

**SOCIAL FACTORS AND DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABA EDUCATION ZONE,
ABIA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study was carried out to examine influence of social factors on deviant behavior tendencies of secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State. In order to achieve this purpose, three research questions were raised and three corresponding hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The population of the study comprised all the 10,500 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students during 2019/2020 academic year in the 63 public secondary schools in Aba Education Zone. The sample for the study was 300 Senior Secondary Two students in Aba Education Zone in 2019/2020 school session. Simple random sampling technique was used for this selection. A researcher-made instrument known as a "Social Factors and Deviant Behaviour Tendencies among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (SFDBTSSSQ)" was used for the study. t-test was used for testing the hypotheses formulated at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that, there is significant influence of gender, peer pressure as well as religious commitment on deviant behaviour tendencies of secondary school students. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that social factors influenced deviant behavior tendencies of secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State. It was recommended among others that parents should pay more attention to their male children. This will help them to understand their characteristics

and how to caution them.

Keywords: *School Factors, Deviant Behaviour, Secondary School.*

Introduction

One of the agents of socialization that has the responsibility of training people to develop skilled man-power for the benefits of the citizens and the society at large is the school. The school is faced with the problem of deviant and inappropriate behaviour tendencies among students. This problem manifests itself in the quality of school leavers and future leaders which the school produces. The deviant and improper behavior amongst students include but not limited to lateness or complete absent from school, rudeness, truancy, disobedient to school authorities, insubordination and indulgence in the examination malpractices. In the long run, this group of students may become adults who lack commitment, decency and dedication to their work, who are prone to absenteeism, lateness to work, unacceptable economic and social activities, neglect of duty, and parents who feel less concerned about their children.

Insubordination and inadequate behavior results to indiscipline, immoral behavior disorderliness and serve as a great source of social vices in the society. It is a dent on children's psychological adjustment and it impact negatively on their social development. It can also destabilize the school climate and flow of learning processes. Adolescents formed the greater number of students at secondary level of education and in trying to explore their world and express their perceive freedom they end up exhibiting behaviours that are not consistent with the societal norms and values. Ikediahi and Akande (2015).

Over the years, studies by Agbaje, (2010), Allen, P., McGarland, M. and Elhaney, M.C. (2005), Mobarake (2015), and Ebeunuwa-Okoh and Ugoji (2015) have shown that some influential factors of improper and inadequate behaviours such as physiological, sociological and psychological factors have been identified as factors that influences deviant behaviours among school adolescents. This current study focuses on social factors which include gender, peer pressure as well as religious commitment as influential variables of deviant behaviour tendencies among secondary school students.

Gender as a social concept that refers to the social and cultural differences a society assigns to people based on their biological make-up Child (2002) in

Ibia (2010). In other words, it refers to the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are created in families, societies and cultures as well as the expectations held about the characteristics, attitudes and behaviours of both the male and female. Aryana (2010) stated that adolescent boys and girls exhibit differences in behavioural patterns regarding their relationship with peers and that the females are more influenced by peer's relations than males.

Gender is a social construct which Ibia (2010), refers to as the social, political, economical, religious, cultural attributes, classifications and opportunities, associated with the concept of male and female. In some societies all over the world men and women have different domain of activities they undertake which give them access to control of resources as well as participation in decision-making. Gender as captured in Akpan (2014) is described as the socio-cultural dimensions of being male or female. Also, gender is distinguished from sex, which involves the biological dimensions of being female or male (Santrock, 2011). Santrock stated that the role expectation and social behaviours ascribed by culture and societies to distinguish between male and female is what is called gender. In other words, gender is the roles and social expectations that prescribed how males and females are expected to think, feel and act in a given culture or society.

Peers refers to social or age grade. School mates can also be referred to as peers. They play important roles in the psychological and social development of most adolescents (Onyejiaku, 2014). They share many things in common including responsibilities that relate to their own affairs, experiment together ways of handling new situations and learn from each other's mistakes as well as corrupt one another. Most students feel more comfortable in the midst of their peers than home. Some students rate the opinions of their peers higher than that of parents and school authorities. They derive satisfaction from having some experience in healthy interaction with people of like minds and learning, and they also learn how to gain freedom from their parents. Peer pressure is usually an influential factor of conformity to the demands of peers among adolescents. Eboji (2011) observed that teenagers may find it easier to resist pressures from their parents and teachers, but peer pressure is often not easy for them to resist.

Peer pressure is the influence adolescent who are age group or students exerts on themselves. Most often, the pressure is so impactful and comprehensive that it could completely deviate the way they think and behave (Eboji, 2011). Peer pressure can be positive or negative. Students may be influenced

negatively or positively depending on the quality or make-up of the members of the peer group. It can help a student to become a better student, and responsible adult in future, make or mar the personality of the student, depending on the type of peer group the student associates with (Agbaje, 2010). Agbaje noted further that why many students for instance, learn smoking, immoral behaviour, drug abuse, and alcoholism from peers which often breed antisocial behaviours, many others learn good behavior, take their study serious and turn out to be successful in life.

Many students are from one religious sector or the other. These religious sects can broadly be divided into Christianity, African traditional religion and Islam. This study examines religious commitment of secondary school students in Abia State. Religious commitment, according to Conner (2012) in Ikejiahi Etal (2015) refers to how much an individual is involved in his or her religion. A religiously committed person is supposed to adhere to his/her religious values, beliefs and practices and use them in daily living.

Children from rigid religious groups and families are made to attend their religious programmes and adhere strictly to religious principles of their sects according to Mustapha (2013). Religion, according to Conner (2012) is the knowledge, beliefs, feelings, actions and experiences of an individual as expressed in relation to the persons believe system. The persons system may include a church group, a religious sector, religious organization to which he or she belongs. Rice (2009) also observed that, belonging to and being active in a religious organization gives an individual something to turn to when in need of help in solving problems which may be physical or spiritual. Harris (2013) notes that religiosity defers delinquency especially for certain forms of delinquency such as use of alcohol, tobacco, sexual immorality, stealing, pervasion and marijuana use. These acts, according to him are strongly condemned by most religious institutions but only weakly or ambiguously condemned by the circular society.

The influence of gender on student delinquency behaviours and academic achievement was explored by Igbo, J. N. and Ihejiene, M. A. (2014). Ex-post facto design was used in carrying out the study. Three purposes, three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Validated questionnaire was used for the collection of data. In analyzing the data, mean and t-test were used for answering the research questions and testing hypotheses respectively. The results indicated that gender had no significant influence on delinquent

behaviours. Gender significantly influenced academic achievement of secondary school students. Location had no significant influence on students, based on their academic achievement and gender.

In a study carried out by Desmond, S. A., Ulmer, J. T. and Bader, C. D. (2013) to investigate the relationship between religion and self-control to determine if self-control mediated the effect of religiosity on substance use; and to determine if the effect of self-control on substance use varied depending on adolescents' religiosity. The result showed that religious youths exhibited higher level of self-control. Data for the study were data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a national representative sample of United States of America adolescent school students. Sample was 200 students randomly selected from each school selected for the study (a total of 132 schools). The study employed descriptive statistics and regression coefficient for statistical treatment of data. Desmond *et al.* (2013) found that religiosity was significant and self-control both reduced marijuana and alcohol use. These authors concluded that faith-based activities might build a kind of inhibitions based on conventional social bonds; and that faith-based programmes can serve as crashes in developing muscle that people need to over-come temptations to do things believed to be wrong.

A survey study was carried out by Mustapha (2013) to find out the impact of religiosity on general delinquent and deviant behaviours among secondary school students. The study used a total sample of 1,497 secondary school students. The study employed multiple Regression model and mean scores for statistical treatment of data. Mustapha hypothesized among others that there was a statistically significant inverse relationship between the total measure of religiosity and all six subscales of delinquency. This author's results indicated a negative correlation between the religiosity score and all the subscales of delinquency. The conclusion was that high religiosity and favourable attitude towards religion and church were related to less aggressive, violent, or criminal behaviours.

The relationship between antisocial behaviour, negative parenting, and peer pressure was examined by Johnson (2012). It was predicted that peer pressure and negative parenting would be positively correlated with antisocial behaviour, but that negative parenting would be more statistically significant. There were 177 male and female college students who completed the Subtypes of Antisocial Behaviour questionnaire, the Measurement of Parenting Style, the Peer Pressure and Popularity questionnaire, and a short demographics

survey. Results indicated that negative parenting and peer pressure were both related to antisocial behaviour ($p < .001$). However, the final hypothesis was rejected because the results indicated that peer pressure ($p < .001$) and not negative parenting ($p < .05$), showed to be more statistically significant. It may be suggested that peer pressure may overpower parenting, after a certain age.

However, despite such investigations and intervention strategies offered by these researchers, there is still much to research in deviant behaviour tendencies. It appears that the issue is inadequately researched and empirical data are inadequate. This research will make data more available for future researchers. Moreover, none of the researchers has carried out research on the area of this study. This work will open up the area of study to the world for further studies. This study sought to determine the influence of social factors on deviant behaviour tendencies of secondary school students, with particular reference to senior secondary II students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.

In many communities around the world, there are certain standards of behavior and characters that are expected of members. In the secondary schools, there are standards of behaviour which are expected of every student irrespective of gender. Students are expected to be submissive, humble, diligent and respectful to school authorities, obey school rules and regulations, be punctual and regular at school, respect others, be neat and clean always, dress neatly and decently to school, study hard and pass examinations without cheating. Students are expected to exhibit high level of discipline and composure compared to those that never attended such level of education.

It is not an overstatement to observe that deviant and inadequate behaviours among secondary school students, especially, the senior students are likely to occur as a result of peer pressure influence. For instance, the rate of truancy, bullying, stealing, drug abuse, cultism, smoking, assault, excessive aggression against other students as well as fighting and the infighting between peer groups and among students are on the increase. Some students go as far as fighting teachers and their parents. The rate of indiscipline and lack of respect for elders, parents, teachers and other authorities is alarmingly on the increase in Nigeria today, also negative gang activities, such as cultism is noticed daily to be on the increase among students and within peer groups across Nigeria.

These deviant behaviours, if not checked, may lead to these students growing up to become armed robbers, rapists, terrorists, cultists, ritualists and lawless individuals, thereby impeding development and peaceful coexistence in the society; increasing insecurity, wanton destruction of lives and properties, abortion and breeding of bastards. It is therefore necessary to ascertain the variables that may influence these deviant behaviours in Abia State, with the aim of achieving a changed attitude necessary for success and progress in life. It is obvious that some factors might have been studied by many researchers and in different study areas to determine the variables that influence deviant behaviour.

However, not much has been done on some variables being investigated in this study and none to the knowledge of the researcher has studied Abia State. The problem of this study therefore is to determine whether social factors such as gender, peer pressure as well as religious commitment have any influence on deviant behavior tendencies of secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of social factors on deviant behavior of secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Determine the influence of gender on deviant behavior of secondary school students ascertain the influences of peer-pressure on deviant behavior of secondary school students.
- ii. Determine the influence of religious commitment on deviant behavior of secondary school students.

The following research questions were raised to direct the study:

- i. How does gender influence deviant behavior tendencies of secondary school students?
- ii. What is the influence of peer pressure on deviant behaviour of secondary school students?
- iii. How does religious commitment influence deviant behavior of secondary school students?

The following null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of gender on deviant behavior of secondary school students.

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of peer pressure on deviant behavior of secondary schoolstudents.

H₀₃: There is no significant influence of religious commitment on deviant behavior of secondaryschool students.

Method

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. This design is used in studies done retrospectively (events that had already occurred) to identify the possible cause and effect relationship between variables. This design is most suitable because the researcher wishes to determine the influence of social factors (which are already existing) on deviant behaviour tendencies among secondary school students in Abia State.

The population of the study comprised all the 10,500 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students during 2019/2020 academic year in the 63 pubic secondary schools in Aba Education Zone. (Abia State Ministry of Education, 2020).

The sample for the study was drawn from Senior Secondary Two students in Aba Education Zone in 2019/2020 school session. Simple random sampling technique was used for this selection. The procedure involved using simple balloting (hat and draw method), where letters of the alphabets was assigned to all the 63 public schools on separate pieces of papers. The papers were folded, mixed and shaken, after which the researcher randomly picked and recorded the schools, the procedure continued until the researcher selected 30 schools out of the 63 public secondary schools. The same procedure was also applied in each school to randomly select 30 SS 2 students until a sample size of 300 was reached.

A researcher-made instrument known as a “Social Factors and Deviant Behaviour Tendencies among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (SFDBTSSSQ)” was used for the study. The questionnaire had three sections labeled section A, B and C. Section A contained two items which measured the respondents’ personal data, section B with 10 items measured itemson peer pressure and religious commitments, while section C contained 14 items on deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

Validity of the instrument was obtained from two experts in Test and Measurement, and one from Sociology of Education all in the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo. The experts were required to assess the suitability of the items measuring the variables in the research. Out of 73 items given to the experts, 12 were deleted completely, 5 items were modified and retained. At the end, the researcher used 61 items for administration.

Thirty respondents who did not form part of the main study were randomly selected from the area of the study and the instrument was administered on them. Data collected from the respondents were subjected to reliability test. The Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained for the instrument.

The researchers administered 300 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents in their classes, with the help of five research assistants. They met the respondents face to face with the assistance of research assistants and provided adequate explanation that aided the respondents to respond or provide valid information as required. Completed copies of the questionnaire were collected on the spot. A total of 300 copies were administered and retrieved.

T-test were used for testing of hypotheses. The test of significance was done at 0.05 alpha level.

The results of data analysis carried out on data collected for the study are presented in this section. The findings that emerged from the analyses were also presented as well as the discussion of findings. The presentations were done in line with the hypotheses directing the study.

Results

Table 1: t- test analysis of the influence of gender on deviant behavior of students.

Gender	n	x	SD	Crit-t	Cal-t	Decision at p< .05 alpha
Male	132	44.17	2.88	1.97	22.28*	Reject H ₀
Female	168	35.10	3.92			

***Significant at p<.05 alpha level, n=300, df=298**

The result in Table 1 shows that mean deviant behavior of male students is 44.17 while female students' mean deviant behavior is 35.10. This result shows that male students have a higher deviant behaviour tendency than female students. The result also shows that the critical t- value of 1.97 is less than the calculated t-value of 22.28 with degree of freedom of 298 at 0.05 alpha level. Given this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it can be inferred from the result that the gender of students has significant influence on their deviant behaviour.

Table 2: t-test analysis of the influence of peer pressure on deviant behavior of students.

Peer Pressure	n	\bar{x}	SD	Crit-z	Cal-z	Decision at $p < .05$ alpha
Strong peerpressure	197	39.81	6.37	1.97	3.07*	Reject H_0
Weak peerpressure	103	37.71	3.80			

***Significant at $p < .05$ alpha level, $n=300$, $df=298$**

The result in Table 2 indicates that students with strong peer pressure exhibited mean deviant behavior tendencies of 39.81 while their counterparts with weak peer pressure exhibited lower deviant behaviour with a mean of 37.71. The result also indicates that the critical t-value as 1.97 is less than the calculated z-value which is 3.07 with degree of freedom of 298 at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, it is inferred that peer pressure does significantly influence deviant behavior among students.

Table 3: T- test analysis of the influence of religious commitment on deviant behavior of students.

Religious commitment	n	\bar{x}	SD	Crit-z	Cal-z	Decision at $p < .05$ alpha
Religiously committed students	126	35.93	5.59	1.97	9.24*	Reject H_0
Non-religiously committed students	174	41.37	4.60			

***Significant at $p < .05$ alpha level, $n=300$, $df=298$**

The result in Table 3 shows that the tendency to exhibit deviant behaviour is higher among students showing no commitment to their religion with mean of 41.37 while students who are committed to their religion exhibited lower deviant behaviour with a mean of 35.93. The result also shows the critical t-value to be 1.97 is less than the calculated t-value which is 9.24 with degree of freedom of 298 at 0.05 alpha level. From this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Hence, an inference is made that religious commitment has a significant influence on deviant behaviour of students.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the influence of gender on deviant behavior of secondary school students revealed that there is significant influence of gender on deviant behavior of secondary school students. The reason for high male deviant behaviour may be as a result of the nature of women to abhor violence much more than their male counterparts. It can also be identified with the feminine nature regarded as being weak and withdrawn. It must also be noted that males tend to be more outgoing, strong willed and ready to overcome challenges on their way to manhood unlike their female counterparts who will rather look up to men for their daily need and sustenance. The finding of the study is in contrast with that of Igbo *et al.* (2014), who found that gender had no significant influence on delinquent behaviours.

The findings of the influence of peer pressure on deviant behavior of secondary school students revealed that there is significant influence of pressure on deviant behavior tendencies of secondary school students. The influence of peer pressure among students could be located in their desire to belong to a particular group in a given environment like school as is the case in this study. Sometimes being a member of a group seems to embody members to behave in a particular way as their leader may want them. Though, some peer group members may be forced to belong and do certain things they would not want to do ordinarily. The finding of the study lends credence to that of Johnson (2012), who found that peer pressure significantly influenced deviant behaviour among secondary school students.

The findings of the influence of religious commitment on deviant behaviour tendency of secondary school students revealed that there is significant influence of religious commitment on deviant behavior of secondary school students. Thus, given the findings, one can say that commitment to one's religious faith or belief is significantly essential to curb the rising incidence of deviant or anti-social behaviour in the society. The finding corroborated that

of Mustapha (2013), whose study showed that high religiosity and favourable attitude towards religion and church were related to less aggressive, violent, or criminal behaviours.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that social factors do influence deviant behavior of secondary school students in Aba Education Zone, Abia State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should pay more attention to their male children. This will help them to understand their characteristics and how to caution them.
2. Religious leaders should do more to enlighten and train the adolescents and prepare them for a better future through seminars and religious teachings.
3. Educational planners should put in place a program that will enlighten the students on the danger of evil association, violence and access to sexual materials

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