

## **Conditions that Influence Juvenile Delinquency among Secondary Schools in Ore and Akure, Ondo State**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined conditions that influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school pupils in Ore town and Juvenile Remand Home Akure, in Ondo state. It was a survey. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analyzed using mean. The population consisted of the entire secondary schools in Ore and all the warders in the Juvenile Remand Home Akure. A sample 341 students and wardens drawn from population using purposive and random techniques. Findings reveal, among others, that the conditions in the Juvenile Remand Home are not conducive for the remanded children. Recommendations were made for the improvement of the Juvenile Remand Home.

**Keywords:** Juvenile; Delinquency; Home; Children; School.

### **Introduction**

Delinquency is an act of putting up deviant behaviours. It includes behaviour that would be considered criminal if committed by adults, such as rubbery, street fighting, among others. It also includes acts that are not necessarily common in adults, such as truancy and running away from home. Tracia (2010) define delinquency as the act of committing those things

considered crimes by the state which covers anything from small crime, for instance a student who cut school repeatedly, to serious crime like felony, theft and murder. Delinquency could also be seen as neglect on the part of juveniles to conform to the accepted standards of behaviour in a given society (Lawn Order 2011).

The most common criterion employed in defining juvenile is chronological age. In Nigeria law, however, it refers to a person under the age of 18. Such a person may be dealt with under the special provisions of Children and Young Person's Law (CYPL) (Isabella, 2014). The age limit however, varies from country to country, and from state to state within a country. In Ondo State, the juvenile age limit is 18 years.

Juvenile delinquency is a broad term given to a juvenile who commits crime. Hagan and Foster (2002), explain juvenile delinquency as that behaviour on the part of any child which involves the inability to respect constituted authority and observe conventional or established laws of the society. Juvenile delinquency is thus the criminal act performed by juveniles or the youths. It is the legal term for criminal behaviour carried out by minors recognized for having problematic behaviours (Kahoy, 2009). Roberts (2013), noted that crime and delinquency are complex phenomena.

Several factors often combine to give rise to delinquent behaviour in children. Such factors could be biological, psychological or social (Maas, Herrenkohl, & Sousa, 2008). Mike (2010) identified four primary risk factors that can identify young person's inclined to delinquent activities: the individual, family, mental health and substance abuse. Tracia (2010) added two others namely: society and peer pressure. Kahoy (2009), also observed that the community in which the children live

influence them in various ways. According to Hay, Fortson, Hollist, Altheimer and Schaible (2006), there exist multiple risks in children's backgrounds including deficits in family, school, peers, and neighbourhoods, all of which result in delinquency. Christopher (2010) reported statistically significant associations among the youth, family characteristics and child welfare agency measurements with later youth delinquency adjudication. American Psychiatric Association [APA](2004) also noted that several mental factors are also seen as contributing to juvenile delinquency, a common one is conduct disorder which is lack of empathy and disregard for societal norms.

A number of children engaging in delinquency, anti-social and aggressive behaviours may begin as early as pre-school or in the first few grades of elementary school. Childhood misconduct tends to be resistant to change, for example, the parent disciplining more harshly, often predicts continuing problems during adolescence, as well as adult criminality (Prochnow & Defronzo, 1997). The family is the foundation of any human society; children who are rejected by their parents who grow up in an inadequately supervised environment are at great risk of becoming delinquent (Flouri, Eirin & Anna, 2002). As recorded in "Law n Order" (2011), social and economic conditions outside the family may also contribute to juvenile delinquency. The difficulty of living in poverty in

slums or blighted areas may breed contempt for oneself and for others, peer also plays a significant role in the attitude put up by children. According to O'Donnell (2014), when children are older, friends play a more important role than they might have in the past children want to be accepted and want to belong to a group. That means the opinions and pressures of friends are important to them. Barkley, Salvy, Sanders, Dey, Von Carlowitz and Williamson (2014) observed that children exhibited 54% greater average accelerometer counts during the peer or friend play condition than during the solo play condition. According to Kerr, Zalk and Stattin (2011), peer influence on adolescent delinquency is well established.

Delinquency in a child affects the child, the family and the society at large. According to Loeber and Farrington (2001), between 1980 and 1996 the number of arrests has increased considerably for offenders ages 12 and under. This increase is a cost to society in two ways: the cost of the crime and the cost of multiple agencies involved with the children.

In curbing juvenile delinquency in the society, Immarigeon (1996), opined that justice can be better served and people steered up on the right path by involving families in juvenile crime cases and that communication plays big role in how the family functions. According to Roberts (2013), in earlier times, children were thrown into jails with adults, long prison terms and corporal punishment were common, and some children were even

sentenced to death for crimes. Reformers concerned about the harsh treatment of children urged the establishment of a separate court system for juveniles. The idea behind juvenile court was that children in trouble with the law should be helped rather than punished. According to Farrington (1989), harsh discipline at age eight and authoritarian parenting at age ten have been found to predict later violent crime convictions. In some case there are Juvenile Remand Homes for the children.

Juvenile remand home is an institution of rehabilitation for a delinquent child. Such facility takes in juvenile offenders, children in need of care and protection or children beyond parental control. Such a home exists in Akure the capital of Ondo State. The conditions in the Remand Home and the influences on the behaviour of the children remain questionable. A study conducted by the Nigeria office of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) found that remand homes, approved schools, borstals or prisons "are not equipped to serve their statutory functions". The result is that the stated objectives of rehabilitation and reform are defeated ("IRIN" 2014). The remand home in Akure has not been properly funded; majority of the facilities are not in good condition.

#### **Purpose of the study**

The major purpose of this study was to examine the causes of juvenile delinquency in Ore and Akure of Ondo State. Specifically, the study determined:

1. ways school conditions cause juvenile delinquency.
2. ways peers groups aid juvenile delinquency in a child.
3. ways conditions in the home aid juvenile delinquency.
4. ways Juvenile Remand Home influences delinquent children.

### **Research question**

The following research questions were formulated to aid the study;

1. what are the ways school conditions cause juvenile delinquency?
2. what are the ways peers groups aid juvenile delinquency in a child?
3. what are the ways conditions in the home can aid juvenile delinquency?
4. what is the influence of juvenile remand home on delinquent children?

### **Methodology**

#### ***Design and area of the study:***

Descriptive survey research was used. The area of the study was Ore town and Akure. Ore town were chosen because the rate of crime is so high compared to every other town within the state at the time of the study. Juvenile Remand Home is a place where justice is done to delinquent children in Akure town.

***Population of the study:*** The population was made up of all the secondary school students in Ore town. There are seven secondary schools. Two of the schools are government secondary schools and

the remaining five are private secondary schools. The total population of the students in both junior and secondary section of the schools, as at the time of this research, was 3,148. Ten wardens in the Remand Home also formed part of the population.

#### ***Sample and Sampling Technique:***

Purposive and simple random technique were used to select three hundred and thirty one (331) students across all the schools, from both junior and senior sections. The ten wardens from Juvenile Remand Home Akure were selected. The sample size was 340 respondents, 331 students and 10 wardens from the Remand Home.

#### ***Instrument for data collection:***

Questionnaire was used for data collection. The instrument consists of 23 items. It comprised of four-point scale. Three lecturers from Home Economics Department, Adeyemi College of Education ascertained the validation of the instrument. Test-retest method was used to administer fifteen (15) instruments on fifteen respondents; the reliability was calculated using Pearson product moment correlation. The coefficient of the analyzed data was 0.81.

#### ***Data collection and analysis technique:***

A total number of 341 copies of the questionnaire were distributed with the help of two research assistants in which all were completed and retrieved, representing 100% recovery rate. The entire copies were properly filled. The data were analyzed using mean score to determine the respondents' agreement

with the items. The cut-off point was 2.50.

### Findings of the study

**Table 1:** Mean responses on the ways school conditions influence juvenile delinquency in children.

S/N	School condition causes of Juvenile delinquency	Mean	Remark
1.	Insufficient classroom facilities.	3.00	Agreed
2.	Students' hanging around the school building while teaching and learning are going on.	2.73	Agreed
3.	Non proper discipline,	2.61	Agreed
4.	Improper management of classroom by teachers	2.34	Disagreed
5.	Not taking subjects that teaches moral (e.g. religious studies) seriously.	3.16	Agreed
6.	Teachers lack of concern about students' attendance in the classroom.	3.20	Agreed

Table 1 reveals that five of the items have a mean range of 2.16 - 3.20 and the remaining one has the mean of 2.34. This indicated that the respondents agreed with five items because their means were above the cut-off point of 2.50 and disagreed with one.

**Table 2:** Mean Responses on ways peer group aid juvenile delinquency in children.

S/N	Peer group influence causes of juvenile delinquency	Mean	Remark
1.	Hanging out in the night.	3.06	Agreed
2.	Tasting of hard drugs.	3.16	Disagreed
3.	Forming famous groups (cult groups)	3.12	Agreed
4.	Desire to put on latest clothing.	3.23	Agreed
5.	Desire to mingle with the opposite sex.	2.86	Agreed

Table 2 reveals that all the items have mean range of 2.86 - 3.23. This indicated that the respondents agreed with all the items because their means were above the cut-off point of 2.50.

**Table 3:** Mean Responses on ways home conditions cause juvenile delinquency.

S/N	Home condition causes of juvenile delinquency	Mean	Remark
1.	Unhealthy parent-children relationship.	3.50	Agreed
2.	Parents not financing the children's education.	3.17	Agreed
3.	Leaving children to fend for themselves	3.40	Disagreed
4.	Not giving children food at the appropriate time.	2.92	Agreed
5.	Inadequate monitoring of children's moral, academic and social life.	2.92	Agreed
6.	Lack of parent-children communication.	3.13	Agreed

Table 3 reveals that all the items have mean range of 2.92 - 3.50. This indicated that the respondents agreed with all the items because their means were above the cut-off point of 2.50.

**Table 4:** Mean Responses on Ways Juvenile Remand Home Influence Delinquent Children.

S/N	Warders' respond on the impact of juvenile remand home on children.	Mean	Remark
1.	Most likely to curbs delinquency in them.	3.00	Agreed
2.	Likelihood of being initiated by bad groups the older inmates	2.00	Agreed
3.	Good rehabilitation with good facilities.	2.00	Disagreed
4.	Too much punishment given.	2.00	Disagreed
5.	Feel abandoned	3.00	Agreed
6.	Conducive environment.	2.00	Disagreed

Table 4 reveals that three of the items have the means of 3.00 and the remaining three has the means of 2.00. This indicated that the respondents agreed with the three items having their means above the cut-off point of 2.50 and disagreed with the remaining three items.

#### Discussion of the findings

The findings of this study show that the respondents agreed with the following as part of the factors that causes juvenile delinquency in schools. Insufficient classroom facilities; Students' hanging around the school building while teaching and learning are going on; Teachers lack of concern about students' attendance in the classroom. These are in accordance with the report given in "Law n Order" (2011) that one of the ways to curb delinquency in a child is that the states make school attendance compulsory up to the age of 18 and that lack of discipline may also lead to

delinquent behaviour. The study was also able to add the improper management of classroom by teacher. Not taking subjects that teaches moral (e.g. religious studies) seriously. All these are in alliance with the idea of Robert (2013) that children should be taught both at home and in schools informed decision-making processes so as to guide against delinquency:

The identified factors that can aid juvenile delinquency among peer group are: Hanging out in the night; tasting of hard drugs; forming famous groups. According to Kahoy (2009), most of the time, felonious activities are usually done in a group setting, acquiring help from their own gangs or tribes. In the country, gangs would do illicit acts that would make their group famous. O'Donnell (2014) supported that, when children are older, friends play a more important role than they might have in the past, children wants to be accepted and wants to belong to a group. Desire to

put on clothing in vogue; to mingle with the opposite sex. As recorded in "Law n Order" (2011), social and economic conditions outside the family may also contribute to juvenile delinquency. Barkley *et al* (2014) observed that, Children exhibited 54% greater average accelerometer counts during the friend condition than during the solo play condition. According to Kerr *et al* (2011), peer influence on adolescent delinquency is well established. O'Donnell (2014) also supported that, the opinions and pressures of friends are important to children.

In homes, the various identified factor that can aid delinquency in children are: Unhealthy parent-children relationship."Law n Order" (2011) recorded that many delinquents come from broken homes or from homes where the adults do not show sufficient love for each other or for their children; Kahn(1957), It is only through the love and approval of the significant adults in a child's life that he is able to give up his primitive behaviour for that which meets the demands of social living. Other identified factors are: Parents not financing the children's education; Inadequate monitoring of children's moral, academic and social life; and leaving children to fend for themselves. According to Flouri et al (2002), children who are rejected by their parents who grow up in an inadequately supervised environment are at great risk of becoming delinquent: Robert(2013) noted that lack of parental supervision is thought

to be an influence on juvenile crime rates. The study also identified that, not giving children food at the appropriate time can aid delinquency in a child. Kahoy(2009) observed that, records dating back to 1990 collected by the Quezon City government reveal expose that poverty is the common origin of a great majority of children in jail. Lastly, inadequate parent-children communication is also an identified factor. Immarigeon (1996), is of the view that justice can be better served and people steered up on the right path by involving families in juvenile crime cases that communication plays big role in how the family functions

The study observed the following as the influence of the juvenile remand homes on delinquent children: Most likely to curbs delinquency in them. According to Robert (2013) the idea behind the establishment of juvenile court and juvenile remand home was for the child to be helped rather than punished. The study disagreed with the likelihood of the younger children being initiated by the older children. The study also disagreed that the juvenile remand home has good rehabilitation with good facilities; disagreed that the environment is conducive for the children; and agreed that the children feel abandoned even though there was no much punishment given to them. "IRIN" (2014), noted that in a study conducted by the Nigeria office of the United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF) that remand homes, approved schools, borstals or prisons "are not equipped to serve their statutory functions".

Isabella (2014), concluded in a research that welfare and best interests of young offenders are not adequately preserved and protected.

### **Conclusion**

The future of the society depends on what the children of today have in stock and this in turn depends on what the adults are able to build in the children. It is evidence in this research that most home have not being standing up to their responsibility in showing love and adequate care for the children. The juvenile remand home as an alternative to help the abandoned children has also failed in its objective.

Delinquency in juvenile is almost becoming a global issue; it is therefore the duty of every parent to stand up to their responsibilities in giving adequate care, love good communication and provision of needs to their children, since the family is the foundation of any human society. Schools should also inculcate the appropriate discipline to wayward children "A built child, they say, is better than a repaired adult".

To think that delinquency in a child is not bigger than political, economical and health issues presently ravaging the country, and that they mere disorientated youth, is actually unfair. A youth, for the sake of living a kind of life style that will make him feel belong among his peer group will join a gang and do some costly things in the society, whose effect will not be reversible. It is therefore important to keep in mind, and constantly check on

a child who is most likely to exhibit in childhood, precursors of the conditions that are likely to be displayed through conduct disorder such as unnecessary rude to elders, disregard for society norm and family value, among other things, before it eventually get out of hand.

### **Recommendations**

The research work therefore made the following recommendations for effective curbing of delinquency in a child:

- 1) Parents should do everything possible to bridge whatever communication gap that must have being existing between them and their children, so as to be able to make early detection of any rebellion in their children.
- 2) Every adult should see the training of all children as the duty of everyone, because the society will sure reap from the outcome of a child's attitudes, either good or otherwise.
- 3) The government should also help to put the Juvenile remind homes in the appropriate conditions so that the abandoned children will have second chance for any of their misdeed such as providing appropriate materials and facilities.
- 4) The government should provide facilities that will enhance good teaching and learning for schools and appropriate discipline should not be replaced with another thing by school authorities.



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