



Single-Parenthood and Juvenile Delinquency Among Secondary School Students in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of single parenthood on the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours in Rivers State. In all, this study specifically, sought answers to the purpose of the research in relation to the research questions and hypotheses put forward in the study. This study is grounded in the conflict theory and the functionalist perspective of education and its effect on societal development in general. The data for this study was collected through questionnaire, and was analyzed using quantitative methods to strengthen the validity of the findings. The sample size of this study comprised 300 respondents (271 Females; 29 males). The reliability of the research instrument was statistically tested using SPSS version 23. The data collected were analyzed to answer the specific research questions and hypotheses. The findings of this study revealed that the basic roles of family stability, broken home, parenting type, and style are similar across the world. Analysis of both literature and empirical results and findings showed that there is a significant relationship between the influence of home stability (stable and unstable homes), broken home, parenting type and style and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State. Recommendations were preferred.

Keywords: Single-Parenthood, Stable Homes, Broken Homes, Juvenile Delinquency, Secondary Schools, Students, Rivers State.

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INTRODUCTION

In every society, once there is cultural conflict, it results in the adoption of new positive or negative ways of life especially amongst the younger generation. In Nigeria, particularly in Rivers State, through the mass media, such as the television, watching and reading of foreign movies (TV, Internet, Newspaper, Magazine), children have adopted new values, which have a lot of negative consequences on their lives. Today, the society has become something else, as the normal accepted behaviour is fast giving way to immoral behaviour. In the secondary schools, students exhibit all forms of delinquent behaviours. Abenga and Asor (1990) echoed this when they note that “though not supported by empirical evidence, that adolescent delinquency is gaining grounds in Secondary Schools generally in the society”. This development is very worrisome to the government and other stakeholders in the state.

Many blame the family for not doing much to inculcate good morals to their children before sending them to the school. In reality, the family is where the foundation of human society is laid; whatever a child becomes, the family obviously plays a substantial role. The family is entrusted with the primary responsibility of inculcating the society’s cherished value to their younger ones before sending them to the school.

The family a child comes from, to a great extent, determines the type of person he or she becomes. If he or she is from a family of where both parents quarrel and fight every day, such a child perceives life the same way and takes this pattern to school. Also, in family where there is love and oneness, children from such families exhibit same thing outside their homes. In the school, they exhibit good moral act and are liked by others. This in essence, show that families can teach children aggressive, antisocial and violent act. Also, children who grew up in homes with considerable conflicts or who are inadequately supervised are at greater risks of becoming delinquents.

Although, a parent may care for and discipline his or her child, but this may be insufficient for instilling self- control. Barriers can arise which may hinder the parents ability to satisfy the conditions for effective child-rearing. In their further explanation of the influence of family on the development of delinquent act, Kelli, Carl and Krull (2008, p. 74) explained that: “First the more children there are in a family, the less time energy and financial resources parents will have to devote to each individual child. They will be less able to directly or indirectly supervise each child’s activities and hence, their involvement in delinquent act”.

Thornberry, Smith, River, Hinzinga and Stonthamer-Loeber (1999) in their research, found 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 problems, including delinquencies than children who are from both parent families. In a related study, Wright and Karen (1994) showed that single parenting produce more delinquent children than families where both parents are present. In line with this, Muchlenberg (2002) in his study concluded that the absence of both parents in families make gang membership appealing. Against this background, this study thus seeks to investigate whether single parenthood contributes or influences juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of juvenile delinquency among secondary schools students in Rivers State is a serious one that is currently attracting attention of parents, teachers and stakeholders. Students in the secondary schools indulge in different forms of delinquent behaviours, which include

cultism, smoking of Indian hemp, drug abuse, indecent dressing, stealing, examination malpractice, pre-marital sex and other vices, which are detrimental to their future development and by extension that of the society.

In secondary schools globally, the involvements of students in delinquent behaviours are becoming worsening every passing day and has called for concerns. For instance, some of the students at the different levels of secondary education belong to different cult groups. Oruwari & Owei (2006) in their paper on Youths in urban violence in Nigeria, a case study of urban gangs from Port Harcourt, concluded that cult groups that are normally found in the universities, such as Vikings, Pirates, Black axe etc. have made an inroad into secondary schools. Egbo-Chuku (2009) in his own study listed the cult groups that have entered into the secondary schools to include Buccaneers, Black Axe, Black Cats, Maphites, Vikings, Delma etc. They use these groups to terrorize their fellow students and harass their teachers.

More so, they are involved in examination malpractices in both internal and external examinations. The perpetuations of these deviant behaviours have escalated beyond the control of the school authorities and the government. It is now a huge problem to the society. These children are from various families, which is the starting point of socialization for the child. As a result of the influence of the family on the development of the child, the questions have become very imperative. Is the problem of delinquency necessitated by the type of families these students come from? Or are there other factors within the family structure that precipitates students' involvement in delinquent behaviours? This study intends to provide answers to these questions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the influence of single parenthood on the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours in Rivers State. The scope of the study was limited to male and female students from single-parenthood and both parent homes in selected secondary schools in Rivers State. Also, the study will also cover the delinquent behaviours that students get themselves involve in public secondary schools in Rivers State. In more specific terms, the study is intended:

- To determine the influence of home stability on students' involvement in delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State;
- To investigate the influence of broken homes on students' involvement in delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State;
- To ascertain the influence of single and seperated homes on involvement in delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State.; and
- To examine the influence of parental child upbringing style on involvement in delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Questions

To ensure an in-depth investigation into this study, the following research questions guided this study:

- How does family stability influence delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State?

- How does a broken home influence delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?
- How does parenting type (single/separated parents) influence the involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?
- How does parenting style influence involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

- There is no significant relationship between the influence of home stability (stable and unstable homes) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between the influence of home type (broken and intact homes) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between the influence of parenting type (single or separated parents) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.
- There is no significant relationship between influence of parenting style (child upbringing) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The structural functional theory is based on the assumption that society is a complex system, whose parts work together to promote stability and achievement of societal goals. The structural functional theory makes two assertions. Firstly, it holds that society is composed of social structures meaning relatively stable patterns, including the family, religious system, as well as interpersonal interaction. Secondly, each social structure has a social function or consequences for the operation of society as a whole. Social structure from economic production to simple handshake has a part in perpetuating society, at least, its present form (Macionis, 1994).

The given scenario lends credence to Spencer's view cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2008) that considers society like the human body or biological organisms, comprising the skeleton, muscles and various internal organs of the body, all of which contribute to the survival of the human organism. Similarly, the social structures work together to keep society operating (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Correspondingly, Jarvie (1973) stated that members of a society could be thought of as cells that institute organs whose function is to sustain the life of the entity, despite the frequent death of cells and the production of new ones. The functionalist analyses of family in the education of children, examine the social significance of phenomena, that is, the purpose they serve in a particular society in maintaining the whole.

The family as a microcosm of the society has different parts that work in tandem for its harmonious existence. The father, mother and children in a family, have different functions which they perform in the family for the total education of the children. Both parents play

different roles to ensure that the education of the child is possible. The absence of one may adversely affect the onerous task of child's upbringing and education.

Functionalism is the oldest, and yet the most dominant, theoretical perspective in sociology of education and many other social sciences. This study presumes a functionalist view of 'society' specific to the middle years of the twentieth century, a time characterized by a high degree of occupational specialization, shared norms and values, stability, and the tendency to maintain equilibrium in the presence of social changes and peace in society, family and education (Ololube, 2006).

Hurn (1995) states that the functionalist theorists are of the opinion that those who excel in society are those who have worked the toughest for their position, a social occurrence called meritocracy. According to Hurn, it is a society where ability and effort count for more than privilege and inherited status, and good behaviour above all works for the good of society. Society needs the best and the brightest to function at the highest levels, and therefore it gives its highest rewards to the group of people who behaves better the most.

Durkheim (1956) was of the view that the families and schools are there to teach morals to children. These morals are the ones that society has set up so that everyone in the society need to be taught the right value at homes and in schools. In teaching morals and good behaviours, they are also teaching children that they must become part and parcel of the society and they have ties to society or the child and society will break down.

Finally, the application and use of the functionalist approach to this study is vital because it offered the opportunity to first, define problems in a systematic and functional terms. Secondly, it views social problems as always interrelated and lending its application to other component parts of the society. Thirdly, the interdependence of the component parts of family in society was given consideration. Also, the purpose of the choice of functionalist theory is not to test or refute, but to use it to select variables of interest and to organize this research and give it backing. An examination of the concepts used in this work fits into this framework because a picture of the typical outlook of the role of family and society in children's socialization and education is the first step towards accepting the contemporary meaning of today's values and teaching. In essence, the goal is to test how single parenthood influences the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours in Rivers State. The researcher's preference for the functionalist theory does not mean that functionalist theory is not without criticism from other schools of thought. One of the criticisms for example, is that the functionalists were criticized on their view of the causes of educational failure which allocated guilt on the individuals not the society, the poor, or the rich.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Single Parenthood

Single-parenthood has been operationally defined as children residing in single parent households or any type of household other than a household in which both biological parents are present. Child development literature seems to be pointing to the possibility that children not living with both biological parents are in jeopardy (Carling, Menjívar, & Schmalzbauer, 2012).

Single-parenthood involves a sole parent who cares for children without the help of the other parent (Ekpenyong & Udisi, 2016). A single parent family is a nuclear family, where one or more children are nurtured by either a father or a mother (Keswet & Dapas, 2010). Igba

(2006) refers to such a family as father/mother headed family. In such situation, the remaining parent not only inherits the responsibilities of the missing parent, but also takes custody of their children, in addition to his/her own roles as father or mother (Sanchez, 2007).

According to Ekpenyong and Udisi (2016), single-parenting refers to a mother or father who looks after children on his or her own without the other partner. It is a situation, in which one of the two individuals involved in the conception of the child is responsible for the upbringing of the child or children (UNICEF, 2013; Craig, 2015). They include: mother/father following a divorce, never married teen, single parenthood father or mother, single parenting by grandparents, adoptive parents, widows or widowers. Researches (Musick & Meier, 2010; Barajas, 2011) have proved it that children who grow up in a household with only one parent are worse off on average than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents, regardless of the parents race or educational background, regardless of whether the parents are married when the child is born and regardless of whether the resident parent remarries compared with teenagers of similar background, who grow up with both parents at home, adolescents who have lived apart from one of their parents during some period of childhood are twice as likely to drop out of school, twice as likely to have a child before age 20 and one and a half times as likely to be “idle” out of school and out of work in their late teens and early twenties.

Even though, single-parenthood is not the sole culprit for these societal malaise living with just one parent increases the risk of their negative outcomes (Staff, 2017). Growing up with a single parent is just one out of many factors that put children at risk of failure, just as lack of exercise is only one among many factors that put people at risk for heart disease. Many people who do not exercise never suffer a heart attack and many children raised by single mothers grow up to be quite successful (McLanahan & Sandefur, 2009).

Social capital is an asset that is created and maintained by relationships of commitment and trust. It functions as a conduct of information as well as a source of emotional and economic support and it can be just as important as financial capital in promoting children’s future success. The decision of parents to live apart whether as a result of divorce or an initial decision not to marry, damages and sometimes destroys the social capital that might have been available to the child who had the parents lived together. It does this, first and foremost, by weakening the connection between the child and the father (Pearlstein, 2011). When a father lives in a separate household, he is usually less committed to his child and less trusting of the child’s mother hence, he is less willing to invest time and money in the child’s welfare. A weakness father-child relationship can also undermine a child’s trust in both parents and increase his uncertainty about the future, making him more difficult to manage (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Dreier, Chaudron & Lagae, 2015).

O’Connor and Scott (2007) contend that effective family management is vital to enhance positive outcomes in a child. Effective family management has to do with effective parenting practices; this involves seven key skills:

- Notice what the child is doing;
- Monitoring the child’s behavior over long periods;
- Model social skills behavior;
- Clearly state house rules;
- Consistently provide for sane punishment for transgressions;
- Provide reinforcement for conformity;

- Negotiate disagreement so that conflicts and crises do not escalate.

Early social science researches asserted that the “broken home” was the single most important factor in understanding delinquency. More recent research suggests that family disruption is and closely related to delinquency, largely because of the effect of such disruption on relationship bonds and parental monitoring and supervision (Zahn et al., 2010).

Single-parenting is emotionally and psychologically establishing, considering the challenges of becoming bread-winner and a single parent for the family. Weaver (2004) observes that raising children can be both rewarding and challenging, hence it assumes an overwhelming task. Sometimes, single-parenting therefore is likely to be more difficult, that is one parent tries to do the work of two.

Social Challenges of Single Parentage on Children

Studies on single parenthood are acknowledging that they have to be responsible for their children and they should be willing to do so rather than being forced to do so, they naturally should be allowed opportunity to be declared fit and be fully engaged in their children’s lives (Sessou, Amagiya, Adeyeri & Ajayi, 2014). However, several factors are responsible for this social challenge. Amongst them are:

Insufficient Provision of Essential Needs: Children form a peculiar aspect of the human society, with the provision of their needs, materially, morally being the responsibility of the parents. The situation is even worse during the tender ages from birth to 14 years, then from 15 years the trend begin to vary. They are expected to gradually get involved in some minimal duties. This must be within a scope whereby their education will not be adversely affected. If it is difficult for both parents to cope with all the material needs of the child, it is logical that the situation become worse when only a single parent is involve. Worse still, the economic downturn in Nigeria aggravates the situation. However, the degree of effect here depends largely on other factors such as number of children in question, income level of the remaining parent, social welfare conditions of a particular country etc. These notwithstanding, there is a general tendency of decline in volume of materials availability (Chevalier, Harmon, O’Sullivan & Walker, 2013).

Inadequacy of Time: Child nurturing generally is time consuming or intensive, thereby making its need indispensable as in overall human needs. Time automatically presents a bottleneck in the scheme of care, for guidance and general development of the child. This is more so in the case of working parents, as ends must be met in the general interest of the family. The need to make ends meet has given rise to the increase in the number of double employed families. As Alakeson (2012) puts the rate of working mothers has steadily increased among women of almost all ages. The current rate of material employment for two-parent families with school age children has increased. The attempt to cope with this combination has even forced double parent family mothers to resort to care and nanny option.

The time at home will probably be low quality interaction with the children as fatigue or exhaustion, preparation for the next day and the likes will also play out. We see in Walton (2012) on account of a double family lawyer mother when the second child came along, it was so exhausting just to meet their physical and emotional needs after meeting the demands of clients all day that our time together as a family suffered.

Most parents’ extensive engagements of this sort have jeopardized face to face interaction with their children. If double parents find this situation so difficult, it leaves us with little to

guess what happens in the case of single parents. The Awake (2002) declared that all parents face challenges, joys and problems but single parents do so alone, without a partner.

Child Socialization: The human society has generally been observed to dominantly operate norms and standard that guide conduct. It is this framework that trigger off the issue of socialization, through which sustainability of this system can be achieved. Socialization primarily concerns living harmoniously with other members of the society, immediate and larger. According to Anderson and Guernsey (1985), socialization is the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society. It consists of the activities that are devoted to the inculcation and elicitation of basic psychological patterns, through spontaneous interaction with parents, siblings, kinsmen and other members of the community.

He explained further that socialization is a process of social learning through which people acquire personality and learn the way of life of their society. The sensitive nature of socialization makes it imperative for both parents to play their individual role in the life of the child at this stage. For example, given the socio-cultural background of the issue, the initiation of a male child into manhood, especially of the puberty stage is strictly the father's responsibility. This is applicable to the female too, where the onus lies on the mother for adequacy. Again the case of sex education, which is closely connected to is a very sensitive issue and the processes are in extreme ritualistic terms in many African societies. Others are guidance through skill acquisition in peer interactions at various stages of development. The necessity here is to avoid inclination towards extreme character, for example, bully, cowardice etc.

A female child, even before puberty, out-grows the involvement in certain roles in her life by her father. The same thing applies to the male child to the mother. A glaring example is the case of sex education, with its strong natural discomfoting aspects. The picture here therefore shows that at this formative stage of a child's life, the socialization is left to suffer serious blow in the absence of any of the parent, be it father or mother. That is why in Ezewu in Ololube (2012) states clearly that from experience and investigation that children are better off and more secured in double parent homes. Moreover, the product of a one-parent home suffer greater, worse still, when a male parent rears a female child and vice versa in the light of the distinct roles involved. A greater reality faced here is that, these deficiencies follow a child to the school front and beyond in areas of discipline, self-control and psychological stability, all count here.

Delinquent Behaviours

In the words of Jones and McMahon (2014) delinquency is an umbrella word for a wide variety behaviours. Also, Dienne and Oyet (2011) defines delinquency as a behaviour that fails to match up to the normal standards that society prescribes that is set of norms which it expects all its members should faithfully follow.

Delinquent behaviours are those acts performed by the adolescents, which do not conform to the kind of acts which the society expects from its members. Efebo (1999: 297) defines delinquency "as failure, omission or violation of duty; misdeed or offence". When the delinquent finds no avenue towards identification of his goals, he is compelled to react in such a way as to illegitimately reach his goal through anti-social act. Delinquency is the result of unsuccessful efforts to achieve goals of society legitimately. According to Siegel and Welsh (2011), delinquency is the conflict between the individual good and that of the society.

The causes of these delinquencies according to Dienne and Oyet (2011) are fundamentally based on two theoretical bases. Firstly, there are the psychological theories such as Sigmund Freud, B. F. Skinner, Kurt Lewin etc., the underlying assumption in these theories is that delinquency is caused by the psychological make-up of the delinquent. Deficiency in the developmental stages or formation of the individual like when he fails to internalize the expected act of the society, leads to psychological problems of adjustment which are showed by committing delinquent acts.

The implication here is that causes of delinquency reside in the individual and this is revealed through his reaction problems. There are also environmental causes, which include family types and other influences like the peer group. A child obviously establishes a bond with the family as he/she grows up. This bond to a good extent determines what he or she does, the type of act the individual puts up in the outside society.

Types of Students' Delinquent Behaviours

The various forms delinquent behaviours involving secondary school students are numerous. Yaroson (2004) and Ololube (2012) identified the following twelve common school offences:

Stealing: This is a common practice among students. It is taking what does not belong to you without the knowledge or consent of the owner. This includes stealing of textbooks, biro, snacks, money etc. furthermore, Stealing includes robbery, burglary, breaking and entering, and shoplifting from fellow students, staff and school property, and withholding the school fees given to children by parents. According to Grant et al. (2011), stealing appears to be moderately common among high school students and is associated with a range of potentially addictive and antisocial behaviours: poor grades, alcohol and drug use, smoking, sadness and hopelessness.

Dishonesty: This involves telling lies, withholding or falsifying report cards or reports, impersonating etc. Dishonesty includes deceit, fraudulent acts, lying, corruption, treachery, betrayal, withholding or falsifying examination results or reports, cheating and impersonation during examinations (Yaroson, 2004). According to Staats, Hupp, Wallace and Gresley (2009) dishonesty in school is a form of delinquent behaviour and may contribute negatively to character development, harm other students and put the integrity of the school in jeopardy.

Disobedience: This delinquent act involves flouting specific orders, wearing wrong uniforms or wrong sandals etc. disobedience goes further to include non-compliance, breaking school rules and regulations, insubordination and mischief (Ololube, 2012).

Truancy: Truancy involves returning back to school days or weeks after resumption, coming to school late, leaving the school without authorization and dodging specific lesson periods etc. According to Ololube (2012) truancy include absenteeism, non-attendance of school activities, malingering and returning days or weeks after school has resumed, leaving school without authorisation and avoiding specific lesson periods. Plainly put, it is the irregular attendance of school (Animasahun, 2009). Animasahun (2009) and Olanrewaju, and Akano (2011) see truancy as a disease that has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigerian educational programmes and has caused setbacks for many children and adolescents. Persistent truancy according to Coughlan (2009) regular absences from school can have a negative impact on a young person's educational ambitions and life chances.

Cultism: This delinquent act involves students belonging to groups that are banned by the School authority or other groups outside the school, which they use to intimidate their fellow students and their teachers (Ololube, 2012).

Examination malpractice: This involves student's use of external help to write examinations, bringing in text books or other materials, which will aid them in the examinations or getting help from their subject teachers.

Teenage Pregnancy/Sexual Offences: This refers to an under-aged female student becoming pregnant outside the formal wedlock. Sexual Offences: include having sex without the consent of the other person (rape), having sex within or around the school, certified cases of venereal diseases and pregnancy, possession of pornographic literature and use of contraceptives and abortion (Egbochuku & Ekanem, 2008). Rape is the most common violent crime committed on campuses today. Since there are several different classes and types of rapes, it is hard to give an accurate sentence for rape.

Drug offences: The drug offences committed by students are smoking of cigarettes and Indian hemp, keeping or using drugs allegedly to aid memory, keeping or using drugs for regular diseases, but not prescribed by a doctor, keeping or using drugs to prevent or abort pregnancy, drinking alcoholic drinks etc. (Ololube, 2013). They further include selling hemp or cocaine, keeping or using drugs alleged to aid memory, keeping or using prescription drugs that are not prescribed by a doctor, keeping or using drugs alleged to prevent or abort pregnancies, sniffing tobacco and drinking excessive alcohol (Ololube, 2012).

Bullying: This involves oppression of junior students, flogging, willful destruction of junior students' properties etc.

Assault and Insult: includes beating up junior or weaker students and staff, stabbing students and staff, battering, mugging and frequent fighting. In addition to physical attacks these violations also included verbal abuse, rudeness and general disrespectful behaviours. These negative behaviours are intentional and repeated over time (Crews, Crews & Turner, 2008; Okeke, 2012).

Single-Parenthood and Delinquent Behaviours

The type of family a child comes from may influence his or her involvement in delinquent act. Many authorities and research studies have sought to explain the influence of single parent, both parents, a family where one of the parents is late and others on the development of delinquent acts by children from such homes. In their further explication of this, Young and Parish (1977: 216) remark that "Children who are brought up from divorced families are more prone to delinquent acts than those who are brought up from homes where one of the parents has died".

In the upbringing of the child, the presence or absence of one of the parents influences a child's social and emotional balancing. Both parents have their roles to play and one parent cannot successfully play both roles. To this, Shek, Xie and Lin (2014) observed that single mothers are often socially isolated and lack emotional support. The chances of children from single parenthood family to be involved in delinquent acts are obviously higher than those from both parent families.

The society we live in is very volatile and dangerous. A family with both parents is finding it difficult to raise their children because of the so many distractions ascribed to the so called jet age. Children's actions are therefore affected by so many influences, which range from internet browsing to video influences. Then, the child from a single parent home obviously faces more disruptions and less monitoring, which eventually leads to the child's involvement in delinquent act (Li, Zou, Liu & Zhou, 2014).

Delinquent behaviours thrive mostly in unstable family setting as a result of divorce (Cashen & Kevin, 2017). Mooney, Oliver and Smith (2009) very well explained this when they noted that in most divorced families, there is a period in the first year following divorce when mothers become depressed, self-involved, erratic, more non-supportive and authoritarian in dealing with their children. Divorced mothers and their sons are particularly likely to get involved in an escalating quarrel.

Also, Landale and Hetherington (1990) point out that after a divorce, it becomes difficult for parents to supervise the activities of their children as they begin to slowly adjust to the new circumstances. Consequently, the likelihood of the children becoming delinquents becomes very high.

These children as already pointed out are exposed to an environment which they are not matured to face and the effect of this is the likelihood of growing into delinquents.

Still on the behaviours of children from broken homes, Fine (1980) notes that divorce is an undesirable and stressful event which carries with it, undesirable consequences for the family members. Single parents' homes are always faced with such problems as financial hardship and loneliness. As a result, the children tend to experience poor parent-child relationship and this makes them oppositional and more aggressive than children from intact homes. Children from these types of homes are not properly supervised, they tend to be their own masters and the consequent effect of this is involvement in deviant acts. Solomon (1994) further explained this when he noted that in a single- parent home, the interaction between father, mother and children is very low as one parent has to play the role of two" Children from this type of home often get involved in delinquent acts due to poor supervision and monitoring.

Muschlenberg (2002) also supported the findings so far presented on broken or single parents' families and children involvement in delinquent acts. He asserts that the absence of intact families makes gang membership appealing because the delinquents have succour or take solace in the company of their group members, which help to reinforce the delinquency tendency in them.

It is an obvious fact that two parents' families are better in the control and supervision of their children than single parent homes. In terms of emotional balance, children from two parent or intact families are better than those from single parent or broken homes.

METHODS

Most educational and sociological research methods are descriptive and survey in nature. Survey research design is a systematic method of data collection (Ololube, 2009). The research design that was employed in this study is a descriptive one. Descriptive research according to Ololube (2006) is the conditions or relationship that exist; practices that prevail; beliefs, point of views, or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; efforts that are felt; or trends that are developing. The descriptive research employed in this study is a method that is primarily concerned with portraying the present circumstance.

As a result, the researcher included specific research design features from the broad empirical and theoretical perspectives to assess the quality and verify this study of how single parenthood influence the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours in Rivers State. This study is a quantitative design, aimed at emulating or improving best available practice, process and performance to aid our understanding of the theme of this study.

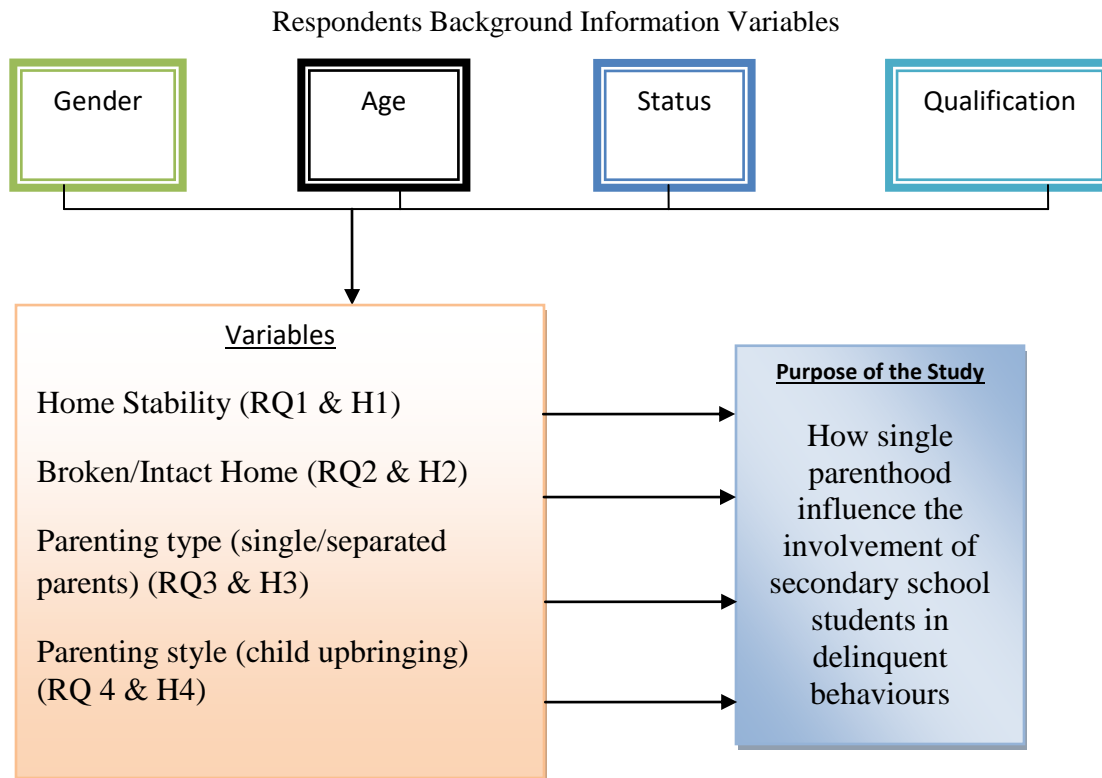


Figure 3.1: Research questions, hypotheses and design

Population of the Study

A research population include all members or elements, be they human beings, animals, trees, objects, events, etc., of a well-defined group. It defines the limits within which the research findings are applicable. In other words, a research population is categorized into target and accessible population. A target population is classified as all the members of a given group to which end the investigation is related, whereas the accessible population is looked at in terms of those elements in the target population within the reach of the researcher (Pole & Lampard, 2002).

The research population for this study is drawn from Rivers State (accessible) of Nigeria (target). It is one of the States in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria. The population comprises of students from ten (10) randomly selected secondary schools in the Rivers East senatorial district of Rivers State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

This study employed the simple random sampling procedure. The researcher’s choice to put into use the simple random sampling is because it is by far the easiest and simplest probability sampling technique in terms of conceptualization and application. It does not necessarily require knowledge of the exact composition of the population, so long as one can reach all the members of the population.

Rivers East Senatorial District is made up of seven (7) local government areas from which Ten (10) secondary schools was randomly selected from the numerous secondary schools in the senatorial district. A sample of three hundred (300) students was used in this study. They transmitted the questionnaire to their parents for completion.

Instrumentation (Questionnaire)

Questionnaire is the instrument that was used for data collection in this study. It is a term used for almost any kind of instrument that has questions or items to which individuals respond. Nworgu's (1991: 93-94) characteristics of a good questionnaire were applied in designing the questionnaire for this study. The characteristics are: relevance, consistency, usability, clarity, quantifiability and legibility. As a result, a questionnaire was designed with the help of the researcher's supervisor to elicit information from the respondents to help gather information on how single parenthood influences the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours.

A suitable design was structured along a four-point Likert-type scale (summated) of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The question was simple to be understood by the respondents because of the different categories of parents that was used for data gathering. The questionnaire comprised of two sections. Section "A" of the questionnaire focus on items such as gender, age, parenthood status, and academic qualifications. Section "B" focus on possible variables, which may or may not evaluate what parents perceive as being capable of influencing involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours, such as:

- Home Stability
- Broken/Intact Home
- Parenting type (single/separated parents)
- Parenting style (child upbringing)

Validity of the Study

The quality of research is related to the possession of the quality of strength, worth, or value. Validity is concerned with the degree to which a test appears to measure what it purports to measure. A measure is valid if it measures what it is intended to measure.

In this research endeavour, the researcher used terms in a fairly straightforward, commonsense way to refer to the correctness or credibility of description, explanation, interpretation, conclusion, or other sort of account (Ololube, 2006).

The instrument that was used in this research was valid because the researcher took time to comply with the formalities and procedures adopted in framing a research questionnaire. To validate the instrument the questionnaire was given to the researcher's supervisors who read through and made necessary corrections. The second process that was used to validate the research instrument was to pre-test the questionnaire and the responses from the respondents was used to improve on the items. In summary, the validity of this study rest on an overall evaluative judgment founded on empirical evidence and theoretical rationales of the adequacy, appropriateness of inferences and action based on the test scores.

Reliability of the Study

The quality of a research is necessarily dependent on the consistency with which the observations are made. The instrument that was used in this study is reliable because it was able to elicit the required information concerning how single parenthood influences the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours. However, a true measure of the reliability of the instrument was based on statistical data. These include test-retest and split-half forms. The instrument was subjected to statistical tests that can be used to assess reliability such as Cronbach Alpha test using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 of a computer software to statistically test the reliability of the research instrument because in research statistics when a research instrument's reliability has been assured it gives the bases for continuity. A Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .812 was obtained, which makes the instrument very reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher with the assistance of a research assistant administered the copies of the questionnaire to students who transmitted same to their parents for completion. After which it was returned to us in sealed envelopes. An estimated period of one week was allowed for the return of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

The analyses for this study will be based on mean score and a standard deviation (SD). The standard scores was calculated using descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23 (SPSS) was used to determine whether significant relationship exists between how single parenthood influences the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours.

A complete data set was created and used in the analyses. A diverse range of statistical techniques was used for data analysis: mean, SD (research question 1—4), One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (*F*). ANOVA will be employed to examine relationships between how single parenthood influences the involvement of secondary school students in delinquent behaviours (Hypotheses 1—4).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents Personal Data

In this study (see Table 1), the first set of data analyses that was conducted was a descriptive statistics (frequency [N], percentage, mean and standard deviation). Data from section 'A' of the questionnaire yielded information about respondents' personal data.

Information on respondents personal data based on gender revealed that 271(90.3%) and 29(9.7%) are female and male respectively. Figures for respondents' age showed that 97(32.3%) age between 20-29 years, 119(39.7%) age between 30-39 years, and 71(23.7%) age between 40-49 years, while respondents who are above 50 years were 13(4.3%). Respondents' statistics on parenthood revealed that single parents were 135 representing 45.0%, information on both parents were 117 representing 39.0%, while 48 representing 16.0% were of stable home. Furthermore, data on respondents qualification revealed that those with school certificate were

78(26.0%), those who hold National Diploma (ND) and the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) were 52(17.3%). Respondents with who hold first degree were 97(32.3%) and those who hold masters' degree 68(22.7%), while 5(1.7%) hold Ph.D. degree. (See Table two for detail).

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Personal Data

Respondents' Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	271	90.3
	Male	29	9.7
	Total	300	100.0
Age	20-29 years	97	32.3
	30-39 years	119	39.7
	40-49 years	71	23.7
	Above 50 years	13	4.3
	Total	300	100.0
Parenthood	Single Parent	135	45.0
	Both Parents	117	39.0
	Stable Home	48	16.0
	Total	300	100.0
Qualification	School Cert.	78	26.0
	ND/NCE	52	17.3
	First Degree	97	32.3
	Masters	68	22.7
	PhD.	5	1.7
	Total	300	100.0

Research Question 1: Family Stability/Delinquent Behaviours

The first research question posits that “How does family stability influence delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State?” The purpose of this research question is to assess respondents' perception on how family stability influence delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State. To answer this question, the responses on items 1-7 of section “B” of the questionnaire were tallied and analyzed along agree and disagree, and the result (see Table 2) revealed that research question one was accepted since the scores were above 2.50. Thus, the grand mean of 3.0138 and a standard deviation of .88880 was accepted, which shows that family stability influences delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Thus, respondents are of the view that the level of family stability influences delinquent behaviours in students.

In line with the findings of this study, Livingstone, Mascheroni, Dreier, Chaudron and Lagae (2015) contend that a stable family and weakness in father-child relationship can also undermine a child's trust in both parents and increase his/her uncertainty about the future, making children more difficult to manage. Same is true of O'Connor and Scott (2007) when they argued that stable and effective family management is vital to enhance positive outcomes in children. Stable and effective homes notice very easily what children are doing, monitor children behavior over long period of time, and model their social skills behaviour that conforms to the family norms and values. Stable and effective homes clearly state house rules and regulations that guide children's behaviours. They consistently provide for well-balanced punishment for misbehaviors, provide reinforcement for conformity to good behaviours and negotiate

disagreement so that conflicts and crises do not escalate. Thus, delinquent behaviours thrive mostly in unstable family setting as a result of divorce (Cashen et al., 2017).

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Family Stability/Delinquent Behaviours

S/N	Family Stability/Students' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours	Mean	SD	N	Remark
1.	Stable and effective homes notice very easily what the child is doing.	3.3867	.74319	300	Accepted
2.	Stable and effective homes monitor the child's behavior over long period of time.	2.8500	.88889	300	Accepted
3.	Stable and effective homes model social skills behaviour that conforms to the family norms and values.	3.3700	.67919	300	Accepted
4.	Stable and effective homes clearly state house rules and regulations that guide behaviours.	2.9300	.86076	300	Accepted
5.	Stable and effective homes consistently provide for well-balanced punishment for misbehaviors.	2.7867	.98881	300	Accepted
6.	Stable and effective homes provide reinforcement for conformity to good behaviours.	2.9600	1.09043	300	Accepted
7.	Stable and effective homes negotiate disagreement so that conflicts and crises do not escalate.	2.8133	.97038	300	Accepted
Grant Total		3.0138	.88880	300	Accepted

Research Question 2: Broken Home/Delinquent Behaviours

The second research question posits that "How does a broken home influence delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?" The purpose of this research question is to assess respondents' perception on how broken homes influence delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State. To answer this question, the responses on items 8-12 of section "B" of the questionnaire were tallied and analyzed along agree and disagree, and the result (see Table 3) revealed that research question one was accepted since the scores were above 2.50. Thus, the grand mean of 3.3960 and a standard deviation of .69404 was accepted, which shows that broken home influences delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Respondents are of the view that broken home influences delinquent behaviours in students.

In line with this study's findings, Sessou, Amagiya, Adeyeri and Ajayi (2014) acknowledged that parents have to be responsible for their children and they should be willing to do so rather than being forced to do so. They argued that family disruptions and broken homes are closely related to delinquency, which affects relationship bonds and parental monitoring and supervision. Insufficient provision of essential needs by single parents may likely result in children delinquent behaviours (Chevalier et al., 2013). They concluded that children are better off and more secured in double parent homes, as such determine their delinquent behaviours.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Broken Home/Students' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours

S/N	Broken Home/Students' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours	Mean	SD	N	Remark
8.	Family disruptions and broken homes are closely related to delinquency.	3.3800	.66110	300	Accepted
9.	Family disruptions and broken homes affect relationship bonds and parental monitoring and supervision.	3.5000	.64138	300	Accepted
10.	Insufficient provision of essential needs by single parents may likely result in children delinquent behaviours.	3.3333	.70986	300	Accepted
11.	Parents face challenges, joys and problems but single parents do so alone, without their partners, as a result it affects their children behaviours.	3.3700	.72677	300	Accepted
12.	Children are better off and more secured in double parent homes, as such determine their delinquent behaviours.	3.3967	.73105	300	Accepted
Grant Total		3.3960	.69404		Accepted

Research Question 3: Parenting Type (Single/Separated) / Delinquent Behaviours

The third research question posits that “How does parenting type (single/separated parents) influence the involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?” The purpose of this research question is to assess respondents’ perception on how parenting type influence delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State. To answer this question, the responses on items 13-19 of section “B” of the questionnaire were tallied and analyzed along agree and disagree, and the result (see Table 4) revealed that research question one was accepted since the scores were above 2.50. Thus, the grand mean of 3.2166 and a standard deviation of .61846 was accepted, which shows that parenting type influences delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Respondents are of the view that parenting type influences delinquent behaviours in students.

In line with the findings in this study, Shek et al. (2014) observed that single mothers are often socially isolated and lack emotional support. The chances of children from single parenthood family to be involved in delinquent behaviours are obviously higher than those from both parent families. They stated that single-parenting is emotionally and psychologically established to cause children misbehaviours, difficult in children’s upbringings, face more disruptions and less monitoring, which eventually lead to the child’s involvement in delinquent behaviours. It is obvious from this study that insufficient time for children resulting from single parenting automatically presents a bottleneck in the care, guidance and general development of the children, low quality interaction with the children as fatigue or exhaustion, preparation for the next day and the likes plays out, and children who are brought up from divorced families are more prone to delinquent behaviours than those who are brought up from homes where one of the parents has died.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Parenting Type/Students’ Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours

S/N	Parenting Type/Students' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours	Mean	SD	N	Remark
13.	Single-parenting is emotionally and psychologically established to cause children misbehaviours.	3.3233	.61649	300	Accepted
14.	Single-parenting is likely to be more difficult in children's upbringings.	3.2700	.64172	300	Accepted
15.	Single-parenting is emotionally and psychologically assumed to be an overwhelming task in children upbringings.	3.0367	.87819	300	Accepted
16.	Insufficient time for children as result of single parenting automatically presents a bottleneck in the care, guidance and general development of the children.	3.1400	.51765	300	Accepted
17.	Working single parents low quality interaction with the children as fatigue or exhaustion, preparation for the next day and the likes plays out.	3.3600	.58154	300	Accepted
18.	Children who are brought up from divorced families are more prone to delinquent behaviours than those who are brought up from homes where one of the parents has died.	3.2567	.70173	300	Accepted
19	Children from a single parent home obviously face more disruptions and less monitoring, which eventually lead to the child's involvement in delinquent behaviours.	3.1300	.39193	300	Accepted
Grant Total		3.2166	.61846		Accepted

Research Question 4: Parenting Style/Delinquent Behaviours

The fourth research question posits that "How does parenting style influence involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State?" The purpose of this research question is to evaluate respondents' perception on how parenting style influence delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State. To answer this question, the responses on items 20-27 of section "B" of the questionnaire were matched and analyzed along agree and disagree, and the result (see Table 5) revealed that research question one was accepted since the scores were above 2.50. Thus, the grand mean of 3.1047 and a standard deviation of .78453 was accepted, which shows that parenting style influences delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Respondents are of the view that parenting style influences delinquent behaviours in students.

In line with the findings of this study, Okoh (2004) noted that parental child upbringing style determines children socialization and involvement in delinquent behaviours, provides the process by which children acquire knowledge, skills and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society, and consists of the activities that are devoted to the inculcation and elicitation of basic psychological patterns of behaviours. Democratic parental style play positive role in the life of their children, while autocratic parental style play negative role in the life of their children. Parental upbringing style which follows rule and regulation at home tends to reduce issues of children delinquent behaviours.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics for Parenting Style/Students' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours

S/N	Parenting Style/Students' Involvement in Delinquent Behaviours	Mean	SD	N	Remark
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20.	Parental child upbringing style determines children socialization and involvement in delinquent behaviours	2.8467	.77362	300	Accepted
21.	Parental child upbringing style provides the process by which children acquire knowledge, skills and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society.	2.8033	1.17014	300	Accepted
22.	Parents children upbringing style consists of the activities that are devoted to the inculcation and elicitation of basic psychological patterns of behaviours.	3.2967	.70021	300	Accepted
23.	Democratic parental style play positive role in the life of their children at this stage.	3.3700	.72677	300	Accepted
24.	Autocratic parental style play negative role in the life of their children at this stage.	3.2300	.63649	300	Accepted
25.	Parental style which allows children do things the way they deem fit determine children patterns of delinquent behaviours.	3.2433	.66251	300	Accepted
26.	Parental upbringing style which follows rule and regulation at home tends to reduce issues of children delinquent behaviours.	2.9433	.82201	300	Accepted
Grant Total		3.1047	.78453		Accepted

Results of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The first hypothesis states that “There is no significant relationship between the influence of home stability (stable and unstable homes) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.” This hypothesis was aimed at assessing if significant relationship exists between family stability and delinquent behaviours.

The result from the ANOVA analysis (Table 6) conducted revealed that there is a significant relationship between family stability and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Respondents are of the view that family stability has a significant relationship with delinquent behaviours in secondary school. This is depicted in the $F\text{-ratio} = 3.889$; $p < .009$, tested at .05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected.

Table 4.6: ANOVA Analysis of Family Stability and Delinquent Behaviours among Secondary School Students

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Family Stability and Delinquent Behaviours	Between Groups	6.262	3	2.087	3.889	.009
	Within Groups	158.885	296	.537		
	Total	165.147	299			

Hypothesis 2: The second hypothesis states that “There is no significant relationship between the influence of home type (broken and intact homes) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.”

The result from the ANOVA analysis (Table 7) conducted revealed that there is a significant relationship between home type and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Respondents are of the view that home type has a significant relationship with delinquent behaviours in secondary school. This is shown in the $F\text{-ratio} = 4.665$; $p < .001$, tested at .05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis two was rejected.

Table 7: ANOVA Analysis of Home Type and Delinquent Behaviours among Secondary School Students

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Home Type and Delinquent Behaviour	Between Groups	7.775	4	1.944	4.665	.001
	Within Groups	122.905	295	.417		
	Total	130.680	299			

Hypothesis 3: The third hypothesis states that “There is no significant relationship between the influence of parenting type (single or separated parents) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.”

The result from the ANOVA analysis (Table 8) conducted revealed that there is a significant relationship between parenting type and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Respondents are of the view that parenting type has a significant relationship with delinquent behaviours in secondary school. This is illustrated in the $F\text{-ratio} = 10.197$; $p < .000$, tested at .05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis three was rejected.

Table 8: ANOVA Analysis of Parenting Type and Delinquent Behaviours among Secondary School Students

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Parenting Type and Delinquent Behaviour	Between Groups	22.844	2	11.422	10.197	.000
	Within Groups	332.676	297	1.120		
	Total	355.520	299			

Hypothesis 4: The fourth hypothesis states that “There is no significant relationship between influence of parenting style (child upbringing) and involvement in delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Rivers State.”

The result from the ANOVA analysis (Table 9) conducted revealed that there is a significant relationship between parenting style and delinquent behaviours among secondary school students. Respondents are of the view that parenting style has a significant relationship with delinquent behaviours in secondary school. This is illustrated in the $F\text{-ratio} = 16.475$; $p < .000$, tested at .05 level of significance. Therefore, hypothesis four was rejected.

Table 9: ANOVA Analysis of Parenting Style and Delinquent Behaviours among Secondary School Students

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Parenting Style and Delinquent Behaviour	Between Groups	21.447	1	21.447	16.475	.000
	Within Groups	387.949	298	1.302		

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the knowledge base of education and the society with a view to evaluate the place of single parenthood on the involvement of secondary school student on delinquent behaviours. This research provides insight, for example, into how parents think and perceive parenting into their everyday and long term concerns, and into the contexts in which their children ideas and attitudes develop over a period of time. Consequently, this study has shown us that parental type and style determine children delinquent behaviours in secondary schools in Rivers State. It was learned through this study that there is a significant relationship between single parenthood and involvement in delinquent behaviours (Shek et al., 2014; Sessou et al., 2014). This study has proven that the researched hypotheses were rejected as the evidence from this study shows that there is a significant relationship between family stability, broken home, parental type and style and student involvement in delinquent behaviours.

The question remains, why do single parenthood have such a strong influence on delinquent behaviours in the Rivers State? As the literature reviewed in this study suggests, all of the component parts of parenthood—single, broken home, parental type, and style feed into the desire and ability of a parents to pursue means of curbing children delinquency to advance education in Rivers State and Nigeria in general (Ololube, 2013; Ololube et al., 2013).

Fostering educational development through reducing delinquency in children in Rivers State is not an easy task, particularly, considering the continuous increase in delinquent behaviours, which is as a result of failure on the part of parents to arrest the situation. Nonetheless, there are a number of steps that can be taken in the direction of fostering educational development by reducing student's delinquent behaviours. Parents must work together with their children to instill a sense and system of accountability through effective rules and regulations to ensure obedience.

Finally, it is imperative to continue stressing to parents the connections between family stability and broken home, and delinquent behaviour and the connections between parenting style and type and students involvement in delinquent behaviours. If parents can come to appreciate that the misbehavior of children of Rivers State will lead to the ineffectiveness and worsening of the nation's insecure environment. Thus, parents should begin to work towards the eradication of the component parts of their children's delinquent behaviours.

In realization of the findings of this study, it is obvious that for the educational systems in Rivers State to flourish and grow and for our children to sustain equity and justice, parents must make their children acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities and commitments needed to be good citizens. However, a lot of works need to be done. Similar studies on a broader scale that covers more senatorial districts or states in Nigeria should be conducted to give an idea of what is obtainable in other parts of the country. Therefore, further research in the area of this study is highly recommended in every segment of this work. Studies should also be carried out to ascertain whether there are other factors that influence delinquent behaviour. In the same way, we recommend that further research be conducted using the research questions and hypotheses from this study; if possible the research design of this investigation should be applied to verify if the result of this dissertation is true or false. It is, therefore, suggested that the findings of this study be viewed as tentative and subject to further investigation.

Recommendations

This study recommends that:

- Parents should be strict on the implementation of the rules and regulations that guide their homes;
- The environmental influence of the region and Rivers State in particular should be addressed to significantly reduce its influence on children;
- Single parenting, broken homes, and poor parenting style should be reduced to the barest minimum so that the delinquent behaviours of our children will be curtailed; and
- Parents must make their children acquire the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities to make them good citizens.

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