



Sociological Correlates of Deviant Behaviour among In-School Adolescents in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Where there is no law, there is no transgression is a popular saying but the human society is governed by series of laws through its various institutions. One of the hidden functions of education through its school agency is to instil conformity in learners for optimal societal functioning as law abiding citizens. Nonetheless, increasing number of adolescents are still bedevilled by social deviance. This study hence, examined the sociological correlates of deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Lagos state, Nigeria. Three hypotheses guided the study while the study adopted a descriptive research design. The study sample comprised two hundred and seventy (270) secondary school students drawn from the study population using simple random sampling technique. A self-designed questionnaire ($r = 0.76$) was used in data collection while the formulated hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at 0.05 levels of significance. The study found that parental influence, social media and peer influence significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The study hence, recommended among others that; Parents should provide a conducive home environment that would enhance good upbringing of their children and also be their role model. Parents should monitor the activities of their children and the kind of friends they keep, to discourage negative peer influence. Parents and the school system should regulate the contents of social media being accessed by adolescent students.

Keywords: Deviant behaviour, Parental influence, Peer influence, Social media.

1. Introduction

Social deviance is an issue of public concern as it is behind every form of social disorganization. No facet of the human society is insulated from social deviance

be it the home, the school or any organization. Merton (1957)'s typology of social deviance (cited in Ajuzie, 2011) remains one of the earliest submissions on the social problem as it was classified into innovation, ritualism, retreatism and excessive conformism. Deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents particularly, is a major challenge in the achievement of the school aims and objectives and by extension the national goals. Deviance is generally defined as any behaviour that does not conform to the established rules of a group of individuals or of the society at large (Idris, 2016). Deviant behaviour involves, not keeping to rules and norms of the society, or the school norms. It is characterised by violation of socially accepted norms that cause damage to individual themselves, their surroundings and the public welfare at large. Ditch (2016) opined that deviant behaviour is a behaviour that violates the laid down rules and regulation of an organisation or group.

Eremus (2015), observed that rules and regulations are not obeyed in our schools as there are many cases of examination malpractice, truancy, bullying, extortion, drug offences and porous behaviour. These are deviations from standard behavioural expectations of the students. Ibuchim (2016) identified common deviant behaviours within the educational system as; examination malpractice, bullying, truancy, stealing, lateness to school, cultism, drug abuse, sex offences, absenteeism and conflict with parents. Similarly, identified among secondary school students were common behaviours such as engaging in; cultism, sex offences, smoking and alcoholism, vandalism, fighting, aggressiveness, truancy, disrespect to constituted authorities and elders, stealing and examination malpractices.

Factors that may influence adolescents' behaviour can be found in the home and such home factors include;

family discord, poor parenting style, poor housing facilities with attendant overcrowding and poverty. Others include; rejection, hostility, sex differences, and large family size (Bannon, 2012). Some biological factors to the problem include issues of; psychopathy, brain damage. and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) among others.

Parental or family influence is critical in the life of every child and parents serve as role models to their children. If a parent acts in a negative way, the child is most likely to imbibe such negative attitudes as such may be generalised to the rest of the society (Carlson, 2012). Thus, parents have much influence over their children's behaviour. However, there are certain parenting techniques that have a greater impact on the adolescents' behaviour including; parental support. Barnes et'al (2006) posited that parental support is that behaviour towards the child, such as praising, encouraging, and giving affection which show the child that he or she is valued and loved. Parental support bond the adolescents to the family institution and build their self-control which hinder them from engaging in deviant acts (Barnes, Joseph and John, 2006). Furthermore, parents who do not reinforce positive behaviour and who do not effectively punish deviance are more likely to experience weak bonds with their children through which the child is more likely to participate in deviant behaviour (Nuredin,2017).

Peer influence refers to the influence exerted by peer group in encouraging an individual to change his or her attitude, values, or behaviour in other to conform to group norms. Adolescents socialise with peers and learn greatly from them (Nuredin, 2017). Most students indulge in deviant behaviour in school because of influence of peers (Agi, 2016). Peer influence is the term used to describe the impact that a group of peers has on an individual, urging them to alter their beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours in order to fit in with the group standards. According to Clasen (2005), peer influence refers to a social condition whereby a person is being influenced or pushed over by friends or age group to do something he or she does not wish to do. It is the pressure an individual feel to conform to in order to be part of the group and be accepted by his peers. Babatunde (2024) viewed peer pressure as a way that people of the same social group at in order to influence one another, often in negative ways. They can encourage each other to skip classes, steal, cheat during examinations, take drugs or involve in other risky behaviours that contravenes the school rules and regulations. Uwakwe et'l (2018), found that peer group dynamics play a crucial role, particularly in adolescence, where the desire to fit in and be accepted can lead to participation in activities like substance

abuse, bullying, and truancy. Milliward and Marisen (2016) found that students involved in deviant acts for the sake of conforming because they see their friends doing the same.

The social media appear to pose so much attraction to today's adolescents, technology being the current way of the world. There has been a growing concern regarding the relationship between various type of media and deviant behaviour among young people. Instilling violent attitude and behaviour pattern in young people for instance, may make the students regard each other as target of aggression and sexual predation. Makers of violent imagery undermine value that are perhaps essential to civilised society and make it difficult for schools to achieve their social expectation and civic aspiration.

Deviant behaviour among adolescent students has a wide array of impacts such as; affects teaching-earning process in the classroom, leads to poor academic performance of the deviants, causes poor parent-child relationships, as most parents may withdraw their love and care on deviant children, and threatens the safety of teachers, school authorities and parents and even destroys school properties (Agi, 2016). Furthermore, Odo (2016), found that students engaging in deviant behaviours had lower academic achievements compared to their well-behaved peers. The study reported that students involved in deviant behaviour had an average academic performance score of 45%, compared to 65% for well-behaved students. Also, Olagunju (2021), submitted that deviant behaviour leads to frequent disruptions in classrooms, making it difficult for teachers to maintain order and deliver effective instruction. Over 55% of teachers in the study reported that their teaching was regularly disrupted by student misconduct. Similarly, Onukwufor (2017), reported that 60% of teachers in their study, felt unsafe due to high levels of student violence and misconduct, which creates a climate of fear and negatively impacts the teaching and learning process. The disruptive impact that deviant behaviour has on the school system and the society at large makes it imperative that further investigation, be conducted on the social problem to mitigate it. It is against this background that this study examined the sociological correlates of deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem.

The issue of deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents has assumed a worrisome trend, in recent times, and education stakeholders appear to be in

dilemma. Observational evidence indicates that many students disobey school rules and regulation with impunity. This ranges from issues of unruly behaviour, truancy, bullying, sex offences, stealing, fighting, vandalism to examination malpractices. These acts have deleterious effects both on the adolescents, the school and the society at large. There are rising cases of school dropouts/out-of-school children, poor academic performance among learners and lot's more which extant research studies have partly attributed to deviant behaviour in schools. When deviant behaviour impact negatively on the school activities, psychosocial adjustment or academic performance of the students, it will in the long run negatively impact the quality of the societal workforce and national development. Many reasons have been advanced as being responsible for the problem of deviant behaviour among adolescents with solutions proffered. The problem still ravages as the proffered solutions have not yielded the needed result. This study hence investigated the sociological correlates of deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents in Lagos state, Nigeria.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the sociological factors that predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area, Lagos state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- To ascertain whether parental influence will predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.
- To determine whether social media will predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.
- To ascertain if peer influence will predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

1.3 Hypotheses

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

- Parental influence will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.
- Social media will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.
- Peer influence will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

2. Methodology.

2.1 Research Design

The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. This gives a true picture of a situation or population and therefore provides the basis for eliciting possible solutions for alleviating the problem under study.

2.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all the senior secondary school two students (SSII) in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State' Nigeria. The choice of this population is due to the fact that the students are not in an external examination class and they are not new in the school.

2.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of Two Hundred and Seventy (270) secondary school students was selected from the study population, using simple random sampling technique. A sample of thirty students was selected from each of the schools used in the study. An equal number of boys and girls were selected; fifteen male and fifteen female students from each of the schools, to allow for gender equity.

2.4 Research Instrument

A self-designed questionnaire titled, Correlates of Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (CDBQ) was used in data collection. It comprised two sections, A and B. Section A comprised of items which sought personal information of the respondents while section B elicited information on the variables captured in the hypotheses. The instrument was validated through experts' opinions to ensure its face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot study and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.76 which was quite high and considered adequate for use.

2.5 Data collection and Analysis

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the selected schools and retrieved immediately after completion to ensure high return rate. The retrieved questionnaires were collated for data analysis. The postulated hypotheses were tested using Linear Regression Analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results and Discussion.

Hypothesis One: Parental influence will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 1.1 Regression Analysis of Parental Influence on Deviant Behaviour

REGRESSION						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	F Sig.
1	Regression	1168.825	1	1168.825	56.550	3.89
	Residual	5539.282	268	20.669		.000
	Total	6708.107	269			
a. Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Influence						

Evidence from Table 1.1 shows that the F-calculated is 56.6 while the F-tab is 3.89. Given that the F-cal is greater than F-tab, this suggests that, the null hypothesis that states that parental influence will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students is rejected. Therefore, parental influence significantly predicts deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 1.2: Regression Coefficient table of Parental Influence on Deviant Behaviour

Coefficients							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	T-tab	Sig.
		B.	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	7.952	.954		8.334		1.98
	Parental Influence	639	.085	.417	7.520		.000
a. Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour							

Table 1.2 revealed that the T-cal is 7.52 and the T-tab is 1.98, since the critical value is greater than the table value the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, these two tables (Table 1.1 and Table 1.2) indicate that the test was significant, parental influence is a predictor of deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Hypothesis Two: Social media will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 2.1: Regression table of Social Media Influence on Deviant Behaviour

Regression						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	646.410	1	646.410	28.579	0.00
	Residual	6061.697	268	22.618		
	Total	6708.107	269			
a. Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Influence						

Evidence from Table 2.1 shows that the F-cal is 28.6 while the F-tab is 3.89 which suggests that the null hypothesis that says that social media will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students is rejected. Therefore, social media significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 2.2: Regression Coefficient table of Social Media Influence on Deviant Behaviour

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.502	.858		12.24	.00
	Social Media influence	.424	.079	.310	5.34	.00
a. Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour						

Table 2.2 revealed the Regression Coefficient table of Social Media Influence on Deviant Behaviour, its T-cal value is 5.34 and the T-tab is 1.98. These two tables indicate that the test was significant hence, social media influence is a predictor of deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Hypothesis Three: Peer influence will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 3.1: Regression Analysis of Peer Influence on Deviant Behaviour

REGRESSION						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2889.442	1	2889.442	202.786	0.00
	Residual	3818.666	268	14.249		
	Total	6708.107	269			

a. Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour
b. Predictors: (Constant), Peer Influence

Table 3.1 revealed that the obtained F-cal value of 202.8 is greater than the F-tab of 3.89. The null hypothesis that states that Peer influence will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among secondary school students is rejected. Hence, peer influence significantly predicts deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Table 3.2: Regression Coefficient table of Peer Influence on Deviant Behaviour

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.996	.661		9.074	0.00
	Peer Influence	1.042	.073	.656	14.240	.00

a. Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour

Table 3.2 shows the T-cal value to be 14.2 and the T-tab value to be 1.96. The two tables indicate that test was significant. Peer influence is hence, a predictor of deviant behaviour among secondary school students

4. Discussion of findings

Hypothesis one showed that parental influence significantly predicts deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents. The reason for this may be due to the parenting style adopted by parents in raising their children which most often is neglectful or permissive. Carlson (2012) opined that parents directly influence deviant behaviour in their children through their parenting techniques and family structure. This finding supports Simons, Whitebeck, Conger and Conger cited in Carlson (2012) that if a parent acts in a negative way, the child is more likely to follow such negative attitude. Thus, parents have much influence over their children’s behaviour. Similarly, parental monitoring and knowledge of the adolescent’s whereabouts and the activities in which they are engaged are strong predictors of reduced deviant behaviour in adolescents (Criss et al. 2015). Hence, their lack of knowledge of the child’s behaviour promotes the adolescent’s deviant behaviour, specifically his or her misbehaviour at school, which includes truancy (Chinyakata, Roman and Donga, 2022). Also, some of the deviant behaviours of adolescents are a result of the parent’s inability to employ disciplinary methods that discourage inappropriate behaviour. Parental discipline is hence

critical in raising adolescents that will not engage in deviance.

Hypothesis two revealed that social media significantly predict deviant behaviour among adolescent students. The reason for this may be due to increased presence of adolescents on social media platforms such as; Facebook, Twitter (X), Whatsapp and Instagram, which they often use negatively. This finding corroborates Kento (2015), who opined that children's character development appears to be negatively impacted by wholesome mainstream media, rather than positively. The demands of their education, social lives, and careers are difficult for the students to adapt to. This finding also aligns with Muia (2016) who found that social media contributed to violence among the students in his study and as well influenced their sexual practices. Furthermore, it increased cases of molestation and cyberbullying among the students.

Hypothesis three revealed that peer influence significantly predicts deviant behaviour among adolescents. The reason for this may be due to the challenges associated with adolescence as a stage of development. Uwakwe, Okechukwu and Nweke (2018), found that peer group dynamics play a crucial role, particularly in adolescence, where the desire to fit in and be accepted can lead to participation in activities like substance abuse, bullying, and truancy. In line with this finding, is a study that investigated drug abuse concerns among students in Kenya, which found that students who use and abuse drugs seemed

to lack knowledge about their effects but wrongly rely on peers for such information. Negative peer influence was hence identified as the main factor that pushes students to use and abuse drugs (Gershon, 2024). Also, Ikediashi and Akande (2015) submitted that peer group membership leads to peer influence and anti-social behaviour. This finding further aligns with Hinnat and Alberti (2018), who concluded that adolescents who have more friends endorsing anti-social behaviours are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour than those with non-deviant friends.

5. Conclusion

On the basis of the findings made, this study concludes that parental influence, peer influence and social media significantly predict deviant behaviour among in-school adolescents. The recommendations proffered in the study when fully implemented would assist in curtailing the problem of deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

6. Sociological Implications of the Findings.

This study has revealed that parental influence, peer influence and social media as key determinants of deviant behaviour among adolescents. This finding is critical given that it cuts across the major agents of child socialization; the family, the peer group and the mass media. The adolescents will continue to interact with these agencies. The agencies should hence, fulfill their social roles effectively as it pertains raising socially conforming adolescents that are in tune with their societal expectations. Should these agencies fail, then, social disorganization is inevitable. Parents should not only model the socially acceptable patterns of behaviour but should also adopt parenting practices that yield the desired societal outcomes. Adolescents will always treasure their peers but parents and significant others should assist the adolescents to sustain only the positive peer influence and eschew the negatives by monitoring the friends that their children keep. Also, technology is currently the way of the world and social media is a part of this new world order. Parents and teachers should regulate adolescents' social media usage.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- Parents should provide a conducive home environment that would enhance good moral upbringing and be a role model to their

children so that they will imbibe good behaviour.

- Parents and the school system should regulate the contents of social media being accessed by adolescent students.
- The parents and the school system should make rule and regulations that would discourage students from negative peer influence.
- Parents should take more interest in the welfare of their children, more especially as it concerns the type of friends they keep.
- The government should provide adequate personnel such as sociologists, psychologists, and vocational guidance counsellors in public secondary schools, to assist in dealing with cases of deviance in schools.
- Seminars and conferences should be organized to educate students on the dangers of deviant behaviour and the negative influence of social media.

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