GENDER DIFFERENCES, PEER PRESSURE AND PARENTING STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF CRIMINAL INTENT AMONG SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN GUMA, BENUE STATE

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Abstract

This present study investigated gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles as predictors of criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma, Benue State and adopted the cross-sectional survey design. The simple random sampling was unitized in the administration of two hundred and seventy one (271) students with their demographic characteristics showing (Male = 194 (71.6%), and (Female = 77 (28.4%). Age ranged between 11 and 17 with Mean age of 14.1, (SD= 1.8). Participants' responded to (3) standardized self-report questionnaires. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. On the whole, four hypotheses were formulated and inferentially tested at 0.05 level of significant. Participants' responses were analysed using independent t-test, simple and multiple linear regression analysis. Results showed no significant difference between male and female on criminal intent behaviours, [t (269) = 1.051; p = .294]. This means that there is no significant difference in criminal intent between males and females student in the data set. Also, peer pressure did not predict criminal intent [R=.007, R^2=.006, F[1,269]=.015, p>0.05]. This implies that peer pressure does not appear to be a significant predictor of criminal intent. Further research is needed to investigate other potential predictors and explore the complex factors that contribute to criminal intent. However, result revealed that parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative) jointly predicted criminal intent [R = 415; R2 = .173; F (3, 267) = 18.556; p < 0.05]. This implies that the secondary school students raised in these parenting environments might be more likely to develop criminal intent patterns. Lastly, result revealed that gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative) jointly predicted criminal intent [R = 429; R^2 = .184; F (5, 265) = 11.962; p < 0.05]. The findings means that both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles significantly predict higher levels of criminal intent among secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area,

while peer pressure emerges as a strong predictor as well. Gender does not appear to play a significant role in influencing these outcomes within this context. This findings recommended the importance of guidance and counselling for parents and adolescents, to help them cope with life challenges and to build their social and emotional skills, as well as the necessity of appointing school psychologists and public health experts to help the secondary school adolescent become valuable individuals. Also the adolescent should be guided in making good friends to reduce peer pressure resulting from keeping bad friends.

Keywords: Gender Differences, Peer Pressure and Parenting Styles and Criminal Intent

Introduction

Some adolescents and youth consider a life of crime better than a regular job. Most of the time, the combination of these factors leads a person to commit crime. Greed, anger, revenge, jealousy or pride can be reasons for committing crime. Adolescents are the most essential part of any society. The horrifyingly vertical rise of crimes in recent years has turned into an issue of serious concern for the parents as well as the community all over the world. In a word, our innocent young boys and girls have become mentally and psychologically restless and impatient as a direct result of an endless uncertainty and insecurity that is engulfing them from all corners (Hasan, 2021). According to the FBI statistics, most crimes are committed by adolescents. Generally adolescence is a time of heightened vulnerability and we have to rethink adolescence as adolescence itself is changing. Nowadays adolescence begins much earlier, and it ends much later (Steinberg, 2020). In Nigeria, the involvement of adolescents and youths in criminal activities is really very alarming. Academicians and human rights activists said that unemployed youths and those dropped out of schools or colleges were mainly involved in the gangs and commit criminal activities due to lack of recreational activities, social degradation, weakening roles of the family, unlimited access to internet, lack of moral lessons in the family and the school (Ola, 2019).

Ambrose et al. (2022) described criminal intent patterns that consist of thoughts that most people have had before (e.g., considering committing a crime in times of desperation) but understand as unreasonable. However, for individuals with criminal intent patterns (commonly offenders), these thoughts are not dismissed with simple reasoning. In fact, these individuals are also believed to have other cognitive tendencies (patterns of criminal intent) that assist in the endorsement of such thoughts, as well as the execution of related actions, such as criminal acts. Although criminals are typically unaware of such erroneous and counter-productive thinking styles, these distinct patterns influence both the initiation and sustainment of antisocial behaviour. The two

lines of theory both assert that criminal behaviour is a result of free choice and a culmination of irresponsible thinking that the individual acts upon. According to (Das 2019), some examples of delinquent behaviour include stealing, theft, armed robbery, murder, assault, rape, unlawful possession of firearms, kidnapping, prostitution, drug sales and usage, tobacco usage, tax evasion, embezzlement, money laundering, bribery and corruption.

Previous research indicates that there are notable differences in how males and females process information related to criminal behaviour (Consulting & Bright, 2018), males are often socialised to exhibit more aggressive behaviours and risk-taking tendencies, which can correlate with higher rates of delinquency. In contrast, females may be socialised towards relational aggression and emotional responses, leading to different patterns of criminal intent. Studies have shown that gender influences not only the types of crimes committed but also the motivations behind these actions (Chesterton 2020). For instance, males may engage in crimes for status or thrill-seeking, while females might be more influenced by relational dynamics or emotional distress. Gender seem to have some influence on criminal intent.

Peer pressure which is considered a variable in this study could be a significant factor influencing in-school adolescents'

behaviours, including criminal intent. During secondary school years, students are particularly susceptible to peer influence as they seek acceptance and validation from their peers. Research has demonstrated that adolescents who perceive high levels of peer support for delinquent behaviour are more likely to engage in such activities themselves (Brame et al., 2021). This phenomenon can create a cycle where individuals adopt criminal intent patterns as a means of fitting in or gaining approval from their peers.

Parenting styles is another independent variable that could play a critical role in shaping an adolescent values, beliefs, and behaviours. Baumrind's typology identifies three main parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. Each style has distinct implications for child development: Authoritative Parenting: Characterized by warmth and structure; the adolescents tend to develop better self-regulation skills and moral reasoning. Authoritarian Parenting: Marked by high demands but low responsiveness; the adolescent may rebel against strict rules or internalize negative feelings. Permissive Parenting: Involves high responsiveness but low demands; the adolescents may struggle with self-discipline and boundaries (Kim & Fletcher, 2018).

A parenting style is a psychological construct representing standard strategies that parents use in their child rearing. The quality of parenting can be more essential than the

quantity of time spent with the child (Ogbebor, 2022). For instance, a parent can spend an entire afternoon with his or her child, yet the parent may be engaging in a different activity and not demonstrating enough interest towards the child. Parenting styles are the representation of how parents respond to and make demands on their children. Parenting practices are specific behaviours, while parenting styles represent broader patterns of parenting practices (Liu et al., 2019).

The interplay between gender differences, peer pressure, and parenting styles creates a complex web influencing criminal intent among secondary school students. For example, boys raised in authoritarian households may react against strict rules through delinquent behaviour when influenced by peers who endorse such actions. Similarly, girls from permissive backgrounds might struggle with identity formation under peer pressure leading them toward maladaptive coping strategies including criminal intent. It is based on this background that this research is set to investigate gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles as predictors of criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Many Nigerians have expressed worries over the recent increase in criminal activities, especially the frequency of violent crimes across the country. According to the United Nations office on drugs and crime (2021), crime is one of the human security problems confronting humanity across the world. Nations like Nigeria have been grappled with the rising incidence of homicide, armed robbery, kidnapping, drugs and human trafficking, illegal gun running and a host of others (Abdulraheem et al., 2022). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in 2021 estimated global homicides at 468,000 in 2021 and more than 36% was estimated to have occurred in Africa, 31% in the Americas, 27% in Asia, 5% in Europe and 1% in the tropical Pacific region. Africa has remained a leading continent in global crime statistics. The prevalence of violent and non-violent crimes has remained high in Nigeria. According to Africa Check, an online newspaper 2/9/2024.

The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has fuelled the crime through criminal intent mind and has increased the rate of terrorist's attacks in different parts of the country, for the nation's economy and growth (Igbini, 2020). To address the threat to national security and combat the increasing waves of crime the federal government every year starting from 2013 budget has made huge allocation to security, and the national assembly passed the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 (Ewetan, 2013). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high, and a confirmation of this is the low

ranking of Nigeria in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012). It should be worthy of note that criminality does not just happen it must start with a corrupt mind.

Despite the plethora of security measures taken to address the daunting challenges of insecurity in Nigeria, government efforts have not produced the desired positive result and hence the need to look for solutions to this menace. The conservative or traditional approaches seem to be curative rather than preventive. This therefore calls for efforts that will look at the root causes of crime, so that we stop treating symptom rather than causes. This ugly trend has been the major concern for researcher to determine what really influenced criminal intent among secondary school students. Some argue that criminal mind has been on the increase due to environment, others believe that it is genetic, and yet others viewed it in connection with the personality of the individual. Others considered different variables as what determined criminal intent of a person. But no attention has been given to peer pressure and parenting styles of the affected children. And the researcher is on the opinion that, the way secondary school students interact with their mates of different background with different home training at times can influence others and also the type of parenting styles parent used on their children can also determine the criminal intent of a child. It is on this fact that research is aimed at investigating gender differences, peer

pressure and parenting styles as predictors of Criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles as predictors of criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. Specific the study aim at (i) Determine the differences between males and females in predicting criminal intent (ii). Examine the influence of peer pressure as a predictor to criminal intent (iii) Ascertain the influence of parenting styles as a predictor to criminal intent (iv) Investigate the combined influence of gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles as predictors of criminal intent. Hypotheses were tested based on the four specific purposes of the study.

Literature Review

Literature were reviewed in relation to the present studies. Jamie et al. (2019) examined gender differences in the measurement of criminal motives. The results highlight both similarities and differences in the measurement of criminal intent, with 26% of items significantly varying between genders. Once measurement differences and similarities were taken into account, male and female probationers were just as likely to exhibit antisocial attitudes. The implications

highlight the notion that researchers cannot assume that criminal thinking assessments are gender-neutral.In Nigeria, Oluwadare and Agboola, (2021) examined gender disparity in criminal behaviour in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that preferential treatment only existed in terms of hard labour; that women were not exposed to manual labour as their male counterparts do. Also, Benson and Harbinson, (2020) examined gender differences and criminal thinking among individuals convicted of white-collar crimes. One possible explanation for the gender distribution of white-collar offending may be gender related differences in Criminal thinking styles. The paper uses the psychological inventory of criminal thinking styles (PICTS) to compare women and men convicted of white-collar type crimes on eight different thinking styles and three summary scales. The results showed that both women and men convicted of white-collar type crimes had low criminal thinking scores on the PICTS. On some styles, women scored higher than men, but the differences were small. Regression analyses found that after controlling for other factors gender predicted proactive, reactive, and general criminal thinking: on average women scored higher than men on all three scales. However, the results also showed that measures of risk and needs were stronger predictors of Criminal thinking than gender.

The focus in criminological research on the influence of delinquent peers on delinquency has led the field to almost entirely ignore the influence of conforming peers on conformity. There have been some studies that sought to examine the influence of peer pressure on criminal behaviour and thinking. Take for example, Onoyase and Ebenuwa (2018) examined the relationship among Adolescents" developmental characteristics, peer group influence and their anti-social behaviours. The findings revealed that physical, intellectual, social/emotional characteristics and peer group influence adolescents" anti-social behaviours. It was recommended that adolescents should be made to indulge in productive leisure time activities where they can dissipate their energies. Furthermore, Suleiman et al. (2023), investigated the influence of family environment and peer pressure on criminal tendencies among undergraduate students of federal university of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested using Simple Linear Regression and Multiple Regressions analysis. Simple Linear regression and multiple regression indicated that there was a positive relationship between family environment and criminal tendency (R = 0.793 = R2 = 0.542 (F (1,390) = 184.184, t = 14.260, p < .05). Further analysis revealed that peer pressure significantly influenced criminal tendency (R = 0.576 = R2 = 0.153 (F (1,390) = 24.630, t = 6.706, p < .05). Also, result of hypothesis three indicated a significant relationship between family environment

and peer pressure on criminal tendency (R = 0.835 = R2 = .610 (F (2, 389) = 106.487, t = - 5.087, p < .05). It was recommended among others that; parents should be mindful of the kind of peers their children/wards associate with because they can learn bad behaviours from them.

In order to examine the joint influence of peer pressure and parenting styles on criminal intent, Ashrafa et al. (2019) in their study on the role of parenting and peer pressure in the development of Juvenile delinquent behaviour among higher secondary school children indicated that peer pressure and parenting styles jointly predict delinquency among secondary school children. Furthermore, Ilesanmi (2020) investigated the influence of parenting styles and peer pressure on delinquent behaviour among senior secondary school students in Kaduna Metropolis. Also, correlational design was adopted and data was collected from 320 students (male =164 (51.2%); female = 156 (48.8%)) age range 14 – 19years drawn from the ten purposively selected schools with the population of 2256 in Kaduna metropolis. Data was collected using parenting style questionnaire that covers authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, and permissive parenting style. Peer Pressure Questionnaire and Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire were also used. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at the .05 levels of significance to test the four hypotheses stated for the study. Result revealed that there is a significant negative correlation r = -.188; p < .001 between authoritative parenting style and delinquent behaviour which implies that children from homes where authoritative parenting style is used are less likely to be delinquents. Authoritarian parenting style and delinquent behaviour among students strongly and positively correlate r = .504; p < .000 and laisser-faire parenting style and delinquent behaviour r = .662; p < .000 thereby strongly suggesting that children from homes where authoritarian parenting style and laisser-faire parenting style is practiced are strongly likely to be delinquents. Peer pressure was also found to strongly encourage delinquent behaviour among students r = .683; p < .000. Based on this findings it was recommended that parents should adopt the authoritative parenting style in the upbringing of their children. This should involve discussing problems with their children and setting rules that will guide the behaviour of the children. Authoritarian and permissive parenting style should be avoided as it has a significance relationship with delinquent behaviour. Students should be guided in making good friends to reduce peer pressure resulting from keeping bad friends.

Social Learning Theory and Social Control Theory

This study adopts the social learning theory (Sutherland, 1949; Akers, & Lee, 1996) and

the social control theory of Hirschi, (1961). The social learning theory posits that criminal behaviour is learned in the process of interaction within primary groups, in particular, peer groups". They argue that the learning involves learning or imbibing criminal codes and habits. In the process, if more of criminal codes than conforming codes are learnt, then such individuals are most likely to deviate from the approved social norms or laws of the society. They will eventually adopt criminal behaviour as the normative conduct. In their association with nonconformist peers they have heard and learnt more definitions favourable to deviant behaviour rather than unfavourable definitions. Such interactions produce shared understanding, norms, values and beliefs on the basis of which in most cases, individuals act contrary to the values and expectations of the larger society.

Method

Design

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey is an observational study; it is the collection of information from respondents at a single period in time using questionnaire. The study design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to compare many variables at the same. The independent variables for this study are gender, peer pressure and parenting styles while Criminal thinking is the dependent variable.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State which is located between longitude 8° 21¹ - 9° 13¹ E and latitudes 7° 35¹ - 8° 8¹ N. The area lies in the extreme Northern part of Benue State, Nigeria. It is bordered in the North by Nasarawa State, in the East by Logo LGA, in the Southeast by Buruku LGA, in the South by Tarka LGA and in the Southwest by Makurdi LGA; all in Benue State. Guma LGA extends over 2,925 Square Kilometers' lies athwart river Benue and it main tributary, river Katsina-Ala. The LGA have a population of 191,599 according to the 2006 census, and a projected population of 225,590 in 2016. The area is characterized by numerous other rivers whose basin flood at the peak of rainy season, Ortserga (2009). However, it is known that Guma LGA comprises several council wards, which include: Kaambe, Abinsi, Uvir, Saghev, Nzorov, Nyiev, Mbabai, Mbayer or Yandev, Mbawa and Mbadwen. Guma LGA and its council wards has a concentration of government and private secondary schools whose students served as the population of interest in this study.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population for this study comprised 271 male and female students from selected secondary schools within Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. Participants were selected from both

Government and Private secondary schools in the 4 major communities in the Local Government Area of Benue State: Gbajimba: Government Science and Technical College (GSTC) (268), Daudu: Mbawa Community Secondary School Daudu (321). Abinsi: Wisdom Model Secondary School Abinsi (137) and Agasha: Government secondary school (GSS) (276) making a total of 1,002 students. One school was selected in each of the major communities to represent the subset (Source: Benue State Universal Basic Education Board SUBEB: https://ubec.gov.ng/benue/). The inclusion criteria were secondary schools and their students from only the selected schools within the study area. Also those who give consent. While the exclusion criteria were secondary schools and students who are not included in the study area.

Sampling Technique

This study employed the simple random sampling technique in the collection of data from the respondents. Simple random sampling is a type of probability sampling in which the researcher randomly selects a subset of participants from a population. Each member of the selected population has an equal chance of being selected. Data is then collected from as large a percentage as possible of this random subset. In using this method, the researcher visited the selected secondary schools brief the students about the study and sought permission from them to participate in the study.

Sample Side Determination

Since the population is finite, Yamane (1967) statistical formula was used in determining the sample size of the study. The population for this study were 1,002 selected secondary school students from one (1) school each from the four (4) major towns/communities in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State.

Using Yamane formula = 286, However, only 271 copies were retuned and valid for analysis.

Instruments

i. **Peer Pressure Questionnaire (PPQ):** The questionnaire on the level of peer pressure of the youths was the subscale of the Peer Pressure and Popularity Scale developed by Palani and Mani, (2016) was used to assess the peer pressure of the respondents. This scale is made up of 30-items. The scale is scored using (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree). The total responses are summed up to produce the total score, which reflected the participants' level of peer pressure. This scale has a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .94 and 0.97 respectively. Hence, the perceived peer pressure scale is found to be valid for application. The scale indicated that the higher score reflects higher level of peer pressure and low score reflects lower level of peer pressure as

perceived by the students. The measure yielded a reliability coefficient's alpha ranging from 0.69 to 0.91 for all measures. The result of the pilot study conducted in Abuja Nigeria by (Ambrose et al., 2022) showed that the items on Peer Pressure Scale yielded a Cronbach alpha of .778. Therefore, all the items were included in their main study. This means that the scale is reliable to be used on the population of secondary school students. It was also validated using secondary school students by Aja (2023) in Benue State, Makurdi Nigeria, the scale has a Guttman split-half reliability coefficient of .679 and internal consistency of .803 Cronbach's Alpha.

ii. **Parental Authority Questionnaire:** Developed by John and Buri (1991). Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number of the 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your mother. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your mother during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. We are looking for your overall impression regarding each statement. Be sure not to omit any items.1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Description: The PAQ is designed to measure parental authority, or disciplinary practices, from the point of view of the child (of any age). The PAQ has three subscales: Permissive (P: items 1, 6, 10, 13, 14, 17, 19, 21, 24 and 28), Authoritarian (A: items 2, 3,7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 25, 26 and 29), and Authoritative/flexible (F: items 4, 5, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22,23, 27, and 30). Mother and father forms of the assessment are identical except for references to gender. It has a reliability of .89. Scoring: The PAQ is scored easily by summing the individual items to comprise the subscale scores. Scores on each subscale range from 10 to 50. The instrument was validated in Nigeria in a study by Omoluabi (2022) which obtained a concurrent validity coefficient of .73 with internal consistency reliability estimate alpha coefficient of .86. The scale together yielded a Cronbach alpha of .772.

iii. **Criminal Thinking Scale:** This scale was originally developed by Walters (1998) which aimed at measuring the thinking patterns of criminals. The original scale contained 36 items with response categories ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. The original scale reported a Cronbach reliability coefficient of .78. Scoring: Items shown below from this assessment are re-grouped by scales, and response categories are 1=Strongly

Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. Scores for each scale are calculated as follows (and no more than half of the items for any scale can be missing). 1. Find and reverse the scoring for reflected items (i.e., those designated with ®) by subtracting the response value (1 to 5) for this item from "6", (e.g., if the response is "2", the revised score is "4" [i.e., 6-2=4]) 2. Sum the response values of all non-missing items for each scale, 3. Divide the sum of item responses by the number of items included (yielding an average), 4. Multiply this average by 10 (in order to rescale the score so it ranges from 10 to 50) (e.g., an average response of "2.6" for a scale therefore becomes a score of "26"). It was piloted and validated in Nigeria by Ambrose et al. (2022). The result of the Pilot study yielded a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .845. This generated Cronbach alpha was high and so was deemed useful for the study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the instruments for this study. Fifty copies of the questionnaire were administered to students of government model secondary school Makurdi which was not included in the study population but it has the same characteristics as the study population. The researcher used the introduction letter from the Department of Psychology, Nasarawa State University Keffi as means of identification. The researchers also introduced them self's and briefed them about the study and seek permission from them to collect data. All items must go through the Cristobal, Flavian, and Guinaliu, (2007)' criterion for returning items on the scale which states that an item must correlate at least .30. Reliability Report The piloted Peer Pressure Questionnaire (PPQ) containing 26-items yielded an output Item-Total Correlation ranging from .38 to .48 and Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency of α=.85.Similarly, the piloted Parental Authority Scale comprising of 27-items yielded an output of Item-Total Correlation ranged from .29 to .086 with items internal consistency of Cronbach's Alpha α=.82. Lastly the piloted Criminal Thinking Scale comprising of 30 items yielded an output of Item-Total Correlation ranged from .53 to .46 and items internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha of α=.83. This implies that the reliability and validity of the instrument are good.

Procedure

The researchers personally visited the selected secondary schools where data was collected. In each of the selected schools visited, the researchers first and foremost introduced them self to the management, briefed them about the study and sought permission from them to collect data from their students. When granted permission, the researcher then visited the students class by

class, introduced them self and also sought their consent to participate in the study. Those who agree to participate were administered a copy of questionnaire which there filled and returned to the researcher on the spot and some at a particular period of time.The data for this study was analysed using inferential statistics involving the simple linear regression analysis which was used to test hypotheses two, multiple regression which was used in testing hypothesis three and four while the independent t-test was used to analyse hypothesis one via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)v 25.

Result

Hypothesis 1:This hypothesis stated that there will be a significant differences between males and females on criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using independent t-test and the result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Independent t-test Showing Difference between males and females on Criminal Intent

DV	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p
Criminal Thinking	Male	194	71.3557	7.37186	.52927			
						1.051	269	.294
	Female	77	70.2987	7.70691	.87828			

Result in table 1 shows that there was no significant gender difference on criminal intent behaviours among selected secondary schools in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, [t (269) = 1.051; p = .294]. Based on this result, hypothesis one which stated that 'there will be a significant differences between males and females on criminal intent behaviours among adolescents' in selected secondary schools in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria' was therefore not supported. This means that there is no significant difference in criminal intent between males and females in the data set. Gender does not appear to have a meaningful impact on the criminal intent scores within this sample.

Hypothesis 2: This hypothesis stated that peer pressure will significantly predict criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. This hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression analysis and the result is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Simple linear regression analysis showing peer pressure as a predictor of criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State

Variable	R	R^2	df	F	.	t	Sig.
Constant	.007	.006	1,269	.015		24.714	.000
Peer Pressure					.007	.122	.903

Dependent Variable:Criminal Intent

The result presented in table 2 above revealed no significant influence of peer pressure as a predictor to criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State [R=.007, R^2=.006, F[1,269]=.015, p>.05]. Based on this result, hypothesis two was not accepted. This implies that peer pressure does not appear to be a significant predictor of criminal intent in this particular analysis. Further research is needed to investigate other potential predictors and explore the complex factors that contribute to criminal intent.

Hypothesis 3: This hypothesis stated that parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative/flexible) will jointly predict criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression and the result is presented in table 3 below

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing parenting styles as predictors of criminal intentamong selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

DV	Predictor(s)	R	R^2	F	df	β	t	p
Criminal thinking	Constant	.415	.173	18.556**	3, 267		16.107	.000
	Permissive					.218	3.387	.001
	Authoritarian					.191	2.890	.004
	Authoritative					.116	1.867	.063

** p < 0.005

Result in table 3 revealed that parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative) jointly predicted criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria [R = 415; R^2 = .173; F (3, 267) = 18.556; p < 0.05]. Hypothesis two was therefore accepted. Furthermore, Observation of coefficient of determination shows that parenting styles significantly accounted for just 17.3% of the variance in criminal intent can be explained by the three parenting styles. This implies that the secondary school students raised in these parenting environments might be more likely to develop criminal intent patterns.

On the independent basis, the result shows that permissive parenting style [β = .218, t = 3.387; p = .001]. This implies that permissive parenting could lead to an absence of discipline, boundaries, and structure, which may contribute to deviant behaviour and criminal intent. On authoritarian parenting style result revealed that [β = .191, t = 2.890; p <.004]. This result implies that authoritarian parenting which is more rigid, may lead to resentment, rebellion, and poor decision-making, which could also contribute to criminal intent. Lastly on authoritative parenting, result showed that [β = .116, t = 1.867; p >0.05]. Although it shows a trend toward significance, does not appear to have a strong enough relationship with criminal intent in this specific study, likely due to it's relatively more balanced and positive approach to parenting.

Hypothesis 4: This hypothesis stated that there will be a significant joint influence of gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles in predicting of criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression and the result is presented in table 4 below

Table 4: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing joint influence of parenting styles as predictors of criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

DV	Predictor(s)	R	R^2	F	df	β	t	p
Criminal Intent	Constant	.429	.184	11.962**	5, 265		14.161	.000
	Gender					-.057	-1.031	.304
	Peer Pressure					-.093	-1.623	106
	Permissive					.224	3.488	.001
	Authoritarian					.197	2.990	.003
	Authoritative					.132	2.103	.036

** p < 0.005

Result in table 4 revealed that gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative) jointly predicted criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria [R = 429; R^2 = .184; F (5, 265) = 11.962; p < 0.05]. Based on this result the hypothesis is accepted. The findings means that both permissive, Authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles significantly predict higher levels of criminal intent among secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area, while peer pressure emerges as a negative predictor as well. Gender does not appear to play a significant role in influencing these outcomes within this context. The R^2 value [0.184] means that 18.4% of the variance in criminal intent is explained by the combination of gender, peer pressure, and parenting styles. While this still leaves a

significant portion unexplained, it indicates a moderate amount of explanatory power. The result is significant meaning that at least one of the predictors is a statistically significant contributor to explaining criminal intent in this model.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, results were discussed in relation to the formulated and tested hypothesis. As a result, the study aims is to investigate the gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles as predictors of criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria.

As hypothesized that there will be a significant differences between males and females students on criminal intent behaviours in selected secondary schools in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was tested using independent t-test and the result showed no significant gender difference on the issue of criminal intent behaviours among selected secondary schools students. Therefore, hypothesis one was not supported. The probable reason could be due to similar role or engagement between male and female. This result is not in line with Jamie et al. (2019) that examined gender differences in the measurement of criminal intent. Their results highlight both similarities and differences in the measurement of criminal intent, with 26% of items significantly varying between genders. Once measurement differences and similarities were taken into account, male and female probationers were just as likely to exhibit antisocial attitudes. Finding also disagrees with the result by Benson and Harbinson, (2020) their results showed that both women and men convicted of white-collar type crimes had low criminal intent scores. On some styles, women scored higher than men, but the differences were small. Regression analyses found that after controlling for other factors gender predicted proactive, reactive, and general criminal intent: on average women scored higher than men on all three scales. Also not in support, is the study by Oluwadare and Agboola, (2021) whose result showed that male criminality became the most significant issue in the literary discussion of crime, which gave female criminality little or no attention. In the same view some research has shown that the average level of criminal intent and criminogenic cognitions is higher among males than females.

The second hypothesis in this study revealed no significant influence of peer pressure as a predictor to criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. This may stem from contextual factors unique to the area, individual differences among students that enhance resilience against negative influences, alternative factors contributing more significantly to criminal thought

processes, developmental stages affecting susceptibility to peer influence, and effective educational interventions present in their environment. This finding is not consistent with the study by Onoyase and Ebenuwa (2018) whose findings revealed that peer group influence adolescents" anti-social behaviours. Again the finding of this hypothesis is not in support with the study by Suleiman et al. (2023) whose result revealed that peer pressure significantly influenced criminal tendency.

The third hypothesis which states that parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative/flexible) will jointly predict criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria was therefore supported. This implies that the secondary school students raised in these parenting environments might be more likely to develop criminal intent patterns. This could be explained as the way parents interact with their children—whether through supportiveness or strictness can significantly shape their cognitive frameworks regarding morality and legality. This finding is consistent with the study by Ashrafa et al. (2019) whose finding indicated that parenting styles predicted delinquency among secondary school children. Also in agreement is the study by Ilesanmi, (2020) whose result revealed a significant but negative correlation between authoritative parenting style and delinquent behaviour

which implies that children from homes where authoritative parenting style is used are less likely to be delinquents.

The fourth hypothesis stated that there will be a significant joint influence of gender differences, peer pressure and parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative) in predicting criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. Based on the analysis the hypothesis was accepted. The findings means that both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles significantly predict higher levels of criminal intent among secondary school students, while peer pressure emerges as a strong predictor as well. Gender does not appear to play a significant role in influencing these outcomes within this context.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that; no significant gender difference was found in the prediction of criminal intent behaviours among selected secondary schools in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. This means that there is no significant difference in criminal intent between males and females in the data set. Also, peer pressure does not appear to be a significant predictor of criminal intent in this particular analysis. Further research is needed to investigate other potential predictors and explore the

complex factors that contribute to criminal intent. Furthermore, parenting styles (permissive, authoritarian and authoritative) jointly predicted criminal intent among selected secondary school students in Guma Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. This can be explained as secondary school students raised in these parenting environments might be more likely to develop criminal intent patterns. Lastly, it was concluded that both permissive and authoritarian parenting styles significantly predict higher levels of criminal intent among secondary school students, while peer pressure emerges as a strong predictor as well. Gender does not appear to play a significant role in influencing these outcomes within this context.

Recommendations

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

i.   Since there was no gender differences in prediction criminal intent behaviours and pressure did not appear to be a significant predictor of criminal intent. It was recommended that further research might be needed to explore other factors influencing criminal intent, such as socioeconomic background, or community engagement.

ii.   Parenting styles was found to predict criminal intent of the secondary school students. It was recommended that

intervention programs focused on educating parents about the impact of different parenting styles, encouraging authoritative practices that are balanced with warmth and discipline should be established.

iii.   However, the hypothesis that parenting styles predict criminal intent is supported, particularly by permissive and authoritarian parenting styles, which have a significant positive relationship with criminal intent. It was recommended that interventions aiming to reduce criminal intent in adolescents could benefit from promoting parenting styles that combine appropriate levels of control with warmth and support (i.e., authoritative parenting).

iv.   A significant joint influence was found. This findings recommended the importance of guidance and counselling for parents and adolescents, to help them cope with life challenges and to build their social and emotional skills, as well as the necessity of appointing school psychologists and public health experts to help the secondary school adolescent become valuable individuals. Also the adolescent should be guided in making good friends to reduce peer pressure resulting from keeping bad friends.

Implications, Contributions and Suggestions for Further Studies

i.   Understanding that permissive and authoritarian parenting styles are associated with higher levels of criminal intent can inform educational policies and intervention programs aimed at parents and guardians within Guma Local Government Area and similar contexts.

ii.   Schools could implement workshops or seminars focused on effective parenting strategies, emphasizing the importance of balanced approaches such as authoritative parenting which appears to have less impact on fostering criminal thoughts compared to permissive or authoritarian styles.

iii. Given that only about 41% of variance is explained by these three types of parenting styles, further research could explore additional variables such as socio-economic status, child parent relations, drug use, peer influences, community environment, or individual psychological factors like personality traits and social support contributing to criminal intent among adolescents.

iv.   It's crucial to consider cultural factors when interpreting these results since perceptions and practices surrounding parenting can vary widely across different cultures and communities.

v.   In conclusion, this analysis highlights critical relationships between specific parenting styles and adolescent behaviour regarding criminal thought processes, suggesting areas for targeted interventions aimed at improving outcomes for the adolescent in Guma, Benue State and Nigeria at large.

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