

JUVENILE DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DAY AND BOARDING STUDENTS

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Abstract

For decades now, juvenile deviant behaviours has become a major concern to Psychologists, Criminologists, Educationists and the society at large, and many scholars have studied its moral, social and developmental implications. Comparing the day and boarding students on juvenile delinquent behaviours is the interest of the present paper. The Social Learning Theory of Rotter (1954) captures the most credible explanation for delinquent behaviours among adolescents, since it is agreed that behaviour is socially learned through the interaction between environment and one's psychological processes. A total of 377 students comprising 190 males and 187 females, 185 day students and 192 boarders, age ranged between 14 and 17 years, with a mean age of 16.22 and standard deviation of .71 to participate in the study. It was hypothesized that d) Day students would significantly show delinquent behaviours more than boarding students; b) Male students would significantly differ from Female students on delinquent behaviours. The Psychopathic Deviate Scale by Hathaway and Mckinley (1967) was the main instrument for the study, which randomly selected participants from secondary schools in Anambra State. Independent t-test statistics was used to compare day and boarding students, male and female on juvenile delinquent behaviours. Results strongly suggested that day students showed juvenile delinquent behaviour than the boarding students and that male students significantly differed from female students on juvenile delinquent behaviours. It was therefore concluded that rather than posing a threat to the development of the adolescent/students, boarding school helps to nurture an adolescent student to proper development and necessary adjustments.

Keywords: Juvenile Delinquent Behaviour, Day and Boarding Students

INTRODUCTION

Behaviours that go against the norms and value system of a given community, state or nation is one of the important issues faced by most nations of the world today. These forms of behaviour are sometimes perpetuated by the teens (adolescents) in diverse capacities. Thus, it appears to be on the rise despite the social awareness of the ills of delinquency/crime (Ifedigbo & Mbah, 2015). In Nigeria for instance, involvement of adolescents in delinquent activities is on the increase. The last two decades witnessed crimes ranging from minor stealing to major robbery and killing perpetuated by teens/adolescents. There has also been increasing concern of the Police and the general public on the seriousness of adolescents'

delinquent and conduct problems (Wu, Chia, Lee & Lee 1998). They reported that juvenile delinquent behaviour rate rose from 367 to 538 per 100,000 between 1986 and 1996. They claimed that most of the adolescents arrested in 1996 were arrested for petty crimes, such as theft, with about 38 percent arrested for shoplifting and 18 percent for simple theft. The outcome of their research also shows that most serious crimes, such as rioting, robbery and extortion accounted for 15 percent. Attempts had also been made recently on the rate of delinquent behaviours among teens. Statistics with reference to the latest National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) report (2012) shows that delinquent behaviours involving teens/adolescents have increased from 0.8 % (2001) to 11.8 % (2011).

Juvenile Delinquency

The term juvenile delinquency has a broad definition; while some emphasize the legal aspect such as the violation of the law, others emphasize the characteristic problems of delinquency. During the 18th Century, the definition of juvenile delinquency shifted from —a form of misbehavior common to all children to a euphemism for the conditions and behaviors of poor children (Roberts, 2004). The Nigerian constitution of 1979 defines juvenile delinquency as “a crime committed by a young person under the age of 18 years as a result of trying to comply with the wishes of his peers or to escape from parental pressure or certain emotional stimulation’.

Nevertheless, juvenile delinquency, which is used interchangeably as juvenile delinquent behaviour is defined as any illegal actions committed by a juvenile in which there is an apprehension and court proceeding. It refers to actions that violate the law, committed by a person who is under the legal age of majority. It also references participation in illegal behavior by minors (juveniles, i.e. individuals younger than the statutory age of majority) (Siegel & Welsh, 2011).

Explaining juvenile delinquency, Kring, Davison, Neale and Johnson (2007) indicated that the diagnostic criteria for delinquent behaviours include two major components: i) A pervasive pattern of disregard for the rights of others since the age of 15; and ii). The presence of a conduct disorder before age 15 (such as truancy, running away from home, frequent lying, theft, arson and deliberate destruction of property, working only inconsistently, breaking laws, being irritable, physically aggressive, defaulting on debts, being reckless, impulsive, neglecting to plan ahead, show little regard for truth and little remorse for their misdeeds.

With regards to defining who is a delinquent and who is not, considerations are made to the norms and culture of the society in which the juvenile lives. What may be deemed a delinquent behaviour in Nigeria may be an acceptable behavior in another part of the world. However, when a juvenile commits an offence, contrary to the laws or norms of the society, such as acts of rape, vandalism, theft, drug related activity, arson or other anti-social behavior, he/she is then considered a juvenile delinquent. A delinquent is therefore a legal term which describes a juvenile or an adolescent who has broken a criminal law, and/or is being officially processed by the juvenile court and is judged by the court to be a delinquent. It is also any male who while under the age of 17 years, or any female who while under the age of 18 years violates any law... or is incorrigible, or knowingly associates with thieves, vicious or immoral persons; or without just cause and without the consent of its parents, guardian or custodian absents itself from its home or place of abode, or is growing up in idleness or crime, or knowingly frequents a house of ill repute; or knowingly frequents any policy shop or place where gambling device is operated; or frequents any saloon or dramshop where intoxicating liquors are sold; or patronizes or visits any public pool room or bucket

shop, or wanders about the streets in the night time without being on any lawful business or lawful occupation; or habitually wanders about any railroad yards or tracks or jumps or attempts to jump on to any moving train, or enters any car or engine without lawful authority, or uses vile, obscene, vulgar, or indecent language in any public place or about any school house, or is guilty of indecent or lascivious conduct (Sirohi, Criminology and Penology, Allahabad Law Agency, 2008).

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN JUVENILE DELINQUENT BEHAVIOURS

Juvenile delinquency occurrences by males are largely disproportionate to the rate of occurrences by females (Shover, James, & Thornton, 2011). This great gap between the crimes reinforces the connotations of traditional masculinity to be the center of violence, aggression, and competition. This is largely based on the notion that as males, it is their duty to take what they feel they deserve through these means to define themselves and play the role of provider and independent figure. These societal conditions are infringed by male peers, asserting the notion that the Panoptic that Jeremy Bentham described as an ideal selfregulation prison both literally and figuratively mimics the actions of male delinquents. However, these delinquencies are not as prevalent in females in that they are expected to be more docile individuals and relies solely more on dependent characters, alleviating them from the need of committing delinquencies. Because aggression is not a desired characteristic, it has caused more commotion when females perform crimes that are often attributed to males.

The acts of delinquency begin with the juvenile's expectations of their perceived roles through the direction of adults of both genders. Sandra Lee Bartky expresses these claims thoroughly in her work *Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power* by examining close observation of diction, action, and decorum. Boys learn to take as much space as possible when sitting, dress appropriately to stand out, and speak more demanding to assert his position and gain respect from fellow male peers. This expectation of leadership rarely enforced through peers largely dictates that delinquencies arise when male feel that they cannot assert or claim such respect through legal and practical means, thus enforcing violence is merely extenuating a desired trait to gain such position. Thus, delinquent behavior is expressed as an outlet especially to those of lower socioeconomic backgrounds that cannot gain precedence through conventional means.

Gender role for females is to become more unnoticeable, a follower that does not need to stand out. Because of their condition to be more docile and dependent, the instinctive need to gain precedence is not as highly valued. Even respect comes in the form of different terms, as it is through how appropriately she conducts herself that seems innocent. This is also influenced by fellow peers such as mothers and other female figures apart from the authoritative male figure. In this instance, there is no need to urge to commit delinquency as the female is expected to rely on the male for his expected role as provider. It is through the act of needing to become dependent that enforces the feminine characteristics to seem as an alternative to delinquency. In fact, it has been largely stated that while masculinity induces such violent behavior, femininity is seen as the antithesis to delinquency (Shover, James, & Thornton, 2011). Furthermore, it is assumed that because femininity and masculinity are portrayed to be opposites, they contain bipolarity in society that forms an explanation to the staggering disproportionate ratio between convicted delinquents. A sociological study conducted and recorded in the article *Gender Role Expectations of Juveniles*, both a masculine and feminine test was created to be answered by kindergartners until high school, indicating what role expectations were among the sexes. The answers were predominantly that males were to provide through aggressive terms, while females should be the more

docile, bolstering the bipolarity assumption. This is because gender-role socialization produces an absolutist stance toward rules and a receptiveness toward generalized moral standards among girls while boys tend to develop a more individualistic and relativistic view of rules (Shover, James, & Thornton, 2011). The bipolarity assumption suggests that masculinity and femininity are opposites, and the assumption of unidimensionality implies that gender differences form a single scale (Norland, James, Shover, 2008)

FACTORS THAT ENGENDER JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Juvenile delinquency takes place in various forms and varies in degree, frequency, duration and seriousness and involves different forms of specialization like drug addiction, sex offences, predatory acts etc. Delinquency like other social behaviour has complex roots. It is most often a transitory phenomenon. However, there is no single cause of Juvenile delinquency but there are many and varied causes ranging from biological, socioenvironmental, psychological, physiological and personal factors.

Nevertheless, amongst very many factors that can engender juvenile delinquency, the present study presume that type of secondary school is one of such factors that may have influence on delinquent behaviours. Type of secondary school in this context refers to the type of school in which a child is trained. In this study, it cuts across two divergent types that place a student on either day or boarding student. The first boarding (or residential) schools (which makes a student a boarder) reference schools where students stay internally during the school week (and sometimes during the weekend/ holidays). Boarding schools have dormitory facilities and facilities for eating, studying and recreational activities. Usually there is accommodation for supporting and/ or teaching staff as well as mostly seen among the mission schools. A complementary literature in sociology and psychology emphasizes the potential benefits of boarding schools including: placing students in safer, less volatile, and less stressful environments; minimizing negative parental and community interactions; and ensuring that students have positive adult role models, are provided with nutritious foods, and spend less time being idle.

The second Day-schools reference schools that students attend during the school day. Children stay in school during school hours. Often, there are facilities to take lunch at school as well. Furthermore, extra-curricular programs can be offered in and/or by the school outside school hours. Day-schools do not have dormitory facilities. Day school gives the child the opportunity to relate with people outside the school on daily basis, which also makes for modeling after the positive or negative lifestyle of the people he mingles with. Apart from given the child continuous stay with the parents, guidance or caregivers, it avails the child the opportunity to associate with peers, and thus, increases the vulnerability of the said child to peer pressure and influence (which maybe negative or positive).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING THE STUDY

The present study built on the Social Learning Theory (SLT) of Rotter (1954). This theory assumes that behavior is socially learned. An individual learns through past experience and that certain satisfactions are more likely in some situations than in others. In addition, learned behaviors may be modified or changed with new experiences or input. Behavior is learned from other people, and individuals' needs are sometimes met with the assistance of other people (Rotter, 1954). According to this theory, a person's behavior is determined by her/his goals. With past experiences, a set of differentiated needs develop in each individual. The more specific the category of behaviors and goals included in the need; the greater the possibility of predicting the strength of one from the other.

In SLT a need may be viewed as having three essential components: need potentials, expectancies, and values. Need potential refers to the set of behaviors directed toward the same goal and their potential strength, which is the likelihood that they will be used in a given situation (Rotter, 1971). For example, Johnson, Mccaue & Klein (2002) found that adolescents who perceived the rewards of delinquency as outweighing the costs had a higher frequency of delinquent behaviour than other adolescents. Delinquency would be seen as the “set of behaviours” used to achieve the goal of the “rewards” of delinquent behaviour. The second major component is expectancies, or beliefs and knowledge, that certain behaviours will lead to satisfactions or goals that a person values. For example, the individual may know that past experiences of engaging in delinquent behaviours brought excitement and pleasure. The individual believes and expects that the same activity of delinquency will bring excitement and pleasure again. Therefore he/she engages in the delinquent activity again.

Another individual may know that delinquency can lead to being culpable of crime by the statutory standard, therefore does not engage in delinquent activity because he/she values personal freedom. The third major component is the value attached to the goals themselves.

Values differentiate the degree to which one set of satisfactions is preferred over another (Rotter, 1971). The value of an exciting life was found to correlate more highly with risky adolescent behaviours than were other values (Rozmus & Edgil, 1993); and thus explains the interaction between environment and one’s psychological processes that leads to delinquent behaviours.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For decades now, juvenile deviant behaviours have become major concern to Psychologists, Criminologists, Educationists and the society at large, They have indeed been on the increase since the World War II among the industrialized and developed countries as well as developing countries, and have been reported to include high rate of early school dropouts in both girls and boys, increase in street children and high rate of crime, both in towns and rural settings etc.

To understand the prevalent of juvenile delinquent behaviours, many scholars have studied its moral, social and developmental implications, as well as the factors that engender such behaviours. Some of these studies highlighted gender (Moffitt et al, 2001); peer influences, (Garnefski & Okma, 2002), race/ethnicity (Walker-Barnes & Mason, 2001), self-esteem (Rosenberg et al, 1989) the presence of trauma, abuse and/or violence (Fox, 1996), in a child or youth’s life, style of parenting etc. as factors responsible for juvenile delinquent behaviours. Quite perturbing however is the knowing that most of these studies are foreign based, another is that few of these studies had tried to compare type of students (that is type of secondary school) on delinquent behaviours. The present study seeks to close this lacuna, thus, it raised the following questions to guide the study:

- i. Will day students significantly show delinquent behaviours more than boarding students among secondary school students in Anambra State?
- ii. Will male students differ significantly from female students on delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Anambra State?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to ‘Compare day and boarding students on juvenile delinquent behaviours.’

Specifically, the main objectives of the study are to:

- i. Find out whether day students will significantly show delinquent behaviours more than boarding students among secondary school students in Anambra State.
- ii. Find out whether male students will significantly differ from female students on delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Anambra State.

Hypotheses

- i. Day students will significantly show delinquent behaviours more than boarding students among secondary school students in Anambra State.
- ii. Male students will differ significantly from female students on delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Anambra State.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 377 students were randomly selected using simple random sampling techniques from secondary schools in Anambra State to participate in the study. They comprised 201 males and 176 females, 185 day students and 192 boarders, age ranged between 14 and 17 years, with a mean age of 16.22 and standard deviation of .71.

Instrument

One instrument was used for data collection. It included Psychopathic Deviate Scale (pds) by Hathaway and Mckinley (1967), a 72-item scale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory developed by Hathaway and Mckinley (1967). 41 are designed to obtain clinical information about client's personality, while 30 of the items constitute the K scale which is one of the correction/validity scales of MMPI designed to assess the extent to which a client truthfully responded to the items of the whole test. The pd scale and k scale overlap by having some items common to both of them.

Validity and Reliability

Pd scale was correlated with Arrow Dot Test which is the subtest of TES (Dombose & Stobin, 1958) that measure ego strength and obtained a concurrent validity coefficient of .87. One week interval test-retest coefficient of reliability reported by Hathaway and Mckinley (1967) with a sample of 160 male and female normal clients are pds = .80, k scale = .76. However, the present study obtained an internal reliability coefficient of .89, in a pilot test with 50 students of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Procedure

The Principals/Managers of each of the respective schools selected for the study were met by the researchers. During their brief chat, they were able to explain the nature of the research to each of the principals/managers in the respective schools. Based on the established understanding and rapport, the Principal directed the researchers to the Guidance and Counselor, who was said to be in a better position to render the help they came for. Meeting with the respective Guidance and Counselors gave the researchers opportunity to have dates fixed for the study for each of the schools visited.

On each of the agreed dates, the researchers went to the respective schools, and with the help of the Guidance and Counselor, sampled the students using simple random sampling techniques. A platform or sampling techniques that gives every member of the population equal chance of participating in the study. These students were made to pick folded papers, put in a bowl, on which was written either "YES" or "NO". The students that picked YES

were the actual participants that participated in the study. Out of 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 377 copies were found valid and used as the actual data in the study.

Design and Statistics

This is a comparative study, involving two groups on one treatment condition. Therefore, the independent t-test statistics was used for data analysis and testing of the hypothesis.

RESULT

Table I

Showing the mean and standard deviation of day and boarding students on delinquent behaviours

Adolescent Delinquent Behaviours

| Type of Student | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|-------------------|---------|----------------|-----|
| Day Students | 29.0054 | 9.87888 | 185 |
| Boarding Students | 27.7865 | 7.28415 | 192 |
| Total | 28.3846 | 8.66505 | 377 |

Inspection of the mean in table 1 above revealed that day students ($M = 29.01$, $SD = 9.88$) showed delinquent behaviour more than boarding students ($M = 27.79$, $SD = 7.28$). This however confirmed the hypothesis, which stated that ‘Day students would significantly show delinquent behaviours than boarding students.’ This implies that rather than a threat to adolescents’ development, the boarding was rather a formative factor which helps the adolescents to experience appropriate and effective adjustment pattern to the ever-fluidy environment.

Table 2

Showing the result of the Independent t-test of day and boarding students on delinquent behaviours

| Adolescent Delinquent Behaviours | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------|---|-------------|
| Gender (male and female) | t | df | F | Sig. |
| Equal Variance Assumed | 2.222 | 375 | | 24.854 .000 |
| Equal Variance Not Assumed | 2.288 | 339.754 | | |

The Independent t-test table above showed that a significant difference exists between male students and female students on juvenile delinquent behaviour. This however confirmed the hypothesis, which stated that ‘Male students would significantly differ from female students on juvenile delinquent behaviour. This implies that though delinquent behaviours are the devil facing the teens, differences persist on the manner these behaviours are exhibited.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study compared day and boarding students on delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Anambra State. Statistical analysis confirmed that hypothesis one was upheld. Thus, day students significantly showed delinquent behaviours more than boarding students. Detail showed that day student’s mean score is greater than that of the boarding students, implying that delinquent behaviours are exhibited more by the day students than it is with the boarding students.

This study however is in line with the assertion of Woord (2007) who asserted that boarding schools offer students a good opportunity to learn and live together with other students: learn to cooperate and respect other people's habits and values (thereby, molding them into responsible adults); develop social and communicational skills through interaction with other students and staff. Furthermore, the findings validated the declaration of Woord (2007) that boarding school contributes to development of self-dependence, self-confidence and responsibility of students, which in another sense could be seen as an antidote to delinquent behaviours. Suffice it to that in boarding school, students rely less on their parents, (yet under the viable monitoring vigilance of their teachers), which helps to make them grow into independent adults unlike their counterparts who are more dependent due to their constant contact with their parents.

Analysis for hypothesis two which tested whether male students would significantly differ from female students was also upheld. Detail of the mean scores showed that male students scored high on delinquent behaviour than their female counterpart. It is however plausible to state that gender roles, which were endowed on each of the gender explains this difference in a cordial way.

This finding however is in line with claim of Shover, James, and Thornton (2011) that juvenile delinquency occurrences by males are largely disproportionate to the rate of occurrences by females. This great gap between the crimes reinforces the connotations of traditional masculinity to be the center of violence, aggression, and competition. This is largely based on the notion that as males, it is their duty to take what they feel they deserve through these means to define themselves and play the role of provider and independent figure. These societal conditions are infringed by male peers, asserting the notion that the Panoptic that Jeremy Bentham described as an ideal self-regulation prison both literally and figuratively mimics the actions of male delinquents.

Implication of the Study

The findings of the study vehemently showed that day schooling exact a major threat on the adolescents' behavioural development and adjustment. This can be largely as a result of the negative consequences of not being properly monitored by the appropriate bodies especially when parents or caregivers have tight schedules that deprive them adequate parenting of their wards (because of the quest to make ends meet), or when parents use parenting styles such as permissive and uninvolved parenting styles, both of which according Baumrind (1991), are non-punitive, accepting and affirmative in their relationship towards their children. Such parents make few or no demands for household responsibility and allow the children to behave the way they want; and who is seen as disengaged parents who are neither demanding nor responsive. These parents do not monitor their children's behaviour and also do not support them.

Suggestion for the Study

With regards to the findings of study, the researchers strongly suggested that parents and caregivers whose schedules are tight or who exhibit the unsupportive parenting style should recourse to boarding school, as this has proven a viable tool for proper nurturing, development and necessary adjustment. When this is in place, it makes for adequate benefits of the general populace or society at large. It therefore disproved the saying and claims that boarding school poses threat to the development of the adolescents.

Limitation of the Study

The paramount limitation of the present study is the small sample size. This is believed to have the capacity that could somewhat hamper the generalizability of the result/findings across schools outside the state of study.

Conclusion

The study concludes that rather than a threat to the development of the adolescent/students, boarding school helps to nurture an adolescent student to proper development and necessary adjustments, which is beneficial to not only the adolescent but the society at large.

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