



PATTERNS OF GRAFFITI BEHAVIOUR AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Graffiti is one of the salient and less recognized deviant behaviours in schools and among the research scholars, particularly in Nigeria. In view of this, this study investigated the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. The study followed the descriptive survey design; using a proportionate sampling technique to select 390 respondents. The instrument used was a self-designed "Patterns of Graffiti Behaviour Questionnaire" with Cronbach reliability coefficient of .81. About 74 copies of the questionnaire were not returned; while 126 copies were wrongly filled; hence, 200 copies of the questionnaire were included in data analysis. Percentage, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were the data analyses tools employed in this study. The results showed that inscription on the school toilet walls, drawing sex organ on toilet walls and drawing of a female's breast on school wall to communicate sexual harassment are the topmost patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis. The hypotheses tested indicated that (gender, age and family; $p = .10; .08$ and $.16 > .05$) have no significant influence on the patterns of graffiti behaviour among the respondents. Sequel to the outcome of this research, relevant recommendations were provided.

Keywords: Patterns of graffiti behaviour, in-school adolescents, Ilorin metropolis.

INTRODUCTION

The term "graffiti" originated from the Italian word "graffito" which simply means "any form of disgusting writing, inscriptions, sketches on a specific platform, doors or surface of private or public places, toilets, parks, vehicles or commuters, usually bearing some sexual, gangs' slogan or political stuff, proposition, a lover's vow or irritating words" (Chiluwa, 2008; Olofin, 2013). It is an "informal or illegal symbols, carvings, scratching, paintings or drawings deliberately done by an individual on any physical space" (Environmental Campaigns Limited, 2008). Graffiti is the act of drawing on people's properties or public spaces without the consent of the owners. In this regard, graffiti is an antisocial behaviour in which its prevalence varies from society to society but attracts some penalties across social strata (White, 2001). This is because it is considered as defacement and vandalism behaviour punishable by the law.

Graffiti is an act or behaviour commonly found among the youth and many secondary school adolescents do perpetrate the act. Graffiti, in a general context, does not portray deviancy or



delinquency in entirety; it has been acknowledged as a creative art for its certain form of “uniqueness in terms of visual and language manifestation with a holistic and special aesthetics” (Kan, 2001). However, graffiti might become destructive or anti-social when it is being used to cause conflict among individuals, to deface beautiful spaces, when it used for political aggrandizement, to publicise gangsters’ motives/activities or to unreasonably challenge the school authority on a specific decision. That is, any form of graffiti working against the achievement of the primary goals and objectives of the educational system could be referred to as anti-social behaviour. This is why Kan (2001) described graffiti in high schools as an unnecessary and indirect disruption of the overall educational system that distracts students from vigorous pursuit of their primary academic goals.

Students often create graffiti with different tools such as marker, paint, pens, pencils, chalk, charcoal, knives and other sharp objects. It is thus a design of human and a type of communication that can be inferred from, examined and understood by the target audience. Graffiti has been viewed as an unwelcome resentment or a sign of revolt against the constituted authorities and a complete sign of destructive behaviour that must be checkmated (Nwoye, 2003). It is regarded as an alternative form of personal and interpersonal communication that is free of ordinary social limitations that prevent people from voicing out their thoughts and a source of information about significant social issues and problems (Abel & Buckley, 2000; Yieke, 2003).

Idowu, Esere and Ajiboye (2017) observed that graffiti is an anti-social behaviour among youngsters that has received less recognition in the research parlance, particularly in Nigeria. Graffiti is a behavioural attempt to create recognition in the society. In Nigeria, graffiti exists in artistic form among students, but mostly with the use of chalks and charcoal, as a substitute for the spray paints (Achi, 2010). In this new age, despite the advent of modern vehicles or other transportation means, computers and more, wall surfaces and doors are still being used by the students to produce graffiti. Drax (2002) stated that students majorly draw graffiti on toilet, bathroom and classroom walls, as channels to repress and communicate their feelings, views and belief meant to inform the readers, persuading them towards a particular point of view, influence them towards more positive goals, warn about impending danger and integrate all concerned for collective involvement in developmental effort.

According to Morva (2016), graffiti may take different patterns; it may take the form of written language whose authorship usually remains anonymous. The behaviour might be characterised by aggression towards people and animals, fire setting and theft. Secondary school students use it as a communication channel when they feel that other means to express themselves have been blocked by the authority in charge. Graffiti also manifests through the hip-hop music or ‘b-boying’; gang uses graffiti to demarcate territory as an indicator of gang-related activities (Mwangi, Gathumbi, & Adelheid, 2015).

Graffiti include symbols drawn or written on public spaces (walls or doors of buildings, classroom desk and chair, trains, or buses). It may also come in forms of tag, which contains a highly stylish typography or numbers and words that are typically illegible by non-members of the group. Public graffiti (written or inscribing on toilet walls, doors or open space) is the most visible and prolific form of graffiti among youngsters, which may express some basic social, occultic or political messages (Gomez, 2003). Different patterns of graffiti exist in Nigeria but, they are mostly practiced by adolescents in secondary schools.

Graffiti in secondary schools could help to explain some behaviour manifested by the students as they try to express their needs, wishes and grievances, and such impact on their learning. Graffiti written by students in classrooms that depicts violence and use vulgar language could give a negative impression to the teachers about that particular class. This could mar teaching and learning process as the teacher would not feel safe and would have no confidence in the class (Phillips & Wallbangan, 2004). Students opposing the school directives may find it difficult to express their mind openly but convey their grievances through graffiti for fear of negative result from confronting the authorities. In making



graffiti, students may use codes that are exclusively understood by the writer and the target audience. From a survey finding, Teeyan and Dryburgh (2000) discovered that the main reasons for graffiti behaviour among adolescents were peer influence, self-gratification and practical uses.

Graffiti undermined the safety of people because of the impression that spaces and properties are not respected and adequately cared for; so it can lead to fear and anxiety in the society (Sutton, Cherney, & White, 2008). Perceptions of graffiti as vandalism and its impact on feelings of safety are based on its association with more severe types of offending. According to Bandaranaike (2001), anxiety about crime being out of control has been attributed to the existence of graffiti in the society and its presence to be an indication of a general decline in the quality of public space which may result in more serious crimes.

Traditionally, it is assumed that graffiti makers come from socially disadvantaged background. However, research evidence might not be in support of this. The London Assembly Graffiti Investigative Committee (2001) found that the socioeconomic background of an individual is largely irrelevant in determining whether a person becomes a graffiti maker or not. Age on the other hand, was revealed in the finding as a key variable in tagging; mainly perpetrated by young males between the age of 11 and 16 years; while the more advanced pieces were produced by older individuals. This above discourse prompts the researcher to examine the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Graffiti has been viewed as a significant aged-long cultural phenomenon. Despite their significance, they are also repulsive; being perceived as a mere illegal act of destruction and misbehaviour that heightened the general fear of crime and results in damage to public or private properties (DeNotto, 2014; El-Nashar & Nayef, 2016). However, students still produce graffiti on walls or doors despite the several networks that the digital world offers them to express their opinions freely (Matthews, Speers, & Ball, 2012). This phenomenon is visible on almost every feasible surface in secondary schools' parks, chalk board, doors and restrooms.

Graffiti value is a complex social issue that has propelled different and conflicting perspectives between sections of the society. In many secondary schools, students are usually found of producing graffiti that are visible on almost every conceivable surface, like corridors of offices and buildings, bathroom and toilet walls, in/on vehicles and other properties. It is not uncommon to find graffiti nuisance on the classrooms' chalkboard, teachers' furniture, students' desks and chairs, dormitories and dining halls in the school environment. According to Crystal (2007), one of the negative effects of graffiti is that it can make an environment become nuisance. It is often stressed that its presence contributes to a general sense of immorality and intense fear of crime.

Previous studies on patterns of graffiti are scarce, particularly, in Nigeria. For instance, Achi (2010) study focused on pragma-semiotic analysis of graffiti of Kaduna Polytechnic students. Plenty and Sundell (2015) examined graffiti as an antecedent to future behaviour during adolescence. Sampling teachers' opinion, Idowu, Esere and Ajiboye's (2017) study was also on social media as well as graffiti on behaviour of secondary school students in Osun State. Many of the previous studies were silent on the patterns or forms of graffiti behaviour among secondary school students and none of the studies was carried out in Ilorin metropolis. This indicates that, perhaps, few studies exist on graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents. The researchers thus deem it essential to fill the research gap uncovered by prior researchers by determining the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. Therefore, relevant research question that focused on the main objective of this study is:

- What are the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State?



The following hypotheses support the main research question of the study:

- There is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.
- There is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on age.
- There is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on family type.

METHOD

Research Model

Using a quantitative research approach, this study determined the patterns of graffiti behaviour among the target respondents. Therefore, the choice of descriptive research design of the survey type made it possible for the researcher to elicit required information, through the use of questionnaire, from the sampled respondents on the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

Study Population and Sample

The population for this study comprises all secondary school students in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State which was 195,717 students (Kwara State Ministry of Education, 2019). Based on the population size, a sample of 384 (Research Advisor, 2006) was selected using proportionate sampling technique. Proportional sampling technique was used to select schools in Ilorin South, Ilorin West and Ilorin East in ratio 3:4:3 based on the number of schools in each Local Government Area. However, for even distribution across the selected schools, the researcher increased the sample size to 390; thus, random sampling was used to select 39 respondents from the 10 selected secondary schools in Ilorin metropolis.

Data Collection Tool

The main instrument used for this study was tagged “Patterns of Graffiti Behaviour Questionnaire” (PGBQ). It is a self-designed questionnaire, which consists of sections A and B. Section A focused on the demographic data of the respondents; while section B contained twenty (20) items on patterns of graffiti behaviour. Participants responded to the items using the four point Likert-type rating scales format of: Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The instrument has a Cronbach reliability coefficient .81 and this adjudged it reliable for the study.

Based on the scoring pattern of the questionnaire, the average mean score is 2.50 (4+3+2+1/4), which was considered as the benchmark for determining the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents. An average mean score of 2.50 and above was rated as the topmost patterns of graffiti behaviour; while an average mean score less than 2.50 was rated undermost patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained was analysed using frequency and percentage for the demographic data section. T-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics were used to compare the mean of different groups as stipulated in the hypotheses. The t-test statistics was used to compare the means of two groups; while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to compare mean scores of three or more groups. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.



RESULTS

Originally, 390 copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents, but due to an unforeseen circumstance about 74 copies were not returned and 126 copies of the questionnaire were invalid for data analysis because they were wrongly filled by the respondents. Hence, the results of this study were processed on the remaining 200 valid copies of the questionnaire. Therefore, out of the 200 recognised participants, 70 (35.0%) were males; while 130 (65.0%) were females. This shows that the majority of respondents were females. Based on respondents' age, 62 (31.0%) were between 10-14 years, 100 (50.0%) were between 15-19 years; while 38 (19.0%) were between 20 years and above. This shows that the majority of respondents were between in their mid-adolescents. With respect to family type, 126 (63.0%) of the respondents were from monogamous family; while 74 (37.0%) were from polygamous family. This shows that the more of the respondents were from monogamous family.

Research Questions: What are the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 1. Mean and rank order on the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents.

N	To the best of my knowledge, graffiti behaviour occur among secondary students in form of:	Mean	Rank
16	inscription on the school toilet walls	3.42	1 st
12	drawing sex organ on toilet walls	3.21	2 nd
20	drawing of a lady's breast on school wall to communicate sexual harassment	3.13	3 rd
8	making symbols and drawings on public spaces so as to spread messages to a larger audience	3.12	4 th
5	decorating the street with posters that express students' grievances	3.10	5 th
10	etching of names into desks	3.05	6 th
1	writing of a schematic signature on a wall	2.93	7 th
17	writing on placards to engage in a struggle for a better social order	2.88	8 th
16	writing teachers' character on the classroom's chalk board	2.77	9 th
7	repetition of nicknames or words of rebellion on public walls	2.77	9 th
3	telling a tale or stating a question on a wall	2.77	9 th
4	presenting a political ideology through placard	2.75	12 th
13	inscription of horrific drawing (such as human skull) to symbolise gang activities	2.71	13 th
9	inscription of horrific drawing (such as human skull) to symbolise gang activities	2.70	14 th
18	writing of poetry on dull public spaces	2.68	15 th
11	posting of one's picture on school walls to receive admiration from other students	2.68	15 th
19	writing of insulting words on class doors	2.68	15 th
2	drawing symbols on walls as a way to display power over rival gangs	2.67	18 th
15	drawing of artificial symbol on a government properties to express their wishes	2.65	19 th
14	painting of colour that symbolises the gang in which the students belong	2.56	20 th

The Table 1 shows that all the 20 items have mean scores that are above the average mean value of 2.50. This implies that all items on patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents were all agreed upon by the respondents. However, items 6 with a mean score of 3.42, 12 with a mean score of 3.21 and 20 with a mean score of 3.12 were ranked as the top three, that is, 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively. The items confirmed "inscription on the school toilet walls", "drawing sex organ on toilet walls" and "drawing a lady's breast on school wall to communicate sexual harassment". Based on the topmost identified items and the fact that all the items have above 2.50 mean values, it is inferred that there are numerous patterns of graffiti behaviour engaged in by in-school adolescents but the most common are inscription on the school toilet walls, drawing sex organ on toilet walls and drawing a lady's breast on school wall to communicate sexual harassment.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Table 2 presents the calculated t-value of .06 with a corresponding p-value of .10 which is greater at .05 alpha level. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents based on gender; hence, the hypothesis was retained. Therefore, male and female in-school adolescents are similar in their patterns of graffiti behaviour in Ilorin metropolis.



Table 2. Mean, standard deviation, and t-test comparing patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Gender	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	df	Cal. t	p-value
Male	70	57.20	9.765	198	.06	.10
Female	130	57.12	8.970			

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on age.

Table 3. ANOVA comparing patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on age

Sources	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	Cal. F	p-value
Between Group	427.440	2	213.720	2.55	.08
Within Group	16532.693	197	83.919		
Total	16959.500	199			

Table 3 presents the calculated F-ratio of 2.55 with a corresponding p-value of .08, which is lesser at .05 alpha level. This implies that there is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents based on age; hence, the hypothesis is retained. Therefore, age has no influence in the patterns of graffiti behaviour exhibit by in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on family type.

Table 4. Mean, standard deviation, and t-test comparing patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on family type

Family type	n	Mean	Std.Dev.	df	Cal. t	p-value
Monogamous	126	56.45	9.427	198	1.40	.16
Polygamous	74	58.34	8.824			

Table 4 presents the calculated t-value of 1.40 with a corresponding p-value of .16 which is greater at .05 alpha level. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents based on family type; hence, the hypothesis was retained. Therefore, family background is not a determinant of students' involvement in various forms of graffiti behaviour.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The findings of the study revealed that inscription on the school toilet walls, drawing sex organ on toilet walls and drawing of a lady's breast on school wall to communicate sexual harassment as the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This implies that graffiti acts are more rampant among in-school adolescents in different secondary school in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State and it boils down to risky sexual behaviour. Inscription (writing of anything) on the school toilet walls, classroom board or store doors is one of the ways in-school adolescent express graffiti behaviour in the school environment. This can be easily seen or observed when one gets to the toilet; classroom or stores of different schools. However, many teachers or other school staff hardly pays attention to this behaviour exhibited by students. Sometimes, the student could have rub-off whatever signs or symbol placed on the classroom chalkboard before the teacher's arrival or removes it from where it can be easily sighted by those in authority. The findings was in line with study of Mwangi (2012) who reported that, in most secondary schools, there had been persistent writing of graffiti on the walls of classrooms, toilets, libraries, dormitories and laboratories. Students sometimes used various codes and complex graffiti to communicate among themselves and



understanding these codes could help to understand what transpires amongst them and their behavioural intents.

It was also discovered that drawing sexual organ on toilet walls is another patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This, perhaps, is one of the ways by which in-school adolescents expressed their sexual feeling about the opposite sex or to oppress, intimidate or mock a colleague that had offended them or failed to conform to their idiosyncrasies. Such oppressive or intimidating behaviour could lead to conflict, emotional torture and hatred among the students. In turn, this may affect their overall educational achievement. The findings concurs with the study of Bruner and Kelso (2000) who found that male restrooms are full of different image of private parts and vulgar words on sex while female graffiti was less sexually open but more relationship oriented.

Furthermore, the outcome of the study indicated the drawing of a lady's breast on school wall to communicate sexual harassment as another pattern of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This implies that graffiti behaviour in schools may also be an evidence of sexual harassment by young people generating a permissive culture, in which case such acts are rarely viewed as misconducts to warrant punishment. Also, when such image is drawn and students are making references or raising different comments on it in the classrooms, it may affect (psychologically and behaviourally) students who potential victims of such harassment. The findings is in tandem with the research by Idowu, Esere and Ajiboye (2017) which revealed that students' graffiti behaviour influenced them negatively because it is used to harass their colleagues, to deface private and public properties, and it aids their involvement bad gangs.

Hypothesis one revealed that male and female in-school adolescents are similar in their patterns of graffiti behaviour in Ilorin metropolis. This finding disagrees with the study of Halsey and Young (2002) which indicated a significant difference between male and female graffiti patterns of behaviour. The difference in the findings of the study might be that the respondents who participate in the study of Halsey and Young (2002) are tertiary institution students.

Hypothesis two revealed that no significant difference exists among in-school adolescents of different age group on the patterns of graffiti behaviour in Ilorin metropolis. The implication of this finding is that both young and old in-school adolescents are similar in their expression of patterns of graffiti behaviour they engaged in. This finding disagrees with the study of Smart (2004) who found that students within the age range 13 and 16 years engaged in graffiti significantly more often than other students between the age range of 20 years and above. The difference in the findings of the study might be that the respondents who participated in the study of Smart (2004) are foreign students.

Hypothesis three revealed that there was no significant difference in the patterns of graffiti behaviour among in-school adolescents in Ilorin metropolis based on family type. This means that respondents from different family background are similar in their expression of patterns of graffiti they involved in. This finding disagrees with the study of Price and Kunz (2003) which indicated that children from divorced homes have higher rates of graffiti behaviour compared to children from intact homes. The different in the findings of the study might be that the respondents who participated in the study of Price and Kunz (2003) are foreign students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the findings of the study:

1. The school authority should make rules and regulations to control students' inscription of images or symbols on the wall, in order to minimize students' graffiti behaviour in the school environment.



2. School counsellors, with the help of other school staff, should help the students in using graffiti patterns for positive creativity in order to harness their innate potentials for academic success rather than for destructive behaviours.
3. School counsellors should help the students through individual or group counselling, using cognitive restructuring counselling techniques to change the negative perception of students in the use of graffiti. Thereby, helping the students to be creative rather than being destructive to the school environment.
4. Parents should orientate their children on positive exhibition of their sexual behaviour and monitor their children activity in order to control drawing of sexual organ on the school toilet walls.
5. The teachers should guide students observed with graffiti behaviour on how they could make use of it positively rather than using it to cause nuisance in the school environment. This in future will help students with artistic potentials to become proficient in such profession.
6. The school environmental staff in charge of sanitation should always do regular checking and report any forms of inscription on the toilet wall to the school authority in order to reduce negative patterns of graffiti behaviour among students.

Limitation of the Study

The findings of the study are limited to the adolescents in Nigeria because graffiti behaviours practices are cultural bound and vary from country to country. For instance, large inscription on motor vehicle and political graffiti type are common among the American youth compared to youth in the Africa. The study is limited to the context of deviant behaviours among youngsters and does not portray graffiti in the literature and artistic contexts. The outcomes of this study is also limited to the adolescents in secondary schools as graffiti behaviours among students of higher institutions of learning might be different from how teenagers would display theirs.

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