

PERSONALITY TRAITS AS PREDICTORS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR IN ADOLESCENTS FROM LAGOS METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This study examined personality traits as predictors of delinquent behaviour in adolescents from Lagos metropolis, Nigeria. The sample comprised two hundred and fifty (250) senior secondary school students, selected through stratified random sampling technique from five secondary schools in Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State. Four hypotheses were generated for the study and tested using a questionnaire developed by the researcher. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, while the independent t-test was used to test hypothesis 4. All hypotheses were tested at 5% level of significance. The findings revealed that there is a significant correlation between adolescents' personality types and manifestation of delinquent behaviours. Also, the study discovered a significant level of association between students' perception of delinquent behaviours and their personality development; likewise, peer pressure has a significant relationship with manifestation of delinquent behaviours among the students. Finally, the study found a significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students.

Keyword: Adolescents, Delinquent Behaviour, Personality.

Introduction

What makes us think, what makes us the way we are, and what makes us exhibit a particular attitude or behaviour that is peculiar to an individual is the personality of that individual. According to Ishola et al. (2022), personality is the wholesome attribute or behaviour of a person. Studies have shown that no two different individuals are the same, including those referred to as identical twins (Lawrence & Sobha, 2017).

The personalities of individuals accounts for this variation in people's behaviour. However, behaviours are not sufficient for possession of a trait because someone might display the behaviours typically associated with a given trait but not actually possess the trait. The action might be the result of some other cause, such as a prudential desire to act as if one

possessed the trait. Thus, it is the nature of the inner motivational states and not the behaviour itself that is generally described when we attribute personality traits to a person. Personality is responsible for the differences in people's attitudes towards life.

Although, there is no universally accepted definition of personality, Ishola et al. (2022) defined personality as the unique and distinctive characteristics that set a person apart from another. According to him, personality includes one's outward appearance, one's role in life, the totality of one's qualities or attributes, the way one really is, and one's general habitual behaviour-politeness, submissiveness, talkativeness, and so on. Ishola et al. (2022) maintained that personality is the more or less stable and enduring organization of a person's character, temperament, intellect, and physique, which determines his unique adjustment to his environment. The presentations above appear to suggest that personality is an integrated and organised self-concept, self-attitudes, self-values, ambitions, and all behavioural dispositions peculiar to an individual as a unique being or person (Aderonke et al., 2021). There is no gain in saying that personality as a concept is quite broad, particularly, when it involves all facets of human behaviour and embraces aspects of developmental, social, experimental, physiological, and —clinical psychology. There are many dimensions used to determine deviant behaviour. When a deviant occurs, the individual finds himself in conflict with either himself or social groups. In varying degrees, he is socially or vocationally incapacitated. This incapacitation may be general or unrealistic. According to (Kabiru, 2021), deviant behaviour can be consensually validated as a behaviour problem when it is judged by society to be outside the bounds of acceptability. Thus, the consensual criteria, as put down by an influential writer on interpersonal relationships, describes deviant behaviour as that which society perceives as dangerous, anxiety-provoking, or socially disruptive.

Reid (2022) is of the opinion that a child is behaviour disordered if he shows some of the following characteristics over a significant period of time: An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; and a general pervasive mood of happiness or depression. A tendency to develop physical symptoms of pains or fears associated with personal or school problems. (Yusuf, Daud, & Arshat, 2021) asserted that a disturbed child is the child who cannot or will not adjust to the socially acceptable norms of behaviour and, consequently, disrupts his own academic progress, the learning efforts of his classmates, and interpersonal relationships.

Deviant behaviour has become a problem that has eaten deep into the educational system. This problem has always attracted the attention of educational psychologists, teachers, parents, and other experts on educational development in our nation. In Nigeria today, delinquency is evident in the behaviours of adolescents as they break parental rules, school regulations, and societal laws. Deviant behaviour has given rise to offences ranging from violations of parental disciplinary measures to truancy, bullying, abnormal dressing, stealing, assaults, robbery, and other socially unacceptable acts. In secondary schools, deviant behaviours have increased in number. The most abnormal behaviours that are

rampant in juvenile delinquents are disobedience, cases of rape, and other acts of gangsterism.

According to Muyideen (2020) the adolescent manifested a number of problems that are characteristic of the adolescent stage. Adolescents in schools behave differently. Some adolescents adopt the life of introversion, whereby they are not outgoing, shy, moody, avoid association, etc., while some youths who are extroverts are outgoing, outspoken always, mix up with friends, and are more sociable than the introverts. The problem of deviant behaviour among adolescents in schools refers to the problem of wrongdoing by young people, and includes truancy, stealing, vandalism, terrorism, drug addiction, and other behaviours that are against the social norms. Quite a lot of reasons have been adduced for the high rate of deviant behaviours in schools (Adisa et al., 2022). These include: absence of parental supervision; lack of challenging or interesting school work and curriculum; the desire to participate in pleasurable activities and socialization with peers away from school; anxiety feelings as a result of labelling and tracking within the school system; and inconsistent punitive measures against truancy occurrence.

The issue of adolescents and deviant behaviours, especially in a school setting, can never be over-flogged in research studies. Many parents are becoming more agitated as to how to handle their growing children as they approach the age of adolescence. Based on the behavioural signals received from these young children, one wonders what would happen to their educational achievement.

Teachers in secondary schools are receiving more challenges from their students day by day. Every person in the society is aided in adjusting to the world around him, through either parental or community help. Adolescents, therefore, need to be assisted to adjust behaviourally to the changes around them by their parents, community or environment, and school. All these problems may cumulatively lead to educational deficiencies such as poor study habits, academic underachievement, poor self-concept, low self-esteem, and a lack of motivation to learn and adjust. Hence, there is a need for some understanding and responsible adults from the background who would serve as role models for the young stars to redirect their energies towards the right channel that would produce a rewarding and satisfactory pattern of behaviour in them. Thus, this study is undertaken to examine personality types as correlates of deviant behaviour among senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

Adolescents manifest a number of problems that are characteristic of the adolescent stage. Adolescents in schools behave differently. Some are extroverts who are outgoing, outspoken, friendly, and restless, while others are introverts who adopt a life of shyness, avoiding associations with peers and other members of the community. Deviant behaviours among adolescents in schools involve the problems of doing wrong, disobedience to constituted authorities, and violating the laid-down rules and regulations instituted by adults in a given society. These problems are stealing, prostitution, fighting, vandalism and terrorism, drug addiction, and alcoholism, which often lead to indiscriminate sexual activities, rape, and sexual harassment, which abounds in our schools and society. There is

a degeneration of the society's norms and expected values due to the negative personalities of adolescents.

The problem of this study, therefore, is that of adolescents' personality types, which would be attributed to deviant behaviour among senior secondary school students in the Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine personality correlates of delinquent behaviour among adolescent students in Lagos metropolis. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Find out the relationship between the personality type of adolescents and the manifestation of delinquent behaviour;
2. investigate if students' perceptions of delinquent behaviour will significantly correlate with their personality development;
3. examine the relationship between peer pressure and manifestations of delinquent behaviour among students, and
4. determine if there is a gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviour among students.

Research Questions

Based on the problem of the study, the following research questions guided the study are:

1. Is there any relationship between adolescents' personality types and manifestations of delinquent behaviour?
2. To what extent will students' perceptions of delinquent behaviour correlate with their personality development?
3. Is there any relationship between peer pressure and the manifestation of delinquent behaviour among students?
4. Will there be a significant gender difference in the extent of deviant behaviour among students?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested during the course of this study:

1. There is no significant relationship between adolescents' personality types and the manifestation of delinquent behaviours.
2. There is no significant relationship between students' perceptions of delinquent behaviours and their personality development.
3. There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and the manifestation of delinquent behaviours among students.
4. There is no significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students.

Delinquent Behaviours and Personality Development

Traits theories emphasize the psychological side of crime, including the relationship among personality, intelligence, learning, and criminal behaviour. The psychodynamic perspective focuses on early childhood experiences and their effects on personality. Toyin and Nkechi (2020) argued that psychoanalytical theorists claim that criminal behaviour is the result of mental conflicts, and these conflicts may arise in the subconscious or unconscious mind.

A personality trait is an interrelated cluster of mental and/or behavioural characteristics. According to Moldes et al. (2019) the coherent core of personality is attributable to traits that underlie personality. Traits enable individuals to respond to heterogeneous stimuli in a typical manner, and traits influence their thoughts and actions in diverse but characteristic ways. Thus, according to Toyin and Nkechi (2020) traits account for both the stable and enduring features of personality as well as how it may fluctuate and grow. Juvenile delinquents showed more depression, cognitive distortions, and problem behaviour than non-delinquents. Key characteristics of depression include difficulty concentrating, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, hopelessness, feelings of worthlessness, and, at its extreme, suicidal thoughts and tendencies.

Adolescents' problems arise as a result of the various environmental demands the child has to cope with during the puberty period. The environmental demands may be internal or external. The internal demands include issues such as physiological changes associated with rapid growth, neurological mechanisms, hormonal activities, and puberty (Soft et al., 2017). There are also internal forces associated with the child's new-found advanced thinking strategy. This advanced thinking is associated with the maturation of the brain and other nervous tissues. The child can now think in the abstract, imagine, plan, theorize, predict, and be more sensitive to the various ways in which other individuals can reinforce punish. He is more aware of the sudden changes in moods, feelings, and attitudes of other people.

The adolescent may have problems in his attempts to express his feelings and thought processes associated with puberty (Muyideen, 2020). For example, while an adolescent is sexually mature and has developed increased motivation for sex, he may not be able to carry out his desire and need for sex because of possible economic, social, educational, and religious constraints. The sources of adolescent problems may be made more complex by the social norms and expectations of adult norms and taboos. This is why the adolescents are often described as a "social artefacts". This simply means that the adolescent and his problems are partly created by social forces. The adolescent's needs, aspirations, values, adjustments, and overall personality are largely products of his interaction with social forces (Muyideen, 2020).

Delinquency is an environmental and social illness. Delinquent behaviours are skilled and gained. A child is not born as a delinquent, nor are its genes responsible for delinquent behaviours (Sanni et al., 2010). In this way, delinquents are not a single type of human beings that is born with any such innate, physical, mental, or emotional characteristics.

These individuals have normal with normal needs and desires. Like other normal children, they also want love, security, and to be recognized as normal children. The refusal of these basic needs leads to adjustment problems, and as a result, these children develop enmity and protest against society. Consequently, delinquent behaviour is produced that is indignant against social and environmental conditions (Muyideen, 2020).

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of this study was comprised of students in Senior Secondary Schools in the Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select 250. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaires were administered to the selected respondents by the researcher in their schools during the school period, with the assistance of their teachers. The instrument was filled immediately, and collection was made immediately upon completion to ensure a 100% return rate. Thereafter, the administered questionnaires were collected and collated for data analysis. The data collected in this study was analysed using simple percentages and frequency counts, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the independent t-test statistics. The simple percentage and frequency counts were used to analyse the bio-data of the respondents; the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3, while the independent t-test was used to test hypothesis 4. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Bio data of the respondents

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	125	50
Female	125	50
Total	250	100

Table 1 showed that 125 (50%) respondents were male and 125 (50%) respondents were female. Both genders were equally represented in the study.

Table 2: distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13-14years	104	41.6
15-16years	125	50.0
17years and above	21	8.4
Total	250	100

Table 2 indicated that 104 (41.6%) of the respondents were between the ages of 13 and 14, 125 (50%) were between the ages of 15-16; and 21(8.4%) of them were registered for ages 17 and above. Thus, the majority of the participants fell within the age bracket 15-16 years.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by class

Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SS II	125	50
SS III	125	50
TOTAL	250	100

Table 3 showed that 125 (50%) respondents were selected in SS I, while 125 (50%) were selected in SS I. Thus, both SSI and SSII were equally represented in the study.

Testing the Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

Hypothesis one states that there is no significant relationship between adolescents' personality types and the manifestation of delinquent behaviours.

The statistical instrument used in testing this hypothesis was the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient. The result is represented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Relationship between adolescents' personality types and manifestation of delinquent behaviours.

Variables	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	n	r-cal	r-crit
Personality types	21.50	2.77				
			248	250	0.63	0.195
Manifestation of delinquent behaviours.	30.48	3.92				

*significant at 0.05, df = 248; r;cal=0.63

Table 4 showed that the value of r-calculated (0.63) was greater than the value of r-critical (0.195), given 248 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that there is a significant relationship between adolescents' personality types and manifestations of delinquent behaviours.

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two states that there is no significant relationship between students' perceptions of delinquent behaviours and their personality development. The statistical instrument used in testing this hypothesis was the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The result is presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: relationship between students' perception of delinquent behaviors and the personality development

Variables	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	n	r-cal	r-crit
Students' perception on delinquent behaviours	16.13	2.02				
			248	250	0.67	0.195
Personality development	18.34	2.27				

*significant at 0.05, df=248; r-cal=0.67

Table 5 showed that the value of r-calculated (0.67) was greater than the value of r-critical (0.195), given 248 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance. This led to the

rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that there is a significant relationship between students' perceptions of delinquent behaviours and their personality development.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three states that there is no significant relationship between peer pressure and the manifestation of delinquent behaviours among students. The statistical instrument used in testing the hypothesis was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The result is presented below.

Table 6: Relationship between peer pressure and manifestation of delinquent behaviours among students

Variables	$\bar{x}$	sd	df	n	r-cal	r-crit
Peer pressure	19.85	2.53	248	250	0.72	0.195
Manifestation of delinquent behaviours	30.48	3.92				

*significant at 0.05, df= 248; r-cal=0.72

Table 6 showed that the value of r-calculated (0.72) was greater than the value of r-critical (0.195), given 248 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance. This led to the rejection of null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, which states that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and manifestation of delinquent behaviours among students.

Hypothesis four

Hypothesis four states that there is no significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students. This hypothesis was tested using the independent t-test statistical tool. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students

Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	t-crit
Female	125	23.49	6.88	2.17	1.67
Male	125	26.38	9.27		

*significant at 0.05, df=248; critical t = 1.67

Table 7 showed that a calculated t-value of 2.17 resulted as the gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students. This calculated t-value is significant since it is greater than the critical t-value of 1.67 given 248 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students.

Summary of Findings

The four major findings of this study were summarized as follows:

1. Hypothesis one found that there is a significant relationship between adolescents personality types and manifestations of delinquent behaviours.
2. Hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant relationship between students' perceptions of delinquent behaviours and their personality development.
3. Hypothesis three showed that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and the manifestation of delinquent behaviours among students.
4. Hypothesis four found that there is a significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that there is a significant relationship between adolescents' personality types and the manifestation of delinquent behaviours. This agrees with Nrumah and Frimpong (2021) that adolescent manifested a few problems that are characteristic of the adolescent stage. Adolescents in schools behave differently. Some adolescents adopt the life of introversion, whereby they are not outgoing, shy, moody, avoid association, etc., while some youths who are extroverts are outgoing, outspoken always, mix up with friends, and are more sociable than introverts.

Another finding of this study is that there is a significant relationship between students' perceptions of delinquent behaviours and their personality development. This finding is in agreement with Legault (2016) who maintained that a personality trait is an interrelated cluster of mental and/or behavioural characteristics. The coherent core of personality is attributable to traits which underlie personality. Trait enable individuals to respond to

heterogeneous stimuli in a typical manner, and traits influences their thoughts and actions in diverse but chrematistics ways. Thus, for Legault (2016), traits accounts for both the stable enduring features of personality as well as it may fluctuate and grow. Juvenile delinquents showed more depression cognitive distortions and problem behaviour than non-delinquents. Key characteristics of depression Include difficulty concentrating, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, hopelessness, feelings of worthlessness, and, at its extreme, suicidal thoughts and tendencies.

The study also found that there is a significant relationship between peer pressure and manifestation of delinquent behaviours among Students. This finding agrees with (Zhu & Shek, 2020) who observed that many students participate in deviant behaviours, campus violence, Cult activities, rape, robbery and other 'heinous crimes as a result of peer influence. This tends to suggest that some people if left to themselves would never indulge in criminal activity of any sort but for the purpose of peer compliance and group dynamism they take to deviance and crime. This is also in agreement with (Yusuf, Daud, Arshat, et al., 2021) who discovered that peers sometimes attempt to take over child parenting by telling their age-mates to ignore what parents tell them about life generally but listen to their own directives. This influence tends to be very pervasive because the peer group for the most part has a code of conduct to which all the members must submits. Those things that parents consider too intimate to discuss with their children (for example, sex issues, alcoholism secret cults etc) are freely and openly talked about within the peer group.

Finally the study found that there is a significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students. This is in agreement with Yusuf, Daud and Arshat (2021) who found out that girls were involved in certain forms of delinquency, such as theft from home, graffiti and truancy more than boys. Boys were rather found to be more involved in more serious forms of delinquency, such as carrying weapon, house-breaking and robbery than girls. furthermore, the finding here agrees with the study of Zhu and Shek (2020)who found that male peer groups tend to display more assertive behaviour and independence. Male peer groups also tend to display more antagonistic behaviour than girls. Status hierarchies develop within males peer groups having members vie for position for a time, but eventually a stable hierarchy is established reducing intragroup conflict.

Conclusion

This study examined personality correlates of delinquent behaviour among senior Secondary school students. It can be reasonably inferred that individual Personality appears to be a function of innate oriented; that personality traits evolved as strategies to manipulate people in order to gain personal advantages, therefore, people are manipulative, selfish and calculating in their relationships. It is important to note that personality of individuals plays a crucial role in psychosocial adjustment and since the formation begins at the early childhood, parents, and significant others within the child's immediate environment should help the child to form positive self-concept so as to have a better future

personality. conclusively, based on the analyses and the results following It, the following conclusions were reached: a significant relationship exists between adolescents' personality types and manifestation of delinquent behaviours, & significant relationship exists between students' perception of delinquent behaviours and their personality development, a significant relationship exists between peer pressure and manifestation of delinquent behaviours among students and there is a significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviours among students. The results from this study have highlighted the need for a better understanding of the personality structure of our juvenile delinquents.

Recommendations

1. Given the observed significant relationship between adolescents' personality types and manifestations of delinquent behaviors, it is recommended to implement targeted interventions tailored to specific personality profiles. Develop educational programs that focus on enhancing positive personality traits and coping mechanisms while addressing potential risk factors associated with delinquency. Collaborate with educators, psychologists, and parents to create a supportive environment that fosters the development of positive personality traits in adolescents.
2. Acknowledging the significant relationship between students' perceptions of delinquent behaviors and their personality development, it is recommended to integrate positive behavior modeling into educational curricula. Implement awareness campaigns to address misconceptions about delinquent behaviors and promote a more accurate understanding among students. Additionally, incorporate counseling and mentoring programs to support healthy personality development, emphasizing empathy, resilience, and effective decision-making skills.
3. In light of the observed significant relationship between peer pressure and delinquent behaviors among students, it is recommended to design and implement peer-led intervention programs. Empower students to resist negative peer influences by providing them with skills for effective communication, assertiveness, and peer support. Encourage the creation of positive peer groups and promote a school culture that values inclusivity and mutual respect.
4. Recognizing the significant gender difference in the extent of delinquent behaviors, it is recommended to tailor intervention strategies to address the unique challenges faced by males and females. Develop gender-sensitive counselling programs that consider the social and cultural factors influencing delinquency in each gender. Foster open communication about gender-specific issues and promote a supportive environment that encourages positive behaviour and healthy development for all students.

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