
**FAMILY SIZE AND FAMILY TYPE AS PREDICTORS OF
CLANDESTINE BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA,
EDO STATE**

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of family size and family type as predictors of clandestine behaviour among secondary school students in Oredo local government area of Edo State. A survey research design was used, and data were collected using a structured instrument titled Family Size and Type Influence on Clandestine Behaviour (FICB). The questionnaire was administered to 400 randomly selected students from five government secondary schools in the area. Two hypotheses guided the study and were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.78. Inferential statistics of independent samples t-test was used to test hypothesis 1, while simple linear regression statistics was used in testing hypotheses 2. Findings revealed no significant relationship between either family size or family type and students' clandestine behaviour. Based on these outcomes, it was recommended that parents especially those with larger families should make intentional efforts to ensure the positive upbringing of their children.

Keywords: Family size, Family type, Clandestine behaviour, Secondary school students

Introduction

Family typically comprises of individuals related by birth, marriage, or adoption, often cohabiting and forming the primary unit of social organization. Members may include parents, children, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives. Families serve essential roles by providing emotional support, care, identity, and fostering social development. They are also central to nurturing children and caring for elderly members. In this study, family-related factors being examined in connection to student engagement in clandestine behaviour include **family size** and **family type**. Family types include nuclear (parents and children), extended (multi-generational), and blended families (formed through remarriage), among others. Family size is classified as either small or large, based on the total number of household members.

Family size is often considered a key variable in shaping children's behaviour. It refers to the number of people in a child's household, including the child. Birth order position among siblings also plays a role. Okonkwo (2015) described the family as a social structure involving parents, children, and relatives. Similarly, Ononuja (2015) referred to the family as a unit of individuals bound by marriage, blood, or adoption, typically sharing a residence. Ekwok (2020) showed that family size significantly influences deviant behaviour among secondary school students. Students from polygamous homes often exhibit higher levels of misconduct due to limited supervision. A lack of academic guidance may snowball into disobedience, poor relationships with teachers and peers, and even acts like stealing. Doherty (as cited in Ali and Gracey, 2013) also reported a link between family size, academic performance, and behavioural issues in students.

Family type, as described by Banda and Mweemba (2016), refers to the social and structural composition of the household—whether nuclear, extended, monogamous, polygamous, single-parent, foster, intact, broken, or polyandrous. Family structure plays a critical role in shaping a child's character. Dysfunctional environments—marked by inadequate parental role models, criminal behaviour, sibling delinquency, and poor supervision—can foster behavioural problems. Additional challenges such as overcrowding, financial hardship, emotional neglect, and a lack of family bonding

can further exacerbate the situation, potentially leading students toward deviant or clandestine behaviours.

Clandestine behaviour are character and attitude that is secretive or kept hidden from the knowledge of others and are often for illicit or covert purposes. Such as smoking and drinking in secret, stealing, arm robbery, kidnapping, internet scams, cultism, ritualism and so on. Clandestine behaviors are disruptive behaviors characterized by covert and overt hostility and intentional aggression towards others. Most children exhibit some level of clandestine behaviors during their development. Some children may exhibit high levels of both clandestine behavior and acceptable behaviours, for example, the child will be very intelligent and yet very stubborn. However, some may exhibit low levels of both types of behaviors.

The limited educational background of some parents possibly resulting from large family responsibilities can also hinder effective child supervision. As Dintwat (2010) observed, there is a significant association between students' family types and their engagement in deviant behaviours. Therefore, parents—regardless of family size or structure—must be proactive in nurturing their children to prevent engagement in antisocial or clandestine acts. A committed parenting approach contributes to a more orderly and peaceful society.

Despite various interventions by parents, schools, and government agencies aimed at curbing deviant behaviour among students, incidents of clandestine conduct persist in Benin City. Reports from media outlets and school officials indicate a rising concern. While existing literature identifies multiple behavioural predictors—ranging from family background to attitudinal and demographic variablesefforts to resolve the issue may not be properly targeted. Given the pivotal role family structure and parenting practices play in shaping behaviour, a deeper understanding of how these factors affect student conduct is urgently needed.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. **determine if** there is a difference between family size and students' clandestine behaviour; and
- ii. **determine if** there is a relationship between family type and students' clandestine behaviour.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀1: There is no significant difference between family size and students' clandestine behaviour.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between family type and students' clandestine behaviour.

Methods

This study adopted a survey design, suitable for collecting data from a large group of respondents. The design enabled the generalization of findings to the target population. The target population included students from all 14 public secondary schools in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State. According to the State Universal Basic Education Board (2024), these schools have a total of 18,106 students. The Taro Yamane formula was used to obtain the sample size, of 400 students. Data analysis was carried out using Inferential statistics of independent samples t-test was used to test hypothesis 1, while simple linear regression statistics was used in testing hypotheses 2. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

H₀1: There is no significant difference between family size and students' clandestine behaviour.

Table 1: T-test of independent samples Statistics on difference between family size and students clandestine behaviour

Family Size	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Small	196	1.526	0.501	-0.00390	398	-0.078	0.938	Ho is retained
Large	204	1.529	0.500					

The data in table 1 shows that based on students' clandestine behaviour, the students from small size families had a mean of 1.526, while those large families had a mean of 1.529. Hence, the students from large families have a higher mean than those from small families. As a result, the students from large families have worse clandestine

behaviour than their counterparts in the small families. The data also showed a t-value of -0.078, $df = 398$ and a p-value of .938, testing at an alpha level of .05. The p-value is greater than .05, thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between family size and students' clandestine behaviour is retained, meaning that there is no difference in clandestine behaviour of students in small and large families.

H₀2: There is no significant relationship between family type and students' clandestine behaviour.

Table 2: Simple linear regression statistics on relationship between family type and students' clandestine behaviour

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df 1	df 2	Sig. F Change
.086 ^a	.007	.005	0.49866	.007	2.932	1	398	.088

Analysis of Variance (Anova^b) (students clandestine behaviour)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	0.729	1	0.729			
Resident	98.969	398	0.249	2.932	0.088 ^b	Ho is retained
Total	99.698	399				

From the data in table 2, with R-value of .086 there is a positive strong relationship between the predictor (family type) and students clandestine behaviour. The R Square value of 0.007 (0.7%) shows that family type variables predict 0.7% of the variance of the students clandestine behaviour. From the data in the ANOVA table, the F value is 2.932. The p-value is 0.088 which is greater than 0.05, hence, the null hypothesis is accepted/retained which showed that there is no significant relationship between family type variables on students' clandestine behaviour.

Discussions

The results showed that there was no significant difference between family size and students' clandestine behaviour, meaning there is no

difference in clandestine behaviour of students in small and large families. This however, negates the finding of Ekwok (2020) who found that family size significantly influences deviant behaviour among secondary school students. Corroborating this, Doherty (as cited in Ali and Gracey, 2013), also found a correlation between family size and student academic outcome and deviant behaviour among students.

The findings also indicated that there is no significant relationship between family type variables on students' clandestine behaviour. This finding was contrary to the finding of Dintwat (2010) who discovered that deviant behaviour of most students was significantly related to students' family type.

Conclusion

It was concluded that between students from large families and small families, clandestine behaviour was worse among those from large families; though difference not significant (meaning there is no difference in clandestine behaviour of students in small and large families). Also, there was a positive strong relationship between family type and students clandestine behaviour, however, not significant.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that parents should make every effort possible in seeing to the good nurturance of their children, especially that of large families. Irrespective of family type, parents should endeavor to see to their children non-involvement or indulgence in clandestine activities. All hands (schools, religious bodies, community, society, and so on) should be on deck in collaborating with families in the raising of their children and/or wards.

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