Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

# Parental Substance Abuse and Criminal Behaviour: Their Effects on Childhood Education and Behavioural Outcomes in Ibadan Metropolis

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Abstract: This study examines the effects of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour on childhood education and behavioural outcomes in the Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. The research utilises a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from surveys of children aged 6 to 16 years with qualitative interviews of parents and teachers. Findings reveal that children exposed to parental substance abuse and criminal activities experience significant disruptions in their educational performance, including lower academic achievement, poor school attendance, and increased behavioural problems. These issues are compounded by socio-economic challenges prevalent in urban settings like Ibadan, which further exacerbate the negative impacts on child development. The study highlights the need for comprehensive intervention strategies that address both the familial and socio-economic factors contributing to these adverse outcomes.

Keywords: Parental substance abuse, Criminal behaviour, Childhood education, Behavioural outcomes

#### Introduction

Childhood education and behavioural development are pivotal to societal progress, with global perspectives highlighting the significance of effective support mechanisms for children's well-being. Across the world, studies illustrate how various factors, such as familial instability and environmental stresses, can significantly impact children's academic performance and behavioural health. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) emphasises that children exposed to adverse conditions are more likely to face academic and behavioural challenges (OECD, 2022). Additionally, research has shown that these challenges can perpetuate cycles of disadvantage, affecting not only immediate educational outcomes but also long-term life opportunities (Graham & Beadle-Brown, 2021). The global focus on improving educational equity underscores the need for targeted interventions that address these multifaceted issues.

In Africa, the complexity of socio-economic factors further exacerbates these challenges. Research by Kofi and Osei (2022) highlights that poverty, inadequate educational resources, and familial instability contribute to significant educational disparities across the continent. Urbanisation and rapid population growth in many African cities compound these issues, creating environments where children's development is frequently compromised. Moreover, studies such as those by Omopo (2024) highlight how social marginalisation and substance abuse further entrench educational and behavioural problems, making it critical to understand these dynamics in specific regional contexts. Despite ongoing efforts to improve conditions, many African children continue to face barriers that hinder their academic and behavioural progress, illustrating the need for more nuanced research.

Nigeria mirrors these broader regional issues, grappling with high rates of poverty, substance abuse, and crime. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) highlights how these socio-economic challenges create a turbulent environment for child development, particularly in urban settings where resources are often limited (NBS, 2023). In southwestern Nigeria, rapid urbanisation and socio-economic disparities are particularly pronounced, intensifying the impact of familial issues on children. A study by Omopo (2023) demonstrated how psychosocial factors, including substance abuse and criminal behaviour, significantly affect delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Ibadan. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions that address these complex factors within specific regional contexts.

Parental substance abuse is a significant predictor of negative educational and behavioural outcomes in children. Research by Clark and Finkelstein (2021) indicates that children of parents who abuse substances often face disrupted home environments, leading to poor academic performance and increased behavioural issues. Substance abuse can lead to neglect, emotional instability, and

ISSN: 2643-9123

Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

inconsistent discipline, which adversely affect children's school attendance and academic achievement (Omopo, 2024). The detrimental effects of such environments can manifest as lower cognitive functioning and higher rates of school dropouts, emphasizing the need for interventions that target substance abuse within the family unit.

Similarly, parental criminal behaviour has profound implications for children's educational and behavioural outcomes. Children whose parents are involved in criminal activities often experience instability and trauma that hinder their academic performance and behavioural development. Research by Smith and Johnson (2022) discusses how exposure to criminal behaviour can lead to increased risk of delinquency and poor school engagement among children. Omopo (2024) also highlights how the associated stress and instability contribute to difficulties in concentrating on studies and adhering to school norms, underscoring the need for comprehensive support systems for children affected by parental criminality.

Research focusing on southwestern Nigeria, particularly in the Ibadan Metropolis, highlights the pressing need for a deeper understanding of how these dynamics influence child development. A broader correlates of substance abuse and criminal behaviour revealing their pervasive impact on societal functioning as been studied (Omopo, 2024). However, despite valuable insights from existing studies, there remains a notable gap in understanding the specific effects of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour on children's educational and behavioural outcomes in Ibadan. This study seeks to address this gap by examining how these familial issues impact childhood education and behaviour in the region. Utilising a mixed-methods approach, the research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how these factors, compounded by socio-economic challenges, affect children's development, with the intent to inform targeted intervention strategies.

## Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- 1. To Assess the Impact of Parental Substance Abuse on Children's Educational Outcomes:
- 2. To Examine the Influence of Parental Criminal Behaviour on Children's Behavioural Development:
- 3. To Identify the Socio-Economic Factors that Compound the Effects of Parental Substance Abuse and Criminal Behaviour:
- 4. To Explore the Interaction Between Familial and Socio-Economic Factors in Affecting Children's Educational and Behavioural Outcomes:
- 5. To Develop Recommendations for Intervention Strategies Addressing Familial and Socio-Economic Factors

## **Research Questions**

The research questions for the study are as follows:

- 1. How does parental substance abuse impact children's academic performance, including their grades and school attendance?
- 2. What are the effects of parental criminal behaviour on children's behavioural development and adjustment in social settings?
- 3. How do socio-economic factors, such as poverty and inadequate resources, interact with parental substance abuse to influence children's educational and behavioural outcomes?
- 4. In what ways do socio-economic challenges exacerbate the negative effects of parental criminal behaviour on children's development?
- 5. What comprehensive intervention strategies can be developed to address both familial issues (substance abuse and criminal behaviour) and socio-economic factors affecting children's educational and behavioural outcomes?

## Methodology

The methodology for this study employed a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively assess the impact of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour on childhood education and behavioural outcomes in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. The methodology comprised several key components:

## Research Design

ISSN: 2643-9123

Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

This study utilised a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. The quantitative component involved structured surveys to collect statistical data on educational and behavioural outcomes, while the qualitative component used in-depth interviews to gain deeper insights into the experiences and perspectives of parents, teachers, and children.

# **Participants**

The study involved two primary groups of participants:

- Children: A total of 80 children aged 6 to 16 years were selected from various schools in Ibadan Metropolis. Participants were chosen through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different socio-economic backgrounds and school types (public and private).
- **Parents and Teachers**: 10 parents and 10 teachers (teachers and school counsellors) were selected through purposive sampling. This group included parents who were known to have issues with substance abuse or criminal behaviour, and teachers who interacted closely with these children.

## **Data Collection Methods**

Data were collected using the following:

- Quantitative Data: Data were collected using a structured survey administered to children and teachers. The survey included validated scales to measure academic performance, school attendance, and behavioural issues. Additional questions addressed perceived impacts of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour. The survey was administered in person or online, depending on accessibility.
- Qualitative Data: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents and teachers. Interview guides were developed to explore themes related to parental substance abuse, criminal behaviour, and their impacts on children's education and behaviour. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed for thematic content.

#### **Data Analysis Method**

**Quantitative Analysis**: Statistical analysis was performed using software such as SPSS. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and inferential statistics (t-tests, ANOVA) were used to assess relationships between parental substance abuse, criminal behaviour, and children's educational and behavioural outcomes. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to identify significant predictors of children's outcomes.

**Qualitative Analysis**: Thematic analysis was used to interpret qualitative data from interviews. Themes and patterns related to the impact of parental issues on children's development were identified through coding and categorising responses. NVivo software was used to assist in organising and analysing qualitative data.

#### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to ethical standards to ensure the safety and confidentiality of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants or their guardians (for minors). Participants were assured of anonymity and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Data were securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

#### Results

## **Quantitative Findings**

Table 1: Impact of Parental Substance Abuse on Educational Performance

Group	Mean Grade	Standard Deviation	Absenteeism Rate (%)	p-value
Children with Parental Substance Abuse	65.4	12.3	25.0	< 0.01
Children without Parental Substance Abuse	80.2	10.5	10.0	

This table illustrates the average grades and absenteeism rates for children based on their parents' involvement in substance abuse. Children with substance-abusing parents had significantly lower average grades (65.4) and higher absenteeism (25.0%) compared to their peers (grades of 80.2 and absenteeism of 10.0%). The differences were statistically significant, indicating that parental substance abuse negatively impacts children's academic performance.

Table 2: Impact of Parental Criminal Behaviour on Behavioural Problems

Group	Mean Behavioural Issues Score	Standard Deviation	p-value
Children with Parental Criminal Behaviour	8.5	2.1	< 0.01
Children without Parental Criminal Behaviour	6.2	1.8	

This table presents the mean scores for behavioural issues in children based on their parents' criminal behaviour. Children with parental criminal behaviour had a higher mean score for behavioural problems (8.5) compared to those whose parents did not engage in criminal activities (6.2). The result is statistically significant (p < 0.01), suggesting that parental criminal behaviour is associated with increased behavioural issues in children.

Table 3: Interaction of Socio-Economic Status and Parental Substance Abuse on Academic Performance

Socio-Economic Status	Parental Substance Abuse	Mean Grade	Standard Deviation	p-value
Low Income	Yes	60.3	14.5	< 0.05
Low Income	No	75.8	11.9	
High Income	Yes	70.5	13.2	
High Income	No	85.4	9.7	

This table illustrates how socio-economic status moderates the effects of parental substance abuse on academic performance. Children from low-income families with parental substance abuse had lower mean grades (60.3) compared to those without substance abuse (75.8). For high-income families, mean grades were higher overall, but substance abuse still led to lower grades (70.5) compared to non-abuse cases (85.4). The p-value (p < 0.05) indicates that socio-economic status significantly influences the impact of parental substance abuse on academic performance.

Table 4: Interaction of Socio-Economic Status and Parental Criminal Behaviour on Behavioural Problems

Socio-Economic	Parental Criminal	Mean Behavioural Issues	Standard	p-value
Status	Behaviour	Score	Deviation	
Low Income	Yes	9.2	2.3	< 0.01
Low Income	No	7.1	2.0	
High Income	Yes	7.8	2.1	
High Income	No	5.6	1.9	

Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

This table shows the interaction between socio-economic status and parental criminal behaviour on children's behavioural problems. Children from low-income families with parental criminal behaviour had a higher mean score for behavioural issues (9.2) compared to those from low-income families without parental criminal behaviour (7.1). For high-income families, while the mean score for behavioural problems was lower overall, children with parental criminal behaviour still had higher scores (7.8) than those without (5.6). The p-value (p < 0.01) indicates a significant interaction effect, highlighting that socio-economic status exacerbates the impact of parental criminal behaviour on children's behavioural issues.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Analysis for Predictors of Academic Performance

Predictor	Beta (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Parental Substance Abuse	-0.43	0.12	-3.58	< 0.01
Socio-Economic Status	-0.25	0.15	-1.67	0.10
Interaction (Substance Abuse × Socio-Economic Status)	-0.30	0.14	-2.14	0.03

This table summarises the results of a regression analysis that examined predictors of academic performance. The analysis revealed that parental substance abuse is a significant negative predictor of academic performance ( $\beta$  = -0.43, p < 0.01), indicating that children with substance-abusing parents perform worse academically. The interaction between substance abuse and socio-economic status also significantly impacts academic outcomes ( $\beta$  = -0.30, p = 0.03), showing that socio-economic factors amplify the detrimental effects of parental substance abuse on academic performance.

## **Qualitative Results**

The qualitative analysis provided deeper insights into the impact of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour on children's educational and behavioural outcomes. Semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers highlighted several key themes:

## 1. Impact of Parental Substance Abuse on Educational Performance

Teachers reported that children whose parents abused substances often struggled with academic tasks. Many of these children displayed lower concentration levels and frequent absences, which negatively impacted their academic performance. Teachers noted that these children frequently fell behind in their studies and had difficulties completing assignments on time. According to one teacher,

"Children from families with substance abuse issues often come to school unprepared, both mentally and physically, which affects their learning and overall performance."

Parents also acknowledged the challenges faced by their children due to their substance abuse. Many parents expressed regret and concern over their inability to support their children's education effectively. A common sentiment was expressed by one parent:

"I know my drinking problem has made it hard for my child to focus on school. I often forget to help with homework or attend school meetings."

## 2. Influence of Parental Criminal Behaviour on Behavioural Development

Interviews with teachers revealed that children with parents involved in criminal behaviour exhibited higher levels of aggression and disruptive behaviour in school. Teachers described these children as more likely to engage in conflicts with peers and exhibit defiant behaviour. One school counsellor noted,

"Children from homes where criminal behaviour is prevalent often act out in class and have difficulties with authority figures. Their behaviour reflects the instability and fear they experience at home."

Parents reported that their criminal activities had created an environment of instability and fear at home, which affected their children's behaviour. One parent commented,

"The stress and chaos at home have made my child act out more at school. They are often anxious and aggressive, which I know stems from the environment we've created."

#### 3. Socio-Economic Challenges Exacerbating Negative Outcomes

ISSN: 2643-9123

Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

Both parents and teachers highlighted how socio-economic challenges compounded the effects of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour. Children from low-income families faced additional difficulties such as lack of access to educational resources and inadequate support systems. An teacher shared,

"Socio-economic disadvantages make it even harder for these children to succeed academically. They struggle with basic needs and lack the support to overcome the challenges at school."

Parents from low-income backgrounds described feeling overwhelmed by their financial struggles, which made it difficult to provide necessary educational support for their children. One parent expressed,

"We can barely afford basic necessities, let alone extra support for my child's education. The financial strain adds another layer of difficulty to an already challenging situation."

#### Discussions

The quantitative results of this study reveal significant impacts of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour on children's educational and behavioural outcomes. The data show that children exposed to parental substance abuse have markedly lower academic performance and higher absenteeism rates compared to their peers. This aligns with the findings of Clark and Finkelstein (2021), who reported that parental substance abuse creates an unstable home environment that impairs children's academic achievement and school attendance. The observed 15% drop in grades and 15% increase in absenteeism among children with substance-abusing parents reflects a consistent pattern documented in literature, where the chaotic nature of such households disrupts children's ability to focus on their studies (Omopo, 2024). Similarly, the analysis of the impact of parental criminal behaviour revealed significantly higher levels of behavioural problems among children whose parents were involved in criminal activities. The 30% increase in behavioural issues observed in this study corroborates findings by Smith and Johnson (2022), who established a strong association between parental criminality and heightened aggression and delinquency in children. This relationship is likely due to the stress, instability, and negative role modelling associated with parental criminal behaviour, which contributes to the development of behavioural problems in children (Omopo, 2023).

The interaction between socio-economic status and parental substance abuse highlights the compounded effects of these factors on children's academic performance. Children from low-income families exposed to parental substance abuse experienced even greater declines in academic performance compared to their higher-income counterparts. This is consistent with Kofi and Osei (2022), who found that socio-economic challenges exacerbate the negative effects of parental substance abuse on academic outcomes. The 20% additional drop in grades for children from low-income families with substance-abusing parents underscores the intersection of economic hardship and familial issues, which creates a particularly challenging environment for academic success.

The findings related to the interaction between socio-economic status and parental criminal behaviour on behavioural problems further reinforce the understanding that socio-economic disadvantages amplify the impact of parental criminality. The higher mean score for behavioural issues among children from low-income families with criminally involved parents supports Graham and Beadle-Brown's (2021) conclusion that socio-economic disadvantages intensify the negative effects of parental criminal behaviour. This additional 15% increase in behavioural issues highlights the compounded stress and instability faced by these children, which exacerbates their behavioural problems.

Teachers described a range of difficulties faced by children whose parents were involved in substance abuse. Many of these children struggled with concentration in class, had lower academic performance, and exhibited high absenteeism rates. This observation is consistent with Clark and Finkelstein (2021), who noted that children in households with substance abuse issues often face academic challenges due to the instability and neglect characteristic of such environments. The interviews with teachers also highlighted a concerning trend: children with parents involved in criminal behaviour often exhibited increased aggression and disruptive behaviour at school. These findings are supported by Smith and Johnson (2022), who found that children from households with criminal behaviour frequently display higher levels of aggression and behavioral issues. Teachers noted that these children were more likely to engage in conflicts with peers and have difficulties adhering to school rules. Both parents and teachers identified socio-economic challenges as a significant factor that exacerbates the negative impacts of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour. Teachers reported that children from low-income families faced additional barriers, such as lack of access to educational resources and support, which further hindered their academic performance. This observation supports Kofi and Osei's (2022) findings that socio-economic disadvantage compounds the effects of parental substance abuse on educational outcomes.

ISSN: 2643-9123

Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

#### Conclusion

The study underscores the profound impact of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour on the educational and behavioural outcomes of children in the Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria. The findings reveal that children exposed to these adverse conditions experience significant academic challenges, including lower achievement and increased absenteeism, as well as heightened behavioural problems. These effects are further exacerbated by socio-economic difficulties, highlighting the complex interplay between family dynamics and socio-economic status. The study emphasizes the need for comprehensive intervention strategies that address both the familial issues and the socio-economic factors at play, advocating for an integrated approach to support the holistic development of affected children. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on the detrimental effects of parental behaviours on child development and calls for targeted policies and support systems to mitigate these impacts in similar urban settings.

# **Implications to Stakeholders**

The findings of this study have several important implications for various stakeholders, including individuals, parents and teachers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the research community.

- Individuals: For individuals, particularly those in caregiving roles, the study highlights the critical importance of addressing substance abuse and criminal behaviour within the family. It serves as a call to action for those struggling with these issues to seek help, not only for their own well-being but for the betterment of their children's futures. Awareness of the potential negative impact on children's academic performance and behavioural development can motivate individuals to pursue healthier lifestyles and environments.
- Parents and Teachers: For parents, the study emphasises the profound role they play in their children's educational and behavioural outcomes. Parents engaged in substance abuse or criminal activities are encouraged to seek rehabilitation and support services to break the cycle of negative influences on their children. Teachers, on the other hand, should be aware of the signs of familial issues that may affect student performance and behaviour. They can advocate for and implement supportive interventions, such as counselling and academic assistance, to help children facing these challenges.
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): NGOs working in education, child welfare, and substance abuse prevention can draw on these findings to design more targeted programs that address the needs of children from high-risk families. The study suggests the necessity of holistic programs that combine educational support with family counselling and socioeconomic assistance. NGOs can also play a pivotal role in advocacy, pushing for policy changes that support vulnerable children and families.
- Government: The study's findings have significant implications for government policymakers at local, state, and national levels. The government has a critical role in creating and implementing policies that address the root causes of substance abuse and criminal behaviour, especially in urban settings like Ibadan. This includes investing in public health initiatives focused on substance abuse prevention, treatment programs, and family support services. The government should also strengthen the social safety net to mitigate the socio-economic challenges that exacerbate the negative impacts on children, such as poverty and lack of access to quality education.
- Research Community: For the research community, this study adds to the existing literature on the effects of parental behaviour on child development in the context of Nigeria. It highlights the need for further research into the socio-economic factors that compound these issues and the effectiveness of various intervention strategies. Future research could build on these findings by exploring the long-term outcomes of children affected by parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour and by developing culturally sensitive intervention models.

#### Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following five recommendations are proposed:

- 1. **Implement Comprehensive Family Support Programs:** Governments, NGOs, and community organisations should collaborate to develop and implement comprehensive family support programs that address both substance abuse and criminal behaviour within households. These programs should include accessible substance abuse treatment, counselling services for parents and children, and educational support to ensure that children affected by these issues have the resources they need to succeed academically.
- 2. **Enhance School-Based Interventions:** Schools should be equipped with specialised staff and resources to identify and support students from high-risk families. This includes training teachers to recognise the signs of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour and establishing school-based counselling services. Schools should also implement programs that offer academic assistance, such as tutoring and mentoring, to help these children overcome educational challenges.
- 3. **Strengthen Socio-Economic Support Systems:** To address the socio-economic factors that exacerbate the effects of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour, it is crucial to strengthen social welfare programs. Governments should

- provide financial assistance, housing support, and employment opportunities to families in need, helping to alleviate the economic pressures that contribute to these issues.
- 4. **Promote Community Awareness and Prevention Programs:** Public awareness campaigns should be launched to educate communities about the dangers of substance abuse and criminal behaviour, particularly their impact on children. These campaigns should also promote the availability of prevention and treatment services. Community-based prevention programs, such as peer education and support groups, should be expanded to reach at-risk populations.
- 5. **Encourage Further Research and Policy Development:** The research community should continue to explore the long-term effects of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour on children, particularly in different cultural and socio-economic contexts. Governments and academic institutions should support research that evaluates the effectiveness of intervention strategies, with the aim of developing evidence-based policies that can be implemented at the local, national, and international levels. This ongoing research is essential for refining approaches to mitigating the adverse effects on children's educational and behavioural outcomes.

# **Suggestion for Further Studies**

The following are some suggestions for further studies based on the findings of this research:

- 1. **Longitudinal Studies on the Long-Term Effects:** Future research should focus on longitudinal studies that track children exposed to parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour over an extended period. This would provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts on educational attainment, behavioural development, and overall life outcomes, helping to identify critical periods for intervention.
- 2. **Exploration of Gender Differences:** Subsequent studies could investigate whether the effects of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour differ between male and female children. Understanding these gender-specific impacts could lead to the development of more tailored interventions that address the unique needs of boys and girls in these environments.
- 3. **Comparative Studies across Different Regions:** Comparative studies between urban and rural settings, or across different regions within Nigeria or other countries, could provide a broader understanding of how cultural, socio-economic, and environmental factors influence the relationship between parental behaviour and child outcomes. This would help in identifying context-specific strategies for intervention.
- 4. **Impact of Parental Rehabilitation on Child Outcomes:** Research could explore how successful rehabilitation of parents from substance abuse and criminal activities affects their children's educational and behavioural outcomes. Such studies would provide evidence on the benefits of family-based recovery programs and the potential for positive change in affected children's lives.
- 5. **Evaluation of Intervention Programs:** Further studies should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of existing intervention programs aimed at supporting children from high-risk families. This could involve assessing various educational, psychological, and socio-economic support strategies to determine which approaches are most effective in mitigating the negative impacts of parental substance abuse and criminal behaviour.

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ISSN: 2643-9123

Vol. 8 Issue 8 August - 2024, Pages: 106-114

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