



Childhood Trauma, Resilience and Locus of Control as Predictors of Deviant Behaviour among Public Secondary School Students in Sagamu Local Government

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Abstract

This study was carried out mainly on the influence of childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State. This study adopted the survey approach of descriptive research design with the population sample of 200 students drawn across the study area. The research instrument comprised a self-designed questionnaire. The questionnaire was validated and subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability with a coefficient of 0.71. Hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The finding from research hypothesis one indicated that there was influence of childhood trauma ($\alpha = .198$; $p < 0.05$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The result of hypothesis two indicated that there was positive influence of resilience ($\alpha = .192$; $p < 0.05$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The result of hypothesis three indicated that there was influence of locus of control ($\alpha = .010$; $p < 0.05$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students. Joint influence of childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control was shown to be significant on the deviant behaviour ($F_{(3, 196)} = 90.524$; $p > 0.05$) among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. It was concluded that the independent variables jointly influence the dependent variable among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. Therefore, it was recommended among others that parents should be educated on preventive measures that must be observed in order to prevent their children from the experience of childhood trauma which can affect their behaviour in the later life. Counsellors must engage students affected by childhood trauma in meaningful and sustainable counselling sessions until they observe behavioural changes in such students. Students must also be encouraged to be resilient so as to be able to perform excellently in their academic endeavour.

Keywords: Childhood trauma, Resilience, Locus of control, Deviant behaviour.

1. Introduction

Education is globally accepted as a powerful tool for inculcating desirable behaviour, positive values, skills and knowledge into learners. Parents send their children to school so that they learn good morals and acquire skills and knowledge needed for them to be able to make maximum contribution to the development of self and their society. While at school, students build relationships with their peers and their teachers. The kind of relationship that exists between students and their teachers can foster their development of strong bonds that enhances their development of good character. The level of connectedness among students and other people they interact with at school can help provide warm support around the students and thus prevent them from indulging in deviant behaviour (Asiyai, 2019). Educationists are seriously concerned about producing graduates that are capable of eliciting behaviours that are desirable (Koris & Aav, 2019).

Deviant behaviour is any behaviour exhibited by members of a group or society which is at variance with the established rules of the group or society (Adekanmbi & Ukpere, 2019). It has been noted that deviant behaviour increases globally and yearly (Asiyai, 2019). Deviant behaviour short chains the purpose of education by impacting negatively on teaching and learning in school (Mogbana & Edward, 2022). Without good discipline in school teachers will find it difficult to teach and students cannot learn effectively (Edmonds, 2020). Deviant behaviour is a common feature of secondary schools across the universe. Fatoki and Kobiowu (2020) reported that deviant behaviour was high among students as some brought dangerous weapons to school. In another study, Vuma (2021) expressed 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.

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Some students resort to deviant behaviour when they are unable to withstand academic rigours (Marenyenya, 2023). The principal ensures proper maintenance of discipline for the smooth functioning of the school and attainment of quality delivery of teaching and learning. A healthy school environment is

imperative for students' meaningful learning and quality assurance. As rightly noted by Donohoo (2018), highly performing schools are committed to desirable student behaviour as well as clear behavioural expectations for all students. The principal is responsible for ensuring that education policies and programmes are efficiently and effectively implemented for the successful attainment of the goals and objectives of the school.

The primary functions of schools in the training and changing the citizens cannot be overemphasised. Torabian (2022) opined that education is the art of leading a person from the dark era of ignoramus into the limelight of knowledge and understanding. This implies that an educated person can assist in transforming the society for positive growth and development.

Sequel to this, Mogbana and Edward (2022) opined that rules and regulations are not obeyed in our schools as there are many cases of examination malpractice, truancy, bullying, extortion, sexual offences, indecent dressing, negative behaviours, dishonesty and many others. According to Mogbana, et al (2022), these ill-attitudes signify deviation from standard functionality of students' behaviours. It is on this assertion that Baylor (2021) ranted that schools has become a place for committing different types of atrocities and urged the government, parents and school administrators to wake up and ensure proper elimination of deviant behaviours in our schools.

Childhood trauma, encompassing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, and exposure to domestic violence, significantly impacts an individual's development and well-being. Understanding the prevalence, effects, and mechanisms of childhood trauma is crucial for developing effective interventions and support systems for affected individuals. Childhood trauma refers to adverse experiences that occur during childhood and have long-lasting effects on an individual's emotional, psychological, and physical well-being. These traumatic events can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence. Secondary school students who have experienced such trauma may exhibit a range of deviant behaviours as a means of coping with their unresolved distress and emotional pain.

Childhood trauma is often described as serious adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Briggs, Amaya-Jackson, Putnam & Putnam, 2021). Children may go through a range of experiences that are classified as psychological trauma; these might include neglect, abandonment, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and physical abuse, witnessing abuse of a sibling or parent, or having a mentally ill parent. These events have profound psychological, physiological and sociological impacts and can have negative, lasting effects on health and well-being such as unsocial behaviours,

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and sleep disturbances (Cohen, Murphy & Prather, 2019).

Dye (2018) study on adverse childhood experiences, determined that traumatic experiences during childhood are a root cause of many social, emotional, and cognitive impairments that lead to increased risk of unhealthy self-destructive behaviours, risk of violence or re-victimisation, chronic health conditions, low life potential and premature mortality. As the number of adverse experiences increase, the problems from childhood through adulthood also rises (Cohen, et al., 2019).

Complex trauma occurs from exposure to multiple and repetitive episodes of victimisation or other traumatic events. Individuals who are exposed to multiple forms of trauma often display a wide range of difficulties compared to those who have only had one of a few trauma exposures. For example, cognitive complications (dissociation), affective, somatic, behavioural, relational, and self-attributional problems have been seen in individuals who have experienced complex trauma (Kumar, Brand & Courtois, 2022). Medical trauma, sometimes called paediatric medical traumatic stress, refers to a set of psychological and physiological responses of children and their families to pain, injury, serious illness, medical procedures, and invasive or frightening treatment experiences.

Medical trauma may occur as a response to a single or multiple medical events (Leape, 2018). In children, they are still developing cognitive skills and because of this, they process information differently. They might associate pain with punishment and could believe they did something wrong that led to them being in pain or that they somehow caused their injury (Hooley & Franklin, 2018).

Children may experience disruptions in their attachment with their caregivers due to their traumatic medical experience. This does depend on the age of the child and their understanding of their medical difficulties. For example, a young child may feel betrayed by their parents if they have had to participate in activities that have caused and contributed to the child's pain such as administering medications or taking them to the doctor. At the same time, the parent-child relationship is strained due to parents feeling powerless, guilt, or inadequacy.

Resilience is the ability to adapt to stressful situations in any facet of an individual's life or environment (Vella & Pai, 2019). It simply means the ability to bounce back from difficult and challenging experiences. In other words, resilience refers to the ability to persevere to attain desired academic achievement and accomplishment when encountering difficulties in academic pursuit. Bryan, O'Shea and MacIntyre, (2019) posited that resilience also entails striving not only in negative situations but also in positive ones, which may also present challenges.

According to Ayala and Manzano (2018), students who are resilient are likely to maintain high level of academic motivation and performance in spite of the challenging conditions that put them at risk of doing poorly in academics. This implies that academic resilience is underscored for facilitating positive academic outcomes through perseverance in spite of academic difficulties and challenges.

Research has been inconsistent on the impact of academic resilience in promoting positive academic outcomes. In their study, Ahmed, Umrani, Qureshi and Samad (2018) reported that resilience has a statistically significant positive relationship with reading achievement but not with students' Grade Point Average (GPA). This implies that resilience could have specific impact on students' academic outcome. Similarly, Unachukwu, Anierobi, Nwosu and Okeke (2020), found a significant difference in the academic resilience and achievement for secondary school students in favour of girls. Ayala, et al (2018) found that female students are more resilient in their academics than male students. Another study was conducted by Romano, Angelini, Consiglio, and Fiorilli (2021) on academic resilience among senior secondary school students: influence of learning environment and the findings revealed a significant gender difference in academic resilience of the students in favour of male students. This implies that boys are more academically resilient than girls. On the other hand, Chisholm-Burns, Spivey, Sherwin, Williams and Phelps (2019) found no gender significant difference in academic resilience among students. The above studies revealed inconsistencies in results of the impact of academic resilience on academic achievement among students based on gender.

Resilience is not a general structure for all life areas, but it is rather a personal, cultural, dynamic, and background-dependent phenomenon. People may not demonstrate resilience to all life events or aspects but only to specific situations. That is, people may be resilient to specific threats and vulnerable to others (Masten, 2021). In addition, some sources of resilience are only achievable in specific contexts; which means it is a way of interaction between stressors, context, and personal traits. For example, resilient individuals may encounter harmful situations, but they do not suffer interruption of their life order.

Locus of control has its foundations in social learning theory and is used as an explanatory tool for behaviour (Cunha & Gavioli, 2022). It is measured on a dichotomous scale in which those with internal locus of control believe that consequences are a result of individual action whereas those with external locus of control believe that consequences are due to fate, chance, or powerful others. Findings from various research suggests those with internal locus of control tend to assume responsibility over their life choices and are better adjusted emotionally (Cunha, et al,

2022). Confidence that individuals have control over their lifestyle may have great impact on safer sex behaviour. Munawir, Yusuf, Effendi and Afdal (2018) found as individuals move into adolescence, locus of control becomes more internal. This sense of control parallels the dilemma described during Erik Eriksons developmental stage, identity versus role confusion. Erikson argued that, in order for adolescents to achieve a mature sexual identity, they must reexamine their identities and roles in order to achieve a personal sense of self (Cunha, et al, 2022). It is during this period that adolescents turn their focus internally in order to establish a personally acceptable identity. Formal sexual education tends to begin in early adolescence, yet most programmes do not focus on individual control over sexual decision-making. Recent research suggests that locus of control is an important characteristic to consider in prevention efforts (Kesavayuth, Poyago-Theotoky & Zikos, 2020).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the issues of global concern in effective school administration is handling students' deviant behaviours within secondary schools in Nigeria, there are several complaints by teachers, parents and the general public of deviant behaviours of students including noise making, inattention, fighting, loitering about, molesting fellow students, threatening and intimidating and waylaying classmates. Deviant behaviours in school can damage the school's reputation both locally and internationally. A school where disruptive behaviour predominates becomes dysfunctional, making it difficult for teaching and learning to go on smoothly. An unsafe school environment is an eye sour to any visitor and an inhibitor of effective learning and teaching.

It has been observed that childhood trauma such as exposure to maternal depression, community violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse, bullying and many others could lead to a child deviating from the norms of the school. Yet some children display resilience than others who have gone through trauma in their early life. The level of students' locus of control determines their behavioural pattern. For a proper understanding of individual student's behavioural pattern, there is the need to examine the roles of childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control in this research work.

2. Method

This study adopted the survey approach of descriptive research design because it helped to obtain data from the sample of the population and established the relationship that exists between childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control and deviant behaviours among private and public secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select twenty (20) Senior Secondary School students from five (5) private secondary schools and five (5) from public secondary schools in Sagamu Local Government Area making a total number of two

hundred (200) Secondary School students in the study area. A self-designed Childhood Trauma Scale (CTS), Resilience Scale (RS), Locus of Control Scale (LCS) and Deviant Behaviour Scale (DBS) were used to elicit information from the respondents in this research. All the instruments were rated in adapted five points likert scale of 1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; and 5 = Always. The instruments were validated and the reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained.

2.1 Method of Data Analysis

After gathering the data through the administration of questionnaire, the data collected were analysed according to the research questions and hypotheses. Hypotheses were tested using regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

3. Results

Ho1: There is no significant influence of childhood trauma on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government.

Table 1. shows the influence of childhood trauma on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. The table shows that childhood trauma has influence ($\alpha = .163$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. However, the level of the influence of childhood trauma on deviant behaviour among secondary school students was significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 1 indicates that there is influence of childhood trauma on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of resilience on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government.

Table 2 shows the influence of resilience on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. The table shows that resilience has influence ($\alpha = .192$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. However, the level of the influence of resilience on deviant behaviour among secondary school students is significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 2 indicated that there was influence of resilience on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State.

Ho3: There is no significant influence of locus of control on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government.

Table 3 shows the influence of locus of control on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. The

table shows that locus of control has influence ($\alpha = .010$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. However, the level of the influence of locus of control on deviant behaviour among secondary school students was not significant ($p < .05$) Thus, hypothesis 3 indicated that there was no influence of locus of control on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State.

Ho4: There is no significant joint influence of childhood trauma, resilience, locus of control and deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government.

Table 4 shows the composite influence of childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control on deviant behaviours among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. The table shows that there was positive composite relationship among the independent variables ($R = .281$). The table shows further that the coefficient of determinant (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.079$) indicated that the independent variables accounted for 7.9% of the total variance in the deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State (Adjusted $R^2 \times 100 = 7.9$). This joint influence of childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control was shown to be significant on the deviant behaviour ($F_{(3, 196)} = 90.524$; $p > 0.05$) among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State.

4. Discussion of Findings

The finding from hypothesis one indicated that there was influence of childhood trauma ($\alpha = .198$; $p < 0.05$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. Many studies indicated that there was correlation between childhood trauma and subsequent deviant behaviour in adolescents. Briggs et al. (2021) found that children who experienced abuse or neglect were more likely to engage in antisocial behaviours during adolescence. Similarly, a longitudinal study by Cohen et al. (2019) demonstrated that exposure to violence during childhood was a significant predictor of violent behaviour in later years. Additionally, research by Briggs et al. (2021) highlighted that the cumulative effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) significantly increased the risk of deviant behaviours. These findings underscore the importance of early intervention and support for children who have experienced trauma to mitigate the long-term negative outcomes.

The result of the hypothesis two denoted that there was positive influence of resilience ($\alpha = .192$; $p < 0.05$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. In Ahmed et al (2018) resilience was seen as an

Table 1: Regression analysis showing the influence of childhood trauma on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government.

Model	Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	11.135	1.368		8.139	.000
Childhood Trauma	.198	.085	.163	2.323	.021

Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour

Table 2: Regression analysis showing the influence of resilience on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government.

Model	Coefficients ^a			T	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	10.184	1.505		6.766	.000
Resilience	.233	.085	.192	2.746	.007

Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour

Table 3: Regression analysis showing the influence of locus of control on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government.

Model	Coefficients ^a			T	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	14.066	1.279		10.997	.000
Locus of Control	.009	.068	.010	.140	.889

Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour

Table 4: Multiple Regression analysis showing the composite influence of childhood trauma, resilience, locus of control and deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State.

R: .281^a
R Square = .079
Adjusted R Square: .065

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	271.572	3	90.524	5.606	.001 ^b
Residual	3164.908	196	16.147		
Total	3436.480	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Deviant Behaviour

b. Predictors: (Constant), Childhood Trauma, Resilience and Locus of Control

c. Predictors: (Constant), Childhood Trauma, Resilience and Locus of Control

individual's competence to bounce back from an unfavorable or stressful situation. Unachukwu et al (2020) supported that it is the ability of an individual to stay competed in spite of adversities. It is the ability to spring back from psychological damage. This means that resilience acts as a protective factor against deviant behaviour by providing adolescents with the tools to manage stress and adversity constructively. Ayala (2018) opined that resilient students often form healthy relationships with peers who engage in prosocial behaviours, thereby reducing exposure to negative influences that could lead to deviant behaviour. The above indicate that students with resilience behave well compared to others without resilience.

The result of hypothesis three implies that there was influence of locus of control ($\beta = .010$; $p < 0.05$) on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. Cunha (2022) found that secondary school students with a high internal locus of control tend to achieve better academic results. These students are more likely to engage in effective study habits, seek help when needed, and persist through academic challenges. Conversely, students with a high external locus of control may attribute their academic difficulties to factors beyond their control, such as luck or teacher bias, leading to lower motivation and performance (Munawir et al, 2018). Kesavayuth et al (2018) highlighted that an internal locus of control is

associated with higher resilience and better mental health outcomes. These students are more likely to adopt proactive coping mechanisms and maintain a positive outlook even in the face of adversity.

The joint influence of childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control was shown to be significant on the deviant behaviour ($F_{(3, 196)} = 90.524$; $p > 0.05$) among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. Briggs et al. (2021) confirmed the strong association between childhood trauma and the development of depression and anxiety disorders in adulthood. They found that individuals with multiple ACEs were at a substantially higher risk for these conditions. But Ahmed et al (2018) saw resilience as an individual's competence to bounce back from an unfavorable or stressful situation. On the other hand, understanding locus of control among secondary school students is crucial, as it significantly impacts their academic performance, mental health, and overall development.

5. Conclusion

Conclusively from the study, childhood trauma, resilience and locus of control significantly influence deviant behaviours among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State. The multiple regression analysis shows that the independent variables jointly influence the dependent variable among secondary school students in Sagamu Local Government Area, Ogun State.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings in this work, the following recommendations are therefore made.

1. Parents should be educated on preventive measures that must be observed in order to prevent their children from the experience of childhood trauma which can affect their behaviour in the later life.
2. Counsellors must engage students affected by childhood trauma in meaningful and sustainable counselling sessions until they observe behavioural changes in such students.
3. Students must also be encouraged to be resilient so as to be able to perform excellently in their academic endeavour.
4. Internal locus of control should be inculcated into the students who have been affected negatively as a result of the relationship with peers and engagement in the societal vices.

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