



# Teacher variables and delinquent behaviour among primary school pupils in Ahoada West local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study examines teacher variables and delinquent behavior among public primary school pupils in Ahoada West Local Government Area of River State. The independent variables examined were; teachers' attitude, teachers' classroom management, teacher-pupil relationship while dependent variable is pupils' delinquent behavior. To achieve the purpose of the study, three research questions and three research hypotheses were posed and formulated respectively to guide the study. Two hundred (200) pupils in public primary schools were randomly selected for this study. The instrument used for data collection was a 16-item questionnaire named Teacher Variables and Delinquent Behaviours (TVDB) constructed by the researchers. Independent Samples T-Test was used for data analysis. Each of the hypotheses was tested at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant influence of teachers' attitude, teachers' classroom management, and teacher-pupil relationship on delinquent behavior among pupils in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study recommended that teachers should act and manage their classroom adequately to curb students' delinquent behaviours in the classroom.

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**Keywords:** Teachers' attitude, teachers' classroom management, teacher-pupil relationship.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Introduce the problem

In primary school, the recurrence of pupils' delinquent behavior such as cultism, examination malpractices, sexual permissiveness, alcoholic and drug addiction, lying and dishonesty, disrespect for constituted authority, abortion, truancy, indecent dressing,

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bullying, rape, lateness, vulgarities and even suicide have been numerous issues to contend with. The problem of deviant behaviors as exhibited by the public primary school pupils have metamorphosed into a cankerworm with devastating consequences both on the students themselves and the Nigeria society at large (Cooper, 2014). These problems according to Ibok (2016) are “truancy, stealing, disrespect, bullying” (p.17). The situation has worsened as pupils are no longer committed to their studies and are not encouraged to do so. Most of them who involve in these wasting activities truncates their stay and years of study and the grave consequences of these behaviors includes dismissal, loss of position, loss of, expulsion while others who are not caught cannot defend the certificate issue to them. Also, these set of students cannot be useful to themselves, their families as well as the society when employed (Strong, 2013). In spite of the efforts made by both the government and the school authorities to checkmate deviant behaviors, it is observed with dismay that the chronicle of deviant activities in primary school is unending. Indeed the magnitude both in scale and in frequency has reached an alarming dimension. If primary school pupils cultivate ethical values such as humility, respect, love, kindness, justice, fair play, spirit of forgiveness, obedience, devotion to duty, orderly behavior and selfless service, these in turn may enhances their academic performance.

Currently, there has been a renewed interest in the role of the teacher as the key to improving pupils’ socio-ethical value in primary schools. There seem to be a growing consensus among parents and educational stakeholders as well as policy makers that pupils’ delinquent behaviors are exclusively dependent on teachers’ characteristics (Ibok, 2016). Based on this sentiment, teachers are frequently accused, blamed and held accountable for delinquent behaviors and pupils’ under-achievement in school. Many teachers have been demoted, sacked and threatened or even punished (especially those in private schools) for the causes of pupils’ delinquent behaviors. It is based on this premise that this study seeks to find out if there is any influence of teacher variables on delinquent behaviors among primary school pupils in Ahoada West local government area of River State. Teachers have the primary obligation to help students to learn how to recognize and solve problems, comprehend new phenomena, construct mental models of these phenomena and, given a new condition, set goals and regulate their own learning (Akubua, 2013). A teacher’s ability to influence pupils’ delinquent behaviors depends on several variables. A teacher is expected to be effective and professionally well-grounded to perform the task of teaching. According to Strong (2013), the dimensions that characterize teacher’s variable that may influence pupils’ delinquent behaviors include qualification, attitude and classroom management and teacher- pupil relationship. Each of these dimensions focuses on a fundamental aspect of the teacher’s professional qualifications or responsibilities. Essentially, teachers have two major roles in the classroom: the role of creating conducive learning environment and actual delivery of lesson. Yuce (2019) maintained that the role of language teachers for instance have changed compared to those

who taught 30years age. The author went ahead to mention such roles to include: controller, prompter, participant, resource and tutor. It is important to note that teacher perform several roles to affect their students positively. Some of the teacher variables that may influence pupil delinquent behavior examined include teachers' attitude, teachers' classroom management, and teacher-pupil relationship.

## *1.2. Literature Review*

One of the challenges and opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be for schools at all levels to focus more on assisting pupils to develop positive attitude toward learning in order to succeed in school. Attitude refers to an individual's thinking, disposition, feeling, interest, opinion or position taken with respect to others (Obodo, 2015). This suggests that some teachers transfer their values and aspirations on to learners. Again, the initial experiences provided by teachers may modify pupil's values, emotion, interest and attitudes (Cooper, 2014).

Isidore (2015) conducted a study on the influence of teachers' attitude on pupils' delinquent behaviour among primary schools in Uyo State. In order to achieve this, three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha levels. The design adopted was the descriptive survey study. The sample for the study consisted of 250 primary schools pupils randomly selected from 5 secondary schools. The sample was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for this study was an adapted 15 items, 5- option rating scale questionnaire. The data collected was subjected to statistical analysis using Chi-Square. The results obtained amongst others, revealed that, teachers' attitudes significantly influence pupils delinquency behaviours. This suggests that, teachers' positive attitude towards the pupils may help to curb the negative trend of socio-ethical values or morality among students in the society, the home and school have the stronger influence.

Pupils spend most of the time in the classroom than the home and many of the behaviors they learn are in the classroom. The way and manner the teacher manages his/her classroom during lesson delivery can make or mar the pupils' behaviors. Classroom management refers to all those essential teaching and learning activities which are highly necessary not only to create but also to maintain a supportive and orderly atmosphere. It includes planning and preparation of the materials, decoration of the classroom, creation of expectation, establishment and enforcement of rules and routines in the classroom (Tan, 2013). Akubue (2013) observed that in its most routine level, classroom management concerns a large variety of straight forward activities such as simple ensuring discipline amongst students, maintaining and distributing classroom materials and routine custodial caring for students' behavior. These actions may not be instructional in nature but they facilitate instruction and help in development of moral value among the pupils. Levin(2016) is of the view that, well qualified and competent teachers are better placed to manage their classrooms effectively than others.

Eze (2010) conducted a study on teachers' classroom management and pupils' delinquent behavior in Bakassi Local Government Area, Cross River State. In order to achieve this, two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha levels. The design adopted for the study was the ex-post facto. The sample for the study consisted of 180

students randomly selected. The sample was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for this study was an adapted 20 items, 4-option rating scale questionnaire. The data collected was subjected to statistical analysis using Chi-square. The results obtained amongst others, revealed that there is a significant influence of teachers classroom management on pupils delinquent behaviors in Bakassi Local Government Area, Cross River State. This implies that a poorly managed classroom may result to delinquent behaviors among pupils while a properly managed classroom will produce well behaved pupils.

Teacher-pupil relationship is key to building well behave pupils in the classroom. When the relationship between the teacher and the pupils is cordial, pupils will always look forward to meeting that teacher. But if the relationship is not cordial, pupils will tend to run away and that may lead to truancy. Jones(2012) opined that,pupils prefer teachers who are warm and friendly. In the classroom, the interpersonal relationship between teacher and pupils is an important element in the pupils' learning process and modification of pupils' behaviors. According to Adina and Ana (2012), the establishment of common ground between teachers and pupils is a fundamental component for a good and lasting interpersonal relationship. Teacher-pupils relationship is part and parcel of the teaching and learning process because it influences pupils' behaviors. Teachers have to bear in mind that their actions are likely to have a significant influence upon improving or detracting from the quality of their relationship with pupils which in turn will have a favorable or negative influence on pupils' behaviors.

King (2014) conducted the study, influence of teacher-pupil relationship on pupils' delinquent behaviour in primary school in Enugu State. In order to achieve this, three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha levels. The design adopted for the study was the survey study. The sample for the study consisted of 200 primary school teacher randomly selected in 5 public primary schools in Enugu State. The sample was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for this study was an adapted 12 items, 4- option rating scale questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to reliability measure using test- retest method. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using independent t-test. The results obtained amongst others, revealed that teacher-pupil relationship significantly influence pupils delinquent behaviors. Also, Nsikak (2012) conducted a study to examine the relationship between teacher-pupil relationship and pupils' deviant behavior in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa State. In order to achieve this, two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha levels. The design adopted for the study was the ex-post facto. The sample for the study consisted of 150 students randomly selected for the study. The sample was selected using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument used for this study was an adapted 12 items, 4- option rating scale questionnaire. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The results obtained amongst others, revealed that there is a significant relationship between teacher-pupil relationship and pupils' deviant behaviors.

However, the extent to which delinquent behavior has eaten deep amidst primary school pupils in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State has given the writers of the study a concern. This study therefore seeks to find out whether teacher variables have any

influence on pupils' delinquent behaviours in schools in the study area State hypotheses and their correspondence to research design.

### *1.3 Statement of purposes, Questions and hypotheses*

#### Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine teacher variables and delinquent behavior of public primary school pupils in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study seeks to determine whether;

1. Teachers' attitude influence delinquent behaviors among public primary school pupils.
2. Teachers' classroom management influence delinquent behaviors among public primary school pupils.
3. Teacher pupil relationship influence delinquent behaviors among public primary school pupils.

#### Research Questions

1. How does teachers' attitude influence delinquent behavior among public primary school pupils?
2. To what extent can teachers' classroom management influence delinquent behavior among public primary school pupils?
3. Does teacher pupil relationship influence delinquent behavior among public primary school pupils?

#### Statement of Hypotheses

Based on the specific objectives and research questions raised, the following null hypotheses were put forth to guide the study:

1. There is no significant influence of teachers' attitude on delinquent behavior among primary school pupils
2. There is no significant influence of teachers' classroom management on delinquent behavior among primary school pupils.
3. There is no significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on delinquent behavior among primary school pupils.

## **2. Method**

The study area was Ahoada West Local Government Area, River State. The research designed adopted is survey design. This design method was preferred because it concerned with finding, describing and interpreting data collected from samples of population. The population for the study consist of all primary school pupils in public secondary school in Ahoada west Local Government Area of River State. A sample of 20

pupils was randomly selected for the study. A questionnaire was used in data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two sections (A&B). Section A described the bio data of the respondents while section B was developed on the main variables which include attitude, classroom management and teacher-pupil relationship. The questionnaire was based on four point likert scale used in measuring responding opinion level of strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, and strongly disagreed

### *3.1. Subsection of the method.*

The study area was Ahoada West Local Government Area, River State. The research designed adopted is survey design. This design method was preferred because it is concerned with finding, describing and interpreting data collected from samples of population. The population for the study consist of all primary school pupils in public secondary school in Ahoada west Local Government Area of River State. A sample of 200 pupils was randomly selected for the study

### *3.2. Participant (subject) characteristics*

The study made use of public primary school pupils in Ahoda local Government Area of River State, Nigeria. These pupils were basically primary five pupils, why they were used was because they can read and write and are capable of responding to the questionnaire items. Moreover, they are of 7-8 years of age showing that they are mature to handle the instruments.

### *3.3. Sampling procedures*

The sampling procedure adopted was the simple random sampling technique of hat and draw where each subject is given equal opportunity to be selected. Numbers were written and placed in a basket and subjects were asked to pick at random. This was done until the required number was obtained.

#### *3.3.1. Sample size, power, and precision*

A sample size of 200 was obtained from target population of all the primary school pupils of 1256 in public primary school in Ahoda West Local government area of River state. 16% of the population was taken to form the sample size.

#### *3.3. 2. Validity and Reliability*

The instrument was face-validated by two experts in measurement and evaluation from the University of Calabar. Corrections were pointed out by the expert and

adjusted by the researchers and the document was declared valid. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach Alpha reliability was employed which gave a reliability coefficient of .07-.08 respectively.

### 3.3.3. Data Analysis

The statistic package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme was used to analyze the data collected. The data was analyzed using Independent t-test statistical tool. The results of the analysis are presented in tables 1, 2, and 3. The hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

## 4. Results

### Hypothesis one

Hypothesis one stated that there is no significant influence of teachers' attitude on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils. The independent variable in this hypothesis is teachers' attitude, while the dependent variable is delinquent behavior. Independent t-test statistical analysis was used to test this hypothesis. To test this hypothesis, teachers' attitudes were classified into two groups (positive and negative attitude). The subjects who sum of their responses in the questionnaire ranges from 5 to 12 are classified as teacher negative attitude while those responses from 13-20 are classified as teacher positive attitude, their means were compared using the independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

### **Independent T-Test Analysis on influence of teacher attitude on delinquent behaviours of primary school pupils. (N=200)**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value
Positive attitude	134	14.63	5.99	5.56*
Negative attitude	66	10.10	5.11	

\* Significant at .05, critical t = 1.96, df=198

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 revealed that, the calculated t-value of (5.56) is higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of teachers' attitude on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils was rejected. This result implies that, there is a significant influence of teachers' attitude on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils

#### Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of teachers' classroom management on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils. The independent variable in this hypothesis is teachers' classroom management, while the dependent variable is delinquent behavior. Independent t-test statistical analysis was used to test this hypothesis. To test this hypothesis, teachers' classroom management was classified into two groups (low and high). The subjects who sum of their responses in the questionnaire ranges from 5 to 12 are classified as teacher high classroom management while those responses from 13-20 are classified as teacher high classroom management, their means were compared using the independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

**Independent T-Test Analysis on influence of teacher classroom management on delinquent behaviours of primary school pupils. (N=200)**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value
High classroom management	119	14.11	5.69	5.40*
Low classroom Management	81	9.99	5.01	

\* Significant at .05, critical t = 1.96, df=198

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 2 revealed that, the calculated t-value of (5.40) is higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of teachers' classroom management on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils was rejected. This result implies that, there is a significant influence of teachers' classroom management on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils.

### Hypothesis three

Hypothesis three stated that there is no significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils. The independent variable in this hypothesis is teacher-pupil relationship, while the dependent variable is delinquent behavior. Independent t-test statistical analysis was used to test this hypothesis. To test this hypothesis, teachers' classroom management was classified into two groups (low and high). The subjects who sum of their responses in the questionnaire ranges from 5 to 12 are classified as teacher low relationship while those responses from 13-20 are classified as teacher high relationship, their means were compared using the independent t-test analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**

**Independent T-Test Analysis on influence of teacher –pupil relationship on delinquent behaviours of primary school pupils. (N=200)**

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value
Cordial relationship	132	14.61	5.49	
Not cordial relationship	68	9.21	5.11	6.10*

\* Significant at .05, critical t = 1.96, df=198

The result in Table 3 revealed that, the calculated t-value of (6.10) is higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 levels of significance with 198 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils was rejected. This result implies that, there is a significant influence of teacher-pupil relationship and delinquent behavior of primary school pupils.

## 5. Discussion

The finding that states that, there is a significant influence of teachers' attitude on delinquent behaviours of public primary school pupils is in consonance with the finding of Doyne (2011) who found that, teachers' attitude significantly influence delinquent behavior among primary school pupils in basic schools. That is, if teachers are not well behaved, they can possibly influence the pupils negatively. The finding is also in accordance with Udom (2011) who maintained that; attitude is one's character and behavior to be well thought of and admired.

The second finding which stated that there a significant influence of on pupils' delinquent behaviours is in agreement with Cassias (2013) who ascertain that; teachers' classroom management significantly influence delinquent behavior among pupils in Basic schools. The finding of this study is also in line with Ibok (2016) who in his study found out that there is a significant effect of teachers' classroom management on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils.

The finding on teacher-pupils relationship was significant, meaning that when there a cordial relationship between the teacher and the pupils; they will imbibe positive behaviours which will enhance their personalities. This finding is in consonance with the finding of King (2013) who found that, there is a significant influence of teacher-pupils' relationship on delinquent behavior of primary school pupils. A person with moral values is able to endure hardship, overcome criticism, and optimistically confront challenges in a tranquil manner. The finding also aligned with the postulation of Blatt (2010) that teacher-pupils' relationship significantly influence pupils' deviant behaviors. It is important to recognize that when there is no cordial relationship between the teacher and the pupils, they pupils may become delinquent by engaging in unpleasant behaviours which are inimical to them and the society.

## 6. Conclusions

This study examined teacher variables and delinquent behavior of primary school pupils. Literature was reviewed and it was variously revealed that, there is a significant influence of teachers' attitudes, classroom management and teacher-pupil relationship on delinquent behaviours among primary school pupils. This study is carried out in a different location in Ahoada local government area of River State and the result has confirm those of other authors in the literature. From the foregoing, it was concluded that there is a significant influence of teachers' attitude, classroom management and teacher-pupil relationship on delinquent behavior of public primary school pupils in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State.

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## 8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should develop positive attitudes toward the pupils they teach so that they can emulate them and become better citizens.
2. Teachers should present themselves approachable and not to make things difficult for the pupils.
3. Teachers should be able to manage their classes in terms of classroom management, positioning of pupils according to their abilities, control noise making, manage the time table effectively, dress neatly and smartly and be always punctual to school.
4. Teachers should establish a good and close relationship with the pupils so that they can identify their problems and find a quick solution.

## 8. Implications of the study

The findings of this study have implications for the teachers, students and the society. For the past five years, Nigeria as a country has witnessed a lot of crisis and this has been evident in the delinquent behaviours exhibited by even primary school pupils. Primary school pupils are future leaders and if they become delinquent, then, the nation's future will be bleak. Teachers as role models have a lot to do in order to mould pupils' character. When teachers have the right attitudes, pupils will emulate them and develop right and positive attitudes and become responsible adults who will in turn build a better and peaceful society. Also, through adequate classroom management by teachers and provision of a conducive classroom climate, pupils' behaviours will be enhanced. Furthermore, when teachers are cordial in their relationship with the pupils, the pupils' confidence will be built and lasting peace can be witnessed as they relate positively with the outside world.

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