

Family Background and Deviant Behaviour among Secondary School Students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated the influence of family background and deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone of in Cross River State, Nigeria. To carry out this investigation, two research questions were raised to guide the study and two corresponding hypotheses were formulated and tested. Literature was reviewed based on the sub-variables of the independent variable in relation to the dependent variable. Ex-post facto research design a sample of 567 SSII students was used. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Data collection was by the use of research questionnaire titled: “Family Background-Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire” (FB-DBQ). The instrument was subjected to face and construct validity by experts in Counseling and Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability estimate was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability method which yielded an overall index of 0.77. The hypotheses were tested at 0.5 levels of significance using the independent-test statistical technique. The results revealed that family size significantly influences deviant behaviour among secondary school students. While the result for hypothesis two showed no significant influence on family structure and deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The study recommended among others that Families should have number of children they can cater for to prevent student’s vulnerability to deviant behaviour.

Introduction

For many years, education stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, government, parents and students themselves have witnessed increased manifestation of deviants’ behaviour as observed among secondary school students in Nigeria. The present researcher had also observed an increase in various types of deviant behaviour which used to be rarely heard of and this display of deviant behaviour is fast assuming a normal behaviour among secondary school students. As observed by Park (2013), deviancy in adolescents has assumed a very high percentage in various aspects which is really getting out of hand to education stakeholders and other organs which have the responsibility of handling issues as such. Also Onyewadume (2004) decried that many Nigerians have become worried about the trend of deviancy in our schools.

Deviant behaviour can be considered as a behavioral disposition which is not in line with the school rules and regulations and also not in accordance with the norms and ideals of a particular society. Among secondary school students in the study area, deviant behaviour which are also referred to be school offences include stealing, fighting, dishonesty, destruction of school properties, disobedience to school authority, truancy, assault, insult, carrying weapons, sexual indulgence and aggression. For example, some students engage in aggressive behaviour toward fellow students and teachers thereby causing uneasiness among fellow students and teachers. Consequently, the present researcher observed that the tendency towards deviant behaviour among secondary school students in the study area has continued to perplex education stakeholders and make them restive. Therefore if nothing is done to stop deviant activities in secondary school, the lives of other students, principals, teachers and those outside the school environment are in danger. For instance, students who engage in sexual related offences leading to unwanted pregnancy may collude with the accomplice to commit abortion. Problems arising from use of quack or unsafe means may result to the female losing her womb amidst other complications. Other consequences of deviant activities like truancy, disobedience and stealing include punishment from the school authority. And when student are continually serving punishment especially during school hours, they would miss out on lessons taught in the classroom. As a result, such students perform poorly and this may hinder their educational progress in life. According to Chee-Leong (2006) students engaged in deviant activities always lack concentration, good self-esteem and perform poorly in tests and examinations leading to school dropout. The consequences are many and too costly to bear. For example, the goal of secondary school education for the Nigerian society is already being thwarted if the products are allowed to be deviant. Therefore, the search for solution to this problem prompted this study.

To solve the problem of deviant behaviour among students in the study area, numerous efforts have been and continually being expended. In response to the challenges posed by students' deviant behaviour, guidance counsellors have been deployed to public schools in the state to help schools handle students' educational, vocational and personal-social problems. More teachers are being trained to equally assist as teacher-counsellors in order to help discipline students by so doing nip in the bud the problem of deviancy in secondary schools. Workshops, seminars, and symposia are ongoing efforts to equip school principals and teachers with professional knowledge and skills that will enable them manage the phenomenon. Also still in the quest to find solution to the problem, the government, as part of its transformation agenda and in keeping with the yearnings of the education stakeholders, directed that all public schools must close at 2.00pm instead of 4.00pm daily in order to enable parents and families spend quality time with their children. Despite the efforts so far made by government students still engage in deviant behaviour. Schools on their part have organized seminars enrichment activities, counselling sessions in order to help students rethink on their negative behaviour. Disciplinary measures employed by school administrators include parents signing an undertaking for good behaviour by students, corporal punishment, suspension and expulsion, with the view to checking deviant behaviour among students in the study area. Still, deviant behaviour remains among students.

From the foregoing and in reflecting on government desire, parents and families ought to spend quality time with their children as this could help in having greater control over the children's daily lifestyle. The opinion of the present researcher is that home could play a key role

in the development of deviant behaviour in students, which they manifest in the school environment. Isangedighi (2007) noted that the care and love which should make a lot of impact in the developmental process of the child is lacking in many families. The study noted that children come from different families therefore family background variables could exert some influences that may aid or hinder development of deviant behaviour in the students. Denga (2000) said that a child ought to be trained at home before taking the child to school. Christie, Petrie and Christie (1999) observed that families can provide a ground against deviant behaviour. These observations justify the study's search light on some family background variables which includes family type, family size, family structure, and family location with the view to examine its influence on student deviant behaviour.

Family size refers to the number of children parents have which could interfere with effective socialization of the children. Goodluck (2013), Hurlock (2002), and Ali (2013), in a study on deviant behaviour among students in Port Harcourt, River State, sampled 300 students of two equal groups. The independent t-test statistics was used and it was revealed that there exist no significant difference between the two groups on their deviant behaviour. The researcher noted that deviant behaviour is not as a result of family size influence but gender. Doherty in Ali (2013), conducted a study and found a correlation between family size and student academic outcome and deviant behaviour among students. Doherty explained that since children from large families are faced with the responsibility of upbringing of their younger siblings, they have less time for academic pursuit. More so, since these children are often times stressed due to diverse pressure ranging from small financial resources, unconducive family environment, reduced parental care tend to predispose them to negative behaviour which the current study also confirmed. On the other hand, children from smaller families receive better parental care, have comfortable family environment and as such are less prone to deviancy.

Family structure refers to how the family is constituted. It could either be intact (that is, children live with both parents) or broken (that is children live with either of the parents or relatives). As a result one expects that there would be differences in experiences in those different home structures. Douglas (2004) those children from divorced families especially the ones handled by female parents are highly involved in negative sexual behaviour. The researcher reasoned that most female parents are so liberal in the way they handle their children and as such the children have a lot of freedom to behave as they like; eventually get involved in deviant behaviour like stealing, fighting, truancy and aggression. Price and Kunz (2003) in their 72 studies involving divorce and juvenile misconduct discovered that there is a high rate of delinquency among children brought up from divorced homes as compared to children brought up from intact homes. Conanor and Philips (2002) observed that the contributing factor affecting delinquency in the home is the absence of a father. Nkhata and Mwale (2016) opined that students who were more prone to deviant acts came from single parent families as compared to those who came from intact homes. Based on the variables above, the researcher desires to see to the elimination of deviant activities in the Education Zone of Calabar in Cross River State.

Statement of the problem

Recently, in our society, majority of secondary school students have shown unacceptable behaviour which is not in line with the norms and standards of the schools and ideals of the society. Some education stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, government, parents and students themselves have expressed concern over deviant behaviour exhibited by secondary school students.

Deviant behaviour constitutes those school offences such as stealing, fighting, truancy, aggressive attacks on others, assault, insult, drug offences, sex-related offences, disobedience, among others. The negative consequence of these activities affects not only the students but also the education stakeholders. Therefore, the phenomenon continue to perplex all and sundry and making all restive. Many factors ranging from attitudinal variables to family background variables have been identified in the literature as factors influencing students' deviant behaviour, as such efforts have been set in that direction in the quest to curb this challenge. Several efforts have been made by government and the school authorities in order to have the problem nipped in the bud. Despite the efforts, students deviant behaviour still persist in Calabar Education Zone as read, witnessed and heard through newspapers, reports by significant persons in schools and Cross River TV and radio broadcast. Perhaps these efforts have not been directed toward the right direction. Based on this, the present study in line with some observations that the family background has enormous role to play in children socialization, decided to point its searchlight on family background variables which includes family size and family structure.

The question arising from the researcher's observation is how are students' deviant behaviour in schools in the Educational Zone of Calabar in Cross River State influenced by family background variables such as family size and family structure?

Purpose of the study

This study is purposed to investigate family background and deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed at investigating the influence of family size and family structure on deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Research questions

The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. How does family size influence deviant behaviour among secondary school students?
2. How does family structure influence deviant behaviour among secondary school students?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide this study:

1. Family size does not have any significant influence on deviant behaviour among secondary school students.
2. Family structure does not have any significant influence on deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Research methodology

The ex-post facto design was used for the research. Isangedighi, Asim and Joshua (2004) see this design to be an empirical inquiry where the researchers have no control over the independent variables because their manifestation had already taken place or because they cannot be manipulated. Therefore, the design is most appropriate for this study because the independent variable and the dependent variable as at the time of investigation had already occurred. Family background variables like family size, and family structure has already exerted its influence on students' deviant behaviour and as such the researcher who had no control over what had already occurred adopted this design.

The study population is consisting of SSS II students in 2015/2016 academic session in public schools in the Education Zone of Calabar in Cross River State, Nigeria. There are a total of 81 public secondary schools and a population of 5,341 students comprising 2,679 males and 2,662 females. The technique used was the stratified sampling technique. The choice of this sampling procedure was because it permitted adequate representation of the respondents according to the local government areas, number of schools and sex.

The instrument for data collection was 10 items questionnaire titled "Family Background-Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire" (FB-DBQ). The questionnaire was constructed by the researcher under the guidance of experts. The questionnaire has two sections. Section one, information elicited was on respondent demography such as sex, age, class, school type and family location. Section two, information elicited was on respondent deviant behaviour with regard to stealing, truancy, aggression and fighting respectively. Section two is a four point Likert type scale with four alternative responses such as; strongly Agreed (SA) Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Disagreed (D). The least possible total score a respondent could make for each subsection was four while the highest possible total score was sixteen. The items were scored in decreasing order or increasing order of magnitude depending whether the item is positively worded or negatively worded respectively. Decreasing order had Strongly Agreed (4 points), Agreed (3 points), Strongly Disagreed (2 points) and Disagreed (1 point) while increasing order had Strongly Agreed (1 point), Agreed (2 points), Strongly Disagreed (3 points) and Disagreed (4 points).

Results

The results were presented using tables. Data analysis was done to test the hypotheses after being re-stated. Hypotheses in the study were tested at 0.05 levels of significances in each of the component of deviance.

Hypothesis one:

Family size does not significantly influence deviant behaviour among student. The independent variable was family size (1 to 4 and above 4), and the dependent variable was deviant behaviour in terms of stealing, fighting, truancy and aggression.

TABLE 1

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of family size on each component of deviant behaviour among secondary school students (N= 567)

Variables	Groups	N	X	SD	t-values	p-level
Stealing	Below 4	345	10.70	2.479	-4.357	.000
	4 and above	222	11.71	3.000		
Fighting	Below 4	345	10.64	2.032	-4.508	.000
	4 and above	222	11.56	2.851		
Truancy	Below 4	345	10.33	2.538	-5.440	.000
	4 and above	222	11.62	3.056		
Aggression	Below 4	345	9.83	1.873	-6.632	.000
	4 and above	222	11.16	2.888		
Overall	Below 4	345	41.50	7.458	-5.885	.000
	4 and above	222	46.05	10.946		

Significant at $p < .05$, $df = 565$, Critical $t = 1.96$, $N = 567$

The result in table 1 revealed that the overall t-value of -5.885 as calculated had a very high value as compared to the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 levels of significances with 565 degrees of freedom. Following this outcome, the null hypothesis was rejected. The hypothesis states that deviant behaviour is not significantly influenced by family size. Thus, implying that deviant behaviour observed in students is significantly influenced by family size. However, the components of deviant behaviour in terms of stealing, fighting, truancy and aggression revealed the calculated t-values of -4.357, -4.508, -5.440 and -6.632 respectively ($p > 0.05$). The result indicated that family size significantly influence all components of deviant behaviour.

Hypothesis two:

Family structure has no influence significant on deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The independent variable was family structure categorized as (broken and intact) and the dependent variable was deviant behaviour. In testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance, the Independent t-test was utilized with data analysis shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of family structure on the components of deviant behaviour among secondary school students ($N = 567$)

Variables	Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	p-level
Stealing	Intact	378	10.89	2.567	-2.606	.009
	Broken	189	11.52	3.013		
Fighting	Intact	378	10.69	2.239	-4.441	.000
	Broken	189	11.63	2.660		
Truancy	Intact	378	10.57	2.671	-3.205	.001
	Broken	189	11.37	3.037		
Aggression	Intact	378	10.06	2.129	-4.072	.000
	Broken	189	10.93	2.810		
Overall	Intact	378	42.21	8.300	-3.981	.000
	Broken	189	45.44	10.599		

* Significant at .05 level, critical $t = 1.96$, $df = 565$.

Results in table 2 revealed the overall calculated t-value of -3.981 ($p < 0.05$) with 565 degrees of freedom and the critical t-value of 1.96. It was observed that the t-value as calculated was higher

than the critical t-value. Hence, since the t-value that was calculated is higher than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis that family structure has no influence that is significant on deviant behaviour among students was rejected. Results of the components of deviant behaviour in terms of stealing, fighting, truancy and aggression further revealed the calculated t-values of -2.606, -4.441, -3.205 and -4.072 respectively ($p > 0.05$). The result goes to show that family structures significantly influence all components of deviant behaviour.

Discussion of the finding

Results obtained from analysis are discussed in consonance with the variables of the study.

Family size and deviant behaviour observed in secondary school students

Deviant behaviour observed in students is significantly influenced by family size. The finding of this study agrees with that of Doherty in Ali (2013), who conducted a study and found a correlation between family size and student academic outcome and deviant behaviour among students. Doherty explained that since children from large families are faced with the responsibility of upbringing of their younger siblings, they have less time for academic pursuit. More so, since these children are often times stressed due to diverse pressure ranging from small financial resources, uncondusive family environment, reduced parental care tend to predispose them to negative behaviour which the current study also confirmed. On the other hand, children from smaller families receive better parental care, have comfortable family environment and as much are less prone to deviancy. This fact was evident in the mean values of the two categories of family size in the analysis of data. However there were other studies that found in the contrary that family size does not influence deviant behaviour. Example of such studies were that of Goodluck (2013), Hurlock (2008), Ali (2013), who all found in their studies that family size has no influence that is significant on deviant behaviour but the researcher from the evidence of the data analysis concluded that large family size is a risk factor in terms of lack of control which might lead to undue freedom predisposing children to deviant behaviour and cautioned here that parents should have the number of children they can care for.

Family structure and deviant behaviour among secondary school student

Significantly, the outcome of result on the variables of this study shows that there is influence of family structure in terms of broken or intact on deviant behaviour among secondary school students. During the field work, the researcher observed that students from broken homes tend to be aggressive in behaviour and as such were engaged in fighting, truancy, using abusive languages on fellow students and teachers; while the students who are from intact homes are better behaved. What transpired at home between both parents shows that both parents have respect for each other and understanding. The result tallies with that of Douglas (2004) those children from divorced families especially the ones handled by female parents are highly involved in negative sexual behaviour. The researcher reasoned that most female parents are so liberal in the way they handle their children and as such the children have a lot of freedom to behave as they like; eventually get involved in deviant behaviour like stealing, fighting, truancy and aggression. The finding is in line with the views of Nkhata and Mwale (2016) that students who were more prone to deviant acts came from single parent families as compared to those who came from intact homes. The reason for this deviant act according to them is the students' lack of adequate support from parents.

Price and Kunz (2003) found that children from divorced homes (broken homes) have higher rate of deviant behaviour like general delinquency, theft and crime against persons among

other offences. In support of the above observation Conanor and Philip (2002) concluded that the most important factor that led children to deviant activities is the absence of a father in the home. This implies that deviant behaviour is prevalent among children living with either parents or particularly those who live in homes without father.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the of findings from the study, the researcher posits that: family size which is below 4 and above 4, and family structure which connote intact and broken home, significantly influence deviant behaviour observed in secondary school students. It could also be inferred that from the study that most family related variables as individually considered in the study directly or indirectly influence students in the way they behave, react and handle situations as individuals.

Recommendations

Below are the recommendations made based on the findings of the research:

1. Families are advised to have children they can cater for to prevent student's vulnerability to deviant behaviour.
2. Would be parents should plan toward a monogamous family which has been found to provide children and teenagers the needed protection form vices that could make them vulnerable to deviant behaviour.
3. Parents or families should ensure to maintain a united home which can foster the needed conducive atmosphere for their teenagers to develop acceptable behaviour instead of deviant behaviour.

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