

Family Background Factors as Correlates of Juvenile Delinquency Among In-School Adolescents in Delta State

Uyanwanne, Innocent

uyanwanneinnocent@gmail.com ; +2347065790365

Department of Guidance and Counselling
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike

Abstract

This study determined the extent family background factors correlate with juvenile delinquency among in-school adolescents in Delta State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. A sample of 826 was used for the study. Two instruments namely, “Family Background Factors Questionnaire (FBFQ)” and Juvenile Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (JDBQ)” were developed by the researcher and validated by three experts. The stability of the FBFQ and JDBQ was determined using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation and reliability indices 0.85 and 0.86 were obtained. The internal consistency of the FBFQ and JDBQ was determined using Cronbach Alpha and reliability indices of 0.79 and 0.81 were obtained. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson’s r , R^2 to answer the research questions while linear regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance. The findings of the study indicated that intact family unit structure significantly correlated with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents as it predicted 55.1% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. Broken homes correlated with 91.4% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. It was concluded that broken homes have more negative causative impact than intact family unit structure on juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that functional counselling centres be established at secondary education level and professional counsellors employed to counsel the students.

Key: Family background factors, Intact family, broken homes, juvenile delinquent behaviour

Introduction

The increase in the cases of maladjusted students in the secondary schools especially in areas of delinquent behaviours, truancy, examination malpractice, school drop-out, fighting and other school violence and offences has been a source of concern. Juvenile delinquency refers to prohibitive behaviour among a particular age bracket –children and youths. Ruch in Sambo (2018) defined juvenile delinquency as the problems caused by the youth in the community which are now universally accepted as crimes frequently committed by young people under the age of 21 years. Juvenile is seen as young youthful, not fully developed, not yet adult that has reached sexual maturity. In the same vein, Adeshina, (2019) opined that juvenile delinquency is that behaviour on the part of the children, which may, under the law subject those children to the juvenile court. Water in ZEDA (2015) noted that youth delinquency has been associated with the adolescent age; and to him this is because it is the age when youths struggle for their freedom. In this attempt they commit so many offences. Block in Sunday (2017) observed that ironically as nations grow richer and the opportunities for youths multiply, juvenile delinquency seems to increase steadily in almost every society.

Delinquents has been categorized as Un-socialized delinquents, socialized delinquents and over-inhibited neurotics (UNICEF, 2011). Un-socialized delinquents tend to be malicious and violent; lacking in remorse. According McCord and McCord in Adeshina. (2019) the un-socialized delinquents also called the psychopathic are the most dangerous as they lack the ability to form a lasting emotional relationship with others. There is almost total lack of guilt, remorse or inhibition. The psychopathic does not find emotional satisfaction in gang membership. He commits a wide gamut of crime and has a remarkably high rate of recidivism. The Socialized delinquents tend to be the commonest type of delinquents. They keep bad company a lot and are less co-operative and out-going (Bello, 2018). The socialized delinquent according to Reiss in Adeshina (2019) does not suffer from any particular psychological disorder, other than those which characterized the typical adolescent. His crimes are not motivated by deep-seated anxieties or unresolved conflicts, but rather by a simple desire to conform to the norms of his gang. The socialized delinquent seems to be produced by a frustrating and inconsistent family background (Glueck & Glueck in Adeshina, 2019). The over-inhibited neurotics are the exclusive, sensitive and worrying types (Debayo, 2015). Wheeler in Adeshina (2019) maintained that the neurotic delinquents suffer from deep anxiety, intense insecurity and often pervasive guilt. For such a person, criminal behaviour is a way of expressing an unresolved conflict and to others a release from anxiety. His behaviour stems

from deeply impeded psychological causes rather than from a simple acceptance of a gang culture as a means of winning prestige. His behaviour exhibits compulsive quality that is often absent in socialized delinquents. The juvenile arsonists, sexual offender, or narcotic addict usually comes from the ranks of neurotic delinquents (Abraham in Adeshina, 2019).

Efforts have been made to prevent juvenile delinquency among in-school adolescents. The most obvious reason is that delinquency puts a youth at risk for drug use and dependency, school drop-out, incarceration, injury, early pregnancy, and adult criminality. Saving youth from delinquency saves them from wasted lives. Many of the most popular delinquency-prevention programmes have been ineffective. Some even increased the risks of future delinquency (Greenwood, 2018). Some of the identified risk factors for delinquency are genetic or biological and cannot easily be changed. Others are dynamic, involving the quality of parenting, school involvement, peer group associations, or skill deficits. Generally speaking the grand lines of the prevention programme that have been proven to effectively hold the young age to the delinquent attitude are included the home, the society, the school environment, peer group, social and emotional disturbance, absence of sex education, lack of social acceptability as a result of maladjustment outside the home and instigation or incitement and others. However, the extent each of these variables could correlate with juvenile delinquency among the in-school adolescents have not been adequately investigated. Therefore, one wonders the extent family background factors correlate with juvenile delinquency among in-school adolescents.

The family is the most important primary group and the smallest social unit in society. It has its roots in our biological and physical nature. As such it is universal in the sense that no human society could possibly exist or has existed without some form of family organization. Akubue and Okolo (2018) defined family as a group of people who interact and communicate with others such as husband, wife, and children. Doob (2017) defined family as a social unit composed of two or more people who live together and are related by blood, marriage or adoption.

However, married couple without children, according to Doob (2017) can adopt because couple, though bound by the strongest personal ties, do not constitute a family, for such ties can conceivably exist among couples who are not married. What gives the family its character are children for only in such a family can that intimate, personal relationship be established by which the family can perform its function of rearing, protecting and educating the children,

transmitting to them the social values it has inherited and creating a special bond between all the members. The family may be of different types which include intact family unit structure and broken homes, single, dual, monogamous, polygamous, nuclear or extended as the case may be. It could also be divorced, separated or intact family types.

An intact family can be said to be a functioning union between a mother and a father, so when a break up exists, the turmoil may affect a child to a greater extent. A functioning family is more beneficial to a child than a dysfunctional one. Family separation was a great contributor of children for example running to the streets from their homes. It has been reported that family dynamics and structure are causal variables in discussing delinquency because they have a critical role in both the socialization and control of juveniles (Popenoe, 2017). Literature reports showed that an intact home with a mother and father (emphasis on the father) has a stabilizing effect and may act as a deterrent in certain areas of juvenile delinquency (Doob, 2017). An intact family structure has been found to influence a child's susceptibility to peer pressure, contribute to offspring development and capabilities in adapting to society and is linked to fewer incidences of delinquency related issues (Steinberg, 2019). Proportionately, more juveniles who are referred to police agencies and the juvenile courts for delinquency charges live in disrupted families when compared to the general population. Children from biologically intact homes have lower incidence of illegal behaviour that is paralleled by their lower rate of susceptibility to peer pressure to commit deviant acts (Mullens, 2014). The study suggests that there is a link between juvenile deviance and family structure. The study also suggests that juveniles who are charged with more serious acts of delinquency are from incomplete homes than juveniles charged with lesser acts of misconduct. The family is shown to have a direct influence on negative peer pressure that may in turn affect a juvenile's involvement in delinquent activity (Steinberg, 2019).

A broken home is another variable that is suspected to correlate with juvenile among in-school adolescents. Juveniles from broken homes according to Mullens (2014) are 2.7 times more likely to run away from their family than children living in intact homes. The core belief is that a broken home has an imbalance and as a result is detrimental to a child's socialization and personality adjustment. As a result, a child may be more susceptible to negative peer pressure and may ultimately commit acts of delinquency not committed by children from intact homes where there is a balanced structure of man and women who act as good role models in the child's acquiring proper roles. Literature reports also indicate the influence a broken home has

on certain types of delinquency (Koziey & Davis, 2015). Upon further examination, Rankin (2019) compared various broken homes and runaway offenses and found that children from a single parent home (no step-parent) are 1.8 times more likely to run away than as a child living in an intact home. The odds increase to 2.7 for children living with one biological parent and a step-parent and increases to 4.0 for a child living with neither biological parent regardless of the sex or age of the child (Rankin, 2019).

Many psychologists upheld to social adjustment as the ability to adapt oneself to social activities, ability to cope with laid down standards of behaviour, ability to master challenges to interact with one's environment and develop good conscience, deal appropriately with anxiety and conflict (Kalu, 2018; Delvega and Juada, 2018). In a study by Kalu (2018), it was reported that antisocial activities are prominent within the secondary school age (11-18 years). These calibers of maladjusted students do find it difficult to get along with fellow students and their family members, friends, peers, school teachers; some could get engaged in self-destruction and even that of others they manifest aggressive tendencies, deviancy and drug abuse. Some secondary school students have come to regard pre-marital sexual activities as the private personal affairs of the participants and no business of anyone else (Akpan 2015; Kalu 2018). The school and government have tried several disciplinary efforts to stop these antisocial activities among students but to no avail (Kalu, 2018). Therefore, there is need to determine the extent family background factors such as intact family unit structure and broken homes could correlate with juvenile delinquency among in-school adolescents in Delta State.

Statement to the Problem

Personal experience shows an increase in the cases of maladjusted students in the secondary schools especially in areas of delinquent behaviours, truancy, examination malpractice, school drop-out, fighting and other school violence and offences. Thus, parents, teachers and the general public are all worried about this ugly trend and it seems to have some direct connection with the kind of family background or family structure that these students come from. Researchers and counsellors are faced with the task, and challenged with the responsibility of exploring the extent to which these different family structure influence students' delinquent behaviours for global trends and challenges in education. It is against this background that this study investigated the extent family background could correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviours of in-school adolescents in Delta State

Purpose of the Study

This purpose of the study is to determine the extent family background factors correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviours of in-school adolescents in Delta State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent intact family unit structure correlates with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents
2. The extent broken homes correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents.

Research Questions.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent to which intact family unit structure correlates with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents?
2. To what extent do broken homes correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.5 level of significance.

HO₁: Intact family unit structure does not significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents

HO₂: Broken homes do not significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. A total sample of 826 (329 males and 497 females) senior secondary school students with in Delta State was drawn through multistage sampling techniques from a total of 8,264 (3293 males and 4971 females) senior secondary school students. Two instruments namely, "Family Background Factors Questionnaire (FBFQ)" and Juvenile Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (JDBQ)" were developed by the researcher and validated by three experts in Psychology, Guidance and Counselling and

Measurement and Evaluation; all from the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike respectively. The stability of the FBFQ and JDBQ was determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and reliability indices 0.85 and 0.86 were obtained after the test retest. The internal consistency of the FBFQ and JDBQ was determined using Cronbach Alpha method and reliability indices of result of 0.79 and 0.81 were obtained. The data generated for this study were analyzed using Pearson's r , R^2 (coefficient of determination) to answer the research questions while linear regressions analysis was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significance.

Results

The results of the study are presented below

Research Question 1

What is the extent to which intact family unit structure correlates with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of intact family unit structure as predictor of juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents

| Source | | IFUS | JDBIA |
|--------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| IFUS | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .742* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 826 | 826 |
| JDBIA | Pearson Correlation | .742* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 826 | 826 |
| | R^2 | .551 | |

IFUS = Intact family unit structure, JDBIA = Juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 indicated a correlation coefficient (r) of .742 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of ± 0.61 -8.00. This indicates that intact family unit structure correlates with juvenile delinquent behaviour for global trends and challenges in education of in-school adolescents to a high positive extent. The coefficient of determination (R^2) .551 indicates that 55.1% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents was accounted for by intact family unit structure. Therefore, intact family unit structure predicted 55.1% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent of in-school adolescents in Delta State.

Hypothesis 1: Intact family unit structure does not significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents.

Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis of intact family Unit Structure as Correlate of Juvenile Delinquent Behaviour of In-School Adolescents

| Source | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Regression | 225.523 | 1 | 225.523 | 135.612 | .000 |
| Residual | 1372.132 | 825 | 1.663 | | |
| Total | 1597.655 | 826 | | | |

Data in Table 2 showed that intact family unit structure significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. The calculated f-value of 135.612 in respect of the relationship between intact family unit structure and juvenile delinquent behaviour for global trends and challenges in education of in-school adolescents is higher than f-critical of 1.96 with degree of freedom of 1 and 825 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which holds that intact family unit structure does not significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents was rejected. Consequently, intact family unit structure significantly correlated with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents in Delta State.

Research Question 2

To what extent do broken homes correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents?

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Broken homes as Correlates of juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents

| Source | | BH | JDBIA |
|--------|---------------------|-------|-------|
| BH | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .956* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 826 | 826 |
| JDBIA | Pearson Correlation | .956* | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 826 | 826 |
| | R ² | .914 | |

BH = Broken homes, JDBIA = Juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 3 indicated a correlation coefficient (r) of .956 which is positive and within the coefficient limit of $\pm 0.81-1.00$. This indicates that broken homes correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour for global trends and challenges in education of in-school adolescents to a very high and positive extent. The coefficient of determination (R^2) .914 indicates that 91.4% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents was accounted for by broken homes. Therefore, broken homes predicted 91.4% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents.

Hypothesis 2: Broken homes do not significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour for of in-school adolescents

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis of Broken homes as Correlates of juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents

| Source | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Regression | 268.552 | 1 | 268.552 | 191.823 | .000 |
| Residual | 1155.133 | 825 | 1.400 | | |
| Total | 1423.685 | 826 | | | |

Data in Table 4 showed that broken homes significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. The calculated f-value of 191.823 in respect of the relationship between broken home and juvenile delinquent behaviour for global trends and challenges in education of in-school adolescents is higher than f-critical of 1.96 with degree of freedom of 1 and 825 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that broken homes do not significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour for global trends and challenges in education of in-school adolescents was rejected. Consequently, broken homes significantly correlated with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents.

Findings

The findings of the study were that:

1. Intact family unit structure significantly correlated with juvenile delinquent behaviour for global trends and challenges in education of in-school adolescents as it predicted 55.1% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents in Delta State.

2. Broken homes predicted 91.4% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. Therefore, broken homes significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents in Delta State.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that intact family unit structure significantly correlated juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents as it predicted 55.1% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents Delta State. The finding of the study is in line with the study conducted by Doob (2017) which reported that an intact home with a mother and father (emphasis on the father) has a stabilizing effect and may act as a deterrent in certain areas of juvenile delinquency. The findings of the study are also in line with the findings of Steinberg (2019) which indicated that an intact family structure has been found to influence a child's susceptibility to peer pressure, contribute to offspring development and capabilities in adapting to society and is linked to fewer incidences of delinquency related issues. It should be noted that proportionately, more juveniles who are referred to police agencies and the juvenile courts for delinquency charges live in disrupted families when compared to the general population. Children from biologically intact homes have a lower incidence of illegal behaviour that is paralleled by their lower rate of susceptibility to peer pressure to commit deviant acts.

The findings of the study further indicated that broken homes predicted 91.4% of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. Therefore, broken homes significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. The findings of this study corroborate the findings of Mullens (2014) which indicated that juveniles from broken homes are 2.7 times more likely to run away from their family than children living in intact homes. The findings of the study are also in agreement with the findings of Koziey and Davis (2015) which reported the influence a broken home has on certain types of delinquency. The findings of this study are also in line with the findings of the study by Rankin (2019) which compared various broken homes and runaway offenses and found that children from a single parent home (no step-parent) are 1.8 times more likely to run away than as a child living in an intact home. The core belief is that a broken home has an imbalance and as a result is detrimental to a child's socialization and personality adjustment. As a result, a child may be more susceptible to negative peer pressure and may ultimately commit acts of delinquency not

committed by children from intact homes where there is a balanced structure of man and women who act as good role models in the child's acquiring proper roles.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the researcher concluded that intact family unit structure and broken homes significantly correlate with juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents. However, intact family unit structure predicted only 55.1% while broken homes predicted 91.4% of the variance of the variance observed in the juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents in Delta State. Conclusion can therefore be made that broken homes have more negative causative impact than intact family unit structure on juvenile delinquent behaviour of in-school adolescents.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

1. Functional counselling centres should be established at secondary education level and professional counsellors employed to fully guide the in-school adolescents.
2. Parents should adequately provide for their adolescents and constantly monitor their children's educational and non-educational activities.
3. School authorities should make efforts to provide conducive learning environment for the adolescents. Such a situation will enable the child to settle down or make proper adjustments in school.

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