

SOCIO-PERSONALOGICAL FACTORS AS DETERMINANTS OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOURS AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN IKENNE, OGUN STATE

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Abstract

The dynamic relationship between individual and social factors and their connection with adolescents' anti-social behaviour have been examined using a descriptive survey design. Three schools were purposively selected in Ikenne local Government and Two hundred and thirty-one Senior Secondary School students from these schools participated in the study. Three instruments namely, Adolescent Self-Regulatory Inventory (ASRI), Monitoring the Future Study and Delinquent Subscale of the Child Behaviour Checklist – Youth Self Report were adapted to examine the effect of independent variables on dependent variable. Reliability values of 0.78, 0.65 and 0.75 respectively were obtained for the instrument. Multiple regression and independent t-test were used to test the three hypotheses postulated. The results show significant joint and relative contribution of the independent variables on adolescents' anti-social behaviour. The moderating effect of gender on self-control was also significant while gender did not moderate the effect of social skill on antisocial behaviour. It was then concluded that the combination of self-control and social skills can help reduce the antisocial behaviours displayed by adolescents. Implications for counseling have been outlined in the body of the work.

Keywords: Socio-Personalological factors, Antisocial behaviours, Adolescents

Introduction

The understanding of the biological and social bases of complex behaviours which are anti-social is not new to researchers in the area of

psychology, neuroscience, sociology and criminology. Antisocial behaviour may manifest itself in many different forms. This Kaunitz, Andershed, Brännström, & Smedslund (2010) described as encompassing all actions that deviate significantly from established social norms. The type of behaviours included in their definition

(Substance abuse, theft, aggression) varies between countries (and many other terms are often used (offender, conduct disorder, delinquency) for the same behaviour. Coie and Dodge, (1998); Loeber and Schmalings, 1985; Rutter, Giller, and Hagell (1998) defined antisocial behaviour as acts that inflict physical or mental harm or property loss or damage on others and maybe intended to lower the well-being of other persons, which may or may not constitute the breaking of criminal laws. Though some of these behaviours are normative at certain ages of child development, when carried on during adolescence, may serve as the strongest predictors of adjustment problems, including criminal behaviour, during adulthood (Kohlberg, Ricks, & Snarey, 1984). As observed by Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996; Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Green, 1991; Moffitt, 1993; Patterson, Capaldi, & Bank, 1991) youth who become involved in criminal behaviour at late childhood or early adolescence appear to be at an especially high risk for continuing such behaviours during adulthood. These same youth may also be faced with and are at high risk for other problems, such as academic difficulties, substance abuse and early sexual behaviour, each of which may have serious long term consequences (Dryfoos, 1990; Hawkins, 1995; Howell, 1995). In other words, individuals who displayed more serious antisocial behaviours in childhood usually have greater difficulties than their peers in work; abuse substances; have difficulties in interpersonal relationships such as marriage or parenting (Caspi, Elder, & Herbener, 1990; Farrington, 1991; Magnusson, 1992; Quinton & Rutter, 1988; Robins, 1993; Rönkä & Pulkkinen, 1995) during young adulthood.

Zakzaky (2001:39) gave a quick look at those behind violence in Nigerian cities by stating that, “most of those who carry out violent crime associated with lootings and killings are groups of jobless youths, who have no means of livelihood”. A good number of them are on the streets, unemployed, underutilized and poor, who often attempt to use their youthful vigour negatively (Ezereonwu, 2001). These are individuals who failed to obtain respect legitimately but look to other ways of obtaining respect and recognition, thereby, becoming high security risks to the peace and stability of the Nation. This was further corroborated by Aderanti, 2006 who stated that Adolescents' rebellious behaviours range from vandalization of properties through rioting and armed robbery, to drug addiction, engagement in cult activities and various forms of cheating such as examination malpractices, and what is commonly known today as “yahoo yahoo”.

The adolescents, by virtue of their developmental virtue exact a great pressure on the society at large. Thus, the need for this study to consider some of the socio-personal factors that predisposes them to antisocial behaviours in Nigeria.

Gender

Gender constitutes another differential factor when the indicators and the source of troubles are examined during adolescence (Claes, Lacourse, Ercolani, Pierro, Leone & Presaghi, 2004). Whereas, several authors consider that, globally, risk factors of conduct problems are identical in girls and boys (Ary, Duncan, Duncan, and Hops, 1999; Barrera, Biglan, Ary and Li 2001; Storvoll and Wichstrom, 2002), others observe that gender moderates the strength of parental bonding as a protective factor against deviant behaviours, the protective effect being stronger in girls than in boys (Jessor, Van Den Bos, Vanderryn, Costa and Turbin, 1995). These observations incite many authors to approach these questions separately and to investigate the differential impact of risk factors for boys and girls (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter and Silva, 2001; Sorenson, Brownfield, and Jensen, 1997). Studies have begun to address gender differences in the causes of antisocial behaviours, thus indicating that the study of such differences can give a better understanding of the root causes of aggression and delinquency (Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001). Again, arguments about the differences in the gender pathway through which antisocial behaviours occur as well as the differential pathways to both delinquency and overt aggression for boys and girls have been raised (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1998; Moffitt et al., 2001; Zahn-Waxler, 1993; Zoccolillo, 1993). For instance, Rutter, Giller, and Hagel (1998) found that girls commit more thefts, notably domestic thefts, whereas boys engage more often in severe offences, violence, private property offences, and selling drugs.

Self-Control

Although Arneklev, Cochran, & Gainey (1998) observed that self-control may become relatively stable at early adulthood, it should not be seen as a stable and immutable propensity in adolescence (Burt, Simons, & Simons, 2006). Turner and Piquero (2002) provided only partial support for this proposition, by demonstrating that non-offenders gain more self-control than offenders during childhood and that some change in levels of self-control is likely to occur in adolescence. In several studies, sex differences have been reported on the levels of self-control and antisocial behaviour (Campbell, 2006) and have reported males score to be lower on self-control and higher on antisocial behaviour than females. Notwithstanding mean differences between the sexes, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued that

the effects of low self-control on aggressive and delinquent behaviour would be the same for males and females. Blackwell and Piquero (2005) showed that sex differences in the self-reported likelihood of committing criminal offences in the future could not be explained by different effects for self-control for men and women whereas, Nichols, Graber, Brooks- Gunn, and Botvin (2006) demonstrated that risk factors such as family disruption and self-control play a similar role in increased engagement in aggression and delinquency for urban minority boys and girls. Other studies (Mason & Windle, 2002; Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001), however, indicated that low self-control plays a greater role for men's antisocial behaviour than for women's antisocial behaviour. Using measures such as impulsivity and risk seeking as indicators of self-control, LaGrange and Silverman (1999) showed that only for boys impulsivity was strongly related to delinquent behaviour.

Social Skills

As adolescents mature, their social skills are called upon to form and maintain relationships but often, these young people often do not exhibit social skills related to the resolution of social interactions and problems they encounter, instead, demonstrate various antisocial behaviours (Goldstein & Glick, 1987; Goldstein, Glick, Irwin, Pask-McCartney, & Rubama, 1989; Kazdin, 1987). However, if these relationships, especially those of high quality are formed, beneficial outcomes such as psychological health (Rhodes, Contreras, & Mangelsdorf, (1994), improved academic performance (Rhodes, Grossman, & Resch, 2000 ; Wentzel, & Caldwell, 1997) and success in relationships as adults follow (Franz, McClelland, & Weinberger, 1991). Therefore the absence of such quality relationships is associated with negative outcomes, such as delinquency and psychological problems (Miller, 1990). The General Theory accounts for crime in terms of lack of self-control. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that the self-control-crime relationship can be applied to all types of crimes and for all categories of people. Those with greater self-control should be "less likely under all circumstances through life to commit crime"(1990: 118).

Aims of the Study

This paper examines the dynamic relationship between individual and social factors and their connection with anti-social behaviours among secondary school adolescents. It also examines the moderating effect of gender on each of these variables and their connection with anti-social behaviours. Based on the aims of the study, the following hypotheses were drawn;

1. H0: There is no joint contribution of social skill and self-control on adolescent anti-social behaviour
2. H0: There is no relative contribution of social skill and self-control on adolescent anti-social behaviour
3. H0: There is no gender moderating effect of social skill and social control on adolescent anti-social behaviour

Methodology

Two hundred and fifty questionnaires were given out to participants from three purposively selected secondary schools in Ikenne Local Government area of Ogun State. The total number of questionnaires filled properly and returned were two hundred and thirty one, thus, giving a retrieval value of 92.4%. The students used for the study were SS1 -SS3 students, with an average mean age of 16years.

Measures

The participants were asked to report their gender as either Male=1 or Female=2 in the instrument administered to them.

Self-Control

The Adolescent Self-Regulatory Inventory (ASRI) by Moilanen (2007) was adopted to measure the self-control of the adolescents. The scale contained 36 items measured on a Likert scale from not at all true of me to really true of me. The Cronbach alpha obtained for the scale by the researchers was 0.78. Items on the scale include: I get carried away emotionally when I get excited about something and when I have a serious disagreement with someone, I can talk calmly about it without losing control.

Social – Skills

The social skills of the participants which examined the efforts of the adolescents at initiating social interaction with peers and others outside the home were measured using the 13-item scale from the Monitoring the Future Study by Bachman, Johnston, & O'Malley (1993). The participants responded on a 5-item Likert-type scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Cronbach alpha of 0.65 was obtained for the scale Examples of items on the scale are: I enjoy doing things and talking with peers and I am comfortable joking with teachers and staff.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Antisocial behaviour was measured by adapting the Delinquent subscale of the Child Behaviour Checklist-Youth Self-Report (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1987). The sub-scale contains six items, which were responded to

using response categories which ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Examples of the items on the scale are: I destroy things belonging to others and I disobey at school. Cronbach alpha of 0.75 was obtained for the scale by the researchers.

Data Analysis

Data collected were subjected to multiple regression analysis to identify the relationship among the variables. Independent t-test was also used to determine the moderating effect of gender on each of the variables.

Results

Hypothesis one

H0: There is no combined effect of social skill and self-control on adolescent anti-social behaviour

Table 1: Summary of Regression Analysis between the predictor variables and adolescent anti-social behaviour

Multiple R = 0.590 Multiple R ² = 0.348 Multiple R ² (Adjusted) = 0.342 Standard Error of Estimate = 1.234					
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean of Square	Df	F- Ratio	P
Regression	186.141	93.070	2	61.091	0.000
Residual	348.877	1.523	229		
Total	535.017		231		

Table 1 shows that there was a joint contribution of the independent variables (self-control and social skill) to adolescent anti-social behaviour ($R=0.590$, $P<.05$). The combination of the independent variables accounted for 34.8% (adjusted $R^2=0.348$) of the total variance in the adolescent anti-social behaviour. The analyses of variance of the multiple regression yielded an F-ratio value which was found to be significant at 0.05, Alpha level $F(2, 229) = 61.091$, $P<0.05$.

Hypothesis Two

H0: There is no relative contribution of social skill and self-control on adolescent anti-social behaviour

Table 2: Relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of adolescent anti-social behaviour

Variables	B	Std.Error	Beta	T	Sig	P
Constant	-0.685	0.104		-6.571	.000	>.05
Social Skills	-.340	.047	-.390	-7.156	.000	>.05
Self-Control	-.337	.050	-.371	-6.800	.000	>.05

** Dependent Variable: Adolescent Anti-Social Behaviour

Table 2 indicates the contributions of each of the independent variables to the prediction of adolescent anti-social behaviour among adolescents. In terms of magnitude of the contribution, Social skills was found to have contributed most to the prediction of adolescent anti-social behaviour ($\beta = -0.390$, $t = -7.156$; $P < 0.05$) followed by Social- Control ($\beta = -0.371$, $t = 6.800$; $P < 0.05$).

Hypothesis Three

H0: There is no significant gender effect of social skill and social control on adolescent anti-social behaviour

Table 3: Showing the gender moderating effect of social skill and social control on adolescent anti-social behaviour

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
	Gender	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Self- Control	Male	18.358	.000	-.507	230	.631
	Female			-.416	75.928	.678
Social- Skill	Male	0.026	0.871	-1.900	230	.059
	Female			-1.965	106.787	.052
Anti-Social Behaviour	Male	37.493	0.000	4.557	230	.000
	Female			3.937	80.661	.000

Table 3 shows the moderating effect of gender on the two independent variables (Social-Skills and Self- Control) and Antisocial Behaviour of the adolescents. Result shows that gender moderated its effect on self-control while gender did not moderate the effect on social skills. Gender was also found to have an effect on the antisocial behaviours of the adolescents. The finding indicates that the self-control of males and females differ as it relates to antisocial behaviour while it is same or similar as it relates to their social-skills.

Discussion

The first and second hypotheses were rejected, this is because all the independent variables were found to have jointly and relatively contributed to the prediction of antisocial- behaviour in the adolescents. The relationships were found to have a negative relative contribution to the anti-social behaviour of the adolescents. This implies that an increase or a decrease in one of the variables in the adolescent would likely increase or decrease the anti-social behaviour. For instance, a decrease in social- skills of the adolescents would increase their anti-social behaviour while an increase would decrease the anti-social behaviours of the adolescents. Recognizing the importance of self-control may perhaps be the reason why (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Rothbart and Putnam, 2002) opined that the absence of self-control or effortful control also plays a major role in the

development of antisocial behaviour. In other words, the presence of self-control as a characteristic of an adolescent may likely reduce their involvement in antisocial behaviours and the absence or presence of low self-control may activate antisocial behaviours in the adolescents. Further, if social skills relationships, especially those of high quality are formed, beneficial outcomes such as psychological health (Franz, McClelland, & Weinberger, 1991) and success in relationships as adults follow (Engels, Finkenauer, Meeus & Dekovic, 2001).

Again, gender was found to have moderated the effect of self-control on the antisocial behaviour of the adolescents but did not affect their social skills. In other words, the effect of social skills for both males and females are similar and will have the same or similar effect on the antisocial behaviours of the adolescents. Though, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argued that the effects of low self-control on aggressive and delinquent behaviour would be the same for males and females, however, other studies have indicated that low self-control plays a greater role for men's antisocial behaviour than for women's antisocial behaviour (Mason & Windle, 2002; Moffitt, Caspi, Rutter, & Silva, 2001). Similarly, Higgins and Tewksbury (2006) found that the association between self-control and the tendency to show risky behaviour, such as hitchhiking or hanging around with someone at night, was greater for boys than for girls.

Implication for Counselling

This study has a number of implications for counseling. Adolescents should be encouraged and taught how to develop constructive interpersonal skills and be able to make constructive joint decisions through their interactions with their peers. This is because making positive peer relationships in respect of their gender will discourage antisocial behaviours which put them at risk of developing later high levels of crime in their adulthood. Again, adolescents should be encouraged to consider the consequences of their behaviours by helping them to know that the ability to regulate their behaviours and emotions will likely be viewed positively by their peers and will endear them to friends who are also positive in their attitudes and behaviours.

In conclusion, this study has revealed that a combination of self-control and social skills can help reduce the antisocial behaviours displayed by adolescents, despite its strength at understanding the interplay of these two variables and their gender differences on antisocial behaviours, the study is limited by characteristics of its sample, in that the group of adolescents were those who attend public schools and may be considered to be more of the middle and lower class. Given these characteristics, our findings may not be generalized to populations that are more heterogeneous.

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