



IMPACT OF SOCIAL VICES AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ONDO STATE: GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING INTERVENTION

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Abstract

The paper looked at the intervention of guidance and counselling to curb social vices among in-school adolescents in Ondo State. Incidences of social vices such as examination malpractice, indecent dressing, sexual immorality, lateness to school, and truancy were examined. Factors identified as responsible for social vices such as peer group pressure, parental neglect, broken homes, lack of supervision and attention given to the needs of adolescents were discussed. The paper also considered some societal conditions linked to social vices such as poor governance, corruption, and lack of guidance in schools and homes. Solutions to social vices among in-school adolescents were highlighted. The paper concluded that if proper guidance counselling were given to in-school adolescents, social vices may be significantly reduced among adolescents in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Keywords: counselling intervention, in-school adolescents, social vices

Introduction

Social acts are defined as the interactions of individuals with their environment. Vices can be described as abnormal behaviours that are harmful to peaceful co-existence, societal ethical values, or an individual's well-being. Since no one lives in isolation, people interact with their environment and with others, and there are expected ethical values that guide individuals' behaviour in society. In-school adolescents are not exempt from these societal expectations. However, the rules and regulations governing the conduct of in-school adolescents may vary from one society to another. According to Diridi (2014), graduates from secondary schools are expected to be intellectually competent, productive, self-disciplined, self-fulfilled, self-actualized, effective, patriotic, and morally upright citizens. They should be on the path to enhancing their academic status. Unfortunately, in some cases, the opposite seems to be true, as in-school adolescents engage in social vices without proper counseling for behaviour modification. This situation may pose security threats when a population consists of highly maladjusted individuals. The involvement of in-school adolescents in social vices may also hurt their academic performance. It seems urgent to address these social vices among in-school adolescents before they become pervasive issues in society.

The Nigerian educational system faces numerous challenges that hinder effective teaching and learning in schools. Secondary school education aims to prepare students for practical living and to contribute to society's development. Secondary schools are expected to be centres of knowledge responsible for producing graduates who are competent in both character and learning, ready to pursue higher education or enter the workforce. Social vices hurt individuals and society as a whole, affecting their mental, physical, academic, and moral well-being. In-school adolescents often divert their time from academic pursuits to engage in social vices, which can have detrimental effects on their stability and academic performance. Many students are engrossed in various vices at the expense of their future careers and overall life development. If these behaviours are not addressed, they could pose a serious threat to society, jeopardizing the students' future well-being and careers. To fulfill the objectives of secondary school education outlined in the National Policy of Education, it is crucial to implement counselling interventions to address the rise of social vices among in-school adolescents in Nigeria.



Conceptual review

Concept of Social Vices

The term "vices" is derived from the Latin word "vitium," which means defect or failing. It refers to bad habits or immoral behaviours. Common vices among adolescents include sexual immorality, indecent dressing, stealing, cultism, pick-pocketing, drug addiction, exam malpractice, hooliganism, gambling, smoking, rape, and alcoholism, among others. Social vices are negative and unhealthy traits that are disapproved of by responsible members of society. They are actions that deviate from accepted moral and cultural values and norms in a given society. Igwe (2014) noted that social vices are anti-social behaviours that violate societal norms and values, ranging from inappropriate dressing to sexual harassment, cultism, kidnapping, exam malpractice, hooliganism, character defamation, impersonation, and financial fraud, among others. Peer pressure, parental negligence, the negative impact of broken homes, and lack of parental care and supervision are major causes of social vices. These vices have negative effects on the mental, physical, academic, and moral well-being of individuals, as they divert their focus from studies to engaging in these vices, leading to poor academic performance. Addressing social vices requires guidance and counseling, good governance, creative school activities, and other social infrastructure.

Secondary School Education in Nigeria

This is the level of education in Nigeria designed for pupils after primary school leaving certificate to enable them to acquire prerequisite intermediate knowledge and qualification for admission into tertiary institutions such as Universities, Polytechnic or Colleges of Education for advanced studies that ensure skill acquisition, and professionalism in specialized professions for employability. The aims of secondary education as outlined by the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN 2014) include:

- Provision for all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education at a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background;
- Offering a diversified curriculum to cater for the difference in talents, opportunities and future roles;
- Provision of trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades;
- Development and promotion of Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage;
- Inspires students with a desire for self-improvement and achievement of excellence;
- Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity;
- Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others,
- Respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals live as a good citizen and provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development among others.

The achievement of the afore-mentioned goals of secondary education is a pointer towards the production of active, participatory and contributory members of the society who can impact the society positively, but with the upsurge of social vices among in-school adolescents in Ondo State, achieving the goals appears bleak if guidance counselling intervention is unnecessarily delayed.



Concept of Guidance and Counselling

The word guidance refers to the process of directing, piloting, managing, steering, aiding, assisting, leading and interacting while counselling is the process by which a person with problems is helped by a professional counsellor to voluntarily change his behaviour, clarify his attitudes, ideas and goals so that his/her problems may be solved (Tambuwal, 2010). Guidance and Counselling is a branch of study that provides clients with the opportunities to come to terms with his/her challenges and to equally apply the counselling procedure exposed to him/her by the psychotherapist to resolve his or her challenges. Guidance and counselling have a vital role to play in the actualization of in-school adolescents' educational goals. Education is the process by which the success, economic growth and social development of a nation can be measured, against this background; secondary school education should be geared towards injecting changes that are desirable and that meet the purpose of achieving societal transformation that is suitable for national development in the 21st century Nigeria. According to the National Policy on Education (2014), the essence of incorporating guidance and counselling into the Nigerian school system was to eliminate the overwhelming ignorance of many young people on their choices of career prospects and personality adjustment among in-school adolescents.

Factors Influencing Social Vices among In-school Adolescents

Factors influencing social vices among In-schools adolescents include, but are not limited to peer group pressure, parental negligence, inadequate counselling intervention, broken homes and domestic challenges (Ojewola, 2022)

Peer pressure

This is one of the reasons young people find themselves involved in illicit activities. Adolescents who grow up in urban areas where cultism, internet fraud, and prostitution are prevalent are more likely to be negatively influenced. Peer pressure seems to be the main cause of in-school adolescents' involvement in social vices, as they spend a lot of time with their friends in school, at home, and in social gatherings, especially those living in urban areas where cultism, internet fraud, illicit acts, and prostitution are common. It appears that adolescents' vulnerability due to their young age makes them easily influenced. The high level of adolescents' curiosity to learn, have fun, and try new things, such as smoking, drinking alcohol, and engaging in sexual activities outside of marriage, poses challenges associated with the development of social vices. This demonstrates the significant influence of friendship on one's life. A child tends to behave like his or her friends to avoid being labelled as cowardly, uncivilized, or crude. Peer pressure is a major cause of social vices in society. Therefore, the peer group provides the developing child with a wide range of behaviours and cultural and sub-cultural values.

Negligence at home

The increase in social vices among in-school adolescents is partly attributed to poor parenting. Parents are expected to provide for their children's basic needs and give them a quality education. However, when a family has more children than they can afford to care for, the children may seek alternative means of livelihood, potentially leading to association with negative influences. Adolescents from permissive and uninvolved parenting styles are more likely to engage in social vices, as they may associate with peers of questionable character without facing consequences. Negligent parents can have a significantly negative impact on their children's lives. The role of parents during a child's development is crucial, and any neglect or carelessness can adversely affect the child's life. The environment and home environment a student comes from can also contribute to indiscipline and insubordination. Children from undisciplined



homes and societies are more likely to display acts of indiscipline, as such behaviour is contagious and persuasive.

Mass Media

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that adolescents who watch a significant amount of television tend to rely on stereotypes of the various groups depicted in the media. According to Lyamu (2015), adolescents often apply what they learn from television to real-life situations. Essentially, what adolescents watch on screen can have a significant impact on their thoughts and behaviour. This is captured in the saying, "You are what you read."

Examination Malpractice

Examination malpractice refers to any behavior that goes against the specified norms, rules, and regulations set by institutions for the conduct of a credible examination. Elujekwute (2019) defines examination malpractice as any irregular behavior exhibited by candidates or anyone involved in the conduct of an examination, whether inside or outside the examination hall, before, during, or after the examination. In simple terms, examination malpractice encompasses all forms of misconduct associated with the administration of an examination, which could occur before, during, or after the examination. Oluwasanmi (2014) suggests that it is an act of disrespect towards all the rules and regulations governing the proper conduct of any examination or evaluation process. In recent times, examination malpractice has evolved from occasional cheating (such as straining of necks or "giraffing" to catch a glimpse of others' work) to more sophisticated methods. Some candidates write relevant information on different objects or parts of their body or clothes and use it during the examination. Others smuggle in lecture notes to copy from, exchange question papers with answers, or even hire someone else to take the exam for them. The serious consequences of examination malpractice on young students cannot be overstated. It has various negative effects on society, including damaging the academic image, causing psychological trauma to innocent students, promoting poor study habits, and contributing to moral decay, among other issues.

Sexual Promiscuity

Sexual promiscuity among in-school adolescents in Ondo state is a serious concern. This behavior involves engaging in sexual acts with multiple partners and exposure to pornography. It has led to unwanted pregnancies, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, and even premature death among adolescent girls trying to terminate unwanted pregnancies. Additionally, complications may arise, leading to hospitalization, and some may drop out of school as a result of the abortion process.

Indecent dressing

Indecent dressing refers to the act of dressing in a way that exposes body parts such as breasts, buttocks, or underwear that should be covered. This goes against the accepted moral standards of society. The purpose of dressing is to adorn oneself, protect the body from harsh weather, and cover sensitive body parts. However, the influence of social media and the internet has negatively impacted the way in-school adolescents dress. Dressing is considered indecent when it has a provocative or stimulating effect on others. Many students today are dressing in a manner that can be seen as almost naked in the name of fashion. Indecent dressing has become a common characteristic of the dressing habits of many in-school adolescents in our modern world.



Truancy /lateness

Truancy is when a student is absent from school without permission or attends school but skips classes. Dagih (2015) notes that it's common to see many students leaving school early or deliberately missing classes. Truancy is a significant issue among secondary school students, with occasional truancy, casual truancy, and habitual truancy being the main types. Factors contributing to truancy include student, family background, school, and community influences. Lateness, or students arriving at school after the scheduled time, is also a concern. Maina and Ankoma (2015) state that punctual students can fully participate in school activities and benefit from morning lessons, while latecomers face punishment and miss out on these opportunities. It's important to address lateness, as it not only affects academic performance but can also lead to long-term problems for students.

Bullying and Fighting

These are social issues that are common among some in-school adolescents. Omonijo, Nnedum, Fadugba, Uche, and Bierrenu-Nnabugwu (2013) observed that students brazenly engage in bullying or fighting younger ones. They stressed that there have been cases where secondary school students have engaged in street fights, showing no regard for caution, and manhandling fellow students and even teachers. Students have at times engaged in arson and harmed peers and younger individuals in the name of gang activity.

School Factors

The authoritarian style of school administration, which imposes strict control on students' movement, may hinder the self-development of adolescent children. In such environments, teachers and administrators issue unquestionable instructions to students, limiting open and liberal communication. Oluwasanmi (2014) noted that the lack of verbal exchange and discussion prevents in-school adolescents from learning objectively and practicing interpersonal communication skills. Teachers prioritize discipline and expect immediate obedience, often resorting to detention or visits to the principal's office for non-compliance. As a result, students may feel powerless and reluctant to initiate activities, leading to truancy and indiscipline. Additionally, inadequate school facilities, such as poorly equipped laboratories and libraries, can contribute to social vices among secondary school students. These essential facilities are crucial for effective teaching and learning outcomes.

Counselling Interventions

The role of a guidance counsellor in schools is crucial for the development and preparation of adolescent students in both the school and wider society, especially in the context of a new Nigeria where social and moral development are emphasized. The counsellor must be creative and implement professional and innovative activities to ensure a comprehensive approach to preparing for a reorganized and reoriented society in 21st-century Nigeria. Through counselling techniques, the counsellor is expected to equip Nigerian adolescents with essential life skills, such as problem-solving, conflict resolution, communication, and interpersonal skills. Counselling provides a safe environment for learning, practicing, and experimenting with these skills before applying them to real-life situations outside of sessions, ultimately contributing to better overall wellness for the body, mind, and spirit.

The counsellor is responsible for facilitating the overall development of individuals to help them become valuable members of society. Specifically, school counselling programmes should be geared towards the following:



- Helping in-school adolescents to acquire an understanding of their self-concept, emotions and aspirations through emotional intelligence education.
- Emotional intelligence education would help In-school adolescents learn skills to promote self-understanding and the ability to communicate this understanding effectively to others through the acquisition of personal and social competencies (Oyinloye,2012).
- Teaching interpersonal conflict and problem-resolution skills to promote tolerance, understanding, and respect for diversity.
- Assisting students in discovering and utilizing their talents and potential for their benefit and the benefit of society.
- Helping In-school adolescents to acquire skills to be productive, progressive, and successful to generate income.
- Teaching students how to adapt to changes resulting from maturation, physical growth, and general development.
- Helping In-school adolescents to develop self-efficacy and enhance their quality of life and human dignity.
- Preparing students to be law-abiding members of society.

Recommendations

Parents and guardians need to train their adolescent children in the proper way of behaving and conducting themselves so that they will not become a nuisance to themselves and society.

- Schools should instill discipline in their In-school adolescents so that the acts of lawlessness and vagrant disobedience to constituted authority will be avoided and they will learn to obey rules and regulations in their schools.
- School administrators and the Ministry of Education should organize workshops and seminars for the teachers, students and parents on how to promote good conduct among the students within the school setting and outside the school.
- Universal Basic Education system is funded by the Federal government of Nigeria, states, World Bank and other donor agencies. The tertiary level of education is supported with a special intervention fund, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND). The secondary level of education is left only in the hands of various state governments in Nigeria. This lopsided intervention funding excluding secondary schools should be addressed.
- The Universal Basic Education Commission is in charge of basic education in Nigeria while the National Universities Commission regulates the activities of universities in the country. No such body has been created for secondary schools. This imbalance should be looked into. This may enhance quality education delivery at this level of education.

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