

LONELINESS AND PEER PRESSURE AS FACTORS PREDICTING DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

BY

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This study investigated Loneliness and Peer Pressure as Predictors of Delinquent Behaviour Among Secondary Schools Students Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. The study adopted a correlation research design. The population for the study comprises of all senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. Simple Random Sampling Technique was used to select 150 senior secondary school students within Ilorin Metropolis. The instruments used for the collection of data were Bench's (2003) Loneliness Scale ($r = 0.82$), Peer Pressure Scale ($r = 0.73$) and Hussain's (2004) Delinquency Behaviour Scale ($r = 0.59$). The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05. The findings revealed that there was significant relationship between emotional loneliness and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students within Ilorin Metropolis (r . calculated = 0.64, $df = 198$ and $P < 0.05$); there was significant relationship between peer pressure and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students within Ilorin Metropolis. (r . calculated = 0.64, $df = 198$ and $P < 0.05$); there was significant joint contribution of loneliness and peer pressure to the prediction of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis Area of Kwara State ($AR^2 = 0.59$, $df_{2/97} = 71.13$ and $P < 0.05$) and loneliness ($\beta = 0.47$) and peer pressure ($\beta = 0.46$) had significant relative contributions to the prediction of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. The findings were discussed and necessary recommendations based on the findings of this study were put forward. Important suggestions on how delinquent behaviour can be curb base on the finding of this study by subsequent efforts on this or similar studies are provided.

Keywords: Loneliness, Peer Pressure, Delinquent behaviour, Senior Secondary School, 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, 2018). The term 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, 2014). 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”.

Delinquency is basically a legal concept defined in different ways among people or scholars. It is defined as a state of being delinquent or behaviour that is not in accordance with accepted social standards or with the constitution of Nigeria. In a society, a delinquent behaviour refers to any act punishable by death, imprisonment or a fine. Delinquent behaviour includes stealing, sexual offence, destruction of state property (vandalism) and smoking of marijuana, drug pilfering and others. Bartol (2021) explains that the psychological definition of delinquency is a child's engagement in extreme anti-social behaviour. Delinquency has been seen as a global phenomenon. This phenomenon has been widely discussed. Often, it is linked to deviancy from societal norms and criminal behaviour (Antwi, 2016). The delinquency issue is an alarming issue in most countries worldwide. For example, the 'knife-carrying culture' of teenage offenders in the United Kingdom has contributed to more accidents and deaths than shooting (Morgan et al., 2021). Cigarette smoking, substance misuse, harassment and cyber-crime in Nigeria are allegedly rising among young people and thus raising a serious question for the deep conservative government (Kim et al., 2022). America, which is one of the world's most developed nations, is also reportedly anxious and worried about the ferociousness with which juvenile offenders commit antisocial actions (Ntshangase, 2015). These have contributed to society's height of fear and instability as they allegedly assault their teachers, shoot people, commit rape, engage in gang violence, terrorize communities, and when they are caught, they are remorseless.

Loneliness is a negative emotional response to the discrepancy between the expected and achieved quality of social networking (Perlman & Peplau, as cited in Vanhalst, 2022). Adolescents experience the process of self-discovery, which is often a difficult process for teenagers (Laursen & Hartl, 2022). This difficult process can put teenagers into a conflict with other teenagers, which eventually make teenagers experience physical isolation and loneliness. Roekel et al (2015) found that adolescents experience a higher level of loneliness when they are alone; while teenagers also feel lonely when they are at school and with classmates. Loneliness is often seen as a negative experience, yet for many years philosophers have spoken about loneliness in a positive light. Positive loneliness, also known as "Einsamkeit", is described as the "voluntary withdrawal from the daily hassles of life and oriented towards higher goals, such as reflection, mediation and communication with God" (Gierveld, 2018). The definition of loneliness relating to this study is "the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively" (Gierveld, 2018). Furthermore, loneliness involves a person's perception, their experiences, and their evaluation of their isolation. Loneliness is known to cause multiple health problems such as an increase in depression, sleeping problems, and a decrease or increase in appetite (Gierveld, 2018).

It can be observed in most public secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria that there exists student's delinquency. All over the state, some students strolling late to school when school is in session branching into public houses to purchase substances that should not be ingested at their age. While school has long opened, they can be seen under trees chatting away. Bullying has been the order of the day, within and outside the school premises. Bullying of junior students is the outcome of peer-group association which regularly attracts punishment by the school authority. Police arrest of students for cultism and vandalization. But students' cultism and vandalization of school property is responsible. Peer association is described as a small group of similar-aged. A child enters a peer group because they need security and a sense of identity (Singh, 2017). Obviously, the brain of teenagers is not established entirely like the brain of adults. Thus, they are more likely than adults to gain control from criminal peer behaviour. Adolescents devote more of their time in and outside the school with peers and classmates. This is also a major explanation of why they so readily join their friends in violence. Deviant peer association has been linked with juvenile behaviour (Menard & Grotper, 2021). Families play an integral role in the socialization and growth of children, but peer groups are critical because children spend more of their time with peers rather than parents, and so their behaviour is modified by friends and effectively affects parental decision-making (Beardslee, 2018). Children are increasingly creating more networks of others outside their homes. Peer association without parental control is closely related to antisocial behaviour (Meldrum & Clark, 2015). Contrarily, intense contact with parents

decreases the probability of peer delinquency. Often, children who are subject to strict parental control and restriction rarely participate in peer deviant behaviour (Ruiz, 2019).

The foregoing studies are among numerous studies that highlight the problem of delinquency. The study looks at delinquency as an issue associated with loneliness and peer influence. The question is: what is being done to tackle delinquency in the first place before it is transformed into real crime and potential misconduct? Alboukordi (2022) also agree with other researchers that early childhood delinquency is likely to persist throughout adolescence and adulthood. He further points out that the etiology of antisocial behaviour is essential to identifying problem behaviour to formulate effective approaches. Also, the numerous psychological and social roots of adolescents' problematic behaviour can be addressed. He believes that the battle against antisocial activity rests in tracing the root of the different types of behaviour that affect adolescents.

Statement of the Problem

The incidence of delinquency among secondary school students in Nigeria in general and Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State in particular has tremendously increased in intensity and magnitude in recent years. Listening to daily news and will hear several incidents such as examination malpractice, sexual harassment, rape, cultism, truancy, fighting, destruction of school and other public property and other form of immoral behaviours involving secondary school students. This has become a source of concern to school administrators, teachers, government as well as concerned parents. Peer-grouping is acceptable age-long association characteristic of students in secondary school. This could have created negative outcomes that necessitate academic investigations. Peer group, if not studied is likely to mutate into juvenile delinquency among students. Problems arise when adolescents are loyal to their peer group. Quite a few of them believe in their peer and this is the characteristic of their style. Students are likely to be engaged with bad friends as the adage goes "evil association corrupt good manners". The citadel of learning might actually become the nursing ground breeding delinquency.

It is worrisome to note that there are numerous maladaptive behaviours which the peer groups manifest without one pointing out the limitation. For instance, issues about fence-jumping, gate crashing, improper dressing, lateness, bullying, insubordination, class cutting, truancy, vulgar language and many others are unbecoming of adolescents. What is quite disturbing is that there is lack of monitoring on the part of the parents, teachers and significant others like Pastor, Imam and neighbours. They forget that students spend eight hours at school and sixteen hours at home. It could be possible that poor moral character imbibed from the various peer group characteristics as narrated above might indeed be responsible for student delinquency in Nigeria. This study therefore, embarks on the investigation of the impact of peer-groups on juvenile delinquency of students in secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State, Nigeria.

However, to the best of the knowledge of the researcher, not much has been done on contribution of loneliness and peer pressure on delinquent behaviour among secondary school students. It is evident that most students' indiscipline and unrests are premeditated to cause maximum destruction. Considering the above, the researcher deemed it fit to investigate into the contributions of loneliness and peer pressure to delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is therefore to investigate the psychological factors as predictors of secondary school students' delinquency in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. Specifically, the study is designed to achieve the following purposes:

1. To identify the relationship between loneliness and delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.
2. To investigate the relationship between peer pressure and delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

3. To examine the joint contributions of loneliness and peer pressure to the prediction of delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.
4. To unveil the relative contributions of loneliness and peer pressure to the prediction of delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions raised, the following research hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- H0₁:** There is no significant relationship between loneliness and delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.
- H0₂:** There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.
- H0₃:** There are no significant joint contributions of loneliness and peer pressure to the prediction of the delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.
- H0₄:** There are no significant relative contributions of loneliness and peer pressure to the prediction of the delinquency among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Methodology

This study is basically a descriptive research design of ex-post-facto type as it attempts to find out loneliness and peer pressure as predictors of delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis. The population of the study comprised all public secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis. Simple random sampling procedure was adopted in this study. The participants for this were randomly selected from five (5) public secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis. A total of thirty (30) respondents were randomly selected from each school, making total of one hundred and fifty (150) respondents. Data for the study was gathered mainly through the use of an adapted questionnaire. The questionnaire tagged Delinquency Among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (DASSSQ) was responded to by the students in the sample schools. The questionnaire consists of five (4) sections. Section 'A' students Bio-data, section 'B' contain items on causes of delinquency, Section 'C' embrace items on contribution of loneliness to delinquency, section 'D' includes items on contributions of peer pressure to delinquency among secondary school students. The items on the questionnaire were rated using Likert type like rating scale. Where: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree. Respondents ticked from the alternatives, options that best represent their opinions. The instrument is an adapted one, in order to ascertain the validity of the instruments, test re-test reliability approach were adopted to determine the reliability of the test. The set of two scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and 0.72 reliability index was obtained.

The instruments for this study were personally administered by the researcher on the respondents in the sample schools. Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher introduced himself to the principals of the selected schools and informed them about his mission in the schools. Upon obtaining the required permissions from the authority of each school, the researcher administered the instrument on the respondents. The completed questionnaire was collected from the respondents in each of the sample schools by the researcher.

Descriptive statistics percentages were used to analyse the demographic, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used for the two (2) hypotheses, while multiple regression were used for research hypotheses 3 and 4 to establish the joint and relative contributions of independent variables to dependent variable.

Results

The data presented in Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents using frequency and percentages.

Table 1:
Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	41	41.0
Female	59	59.0
Total	100	100.0
Age		
11-13 Years	36	36.0
14-16 Years	33	33.0
17 Years and Above	31	31.0
Total	100	100.0
Religion		
African Traditional Religion	1	1.0
Christianity	35	35.0
Islam	64	64.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 1 showed the distribution of respondents by gender, age and religion. It showed that 100 respondents participated in the study. The male participants were 41 (41.0%) while 59 (59.0%) were females; 36 (36.0%) were between 11-13 years, 33 (33.0%) were in the age range of 14-16 years while 31 (31.0%) were 17 years and above. 1 (1.0%) of the respondents were from African Traditional Religion, 35 (35.0%) were Christians while 64 (64.0%) were Muslims. The implications of this table revealed that larger percentage of the respondents were females. Also, larger percentages of the respondents were in the age range of 11-13 years and larger percentages were Muslims.

Hypotheses Testing**Hypothesis One**

Ho1: *There is no significant relationship between loneliness and delinquent behaviour of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.*

Table 2: Table Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation and P.P.M.C Scores on Relationship between Loneliness and Delinquent Behaviour of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis

Variable	Mean	SD	df	N	r	P	Remark
Loneliness	44.03	17.65					
Delinquent Behaviour	40.13	13.23	98	100	.939	.000	Significant

The table 2 above shows that there was significant relationship between loneliness and delinquent behaviour ($r = .939$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this is that emotional intelligence significantly related to students' academic performance.

Hypothesis Two

Ho2: *There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and delinquent behaviour of secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis.*

Table 3: Table Showing the Mean, Standard Deviation and P.P.M.C Scores on Relationship Between Peer Pressure and Delinquent Behaviour of Secondary School Students in Ilorin Metropolis.

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	N	r	p	Remark
Peer Pressure	21.98	4.44					
Delinquent Behaviour	4.18	1.12	98	100	.627	.000	Significant

The table 3 above shows that there was significant relationship between peer pressure and delinquent behaviour ($r = .627$; $p < 0.05$). The implication of this is that locus of control is significantly related to students' academic performance.

Hypothesis Three

Ho3: *There are no significant joint contributions of loneliness and peer pressure to the prediction of delinquency among secondary school students*

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analysis of Loneliness and Peer Pressure as Predictors of Delinquent Behaviour among Secondary School Students

Analysis of variance				
	Sum of Square (SS)	DF	Mean square	F
Regression	8331.25	2	4165.63	159.46
Residual	3840.25	147	26.12	
Total	12171.50	149		

The Table 4 shows that the independent variables (loneliness and peer pressure) as predictors of delinquency among secondary school students. The value of R (adjusted) = .827 and R^2 (adjusted) = .680. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of 159.46 and was found to be significant at 0.05 level.

Hypothesis Four

Ho4: *There are no significant relative contributions of loneliness and peer pressure to the prediction of delinquency among secondary school students*

Table 5: Relative Contribution of Independent Variables to the Prediction of Delinquent Behaviour among Secondary School Students

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		T	P
	B	Standard error	Beta			
Constant	-1.086	1.557			-.697	0.487
Loneliness	.608	.063	.511		9.662	0.00
Peer Pressure	.529	.062	.450		8.513	0.00

The Table above shows that each of the independent variables independent variables (parenting style and teachers' professionalism) made a significant contribution to the prediction of indiscipline among secondary school students. In term of magnitude of contribution, parenting style made the most significant contribution (Beta= .511; $t = 9.662$; $p < 0.05$) to the prediction follow by teachers' professionalism (Beta= .450; $t = 8.513$; $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The first research hypothesis revealed that there was significant relationship between loneliness and delinquency among secondary school students. The results indicate that students in the study have lower level of loneliness although female students appear to have moderately higher level of loneliness than male's students. This finding is in consistent with Weiss (2022) that women are more apt to be lonely than men. Furthermore, Hojat (2022), women are said to have lower self-esteem which given the association between loneliness and low self-esteem means they are more prone to loneliness. While the findings of the study suggest that females have higher level of loneliness than males, it is also not consistent with the findings of Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (2020) that suggest no gender differences in relation to loneliness. The explanation to the female higher score on the RUCLA than males could be likened to Borys and Perlman (2015) argument that gender differences in loneliness result from men's greater reluctance to disclose socially undesirable feelings. While some studies report females to be lonelier than males (Killen, 2018), others such as Le Roux (2019) conclude that male adolescents experience a significantly higher degree of loneliness than female counterparts. Based on the results from the previous research in the West, it could be concluded that there are contradictory findings regarding gender and loneliness.

The second research hypothesis revealed that there was significant relationship between peer pressure and delinquent behaviour among secondary school students. The implication of this revealed that the existence or inexistence of peer groups can lead to or discourage juvenile delinquency. This finding supports earlier studies by Molly (2016) "friendship networks are very heterogeneous in terms of members' participation in delinquent behaviour with the majority of adolescents belonging to networks containing both delinquent and non-delinquent friends." The intimacy and mutual trust reported in prior delinquent peer researches therefore may primarily reflect delinquents' ties to non-delinquents. A focus on groups permits classification of peer delinquency along a continuum (i.e., more or fewer delinquent friends; higher or lower average group delinquency). Peer groups are formed for different reasons. For example, if the peer group is formed for the purpose of friendship then it will generally serve to provide a sense of belonging, together with social and emotional support for the group members.

The third research hypothesis revealed that the independent variables (loneliness and peer pressure) influence the delinquency among secondary school students. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of and was found to be significant at 0.05 level with independent variables contributing 68% to delinquency among secondary school students. This is in collaboration with the finding of Tyler et al. (2016); Wearmouth, (2017); Arends, (2019) students by virtue of their differences in upbringing or cultural background exhibit a variety of behavioural characteristics in schools which need to be managed in order for schools to function as effective learning institutions. Likewise teachers, by virtue of their personal and professional qualities affect the behaviour of students in a multitude of ways (Rubie-Davies, 2016). As teachers perceive student behaviour in different ways, students too tend to have varying degrees of expectations and perceptions about their teacher behaviour (Tatar & Yahav, 2021). Inevitably the interaction of both teachers and students tend to jointly determine the discipline milieu in schools. When teacher expectations and student interests do not go hand in hand, there is a strong tendency for the occurrence of problems or a rift in the relationship between the two groups (Yoon, 2018) which is clearly a cause of concern for behavioural management.

The fourth research hypothesis revealed that each of the independent variables (loneliness and peer pressure) made a significant contribution to the prediction of delinquency among secondary school students. In term of magnitude of contribution, peer pressure made the most significant contribution to the prediction follow by loneliness. This is in line with the finding of Phillipson (2017) peer influence has been associated with child behaviour such as hostility, delinquency, rebelliousness, and antisocial aggression. Research has also found that a child's early experience with excessive peer control tends to correlate with the development of anxiety. It is possible this anxiety stems from a lack of opportunity to develop autonomy through independent exploration of the environment. It has also been proposed that the low warmth typical of authoritarian parenting could be linked to child depression (Rapee, 2017). In a study of permissive

parenting, lack of involvement, lack of follow through, and lack of confidence in parenting ability were important predictors of child behaviour problems reported by both parents and teachers (Calzada, 2020).

Conclusion

The study concluded that there was significant relationship between loneliness, peer pressure and delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State. This implies that loneliness and peer pressure has great influence on behaviour of students.

Recommendations

In view of the results obtained from the study, the following recommendations are hereby made in order to improve the level of discipline among secondary school students.

1. To minimise the influence of negative behaviour of peers, adolescents should be psychologically and instrumentally prepared. They should be attended by the family, community, experts such as counselling psychologists and other related stakeholders to benefit them in choosing the right friends.
2. Parents should devote more time to the training of their children. They should not leave the discipline and education of their children in the hands of the teachers and house helps alone.
3. Government, counselling psychologists and other stakeholders should sensitise the community on the effects of poor socialisation, violence, and drug abuse and substance usage on adolescent behaviour
4. The school Guidance Counsellor should be equipped with relevant resources to look into issues like bullying friends and its impact on students fighting. This can be achieved through interviews of those bullied as well as those caught fighting.

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