

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS IN EBONYI STATE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate and find out the various factors responsible for juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 250 male and 250 female students were randomly selected for the study from the three educational zones of Abakaliki, Onueke and Afikpo of the state. Data collected were analysed using weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the two research questions and T-test to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the respondents show that the 15 items in the questionnaire were the family-based and socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. In the light of the findings of this study the following

recommendations were made for reducing the incidences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria, which include that the educational authorities should train, motivate and encourage teachers on the modern and most effective methods of instilling discipline in schools, parents should rise up to their God given role as the child character moulder starting from the family through the entire society, and that every school should be made to have well equipped and functional guidance and counselling unit to cater for both career and emotional needs of students.

Keywords: juvenile, delinquency, secondary school, students

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Marriage is the oldest social institution ordained by God as a social contract between two individuals to become husband and wife. Marriage as ordained by God gives legitimacy to sexual relationship and reproduction of legitimate children (Sarker, 2007). Marriage is the state of being united with a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife for the purpose of companionship, procreation and maintaining a family (Gove (2006). However, marital instability has become a thing of concern in this contemporary society and this is associated with separation, divorce, and widowhood. Separation and divorce are social phenomena created by either husband or the wife or both, but widowhood is beyond the control of human being, it is related to death and thus universal (Amina, 2008). However, separation may be in two categories: “physical separation”, that is; when the husband and the wife reside separately without resolving their marital tie, “mental separation” that is; when the couple decides to live together in the same household but without having biological and psychological relations. It is imperative to note that when marriage is dissolved in the court of law, it is called divorce, but when it is dissolved by death is called widowhood (Amina, 2008). Moreover, the term marital instability is used to refer to the process whereby marriages breakdown through separation, desertion or divorce (Lesmin and Sarah, 2008). The act of divorce may bring about juvenile delinquency. No wonder citizens, researchers and public officials perceive juvenile delinquency

as a major social contemporary concern in Nigeria. Juvenile crimes witnessed in Nigeria include: drug abuse, cultism, bullying, truancy, examination malpractices, prostitution and theft (Ugwuoke and Duruji, 2010; Sanni; Okediji; Modo and Ezeh, 2010). Shoemaker (2010), defined juvenile delinquency as “illegal acts, whether criminal or status offences, which are committed by youth under the age of 18”. From this definition, it is pertinent to highlight the two types of delinquent offences associated with young people, herein referred to as juveniles/children. The first type of offence is a conduct that would be a criminal law violation for an adult, such as rape, burglary and robbery. The other type of delinquent offence called “status offences” are delinquent conducts that do not apply to adults, such as running away from home and truancy (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2001; Alfrey ,2010).

This ugly trend led to the establishment of judicial administrative processes by the colonial administrators to deal with juvenile delinquents (Fourchard, 2006). It is appalling that the worrisome issue of juvenile delinquency still plagues the contemporary Nigerian society in a serious dimension (Muhammed; Salawu; Adekeye; Ayinla and Adeoya, 2009). However, the problem of juvenile delinquency is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. In 2007, the law enforcement agencies in the United States of America reported 2.18 million arrests of juveniles. Alfry (2010) reported that the United States Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 72% of jailed juveniles came from fragmented families. According to World Youth Report cited in Sheryln (2008), the rate of criminal activity among juveniles in groups in the Russian Federation is about three to four times higher than that of adult offenders. Moved by the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency in Britain, Juby and Farrington (2001) examined juvenile delinquency and family disruption in a longitudinal survey of South London males from age 8 to 46. The researchers found that 29% of the boys from disrupted families were convicted as juveniles compared with 18% of the boys from stable families. The researchers concluded that family disruption was one of the contributory factors to the upsurge of juvenile delinquency in Britain.

Statement of the problem

The increasing rate of juvenile delinquency has become a major social problem globally and locally. Researchers and concerned individuals have traced the preponderance of juvenile delinquency to the increasing rate of family instability among other factors. Juvenile delinquency in Nigeria is a major social problem which affects the whole society and constitutes a serious impediment to development. Children from unstable homes are more likely to run away from their families than children who come from more stable families (Uwaoma and Udeagha, 2007).

Furthermore, an unstable home has an imbalance, and as a result is detrimental to a child's socialization and personality adjustment. The resultant effect is that a child may be more vulnerable to negative peer pressure and may ultimately commit delinquent acts not committed by children from stable families where there is a balanced structure of two parents who act as good role models in the child's acquiring proper roles (Odebunmi, 2007). Children growing up in unstable families are at a greater risk of experiencing a variety of behavioural and educational problems, including; smoking, drug abuse, vandalism, violence and criminal acts than children from stable families (Sheryln, 2008). According to Sheryln, changes in the family can affect the levels of self-control in children. The transitions in the family structure also lead to changes in the organization, monitoring and disciplining of the children. If the changes are widespread, the resulting changes in the adolescent levels of self-control will likely lead to anti-social behaviours.

Factors found to insulate children from delinquency are stable, unbroken homes with a supportive parent-child relationship, as well as a set of parents who provide both a positive role model and the financial assistance needed to sustain an adequate household (Smith & Walters, 2008).

Based on these essential elements, it is obvious that every effort must be made to strengthen the family, in hopes of combating delinquency and bringing about a more stable environment for children to learn and grow. On the other hand, Children from a broken home have been found to be two to three times more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems, when compared to children from intact homes (Popenoe, 2005). The result of this is that many parents do not fully grasp their role as a teacher nor do they realize the influence they exert as parents on their

children. When these vital lessons are not taught by the family, a child may collapse under the pressures of the outside world, with juvenile delinquency being an almost certain fate.

While it may be that adolescents are being processed through the system more today rather than actually committing more forms of crime and delinquency, they are nonetheless experiencing increased involvement with the criminal justice system creating problems for parents, schools, communities, and other children who are in the presence of juvenile delinquents. Two of the main factors influencing juvenile delinquency are the family structure that a child is exposed to and the relationships adolescents have with parents. As with patterns of juvenile delinquency, family structure in Nigeria has also changed dramatically over the last century, becoming very diverse in today's society. In Nigeria today, crime is common among the young people, many of them are caught in one criminal act or the other. Thus, it is in this light that the researchers wish to investigate the effect of marital instability on juvenile delinquency in Nigeria.

Scope of the study

The study focuses and is limited to finding the factors responsible for juvenile delinquency among secondary schools students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria and determining the consequent effects in the society. The study primary focuses on the public senior secondary schools in area.

Purpose of the study

Generally, the main purpose or aim of this study is to find out the inherent relationship between family instability and juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in the area of the study. The study is also geared toward;

- (i) Identifying the family-related factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria.
- (ii) Identifying the socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria.

Significance/Justification of the study

The findings of this study will provide a good knowledge of how to handle the rising incidences of juvenile delinquencies among secondary school students our society. This will go a long way in ensuring orderliness and peaceful study environment in the schools and the family.

The findings shall be of great benefit to school administrators and teachers.

Research questions

A single research question guided the study, and includes the following.

- (i) What are the family-based and socioeconomic factors causing juvenile delinquencies among secondary school students?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was developed in the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance. This includes:

HO. There is no significant difference in mean responses of both male and female students on the family-based and socioeconomic factors causing juvenile delinquencies among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Analysis

The theoretical framework on which this paper is hinged on is the Social Control theory as postulated by Travis Hirschi in (1969) as cited in Pratt; Gau, and Franklin, (2011). The theory posits that criminal behaviour and delinquency result from failure of individuals to bond with conventional social groups such as the family and schools (Miller, 2009). In other words, a person is less likely to choose crime if he/she has strong social bonds. Miller (2009) posits that Social Control theory says that to the extent that a youth/a child fails to become attached to the control agencies of society (for instance, the families and the schools), the youths' chances of engaging in delinquency are increased. Hirschi (1969) identified four key concepts in his social control theory; attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2001). According to Hirschi, attachment to others in the society provides the individuals insulation from committing deviant acts; Commitment entails an investment in conventional activities and norms; Involvement is behavioural and measures one's tendency to participate in conventional activities while belief in the legitimacy of social norms and values minimize delinquency (Winfre and Abadinsky, 2003).

Extrapolating from the social control theory, juvenile delinquency can be linked to family instability. Hence, the inability of the family as a social institution to bond with the children as a result of instability and disruptions could be associated with the problem of juvenile delinquency (Winfre and Abadinsky, 2003). Social Control Theory proposes that people's relationships, commitments, values, norms, and beliefs encourage them not to break the law. Thus, if moral codes are internalized and individuals are tied into and have a stake in their wider community, they will voluntarily limit their propensity to commit deviant acts. The theory seeks to understand the ways in which it is possible to reduce the likelihood of criminality developing in individuals (Richard, 2002). It does not consider motivational issues, simply stating that human beings may choose to engage in a wide range of activities, unless the range is limited by the processes of socialization and social learning. The theory derives from a Hobbesian view of human nature as represented in *Leviathan*, i.e. that all choices are constrained by implicit social contracts, agreements and arrangements among people. Thus, morality is created in the construction of social order, assigning costs and consequences to certain choices and defining some as evil, immoral and/or illegal.

Moreover, Hirschi (2009) has argued that young people are more likely to conform if their bond to society is strong. The theory further postulates that deviance is the outcome of a failure of social control. When individual have strong bond to society, their behaviour will conform to the conventional norms when any of these bonds is weakened. When the bond in the family is weakened or broken, the constraints that society puts on its members may compel an individual to violate the law. Social control theory assumes that all individuals are potential delinquents and criminal "born bad" and that social control, not moral values maintain law. In the absence of sensitivity to and interest in others, a youth is free to commit criminal acts. With the explanation of this theory, if there was no social control there would be little conformity. The theory further postulates that people who are integrated into the society tend to follow its role, whereas, people who are isolated from society may be inclined to break them. The youths who have close relationship with their parents, friends and teachers and who maintain a positive self-image will be able to resist the lure of deviant behaviour.

Apparently, parents, peers and school are the most important social institutions which a person should maintain. Attachment to parents is the most important. The second element is

commitment; this involves the time, energy and effort expended in pursuit of conventional lines of action. Social Control Theory holds that if people build up a strong involvement in life, property and reputation, they will be less likely to engage in acts that will jeopardize their position. Furthermore, on the issue of involvement, Hirschi believes an individual's heavy involvement in conventional activities does not leave time for illegal behaviour. He obliges that involvement in school, recreation and family insulates the youth from the potential lure of criminal behaviour that idleness encourages. On the belief system, people who live in common social settings often share a similar moral doctrine and revere such human values as sharing sensitively to the rights of others and admiration for the legal code. If these beliefs are absent or weakened, individuals are more likely to share in antisocial acts.

Conceptual Analysis

The relationship Between Marital Instability and Juvenile Delinquency

Researches indicate that various exposures to violence within the family or outside the family are important sources of delinquent acts. In other words, if violence encompasses all emotional environmental aspects of the juvenile's life, he is more likely to engage in delinquent activities (Hagan and Foster, 2001). Families behaviours particularly parental monitoring and disciplining seem to influence association with delinquent peers throughout the juvenile period (Cashwell and Vacc, 2004). A long history of research has further linked family dysfunction with future criminal offending, in part because parents monitor and provide nurturance to children. It is thought that the loosening of bonds among family members may result in more criminal involvement. In most cases, delinquents have been viewed as individuals who come from less intact families often referred to as "broken homes". Typically, the term "broken home" has been operationalized to mean "children residing in single-parent households or any type of household other than a household in which both biological parents are present". In contrast, an "intact family" usually refers to a nuclear family arrangement in which both biological parents reside in the household with their biological children. "Intact family arrangements" differ from other modern-day family arrangements including single-parent arrangements, two-parent arrangements

involving a step-parent, extended family arrangements, and the adoptive or foster family arrangement (Kierkus and Bauer, 2002). A study by Demuth and Brown (2004), demonstrates that broken homes are associated with juvenile delinquency but also that family arrangements are not just a broken home issue. Specifically, the researchers found that levels of juvenile delinquency were much higher in teenagers residing with single fathers and lowest among teenagers who were part of a two-parent household. The researchers suggest that higher levels of delinquency among children residing with their fathers were due mainly to inadequate parental involvement in a teenager's life. They drew the inference that overall, the lack of supervision and the absence of close relationships between the teenager and his parents are factors that influence delinquency.

However, Hoffman and Johnson (2008), in their findings suggest that a broken home is associated with juvenile delinquency. However, these researchers did not find any significant evidence of increased juvenile delinquency associated with whether the child resided with the father or mother. Other researchers have found that many family characteristics and family environment influence juvenile delinquency behaviour. For example, the number of people in a family, inconsistent parenting, familial problems, child neglect, and the children's attachment to parents (Derzon and Lipsey, 2000; Wasserman and Seracini, 2001). Changes in family arrangements emerge for reasons including separation, divorce, and sudden death of a parent, unemployment, and sequel of substance abuse (Demuth and Brown, 2004). The family is very important in creating a law-abiding child; whereas truancy and school drop-outs are disturbing issues confronting adolescents, parents, and teachers alike. Continued efforts to decrease the number of delinquent acts have led many researchers to investigate the underlying factors that lead to juvenile delinquency. Researches indicate that the family environment is an important variable in the development of delinquency. Gorman-Smith and Tolan (2008), discover that parental conflicts and parental aggressiveness predicted violent offending whereas lack of maternal affection and parental criminality predicted involvement in property crimes. In another study conducted by Gorman-Smith; Sheidow; Tolan and Henry, (2001), data showed that children are more likely to resort to violence if there is violence within the relationships that they may share with their family. Thornberry (2007) posits that children who live in homes with only one parent or in which marital relationships have been disrupted by divorce or separation are

more likely to display a range of behavioural problems including delinquencies than children who are from two parent families. Wright and Wright (2004) study shows that single parent families produce more delinquent children than two-parent families. In consonance with this, Muehlenberg (2002), research findings stress that the very absence of intact families makes gang membership more appealing. According to Wright and Wright (2004), two-parent families provide increase supervision and surveillance on property while single-parenthood increases the likelihood of delinquency and victimization simply by the fact that there is one less person to supervise adolescent's behaviour. Many familiar variables have further been studied in an attempt to better understand the ethology of delinquency. Flannelly *et al.* (2009), report that adolescents without parental supervision during and after school hours are more likely to engage in delinquent acts.

Featherstone, Cundick and Jensen (1993), claim that youth from intact or two parent families are less likely to report school problem than are children from single-parent families.

Furthermore, Clark and Shields (2007), in their study found a correlation between familial communication and juvenile delinquency asserting that the level of communication within the family among its members may significantly contribute to delinquency. Cashwell and Vacc (2006) investigated the role of family cohesion and found that a cohesive family environment reduces the chances of delinquent behaviours. Similarly, Shields and Clark (2005) found that low levels of adaptability in the family results in higher levels of delinquency. It is apparent that there appears to be a relationship between family arrangements and delinquency in juvenile.

Furthermore, Sanni et al (2010) and Goeke-Morey, (2014) have produced the following manifestations of juvenile delinquencies in secondary schools in Nigeria. These include: cruelty, bullying, fighting, vandalism, roughness during games, use of foul language, stealing, lying, cheating, examination malpractice, gambling, truancy, drug abuse, noise-making, disobedience, stubbornness, apathy, untidiness, failure to wear correct school uniform, reading of pornographic materials, sexual immorality, mob action, loitering, and carrying of weapon. Bringing into perspective the preponderance of juvenile delinquency, Edelman (2005) discovers that about 1,234 youths run away from home and 2,255 teenagers drop-out of school each day. Every five minutes, a juvenile is arrested for some kind of violent crime, and every two hours a child is

harmed with a weapon. Without doubt, the problem of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools is a grave one. Going by statistical data available on the frequency, intensity and diversity of juvenile delinquency, it appears that in the war against juvenile delinquency, the adult society is steadily losing ground on every front.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this study is discussed under the following sub-headings:

Design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instruments, administration of the instrument and methods of data analysis.

Design of the study

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey design according to Nworgu (2006), is the one in which a group of people is studied by collecting and analysing data from few people, considered to be representative of the entire group. The author further stated that questionnaire, test or interview could be used to collect data in survey design. The design was considered appropriate for this study because questionnaire was used to obtain data from students teachers in the area of the study.

Area of the Study

The area of study is Ebonyi state of Nigeria. The state is located in the southeast geopolitical zone of the country and thirteen local government council areas. The states have many junior and senior secondary schools with the primary target of ensuring access to quality secondary education by every child of school age.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises all the senior secondary students in the 289 secondary schools in Ebonyi state. According to the official record from the Planning, Research and Statistics of the secondary education board of the state (2022) there are 11,902 students in Ebonyi state.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Multi stage sampling techniques was used in choosing 500 respondents comprising 250 male students and 250 female students, for the study. At least 100 students will be sampled from each of the three educational zones of the state.

Instrument for Data Collection

The Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire called 'Secondary School Juvenile Delinquencies Questionnaire' (SSJDQ). The questionnaire items were generated based on the information gathered from the review of related literature. There are 15 items in the questionnaire.

Each questionnaire item is assigned a four point scale of: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Disagree (D); Strongly Disagree (SD), with the corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument was firstly validated by three (3) experts; one from Measurement and Evaluation, Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo, and the other two from the department of Educational Psychology, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The validators will be given a copy of the questionnaire for appropriate vetting, validation and suggestions. Their respective suggestions were incorporated in the production of the final questionnaire.

Reliability of Instrument

The Chronbach's Alpha coefficient method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. It was obtained by administering a single test to 10 and 50 selected teachers and students in some selected senior secondary schools in Cross River state. The choice of schools in the state is because they were in another geopolitical zone of the country.

The data obtained from the administration of the questionnaire were analysed by finding the variance of each item of the questionnaire and the variance of the total number of items in each section of the questionnaire. The variances were used to calculate the alpha coefficient of the questionnaire.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers involved ten research assistants from selected senior secondary schools within the three educational zones of the state for the study. These research assistants will be trained to assist in the administration of the questionnaire to the teachers and students. Five hundred (500) copies of the questionnaire are expected to be administered and subsequently retrieved.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected will be analysed using weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the two research questions and T-test to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. Four response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD), and Disagree (D) were posed for the respondents for each item. Each of the items was assigned a value, thus: SA =

4, A = 3, SD = 2 and D = 1. This produced a cut of point of 2.50. Any mean of 2.50 and above was accepted and rejected when below that value. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research Question One

What are the family-based and socioeconomic factors causing juvenile delinquencies among secondary school students in Ebonyi state?

Table1. Mean responses of students on the family-based and socioeconomic factors causing juvenile delinquencies among secondary school students in Ebonyi states.

s/n	Item statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Decision
1	Instability in the family due to absence of cohesion and love among the parents.	1680	165	30	10	1885	3.77	1.00	Accepted
2	Single parenthood due to absence of father or mother.	400	645	340	15	1400	2.80	1.25	Accepted
3	Poverty and general low level of living among the families.	440	645	270	40	1395	2.79	1.11	Accepted
4	Poor exemplary lifestyles among the parents/guardians to the children.	760	750	60	30	1600	3.20	1.16	Accepted
5	Early exposure of children to violence, amoral lifestyle and other related vices.	1480	310	40	5	1835	3.67	1.07	Accepted
6	Over-pampering and faulty early child upbringing.	940	690	30	20	1680	3.36	1.09	Accepted
7	Negative peer group influence.	504	750	150	35	1439	2.89	0.44	Accepted
8	Lack of proper character moulding and supervision in the family and school.	840	270	140	30	1280	2.56	0.51	Accepted
9	Lack of extra-curriculum activities to keep the children	500	825	160	15	1490	2.98	0.62	Accepted

busy.

10	Poor implementation of educational reform programmes and its implementations to the institutions	760	660	160	10	1590	3.18	0.99	Accepted
11	Insufficient and experienced trained to enforce and maintain discipline in schools.	1640	180	40	10	1870	3.74	1.04	Accepted
12	Unnecessary parents'/guardians' interferences in the disciplinary processes in schools.	420	565	190	115	1290	2.62	0.92	Accepted
13	Lack of seriousness by the heads of institutions and teachers to maintain discipline in schools.	1200	435	80	15	1730	3.46	1.20	Accepted
14	General quest for money and material things in the society.	360	945	180	5	1490	2.98	0.91	Accepted
15	General failure to live up to the expectation by relevant institutions for maintaining discipline in the society.	780	660	145	9	194	3.19	1.02	Accepted

The data presented in Table 1 revealed that the 15 items in the table had their mean values ranging from 2.56 to 3.77. This means that each of the mean value is above the cut-off point of 2.50, indicating that they are all family-based and socioeconomic factors causing juvenile delinquencies among secondary school students in Ebonyi state. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.44 to 1.25. This means that each of the standard deviations is below 1.96. It therefore shows that the respondents were not too far from the mean and they were close to one another in their responses.

Hypothesis Ho:

There is no significant difference in mean responses of both male and female students on the family-based and socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. The data for testing the hypothesis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. T-test analysis of the responses of two groups of respondents (male and female secondary school students of Ebonyi state) on the family-based and socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria

s/n	Item statement	Male students	Female students	t-cal	t-tab	Remark
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		N = 250		N = 250				
		X ₁	S ₁ ²	X ₂	S ₂ ²			
1	Instability in the family due to absence of cohesion and love among the parents.	3.00	0.49	3.56	0.44	-1.59	1.96	Not significant
2	Single parenthood due to absence of father or mother.	3.10	0.66	3.46	0.50	-4.77	1.96	Not significant
3	Poverty and general low level of living among the families.	3.74	0.97	3.14	0.95	-2.97	1.96	Not significant
4	Poor exemplary lifestyles among the parents/guardians to the children.	3.71	0.46	3.69	0.46	0.40	1.96	Not significant
5	Early exposure of children to violence, amoral lifestyle and other related vices.	3.27	0.99	3.44	0.87	-1.96	1.96	Not significant
6	Over-pampering and faulty early child upbringing.	3.00	0.92	2.91	0.83	0.70	1.96	Not significant
7	Negative peer group influence.	3.19	1.09	3.28	0.86	-0.70	1.96	Not significant
8	Lack of proper character moulding and supervision in the family and school.	2.66	1.08	3.06	0.72	-3.52	1.96	Not significant
9	Lack of extra-curriculum activities to keep the children busy.	3.59	0.50	3.40	0.49	-2.96	1.96	Not significant
10	Poor implementation of educational reform programmes and its implementations to the institutions	3.14	0.79	3.02	0.95	1.06	1.96	Not significant
11	Insufficient and experienced trained to enforce and maintain discipline in schools.	2.96	0.84	3.17	0.38	-2.86	1.96	Not significant
12	Unnecessary parents'/guardians' interferences in the disciplinary processes in schools.	3.26	0.70	3.31	0.47	-0.33	1.96	Not significant

13	Lack of seriousness by the heads of institutions and teachers to maintain discipline in schools.	3.41	0.69	3.36	0.46	0.13	1.96	Not significant
14	General quest for money and material things in the society.	3.29	0.74	3.54	0.48	-2.80	1.96	Not significant
15	General failure to live up to the expectation by relevant institutions for maintaining discipline in the society.	3.35	0.83	3.48	0.47	-1.60	1.96	Not significant

df = 499

The data presented in Table 2 revealed that each of the 15 items in the table had a calculated t-value less than the table value of 1.96 (two tailed test) at 0.05 significance and 499 degrees of freedom. This indicates that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the two groups of respondents (male and female secondary school students of Ebonyi state) on the family-based and socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. With this result the null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld for the 15 items.

Results

The following findings emerged from the study based on the research question answered and hypothesis tested. The respondents agreed that there are family-based and socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria.

- Instability in the family due to absence of cohesion and love among the parents
- Single parenthood due to absence of father or mother
- Poverty and general low level of living among the families
- Poor exemplary lifestyles among the parents/guardians to the children.
- Early exposure of children to violence, amoral lifestyle and other related vices.
- Over-pampering and faulty early child upbringing.
- Negative peer group influence
- Lack of proper character moulding and supervision in the family and school.
- Lack of extra-curriculum activities to keep the children busy.
- Poor implementation of educational reform programmes and its implementations to the institutions
- Insufficient and experienced trained to enforce and maintain discipline in schools.
- Unnecessary parents'/guardians' interferences in the disciplinary processes in schools.

- Lack of seriousness by the heads of institutions and teachers to maintain discipline in schools
- General quest for money and material things in the society
- General failure to live up to the expectation by relevant institutions for maintaining discipline in the society.

Finding on Hypothesis

The finding of the hypothesis tested revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the two groups of respondents (male and female secondary school students of Ebonyi state) on the family-based and socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. With this result the null hypothesis of no significant difference was upheld for the 15 items.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate and find out the various factors responsible for juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, which according to Nworgu (2006), is the one in which a group of people is studied by collecting and analysing data from few people, considered to be representative of the entire group. A total of 250 male and 250 female students were randomly selected for the study from the three educational zones of Abakaliki, Onueke and Afikpo of the state. Data collected were analysed using weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the two research questions and T-test to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings from the respondents show that the 15 items in the questionnaire were the family-based and socio-economic factors causing juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria. These factors identified include instability in the family due to absence of cohesion and love among the parents, single parenthood due to absence of father or mother, poverty and general low level of living among the families, poor exemplary lifestyles among the parents/guardians to the children, early exposure of children to violence, amoral lifestyle and

other related vices, over-pampering and faulty early child upbringing, negative peer group influence, lack of proper character moulding and supervision in the family and school, lack of extra-curriculum activities to keep the children busy, poor implementation of educational reform programmes and its implementations to the institutions, insufficient and experienced trained to enforce and maintain discipline in schools, unnecessary parents'/guardians' interferences in the disciplinary processes in schools, lack of seriousness by the heads of institutions and teachers to maintain discipline in schools, general quest for money and material things in the society, and general failure to live up to the expectation by relevant institutions for maintaining discipline in the society.

Educational Implications

The findings of this study have far reaching implications for not only for the success of teaching and learning in the schools but for the students to have the right character and attitude in pursuing their various careers. When relevant stakeholders in educational sector are made to be fully aware of the various factors causing students delinquent behaviours in the school, they will be better placed to handle the problem.

In recent time, cultism and examination malpractices have bedevilled the educational system in the country. This study gives the foundation knowledge of the source of these problems, and from which relevant solutions can be sought. This study can also form a good source of material for research works on improving security, discipline and conducive teaching and learning environment in the educational institutions in Nigeria.

Limitations of the Study

- (i) The research work focused on identification of family-based and socio-economic factors which cause juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state.
- (ii) It took the researcher extra time and effort to reach the respondents due to distances involved and their tight schedules of activities and to get the students in the right frame of minds.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study the following recommendations are made for reducing the incidences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ebonyi state of Nigeria.

- i. Educational authorities should train, motivate and encourage teachers on the modern and most effective methods of instilling discipline in schools.
- ii. Parents should rise up to their God given role as the child character moulder starting from the family through the entire society.
- iii. Every school should be made to have well equipped and functional guidance and counselling unit to cater for both career and emotional needs of students. This will ensure that the students are properly monitored and guided both academically and emotionally.

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