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Self-concept and Academic Achievement of Delinquent and Non-delinquent Students in Imo State, Nigeria (Pp. 158-170)

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Abstract

This study investigated self concept and academic achievement of delinquent and non-delinquent students. A total of 120 subjects comprising of 60 non-delinquent students randomly selected from two secondary schools and 60 delinquent inmate from Boys Approved Remand home for delinquents in Imo state were used for study. The 120 students (60 delinquents and 60 non-delinquents) responded to two research instruments namely Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI) for self concept and Achievement Test Battery (ATB) for academic achievement. Three hypotheses were formulated and statistically tested. Result of analysis of variance (Anova) and Sheffe's multiple comparison testing indicate that there is a significant difference between self concept of delinquent and non-delinquent students and their academic achievement. There is also significant difference between delinquent and non-delinquent students academic achievement and furthermore result indicate a significant difference between the self concept of delinquent and non-delinquent students. Based on the findings, the study recommended among others that government should provide professional psychologists and counselors to

schools, and that such should be concerned with the development of self concept of their students for better academic achievement.

Introduction

In organized societies and cultures there are people who do not abide by the laws of the land. Their behaviour invariably constitute a threat to the citizenry and indeed the society. They are called 'criminals' if they are adults and 'delinquents' if they are youths (Encyclopedia of social science 2001)

According to Mason (2005), delinquency, is defined as the behaviour consequent to the failure of personal and social control to produce behaviour in conformity with the norms of the social system to which legal penalties are attached. Juvenile delinquency is a legal term for behaviour of children and adolescent that in adults would be judged criminal under law. Juvenile delinquency is largely the result of failure of primary groups to offer the child appropriate non-delinquent social role models or to provide the child with forms of social control which will ensure acceptance of those social roles which are preferred in accordance with his needs (Elliot and Voss 2001, Sarason 2003)

Delinquents break the norms and values of the society whereas non-delinquents conform to the societal norms and values. Delinquents can defile any form of authority. Their activities are usually threatening to the societal order, whereas non-delinquents maintain laws and order and respect constituted authority. Delinquents unlike non-delinquents perceive themselves as lazy, bad and ignorant. (Edward 1996, Brown 1998, Breznier and Piquero 2001 and Zamora 2005)

Average delinquent scores is lower on intelligent tests. There is a higher incidence of mental retardation among delinquents when matched with non-delinquents. They are found to be socially assertive, hostile, suspicious, destructive, defiant to authority and generally lacking in self control (Onyehalu 2003, Walklate 2003, Zamora 2005, Hickey 2006).

Most psychologists educationists and criminologists (e.g Walklate 2003, Zamora 2005, Ajibade 2007) have attributed the causes of juvenile delinquency to a complex of psychological, social and economic factors. Clinical studies have also uncovered emotional mal-adjustments, usually arising from disorganized family situations in many delinquents. Other studies have suggested that there are persisting patterns of delinquency

in poverty – stricken neighborhoods regardless of changing occupants (Shields and Clark 1995, Steinberg and Morris 2001, Onyehalu 2003, Mason 2005)

Today, more young persons are delinquent than in the past and their acts of delinquency are very violent and destructive of life and property. Olubajo (2001) enumerated a wide range of delinquent acts among Nigerian youths. These include boys fighting with weapons, teenage girls who sneak out of homes and out of schools to sleep with elderly men for money, boys who steal their parents jewelries to sell for money and those who beat up their parents.

In Nigeria, government continues to build remand homes and similar schools where not only teaching and learning take place but the delinquents are educated emotionally, socially and cognitively. More often than not these juvenile delinquents leave these places unchanged. Delinquency affect their self concept, academic performance, opportunities and sometimes prevent them from becoming useful adults. Students who have low self concept tend to encounter difficulties in almost every area. Low self concept learners have a high level of anxiety, encounter difficulty in making friends, adjust less easily to school and tend to be hampered in school achievement. A favourable and positive self-concept is essential for personal happiness, adjustment and good academic achievement.(Alexander 1997, Bolter 2002)

Furthermore, the researcher's experience reveal that vicious adults use teenagers for delinquent purposes such as prostitution, sex trafficking, burglary, shoplifting, examination malpractice and other forms of theft. However, some delinquents are known to be intellectually sound. They are hyperactive and the normal classroom situation is not stimulating enough that they revolt against constituted authority. Boulter (2002) also observed that not only criminals exploits delinquents but also respectable members of the society use them to satisfy their needs. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to rehabilitate these delinquent.

The Extent of Delinquency among Nigerian Children

One does not need to go far before realizing the existence of delinquency among Nigerian children. Delinquency is an aspect of crime which receives great attention from the news media and politicians. From the family, to the school and workplaces cases of delinquent behaviours abound.

The extent of delinquency among children in Nigeria may not be accurately measured, as there has not been research studies carried out specifically to measure delinquency. Nevertheless, research studies have been undertaken to ascertain the relationships between various factors that can lead to delinquent act (Onyehalu 2003, Ukoha 2003) so from these studies one can deduce the extent of delinquency in Nigeria.

In Nigeria today, prisons are filled to the brim with delinquents who have committed various types of crimes. The rate of school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, truancy, drug abuse and misuse are on the increase (Mayor 2005, Kobiowu, 2006). The high incidence of crimes, violence, and disruptive and dysfunctional behaviour among students have often been linked with the influence of psychoactive substances (Abasiubong et al 2006)

The FBI reports that between 1980 and 1990, violent crime rates for 10-17 years olds increased by 27% reaching the nation's all time high (Uniform Crime Report for United States, 1991). Strikingly, the overall arrest rate for 18-24 years age range is almost twice as high as that of youth under 18 (Statistical Abstract of the United States). The trend may not be strikingly different for Nigeria.

A relationship between academic achievement and delinquent behaviour has been proposed by various hypothetical approaches. Indeed this relationship is a mainstay of most theories of delinquency. (Brier 1989, Boulter 2002, Mason 2005). Self concept is essential for personal adjustment and good academic achievement.

The school failure hypothesis suggests that the failure experienced by juveniles with learning disabilities is the first of the many negative experiences that could result in delinquency because of the development of a negative self concept (Brier, 1989, Mason 2005). The susceptibility hypothesis explains delinquent behaviour as the result of neurological and intellectual differences in personality attribute in juvenile with learning disabilities. This may lead to an increased susceptibility to engage in defiant, aggressive and antisocial behaviour or delinquent conduct (keilitz and Dunivant 1988, Zamora 2005)

The differential treatment hypothesis explores the nature of the inconsistent treatment of learning disabled juveniles in the juvenile justice system. This hypothesis holds that, though learning disabled

juveniles commit the same types of crimes at the same rate as non-juveniles, the learning disabled juveniles are more likely to get caught and are at greater risk of being adjudicated (Kelitz and Dunivant 1988, Brier 1989, Mason 2005)

Self Concept and Academic Achievement

Self concept is the mental and conceptual understanding and persistent regard that sentient beings hold for their own existence (Wikipedia 2008). In other words, self concept is the sum total of person's knowledge and understanding of his or herself. Components of self concept include physical, psychological and social attributes which can be influenced by the individual's attitude, habits, beliefs and ideas (McAdams 1986)

Some psychologists and educationists (e.g Campbell 1986, Goltlieb and Roggers (2002) are becoming aware of the fact that an individual self concept or attitudes and perception of himself are intimately related to how he learns and behaves. Some adolescents are deficient in school work not as result of low intelligence or physical impairment but because they seem to see themselves as unable to undertake academic work success in school work. Thus how much a person feels about the qualities and attribute he possesses or on those qualities themselves affect his self concept.

Problem of the Study

Delinquency is a disturbing issue confronting adolescents, parents and teachers alike. Taken together the increase in the number and severity of such acts and their overwhelming cost for the society validities the notion that delinquency has become a prominent national issue. In all its ramifications, delinquency has destructive and dysfunctional effects on the lives of individuals involved. Delinquency becomes problematic because it affects the delinquent academic achievement and diverts resources into efforts at social control when those resources could be more carefully diverted elsewhere.

Continued efforts to decrease the number of delinquent acts have led many researchers to investigate the underlying factors that may lead youth to act out in delinquent ways. Indeed, many factors have been suggested to have casual links to delinquency. Relationship behaviour has been proposed by various hypothetical approaches.

Acosta (2001) stated that the key factor to academic achievement is self – concept and this measures is a better predictor of achievement. The problem this study addresses itself to, can be put in a question form . Can self –concept be related to the academic achievement of delinquents and non-delinquents students? Are there differences in students self-concept and academic achievement of delinquents and non- delinquents students?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the self concept of delinquent and non-delinquent students as they affect their academic achievement.
2. There is no significant difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent students academic achievement.
3. There is no significant difference between delinquent self concept and non-delinquent self concept.

Method

A total of 120 delinquent and non-delinquent students in Junior secondary school (JSSIII) were used in the study. From this total, 60 are delinquents and 60 are non-delinquents. Age range from 10 to 13 years with an average age of 11.8. All the 60 inmates in JSS III found at Boys Approved Remand School for delinquents in Arondizoogu, in Okigwe Educational zone of Imo state were used for the study. Delinquents are sent to Remand homes by the Juvenile Courts to remove them from further influence of the peer group. In addition a total of 60 non-delinquents student from two secondary schools in Okigwe Educational zone were randomly selected.

Two main instruments were used to collect data for the study.

- i. Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI) Akinboye 1979. The ADPI has been found to be useful in the assessment and management of a number of psycho-social problems such as individual self concept.

There are 30-items on ADPI and subjects could rate themselves on an 8-point scale 0-8. A maximum score of 240 is for high self concept while a score of 120 is the minimum. Section A of the APDI includes items that describe the various ways individual perceives themselves. The items are generated from the product

of some clinical interviews with adolescents in some Nigerian secondary schools as well as from existing literature and especially the analysis of Epsteins self –perception scale is a general self-perception scale which may be able to asses academic, social, personal and intellectual ability of perception of the adolescent.

- ii. Achievement Test Battery (ATB) on four core subjects - Mathematics, English, Social science and Integrated science.

Achievement Test Battery (ATB) based on the JSS Syllabus was constructed and administered to the subject. Copies of achievement Test Battery (ATB) were given out to experienced Mathematics, English, Social studies and Integrated teachers to vet the test items in terms of content, clarity of words and relevancy of items to the study. All their recommendations were incorporated into the final achievement test battery employed in this study. This procedure helped ensure for the validity of the test instruments.

The ADPI has a high reliability index and construct validity. Its reliability under test-retest is found at 0.79, while the internal consistency reliability is 0.75 (Akinboye 1981)

Also the reliability coefficient of the Achievement Test Battery (ATB) was established with the test-retest technique. The researcher administered copies of the Achievement Test Battery to 20 students which were not used in the main study. After an interval of two weeks, the test was re-administered to the students. The resulting correlation indicate 0.82 for Mathematics, 0.88 for English, 0.85 for social studies and 0.81 for Integrated science.

The ADPI and the Achievement Test Battery (ATB) were administered to 60 delinquents and 60 non-delinquents by the researcher with the assistance of teachers from the school under investigation.

The stated hypotheses were analyzed by using the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Sheffe multiple comparison test.

Results and Discussion

Result findings is based on the following hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the self concept of delinquent and non-delinquent students and their academic achievement.

Table I showed that computed F (40.56) is greater than critical F (2.41) and level of significance (0.05) is greater than the probability (0.00). This result rejected the null hypotheses and accepted the alternate hypotheses that there is significance difference between the self concept of delinquent and non-delinquent students and their academic achievement. Thus non-delinquent students have higher self concept and perform significantly better than delinquent students

Ho₂ *There is no significant difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent students academic achievement.*

Table 2 showed that the level of significance (0.05) is greater than the probability (0.00) and the confidence interval [-19.20: - 6.83] does not contain zero. This result rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis that there is significant difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent academic achievement

Ho₃: *There is no significant difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent self concept students academic achievement.*

Table 3 showed that the level of significant (0.05) is greater than the probability (0.00) and the confidence interval [-18.15: - 5.18] does not contain zero. This result rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternate hypothesis that there is significant difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent self concept.

The results of the analysis presented in table 1 to 3 indicate the following that there is a significant difference between the self concept of delinquent and non-delinquent students.

- i. That there is a significant difference between the delinquent and non-delinquent self concept as they affect students academic achievement. The non-delinquent students perform better than delinquent students Edward (1996), Brown (1998), Steinberg and Morris ((2001), Onyehalu (2003), Badru (2006) and Ajibade (2007) have shown that low educational achievements or school failure and cognitive delays are associated with increase risk of juvenile delinquency. Also children with learning difficulties and cognitive delays are at an increased risk of delinquent behaviour and young offenders have increased risks of cognitive delays and learning difficulties. Thus, the persistent association between academic achievement and delinquent behaviours has

lead to search for an explanation of these association (Keilitz and Dunivant 1998, Larson 1988, Sarason 2003 and Zamora 2005) it is palpable that low self concept could be significantly linked to academic under –achievement.

- ii. This findings is in line with the studies of Alexander (1997), Eliot et al (2001); that scholastic failure leads to lowered self concept which in turn leads to increased probability of delinquency as a possible defence mechanism . Delinquent students are best known to engage in anti social acts most of the time, instead of engaging in worthwhile activities. The kind of person an individual is can be influenced by the abilities, dispositions, values, beliefs and aspirations. Furthermore, mans insatiable desire for the good things of this life propels him to greater heights. Thus one success leads to other (Zamora 2005).

This is in consonance with the fact that self-concept is a dynamic attribute or construct which changes with experience. It facilitates attempts to fulfill needs while on the other hand diminishes with disapproval and anxiety. A more cautious approach to these findings suggest that self concept merely sets a stage thereby making delinquents to response to certain social situation negatively. Delinquent have a higher incidence of personality problems than non - delinquents and delinquents are more associated with cheating during examinations. According to studies young persons who engage in delinquent acts often perceive themselves as having less chance of success in life than those who are not involved in deviance (Zamora 2005)

- iii. There is a significant difference between academic achievement of delinquent and non-delinquent students.

Researcher (e.g Keilitz and Dunivant 1998, Larson 1988, Beebe and Muller 1993, Brier 1995, Malmgren and Zamora 2005) explains delinquent behaviour as the result of neurological and intellectual differences in personality attributes such as low self concept with learning disabilities. These differences may lead to an increased susceptibility to engage in defiance, aggressive and anti-social or delinquent conduct. Thus, the poor academic performance in school by juveniles with academic problem is

the first of many negative experiences that will result in delinquency because of the development of negative self concept.

Conclusion

Regardless of the findings of this study, the self concept of an individual holds out an important key to the progress, success and achievement of that individual. It involves the will to achieve and could be seen as a driving force behind the strive to achieve something in life. This probability shows that delinquency is not an inborn attribute rather the way an individual perceives “his” self determines whether his contribution is positive or negative to his environment. Self concept has been found to significantly influence academic achievement. It is also related to delinquency.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations were made.

- i. The Government should provide institution with psychologists counselors who are specially trained to be able to identify psychological characteristics of delinquency at the early stage so as to checkmate delinquency.
- ii. The Government should provide the remand homes with specialist capable of improving the lives of these juvenile delinquent, and as well as provide more infrastructural facilities in these institutions so that the inmates can feel more at home to show up their self esteem and self perception which can be among the determinants of delinquency.
- iii. Those with low self esteem including delinquents need to be given commensurate levels of responsibilities and positive regards to help them develop intellectually, socially and emotionally.

Table I: Result of ANOVA testing H_{01}

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	LS	Prob	f-comp	f-crit	Descion
Between	17627.58	3	5875.86	0.05	0.00	40.56	2.41	Reject
Within	34184.42	236	144.85					
Total	51811.20	239						

Table 2: Result of Sheffe multiple comparison testing the null hypothesis between delinquent and non-delinquent students academic achievement.

Variable	Mean	SD	Confidential interval	LS	Prob	Remark
delacada	39.33	12.33	[-19.20: - 6.83]	0.05	0.00	
ndelacada	52.35	10.70				

Table 3: Result of Sheffe multiple comparison testing the null hypothesis between the delinquent and non-delinquent self concept students academic achievement.

Variable	Mean	SD	Confidential interval	LS	Prob	Remark
deself	51.58	10.55	[-18.15: - 5.18]	0.05	0.00	
ndeself	63.55	14.20				

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