

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR ON THE BASIS OF PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND, SINGLE PARENTHOOD AND SOCIO – ECONOMIC STATUS OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN IBADAN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the comparative analysis of delinquent behaviour on the basis of parental educational level, single parenthood and socio economic status of adolescents in selected secondary schools in Ibadan metropolis. Two hundred and fifty (250) adolescents were drawn from these schools which cut across various socio economic statuses. Their age range was between 13 and 20 years old, while their mean age was 15.6 and SD was 1.8. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. The results show a significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from highly and lowly educated parents in the first hypothesis. It also showed a significant difference in the delinquent behaviour in the adolescents whose parents were not living together and also between parents who were of senior / professional cadres and those of junior workers / petty traders in the second and third hypotheses respectively. The implications of the above results brought about to our consciousness the roles the stakeholders and policy makers could play in assisting the adolescents to live a life free of crime and abnormal behaviours. Some recommendations needed for improving the totality of the findings of this study were equally made.

Keywords: Delinquency, Socio-economic status, Senior Secondary School students, Family, Education.

Introduction

The problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated and universal and crime prevention programmes are either unequipped to deal with the present realities or do not exist. Many developing countries have done little or nothing to deal with these problems, and international programmes

are obviously insufficient. Developed countries are engaged in activities aimed at juvenile crime prevention, but the overall effect of these programmes is rather weak because the mechanisms in place are often inadequate to address the existing situation. On the whole, current efforts to fight juvenile delinquency are

characterized by the lack of systematic action and the absence of task-oriented and effective social work with both offenders and victims, whether real or potential. Analysis is further complicated by a lack of international comparative data (World Youth Report, 2003).

The concept of delinquency is so complex that it is perceived differently by psychologists, sociologists, legal practitioners, religionists and the like. But the consensus is that delinquency is an anti-social behaviour. Each society prescribes its own set of norms and values which must be strictly adhered to by its members and anybody who violates such norm is seen as a delinquent. Raine (1993) defines delinquency as a concept referring to the criminality of non-adult persons and to certain forms of behaviour on their part which are within the context of different cultures as socially deviant. Maud (1990) feels a child can only be classified as delinquent when his anti-social tendencies appear to someone to be so grave that he becomes or ought to become the subject of official action. The issue of adolescent delinquent behaviour has been a problem all over the globe and this has created a lot of concern to parents, teachers, government and the society and this has led to governments setting up remand homes where these delinquents are being managed. The act of delinquency which is prevalent among secondary school students nowadays has been an age long problem in Nigeria secondary schools. The adolescents are bothered with variance of problems that arise from organic, psychological and social pressures, and

these are being influenced greatly by their pressures which make them exhibit behaviours that are not in consonance with societal norms leading to delinquency. Delinquency is a behaviour that involves retraction from rules that govern behaviour among adolescents (Isangedighi, 1998). Ajake, Etuk and Omori (2010) report that school complaints about delinquency among the students have recently been on the high side and those students are now involved in heinous crimes.

Adolescence is often defined as a transient state between childhood and adulthood and a formative period during which many life patterns are learned and established (Meadow, 1986; Ogunlade & Olasehinde, 1995). It is a crucial and dynamic time for young people as they begin to develop their capacity for emphatic abstract thinking and future time perspective, a time when adolescents begin to reach their adult size physiologically; their bodies become more sexually defined and reproductive capacity is established. The stage of adolescence coincides with puberty and subsequent childbearing. Hall in Salami and Alawode (2000) claims that adolescents are characterized by emotional instabilities and hyperactivities, which cause them to experience storm and stress. Brickson in Salami and Alawode (2000) opines that identity formation creates tension in the adolescents to the extent that some of them become confused about their personality. The period of adolescence is very important to the overall development of an individual. Any laxity on the part of the parents in assisting and guiding the

adolescents may result in academic backwardness and development of unwholesome behaviours.

Muss (1999) has brought together most of the current theories of adolescence, one of the most outstanding contributions to knowledge in this area is the developmental task theory brought into limelight by Havighust Neugarten (1997). He listed ten significant tasks for adolescence. These include: achieving new and more mature relation with age mates of both sexes (peer group); achieving a masculine or feminine social role; accepting one's physique and using the body effectively to mention a few. In short, their illustration emphasizes physical maturation, cultural maturation and individual inspiration. In legal terms, Stenberg (1996) says adolescent begins with the attainment of juvenile status and ends with the attainment of maturity status, which is the ability to vote.

A lot of reasons might be responsible for adolescents' delinquent behaviours, however, this study critically examines a comparative analysis of delinquent behaviour on the basis of parental educational background, single parenthood and socio-economic status of in-school adolescents in Ibadan. The three independent variables are hereby examined.

The educational level of parents determines their status and level of influence in the society. This comes from the fact that education has been described as one of the sources of social stratification and social mobility (Uche, 1984). He says that attitudes towards

education were very much influenced by social class. As a result, the children of middle class parents were more likely to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them both at secondary and higher education institutions than were the children of poor labourers or factory workers (who were hardly educated). In a study conducted in Cross River state of Nigeria, Ajake, Etuk and Omori (2010) discover that environment had considerable influence on adolescents' school achievement. Adolescents from literate homes had better achievements than their counterparts from illiterate homes.

Parents are mainly responsible for the educational and career development of their children. However, divorce and separation of various kinds or death of one spouse may leave the role in the hands of a single parent. Single parenting can be defined as a situation in which one of the two individuals, involved in the conception of the child is responsible for the upbringing of the child. Single parenthood may arise when either the male or female decides to produce and rear a child or children outside wedlock (Ortese, 1998). In Nigeria, the existence of single parents was before now unknown, and where they existed they are ignored as exceptional cases. However, nowadays, single parenting is a fast growing family pattern both inside and outside Nigeria (Nwachukwu, 1998). Although there are no available statistics of single-parent families in Nigeria, practical experience and newspaper reports show that there is increase of single parents in Nigeria. In the

western countries, there is a growing increase in the percentage of adults and children living in single-parent households Nwachukwu (1998). A child from homes where the father and the mother are present will be well taken care of and socialised in the best way possible Ortese (1998). This is due to the fact that the process of socialisation depends on both parents playing complimentary roles in bringing up the child. Such a child is likely to achieve self-actualisation later in life. Children from single-parent homes are likely to suffer deprivation and denial of some rights and opportunities. Animasahun (2011) is of the view that adolescents from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviour and poor academic records. The problem of deprivation of a second parent is bad enough but when the remaining parent cannot cope with the resultant problems, a tragic situation arises. In such a situation, the child becomes a misfit in the society.

The family is the first socialising agent the child comes into contact with. It has a great influence on the child's physical, mental and moral development. The family lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school and the personality that the child takes to school is determined by the home. Also, on the average, children raised by one biological parent fare worse on a host of social and economic measures than children raised by both biological parents (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan 2002). Animasahun (2011) submitted that children from intact-homes are well taken

care of and better socialized, especially in situations where the process of socialisation depends on both parents playing complimentary roles in raising such children; which will definitely impact positively on the latter during school years. On the other hand, children from single parent homes are likely to suffer deprivations and denials of some rights and opportunities that will have negative psycho-socio impact on them in school years. Also, children from broken homes are usually associated with anti-social behaviours and poor academic records possibly because a single parent faces double responsibilities requiring time, attention and money of the parent. Hence, less attention is paid to the psychological well-being and education of the child. Children from single-parent homes are commonly described as more hostile, aggressive, anxious, fearful, hyperactive and distractible than children from intact families Nwachukwu (1998).

Socio economic status (SES) is an economic and sociological variables which combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education and occupation. When analyzing a family's SES, the household income earners' education and occupation are examined, as well as combined income, versus an individual, when their own attributes are assessed (Annette 2003). Socio-economic status is typically broken into three categories, high SES, middle SES, and low SES to describe the three areas a family or an individual may

fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories, any or all of the three variables (income, education, and occupation) can be assessed. Kraus and Keltner (2008) notice that children of parents with high socio economic status tend to express more "disengagement" behaviours than their less fortunate peers. In this context, disengagement behaviours represent actions such as fidgeting with other objects and drawing pictures while being addressed. Other participants born into less favoured circumstances tended to make more eye contact, head nods and signs of happiness when put into an interactive social environment. Authors hypothesized that the more fortuitous peers felt less inclined to gain rapport with their group because they saw no need for their assistance in the future (Kraus & Keltner, 2008),

Furthermore, socio-economic status has been found to play a significant role in adolescent delinquency. According to Uche (1994), children from high socio-economic status parents with adequate income, good occupation and high level life style are likely provided with huge quality private education from nursery up to the university level. Given this opportunity, it is likely that such children will be less delinquent than their counterparts from low socio-economic background. However, from an empirical study by Coughin and Vuchimah (1996), there is a relationship between family socio-economic status and juvenile delinquency. The study reports that female secondary school students from low

economic status parents tend to act out as a result of low level of support from their mother while boys tend to act out as a result of low level parental mentoring. But the study concludes that family structure is not a predictor of juvenile delinquency. Nevertheless, low parental monitoring from either high or low socio-economic status did seem to predict higher drug use (Dishon & Loeber, 1985). Also, Oni (2007) and Omoegun (2007) had averred that there is significant difference between the rates of deviant behaviour among students from high and low socio-economic statuses.

In another study on child rearing style and students' dishonest behaviour by Ajake, Isangedighi and Bisong (2008), child rearing style is a function of family socio economic status. Significant difference existed between respondents from autocratic child rearing family and those from democratic homes in lying, stealing and truancy; in each case, autocratically reared adolescents are more vulnerable to delinquency than their counterparts from democratic rearing style. Again a significant difference existed between adolescents reared under democratic child rearing style and their counterparts reared under the *laissez-faire* rearing style in lying, stealing and truancy. In each case, those who were brought up under the *laissez-faire* families were the more vulnerable.

In a study carried out in Nigeria which aimed at determining the extent to which parents occupational status influences the educational attainment of children, Ojo (1987) found that sixty

percent of 1,327 university students randomly drawn for the study were children of farmers (socio-economically low), 92% were drawn from parents in the senior staff category, 17% were children of traders while 13 % of the students were children of junior staff. His finding was contrary to those of Miner (1986) and Abernethy (1986). He found out that delinquent behaviour was rather exhibited by children from middle class families or high socio-economic group.

Weis (1982) in her study of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status: pattern of access in Ghanaian secondary school found that greater percentage of delinquent behaviour in school was associated with children from rich homes since they were the majority in schools. On the other hand, delinquent behaviour in school was associated with students from poor homes as a result of the spillover from the society where they constituted a larger percentage.

On the basis of the above, three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were formulated in the null form and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from highly and lowly educated parents.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from intact and single parent families.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of

adolescents from low and high socio-economic status family.

Sample and sampling technique

A total of 250 Senior Secondary School students were randomly selected for this research through multistage stratified sampling technique. They were drawn from five local government areas within Ibadan metropolis namely; Ibadan North, Ibadan North East, Ibadan South East, Ibadan North West and Lagelu local government areas. In each of the Local Government areas, a secondary school was selected by balloting. Three were public schools and two were private schools, four of these schools were mixed and one was female only. The adolescents in each of the schools cut across different socio economic status. All adolescents in each school balloted for space in the research. A total of 130 were drawn from lower class, 67 were from middle class while 53 were drawn from high socio-economic class. Therefore, a total of 250 participants were given questionnaires, three were not properly filled leaving the total at 247. Out of this number 99 were males which represents 40.1% and 148 were females which represents 59.9%. The age range was between 13 and 20 years old, while their mean age was 15.6 and Standard Deviation was 1.8.

Instrumentation

The relevant data were collected with the use of Adolescents' Delinquency Behaviour Questionnaire (ADBQ) constructed by the investigators with the assistance of professionals in the area of psychometrics. The inventory is divided

into three sections. Section A contains information on the respondents' personal data. Section B measures the parental socio-economic status of the respondents while section C measures adolescents' anti-social behaviours. It is a 30-item scale constructed on 4-point Likert type, ranging from: (1) Very much unlike me to (4) Very much like me. Examples include: I often engage in physical combat, I cheat in examinations, I can use ammunition to

Results

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from highly & lowly educated parents. The result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: t-test table showing the difference in delinquent behaviour between adolescents from highly and lowly educated parents

CLASS OF VARIABLE	N	X	SD	t-calc	t-crit	Df	TESTED DECISION
HIGHLY EDUCATED PARENTS	164	40.70	2.49	2.32	1.96	245	REJECT H ₀
LOWLY EDUCATED PARENTS	83	43.56	12.53				

P<0.05

As shown in table 1 above, the calculated t is 2.32 which is more than the t-critical of 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from highly and lowly educated parents is rejected. This means there is a significant difference between them. In other words, the mean value of 43.56 recorded on delinquent behaviours among adolescents

fight among colleagues, I injured somebody recently, I have served punishment for stealing and the like. The reliability of ADBI is provided by the result of a test- retest study of sample of 32 using SS2 students was .89.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the participants were analyzed using t- test statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

from lowly educated parents is higher than their counterparts from highly educated parents with a mean of 40.70.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from intact and single parent families. The result is presented in table 2.

Table 2: t-test table showing the difference in delinquent behaviour between adolescents from intact and single parent family

CLASS OF VARIABLE	N	X	SD	t-calc.	t-crit.	Df	TESTED DECISION
INTACT FAMILY	186	39.58	8.70	2.01	1.96	245	REJECT H ₀
SINGLE PARENT FAMILY	61	42.46	11.67				

P<0.05

As shown in table 2, the t-calculated is 2.01 which are more than the t-critical value of 1.96. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. It can therefore be inferred from the results that there is a significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from intact and single parent families. In other words, the mean value of 42.46 recorded on delinquent behaviours among adolescents

from single parent families is higher than their counterparts from intact families with a mean of 39.58.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from low and high socio-economic status family. The result is presented in table 3.

Table 3: t-test table showing the difference in delinquent behaviour between adolescents from low and high socio-economic status parents

CLASS OF VARIABLE	N	X	SD	t-calc	t-crit	Df	TESTED DECISION
HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS PARENTS	164	40.32	9.5	2.32	1.96	245	REJECT H ₀
LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS PARENTS	83	45.51	12.5				

P<0.05

Table 3 shows that the calculated t is 2.32 which is greater than the t-critical of 1.96. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from low and high socio-economic status parents is

therefore rejected. It can therefore, be seen from the result that there is significant difference in the delinquent behaviour between adolescents from low and high socio-economic status. In other words, the mean value of 45.51 recorded on

delinquent behaviours among adolescents from low socio-economic status parents is higher than their counterparts from high socio-economic status with a mean of 40.32.

Discussion:

The first hypothesis, which was tested, was rejected on the premise that there is a significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from lowly and highly educated parents. The mean score of adolescents from lowly educated parents on delinquent behaviour is higher than those from highly educated parents. The advantage that adolescents from highly educated parents have could be due to the education of the parents that afforded them proper monitoring of their children at least, coupled with their wide experience and knowledge. Another reason could be the issue of role modeling whereby the children saw the educational achievements of their parents as a model and would, therefore, concentrate more on their studies rather than engaging in delinquent behaviours. In addition, it is perceived that adequate planning of activities and accessibility to books and educative materials kept the adolescents of educated parents out of being delinquent because, to an extent, they were meaningfully engaged. This finding is in consonance with Gottfredson and Godfredson (1985); Gold (1989) who observe that disorderly schools were associated with students from less educated parents. They maintain that highly educated parents could send their children to the privileged schools that

were less violent and less aggressive. Thus, some manifestations of delinquency such as: aggressive behaviour, truancy, pilfering and the like are more associated with children from less educated homes. Uche (1984) also posits that children of middle and higher class parents are more likely to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them to attain schools than children of poor labourers and factory workers who ended up more as delinquents as compared to their counterparts from highly educated parents.

The second hypothesis was rejected through the result of the findings which show that there was a significant difference in delinquent behaviour of adolescents from intact and single parent families. Adolescents from single family parents scored higher on delinquency scale than their counterparts from intact families as evident in the mean scores. This could be traced to the fact that most of the single parents are women, and when children advance to certain age, especially the age of adolescence, women may no longer have control over them or punish them anyhow. These kinds of adolescents take instructions from outside, especially from their peers who influence them into engaging in delinquency. This finding corroborates the study of McLeod and Shanahan (1996) which examine the relationship between single parents and their children misbehaviours. It is discovered that income and perceived economic stress significantly increased the level of anxiety in the mother which in turn reduced the level of nurturance she

exhibited towards her children in preventing anti-social behaviours.

Finally, findings on the third hypothesis reveal that there is a significant difference in the delinquent behaviour of adolescents from high and low socio-economic status parents. The adolescents from low socio-economic background score higher on delinquent behaviour ratings than their counterparts from high socio-economic status parents. Reasons for this may not be farfetched. Children generally hate poverty, especially as they grow up to find the differences in various kinds of parents. They want to be like their peers from rich background, and therefore engage in delinquency to acquire or achieve their desire. This agrees with the study carried out by Sampson and Laub (1994) that base their measures of economic stress on average weekly income and the reliance on outside aids as measured by the job cadre of the parents. Their findings saw family economic stress positively correlated with delinquency among the young ones.

Recommendations

This research has the following recommendations to make based on the findings. These recommendations if properly implemented will be of great help to the: adolescents, society, parents, social agencies, counselling psychologists, teachers and all the stakeholders in preventing this menace. The first recommendation is that parents and the society should be enlightened on the behavioural activities of their children, especially, during adolescence period.

This will enable the parents and the society to put them on the right course. Secondly, the social agencies such as school, youth and religious agencies should constantly teach and organize sound moral doctrine training and sex education programmes which will enable the adolescents to have deeper knowledge of the consequences of their anti-social behaviour. Also, the adolescent stage is characterized by restiveness. Efforts should, therefore, be made by the governmental agency concerned with youth welfare to re-channel this restiveness towards sporting activities and the likes. Lastly, Teachers and Guidance-Counsellors should not relent in their efforts in contributing to the proper upbringing of the adolescents in their care; and parents should consider it a joint effort in nurturing their children.

Limitations

The study has some limitations which would be an advantage for future researchers to work on. This begins with the sample size which is considered to be small and thus jeopardizing the wide generalization of the results obtained. Also, the number of variables considered in this study is small. More variables responsible for adolescent's delinquency should be considered, whereby multiple regression analysis could be used to find out the joint as well as relative contributions of the various independent variables to the prediction of adolescent delinquency.

Conclusion

The study purported to find out the comparative analysis of delinquent behaviour on the basis of parental educational, background, single parenthood and socio-economic status of in-school adolescents in Ibadan. The obtained results reveal that adolescents from lowly educated parents are more delinquent than their counterparts from

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