



The roles of Neighborhood Influence and Social Media on Secondary School Brutality: A correlational study

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Abstract

Learners receive less instruction from schools with high rates of brutality, violence, and crime. These schools have lower Academic achievement and absenteeism and higher dropout rates. This study examined the pattern of relationship between neighborhood influence, social media, and school brutality. This study employed a descriptive survey of correlational design, and a multistage sampling procedure was utilized. Adolescents (N=298; 31.54% female, 68.46% male) aged 11 to 17 participated. Participants completed standardized instruments: (Perceived Neighborhood Influence Questionnaire $\alpha = 0.79$; Social Media Scale $\alpha = 0.77$ and Violent Behavior Assessment Scale $\alpha = 0.91$). The results showed that neighborhood influence ($r = .442$, $p < 0.05$) and social media ($r = .528$, $p < 0.05$) all had a significant relationship with school brutality. Also, social media usage recorded the most effective relative contribution to school brutality, followed by neighborhood influence. This emphasizes that schools should work with local community groups to make neighborhoods safe and helpful for students. This can help to lower the chance of brutality at school and help students do well.

Keywords: School Brutality; Neighborhood Influence; Social Media; Adolescence

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1. Introduction

Educating students is less successful in schools with high rates of brutality, violence, and crime. These schools have more dropouts, greater absenteeism rates, and worse learner achievement levels. A few violent acts can have far-reaching adverse effects on a large number of students, even in schools where the victimization rate is low (Zhou et al., 2022). Their fear of victimization hampers students' educational and psychological development. According to Gover (2015), students who experience feelings of threat at school struggle academically and are more likely to discontinue their studies. A child's

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education may suffer greatly when their fears of violence and brutality in schools grow. When community members, teachers, and students fear attending school, there is a severe risk to their ability to receive a successful education. Maladjustment is bred by school brutality; it is more common for young people who are subjected to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse to suffer more brutality and inflict it on others. According to Devries et al. (2021), in their analysis of the events leading up to the Columbine High School massacre in Littleton, Colorado, students who endured years of being teased, mocked, shunned, harassed, and otherwise shamed, humiliated, and targeted by their peers may have developed resentment and hatred that eventually blows up in the form of physical violence.

Brutality in schools serves no useful purpose. The effects of school brutality may hamper students' ability to fulfill their potential or reach their educational objectives. Moreover, it could result in a lifetime of criminal activity or antisocial actions. The most significant outcome could be the student's death or the end of their academic career. Schools experiencing incidents of brutality could gain unwarranted attention. According to De Smet (2016), there's a high probability that these schools' reputations will be damaged and their alumni may face stigma. When brutality against students results in an unscheduled closing of the school, it disturbs the academic program. When schools close suddenly, guardians and parents lose their financial investments. Further, they might lose their wards or children to violence in schools. Government planning for education becomes difficult because of the school closure. The hurt caused by school brutality falls on society as well. According to Olanrewaju and Omoponle (2017), society experiences decreased productivity and a lack of peace and stability.

The losses that result from school brutality are not in any way minimal. According to the World Bank's press release in 2021, globally, it was estimated that the cost of brutality in and around schools in lifetime earnings is US\$11 trillion. This high cost shows that school brutality is a subject that requires more attention globally (Eijigu & Teketel, 2021). All over the world, the environment and climate necessary for effective teaching and learning are increasingly undermined by a culture of school-based criminality (Omoponle and Olanrewaju, 2019). There is no doubt that school brutality has robbed the educational sector globally. However, most times, researchers focus on the impact of school brutality on school achievement rather than environmental factors predicting school brutality. Due to the hiatus in literature, this study examined the correlations between neighborhood influence, social media, and school brutality.

1.1. Neighborhood Influence and School Brutality

A neighborhood is a subset of a broader community. It results from a mix of individuals and organizations occupying a certain area. An ecological unit nestled within progressively larger communities is called a neighborhood (Obilor & Ikechukwu, 2021).

As a social unit, a neighborhood is the primary form of social organization, including people with shared histories and roots. Action and interaction in the neighborhood create cooperation, intimacy, and a sense of belonging and collaboration. Neighborhood influence refers to the process by which various neighborhood conditions influence the actions of individuals living in the neighborhood, collectively or individually. Neighborhoods can be influenced by ecological, cultural, or sometimes political forces. Galster et al. (2010) give mechanisms of neighborhood effects as social-interactive, geographical, institutional, and environmental. Also, the concept of neighborhood influence covers the neighborhood's impact on the behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of the individuals who live within it. This includes factors such as the neighborhood's social and economic conditions, social and community resources, and the quality of its physical environment (Giffords Law Center, 2018; Adewuyi, 2023). It is believed that neighborhood conditions and characteristics can impact individual behavior and well-being in various ways, including exposure to brutality and crime, access to educational and economic opportunities, and social relationships and networks (Berends, 2015).

Research has shown that neighborhood influence can significantly shape an individual's attitudes and behaviors, including their risk for involvement in brutality. For example, studies have found that individuals living in neighborhoods with high levels of crime and brutality are at increased risk for violent behavior themselves (Britt et al., 2018; Galster et al., 2010; Billings et al., 2019). Additionally, neighborhood characteristics such as poverty and residential instability have been associated with increased risk for school brutality (Omoponle, 2023). Students who lived in neighborhoods with high levels of poverty, crime, and disorder were found to have a higher risk of involvement in school brutality. The authors found that neighborhood characteristics like poverty significantly influenced school brutality. This finding is supported by another study conducted by (Chetty et al., 2016), which found that neighborhoods with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and crime were associated with increased levels of school brutality.

Additionally, Browning et al. (2021) conducted a study that found that neighborhoods with a high concentration of deviant peers and low levels of social control were associated with an increased risk of involvement in school violence and brutality. The authors argued that the neighborhood environment might influence school brutality by exposing students to deviant peers who may engage in violent behavior. Furthermore, (Nansel et al., 2001) found that neighborhood characteristics, such as poverty and crime, were related to school brutality. These findings highlight the importance of considering neighborhood factors when examining the relationship between neighborhood influence and school brutality. In addition to neighborhood characteristics, neighborhood social processes can influence school brutality. For example, Gaias et al. (2018) found that neighbourhood social disorganization, such as a lack of social control and cohesion, was associated with increased school brutality. Similarly, according to Burrington (2018),

neighborhood social disorganization, including family disruption, residential mobility, and family instability, was associated with increased school brutality.

1.2. Social Media and School Brutality

The phrase "social media" is frequently used to describe new media that allow for interactive interaction. All social networking sites that are used for communication are referred to as social media. These social media sites include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube, and many other networking platforms (Ngonso, 2019; Opesemowo et al., 2023). According to Gentile (2009), social media can also be defined as interactive computer-based mediated technologies that make it easier to create or share ideas, knowledge, professions, and other forms of expression through online communities and networks. The term "social media" describes the range of web resources and programs allowing users to create, share, and exchange information and content. It is widely recognized as one of the most remarkable technological advancements of the 21st century, with billions of users worldwide. Social media has become an integral part of people's daily lives, allowing them to connect with friends, family, and people with similar interests and access news and entertainment. As a result, it has been extensively studied and researched by various disciplines, including sociology, psychology, and communication.

The relationship between social media and school brutality has been widely studied in recent years, with many empirical findings showing a positive association between the two. For instance, a study by Olanrewaju & Omoponle (2017) found that social media use was positively related to school brutality, with students who spent more time on social media being more likely to experience brutality at school. Similarly, a study by Anderson and Dill (2000) found that exposure to violent media, including video games and movies, was related to increased aggression and school brutality among students. This study suggested that social media use, particularly exposure to violent content, may increase the risk of school brutality. The study of Whittaker and Kowalski (2015) established a link between social media and cyberbullying. Their study was in line with that of Al-Sharqi, Hashim, and Kutbi (2015), who found that social media leads to cyberbullying and the weakening of physical human relationships. Patton et al. (2014) study demonstrates that youth brutality, whether bullying, gang brutality, or self-directed brutality, increasingly occurs in the online space. The findings of Busari and Adewuyi (2018) revealed that exposure to social media promotes aggressive behaviors among adolescents. Their study was consistent with that of Ayanwale et al. (2023), who said that social media negatively influenced the social behavior of students, particularly brutality at school.

1.3. Research Questions

The general purpose of this study is to examine neighborhood influence and social media as correlates of school brutality. Specifically, the following research questions guided the study:

- i. What pattern of relationship exists between neighborhood influence, social media, and school brutality?
- ii. What is the joint contribution of (neighborhood influence and social media) to school brutality?
- iii. What is the relative effect of (neighborhood influence and social media) on school brutality?

2. Method

2.1 Design

This study employed a descriptive survey of correlational design type. The approach allows the researcher to measure relationships, gather information, summarize, and interpret data for clarification.

2.2 Population

The target population of this study consists of all in-school adolescents in Ilorin Metropolis (Ilorin-East, Ilorin-South, and Ilorin-West). The study's sample size was 300 (298 students finally completed). The researcher adopted a multistage sampling procedure in selecting the respondents. Firstly, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique to choose the secondary school location in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria. Secondly, the researcher used a simple random method to select fifteen (5 each) out of the Fifty-six schools in the three Local Government Areas. For the third stage, a stratified sampling technique was used to determine twenty students from the fifteen selected Ilorin secondary schools. The samples consist of both male and female students from the senior secondary school category.

2.3 Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire with two major sections, A and B, was used for this investigation. Section A collected demographic information from the respondents, including gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and kind of school. The responses about other variables were gathered in Section B of the Questionnaire. Experts in teacher education, educational assessment, and Educational Psychology were supplied with the instrument and the study questions to confirm its validity. Based on the suggestions and opinions of the experts, the final text was revised. Using the test-retest approach, the instrument's reliability was ascertained. To ascertain the instrument's reliability, students in the

schools that weren't included in the study's sample received the instrument twice, separated by three weeks. Using the test-retest approach, the reliability index of the instruments was taken as follows: (Perceived Neighbourhood Influence Questionnaire $\alpha = 0.79$; Social Media Scale $\alpha = 0.77$; and Violent Behavior Rating Scale $\alpha = 0.91$), which confirmed the suitability of the instrument for the study. After obtaining the authorities' clearance from the sampled schools, the researchers obtained each participant's agreement and followed all ethical norms. The respondents were also assured of the confidentiality of the information collected, which helped avoid distortion of facts. The researchers and five research assistants collected the data for this study.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data collected regarding the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency count and percentage) for demographic data. PPMC and multiple regression statistical tools were used to answer the research, all at 0.05 significance level.

3 Results

Table 1: Respondents distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	94	31.54
Male	204	68.46
Total	298	100.0

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the participants in this study based on their gender. The table indicates that 298 secondary school students were used for this study. Of the total number, 94 (31.54%) were females, while 204 (68.46%) were males. The result from this table implies that more male secondary school students participated in the study.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Age Range

Age Range (yrs)	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
11-13	72	24.16	24.16	24.16
14-16	124	41.61	41.61	65.77
Above 16	102	34.23	34.23	100.0
Total	298	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the age distribution of the participants. The data revealed that 72 participants, representing 24.16 % of the entire participants, are between ages 11-13, 124 participants, representing 41.61%, are between the ages of 14-16, and 102 participants, representing 34.23 %, are above 16 years of age.

Table 3:
Frequency Distribution of Respondents by Ethnicity

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yoruba	236	79.19	79.19	79.19
Igbo	14	4.70	4.70	83.89
Hausa	48	16.11	16.11	100.0
Total	298	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 shows the frequency distribution of the participants based on ethnicity. The table shows that the Yoruba ethnic group had the highest ethnic representation among the participants in this study. They pooled 79.19% of the participants, with 206 students identifying as Yoruba; there were 14 (4.70%) of the participants who identified with the Igbo ethnic group, while 48 (16.11%) of the participants identified as Hausas.

Answering of Research Questions

Research question 1: What pattern of relationship exists between neighborhood influence, social media, and school brutality?

Table 4: Descriptive and Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship between neighborhood influence, social media, and school brutality

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3
School brutality	298	31.64	5.86	1		
Neighborhood influence	298	24.88	7.2	.442**	1	
Social media	298	22.06	8.48	.528**	.731**	1

** Correlation Significant at 0.01 levels

Table 4 shows that there were positive significant relationships between the variables; neighborhood influence ($r = .442$, $p < 0.05$) and social media ($r = .528$, $p < 0.05$) all had a significant relationship with school brutality. The result confirms that the independent variables used in this study are appropriate to predict the independent variable.

Research question 2: What is the joint contribution of (neighborhood influence and social media) to school brutality?

Table 5: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis on Composite Contribution of Independent Variables to School Brutality

Analysis of variance					
	Sum Square (SS)	of	DF	Mean Square	F
Regression	136652.261		2	68326.131	58.971
Residual	341798.813		295	1158.640	
Total	478451.074		297		

a) $R = .534$

b) $R^2 = .286$

c) Adjusted $R^2 = .281$

d) Standard error of estimate = 34.03880

Table 5 shows the composite contribution of neighborhood influence and social media to school brutality. The table shows the coefficient of multiple correlations ($R = 0.534$) and multiple regression adjusted ($R^2 = 0.281$). This implies that 28.1% of the variation in school brutality was accounted for by the joint effect of the independent variables when taken together. At the same time, the remaining may be due to other factors and residuals. The table also showed that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F (58.971, $p < 0.05$) significant at 0.05 level.

Research question 3: What is the relative effect of (neighborhood influence and social media) on school brutality?

Table 6: Summary Relative Contribution of Independent variables to school brutality

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients		t	p
Model	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	-10.476	15.795		-.663	.000
Neighborhood influence	.338	.202	.121	1.678	.000
Social media	1.892	.311	.439	6.090	.000

Table 6 revealed the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (neighborhood influence and social media) to the dependent variable (School brutality) among secondary school students: neighborhood influence ($\beta = .121$, $p < 0.05$) and social media ($\beta = .456$, $p < 0.05$) had a significant relative contribution to school brutality. However, social media recorded the most significant relative contribution to school brutality among secondary school students and was followed by neighborhood influence, respectively

4 Discussion

The result from the first research question shows a significant relationship among the predictor variables in the study. A growing body of research demonstrates a substantial relationship between neighborhood influence, social media, and school brutality among secondary school students; for example, neighborhood influence significantly impacts students' school experiences. Aggression and brutality in schools can rise as a result of fear and insecurity stemming from high crime and brutality in the neighborhood (Leuschner et al., 2017). Furthermore, Kanmodi et al.'s (2020) research revealed a link between a neighborhood's high concentration of deviant peers and low social control and a higher likelihood of involvement in acts of school violence. The authors contended that by exposing children to violent peers who may act out, the neighborhood setting may have an impact on acts of school violence. Additionally, (Omoponle, 2023) discovered a correlation between school brutality and neighborhood features like crime and poverty. The significance of taking into account neighborhood characteristics when analyzing the

connection between neighborhood influence and school violence is underscored by these findings.

Social media has also significantly impacted students' attitudes and behaviors. According to research, social media can fuel the spread of violent ideologies and cyberbullying, which raises the possibility of school brutality (Laursen and Veenstra, 2021). Research has indicated that students' behavior in the classroom can be positively impacted by their responsible use of social media (Adegboyega, 2020). On the other hand, harmful social media use can result in a number of unfavorable things, such as a rise in violence and a decline in academic success (Shah et al., 2019). Further research has demonstrated that social media use significantly affects students' school experiences. However, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to face poverty and have fewer resources available to them, which may raise the likelihood that they will engage in violent behavior. Social media significantly influences how students think and behave. According to research, students are more likely to watch violent videos on social media themselves if they hang out with peers who do the same (Egan and Siever, 2014). Consequently, the complex landscape resulting from the interaction of these factors influences secondary school students' experiences with school brutality. To effectively address and prevent school brutality, these relationships must be understood.

Findings from this study also confirmed that the independent variables (neighborhood influence and social media) are good predictors of school brutality. Evidence suggests that the independent variables jointly contribute to the dependent variable of school brutality among secondary school students. For instance, studies have shown that social media shapes students' attitudes and behaviors (Sylvester et al., 2023). Additionally, neighborhoods with high levels of crime and brutality can contribute to a sense of fear and insecurity among students, which can increase the risk of aggression and brutality in schools (Chen and Rosen, 2011). Social media can also contribute to school brutality by promoting cyberbullying and spreading violent ideology (Afolashade, 2023; Patchin and Hinduja, 2010). These factors can create a vicious cycle, where a negative neighborhood influence, low socio-economic status, and exposure to violent behavior through peer groups and social media can lead to increased school brutality. Furthermore, low parental socio-economic status can also contribute to school brutality. Studies have shown that students who struggle financially are more likely to experience negative emotions and frustration, which can lead to aggressive behavior (Adewuyi, 2021; Dorn and Fiore, 2013).

From the last research question, social media recorded the most significant relative contribution to school brutality. A number of factors influence the complex issue of school violence among secondary school students in Ilorin. Research has shown that social media has the most significant relative contribution to the incidence of school brutality, even though all of these factors play a role. Students who were exposed to high levels of social media usage were found to be more likely than students who were not to engage in violent behavior, such as bullying, fighting, and carrying weapons, according to a study by Fredrick et al. (2021). For instance, Kowalski et al. (2008) found that students from low-income neighborhoods had a higher likelihood of experiencing bullying, a type of school brutality. Social media and neighborhood influence impact students' attitudes and behaviors and raise the possibility of school brutality (Egan and Siever, 2014; Fagbule et al., 2021). They concluded that pupils are more likely to act violently if they witness aggressive behavior in their communities or on social media (Brizio et al., 2015). A comprehensive strategy that considers all contributing factors must be used to address school brutality effectively. Schools can attempt to lessen the frequency of school brutality by considering the interaction between environmental, social, and individual factors.

5 Conclusions

This study provides novel insights into the connections among social media, neighborhood influence, and school brutality. The results show that among students who have not yet attained the age of legal responsibility, there is a statistically significant relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable (school brutality). The results demonstrate the significance of considering various factors in the comprehension and prevention of school brutality since every predictor variable significantly influenced the outcome. This emphasizes the necessity of broad and all-encompassing strategies to stop school brutality because it is unlikely that a single element will be adequate to deal with the problem successfully. The results offer valuable perspectives on the intricate connections among the study's variables, implying that the elements engage in intricate interactions and mutual influences. Effectively addressing school brutality in Ilorin and other situations like it requires an understanding of these intricate relationships.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- Schools should have peer-to-peer counseling services and other programs that encourage students to act in a good way and help others.
- Schools should work with local community groups to make neighborhoods safe and helpful for students. This can help to lower the chance of brutality at school and help students do well.

- Schools should keep an eye on how students use social media and make rules to stop cyberbullying and other forms of brutality that happen online.

Limitations of the Study

One significant barrier is the teenager's willingness to provide information about acts of brutality in schools. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data obtained from questionnaires, which might contain biases related to social desirability or recall, among other potential sources of measurement error. It was also found that certain students did not complete the questionnaires thoroughly, and some did not respond to all the questions.

Suggestions for the Further Studies

Studies of a similar nature with larger sample sizes should be conducted elsewhere. The relationships between the causes and effects of school brutality over time could be examined using a longitudinal study design. In addition, other contextual elements like community opinions, cultural norms, and family dynamics might be investigated in future research as possible predictors of school brutality.

Ethics Statement

All procedures involving human subjects in this study adhered to the National Research Committee's ethical guidelines. To participate in this study, each participant provided written, informed permission.

Acknowledgments

The authors are grateful to the scholars whose works they used as a resource and the students who responded to their instruments.

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