MEDIA AND PEER INFLUENCE AS CORRELATES OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

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Abstract
A large number of secondary school students seem to be displaying behaviour that defies social norms and school established standards. Deviant behaviours have consequences which do not only affect the students but also other education stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, government, parents and the society. Thus, this study examined media and peer influence as correlates of deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Southwest, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted with a population of 31,144 male and female students in all the public and private secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. A sample of 1,777 students was selected using multistage sampling procedure. A self-designed instrument titled 'Media and Peer Influence as Correlates of Deviant Behaviour' Questionnaire (MPICDBQ) was used to elicit data for this study. The instrument was validated by experts and subjected to reliability test through Cronbach Alpha which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Findings of the study revealed that media and peer influence had significant relationship with deviant behaviour among secondary school students. It was recommended among others that irrespective of socio-economic status, parents should strictly monitor and control the activities of their wards including the kind of friends they mingle with to avoid negative influence from peers and the media.

Keywords: Media influence, Peer influence, Deviant behaviour, Students, Secondary schools

Introduction

Recently, a large number of secondary school students, particularly in Southwest, Nigeria, seem to be displaying behaviour that defies social norms and school established standards. This type of behaviour violates the norms or social standard of schools. Deviant behaviour tends to manifest among students at all levels of education in the country especially in secondary schools. Secondary education is provided for children after primary education. Jacob and Adegboyega (2017) submitted that incidence of deviant behaviour among secondary school students include smoking, stealing from friends or parents, bullying, examination malpractice, rape, abortion, lateness, rudeness, cultism, loitering, lying, assaulting or fighting others, being cruel to others and being sexually promiscuous among others. The authors further contended that such behaviour sometimes constitute violation of legal codes or disturbances of thought or emotion. Some of the social factors identified to be contributors to deviant behaviour among students are media and peer influence.

Deviance among secondary school students has negative consequences. A school where disruptive behaviour prevails tends to become dysfunctional, making it difficult for teaching and learning to go smoothly as expected. Students may lose concentration in classroom activities due to punishment, and this could afterward result to poor academic performance, suspension, expulsion, as well as dropping out. Students expelled from school and those that dropout usually constitute nuisance and get involved in criminal activities thereby increasing crime rate in the society. School calendar could also be disrupted depending on the magnitude of deviance. This indicates that the consequences do not only affect the students but also other education stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, government, parents and the society.

Media Influence and Deviant Behaviour

One of the social changes that technology brought to the global world is social media. Social media is one of the technologies that could help to be connected to anywhere, anybody in the world without being there physically. Okeyinka (2019) declared that mass media brought new ideals, beliefs, techniques, products and fashion which are not in the best interest of the developing societies as some of the activities communicate violence and crime. Researchers have revealed that Nigeria has witnessed an unprecedented dramatic increase in the number of people having access to smart phones in the last ten years. Nigeria had over 154 million phone subscription in 2016 compared with 32 million in 2006 and those using the internet have risen from 5.55% in 2006 to 25.67% in 2016. Many of these phones are smart phones with increasingly complex features, which make them more appealing to young people. Phones used among young people have also witnessed exponential increase especially with the introduction of mobile learning in Nigerian schools. The variety of smart phone features and the availability of cheap internet access through service providers have made the use of smart phones more appealing to young people (Balogun & Olatunde 2020). Though, the exact number of users is hard to pin down, finding shows a strong growth outlook for the Nigerian smartphone market with user numbers to at least triple within the next five to six years (forecast of smart Phone users in Nigeria 2014-2025).

There is no gainsaying that the smartphone seems to be playing vital role which cannot be eroded in the society especially in the secondary schools where the students are permitted to use it. Social media enhances easy communication. It is a device commonly used among the secondary school students to reach their parents especially the boarders. Researches have proved that social media such as the mobile phone is somehow easy to handle and that it has played one or more important roles in the life of every individual particularly in the secondary schools. Observations has shown that social media enhances students' learning in different ways. It easily promotes collaborative and different types of learning through students' wireless connection to the internet. It has been observed that the laptop has motivated many students who ordinarily wouldn't have made use of the internet to do so and because mobile phones enable people to stay on-line for longer periods connecting to a world of almost limitless information thereby, increasing the volume of activity in social networking.

The opinion of Anshari et al. (2017) showed that many students rely on their mobile phones to download educational materials from the internet. A study by Al-Harrasi and Al-Badi (2014) found that university students are able to amass great amounts of information useful for their academic work by connecting to on-line sites. Empirical evidence also suggests that university students use mobile phones predominantly for social activities. This could be part of what necessitated the submission of AI-Harrasi and Al-badi (2014) that social networking emerged as a prominent activity that students engage their phones with 96% of college students use their mobile phones for all manners of social networking, with 71% of the students admitting using social net-works to communicate with their friends, over and above family members and relations. It can be deduced that social media seems to contribute positively to students learning if it could be properly handled.

The researcher observed that usage of cell/mobile phones might not be limited to the students in higher institution as observed by Al-Harrasi and Al-Badi (2014) because pupils in primary schools have been taught how to use mobile phone to solve assignments, likewise some of Nigeria secondary schools have gone on internet. Zoom classes had been introduced to secondary schools. For instance, during the period of lockdown in year 2020, some secondary schools students enjoyed online classes. Reena and Sam (2022) ascertained that during the period of COVID 19 pandemic, when children were provided with mobile phones to enhance their online mode of education, students were exposed to spending of excessive time on internet and social media.

Despite the importance and role played by the social media in the life of students one cannot dispute the fact that some students also abuse it. This could be part of Oluwagbohunmi (2017)

submission that students unconsciously and inadvertently result to the use of chatting slangs and abbreviations in school work or examinations just the way they use them while chatting on phone. They use codes that cannot be decoded even by their lecturers to write examinations. She also opined that the way the youth stick the earpiece to their ears is another unruly behaviour. The author stressed further that sometimes, they do it in such a way that they are completely oblivious of what operates around them. Many of them have met their untimely death while chatting or pinging on the road because they carelessly and unconsciously jump into highways and high speed vehicles while chatting with the earpiece tightly glued to their ears. This seems to indicate that the students might be exposed to different kind of activities on the net that could have negative impact on their life if they are not properly monitored.

The findings of Alonge (2018) corroborated this in a study on the relationship between level of undergraduates' awareness of and involvement in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria. The study revealed that there is significant relationship between erosion of societal values and the level of undergraduates' involvement in cybercrime in Southwest, Nigeria. He stressed that the recent form of deviant behaviour among the youth in the Southwest, Nigeria have been source of concern to everybody despite the fact that Nigeria cherishes her cultural values by deliberately inculcating them into her youth from generation to generation but the cultural values seem to be watered down due to what the youths listen to and watch through the social media.

Peer Influence and Deviant Behaviour

A peer is a person who is equal to another in age, ability, qualification, background and social status or a person who belongs to the same age group or social group. Peer group is a small group of similar age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities. It might also be the coming together of a healthy age intermediary, by which young ones learn skills and learn to deal with challenges and to solve problems in a social context (Jones 2010). Researches have shown that peer influence plays great roles in the social and emotional development of adolescents. Peer influence often begins at an early age and increases as one grows older. A peer could be seen as anyone (within one's age grade), it is natural one looks up to in behaviour or someone who one would think is equal in age or ability.

Peer group was defined by Okunade and Akinola (2018) as a primary group of people who have similar age interest, background or social status that seem to influence the person's belief and attitudes. Observation has shown that people that belong to same age, environment, neighborhood, rank, social status, have influence on one another. Okeyinka (2019) opined that peer group is of great importance as it affects young people way of life. This could be traced to the fact that majority of parents are too busy to know or monitor the kind of friends their children move with. So, children whose parents are less committed to their moral training become easy victims of peer pressure.

A peer group can act as positive role model, for instance, if a student is involved with a group of students who are ambitious and working hard to attain high academic goals, he/she might feel pressured to follow suit to avoid feeling excluded from the group. Okeyinka (2019) stressed that there are schools where certain peer group become deviant and dreadful as to take up a murky image of a secret cult. He stressed further that members tend to comply with the group oaths rather than run a risk of being expelled, beaten up or being killed.

On the other hand, peer group could also serve as a negative influence on a student when members of such group spend much of their time on extra curricula activities which does not add value to their academic performance. For instance, when a brilliant student mingles with such group, he or she tends to lose interest in learning. This could be one of the reasons why Olalekan (2016) submitted that peer group plays role in the life of learners and it has a lot of influence on students because students seem to feel more comfortable and relaxed among fellow peers. Milliward and Marisen (2016) in their study on contributing factors to adolescent deviant behaviours in the central region of Malawi found that students involved in deviant acts for the sake of conformity because they see their friends doing the same. They added that

most of the students get involved in deviant behaviour due to peer pressure and that they considered it as a stylish act not really knowing its consequences.

It is observed that deviant behaviour among students in secondary schools affects teaching and learning due to peers influence, for instance, teacher seems to use part of his teaching period trying to control students rather than teaching them. Many a times they communicate with their peers using signals or telepathic communication, thereby distracting one another. The students involved may not benefit from what the teacher is passing across to them. They become carried away by whatever discussions they might be engaged in, thereby losing out on the lessons taught. This is one of the negative contributions of peer influence to deviant behaviours in secondary school students.

It was also reported by Lawal in The Guidance 16th May 2019, that in the last 10 years, violence is becoming a norm in Nigeria's primary and secondary schools, that cultism is not only found in higher institutions but also in primary and secondary schools. For instance, in 2014 at St. Francis High School in Akure, four secondary school students were arrested by the Ondo State Police Command for being involved in cultism. It was also reported in The guidance that in May 2017, seven students from Iponri Senior High School; Akinto Senior High School, Surulere; Stadium High School; and Oloye Comprehensive College, Orile) were arrested and arraigned before an Ebute Meta magistrate court, Lagos for being involved in hooliganism.

In the work of Animashahun and Aremu (2011), peer has great influence on their members and that they might be pressurised to conform to group's value. In such a case, majority of the students that are not well grounded in good morals might adjust to the group's way of life such as indecent dressings, smoking, and coming late to class among others. In a similar view, Bobbies and Elhaney (2005) viewed peer pressure as a way that people of the same social group act in order to influence one another, often in negative ways. Peer influence also has negative effects on secondary school students. Majority of students that involve in secret cults and substance abuse started as a result of peer pressure. They can encourage each other to skip classes, steal, cheat during examination, take drugs or alcohol, use foul language or involve in other risky behaviours which are not in line with the rules and regulations of the schools. In view of the above, this study examined media and peer influence as correlates of deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the relationship between media influence and deviant behaviour in southwest Nigeria. It also determined the relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between media influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students in Southwest Nigeria.
2 There is no significant relationship between media influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students.

Methodology

The study examined social factors as correlate of deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Southwest, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. The population of the study consisted 31,144 male and female students in all the public and private secondary schools in Southwest, Nigeria. The sample of this study consists of 1777 students who were selected from public and private secondary schools in Southwest Nigeria using multistage sampling procedure. A self-designed instrument titled 'Media and Peer Influence as Correlates of Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (MPICDBQ)' was used to elicit data for this study. To ascertain the face and content validity of the instruments, copies were subjected to thorough screening by experts in Social Studies Education, Tests, Measurement and Evaluation as well as Guidance and Counseling. The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach Alpha reliability testing and it yielded a

reliability coefficient of 0.82, this was adjudged to be suitable for the study. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between media influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students.

To test this hypothesis, scores on media influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students in Southwest, Nigeria were collated and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result is presented below:

Table 1: PPMC showing relationship between media influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students

Variables	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	r_{cal}	*Sig*
Media Influence	1777	10.23	4.204	0.321*	0.000
Deviant Behaviour	1777	33.82	12.108		

P < 0.05 (Significant Result)

The result in table 2 shows that $r_{cal} = 0.321$; P = 0.000 < 0.05. Since the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between media influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students.

To test this hypothesis, scores on peer influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students in Southwest, Nigeria were collated and subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 2: PPMC showing relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students

Variables	*N*	*Mean*	*Std. Dev.*	r_{cal}	*Sig*
Peer Influence	1777	9.73	3.628	0.364*	0.000
Deviant Behaviour	1777	33.82	12.108		

P < 0.05 (Significant Result)

The result in table 1 shows that $r_{cal} = 0.364$; P = 0.000 < 0.05. Since the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students. Based on this finding, it was recommended that parents should strictly monitor and control the activities of their wards including the kind of friends they mingle with.

Discussion

The finding of this study showed that there is significant relationship between media influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students. The finding of Okeyinka (2019) was in agreement with the above that mass media brought new ideals beliefs, techniques, product, fashion which are not in the best interest of the developing societies; they communicate violence and criminal acts. It palpable clear that same means of communication and information seem to affect most of the students using it. This is because majority of these secondary school students tend to put most of the things they watch via the social media into practice not minding the consequences as revealed in this study. This implies that the students might be exposed to different kind of activities on the internet that could have negative impact on their lives if they are not properly monitored. This finding also corroborates Oluwagbohunmi (2017) who declared that the negative effect of the dangerous use and abuse of social media is its being used as means of recruiting or initiating youths into secret societies or organisations. Most of them have met their untimely death while chatting or pinging on the road because they carelessly and unconsciously jump into highways and high speed vehicles while chatting with the earpiece tightly glued to their ears.

The study also revealed that significant relationship exists between peer influence and deviant behaviour among secondary schools students. Due to sense of belongingness and acceptance, some students tend to behave in accordance to what their peers accept. This finding is supported by Okeyinka (2019) who opined that Peer groups have a significant

impact on students' behaviour. The finding also agrees with Milliward and Marisen (2016) who found that students involved in deviant acts for the sake of conformity because they see their friends doing the same. The findings of these authors show that peer influence plays a significant influence on students' deviant behaviour in secondary schools.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that media and peer influence had significant influence on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Irrespective of socio-economic status, parents should strictly monitor and control the activities of their wards including the kind of friends they mingle with to avoid negative influence from peers
2. Use of smart phones should be discouraged among the students especially within the school premises. This would limit their access to as well as time spent on sophisticated media gadgets that tend to expose them to unacceptable behaviours.

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