

## **Role of Social Control and Self-Control on Criminal Behaviour Tendency among Politicians in Enugu State**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined role of social control and self-control on criminal behaviour tendency among Politicians in Enugu State. A total of 108 Politicians, comprising 65 males and 43 females, between the age range of 25 and 55 years, with mean age of 28. 3 years and standard deviation (SD) of 6.3, were randomly drawn using convenience sampling technique from the members of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) State convention venues in Enugu metropolis, Enugu State. Three sets of instruments were used in this study: Social Control Scale validated for use in Nigeria by Ngwu (2015); Self-control Scale validated for use in Nigeria by Olufaye (2017); and Criminal Behaviour Scale validated for use in Nigeria by Ekwu (2016). The design for this study was cross-sectional survey, while two-way analysis of variance statistics was used to analyze data. The result of the study showed that social control did not play a significant role on criminal behaviour tendency among politicians in Enugu State [ $F(1,104) = 2.72, p < .05$ ]. Self-control also did not play a significant role on criminal behaviour tendency among politicians in Enugu State [ $F(1,104) = 2.63, P < .05$ ]. Based on the results of this study, it has been established in the field of scientific research that neither social control nor self-control played a significant role on criminal behavior tendency among politicians in Enugu State. The state should, therefore, keep the tempo of socializing her inhabitants with the best practices that agree with the accepted way of living, to avert cases of criminal behaviours in the state in particular and the country in general.

**Key words:** Social control, Self-control, Criminal Behaviour Tendency, Enugu State

### **Introduction**

Crime is a phenomenon that is found in all human societies. Society is where all manners of people live in. Crime had its origin from the time of Adam and Eve. History had it that the first crime committed on earth was from Adam and Eve who disobeyed God and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, which contained the knowledge of good and bad, thereby violating God's law. Furthermore, after this, another crime was committed by Cain when he killed his brother, Abel. The story had it that after these crimes, other crimes followed, leading to the destruction of the earth by flood. As crime is a natural critical phenomenon in the world in general and Africa in particular, Nigeria is not an exception. In Nigeria, like every other country of the world today, crime is on the rapid increase.

Crime, according to Doulop (2016), is the act of violation of rule of law of the land for which a punishment is applied by the authority or forces in power, to prevent its future occurrence. Crime occurs in all aspects of human life such as in economic, political, educational and religious sectors. This crime is committed by both male and female, government and the governed, young and old, educated and uneducated, and even the security agents whose work it is to protect the law of the land (Olukola & Aremu, 2016). The dreadful nature of crime in Nigeria today requires drastic measures to combat the menace in totality. Those governmental and non-governmental organizations should sit-up in combating the rising threat of crime in Nigeria. It seems all efforts employed by both the past and present governments in the contemporary Nigeria, have not actually yielded any fruitful outcome, probably because the root cause of the crimes have not been adequately addressed (Olukola & Aremu, 2016).

According to Ajumobi (2014), rarely did any day pass in Nigeria without the news media reporting at least one shocking and terrible act of criminal behaviour involving either the young or the old. In Nigeria today, the news people hear every day is about herdsmen, Boko Haram attacks, kidnapping, armed robbery, assassinations, hired

killings, banditry, ethnic and tribal conflicts, ritual killings, student cultism, police brutality, suicide, army brutality, election rigging, rape, child trafficking, etc.

The ability of the security agencies in Nigeria to find solution to the problems of crime in Nigeria will be dependent on the understanding of its causes and unique features. According to Adams (2015), behaviour is caused by many factors such as biological and environmental factors. An individual's style of coping with the environmental stressors will not be the same.

Criminals have direct link to conflicts which emanate between the societal values and the achievement of success (Henshaw, 2016). This same source further noted that the disparity in the opportunity to achieve success makes the efforts of those with low self-control to achieve the goal through approved ways. Criminal behaviour seems to be a usual or normal response to frustration, suppression, oppression, denial and tension generated by pressure and conflict within the domain of the society (Gunney, 2014). The environment to which one has been socialized determines the criminal behaviour exhibited by the individual (Gunney, 2014). Fredson (2012) noted that the essential disparity between criminals and non-criminals is dependent on their degree of self-control.

The social control is to include effective supervision, cohesion among group members, unemployment, enforcement of goals, norms, values and discipline (Reckless, 2014). Reckless further noted that every individual is housing both external and internal structure which serves as a buffer or protector and insulates an individual against delinquency and crime. He further suggested that these inner and outer persons help to protect against one's potential deviation from legal and social norms and work to insulate an individual from the pressures of criminal influences. These personal containments exert their influences internally to control an individual's behaviour, while outer personal containments refer to one's social environment and those normative constraints in which society and government use to control its members. There are some personal factors that compel or push an individual into committing crimes. Those personal factors include anxiety, frustration, hostility, etc while external factors that push an individual to commit crime include friends who are members of criminal groups, watching violent and other firms that pollute the mind (Gunney, 2014). Gunney further noted that external pressures are those adverse living conditions that lead to crimes and criminality. According to him, unemployment, denial of rights, frustration, neglect etc. are external pressures that are considered as the adverse living conditions that give room for criminal behaviours to take place.

It seems every individual has potentials to become criminal. However, it is the social control that maintains law and order in the society. It is this social control that forbids freedom to commit criminal acts. The social control is the strategy as well as the technique that helps to regulate or direct human behaviour. Heartle (2016) believes that if people's beliefs and values are weakened or removed, there is likelihood for the people to engage in antisocial behaviours.

On the other hand, if the people believe that laws or the enforcers of the laws are partial or unfair, the bond holding the society together weakens and the possibility of committing criminal acts by the criminals become certain (Hirschi, 2004).

Freud (1933) noted that all human beings have natural drives and urges that are repressed in the unconscious mind. Freud further pointed out that all human beings have criminal intents emanating from their environmental stimulations. Freud also noted that the process of socialization controls those practices that are learned during childhood development and that when a child lacks proper socialization, he or she may develop a disturbing personality that may cause him or her to direct antisocial impulses inward or outward. Davis (2016) noted that a child who channels his or her impulse inward, rather than outward, is likely to become a neurotic, and the child that channels them outward, rather than inward, is likely to become a criminal.

The development of self-control of children starts from birth to the extent that their parents place clear rules before them, monitor their behaviours, identify rule violations by them and punish them adequately for such violations

(Patterson, 2015). Kohlberg's developmental theory of moral reasoning states that criminal behaviour results from the way people organize their thought about morality and the law. The child's moral reasoning is dependent on obedience of and avoidance of punishment (Americk, 2012).

This study explored the role of social control and self-control in criminal behaviour among politicians in Enugu State and unraveled the root causes of criminal behaviours of the politicians, which will help to regulate and direct their activities in the society.

In the past, the behaviours of the politicians in Enugu State seemed to have been regulated by social and self-controls. Criminal behaviours among them as at that time were minimal. However, in Enugu State today, crimes are committed among the politicians without remorse. Crimes are highly on the increase among the Politicians in Enugu State, ranging from election rigging, stealing of public funds, sponsoring kidnapping, terrorism, armed robbery, and assassination, to ethnic and religious conflicts. Provision of solution to the problems of criminal Behaviour among politicians in Enugu State will be dependent on understanding the causes and unique features of such behaviour. The role of social control and self-control in criminal behaviour among politicians in Enugu State has not been investigated.

### **Research Questions**

This study attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Will social control play a significant role on criminal behaviour tendency?
2. Will self-control significantly play a role on criminal behaviour tendency?

Therefore, the main aim of this study was to investigate whether social control and self-control played significant roles on criminal behaviour tendency among politicians in Enugu.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. Social control will not play a significant role on criminal behaviour tendency among Politicians in Enugu State.
2. Self-control will not play a significant role on criminal behaviour tendency among Politicians in Enugu State.

### **Theoretical Framework**

For better understanding of this study some theoretical approaches were applied.

#### **Theory of Cognitive Development (Dennis, 2009)**

According to this theoretical approach by Dennis (2009), every criminal behaviour resulted from the day in which the laws were made in the society. This theory has a link with the study in the sense that the laws of the society are part of the social control measures used in checkmating the excesses of man. This theory can be criticized following its submission that societal laws are the determinants or causes of criminal behaviour of people rather than to see them as something that can be used to check or control the criminal behaviour.

#### **Psychoanalytic Theory (Freud, 1956)**

This theory as advanced by Freud (1956) noted that all humans have natural drive and urges pushed into the unconscious. Freud further emphasized that the psychic apparatus that house the moral reasoning of every man comprises three interacting principles of personality such as the id, ego and the superego, which according to him, during the process of socialization; the criminal intentions are immunized or reduced by the development of inner controls that are learned through childhood experience. The id is known as pleasure seeking principle and completely operates at the unconscious mind. According to Freud, the wishes and impulses arising from man's instinctual needs generate pressure and tension that require immediate satisfaction.

If our personalities were all id, the entire humanity would be jeopardized and put into endless conflict. The ego according to Freud (1956) is the executive part of the psychic apparatus, the planning, decision-making, rational

and logical part of the person. Freud explained the ego as being governed by the reality principle and also tries to bring the individual pleasure within the standards of the society, and to see the extent to which one can go without being hurt or getting into problem with others or self. According to Green (2015), while the id demands for immediate gratification of our needs and impulses, the ego will defer the gratification until the appropriate time and place.

Freud (1933) noted that superego represents the internalization of parental and social moral values. He further observed that the superego monitors the ego, gives it orders, judges it and threatens it with punishment. Green (2015) noted that man cannot be described as a moral being until the Superego has fully developed in the person. Santrock (2005) noted that both the Id and the superego make life unstable for the ego and that at every point in time, the ego is trying to resolve the crises resulting from the id and superego. For example, if the id demands sex and the superego on its own comes up with the idea that sex is sin and immoral, the ego will be put under pressure to resolve the disagreement. If the inability of the individual's ego to resolve these crises persists, it may result to low self-control and the individual is likely to commit crime of any kind.

This theory can be criticized in the sense that if it is true that conflicts that emanate from the three interacting principles of personality, can make people commit crime, why is it that some people exhibit criminal behaviour while some people do not? Self-control Theory (Gottfredson, 1990).

This theory stipulates that criminologist theorists referred "Low self-control" to the extent to which individuals were vulnerable to the temptation of the moment and that people with low self-control were impulsive, took risk, had low cognition, self-centered, etc and lived for the present rather than the future. According to this theory, such people find it difficult to delay gratification. Adams (2014) in his study, found non-significant correlation between social control and criminal behaviour. He further emphasized that people are likely to become criminals when the controlling forces in their lives are not functioning effectively well.

Mcgregor and Nicado (2015) study on relationship between social control and criminal behaviour among adolescents, reported a strong link between social control and criminal behaviour of the adolescents.

Janney and Janney (1998) study on self-control and imprudent behaviours which included the excess consumption of alcoholic beverages and the use of hard drugs like cocaine, found low self-control to be a better predictor for drinking of alcohol beverages and for the use of hard drugs. The study further revealed that low self-control predicted criminal behaviours. Wood (1998) study investigated power of self-control on acts of personal violence and illegal use of substances, the result showed that self-control had non-significant impact on all behaviours in the study. Thomas and Herold (2014); Dard and Gerry (2016), in their studies, reported that criminal behaviour was not solely related to social control or economic instability. They further noted that we should focus on momental factors which trigger the criminal tendencies or opportunity.

Out of the theories reviewed in this study, Psychoanalytic theory advanced by Sigmund Freud in 1956 has been adopted as the theoretical framework of this study following its link with all the variables of study in this work.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A total of 108 participants comprising 65 Male and 43 female Politicians between the age range of 25-55 years with mean age of 28.3 and standard deviation (SD) of 6.2, participated in this study. They were drawn using convenience sampling technique from members of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC) in Enugu metropolis during their state convention. Convenience sampling is a technique where the researcher uses only those who are on ground at the time of the study and agreed to participate in the study. The highest education qualification of the participants were WAEC, SSCE, NECO, OND and B.Sc, B.Ed, M.BA, M,Sc Degrees.

### Instrument

Three sets of instruments were used for the study. They are the Self-control Scale developed by Grasmick (1993) and validated for use in Nigeria by Olufayi (2017) who conducted a pilot study and obtained reliability co-efficient of 0.73 and concurrent validity of 0.57. The instrument has 24 items and any score less than 44 is regarded as low self-concept, while 45 and above score is regarded as having high self-control. The second instrument is Social Control Scale developed by Cohen and Lichtenstein (1990) and validated for use in Nigeria by Ngwu (2015) who conducted a pilot study and obtained the reliability co-efficient of 0.65 and concurrent validity of 0.55. This instrument has 27 item questions. Any score less than 50 is regarded as low social control, while score from 50 and above is regarded as high social control, and Criminal Behaviour Scale developed by Aminasahun (2011) and validated for use in Nigeria by Ekwu (2016) who conducted a pilot study and obtained the reliability co-efficient of 0.82 and concurrent validity of 0.70. This instrument has 15 item questions. Any score less than 30 is considered low in criminal behaviour, while score from 30 and above is regarded as high in criminal behaviour. The instruments were designed and scored on 5-point likert type response format, ranging from Strongly Agree-5points, Agree-4 points, Undecided- 3points, Disagree – 2 points and Strongly Disagree-1point.

### Procedure

A total of 120 copies of the questionnaires were randomly administered to the members of each of the political groups during their various state conventions in their different venues in Enugu Metropolis. The administration of the questionnaires took two days with the help of five research assistants. The copies of the questionnaires were filled and returned on the spot. Out of 120 copies of the questionnaires administered, 115 copies were returned. Then, out of the 115 copies returned, 108 copies were correctly filled, while 7 copies that were wrongly filled were discarded. Therefore, the statistical analysis of data in this study was based on the 108 copies of the questionnaires correctly filled.

### Design and Statistics

This study's design was Cross-Sectional Survey design, while two-way ANOVA was used for the statistical analysis of data.

### Results

**Table I: Mean and Standard Deviation Summary Table for the Role of Social Control and Self-Control on Criminal Behaviour**

Variables	Level	Mean (x)	SD	N
Self-control	High	48.73	6.5	56
	low	36.28	6.3	52
Social control	Social	46.73	6.2	56
	Non-social	34.6	6.1	52

The above table shows that high self-control obtained the highest mean and standard deviation of ( $x = 48.73$ ,  $SD = 6.5$ ) followed by social control, (social) had ( $x = 46.73$ ,  $SD = 6.2$ ) while low self-control had ( $x = 36.28$ ,  $SD = 6.2$ ) and social control (non-social) had ( $x = 34.6$ ,  $SD = 6.1$ ).

**Table II: Summary Table of Two-way ANOVA on the Role of Social Control and Self-Control on Criminal Behaviour**

Variables	Type II of Squares	Mean Square	df	F	P
Rows (social control)	782.02	782.02	1	2.72	<.05
Column (self-control)	789.02	789.02	1	2.63	<.05
Interaction (SC XSC)	0.03	0.3	1	0.00	>.05
Within cell	26654.05	28.57	112		
Total	28224.56		112		

The above table shows no significant role of social control and self-control in criminal behaviour  $F(1, 112) = 2.72$   $P < .05$ . In other words, social control did not play a significant role on criminal behaviour among the politicians, in Enugu State thereby accepting the first hypothesis. The self-control also did not play a significant role on criminal behaviour among the Politicians in Enugu State  $F(1, 112) = 2.63$ ,  $p < .05$  and thus, the second hypothesis which stated that self-control will not significantly play a role in criminal behaviour among politicians in Enugu State was also accepted. Another result also showed that the interaction effect of social control and self-control did not play a significant role in criminal behaviour among the politicians in Enugu State.

### Discussion

The result of this study indicated that social control did not significantly play a significant role in criminal behaviour of Politicians in Enugu State, hence, the acceptance of the first hypothesis which states that social control will not play a significant role in the criminal behaviour among politicians in Enugu State.

The results of the current study are in agreement with Adams (2014) study which found no significant relationship between social control and criminal behaviour among his participants. He emphasized that people were likely to become criminals when the controlling forces in their lives are not functioning effectively well. Also the result of this study agreed with the results of studies of Thomas and Herold (2014); Dard and Gerry (2016) which reported that criminal behaviour was not solely related to social control or economic instability, rather it was very necessary to focus on momental factors that trigger the criminal tendency or opportunity.

Furthermore, also in agreement is Wood (1998) study which investigated power of self-control on acts of personal violence and illegal use of substances, and the result showed that self-control had non-significant impact on all behaviours in the study. However the findings above as well as the current study, did not agree with McGregor and Nicado (2015) which noted that Social control was a strong predictor of criminal tendency and the incidents of criminal fraud. Furthermore, the result of the study by Janney and Janney (1998) showed that low self-control and imprudent behaviours which induced the excess consumption of alcoholic beverages and the use of hard drugs like cocaine had relationship. Also, the study of Gottfredson (1990) noted that people with low self-control were impulsive, took risk, and had low cognition, self-centered, lived for the present rather than the future, etc and that such people found it difficult to delay gratification. The results of these studies were not in agreement with the results of the current study. This could be as a result of the environmental, age, level of education and personality differences among the participants. Finally, the interaction effect of social control and self-control did not play a significant role in criminal behaviour among the Politicians in Enugu State.

### Implication of the Findings

For the fact that this study revealed that social control did not play a significant role on criminal behaviour among the politicians in Enugu State and reported also that self-control did not play a significant role on criminal behaviour among the Politicians in Enugu State, social psychological literature has been equipped and up-dated by the new knowledge from the results of the current study. Therefore, neither social control nor self-concept was implicated in playing a role on criminal behaviour tendency among politicians in Enugu State.

Future researchers should look out for the roles of other variables in criminal behaviours of politicians in Enugu State other than the two variables in the study.

### Summary and Conclusion

This study shows that both social control and self-control played no significant role on criminal behaviour tendency among politicians in Enugu State. Therefore, for the fact that both social control and self-control were found to have no link with the criminal behaviour tendency of the politicians in Enugu State, the hypotheses of this study were accepted and this implies that the various social groups in the State such as religious, political, governmental and non-governmental groups, are active in the application of better socialization plans designed for their inhabitants. Therefore, Enugu State should keep the tempo high for this will get rid of the criminal behaviours in the state in particular and in the country in general and ensure people of a free crime society especially in our political fields.

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