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Moderating Role of Peer Relationship in Neighborhood Disorder and Tendency to Commit Crime among Undergraduates

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Abstract

The study investigated the moderating role of peer relationship in neighborhood disorder and tendency to commit crime among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Participants from the study were randomly selected undergraduates who volunteered and were allowed to fill a Google form, three instruments were used for data collection: criminal behaviour scale, Neighborhood disorder scale and index of peer pressure. The study adopted moderated predictive design and analysis was carried out using process macro of the SPSS version 30.0. Results revealed that neighborhood disorder positively and significantly predicted tendency to commit crime, peer relationship positively and significantly predicted tendency to commit crime and peer relationship significantly and positively moderated the relationship between neighborhood disorder and tendency to commit crime among undergraduates. It was recommended that government should ensure that all persons who commit crimes are brought to book, as this will reduce the tendency to engage in crimes.

Keywords: *Peer Relationship, Neighbourhood Disorder, Tendency to Commit Crime Undergraduates*

Introduction

Since ancient times, societies all over the world have been working to reduce crime, and Nigeria is no exception (Pieszko, 2016). Based on personal experience, many young people, particularly undergraduates, appear to have committed some form of crime, including human trafficking, burglary, kidnapping, robbery, and more recently, various forms of online or digital crimes. Violence against intimate partners has also been mentioned by other academics (Dabaghi et al., 2023). Since crime has significant societal costs, it is a top political priority in many industrialized and developing nations (McCollister et al., 2010; In Pak & Gannon, 2023). In fact, it might not be incorrect to say unequivocally that there can be no civilization without crime. Numerous elements linked to criminal activity have been examined by earlier scholars. Although the goal of

all these programs was to lower crime, it seems that the proportion of crimes being committed is increasing. Regretfully, it seems that these researchers are missing the opportunity to look into how peer relationships affect the association between neighborhood disorder and criminal propensity among Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka undergraduates.

Varied authors have varied definitions of crime, such as any action that violates the law (Opeyemi Oyelade, 2019a). According to other academics, crime is an offense against a society's values. This implies that any action taken by a person, whether or not it is done with the aim to harm another person, is illegal. As a result, the term "crime" comes from the Latin word "crimen" meaning "offence" (Onyeneke & Karam). This backs up the earlier claim that actions taken against a person or society could be considered crimes. In this sense, compared to actual crime, the propensity to commit crime seems to adopt a purposeful stance. Take the idea that might result in the actual crime, for example. Nevertheless, the notion of the tendency to commit crime has not yet been widely agreed upon in the literature. The author is interested in the psychological position that makes committing a crime appealing to undergraduates in the context of the current study. Thus, an undergraduate's inclination to commit crimes is their predisposition to do so.

Two main approaches to the study of crime were identified by the authors: the economics of crime in the 1980s and mental illness or a negative attitude (Becker, 1968). Although the Becker's approach asserts that psychopathy and mental illness are the causes of crime, a more contemporary perspective suggests that socioeconomic circumstances are the cause of crime. These days, studies on crime and criminal behavior continue to favor the socioeconomic and demographic approach. According to studies, there are a number of negative effects of crime, including anxiety, depression, fear, insecurity, political instability, economic depression, underdevelopment, a decline in the educational system, class differences, and illicit drug use (Sugiharti et al., 2023; Källmen et al., 2023; Thompson et al., 2022; Gunuboh, 2023). Because, regardless of its institutions, crime happens in every society at every stage of its evolution (Pieszko, 2016). It is imperative that researchers take the time to investigate potential solutions. A variety of crimes can occur, including cybercrime, human trafficking, auto theft, robbery, domestic abuse, and kidnapping (Dabaghi et al., 2023). Crime and poverty were found to be significantly positively correlated by researchers (Shaw & Mikay 1942, in Graif et al., 2014). Peer pressure has been linked to criminal behavior, according to some research (Nurul Fitriah Alias et al 2024; Mohd Suhaimi Mohamad et al 2021).

Informing peer relationships, children frequently make decisions about social exclusions and inclusions (Willen & Rutland, 2011), and peer relationships are situations in which one person influences or is influenced by one or more people of similar age (Laursen & Veenstra, 2021). Peer relationships are defined by many scholars as interpersonal relationships that are formed and developed through the process of communication between individuals at similar levels of psychological development (Brown, 2009). According to scholars, peer relationships are crucial for adolescent growth, but not all teenagers are able to build on these positive relationships to the same extent (Brown & Larson 2009). According to studies, teenagers are involved in peer connections, and this correlation may be widespread (Veenstra, 2021). Peer impact, which can be linked to experiences with friends and affiliates, therefore happens when a person does or thinks during the time of relationship with peers (Laursen, 2018, p. 447).

According to Thompson et al. (2022) and Vargas et al. (2020), neighborhood disorder is one of the contextual elements of criminal studies. According to Freedman and Woods (2013), other researchers have studied neighborhood features using a variety of terms, including neighborhood gangs, neighborhood circumstances, and neighborhood effects. Unfortunately, none of these research were able to characterize neighborhood disorder. Each made the best effort to describe the idea. When a neighborhood's features negatively impact its residents and have the potential to violate their fundamental human rights, it is referred to as a neighborhood disorder. According to the authors (Graif et al., 2014), there are two different kinds of neighborhoods: urban and rural. Consequently, the degree of criminal intent may vary among these groups. (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2001) assert that the outward manifestations of deterioration subtly but effectively communicate information about the impacted community. Neighborhood disorder has several negative effects, such as increased crime, poverty, insecurity, adolescent motherhood, major depression, and psychosis (Vargas et al 2020; Thompson et al 2022; Gunuboh, 2023; Pak & Gannon, 2023; Graif et al 2014).

Last but not least, each civilization may have a distinct kind of crime that symbolises its own economic traits. Thus, these offenses are the consequence of ideas that might then result in actions that society considers criminal. Undergraduate influence, however, has the potential to encourage one to convert these illegal ideas into pro-self-behaviors. However, an extremely chaotic neighborhood may set off an undergraduate's inclination to turn criminal ideas into actions. Therefore, the goal of this study is to determine whether each notion, both separately and together, influences the propensity of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka undergraduates to commit crimes.

Statement of the Problem

Numerous research looked at how different samples' peer pressure affected criminal behavior. Yeng and Mohama, for example, looked at vulnerable adolescents engaged in deviant behaviors, while others looked at peer pressure and influence on deviant behaviors (Omogbo), the motivation behind minor offenses among adolescents (Alias, Aziz), the difficulties surrounding delinquent behaviors among adolescents (Pandit Arundhati), peer relationships and delinquent behaviors (Gifford-Smith), the relationship between peer pressure and socioeconomic status and cyber-crime (Habeeb Adewuyi), the media and peer influence as indicators of deviant behaviors (Babatunde), peer pressure on crime (Suhaimi Mohd), and broken families and criminal activities (Germarie Salvana). The majority of these prior researchers concentrated on participants who were adolescents, while others examined economic aspects that could contribute to criminal activity. However, leaving the moderating role peer relationship on tendency to commit crime among undergraduates. Similar to this, other studies looked at how a neighborhood affects crime (Thompson et al., 2022), how parental poverty affects juvenile crime (Gunuboh, 2023), how gang membership and criminal propensity are related (Dustmann et al., 2023), and how an increase in crime rates affects mental health (Pak and Gannon, 2023). Studies on the moderating effect of peer pressure on the association between undergraduates' propensity to commit crimes and neighborhood disturbance seem to lack empirical support. These information gaps serve as the impetus for investigating how peer pressure influences the association between neighborhood disorder and criminal propensity among Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, undergraduate students.

Empirical Review Peer Relationship and Tendency to Commit Crime

Yuet Yeng & Sehu Mohamad, (2023) investigated how teenagers view juvenile delinquency and how peer pressure and influence impact delinquent behavior. Five male teenagers from Sekolah Tunas Bakti in Kuala Lumpur participated in a qualitative case study to achieve the study's goals. The results show that, in comparison to peer pressure, peer influence has a greater impact on adolescent criminality. Furthermore, some teenagers claimed to have concurrently experienced peer pressure and influence. In a related study, (Omogho Esiri, 2016) examined if peer pressure is a recurring phenomenon in illegal or deviant behavior, particularly when it comes to adolescents, as investigated. Ultimately, it comes to the conclusion that there is peer pressure to fit in, and that this leads to delinquent subcultures adopting criminal norms and behaviors. Similarly, Kim & Fletcher, (2018) used quasi-experimental variation in peer exposure to investigate the impact of delinquent peers on an individual's criminal activities. The findings indicate that a 5 percent rise in the number of peers who commit crimes will result in a 3-percentage point increase in the risk that an individual will commit crimes.

According to Adewuyi et al., (2024) peer pressure, socioeconomic position, gender differences, and undergraduate students' propensity for cybercrime were all investigated in their study. A descriptive survey design of the correlational type was used to achieve this goal. A multi-stage sampling technique was also employed in this investigation. The study's sample consisted of three hundred undergraduate students. Reliable instruments were used to collect the data. Peer pressure, socioeconomic status, and cybercrime inclinations scales. According to the findings, men undergraduates exhibited a higher propensity for cybercrime than their female counterparts. Cybercrime inclinations were significantly correlated with gender, socioeconomic status, and peer pressure. The biggest factor was peer pressure, which was followed by gender and socioeconomic position. Similarly, Blessing, (n.d.) examined why many secondary school pupils appear to be acting in ways that go against both social norms and the standards set by the school. Deviant behavior has repercussions that impact not just the children but also other education stakeholders, including parents, instructors, the government, school principals, and the general public.

Therefore, this study looked at peer and media impact as predictors of deviant behavior in Southwest Nigerian secondary school pupils. 31,144 male and female pupils from all public and private secondary schools in Southwest Nigeria were included in the survey-type descriptive research design. A multistage sampling process was used to choose a sample of 1,777 pupils. Data for this study were gathered using a self-designed tool called the 'Media and Peer Influence as Correlates of Deviant Behavior' Questionnaire (MPICDBQ). Following expert validation, the instrument underwent a reliability test using Cronbach Alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.82. At the 0.05 level of significance, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test two hypotheses. The study's conclusions showed a strong correlation between deviant behavior in secondary school students and peer and media impact. Furthermore, Ferrel et al., (n.d.) study explore the propensity for criminal activity among young people from dysfunctional households in Cateel, Davao Oriental. It looks at the social, cognitive, and behavioral elements that contribute to this inclination. 52 participants, ages 15 to 29, were specifically selected from these families in Cateel, Davao Oriental. Using a questionnaire modified from an earlier study, the study sought to assess their background and propensity for crime. With 51.92% of the sample being male and 48.08% being female, the gender distribution is almost balanced, with the majority of responders being between the ages of 21 and 25. With an overall mean score of 3.53, the data shows a low degree of criminal tendency for behavioral, cognitive, and social factors. Furthermore, a p-value

of less than 0.05 indicates that there is no significant difference in variances between and within age and gender groups across the behavior, cognitive, and social interaction components. The results, which reveal no discernible variation in the propensity to commit a crime between young people of different ages and genders, imply that crime prevention initiatives can be created to be inclusive of all.

Mohamad et al., (2021) investigate how peer pressure affects Malaysian male prisoners' inclinations to commit street crimes. 282 prisoners participated in surveys conducted at four prisons in Peninsular Malaysia using a mixed mode research methodology. At Kajang Prison, only 20 prisoners were chosen for in-depth interviews. According to the findings, 60.3 percent of inmates committed crimes prior to their arrest and incarceration, and 72 percent of inmates acknowledged having a partner engaging in street crime.

Empirical Review of Neighbourhood Disorder and Tendency to Commit Crime

Thompson et al., (2022) examined the relationship between clinically diagnosed MD and neighborhood crime in Sweden's immigrant and non-immigrant populations. First- and second-generation immigrants living in Sweden as well as non-immigrants born between 1960 and 1996 were included in a retrospective cohort research. Between January 1, 2012, and December 31, 2015, they investigated the possible impact of neighborhood crime on the risks of major depression using connected Swedish national registers, geospatial analysis, and multilevel logistic regression models. Findings: In general, people who lived in neighborhoods with high crime rates were more likely to have MD than people who did not. After controlling for potential confounders, there was a significant interaction by immigrant status; the odds of MD among people with non-immigrant origins were more significantly related with increases in neighborhood violence. Increases in neighborhood crime did not appear to have an impact on either male or female immigrants who were born outside of Sweden.

In a related study, Gunuboh (2023) investigated how neighborhood factors and parental poverty affected the rates of adolescent criminality. To test for several hypotheses, it uses two different regression models: the negative binomial regression model and the OLS linear regression model. While the negative binomial regression model is used to forecast the link between the dependents and independent variables, the OLS is used to investigate the correlational relationship between the dependent and independent variables. According to the first regression (OLS) data, there is a significant positive correlation between the rates of juvenile violent crime and parental poverty; a county's juvenile crime rate will rise by approximately 0.53% for every percentage increase in parental poverty. Similarly, the incidence rate ratio of the negative binomial regression model (1st NBRM) shows that, when all other factors are held constant, the number of juvenile arrests for violent crimes is likely to increase by a factor of 1.48 if the percentage of families in a county living in poverty rises by one unit.

Similarly, Dustmann et al (2023) applied identification strategy, which involved randomly assigning refugees to various municipalities in Denmark between 1986 and 1998. Results reveal compelling evidence that gang crime rates in the neighborhood where they were assigned raise the likelihood that boys will commit crimes before the age of 19, and that gang crime (but not other crime) increases the likelihood that girls will become teenage mothers. Additionally, there are

negative and enduring consequences associated with greater gang crime rates: women report lower wages and more welfare benefit claims between the ages of 19 and 28, while men report far higher levels of inactivity.

In another study, Ricard et al., (2024) research identifies risk variables for understanding antisocial behavior across systems, from individuals to communities. Surveys and data from the Census (N = 478; Northeast sample) were subjected to latent profile analysis. Elevated Personality Risk, Elevated Family and Structural Risk, Elevated Personality, Family, and Neighborhood Risk, and Elevated Neighborhood and Structural Risk were the five profiles that best suited the problem. Profiles from criminal record, interview, and questionnaire-based results were compared. Risky conduct and a diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder were most strongly associated with the Elevated Personality, Family, and Neighborhood Risk profile. There was the highest correlation between the number of crimes and the Elevated Neighborhood and Structural Risk profile. These findings highlight significant similarities and differences between types of antisocial conduct and clarify patterns of co-occurring risk within individuals and across systems.

Theoretical Framework

Rational choice theory will serve as the theoretical framework. This theory of rational choice theory has the capacity to link up the independent and moderator variable (neighborhood disorder and peer relationship) to the dependent variable (tendency to commit crime). Rational choice theory gives a comprehensive explanation which provides a framework for understanding crime. According to the Rational Choice theory, before an individual commit crime such individual must analyze the possible outcome. Such an individual must have understood why and what the outcome of the crime would look like. Finally, the individual must have understood the benefit which the behaviour would bring to him/her and possible loss when caught. In the end crime is assumed to take a cognitive process before it would be carried out. In other words, no crime could be an accident. Overall, most crimes are pro-self and not pro-social, and it arises as a result of both economic and social deprivations.

Hypotheses

1. Peer relationship will positively and significantly predict tendency to commit crime among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
2. Neighborhood disorder will positively and significantly predict tendency to commit crime among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
3. Peer pressure will positively and significantly moderate the relationship between neighborhood disorder and tendency to commit crime among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Method

A total number of two hundred and ninety-seven (297) undergraduates from the department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka served as participants for the study. The study adopted a multi stage sampling method. Firstly, a random selection was conducted to select the faculty for the study. Secondly another random selection was conducted to select the department for the study. Finally, participants were randomly selected from the department of psychology. Age range between 17 to 43 years, with mean age of 21.96 and standard deviation 3.180. The participants were from different levels; two participants were from year 1, 80 participants were 200 level

students, 97 undergraduates were from 300 level, and 116 participants were from 400 level students. The participants also included: Christians (291), Muslims (1) and others (3). Three Instruments were deployed for data collection: crime behavior rating scale (CBRS), index of peer relationship scale, perceived neighborhood disorder scale (PNDS), and crime behavior rating scale (CBRS). The crime behaviour rating scale (CBRS) was developed and validated by Animasahun (2011). It consists of thirty-three (33) items scale, these thirty-three (33) items scale were used to measure tendency to commit crime. It is designed to measure behaviors and characteristics that can easily predispose an individual to commit crime. The 33 items were directly scored. The scoring was done on five (5) point scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree" indicating the extent to which the items apply to the participants. Sample items of the (CBRS) include statements such as "my behaviors often go contrary to acceptable norms", "I can find any means to make money to survive". Animasahun (2011) reported internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach Alpha) for CBRS 0.94 and the validity was obtained by inter items correlation ranged from 0.56 to 0.88; convergent validity of 0.86 and discriminant validity of 0.02. In this study, the scale was subjected to pilot testing with two hundred and ninety-seven (297) undergraduates in the Department of psychology, and a Cronbach alpha's coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. The index of peer relation scale was developed by Hudson (1982). It is a twenty-five items scale constructed to measure the way you feel about the people you work with, play, or associate with most of the time, your peer group. It has a 5-point response format ranging from rarely of the time =1, a little of the time =2, some of the time =3, a good number of the time =4, and most of the time =5. The instrument has concurrent validity of .84 as was determined by Hudson (1982), and Anumba (1995) confirmed Cronbach alpha of .94 and validity of .62 by correlating IPR with Hare self esteem scale. The reliability test of 295 participants from the current study revealed a Cronbach alpha of .72 (see appendix).The Perceived Neighborhood Disorder Scale (PNDS) was developed by Ross & Mirowsky (1999), is a 15-items 4-point Likert-type scale consisting of two sub-scales: Social Disorder (n=9 items) and Physical Disorder/Decay (n=6 items). Each item was rated on 4-point Likert type rating scale ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 4 "strongly agree".

Procedure

The researchers created the topic, and instruments for data collection were put into a Google form which was used for online administration to the study participants. Students in the psychology department of the faculty of social sciences were given the opportunity to participate in the study. Therefore, the Google Forms link was made available to all course representatives through their WhatsApp accounts. Furthermore, each Course Representative was asked to share the link of the Google Form to members on their WhatsApp platforms. Participants were informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time and to give their permission. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants. A total of two hundred and ninety-seven (297) google forms were received, and were further subjected to data analysis.

Design and statistics

The design for this study was moderated predictive design. Statistics used for data analysis was Process Macro Model 1 using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30.0.

Table 1: Correlation of Neighborhood disorder and Tendency to commit crime: Peer Pressure

| S/N | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Neighborhood disorder | 1 | | |
| 2. Peer Relationship | .151** | 1 | |
| 3. Tendency to Commit Crime | .374** | .366** | 1 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table2: Model Summary of Neighborhood disorder and Tendency to commit crime: Peer Relationship

| R | R-square | F | df1 | df2 | P |
|-------|----------|---------|--------|----------|-------|
| .5043 | .2543 | 33.0874 | 3.0000 | 292.0000 | .0000 |

Table 2 above revealed the results of neighbourhood disorder and tendency to commit crime: moderation role of peer relationship among undergraduates. Overall, the model result is explained by 25.43% changes in R-Square, $f(3,292) = 33.0874$, $P < .0001$.

Table 3: Moderation table of Neighborhood disorder on Tendency to Commit Crime: Role of Peer Relationship

| | B.coefficient | t | P | LLCL | ULCL | Se |
|---------------|---------------|---------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| Constant | 69.9694 | 77.0205 | .0000 | 68.1814 | 71.7573 | .9085 |
| Neighborhood | 1.2542 | 6.5390 | .0000 | .8767 | 1.6316 | .1918 |
| Peer Pressure | .9677 | 6.0624 | .0000 | .6535 | 1.2818 | .1596 |
| Int-1 | .0856 | 2.5380 | .0117 | .0192 | .1520 | .0337 |

Similarly, the table further showed the predictive strength of each of the independent variable, and the moderating variable and the interaction effects. Specifically, neighborhood disorder was not significant at ($B=1.2542$, $P .001$), peer pressure was significant at $B =.9677$, $P < .001$, and moderation effect was ($B=.0856$, $P < .001$).

Table 4: Conditional effects of the focal predictor at various levels of moderation.

| Peer Relationship | Effect | Se | t | P | LLCI | ULCI |
|-------------------|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|--------|
| -16.9186 | -.1940 | .5878 | -3301 | .7816 | -1.3510 | 9629 |
| -.5186 | 1.2098 | .1912 | 6.3257 | .0000 | .8334 | 1.5862 |
| 24.0814 | 3.3155 | .8488 | 3.9062 | .0001 | 1.6450 | 4.9860 |

Furthermore, Table 4 showed the conditional effects predictor at the various levels of moderation. At lowest level of peer pressure (-16.9186) the effect on the tendency to commit crime was lowest (-.1940), at average level of peer pressure (-.5186) the effect on tendency to commit crime was (1.2098), and at highest level of peer relationship (24.0814), the effect on tendency to commit crime was high 3.3155.

Conclusion

The study looked at how peer relationships might moderate the association between undergraduates' propensity to commit and neighborhood disorder. One of the hypotheses was confirmed. This demonstrated that peer relationships among undergraduates were a positive and substantial predictor of their propensity to commit crimes. The current study's findings, however, are consistent with those of some previous research. Yuet Yeng & Sehu Mohamad, (2023) for example, found a positive and significant correlation between the tendency to commit crime and peer relationships.

Other researchers like (Adewuyi et al., 2024), have also found that peer relationships are positively and significantly correlated with criminal codes, that an increase in the number of peers positively and significantly raises the level of crimes, and that cybercrime and peer pressure are positively and significantly correlated. These results support the idea that peers follow a distinct set of rules for behavior that each person finds difficult to adjust to. The codes that the person was exposed to at home can change significantly from this one. As a result, people among their peers appear to depart from social norms, which can result in illegal behavior. The researcher's focus in this study is the propensity to commit crimes. This supports the idea that criminal activity must go through a number of steps before it is viewed as deviating from the usual. The notion of rational choice could provide an explanation for this observation. First, the rational decision presupposes that everyone possesses the ability to reason logically. This implies that the undergraduate has full responsibility for the decision to join a peer group. Therefore, before announcing their decision to join the group as a full member, the undergraduate must have carefully analyzed the peer's actions. The advantages and potential expenses that one might incur based on their membership are taken into account. According to (Kim & Fletcher, 2018), there may be a chance that the amount of crime in the neighborhood will rise in proportion to the number of peers. Therefore, the rational choice theory offers a nuanced interpretation of the first hypothesis's findings.

In the current investigation, hypothesis two was confirmed. Previous researchers (Ricard et al., 2024; Freeland, 2023; Dustman et al., 2023) supported this position. It is evident from the results of the current study that the characteristics of a neighborhood have an impact on its residents. For example, a related study discovered that people who were not immigrants were more likely to commit crimes (Gunboh, 2023). It's possible that the status connects nonimmigrant individuals to a peer group that instantly adopts new norms and adopts behaviors that ensure their survival in society. Nonetheless, the idea might be a logical choice for explaining the current result findings. Crime is thought to be the result of logical thought, according to rational choice theory. Consequently, it presumes that people think out every facet of a criminal act before committing it. This is known as logical reasoning since it is believed that every individual has the ability to consider every crime before choosing to do it. Moreover, self-interest may serve as a motivation for this logical thinking. This suggests that all crimes are motivated by self-interest, which could be interpreted as selfish (pro self). Personal gain results from this self-interest. As a result, the person aims to satisfy personal needs or conversations. Last but not least, a person cannot commit a crime without complete knowledge of it. Such details could include potential gains, losses, and the best time to carry out the crime in the offender's private life. In the current situation, if a person is able to take into account all the essential losses and profits connected to the particular crime, a disordered neighborhood may encourage the tendency to commit crimes.

Similarly, hypothesis three showed that the peer connection status had a positive and substantial moderating influence on the association between undergraduates' tendency to commit crimes and neighborhood disorder. There is no empirical evidence to support this conclusion. However, theoretical evidence suggests that based on potential markers of criminal behavior, moderation may be expected. As a result, the rational choice theory maintains that criminal behavior results from an individual's own thoughts. The neighborhood's current condition in terms of how safe or dangerous it is to live there may be the main topic of discussion. Let's take a glance at the area. In a disorderly neighborhood, for example, one can either feel calm or anxious. Anxiety will rise as leading to health challenges, the severity may increase, but more undergraduates may think about engaging in criminal activity through gangs or peer networks that view a deviant name since they are aware of how criminals are handled. In a similar vein, a peer connection that accepts a norm that deviates from the norm would increase the neighborhood's crime rate. This might be because more college students are thinking about committing crimes. This might be the case because the area fosters an environment that encourages crime and allows defaulters to go unpunished.

Lastly, it has been demonstrated that peer relationships significantly and favorably moderate the association between undergraduates' propensity to commit crimes and neighborhood disorder. This suggests that people's propensity to commit crimes is likely to increase as long as peer relationships in a disordered neighborhood grow.

Limitations of the study

The present study was limited to the undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra state. As such the choice of university was considered a limitation. Also, literature linking the interaction effect of the moderation of peer relationship and the existing relationship between neighborhood disorder and tendency to commit crime was not available. It was recommended that government should be more active in enforcing laws that will safe guide the society, and School management should create more academic associations that will keep the undergraduates more engaged in academic activities.

Conclusion

Every society constantly struggles with particular kinds of crime that are unique to that society. Every culture has some level of crime. Peer relationships and neighborhood instability will continue to be the primary causes of criminal behavior in the collegiate setting.

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