following;

- Verbal sexual harassment, including unwelcome innuendos, suggestions, hints, sexual advances, sexual jokes or insults, whistling, comments about body parts, inappropriate conversation of sexual nature and the sending of sexually explicit text.
- Physical harassment, ranging from touching, for example fondling, patting, grabbing, groping, brushing up against someone in a sexual way and kissing, to sexual assault and rape.
- Non-verbal harassment conduct, such as leering, winking, graffiti, drawing, displaying or sending sexually explicit picture or objects and rude or unwelcome gestures.
- Secondary harassment, which may occur when a person who has filed a complaint of harassment is harassed by educators or peers.
- Victimization, which occurs when a person is victimized, intimidated or harassed on the basis of refusing to submit to un-wanted attention.

Social Adjustment

Social adjustment has been viewed differently by many authors. Sekar and Arul (2016), opined that social adjustment refers to an individual's adaption in social relationships with other people both inside and outside the school, as reflected in the individual's attitudes and behaviour. They further observed that the school is the major socialization institution for any child. It is the child's first contact with the world outside the home. According to Laximi (2016), social adjustment is very important in several areas, such as peer relationships, family relationship, social relationships to name a few. Crick and Dodge (1994) in Karadag (2017) defined social adjustment as the degree to which children get along with their peers; the degree to which they engage in adaptive, competent social behaviour; and the extent to which the inhibit aversive, incompetent behaviour.

According to Crick and Dodge (1994) as cited in Eva, Olga and Rosario (2016) define social adjustment as the degree to which an individual in competent social behaviours adapts to the immediate social context. Research has shown that victimization experiences negatively influence social adjustment, mainly in the later state of adolescent (Cillessen and Lansu, 2015 as cited in Eva,

Olga and Rosario, 2016). In this regard, it has been shown adolescents who are victimized show low levels of social competence, acceptance and popularity tend to be isolated and rejected and generally they have worst relationship with their peers.

Theoretical William Glasser's Choice Theory (1998) was used to situate this study. Choice theory emphasizes the individual's control over his or her feelings and actions. Conflict arises because we can only control our own behavior. The William Glasser theory teaches the concept that all behavior is chosen. Glasser Choice Theory states that all human behavior is driven by the desire to satisfy five basic human needs: the need to be loved and accepted, the need to be powerful, the need to be free, the need to have fun, and the need to survive. The William Glasser theory argues that everything we do is to fulfill one (or more) of these five basic needs. As we increase our self-control, we can make better and more responsible choices. Choice Theory recommends adopting seven Connecting Relationship Habits to use in all relationships. These include: Supporting, Encouraging, Listening, Accepting, Trusting, Respecting, and Negotiating. Differences On the flip side, Choice Theory brings to light seven Disconnecting Habits that break down relationships. These significant choice theory habits are used to control people and ultimately lead to misunderstandings and resentment. They include: Criticizing, Blaming, Complaining, Nagging, Threatening, Punishing, and Bribing. Rewarding to Control We all choose whether to use Connecting or Disconnecting Habits in our relationships. Happy, positive relationships come from choosing Connecting Habits.

Choice Theory also emphasizes Ten Axioms. We have already seen the first axiom: humans can only control their own behavior. The second is that all we give or get from others is information. Number three is that all long-lasting psychological problems are relationship problems. Axiom four is that we must have at least one satisfying relationship. The others are: The past has a lot to do with who we are, but it does not hold us prisoner. We are driven by five genetic needs. We satisfy these needs by building "quality worlds." All behavior consists of four components: acting, feeling, thinking and physiology. Recognizing that we all control our own behavior brings us freedom. We only have "direct control" over acting and thinking, but we can gain indirect control over feeling and physiology through these.

1. The Quality World: William Glasser theories emphasize the concept of the Quality World. The Quality World is a place in the mind where people store mental pictures of what they find important. They might store images of places, things, beliefs, and people who matter to them. Glasser believed that images in a person's Quality World make them feel good and meet at least one basic need. These pictures don't need to align with society's standards and are unique to each person. Our idea of a perfect life resides in the Quality World.
2. The Perceived World: Obviously, reality doesn't reside in the Quality World. Choice Theory states that we experience the real world through our perceptions. We gather information from our five senses and then pass it through our Total Knowledge Filter. The Total Knowledge Filter is comprised of everything we have experienced over the course of our life. When we encounter new information, we must make a decision. We can: Disregard the information, Believe the information might be meaningful but need to further investigate, decide the information is meaningful and pass it along to the Valuing Filter. Information passed through the Valuing Filter is assigned a value. Pleasurable information is assigned a positive value. Unpleasant information is assigned a negative value. Information that falls in between is considered neutral. This process is extremely personal. Our views can differ wildly from the views of our peers. Glasser believed our Perceived World is what we deem reality. It is: Subjective based on a variety of variables including gender, age, education and experience, Unique to each individual, constantly changing as we gather new information and Likely inaccurate (but feels accurate at the time).

How does choice theory work? We know that teaching person to alter their actions/thinking can affect the way they feel and the way their bodies respond to stress. Education provides a wonderful example of this. Students frustrated over their inability to conquer certain concepts and gain specific skills may be taught to reframe their thinking about what constitutes a quality world for them. Other choice

therapy variations concentrate on past behaviors and ask the clients to work through “triggers” for the behavior so that they can avoid them in the future. Choice Theory and its component, Reality Therapy, do not spend time on the past. They ask clients to concentrate on the present (the reality). They ask them to envision changes they might make in their behavior that would help them get what they want out of their lives (or the perception they have of their quality worlds).

Glasser also developed the concept of Total Behavior. Total Behavior is comprised of four components including: acting, thinking, feeling and physiology. Individuals can only control how they act and think. There is little we can do to directly change our physiological responses (such as anxiety attacks) or feelings. By having direct control of acting and thinking components, our physiology and feelings also change. Direct changes to thoughts and actions cause indirect alterations in those areas. Choice Theory encourages people to build relationships that create “quality worlds” to build cooperation and connection with others

Reality therapy was created using the principles of choice theory. The main objective of reality therapy is that clients make adaptive decisions that will help them meet their basic human needs. Glasser did not believe in mental illness. Instead, problems were the result of unfulfilled goals. He believed mental illness was an expression of unhappiness. Because choice theory deals in the here and now, the client is asked to focus on the present rather than rehashing past experiences. Reality therapy emphasizes the client-therapist relationship. It is thought that the therapeutic relationship serves as a model for other relationships in the client’s life. Indeed, Glasser believed that many psychological problems are relationship problems. It is the therapist’s job to guide the client toward making the choices that will yield the most positive interpersonal outcomes.

Reality therapy is a problem-solving approach. A client must understand that their current behavior is ineffective and work to change it for the better. This is how they realize their objectives. The successful client will learn to take responsibility for their actions and make a commitment to enact more adaptive behavior. Reality therapy is effective with numerous problems, including addiction, bullying and other behavioral disorders. Reality therapy has shown the most success helping adolescents address behavior problems in school and the community.

William Glasser Choice Theory Summary In its purest form. William Glasser Choice Theory states that we make decisions to fulfill our basic needs. It is posited that humans have a desire to make choices that they feel will benefit themselves. Unfortunately, that does not mean that faulty decisions won’t lead to poorer outcomes. However, it has been found that Reality Therapy can help people to improve their problem-solving abilities. With its roots in classic behaviorism, Choice Theory has made important contributions to studies to almost all field of life.

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The design used in this study was a triangulation research design. The rationale for using this design is that mixing two methods provides rich insight into research phenomena. Mixed-method research approach allows researchers to widen their inquiry with sufficient depth and breath. Tegan (2022) stressed that using different methods to collect data on the same topic can make your results more credible. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 300 students and 50 teachers from GBHS Bayelle, BCHS Nkwen and FONAB High School in Bamenda Municipality, North West Region of Cameroon and particularly from five students and teachers.

The instruments that were used for data collection was a closed ended questionnaire for students and interview guide for teachers. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain information about students ranging from their demographic information to their knowledge of incivility and students' social adjustment. The rationale for using an interview guide for teachers for this study was to obtain an in-depth view on teachers understanding of incivility in school and its impact on student social adjustment since they are the ones closest to the students in school.

For the instruments to be effectively adopted face and content validity was carried out. A pilot test was carried out to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. 10 copies of the instrument were administered

in the various schools for a period of 1 week. Reliability analysis was calculated using the Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient and the overall coefficient value of the questionnaire stood at 0.701. The consents of the participants were solicited and only those who consented filled the copies of the questionnaire. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and the research\academic purpose of the exercise. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics specifically frequency count and percentages. The hypotheses of the study are tested using the Spearman’s rho test and the qualitative data were analysed using the direct reporting method where in the exact words of the respondent are reported without alteration and put in inverted commas open and close.

DATA PRESENTATION AND FINDINGS

Research Question One: What is the impact of physical assault on students’ social adjustment?

Table 1: Students’ Opinion on the Impact of Physical Assault on Social Adjustment

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	SA/A	D/SD
I am always scared and withdrawn from other students when I am being kicked	16 (5.0%)	112 (35.0%)	80 (25.0%)	112 (35.0%)	128 (40.0%)	192 (60.0%)
I do not always like to see people punching others, so I do not interact with them	112 (35.0%)	144 (45.0%)	64 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	256 (80.0%)	64 (20.0%)
Slapping someone makes me very angry with the perpetrator(s) and sometimes I retaliate pouring out temper-tantrums	160 (50.0%)	64 (20.0%)	32 (10.0%)	64 (20.0%)	224 (70.0%)	96 (30.0%)
I enjoy using sticks and other dangerous object in beating my classmate /school mates**	32 (10.0%)	32 (10.0%)	48 (15.0%)	208 (65.0%)	64 (20.0%)	256 (80.0%)
I am depressed seeing mates beating each other	64 (20.0%)	64 (20.0%)	144 (45.0%)	48 (15.0%)	128 (40.0%)	192 (60.0%)
Multiple Responses Set (MRS)	560 (35.0%)	432 (27.0%)	352 (22.0%)	256 (16.0%)	992 (62.0%)	608 (38.0%)

****Coding reversed during calculation of MRS**

Based on the student’s opinion on the impact of physical assault, 40.0% (128) of them indicated that they are always scared and withdrawn from other students when physically assaulted. 80.0% (256) of the students also indicate that they do not like to interact with people who beat others. 70.0% (224) of the students also state that slapping someone makes them angry with the perpetrator and even feel like retaliating. Findings also showed that 80.0% (256) of students do not feel happy when others are beaten using dangerous objects. Finally, 40.0% (128) of the students said they feel depressed seeing mates beating each other. In aggregate, 62.0% of the students are socially affected by physical assault while 38.0% are unaffected. In addition, the students added that physical assault causes fear and psychological trauma in them. This overall finding is also presented on the figure below.

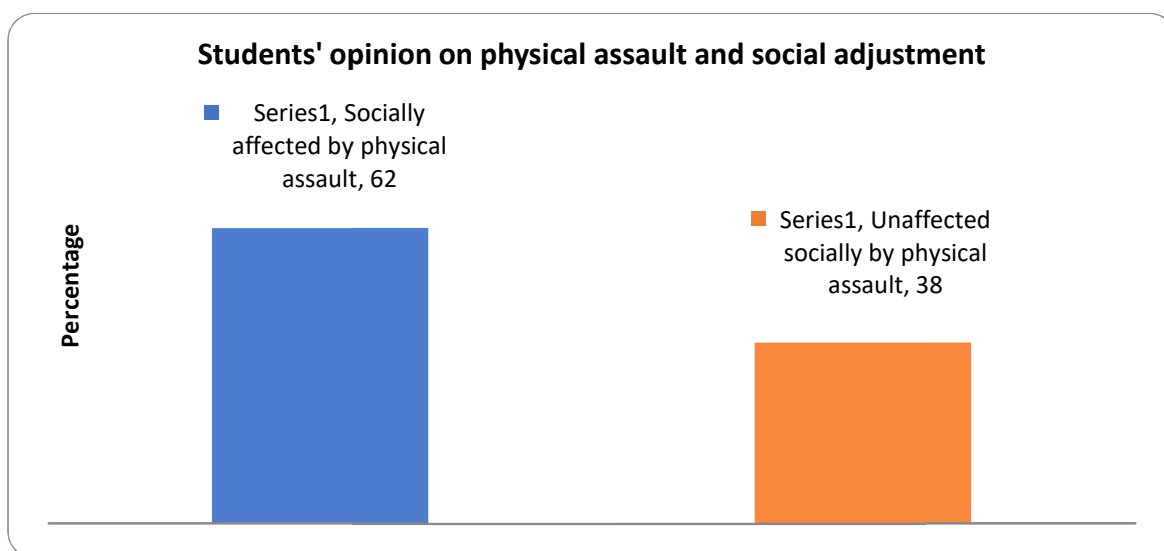


Figure 1: Students’ Opinion on the Impact of Physical Assault on Social Adjustment

Table 2: How physical assaults has an impact on students’ social adjustment

Theme	Frequency	Quotation
Anxiety	3	“It causes fear”
	2	“Tension”
		“It causes drop out from school”
Psychological	3	“It causes drugs addition”
	2	“Psychological trauma”

Findings from teachers showed that physical assaults cause fear, tension, school dropout and psychological trauma which hinders student social adjustment.

Testing of Hypothesis One (Ho1): There is no significant relationship between physical assault and students’ social adjustment

Table 3: Relationship between Physical Assault and Social Adjustment

Test	Statistical parameters	Physical assault	Students’ social adjustment
Spearman's rho	R-value	1	-.506 ^{**}
	P-value	.	.000
	N	320	320

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statistically, findings showed that physical assault has a significant, relatively strong and negative impact on students’ social adjustment (R-value= -0.506^{**}, p-value 0.000 < 0.05). The negative sign of the correlation value implies that students are more likely to find it difficult to interact or associate with others if they are constantly assaulted physically. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis that states there is a significant relationship between physical assault and students’ social adjustment was accepted.

Research Question Two: What is the impact of sexual harassment on students’ social adjustment?

Table 4: Students’ Opinion on Sexual Harassment

Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	SA/A	D/SD
I like exposing body parts e.g. thighs, breasts, private parts and my mates accept me**	16 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	80 (25.0%)	224 (70.0%)	16 (5.0%)	301 (95.0%)
I don’t make friends with students making insulting sexual jokes	128 (40.0%)	16 (5.0%)	96 (30.0%)	80 (25.0%)	144 (45.0%)	176 (55.0%)
I often sexually touched my mates without their consent, but they still freely associate with me**.	48 (15.0%)	64 (20.0%)	16 (5.0%)	192 (60.0%)	112 (35.0%)	208 (65.0%)
I don’t receive unwelcome display of sexual materials /Pornography because it cause me to be emotionally disturb.	112 (35.0%)	64 (20.0%)	48 (15.0%)	96 (30.0%)	176 (55.0%)	144 (45.0%)
I don’t welcome sexual gestures e.g. finger signs and I don’t cooperate with student who do it	160 (50.0%)	64 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	96 (30.0%)	224 (70.0%)	96 (30.0%)
Multiple Responses Set (MRS)	816 (51.0%)	240 (15.0%)	208 (13.0%)	336 (21.0%)	1056 (66.0%)	544 (34.0%)

****Coding reversed during calculation of MRS**

Based on the student’s opinion on sexual harassment, 95.0% (301) of the students indicated that they do not like exposing body parts e.g. thighs, breasts, private parts because their mates do not accept it. 45.0% (144) of the students also indicated that they do not like making friends with students fun of making insulting sexual jokes. Also, 65.0% (208) of students hate to be sexually touched without their consent. 55.0% (176) of the students also indicate that they do not welcome display of sexual materials or pornography because it causes them emotional disturbance. Finally, 70.0% (224) of the students said they do not welcome sexual gestures and hate to cooperate with friends of such act. In overall, 66.0% of the student indicated that their social interaction is affected by sexual harassment while 34.0% of them are unaffected. In addition, the students said sexual harassment cause emotional instability in them. This overall finding is also presented on the figure below.

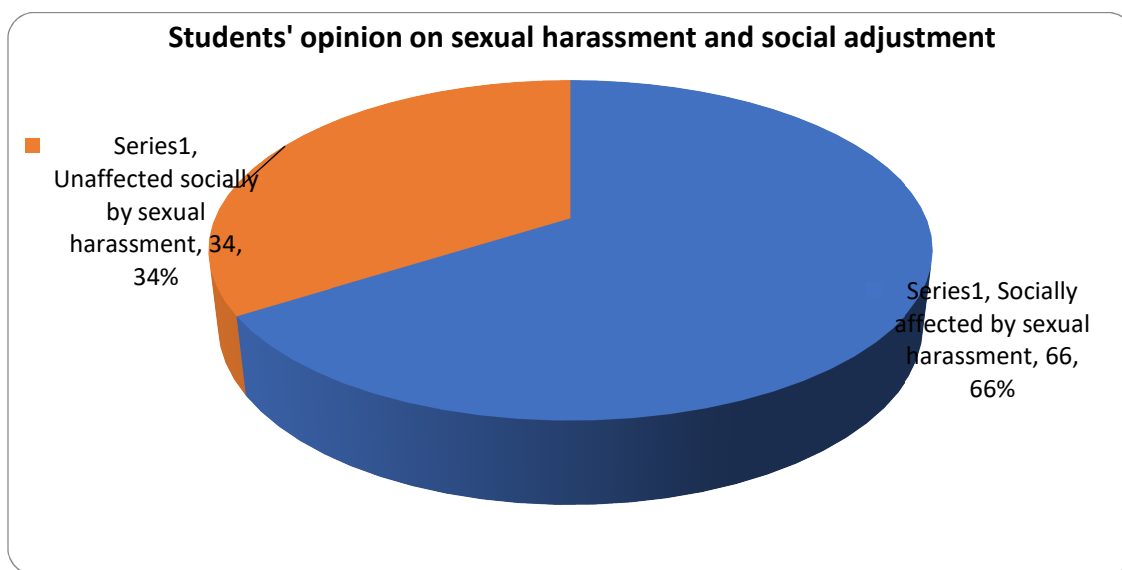


Figure 2: Students’ Opinion on Sexual Harassment

Table 5: How sexual harassment impact students’ social adjustment

Frequency	Quotation
10	“Emotional instability”
8	“Fear”
2	“Shame”
1	“Low self-esteem”

Findings from teachers revealed that sexual harassment can lead to emotional instability, fear, shame and low self-esteem.

Testing of Hypothesis Three (Ho3): There is no significant relationship between sexual harassment and students’ social adjustment.

Table 6: Relationship between Sexual Harassment and Students’ Social Adjustment

Test	Statistical parameters	Sexual harassment	Students’ social adjustment
Spearman's rho	R-value	1	-.501**
	P-value	.	.000
	N	320	320

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statistically, findings showed that sexual harassment has a significant, relatively strong and negative impact on students’ social adjustment (R-value= -0.501**, p-value 0.000 < 0.05). The negative sign of the correlation value also implies that the students are more likely to find it difficult to relate with others if they are constantly sexually harassed by others. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis that states there is a significant relationship between sexual harassment and students’ social adjustment was accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study indicated that, there was a significant, relatively strong and negative relationship between physical assault and students’ social adjustment. The negative impact of the correlation value implies that students are more likely to find it difficult to interact or associate with other if they are constantly assaulted physically. It also means that physical assault contributes a lot to students’ social adjustment problems as many of the students revealed that kicking, punching, slapping, beating and using sticks and other dangerous objects on them or others makes them depressed, scared and withdrawn from other students and will not even interact with others. Majority of the students opines that physical assault causes them to even pour temper tantrums in retaliation. Moreover, finding from teachers shows that, physical assault causes fear, tension, school dropout and psychological trauma which hinders students’ social adjustment.

This significant relationship between physical assaults and students’ social adjustment is in line with finding from the US Department of Health and Human Services (2004), which revealed that students who are victims of physical assault experience some effect including interpersonal conflicts, withdrawal, shock, anxiety or fear, poor concentration and self-criticism. Children may develop psychological trauma with the belief that they may be physically assaulted again (Shen & Sink, 2002). These students end up suffering with relationship issues and adjustment.

There was a significant, relatively strong and negative relationship between sexual harassment and students’ social adjustment. This negative sign of the correlation value also implies that students are more likely to find it difficult to relate with others if they are constantly sexually harassed by others. This also means that sexual harassment contributes a lot to student social adjustment disorder as majority of the students revealed that they don’t make friends or freely associate with students who sexually touch them or expose body parts. They also revealed that unwelcome display of sexual material makes them to emotional disturb and will not cooperate with the perpetrators. Finding from

teachers also revealed that sexual harassment can lead to emotional instability, fear, shame and low self-esteem which are unfavorable characteristics for social adjustment. The findings of this study are similar with that of Brandenburg (1997), who opines that the effect of sexual harassment can be devastating to individual's self-concept, emotional health, career path, interpersonal relationship and entire course of one's personal and professional life. Zauderer (2002), theorized that uncivil acts (such as sexual harassment) directed towards an individual tends to leave victims feeling anxious, stressed and dejected.

CONCLUSION

Student's uncivil behaviours in Cameroon secondary schools is increasing rapidly. It is not uncommon for students to struggle with social issues, but the frequency is quite high in recent years. From observations the prevalence of incivility rates increasing each day. This means that nearly all students have or will experience some kind of incivility from their schoolmates, teachers or even from administrative staff. The exceptionally high frequency of the occurrence for incivility in Cameroon secondary schools is cause for concern. This paper was intended to find out investigate incivility and its impact on students' social adjustment. The study demonstrates that physical assault, sexual harassment has a negative impact on students' social adjustment. Incivility to lead to a host of deleterious effects on student's social adjustments in particular and the school wellbeing in general. In terms of personal outcomes, student incivility is linked to high levels of anti-social behaviors such as poor interactive skills among learners, decrease in psychological wellbeing, straining of relationships, indulging in social deviant behaviors to name a few. In terms of the institution outcomes, incivility has been related to students' withdrawal from school (dropout), teachers' dissatisfaction with work and even poor academic performance.

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