Family Size, Family Structure and Deviant Behaviour among Undergraduates in Public Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria

Melvina N. Amalu
Department of Educational Foundations
University of Calabar, Calabar

&

Florence-Osim U. Bassey
Department of Educational Foundation and
Childhood Education, University of Cross River State

Abstract
This study investigated family size, family structure and deviant behavior among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses were posed to guide the study. The ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The cluster, simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select fifteen faculties from the public Universities in Cross River State., in which there was altogether a sample of 532 students (269 males and 263 females) out of a population of 6,090. The researchers developed an instrument titled: Family Size, Family Structure and Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire (FSFSDBQ) which was used for data gathering. The data was analyzed using One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings of the study revealed that; family size significantly and family structure significantly influence deviant behavior among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. It was recommended that Government, well-meaning individuals and organizations should support single parents and large families with information needed to maintain moderate family size and also assist them financially. Also, lecturers of students with single parents should be more sensitive to their behavioural needs and always be ready to assist them. In the same vein, parents should understand the need to maintain stable home for the children's behavioural development.

Keywords: Family Size, Structure, Deviant behaviour, Undergraduates.

Introduction

The school as a social organization and a microcosm of the larger society has students with varied characteristics that sometimes are inimical to the rules and regulations of the school. They get involved in practices that contradict the do's and don't's of the school. These practices are termed-deviant behaviour. Recently, deviant behaviour among undergraduates has been observed as a fast-growing phenomenon. In the past, it was rarely heard of, but today, it's speedily assuming a normal way of life among undergraduates. This is very pertinent to give attention to, considering the fact that, an extension of deviant practices outside the school would yield her full weight in the society at large.

Deviant behaviour is considered as any behavioral dispositions which are not in line with the school rules and regulations and also not in accordance with the norms and ideals of

a particular society (Ekwok, 2020). In the school setting, deviant behaviour can also be referred to as school offences and they include; poor lecture attendance, examination malpractices, fighting, dishonesty, stealing, disobedience to school authority, assault, truancy, sexual immoralities, carrying of weapons, drug abuse, aggression, cultism, plagiarism, classroom phubbing, vandalization of school's properties as in the case of the University of Cross River where the researchers witnessed students' protest and vandalization of the administrative block, security unit building, some classroom blocks, security vehicles and school's gate (Obia, Oloko & Otang, 2020). A similar case happened in the University of Calabar a few years back where students burnt down the school's data base, security posts, and vandalized parked vehicles. This altered the school's academic calendar because students were told to go home for months (Tina, 2015). Also, some undergraduates engage in cult related activities in school, and this creates uneasiness among fellow students and teachers. All these deviant practices are nowadays common and this makes staying far off such practices an everyday task to reckon with.

As the issue of deviant behavior continues among undergraduates, some individuals have expressed their worries; seeking redresses in order to arrest these unwholesome practices among students. Parents have decried certain unfortunate experiences where their children could not excel academically due to certain behavioural dispositions that are against the norms of the school. According to Chee-Leong (2006) students that engage in deviant activities always lack concentration, good self-esteem and perform poorly in tests and examinations leading to school dropout. The consequences are many and too costly to bear, thus the government has employed the services of the police, civil defense corps, civil society organizations like- social workers, human right activist, and other good behaviour molding activities like; organizing seminars and workshops to curb deviant behaviour and enthrone acceptable behaviour. Counselors have intensified effort in the discharge of their duties by using varied counselling methods such as "heart2heart" to help them have one-on-one interaction with undergraduates to emphasize the need to be well behaved. The Universities are not left out, as they have conducted intermittent orientation services to newly admitted students to emphasize the need to be well behaved. Despite all these efforts, it is sad to observe that deviant behaviour is still found among undergraduates.

The family is the most primary group because it is in the family that the child develops his basic attitude through training and teaching (Amalu, 2017). Each child is born into a family which composes parents and possible others and because the children's lives are centred initially within their families, the family then becomes the primary agent of socialization. The characteristics that define the families and specific things that make up the family include family size, family structure, family style. Family size in this context refers to the total number of children in a child's family in addition to the child himself (Ella, Odok and Ella, 2015). Put differently, family size has to do with the total number of children in a students' family in addition to the student himself. It has been observed that large number families whether of the rich or poor are difficult to maintain, as they are mostly characterized with a high level of

rowdiness and this does not create convenience in good behaviour formation. The size of the family also creates in the students' upbringing some identified problems such as poor feeding, poor clothing, lack of proper parental attention, insufficient funds, malnutrition and disciplinary problems which impacts negatively on students. A family may be regarded as a large family when the children are 7 and above, while a family may also be regarded as moderate when the size of the children are within 4-6 and 1-3 small (Anderson,2011).

Family structure like; monogamy (nuclear), polygamy, divorced parents, re-married parents, single parents, or blended parents. The nuclear family consists of two parents and a child or children. Students in this family type have been perceived to be more stable and stronger in character formation. Single parent's family consists of one parent raising one or more children. It involves a mother with her child(ren) or the father. Some students from such homes are easily delinquent because they are most often deprived of security, protection and love that should come from both parents and these impacts negatively on their behaviour formation (Billings, 2019). Stone (2012) asserted that some children from single parent are more likely to show to a great extent, the effect of under nourishment, illness, insufficient rest as well as negative attitude towards school, which is a factor that can influence deviant behaviour. Contrary to Stone's view, the researchers are aware of some children who are from single parent homes and have excelled academically and in their professional pursuit without showing to a great extent, the effect of under nourishment, illness, insufficient rest as well as negative attitude towards school. In fact, one of the researchers is one of such children. Kessler (2013) blamed deviant behaviour among students on another family structure known as blended family. Parents who divorce most times choose to remarry. This type of family constitutes two separate families merging into one unit (a new husband or new wife and their children from previous marriage or relationship). Some students from this kind of families most often become depressed and may want to compensate themselves in deviant activities. This is not unconnected with the fact that the home atmosphere is not likely conducive. Perry (2009) observed that children of female-headed families (single mothers) are at a greater risk of deviant behaviour because of some mothers having very low incomes and inability to provide the basic needs of the students. A conducive environment is necessary to engender good behaviour formation.

Various researchers have carried out studies on the influence of family size, family structure on deviant behaviour. Ekwok (2020) conducted a study to investigate the influence of family background and deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that family size significantly influences deviant behaviour among secondary school students. While the result for hypothesis two showed no significant influence of family structure on deviant behaviour among secondary school students. The study recommended among others that Families should have number of children they can cater for to prevent student's vulnerability to deviant behaviour.

Also, Naboth and Ikpah (2020) examined the influence of family structure on the incidence of juvenile delinquency among senior secondary school students in Rivers State,

Nigeria. The findings show that male and female students agreed that single parent family structure had significant influence on the incidence of juvenile delinquency among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study therefore recommended that parents should be strict on the implementation of rules and regulations guiding their homes.

In the same view, Ogbu and Akintonye (2018) conducted a study on family structure and its influence on juvenile delinquency. A survey of some selected secondary schools in Benin Metropolis using the purposive sampling method. A total of 350 secondary school students were selected for this study from 3 secondary schools-one in each of the three local government areas in Benin City. Structured questionnaire and interview guide were used for data collection to verify the 2 hypotheses formulated for the study. Result of the study showed that a relationship exist between family structure and juvenile delinquency. The study recommended amongst others that governments, counsellors, social workers and concerned agencies should routinely develop programs aimed at sensitizing parents and care-givers on their roles and obligations towards their children/wards.

Having reviewed and meted the many influences of family size, family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates. It is pertinent the researchers carry out the study to assess the family size, family structure of undergraduates in public universities and how they can influence deviant behaviour found among them, since deviant behaviour may negatively affect general wellbeing of individuals.

Statement of Problem

Over the years, it has been observed that, the fallen standard of rules and regulations in tertiary institutions has continued to impact negatively on undergraduates in Cross River State. The rate at which undergraduates put up behavioral dispositions which are not in line with the schools' rules and regulations nowadays is very worrisome. Students put up anti-social behaviours like; substance abuse, smoking, sexual immorality, cyber bulling, fraud, abortion, involvement in examination malpractices, rape, cultism, lateness to class without remorse, classroom phubbing, plagiarism, rudeness, alcoholism, gang fight, vandalization of school properties etc.

Recently, researchers, parents, school administrators, counsellors and the government have used diverse measures such as counseling, acting dramas on the effect of deviant behaviour, seminars, workshops, jingles on televisions and radios, and write-ups on bill boards. The churches on campus are not left out in trying to curb this menace, but their effort seems to be treating the manifest symptoms because, these deviant behaviours keep reoccurring in different dimensions. This was what prompted the researcher to find out if family size and family structure have influence on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the influence of family size and family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the researcher sought to find out whether;

1. Family size influences deviant behaviours of undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. Family structure influences deviant behaviours of undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Null hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study;
1. There is no significant influence of family size on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant influence of family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The causal comparative (ex-post facto) research design was adopted for this study. .The population of the studyconsist of all year two (2) undergraduates in the 2018/2019academic session from the University of Calabar and the University of Cross River State. . As at the time of the study, the population of this set of students was 6,090 as documented by the institutions' Registry (2019).Cluster sampling, simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were adopted for the study. Firstly, Cross River State was clustered on the basis of public institutions in the area. For even spread of the sample in the two public universities, University of Calabar and University of Cross River state were clustered into two: A and B. Cluster A for University of Calabar, while Cluster B for University of Cross River State. Secondly, in each Cluster, simple random approach was used to select faculties for the study. To do this, the names of all the faculties in each cluster were written on pieces of papers and folded into a basket which were picked at random. In selecting the faculties using this technique, any of the faculty selected was folded and returned back and any reselected was dropped back into the basket. This was done to give all faculties within each of the cluster non-zero chance of being selected. This process was repeated until the sampled faculties were selected for the study. All Ten (10) faculties were selected in University of Calabar, while five (5) out of Ten (10) faculties were selected from University of Cross River State. Thirdly, in selecting the respondents that participated in the study, the purposive sampling technique was utilized. In all the sampled faculties, 10% of the respondents were selected for the study. This was done purposively because of the difficulties in randomly selecting undergraduates. The researcher thus, used her judgment in selecting five hundred and thirty-two (532) undergraduates. The sample consisted of 269 males and 263 females. The sample was drawn using 10% in each sampled faculty.

A questionnaire titled "Family Size, Family Structure and Deviant Behaviour Questionnaire" (FSFSDBQ) was used for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, A and B. Part A was designed to collect demographic data such as: sex, institution, family size and family structure, while section B was designed to obtain information on deviant behaviour among students. The questionnaire was developed using the modified four-point rating scale type where the respondents were asked to indicate whether they Strongly Agree –

SA, Agree - A, Disagree - D, Strongly Disagree- SD. It contained fifteen(15) items measuring the variables of the study. Three experts were given the instrument to validate. Two experts in test, measurement and evaluation and one in Educational Psychology did face validity of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha estimate. To do this, a trial test was administered to 30 respondents who are students of Arthur Jarvis University, a private university in Cross River State. The institution and the set of students were used because they were not part of the study. The data were collected and analysed and the reliability index of the instrument was 0.78. This index was high enough to declare the instrument reliable. 532 copies were administered by the researchers and assistants with the permission of the various Deans and Heads of Department. .All 532 copies of questionnaires were retrieved. Data collected were analyzed using One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Presentations of Results

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of family size on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The variables involved in the hypothesis were family size and deviant behaviour. One-way analysis of variance was employed to test the hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance of the influence of family size on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Groups	N	$\overline{X}$	SD		
1-3 children(small)	201	21.95	3.66		
4-6 children(moderate)	199	22.58	3.52		
7 and above (large)	132	22.59	3.72		
Total	532	22.58	3.67		
Sources of variance	SS	df	MS	F-value	Sig
Between groups	209.852	2	104.92	7.99	.000
Within groups	6944.995	529	13.12		
Total	7154.84	531			

Significant at .05 level; df= 2, & 529, F= 7.99

From Table 1, the result showed that there is a significant influence of family size on deviant behaviour because the obtained probability of .000 is less than .05 alpha level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of family size on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria is rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld. With significant F-ratio obtained, a post hoc test was carried out using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison method. This is to ascertain the pair wise mean value difference possible for significant influence. Results of Post Hoc are presented in Table 2

Table2: Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison of influence of family size on deviant behavior among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Groups	Family size	N	Mean difference	Sig
Moderate	4-6 children	199	-0.64	.077
Large	7 and above	132	-1.62	.000
Small	1-3 children	201	0.64	.077
Large	7 and above	132	-0.98	.016
Small	1-3 children	201	-0.98	.000
Moderate	4-6 children	199	0.98	.016

significant at p<.05

From Table 2, the comparison of the influence of moderate family size with large family size showed significant influence on deviant behaviour only for large family size which have the mean difference of -1.62 and a probability level less than .05, while moderate family size with the mean difference of -0.64 and has a probability level greater than .05 alpha level of significance. Also, in comparing the influence of small family size and large family size, the result was still significant for large family size with the probability level of .000 being less than .05 alpha level of significance and a mean difference of -0.98* while small family size with mean difference of .64 showed no significant influence on deviant behaviour since the probability of .077 is above .05 alpha level of significance. Lastly, in comparing small and moderate family size, the mean differences for small family size and moderate family size were -0.98 and 0.98 with corresponding p-values of .000 and .016 respectively, which was found to be less than .05 alpha level of significance and thus, both groups were significant.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. The variables involved in the hypothesis were family structure and deviant behaviour. One-way analysis of variance was employed to test the hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 3: Summary of One-way Analysis of Variance of the influence of family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Groups	N	$\overline{X}$	SD		
Monogamy	374	22.15	3.65		
SP/DIV/RMD	59	24.15	3.59		
Total	532	22.59	3.67		
Sources of variance	SS	Df	MS	F-value	Sig
Between groups	265.999	2	123.99	10.21	.000
Within groups	6888.849	529	13.02		
Total	7154.848	531			

Significant at p<.05, df=2 & 529, F=10.21

From Table 3, the result showed that there is significant influence of family structure on deviant behaviour because the obtained probability of .000 is less than .05 alpha level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant influence of family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria is rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld. With significant F-ratio obtained, a post hoc test was carried out using Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison method. This is to ascertain the pair wise mean value difference possible for significant influence. Results of Post Hoc are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison of influence of family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Groups	Family structure	N	Mean difference	Sig
1	Polygamy	99	-1.15	.005
	SP/DIV/RMD	59	-2.00	.000
2	Monogamy	374	1.15	.005
	SP/DIV/RMD	59	-0.85	.153
3	Monogamy	374	2.00	.000
	Polygamy	99	0.85	.153

significant at p<.05

From Table 4, the comparison of the influence of polygamous families with families that have single parents/divorced/remarried showed significant influence on deviant behaviour as both groups have mean differences of -1.15 and -2.00 with a corresponding probability value of .005 and .000 respectively. Since the probability values of both family structures were found to be less than .05 alpha level of significance, it shows that they had significant influence on the dependent variable (deviant behaviour). Also, in comparing the influence of monogamous family structure with single parents/divorced/remarried family structure, the result was still significant for monogamous family structure with the probability level of .005 which is not above .05 alpha level of significance with the mean difference of 1.15 while family structure with the experience of single parenting/divorce/remarried showed no significant influence on students' deviant behaviour since the significant value of.153 is above .05 with the mean difference of -0.85.

Lastly in comparing for the third group, the mean differences of monogamous family structure and polygamous family structure were 2.00 and 0.85 with the corresponding significant values of .000 and .153 respectively, which showed that, the mean difference of monogamous family structure was significant since the probability is less than .05 alpha level of significance, while polygamous family structure's mean difference of 0.85 and a probability value of .153 is not significant since .153 is greater than .05

Discussion of Findings

Influence of family size and deviant behavior among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State.

The result of data analysis that addressed influence of family size on deviant behavior among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State produced statistical evidences that showed that family size of students has significantly influence on deviant behavior. This result implies that the size of the family a student comes from has great influence on how the students behave. Students from very large families' sizes are most likely to behave inappropriately due to factor like lack of adequate parental care and supervision. Also as the number of siblings increase, the household tends to become crowded, possibly leading to increase in financial hardship and frustration. This finding corroborates with that of Ekwok (2020) who found out in his study that family size significantly influences deviant behavior among secondary school students in Cross River State.

Influence of family structure deviant behavior among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State.

Also, the result of the data analysis that addressed influence of family structure on deviant behaviour among undergraduates in public universities in Cross River State produced statistical evidences that family structure of students significantly influences deviant behavior. This finding implies that monogamous, polygamous of family where parenting I done either the father or mother alone, where divorce/marriage has occurred has great on students' behavior. Children who found themselves in polygamous family may experience overcrowding as a result of large family size which tends to result to low parental attention, support, financial hardship and lack of enough time attend to the needs of the family members these may lead them into deviant behavior. This finding agrees with that of Ogbu and Akintoye (2018)., Naboth and ikpah (2020) who asserted that family structure has a significant relationship with juvenile delinquency.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings, it was necessary to conclude that family size significantly influenced deviant behaviour among undergraduates. The implication of this finding is that, students from very large family size are prone to deviant activities since parental care and attention may be little on everyone. Also, it was concluded that family structure significantly influenced deviant behavior among undergraduates. This implies that students who have families that both parents are intact would have low tendency to practice deviant behaviour while students from families that are divided/separated/remarried among others are more prone to be involved in deviant behaviour.

Recommendations

From the study findings**,** the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should have the number of children they can carter for to avoid vulnerability to deviant behaviour.
2. Government, well-meaning individuals and organizations should support single parents and large families with information needed to maintain moderate family size and also assist them financially.
3. Teachers of students with single parents should be more sensitive to their behavioural needs and always be ready to assist them.
4. Parents should work with their children (students) to know the best type of family size and family structure to maintain in future.
5. Teachers, parents, academic stakeholders and counsellors should reinforce positive behaviour and punish deviant behaviour so that others can learn.

References

Amalu, M.N. (2017). Family environment and self-esteem as predictors of psychological adjustment of secondary school students from divorced homes in Cross River State. *IOSR Journal of Research and Methods in Education, 7*(6), 9-6.

Anderson, S. (2011). The influence of social media on deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Langata Sub-County in Nairobi. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice.27*(3), 269-287.

Billings, W. (2019). Family background and students learning outcomes in schools. Nairobi: McKini press.

Chee-Leong, G. (2006). The psychosocial impact of violence against children. Retrieved from http://www.unicef.org/malaysia on the 1st June, 2021.

Ekwok, M. L. (2020). Family background and deviant behaviour among secondary school students in Calabar education zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Education and Evaluation. 6* (1), 14-22.

Ella, R. E., Odok, A. O. & Ella, G. E. (2015). Influence of family size and family type on social behaviour of students in government in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE).* 2 (11), 108-114.

Kessler, D. (2013). Patterns of family interaction and children's behavioural outcomes. Johannesburg: Victory press.

Naboth, H. A. Nwafor & Ikpah, G. Uche (2020). Influence of family structure on the incidence of juvenile delinquency among public senior secondary schools students in Rivers State. *International Journal of Innovative Psychology & Social Development. 8 (4):84-94.*

Obia, P., Oloko, K. &Otang, G. (2020, February 3rd). Crutech student protest the suspension of student union government, *Cross River Watch,* retrieved from http://crossriverwatch.com/student-protest-suspension-of-student-union-government, on the 23rd October, 2021.

Ogbu, C. & Akintoye, E.O. (2018). Influence of family structure on juvenile delinquency: A survey of some Selected Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology. 442*(2) 178-195.

Perry, S. J. (2009). Personal and counter production work behavior using conservation of resource theory to narrow the profile of deviant employees. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology. 84*(1), 58-77.

Stone, A. (2012). Changing patterns in family structure: The plight of children in Nigerian schools: Ibadan: Macmillan publishers.

Tina, T. (2015, October 11th). Unical shutdown for two weeks over student protest, *The Guardian Newspaper*. Retrieved from http://guardian.ng/news/unical-shut-down-for-two-weeks-over-students-protest/ on the 23rd October, 2021.