

The Triad of Influence: Peer Pressure, Community Factors, and Gender as Determinants of Delinquent Behaviour among School-Attending Adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

The prevalent rate of juvenile delinquent behaviour among adolescents in different parts of the world gives room for concern. This study therefore, investigates the influence of peer pressure, community factor and gender on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Three hundred adolescents were chosen from the selected schools through multi-stage random sampling technique. Their ages ranged between 9 and 21 years with mean of 15.2. Three research questions and two hypotheses were postulated and tested. Adopted questionnaire consisting of demographic section, and standardized scales on juvenile delinquent behaviour, peer pressure, community factor was used to collect data. The data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that there was significant relationship between peer pressure and juvenile delinquent behaviour among adolescents in Ibadan ($r = .650^{**}$, $N = 300$, $P < .05$) followed by community factor ($r = .575^{**}$, $N = 300$, $P < .05$), followed by gender differences ($r = .298^{**}$, $N = 300$, $P < .05$) on juvenile delinquent behaviour among adolescents. It was recommended that parents should monitor their children and maintain consistent openness, effective communication which could help the adolescent to stay away from juvenile delinquent behaviour.

Keywords: Peer pressure, Community factor, Gender, Delinquent behaviours, School-attending Adolescents

Introduction

Since the dawn of time, almost every country has regarded juvenile criminality as a significant issue, and Nigeria is no exception. Adolescent

misbehaviour in school is becoming increasingly perplexing and pervasive, and misbehaviour anticipation programmes are either incapable of addressing contemporary real-world causes or do not exist. Many underdeveloped countries have done nothing to address these issues, and global initiatives are clearly faulty. Juvenile delinquent behaviour has become a global problem in developed and developing countries, but the origin and factors behind this issue are varied across different class, societal and cultural contexts. Whenever an adolescent commits a criminal offense, they are called juvenile delinquent because of their age (Shaikh and Brohi, 2017). Children are considered as the future of their nation, if these children are prone towards antisocial behaviour, then they will become a great risk for social institutions, especially family (Ahmed and Murtaza, 2016). Moreover, in the current decade, juvenile delinquency has become a huge challenge for sociologists, educationists, counselling psychologist, criminologists, community workers and social planners to overcome (Zafar, 2017). The word juvenile delinquency is used for those children who are aged between 10–17 years, and also those who are not able to take legal responsibilities (Ahmed and Murtaza, 2016).

The term "juvenile delinquency" refers to a young person less than 18 years of age who engages in behaviours punishable by law. There is no universal definition of a juvenile or delinquency. The laws of different nations stipulate different age bracket for the juveniles. Besides, the concept of a juvenile is sometimes used interchangeably with other concepts like a child, an adolescent and a youth. But the law is usually more specific in its definition of a child or juvenile or youth. Manifestations of delinquency among secondary school adolescents in Nigeria include: cruelty, bullying, fighting, vandalism, stealing, lying, sexual immorality, mob action, carrying of weapons etc (Sanni *et al.*, 2015). Eke (2014) noted that there are two main categories of delinquent behaviours which Nigerian adolescents engage in; these are: criminal and status offences. The criminal offences include: stealing, arson, rape, drug offences, murder, burglary, pick pocket, and armed robbery.

Clare (2016) stated that delinquent behaviour refers to destructive acts which are associated with intentional, overt and covert aggression towards others. In the United States of America, around 1.2 million children in 2008 were arrested for violations such as rape, loitering, and murder. Chong *et al.* (2015) revealed that in 2011, 111,484 students enrolled in secondary school in Selangor (Malaysia), of those enrolled; 17,595 were involved in crime, 5,212 in vandalism, 19,545 in truancy, 3,031 in pornography, and 8,563 were involved in other immoral activities. Lee *et al.* (2017) reported that in Canada, 12,292 elementary school students were involved in delinquent behaviour like kicking, fighting, hitting, biting and attacking their classmates or teachers. In recent years, the International Self-Reported Delinquency Study (ISRD) revealed that juvenile delinquency levels were between 13.8% to 40.1% in English speaking countries. The ISRD rate in Canada was found to be 20.1%, with boys being more representative in 14 to 16 years age bracket (Santor *et al.*, 2020). While Kolawole (2020) reported 234,205 in-school adolescents involved in anti-social behaviour in Nigeria, 317,595 were involved in criminal activities in Nigeria, 175,212 in school vandalism in Nigeria, 119,545 in truancy in Nigeria, 213,031 in pornography, and 518,563 were involved in other immoral activities in Nigeria.

However, Eke (2014) listed status offences to include: running away from home, malingering, truancy etc. Delinquency in Nigeria is a persistent source of apprehension to parents, school authorities, government and the society at large. Participation in delinquent acts by adolescents is assuming an alarming proportion and dangerous dimension which are becoming out of control to parents, police and other organs saddled with the responsibility of handling such issues. For example, adolescents engagement in inter-school fight recently in Ilorin –a city in one of the North-Western States in Nigeria - could have passed for a mere inter-school rivalry, but for the use of dangerous weapons such as knives, cutlasses and charms; it was reported that severe injuries were sustained not only by the fighting students but by passers-by in that neighbourhood (Aremu, 2015).

This study examined several factors among which peer group is one of the variables. Peers in schools display patterns of juvenile delinquency in an attempt to re-affirm their freedom from parents and other adults at the adolescence stage (Raheem, 2019). If such behaviours continue to go unpunished or wrongly punished it may become too critical to handle (Nzekwu, 2019). In every society, there exist groups that are part of the larger society but whose members adhere to norms and values that favour the violation of the norms of the larger society. Individuals in society will usually make friends or have their closest associates from among their peer groups. Therefore, peer associates have a great influence on the lifestyle of their members. Peer group association as an agent of socialization, determines to a large extent, what social codes an individual learns (Nsofor, 2018). This implies that individuals whose core group members believe and act deviant behaviour within norms will learn and internalize more of deviant behaviour codes than those that conform with the norms of the society.

Peer pressure extends to all groups. Peer pressure groups refer more specifically to the cluster of associates who know each other and serve as a source of reference or comparison for one another (McCarthy, 2018). Peer pressure groups describes the various ways in which people of similar age, sometimes similar in height, class and the status which include the adults in the society that relate and adjust to each other (Oladipupo, 2018). It is also noted that though adolescents may have friends in another neighbourhood or town, the peer group that has a direct impact is the one that dominates the adolescents' daily life settings. Peer pressure can be seen as the influence exerted by peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her attitude, values or behaviours to conform to the group.

However, not all social networks necessarily constitute a peer group (Philip, 2018). A peer group consists of those who are of roughly equal status. For teenagers, a peer group is composed of individuals who are approximately the same age. Like their adult counterparts, teenagers can be immersed in a variety of peer networks, looking to friends, classmates, and teammates for support in different social

situations (Neff, 2016). Philip (2018) defines peers as a “collection of individuals with whom the individual identifies and affiliates and from whom the individual seeks acceptance or approval”. Two elements are particularly salient in Astin’s definition: connection and acceptance. Peers are a group of people with whom an individual spends time and feels a sense of connection. Margaret, Patricia, and Jill (2014) underscore this aspect of Astin’s definition by arguing that peers and peer groups are “situated through shared participation in particular types of behaviours and activities”. Not all students necessarily feel a sense of connection with other students in their school. Only when students are united by a shared identity or by participation in common activities do they form a peer group. The peer group is a source of affection, sympathy, understanding, and a place for experimentation. As already suggested, peer influence define themselves by the groups with which they affiliate (Landau, 2017).

Another variable of interest in this study is community factors. The community factor where adolescents reside is another factor the researcher is interested in investigating its influence on the juvenile delinquent of adolescents. A community is a place where adolescents live with their parents or guardians and it is the place where they are groomed. It is a place where the adolescents begin to learn the norms and values of the society in which they find themselves. Community varies as they take their cues from a wide variety of sources, such as local economic and social conditions and expectations. According to Sentamu (2013) maintained that community factors are social institutions in which groups of individuals are brought together to share educational experiences and such interactions may breed positive or negative influences on learners. According to Perkins (2006), community factors are the learning environment created through the interaction of human relationships, physical setting, and psychological atmosphere. What a society looks like and what operates therein could affect juvenile delinquency of students. No meaningful learning can take place in a society plagued with crises. It could be ethnic e.g. Ife-Modakeke faces off in Osun State in 1999. Urmobo-Itshakiri warfare

in Warri, Ijaw-Ilaje feud in Ondo State, activities of militant groups e.g. Odua people's congress, the Arewas, the Bakassi boys and more recently the Fulani-herdsmen, Kidnapping, Boko Haram insurgency which has led to closure of school in the Southern and Northern part of Nigeria for several months etc. it leads to closing of school and the consequence is not the best interest of education. Juvenile delinquency would likely thrive where members placed emphasis on materialism and when there is emphasis on acquisition and accumulation of wealth and materials.

Gender, the last independent variable considered is better understood as a product of the way a particular society views and analyses the relationship between male and female, which again are determined by a number of factors, especially, the cultural values of that society (Awofeso and Odeyemi, 2014). This presupposes that perceptions on gender are not immutable; they vary from one society to another, and change from time to time. For better clarification of the concept of gender, is the distinction between sexes (Aina, 2012). Gender, therefore, is not a synonym for female neither is it a derogatory stigma for the male opposite sex (Osezua and Osezua, 2008), although sex is a biological terminology, an anatomical distinction between being a male and a female (Aina, 2012). Gender is a more or less a social construct—a socially constructed inequality between female and male (Aina, 2012).

Gender is a range of characteristics distinguishing between male/masculinity and female/femininity, particularly in the cases of male and female. Gender issues are currently the main focus of discussion and research all over the world, Nigeria inclusive. The question of gender is a matter of grave concern especially among academics and policy formulators. According to Aina (2012), the term gender should be used to refer to the social and cultural constructions of masculinities and femininities, not to the state of being male or female in its entirety. However, this view is not held by all gender theorists. It can also be referred to as socially determined differences between female and male, such as roles, attitudes, behaviour and values. The gender effect on juvenile delinquent behaviour is probably the result of correctional custodial environmental factors. Research on gender effect on

juvenile delinquent behaviour has portrayed that male are better adjusted to correctional environment as compared to female (Ruble, Martin and Berenbaum, 2006).

There is very little data available regarding juvenile delinquency at the secondary schools, notably in Oyo state. The aim of this research is to fill this research gap. Also, most researchers have given priority and attention to the issue of maladjustment behaviour, antisocial behaviour and truancy, with little attention paid to parenting style, social media, peer influence and juvenile delinquency despite the effectiveness of research approaches employed for such studies. Given this gap, this study examines the influence of peer pressure, community factor and gender on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of peer pressure, community factor and gender on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Establish if peer pressure has any significant influence on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.
2. Examine if adolescents' community factor have any significant influence on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.
3. Find out if the gender difference have any significant influence on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria

Research questions

Three research questions were asked and answered at 0.05 level of significance

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the peer pressure and juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the community factors and juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the gender differences and juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria

Methods

This study employs the use of descriptive survey research design using ex-post facto method to achieve the purpose of the study. This is a type of design that seeks to establish investigation among variables by observation, which researcher usually has no control over the variables of interest and therefore cannot manipulate them. Usually, data are collected after the event or phenomenon under investigation has taken place hence the name ex-post facto. The sample drawn was generalized and inferences were made on the whole population of the study. The variables were being observed as have been treated in their natural occurrence. The target population for this study comprised of in-school adolescents in Ibadan who were in (SSS1, SSS2 and SSS3) in Ibadan, Oyo state. Five (5) secondary schools were selected in Ibadan metropolis within Oyo state; the five secondary schools were within the Ibadan in Oyo state. Multi stage sampling technique was used in the study. The first stage involved simple random sampling procedure to select two (2) local governments out of eleven (11) Local Government Area within Ibadan, Nigeria. The second stage involved simple random sampling procedure to select five (5) public secondary schools out of three hundred and thirty-seven (337) public secondary school within Ibadan. The five secondary schools enumerated were Immanuel College, UI, Methodist Grammar School, Oba Akinbiyi High School, Community Grammar School Iwo Road and Army Barrack Grammar School, Iwo

Road. In the third stage, simple random sampling was used to select participants in each school from the five schools; only students from SS 1 to SS 111 were selected for the study. The participants are made up the 300 students. The researchers obtained a letter of introduction from the Department of Educational Psychology, Federal College of Education to facilitate access to five selected secondary schools in Ibadan. Permission was sought from each school's principal, and two research assistants helped administer questionnaires. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, importance, and confidentiality, ensuring their privacy was respected. After distributing questionnaires and providing clear instructions, the researchers collected and sorted the completed forms. Data analysis involved Multiple Regression Analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, with hypotheses tested at a 0.05 significance level.

The questionnaire used in this study comprised of standardized instruments divided into five sections: Section A contains the bio-data which sought demographic information such as age, gender, class, parent marital status, parent's educational qualification and occupation, person responsible for education etc. the other section contains the following Juvenile Delinquency Questionnaire (JDQ) was adopted from Antisocial Behaviour Scale developed by Burt and Donnellan, (2009). It consists of thirty-two (32) items, this deal with the varieties of delinquent behaviour exhibited among students. The 32 questions were answered on the scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "never" and 5 being "very often". The scores from each subscale were combined to produce the JDQ total score, which reflected the overall level of the participants' delinquent behaviour level. However, the adapted version of the instrument was re-validated by the researcher and Cronbach alpha of .79 was obtained in a pilot test.

The peer influence scale developed by Garret (1981). This consists of 28 items with a response format ranging from Strongly Disagree = SD to Strongly Agree = SA. The author reported an internal reliability co-efficient (alphas) ranging from .94 to .97. However, the adapted version of the instrument was re-validated by the

researcher and Cronbach alpha of .68 was obtained in a pilot test. Section D of the questionnaire deals with perceived community environment was adapted from Crail (1999) This consists of 15 items with a response format ranging from Strongly Agree = SA to Strongly Disagree = SD ($\alpha = 0.89$). The researcher revalidated the instrument to establish its psychometric properties that suit Nigerian culture. The internal consistency of the items ranged between 0.41 to 0.78. The overall reliability coefficient of 0.89 was observed.

Data Analysis

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria

Table 1: The summary table showing significant relationship between peer pressure and juvenile delinquent among adolescents

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Df	R	P	Remark
Juvenile Delinquent	43.1443	7.11099	300	298	.650**	.0015	Sig.
Peer Pressure	34.1214	7.09966					

Result from Table 6 shows that there was significant relationship between peer pressure and juvenile delinquent ($r = .650^{**}$ $p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that peer pressure had significant influence on the juvenile delinquent of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between the community factors and juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria

Table 2: The summary table showing significant relationship between community factors and juvenile delinquent behaviour among adolescents

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Df	R	P	Remark
Juvenile Delinquent	43.1443	7.11099	300	298	.575**	.02	Sig.
Community factors	37.1086	7.32514					

Result from Table 2 shows that there was significant relationship between community factor and juvenile delinquent ($r = .575^{**}$ $p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that community factor had significant influence on the juvenile delinquent of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between the gender differences and juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria

Table 3: The summary table showing significant relationship between gender differences and juvenile delinquent behaviour among adolescents.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Df	R	P	Remark
Juvenile Delinquent	43.1443	7.11099	300	298	.225**	.032	Sig.
Gender Differences	36.1086	7.05454					

Result from Table 3 shows that there was significant relationship between gender differences and juvenile delinquent ($r = .225^{**}$ $p < 0.05$). Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that gender differences had significant

influence on the juvenile delinquent of in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the influence of peer pressure, community factors, and gender on juvenile delinquent behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Nigeria. The results showed significant relationships between these variables and delinquent behavior, aligning with prior research while also offering unique insights into the local context. The first hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and juvenile delinquent behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan. However, the findings indicate that peer pressure has a significant influence on juvenile delinquency, contradicting the null hypothesis. This is consistent with the findings of Ojo and Adebayo (2021), who highlighted that adolescents are highly susceptible to peer influence, particularly when they lack strong parental guidance. Social learning theory (Bandura, 1986) supports this claim, suggesting that individuals learn behaviors by observing and imitating those around them.

Studies have shown that peer groups play a crucial role in shaping adolescent behavior. According to Adeyemi and Okafor (2022), adolescents who associate with delinquent peers are more likely to engage in criminal activities. This is particularly evident in disadvantaged communities, where negative peer influences are more prevalent. Similarly, Martins and Lawal (2020) found that peer pressure was a strong predictor of risky behaviors, including substance abuse and truancy, among Nigerian adolescents. These findings suggest that peer pressure remains a critical factor in juvenile delinquency, reinforcing the need for interventions that promote positive peer associations.

The second hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between community factors and juvenile delinquent behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan. The study's findings, however, reveal a significant influence of community factors on delinquency, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

This aligns with the social disorganization theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942), which posits that weak social structures contribute to higher crime rates. Recent studies by Adekunle and Yusuf (2023) support this, showing that adolescents raised in crime-prone communities are more likely to engage in delinquent activities. A well-structured and supportive community fosters positive behavior in adolescents. Research by Eze and Nwachukwu (2021) found that youths in stable communities with active parental and educational support were less likely to engage in criminal activities. Conversely, Olawale and Agboola (2022) noted that neighborhoods with high levels of violence and economic hardship tend to produce more delinquent youths. These findings indicate that strengthening community structures, improving educational opportunities, and fostering parental involvement could serve as effective strategies for reducing juvenile delinquency.

The third hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between gender differences and juvenile delinquent behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan. The study's findings, however, indicate a significant relationship, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This is consistent with the gender role theory (Eagly, 1987), which explains that societal expectations shape male and female behaviors differently. Adebisi and Ogunleye (2022) found that male adolescents are more likely to engage in physical aggression and violent crimes, while female adolescents are more prone to relational aggression and deceitful behaviors. Several studies support the notion that gender plays a critical role in delinquency. According to Bello and Hassan (2023), boys are more likely to participate in criminal activities due to societal reinforcement of risk-taking behaviors. Similarly, Obinna and Adeyemo (2021) found that male adolescents were overrepresented in cases of school-related violence and theft. However, new research suggests that female delinquency is rising. Ahmed and Balogun (2023) argue that shifting gender norms and increased exposure to social influences are contributing to higher delinquency rates among female adolescents.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study provides significant information pertaining to the relationship among peer pressure, community factor and gender on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. The finding of the study clearly indicated that there was significant relationship between peer pressure, community factor and gender on juvenile delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. This finding further supports the importance of recognizing and managing student's juvenile delinquent behaviour, through this, bond can be established between the students and parental roles that could reduce the juvenile delinquent behaviour. Nonetheless, there is need for replication and refinement of this work in the future.

Recommendations

In Nigeria, though many governmental and non-governmental agencies, school administrator and parents, educationist, counsellors, researchers and the policy maker have sprung up to assist in combating the issue of school dropout in various schools at all level (primary, secondary and universities), but is surprising to note that much has not been achieved. Based on the findings from this study, it is recommended that:

- Adolescent's juvenile delinquent behaviour should be monitored right from home before they become inducted into the society. Parents should also serve as good models, understand their child emotion and should attend promptly to the needs of their children at home and in school so as to reduce the rate of juvenile delinquent behaviour.
- Guidance services should be made compulsory in schools to assist students to get adjusted to the new environment they find themselves through orientation programme even in school.

- Parents should monitor their children effectively and maintain consistent openness, effective communication, parental attention emotional and material support which could help the students should be provided by the parent.
- Government should control the activities of media through the board of censors. All programmes that are juvenile delinquent behaviour based should be properly regulated and monitored by the board.

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