

Socio-Demographic Stimulation of Anti-Social Behaviour among Senior Secondary School Students in Port-Harcourt

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Abstract

Anti-social behaviour can be seen as an overall lack of adherence to social norms and standards of people to co-exist peacefully in a society. However, there is an increase rate of anti-social behaviour in the society today especially among the adolescents. Very many secondary school students with anti-social behaviour have a low tolerance for frustration; as they act on impulse, lose their temper quickly, lie easily and skilfully. Anti-social behaviour can become part of youthful behaviour and harmful to the society at large if not controlled as well checkmate. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to investigate the *socio-demographic correlates of anti-social behaviour among senior secondary school students in Port-Harcourt, River State, Nigeria*. 300 questionnaires were distributed; 150 in the public school and 150 in two private schools. Simple percentage, t-test, One way-Anova and Simple Linear Regression were used for the *data analysis*. *The findings revealed that there is a significant difference among public schools and private schools [t (298) = 1.487, p < 0.05]. There is a significant difference based on family type [t (295) = .003, p < 0.05], Age is also significant [F (3, 296) = 4.796, p = 0.003].* Finding shows the need for social work services in our secondary schools. The study recommends a comprehensive early social work intervention with families and schools. Furthermore, social workers and policy makers should plan appropriate preventive and intervention programmes for students with anti-social behaviour. More research should be done in this field of study, as it was limited mainly to three schools.

Introduction

Anti-social behaviours are disruptive acts characterized by covert and overt hostility and deliberate aggression toward others. Willoughby (2001) stated that overt anti social behaviour is a confrontational behaviour that is not concealed, while covert anti social behaviour is hidden and non-confrontational. Burt and Donnellan (2009) used the Subtypes of Anti-social Behaviour Questionnaire (STAB) to classify anti social behaviour into three subtypes: physical aggression, social aggression and rule breaking. Physical aggression includes fighting, physical

bullying, getting angry, having anger management issues, and threatening others (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Burt & Donnellan, 2009). Social aggression can be defined as behaviours that are harmful to those who are in social relationships (Burt & Donnellan, 2009). This type of behaviour can include gossiping, spreading rumours, purposefully trying to destroy one's reputation, and trying to hurt one's feelings by being negative toward their appearance, actions, and beliefs (Burt & Donnellan, 2009). Rule breaking can include theft, selling drugs, vandalism, suspended from school or work, and littering (Burt & Donnellan, 2009). Researchers have not only investigated the types of anti-social behaviour, they have also researched the factors that possibly contribute to its formation. Anti social behaviours exist along a severity continuum and include repeated violations of social rules, defiance of authority and of the rights of others, deceitfulness, theft, and reckless disregard for self and others.

Wachikwu and Ibegunam (2012) defined anti-social behaviour, as crimes committed by young people below the age of eighteen years usually characterized by violation of existing social norms and values. Anti-social behaviour is seen as an overall lack of adherence to the social norms and standards that allow members of a society to co-exist peaceably. Adolescent with anti-social behaviour blame others for their misdeeds; feel picked out by their parents and teachers and never seem to learn from their mistakes. In plain words anti-social behaviour, looks at the life around individuals and socio-demographic factors that influence the behaviour of people. Adolescent in this context revolves around the senior secondary school students (SSS).

According to Steinberg (2014) "adolescence" is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiological, psychosocial, temporal and cultural lenses. This critical development period is understood as years between the onset of puberty and establishment of sociological independence. Social demographics influence the behaviour of an adolescent either negatively or positively, many adolescents today have problems because there are many pressures for them to handle among friends and family. For some adolescents, pressures include poverty, violence, parental problems and gangs. Some may also be concerned about significant issues such as religion, gender role, values or ethnicity. Some adolescents are having difficulties dealing with past traumas they have experienced, like sexual abuse, financial instability of parents and many more.

There are various causes of anti-social behaviour among senior secondary school students, some of which are:

- (i) **School and peer influence:** this is of great importance to adolescent because it either makes or mars them. Relationships of all kinds are made in the school; as such the school environment must be kept safe for all and sundry. Teachers should be friendly and maintain a cordial relationship with students, some teachers bully the students unconsciously which should not be.
- (ii) **Environmental factors:** our environment says a lot about us, our upbringing, our disposition to life and it can influence anti-social behaviour at various levels. It is clear that the role of environmental factors is important for the development of anti-social behaviour, whether it is one of disadvantage,

exposure to violence, patterns of familial engagement, or peer influence. Environmental factors are a necessary condition for anti-social behaviour.

- (iii) **Socio-economic status of the family:** Social class is key within the society the socio-economic status of the family also aids anti-social behaviour. Adolescents nurtured in a state of abject poverty are more prone to anti-social behaviour than those brought up in affluent conditions. Both groups see life from different perspectives and as such takes life as it comes to them. Socio economic status refers to the social and economic position occupied by parents in the society. This status affects adolescents' a lot in latter life.
- (iv) **Parenting styles:** Is one of the most frequently reported contributors to anti social behaviour (Patterson, Debaryshe, and Ramsey, 1990; Schaffer, 2009; Hoeve, 2008). There are four conceptual types of parenting styles: *authoritarian style*, *authoritative style*, *permissive style*, and *neglectful style* (Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van DerLaan, Smeenk, and Gerris, 2009). *Authoritarian parents*; show high levels of control, supervision, harsh punishment, coercion, and moderate levels of love, withdrawal, and support (Hoeve and Dubas, 2008; Gerris., 2009). *Authoritative parents*; show high levels of support, effective communication skills, and supervision without using harsh punishment (Hoeve, 2008; Hoeve, 2009). *Permissive parents*; are defined as parents who give their children too much freedom, without interfering in the child's daily activities (Schaffer. 2009). *Neglectful parents*; are defined as having inadequate punishment skills and displaying very low supervision or control (Hoeve, 2008). Parenting styles play an important role in determining the personality and behaviours of children, for that reason each of these parenting styles have been found to have different effects on children and their behaviour (Hoeve and Van DerLaan, 2008). Anti-social behaviour is caused by abnormal relationships between parents and their children, that is, irresponsibility of parents, and lack of love towards children in their formative years.
- (v) **Cultural Factor:** Culture is life. Africans adores their culture a lot and sees to it that their culture is upheld. Anti-social behaviour occurs most times in social settings in which the norms for acceptable behaviour have been broken for one reason or the other. When this happens, anti-social behaviour takes place among adolescent who want to the modern way of living rather than following the traditional methods laid down by their parents

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the prevalence of anti-social behaviour among secondary school students.
2. To find out if age will determine anti-social behaviour among secondary school students.
3. To find out if school type will determine anti-social behaviour among secondary school students.

Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of anti-social behaviour among secondary school students?
2. Will age affect anti-social behaviour among secondary school students?
3. Will school types affect anti-social behaviour among secondary school students?

Methodology**Population / Sample of the Study**

The population comprised of Senior Secondary School Students in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State. Using the purposive sampling technique, three hundred students were randomly selected. 150 students from a public school and 150 students from two private schools, 75 students from each private school participated in this study.

Instrument

The Frequency of Delinquent Behaviour Scaling Instrument (FDBSI) was used to collect information on the delinquent behaviour of the students. This scale was developed by Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in 2005. FDBSI, a 25-item instrument with six sub scale measures, vandalism, theft, physical aggression, truancy and other school problems destructive behaviour and status offences. It has a Guttman Split Half Reliability of 0.72 and a Cronbachs alpha value of 0.88. Also the instrument has Spearman Brown Coefficient of 0.95.

Data analysis

The data set was processed using SPSS, Simple percentage, t-test for independent group, ONE WAY ANOVA, and Simple Linear Regression.

Results:**Demographic characteristics of participants**

Table 1 shows the demographic variables of the population, the variables shown are gender, student's school type (public or private), family type and age distribution.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents variables frequency percentage

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	118	39.3
Female	182	60.7
TOTAL	300	100
School type		
Private	150	50
Public	150	50
TOTAL	300	100
Family type		
Monogamous	260	86.7
Polygamous	40	13.3
TOTAL	300	100
Age		
10-12 years	12	4.0
13-15 years	176	59.0
16-18 years	98	33.0
19 above	14	5.0
TOTAL	300	100

Table 2: Prevalence of Deviant Behaviour

The anti-social behaviour of the surveyed adolescents was analyzed and the prevalence of the different components was vandalism, theft, physical aggression, truancy, destructiveness and status offence. Table 2 shows the prevalence of anti-social behaviour as follows: deviant behaviour (30.3%), vandalism (23.7%), theft (33.7%), physical aggression (23.7%), truancy (24.3%), destructiveness (7.3%) and status offence (11.2%).

Behaviour	Deviant Behaviour	Vandalism	Theft	Physical Aggression	Truancy	Destructiveness	Status Offense
Prevalence	30.3%	23.7%	33.7%	23.7%	24.3%	7.3%	11.2%

The t-Test scores showed that there were 150 adolescents from public owned schools and 150 adolescents from privately owned schools, while the mean anti social behaviour scores were 31.38 and 29.69 respectively. The directional significant P value associated with this test was .006. The t-Test succeeded in revealing a statistically significantly reliable difference between the mean of the anti social behaviour scores that the adolescents in government schools have ($M = 31.38$, $SD = 12.73$) and that of the adolescents in private schools ($M = 29.69$, $SD = 5.57$), $t(298) = 1.487$, $p = .006$, $\alpha = .05$. It can therefore be concluded that the anti social behaviour levels of the adolescents from public school is significantly higher than that of the adolescents in private schools. Adolescents from public schools therefore engage in significantly more anti-social behaviour than adolescents in private secondary school.

Table 3: t-test table for anti-social behaviour of adolescents in public and private schools.

School Type	N	\bar{X}	SD	T	P
Public	150	31.38	12.73	1.487	<.05
Private	150	29.69	5.57		

N= Number of Respondents

X= Mean

SD= Standard Deviation

T= t-Test

P=Level Of Significance.

The t-Test scores showed that there were 260 adolescents from monogamous family type and 37 adolescents from polygamous family type surveyed, while the mean anti social behaviour scores were 30.57 and 30.57 respectively. The t-Test failed to reveal a statistically significantly reliable difference between the mean of the anti social behaviour scores that the adolescents from monogamous family type have ($M = 30.57$, $SD = 10.34$) and that of the adolescents from polygamous family type ($M = 30.57$, $SD = 5.88$), $t(295) = .003$, $p = .006$, $\alpha = .05$. It can therefore be concluded that the anti social behaviour levels of the adolescents from monogamous family type is not significantly higher than that of the adolescents from polygamous family type. Adolescents from monogamous family type therefore do not engage in significantly more anti-social behaviour than adolescents from monogamous family type.

Table 5: t-test Table for the anti-social behaviour scores of adolescents based on family type

Family Type	N	\bar{X}	SD	T	P
Monogamous	260	30.57	10.34	0.003	>.05
Poly gamous	37	30.57	5.88		

N= Number of Respondents

X= Mean

SD= Standard Deviation

T= T Test

P=Level Of Significance.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the anti-social behaviour of the adolescents in senior secondary schools, based on their age groups. Their age groups were classified in four levels labeled 10-12 years, 13-15 years, 16-18 years, 19 above. The independent variable represented the four different age levels, while the dependent variable was the adolescents' anti social behavior scores. See the table for the means and standard deviations for each of the four age groups.

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviations of Anti-Social Behaviour Scores

Age	N	Mean	SD
10-12 years	12	29.67	4.5
13-15 years	176	29.69	7.86
16-18 years	98	30.85	9.61
19 years above	14	39.79	24.22
TOTAL	300	30.54	9.84

N= Number of Respondents

X= Mean

SD= Standard Deviation

An alpha level.05 was used for all analyses. Table 6 shows the analysis of variance for the anti social scores of the secondary school students based on their age levels.

Discussion of Findings

The study examined correlates of anti-social behaviour among senior secondary school students in Port-Harcourt. The study found out that anti-social behaviour level of the male adolescents is significantly higher than that of the

female adolescents. While some researchers reported that girls are more prone to anti-social behaviour than boys, others affirm that sex difference in anti-social behaviour is relatively small and insignificant. Males and females are both vulnerable to the same individual, familial and environmental risk factor for anti-social behaviour (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter&silvia, 2002).

The study found out that adolescents in public schools were more prone to anti-social behaviour than adolescents in private secondary schools. The anti-social behaviour levels of the adolescents from public school are significantly higher than that of the adolescents in private schools.

The family type did not show any significance in this study in relation to anti-social behaviour among secondary school students. This study found out that the anti-social behaviour levels of the adolescents from monogamous family type are not significantly higher than that of the adolescents from polygamous family type. Adolescents from monogamous family type therefore do not engage in significantly more anti-social behaviour than adolescents from polygamous family type. This is not in line with (Al-krenawi&Slomin-nev, 2008;Elbedour 2007) found more anti-social behaviour among adolescents in polygamous families than adolescents in monogamous families.

Considering age in this study in relation to anti-social behaviour among secondary school students. This study found out that age is a significant factor in the anti-social behaviour of adolescents of the selected secondary schools. The older the adolescents, the more they engage in anti-social behaviour. This is in line with the previous research of (Moffitt 1996; Sohrabi 2007) that found out that as age increases the probability of anti-social behaviour increases. According to Piquero (2007) anti-social behaviour activity increases during adolescence at age 17.

Conclusion

Based on these findings the following conclusions were made:

1. Anti-social behaviour of male adolescents is significantly higher than that of female adolescents.
2. Anti- social behaviour of adolescents from public school is significantly higher than adolescents from private schools.
3. Anti-social behaviour of adolescents from monogamous family type is not significantly higher than adolescents from polygamous family type.
4. Age is a significant factor in anti-social behaviour of adolescents.

Recommendation

The following recommendations are made from the findings of respondents from public and private secondary schools. These findings on anti-social behaviour of adolescents among senior secondary school students should be adhered to and solved by the society.

1. Male adolescents with anti-social behaviour should not be excluded from any health or social care services because of their history with anti-social or offending behaviours. Rather the organizations should support them with love and engage them in healthy mental activities like sports and games, community service and many more.
2. Adolescents in public schools with anti-social behaviour should be motivated and encouraged by educational institution in the society and should be given rewards for good behaviours.
3. Families should also involve loved ones with anti-social behaviour to engage in local support groups and therapy.
4. Children who are neglected at a young age should be provided with financial assistance and taken care of by the government or private groups.
5. Adolescents with anti-social behaviour should be given social skills and instruction in order to stop their misbehaviour.

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