

## CAUSES OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Delinquent behaviour among students is one of the major factors militating against smooth teaching and learning in schools. This study investigated causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population consisted selected secondary school teachers in Kwara State. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select 384 respondents. The research instrument used was a questionnaire entitled "Causes of Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire". Having been subjected to test re-test method and the Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficient formula the instrument possessed a reliability coefficient of 0.87. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that the major causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers are poor study habit, negative peer influence in school and poor school classroom condition. No significant difference in causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers based on gender and work experience. It was recommended, among others, that students should be enlightened on how to develop good study habit and both the school (teachers, guidance counsellors and others.) and home should synergise to ensure monitoring of peer activities of in-school adolescents.*

**Keywords:** Delinquent Behaviour; In-school adolescents, Causes.

### Introduction

In the highly sophisticated world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century where there is increasingly new opportunities that could dispose individuals to various unwholesome attitude, adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviour is bound to be on the increase because of vulnerability of the stage of life they are passing through. Adolescence stage is a period when individuals navigate the transition from childhood to adulthood, thereby exposing them to different life experiences with attendant temptation of engaging in unacceptable behaviours. The involvement of adolescents in delinquent behaviour could predicate on variety of factors which may include biological, social and psychological among others. The position of teachers as *in loco parentis* affords them the opportunity to develop reliable perception about factors responsible for delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents.

Adolescence, from a psychological point of view, is a period dominated by stress and tensions due to inner emotional instability and as a result of conflicting external influence (Oni, 2010). At this stage, the adolescents engage in activities that are perceived to be contrary to the norms and values of the societies; an adolescent often finds it difficult to conform to the norms of the society. Among the most common beliefs about adolescence is that it is the time when the young boys and girls form their personal identities. It is also a period when parents need to go an extra mile in rendering assistance to adolescents in order to develop wholesome behaviours and acceptable attitude which would lead them to function as good citizens in their adulthood (Nwazuo, Yemisi & Moronkola, 2004). Adolescents progress through stages of biological development as well as changes in psychological and social functioning. An adolescent can be described as someone who is

unstable, angry, moody, self-conscious and inexperienced in handling emotional problems. The stage of adolescence coincides with secondary school age when the individual receives formal education. Thus, large proportion of young boys and girls are found in school for pre-career, social and most significantly moral development.

Delinquent behaviour is a serious problem that occurs during adolescence period. It is an umbrella term used to describe any form of negative, inappropriate or unapproved behaviour in any given society. Idamokoro (2005) noted that there are two main categories of delinquent behaviours which Nigerian adolescents often engaged in. These are criminal and status offences. The criminal offences include stealing, arson rape, drug offences, murder, burglary, pick pocket, and armed robbery while status offences include running away from home, malingering, truancy and others. Behaviour could be tagged delinquent when it is contrary to the prevailing norms for an approved social conduct. However, the behaviour is considered to be a delinquent when it is long-lasting and when it violates the rights of others, when it goes against accepted norms of behaviour and disrupts the child's or family's everyday life (Hinshaw & Lee, 2003). Burt and Donnellan (2009) classified delinquent behaviour into three subtypes which are physical aggression, social aggression, and rule-breaking. Physical aggression includes fighting, physical bullying, getting angry and threatening others. Social aggression means those behaviours that are harmful to those who are in social relationships. This type of behaviour includes gossiping, spreading rumors, purposefully trying to destroy one's reputation, and trying to hurt one's feelings by being negative toward their appearance, actions and beliefs. Rule-breaking includes theft, absenteeism from school, vandalism and littering of the surroundings. These behaviours are common features that could be found among in-school adolescents and create disharmonious relationships which could precipitate disorderliness in school environment. In-school adolescents with this behaviour may display a pattern of disruptive and violent characteristics and have problems following school rules and regulation (Hinshaw & Lee, 2003). In-school adolescents' involvement in delinquent behaviour is on the increase and has been a source of worry to many Nigerians (Animashaun, 2004). Such delinquent behaviour ranges from absenteeism from school, gambling, lateness to school, theft, cheating, destruction of property, disobedience, underage drinking, examination malpractice, vandalism, smoking, street fighting, cultism, rape, rioting and others.

Wickliffe (2012) stated the significant factors underlying delinquency among adolescents as: broken home, inadequate education, inappropriate leisure time, influence of unwholesome mass media, instability of home, lack of proper discipline, vocational preparation, over protection by parents, parental conflict, parental rejection, poor living conditions, poor sex education both at home and in school, severe emotional disturbance and wrong companion. Issues of delinquent behaviour have become a thing of great concern to Nigerian secondary schools. Studies, such as Animashaun (2004) and Fawole and Awoniyi (2010) have shown that delinquent behaviour is rampant among in-school adolescents due to a number of causes, which include parents' attitudes towards their children, the community, social class, frustration, peer group, foreign ideas, poverty, and illiteracy, among others. Xiaoru and Howard (2006) carried out a longitudinal study using a sample of 2,753 respondents across three points in time. The results showed that both male and female respondents expressed similar factors responsible for involvement of adolescents in delinquent behaviour.

Teachers play significant roles in both the academic and moral development of the students. To a large extent, students spend a great deal of time with their teacher and therefore, the teacher becomes a role model to them. Teachers are there not only to teach the in-school adolescents, but also to love and care for them. Teachers are typically highly respected by people in the community and therefore become a role model to students. The enormous

time students spend in school gives teachers great opportunity to study their behaviour patterns as well as relate adequately with them. Another role played by teachers is a protector role. Teachers are taught to look for signs of trouble in the students. When students' behaviours change or physical signs of abuse are noticed, teachers are required to look into the problem. Schools and teachers have important roles to play for the all-round development of their students. They could be considered as the closest set of people to the students. Thus, the perception of teachers about causes of in-school adolescents' delinquent behaviour becomes imperative in order to curtail the menace in the society. In addition, several demographic variables may account for the perception which the teachers would develop about the in-school adolescents. Such variables include gender and educational qualifications, work experience and type of subject taught. Some possible causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescent could include parents' inability to provide school materials; lack of parental supervision, poor learning environment, and poor school discipline. Oden (2015) found some cause of delinquent behaviour among students to include poor learning environment and inadequate monitoring of peer activities. It could therefore be inferred that delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescent has reached a level of concern. However, it is more expedient to identify the factors responsible for such unacceptable behaviour in order to find better solutions to the menace. This study therefore examined causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Delinquent behaviour is a well-known issue among in-school adolescents in different communities of the world. The incidence of delinquent behaviours among in-school adolescent in Nigerian has become a worrisome phenomenon. It is common to find young school boys and girls been caught in unwholesome behaviour such as vandalism, bullying, stealing, rule breaking in school, harassment, cultism and many other disruptive behaviours that are tantamount to teaching and learning in schools. The resultant problems have been of great concern, not only to parents but also to teachers and government at all levels.

Fawole and Awoniyi (2010) conducted a study on the issue of family size as risk factor in delinquency among secondary school students in Kwara State. The study revealed that there was no significant relationship between family size and delinquent behaviour, there was however relationship between poor father-child relationship and delinquent behaviour. The study further established that both male and female respondents were similar in their expression on risk factors in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students. Animaseun and Aremu (2015) conducted a correlational study of age, study pattern and school connectedness as factors affecting delinquency among secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship among age, study patterns and school connectedness and delinquency among secondary school students in Osun State. Sanni, Udoh, Okediji, Modo and Ezeh (2010) carried out a study on family stability, types and juvenile delinquency issues among secondary school students in Akwa-Ibom State, Nigeria. The finding showed that family stability and family type have a significant influence on delinquent behaviour among secondary school students. Oden (2015) found that number of years spent at work as well as educational qualifications did not influence the expression of literate parents on factors responsible for delinquent behaviour among students. In order to substantiate the findings of the previous studies or otherwise and fill the gap in research, the present study investigated causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria.

## Research Question

What are the causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria?

## Hypotheses

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the teachers' perceived causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the teachers' perceived causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria based on Work Experience.

## Methodology

The Descriptive survey was adopted for the study. The population for this study comprised all teachers in public secondary schools in Kwara State, which is estimated at over 84,510, according to Federal Government of Nigeria (2017). Purposive sampling was used to select twelve secondary schools across the state. The schools considered were those having the largest population of teachers, which was the reason for purposively selecting them. Simple random sampling was used to select thirty two (32) secondary school teachers from each of the 12 schools. Thus, a total of 384 secondary school teachers were selected for the study. Questionnaire used to collect data for this study was researcher-developed tagged "Causes of Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (CDBQ)" with a reliability coefficient of 0.87, which was obtained through a test retest method. The scores of the two sets of test were subjected to the Pearson's Moment Correlation formula. Both the face and content validity of instrument were established by five test experts from the Departments of Counsellor Education, Arts Education and Science Education, University of Ilorin. A structured questionnaire of 15-item divided into two sections; A and B was adopted with section A addressing the demographic data of the respondents while B addressed items on causes of delinquent behaviour. The instrument was patterned on a four point rating scale format with 4 points as the highest score and 1 as the lowest score. The average mean score for taking decision on the value of each item is 2.50 (that is  $4+3+2+1= 10/4$ ). Hence, all items that have mean scores from 2.50 and above were considered causes of delinquent behaviour while items with less than 2.50 were considered not the causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents. The questionnaire forms were administered by the researchers after obtaining the informed consent of the respondents. The data collected were statistically analysed using percentage, mean, t-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	188	48.9
Female	196	51.1
Total	384	100.0

Table 1 indicates that 188 (48.9%) of the respondents were males while 196 (51.1%) of the respondents were females. This implies that there were more female respondents that participated in the study.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents by work experience**

Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-10 years	185	48.2
11-20 years	135	35.2
Above 20 years	64	16.6
Total	384	100.0

Table 2 indicates that 185 (48.2%) of the respondents have work experience between 0 and 10 years, 135 (35.2%) have work experience between 11 and 20 years while 64 (16.6%) have work experience above 20 years.

**Research Question:** What are causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers?

**Table 3: Mean and rank order of responses on perceived causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents**

Delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents is caused by:	Mean	Rank
Poor study habit	3.57	1 <sup>st</sup>
Negative influence of peers in school	3.55	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Poor school classroom condition	3.52	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Poor ability to cope in school academic	3.46	4 <sup>th</sup>
Negative influence of media	3.41	5 <sup>th</sup>
Poor school discipline	3.38	6 <sup>th</sup>
Poor relationship among teachers and students	3.24	7 <sup>th</sup>
High handedness of disciplinary issues in school	3.15	8 <sup>th</sup>
Emulating wrong models in school	3.07	9 <sup>th</sup>
Inadequate monitoring of students behaviour	2.95	10 <sup>th</sup>
Fear of insecurity	2.81	11 <sup>th</sup>
Low academic activities in school	2.73	12 <sup>th</sup>
Weak policies against delinquent behaviours in school	2.49	13 <sup>th</sup>
Students frequent search for pleasure	2.31	14 <sup>th</sup>
Students frequent search for pleasure	2.31	15 <sup>th</sup>

Table 3 shows poor study habit was ranked the most cause of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents with a mean score of 3.57 while negative influence of peers in school and poor school class room condition followed with mean scores of 3.55 and 3.52 respectively. Only three out of the fifteen items have mean scores below 2.50, which is the benchmark for making decision. Hence, respondents perceived most of the items as being causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents.

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in the causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria based on gender.

**Table 4: The t-test Result of Teachers' Perceived Causes of Delinquent Behaviour among in-school Adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria Based on Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	188	47.83	5.62	382	0.68	1.96	0.08
Female	196	48.41	5.57				

Table 4 attempted to determine the difference in the perception of respondents based on gender. The result shows a calculated t-value of 0.68, a critical t-value of 1.96 with p-value of 0.08. Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, hypothesis one is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by male and female teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria. Thus, gender has no influence on the perception of teachers on causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference in teachers' perceived causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents in Kwara State based on work experience.

**Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing Teachers' Perceived Causes of Delinquent Behaviour among In-school Adolescents in Kwara State, Nigeria Based on Work Experience**

Source	Sum of Square	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-value	Crit. F-value	p-value
Between Groups	1222.21	2	611.31	2.06	3.00	0.071
Within Groups	158141.67	381	415.07			
Total	159363.88	383				

Table 5 attempted to determine the difference in the perception of respondents based on work experience. Table 5 shows a calculated F-value of 2.06 which is less than a critical F-value 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of 0.071 greater than 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the hypothesis was not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria based on work experience. This implies that teachers expressed similar perception of causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents regardless of work experience.

## Discussion

The causes of delinquent behaviours among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers are many but topmost among them include poor study habit, negative influence of peers in school, poor school classroom condition, and poor ability to cope in school academic. This finding corroborates the submission of Animaseun and Aremu (2015) which revealed that there was a significant relationship between study patterns and involvement in delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Osun State. In addition, the present finding supports the submission of Oden (2015) which earlier found causes of delinquent behaviour among secondary school students to include poor learning environment and inadequate monitoring of peer activities. In this context, poor study habit is likely to afford in-school adolescents the freedom to engage in unwholesome activities that could amount to delinquency. Equally, poor learning environment could encourage delinquent behaviour such as truancy, student unrest, vandalism and bullying.

There was no significant difference in the causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State based on gender. The present finding supports the previous study of Fowole and Awoniyi (2010) that male and female are significant in their expression of factor influencing delinquent behaviour among secondary school students. This implies that gender has no effect on teachers' perception of causes of delinquent behaviour among students.

There was no significant difference in the causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents as perceived by teachers in Kwara State based on work experience. This

corroborates Oden (2015) who equally found no significant difference in teachers' expression of factors responsible for delinquent behaviour among students. Thus, regardless of the number of years spent at work, teachers' perception of causes of delinquent behaviour is similar. One may attribute that to the fact that teachers generally relate with student irrespective of number of years in the profession. That might make everyone to have similar observation and perception of causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents.

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that numerous factors cause delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents. However, some of the most significant among the factors are poor study habit, negative influence of peers in school and poor school classroom condition. It implies that most of these factors premised on external environment of the in-school adolescents such as peers and school. In addition, teachers generally have similar perception of causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents. Consequent upon the findings and in-order to significantly reduce causes of delinquent behaviour among in-school adolescents, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) students should be enlightened on how to develop good study habit that will keep them engaged in worthwhile activities such as adequate use of the library and laboratories;
- (ii) both the school (teachers, guidance counsellors etc.) and home should synergise to ensure monitoring of peer activities of in-school adolescents with the aim of preventing negative influence;
- (iii) the stakeholders in the education industry should ensure that conducive learning environment is provided as motivation for learning worthwhile behaviour in school; and
- (iv) all teachers, regardless of gender and work experience should be involved on issues relating to delinquent behaviour among students.

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