

Full Length Research

The Dilemma of Juvenile Delinquency among Government Secondary Schools in Jema'a Local Government Area of Kaduna State Nigeria

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The essence of this research was to investigate the prevalence of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Jema'a local government of Kaduna state Nigeria. The study had two objectives. Two research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted. The population consisted of 5 government secondary schools, 8800 students and 178 teachers. 30 teachers and 90 students were randomly sampled. The instruments used were two questionnaires, The Juvenile Delinquency Questionnaire for Teachers (JDQT) and the Juvenile Delinquency Questionnaire for Students (JDQS) The validity of the instruments were established by two experts in social study education. The analysis of the data was done through percentages and rank ordering. Findings revealed a number of delinquent acts such as students hanging on trees and bushes around the schools, examination malpractices, destruction of school properties, stealing, and smoking Indian hemp. A cumulative analysis points at potential terrorist. Provision of counseling service for both parents and students, Kazan facilities, adoption innovative teaching strategies, award of scholarships, poverty alleviation programs are among the highlights of recommendations

Keywords: Dilemma, juvenile, delinquency, government, secondary, schools

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INTRODUCTION

In every society there are rules and regulations governing the behaviors of its members. A breach or violation of such rules and regulations, amount to social behavior that is sharply in contrast to the customary, traditional, or

generally accepted standard of behavior (Enderson, 2006). A juvenile is a prepubescent child, a person not legally of age, or is younger than may be charged with an offence. A delinquent is an individual who fails to obey

the laws (Oxford English dictionary online, 2010). Juvenile delinquency is the behavior of a child or youth that is so marked by violation of law, persistent mischievousness, antisocial behavior, disobedience, or intractability as to thwart correction by parents and to constitute a matter for by the juvenile courts (Thesaurus dictionary online, 2016). Juvenile delinquents are minors usually defined as been between the ages of 10 and 18 who have committed some act that violates the law of conduct. These acts aren't called "crimes" as they would for adults. Instead of a trial, the juvenile has an "adjudication" after which the juvenile receives a "disposition" and a sentence. However juvenile proceedings differ from adult proceedings. Delinquent acts generally fall into two categories. The first type of delinquent act is one that would be considered a crime had an adult committed it. For particular serious crimes, some jurisdictions will even try children as adults. The second type of delinquent act is one that wouldn't normally be a crime had a child performed it. These are typically known as "age-related" or "status" crimes.

The success of socialization process is said to be the determinant of children's behavior. This means that if the agents of socialization are used positively, children will come up with positive behaviors as such become helpful to the family, school and the entire society. Bhatia and Singhai (2001) are of the view that if parents, teachers and friends should have profound affection, provide profound security and approbation which are fundamental emotional needs of every human being, juveniles will have positive orientations. Children must be nurtured under supervision, guidance, protection and discipline in right proportions avoiding both excuses as well as neglect. In other words all life styles of parents and teachers must serve as models worth of emulation by children.

In Nigeria, secondary school students in the past were characterized by respect for parents, elders and teachers while drinking, stealing, truancy, examination malpractices, smoking, were not common practices among youth, these were termed as taboo (an inhibition that results from social custom or emotional aversion) to the society. Chaba (2002) avowed that students often get involved in antisocial behaviors because they feel that if they do not, they will be social misfits or termed as old fashioned among their peer groups or friends. Yosi (2015) blames the federal government for the increase in juvenile delinquency by taking over missionary schools. Since then there had been a steady increase in juvenile delinquency. This indicates that the tiers of government pay little attention on the aspect of morality. This is what Mboy (2010) describes as "Teaching knowledge without morality". In other words there is no balance in the academic system. In line with this the researchers discovered in the course of this research that in most of the schools religious knowledge has been replaced with

civic education (civic education in a democracy is education in self- government. Democratic self- government means that citizens are actively involved in their own governance; they do not just passively accept the dictums of others or acquiesce to the demands of others). Civic education is now a compulsory subject while religious education has been made optional. Confirming this fact, a West African Examination Chief Examiner disclosed to the researchers that the number of students who sat for religious education in the 2015 West African senior secondary examinations dropped with about 70% compared to previous years. This is a way of gradually bidding farewell to religious education in the Nigerian educational system and it is a pointer to an increasing rate of juvenile crimes in the country in its entirety.

Several theoretical models emphasized the relationship between education and delinquency, an association between academic achievement and delinquent behavior has been proposed by various hypothetical and theoretical approaches in literature. The school of failure hypothesis suggests that the failure experienced in school by juveniles with learning disabilities is the first of many negative experiences that will result in delinquency because of the development of a negative self- image (Deyanira, 2005). Channon and Williams (2014) found plausible evidence that delinquency by age 16 reduces the likelihood of graduating from high school and college. It is therefore pertinent to address juvenile delinquency with all aggression to combat illiteracy and its offshoots. The consequences of juvenile delinquency are many these include; personality disorders, conduct disorders, juvenile crime, interpersonal conflicts antisocial personality disorders, Kazan phenomenon, deviance, class attention deficit disorders, unwanted pregnancies and school dropout. According to Channon and Williams (2014) the cost of reduced educational attainment amongst delinquents is likely to have broader societal effects via decreased productivity and slowed economic growth. The results from the base line model provide plausible evidence that participation in delinquent activity by age 16 have far reaching consequences.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The crime rate in Jema'a local government area of Kaduna state is on the increase and sadly the culprits are most times young people who are just getting to the prime of their lives. The continuing patterns of delinquency include a long list of status offences. Juvenile crime is a perennial public concern. It includes theft, shoplifting, absenteeism and bullying in school, consumption of alcohol, smoking, running away from home etc. One of the major problems facing Jema'a local government area today is the rising trend of juvenile

delinquency in secondary schools. Destruction of public property has become the order of the day since early eighties and up to date it is difficult to have a whole academic session without unrest leading to the destruction of lives and properties, in the same vain children now dictate what suits them even if such things go against the norms of the society. Everyday complaints are launched here and there in respect of lack of discipline and lukewarm attitudes to studies amongst youth in the schools. Disciplinary measures are no longer adhered to. There had been a general assumption that lack of teachers' dedication, lack of religious teaching for moral instructions and general school failure has lead to juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Jema'a local government.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is to investigate the prevalence of juvenile delinquency amongst secondary school students. Specifically the objectives of the research were the following:

1. Unearth the highest risk factors of juvenile delinquency in Jema'a local government area of Kaduna state.
2. Discover the most delinquent behavior exhibited by juveniles in the study area.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the highest risk factors of juvenile delinquency?
2. What is the most common delinquent behavior exhibited by juveniles in the study area?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will help teachers to identify juvenile conduct disorders and provide appropriate referral, and understand the importance of using effective pedagogies to sustain the interest of the students. It will help parents understand the nature and changes emerging in the transition period from childhood to adolescence and provide appropriate guidance and needs for their children. By understanding the needs for adolescents curriculum planners can restructure the various curricula to attract the attention of learners. The study will create a need for the ministry of education to organize seminars, workshops and conferences for teachers. The results of the findings from this study will make school guidance counselors become familiar with the problems of adolescents so that proper behavioral guidance may be

provided for juveniles. The study will also be useful to juvenile courts and reformatory centers to see the need to provide remediating services to juvenile delinquents in schools and in the streets. The results from this research will be of benefit to the ministry of social welfare, youth and sports, the tiers of government in terms of decision making especially those that have to do with young people. The research is also aimed at providing literature to researchers who want to investigate further issues on juvenile delinquency. The study will educate families by providing them with information how to raise socially healthy children. It will teach children on the effects of drugs, gangs, sex and weapons.

This will go a long way to prevent insurgencies. The study will create awareness in the community through the girl brigade, Boys scout, Churches, mosques and other non- governmental organizations and volunteer groups to provide youths with the opportunity to interact in a safe social environment. The study will advocate for the establishment of the Nebraska Correctional Youth Facility (NCYF). This is a detention facility that gears its programs towards restoring delinquent youth. The facility holds young adults violent offenders and juvenile delinquents who have been tried in adult court for committing violent crimes. It is a maximum security institution that assists young inmates by providing them with the help they need to change their behavior.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study anchored on the anomie theory of differential association and the labeling theory. The anomie also known as the strain theory has its first version written by Merton (1957) who gave a biological explanation of deviance and concluded that biology cannot account for variations from one society to the next in the nature and extent of deviance. His primary interest was not so much why a particular individual deviates but why the rate of deviance, differ so dramatically in different societies and for different subgroups within a single society. Anomie is the explanation for high rates of deviant behavior. Anomie is a condition in which society provides little moral guidance to individuals. This explains the rising rate of juvenile delinquency in Jema'a local government area. Durkheim (2006) introduced the concept of anomie to describe the mismatch guild labor to evolving societal needs when the guild was homogeneous in its constituency. He equated homogeneous (redundant) skills to mechanical solidarity whose inertia retarded adaptation. Durkheim contrasted the condition of anomie as being the result of a malfunction of organic solidarity during the transition from mechanical solidarity. Durkheim's use of the term anomie was about a phenomenon of industrialization mass regimentation that could not adapt due to its own inertia, its resistance to

change which causes disruption cycles of collective behavior. Durkheim associated anomie to the influence of a lack of norm or norms that were too rigid. But such normlessness or norm-rigidity was a symptom of anomie, caused by the lack of differential adaptation that will enable norms to evolve naturally due to self-regulation, either to develop norms where some existed or to change norms that had become rigid and obsolete.

The strain theory states that social structures within society may pressure citizens to commit crime. Strain theory holds that crime is caused by the difficulty those in poverty have in achieving socially valued goals by legitimate means. As those with, for instance poor educational attainment have difficulty achieving wealth and status by securing well paid employment, they are more likely to use criminal means to obtain these goals. Merton suggests five adaptations to this dilemma:

1. Innovation: individuals who accept socially approved goals, but not necessarily the socially approved means.
2. Retreatism: those who reject socially approved goals and the means for acquiring them.
3. Ritualism: those who buy into a system of socially approved means, but lose sight of the goals. Merton believed that drug users are in this category.
4. Conformity: those who conform to the systems means and goals.
5. Rebellion: people who negate socially approved goals and means by creating a new system of acceptance goals and means.

The theory of differential association also deals with young people in a group context, and looks at how peer pressure and the existence of gang could lead them into crime. It suggests that young people are motivated to commit crimes by delinquent peers and learn criminal skills from them. There is strong evidence that young people with criminal friends are more likely to commit crimes themselves.

Labeling theory is a concept within criminology that explains deviant behavior from the social context rather than looking at the individual. It is part of interactionism criminology that states that once young people have been labeled as criminals they are more likely to offend. The idea is that once labeled as deviant a young person may accept that role, and be more likely to associate with others who have been similarly labeled. Labeling theorists believe that male children from poor families are more likely to be labeled deviant, and that this may partially explain why there are more working class young male offenders. Several theoretical models emphasize the relationship between education and delinquency. A relationship between academic achievement and delinquent behavior has been proposed by various

hypothetical and theoretical approaches in literature. The school failure hypothesis suggest that the failure experienced in school by juveniles with learning disabilities is the first of many negative experiences that will result in delinquency because of the development of negative self- image (Deyanira, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive analytic survey design was adopted. The population consisted of 5 public secondary schools, 178 teachers and 8800 students in Jema'a local government area of Kaduna state. Thirty teachers and 90 students were randomly sampled. Two questionnaires for teachers and students were used to collect data. The validity of the instruments was established by two experts in social studies education. The data collected were analyzed using percentages, frequency count and rank ordering

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research questions were answered in this section and explanation to the results given.

Research Question One

What are the highest risk factors of juvenile delinquency in Jema'a local government area?

Table 1 highlights the highest risk factors of delinquency amongst youth in Jema'a local government area. These include: lack of parental care, poverty, bad teaching methods, broken homes, lack of guidance counselors in schools, poor performance in school, lack of adequate instructional materials and bad association. Other risk factors (0) are underpinned.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: What is the most common delinquent behavior exhibited by juveniles in the study area?

From the analysis made in table 2 absence from school with no genuine reasons ranks first. Second on the list is examination malpractice. Third on the list is the breaking of school rules and regulations, violence, smoking of Indian and lying.

DISCUSSION

The results revealed that poverty, lack of parental care, broken homes, bad teaching methods, lack of guidance counselors amongst others are responsible for juvenile delinquency in Jema'a local government area of Kaduna state. Statistics indicates that truancy is the most

Table 1: Highest risk factors of juvenile delinquency

Highest Risk Factors Responsible for Juvenile Delinquency	Yes	%	No	%	No idea	%
Poverty	85	70.8	35	29.2	0	0
Bad Method of Teaching	70	58.3	43	35.8	7	5.8
Broken Homes	95	79.2	20	16.6	5	4.2
Lack of Parental Care	110	91%	10	8.3	0	0
Poor Performance in School	63	53.3	37	30.8	20	16.7
Inadequate Instructional Materials	53	44.2	54	45	13	10.8
Non Involvement of Religious Teachers	65	54.2	43	38.8	12	10
Large Family Size	0	0	0	-0	0	0
Home Discord	0	0	0	0	0	0
Child Maltreatment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Antisocial Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0
Antisocial Delinquent Peers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neighborhood Crime and Drug	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harsh Discipline	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poor Monitoring Supervision	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low Economic Status	0	0	0	0	0	0
Abusive Parents	0	0	0	0	0	0
Family Conflicts	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poor parent-child Relationship	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gang Membership	0	0	0	0	0	0
Child Neglect	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hyper activity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Exposure to Television Violence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emotional Factors	0	0	0	0	0	0
Peer Rejection	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low Academic Aspiration	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access to Weapons	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teenage Parenthood	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parental Psychopathology	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sibling Negative Influences	0	0	0	0	0	0
Teacher Victimization	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Large Enrolment without Adequate Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
School Poor Rule Enforcement	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bad Association	91	75.8	24	20	5	4.2
Lack of Guidance Counselors	84	70	26	21.7	10	8.3

delinquent behavior engaged in by students. This accounts for academic failure. The results obtained are consistent with Bature (2014) who also observed that peer group have powerful effects on human conduct and can dramatically influence decision making and behavior choices. The findings also agrees with Alvarado and Kumpfer (2000) who avowed that bad parenting practice and family environment have contributed to juvenile delinquency.

WAYS TO CURB JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The prevention of juvenile delinquency is an essential part of crime prevention in a society. By engaging in lawful, socially useful activities and adopting a humanistic orientation towards society and outlook on life, young persons can develop non-criminogenic attitudes. The successful prevention of juvenile delinquency requires efforts on the part of the entire society to ensure the harmonious development of adolescents with respect to the promotion of their personality from early childhood. The need for and importance of progressive delinquency prevention policies and the systematic and the

Table 2. Most common delinquent behavior exhibited by juveniles

Most Common Juvenile Delinquent Behavior	1st	2nd	3rd	4th Ranks	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Truancy	41	25	11	15	10	4	5	2	3	4
Stealing	10	10	12	20	7	14	10	15	6	7
Disobedience	17	35	12	10	5	7	11	14	5	4
Aggressiveness	15	7	17	6	10	10	6	17	12	10
Destruction of school properties	10	9	7	8	5	15	10	8	23	15
Examination malpractice	30	15	30	9	10	10	5	4	4	3
Lying	15	4	10	15	7	10	17	28	8	9
Unwanted pregnancy	5	10	13	12	5	19	17	10	9	20
Violence	15	9	5	14	10	11	26	14	8	8
Smoking Indian Hemp	15	10	8	5	25	6	20	5	20	6

elaboration of measures should be recognized. Community-based services and programs should be developed for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, particularly where no agencies have been established. Comprehensive prevention plans should be instituted at every level of government which should include the followings:

1. In-depth analysis of the problem and inventories of programs, services, facilities and resources.
2. Provide well- defined responsibilities for the qualified agencies, institutions and personnel involved in preventive efforts.
3. Develop mechanisms for the appropriate coordination of prevention efforts by governmental and non-governmental agencies.
4. Policies, programs and strategies based on prognostic studies to be continuously monitored and carefully evaluated in the course of implementation.
5. Youth participation in delinquency prevention policies and processes, including resources to community resources and youth self-help.
6. Special attention should be given to children of families affected by problems brought about by rapid and uneven economic, social and cultural change, in particular the children of migrants and refugee families.
7. Promotion and development of the personality, talent and mental and physical abilities of young people to their full potentials.
8. Provision of positive emotional support to young

persons and the avoidance of psychological maltreatment.

9. Schools should serve as resource and referral centers for the provision of medical, counseling and other services to young persons, particularly those with special needs, and suffering from abuse, neglect, victimization and exploitation.
10. School systems should attempt to meet and promote the highest professional and educational standards with respect to curricula, teaching and learning methods, approaches and the recruitment and training of qualified teachers. Regular monitoring and assessment of performance.
11. School systems should plan, develop and implement extracurricular activities of interest to young persons, in cooperation with community groups.
12. Special assistance should be given to children and young persons who find it difficult to comply with attendance codes and to drop-outs.
13. Schools should promote policies and rules that are fair and just. Students should be represented by bodies formulating school policies, including policy on discipline and decision making.
14. Community-based services and programs which respond to the special needs, problems, interests and concerns of young persons and which offer appropriate counseling and guidance to young persons and their families should be developed.
15. Communities should provide a wide range of community-based support measures for young persons, including community development

centers, recreational facilities and services to respond to the special problems of children who are at social risks.

16. A range of services and helping measures should be provided to deal with the difficulties experienced by young persons in the transition to adulthood. Such services should include special programs for young drug abusers which emphasize care counseling, assistance and therapy-oriented interventions.
17. Youth organization should be created at local level and given full participatory status in the management of community affairs. These organizations should encourage youth to organize collective and voluntary projects, particularly projects aimed at helping young persons in need of assistance.
18. The mass media should be encouraged to ensure that young persons have access to information and materials from a diversity of national and international sources.
19. The mass media should be encouraged to disseminate information on the existence of services, facilities and opportunities for young persons in the society.
20. Parents should be educated on their responsibilities towards their children
21. Religious education including moral instruction should be made compulsory
22. Poverty alleviation programs should be established

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