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Teachers' Opinions on the Forms, Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions to Deviant Behavior Among Senior School Students in Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

This research examined teachers' opinions on the forms, causes, and consequences of deviant behavior among senior school students in Ilorin South Local Government Area in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive form of survey research. The study population consisted of teachers of public senior secondary schools in Ilorin South; the study group was comprised of 322 teachers selected from 23 schools in the area using the purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire designed by the researcher with 28 items using a four-point Likert scale was used to elicit the necessary data from the respondents. The tool was checked for content validity and the split-half method revealed a reliability index of 0.68. A descriptive statistical method of percentages was used to answer the research question. The findings revealed that lateness, truancy, disrespect of the school authority, and examination malpractice were some of the forms of deviant behavior prevalent among the students. Also, access to illicit drugs and over- or under-pampering of children were considered some of the causes of deviant behavior, while academic failure, increased dropout rates, increased social vices, and an inconducive teaching and learning environment were thought to be the consequences of deviant behavior. Therefore, the provision of adequate

facilities, monitoring of students' activities at all times, and professional counselling are possible solutions to the problem of deviant behavior among the students.

Keywords: behavior, social vices, deviancy, forms and consequences

Introduction

Deviant behavior remains an obstacle to the development of society and the achievement of educational goals and objectives. Deviant behaviors could be viewed as acts that are contrary to the existing rules, regulations, and norms that guide a particular society or organization. Deviant behavior has been described as behavior that is at variance with the acceptable norms of a school (Bolu-steve & Esere, 2017). Deviant in sociology is an action or behavior that violates social norms, including a formally enacted rule (e.g., crime), as well as informal violations of social norms (e.g., rejecting folkways and mores). Although deviance may have a negative connotation, the violation of social norms is not always a negative action; positive deviation exists in some situations. Even if a norm is violated, a behavior can still be classified as positive or acceptable. Social norms differ throughout society and between cultures.

A certain act or behavior may be viewed as deviant and receive sanction or punishment within one society, while in another society it is seen as normal behavior. As expressed by Chuks (2016), three elements allow a behavior to be described as deviant: it impedes an individual's effective functioning in society, it hinders an individual from meeting their personal needs, and it interferes with the wellbeing of other members of the society. Additionally, as a society's understanding of social norms changes over time, so too does the collective perception of deviance. Deviance is relative to the place where it was committed or to the time when the act took place. Killing another human is generally considered wrong. Wrong behavior is also visible within the education system, potentially perpetrated by either teachers or learners. When it is perpetrated among learners, it is frowned upon by the school authorities and most times

sanctioned. Igbinovia (1997) maintained that deviance among students can be a way of drawing attention to injustice and exposing the system's defects in order to adjust them.

Deviant behavior is rampant behavior or acts committed by public secondary school students which disrupt the smooth running of the teaching and learning activities in the school setting. When such an act is perpetrated, it affects the teachers, students, school authorities, and even society at large. Deviant behavior results in all manner of social vices, such as drug abuse, sexual offences, stealing, destruction of public/school property, bullying, and many more. It should also be stated that students engaging in deviant behavior such as hooliganism or street fighting results in the destruction of life and property and, in turn, causes insecurity and creates panic in society.

There is a need to curb this behavior among students because this group of perpetrators will otherwise pose a greater threat to society as they grow older. Deviant behavior among students can prevent them from becoming useful and reliable members of society. It may even lead them to becoming corrupt leaders if they happen to hold public office in the future. It can also make learners lose interest in the value of education. For instance, a student that is impregnated as a result of engaging in sexual immorality may find it difficult to continue with her schooling, thereby preventing her from pursuing her academic career. By so doing, the student's dream or school achievements are limited.

Schooling is an important aspect of every individual's life because it is a key to developing oneself and society. In Nigeria and other parts of the world, as one makes the effort to acquire education, there are certain factors that frustrate the process, which is harmful to the smooth running of every level of educational institutions. Deviant behavior is one of these frustrating factors that prevent the smooth running of education. It cannot be disputed that deviant behavior such as smoking, drinking, stealing, sexual immorality, gambling, and others lead students into all manner of unfavorable or unhealthy behaviors, such as robbery, rape, bullying, drug addiction, unwanted pregnancy, abortion and other forms of criminal dispositions or tendencies. It will be very difficult for

education to achieve its aims in any society if there is a high rate of crime or social vices created by deviant behavior. It is a common feature in Nigeria today to hear in the media that students are engaging in crimes such as drug abuse, sex offences, smuggling, armed robbery, pickpocketing, snatching of cell phones, cybercrime, truancy, and various kinds of theft. These are no doubt strongly deviant behaviors that could result in disorderliness and a breakdown of the norms of the school and society at large.

Deviant behavior among students cannot be completely eradicated, but it can be reduced to its barest minimum if certain measures are taken by the parents, teachers, and school authorities to curb this undesirable behavior. These measures include improved interpersonal relationships and effective communication between teachers and students, a positive attitude among teachers toward work, adequate facilities to make an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning to take place, appropriate discipline of children from their parents, a joint effort between the school and the parents to keep deviant behavior under control, constant monitoring of students' activities by both the school and the parents, encouragement and rewarding of positive attitudes or behavior from the students, adequate care of children from the parents, constant oversight of children's behavior and performance at school, regular admonishment of the students, and many more.

In light of these challenges created by deviant behavior to deter societal development and achieve educational goals, the researcher intends to examine the forms, causes, and consequences of and possible solutions to deviant behavior among students, portraying one or two improper behaviors or attitudes daily in the school. These negative behaviors include stealing, vandalism, rudeness toward teachers, a negative attitude toward work, fighting, meeting in a secluded place during classes, dressing inappropriately or indecently, smoking, and many more. All of these are behaviors that deviate from the school rules and regulations, which disrupt the school activities and thereby limit the achievement of the school's aim and the development of society at large. Thus, the researcher was motivated to investigate the forms, causes, and

consequences of and possible solutions to deviant behavior among public secondary school students.

Statement of the Problem

Senior school students are fond of displaying one or two improper behaviors or attitudes daily in school. These negative behaviors include destruction of school property, rudeness to their teachers, cultism, bullying, stealing, negative attitudes toward work, fighting, meeting in a secluded place during classes, dressing improperly or indecently, smoking, and many more. The variety of these deviant behaviors was witnessed in a school during the annual Science Week, some students were caught tampering with the generator used to supply electricity for the event. This act led to damage to the amplifier being used for the event. Unfortunately, the event was to witnessed official commissioning of a 12 units computer set donated to the school by Rotary Club International. The donors ascertained that this deviant behavior the students could have destroyed the school property, thus, the computer units are would not be safe in the school, and the donation was withdrawn. This incident cost the school possession of this equipment, but after several apologies and several weeks, the donors returned it to the school.

Similarly, there was an incident of a teacher who corrected a student for misbehaving; this particular female student became so rude and addressed the teacher inappropriately in the presence of her colleagues and students' teachers who witnessed the scene. The teacher became furious and flogged the student, who did not cease uttering all manner of insults at the teacher in question before finally being taken to the staff room, where she was collectively scolded by other teachers. This shows the extent to which students have become fearless and disrespectful of their teachers at school.

Cultism and bullying are no longer limited to higher institutions in Nigeria; they have also spread to the lower levels of education. These deviant behaviors are evident in our present-day senior and junior

schools. A real-life scenario is the death of the 14-year-old boy, Sylvester Oromoni, of Downen College in Lagos State. Several accusations claimed that the boy had been bullied multiple times by his senior classmates before he was finally killed for refusing to join a cult. Ethical principles have gone into extinction if youths are capable of committing such an evil act.

The above are behaviors or attitudes evident among secondary school students, which deviate from the school rules and regulations, disrupt the school activities, and thereby limit the achievement of the school's aims and society's development.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated teachers' opinions on the forms, causes, and consequences of and possible solutions to deviant behavior among students. Specifically, the study examined teachers' opinions on the forms, causes, and consequences of and possible solutions to deviant behavior among public senior school students in Ilorin South.

Research Questions

This research question guided this study: What are the teachers' opinions on the forms, causes, and consequences of and possible solutions to deviant behavior among public senior school students in Ilorin South?

Research Design

A descriptive form of survey research was adopted to examine the form, causes, and consequences of and possible solutions to deviant behavior among public senior school students in the Ilorin South Local

Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The study population was public senior secondary school teachers in the Ilorin South Local Government Area. The study focuses on public senior secondary schools and all the teachers of the schools. There are a total of 38 public senior schools (Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2021), 23 of which were sampled using a simple random sampling procedure, with a total population of 1,720 teachers. A total of 322 teachers was considered an appropriate sample size according to a table of sample selection by The Research advisors (2006).

A 28-item questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale designed by the researchers, titled "Teachers' opinion on the Forms, Causes, and Consequences of and Possible Solutions to Deviant Behaviors," was used to elicit the required data from the respondents, teachers in the selected schools in the Ilorin South Local Government Area.

The content validity of the instrument was verified by experts in the Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation unit of the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin. The reliability of the instrument was checked with the use of the split-half method. Cronbach's alpha was adopted in the analysis and a reliability index of 0.68 was obtained. A descriptive statistical method of percentage was used to answer the research questions; the results are presented in the first four tables.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented in the following tables.

Research Question: What are the teachers' opinions on the forms of deviant behavior among public senior school students in Ilorin South?

Table 1: Teachers’ opinions regarding the forms of deviant behavior

The following behaviors could be forms of deviant behavior among senior school students:	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
Examination malpractice	87.5	12.5
Truancy	88.6	11.5
Bullying	86.2	11.8
Lateness to school	90.7	9.3
Stealing	78.2	21.9
Sexual misconduct	77.1	22.9
Fighting	85.4	14.6
Disrespecting the school authority	87.6	10.4
Drug abuse (smoking and alcohol)	71.8	28.1
Damaging school property	78.7	21.3

Table 1 shows that over 70% of the teachers confirmed all the items in the table as forms of deviant behavior that are prevalent among their students.

Research Question: What are the teachers’ opinions on the causes of deviant behavior among Public Senior School students in Ilorin South?

Table 2: Teachers’ opinions regarding the causes of deviant behavior

The following factors could be causes of deviant behavior among senior secondary school students:	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
Over- or under-pampering of children	81.6	18.4
Family poverty	72.3	27.8
Poor attitude of teachers toward work	41.8	58.2
Overpopulation in the classroom	80.0	20.0
Negative effects of mass media	84.5	15.5
Negative peer influence	93.8	6.2
Easy access to illicit drugs	82.5	17.5
Lack of reinforcement for good behavior	71.5	28.4

Table 2 shows that five of the eight factors were causes of deviant behavior in the opinion of the teachers (71.5% to 82.5%).

Research Question: What are the teachers' opinions on the consequences of deviant behavior among Public Senior School students in Ilorin South?

Table 3: Teachers' opinion on the consequences of deviant behavior

The consequences of deviant behavior could be:	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
It may lead to academic failure among students	98.0	2.0
Difficulty forming positive interpersonal relationships	7.1	92.9
It makes the school inconducive to teaching and learning	81.6	18.4
Increased rate of drop-out among students	96.9	3.1
Increase in social vices in society	92.7	7.3
It may lead to problems paying attention, concentrating, and learning	14.5	85.6

Table 3 shows that deviant behavior among public senior school students may lead to some of the items listed.

Research Question: What are the teachers' opinions on the possible solutions to deviant behavior among Public Senior School students in Ilorin South?

Table 4: Teachers' opinions regarding possible solutions to deviant behavior

The following measures could be possible solutions to deviant behavior among senior secondary school students:	Agreed (%)	Disagreed (%)
A professional counsellor should be employed in the school	96.9	3.1
Activities of the students should be monitored at all times	99.0	1.0
Teachers should display a positive attitude toward work	96.9	3.1
Adequate facilities should be provided to reduce overpopulation in the school	100.0	–

Table 4 shows that 96.9% to 100% of the teachers agreed with the possible solutions.

Discussion

The first finding of the research was that students in Ilorin South exhibited deviant behaviors, such as examination malpractice, lateness to school, truancy, bullying, disrespect of the school's authority, vandalism, sexual misconduct, drug abuse, stealing, and fighting. Examination malpractice is a common form of deviant behavior that is observed among students in the Ilorin South Local Government Area: according to 87.5% of the respondents, students cheat during examinations. This is supported by the report of the Examination Ethics Project, which revealed that about 12% of the candidates who took the Senior School Certificate Examination in 2021 were involved in some form of malpractice during the examination (Adebayo, 2021). The report further revealed that Nigeria ranks poorly in the World Examination Malpractice Index. This finding is also similar to that of Amini-Philips and Chukwuma (2017) and Whawo (2015), who found that examination malpractice, stealing, and disobeying class rules were common among students.

Lateness to school was also observed as a reoccurring form of deviant behavior among students in Ilorin South. Some students roam the streets when they ought to be in school. Some of them do not enter the school premises until the second or third period is almost over. This is in line with the findings of Adegunju et al. (2019), who stated that the official arrival time for students at school in Nigeria is 7:30 a.m. Unfortunately, many students can still be seen walking unconcerned around the streets at 9:00 or 9:30 a.m. and many students stay away from school during school hours. Truancy is another perpetual, regular form of deviant behavior among students. As reported by Oghuvbu (2008), globally, truancy has been regarded as a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of educational programs and has caused many setbacks for secondary school students in their educational pursuits. Porter (2013) found that

students who commit truancy commit deviant acts at a higher rate than students who stay in school.

Bullying also exists among the students of Ilorin South. The senior and stronger students tend to bully the junior and weaker students in the school. Okechukwu (2016) enumerated physical assault, extortion, and verbal humiliation and intimidation as various forms of bullying. In addition, Placidus (2013) found that physical bullying was perceived as a dominant element of bullying. Moreover, stealing – which involves taking what does not belong to one without permission – is a consistent and uncalled-for form of deviant behavior that exists among the students. Consuming alcoholic beverages and smoking cigarettes, marijuana, shishas, or other substances are common behaviors of the students from the local area, in the opinion of the teachers. This is corroborated by Chamberlin's (2015) findings, which revealed that many in-school adolescents and even secondary school students have been found on school premises smoking Indian hemp (marijuana), cigarettes, heroin, and other drugs not recommended by doctors.

The second research finding is the causes of deviant behavior among students in Ilorin South, which include easy access to illicit drugs, over- or under-pampering of the child, overpopulation in the classroom, poverty, and a lack of reinforcement for good behavior. Easy access and abuse of drugs among students leads to them misbehaving and having no regard for or fear of the school authority once they are under the influence of the drug. As such, this induces deviant behavior among the students in the school. The easy access to drugs for students in this area is in line with the view of De Bruijn et al. (2014) that even though the legal purchasing age of alcohol is 18 years, anybody can buy alcohol in Nigeria due to the non-enforcement of the existing law and a lack of means to prove one's age. Additionally, there is extensive production and consumption of homemade alcohol (WHO, 2014) such as palm wine, ogogoro, burukutu, and pito. These facts make drugs easily accessible to and abused by secondary school students. Secondly, over- or under-pampering, overpopulation, family poverty, and a lack of reinforcement for good behavior were observed to be the causes of deviant behavior among students in Ilorin

South. This is in agreement with the findings of Yezna Tagele, (2020) in his work "Deviant Behavior of Secondary School Students in Gondar City." Similarly, the American Observer (2007) also agrees that overcrowded classrooms, parent inadequacies, negative peer influence, and negative effects of mass media are causes of deviant behavior among students in school. This finding is also in line with those of Jones (2010), which revealed that peers play an important role in the social and emotional development of adolescents and has the ability to influence others. Similarly, Yarduma and Abdulamid (2007) found that the explosion of the media system through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Imo, YouTube, television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and computers has contributed to the inculcation of deviant practices among students in school.

The third research finding is that the consequences of deviant behavior are academic failure among students, increased drop-out rate, increased social vices in society, and an inconducive environment for teaching and learning. This finding is inline with the report of Yezna Tagele (2020) and American Observer's (2007) report on the consequences of deviant behaviors. On the other hand; other consequences such as difficulty forming positive interpersonal relationships, problems paying attention, concentrating in class, and learning were not considered as consequences of deviant behavior among the students in the present study. This negates the finding of Agi (2016), that most students involved in deviant behavior do not benefit from schooling.

The fourth research finding involves possible solutions to deviant behavior among students in Ilorin South: providing adequate facilities to reduce overpopulation in schools (100.0%), monitoring students' activities at all times (99.0%), employing professional counsellors in schools (96.9%), and teachers demonstrating a positive attitude toward work (96.9%). These results are in line with the recommendations of Yezna Tagele (2020), Agi (2016), and the American Observer (2017) in their various studies, that good school facilities must be provided to aid effective teaching and learning in schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

School is assumed to be a place where students are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude to build self-reliance and develop society. At the same time, a school is also a place where all manner of unwanted behaviors that could hinder the objectives of the school are displayed.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Schools and society at large should strongly promote and reward positive behavior among students at all times. This will motivate students to be positive toward the rules and regulations that guide the school and society at large.
- b. The parents, teachers, and school administrators should work, communicate together effectively, and adopt appropriate and necessary measures to minimize deviant behavior among students.
- c. The rules and regulations of the school should be clear and appropriate discipline must be enforced for any breaches of them.
- d. Proper care for the children should be provided and inculcation of adequate discipline in the children should be ensured by the parents.

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