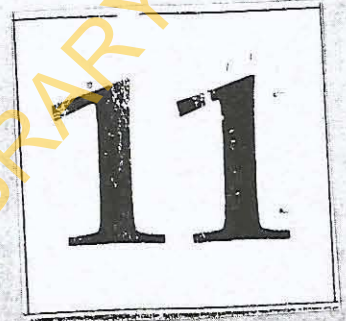
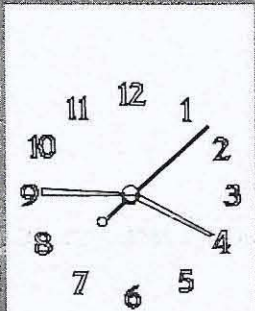




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Contributions are invited from all over the world, and especially from scholars and practitioners working on literacy, adult education and development in general in Nigeria, and other African countries in particular. Book reviews and notes on organisations and agencies as well as research projects and reports of recent conferences are also welcome.

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Psycho-Social Factors Influencing Maladjustive Behaviour Among Delinquent Pupils in Selected Secondary Schools in Ibadan

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Abstract

The study examined the psycho-social factors influencing maladjustive behaviour among pupils in some secondary schools in Ibadan.

A total of 180 senior secondary school pupils drawn from five secondary schools in Ibadan were used for the study.

Questionnaires and archival records were used to obtain information the forces within and outside the individual that cause maladaptive behaviour. This was done with a view to suggesting therapeutic strategies which will help in reducing the rate of delinquents in the schools. Frequency, percentage and chi-square statistical methods were used to analyse the data. Four research questions were generated and tested for the study.

The findings among others showed that there was significant relationship between psycho-social factors and maladjustive behaviour ($X^2 = 15.62$, $df = 6$, $P < 0.05$).

Recommendations made include organizing programmes targeted at families and specifically focusing on adolescents/school children on the need to be resilient in the face of risk and adversity. The findings showed that offences like stealing, truancy, drug abuse and thuggery and many others have been used to categorise pupils being maladjusted. Findings further indicate that pupils who commit the aforementioned offences have been influenced by either problems within them or in their immediate environment like family or school.

Introduction

The dictionary defines maladjustive behaviour as being unable to form good relationships with people because of problems in one's character and attitudes. Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995).

Maladjustive behaviour could also be described as the actions and characteristics of a person who had developed unsuitably so that he/she does not conform to the behaviour in his surroundings and is unable to adapt himself properly to his environment. Such a behaviour will most often result in social and psychological inadequacies and would be against accepted conventional standards.

The causes and the effects of maladjustive behaviour could be attributable to the interplay of many factors and as well be multi-dimensional. Causes and contributing factors have been compartmentalised into external and internal factors. Examples of external factors are environmental, education, family life, religion and socio-economic among others while some examples of internal factors are biological, medical, emotional as well as the mental health issues of children. Realising that it is the interplay of these factors that on the one hand predisposes the individual and on the other hand precipitates maladjustive behaviour. Hence such factors have been found out to be mutually inclusive and therefore cannot be compartmentalized in absolute terms.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. to find out the characteristics of pupils exhibiting maladaptive behaviour in schools.
2. find out the offences that pupils commit that categorise them as being maladjusted and delinquent.
3. to find out the relationship between psychosocial factors and maladjustive behaviour.
4. to determine ways of preventing maladjusted behaviour among secondary school students.
5. to make appropriate recommendations based on the findings.

Literature Review

Maladjustive behaviour is closely associated with fundamental changes in modern society. The modern society characterised by rapid transition, change and uncertainty. For example the technological revolution has contributed to sweeping modifications of life-styles, increased mobility and shifting values. Family life has

been affected by social and job-related pressures and upward mobility. Broken families have become commonplace as marriages are being terminated with ever-increasing frequency. All these and many more have created demand on individuals and families which often leave people confused, stressed and frustrated.

The National Mental Health Information Centre of the United States Department of Health and Human Services explains that young people can have mental, emotional and behavioural problems that are real, painful and costly. These problems often called 'disorders' are sources of stress for children and their families, schools and communities. The number of young people and their families affected by these disorders is significant. Mental health disorders in children are caused by biology, environment or a combination of the two.

Definition of Maladjustment

Maladjustment could be seen as children having mental and emotional problems that lead to unacceptable behaviour. It is a behaviour that people disapprove of. It is a concept that is slippery to pin down by social scientists. It is also seen as patterns of behaviour contrary to the accepted norms of a particular society. In this paper the society is the southwestern part of Nigeria where Ibadan the study area is located.

Behaviour which is different from or conflicts with the standards, which are accepted as normal within a group or social system is referred to as delinquent. What is considered to be normal or maladjustive behaviour can only be gauged in terms of the social context in which it is observed because what is regarded as quite normal in one group or culture may well be regarded as very abnormal in another.

Generally, the child's conduct problems refer to all maladaptive actions which have negative consequences for himself other members of the community and the environment. In other words, such behaviour constitutes a threat to life. It is then undesirable and hence should be modified by counsellors, psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists. From the available literature Okunola (2002); Siegel and Senna (1994).

Conduct Disorders

Young people with conduct disorder usually have little concern for others and the repeatedly violate the basic rights of others and the rules of society. Conduct disorder causes children and adolescents to act out their feelings or impulses in destructive ways. The offences these children and adolescents commit often grow more serious over

time. Such offences may include lying, theft, aggression, truancy, the setting of fires and vandalism, current research has yielded varying estimates of the number of young people with this disorder, ranging from one to four of every 100 children 9 to 17 years of age. US Department of Health and Human Services (1999). Conduct disorder is the commonest psychological disorder of childhood, occurring in 4% of rural population and 9% of an urban population. It has been found out that three times as many boys or girls have been clearly affected in Nigerian society as well as in other nations all over the world. Younger children maladjustive behaviours have been largely characterized by temper tantrums, hitting and kicking, destruction of property, disobeying rules, lying, stealing and fighting. However, in adolescence, maladjustive behaviour problems may include bullying and intimidating of others, drug misuse and abuse, delinquency, drunkenness, hooliganism, bad dressing and appearance, fraud, sexual immorality, examination malpractices, cult activities, truanting from school and from home. National Mental Health Information Centre, US Department of Health and Human Services.

It should be noted that children's maladjustive behaviour, all over the world, is on the increase; among these, are aggressive and violent behaviour. In 1991, in a single school, About 9% of all students were crime victims, 2% were victims of violent crime (Knox and Tromanhauser, 1991).

Generally speaking, maladjustment may be taken as an equivalent of mental illness. This operational definition also lacks some merits because what is commonly regarded as mental illness in one culture may never be seen as mental illness in another culture. For example, in African traditional culture, if a child is an under-achiever, rebellious, suffers juvenile aberrant behaviour, hyperactive and probably (enuresis), that boy may never be seen as maladjusted, but may be perceived as having been bewitched (Ojesina, 2000).

The sociology of delinquency is primarily concerned with violations like stealing, bullying, examination malpractices that are considered offensive by a large number of people. One characteristics shared by those who are widely regarded as maladjustive is stigma – the mark of social disgrace that sets the maladjustive apart from those who consider themselves normal.

Delinquency within the School

Siegel and Senna (1994) explained the high rate of school based crime in the United States. They found out through a survey carried out in some high schools that although teenagers spend only 25 percent of their time in school, 40 percent of the robberies and 36 percent of the

physical attacks involving this age group occurred there.

Findings from another survey of five hundred (Knox and Tromanhauser, 1991) pupils found that one-third reported something had been stolen from them at school or on the way to school during the two preceding months, about 10 percent had been physically assaulted and 12 percent, threatened. More than half the students knew gang members and 9 percent had been recruited for gangs.

School-based delinquency and other antisocial acts are not ignored by administrators. A 1991 national survey of school principals in the US found that many report experiencing a variety of problems on school grounds. As might be expected, secondary schools experience more problems than elementary schools and urban schools more than those in rural areas. But schools in towns and rural areas are not immune from delinquency: Principals in schools located in the rural areas reported more student alcohol and tobacco use than those in city-based schools; the robbery and theft rate is as high in rural schools as in city schools. Siegel and Senna (1994).

Evidences indicate that the rate of maladaptive behaviour in Nigeria is on the increase. For example, the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs where in some of her documentation revealed in 1999 that 95% of the total inmates population in Nigeria prisons are teenagers below the age of 25 years. Similarly, police report indicates that at least 50 youths face trial at the juvenile court in Ibadan during the period of this study.

In recent times, the rate had been rapidly increasing. Studies and reports consistently attest to this fact, a day will not go by without the occurrence of delinquent behaviour ranging from pick-pocketing, destruction of properties, stealing, gross disobedience, truancy and drug addiction. These behaviours continue in spite of the decrees and punishments ranging from fines to imprisonment Okunola (2002).

Psycho-Social Factors

Studies on social and psychological factors which influence or maintain maladjusted behaviour among adolescents have been carried out in contemporary times and the findings indicate positive correlations between these psychosocial factors and emotional and behavioural disorders in adolescence.

In Nigeria, Oloruntimehin (1996) explained that children naturally participate in delinquent behaviour in areas where patterns of delinquent behaviour and criminal actions are all around the child even though she maintained that close family ties to conventional community life can still restrain children who grow in such areas

from delinquent behaviour, Jensen (1997) in a study, "Parents, Peers and Delinquent Action: A test of the Differential Associations Perspective", found that delinquent peers, paternal supervision and support influence delinquency involvement.

Many people are of the opinion that crime, delinquent behaviour, and other forms of deviation from the moral code of the community are evidence of the lack of integration. This lack of integration is one of the phenomena of a dynamic society in which both the structural and functional aspects of a group life keep changing and often seriously disrupted. This disruptive change makes it difficult for people especially the youth, when faced by such rapid continuous changes, may not be able to cope adequately and so frustration and conflict set in.

Psychologists have investigated the personal characteristics of individual conduct problems; explaining their behaviour in terms of a weak ego; an inability to take the role of other people, a failure to identify with parental authority, a reaction to frustration and so on. But the sociological explanations will focus attention on and maladjustment and why it arises at all; why it follows specific patterns; and why some acts rather than others are defined as deviant!

Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of the students exhibiting maladjusted behaviour in the schools?
2. What are the offences the students committed to qualify them as being maladjusted?
3. What is the relationship between psycho-social factors and maladjustment behaviour.
4. In what ways can maladaptive behaviour be prevented among secondary school students?
5. Suggest appropriate recommendations based on the findings.

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used for the study. A sample of 188 pupils was randomly selected from the five schools selected for this study. Out of the 188 questionnaires, 185 were returned, 5 were wrongly filled and could not be analysed for the study, leaving a total of 180. The pupils exhibited behaviour problems which were not reported to the police nor the remand homes but were handled by the school authorities and the guidance counsellor. A set of structured questionnaire was used to collect data from pupils who were reported to school authority during the period of this study

for one offence at least. Data obtained were analyzed using frequency tables and chi-square statistics. It is hoped that this research will serve as a form of intervention for the pupils who participated in this exercise. The items on the questionnaire and the discussion by the researcher will enable the students have more understanding on the issue of maladjustment, hence students will be encouraged to adjust or modify their reactions to the psycho-social factors precipitating the maladjustive behaviour.

Findings

Table 1: Characteristics of students who exhibit maladjusted behaviour in selected schools in Ibadan

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
A	Age Range		
	12-14	20	11.1
	15-17	83	46.1
	18-20	77	42.8
	Total	180	100
B	Sex		
	Male	101	56.1
	Female	79	43.9
	Total	180	100
C	Class		
	SSI	55	30.6
	SSII	107	57.4
	SSIII	18	10.0
	Total	180	100
D	Religion		
	Christianity	114	63.3
	Islam	66	36.6
	Total	180	100
E	Family Type		
	Monogamy	49	72.8
	Polygamy	131	27.2
	Total	180	100
F	Marital Status		
	Intact	127	70.6
	Separated	53	29.4

	Total	180	100
G	Living Arrangement		
	With parent	162	90.0
	Not with parent	18	10.0
	Total	180	100
H	Parents' Education		
	Primary	30	16.7
	Secondary	84	46.7
	Tertiary	66	36.7
	Total	180	100

The ages of respondents is the total percentage of ages 15-1246.1% + 42.8% = 88.9% are between 15 and 20 is quite in agreement with the report of the federal ministry which indicate that 95% of inmates in Nigeria prisons are teenager under 25 years of age. Offences that take this age group to the prison are the same for the sample of this study.

The males 56.1% also indicate that more boys than girls indulge in maladaptive behaviour in the schools. The impression that pupils from problematic families exhibit maladaptive behaviour is challenged by the figures on items E, F and G, all indicating higher percentage of 72.8%, 70.6% and 90.0% from pupils whose family and living arrangements are monogamy, intact and living with parents. Pupils from these homes are expected to conform with school rules and regulations like attending school punctually, not involved with crime, obedience to all school rules but the reverse is the case. All these findings have serious implication for the family social work and other professionals or the field of counselling and education.

Research Question 2:

What are the offences that students committed in the schools that qualify them as exhibiting maladjusted behaviour?

Table 2: Offences that label students as being maladjusted in the schools

High side Offence	Low side Offences	No	%
Stealing	Exam malpractices	52	28.8%
Truancy	AbscondinQ from school	44	24.4%
Drug/ Alcohol abuse	Abuses/ Destruction of property	35	19.4%
Thuggery	Rape/Physical assault	49	27.2%
Total		180	100%

Information was not totally available on all the offences that are being committed by students in the school at this period of this study whether reported or not to the police or to other appropriate agencies. In assessing the offences, the low side offences have been merged with appropriate high side offences. Hence the figures for high side have included figures on low side in this study. For example, the number of pupils that were caught for stealing in the selected schools during the study period was 52 or 28.8%, this figure include pupils who were involved with examination malpractices and other related offences. While for numbers of pupils 44 or 24.4% includes few pupils who absconded from school. Likewise for the figure on drug/alcohol abuse and thuggery included the number of destruction of property and rape respectively.

Research Question 3: Psycho-social factors influencing maladjusted behaviour

Table 3: Cross tabulation and Chi-square Analysis of Psycho-social factors and Maladjustive Behaviour among secondary school students

Psycho-social factors	Respondent's Response to Maladjustive Behaviour			Total	X ² Cal	X ² Critical	df	Sig. Level	Remark
	Not at all	Some times	Most of the time						
Alcohol consumption	23(12.8)	10(5.5)	7(3.9)	40(22.2)					
Thuggery	20(11.1)	12(6.7)	10(5.5)	42(23.3)					
Truancy	28(15.6)	10(5.5)	12(6.7)	50(27.8)	15.62	1.64	6	0.05	Sig.
Stealing	40(22.2)	6(3.4)	2(1.1)	48(26.7)					
Total	111	38	31	180					

$X^2 = 15.62$, $df = 6$, $P < 0.05$, Sig. = Significant

When the result obtained from the above table was subjected to chi-square test, it was discovered that the calculated $x^2 = 15.62$ was greater than the critical value of (x^2) of 1.64 at 0.05 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, meaning that there is significant influence between psycho-social factors and maladjustive behaviour among secondary school pupils.

From the researchers interaction with the pupils, most of them confessed that alcohol consumption, stealing, drug addiction and running away from schools were learnt from both the environment and the school. This seems to justify the saying that most delinquent acts arose from environmental factors. This could either be from the child's family, school, or community.

The finding on research question three agrees with the work of M utza and Sykes (1991), that the distribution of crime reflects variations in the number of opportunities available within the society, which enable individuals to achieve goals that are socially approved. A good number of persons living in a situation regarded as being problematic or inadequate will acquire a set of problematic personal traits or habits as a consequence. Increased rates of delinquency are linked with modernization and this goes to confirm Siegel and Senna (1994) research findings.

Some reasons could be adduced for these psycho-social factors, unemployed youths, many at times becomes devil's advocate and

find unwanted jobs for their idle hands. They therefore developed criminal tendencies like highway robbery, misuse and abuse of drugs. Others become itinerant vagrants constituting menace on the streets as beggars and they procreate and have children without proper care and attention.

Siegel and Senna (1994) explained that family, peer group, schools, and drugs are all the environmental influences on maladjustment and delinquent behaviour among adolescents. They explained that family relationships have long been linked to maladjustment where broken homes, divorce, separation or parental deaths play significant roles. The quality of family life, discipline, parental misconduct, family harmony, child abuse and neglect all influence the development of maladaptive behaviour among adolescents.

Studies have shown that students who abuse drugs are maladjusted, alienated and emotionally distressed and have many social problems. Students who have a deviant lifestyle means associating with delinquent peers, living in a family in which parents and siblings abuse drugs, having a low commitment to education, being alienated from the dominant values of the society and lack commitment to religious values.

Research Question 4: How can maladjusted behaviour be treated or prevented in the schools?

Table 4: Prevention Strategies for Maladaptive behaviour in the Schools

	Prevention strategies
1.	Establish/start school social work: home-school-community liaison.
2.	Improving family functioning.
3.	Improving parental care and child rearing practices
4.	Moral education in schools
5.	Return of religious worship and training in schools
6.	Adult role model
7.	Home-school relations/counselling
8.	Job training with classroom education
9.	Career preparation in schools
10.	Community Education Programmes

Source: Siegel and Senna (1994). *Juvenile Delinquency*.

The above strategies as well as the strategies stated below aimed at prevention of maladjusted behaviour compiled from the literature and internet have been suggested and agreed upon by the students and this author. These strategies if properly implemented will go a long way at reducing to the barest minimum the incidence of maladjustment among secondary school students.

- Cognitive – increase students awareness about the dangers of drug abuse
- Affective – improve students psychological assets and self-image giving them the resources to resist anti social behaviour.
- Behavioural – Train students in techniques to resist peer pressure
- Environmental – Establish school management and disciplinary programmes that deter crimes.
- Therapeutic – treat youth who have already manifested the problems.
- Spiritual – George W. Bush and the Faith Based Initiative reaching the youth through church programmes.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given to the parents, school, community, mass media and the government as a whole.

Since the family is the central unit responsible for the primary socialization of children, the parent should make effort in providing care and protection and ensure the physical well being at their children.

Educational systems should seek to work together with parents, community organizations and agencies concerned with the activities of young persons.

School systems should plan, develop and implement extra curricular activities of interest to the teenagers to keep them busy.

In addition, schools should promote policies and rules that are fair and just; students should be represented in bodies formulating school policy, including policy on discipline and decision-making.

Community-based services and programmes, which respond to the special needs, problems, interest and concerns of the youth and which offer appropriate counselling and guidance to the youth and their families should be developed, or strengthened where they exist.

Youth organizations should be created or strengthened at the local level and given full participatory status in the management of

community affairs. These organisations should encourage youth to organize collective and voluntary projects, particularly projects aimed at helping young persons in needed assistance.

A wide range of recreation facilities and services of particular interest to young persons should be established and made easily accessible to them.

The mass media should be encouraged to ensure that young persons have access to information and materials from a diversity of national and international sources.

The mass media generally, and the television and film media in particular, should be encouraged to minimize the level of pornography, drugs and violence portrayed in the interest of the youth.

Government's agencies should give high priority to plans and programmes for the youth and should provide sufficient funds and other resources for the effective delivery of services, facilities and staff for adequate mental health care, nutrition, housing and relevant services.

Government should provide young persons with the opportunity of continuing in full-time education, funded by the state where parents or guardian are unable to support the young persons, and of receiving work experience.

Government agencies should take special responsibility and provide necessary services for homeless or street children; information about local facilities, accommodation, employment and other forms and services of help should be made readily available to young persons.

Voluntary organization providing services for young persons should be given financial and other support by government and other institutions.

Social Welfare Agencies should organize seminars, symposium and workshops to educate the public on the relevance of the agencies to the state.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings, coupled with the fact that no one can predict the behaviour of pupils, the awareness and prevention and treatment strategies, could all be embedded in school social work. This effort together with other professionals in the schools will help to prevent/reduce maladjustive behaviour among students in the schools.

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