

META-THEORY'S PERSPECTIVE OF FUNCTIONALIST VIEW ON DEVIANCE IN SCHOOLS: PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE OF NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

AWWALU MUHAMMAD INUWA

Department of Education
Usmanu Danfodiyo University, P.M.B. 2346, Sokoto
E-mail: yphiloawwalu@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This paper is on Meta theory's perspective of functionalist view on deviance in schools: Prospect for the future of Nigerian schools. Sociologists of education explore almost all social problems in schools, of which many are manifestation of societal behaviours, among which are deviant act (anti social behaviour). The paper uses Meta theoretical perception to study the functionalist idea of deviance in Nigerian schools. Single sociological theory has fail to yield good result; therefore meta theory stands a better chance as it is the amalgam of two or more theories in the study of one social problem. The paper adopted Meta theory on the functionalist view of deviance as it relates to Nigerian schools. The Meta theoretical perception of functionalist view on deviance in schools is highlighted. Among which deviance function to promote the unification of values by revisiting the strength of social rules and its dysfunction causes treat to school authority, and the prospect is that deviance are view from multiple dimensions, therefore, resolved to adopt various strategies to curtail deviance problems. Among the recommendation emanating from Meta theory are; the social gap and social stratification that exist in society should by no means influence school activities as this frustrate some students to stray, and teachers should desist from labeling students with negative names, because such attitude helps in promoting deviant acts and negative self-fulfillment prophecy among students.

Introduction

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) state that, school environment should be a place where the inculcation of good conduct and teaching of National values take place. The policy is certain that the nation's ideologies and aims of education will be actualized in the schooling environment. Undoubtedly yes, but social factors accompanied with societal problems have manifested in schools. This is as a result of

the influence of family and society on school, certainly this cannot be divorced, as the school is a society in miniature. Some of the social problems emanating from societal influences are: general antisocial behaviors, cultism, student's unrest, bully, and nuisance. These and others pose social challenges to educational process in schools. Perhaps this attracts the conscience of sociologists of education and professional educationist to be precise. Sociologist of education explores and examines the causes as well as solutions to these problems of deviance in Nigerian schools. This paper adopted sociological Meta theory because single theory cannot provide a lasting panacea to the problem of deviance in schools. Due to the above fact, Meta theory could be applicable as a second order theory that involves the application of various theories of sociology of education to the study of a particular social phenomenon. This creditable quality remains to sociology of education as in the field of sociology, because it owns the power of applying various methods, logics, theories of sociology of education to the social problem of educational institutions. This view is strongly supported by the positive statement of August Comte (1798-1857) who dubbed sociology as the "queen" of all social sciences. Adler and Adler (2001, P.1) opined that by this statement Comte means that:

Sociology represented the most fully developed social scientific perspectives at the apex of all the others since in many respects; it combines elements of the other disciplines.

Because humans are highly unpredictable and have pattern behaviours, sociological methodology, mostly Meta theory is the means by which social Philosophers attempt to solve this dilemma. Here, Meta theory carries a matching pedagogy for the studies of social problems in schools. This theory provides the chances to verify to what extent deviant behaviour paradoxically emanates from various social setting and militate against social order and social conformity in schools.

Conceptualization of Deviance

Deviance is a social terminology, a labeled and coin name for people who refuse to conform to societal rules embodied in cultural norms or organize patterned behaviour agreed upon by a particular society. Ogunbameru and Rotimi (2006) opine that, deviance behaviour violates the standard of conduct of a group or society. The term deviance suggests, acts, strange behaviour of people interested in pursuing unusual and strange actions in a particular group of people. In the view of Hughes and Kroehler (2008, P.134)

Deviance is behaviour that a considerable number of people in a society view as reprehensible and beyond the limits of tolerance. In most cases it is both negatively

valued and provokes hostile reactions. Deviance does not exist independently of norms, without norms, and without the application of norms in interpreting behaviour, there is no deviance.

Conceptualization of deviance varies from time to time, place to place, culture to culture and group to group. For instance in many culture of the world consumed alcohol carries various stand in school setting, in some part of the world it is socially accepted while to other it is a social crime and a deviant behaviour as well, for this reason no culture or social settings encourages what is deviant. There is no universal yard stick for the definition and recognition of deviant act, but the simple generalization is that there is an acceptable consensus that, deviance is the violation of a recognized societal law or accepted way of doing things. Meighan (2004: 318) opined that:

Particular behaviour is deviant because it is defined as such by groups in society, particularly by those groups who have some power to establish that their definition carry weight.

This shows that it is a socially constructed term used to refer to unwanted and strange behaviour in a group.

Functionalists View on Deviance

The functions of school in society has positive connotation according to the functionalist sociologists, Meta-theory's view here is, to examine the justification and the stand of functionalists in respect to deviance in schools. Inuwa (2008) posits that, the school is built to help the individual to develop all his or her innate talents and should assist him or her in developing the consciousness of the society that he or she is part of (the home, school, city and the principles of humanity in the world). Schools in Nigeria are to function toward promoting discipline and inculcation of values, but social vices are also alarming which are indiscipline and deviation from the values. Functionalist argue that both conformity and deviation are functional to social setting, therefore this assertion is subject to examination using second - order theory to study the nature, causes and solution of deviance in schools.

Functions of Deviance Behaviour to school authority in Nigeria

The manifested deviant act makes the school authority to reawaken group affection by improving on social bound, creating protection and preserving norms and values:

- a. This is by rewarding accepted behaviour and punishing the contrary. Deviant act forces people to revisit social and conventional norms of group, by drawing their attention to what is the value of the group. In the case of schools, they marshal themselves to protect and preserve existing laws and make staff and student to rededicate themselves to social control (Stark, 2004).
- b. Deviance presence in school or classroom helps the teacher to strengthen rules and develop close relationship with students for proper monitoring.

With the identification of deviance in schools, the authority will organize disciplinary committee and act against its future occurrence. Deviant act helps teachers and school authority to teach moral behaviour by providing examples of what is desirably good to the teaching exercise in all society (Anuforo, 2007).

Dysfunctions of Deviant in Nigeria schools

Manifestation of deviance in school is a threat to school social order, therefore, making it difficult and unpredictable for the authority to know the direction of the groups and sub- groups in schools. Within students, teachers and people in society, deviance causes confusion about norms and values, confusion about what is right and wrong. Here, the varieties of social standards compete with one another causing tension among different sub-authority of the schooling environment, society and stakeholders (Stark, 2004).

Hughes and Kroehler (2008), describe the school social setting as being built on trust and for conception of societal heritage and ideology. Deviancy undermines trust, all sub-groups and groups of deviance social relationship are based on some coded behaviour and when actions are undermined, an unpredicted social order is thrown into disarray. This condition affects all Nigerian schools, especially tertiary institutions. All campuses today faces problems of cheating in examination and it exist in secondary schools.

Deviance is affectionately bound it attracts and stimulates more deviant act into other students or groups of people. These problems pose challenges in schools; as a result high rate of indiscipline and competitive acts of cultism are at its peak in schools (stark, 2004).

Elements of Deviant Behaviours in Nigerian Schools

1. Crime and delinquency are attitude of breaking law, misbehaviour engaged by young children. This act attracts severe punishment, and equally courses school unrest (Fadeiye, 2005).

2. Anti-social behaviour refers to some unwanted activities of deviant youths which involve beating of teacher, nuisance, truancy, bully, theft, gangsterism, and cultism. These acts cause harm and unrest to school authority. Lal, Lal and Achilles, (1993) in Adegoke(2003) postulates that, a News paper reports that at least 20 killings in two years in Nigeria has been blame to be the activities of dozens of cult groups in campuses, and this is now spreading to secondary schools. Many other deviant activities are also promoted by groups and cult who are of rival groups, leading to gang fight, rapes, extortions and assaults.

The identified elements of deviance in schools are due to complexity of the nature of school environment. However, there are both primary and secondary deviation, the primary deviation is when one strays from a group; differentiate his or her activities from that of the normal as a result of choice, interest and influences. This is under choice theory. Secondary deviance on the other hand is when people, teachers, or parents labeled person as thief, wicked, stubborn, arrogant, weak, dull. These labeling results to an action, that student will embark to prove the labeled name and become deviant. This is in line with the theory of self fulfilling prophecy (Haralambos, Holborn & Heald, 2008).

Conceptualization of Meta theory

The entire structures of sociological theories were developed for the interest of clarifying difficulties in social phenomenon. No sociological theory claim orthodoxy in explaining social factors to the barest satisfaction. By implication looking at social situation in a second manner, will help the situation of this context. Sociological Meta- theorizing explains the second order account of theory or theories. This can also be second-order theory of theories. In the application of meta-theory, there need to be an analogy by which the relationship of theories for social phenomenon is found interrelated, so long as it is seen as social factor in social settings. Ritzer (2008) postulates that, among the most recent developments in sociological theory is, the growth of mass interest in sociological Meta-theorizing. Meta- theorists are concerned with the systematic study of the underlying structure of sociological theories as they logically work out solutions to problems. The essence of Meta - analysis in the field of sociology and sociology of education is to have a reflexive study of the discipline. Various sociologists, not only Meta- theorists do analyse situation for proper clarification. As a reflexive study of the underlying structure of sociology and sociology of education in its totality that includes its various components. A Meta-method is an effort to synthesize sociological methods. Ritzer (2008) had tried to categorized varieties of meta- theorizing as follows:

- a. Meta-theorizing as a means of attaining a deeper understanding of theory; this is done to produce more understanding on a particular theory. Perhaps, this consists of the study of theories, by theorists and intellectuals.

- b. Meta-theorizing as a prelude to theory development, entails the prior study or initiation of a conception of the premises of a theory. Thus, it is the study of extant theory in order to produce new sociological theory. This is equally a perspective that overarches parts of sociological theory. The Meta theorizing in this work was used to study the position of functionalist with respect to the function of deviance and its application to Nigerian schools.

Meta theory's Reconciliation of Functionalist view on Deviance

What is perhaps distinctive in Meta theory is the attempt to formulate correlation with an applicable bearing to social life here, there and elsewhere. Sociological Meta-theory studies the functionalists' view of deviance in different ways, ranging from a prelude of theory to a wider extent of generalization. This is not to create conflicting stand but to open room for theoretical linking, leaping, bridging and integrating, for extension and understanding of social facts.

Therefore, Prelude of theory is by means of having prerequisite and features of various theories in an amalgam form to create new theory, these build up ideas, tools and concepts and positives generalization of theoretical perception (Ritzer, 2008).

- a. Functionalist like Durkheim (1858-1917) in Schaefer (2005) believes that deviant has both negative and positive consequences for society and indeed the school. Meta theory exclusively identifies the function of deviance in respect to functional school of thought. This is the function and dysfunction, the later helps to acknowledge the position and value of society in school, while the former stand to negate the effort of social rules in society.
- b. Meta theory reconciles strain theory fact, that deviant can be as a result of a person struggling to meet social status, to fulfill gap and acquire position or recognition.
- c. To Meta theory the control theory depend on imagination and this effect behaviour by means of;
- Attachment strength of student which influences the conforming of student to be deviant depending on the group student accidentally finds him or herself.
 - Meta theory reconcile that the opportunist, in structural functionalism argues that where chances are open to person it determine his or her

opportunities in life it might be advantage or disadvantaged social opportunity.

- Evolvement of student in a legitimate or illegitimate activities influences social behaviour of students. This theory is equally by chance and interest of student.
- Believe theoretical chances of students should make them believe that respect is worth practicing and the vices are worthless, this help to promote conformity or restrains in school.

As a result of the analysis by Meta theory approach toward deviance in Nigerian schools. Deviant should be viewed in a different form before it can be understood. But the most important question is what determines deviant act? What determines whether a person's actions should be seen as eccentric, creative on deviant? Meighan (2004) argues that, the factors that results to deviant behaviour are from the home and environments these consist of both micro and macro factors. Meta theory sees deviant acts as been emanating from:

- The micro factors this result in interpreting student intimacy in school to each other by means of interaction and symbolic communication.
- On the other hand, the macro take of issue related to institutional influence on behaviour, reflecting its status to functional application of micro actors to student's actions.

Deviance takes series of labeling (labeling theory point of view), and the cultural norms and values make up the moral code of conduct considering the constructionist theory. This is a systematic application of recognized symbol to ascertain behaviour to be "good" or "bad", "right" or "wrong".

Possible Prospects Emanating From Meta theory

The problems of deviance in Nigerian schools should be detached from a single factor, but be attached to multiple factors, that is why the used of Meta theory to Identify possible solutions will perhaps help to cut across some theories of sociology of education . Some prospects could therefore be as follows:

1. Meta theory had revealed that deviance should be viewed from various perception of sociology of education in Nigerian schools i.e. by means of

prelude of theories, considering facts, elements, feature and tools of the cause of deviance before generalization in schools.

2. The social gap is school and society ignores the status of the deviance and in trying to equate and move up to standard of recognition. Meta theory reconciles strain theory by identifying its micro factor having effect on macro status of school.
3. Meta theory identify function of deviance, resulting from control theory, feature of attachment to other group, chances to life expectancy, commitment and stray belief. With these identified factors as to how deviance is uniformly operating by means of the collection of various theories, the above comes out with Meta theorizing on the function of deviance in schools, so as to proffer lasting solution. This is by studying deviance epistemologically from various perspectives.

Conclusion

Meta-theory studies of functionalists' view of deviance in Nigerian schools have revealed multiple factors resulting to deviancy in schools. Sociologists of education uses Meta-theory, or second order theory has unveiled relatively hidden truths on the causes, functions, and solutions to deviance in Nigeria schools. This study has help to provide sociologists of education, educationists and parents the chances to have a broader perception on the causes of the deviant acts in school, by drawing inspirations from different sociological perspectives, as well as remedies to deviance from meta-theorizing revelation, approaches and reconciliation methods in this study.

Recommendation

1. School authority should desist from promoting social gap in school, Reward and punishment of any kind, should be base on merit. This will help to minimize social gap and prevent deviance, base on strain theory and conflict perception.
2. Considering the revelation of control theory deviance can be minimize in school by committing students fully in school activities, attaching them to groups, open their horizon of imagination positively and believing in good companies. These will go along way to prevent micro and symbolic causes of deviant in school and make student be functional
3. Because labeling of students as good or bad influences behaviour, therefore Nigerian teachers should desist from using "name" which carries negative inclination on students and pupils. This will prevent macro and secondary cause of deviant and as well stop negative self fulfillment prophecy.
4. All deviant acts that are displayed in school should be noted, recorded, captured and be conceptualized, to help the categorization of the action into

- one theory or the other, by doing this a stated solution will be proffered base on the identified nature of the deviant act, attached to a particular theory.
5. The class teacher, subject-teacher and school Guidance and Counselor should help the students socially, academically and personally to achieve a sense of self-direction, self-understanding, mental balance and social conformity. By means of close monitoring and regular supervision, these will enable them to maximize and adjustment to school, home and societal rules.
 6. Referral services should be provided for students and, parents in order to strengthen association and interaction. Functionally, this will help to strengthen social bound between the school and community.

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