

Delinquency as Determinant of Insecurity of the School Environment in Katsina State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Delinquent behaviour often creates problems and disrupts peace of the school environment. This study investigates the teacher's view on delinquency as determinants for the insecurity of the school environment. The study focuses on the extent of delinquency, factors responsible for delinquency among students that are responsible for the security challenges of the school environment. It also investigates the significant gender differences and differences between the urban and rural Federal Unity Schools in Katsina State. The population of the study consists of 192 senior staff. A sample of 127 staff is used. The results of the study reveal that bullying, stealing, fighting, destroying school property, and breaking school rules and regulations were the most prevalent delinquent acts among students. Broken home, peer group influence, lack of proper guidance service, mass media, poor religious upbringing, boarding schools system and mixed sex institutions as the common course of delinquent behaviours that are causing insecurity of the school environment. Based on the findings, constant orientation services for students on the dangers of delinquent attitudes, provision of proper psychological guidance, moral and religious counselling should be given wide scope for behavioural change is recommended among others.

Keywords: *Delinquent behaviour, insecurity, school environment*

INTRODUCTION

Behaviour problems among secondary school students have been in existence for a very long period of time causing insecurity of the school environment. Students usually engage in delinquent behaviours such as bullying, sexual abuse, substance abuse, unrest, fighting, stealing, destroying school property, breaking school rules and regulations among others. Papalia and Olds (1979) in Usalem (2012) state that they fight, they lie, they steal, they destroy property, and they break rules laid down by parents, school and other authority. Some of the problems can persist and become more serious. Students who are delinquent often create problems for themselves, for their parents, teachers, other students and the entire security of the school environment. Ito and Brotheridge (2007) view that insecurity is recognized as a chronic condition affecting the general environment. It is not uncommon to find the reports of delinquency in the school environment such as violence, disrespect for authority and school procedures, fighting, gang-like behaviours, bringing weapons or drugs to school (Ahiatrogha, Deku and Dramanu, 2009). Clearly, the delinquent behaviours among students that result in insecurity challenges of the school environment are a big worry to the parents, teachers, school administrators and the society in general. Gordon

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(1989) opines that discipline has sharply divided parents, teachers, school administrators, and other caretakers of our children. The concept of delinquency according to Gwueck (1959) in Haruna (2010) is an act forbidden by the law, committed by children within the age range of ten to eighteen years. Hornby (1984) defines delinquency as “neglect of duty” or “wrong doings”. Deighton (1971) defines juvenile delinquency as any serious deviation by a youth from society’s norms, which results in his contact with the law enforcer. Harkary (1999) also notes that the term is applied to the violation of the law by those legally considered under the age of maturity. Delinquency therefore can be referred to as an exhibition of behaviour that is against societal expectation. It is an escape from society’s norms, ethics, customs and breaking of conventional rules of the society. A delinquent juvenile is simply a child who behaves objectionably. To Psychiatrist, for example, it is a combination of factors, mental, physical and spiritual that are responsible for delinquency. The psychologists on the other hand, see it as a result of inner conflict. That is, the problem of juvenile delinquency is both a biological and physical one (Haruna, 2010). In a sense, misbehaviour by students results from an organic malfunctioning of the body. Fakunle (2011) opines that poverty level, political instability and destabilization of many homes are responsible for security challenge.

Many researchers have tried to fine out the problems of delinquency among students. Maqsud (1998) cited in Haruna (2010) in his research to find out the extent of moral behaviour among Nigerian adolescents find out that residential secondary school system contributed a lot to low moral behaviour of Nigerian adolescents because opportunities of interacting with their parents and other family are lacking. Wee (2004) opines that, girls today are less well behaved than they use to be. They engage in truancy, get into fights, take others’ lunch money, vandalize school property, smoke in toilet, scratch the principal’s car and manhandle teachers. Paulo (2004) cited in Ahiatrogah, Deku and Dramanu (2009) views that when it comes to students’ indiscipline, girls can be, and are at times, naughtiest than boys.

Haruna (2010) reveals that the delinquency act in secondary schools is high among the male students than female students, senior students than the junior students, boarding students than day students and urban school than rural school students. According to Ahiatrogah, Deku and Dramanu (2009), there is no significant difference in the perception of indiscipline of students in single sex and mixed sex institutions. The perception of indiscipline of students was higher among students of mixed sex institutions than single sex schools. Nnachi (2009) reveals that rural students exhibit more examination malpractice behaviours than urban students while the location influence the examination behaviour of the males more than the females. Based on the foregoing, this study is undertaken to assess delinquency as determinant of the school environment in Katsina State, Nigeria. The following hypotheses were formulated in null form to guide the study.

- H₀1: There is no significant difference in delinquent acts that are causing insecurity of the school environment between male and female students.
- H₀2: There is no significant difference in delinquent acts that are causing insecurity of the school environment between urban and rural students.

METHOD

The study adopted a survey design geared towards the opinions of teachers on student's delinquent acts as the determinant for insecurity of the school environment. The population of the study consists of all senior staff from two Federal Unity Colleges in Katsina State. A sample of one hundred and twenty seven was drawn from the population by random means. Questionnaire entitled: Delinquent Behaviour Disposition Questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire consisted three sections. Section A consists of biodata, section B consists of eleven items on the frequent occurrence of delinquent acts, while section C consists of 13 items on the causes of delinquent behaviours in Federal Unity Colleges. The data collected were statistically analysed using descriptive statistics and t-test of independent samples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that the most common delinquent behaviours causing insecurity in the school environment were bullying, stealing, fighting, destroying school property and breaking school rules and regulations as they showed 57%, 52%, 52%, 63% and 49% respectively. Table 2 reveals that broken homes, peer group influence, lack of proper guidance services, mass media, poor religious upbringing, imprisoning students in the school compound and mixed sex institutions are the most common causes of delinquent behaviours executed by students that lead to insecurity of the school environment as they showed 75%, 100%, 55%, 57%, 50%, 53% and 60% respectively.

Result of the independent t-test statistics shows that there is significant difference between male and female students in their mean delinquent behaviour that are causing insecurity of the school environment; reason being that the calculated t-value 5.389 is greater than t-critical value 1.658. The calculated mean delinquent behaviour also reveal that male students have higher mean of 32.43 against female students 24.92. Therefore, the null hypothesis which indicates that there is no significant difference in delinquent acts that are causing insecurity of the school environment between male and female students is hereby rejected. At 0.05 level of significance, the t-calculated value is 3.061 and the t-critical value is 1.658. Since t-calculated value is greater than t-critical value, the null hypothesis which indicates that there is no significant difference in delinquent acts that are causing insecurity of the school environment between urban and rural school students is hereby rejected. The findings of this study have shown that, bullying, stealing, fighting, destroying school property and breaking school rules and regulations by students are the most common delinquent behaviours that are causing insecurity of the school environment. Haruna (2010) finds that bullying, stealing and examination malpractice were the prevalent delinquent acts among secondary school students. Finkelhor (2003) in Haruna (2010) also indicates that online bullying is a significant issue for a number of adolescents. The findings of this study also reveal that broken homes, peer group influence, lack of proper guidance services, mass media, poor religious upbringing, boarding and coeducation are the possible causes of delinquent behaviours among students that are causing insecurity of

the school environment. This agrees with findings of Haruna (2010) who discovers that emotional disturbance resulting from broken homes, peer influence, mass media, poor religious upbringing and lack of proper guidance and counselling services were the common causes of delinquency among students. Similarly, the findings of the study also shows that there is a significant difference in delinquent acts that are causing insecurity of the school environment between male and female students as well as between urban and rural school students. According to the findings, there are more exhibitions of delinquent behaviours that are causing insecurity among the male and urban students than the female and rural students. This may be due to the fact that students of the urban school are situated in the town area, closer to the main road and motor park and habitually the tout are hawking closer to the school always visible to the students among others. It could also be assumed that the female students are not influenced by their location in respect of delinquency.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Delinquent behaviour is a social problem that cannot be overlooked due to its negative effect on both the students themselves and the entire security of the school environment as well as society in general. Delinquent students can create problems and disrupt peace of the school environment and beyond. The findings of the study indicate that bullying, stealing, fighting, destroying school property and breaking school rules and regulations are the most common delinquent behaviours that are causing insecurity of the school environment. The findings also indicate that broken homes, peer influence, lack of proper guidance services, mass media, poor religious upbringing, boarding school and mixed sex institutions are the possible causes of delinquent behaviour leading to insecurity of the school environment. Similarly, the findings also found that the delinquent behaviours is higher among male and urban school students than the female and rural school students. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made.

- i Parents should monitor the types of children their wards move around with. To avoid them from becoming members of bad companies.
- ii There should be constant orientation services for students on the dangers of delinquency attitudes to inculcate positive behavioural change in them.
- iii There should be a provision of moral and religious counselling services to every secondary school in the study area and beyond. This could help to revive ethical and religious virtues and create impact on the life and good behaviour of students.
- iv Proper psychological and guidance counselling should be given wide scope in schools. This could help to bring the delinquent students to their real senses.
- v All hands must be on deck (parents, and other stakeholders) to support schools in war against insecurity of the school environment.

Table 1: Types of delinquent behaviours among students that cause insecurity in the schools

S/N	Variables	Frequently	Sometime	Rarely	Never
1.	Substance abuse	3	27	27	43
2.	Bullying	57	23	10	10
3.	Stealing	52	29	6	13
4.	Cultism	0	0	0	100
5.	Sexual misconduct	6	2	8	84
6.	Unrest	2	6	29	63
7.	Lying	17	49	17	17
8.	Fighting	52	13	29	6
9.	Destroying school Property	63	16	16	5
10.	Breaking school rules and regulations	49	17	17	17
11.	Truancy	32	48	12	8

Source: Survey, 2015

Table 2: The possible factors of delinquent behaviours of students in the school environment

S/N	Variables	A	D	UN
1.	Broken home	75	20	5
2.	Peer group influence	100	0	0
3.	Lack of recreational facilities	36	53	11
4.	Lack of cordial relationship between teachers and students	30	60	10
5.	Lack of proper communication between administrators and students	35	55	10
6.	Lack of proper guidance services	55	30	15
7.	Mass Media	57	24	19
8.	Community interference with students	44	30	26
9.	Poor religious upbringing	50	30	20
10.	Poor finance of parents/guidance	36	54	10
11.	Imprisoning students in the school compound	53	30	17
12.	Lack of academic progress	27	48	25
13.	Mixed sex institution	60	30	0

Key: A = Agree; D = Disagree UN = Undecided

Source: Survey, 2015

Table 3: Gender difference in delinquent behaviour among students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-calculated Value	t-critical value	P
Female	50	24.92	6.678	125	5.389	1.658	0.05
Male	77	32.43	8.999				

Source: Survey, 2015

Table 4: Delinquent behaviour among urban and rural students

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-calculated value	t-crit	P
Urban	70	31.49	8.774	125	3.061	1.658	0.05
Rural	57	27.00	7.467				

Source: Survey, 2015

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