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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**PERCEIVED FORMS OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS  
IN WESTERN PROVINCE, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Violent behaviour has become a contemporary issue in the Kenyan educational system. It is manifested in the form of rioting, sexual violence and bullying. This contributes to physical disability and poor academic performance in schools. In Western Province, cases of student violence in secondary schools have been reported in the recent years. For instance, in 2008, eight cases were reported, whereas in 2009 the number rose to over 30 cases. The purpose of the study was to establish the perceived of forms of violent behavior secondary school students in Western Province. The Objective of the study was to establish forms of violence as perceived by teachers and students. The study was based on the Social learning theory by Albert Bandura. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study population was composed of 6,354 teachers and 65,969 form two students. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 364 teachers and 1,152 form two students from 213 public secondary schools. Qualitative data from interviews was transcribed and reported according to emerging themes, categories and sub-categories while quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as the frequency counts, means and percentages. The Mann-Whitney U test was also used in data analysis. Findings of the study revealed that forms of violence were; rioting, bullying, sexual violence and fighting. Recommendations of the study were that: laws related to sexual violence be enforced; ban on caning of students should be encouraged; and an anti-bullying policy be established. It is hoped that the findings of this study may assist policy makers in formulating and implementing policies that address violence in the educational institutions.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Violence implies use of force to kill, injure or abuse others. It occurs between two or more individuals as interpersonal violence, or it involves identifiable groups in the society and erupts as intergroup violence between two or more different religions or ethnic groups. For centuries, violence has been a commonplace feature of school life with its causes embedded in the social, cultural, historical and economic contexts of its time. The focus of violence can be individuals, objects or the school itself, and the nature of the damage can be psychological, physical or material. School violence emanates from a variety of sources; it can be perpetrated by teachers, by students, and even by strangers to the school community (Rennison, 2003). The forms of violence experienced in secondary schools included: bullying; rioting; fighting; and sexual violence. Bullying as a disruptive behavior has been described as a sub-set of aggressive behavior that involves an intention to hurt another person by a variety of means.

It includes; physical and verbal assaults, and social exclusion (Santrock, 2005). Bullying infringes upon a child's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom and security. It also has a negative influence on both the victim's and the bully's physical, emotional, social and educational wellbeing. Every child has, however, the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. Studies in the 1990s showed that bullying was far from harmless and actually posed serious lasting effects. Victims of bullying suffered significant negative social and emotional development. Among the short term effects, victims suffered from low self-esteem, poor grades, few friends, and school attendance problems (Eliot and Cornell, 2009). Such emotional problems as depression and anxiety could also develop and last a lifetime. In addition, those doing the bullying often progressed to more serious aggressive behavior when not confronted about their actions.

In the United States of America, Unnever and Cornell (2003) studied on the nature and extent of student attitudes toward bullying among 2,400 students in 6 middle

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schools. They investigated the consistency and prevalence of student attitudes across gender, race, socioeconomic status, and grade level. They also assessed whether students with positive attitudes toward peer aggression and students with higher level of anger were especially prone to support a normative structure that encourages bullying. Results of the study indicated that a culture of bullying was a pervasive phenomenon among middle school students. Whereas the study by Unnever and Cornell (2003) covered 6 middle schools, the current study covered 213 secondary schools. Similarly, Branson and Cornell (2009) examined the effectiveness of school wide anti-bullying programs. They typically used student self-reports to measure reductions in bullying. This study compared self-reports of bullying with peer nominations in a sample of 355 middle school students. Self-report demonstrated low to moderate correspondence with peer nominations for bullying others and for victimization. More than twice as many students were categorized as bullies using peer nomination as compared to self-report.

While comparing two methods of identifying bullies in a sample of 386 middle school students, using a peer nomination survey, Cole, Cornell and Sheras (2006) established that self-reported and peer-nominated bullies differed in their types of bullying behaviors, level of general self-concept, attitudes toward aggression, and disciplinary infractions. In general, this study raised concern about reliance on student self-report and supported the use of peer nomination as a means of identifying school bullies.

A study on the peer popularity of middle school students involved in bullying was conducted by Thunfors and Cornell (2008). Bullying was assessed by peer report using the School Climate Bullying Survey (SCBS) and popularity was assessed through peer nominations from a student roster. Using a sample of 379 middle school students, bullies were among the most popular students in the school, receiving more peer nominations on average than students uninvolved in bullying or victims. Comparisons of popular and non-popular bullies found few differences, except that, popular bullies were less likely to be victimized whereas female bullies had a greater likelihood of being popular than their male counterparts. In addition, Unnever and Cornell (2004) examined factors that influence a student's decision to report being bullied at school. Their survey covered 2,437 students in six middle schools. They identified 898 students who had been bullied, including 25% who had not told anyone that they were bullied and 40% who had not told an adult about their victimization. They investigated chronicity and type of bullying, school climate, familial, demographic, and attitudinal factors that influenced victim reporting to anyone versus no one, to adults versus no one, and to adults versus peers. Logistic regression analyses indicated that reporting increased with the chronicity of victimization. Reporting was generally more frequent among girls than boys, and among lower grade levels. Students who perceived the school climate to be tolerant of bullying, and students who described their parents as using coercive discipline were less likely to report being bullied.

In another study done by Williams and Cornell (2006) among 542 middle school students, they established factors that influence a student's willingness to seek help for a threat of violence. The survey also included; measures of types of bullying, attitudes toward aggressive behavior, and perceptions of teacher tolerance for bullying. Stepwise multiple regression analyses indicated that willingness to seek help is lower in higher grade levels and among males. Students who hold aggressive attitudes and perceive the school climate to be tolerant of bullying were less likely to report a willingness to seek help. In Japan, where the latter forms of bullying are most common, girls are more frequent bullies (Stassen – Berger, 2007) but in Korea they also tend to be more susceptible to suicidal ideations (Kim, Koh & Leventhal, 2005). Further, the dynamics of bullying are taking on new proportions and no longer take place directly. For instance, the Portuguese culture or history may encourage bullies, but consider one detail of education policy: Portuguese school children must repeat 6th grade unless they pass a rigorous test. Consequently, at least 10% of all 6th graders have been held back two years or more, and these older, bigger children are almost twice as likely to be bullies as the class average (Kim et al., 2005). In addition, a higher proportion of them are immigrants and from low-income families.

In Benin City, Edo state of Nigeria, Egbochuku (2007) studied neglected demographic variable in addition to establishing the incidence of bullying in Government and Private/Mission schools. It was found that 78% of the children have been victims of bullying on at least one occasion and 71% have lashed out at others at least once. However, more boys than girls were found to be both bullies and victims. Boys reported being kicked or hit more often than girls. The result showed that it was more common for bullying to take place in the classroom in government schools than in private schools. The result demonstrated significant differences between the schools investigated. However, significantly more private schools reported kicking and hitting taking place in the playground than in the government schools, whereas bullying was more likely to take place in the classroom in government schools. Unlike the study by Egbochuku the current study established other forms of violence experienced among public secondary school students as perceived by teachers and students.

Ohsako (2007) examined bullying by administering a survey to students in grades 7 through 12 from schools in three Midwestern states. Overwhelmingly, respondents reported that victims of bullying actually brought on the bullying. Less than half believed bullying was done in an attempt to teach a lesson. Students also perceived bullies to be more popular than victims. Interestingly, Ohsako found students believed most teasing they witnessed had been done with no malicious intent, but that victims perceived the teasing as bullying. In their national study of 15,686 students in grades 6 through 10, Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Raun, Simons-Morton and Scheid (2001) reported that 30% of students indicated more than occasional involvement as a bully and/or victim of bullying. Males were more frequently involved as both

bullies and victims, as were students in grades six through eight. In addition, Hispanic students reported slightly higher involvement as bullies than White or African American students, while African American students reported being bullied less frequently than both White and Hispanic students. Finally, more students from rural areas reported bullying than did individuals from suburban and urban areas. Unlike the study conducted by Nansel et al. which involved mainly whites or African Americans, the current study incorporated both male and female African secondary school students.

As part of a larger study, Casey-Cannon, Hayward and Gowen (2001) conducted a qualitative investigation of the experiences and perceptions of relational bullying among middle school girls from Northern California. The majority of the participants reported experiencing either overt or relational bullying. Participants also reported emotional reactions including; sadness, anger, and rejection. Behavioral responses included; ignoring the bully, approaching an adult for help, being assertive and bullying back. Other consequences included; losing friends, negative thinking, and changing schools. In the case of the present study, both boys and girls participated in establishing other forms of violent behaviour experienced among students. In their study, Seals and Young (2003) gathered data addressing the prevalence of bullying among 454 students in grades seven and eight representing urban, suburban, and rural school districts, and most were African American and White. Twenty-four percent of students reported either bullying or being bullied. Males were involved in bullying significantly more often than females, and significantly more seventh grade students than eighth grade students were involved as well. Nearly 14% of students reported being called mean names, and others reported being hit or kicked, being teased, or being threatened. Most incidents of bullying occurred at lunch or recess, but many occurred on the way to or from school as well as in class.

In Malaysia, Yahaya and Sidek (2005) studied teachers' and students' perception towards bullying in 8 secondary schools in Batu Pahat District in Malaysia. Besides that the study attempted to identify students' perception about safety issues at secondary schools. In this study, 80 teachers and 480 students were randomly selected. All information was gathered through Peer Relations Questionnaire - PRQ and The Nature and Prevalence of Bullying in Schools Questionnaire. The alpha cronbach for these two instruments were 0.7010 and 0.8097. Results showed that there was a different perception about the prevalence of bullying among secondary school students and teachers. Students reported that the overall rate of the bullying prevalence were at moderate level whereas, teachers reported the bullying prevalence overall rate were at low level. There was no significant difference on the prevalence of bullying between male and female students but there was a significant difference on the prevalence between verbal bullying and physical bullying. Verbal bullying was seen more frequent as compared to physical bullying. In the current study, it was established that there was no significant difference of the perceptions of the factors

contributing to violent behaviour between male and female students.

In South Africa, Nita (2005) studied on aspects of bullying in schools situated in the Free State province. Using the Delaware Bullying questionnaire, it was established that bullying was to a lesser or greater extent a problem at most schools. Only 16.22% of the respondents indicated that bullying was not a problem at their respective schools. Although the majority of respondents were very rarely, if ever, victims of and/or aggressors in bullying situations, many of them witnessed incidents of verbal bullying in particular. It was also evident that victims of bullying rather confided in their friends than adults when they had been victimised. The was attributed to the fact that, 31.97% of the respondents indicated that fellow learners helped them during bullying situations and on the other hand, only 19.73% were helped by their teachers.

In the Kenyan secondary schools, bullying is one of the students' practices that have particularly scared form one students and other newcomers. Up to the late 1970s, it was a sort of compulsory disciplinary drill in most schools (Kuchio & Njagi, 2008). But it became so violent that some students even suffered permanent injuries and others died. Because of this, the then Ministry of Higher Education realized the dangers involved and banned it as a criminal offence for a student to bully another. Apparently, after this ban only physical beating reduced. A new psychological form of torture which encompasses humiliation through name-calling, taunting, theft, teasing, threats and intimidation emerged. The current research sought to identify teachers' and students' perceptions of factors contributing to violence which Kuchio and Njagi did not address. In addition, Ndeti, Ongecha, Khasakhala, Syanda, Mutiso, Othieno, Odhiambo and Kokonya (2007) conducted a study on the prevalence and frequency of bullying in Nairobi public secondary schools. A self-report sociodemographic questionnaire and the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire of 1991 were administered to 1, 012 students from a stratified sample of public secondary schools in Nairobi. Students reported various types of bullying, both direct and indirect, with significant variations found for sex, age, class and year of study, whether in day or boarding school, and the place they were bullied. Being bullied was significantly associated with becoming a bully in turn. Rioting is a form of violence that involves injuring of people and destruction of property. In Uganda, Rukundo (2009) conducted a study on relationship between management and strikes in two secondary schools of Ntungamo District. A comparative research design was adopted and various tools like the Questionnaires, interview guides were used while sampling method was used to collect data. The causes of the strikes were identified as; indiscipline among the students, failure of the administration to involve stake holders in decision making, harsh punishments, misuse of school funds, and failure of administration to respond to the warnings from students, perceived positive effects of the strikes and external influence or instigation among others. In addition, the psychology of the crowd was also found out to

contribute towards; peer pressure, group influence, and the tradition of striking.

In Kenya, Mathiu (2008) noted that over the past decade, many secondary schools had suffered from strikes most of which placed head teachers on the spot light. For instance, in 1991, male students in a mixed high school invaded the girls' dormitory and raped more than 70 girls in Meru. At least 19 female students lost their lives at a tender age of 15 years. In another incident in 1999, a group of male students in Nyeri High School locked up 4 prefects in their cubicles at night and doused them in petrol killing them instantly. The worst calamity was in 2001 when 68 students in Bombolulu were burnt to death and scores injured after their dormitory was set on fire by two boys who petrol bombed the school. Consequently, several reasons were advanced by different stakeholders as the underlying root causes riots in schools. They included: overloaded curriculum; autocratic school administration; drug and substance abuse; poor living conditions in schools; excessive use of corporal punishment; lack of an effective school guidance and counseling service; pressure for excellent academic performance; abdication of parental responsibility; incompetent board of governors; culture of impunity in the society; adolescence identity crisis; and mass media campaigns (ibid).

In 2001, there were 250 strikes in the Kenyan Secondary Schools. Statistical data was as follows on the basis of provinces; Central (85) Eastern (76) Rift Valley (50) and Western (39). About 25% of the strikes were classified as violent and destructive. A task force had to be formed chaired by Director of education to investigate on the causes of violence. According to that report the causes of unrest included; poor communication between the ministry and school, poor school management, inadequate facilities, overloaded curriculum, lack of co-curriculum activities, drug abuse, poor parenting and political influences. However, this task force did not address the perceived psychological and physiological causes of violent behavior that the current study unravelled. Examination irregularities detected during the processing of the examination by the Kenya National examination Council has been cited as one of the causes of violence in schools. For instance, in one case in Nyanza Province, a student who scored a "B" in mock scored the same grade in K.C.S.E., although he did not sit for the final examination (Mathiu, 2008). This has made students to develop fear for mock exams because they were perceived as being determinants of their lives. In addition, students and teachers feared that there could be massive leakage of examinations by some KNEC officials (Mutsotso, 2004). In spite of the insight given by the above studies, the current study widened the scope by considering other forms of violent behavior among secondary school students. In Western Province, violent students' riots were reported between year 2000 and 2002. In the year 2000, over twenty cases were reported. Some cases were due to transfer of head teachers. In the year 2001, four cases were reported. In addition, strikes that occurred in 2008 were attributed to the post election violence that affected the Kenya that year (Kisia, 2010).

Fighting among adolescents is of public health concern both because of the potential for fight-related injuries and its association with participation in many other health risk behaviors. Fights that involve weapons are a major cause of serious injuries and deaths among youth. A 2001 national survey of high school students in the United States of America by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) found that: 33% of the students had been in a physical fight; 12.5% of the students had been in a physical fight on school property; and 4% of the students had been hurt badly enough in a fight to need medical treatment. In addition, adolescents who used alcohol and illicit drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and anabolic steroids were much more likely to be involved in physical fights. Fight participants who were intoxicated were much more likely to use weapons and cause serious injuries. One study found that when the participants were intoxicated, 61% sustained serious injuries and 51% used weapons. In contrast, when alcohol and drugs were not involved, only 18% of the fights involved serious injuries or weapon use. In spite of the insight given by the above studies, the present study widened the scope by considering other forms of violent behavior among students as perceived by teachers and students in Western Province of Kenya.

Siziya, Muula, Kazembe and Rudatsikira (2008) conducted a study on variables associated with physical fighting among 13,857 high-school students. This study was based on secondary analysis of the United States Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) conducted in 2005. The sampling frame included all private and public schools in the country, stratified by region and urban city based on the US census bureau data. Frequencies and proportions were obtained for the outcome and explanatory variables. Logistic regression analysis was used to estimate the level of association between explanatory variables and the outcome. The findings revealed that, of the 13,857 respondents, 13.5% reported physical fighting on school property in the last 12 months to the survey. Males were more likely to have been in a physical fight than females. Respondents aged 17 years or older were less likely to report physical fighting than those who were 14 years or younger. Compared to Whites, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Blacks, Native Hawaii or other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics were more likely to report physical fighting on school property. In his study on comparison between attitudes toward violence and weapon-carrying among 567 seventh-grade students in three dissimilar United States communities, Rennison (2001) found out that 34% of the students had fought at least once. In addition, within that period, 5% had skipped school owing to fear of violence. Students whose parents used nonviolent disciplinary techniques fought less frequently than those whose parents relied on hitting and more violent disciplinary methods. Fighting was significantly more common among students who believe their parents want them to fight if insulted. Students who reported that they try to stay out of fights usually succeeded. Those students who frequently participated in and observed fighting were more likely to carry a weapon. They concluded that students' understanding of their parents' attitudes and behavior

correlate strongly with violent behavior. While many students feel that weapons confer safety, those students who actually carry weapons are much more likely to fight.

In addition, Ez-Elarab, Sabbour, Gadallah and Asaad (2007) reported that elementary school children who had preference of violent video games were more likely to exhibit violent behaviors than those who did not have that preference. They also found that, adolescents who were alone at home or elsewhere were more likely to play video games than those that were supervised whereas unsupervised adolescents were more likely to engage in a diversity of anti-social and unhealthy life styles such as sexual intercourse, cigarette smoking, violence and illicit drug use. These findings suggested that physical fighting among US High School students was widespread and positively associated with victimization and other risky behaviors such as smoking, alcohol and drug use.

A survey conducted by Ashbaugh and Cornell (2008) established that 29% of 109 sixth grade students reported at least one sexual harassment experience in the past 30 days, with 11% reporting harassment once per week or more. Although boys and girls reported similar rates of harassment, there were important gender differences. For instance, boys were more likely than girls to try to ignore sexual harassment, but girls were more likely to tell someone about their experience and to tell the perpetrator to stop. In addition, there was high concordance between sexual harassment and bullying for both boys and girls. In South Africa, girls experienced rape, sexual harassment and assault at school by male classmates and teachers (Human rights watch, 2001). The study revealed that for many South African girls, violence and abuse are an inevitable part of the school environment. In addition, although girls in South Africa had better access to school than many of their counterparts in other sub-Saharan African states, they were confronted with levels of sexual violence and sexual harassment in schools that impeded their access to education on equal terms as male students. Violence against women in South African society generally is widely recognized to have reached levels among the highest in the world. Indeed sexual violence and harassment in South African schools erected a discriminating barrier for young women and girls seeking any education. In order to fill the gap, the current study unearthed other forms of violent behavior as perceived by teachers and students.

In another study of sexual violence in Botswanan schools by Rossetti (2001), 560 students were surveyed and 67% of the girls reported sexual harassment by teachers. Harassment ranged from pinching and touching to pressure for sexual relations. In addition, 20% of the respondents reported being asked by teachers for sexual relations, and half reported fearing repercussions of poor grades and performance records if they did not. Sixty eight percent of sexual harassment incidences happened in junior secondary schools, 18% in senior secondary schools, and 14% in primary schools. Although 83% of teachers considered student-teacher relations to be a big problem in Botswanan schools, the country code of conduct for teachers remains silent on sexual harassment,

and the Ministry of Education did not have a formal policy to address it.

Building on their previous work in Zimbabwe, Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamira, Lemani and Machakanja (2003) conducted further research and attempted to bridge the gap between research and action in addressing the issue of abuse of girls in African schools. In Ghana and Malawi, they reported findings similar to those in Zimbabwe. Girls were routinely subjected to aggressive sexual advances from older male students and male teachers and to potentially damaging gendered practices in schools. Sexual aggression went largely unpunished and dominant male behaviors by both students and teachers were not questioned. Similarly, research on a sample of 10,000 girls in sub-Saharan Africa found that one-third reported being sexually active and 40% of these girls said their first encounter was "forced." The majority of the perpetrators were male students. In Kenya, Kangara (2006) observed that to recognize sexual violence as a social ill within a social pattern requires individuals to see it as a product of history. Sexual violence in general is a product of gender relations. Over the centuries men have gained lots of dividends from patriarchy systems. Patriarchy has produced a social structure of inequality involving a massive dispossession of social resources. Patriarchal definitions of femininity amount to cultural disarmaments that may be quiet effective as the physical killing. Cases of violence against women often find abused women physically able to look after themselves, but have accepted the abusers' definitions of them as incompetent and helpless. Sometimes patterns of violence follow from this situation. Many members of the privileged group use violence to sustain their dominance. Intimidation of women may take the form of sexual abuse or any other form. Violence is used as a way of asserting masculinity. The male consciousness in Kenya conforms to the general concept of masculinism and is aptly demonstrated in Kenyan cultural norms. In the voice of a Kenyan woman who recounts the advice she got from her mother prior to marriage: respect her husband and do what he wants lest he demand back the bride-price that had been paid. There is thus every reason to believe that the Kenyan society has socialized the male to think of females not only as subordinates, but also as their instruments. Therefore, in order to reduce escalating anxiety among parents, teachers and students over the effects of violence, there was need to study the perceived forms of violent behavior in secondary schools, Western Province, Kenya. It is hoped that, this may lay the foundation for seeking possible solutions to minimize cases of violent behavior among students in secondary schools.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was conducted in Western Province that has 21 Districts. The Social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1977) formed the basis of the study. Learning of any behavior such as violence by students is due to reinforcement, imitation and identification. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design covering a population of 6,354 Secondary School teachers and 65,969 form two Secondary School students from 638

public secondary schools. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select public secondary schools. In addition, a formula recommended by Fisher, Laing & Stoeckel (1983) was used to calculate the number of selected form two students on the basis of their gender and type of secondary school. Purposive sampling technique was used to select teachers from the sampled public secondary schools for the study. Therefore, 364 teachers and 1,152 form two students from 213 public secondary schools participated in the study. In the current study both questionnaires and in-depth interview guides were used to collect data. A pilot study was carried out in four schools of girls and boys to establish reliability of the research instruments. To establish face validity, the research instruments were given to three experts from the Department of Educational Psychology to verify their validity. Qualitative data was transcribed, put into various categories and thereafter reported according to the emergent themes. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean and frequency counts were used while inferential statistics such as Mann-Whitney U-test was also used. The Mann-Whitney U-test was used to establish the significant differences in male and female group means. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 11.0 version for windows.

## RESULTS

The study was to establish forms of violent behavior experienced by secondary school students as perceived by teachers and students. In order to meet this objective of the study, the respondents were provided with a listing of possible forms of violent behaviour and asked to rank each of the listed forms. The responses were summarized and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Perceptions of forms of violent behaviour between male and female students**

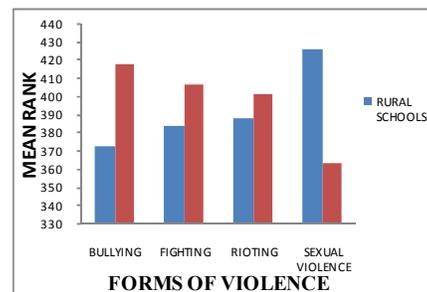
Forms of violence	Gender	Number of Respondents	Mean Rank	Ranks
Bullying	Male	656	544.50	4
	Female	496	618.82	1
	Total	1152		
Fighting	Male	656	564.92	3
	Female	496	591.82	2
	Total	1152		
Rioting	Male	656	569.41	2
	Female	496	585.88	3
	Total	1152		
Sexual Violence	Male	656	617.66	1
	Female	496	522.06	4
	Total	1152		

According to table 1, forms of violence were ranked as follows by male students: sexual violence first, rioting second and fighting third. Male students identified bullying as the least form of violent behaviour. On the other hand, scores given by female students indicated that bullying was first, fighting second, rioting third and sexual violence was fourth. To test for any significant difference between male and female students, the Mann-Whitney U test statistics was applied. The Mann-Whitney U test statistics and Wilcoxon W had values of 162510 and 378006 respectively, with an associated two tail significance level of .943. Since the significance value of

.943 was greater than  $\alpha=0.05$ , it implied that male students did not differ significantly from female students in their perceptions of forms of violent behaviour.

### Perceptions of forms of violence between students in rural secondary schools and students in urban secondary schools.

The respondents were provided with a listing of possible forms of violent behaviour and asked to rank each of the listed forms. The responses are summarized and presented in Figure 1.



From figure 1, ranks of scores assigned to the forms of violence by students in rural schools were as follows: sexual violence first, rioting second and fighting third. Students in rural schools identified bullying as the least form of violent behaviour. On the other hand, scores given by students in urban schools indicated that bullying was first, fighting second, rioting third and sexual violence fourth. To test for the significant difference between two groups of respondents, the Mann-Whitney U test statistics was applied. The Mann-Whitney U test statistics had a value of 76963.5 and Wilcoxon W had a value of 157163.5 with an associated two tail significance level of .550. Since the significance value of .550 was greater than  $\alpha=0.05$ , it was concluded that students in rural schools did not differ significantly from students in urban schools in their perceptions of forms of violence. As pertains to Table 2, male teachers ranked sexual violence first, bullying second and rioting was third. They identified fighting as the least form of violence. On the other hand, female teachers perceived rioting first, fighting second, sexual violence bullying and fighting fourth. In order to test for any significant difference between two groups of respondents, the Mann-Whitney U test statistics was applied. The Mann-Whitney U test statistics had a value of 10442.5 and Wilcoxon W had a value of 32808.5 with an associated two tail significance level of .000. Since the significance value of .000 was less than  $\alpha=0.05$ , it implied that male teachers differed significantly from female teachers in their perceptions of forms of violent behaviour. The differences in the perceptions among teachers could be attributed to gender differences. These findings concur to some extent with those of Olweus (1993) who established that bullying in secondary schools is one of the dark hidden areas of social interaction, along with child physical and sexual abuse and adolescent violence. According to table 3, the teachers in rural secondary schools ranked sexual violence first, bullying second and fighting was third. In addition, they identified rioting as the least form of violence. On the

**Table 2: Perceptions of Forms of Violence between Male and Female Teachers**

Forms of violence	Gender of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Mean Rank	Ranks
Bullying	Male	211	171.81	2
	Female	153	197.24	3
	Total	364		
Fighting	Male	211	156.14	4
	Female	153	217.47	2
	Total	364		
Rioting	Male	211	156.20	3
	Female	153	218.77	1
	Total	364		
Sexual Violence	Male	211	218.34	1
	Female	153	133.07	4
	Total	364		

**Table 3: Perceptions of Forms of Violence between Teachers in Rural Secondary Schools and Teachers in Urban Secondary Schools**

Forms of violence	Location of schools	Number of Respondents	Mean Rank	Ranks
Bullying	Rural Schools	191	175.23	2
	Urban Schools	173	190.53	3
	Total	364		
Fighting	Rural Schools	191	157.97	3
	Urban Schools	153	209.58	2
	Total	364		
Rioting	Rural Schools	191	150.29	4
	Urban Schools	173	218.07	1
	Total	364		
Sexual Violence	Rural Schools	191	218.97	1
	Urban schools	173	142.24	4
	Total	364		

other hand, respondents in urban secondary schools perceived rioting first, fighting second, bullying third and sexual violence fourth. In order to the test for any significant difference between two groups of respondents, the Mann-Whitney U test statistics was applied. The Mann-Whitney U test statistics had a value of 10852.5 and Wilcoxon W had a value of 29188.5 with an associated two tail significance level of .000. Since the significance value of .000 was less than  $\alpha=0.05$ , it implied that teachers in rural secondary schools differed significantly from teachers in urban secondary schools in their perceptions of forms of violent behaviour.

## DISCUSSION

Violent behavior has become an issue of concern among secondary school students. There are various forms of violent behavior as perceived by students and teachers in public secondary schools. Male students perceived the forms of violence in order of seriousness as follows: sexual violence, rioting, bullying and fighting. On the other hand female students identified: bullying, fighting, rioting and sexual violence. Generally, there was no significant difference between male and female students in their perception of forms of violence among secondary school students. Male teachers perceived the following forms of violence in order of seriousness: bullying, sexual, fighting and sexual violence. On the other hand, female students identified the following as forms of violence in order of seriousness: rioting, fighting, sexual violence and

bullying. There was no significant difference in perceptions of forms of violence among teachers. The findings of the current study concurred with the one conducted by Kadzamira (2000) who observed that sexual harassment girls by male teachers was common in rural schools in Malawi. The current study differed with that conducted by Nansel et al. (2001) who conducted a survey of 15,686 students in grades 6-10 in public and private schools within the United States. They reported that 29.9 % of the sample had been involved in bullying, 13% of the students acknowledged they were bullies, 10.6% reported being victims, and 6.3 % admitted being both a bully and a victim. However, Nansel et al. did not establish other forms of violence experienced among students as perceived by teachers in urban and rural schools. In addition, Ohsako (2007) examined bullying by administering a survey to students in grades 7 through 12 from schools in three Midwestern states. Overwhelmingly, respondents reported that victims of bullying actually brought on the bullying. Less than half believed bullying was done in an attempt to teach a lesson. Students also perceived bullies to be more popular than victims. Interestingly, Ohsako found students believed most teasing they witnessed had been done with no malicious intent, but that victims perceived the teasing as bullying.

## CONCLUSION

In relation to the findings of the study, it is concluded that violent behavior is still a challenge in secondary schools. Respondents were able identify the perceived forms of violent behavior in secondary schools. The forms of violence included: sexual violence, bullying, fighting and rioting. Since violence is probably the greatest source of distress among secondary school students today, a concerted effort from teachers and parents is required to address violence manage in schools. Victims of violence ought to be counseled. Improvement of law enforcement related to sexual violence or harassment and awareness promotion of the problem and women's rights are very essential. In addition, ban on caning of students should be encouraged and proper communication channels ought to be established in order to maintain a tranquil environment in schools.

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