
**PARENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND
CLANDESTINE BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS IN
OREDO PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENIN CITY**

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Abstract

The study focused on examining the demographic variables of parents that influence clandestine behaviour among students in public secondary schools located in Oredo, Benin City. A descriptive survey design employing a correlational approach was utilized for this research. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire named the "Parents Demographic and Student Clandestine Behaviour Questionnaire (PDSCB)." Given the extensive population, the Taro Yamane formula was applied to determine a sample size of 400 students, who were randomly selected from public secondary schools within the Oredo Local Government Area. Two research questions were formulated and corresponding hypotheses were established to direct the study. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were evaluated at a significance level of .05. The reliability of the instrument yielded an r value of .74, and the data were analyzed using inferential statistics, specifically simple linear regression. The findings indicated that there is no significant difference between parents' educational levels and students' clandestine behaviour. Additionally, it was found that there is no significant relationship

between parents' occupations and students' clandestine behaviour. Based on these results, it was recommended that parents should dedicate time to engage and communicate with their children so as to foster character development.

Keywords: Parents demographic variables, Clandestine behaviour, Secondary school students.

Introduction

Students are significantly shaped by the surroundings in which they grow up, with the family's socioeconomic standing, their interactions, and upbringing methods being vital factors. This can significantly affect various nurturing aspects like emotional and verbal sensitivity, ultimately shaping the student's behaviour (Sarsour *et al*, 2019). Therefore, it is important to highlight that the family, as a primary institution for students' socialization, plays a crucial role in shaping their personality and behaviour. Unfavorable parenting methods, exposure to domestic violence, parental disagreements, lack of caregiving, neglect, dismissiveness, excessive protection, and insufficient affection and love can adversely affect students and contribute to the development of anti-social behaviour, which they seem to maintain at home, in school, and throughout their adult lives (Eysenck, 2013). In the family, one frequently notices intentional but non-systematic mechanisms that serve as catalysts for students' behavioural growth. These could include the parents' job status, the family's economic standing and earnings, or the expectations held by parents (Hadjicharalambous & Dimitriou, 2020). In line with this, Bloomfield and Kendall (2012) suggested that parenting behaviour is crucial for children's emotional, social, and cognitive growth and serves as a significant factor in shaping children's mental health and antisocial behaviour. Pappa (2006) asserted that children's behaviour and perceptions are shaped by their parents' attributes, including their gender, background, age, nationality, intelligence, education, and understanding of child development. If influenced negatively or poorly by their parents, these adolescents or students might engage in secretive behaviour.

Secretive conduct refers to activities carried out discreetly, usually for reasons considered unethical, unlawful, socially inappropriate, or unauthorized, and it frequently emphasizes the worry linked to the chance of being caught. This term denotes actions performed secretly, often involving adept avoidance of discovery, and usually violating accepted traditions, regulations, or authorities. Within the scope of this research, especially among high school students, hidden behaviour encompass actions like drinking alcohol, smoking, engaging in premarital sex, prostitution, stealing, bullying, participating in cults, secret romantic liaisons, cybercriminal activities, substance abuse, robbery, and gambling, among various others. The reasons for these secretive actions may arise from elements like poor academic results, unstable family situations, peer pressure, parental socio-economic status, an unfriendly school environment, and lack of parental interest, all of which have their own repercussions.

Secretive actions among students pose serious worries about their participation in pre-marital sexual conduct, drug use, cult activities, and related matters. The consequences of these behaviour are grave, and without suitable interventions, the aim of cultivating a well-rounded and ethically sound generation of students might remain out of reach. For these students, participating in such lifestyles is not considered a significant problem; instead, the environment around them frequently accepts these behaviour as normal. Mainstream media, such as movies, digital content, and social conversations, often depict these behaviour as acceptable, causing students to feel no reluctance in engaging when chances present themselves. The impact of suggestive programs, like reality shows such as *Big Brother Naija*, encourages a wish to pursue hidden relationships more freely when away from parental supervision in the school environment, which provides increased independence. Secretive behaviour, marked by departures from social norms and legal expectations, appear in different ways in secondary schools. Cases of bullying and substance misuse are common, with certain students engaging in criminal behaviour, emphasizing the critical need for intervention (Oruta & Nkatha, 2024). Encouraging positive

behavior in both homes and schools is crucial for developing good behaviour and academic success. Failing to deal with hidden behaviour can lead to serious adverse effects on the learning environment (Angel, 2016) and society in general.

The World Health Organization (2002) recognized that in adolescence, there is a heightened awareness of sexuality along with a tendency towards risk-taking behaviour, fantasies, and erotic experiences. This highlights the importance of educating adolescents about the severe repercussions that can stem from such behaviour, which can encompass unintended pregnancies, abortions leading to possible reproductive health complications, the spread of sexually transmitted infections, stalled academic advancement, lower grades, and even dropping out of school, with the gravest outcome being the threat of death. As a result, engaged parental participation in their children's upbringing can encourage a more optimistic attitude toward life, education, dedication to homework, and regular school attendance. On the other hand, if parents abandon their duties to teachers, students might participate in misconduct and hidden actions. Moreover, an absence of ethical direction from parents can adversely affect their children's behaviour, causing some to engage in secretive activities.

Parental factors include a variety of shared traits, such as the demographic and socio-economic backgrounds linked to certain parents. A parent's capacity to shape their children's behavioural norms and moral standards is inherently connected to these factors (Osuafor & Okonkwo, 2013). In this context, the demographic factors of parents encompass, but are not restricted to, family composition, family number, parents' educational levels, and their professions. It is crucial to understand that these traits in a family can either facilitate or hinder the development of hidden behaviour in students. This viewpoint is backed by the idea that a family's quality is influenced by elements like the parents' education, job, income, personality characteristics, and the size and kind of the family. Thus, it is correct to say that families vary considerably according to numerous factors, such as socio-economic status, levels of education, family size, cultural heritage, and the degree of parental

engagement in both educational and extracurricular pursuits, along with household difficulties and closeness. The differences in these family factors could result in parents nurturing children with a range of behavioural characteristics. Within the framework of this research, the parental demographic aspects that the researcher focuses on include the educational attainment of parents, their earnings, and their professions.

The educational background of a household indicates the level of educational awareness to which a child is exposed in their family setting. Certain families include parents with advanced educational backgrounds, allowing them to successfully raise their children using their own expertise, whereas others may have parents with lesser educational achievements. When a child displays behaviour challenges, it is frequently true that the parents do not possess the required techniques to steer them towards suitable behaviour that may alleviate these issues. Alokani *et al* (2013) observed that the educational awareness of parents greatly impacts the academic success of students and their behavioural adaptations. Families with informed parents often show greater concern for their children's welfare, probably because of their wider experiences in different settings. Informed parents tend to be more capable of serving as secondary teachers, offering advice and support regarding appropriate conduct, scholastic achievement, and the key resources needed for their children's success. Moreover, parents with higher educational levels usually have access to improved job prospects, enabling them to support their families more efficiently. In the same vein, Samson (2012) discovered that parents with fewer educational qualifications frequently have restricted understanding of handling their children's problematic behaviour.

Occupation generally denotes a job or profession, signifying the tasks a person engages in to make a living. It acts as a revenue source that people use to satisfy their essential requirements. Occupation includes various activities associated with economic functions, frequently connected to making a living, like trades and professions. The characteristics of a person's job can greatly influence students' conduct. The time shared among family

members significantly impacts family dynamics, serving as a vital element in reinforcing familial connections (Haris, 2011). The kind of job an individual has depends on their field of expertise and can vary regarding pay and time investment. Parental jobs offer not only economic aid to their kids but also influence the quality of time they share together. Kids with parents in secure and prestigious jobs frequently gain entry to excellent private schooling from early childhood up to university. This benefit might lead to these children showing reduced levels of delinquency compared to those from poorer backgrounds. A parent's job can also affect the amount of daily support given to a child. Girls may display behavior problems as a result of inadequate support from their mothers, whereas boys may face challenges because of insufficient parental direction. Dintwat (2010) observed that various professions can cause parents to be physically or emotionally removed from their children, leading to a lack of control over their actions.

Secondary schools face a diverse range of hidden behaviour that can be linked to parental or family influences. This indicates a possible link between the demographic traits of parents and the secretive actions displayed by students. These behaviour in secondary school can appear in different ways, such as a tendency for cheating on exams, resistance to punishment, bullying, promiscuity, participation in cults, and drug abuse, among others. Families showing dysfunction in any of these aspects seem to raise students who participate in covert behaviour.

According to Akpan (2010), deviant behavior is significantly widespread in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State, with many students participating in activities like bullying, loitering, and cheating during examinations. Although the growing occurrence of these behaviour among secondary school students is evident, there appears to be insufficient research examining the impact of family variables or parental demographic factors as influencers of secretive behaviour. As a result, the researcher decided to investigate how parental demographic factors predict secretive behaviour in secondary school students in Edo State.

In today's society, a large portion of high school seniors has

exhibited improper behaviour, much of which is hidden and contrary to the accepted norms and standards of schools and societal values. Different stakeholders in the education sector, such as school leaders, educators, government representatives, parents, and the students themselves, have expressed their concerns about the hidden behaviors exhibited by these students.

Covert actions involve different school violations, such as theft, drug-related activities, sexual misconduct, and cultism, which students frequently partake in discreetly. The negative consequences of these actions reach beyond the students, affecting all parties involved in education. As a result, the occurrence of this behaviour continues to be a matter of worry for the whole community, causing extensive anxiety. Various factors, such as attitudinal influences, family upbringing, and demographic traits of parents, have been recognized in current literature as indicators of students' secretive behaviour. In reply, initiatives have been launched to tackle this problem. Parents, governmental organizations, and educational authorities have all sought to address these issues at their source. Nonetheless, information from numerous media sources, such as print and broadcasts from notable figures in schools and Edo State, suggests that secretive behaviour among students in Benin City persists without interruption. This implies that present initiatives might not be properly focused. Given this context, the current study seeks to concentrate on the demographic factors of parents, specifically their levels of education and jobs, acknowledging their considerable impact on students' socialization and conduct.

The inquiry stemming from the researcher's observations pertains to the extent to which students' covert behaviour in secondary schools within the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State are influenced by demographic variables of their parents, including parental education and occupation. The purpose of this study therefore, is to examining the parents demographic variables and clandestine behaviour among students in public secondary schools in Oredo Local Government, Benin City. Specifically, the study determines:

- i. if there a difference in parents' educational level and students' clandestine behaviour in Oredo Local Government, Benin City; and
- ii. if there a relationship between parents' occupation and students' clandestine behaviour in Oredo Local Government, Benin City.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference in parents' educational level and students' clandestine behaviour.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between parents' occupation and students' clandestine behaviour.

Methods

The research design employed in this study was a survey approach. This design was selected due to its effectiveness in gathering data from a diverse group of respondents through a series of survey questions, allowing for the results to be extrapolated to the broader population. The research population included all students enrolled in the fourteen public secondary schools located within the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. According to data provided by the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), the total enrollment in these public secondary schools amounts to 18,106 students. The reliability of the instrument was conducted using 30 students who are not part of the sapled population and data collected was analyzed using Crombach Alpha Correlation Coefficient Formular and an r value of .74 was obtained. Due to the large population, the Taro Yamane formula was used to obtain the sample size, thus:

Taro Yamane formula: $n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$

n= sample size

N=population

e= the margin error (it could be 0.10, 0.05 or 0.01)

$$n = \frac{18106}{1 + 18106(0.05)^2} = \frac{18106}{1 + 18107 + 0.0025} = \frac{18106}{45.2675}$$

n= 399.97 \approx 400
 Sample size = 400

Inferential statistics of simple linear regression statistics was used to analyzed the data. The criterion level for the mean was 2.50 (average of the four-point Likert scale options) i.e. Strongly Agree=4 points, Agree=3 points, Disagree=2 points, Strongly Disagree= 1 point; $4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.50$. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Ho1: There is no significant difference in parents' educational level and students' clandestine behaviour.

Table 1: ANOVA Statistics on difference in parents' educational level and students' clandestine behaviour

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between groups	245.931	2	122.965	2.266	.105	Ho is accepted
Within groups	21547.659	397	54.276			
Total	21793.590	399				

The data in table 1 showed df = 2, 397, F = 2.266 and a p-value = 0.105. With the p-value greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in parents' educational level and students' clandestine behaviour.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between parents' occupation and students clandestine behaviour.

Table 2: Pearson statistics on relationship between parents' occupation and students' clandestine behaviour

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	Decision
Parents occupation	400	0.096	0.055	Ho is accepted
Clandestine behaviour	400			

The data in Table 2 shows a r-value of 0.096 and a p-value of 0.055. Thus, with the p-value greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. Hence, there is no significant relationship between parents occupation and students clandestine behaviour.

Discussions

The findings showed that there was no significant difference in parents' educational level and students clandestine behaviour. This negates the position of Samson (2012) who found out that parent that had low level of education had little knowledge on how to control deviant behaviour of their children. The findings showed that there is no significant relationship between parents occupation and students clandestine behaviour. This negates the finding of Dintwat (2010) who found out that most occupations makes parents to be afar off from their children hence, they lost control over their wards' misbehaviour.

Conclusion

It was concluded that parents' education had no impact on students clandestine behaviour; and also parents occupation had no influence or relationship with students clandestine behaviour.

Recommendations

Parents should make out time to always relate and communicate with their children in a bid to ensure character building. Families should have the number of children they can cater for to avoid students' vulnerability to clandestine behaviour. Interventions addressing clandestine behaviour should consider addressing socio-

economic status (occupation, education). Parents should offer regular sex education to their children enabling them to be highly conscious of their rights and values while diverting from practising indecent behaviour. Uneducated parents should be seen to instilling discipline and character moulding in their children, irrespective of their educational status.

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