

## Property Crime And The Psychosocial Maladjustment Of Adolescent Students In Cameroon

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### Abstract

*Property crime is a vice that is alarming in secondary schools in Cameroon. It's a severe crime and call for concern especially in schools due to lack of needs and vulnerability of students. Nowadays, the rate at which adolescent students are involved in property crime is alarming. They engage in the various aspects of property crime such as: burglary, vandalism, arson, and larceny. Contextualizing property crime by peers included bicycle theft, book theft, snacks theft, which may have adverse psychosocial effects on the victims. Though they are diverse forms of victimisation among adolescents such as obvert victimisation, relational, property crime and power imbalance, this paper focuses on how property crime (burglary, vandalism, arson, and larceny and theft) lead to psychosocial maladjustments of adolescents in secondary schools in Cameroon. Contextualizing property crime by peers included bicycle theft, book theft, snacks theft. Mixed method was used in collecting data. Purposive and stratified sampling techniques were used to select a sample which comprised of adolescent students (577), counsellors (12) and discipline masters (12) from some schools in the North West, South West, Centre, and Adamawa Region (613). The instruments used for data collection were a closed-ended questionnaire for students, a focus group discussion with students, and an interview for counsellors and discipline masters/mistresses. Data obtained were analysed descriptively and inferentially using cross-tabulations, percentages, and multiple response sets. Statistically, findings showed that property significantly predicts psychosocial maladjustment of adolescents in secondary schools ( $P < 0.001$ ), which is far less than 0.05. The positive sign of the correlation value ( $R = 0.501^{**}$ ) implies that adolescents are more likely to suffer from psychosocial maladjustments when there is a constant or persistent occurrence of property crime in the school environment. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that property crime does not predict the psychosocial maladjustments of adolescent students in secondary school, was rejected. The findings imply that when there is persistent occurrence of property crime, the victim turn to suffer from psychosocial maladjustment. In order to reduce the adverse effects of property crime and promote positive psychosocial maladjustments among adolescent the various stakeholders especially parents, teachers, school administrators, and counsellors should play unique roles in organising forums to advice and counsel the students on the disadvantages of property crime. Furthermore, much security should be put in place based on property crime. Students who take bicycles to school should be advised to chain and lock them to avoid theft. Concerning theft of books, snacks, bags, and other properties in the class, students are advised to write their names on their books, and teachers and other school administrators are equally advised to counsel the students on the disadvantages of stealing. Parents should have talks with their children at home about such acts.*

**Keywords:** Psychosocial maladjustment, Adolescent students, Juvenile delinquency, School-based crime, Psychological wellbeing, Social adjustment, Behavioral problems, Youth crime.

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## **1. Introduction**

Property crime is inevitable in the school environment and is manifested in varied and various ways. It is suffering of physical harm or material loss caused by culpable actions (Von Hirsch & Jareborg 1991) which is an unpleasant experience and is frequently considered an impediment to subjective well-being (Land et al., 2011; Webb & Wills Herrera, 2012). Operationally, property crime involved a victim whose property is stolen or destroyed with or without the use of a threat of physical force against them. General examples of property crime are; burglary, vandalism, arson, and larceny. Contextualizing property crime by peers included bicycle theft, book theft, snacks theft, and other property belonging to students in the school environment.

Property crime is an indicator of peer victimisation that is rampant in the school environment. It is a category of crime usually involving burglary, larceny, theft, arson, shoplifting and vandalism (Freiberg, 1996). Property crime is a crime committed to either obtain money, property resale or some other benefits. These crimes involve force or use of threat of force in cases like robbery or extortion. A crime is any wrongful act that is punishable by law. The crime rate of certain areas depends on several factors such as economic opportunities and other societal aspects that usually cause conflicts (Blumstein & Rosen field, 2008). Property crime builds up in many aspects for example fear of burglary, vehicle theft, arson, bicycle theft, property theft, kidnapping, vandalism and vehicle burglary (Easton, 2010). This deals with the fear of property crime as an indicator to peer victimisation. An example of property crime as victimisation by peers around the school environment is bicycle theft, book theft, theft of snacks, arson and bicycle theft.

Criminal victimisation is suffering physical harm or material loss caused by culpable actions (von Hirsch & Jareborg, 1991). It is an unpleasant experience and frequently considered as an impediment to subjective well-being (Land et al., 2011; Webb & Wills Herrera, 2012). Arson involves any intentional fire setting or attempt to set fire. It is also considered arson if one burns one's property. A frequent motive for arson is insurance fraud, with the fire staged to appear accidental (Douglas et al., 2006). Other motives for arson include desire to commit vandalism or mischief, for thrill or excitement, for revenge, to conceal other crimes, or as a hate crime. Worth noting is the fact that arson or vandalism is a crime

that is also common in the school environment. This is destruction of property by burning.

Property crime includes extortion which is the use of threats to obtain the property of another person. Some threats may include future harm, destroying one's property, injuring one's character or reputation or even death (Freiberg & Arie, 1996). This is also common in school environment. Theft is another indicator of property crime and it is most common, over everything else followed by vehicles parts, clothing and tools (Clarke & Roland, 1999). Theft is manifested in the school environment among peers and friends. Worth mentioning is robbery which is the forceful taking of property from a person's immediate possession through the use of force. Vandalism is another indicator of property crime and is common in school environments. It is wilful destruction of property.

## **2. Review Of Literature**

Property crime among adolescent is a recurrent act and it is manifested in various ways in the school environment. These include burglary, larceny, bicycle theft, arson, and vandalism (Freiberg, 1996). Property crime may be the most perilous in the lives of juveniles in general, but it is also one of the most frequent. Before society can be considered safe and just, it will certainly have to confront such a widespread condition (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1997). Property crime against juveniles deserves a place on the agenda of those concerned about the crime problem and those concerned about children and their welfare (Arnett, & Walsleben, 1998). Property crime in the school environment is manifested through arson, larceny, and burglary. It is the most frequent kind of criminal victimisation and one with important economic and psychosocial consequences although it has not received the same public attention as violent crime in recent years (Hashima & Finkelhor, 1999).

Property crime and victimisation rates are much higher for juveniles than for adults, but very little attention has been paid to property crime in juveniles. Arguably, some of the distinctive features of juvenile property victimisation are its varied occurrence in school environment. This therefore means suggestion taken for its prevention may require different policies than those addressing adult property crimes (Finkelhor et al., 1999). The properties most often taken by peers are wallets, toys, purses, bicycles, books, school bags and other school belongings. Worth noting is the fact that property crime victims are not as much traumatized as violent

crime victims but research has shown them to have elevated depression, hostility, and symptoms that persist over an extended time (Noris & Kaniasty, 1994). Victims of multiple crimes are particularly vulnerable to pronounced psychosocial effects such as anxiety, depression, and other stress related problems. Victimization imposes a substantial burden on the lives and lifestyles of the young. In fact, more affluent students have higher rates of victimisation at school and lower rates away from school, while students from lower income families experience the reserves (Kaufman et al., 1999).

Among adolescents in school, property crime is limited only to those items which are found in the school environment. The items which could be stolen in school may include student's private property like school bags, pen, pencils, lunch, money, text and exercise books. It also involves destruction of such items by maybe burning them. Researchers have in recent years begun to adopt a more integrated approach for the study of crime situation resulting in the development of criminal event perspectives (Meier et al., 2001).

Property crime is another form of peer victimisation which is not void of psychosocial consequences. Juvenile delinquency comprises the practice of divergent behaviour such as psychoactive substances, conflicts and criminal behaviours (theft, drug abuse and trafficking, and robbery) during adolescence (Kazemian et al., 2019). Moffit (2018) posits that a persistent pattern of developmental perspectives of these behaviours is associated with interaction of social and personal factors throughout the development of the individual. It is vital to note that from the period of transition from adolescence to adulthood, some personal variables in terms of personality may favour preparation of property crime (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2019). Worth mentioning is the fact that adolescents are different from each other and therefore it is important to identify and understand these differences in terms of their psychological profiles (El Sayed et al., 2017).

It is important to note that some personal variables in terms of personality may favour the perpetrators of crime. This is very peculiar in the transitional stage of adolescence to adulthood which is a period of identity formation and consequent stabilization of social behaviours (Jolliffe & Frington, 2019). Manichander (2016) holds that maladjustments can be attributed to wide variety of factors including school related factors

like property crime and other forms of victimisation and family environmental factors. Therefore, property crime is a factor that enhances maladjustment. This is evident in the psychosocial maladjusted state in which those affected by property crime find themselves (Hills et al., 2017)

The occurrence of peer victimisation has become increasingly evident in African schools (Isdale et al, 2017; Zuze et al, 2018). Popoola (2005) investigated the prevalence of peer victimisation among secondary school students in a state in South Western Nigeria. Participants consisted of 385 secondary school students selected from ten secondary schools across 10 local government areas in Osun State, Nigeria. The participants, aged between 10 and 19 years, were stratified into junior and senior secondary classes. The Multidimensional Peer Victimization Scale was used to collect data on four types of peer-victimisation commonly found among students. Results from descriptive and inferential analysis of data indicate that the majority of participants reported overall high levels of peer victimisation with attack on property as the most frequent form of peer victimisation. There were significant differences between male and female participants in all forms of victimisation with females reporting higher level of social victimisation, verbal victimisation and attack on property than males. The study also found that while students' level of study did not significantly influence the extent to which they were victimized by peers, age was a significant factor in reported levels of peer victimisation. The study brings into focus the need to make guidance services functional in Nigerian secondary schools to overcome the problem of bullying and peer victimisation. It is similar to mine in that it is out to find out how property crime which is one of the indicators of peer victimisation leads to psychosocial maladjustments amongst adolescents. Although anti-bullying programs have proliferated during the last decade, those aimed at helping children cope with bullying often suffer from a lack of basic research on the effectiveness of children's responses to bullying.

Poverty status has been found to be a risk factor for violence exposure in low-income communities (Chauhan & Reppucci, 2009; Halliday-Boykins & Graham, 2001). Until recently, however, there have been relatively few empirical studies in the U.S. that have examined poverty as a risk factor for bullying and peer victimisation (Carlson, 2006; Curtner-Smith et al., 2006; Unnever &

Cornell, 2003). These studies found that impoverished youth were significantly more likely to be exposed to peer violence in school (Carlson, 2006), and to identify with a culture of bullying (Unnever & Cornell, 2004). They were also less likely to receive empathy from their mother, which can mitigate the likelihood of aggression (Curtner-Smith et al., 2006). Low income youth are more likely to hold positive attitudes toward peer aggression (Unnever & Cornell, 2004). International research findings on the association between poverty and bullying, on the other hand, have been inconsistent (Chaux, Molano, & Podlesky, 2009; Due et al., 2009). In a multilevel study of socio-economic inequality and bullying behaviour among youth in 35 countries, Due et al. (2009) found that youth from families of low socio-economic status reported becoming a bullying victim. On the contrary, Chaux et al.'s (2009) study of bullying among 1000 schools in Colombia found that higher level of bullying in schools was related to better socioeconomic status, where schools in affluent areas may reinforce inequality among students. This study concludes that aggressive and violent behaviours among youth stem from structural inequality rather than poverty status.

### 3. Methods

The research design adopted for this study was the mixed methods approach with a concurrent nested design. Quantitative method was the main method for data collection and the qualitative was imbedded into it. The interview was conducted from those who participated in the questionnaires. The accessible population was made

up of 667,308 students and 32,897 administrators/teachers (Ministry of secondary education statistics 2019\2020) drawn from four public schools, four mission schools and four lay private schools from the four regions in Cameroon. The sample size was 610 which comprised of 586 students and 24 school administrators (discipline masters) and counsellors. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the administrator's and counsellors who participated as respondents to the qualitative instruments.

Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Ethical considerations were taken into account before data was collected. The researcher assured confidentiality from those from whom data was collected. No names of the respondents were required from the instruments. Adolescent students responded to a questionnaire and ten of them participated in a focus group discussion, while school administrator and counselors responded to an interview. Questionnaire data subjected to descriptive statistics to generate counts, percentages, and multiple responses sets. The descriptive data were further used to verify the hypothesis that was stated in the study. The Spearman rho correlation test was used to verify the relationship between relational victimisation and psychosocial maladjustment among adolescent students in secondary schools in Cameroon. Meanwhile qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis and emerging themes and their groundings were discerned and presented, and expatiated by quotations.

### 4. Findings of the study

#### Adolescent Students' Characterisation of Property Crime

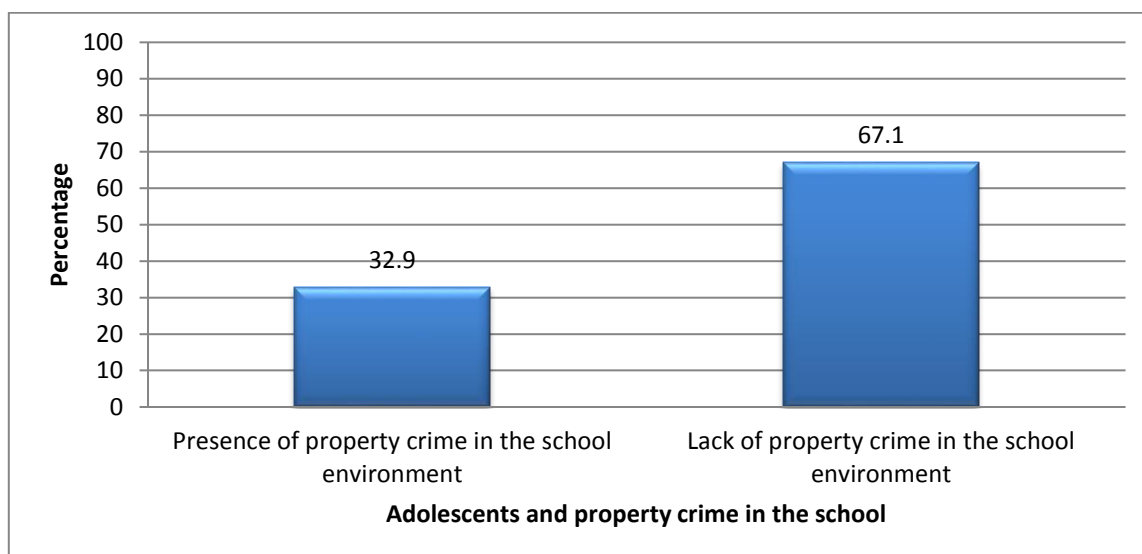
Items	Stretched				Collapsed	
	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	SA/A	D/SD
My school bag is seized by my peers and friends in school	59 (10.2%)	118 (20.5%)	151 (26.2%)	249 (43.2%)	177 (30.7%)	400 (69.3%)
I steal money, books and bags from my peers in class.	28 (4.9%)	37 (6.4%)	107 (18.6%)	404 (70.1%)	65 (11.3%)	511 (88.7%)
I set fire (arson) on my peers books and bags in school	29 (5.0%)	33 (5.7%)	121 (21.0%)	392 (68.2%)	62 (10.8%)	513 (89.2%)

Lack of finances causes me to take what does not belong to me	40 (7.0%)	114 (19.8%)	143 (24.9%)	278 (48.3%)	154 (26.8%)	421 (73.2%)
There are many incidents of bicycle theft in my school	59 (10.3%)	95 (16.6%)	166 (29.0%)	253 (44.2%)	154 (26.9%)	419 (73.1%)
Peers get involved in vandalism	119 (20.8%)	173 (30.2%)	110 (19.2%)	170 (29.7%)	292 (51.0%)	280 (49.0%)
A lot of larceny in school	89 (15.5%)	147 (25.7%)	146 (25.5%)	191 (33.3%)	236 (41.2%)	337 (58.8%)
Burglary is a practiced by peers in school	98 (17.2%)	160 (28.0%)	105 (18.4%)	208 (36.4%)	258 (45.2%)	313 (54.8%)
My knowledge of shoplifting helps me successfully steal in school without being noticed	78 (13.6%)	81 (14.1%)	126 (22.0%)	288 (50.3%)	159 (27.7%)	414 (72.3%)
There is damages of property in school	184 (32.3%)	146 (25.6%)	94 (16.5%)	146 (25.6%)	330 (57.9%)	240 (42.1%)
<b>Multiple Response Set (MRS)</b>	<b>783 (13.7%)</b>	<b>1104 (19.3%)</b>	<b>1269 (22.1%)</b>	<b>2579 (45.0%)</b>	<b>1887 (32.9%)</b>	<b>3848 (67.1%)</b>

Findings on property crime showed that 30.7% (177) of the adolescent students indicated that peers and friends in school seized their school bags. The findings also revealed that 11.3% (11) of the participants steal money, books, and bags from peers in class. While 10.8% (62) of the adolescent students presented that they set fire (arson) to peer's books and bags in school, 26.8% (154) of them admitted that lack of finances causes them to take what does not belong to them. Findings revealed that 51.0% (292) of the adolescent students argued that there were many incidents of bicycle theft in their school and that peers get involved in vandalism. The findings also

showed that 41.2% (236) of the adolescent students indicated much larceny in their school and environment.

Overall, the findings showed that 32.9% of the adolescents agreed to property crimes in their school, while 67.1% disagreed. Findings from the study equally showed that 45.2% (258) of the participant accepted that peers practice burglary in school. Finally, the findings also proved that 57.9% (330) of the students confirmed that there is damage to property in school. This overall result is also presented in the figure7 below.



### Adolescent Students' Characterisation of Property Crime

#### Comparing the Adolescent Students Opinion on Property Crime by Demographic Data

Demographic data			Property crime		Total	Chi-square test
			Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree Strongly Disagree		
School type	Government	n	125	229	354	$\chi^2=19.41$ df=2 P=0.000
		%	35.3%	64.7%		
	Confessional	n	29	28	57	
		%	51.3%	48.7%		
Class	Lay Private	n	34	127	161	
		%	21.1%	78.9%		
	Form one	n	37	99	135	$\chi^2=4.64$ df=3 P=0.200
		%	27.1%	72.9%		
	Form two	n	64	100	164	
		%	38.9%	61.1%		
	Form three	n	85	177	262	
		%	32.4%	67.6%		
	Form four	n	4	9	13	
		%	27.9%	72.1%		
Age range	9-11	n	38	100	138	$\chi^2=3.48$ df=2 P=0.175
		%	27.4%	72.6%		
	12-14	n	121	216	337	
		%	35.8%	64.2%		
	15-17	n	30	69	99	
		%	30.6%	69.4%		
Location	Rural	n	64	119	183	$\chi^2=0.48$ df=1
		%	35.0%	65.0%		

Parental marital status	Urban	n	124	266	390	P=0.489
		%	31.9%	68.1%		
	Married	n	138	290	428	$\chi^2=0.85$ df=3 P=0.836
		%	32.2%	67.8%		
	Single	n	37	67	104	
		%	35.8%	64.2%		
	Divorced	n	4	11	15	
		%	26.7%	73.3%		
	Separated	n	9	17	26	
		%	35.8%	64.2%		

Comparing the adolescents' opinion on property crime by demographic data, findings showed that by school type, a majority of adolescents from Confessional schools (51.3%) attested to the occurrence of property crime, followed by those from Government schools (35.3%) and lastly, those from Lay Private schools (21.1%).

By class, more adolescent students in form two (38.9%) attested to property crime, followed by those in form

three (32.4%), form one (27.1%), and lastly, form four (27.9%). By age range, findings showed that adolescent students within the age range of 12-14 (35.8%) argued the fact that property crime was an occurrence in the school environment, followed by those within the age range of 15-17 (30.6%) and lastly, those within the age range of 9-11 (27.4%). By school location, adolescents in rural (35.0%) and urban areas are (31.9%) almost the same proportion indicted of property crime in their school environment

#### Cross Tabulation between Property Crime and Psychosocial Maladjustment

			Property crime		Total
			Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	
Psychosocial maladjustments	Strongly	n	125	136	261
	Agree/ Agree	%	47.9%	52.0%	
	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	n	114	194	308
		%	37.0%	63.0%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>569</b>

Using a cross-tabulation technique, findings showed that adolescent students whose school environment was characterized by property crime suffered more

psychosocial maladjustment 47.9% than those whose school environment was not characterized by property crime 37.0%.

### Thematic Characterisation of Property Crime

Has your school property ever been stolen in school?	What was it and how was it done?	How often have you experienced it?	What do you think caused that act?	How do you think it can be stopped?
'Yes'	'Books stolen when gone for break'	'Often'	'Poverty'	'Discipline'
	'Calculator, Pens are stolen when gone for break'	'Rarely/once Daily'	'Jealousy Negligence'	'Orientation' 'Implementing rules and regulations'
	'School bag stolen when gone for break'		'Lack of needs'	'Report to school authorities'

Based on the focus group discussion on property crime, findings showed that all the students who participated said that their property had once been stolen from them in school. Finding out what was stolen and how, some students said their books stolen when they went for break, calculator, school bag, and pens were equally stolen from them. The students added that these items (books, calculator, pens, pens and bags) were stolen from them during a break period.

To elucidate, finding out how often the student's items have been stolen, some said 'often', 'daily' while others said 'once in a while. Based on the causes of the student's stolen items, some mentioned 'jealousy from other students, 'poverty,' and 'lack of needs by some students',

while others said it was because they were 'negligent.' Finally, find out from the students what can be done to stop property crime in their school; some said school 'rules and regulations need to be put in place.' Others said 'there is a need for the school to reinforce discipline,' 'students should be counselled,' and 'incidents of property crime be reported to the school authorities. Others said orientation should be reinforcing by school authorities such guidance counsellors and discipline masters.

### Verification of Hypothesis:

Exposure to property crime does not predict the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools.

### Testing the Effect of Property Crime on Psychosocial Maladjustment of Adolescent Students

Test	Statistics	Property crime	Psychosocial maladjustments
Spearman's rho	R-value	1.000	.501**
	p-value	.	.000
	n	569	569

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

Statistically, property significantly predicts adolescent students' psychosocial maladjustment in secondary schools ( $p < 0.001$ ; 0.05). The positive sign of the correlation ( $R = 0.501^{**}$ ) implied that adolescent students were more likely to suffer psychosocial

maladjustment in school environments that constantly or persistent had the occurrence of property crime in it. In addition, descriptive findings showed that adolescent students whose school environment was characterized by property crime suffered more psychosocial



maladjustment 47.9% than those whose school environment was not characterized by property crime 37.0%. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which states that property crime does not predict the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students' in secondary schools, was rejected. In contrast, the alternative, which stated that property crime predicts the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescent students in secondary schools, was retained.

Statistically, findings showed that property significantly predicts psychosocial maladjustment of adolescents in secondary schools ( $P < 0.001$ ), which is far less than 0.05. The positive sign of the correlation value ( $R = 0.501^{**}$ ) implies that adolescents are more likely to suffer from psychosocial maladjustments when there is a constant or persistent occurrence of property crime in the school environment. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which stated that property crime does not predict the psychosocial maladjustments of adolescent students in secondary school, was rejected.

This implied that adolescents are more likely to suffer from psychosocial maladjustment when there is constant or persistent property crime in the school environment. The findings showed that adolescent students whose school environment is characterized by property crime suffer more from psychosocial maladjustment than those whose school environment is accessible. The findings confirmed that property crime is manifested in school in ways such as property theft, bicycle theft, and vandalism. These findings align with Easton's (2010), who says property crime builds up in many aspects, such as vehicle burglary, bicycle theft, property theft, kidnapping, shoplifting, and vandalism. The work of Easton (2010) is slightly different because some of the aspects mentioned in relation to property crime are not aspects of property crime mentioned in the school environment. Examples of property crime as victimisation by peers around the school environment include bicycle theft, book theft, snacks theft, arson, and bicycle uplifting. Some of these indicators align with this work, as many students attest to it. This includes vandalism and property damage in school. At the same time, most students disagree with the following opinions of victimisation around the school compound: bicycle theft, vandalism, larceny, burglary, and vandalism. The study's findings deny that theft is rampant in the school environment, which is contrary to the view of (Clarke & Roland, 1999). Their book stipulated that theft is an indicator of property crime and is most common in the school environment.

Demographic findings of this study showed that as per school type, most adolescents from Confessional schools attested to the occurrences of property crime, followed by those from government schools and lastly lay private schools. By class, more adolescents from form two attested to property crime, followed by those in form three, form one, and form four. Age-wise, findings showed adolescents between the ages of 12 to 14 agreed most to property crime, followed by those between 15 to 17 and 9 to 11. This is similar to Popoola (2005), who defined his study participants as between 10 to 19 years of age and were stratified into junior and secondary classes. By school location, adolescents in the rural area attested less to property crime victimisation in the school environment. In contrast, adolescents in the urban area attested most to victimisation in the urban area.

The study revealed that most of the students detested the items on the questionnaire. This is contrary to the empirical work of Popoola (2005), who investigated the prevalence of peer victimisation among secondary school students in South Western Nigeria and argued in his study that the majority of participants reported overall high levels of peer victimisation with attacks on the property being the most frequent form of victimisation. From this study, students argued that one of the causes of property crime is poverty. This is evident in the works of Chauchan and Rappuci (2009) who stated that poverty has been a risk factor for violence exposure in low-income communities. This is, therefore, a push against property crime in the school environment.

Before the occurrence of property crime, there must be a reason for it. Mckindley (2005) opines that crimes are more likely to be repeated if no measures are taken against them. Therefore, understanding and identifying the root cause of these can be used entirely in preparing primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions to reduce or eliminate the harm or loss experienced by the victims. Theoretically, this study finding is supported by the theory of Wolfgang's (1957) victim precipitation theory, which focuses on why and how crime occurs. findings showed that property significantly predicts the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescents in secondary schools. The positive sign of the correlation value in chapter four implies that adolescents are more likely to suffer from psychosocial maladjustment when there is a constant occurrence of property crime in the school environment. To add to this, the findings from the cross-tabulation table above; descriptively showed that adolescents whose school environment is characterized

by property crime suffer more from psychosocial maladjustment than those whose school environment is not characterized by property crime. The findings of this study are in line with that of Kazemian et al. (2019) who posited that Property crime is another form of peer victimisation which is not void of psychosocial consequences. Juvenile delinquency comprises the practice of divergent behaviour such as psychoactive substances, conflicts, and criminal behaviours (theft, drug abuse, trafficking, and robbery) during adolescence.

## **5. Discussions**

Property crime significantly predicts psychosocial maladjustment of adolescents in secondary schools. This implied that adolescents are more likely to suffer from psychosocial maladjustment when there is constant or persistent property crime in the school environment. Adolescent students whose school environment is characterized by property crime suffer more from psychosocial maladjustment than those whose school environment is accessible. The research confirmed that property crime is manifested in school in ways such as property theft, bicycle theft, and vandalism. These findings align with Easton's (2010), who says property crime builds up in many aspects, such as vehicle burglary, bicycle theft, property theft, kidnapping, shoplifting, and vandalism. The work of Easton (2010) is slightly different because some of the aspects mentioned in relation to property crime are not aspects of property crime mentioned in the school environment. Examples of property crime as victimisation by peers around the school environment include bicycle theft, book theft, snacks theft, arson, and bicycle uplifting. Some of these indicators align with this work, as many students attest to it. This includes vandalism and property damage in school. At the same time, most students disagree with the following opinions of victimisation around the school compound: bicycle theft, vandalism, larceny, burglary, and vandalism. The study's findings deny that theft is rampant in the school environment, which is contrary to the view of (Clarke & Roland, 1999). Their book stipulated that theft is an indicator of property crime and is most common in the school environment.

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Before the occurrence of property crime, there must be a reason for it. Mckindley (2005) opines that crimes are more likely to be repeated if no measures are taken against them. Therefore, understanding and identifying the root cause of these can be used entirely in preparing primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions to reduce or eliminate the harm or loss experienced by the victims. Theoretically, this study finding is supported by the theory of Wolfgang's (1957) victim precipitation theory, which focuses on why and how crime occurs.

## **6. Conclusions**

From the findings, it was concluded that property crime significantly predicts the psychosocial maladjustment of adolescents in secondary schools. The positive sign of the correlation value in implies that adolescents are more likely to suffer from psychosocial maladjustment when there is a constant occurrence of property crime in the school environment. To add to this, the findings from the cross-tabulation table above; descriptively showed that adolescents whose school environment is characterized by property crime suffer more from psychosocial maladjustment than those whose school environment is not characterized by property crime. This is in line with Kazemian et al., 2019 who posited that Property crime is another form of peer victimization which is not void of psychosocial consequences. Juvenile delinquency comprises the practice of divergent behaviour such as psychoactive substances, conflicts, and criminal behaviours (theft, drug abuse, trafficking, and robbery) during adolescence.

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