



Psycho-Social Variables Responsible for Deviant Behaviour Among Secondary School Adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State

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Received: 30.04.2026 | Accepted: 08.05.2026 | Published: 01.06.2026

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DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.20492614](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20492614)

Abstract

Original Research Article

Adolescence period is very essential to the growth of any person. The peculiarities of this period make it unique from other aspects of development. It is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood; it requires an atmosphere full of love and understanding to function well. If the adolescents are well taken care of and given appropriate guidance at home and in school they are likely to be influenced negatively by peers and other environmental variables to become deviants. Various literatures; print and electronic media have reported series of case relating to deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in almost every society in the world. Evidently, the incident has become perennial that the school environment which supposedly an environment for inculcation of good morals and instill discipline is now becoming a mall for shopping deviant behavior by adolescent. This study therefore, investigated social variables responsible for deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers state. The study adopted descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised all the secondary school adolescents in the study area. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample of 200 respondents to constitute the sample size. Adolescents Deviant Behaviour Inventory was used to collection of data. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research question.

Keywords: Psycho-social variables, deviant, adolescent, peer group.

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Introduction

The school is a social environment where people gather for the purpose of teaching and learning. It is one of the agents of socialization that is used to transit culture, norms, values and skills considered worthwhile in a given society from one generation to another. That is, it is used to perpetuate cultural values of the society. The school grooms and socializes students within the

ambit of acceptable cultural values. The school is the only social institution where members of a given society acquire formal education in order to save societal values from going into extinction.

The school is the place where adolescents spend most of their daily time, interacting and socialising with others. It is the natural social setting for them. However, it is also in this socio-



temporal space that the student behaviour is influenced. In fact, the characteristics of the school may impact on the ways in which the students behave with others. Panchoo (2016), Ugboko & Adediwura (2012), Ramharai, Curpen and Mariaye (2012), Pascal (2015), Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) and Edinyang (2017) in Belle (2017) found the following school features that encourage students to misbehave: overcrowded classroom; too much harsh discipline measures; student alienation; the feeling of disempowerment from the principal to deal with indiscipline; lack of effective leadership from the principal; inadequate supervision; absence of the teaching of social, creative, communication and interpersonal skills; lack of student voice and choice in their learning; the feeling of rejection by students; lack of care from friends, educators and the principal; lack of extracurricular activities and sport activities; the banning or controversial use of corporal punishment; and absence of academic support for students with academic and behaviour problems.

Human behaviours are expected to conform to the norms and values of every given society hence there are acceptable and unacceptable or deviant behaviours in every society. Therefore some customary rules and regulations are required for smooth performance and peaceful life. There have been some traditional treatments in schools keeping the students disciplined, which are now outdated and inapplicable. It is not arguable that deviant behaviours have increased intensively and occurs more frequently in schools, the use of corporal punishment was part of authoritarian approach to control the incident of deviant behaviours in the school environment. The common proverb was used "spare the rod and spoil the child". This proverb was very famous among the old teachers and head of schools particularly for dealing with disruptive behaviour of students of secondary school level (Kirkpatrick, 2006)

Teachers are faced with myriads of behavioural problems relating to students in the school environment. Attempt to control deviant behaviours cause considerable teachers' time at the expense of academic instruction in the class. School discipline issues such as deviant behaviour and violence also have an increase

effect on teacher stress and burnout. There is a major body of research supporting the fact that classroom organization and behaviour management competencies considerably affect the perseverance of new teachers in their teaching careers. New teachers require effective means to handle deviant behaviours. Teachers who have significant problems with behaviour management with classroom discipline often report high level of disappointment and stress and are simultaneously ineffective. Sometimes it becomes extremely difficult to organize classroom and deal with deviant behaviour simultaneously, which is indispensable for the academic outcome (Rehman, Shahzada, Tariq & Khan, 2013).

Deviant behaviours in the school environment has adverse effect on the teaching and learning process. Sometimes a single student disturbs the whole classroom so much that neither the student who creates disruption nor the other student sitting beside him or her can learn. Deviant behaviour directly puts teachers, students and parents in embarrassing situation. Therefore, it has become the matter of great concern for the educators (Rehman, Shahzada, Tariq & Khan, 2013).

Review of Related Literature

Adolescence period is very essential to the growth of any person. The peculiarities of this period make it unique from other aspects of development. It is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood; it requires an atmosphere full of love and understanding to function well (Ajidahun, 2011). In Nigeria today, many adolescents are getting into problems simply because of how they were nurtured and what they were exposed to in the course of growing up. Growing up in Nigeria sometimes depends on the types of homes and parents one has. The economic status of the homes whether low or high may likely contribute to the positive or negative development of the adolescents. The homes too, whether loving, caring and supportive may contribute enormously to the proper development of the adolescent child.

Conger and Chao in Ajidahun (2011) maintained that adolescents in divorced families are more

likely than adolescents from intact homes to have less intimate relationship with their parents. Sometimes they also drop out of school because of lack of concentration; they could become sexually active at an earlier age because there may not be proper monitoring of their behaviour. Apart from this, they sometimes take to drugs and associate with anti-social peers and this may lead to having lower self-esteem. Furstenberg et al. (2001) stressed that the family needs to be intact for adolescents to experience the warmth and nurture of a loving family. Emotional and behavioural problems may stem from parental conflict before and after divorce, as well as from the separation itself. In the view of Young et al. (1997), a smooth functioning family can provide support and nurture to an adolescent during times of stress and crises. Adolescents from divorced, single-parent family tend to do worse in school and get into trouble with the school authorities more than do adolescents from two parents homes, perhaps because single parents find it difficult to monitor their children on top of their other responsibilities. Adolescence period is sometimes referred to as a period of stress and storm due to some biological changes they do experience in their bodies. If the stressors are increased by parents' marital breakdown then adolescents concerned may be stressed the more. As noted by Pelton and Forehand (2001), the family then becomes a source of stress as a result of divorce. Both parents have roles to play in the lives of adolescents and these roles cannot be overemphasized. Cooney and Mortimer (1999) observed that divorce may be a kind of distraction that disrupts the functions of parents to their children. The absence of father in homes may lead to aggressive behaviour and poor adjustment. During the teenage years, the father often assumes the primary responsibility for disciplining the male adolescents who sometimes exhibit more antisocial and delinquent behavior.

Mcloyd (2000) maintained that the financial strength of a home is worsened by divorce since both parents are no longer together. The financial stand of the home is left in the care of the mother whose financial strength may not be able to support the children. Such mothers are more distressed than their counter-parts in intact

homes. They often show lower support, nurture and involvement with their children. Divorce generally has effects on both sexes of adolescents but in different ways. Kelly (2000) affirmed that there are lots of negative effects of divorce on males than females. Wolfinger (1998) found that adolescent males are prone to drinking problems due to parental divorce. On the other hand, girls from single parents are more likely to leave home after school. Both girls and boys from divorced families tend to be more depressed, according to Simons (1999) than their same aged peers from intact families.

The term Psycho-social is often used to underline the dynamic relationship between psychological and social variables, each continually influencing the other. Psychological variables are those factors that affect emotions, behaviors, thoughts, memories, learning abilities, perceptions and understanding. "Social variable" refer to those factors that determinable by the environment such as family background, peer group, type of school, socio-economic status, mass media, community breakdown, etc.

Psycho-social variables encompass both the social and psychological aspects of an individual's life and cover a broad range of both positive and negative factors often measured in behavioural sciences and its relative studies. Social factors include quality of life, health behaviors (alcohol consumption, smoking status and drug use), physical activity level, and socio-economic status, whereas personal factors like depressive symptoms, perceived stress levels, anxiety, and mood. Technically, Psychological variables would constitute items like self-esteem, self concept, aspiration and perception towards life achievement or a target towards a set objective. Students with positive self concept would strive to work hard in school in an effort to justify their self perception (Oyeyemi, 2019). It would be appropriated at this point of our National development to educate parents and teachers to be positive in their relationship with learners and to engage the youths in activities that make them feel good about themselves and never to be subjected to circumstances in which may subject them to any form of humiliation or dehumanisation. A proposition that a person's self concept influences his behavior has long

been a part of individualistic social philosophy. A belief in the power of self concept is incorporated into diverse strands of psychological, sociological and educational theory, all of which have emphasized the influence of subjective inner experiences as a derivative and source of individual's behaviour (Bacchini, Concetta and Afusso, 2011 in Oyeyemi, 2019).

Anti-social behaviour, personality disorder or conduct disorder, a term synonymous with deviant or delinquency was defined by Wachikwu and Ibegbunam (2012) as crimes committed by young people below the age of eighteen years usually characterized by violation of existing social norms and values. It was defined by Mayer (2001) as a recurrent violation of socially prescribed patterns of behaviour usually involving aggression, vandalism, rule infractions, defiance of authority and violation of social norms. Similarly, deviant behaviour was also defined by Hanrahan (2006) as a disruptive act characterized by covert or overt hostility and intentional aggression towards others. It refers to an overall lack of adherence to the social norms and standards that allow members of a society to co-exist peacefully. Okon (2003) in Oyeyemi (2019) made the following comments about people with conduct disorder in the following words. "People with antisocial personalities have a low tolerance for frustration. They act on impulse, lose their temper quickly, and lie easily and skillfully. During their developmental stage i.e childhood, they are often bullies who fight, lie, cheat, steal, and are truant in schools. They blame others for their misdeeds, feel Picked out by their parents and teachers, and never seem to learn from their mistakes". Some of the deviant behaviours often times exhibited by students in secondary schools and prominent among them are drug abuse, examination malpractice, cultism, rape among others Over the years a host of factors have been identified as responsive factors for increase in deviant behaviours in schools prominent among which includes:

Home Environment: Home environment here refers to the affective aspect of the home where children are raised. Some children are nurtured in aversive, punitive and violent environments while others are nurtured in blissful environment

with love, care, compassion and understanding. Those raised in aversive and punitive environments are usually verbally abused, spanked and sometimes injuries are inflicted on them for any perceived misconduct (real or imagined) by their primary caretakers (Ukpong, 2003). More so, the elderly siblings also mete out raw treatment to the younger ones. Children raised in such home environments are physically and psychologically traumatized. In such homes, all the children can see is hatred, quarrel, bitterness, hostility, violence, competition and pains. They accept misdemeanor as a way of life and may have no qualms meting out this same treatment to the weaker ones. However, children nurtured in home environments where parents show love, care and tenderness to the children are likely to develop pre-social personality traits and may hardly engage in risky behaviours.

Parenting Approach: Inconsistent parenting approach, swinging from excessive punishment to excessive leniency is capable of precipitating antisocial behaviour in adolescents. At home or elsewhere, heavy exposure to uncensored media violence through television, video, internet sites or even cartoons has long been associated with an increase in the likelihood that a child becomes violent and behaves in an aggressive and antisocial manner (Hanrahan, 2006). In studies conducted by Mayer (2001) and Wachikwu and Ibegbunam (2012), it was found that aversive and punitive home environments promoted deviant behaviours such as violence, vandalism and escape from home while majority of children raised in loving and caring environments developed pre-social behaviours.

Socio-Economic Status of Parents: Discussion on factors that contribute to the development of deviant behaviour traits in adolescents cannot be complete without mention of socioeconomic status of parents. Some adolescents are nurtured in a state of abject poverty while some others are brought up in affluent conditions. For those brought up in later condition, life is good and there is no need to do anything that can endanger their lives. For those brought up in the former condition, the reverse is the case as they have to struggle for survival. Chauhan (1990) in Oyeyemi (2019) observed that poverty of parents make it impossible to fulfill the legitimate basic

physiological needs could give rise to frustration which could ultimately trigger off anger and general antisocial behaviour in adolescents. Nwankwo (2003) also noted that children born into impoverished environments might take to socially unacceptable behaviours as a survival strategy. Bacchini, Concetta and Afusso (2011) and Nwankwo, Nwoke, Chukwuocha, Obbany, Nwoga, Iwuagwu and Okereke (2010) found that gender, parenting style, exposure to community violence and parents socio-economic status were significantly associated with deviant behaviours among the students. Okon (2003) reported that antisocial behaviour was acute among adolescents with low socio – economic background due to their exposure to harsh economic situations.

Peer Group Influence: The impact of Peer group appears to exert more influence on the behaviour of adolescents. An adolescent who belongs to a peer group whose members engage massively in deviant behaviours and all forms of antisocial activities such as under-age smoking, alcoholism, pilfering, cultism, rape, prostitution and violence is most likely to imbibe these attitudes. Developmental theories according to Monahan, Steinberg and Cauffman (2009), suggest that affiliation with deviant peers and susceptibility to peer influence are important contributors to adolescent delinquency. Monahan et al. (2009) conducted a longitudinal study of 1354 antisocial youths to investigate how individual variation in exposure to deviant peers and resistance to peer influence affected antisocial behaviour manifestation from middle adolescence into young adulthood (ages 14 to 22 years). They obtained evidence that antisocial individuals chose to affiliate with deviant peers, and affiliating with deviant peers was associated with an individual's own delinquency. Duarte, Escario and Molina (2011) found that there was existence of significant peer group influences on the deviant behaviours of alcohol abuse and truancy.

Personality defects: The personality of individuals is formed during school age. The quality of a person as an adult is determined from his quality as a child. Due to this fact, any sign

of involvement in deviant behaviour should be looked into with a view to recognizing their onset in children and taking remedial action to rectify the maladies before they get out hand. It is believed that the consequences of conduct disorder in adolescents are grave especially if no remedy is sought and found at the early stage of the manifestation of the traits.

Statement of Problem

One of the issues of global concern in effective school administration is handling students' deviant behaviour. Within secondary schools in Nigeria there are several complaints by teachers, parents and the general public of deviant behaviour of students including noise making, inattention, fighting, loitering about, molesting fellow students, threatening and intimidating and waylaying classmates, use of hard drugs gangsterism, etc. Deviant behaviours among adolescents in school can damage the school's reputation both locally and internationally. A school where disruptive behaviour predominates becomes dysfunctional, making it difficult for teaching and learning to go on smoothly. An unsafe school environment is an eye sour to any visitor and an inhibitor of effective learning and teaching.

Controlling behavioural problem is a serious challenge to parents, teachers, counsellors and government. The dynamics of any classroom can change as a result of students' deviant behaviour thus increasing the stress faced by teachers and school administrators. The teacher's ability to effectively manage behaviour problems in the classroom is imperative for goal attainment and improving students learning and academic performance. Though literature abounds on studies which examined deviant behaviour in secondary school, none of the studies covered psycho-social variables in Obio/Akpor local Government Area of Rivers state State, Nigeria to the best of knowledge of the researcher. In addition, efforts have not been concentrated on examining the impact of deviant behaviour on adolescent students' learning in the Local Government Area. This observation informed the focus of this study.

Research Objective/Purpose

The objective of the study is to investigate psycho-social variables responsible for deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Research Question

To facilitate this study, the following research question was answered;

1. What are the psycho-social variables responsible for deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers state?

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design to investigate the psycho-social variables responsible for deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers state. Rivers State. Okwo & Walson (2016) defined a descriptive survey design as a design concerned with describing events as they are without any manipulation of what caused the event or what is being observed. Ajoku (2006) posit that descriptive research design describes “what is” by recording, analysing and interpreting conditions that exist. The process involves the collection of data in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions generated in the study. The research design is appropriate for the study as it investigates the psycho-social variables responsible for deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

The population of the study consisted of all the secondary school adolescents in the study area. A stratified random sampling technique was

adopted in selecting the sample. To carry out the random sampling technique, the ballot system was used with the inscription “S” for selected and “N” for not selected. The sample size of the study was 200 respondents.

The instrument for data collection was a self-developed 12 item instrument. It was titled “Adolescents Deviant Behaviour Inventory (ADBI)”. ADBI was used to get the desired information from the respondents. The instrument was divided into two sections (A and B). Section A is called demographic data. While section B consisted of questions that elicited responses from the respondent’s base on their perceptions, feelings and opinion.

The designed instrument was validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling who vetted and made corrections. These corrections were incorporated and they contributed immensely in structuring the final draft of the instrument. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest technique was used.

The researcher visited and administered the same instrument to a sample of 25 married couples in River state which is outside the sample respondents. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was established using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The instrument was therefore, judged as dependable for the study. Means rating was used to answer the research question.

Research Question One

1. What are the psycho-social variables responsible for deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers state?

Table 1: Psycho-social variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Criterion Mean
My family is poor and can not provide for my basic	400	3.52	0.94	2.5

needs		
I learnt how to smoke from my friends	2.53	0.73
I joined bad gang because I feel that I am not good enough to be loved	2.32	0.89
I make noise in the class because of lack of learning facilities in my school	2.15	0.88
I always fight in school because of my friends	2.46	0.69
I don't steal because my parents provide all my needs	2.49	0.88

Result in table 1 reveals that item 1-5 is well above the criteria mean of 2.50, while item 6 is below the criteria mean of 2.5, indicating that it does not constitute a factor to deviant behavior of adolescents. Whereas the following items: My family is poor and can not provide for my basic needs; I learnt how to smoke from my friends; I joined bad gang because I feel that I am not good enough to be loved; I make noise in the class because of lack of learning facilities in my school; I always fight in school because of my friends respectively influence deviant behavior among adolescents.

Discussion on Findings

From the analysis of data, it is revealed that family background, peer group influence, self-concept, and school environment are major psycho-social variables influencing secondary school adolescents' deviant behavior in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers state. This finding is in agreement with Panchoo (2016), Ugboko & Adediwura (2012), Ramharai, Curpen and Mariaye (2012), Pascal (2015),

Gutuza and Mapolisa (2015) and Edinyang (2017) who found the following school features that encourage students to misbehave: overcrowded classroom; too much harsh discipline measures; student alienation; the feeling of disempowerment from the principal to deal with indiscipline; lack of effective leadership from the principal; inadequate supervision; absence of the teaching of social, creative, communication and interpersonal skills; lack of student voice and choice in their learning; the feeling of rejection by students; lack of care from friends, educators and the principal; lack of extracurricular activities and sport activities; the banning or controversial use of corporal punishment; and absence of academic support for students with academic and behaviour problems. In the same vein, the study agrees with Okon (2003) who reported that antisocial behaviour was acute among adolescents with low socio – economic background due to their exposure to harsh economic situations. It is also in agreement with Duarte, Escario and Molina (2011) who found that there was existence of significant peer group

influences on the deviant behaviours of alcohol abuse and truancy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, adolescence is said to be a period of stress and storm. It is characterized with series of uncertainties and proneness to deviancy. It is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood; it requires an atmosphere full of love and understanding to function well. If the adolescents are well taken care of and given appropriate guidance at home and in school they are likely to be influenced negatively by peers and other environmental variables to become deviants. Various literatures; print and electronic media have reported series of case relating to deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents in almost every society in the world. Evidently, the incident has become perennial that the school environment which supposedly an environment for inculcation of good morals and instill discipline is now becoming a mall for shopping deviant behavior by adolescent. It has been uncurled that peer group, home background and self concept which are psychosocial variables influence deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Parents should provide for the basic needs of their adolescent children; care and love them so as to help them to have confidence in their family and themselves. Parents should also be good role models to their adolescent children.
2. President Muhammadu Buhari should sign the bill recognizing counselling as a profession which has been passed into law by the two chambers of the National Assembly to give professional counsellors in Nigeria the legal approval to open counselling clinic in order to give parents and adolescents easy access to counselling services
3. Government at all levels should employ thousands of unemployed counsellors

roaming in the street in all public institutions in the country to help curb the issue of deviant behavior among secondary school adolescents.

4. Government should empower counsellors to carry out enlightenment campaign through print and electronic media focusing the drug use and abuse, pre-marital sex, cultism, and other social vices.

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