

THE IMPACT OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the impact of juvenile delinquency on youth development. The problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated and universal and crime prevention programmes are either unequipped to deal with the present realities or do not exist. Many developing countries have done little or nothing to deal with these problems and international programmes are obviously insufficient. Developed countries are engaged in activities aimed at juvenile crime prevention. But the overall effect of these programmes is rather weak because the mechanisms in place are often inadequate to address the existing situation on the whole. Current efforts to fight juvenile delinquency are characterized by the lack of systematic action and the absence of task-oriented and effective social work with both offenders and victims, whether real or potential. Analysis is further complicated by a lack of international comparative data.

Keywords: Impact, Juvenile Delinquency, Youth Development, Family, Crime Prevention.

INTRODUCTION

For many young people today, traditional patterns guiding the relationships and transitions between family, school and work are being challenged. Social relations that ensure a smooth process of socialization are collapsing; lifestyle trajectories are becoming more varied and less predictable. The restructuring of the labour market, the extension of the maturity gap (the period of dependence of young adults on the family) and, arguably, the more limited opportunities to become an independent adult are all changes influencing relationships with family and friends, educational opportunities and choices, labour market participation, leisure activities and lifestyles. It is not only developed countries that are facing this situation; in developing countries as well there are new pressures on young people undergoing the transition from childhood to independence. Rapid population growth, the unavailability of housing and support services, poverty, unemployment and underemployment among youth, the decline in the authority of local communities, overcrowding in poor urban areas, the disintegration of the family and ineffective educational systems are some of the pressures young people must deal with. Youth nowadays, regardless of gender, social origin or country of residence, are subject to individual risks but are also being presented with new individual opportunities—some beneficial and some potentially harmful. Quite often, advantage is being taken of illegal opportunities as young people commit various offences, become addicted to drugs, and use violence against their peers.

Statistical data indicate that in virtually all parts of the world, with the exception of the United States, rates of youth crime rose in the 1990s. In Western Europe, one of the few regions for which data are available, arrests of juvenile delinquents and under-age offenders increased by an average of around 50 per cent between the middle 1980s and the late 1990s. The countries in transition have also witnessed a dramatic rise in delinquency rates; since 1995, juvenile crime levels in many countries in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States have increased by more than 30 per cent. Many of the criminal offences are related to drug abuse and excessive alcohol use.

The majority of studies and programmes dealing with juvenile delinquency focus on youth as offenders. However, adolescents are also victims of criminal or delinquent acts. The continuous threat of victimization is having a serious impact on the socialization of young men and on their internalization of the norms and values of the larger society. According to data on crimes registered by the police, more than 80 per cent of all violent incidents are not reported by the victims. Information about the victims allows conclusions to be drawn about the offenders as well. Results of self-report studies indicate that an overwhelming majority of those who participate in violence against young people are about the same age and gender as their victims; in most cases the offenders are males acting in groups. Those most likely to be on the receiving end of violence are between the ages of 16 and 19, with 91 in every 1,000 in this group becoming victims of some form of crime. Surveys have shown that men are more likely than women to become victims. In the United States, 105 in every 1,000 men become crime victims, compared with 80 per 1,000 women. Men are 2.5 times more likely to be victims of aggravated assault. Older people are less often affected; as mentioned, crimes are usually committed by representatives of the same age groups to which the victims belong.

Young people who are at risk of becoming delinquent often live in difficult circumstances. 2 Children who for various reasons—including parental alcoholism, poverty, breakdown of the family, overcrowding, abusive conditions in the home, the growing HIV/AIDS scourge, or the death of parents during armed conflicts—are orphans or unaccompanied and are without the means of subsistence, housing and other basic necessities are at greatest risk of falling into juvenile delinquency. The number of children in especially difficult circumstances is estimated to have increased from 80 million to 150 million between 1992 and 2000 according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The problem of juvenile delinquency is becoming more complicated and universal, and crime prevention programmes are either unequipped to deal with the present realities or do not exist. Many developing countries have done little or nothing to deal with these problems, and international programmes are obviously insufficient. Developed countries are engaged in activities aimed at juvenile crime prevention, but the overall effect of these programmes is rather weak because the mechanisms in place are often inadequate to address the existing situation.

On the whole, current efforts to fight juvenile delinquency are characterized by the lack of systematic action and the absence of task-oriented and effective social work with both offenders and victims, whether real or potential. Analysis is further complicated by a lack of international comparative data.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The youths of today are exposed to a lot of vices that have impacted negatively on their personality development. Juvenile delinquency is always associated with the youths and a lot of reasons have been adduced for this menace that has continued to destroy the bright future of such youths. Some of the reasons include:

- i) Corporal punishment in schools is being abolished in schools and the level of indiscipline has continued to worsen and thus the future of such youths looks bleak.
- ii) There is also the lack of attention for children by their parents as they concentrate more on their different businesses having little or no time to give their children proper home training.
- iii) Also the peer pressure has affected the behaviours of youths as they are easily influenced and thus engage themselves in vices.
- iv) Early detachment from parents to self dependent of youths these days, there has been a remarkable increase in the rate of violence among youths due to many reasons including drug addiction, broken homes, single parenting, bad parenting style e.g. democratic, authoritative or indulgence, etc.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main purpose of this study includes the following:

- i) To identify how juvenile delinquencies can affect the personality development of youths.
- ii) To identify the consequences of juvenile delinquencies on the immediate and future development of the country.
- iii) To identify the role of government, parents and the society on the personality development of the youths.
- iv) The role of the mass media in the prevention of crime in the country.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any significant relationship between bad behavior of youth and family background?
2. Is there any significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and their children personality development?
3. Is there any significant relationship between peer group pressure and the youth's attitude to life?
4. Is there any significant relationship between the youths and exposure to violence and the use of hard drugs?

RESEACH HYPOTHESIS

1. **H₁**: There is significant relationship between bad behaviour of youths and family background
H₀: There is no significant relationship between bad behaviour of youths and family background
2. **H₁** : there is significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and their children personality development
H₀: there is no significant relationship between socio-economic status

- of parents and their children personality development
3. **H₁:** there is significant relationship between peer group pressure and the youths attitude to life
H₀: there is significant relationship between peer group pressure and the youths attitude to life
 4. **H₁:** There is significant relationship between the youths and exposure to violent and the used of hard drugs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Juvenile delinquency is often treated through a myriad child-oriented programs and services that attempt to decrease the likelihood of recidivism. This treatment paradigm has been a consistent fixture of the juvenile justice system for more than 100 years, since the birth of the juvenile court in Cook County, Illinois, in 1899. Although the intent of the juvenile court has shifted over the years from policies focused on the best interests of the child to the best interests of the public, its goals have remained the same: to intervene in the trajectories of youths after they have already engaged in delinquent acts (Field, 1999; Tonry, 2000). This strategy has been associated with high costs and relatively low effectiveness (Feld; Tonry). In response to the treatment-oriented policies of juvenile crime control, primary prevention programs have been offered as an alternative approach to reducing negative developmental outcomes. Primary preventions have been defined as interventions that promote well-being and prevent future problems. Primary programs contrast with secondary and tertiary programs that are timed during or after a problem have manifested (Durlak, 2007). Early educational interventions, such as Head Start, have been devised as primary prevention programs to increase cognitive and academic functioning and they have the potential to influence outcomes in other domains as well, including delinquency and crime (Barnett, 2005). Several studies that went beyond comparing the incidence of broken among criminals with the incidence in the general population failed to show a link between broken homes and delinquency. For example among blacks in St. Louis, boys from broken homes were not more likely to become delinquent than those from two parent homes (Robins and Hill 1966). Careful analyses of juvenile court cases in the United States during 1969 showed that economic conditions, rather than family composition influenced children's delinquency (Chilton and Markle 2002) of London schoolboys and of American school children of both sexes, within social class, delinquency was not more prevalent among children from single-parent homes. Children in single-parent families are likely to have been exposed to such crime-promoting influencing as parental conflict and alcoholism. To detect effects on sons' criminality, one study divided both broken and united families according to whether not the father was an alcoholic or a criminal (McCord). The study showed that alcoholic or criminal father were more likely to have sons convicted of serious crimes, whether or not the father was present. There was no association between criminal behavior and single-parent families, regardless of whether the sons had alcoholic or criminal fathers.

Single parents often find it hard to get assistance. If they must work to support themselves and their families, they are likely to have difficulty providing supervision for their children. Poor supervision, like alcoholism and criminality, seems to generate delinquency. Careful study of the impact of differences in household composition shows that in homes that lack fathers, grandmothers and other adult relatives are protective against delinquency. This

evidence further undermines theories that rely on same sex adults as explanation for successful socialization in families.

Knowledgeable observers have concluded that the evidence fails to support a conclusion that single parent families cause crime. Asking whether broken homes are good or bad is misleading; the answer must depend in part on the available alternatives. Family conflict is particularly likely to promote criminal behavior, and the choice to divorce must typically be made by parents who do not get along. Convincingly, David Farrington found that among boys who had not previously aggressive, marital disharmony of parents when the boys were fourteen predicted subsequent aggressive behaviour.

Furthermore, effects of living with a single parent vary in relation to the emotional and economic climate in the home. Indeed, in their longitudinal study of family disruption among London boys, Heather Juby and David Farrington (2001) found that those who stayed with their mothers following disruption had delinquency rates that were almost identical to those reared in intact families with low conflict. And in their study of inner-city minority youths living in Chicago, Deborah Gorman Smith, Patrick Tolan, and David Henry (1999) showed that single-parent status had little impact on delinquency

Whatever characteristics individuals may have inherited, resulting personalities and behaviour are influenced by the social environments in which they are raised. Genetic transmission does not occur without environmental influences. Perhaps the best grounds for believing that family interaction influences conduct comes from those programmes that alter parental management techniques and thereby benefit siblings. Consistent and reasonable guidance forms the foundation for such programs.

Social control theory postulates that bonds between parents and children provide a basis for children to give up their immediate pleasures in exchange for receiving distal rewards attached to socialized behaviour. Consistent discipline and supervision add social control to the internalized bonds on the route toward forming well-socialized adolescents. The theory gains support from a series of studies showing absence of parental affection to be linked with delinquency. Furthermore, reductions in delinquency between the ages of fifteen and seventeen years appear to be related to friendly interaction between teenagers and their parents, a reduction that seems to promote school attachment and stronger family ties (Liska and Reed, 2005).

Warm family relationships appear to reduce the risk of delinquency in a variety of cultures other than those founding the United States. For example, Danish adolescents having warm family interactions were less likely to shoplift or commit vandalism than their peers (Arnett; Jeffrey; and Balle-Jensen 2003). In the Netherlands, adolescents between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one who had positive relations with their mothers were considerably less likely to have been engaged in delinquent behavior than those who had negative relationships (Terlouw and Junger-Tas 2002).

Parental rejection may affect the ways in which children regard both themselves and others parents who fail to provide consistent guidance deprive their children of opportunities to gain approval by choosing to behave in accordance with parental rules. If parents treat their

offspring with disdain, the offspring are likely to regard as unworthy of care and may come to believe that the way they are treated is how they should treat others.

Symbolic interaction theories suggest that roles assigned within families can have an important effect on how children defuse others with whom they are likely to have contacts. A variety of types of evidence suggests that esteem. Other studies suggest that delinquents lack empathic responses to those around whether family rejection or neglect affects tendencies toward delinquency through failures in attachment or through role. Concept may appear merely an interesting academic debate. Yet designs for intervention strategies have depended on these theories in order to decide what approaches to take.

Prevention program that successfully develop bonds between counselors and youths have failed to prevent delinquency, as have some carefully designed programs aimed toward building self-esteem. The Cambridge— some ville youth study successfully established close bonds between young boys and counselors over a period of several years. Nevertheless, boys who formed such bonds were not less likely to become delinquents than matched boys who were not assigned to programme counselors

In sum, parental affection and reasonable parental control have been shown to promote socialized behaviour. Yet when children fail to receive these early in their lives, substitutions have typically been ineffective. Of course temperamental, physical and intellectual differences sometimes influence parenting. Therefore, children's characteristics may affect the relationship between early parenting, and later child problems. Parents who are themselves aggressive and anti social are the most likely to use harsh punishments and to have children who are at heightened risk for aggressive anti social behaviour. When children misbehave, parents (or their substitutes) are the first line of control. How they discipline can influence not only immediate behaviour, but also their future influence on the child's values. Several longitudinal studies investigating effects of punishment on aggressive behaviour have shown that punishments are more likely to result in defiance than compliance.

In an investigation of two-year-olds, mothers described their techniques for discipline and various features about family life. Their infants were asked to respond to directions in the laboratory. The same mother-child peers were studied one month later in their homes during meal preparation and mealtime. After controlling other types of maternal behaviour, the observer ratings indicated that negative control was related to defiance in both settings (Crockenber; and Litman 2002).

Similarly, spanking seems counterproductive for children preparing to enter school. Parent in three cities reported on family disciplinary practices over the prior year as they registered their children for kindergarten. The children were subsequently observed in their classrooms. Children spanked by their mothers or fathers displayed more angry, reactive aggression in the kindergarten classrooms than did those who did not receive physical punishments (Strassbog).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is restricted to Abuja area and the total number of respondents for the study is one hundred and twenty. The target population comprises of the youths, parents, teachers,

professionals randomly selected so as to represent the population accurately as there is high rate of juvenile delinquencies around Abuja area

The researcher personally administer the instrument on respondents after explaining the content of the instrument and how to fill it, the respondents were encouraged to fill it and return immediately or return latest two days after administration. In the analysis of data, the instrument (questionnaire) is divided into two. For the respondents bio-data the simple percentage method is used for the analysis of section A while for section B the pearson's product moment correlation was used and it is represented thus:

$$r = \frac{N \Sigma xY - \Sigma x \Sigma Y}{\sqrt{[N(\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2)] \cdot [N(\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2)]}}$$

Where

r = product moment correlation

N = Number of pairs of scores

Σx = Sum of scores in variable X

ΣY = Sum of scores in variable Y

Σx^2 = Sum of x scores squared

Σy^2 = Sum of Y scores squared

Σxy = Sum of products of paired x and y scores

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The presentation of the data collected is analyzed in this chapter. The simple percentage and pearson's product moment correlation was used for the analysis of the hypotheses formulated. One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were administered on the respondents and out of this number one hundred and eighteen (118) was retrieved and analyzed.

TABLE 1 CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO GENDER

Sex	Number	%
Male	75	64
Female	43	36
Total	118	100

The above result showed that 64% of the respondents are male while 36% were female and this implies that the male respondents showed more interest on the study.

TABLE 2 CLASSIFICATIONS ACCORDING TO AGE

Age	Number	%
15 – 20	23	20
21 – 25	66	56
26 – 30	17	14
31 and above	12	10
Total	118	100

From the table above 56% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 21 – 25, 20% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 15 – 20, 14% of the respondents are

within the age bracket of 26 – 30 while 10% of the respondents are within the age bracket of 31 and above. This implies that the respondents between the age bracket of 21 – 25 represent the bulk of the respondents and also the juvenile delinquencies are more associated with people within this age bracket.

TABLE 3 CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Educational qualification	Number	%
SC/GCE	18	15
ND/HND/Degree	61	52
Post graduate	14	12
Others	25	21
Total	118	100

The table above indicated that 52% of the respondents have ND/HND/Degree; 21% of the respondents have professional qualification, 15% of the respondents have SC/GCE while only 12% have post graduate certificate. This implies that all the respondents are well informed about the study.

TEST OF HYPOTHESES

To analyze the data the researcher uses pearson's product moment correlation represented thus:

$$r = \frac{N \Sigma xY - \Sigma x \Sigma Y}{\sqrt{[N(\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2)] \cdot [N(\Sigma Y^2 - (\Sigma Y)^2)]}}$$

Where

r = product moment correlation

N = Number of pairs of scores

Σx = Sum of scores in variable X

ΣY = Sum of scores in variable Y

Σx^2 = Sum of x scores squared

Σy^2 = Sum of Y scores squared

Σxy = Sum of products of paired x and y scores

Hypothesis One

Table A

S/N	X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
1	78	39	6084	1521	3042
2	56	60	3136	3600	3360
3	82	36	6724	1296	2952
4	73	45	5329	2025	3285
5	34	84	1156	7056	2856
	323	264	22429	15498	15495

The table above is for the hypothesis that says:

There is no significant relationship between bad behaviour of youths and the family background.

$$r = \frac{5(15495) - (323)(264)}{\sqrt{[5(22429 - (323^2))] \cdot [5(15498 - (264)^2)]}}$$

$$r = \frac{77475 - 85272}{\sqrt{(112145 - 104329) \cdot (77490 - 69696)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-7797}{\sqrt{(7816)(7794)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-7797}{(88.41)(88.28)}$$

$$r = \frac{-7797}{7804.83}$$

$$r = \underline{\underline{-0.998}}$$

Where:

The pearson's product moment table value = 0.632 @ 0.05, level of significance with:

- The degree of freedom (10 – 2 = 8)
- r calculated value – 0.998

Decision

Since the calculated value of –0.998 is less than the table value of 0.632 at 8 (degree of freedom) and 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that there is no significant relationship between bad behaviour of youths and family background we accept H_0 and reject H_1 .

Hypothesis Two

Table B

S/N	X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
6	69	47	4761	2209	3243
7	85	33	7225	1089	2805
8	77	41	5929	1681	3157
9	71	44	5041	1936	3124
10	86	32	7396	1024	2752
	388	197	30352	7939	15081

The table above is for the second hypothesis that says:

“There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and their children’s personality development”.

$$r = \frac{5(15081) - (388)(197)}{\sqrt{[5(30352 - 388^2)] \cdot [5(7939 - 197^2)]}}$$

$$r = \frac{75405 - 76436}{\sqrt{(151760 - 150544) \cdot (39695 - 38809)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-1031}{\sqrt{(1216) \cdot (886)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-1031}{(34.87) (29.77)}$$

$$r = \frac{-1031}{1038.08}$$

$$r = \underline{\underline{-0.993}}$$

Where:

The pearson’s product moment table value = 0.632 @ 0.05, level of significance with the degree of freedom (10 – 2 = 8) r calculated value – 0.993

Decision

Since the calculated value of –0.993 is less than the table value of 0.632 at 8 (degree of freedom) and 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that “there is no significant relationship between socio-economic status of parents and their children’s personality development.

Hypothesis Three

Table C

S/N	X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
11	81	37	6561	1369	2997
12	63	50	3969	2500	3150
13	76	42	5776	1764	3192
14	79	39	6241	1521	3082
15	54	64	2916	4096	3456
	353	232	25463	11250	15877

The table above is for the third hypothesis that says:

“There is no significant relationship between peer group pressure and the youth’s attitude to life”.

$$r = \frac{5(15877) - (353)(197)}{\sqrt{[5(25463 - (353)^3)] \cdot [5(11250 - (232)^2)]}}$$

$$r = \frac{79385 - 81896}{\sqrt{(127315 - 124609) \cdot (56250 - 53824)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-2511}{\sqrt{(2706)(2426)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-2511}{\sqrt{(52.02)(49.25)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-2511}{2561.99}$$

$$r = \underline{\underline{-0.980}}$$

Where:

The pearson’s product moment table value = 0.632 @ 0.05, level of significance with the degree of freedom = (10 – 2 = 8) r calculated value = – 0.980

Decision

Since the calculated value of – 0.980 is less than the table value of 0.632 at 8 (degree of freedom) and 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that “there is no significant relationship between peer group pressure and the youths attitude to life”.

Hypothesis Four

Table D

S/N	X	Y	X ²	Y ²	XY
16	71	47	5041	2209	3337
17	88	27	7744	729	2376
18	63	55	3969	3025	3465
19	45	73	2025	5329	3285
20	69	49	4761	2401	3381
	336	251	23540	13693	15844

The table is for the fourth hypothesis that says:

“There is no significant relationship between the youths exposure to violence and the use of hard drugs.

$$r = \frac{5(15844) - (336)(251)}{\sqrt{[5(23540) - (336)^2] \cdot [5(13693) - (251)^2]}}$$

$$r = \frac{79220 - 84336}{\sqrt{(117700 - 112896) \cdot (68465 - 63001)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-5116}{\sqrt{(4804) \cdot (5464)}}$$

$$r = \frac{-5116}{5123.40}$$

$$r = \frac{(69.31) (73.92) - 5115}{5123.40}$$

$$r = \underline{\underline{-0.999}}$$

Where:

The table value = - 0.632 @ 0.05, level of significance with the degree of freedom = 10 - 2 = 8
 calculated value = - 0.999

Decision

Since the calculated value - 0.999 is less than the table value of 0.632 at 8 (degree of freedom) and 0.05 level of significance. The result shows that there is no significant relationship between the youths exposure to violence and the use of hard drugs.

CONCLUSION

Juvenile delinquency covers a multitude of different violations of legal and social norms, ranging from minor offense to serious crimes committed by young people. Some types of juvenile delinquency constitute part of maturation and growth and disappear spontaneously as young people make the transition to adulthood. Many socially responsible adults committed various types of offences during their adolescence

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