

An Appraisal Of Delinquent Behaviours Among Secondary School Students In Ondo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to appraise delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Akure North and Akure South Local Government Areas of Ondo State, Nigeria. Two hundred students of senior secondary classes two and three (SS2 and SS3), were used as sample. Two of the selected schools were mixed, while the other two were girls' and boys' only respectively. The research instrument for the study was a self-constructed questionnaire entitled "Appraisal of Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (ADBQ)" Data collected were analyzed using percentage (%). Findings from the study showed that the parent, the teacher and the media, are all instrumental to students' delinquent behaviours. Based on the findings of the study, conclusion was drawn and recommendations made.

Keywords: Appraisal, Delinquent Behaviours, Secondary School Students.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of delinquency is observed to be as old as humanity itself. There is no gainsaying of the fact that, a proportion of adult criminals have a background of early delinquency. Farrington (2004) describes delinquency as crimes committed by young people. Delinquency comprises legal infractions ranging from littering to murder. Even though the crimes committed by adolescents could be the same as those committed by adults, because it is assumed adolescence are yet to comprehend fully the consequences of their actions, they are tried differently by the juvenile court system. The type of punishment they received is to prevent them from committing another illegal act.

The society or the environment where the child lives has much to do with his behavior. Santrock (2007) confirmed this assumption when he said that, a community with a high crime rate, cannot but expose its adolescents to criminal activities since they have to copy models who are into criminality. Santrock also identified predictors of delinquency to include conflict with authority, minor covert acts followed by property damage, minor aggression followed by fighting and violence. More signs of delinquency according to Loeber and Farrington (2001), Stouthamer – Loeber et al (2002), included authority conflict. This has to do with show of stubbornness before the age of twelve. Convert behaviour which included minor convert acts; such as lying, leading gradually to more serious delinquency. Lastly, is the exhibition of overt behaviour which included aggression followed by fighting and violence.

The observed increase in the incidence of delinquency among our secondary school adolescents towards constituted authority, could be attributed to more social forces, which are traceable to factors such as; changes in parenting styles, teacher-student relationship, social

media or technological advancement. For example, despite the fact that parents play very important roles in children development, it is observed that most parents today hardly have the time to look after their children. This could be resulting from the fact that most women now go to work outside the home to earn money in order to support the family. Thus, children are left in the hands of house helps or dropped at the crèche, where not much attention is given to them. The implication is that most of the children grow up lacking proper supervision, having neither moral nor spiritual guidance. In the words of Roth & Brooks – Gunn (2000), though adolescents are moving towards independence, yet we should not deny them of the need to stay connected with their parents. Along this same line, the longitudinal study on the Adolescent Health of the Council of Economic Advisors (2000), found that more than 12,000 adolescents who did not eat dinner with their parents for five or more days a week, had dramatically higher rates of smoking, drinking, engaging marijuana use, getting into fighting and initiation into sexual activities. In another study by Mounts (2002), parents who played an active role in monitoring and guiding their adolescents' development, were found with adolescents who had positive peer relations and lower drug use, than parents who had less active roles.

More studies by Dunn et al (2001), Stewart (2005), showed that there are increasing number of children growing up in divorced or separated families. This implies that there are far more elementary and secondary school children living in step families. Anderson et al (1999), Hetherington & Kelly (2002), found that children in step families show more adjustment problems than those in non-divorced families, also are liable to adjustment problems in academic, and show low self-esteem. Small (1990) stressed further too, that competent adolescents' development most likely occur when they have parents who show them warmth and mutual respect; have interest in their lives, and display constructive ways in dealing with their problems or conflicts.

Schools and teachers have important roles for the all – round development of their students Heppner (2003) stressed teachers' powerful influence on the school adolescents while Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) viewed moral perspectives on teachers education to include; redefining teacher – student relationship, recontextualizing course methods and content knowledge. However, Lanier (1997) observed that new technology is seen recently as one of the most powerful forces changing the roles of teachers' - students' relationship. Today's world is exposed to multitude of print and electronic sources. The work of the teacher is therefore more on the making of informed judgements, creating knowledge to the benefits of the students and the society. However, Akinboye (1982) opined that where teachers lack innovation and competences in their subject areas, it results into limiting students' knowledge, and heightening their level of delinquent behaviours. Still on the roles of the teachers towards their students, Buzzelli and Johnston (2002), went further to describe teachers as moral agents in the lives of their students. Akinboye (1982) however expressed disappointment in the ways adolescents face problems in getting adjusted to moral codes and rules of the school, based on the lots of inconsistencies among teachers. For example, examination malpractices are prohibited among students, yet there are teachers that aid cheating even in the examination hall.

Happner (2003) while reflecting on the effective performance of teacher's duties was not happy that recently, there had been large number of students per class. Also, he noted too that, there had been shortage in the number of teachers. This according to Happner (2003), has a lot of implications for quality control in classroom teaching, as it could encourage students' unrest, and their involvement in diverse negative behaviours such as; examination malpractices, fighting, truancy and others. Again another disheartening situation that could dampen the

morale of teachers is the observation made by Pota (2015), which showed that there had been drastic decline in the respect for teachers internationally. Pota noted that teachers often face intimidation even from parents of their students. Parents increasingly fail to back the authority of teachers for their wards or children. Akinboye (1982), in more than three decades away, observed that there was lack of incentives to teachers from the government. It is very sad that even now, at the 21st century, teachers are still wallowing in much poverty, as their salaries for months are often not paid. This could further explain the care-free attitudes of teachers to their duties; and why incessant strike actions have always been the order of the day.

It is a general belief that many youngsters are initiated into smoking, drinking, bullying and other anti-social or delinquent behaviours through the social media. According to Kariku (2016), the teens are exposed to everything through the social media. He felt that no matter how hard parents try to protect the adolescents from negative news, it seems to be impossible. Bushman and Huesman (2001), DeAngelis (2007) trying to link media violence to real-life violent behaviours, stated that there is no doubt, children, like adults are equally exposed to a tremendous amount of violence through the media. It could be added here that, it is not only in the industrialised societies alone, as being expressed by the preceding scholars, that people spend more of their leisure time with electronic media than any other activity but also happens in developing countries such as Nigeria. This may explain why violent imagery is rampant everywhere in the world today.

Statement Of The Problem

Recently, the incidence of delinquent behaviours among Nigerian youths has been on the increase. This has in turn resulted into many social problems in Nigerian society. The resultant problems have been of great concern, not only to parents but also to governments at all levels. Delinquent behaviours among secondary school students deserve careful study as they affect their academic performance. The following questions were raised to serve as a guide to the study:

1. Does change in parenting styles in the modern time have any influence on delinquency?
2. To what extent does teacher - student relationship influence delinquency?
3. Does the media or technological advancement in the modern world influence delinquency?

METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study was the descriptive survey method. The population was made up of all senior secondary classes two and three (SS2 & SS3) in Akure North and Akure South Local Government Areas of Ondo State, Nigeria. Four schools were used for the study. Two of the schools were mixed (male & female), these were Ijo Mimo Oluwa High School, Akure, and Ejioba High School, Oba - Ile. The other two schools were single-sex; Fiwasaye Girls Grammar School, Akure. (Girls only) and Aquinas College, Akure (boys only). Fifty students were randomly selected from SS2 and SS3 each of the schools used. In all, two hundred students were used as sample for the study. The research instrument used was a self-constructed questionnaire entitled "Appraisal of Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (ADBQ)". The questionnaire was made up of 36 items. Each item required two responses of either 'Yes' or 'No'.

The principal of each school was first contacted for permission. The Questionnaires were distributed to the students during the school hours by the researcher herself, with the assistance of the class teachers in the respective schools selected. In all the classes used, the

collection of the Questionnaires was done by the researcher herself immediately after completion by students.

The data collected were analyzed using percentage (%) after weighing the responses obtained from the Questionnaires. This was done by totalling up the number of 'Yes' or 'No' responses to find the percentage scores.

Table 1: Parental Factors on Delinquent Behaviours.

S/N	Items	No of Responses		
		Yes	No	Total
1	There is lack of proper care or attention by parents to their children at home	190 (95%)	10 (5%)	200
2	Parents do not monitor their children at school	140 (70%)	60 (30%)	200
3	Parents do not monitor the types of film their children watch or listen to at home	180 (90%)	20 (10%)	200
4	Parents not showing good examples at home can encourage delinquent behaviours	180 (90%)	20 (10%)	200

Data on Table 1 showed that lack of proper care or attention by parents to their children at home influences delinquent behaviours. 190(95%) of the respondents agreed with this, while only 10(5%) disagreed. 140(70%) of the respondents agreed that parents do not monitor their children at school, while 60(30%) disagreed. 180(90%) of the respondents agreed that parents do not monitor the types of film their children watch at home, while only 20 (10%) of the respondents disagree 180(90%) respondents agreed that parents not showing good examples at home could breed delinquent behaviours, while 20(10%) disagreed.

Table 2: Teachers' Factors & Delinquent Behaviours

S/N	Items	No of Respondents		
		Yes	No	Total
1	Poor methods of teaching by teachers can influence delinquent behaviours.	160 (80%)	40 (20%)	200
2	Lack of dedication to duties by teachers can influence delinquent behaviours.	140 (70%)	60 (30%)	200
3	Shortage of teachers can cause delinquent behaviour	150 (75%)	50 (25%)	200
4	Large number of students in class encourage delinquent behaviours.	150 (75%)	50 (25%)	200

Data on Table 2 showed that, 160 (80%) respondents agreed that poor methods of teaching by teachers have influence on students' delinquent behaviours, while 40 (20%) disagreed. The Table showed further too, that 140 (70%) respondents agreed that teacher lacked of dedication to their duties, can influence delinquent behaviours while 60 (30%) disagreed. 150 (75%) of the respondents agreed that shortage of teachers has effects on students' delinquent behaviours, while 50 (25%) disagreed. Lastly, data on Table 2 showed that 150 (75%) respondents agreed that large class encouraged delinquent behaviours among students, while 50 (25%) disagreed.

Table 3: Influence of Mass Media on Delinquency

S/N	Items	No of Respondents		
		Yes	No	Total
1	Young people are initiated into delinquent behaviours like smoking, bullying, fighting and others through the media	180 (90%)	20 (10%)	200
2	Watching of blue films on the social media encourages delinquent behaviours	190 (95%)	10 (5%)	200
3	Students spending more of their time with the electronic media can fall victims of delinquent behaviours.	170 (85%)	30 (15%)	200
4	Parents not monitoring the types of films, or music their children listen to can encourage delinquent behaviours	180 (90%)	20 (10%)	200

Data on Table 3 showed that 180 (90%) agreed that young people are initiated into delinquent behaviours through the media, while 20 (10%) respondents disagreed. 190 (95%) respondents agreed that watching of blue films on the social media encouraged delinquent behaviours, while 10 (5%) disagreed. 170(85%) respondents agreed that students spending more of their time with the electronic media can fall victims of delinquent behaviours, 30(15%) disagreed. Finally, data on Table 3 showed that 180 (90%) agreed that parents' failure to monitor the types of film, or music their children listen to, can encourage delinquent behaviours, while 20 (10%) disagreed.

DISCUSSION

Findings of the study, showed that delinquent behaviours among secondary school students can be traced to cumulating factors which include; lack of proper attention of parents to their children at home; coupled with lack of regular visitation of parents to their children or wards at school, parents not limiting their children on the types of films, music or games they watch on the social media which encourage lots of negative behaviours among the students. The study's finding also showed that many parents do not serve as good models to their children or wards. This finding is in agreement with that of Roth & Brooks - Guun (2000), and Mounts (2000), who expressed the need for adolescents to stay close to their parents for warmth and positive personality development in order to discharge them from getting involved in anti-social behaviours. The finding of the study also showed that many factors are resident in the teacher and the school, that encouraged delinquent behaviours in students. As revealed further by the finding of the study, lack of dedication by teachers to their duties, all cumulatively are

found to encourage delinquency among students. The finding of the study showed also that shortage of teachers and large number of students in class were found to be contributive to anti-social behaviours among students.

The finding of this study is in line with the recommendation of Lanier (1997), Buzzelli and Johnston (2002), who when considering teacher - student relationship, emphasised the need for teachers to recontextualise their course methods and content knowledge, also stressed the need for teachers as moral agents to live up to their expectation by being dedicated to their duties. Though it may not be proper to justify the non-dedication of teachers to their duties, however, it might be necessary to draw attention to the fact that the lukewarm attitudes to work by teachers, must have been caused by lack of incentives to them from the appropriate governments in Nigeria. Coupled with this, is the negative perception of the generality of people towards teachers. To this, Akinboye (1982), expressed his disappointment in the ways teachers are denied of their incentives by government. In addition, Pota (2015) also observed that there had been a general and drastic decline in the respect for teachers internationally.

Further revelation by the study showed there was a similarity in the finding of the study with that of Happner (2003), who argued that large number of students, as well as shortage of teachers, had a lot of implications for quality control in classroom teaching; and as such can breed delinquent behaviours among students.

More finding of the study showed further too that, young people are initiated into delinquent behaviours through the mass media. It showed that watching of blue films, spending more of their time with the electronic media, lack of proper monitoring of parents on the types of films their children watched, could encourage delinquent behaviours. This finding is in agreement with Bushman and Huesman (2001), who when trying to link media violence to real-life violent behaviours, stated that children, like adults are exposed to a tremendous amount of violence through the media.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that many parents are not giving enough attention to their children, as such, many children grow up to exhibit delinquent acts, either in school or the larger society.

Also, further finding of the study revealed that besides the fact that many teachers are not dedicated to their duties because of lack of job satisfaction, a host of them are not up-to-date in their methods of teaching. Many of them are not knowledgeable enough to impact useful information into their students. This is found to be dangerous in the sense that, it becomes a hindrance to students' success. A failing student can never be happy, the student could stand the risk of joining peer groups, becoming a truant, a drug addict, or an armed robber, to make up for what he has missed at school.

The finding of the study also showed that, impact of electronic or social media, goes a long way to disrupt the behaviours of many students in performance of their academic and social roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings and conclusion, there is need for parents, teachers, and the students too, to be conscious of the need to acquire proper socialization. It is the duties of parents, teachers in schools, to be of good models, to inculcate good behavioural patterns in the child, to make him or her useful to himself or herself, and to the society at large.

The government at all levels should be alive to the needs of teachers, so as to motivate them in the course of performing their duties. Government should look into how to provide enough teachers and make the school environment conducive for learning.

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