

**Gender and Locality as Predictors of Assertive Behaviour among School-Going Adolescents in
Odogbolu Local Government Area, Ogun State**

By

Olalekan Rahman ADEBAYO, Ph.D.

Department of Counselling Psychology and Educational Foundations,
Tai Solarin Federal University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State.
adebayoor@tasued.edu.ng; +2348130413059

Obafemi Teliat ADEDAYO

Department of Educational Psychology, Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Science and
Technology, Omu-Ajose, Ogun State.
Obafemiteliat791@gmail.com

&

Adegboyega Mayowa ADEOSUN

Department of Educational Foundations,
Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Nigeria.
adeboyegaa17@gmail.com.

Abstract

This study investigated gender and locality as predictors of assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised all in-school adolescents in the study area, from which a sample of 380 students was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure involving stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using the Assertive Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ), adapted from the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS). The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Data were analysed using multiple regression analysis and independent samples t-tests. The findings revealed that both gender and locality significantly predicted assertive behaviour among the respondents. Male adolescents demonstrated higher levels of assertiveness than their female counterparts, while students from semi-urban communities were found to be more assertive than those from rural areas. The study concludes that gender and locality are important demographic factors influencing assertive behaviour among adolescents. It recommends the implementation of school-based assertiveness training programmes, gender-sensitive counselling interventions, and community awareness initiatives to promote healthy self-expression, interpersonal competence, and positive social development among adolescents.

Keywords: Gender, Locality, Assertive Behaviour, School-Going Adolescents.

Introduction

Adolescence is widely recognized as a critical stage of human development characterized by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes that significantly influence an individual's transition into adulthood. These developmental processes shape their identity, interpersonal relationships,

emotional well-being, and behavioural patterns, making adolescence a particularly sensitive period for positive and negative environmental influences. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2024) emphasizes that adolescence is a formative stage during which social, emotional, and behavioural competencies are established, and these competencies have lasting implications for health, educational attainment, and psychosocial adjustment throughout adulthood. Similarly, Sirin, Brauer, and Tugberk (2024) argue that adolescence represents a pivotal period for identity construction, with contemporary social, cultural, and digital environments increasingly influencing how young people develop their sense of self and interact with others.

According to Erikson's psychosocial theory, adolescence represents the developmental stage of identity versus role confusion, during which individuals actively explore values, beliefs, and future aspirations to develop a stable identity (Erikson, 1968). Consequently, successful navigation of this developmental stage requires adolescents to acquire essential interpersonal and socio-emotional competencies that promote autonomy, resilience, and healthy social relationships. One of the essential psychosocial skills that develops during adolescence is assertive behaviour. Assertiveness refers to an individual's ability to express thoughts, feelings, opinions, and personal needs confidently and respectfully without violating the rights of others. Rather than encouraging aggression or passivity, assertiveness promotes honest communication, self-respect, and mutual respect in interpersonal relationships (Plantade-Gipch et al., 2023). As adolescents become increasingly influenced by peers, school demands, and social expectations, the ability to communicate assertively becomes an important determinant of healthy psychosocial adjustment.

Recent studies suggest that assertiveness is more than a communication skill; it is a protective psychological resource that supports adolescents' emotional and social development. According to Plantade-Gipch et al. (2023), adolescents who demonstrate higher levels of assertiveness are more likely to regulate their emotions effectively, cope with stressful situations, and maintain positive psychological well-being. Similarly, the World Health Organization (2025) identifies assertiveness as one of the essential interpersonal competencies that enable adolescents to make healthy decisions, manage emotions, and build positive relationships during this critical stage of development.

School-going adolescents who demonstrate assertiveness tend to participate actively in classroom activities, communicate clearly with teachers, and establish positive peer relationships. They are also more capable of resisting negative peer pressure and managing interpersonal conflicts constructively

(Erozkan, 2019). In contrast, limited assertiveness may hinder students' ability to express concerns, ask for help, or defend personal boundaries. Adolescents who lack assertive skills may display maladaptive behavioural patterns. Some may become overly submissive, suppressing their opinions and emotions, which can result in low self-esteem, anxiety, and vulnerability to bullying. Others may resort to aggressive behaviours, mistakenly using hostility or dominance to assert themselves, leading to disciplinary problems and strained relationships (Gresham, Elliott, & Cook, 2020). These contrasting outcomes highlight the importance of assertiveness as a balanced and adaptive social behaviour.

Gender has been consistently identified as a factor that influences the development and expression of assertive behaviour during adolescence. In many societies, including Nigeria, socialisation practices encourage different behavioural expectations for males and females. Male adolescents are often socialised to be bold, dominant, and outspoken, whereas females may be encouraged to be polite, accommodating, and emotionally restrained (Eagly & Wood, 2019). These gender norms can shape adolescents' confidence and willingness to express themselves in social and academic settings. Studies on gender differences in assertive behaviour have produced mixed findings. Some studies report higher levels of assertiveness among male adolescents, while others suggest minimal or context-dependent differences between genders (Deluty & Rakos, 2021). These inconsistencies suggest that gender does not operate in isolation but interacts with cultural, environmental, and situational factors. This underscores the need to examine gender within specific social contexts rather than treating it as a universal predictor regardless of location.

Locality is an important contextual variable that may significantly influence the development of assertive behaviour among adolescents. The social and physical environments in which adolescents are raised shape their communication patterns, self-expression, and interpersonal relationships. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes that behaviour is influenced by multiple environmental systems, including community and cultural contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As such, differences in locality, particularly between rural and urban settings, can play a critical role in shaping adolescents' assertiveness. Urban and semi-urban environments often provide adolescents with greater access to educational resources, social services, and diverse peer interactions. These settings typically expose young people to varied communication styles, multicultural perspectives, and opportunities for participation in group activities, debates, and leadership roles. Such exposure can enhance confidence,

verbal expression, and self-advocacy skills, which are essential components of assertive behaviour (UNESCO, 2022). The presence of guidance services, media influence, and structured school programmes in urban areas further supports the development of assertiveness among adolescents.

In contrast, rural environments may present a different socialisation context for adolescents. Rural communities often emphasize traditional values such as obedience, conformity, and respect for authority and hierarchy. While these values promote discipline and social cohesion, they may also discourage open self-expression and independent decision-making, especially among younger individuals (Santrock, 2019). Adolescents raised in such environments may therefore be less encouraged to voice their opinions or challenge unfair treatment, which can limit the development of assertive behaviour.

Cultural norms within different localities play an important role in shaping how adolescents develop and express assertive behaviour. Social Role Theory explains that gendered behaviours are largely learned through societal expectations and the roles assigned to males and females within a particular cultural setting (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Recent evidence suggests that these expectations continue to shape adolescents' social interactions and behavioural development across different communities (Kapungu et al., 2024). In many rural African settings, girls are expected to be respectful, obedient, and reserved, while boys are encouraged to demonstrate confidence, authority, and leadership. These expectations may discourage female adolescents from expressing their views freely and reduce opportunities for developing assertive communication skills. In some communities, masculinity is associated with dominance and authority, causing some male adolescents to express themselves through aggression rather than respectful communication. Such behaviour differs fundamentally from assertiveness because it disregards the rights and feelings of others. A recent study by Nwankpa et al. (2024) demonstrates that traditional beliefs on male authority continue to influence expectations regarding boys' and girls' behaviour. These findings suggest that rigid gender norms may limit the healthy development of assertiveness among both male and female adolescents, although the effects may differ according to gender and locality.

Empirical studies on influence of gender and location on assertive behaviour include Sharma and Kaur (2021) submitted that gender significantly influenced assertive behaviour among adolescents, with male students demonstrating higher levels of assertiveness compared to female students due to cultural and social expectations surrounding gender roles. Similarly, Afolabi and Adekunle (2022) reported

that gender differences significantly affected adolescents' communication patterns and social confidence in secondary schools in Nigeria. Martinez and Lopez (2020) reported that gender had no significant influence on assertive behaviour among adolescents, arguing that assertiveness is more strongly shaped by personality traits and family upbringing than by gender differences. Nwosu and Chukwu (2021) found significant gender differences in assertive behaviour among adolescents, with males exhibiting greater assertiveness than females. Similarly, Kaur and Singh (2022) reported that male students demonstrated higher confidence and self-expression compared to female students in school settings. On the contrary, Ahmed and Khan (2020), who found no significant difference in assertive behaviour between male and female adolescents, suggesting that modernization and changing educational practices have reduced gender disparities in social behaviour among adolescents.

Eze and Okafor (2022) found significant differences in assertive behaviour between rural and urban adolescents, with urban students showing higher levels of assertiveness. Similarly, Adegbuyi and Salami (2021) reported that locality significantly influenced communication skills and interpersonal confidence among adolescents. However, the study of Williams and Carter (2019), who found no significant difference in assertive behaviour between rural and urban adolescents, arguing that assertiveness is largely influenced by family structure and personality development rather than geographical location. Ibrahim and Musa (2021), found that adolescents from urban and semi-urban communities displayed significantly higher assertive behaviour than their rural counterparts due to better social exposure and access to educational opportunities. In the same vein, Okeke and Eze (2023) reported that locality significantly influenced interpersonal communication and self-confidence among secondary school students in South-West Nigeria. In contrast, Brown and Taylor (2019) found no significant relationship between locality and assertive behaviour among adolescents, concluding that peer relationships and parental upbringing had stronger influence on adolescents' social behaviour than residential location. Yusuf and Bello (2022) which posited that demographic variables such as gender and locality jointly influenced adolescents' social adjustment and assertive communication. Likewise, Adeyemi and Lawal (2021) reported that both environmental and personal factors significantly predicted behavioural outcomes among adolescents in secondary schools. Conversely, Green and Walters (2020) reported that demographic factors jointly had weak predictive influence on adolescent assertiveness, emphasizing that psychological variables such as self-esteem and emotional intelligence were stronger determinants of assertive behaviour.

Traditional values commonly upheld in rural settings can shape adolescents' behavioural expression in complex ways. While such values may promote discipline and communal harmony, they may also discourage open self-expression, especially among younger individuals or female adolescents (Ogunyemi & Mabekoje, 2020). As a result, adolescents from rural localities may exhibit assertive behaviour differently from their urban counterparts, depending on how cultural expectations are enforced within families and schools. Similarly, there may be difference according to gender. It is based on this backdrop the researchers investigated gender and locality as predictors of assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents in odogbolu local government area, ogun state.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognised importance of assertive behaviour for adolescents' psychological well-being and social adjustment, many school-going adolescents continue to experience difficulties in expressing themselves appropriately. In schools, a lack of assertiveness often manifests as inability to resist negative peer pressure, fear of speaking up in class, poor conflict resolution skills, and vulnerability to bullying. In Nigerian secondary schools, concerns have been raised about increasing cases of bullying, peer intimidation, and maladaptive interpersonal behaviours among adolescents. These challenges suggest deficits in assertive skills, which are necessary for healthy communication and self-advocacy. While various factors may contribute to these challenges, gender and locality appear to play significant yet under-examined roles in shaping adolescents' assertive behaviour.

In Odogbolu Local Government Area, schools serve students in both rural and semi-urban communities, where cultural expectations and access to social resources may differ significantly. Traditional gender roles and community norms may further influence how male and female adolescents are encouraged or discouraged from expressing assertiveness. However, there is a paucity of empirical studies investigating how gender and locality independently and jointly predict assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents in this area. This gap in knowledge limits the development of context-specific counselling and educational interventions. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining gender and locality as predictors of assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined gender and locality as predictors of assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents in Odogbolu Local Government Area, Ogun State.

Specifically, the study:

1. Determined whether gender significantly predicts assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.
2. Examined whether locality significantly predicts assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.
3. Assessed the joint predictive influence of gender and locality on assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.
4. Compared the level of assertive behaviour between male and female adolescents.
5. Examined differences in assertive behaviour between adolescents from rural and semi-urban localities.

Research Questions

The following research was raised to guide the study:

1. What is the predictive effect of gender on assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents?
2. What is the predictive effect of locality on assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents?
3. What is the joint predictive effect of gender and locality on assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents?
4. What difference exists in assertive behaviour between male and female school-going adolescents?
5. What difference exists in assertive behaviour between school-going adolescents from rural and semi-urban localities?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Gender will not significantly predict assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.

2. Locality will not significantly predict assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.
3. Gender and locality will not jointly predict assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.
4. There is no significant difference in assertive behaviour between male and female adolescents.
5. There is no significant difference in assertive behaviour between adolescents from rural and semi-urban localities.

Research Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted and the population comprised all in-school adolescents in public secondary schools in Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun State. A total of three hundred and eighty (380) sample size was determined using (Taro Yamane in Class Gist Sample Size Calculator, 2022). A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents. First, stratified sampling was used to categorize the schools based on their locality (rural and semi-urban) to ensure fair representation of the different environments. Thereafter, simple random sampling technique was employed within each school to select the students, thereby giving every eligible student an equal opportunity of participating in the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Assertive Behaviour Questionnaire (ABQ), adapted from the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) developed by Rathus (1973). The adaptation was considered necessary to ensure the suitability of the instrument for the study population and its alignment with the objectives of the research. The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section A elicited demographic information such as gender and locality. Section B contained items designed to measure assertive behaviour among students. The items assessed key dimensions of assertiveness. The questionnaire items were structured on a four-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

To ensure the face and content validity of the instrument, experts' comments, suggestions, and corrections were put into consideration, necessary revisions were made. The reliability of the instrument was established by administering it on twenty (20) in-school adolescents in a school that

was not part of the sample, the responses were analysed using the Cronbach Alpha and it yielded reliability coefficient of 0.81 which indicated that the instrument is reliable for data collection.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	190	50.0
Female	190	50.0
Total	380	100

Table 1 shows that 190 (50.0%) of the respondents were male, while 190 (50.0%) were female. This indicates equal representation of male and female adolescents in the study.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Locality

Locality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rural	190	50.0
Semi-Urban	190	50.0
Total	380	100

Table 2 reveals that 190 (50.0%) of the respondents were from rural localities, while 190 (50.0%) were from semi-urban localities. This indicates balanced representation across the selected localities.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Gender will not significantly predict assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Predictive Influence of Gender on Assertive Behaviour

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Gender	2.314	.218	4.126	.000
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
.218	.048	.045	17.028	.000

Table 3 shows that gender significantly predicted assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents ($\beta = .218$, $t = 4.126$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value (.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that gender significantly predicts assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.

Hypothesis Two: Locality will not significantly predict assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Predictive Influence of Locality on Assertive Behaviour

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Locality	1.876	.193	3.782	.001
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
.193	.037	.034	14.304	.001

Table 4.4 indicates that locality significantly predicted assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents ($\beta = .193$, $t = 3.782$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value (.001) is less than the 0.05 level of

significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that locality significantly predicts assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.

Hypothesis Three: Gender and locality will not jointly predict assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing Joint Predictive Influence of Gender and Locality on Assertive Behaviour

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.
Gender	2.101	.201	3.954	.000
Locality	1.654	.174	3.411	.001
R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Sig.
.301	.091	.086	18.742	.000

Table 5 reveals that gender and locality jointly predicted assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents ($R = .301$, $R^2 = .091$, $F = 18.742$, $p < 0.05$). The result indicates that gender and locality jointly accounted for 9.1% variation in assertive behaviour among adolescents. Since the p-value (.000) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in assertive behaviour between male and female adolescents.

Table 6: Independent Samples t-test Showing Difference in Assertive Behaviour Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Male	190	42.67	5.21	3.264	378	.001
Female	190	40.18	4.87			

Table 6 shows that there was a significant difference in assertive behaviour between male and female adolescents ($t = 3.264$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value (.001) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the

null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that assertive behaviour differs significantly between male and female adolescents.

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant difference in assertive behaviour between adolescents from rural and semi-urban localities.

Table 7: Independent Sample t-test Showing Difference in Assertive Behaviour Based on Locality

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Rural	190	39.84	5.02	2.947	378	.003
Semi-Urban	190	42.11	4.96			

Table 7 reveals that there was a significant difference in assertive behaviour between adolescents from rural and semi-urban localities ($t = 2.947$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value (.003) is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that locality significantly influences assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of hypothesis one revealed that gender significantly predicted assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents ($\beta = .218$, $t = 4.126$, $p < 0.05$). The regression result showed that gender accounted for about 4.8% of the variation in assertive behaviour among the respondents ($R^2 = .048$). This implies that differences in gender contributed significantly to variations in assertive behaviour among adolescents. The finding established that male and female adolescents differ in their level of assertiveness. The finding is consistent with the study conducted by Sharma and Kaur (2021), who found that gender significantly influenced assertive behaviour among adolescents, with male students demonstrating higher levels of assertiveness compared to female students due to cultural and social expectations surrounding gender roles. Similarly, Afolabi and Adekunle (2022) reported that gender differences significantly affected adolescents' communication patterns and social confidence in secondary schools in Nigeria. However, the finding contradicts the study of Martinez and Lopez (2020), who reported that gender had no significant influence on assertive behaviour among

adolescents, arguing that assertiveness is more strongly shaped by personality traits and family upbringing than by gender differences. The disagreement in findings may be attributed to differences in socio-cultural environments, research design, and the characteristics of the study population.

The finding of hypothesis two indicated that locality significantly predicted assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents ($\beta = .193$, $t = 3.782$, $p < 0.05$). The result showed that locality accounted for about 3.7% of the variation in assertive behaviour among the respondents ($R^2 = .037$). This implies that the environment in which adolescents reside influences their assertive behaviour. Adolescents from semi-urban areas may have greater exposure to social interactions, communication opportunities, educational resources, and extracurricular activities, which may contribute to higher levels of assertiveness compared to adolescents from rural areas. The finding supports the study conducted by Ibrahim and Musa (2021), who found that adolescents from urban and semi-urban communities displayed significantly higher assertive behaviour than their rural counterparts due to better social exposure and access to educational opportunities. In the same vein, Okeke and Eze (2023) reported that locality significantly influenced interpersonal communication and self-confidence among secondary school students in South-West Nigeria. In contrast, the finding disagrees with the study of Brown and Taylor (2019), who found no significant relationship between locality and assertive behaviour among adolescents, concluding that peer relationships and parental upbringing had stronger influence on adolescents' social behaviour than residential location. The variation in findings may be due to differences in geographical settings and socio-economic conditions of the respondents.

The findings of hypothesis three revealed that gender and locality jointly predicted assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents ($R = .301$, $R^2 = .091$, $F = 18.742$, $p < 0.05$). The result indicated that gender and locality jointly accounted for 9.1% of the variation in assertive behaviour among adolescents. This implies that the combined influence of gender and locality contributed significantly to adolescents' assertive behaviour. The interaction between personal characteristics and environmental factors appears to shape how adolescents express themselves and relate with others. The finding agrees with the study of Yusuf and Bello (2022), who found that demographic variables such as gender and locality jointly influenced adolescents' social adjustment and assertive communication. Likewise, Adeyemi and Lawal (2021) reported that both environmental and personal factors significantly predicted behavioural outcomes among adolescents in secondary schools. Conversely, the finding is contrary to the study conducted by Green and Walters (2020), who reported

that demographic factors jointly had weak predictive influence on adolescent assertiveness, emphasizing that psychological variables such as self-esteem and emotional intelligence were stronger determinants of assertive behaviour. The contradiction may be linked to differences in variables considered and variations in cultural contexts.

The findings of hypothesis four showed that there was a significant difference in assertive behaviour between male and female adolescents ($t = 3.264, p < 0.05$). Male adolescents recorded a higher mean score (Mean = 42.67, SD = 5.21) than female adolescents (Mean = 40.18, SD = 4.87). This indicates that male adolescents exhibited higher assertive behaviour than female adolescents in the study area. The difference may be attributed to societal expectations and gender socialization patterns that encourage males to express themselves more confidently and openly. This finding is in agreement with the study of Nwosu and Chukwu (2021), who found significant gender differences in assertive behaviour among adolescents, with males exhibiting greater assertiveness than females. Similarly, Kaur and Singh (2022) reported that male students demonstrated higher confidence and self-expression compared to female students in school settings. On the contrary, the finding contradicts the study carried out by Ahmed and Khan (2020), who found no significant difference in assertive behaviour between male and female adolescents, suggesting that modernization and changing educational practices have reduced gender disparities in social behaviour among adolescents. The disparity in findings may result from cultural differences and variations in sample characteristics.

The findings of hypothesis five revealed that there was a significant difference in assertive behaviour between adolescents from rural and semi-urban localities ($t = 2.947, p < 0.05$). Adolescents from semi-urban localities had a higher mean score (Mean = 42.11, SD = 4.96) compared to adolescents from rural localities (Mean = 39.84, SD = 5.02). This implies that adolescents residing in semi-urban areas exhibited higher levels of assertive behaviour than those in rural areas. The result may be due to increased exposure to social interactions, media influence, and educational opportunities within semi-urban environments. The finding supports the study conducted by Eze and Okafor (2022), who found significant differences in assertive behaviour between rural and urban adolescents, with urban students showing higher levels of assertiveness. Similarly, Adegbuyi and Salami (2021) reported that locality significantly influenced communication skills and interpersonal confidence among adolescents. However, the finding opposes the study of Williams and Carter (2019), who found no significant difference in assertive behaviour between rural and urban adolescents, arguing that assertiveness is

largely influenced by family structure and personality development rather than geographical location. The inconsistency in findings may be attributed to socio-economic and cultural differences among the study populations. Similarly, Mhlongo and Mthembu (2023) reported that adolescents from rural and urban schools did not differ significantly in their levels of assertiveness after controlling for self-esteem and parental support. The inconsistency in findings may be attributed to socio-economic, cultural, and educational differences among the study populations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that gender and locality are important determinants of assertive behaviour among school-going adolescents. Gender significantly influences how adolescents express themselves, communicate their opinions, and defend their rights in social situations. Also, male adolescents exhibit higher levels of assertive behaviour than female adolescents. Locality significantly influenced assertive behaviour. Adolescents residing in semi-urban areas demonstrated higher levels of assertiveness than those from rural areas.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following were recommended:

1. School counsellors should design and implement gender-sensitive assertiveness training programmes that equip both male and female students with effective communication, self-expression, decision-making, and interpersonal skills.
2. The Federal Ministry of Education, State Ministries of Education, Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB) should provide targeted guidance and counselling services, leadership development programmes, and assertiveness training for adolescents in rural communities to reduce disparities associated with place of residence.
3. School administrators, counsellors, and education stakeholders should develop comprehensive intervention programmes that address both gender and environmental influences on adolescents' assertive behaviour through school-based counselling, life skills education, and community engagement initiatives.

4. Teachers and school counsellors should create supportive classroom and counselling environments that encourage female students to express their opinions confidently, participate actively in classroom discussions, and develop healthy assertive communication skills.
5. Parents, school counsellors, and community leaders should collaborate to provide adolescents in rural communities with opportunities for social interaction, mentorship, communication skills development, and confidence-building activities that promote assertive behaviour.

References

- Adeyemi, T. A., & Lawal, O. A. (2021). Gender, peer relationships and interpersonal behaviour among adolescents. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Studies*, 18(1), 45–56.
- Brown, T. L., & Taylor, R. M. (2019). Gender, social interaction and assertive behaviour among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Behaviour*, 14(3), 201–214.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. W. W. Norton.
- Ibrahim, M. A., & Musa, S. A. (2021). Gender and interpersonal relationships among secondary school students. *International Journal of Educational Studies*, 13(1), 34–46.
- Martinez, J. A., & Lopez, M. R. (2020). Gender differences in adolescent assertiveness and interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 23(5), 641–656.
- Nwosu, C. I., & Chukwu, E. A. (2021). Gender and social adjustment among secondary school students. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Research*, 15(2), 91–103.
- Pérez-Torres, V. (2024). Social media: A digital social mirror for identity development during adolescence. *Current Psychology*, 43, 22170–22180.
- Plantade-Gipch, A., Bruno, J., Strub, L., Bouvard, M., & Martin-Krumm, C. (2023). Emotional regulation, attachment style, and assertiveness as determinants of well-being in emerging adults. *Frontiers in Education*, 8, 1058519.
- Sirin, S. R., Brauer, S. Z., & Tugberk, R. C. (2024). Reframing adolescent identity: A global perspective for the digital age. *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology*, 6, 301–322. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-devpsych-010923-101059>
- World Health Organization. (2024). Adolescent and young adult health. World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization. (2025). Mental health of adolescents. World Health Organization.
- Yosep, I., Suryani, S., Mediani, H. S., Mardhiyah, A., Maulana, I., Hernawaty, T., & Hazmi, H. (2024). A scoping review of assertiveness therapy for reducing bullying behavior and its impacts among adolescents. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare*, 17, 1777–1790. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S460343>