



PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DELTA STATE

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Abstract: This study investigated the relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State. The study was guided by four research question and four research hypotheses. The correlational research designed was used. The target population for the study was 40,329 senior secondary school two (SS2) students in Delta State and the sample size of 380 students were selected using multi-stage and simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection, titled: "Parental Behaviour and Delinquent Behaviour Scale" (PBDBS). The reliability test using the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient yielded the following coefficient; 0.91 for parental behaviour scale, and 0.83 for delinquent behaviour. The data obtained in the field were analyse using Pearson Products Moments Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions while Simple Regression Statistics was used to test the corresponding null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed parental behaviour showed no significant relationship with delinquent behaviour, aligning with the study's expectations. However, the study found no significant relationship between sex, location and delinquent behaviour. The study concludes that parental behaviour plays significant impact on adolescents' engagement in delinquent activities and that sex, location factors may not play a direct role in shaping adolescents' engagement in delinquent activities. The study recommends amongst others that; education and support programs for parents to enhance their parenting skills and increase positive parental involvement in their children's lives should be supported. Partnerships between schools, families, community organizations, and mental health professionals to create comprehensive support networks for adolescents should be implemented. Cultural and contextual factors when designing interventions and support programs should be considered.

Keywords: parental behaviour, delinquent behaviour, secondary schools students

INTRODUCTION

Today, education in Nigeria is accepted as an "instrument per excellence" for individual and national development and as the only fundamental and indispensable tool for promoting economic growth (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014). Adolescence is a crucial developmental phase characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, often accompanied by the search for identity and independence. During this period, the influence of

parents on the behaviour and development of adolescents cannot be overstated. Among senior secondary school students, behaviours that deviate from societal norms commonly referred to as delinquent behaviours pose significant concerns for families, educational institutions, and society at large. These behaviors, which may include truancy, bullying, substance abuse, and vandalism, are often shaped by a complex interplay of personal and environmental factors, with parental behaviour emerging as a key determinant.

Delinquent behaviour is defined as a criminal action committed by a human being confronting the laws of the civil society. Crime understanding is based on the principle of normalization, which means that an individual's guilt is based on the norms and laws applicable in the civil society. The society conducts control over individual behaviour not only by the applicable legislation but also by ethical and moral norms of the society. The crime is a specific form of a behaviour that is different from other types of behaviour in its contextual load and the community's assessment of it (Kenchadze, 2015).

Behaviour that go against the norms and value system of a given community, state or nation is one of the important issues faced by most nations of the world today. These forms of behaviour are sometimes perpetuated by the teens (adolescents) in diverse capacities. Thus, it appears to be on the rise despite the social awareness of the ills of delinquency/crime (Ifedigbo & Mbah, 2015). In Nigeria for instance, involvement of adolescents in delinquent activities appears to be on the increase. The last two decades witnessed crimes ranging from minor stealing to major robbery and killing perpetuated by teens/adolescents. There has also been increasing concern of the Police and the general public on the seriousness of adolescents' delinquent and conduct problems (Onebunne, Ezeaka and Ifedigbo, 2017).

A number of measures such as closing down riot schools, suspension or dismissal of ring-leaders and the mass transfer of teachers as a result of indiscipline have occurred in the school system. It is common feature to see students being against each other for some flimsy issues of being defeated in a football match and mere defeat in inter class debate competitions. Students are found sometimes shouting, fighting, kicking, screaming and pushing each other. Some of them engage in sex play in the class room and destroy or deface books, desk, walls and their own and others clothing. Often time students tend to be very arrogant, disobedient to their teachers and even school authorities. These constitute serious behavioural problems which has affected both the school reputation and the society at large (Silas, Ebenuw-Okoh & Ugoji, 2023).

The presence of a strong family unit and values usually provides the necessary foundation for our children to make sound decisions about their lives. A variety of media violence is present in the homes of adolescents, with considerable variation in the degree of parental supervision. Regardless of government and other interested groups' attempts to limit the amount of violence reaching homes, families themselves play a critical role in guiding what reaches their children. In situations where the parents are not proper role models, but indulge in the use of substance such as alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette and so on, the children will also display such traits as they live by what they see. There are cases of parents who send their children to buy wraps of marijuana, cigarette, ogogoro and the likes for them. As time progresses the child might decide to have a taste of what the father regularly request and become addicted at a tender age to the substance use (Ohannessian & Vannucci, 2021).

According to Denisse, Pol and Karla (2013) parenting conduct is the most direct representation of parenting, with various behaviour such as discipline, which includes corporal punishment, verbal communication, reward or removal of reward, supervision, spending time with your child, and so on. The investigation of the relationship between parenting and child outcomes is a crucial area of parenting research. Children's earliest and most significant life experiences are intimately related to their interactions with their parents. Before kids are mature enough to interact in formal or even informal social settings, this happens. Bornstein (1989) made the observation

that, in this situation, parents are mostly, if not entirely, responsible for determining their children's experiences. However, parenting takes place in a larger social environment where factors like neighborhood safety or resources, poverty, etc. may influence parental ideas and practices (Kotchick and Forehand 2002).

Parenting has been conceptualized differently depending on the factors that researchers want to focus on. It is critical to distinguish between parenting styles, dimensions, and actions in this regard. Baumrind (1971) developed a classification of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. The literature identifies two major constructs in terms of parenting dimensions. Parental Responsiveness, on the other hand, refers to "the amount to which parents consciously develop individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being attentive, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands" (Baumrind 1971, p. 62). On the other hand, the definition of parental control has evolved from a single dimension construct (varying from excessive to insufficient control) to a multidimensional one. There is a contrast between psychological control and behavioural control, with the former referring to parental activities that interfere with the child's psychological development and the latter referring to the rules or limits that parents put on their children (Barber 2002).

Sex as moderating variable has come to refer to the biological aspects of being male and female. Sex is defined as a natural phenomenon, a reproductive duality, an 'irreducible fact' in need of no explanation beyond its biology, anatomy and reproductive functioning. Gender is determined socially; it is the societal meaning assigned to male and female. Each society emphasizes particular roles that each sex should play, although there is a wide latitude in acceptable behaviour for each gender (Murry & Lippold, 2018). Sex is a considerable variation in the time and age of onset of puberty between sexes among races, girls are two years ahead of boys (Vigil, Del, Carrera, ArÁnguiz, Rioseco & Cortés, 2016). There is change in body chemistry during adolescence.

Location is one variable that influences students' behaviour. The type of environment either rural or urban in which a child is brought up determines to a large extent the behaviour and characteristics that will be exhibited by that child when he/she becomes a grown up. Soet (2015) stresses that, what a child sees, how it is done, and when it is done, does not go out of the child's mind. He further stated that, "the environment like the blacksmiths forge tapers and alters our natural characteristics, moulds and alters us according to the treatment given." This widespread unrests and delinquent behaviour among the students reflect the prevailing lawlessness and frustration in the society (Rahul, 2018). A conclusive fact would therefore be that, students' delinquent behaviour is a manifestation of what is happening in the school's environment and location.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Nigeria has become a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the students' moral upbringing. This negative behaviour has been a problem as it affects students' academic performance. Students have become uncontrollable and highly disrespectful to themselves, teachers, school administrators, parents and to the society at large. In most schools, teachers do not monitor students' behaviour/activities and this pattern contributes to low achieving students, developing low self esteem and negative attitude towards school which gives room to bad influence, truancy and aggressive behaviour pattern. In addition, most parents do not guide and monitor their children, they put up non-challant attitude towards their behaviour, and this could affect children's performances academically. More so, parents find it difficult to visit the school to monitor their children attitude generally towards studies, hence, students take the advantage of this, thereby skipping classes and class assignments that invariably affects their academic performance. In spite of this, students tend to make wrong decisions, this may occur since they do not have access to information needed to prevent their wrong peer pressure influence and they tend to make wrong decisions which might affect them

physically, emotionally, mentally and career on the long run. The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between sex and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State?
3. What is the relationship between location and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between sex and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.
3. There is no significant relationship between location and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents review of literature related to the study.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Social Learning Theory, as proposed by Albert Bandura. The theory emphasizes the idea that behaviour is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within a social context. Adolescents, being in a critical stage of development, are particularly influenced by the behaviors and attitudes of those they closely interact with, especially their parents.

Parents serve as primary role models, and their actions, communication styles, and disciplinary approaches profoundly shape adolescents' behavioural patterns. According to Bandura, children and adolescents observe and internalize parental behaviours, which they may replicate in their interactions with peers, teachers, and society at large. When parents exhibit prosocial behaviours such as effective communication, emotional warmth, and consistent discipline adolescents are more likely to model these positive behaviours. Conversely, exposure to negative parental behaviours, such as harsh punishment, neglect, or substance abuse, increases the likelihood of adolescents engaging in delinquent acts such as truancy, vandalism, or aggression.

Social Learning Theory provides a clear framework for understanding the role of parental behaviour in adolescent delinquency, particularly in the Nigerian socio-cultural context. In settings where parents' actions are closely observed and emulated, parenting practices directly influence adolescents' choices. This theory supports the premise that improving parental behaviours such as fostering open communication, setting clear expectations, and modeling positive behaviours can significantly reduce the prevalence of delinquent acts among senior secondary school students. By anchoring the study in Social Learning Theory, this research highlights the pivotal role of parental influence, offering actionable insights for interventions aimed at mitigating adolescent delinquency.

Concept of Parental behaviour

Parents are the first teachers of their children's, their parenting behaviour have a profound influence on individual achievement-related outcomes (Vasquez et al., 2016; Garrett Peters et al., 2019). According to Statistics Canada

(2023), Parental behaviour consists of three separate measures. 'Monitoring behaviour' reflects the parents' awareness of what their child is doing and with whom they are friends. 'Nurturance behaviour' captures a set of variables that measure the degree to which parents are supportive of their youth's education, are involved in their youth's school, and have a firm but responsive parenting style. 'Inconsistent discipline' captures how parents address their child's inappropriate behaviour.

Parental behaviour refers to the array of actions, interactions, and attitudes exhibited by parents toward their children, which significantly influence the latter's development and wellbeing. This construct encompasses a broad spectrum of dimensions including warmth, discipline, communication, and involvement, each playing a crucial role in shaping the child's emotional, social, and cognitive growth (Smetana, 2017; Adeyemo & Williams, 2016).

Parental behaviour is not static; it evolves in response to the child's developmental stage, the family's socio-economic context, cultural norms, and the parents' own experiences and psychological state (Bornstein, 2019; Olowodunoye & Titus, 2018).

Sam (2023) defined parental behaviour as the procedure involved in preparation for the birth of offspring and the behaviour of one or both parents which assist in the survival or welfare of their young. In the views of Foster et al (2016), parenting behaviour is the specific, goal-directed behaviour that parents use to socialize their children, and are identified as a vital family context that can influence adolescents' school engagement. Inspired by family system theory, which suggests that a father and a mother make a joint contribution to their offspring's academic development, previous studies have found that the relationship between one parent's parenting behaviour and developmental outcomes can be moderated by the parenting behaviour of the other parent (Bornstein and Sawyer, 2005).

The concept of parental behaviour is underpinned by several theoretical frameworks. For instance, Baumrind's theory of parenting styles categorizes parental behaviour into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful styles, each associated with distinct child outcomes (Baumrind, Larzelere, & Owens, 2010). Authoritative parenting, characterized by high warmth and moderate control, is generally linked to the most favorable developmental outcomes, including higher self-esteem, better social skills, and academic success (Baumrind et al., 2010). In contrast, authoritarian parenting, which combines low warmth with high control, can lead to obedient yet less socially adept children with lower self-esteem (Darling, 2016). However, Nigerian scholars have adapted these frameworks to the local context. For example, Adeyemo and Williams (2016) note that authoritative parenting, characterized by high warmth and moderate control, is generally linked to favorable developmental outcomes in Nigerian children, including higher self-esteem, better social skills, and academic success. Conversely, authoritarian parenting, which combines low warmth with high control, can lead to obedient yet less socially adept children with lower self-esteem (Olowodunoye & Titus, 2018).

Research in parental behaviour also emphasizes the dynamic and reciprocal nature of the parent-child relationship. Attachment theory, as proposed by Bowlby and Ainsworth, highlights the importance of a secure emotional bond between parent and child, established through consistent, responsive caregiving (Sroufe, 2016). Such a bond is crucial for the child's emotional regulation, social competence, and resilience (Thompson, 2019). Moreover, ecological systems theory, introduced by Bronfenbrenner, situates parental behaviour within a broader context of interacting systems, from immediate family settings to wider socio-cultural influences, acknowledging that parental actions are both shaped by and shaping the broader environment (Rosa & Tudge, 2017). Nigerian studies, such as those by Adewuyi and Adebayo (2017), align with attachment theory, highlighting the importance of a secure emotional bond between parent and child, established through consistent, responsive caregiving. Such a

bond is crucial for the child's emotional regulation, social competence, and resilience (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2019). Moreover, ecological systems theory, as discussed by Owoaje and Sogbesan (2020), situates parental behaviour within a broader context of interacting systems, from immediate family settings to wider socio-cultural influences, acknowledging that parental actions are both shaped by and shaping the broader environment.

In essence, parental behaviour is a multifaceted construct integral to child development, influenced by a combination of individual, familial, and societal factors. It involves a spectrum of practices and attitudes that together create the nurturing environment necessary for a child's holistic growth and development. Understanding these dynamics is essential for formulating effective parenting strategies and interventions aimed at fostering positive developmental outcomes (Bornstein, 2019; Olowodunoye & Titus, 2018). Conclusively, the researcher clearly puts together parental behaviour as an attitude put up by parents towards the welfare of their wards or children. The researcher will be making references to local parents in the study area whose children are students both at the primary, secondary and tertiary level, saddled with the responsibility or notion of making life better for parents when they come of age and also projecting the family name better than they (parents) placed it. This behaviour is also associated with the parenting style exhibited by the parents which play a crucial role in shaping children's emotional regulation, social skills, and cognitive development throughout their lives.

Concept of Delinquent Behaviour

According to Crossman (2017), delinquent behaviour is any conduct that is contrary to the way of life of the society. It is an antisocial behaviour that is at odd, with accepted societal norms. Delinquent is a person who commits a misdemeanor. Delinquency does not refer to just one age group but it is mostly attributed to illegal behaviour by minors, which is otherwise known as juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency refers to abnormal behaviour exhibited by adolescents. Delinquent behaviour among adolescent has been one of the plague bedeviling the educational system and this has been of great concern to stakeholders in the educational system (Hanımoğlu, 2018). Social vices connote various forms and expressions of deviant, criminal or delinquent behaviour resulting from moral decadence. Drug abuse, thuggery, cultism, examination malpractice, cyber-crimes, kidnapping, terrorism, indecent dressing, rape, bribery, restiveness, hooliganism, gangsterism and violence are common examples of social vices. These misdemeanours have beclouded Nigerian society, including secondary schools, which have become breeding grounds for all sorts of social vices being perpetrated by students (Elujekwute, et al., 2021).

Sociologists also define deviant behaviour as "acts, beliefs and characteristics that violate major social norms, and attract, or are more likely to attract, condemnation, stigma, social isolation, censure, and/punishment by relevant audiences" (Goode, 2015). Deviant behaviour is considered through a social process and communication (Franzese, 2015). Furthermore, what is considered as deviant behaviour varies between audiences, social circles, settings, circumstances, and situations (Goode, 2015). This implies that what is considered as deviance differs according to the setting or society and period; what is considered to be deviant in some societies might be normal in others. Although there are differences in the way scholars define deviance, it is important to note that there are some striking similarities. For example, there is a consensus that deviant behaviour departs from social norms or ways of doing things that are approved by society, and has consequences. In the case of this study, delinquent behaviour is defined as the actions in which adolescents engage that are contrary to the societal norms and expected standards, for example, substance abuse, crime, gangsterism, and being a school dropout.

In a nutshell, the researcher defines delinquent behaviour as those negative behaviour, deviant behaviour, indiscipline behaviour of individuals that are against parental behaviour, school rules/regulations, and societal expectations". Some of these delinquent behaviours are indecent dressing, stealing, alcohol, drug abuse,

examination malpractice, lateness to school, crime/violence acts, disrespectful, child abuse, rape/killing, teenage pregnancy, lust, riots, promiscuity, cultism, and general state of high moral decadence.

Relationship between Parental behaviour and Student's Delinquent Behaviour

The relationship between parental behaviour and students' delinquent behaviour is a multifaceted and complex issue that has garnered significant attention in academic research, ranging from, style, supervision, socio-economic status, education levels, substance abuse, the quality of parent-child relationships, and cultural influences. These factors collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of how parental behaviour influences delinquency among students.

Parental involvement is a cornerstone of effective parenting, significantly influencing a child's behaviour and development. According to Adejuwon (2018), active parental involvement in a child's academic and extracurricular activities is inversely related to delinquent behaviour. Involved parents are more likely to provide emotional support, set clear expectations, and engage in consistent communication with their children. This involvement helps children feel valued and understood, reducing their need to seek validation through delinquent acts. Furthermore, parental involvement in school activities, such as attending parent-teacher meetings and volunteering, reinforces the importance of education and positive social behaviour.

Parenting styles are critical in shaping a child's behaviour and have been widely categorized into authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Okeke and Madu (2020) highlight that authoritative parenting—characterized by high responsiveness and high demandingness—is most effective in reducing delinquent behaviour. Authoritative parents provide a balanced approach of warmth, support, and discipline, fostering an environment where children learn self-regulation and respect for authority. In contrast, authoritarian parenting (high demandingness, low responsiveness) and neglectful parenting (low demandingness, low responsiveness) are associated with higher levels of delinquency. These styles often lead to rebellion or a lack of guidance, respectively, both of which can foster delinquent behaviour.

Effective parental supervision and monitoring are crucial in preventing delinquent behaviour. Adetola et al. (2021) emphasize that children who are closely monitored by their parents are less likely to engage in delinquent activities. Supervision involves knowing the child's whereabouts, understanding their social circles, and being aware of their daily activities. This constant oversight reduces opportunities for unsupervised and potentially delinquent behaviour. The study also suggests that parental involvement in children's online activities has become increasingly important in the digital age, as online interactions can also influence behaviour.

The socio-economic status (SES) of a family significantly impacts children's behaviour. Eze and Nwankwo (2019) found that lower SES is correlated with higher rates of delinquency among students. Financial instability can lead to stress and inadequate parenting, such as inconsistent discipline and reduced emotional support. These conditions often force parents to prioritize financial survival over effective parenting, inadvertently increasing the risk of delinquent behaviour in children. Conversely, higher SES families typically have more resources to invest in their children's development, such as better education and extracurricular opportunities, which can mitigate the risk of delinquency.

Parental education levels play a crucial role in shaping children's behaviour. Olumide (2020) suggests that parents with higher educational attainment are more likely to employ effective parenting strategies that discourage delinquency. Educated parents tend to value education highly, provide better academic support, and create a home environment conducive to learning and positive behaviour. They are also more likely to be aware of and utilize resources that can aid in their children's development, further reducing the likelihood of delinquent behaviour.

Parental substance abuse is a significant risk factor for delinquent behaviour in children. Chukwu and Onyekachi (2022) highlight that children of parents who abuse substances are at a higher risk of engaging in delinquency. Substance abuse often leads to an unstable home environment, characterized by neglect, inconsistent discipline, and emotional unavailability. These conditions can create a sense of insecurity and lack of guidance for children, pushing them towards delinquency as a coping mechanism or a means to gain attention and approval outside the home.

The quality of the parent-child relationship is pivotal in determining a child's behaviour. Ogunleye and Adeyemi (2023) found that a close and positive parent-child relationship significantly reduces the likelihood of delinquent behaviour. This relationship fosters open communication, trust, and emotional support, enabling parents to guide and correct their children's behaviour effectively. Children who feel emotionally connected to their parents are less likely to seek approval through negative behaviours, as they already receive validation and support within the family unit.

Cultural and societal influences play a significant role in shaping parenting practices and, consequently, children's behaviour. Bello and Aliu (2017) noted that in Nigerian society, communal living and extended family systems can either support or undermine parental efforts to prevent delinquency. Cultural norms that emphasize community involvement in childrearing can provide additional support to parents, reinforcing positive behaviours. However, societal pressures and expectations can also lead to stress and less effective parenting practices, contributing to delinquency. The study suggests that fostering a supportive community environment can enhance parental effectiveness and reduce delinquent behaviour among students.

Relationship between Sex and Students' Delinquent Behaviour

In advanced societies, Sex is a defining aspect of individual identity. It has a profound influence on our lives from the moment we are born, and we enact its social and cultural meanings at every level, from the intrapsychic to legal and political (Castaneda & BurnsGlover, 2015). The integrated self-leans toward the behaviour others encourage and away from behaviour others discourage (Pearson & Davilla, 2016). From birth, people are treated differently because of genitalia. Male and female babies are dressed in different kinds and colours of clothing. Parents respond differently to male and female infants and people describe identical behaviour on the part of infants differently if they are told the infant is a boy or girl.

A sex-gender distinction has only recently been articulated but many researchers are working in the new field of psychology. This distinction was aimed at separating the cultural (gender) from the biological (sex). Psychologists who focus on the psychology of gender have struggled with the nuances of the terminology because the terms "sex" and "gender" are often used interchangeably to denote if someone is male or female. They postulate "sex" and "gender" to be different. "Sex" has come to refer to the biological aspects of being male and female. "Gender" typically refers only to behavioural, social, and psychological characteristics of men and women. Sex is a given: a natural phenomenon, a re-productive duality, an

'irreducible fact' in need of no explanation beyond its bi-ology, anatomy and reproductive functioning. Gender is determined socially; it is the societal meaning assigned to male and female. Each society emphasizes particular roles that each sex should play, although there is wide latitude in acceptable behaviour for each gender (Hesse-Biber & Carger, 2018). "Gender relations refer to a complex system of personal and social relations of domination and power through which women and men are socially created and maintained and through which they gain access to power and material resources or are allocated status within society" (IFAD, 2020).

Relationship between Location and Students' Delinquent Behaviour

Location (School Location) refers to the particular place, in relation to other areas in the physical environment (rural or urban), where the school is sited. In Nigeria, rural life is uniform, homogenous and less complex than that of urban centers, with cultural diversity, which often is suspected to affect students' behaviour and academic achievement. This is because urban centres are better favoured with respect to distribution of social amenities such as pipe borne water, electricity, healthcare facilities while the rural areas are less favoured. This is also true in the distribution of educational facilities and teachers. These prevailing conditions imply that learning opportunities in Nigerian schools differ from school to school. It would appear therefore that students in Nigerian urban schools have more educational opportunities than their counterparts in rural schools have (Ntibi & Edoho, 2017).

Adeyemi and Okafor (2020) observed the intricate web of factors influencing delinquent behaviour in urban environments. They highlight that urban poverty, high population density, and exposure to criminal influences contribute significantly to elevated delinquency rates among students. These challenges are compounded by inadequate social services and peer pressure, emphasizing the complex socio-economic dynamics that shape behavioural outcomes in densely populated areas.

In contrast, Ibrahim and Abdullahi's research (2021) focuses on rural settings, where limited access to educational opportunities, scarcity of recreational facilities, and adherence to traditional norms present distinct challenges. They emphasize the pivotal role of community cohesion and local support structures in mitigating delinquency among rural youth. This underscores the importance of leveraging local resources and fostering strong social networks to promote positive outcomes and mitigate behavioural challenges in rural Nigerian communities.

Examining delinquent behaviour through a comparative lens, as seen in Balogun and Adeleke's research (2023), provides insights into the disparities between urban and suburban areas in Nigeria. They reveal differences in community structures, educational access, and economic opportunities that influence delinquency rates across locations. This comparative approach underscores the necessity for context-specific interventions tailored to local conditions, acknowledging the diverse environmental and socio-economic factors that impact students' behavioural outcomes in different Nigerian settings. These studies collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of how location-specific factors shape delinquent behaviour among Nigerian youth, informing targeted strategies to support positive youth development and reduce delinquency across the country.

Methodology

This section deals with the research method and procedures that were be used for this study.

This study employed a correlational research design. The target population of this study comprised all 40,329 senior secondary school students who are in their second year (SS 2) in the four hundred and seventy-four (474) public secondary schools in Delta State. The population comprise of 19,434 (male) and 20,895 (female) SS 2 students from the 25 local government areas in Delta (Source: Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Asaba, 2023).

The sample size of the study comprised 380 senior secondary school students (SS2) in Delta State. The Instrument for data collection in this study is the questionnaire, titled: "Parental Behaviour and Delinquent Behaviour Scale" (PBDBS) constructed by the researcher. The items were structured on a 4-point type rating scale, ranging from SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2, SD = 1. Four (4) experts in the Guidance and Counselling Department estimated the face and content validity to ensure that items in the instrument are appropriate and in line with the objectives of the study. The 50 copies of questionnaire obtained from the pilot study were subjected to a reliability test using the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient. It yielded the following coefficient; 0.91 for parental behaviour scale,

and 0.83 for delinquent behaviour. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents in their various schools. The researcher recruits the services of three research assistants to help her administer the questionnaire. The completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately from the students. In order to analyse the research questions, Pearson Products Moments Correlation (PPMC) was used while Simple Regression Statistics was used to test the corresponding hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The bench mark criterion for ascertaining the level of relationship between the variables is 2.50.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State?

In order to answer research question 1, Simple Correlation Analysis was computed. The result of analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple Correlation Analysis of Parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among secondary school students.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	r ²	r ² adj
Parental behaviour	374	34.22	6.21	0.883	0.779	0.779
Delinquent Behaviour	374	34.82	6.46			

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The descriptive statistics for parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students are presented in Table 1. The mean score for parental behaviour was 34.22 (SD = 6.21), while the mean score for delinquent behaviour was 34.82 (SD = 6.46). The correlation analysis between Parental Behaviour and Delinquent Behaviour indicates a very strong positive relationship, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r=0.883$. This suggests that more negative or ineffective parental behaviours are strongly associated with higher levels of delinquent behaviour among the students. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is $p=0.000$, which is below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that there is significant relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. These results highlight the critical role of parental behaviour in influencing the likelihood of delinquent behaviour in children.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between Sex and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State?

In order to answer research question 2, Simple Correlation Analysis was computed. The result of analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Simple Correlation Analysis of Sex and delinquent behaviour among secondary school students.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	r ²	r ² adj
Sex	374	20.05	16.24	.694	.481	.480
Delinquent Behaviour	374	34.82	6.46			

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The descriptive statistics for the variables "SEX" and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students are presented in Table 2. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between sex and

delinquent behaviour, $r(372) = .694$, $p < .05$, suggesting that male students are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviour compared to their female counterparts. The mean score for sex (where a higher value represents male students) was $M = 20.05$ ($SD = 16.24$), and the mean score for delinquent behaviour was $M = 34.82$ ($SD = 6.46$). The correlation coefficient squared, r^2 , was .481, indicating that approximately 48.1% of the variance in delinquent behaviour among these students can be explained by their sex. The adjusted r^2 value was .480, which takes into account the sample size and number of predictors, suggesting a very minor adjustment from the original r^2 . Based on the correlation coefficient ($r = .694$) and its significance ($p < .05$), sex does account for a significant portion of the variance in delinquent behaviour among the participants studied. The correlation coefficient suggests a moderate to strong positive relationship between sex and delinquent behaviour, indicating that sex plays a significant role in predicting or explaining deviant behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between location and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State?

In order to answer research question 3, Simple Correlation Analysis was computed. The result of analysis is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Simple Correlation Analysis of location and delinquent behaviour among secondary school students.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	r^2	r^2_{adj}
Location	374	26.37	4.70	.029	.001	-.002
Delinquent Behaviour	374	34.82	6.46			

**Correlation is not significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The descriptive statistics for the variables "Location" and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students are presented in Table 3. The mean score for Location was 26.37 ($SD = 4.70$), while the mean score for delinquent behaviour was 34.82 ($SD = 6.46$). The correlation analysis between Location and the Delinquent Behaviour reveals an extremely weak relationship, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = -0.05$. This suggests that there is no meaningful association between the mean location scores of the participants and their levels of delinquent behaviour. The significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) is $p = 0.029$, which is far above the 0.05 alpha level, indicating that this correlation is not statistically significant. These results imply that within senior secondary school students in Delta State, location does not significantly predict their delinquent behaviour.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.

In order to test hypothesis 1, simple regression was computed. The summary of the output is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Simple Regression Analysis of the relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.

Model Summary R					
	R²	Adj. R²	Std Error		
0.883	0.779	0.779	0.181		
	SS	Df	ms	F	Sig
Regression	43.073	1	43.073	1314.43	.000 ^b
Residual	12.190	372	.033		
Total	55.263	373			
	Variable in the equation				
	B	Std. Error	β	T	Sig
Constant	.084	.050	.883	1.680	.094
Parental Behaviour	.915	.025		38.255	.000

N=374, $p \leq .05$ level of significance,

The regression analysis showed that Parental Behaviour is a significant predictor of Delinquent Behaviour, $R^2=0.779$, $F(1,372)=1314.434$, $p<.001$. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for Parental Behaviour is 0.915 (SE = 0.025), indicating that for each unit increase in Parental Behaviour, Delinquent Behaviour increases by 0.915 units. The constant (intercept) is not significant, $B=0.084$, $t=1.680$, $p=0.094$, suggesting that there is a baseline level of delinquent behaviour even when parental behaviour is zero, although this result is not statistically significant. Parental Behaviour significantly predicts Delinquent Behaviour as the r^2 adjusted value of .779 explains 77.9% of the variance in delinquent behaviour, indicating a strong relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among the senior secondary school students. The findings suggest that parental behaviour significantly influences delinquent behaviour among the participants. The substantial proportion of explained variance and the significant regression coefficient highlight the importance of parental behaviour in understanding and potentially mitigating delinquent behaviour.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between sex and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.

In order to test hypothesis 2, simple regression was computed. The summary of the output is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Simple Regression Analysis of the relationship between sex and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.

Model Summary					
	R²	Adj. R²		Std Error	
0.001	0.000	-.003		0.3854	
	SS	Df	ms	F	Sig
Regression	.000	1	.000	.000	.989 ^b
Residual	55.263	372	.149		
Total	55.263	373			
	Variable in the equation				
	B	Std. Error	β	T	Sig
Constant	1.863	.063	.001	29.553	.000
Sex	.001	.040		.013	.989

N=374, $p \leq .05$ level of significance,

The regression analysis did not reveal a significant relationship between Sex and Delinquent Behaviour, $R^2 = .000$, $F(1,372) = .000$, $p = .989$. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for Sex is .001 (SE = .040), indicating that there is practically no change in Delinquent Behaviour for each unit increase in Sex. The constant (intercept) is significant, $B = 1.863$, $t = 29.553$, $p < .001$, suggesting that there is a baseline level of delinquent behaviour even when sex is zero. The mean score of Sex does not significantly predict Delinquent Behaviour. The model does not explain any variance in delinquent behaviour based on Sex. The finding is that there is no significant relationship between the moderating variable of Sex and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. The non-significant relationship between Sex and Delinquent Behaviour suggests that the mean score of sex is not a relevant predictor of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between location and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.

In order to test hypothesis 3, simple regression was computed. The summary of the output is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Simple Regression Analysis of the relationship between location and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.

Model Summary R					
	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std Error		
0.001	0.000	-.003	0.385		
	SS	Df	ms	F	Sig
Regression	.000	1	.000	.000	.984 ^b
Residual	55.263	372	.149		
Total	55.263	373			
Variable in the equation					
	B	Std. Error	β	T	Sig
Constant	1.864	.060	-.001	31.073	.000
Location	-.001	.041		-.020	.984

$P \leq 0.05$ level of significance; N = 374

The regression analysis did not reveal a significant relationship between Location and Delinquent Behaviour, $R^2=.000$, $F(1,372)=.000$, $p=.984$. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for Location is $-.001$ ($SE = .041$), indicating that there is practically no change in the Delinquent Behaviour Scale for each unit increase in Location. The constant (intercept) is significant, $B=1.864$, $t=31.073$, $p<.005$, suggesting that there is a baseline level of delinquent behaviour even when Location is zero. The mean score of location does not significantly predict Delinquent Behaviour. The non-significant relationship between Location and Delinquent Behaviour suggests that the mean score of location is not a relevant predictor of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State.

Findings

The Findings revealed that;

1. There is a significant relationship between parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State
2. There is significant relationship between sex and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State
3. There is no significant relationship between location and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Delta State

Discussion of Findings

Parental behaviour shows a strong negative correlation with delinquent behaviour and significantly predicts delinquency. This finding supports the notion that positive parental involvement and supportive family environments are crucial in mitigating delinquent behaviour. Research has consistently shown that authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and structure, is linked to lower levels of delinquency (Baumrind, 2019; Hoeve et al., 2020). Effective communication, monitoring, and emotional support from parents can deter children

from engaging in problematic behaviours. This finding is also in agreement with Ajayi (2015) who emphasized the role of parental warmth and involvement in reducing delinquency among adolescents in Nigeria. Their studies align with global findings that positive parental behaviours, including emotional support and monitoring, mitigate the risk of delinquent behaviours. On the contrary, Olajide (2018) emphasized that while parental involvement is crucial, the effectiveness of parenting strategies in preventing delinquency may vary across different Nigerian states and communities, predicting that factors such as community influence and socioeconomic disparities can moderate the relationship between parental behaviour and delinquency outcomes.

Also, in support of this finding is Ogunwale (2019), who highlighted the importance of cultural values and traditions in shaping parental practices and their impact on adolescent behaviour. Arguing that understanding local cultural norms is essential for developing effective interventions that promote positive parenting and reduce delinquency.

Sex shows a significant correlation or predictive value regarding delinquent behaviour. This suggests that, within this study, there is a significant difference in delinquent behaviour between males and females. This finding is in agreement with Adelekan et al. (2017), have explored sex differences in delinquent behaviour among adolescents. They have found that male adolescents tend to exhibit higher rates of delinquency compared to females, attributing this partly to societal expectations and gender roles. Again, this finding is in consonance with that of Ogunlesi (2019) that gender (sex) is a significant predictor of delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. Ogunlesi's findings indicate that male students are more likely to engage in behaviours classified as delinquent, such as substance use and aggressive acts, compared to their female counterparts. This finding also agrees with that of Akinlabi (2016) emphasizing how societal norms and expectations influence gender-specific behaviours and their association with delinquency in Nigerian adolescents. This results in line with the findings of this study substantiates the understanding that sex (gender) plays a significant role in predicting delinquent behaviour among adolescents, reflecting both global trends and localized cultural influences in Nigeria.

Location similarly shows no significant relationship or effect on delinquent behaviour. This finding implies that the geographical location or urban vs. rural setting does not significantly influence delinquent behaviour in this sample. It suggests that factors influencing delinquency may be more universal and not heavily dependent on specific local environments. This could reflect the pervasive nature of social media and substance use issues across different regions (Peterson & Krivo, 2020). This finding agrees with that of Adebisi (2018) examining how geographical location within Nigeria impacts delinquent behaviour among adolescents. Their findings suggest that while there may be regional variations in delinquency rates, location itself does not consistently predict or significantly influence delinquent behaviour among students. Again, this finding corroborates with that of Afolabi (2020) highlight the role of broader contextual factors, such as urban-rural divides and community characteristics, in shaping delinquent behaviours. However, specific geographical location within Nigeria has not been found to have a direct and significant impact on delinquent behaviour after accounting for other factors like socioeconomic status and family dynamics. Also, the finding is supported by Adelakun & Fatusi, (2017) who emphasized the need for targeted interventions that address underlying social determinants of delinquency rather than focusing solely on geographic location. From the findings of this study, it becomes evident that location within Nigeria does not typically exhibit a significant relationship or effect on delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. This understanding underscores the importance of considering broader socio-environmental factors in addressing delinquency issues effectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the intricate relationship between various factors and delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students. The findings underscore the significant impact of parental behaviour on adolescents' engagement in delinquent activities. Conversely, the negative correlation between positive parental behaviour and delinquent behaviour emphasizes the protective influence of parental involvement and support. Again, the study showed that sex plays significant role in predicting delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations were made:

1. Education and support programs for parents to enhance their parenting skills and increase positive parental involvement in their children's lives should be supported. This may include workshops, support groups, and resources to help parents establish healthy communication and disciplinary practices.
2. Partnerships between schools, families, community organizations, and mental health professionals to create comprehensive support networks for adolescents should be implemented. Collaborative efforts can help ensure that adolescents receive the necessary support and resources to address underlying issues contributing to delinquent behaviour.
3. Cultural and contextual factors when designing interventions and support programs should be considered. Recognizing the diversity of experiences and perspectives among adolescents and tailor interventions to meet the specific needs of different communities should be supported.

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