

Psycho-Sociological Factors As Determinants Of Juvenile Delinquency Among Adolescents In Junior Secondary Schools In Patani Local Government Area Of Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated psycho-sociological factors as determinants of juvenile delinquency among adolescents in junior secondary schools in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State. Descriptive research design was used in the study. Two hundred and fifty respondents were selected from six selected secondary schools in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria through simple random sampling technique. Three research hypotheses were formulated in the study. The respondents were measured with relevant standardized scale (instruments) with strong reliability coefficient which include; socio-economic status scale $\alpha = .89$, peer influence scale $\alpha = .91$, self-esteem scale $\alpha = .88$ and juvenile delinquency scale $\alpha = .92$. The data obtained was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), Analysis of Variance and Multiple Regression Analysis statistical methods. The result showed that there was a negative significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and juvenile delinquency ($r = -.956$; $P < 0.05$), while there was positive significant relationship between peer influence and juvenile delinquency ($r = .938$; $P < 0.05$) and there was also significant relationship between self-esteem and juvenile delinquency ($r = .226$; $P < 0.05$). The three independent variables jointly accounted for 93% variance in predicting juvenile delinquency among junior secondary students. The independent variables made positive relative contribution to juvenile delinquency in the following order: peer influence ($\beta = 0.353$, $t = 11.561$, $P < 0.05$) followed by self-esteem ($\beta = 0.210$, $t = 3.953$, $P < 0.05$), and parental socio-economic status ($\beta = -0.626$, $t = -20.496$, $P < 0.05$). On the strength of these findings, it was recommended that government should make strict laws on delinquencies, as any individual caught in this act should be reprimanded and taken to juvenile home for correction. This will serve as a deterrent for other juveniles who have the minds of engaging in these acts.

Keywords: Adolescents, Psycho-sociological, Parental socio-economic status, Peer influence, Self-esteem, Juvenile delinquency

Introduction

Adolescence is a period of transition during which change in group belongingness from childhood to adulthood takes place and creates a gap in an individual that contribute to uncertainty of behaviour; and it is characterized by introduction into risky and delinquent behaviours like violence, unprotected sexual intercourse, smoking, drinking, truancy, stealing to mention a few. Delinquency as “an illegal or immoral behaviour, especially by the young person who behaves in a way that is illegal or that the society does not approve of”. Shoemaker (2010), defined juvenile delinquency as “illegal acts, whether criminal or status offences, which are committed by youth under the age of 18”. The two types of delinquent offences associated with young people, herein referred to as juveniles/children. The first type of offence is a conduct that would be a criminal law violation for an adult, such as rape, burglary, robbery, etc. The other type of delinquent offence called “status” offences are delinquent conducts that do not apply to adults, such as running away from home, truancy, to mention a few (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2001; Alfrey, 2010).

Some of the juvenile crimes witnessed in Nigeria include and not limited to: truancy, drug abuse, smoking, cultism, bullying, examination malpractices, prostitution and theft (Ugwuoke, 2010; Sanni, Udoh, Okediji, Modo and Ezech, 2010). Overtime, every society has declared certain modes of behaviour to be unacceptable or criminal in nature. Crime happens anywhere in the world and it excuses no one, whether rich or poor, youths, adults and juveniles. Juvenile delinquency in schools and outside of schools is an issue that is damaging the whole world. It is not something that is happening recently, it has been happening over a long period of time. Delinquency, a legal term for criminal behaviour carried out by a juvenile or adolescent, is often the result of escalating problematic behaviour.

Many factors have been identified as indicators of juvenile delinquency, some of these factors include amongst others parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem. Parents' socio economic status has been described as one of the factors that influence juvenile. Socio-Economic Status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation (Ezewu, 2005). It is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group, when viewed through a social class lens, privilege; power and control are emphasized (Calhoun, Hemingway and Poulter, 2008). Socio-economic status (SES) can be high, average or low. It is observed that people of low socio-economic status often engage in child abuse and neglect due to poverty, low income earnings, low educational background. Chen and Paterson (2006) posit that low socioeconomic

status and its correlates, such as lower education, poverty, and poor health ultimately affect Nigerian children as it could lure them into delinquency.

Another factor that could influence juvenile delinquency is peer influence. Peer influence refers to the tendency or readiness in people of the same age or social status to behave in a particular way as a mark of conformity to the opinion, interest, standard and norms of their peer. Chan and Zhang (2007) affirmed that peer group with shared experience is an inescapable source of personal relationships. The frequent interactions with peers, particularly with deviant peers sometimes lead to the adoption of delinquent behaviour for group conformity. Atwai (2011) observed that peer influence and low self-esteem appear to be the major factors fuelling juvenile delinquency like excessive stealing, truancy smoking, drinking etc. The author noted that having friends who engage in delinquent acts, is one of the greatest determinants in whether such adolescents would exhibit delinquent behaviours,

Another factor that influences juvenile delinquency is self-esteem. Self-esteem is described as the evaluation one has of him/herself, how one feels about him/herself in almost any situation (Rosenberg, 1965 cited in Pharr, 2017). Adolescents' self-esteem could be high or low. Adolescents with low self-esteem focus on trying to prove themselves to others, they generally lack confidence in themselves, and often doubt their own worth and acceptability as they can be lured in delinquent acts. Adolescents frequently blame others rather than take responsibility for their behaviours such as going to club regularly, stealing, bullying smoking among others (Mruk, 2013). Ziller (2009) posited that a healthy and/or high self-esteem may serve as an insulator against delinquency, even in juvenile populations which are otherwise delinquency prone.

Statement of the problem

For over many decades now, the issue of juvenile delinquency among adolescents most especially in junior secondary schools cannot be over emphasized, as it has become a source of worry to parents, caregivers and policy makers. Juvenile delinquency in Nigeria is a major social problem which affects the whole society and constitutes a serious impediment to development. Report has it that the recent trend in Nigeria shows that juvenile delinquency is now pervasive, appearing everywhere from the large metropolitan city to the rural areas of the country that were once thought to be immune to urban problems (Ojo, 2012). Millions of people worldwide, even in countries once considered relatively safe, seem to have a haunting fear of crime and violence in recent times. The rise in destructive and deviant acts amongst adolescents seems to be evident in school dropout rates, truancy, teenage pregnancies, examination malpractice, armed robbery, assault, rape, house breaking, forgery, bullying, drug abuse and quite apparently substantial increase in teenage crimes committed. In Nigeria today, the fear of crime permeates every aspect of human life. The implication is that the children may be exposed to learning delinquent behaviours and they may also be enticed into joining delinquent gangs. The effect is that children in such a situation may be pushed to engage in theft, extortion and other delinquent actions to make ends meet. It is against this background that the study sought to investigate the psycho-sociological as determinants of juvenile delinquency among adolescents in junior secondary schools in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of psycho-sociological factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) on juvenile delinquency among adolescents in junior secondary schools in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State. Specifically the objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the relationship that exists between the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) on the dependent factor (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State.
- ii. investigate the joint contribution of the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) to the prediction of the dependent variable (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State.
- iii. determine the relative contribution of each of the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) to the prediction of the dependent factor (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State.

Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) on the dependent factor (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Oyo State.

H0₂: There is no significant joint contribution of the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) to the prediction of the dependent variable (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State.

H0₃: There is no relative contribution of the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) to the prediction of the dependent factor (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State.

Literature Review

A plethora of studies has found that juvenile delinquency is a serious global problem that troubles many societies (Hoge, 2001; Ladokun, 2010; Du Preez & Luyt, 2011). The problem is not a new phenomenon at all. Goldson (2011) states that the problem

is as old as 'problem families' and the paranoiac discovery of alcohol beverages". Goldson's (2011) posited further that juvenile delinquency is widespread, albeit at variable levels. Juvenile delinquency is fast becoming one of the largest problems facing many societies due to many different factors ranging from parental factors to bullying at schools all which has led to different theoretical notions by different scholars (Mulvey, 2007).

Weis (2008) in her study of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status: pattern of access in Ghanaian secondary school found out that greater percentage of delinquent behaviour in school is associated with children from rich homes since they are the majority in schools, on the other hand delinquent behaviour in school is associated with student from poor homes as a result of the spillover from the society where they constitute a larger percentage. The educational level of parents determines their status and level of influence in the society. The author concluded that there was significant relationship between socio-economic status and juvenile delinquency. Ryan (2002) supported the finding as he noted that parents who are less educated are more passively involved in the management, upbringing and education of their children. Their children do not seem to give them the desired respect since they are less likely to guide them academically. In another study conducted by Schrötle and Ansoorge, (2008) in Germany specifically among in school adolescents, there is a higher likelihood of experiencing delinquent behaviours like physical or sexual violence from parents in households with lower incomes, but the differences between income levels are not quite as strong as those found in the US or EU-wide studies. The authors concluded that there was positive linear relationship between socio economic status and juvenile delinquency among adolescents.

Vitaro, Brendgen, and Tremblay (2002), support the study that spending time with deviant friends exert a great deal of pressure on a young person to adopt the same behaviours. The peer influence/socialization mode proclaims that weak bonding to conventional peers leads to association with deviant behaviours. Even though this may be true, Vitaro et al (2002), also suggests that the presence of even one non-delinquent friend may be able to mitigate some of the influence from friends who engage in deviant behaviour. Each individual brings their own norms and values and the friendship is unique in that respect. Study conducted by Mwaniki and Nyaga (2014) among secondary school students in Kenya to indicate whether family and peers contribute to juvenile delinquency. According to these authors adolescents give in to a peer pressure because they do not want to be made fun of and they want to try new things which are done among the peer group members. These decisions can make the adolescents to abandon their better judgement. This sample was drawn from Kenya secondary schools. The finding of the study revealed that there was significant relative contribution of peer influence to the prediction of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Kenya.

Hoge, Andrews and Leschied (2004) tested three hypotheses with respect to delinquent behaviour, the author worked with a sample of 338 juveniles in their study. The first hypothesis centers on parent-child relationship, the second on peer influences and the third on attitudes towards authority. They noted that familial relationships combined with an association with delinquent peers offers the highest predictor for juvenile delinquency. Their prediction was that the highest levels antisocial behaviour would occur where poor attachment between parent and child was combined with poor control.

Lee (2012), conducted a study on the influence of self-esteem and delinquency in South Korean adolescents. The finding showed that self-esteem of adolescents with higher levels of initial self-esteem grew slower whereas that of adolescents with lower levels of initial self-esteem increased faster over time. The author concluded that self-esteem had influence on delinquency among South Korean adolescents. Lee, Morrell, Marini and Smith (2010) found that Low levels of self-esteem have also been linked to low take up of leisure participation, and adolescents with low self-esteem were also more likely to report more deviant behaviour than others. In a study conducted in Nigeria, Sangowawa and Adebisi (2013), found that high self-esteem was a significant predictor of abstinence of delinquent behaviours like fighting, smoking, truancy to mention a few among out-of-school adolescent females.

Theoretical framework

Social control theory

The theory that this study anchors on is social control theory. Social control theory in criminology was developed by an American criminologist; Travis Hirschi in the late 1960s. The theory posits that criminal behaviour and delinquency result from failure of individuals to bond with conventional social groups such as the family and schools (Miller, 2009). In other words, a person is less likely to choose crime if he/she has strong social bonds. Miller (2009) argued that "social control shows the extent that a youngster fails to become attached to the control agencies of society (for instance, the families and the schools), the youngster's chances of engaging in delinquency are increased". Travis Hirschi identified four key concepts in his social control theory, viz: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2001).

The relevance of this theory could be linked to the main tenets as it applies to juvenile delinquency and family instability. Hence, the inability of the family as a social institution to bond with the children as a result of instability and disruptions could be associated with the problem of juvenile delinquency. However, social control theory has been criticized for ignoring the effects of parental behaviour in modeling youth conduct

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design of survey type. As pointed out by Adeyemo (2001), the approach involves interpretation of facts without manipulating any variable. One of the advantages of survey research and relevance to the present study is the fact that it makes evaluation of existing condition as well as collection of factual information possible.

Population

The target population of this study comprised all Junior Secondary School Students one, two and three (JSS 1, JSS 2 and JSS3) both private and public in Pantami Local Government, Delta state. This population was selected because most of the delinquent acts/behaviours are found within them

Sample and Sampling Technique

A total of two hundred and fifty (250) participants were selected from five secondary schools within Patani local government using simple random sampling technique. In this study, both probability and non-probability sampling was used to select the study sample. Non-probability method was used to select Patani local government because this local government has the only few towns and villages that made it up which could have fewer number of schools and it is assumed that there could be low records of delinquent behaviours among students which could easily be curbed. Purposive sampling was used to select junior students enrolled in public and private secondary schools. Purposive sampling helps to select subjects that possess specific characteristics that were required for this study. The schools in the population differ by type – boys, girls or mixed schools. In order to ensure that these different categories are adequately represented in the sample, stratified sampling was used. Stratified sampling was used primarily to ensure that different groups in the population would be adequately represented in the sample.

Instrument

Questionnaire was the instrument used in the collection of data. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Section A contains bio-data that sought information on personal data of the respondents. Section B contains juvenile delinquency scale which was developed by Zenzile (2008). The scale was adopted to measure the delinquent activities which are being perpetrated among secondary school students. It consisted of 15 items with a Cronach Alpha of 0.89. Section C measured socio-economic status which was developed by Salami (2000). The scale was adopted to measure the educational, occupational and social status of the adolescents' parents, with a Cronach Alpha of 0.89. Section D measured peer influence scale which was developed Santor, Messervey and Kusumakar (2000). The scale was adopted to measure the rate of peer influence among adolescents. It consisted of 10 items with a Cronach Alpha of 0.91. While section E measured self-esteem which was developed by Rosenberg (1965) which was used to measure an individual value or worth. It consisted of 15 items with a Cronbach alpha of .88.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher administered the instrument to the respondents in their respective schools with the help of a trained assistant researcher. After the copies of the questionnaire have been filled out by the respondents, they were collated for analysis. Two hundred and seventy-five (275) copies of questionnaire were administered and two hundred and fifty were retrieved and were used for the study. Pearson's product moment correlation (PPMC) and regression analysis were used to test the three research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Demographic information of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	135	54.0
	Female	115	46.0
Age	8-11 years	73	29.2
	12-15 years	158	63.2
	16-19 years	19	7.6
Religion	Christianity	243	97.2
	Islam	7	2.8
Parents marital status	Intact	192	76.8
	Separated	42	16.8
	Divorced	16	6.4

Table 1 shows that 135 (54.0%) were males and the rest 115 (46.0%) were females. This means that males participated more in the study than their female counterparts. Seventy-three (29.2%) fell between the ages of 8-11 years while 158 (63.2%) fell between 12-15 years and the rest 19 (7.6%) fell between 16-19 years. This means that respondents whose age fell between 12-15 years participated more in the study. Two hundred and forty-three (97.2%) were Christians and the rest 7 (2.8%) were Muslims. Also, 179 (76.8%) of the respondents' parents were intact, 42 (16.8%) were separate while 16 (6.4%) were divorced. This means that respondents whose parents' marital statuses were intact participated more in the study.

Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) on the dependent factor (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Oyo State

Table 2: Correlation matrix showing the relationship between study variables

Variables	Mean	Std.Dev	1	2	3		
Juvenile delinquency	30.5283	35.44182	1.000				
Parent socio-economic status	30.6700	36.11928	-.956**	1.000			
Peer influence	26.0283	18.60388	.938**	.935**	1.000		
Self-esteem	33.8400	29.75247	.226**	-.005	.003	1.000	

*Correlation is significant at 0.05(2-tailed)

Table 2 revealed the relationship of each independent variables (parent socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) with the dependent variable (juvenile delinquency); Juvenile delinquency positively correlated with peer influence ($r = .938$, $P < 0.01$), followed by self-esteem ($r = .226$, $p < 0.01$), but negatively correlated with parent socio-economic status ($r = -.956$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the higher the influence of peer influence and self-esteem on students' the higher their juvenile delinquency tendency.

H0₂: There is no significant joint contribution of the independent factors (parental socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) to the prediction of the dependent variable (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State.

Table 3: Summary of regression for the joint contributions of independent variables to the prediction of juvenile delinquency

R = .964 R Square = .530 Adjusted R square = .526 Std. Error = 9.39744						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	699783.613	3	233261.204	86.8631	.000 ^b
	Residual	52633.906	196	268.540		
	Total	752417.518	199			

Table 3 reveals significant joint contribution of the independent variables (parent socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) to the prediction of juvenile delinquency. The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions $R = 0.964$ and multiple R -square = 0.530. This suggests that the three factors combined accounted for 52.6% ($\text{Adj. } R^2 = .526$) variance in the prediction of juvenile delinquency. The other factors accounting for the remaining variance are beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there was a significant effect of the Independent variables on the juvenile delinquency, $F_{(3, 196)} = 86.8631$, $P < 0.01$. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

H0₃: There is no relative contribution of the independent factors (parental socio- economic status, peer influence and self-esteem) to the prediction of the dependent factor (juvenile delinquency) among Junior Secondary School students in Patani Local Government Area of Delta State.

Table 4: Relative effect of the Independent variables to the prediction of juvenile delinquency.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-5.616	.850		-6.606	.000
	Parent socio-economic status	-.614	.030	-.626	-20.496	.000
	Peer influence	.673	.058	.353	11.561	.000
	Self-esteem	.106	.026	.210	3.953	.001

Table 4 shows that the three predictors (peer influence, parent socio-economic status and self-esteem) are potent predictors of juvenile delinquency. The most potent factor was peer influence ($\text{Beta} = .353$, $t = 11.561$, $P < 0.01$), followed by Self-esteem ($\text{Beta} = .210$, $t = 3.953$, $P < 0.05$) and parent socio-economic status ($\text{Beta} = -.626$, $t = -20.496$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected.

This implies that, increase in peer influence and self-esteem will increase students' juvenile delinquency by 35.3%, and 21.0% respectively. While increase in parent socio-economic status will reduce students' juvenile delinquency by 62.6%.

Discussion

Hypothesis one showed that there was significant relationship between parent socio-economic status, peer influence and self-esteem on (juvenile delinquency). The finding goes in line with that of Weis (2008) who reported that delinquent behaviour in school is associated with children from rich homes since they are the majority in schools, on the other hand delinquent behaviour in school is associated with student from poor homes as a result of the spillover from the society where they constitute a larger percentage. The finding also supports that of Vitaro, Brendgen, and Tremblay (2002), who reported that presence of even one non-delinquent friend may be able to mitigate some of the influence from friends who engage in deviant behaviour. Each individual brings their own norms and values and the friendship is unique in that respect. The finding lends credence with that of Lee (2012) who reported that self-esteem of adolescents with higher levels of initial self-esteem grew slower whereas that of adolescents with lower levels of initial self-esteem increased faster over time

Hypothesis two showed that the three independent variables jointly contributed to the prediction of juvenile delinquency. The finding goes in line with that of Ryan (2002) who surmised that that parents who are less educated are more passively involved in the management, upbringing and education of their children. It also supports that of Mwaniki and Nyaga (2014) who found that adolescents give in to a peer pressure because they do not want to be made fun of and they want to try new things which are done among the peer group members. And the finding of also supports that of Lee, Morrell, Marini and Smith, (2010) who reported that Females who reported low levels of delinquent behaviour also reported low levels of self-esteem. Low levels of self-esteem have also been linked to low take up of leisure participation, and adolescents with low self-esteem were also more likely to report more deviant behaviour than others.

Hypothesis revealed that the three independent variables relatively contributed to the prediction of delinquent behaviour. The finding corroborates that of Schrötle and Ansorge (2008) who found that there is a higher likelihood of experiencing delinquent behaviours like physical or sexual violence from parents in households with lower incomes. The finding also validates that of Hoge, Andrews and Leschied (2004) who found that familial relationships combined with an association with delinquent peers offers the highest predictor for juvenile delinquency. Their prediction was that the highest levels antisocial behaviour would occur where poor attachment between parent and child was combined with poor control. And that of Sangowawa and Adebisi (2013), who found that high self-esteem was a significant predictor of abstinence of delinquent behaviours like fighting, smoking, truancy to mention a few among out-of-school adolescent females.

Conclusion

To reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency, students are expected to have a high self-esteem, good relationship with their colleagues and move with friends who would have positive impact in their lives, and also, parents should meet the needs of their children and wards. It was concluded that if students move with peers who have negative influence in their lives, it could make such students to engage in ugly behaviours like pilfering, smoking, fighting to mention but a few. Also, if parents find it difficult to meet the need of their children and wards, such children could possibly engage themselves in some delinquent behaviours that could later have effect in their lives and the family at large. In addition, students who have a low self-self and/or think low about themselves, could also find themselves in some delinquent behaviours that could hinder their academic work and later imping on their future career aspiration

Recommendations

The researchers made the following recommendations based on the findings of the study:

- Parents and caregivers should try as much as possible to meet the needs of their children and wards as this would make them not to engage in delinquent behaviour like truancy, stealing, pilfering, bullying just to mention a few. If some of these needs are met, it would make such children to face their school work and also shun any form of delinquencies.
- Also, both the parents and teachers in the school should also assist to monitor the activities of adolescents both in and outside the school in order to check the influence of peers on the adolescents and to correct them when they go astray.
- Schools should inculcate in their students the roles of morals and values as this would make students to shun any form of delinquent behaviours and prepare them for future life challenge so as to become a better and successful persons.
- Components of self-esteem should be included in the school curriculum so as to foster self-esteem in the students. Individual who has a high self-esteem may not engage in behaviours that could endanger his/her future desires.
- Clubs and associations like Boys Scout, Boys Brigade, Girls Guild, Red Cross, Rotaract Club just to mention a few, must be encouraged among adolescents and youth. This will dissuade them from delinquency and equally provide the opportunity to learn spirit of good behaviour.
- There should be a stand-by committee at the Federal and States' levels in Nigeria that will constantly monitor, assess and implement policies on Juvenile Justice System in the country as this would reduce the rate of juvenile delinquencies.

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