INVESTIGATION OF SOME FACTORS PROMOTING DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigated factors promoting deviant behaviour among public secondary school students in Rivers state. The study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses. Sample of 300 students were drawn through simple random sampling technique from three secondary schools in Obio Akpor LGA. Data was collected through questionnaire titled "Factors Promoting Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire" (FPDBQ) developed by the researchers. Reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained through test re-test. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The results revealed that poor family background, media and societal influence promote deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The study recommended that family counselling should be taken seriously by all practicing counsellors in Nigeria and parents should regulate what their children watch on televisions and cables.*

KEYWORDS: Deviant, Behaviour, Student.

INTRODUCTION

Deviant behaviours among secondary school children have been on the increase over the years. There seem to be emergence of new obnoxious behaviours now than what it used to be. The researchers have also observed that good number of secondary school students especially in Rivers state belong to one cult or another hence the incessant violence and fight in most public secondary schools. Hastings and Thomas, (2009) defined deviant behaviour as any behaviour that is recognized as violating expected rules and norms. It is a behaviour that departs significantly from social expectations (Akers, & Sellers, 2004). Social deviance means those behaviours or characteristics that violate significant social norms and expectations and are abhorred by a large number of people. We can also look at deviance simply as those behaviours that breach commonly held norms, values and expectations of a society. Andersen and Taylor (2009) stated that those that depart from conventional norms are called deviants. In a related development, Steven (2013) opined that deviance is seen by lots of people as a bad behaviour because it constitute a social problem. This is because deviant behaviour affects the smooth flow of social interaction and impairs social organization. Some deviant behaviours briefly reviewed in this study include lying, bullying and fighting.

Lying is the act or practice of telling or speaking falsehood. It is an act which when repeated often becomes a habit. Quite often, lying is resorted to as a cover up for some misdeeds or prank. Possible reasons why school children engage in lying as identified by Edo-Olotu (2006) include avoiding a painful experience, to avoid undesirable consequence for one's action or punishment for homework not done, afraid of parents or teachers' reaction to a given situation. Some use it as tool to deceive while others use it as a cover up. Bullying on the other hand is

defined as deliberate and repeated hurtful act, word or behaviour such as name calling, threatening or shouting at someone. These unpleasant and unacceptable acts are usually unprovoked. The bully is usually physically stronger than the victim. Bullying is a bad habit that some student indulges in at the expense of their mates. It breeds fear in the innocent students which can affect their academic performance negatively. Ekechukwu (2009) identified various types of bullying to include physical such as punching, beating, biting, and strangling. It may be verbal and this includes acts such as hurtful name-calling, teasing and gossip. It may be emotional in nature as rejection, terrorizing, ethnic affronts, isolation, ostracizing, manipulation and peer pressure. It could be sexual like sexual propositioning, sexual harassment and assault. Fighting is the act of expressing ones anger through the use of fist, weapon and other violence means. Teens who are frequently involved in fight often do not know how to control their anger or how to prevent or avoid conflict. Others who are predisposed will get into fighting easily. They always believe that fighting is the acceptable solution.

Researchers have attributed the causes of deviant behaviour in secondary schools to students' poor family backgrounds, effects of mass media and societal pressure/influence. Echebe (2010) asserted that students who come from abusive parents display characteristics of abusive persons. Such children for instance end up beating their fellow playmates without feeling any kind of remorse. On the other hand, students brought up by uncaring parents usually portray delinquent behaviours (Simourd, & Andrews 1994). They resort to criminal activities to achieve what they could not get from their parents. Charon (2007) is of the view that such students take part in criminal activities such as stealing, rioting/rebellion among others. In the same vein, mass media has a negative effect on school children, more specifically the violent content that are aired in the television or in cinemas. It is believed that children believe what they see in the media more than what happens in the real life (Dibia & Nicholas 2017). Secondary school children who watch too many fights in the television or read pornographic materials on the internet begin to develop certain characteristics that affect the people around them negatively. The society also models the behaviour of people. The attitude that other people have concerning their fellow human race leads to rebellion from the marginalized groups. Such people who are neglected by the society, and whose needs are not looked into by the people in authority end up engaging in activities or behaviour that contradicts the requirements of the society. Frustration from these is now being expressed through hostage-taking, vandalism and kidnapping (Nicholas, Ubani & Amadi-Wali 2015). The school learning environment is a place where children go to get education and to learn all sorts of good mannerism. It however turns out that children get negatively affected by their fellow children in school. Some develop deviant behaviors after watching the way their peer behaves (Hartl,; Monnelly, & Elderkin, 2012).

This study basically anchored on two theories – Psychoanalytic and Cognitive developmental theories. Psychoanalytic theory, which was developed by Sigmund Freud, states that all humans have natural drives and urges that are repressed in the unconscious. Additionally, all humans have criminal tendencies. These tendencies are curbed, however, through the process of socialization. A child that is improperly socialized could develop a personality disturbance that causes him or her to direct anti-social impulses either inward or outward. Those who direct them inward become neurotic while those that direct them outward become criminal. On the other hand, cognitive development theory states that deviant behaviour results from the way in which individuals organize their thoughts around morality and the law. There are three levels of moral reasoning according to Lawrence Kohlberg, a developmental psychologist. During

the first stage, called the pre-conventional stage, which is reached during middle childhood, moral reasoning is based on obedience and avoiding punishment. The second level is called the conventional level and is reached at the end of middle childhood. During this stage, moral reasoning is based on the expectations that the child's family and significant others have for him or her. The third level of moral reasoning, the post-conventional level, is reached during early adulthood at which point individuals are able to go beyond social conventions. That is, they value the laws of the social system. People who do not progress through these stages may become stuck in their moral development and as a result become deviants or criminals (Macionis, & Gerber, 2011; Murray, 1998).

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does family background promote deviant behaviour among   public secondary school students in Rivers state?

2. How do media promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students in Rivers state?

3. How does societal pressure/influence promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students in Rivers state?

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H_{01}: Poor family background does not significantly promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students in Rivers state.

H_{02}: Media does not significantly promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students in Rivers state.

H_{03}: Societal pressure/influence does not significantly promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students in Rivers state.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Nwankwo (2013) stated than a descriptive survey research design is a plan, structure and strategy that an investigator adopts in order to obtain solution to research problems using questionnaire in collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data. The design was considered suitable since the study obtained data through the use of questionnaire. The study was carried out in Obio Akpor local government area of Rivers state. The area is appropriate for the study because there are fourteen senior secondary schools owned by the government in the L.G.A. This information was obtained from Rivers state Senior Secondary School Board. The population of the study covers all the students in the fourteen senior secondary schools but only 300 students formed the sample size. 100 students each were drawn from three secondary schools through simply random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was 30 items questionnaire titled: Factors Promoting Deviant Bahaviour Questionnaire (FPDBQ). The questionnaire was developed by the researchers through relevant literatures reviewed. The items had 4- point scale of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed, with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2, and 1. The instrument was validated by two experts in the Department of Educational Psychology,

Guidance and counselling, University of Port Harcourt and Department of Psychology and Counselling, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia state. Their corrections were integrated into the final version of the instrument. Split half technique and Cronbach Alfa reliability method were adopted to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A Cronbach Alfa coefficient of 0.89 was obtained. Three hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents, but two hundred and eighty six were returned and analyzed. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The average mean of 2.50 was used for decision-making. Any item with a mean rating of 2.50 and above were regarded as a factor that is capable of promoting deviant behaviour while those with the mean of less than 2.50 was regarded as not being able to promote deviant behaviour. Any item with a standard deviation of 0.00 and t-critical above 1.96 indicated that the respondents were not far from the mean and the opinion of one another. The hypothesis of no significance deference was upheld for any item whose t-calculated value was less than t-table value at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Mean standard deviation and t-test analysis of how poor family background promotes deviant behaviour.

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	t-cal	Remarks	
1.	Children who live in shanty places easily learn bad behaviour.	2.90	0.58	2.09	AC	S
2.	Children from homes where parents fight will likely learn to fight.	3.12	0.90	1.98	AC	S
3.	Fathers who are always drunk will influence their children negatively.	3.21	0.44	3.01	AC	S
4.	Children will develop good habits if the home is conducive	3.11	0.61	2.03	AC	S
5.	Those children who hawk in the parks, mechanic workshops etc will develop good character than others who do not.	3.31	0.51	0.36	RJ	NS
6.	Well behaved parents will influence their children behaviour positively.	3.24	0.56	2.02	AC	S
7.	Basic morals are learnt at home and female students learn much from their mothers.	3.01	0.47	1.99	AC	S
8.	Behaviour of every kind- good, bad etc. begins from the home.	3.74	1.03	2.62	AC	S
9.	Those students whose parents care for will always have good conduct.	2.53	0.34	3.04	AC	S
10.	Bad behaviour can also be inherited from parents who possess them.	3.48	0.74	1.97	AC	S

X=mean, SD=standard deviation, t-cal= t-calculated, t-critical=1.96, AC= accepted, S= significant and NS= not significant. The data in table 1 revealed that the mean of the 10 items

ranged from 3.74 to 2.53. This showed that all the items had a mean value above the cutoff point of 2.50. The table also revealed that all the items had their standard deviation ranged from 1.03 to 0.34; this showed that the respondents were not far from one another in their responses. The result of the test of hypothesis in table 1 indicated that each of the items but one had its calculated t-value higher than the table value of 1.96. This revealed that poor family background significantly promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students. Therefore, the hypothesis that poor family background does not significantly promote deviant behaviour is rejected.

Mean standard deviation and t-test analysis of how media promotes deviant behaviour.

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	t-cal	Remarks	
1.	A lot of bahaviour been exhibited by students is TV influenced.	2.72	0.70	2.01	AC	S
2.	Children like to practice what they watch in the television.	3.62	0.83	3.08	AC	S
3.	Every TV programme has something to teach children either good or bad.	2.91	0.62	2.06	AC	S
4.	Some students read pornographic materials in school.	4.09	1.07	1.99	AC	S
5.	Those children who watch war films, may develop over time violent attitude towards others.	2.81	0.41	2.09	AC	S
6.	Most parents are not able to control what children watch.	4.14	0.70	2.47	AC	S
7.	Some homes look like cinema house as a result of the kind of things they watch in the house.	3.41	0.32	2.50	AC	S
8.	Things students read can influence them negatively.	2.61	0.23	3.77	AC	S
9.	Most of the female dresses that exposes their sensitive parts are learnt from TV.	2.93	0.44	3.51	AC	S
10.	Internet has become another thing that is teaching students all sorts of things.	3.91	0.40	2.02	AC	S

X=mean, SD=standard deviation, t-cal= t-calculated, t-critical=1.96, AC= accepted, S= significant and NS= not significant. The data in table 2 revealed that the mean of the 10 items ranged from 4.14 to 2.61. This showed that all the items had a mean value above the cutoff point of 2.50. The table also revealed that all the items had their standard deviation ranged from 1.07 to 0.23; this showed that the respondents were not far from one another in their responses. The result of the test of hypothesis in table 2 indicated that each of the items had its calculated t-value higher than the table value of 1.96. This revealed that media significantly promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students. Therefore, the hypothesis that media does not significantly promote deviant behaviour is rejected.

Mean standard deviation and t-test analysis of how societal pressure/influence promotes deviant behaviour.

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	t-cal	Remarks	
1.	The pressure to look like others have made most students engage in bad behaviour.	3.20	0.55	1.97	AC	S
2.	Some students have so influence their mates to the point that they compromised.	2.50	0.69	1.98	AC	S
3.	Some students learn bad character from their friends in the school.	2.87	0.50	2.42	AC	S
4.	It is possible to learn stealing and fighting from the school.	2.90	0.57	2.00	AC	S
5.	Our environment has negatively changed the attitude of some students towards cultural norms.	2.91	0.70	2.63	AC	S
6.	Good number of students now engages in gambling because their friends do it.	2.54	0.66	2.02	AC	S
7.	Some secondary school students in Rivers state are involved in cultism so much that teachers now fear them.	2.71	0.91	1.96	AC	S
8.	Adult students in secondary schools influence negatively the younger ones.	2.60	0.63	3.01	AC	S
9.	Intake of Indian hemp in our environment is no more secret and boys are joining.	2.93	0.44	3.51	AC	S
10.	I cannot do without my friends no matter their behaviour.	2.41	0.40	1.02	AC	S

X=mean, SD=standard deviation, t-cal= t-calculated, t-critical=1.96, AC= accepted, S= significant and NS= not significant. The data in table 3 revealed that the mean of the 10 items ranged from 3.20 to 2.41. This showed that all the items but one had a mean value above the cutoff point of 2.50. With the grand mean, the item with less than 2.50 is covered. The table also revealed that all the items had their standard deviation ranged from 0.91 to 0.40; this showed that the respondents were not far from one another in their responses. The result of the test of hypothesis in table 3 indicated that nine of the items had its calculated t-value higher than the table value of 1.96. This revealed that societal pressure/influence significantly promote deviant behaviour among public secondary school students. Therefore, the hypothesis that societal pressure/influence does not significantly promote deviant behaviour is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The result of the study in table 1 revealed that poor family background promotes deviant behaviour among public secondary school students in Rivers state. Responses from items like living in shanty places, homes where parents fight, home where the father is a drunkard which makes up poor family background were strong indications that the variable under investigation promotes deviant behaviour. This result is corroborated by the findings of Echebe (2010) who investigated the effect of broken home on the child and found that children from abusive homes

develop such characteristics and behaviour. This result implies that if the home is conducive for the child upbringing, the prevalence of deviant behaviour in our society will reduce.

The result of the study in table 2 showed that media promotes deviant behaviour among public secondary schools in Rivers state. This can be deduced from the responses on the items that tested how media promote deviance. This result is in tandem with the findings of Dibia and Nicholas (2017); Farrington and Jolliffe (2004) that investigated how media influence indecent dressing among female undergraduate students and found out that indecent dressing is catalyzed by the nude pictures that is constantly aired in the televisions without control. Again we can conclude that media has influenced deviant behaviour than any other variables.

The result of the study in table 3 revealed that societal pressure/influence has greatly promoted deviant behaviour. This can be ascertained from the responses of the students. This result is in agreement with the findings of Nicholas, Ubani and Amadi-Wali (2015) that examined the factors responsible for youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region and found out that environmental factor is responsible for the mayhem. It is pertinent to state here that societal influence has promoted deviant behaviour greatly (Lykken, 1995).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers have provided adequate information on the subject matter. It is pertinent to point out that deviant behaviours have become a global challenge that is capable of destroying the world. The rate at which norms and societal rules are being violated by youths is an indication that if nothing serious is done now, the future will be very bleak (Haggbloom, 2002). Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made for immediate attention by those who are concerned with this ugly situation:

- Family counselling should be taken seriously by all practicing counsellors in Nigeria as this will provide opportunity for parents to learn how to handle and manage their children and the entire home.

- Parents should regulate what their children watch on televisions and cables as many negative things are being aired.

- Government should enact laws against deviant behaviours in our secondary school. This may deter students from getting involved in a behaviour that will ruin their academic pursuit.

- Any student who is found trying to recruit others into what is not acceptable by the society should be expelled from the school with immediate effect.

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