

## ***Determinants of Deviant Behaviour among Secondary School Adolescent Students in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling***

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### **Abstract**

*This study explored determinants of deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis, and its implications for counselling. The study made use of descriptive research of the survey type. The population of the study comprised all the secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis. The sample consisted of 100 adolescent students of secondary schools in Jos metropolis. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to get a representative sample. The instrument used was a self-constructed questionnaire. The study was guided by four hypotheses. The instrument was subjected to face validation by two experts from Research, Measurement and Evaluation, and Guidance and Counselling Units in the Department of Educational Foundations of University of Jos. Reliability index of 0.68 was obtained. Data obtained were analyzed using frequency count and chi-square method of analysis. The study revealed that family background, societal factors, and peer group can influence the behaviour of adolescent students in secondary schools, and that social media does not have significant impact on students' behaviour. It was recommended, among others, that parenting programmes, family therapy, and parental education should be carried out to improve family dynamics and supervision.*

**Keywords:** deviant, behaviour, adolescent, students, counselling

### **Introduction**

Deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students has been alarmingly increasing every year. The origin of deviant behaviour could be traced along with the origin of human race. Deviant behaviour is an inevitable problem of global society; research studies indicate that the density and intensity of deviance in human behaviour has been alarmingly increased and is creating a massive disruption in the balance of the society, especially the school environment. Deviant behaviour is the act that an individual displays that is against the norms of a particular society. These acts are generally ways that are not acceptable to the community. The process of carrying out the act of misbehaviour that is not acceptable to the society is referred to as deviance. Deviant behaviour is also referred to actions or behaviours that violate social norms or

expectations. Social norms are unwritten rules that guide behaviour and are considered acceptable by certain social groups or cultures.

Deviant behaviour comes from the term “deviate”, which means to stray from a normal or acceptable behaviour or action. Deviant behaviour is often referred to as a deviant action. The term “deviant behaviour” is a problem producing behaviour committed by an individual or group that interferes with the enjoyment of life or essential role performance of one or others, and that is sufficient to produce a social censure or control response intended to change or eradicate that behaviour (Eremus, 2015). Angel (2016) opined that deviant behaviour is any behaviour that lacks conformity and acceptability of the people in the society. Deviant behaviour is that behaviour that violates the laid down rules and regulations of a given organization or group. The researcher went further to emphasize that deviant behaviour is a common phenomenon among students in schools which has led them to join secret cults, and other heinous crimes in the school. In the opinion of Gibbs (2014), deviant behaviour is a conduct that deviates from the societal norms. Deviant behaviour is any behaviour exhibited by members of a group or society which is at variance with established rules of the group or society (Idris, 2016). Nabiswa et al. (2016) noted that deviant behaviour short changes the purpose of education by impacting negatively on teaching and learning in school.

However, Damron-Bell (2011), and Hanimoglu (2018) acknowledged that deviant behaviour increases globally yearly. Deviant is a common feature of secondary schools across the universe. For instance, Hayden (2011) reported that the number of physical assaults on teachers have escalated and that some students have been bullied by fellow students, thereby causing misery on those students bullied and disrupting learning. Without good discipline in school, teachers will find it difficult to teach and students cannot learn effectively (Hayden, 2011). Educationists are seriously concerned about producing graduates that are capable of eliciting behaviours that are desirable (Peretomode, 2015). Some students, according to Babatunde (2016), resort to deviant behaviour when they are unable to withstand academic rigours. Other studies, such as Bolu-Steve and Esere (2017) defined deviant behaviour as an act or conduct that does not conform with established rules of a society or group. Deviant behaviours are conducts that are commonly considered inappropriate or deviation from the norms of the society. These are behaviours that are contrary to the laid down rules and regulations of a group or society.

Determinants of deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students could be traceable to family circumstances, socio-economic background, parenting style, peer pressure, and social media. Family is the first place of education in the life of a child. The child is exposed to various aspects of learning before being exposed to the formal education. Carlos (2012) stated that parents significantly shape their children’s behaviour through the parenting practices and strategies they use. The individual might

be positively or negatively influenced from home. The family background encompasses family socio-economic status, child rearing practices and many others. According to Agi (2016), a permissive family exposes the child to all kinds of behaviours including maladaptive behaviour. Chuks (2016) asserted that factors within the family and poor parental relationship are capable of breeding children that misbehave in school. Students who come from abusive parents, according to Echebe (2010), display characteristics of abusive persons; such children for instance end up beating their fellow playmates without feeling any kind of remorse. Bindah et al. (2011) stated that peer groups are primary groups of people who have similar interests, age, background or social status that are likely to influence the person's beliefs and attitudes. Owuamanam and Bankole (2015) asserted that peer group influence is also identified in different types of communication styles which lead to bullying among the students.

Other determinants of secondary school adolescent students' deviant behaviour include social media, societal factors, and the school learning environment. Social media has become inevitable in almost everyone's life irrespective of age. Children's exposure to bad television programmes, immoral magazines as well as pornographic films and materials, make students to be involved in immoral behaviour. This has contributed to high risk level deviant behaviours in Nigerian school system. Kento (2015) posited that the effects of unwholesome mass media seem to have negative impact on the character development of children than their positive impression. It is believed that children believe what they see in the media more than what happens in real life (Dibia & Nicholas, 2017).

The society also models the behaviour of people. The attitude that other people have concerning their fellow human race leads to rebellion from the marginalized groups. Societal factors are one of the pressing problems predisposing students to deviant behaviours. Agi (2016) opined that as the society experiences growth and becomes complex in nature, so also do societal factors cause students' deviant behaviour. The school learning environment is also a determinant factor of deviant behaviour of the students. The school learning environment is a place where children go to get education and to learn all sorts of good mannerism. It however turns out that children get negatively affected by their fellow children in school. Some develop deviant behaviours after watching the way their peer behaves (Hartl et al., 2012).

Types of deviant behaviour in schools include examination malpractice, truancy, bullying, lateness to school, stealing, drug abuse, cultism, sex offences and absenteeism. Deviant behaviour generally can further be divided into two main types of formal and informal. Formal deviant behaviour refers to actions that violate formal laws, whereas informal deviant behaviour refers to actions that violate social norms or expectations. Social norms are unwritten rules that guide behaviour and are considered acceptable by certain social groups or cultures. Both formal and informal deviant behaviour can result in negative consequences. For example, formal deviant behaviours

can result in legal fines and arrest. While informal deviant behaviour can result in being stigmatized and ostracized by society. An example of informal deviant behaviour would be picking of nose in public or standing too close to another person. That of formal deviant behaviour would be stealing a car or committing murder.

Agi (2016) outlined the effects of deviant behaviour on teaching and learning as follows: deviant behaviour leads to poor parent-child relationship. Most deviants do not usually benefit from schooling. Deviant behaviour affects the students' academic performances. It can further lead to truancy and abstentism from the school. Deviants often threaten both teaching and non-teaching staff of the school, as well as their parents at home. Disruptive behaviour can trigger frequent outburst in response to minor provocations, potentially leading to vandalism and destruction of school property.

This study therefore sought to find out the determinants of deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

### **Hypotheses**

The study was guided by the following hypotheses:

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between family background and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between level of societal factor and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

**Ho3:** There is no significant relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

**Ho4:** There is no significant relationship between social media and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

### **Methodology**

The survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study includes all the senior secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis totalling 2,684. Five secondary schools were randomly selected and 20 students were randomly selected from each of the five schools, which give a total number of 100 students as the sample of this study.

A questionnaire titled "Questionnaire for Determinants of Deviant Behaviour among Secondary School Students, (QDDBSSS)" was used to elicit information for the study. The instrument measured determinants of deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The instrument had five sections, A to E. Section A elicited demographic information, while section B to D measured the other three sub-variables of the independent variable while section E measured deviant behaviour. The questionnaire uses a 5 point Likert scale response format, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling, and Research, Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Jos. To establish reliability, the instrument was administered to 30 secondary school students. Test-retest reliability was carried out with 0.76 result using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts, chi-square, and one-way ANOVA.

### Presentation of results

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between family background and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

**Table 1:** Family background and deviant behaviour

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	Df	$\chi^2_{cal}$	$\chi^2_{tab}$	Remarks
Family background	100					
		25	98	48.7	7.81	Significant
Deviant behaviour	100					

Table 1 indicates that chi-square calculated was 48.78 which is greater than table value of 7.81 at alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a significant relationship between family background and deviant behaviour.

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between level of societal factors and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

**Table 2:** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of level of societal factors and deviant behaviour

Group	Level of societal factors	N	$\bar{x}$	SD
1	No level	16	38.34	6.93
2	Less level	40	41.36	10.10
3	High level	44	41.90	10.14
Sources of variation	SS	Df	MS	F
Between groups	152.76	1	76.49	4.84*
Within groups	9363.36	98	15.68	
Total	9516.12	99		

Table 2 shows a calculated f-value of 4.84 was obtained. This is greater than the critical value of 3.00 at 2 and 98 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. From this result, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Ho3:** There is no significant relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour among the secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

**Table 3:** Peer influence and deviant behaviour

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	Df	$\chi^2_{cal}$	$\chi^2_{-tab}$	Remarks
Peer influence	100					
		26.5	98	78.54	7.81	Significant
Deviant behaviour	100					

Table 3 reveals that F-cal (78.54) is greater than table value of F (7.81); the null hypothesis is rejected. There is significant relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour.

**Ho4:** There is no significant relationship between social media and deviant behaviour among secondary schools adolescent students in Jos metropolis.

**Table 4:** Social media and deviant behaviour

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	Df	$\chi^2_{cal}$	$\chi^2_{-tab}$	Remarks
Social media	100					
		25.5	98	5.94	7.81	Not significant
Deviant behaviour	100					

Table 4 shows that the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) stood at 5.94 which was lesser than table value of 7.81 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis that says social media has no effect on deviant behaviour of secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis was accepted.

### Discussion of the findings

The result of this study reveals that there is a significant relationship between family background and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students. Family plays a pivotal role in the life of adolescents. Family situation like dynamics of interaction and relationship that exist among the members would act as an influencing factor in the behaviour of the adolescents raised in the family. The family background encompasses family socio-economic status, child rearing practices, parents' social class, and parents' level of education. This is in agreement with the study of Agi (2016) who suggests that children from permissive families may be more likely to engage in maladaptive behaviours, as they are often exposed to a broad range of behaviour without clear boundaries or discipline. Chuks (2016) asserts that the factors within the family and poor parental relationship are capable of breeding children that misbehave in school. This work relates to Carlos (2012) that children copy their behaviours from what they see around the home. The findings also supported the findings of Bindah et

al. (2011) who opine that parents have a significant influence on deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students.

The result of the study in table 2 showed that there is a relationship between levels of societal factors and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis. This can be ascertained from the responses of the students. Societal factors are one of the pressing problems predisposing students to deviant behaviours. For example, as the society experiences growth and becomes complex in nature, so also do societal factors cause students' deviant behaviour (Agi, 2016).

The result of the study in table 3 further indicated that there is a significant relationship between peer influence and deviant behaviour. This can be deduced from the responses on the items that tested the relationship between peer influence and deviance among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis. Peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his attitudes, values or behaviour in order to conform to that of the group norms.

The result of the study in table 4 revealed that there is no significant relationship between social media and deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students in Jos metropolis. This result is in contrast with that of Dibia and Nicholas (2017) who investigated how media influence indecent dressing among female undergraduate students, and found out that exposure to nude images on television, lacking adequate regulation, contributes to the perpetuation of indecent dressing. Kento (2015) posited that the effects of unwholesome mass media seem to have negative impact on the character development of children than their positive impression. The study is also not in agreement with the findings of Muhammed and Mohamedunni (2015) who found that individuals exposed to adverse family, socioeconomic, and cultural factors, as well as those with an external locus of control, are more vulnerable to deviant behaviour.

### **Implications for counselling**

The counselling implications of deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students are highlighted below:

- i. Counsellor's role: The counsellor should act as a mediator between students and administrators to resolve conflicts and modify undesirable behaviour.
- ii. Parental involvement: Parents should be involved in counselling to address the root causes of deviant behaviour, such as broken homes, permissive homes, and the influence of media.
- iii. School environment: The school environment should be conducive to learning with teachers setting good examples and providing guidance to students.
- iv. Counselling techniques: Behavioural modification techniques, such as reinforcement, can be used to curb undesired behaviour among school children.

v. Counselling programmes: Counselling programmes should be designed to reduce frustration and its effect among students and to build assertive behaviour through decision-making, expressing opposing views, and controlling emotions.

vi. Counsellor's training: Counsellors should be trained to handle deviant behaviour effectively, including crisis situations, and to provide individual and group counselling for at-risk students.

vii. School policies: Schools should develop policies to address deviant behaviour, including disciplinary measures and counselling support.

### **Conclusion**

Deviant behaviour is a behaviour that varies markedly from the norms acceptable to the society. There are norms of behaviour to which an individual is expected to conform in the larger community as well as norms established within the school system. Therefore, an individual in the society could only be described as a deviant when his conformity to the cultural group values and beliefs are deficient and maladaptive. Deviance is a relative term because the accepted norms of any two societies may not be the same. What is acceptable in one society may not be acceptable in another. There are several forms of deviant behaviour exhibited by secondary school adolescent students, such as examination malpractice, absenteeism, noise making, improper dressing, stealing, lateness to school, and fighting. The determinants of deviant behaviour among secondary school adolescent students include family background, societal factors, and peer influence while social media is not seen as a determinant. This calls for an urgent attention by the school, government, society and parents.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings:

1. Family-focused interventions including parenting programmes, family therapy, and parental education should be organized to improve family dynamics and supervision.

2. School – based programmes involving counsellors, peer - mentoring, and evidence – based programmes should be organized to address deviant behaviour and promote positive behaviours.

3. Community engagement including collaborations with community organizations, religious groups, and local leaders should be adopted to provide support and resources for adolescents.

4. Mental health services which include access to counselling, therapy, and psychological support should be made accessible to address underlying issues contributing to deviant behaviour.

5. Academic support which includes additional academic support, tutoring, and mentoring should be provided to the students to help those struggling academically.

6. Peer support groups should be established to provide a safe space for adolescents to share experiences and receive support.



7. The teachers should be trained to be able to identify and address deviant behaviour, and provide supportive learning environment.
8. There should be development and implementation of policies to address deviant behaviour, bullying, and students' well-being in schools.
9. Community-based initiatives focusing on youth development, skills' building, and positive relationships with peers and adults should be organized.
10. There is need to conduct further research including longitudinal studies to explore long-term effects and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

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