Social Variables and Maladaptive Behaviours among Secondary School Students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined Social variables and Maladaptive behaviour of public senior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria Three research questions were formulated and three hypotheses were stated in their null form and tested with appropriate statistics at a .05 level of significance. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 54,216 senior secondary two (SS2) students in all 235 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Nwana's sampling formula was used to select 20% of students from nineteen (9) public secondary schools. The researcher made use of a questionnaire entitled (FVSDBTQ) to obtain data from respondents. The instrument was validated by experts in the sociology of Education and Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling, University of Uyo, Uyo. Cronbach Apha analysis for internal consistency reliability of the instrument yielded a coefficient of .96. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using independent t-test and ANOVA. The study revealed that social variables differ in terms of the maladaptive behaviour of secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The independent t-test and ANOVA of the hypotheses indicated significant differences in students' maladaptive behaviour based on family discipline, family emotional climate and parent-child relationship. It was, therefore, concluded that social variables differ significantly based on students' maladaptive behaviour in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The researcher made some useful recommendations which include: parents should also take the discipline of their children seriously; parents should show a good example for their children to emulate and parents should also develop a healthy relationship with their children to help them develop good moral behaviour among other recommendations.

Keywords: Social Variables, Maladaptive, Behaviour, Students

Introduction

Education is very crucial in the development and inculcation of right values and standards of behaviour. Through education, children are nurtured to become responsible and respectful citizens, and enabled young ones to develop knowledge, and skills, adopt new behaviour and can survive societal challenges. The bedrock of a child's education starts in the family. Parents are obliged to teach their children certain beliefs and values morally accepted by society. This is because the family is the primary institution that socializes the young and provides surveillance over their behaviour (Okorodudu, 2010). Moral values and standards of behaviour inculcated into the minds of children can shape children, responses to certain actions. Agbakwuru (2012) noted that as a social setting, the values structure and dynamics of the family significantly affect its member's behaviour, attitudes, interest and general well-being. The family has the duty of protecting, providing, caring and socializing the child with expected roles in society. The family provides the child with practical behavioural patterns. This means that the child learns some form of behavioural pattern from what he sees members of the family do (Onwuhanze, 2019).

As observed by Baker, Sigmon and Nugent (2001), the family sets the moral tone of subsequent actions or behaviour, displayed by young ones in their daily life. In the process of communicating or interaction, parents inculcate good values and behaviour, explaining the reasons for adhering to moral rules and the consequences of moral violations. If parents fail in their role of facilitating the moral development of young ones, such children according to Oladele (2005) are likely to become deviants; ignoring established rules, regulations and moral standards of the school and the larger society.

Deviant acts among students have polluted the Nigeria school system and made it difficult for the goals and objectives of education to be achieved. According to Akpan (2018), the maladaptive behaviour of students covers cheating, extortion, bullying of fellow students, truancy, drug abuse, rape, maiming, cultism, disobedient, arrogance, jealousy, unhealthy competition, violent assault to fellow students, teachers and school administrators among others. Such acts to a great extent are found to be fashionable and appreciated as a modern style of life among secondary school students. As observed by Denga (2002), most of the deviant behaviour displayed by students in schools could be attributed to family factors, as parents' values and behaviours observed by children may influence their behaviour positively or negatively. Social variables may make students become deviants in school. Such social variables are family discipline, family emotional climate and parent-child relationship.

One of the social variables which could influence the maladaptive behaviour of students is family discipline. Discipline is a willing submission to rules and regulations (Ibia, 2011). Everyone including the children needs law and order to behave well and be accepted by society. The first place where children are expected to receive discipline is the family or the home. Children who come from homes where parental discipline is effectively enforced are likely to obey and comply with the rules and regulations of other superior authorities visa-vis that of the school. Henderson (2014) avers that children who learn to accept parental authority will also tend to accept teachers' authority in the school. Thus, if children who display bad behaviour at home are disciplined, such children may not carry-over such behaviour to school. Failure to discipline erring children at home may lead them to show maladaptive behaviour such as disobedience to school rules, fighting, vandalism of school properties, excessive aggression, truancy, cheating and violent crimes (Moghaddam, 2008).

Family emotional climate may also encourage maladaptive behaviour among students. The emotional climate of the family involves the psycho-social situation in the family that makes the home conducive or not conducive to a child to gain moral development (Morriah, 2012). A positive relationship between the father and the mother is very significant in helping students know how to behave toward others outside the family. According to Lamb (2002), fathers who treat the mothers of the children with respect in words and actions and who avoid conflict while relating with other adult members of society, are more likely to have children who understand how they are to treat others in school. They are less likely to develop violent or unhealthy relationships. On the other hand, if the home environment is not peaceful, conducive and accommodative, where husbands often display aggressive behaviour towards their wives and children are likely to raise children who are prone to exhibit maladaptive behaviour such as fighting, pushing, shoving, shaking, punching, kicking, slapping and throwing abusive words on people without considering the age difference. (Garble and Belsky, 2004).

Parent-child relationships may also influence students' maladaptive behaviour. Right from birth, parents are expected to mould and shape children with the behaviour suitable to the norm of society through interaction with them. The closeness between the parents and the children has a greater impact on a child's behaviour. The mother provides lots of social and emotional support to the child while the father provides more physical support. Agbaje (2010) and Ibia (2016) have noted that deviant children are more likely in homes where fathers are always absent and where the feelings, needs and interests of children are not assured. A child needs love, care, closeness and experiences from the parents to develop good behaviour and live a responsible life. A well-balanced child grows up in the home of psychologically and socially well-balanced parents. Moreover, parents are supposed to be a model to their children. If parents act negatively, the children are more likely to follow their parents' negative attitude (Olorunfemi-Olabisi, 2014). Also, the child is more likely to generalize this attitude to the rest of society. This shows that parents have a greater impact on their children's behaviour, positively or negatively.

Thus, given the above background, the present study seeks to examine the influence of social variables and maladaptive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study was to determine the differences in social variables based on maladaptive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to determine:

1. The differences in family discipline on maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State.
2. The differences in family emotional climate on maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State.
3. The differences in parent-child relationship on maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. In what ways does family discipline differ from maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State?
2. In what way does family emotional climate differ on maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State?
3. In what ways does the parent-child relationship differ in maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated in their null form to guide the study:

1. There is no significant different in family discipline on maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State.
2. There is no significant different in family emotional climate on maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State.
3. There is no significant different in parent-child maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State.

Method and Materials

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Akwa Ibom State, which is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. The state is located in the south-south geo-political zone of the federal republic of Nigeria. The population for the study comprised all the 54,216 senior secondary two (SS2) students in the 235 public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The State is sub-divided into three Senatorial Districts, Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District had 85 public secondary schools with 19,519 SS2 students, Akwa Ibom North West Senatorial District had 87 public secondary schools with 20,191 SS2 students while Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District had 63 public secondary schools with 14,506 SS2 students. (Secondary Education Board, Uyo, 2019).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 120 Senior Secondary 2 (SS2) students was selected for the study, using a multi-stage sampling technique. On this basis, a sample size of 120 (2%) was used. The first stage involves random selection of three Local Government Areas in each Senatorial District. This will bring the number of Local Government Areas to Nine. The second stage involves the use of a purposive random sampling technique in selecting 3 public secondary schools in each of the three Senatorial Districts, which shall give 9 sampled schools. The last stage involves the use of a simple random sampling technique (hand and draw method) in selecting 10% of SS2 students each from the 9 sampled schools.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed and validated an instrument titled "Social Variables and Students' Maladaptive behaviour questionnaire (FVSDBTQ) which was used for data collection. The FVSDBTQ questionnaire has 3 sections. Section A contains information on social variables such as home local, parental educational background status, family type and family size and home location of the respondents with 4 items. Section B contains 20 items on other social variables while section C contains 30 items measuring the maladaptive behaviour of students, and these shall give a total of 54 items.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was given to three experts to assess its face and content validity. Two of the experts shall be from Measurement and Evaluation.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the FVSDTB questionnaire, and Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) was used to answer the research questions, while a related t-test will be used to test the research hypotheses at.05 levels of significance.

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion of Findings

The results of data analysis for the study are presented below:

Research Question 1: What is the difference in maladaptive behaviour based on family discipline among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State?

To answer this research question, students whose family discipline scores were between 1-14 were considered low, while students whose family discipline scores were 15 and above were considered as high. The two sets of scores were compared using the mean and the result is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 1: Mean of Students' Maladaptive behaviour Based on Family Discipline

Family Discipline	N	Mean
High	782	41.70
Low	410	49.79

The result in Table 4.3 indicates the mean of students' deviant behaviour tendency based on their family discipline. From the table, the mean deviant behavior tendency of students from families with high disciple was 41.70, while that of students from families with low discipline was 49.79. The mean difference between the two groups is 8.09 in favour of students from families with low discipline. This is an indication that students differ in deviant behaviour tendencies based on family discipline.

Research Question 2: What is the difference in maladaptive behaviour based on family emotional climate among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State?

To answer this research question, students whose family emotional climate scores were between 1-14 were considered low, while students whose family emotional climate scores were 15 and above were considered as high. The two sets of scores were compared using the mean and the result is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 2:Mean of Students' Maladaptive behaviour Based on Family Discipline

Family Emotional Climate	N	Mean
High	1067	43.98
Low	125	49.08

The result in Table 4.4 indicates the mean of students' deviant behaviour tendency based on their family emotional climate. From the table, the mean deviant behaviour tendency of students from families with high emotional climate was 43.98, while that of students from families with low emotional climate was 49.08. The mean difference between the two groups is 5.10 in favour of students from families with low emotional climate. This is an indication that students differ in deviant behaviour tendency based on family emotional climate.

Research Question 3: What is the difference in maladaptive behaviour based on parent-child relationships among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State?

To answer this research question, students whose parent-child relationship scores were between 1-14 were considered low, while students whose parent-child relationship scores were 15 and above were considered as high. The two sets of scores were compared using the mean and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean of Students' Maladaptive behaviour Based on Parent-Child Relationship

Parent-Child Relationship	N	Mean
High	805	43.61
Low	387	46.39

The result in Table 4.5 indicates the mean of students' deviant behaviour tendency based on parent-child relationships. From the table, the mean deviant behaviour tendency of students from families with high parent-child relationships was 43.61, while that of students from families with low parent-child relationships was 46.39. The mean difference between the two groups is 2.78 in favour of students from families with low parent-child relationships. This is an indication that students differ in deviant behaviour tendency based on the type of parent-child relationship.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on family discipline in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Independent t-test Analysis of Students' Maladaptive behaviour Based on Family Discipline

Family Discipline	N	Mean	t-cal	df	Sig.
High	782	49.70	19.48	1190	.000
Low	410	41.79			

The result in Table 4.12 indicates that the calculated t-value of 19.48 at 1190 degrees of freedom since the p-value of .000 is less than the .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in maladaptive behaviour of students based on family discipline in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on family discipline in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on family emotional climate in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: Independent t-test Analysis of Students' Maladaptive behaviour Based on Family Emotional Climate

Family Emotional Climate	N	Mean	t-cal	df	Sig.
High	1067	43.98	7.21	1190	.000
Low	125	49.08			

The result in Table 4.13 indicates that the calculated t-value of 7.21 at 1190 degrees of freedom since the p-value of .000 is less than the .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in maladaptive behaviour of students based on family emotional climate in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on family emotional climate in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on parent-child relationships in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 6: Independent t-test Analysis of Students' Maladaptive behaviour Based on Parent-Child Relationship

Parent-Child Relationship	N	Mean	t-cal	df	Sig.
High	805	46.38	5.96	1190	.000
Low	387	43.61			

The result in Table 4.14 indicates that the calculated t-value of 5.96 at 1190 degrees of freedom since the p-value of .000 is less than the .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in maladaptive behaviour of students based on parent-child relationship in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on parent-child relationships in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

The result of testing null hypothesis 1 indicates that there is a significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on family discipline in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State. The result of this study is similar to that of Tumuti (2013) who researched perceived factors influencing maladaptive behaviour among the youth in Njathaini Community, Nairobi, Kenya. The result of the study indicates that students from highly disciplined homes were less likely to be involved in maladaptive behaviour in schools. It is also similar to that of Jacob and Adegboyega (2017) who conducted similar research on perceived causes and incidences of maladaptive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria and found out that students from less disciplined homes were most prone to maladaptive behaviour than those who are from well discipline homes. The reason for this result could be that children in which their parents discipline them from time to time might not nurse the tendency to engage in deviant behaviour in order not to be disciplined by their parents. On the other hand, students whose parents overlook most of their children's misconduct might consider engaging in deviant behaviour as a normal act, since their parents do not warn them against such behaviour.

The result of testing null hypothesis 2 indicates that there is a significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on family emotional climate in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this study is similar to that of Nwachukwu (2018) who conducted a study on juvenile infractions in selected secondary schools in Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria and found that the emotional climate of the family has a significant influence on students' tendency of involvement in maladaptive behaviour. It is also similar to that of Abdul (2016) who conducted a study on the influence of selected family context secondary school students' involvement in maladaptive behaviour in North East Geo-Political Zone, Nigeria and found that a cordial relationship between couples reduces the likelihood of students becoming deviants in schools. The reason for this result could be that students who come from families with a stable emotional climate do feel free to communicate with their parents and the parents on their own communicate freely with their children and are always ready to give them the needed help to develop good morals.

On the other hand, students from a poor family emotional climate could be distant from their parents and get attached to their peers which could lead to involving in deviant behaviour. The reason could also be parents from an emotionally unstable family might show some element of rejection towards their children. They might choose not to care for the children's needs. This attitude of parents could jeopardize the normal security feelings of the child thereby inducing feelings of helplessness and frustration which adversely and frustration which affect a child's adjustment in life and lead to runaway behaviour into maladaptive behaviour.

The result of testing hypothesis 3 indicated that there is a significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of students based on parent-child relationships in secondary school in Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this study is similar to that of Offordile (2012) who conducted a study on the influence of parent-child communication patterns on self-esteem and academic achievement of senior secondary school adolescents in the Enugu Educational Zone of Enugu State and found out that parent-child relationship and communication patterns have significant influence on students' maladaptive behaviour. It is also in line with the study conducted by Ngozi and Evelyn (2015) on the relationship between family type, gender, parenting style and maladaptive behaviour among diploma students of Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria who reported that the parent-child relationship has a significant relationship with maladaptive behaviour among the students. The reason for this result could be that students with high parent-child relationships are very close to their parents and their parents get to more about them. This includes the type of friends they keep and most of their activities in the school. With this type of relationship, the parents can easily provide help when the child wants to go astray.

On the other hand, children from a poor parent-child relationship family might be deprived of their parents' attention, thus, designing their path and following it through without their parental guidance which might lead them to involvement in deviant behaviour. They might want to experiment with everything whether good or bad based on their peer's guidance. With such uncontrolled curiosity, they might get involved in deviant behaviour or nurse such a tendency. The reason could also be in line with the words of Agbaje (2010) who said that deviant children are more likely in homes where fathers are always absent and where the feelings, needs and interests of children are not assured.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the influence of social variables on maladaptive behaviour among senior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Eight social

variables were considered in the study. The variables were; family discipline, family emotional climate, and parent-child relationship. The eight variables were used to formulate eight research questions and eight hypotheses. The result of the analysis indicated that there is a significant influence of social variables on maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of this study on social variables and maladaptive behaviour among secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State, it was concluded that broken families and large family sizes increase maladaptive behaviour among students. It was also concluded that students whose parents administered less discipline and were given more time leisure are more prone to nursing maladaptive behaviour.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study;

1. Regardless of the parents' educational background, they should do well to inculcate moral values in their children to help them develop acceptable behaviours in society.
2. Parents should take the discipline of their children seriously to help them develop good morals. Such discipline would also help the children to desist from nursing deviant behaviour tendencies.
3. Parents should try as much as possible to develop healthy relationships with their children. This will make it easy for them to correct their children when it is necessary to develop sound morals. It will also help the children to easily accept the discipline, realizing that it is done out of love.

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