



Socio–Economic Environment and Juvenile Delinquency Among Secondary School Students in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the menace of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Rivers State to the society. The dysfunctional remand homes, ineffective juvenile system and the absence of borstal institution in Rivers State have necessitated the increase of delinquent activities because there are no functional correctional institutions to remand, correct and rehabilitate the delinquents from their unacceptable behaviour and actions. Three null hypotheses were derived from the main objectives which takes a critical analysis on the socio-economic factors that spur juveniles to commit delinquency, namely: There is no significant relationship between social/vocational skills and high rate of juvenile delinquency; there is no significant relationship between levels of economic status of parents and high rate of juvenile delinquency; and there is no significant relationship between delinquent peers influence and high rate of juvenile delinquency. The research design adopted in this study is survey and questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were also used in the study while study samples across the state were Port Harcourt City, Ahoada and Degema Towns. A sample size of 345 respondents was used as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation with one way analysis of variance were statically adopted to analyze the data collected from the field. The findings of the study revealed that the three null hypotheses were rejected while the alternative hypotheses were accepted. Majorly, the findings revealed that parents are central in creating affective environment in their homes through vigilant parenting and giving financial support, physical and health needs, emotional care, counselling, guidance and supervision of their juveniles' conduct and actions. While the government and community authorities should create enabling laws, effective juvenile system and establishment of borstal schools with well equip vocational training centres to complement the efforts of parents. It is therefore advocated that: there should be effective structural institutions like parents' council of Nigeria from the community level to the national level and the strengthening of parent-teachers association in schools to accommodate behavioural skills training amongst others to handle juveniles with delinquent behaviour before it escalates to an uncontrollable proportion.

Keywords: Socio-Economic Environment, Vocational Skills, Peer Influence, Juvenile Delinquency.

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INTRODUCTION

Juvenile delinquency is a general phenomenon because no country in the world can boast of totally eradicating this ugly trend but it becomes a social problem when half or three-quarter of the population of a particular country views it to affect the peace and order of their country.

Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia (2018) defined juvenile delinquency also known as 'juvenile offending', as "participation in illegal behaviour by minors (juveniles, i.e. individuals younger than the statutory age of majority)". In Nigeria, delinquency is a serious offence committed against the criminal or penal code of the country, or against the Children Young Person Act of 1914.

Nelson, Rutherford and Wolford (1996) cited in Poduthase (2012) noted that delinquent behaviour can be viewed in two dimensions: internalizing disorders and externalizing disorders. They observed that internal misbehaving is generated by the individual himself/herself to meet his/her expected selfish desires. While external misbehaving is generated by another individual towards the victim negatively to the advantage of the offender's desires.

Juvenile delinquencies are serious offences committed by children and young ones between the ages of 7 to 18, against the penal or criminal code of Nigeria. These serious offences, if committed by adults, will otherwise earn them conviction and imprisonment. Due to enculturation or diffusion of foreign cultures into our society, juvenile delinquency is not just an urban social problem, it affects our villages as well, though the nature and degree may differ. Some of the violent delinquency committed by young ones include: Armed robbery and other property-related delinquencies such as burglary, pick-pocket, shoplifting, kidnapping, Indian hemp smoking, drunkenness and ingestion of drugs like codien and tramadol, etc.

Infringement of societal rules by young ones undoubtedly is increasing in extent and intensity and has become a national concern. The media has consistently expressed disgust for the increasing involvement of young persons in violent delinquencies. In Rivers State, as well as other states in Nigeria, delinquency is often regarded as a product of social change and the inability of young ones to cope or adapt their behaviour according to the norms and value of the society due to limited access to basic resources for subsistence.

In the traditional society, opportunities for delinquent activities were limited because society at that time was simple and homogeneous. The socialization of children and young ones was done through families, extended family and age grade. Common offences like stealing and lying were dealt with in a manner to deter others. For instance, in traditional society, theft was considered a serious offence and anyone caught stealing was subjected to public disgrace like severe beating and the stolen item was carried publicly by the thief who is paraded in the community. The stolen item is returned to the owner and the thief made to pay a fine. These measures are today grossly inadequate because of the heterogeneous and urbanized nature of modern societies.

Inyang (2004) observed that a synopsis of police crime report offers a clear evidence of the upsurge in criminal and delinquent activities in the country. It was reported in Newswatch (23:9:89) that between 1980 and 1983, property worth N828.66 million was stolen by robbers nationwide and most of the offenders were found to be juveniles. There is also the case of 12 juveniles who in 1988 were condemned to death by the Lagos State Robbery and Firearms Tribunal for taking part in armed robbery operations within Lagos Metropolis (Newswatch, 12:9:88).

The National Bureau of Statistics (2012) in a baseline youth survey report observed that the population of youth aged between 15-35 years in Nigeria is estimated to be 64

million and about 54% are unemployed. For crime statistics, 46,836 youths were recorded against different types of crimes, leading from Indian hemp smoking to theft and murder.

In Rivers State, the remand homes and rehabilitation centres are in shambles with dilapidated infrastructure and a semi-functional system (Ministry of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation, Port Harcourt) and my recent visit to the Port Harcourt Maximum Prisons, Ahoada and Degema respectively, revealed that majority of the inmates are young persons from the age range of 17-24 years. It is on this basis of the increasing involvement of juveniles in delinquency that motivated me to research on the topic, to investigate the causes, consequences and make recommendations on how best to tackle the delinquency problems in the state as well as in the country at large.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Socio-economic Environment of Juvenile Delinquency

Socio-economic environment is a social location in which activities surrounding the wellbeing of adolescents are carried out in their day-to-day interaction with others (Carlen, 1988). This environment, if properly equipped shapes the socialization process of the child, but if not, it affects the child's development. At this point, according to Fatchamps and Minten (2016), the child who does not learn the proper values of life cannot adjust himself to the situations which he has to face in life. Very often, the child expresses his/her frustration in the form of delinquent activities.

Studies from the child vagrancy are also reported from the Indian Situation. Srivastava published his study of juvenile vagrancy conducted in the city of Kampar and Lucknow in 1963. He studied 300 juvenile vagrant boys and pointed out a pre- delinquency phase of juvenile. He found that vagrancy is not the usual satisfaction of some wander lust but fulfills certain basic urges wrapped and malformed by poverty, appalling overcrowding family disintegration and unwholesome habits of parents and associates. The children come in contact with the gang initially sound to protect their interest but ultimately to make them learn delinquent ways of living, that is, truancy, smoking, gambling, sexual misconduct, pick pocketing, shop lifting and theft. These activities become central and create secondary anti-social habits and behaviour patterns and the children easily slip down to a hardened and complex criminal carrier. He also found that activities of delinquency and crime are high in the vagrant areas. They come from the families of poor and miserable economic status.

Further in the study, Srivatsava (2005) found that 67.4 percent of the delinquents' low academic performances are below the average, while 25.5 percent had average and only 7.4 percent above average academic performance. Also, the Indian Council of Social Welfare had taken up a study and published its research report on impact of institutions on juvenile delinquents in 1969. The project covered the delinquents released during the period of five years from 1958 to 1963 mainly from certified schools of Maharashtra. The total sample was 224 inmates. The main findings of the study regarding the background of the delinquents revealed that about 69 percent of the delinquents were reported to be truants from school and had dropped out while 17 percent out of the delinquents had not gone to school at all (Coie, Terry, Lenox, Lochman & Hyman, 1995). Nearly 45 percent of the children worked unskilled work like hawking, collies, domestic servants etc. While about 35 percent of them were engaged in illegal occupation, over 55 percent of them had belonged to broken families.

As pointed out, juvenile delinquency is essentially an urban problem, though otherwise it is considered universal. The urban situation is one in which delinquency naturally gets developed due to the kind of arrangement it will have for itself. India is fast industrializing and urbanizing during the post-independence time. It experienced a kind of

social upheavals due to migration, formation of new urban neighbourhoods, etc. having its implication to human behaviour (Gohtreson & Lirschi, 1990).

Social/Vocational/Technical Skills Education and Juvenile Delinquency

Nangle, Erdlog, Carpenter, and Newman (2002); Ollendick and Hersen (1979); Stewart, Carr, and Leblanc (2007); Thompson (2008) cited in Henry Poduthase (2012) all observed that social skills training is a kind of psychotherapy that works to help people improve their social skills deficits so that they become socially competent. These social skills deficits include: anxiety and stress, antisocial behaviors, social isolation, cognitive deficits, and low self-confidence. Spencer (2003 cited in Thompson, 2008) affirms that the process of social skills training is aimed at increasing a person's ability to do very social behaviour that are essential in achieving success in social, interactions.

Ollendick and Hersen (1979) cited in Pudathase (2012) also found that social skills training was effective in an experiment they carried out with 27 delinquents. Miltenberger (2004) defines behavioral skills training as a procedure consisting of instruction modeling, behavioural rehearsal and feedback that is used to teach new behaviors or skills. Instruction provide a description of the skill, its importance when and when not to use the skill; Modeling – practically shows how to do the skill; behavioural rehearsal – practice how you are taught several skills; and feedback – the participant is praised for following the responses and told to let go the incorrect responses. Zainab (2015) also affirms that behavioural skills training is a strategy used in educating students, delinquents, non- delinquents etc to acquire new behaviour or skill and it is acknowledged to be very effective.

Economic Status of Parents and Juvenile Delinquency

Osonwa, Adejobi, Inyam and Osonwa (2003) observed on their findings that there is a great relationship between economic status of parents and the academic performance of students. Reasons being that students from lower income households scored significantly lower than students from higher income households. In conclusion, they called on government to help reduce the imbalance by subsidizing the educational expenses of students from lower households.

Ekpenyong (1998) noted that it may be true that most young persons are delinquents because they are poor; it is also true that most delinquents and criminals are not the poorest members of society. But as Merton's Anomie's theory (1957), puts it that a society such as ours (Nigeria) which emphasizes materialism but provides limited opportunities for its attainment tends to propel the poor into perpetual criminal and delinquent activities, which in most cases are carried out in subculture oriented gangs.

Eneji, Ubom, Eneji, Obogo and Dunnamah (2003) also found that there is a positive relationship between parents' socio-economic status and female students' dropout in school. Their findings were in line with the findings of Hunter and May (2003) & Dachi and Garret (2003), which observed that the low socio-economic status of parents is among the core factors responsible for students' dropout in school.

Corcoran et al (1985), Brooks-Gunn et al (1993) and Pearlin et al (1981) cited in Mayer (2002), noted that the level of parental income is directly related to juveniles' outcomes and that the poor juveniles from low income status families impose costs in terms of economic, health, social and educational expenditure on society because the opportunities for them to succeed are limited they also observed that juveniles from low income or poor families when they become adults, may end up perpetrating the cycle of poverty in the society.

Delinquent Peer Influence and Juvenile Delinquency

Hoghugh (1983) noted that nearly all children belong to one or two peer groups with which they get along; and peer groups fulfill a wider range of functions for their members and that is why they are influential. It is through this encounter that youngsters discover the pleasure of fellowship, status protection, security, identity and stimulation. Thus, delinquent behaviors as Morrow (1967) noted, tend to be a reflection of societal influence on the juveniles because schools are located in the community of which they cannot be free from societal influence, even though they act to modify parenting influences.

Kaplan et al (1987) viewed that association of juveniles with peers who engage in delinquent behaviour facilitate the acting out of delinquent disposition, and that inadequate or weak supervision of juvenile activities by parents are usually associated with the predisposition of juveniles to delinquency. Howes (1983) observed that delinquency can be, and in most cases a group activity. Peers promote socialization through influence on social skills, emotional security and companionship. Young people's friendship and learning are based on effective relationship, mutual enjoyment of each other and friendly exchange.

Inyang (1989) cited in Inyang (2004), observed that committing an offence is like undergoing any act which has three parts: the idea, the opportunity and the ability. These parts operate in an orderly manner. For example, the idea of committing theft, such as pick-pocket or shoplifting leads to the looking for a wicked minded person who shares the same interest and is willing to learn and cooperate in the act. Inyang also observed that youngsters who indulge in delinquent activities while in school usually end up as school failures. The alternative is to find employment and without a good certificate, end up getting menial jobs or no outlet for job opportunity. They become faced with status frustration. These youngsters often learn from their friends and agree to gravitate to the nearby motor-parks and market places in town as the only places at which they can earn money as 'area boys' and 'loaders' or get involved in serious delinquency like arm robbery.

UN Juvenile Delinquency World Youth Report (2003) observed that statistical data in many countries display that delinquency is largely a group occurrence; and that between two-thirds and three-quarters of all juvenile offences are committed by members of different groups.

Ehiemua (2004), observed that juvenile delinquency is a serious problem encountered by every modern societies/countries in the world. He noted that there are two types of parenting: vigilant and harsh parenting. In vigilant parenting, parents regularly monitor their adolescents' words and actions, type and peer friends they associate with, and parents too must be of good behaviors and examples for the adolescents to follow/imitate while in harsh parenting, parents have slow, lukewarm or I-don't-care attitudes about the good upbringing of their adolescents because even the parents ways of life or behavior are questionable. He also observed that vigilant parenting is best in controlling juveniles against committing delinquency while harsh parenting encourages anti-social behaviors among juveniles which likely pushes them to commit delinquency.

Thesis Statement

Juvenile delinquency is a social problem in the State because it is affected the peace and order of the people living in Rivers State. The people cannot confidently carry out their normal socio-economic activities due to fear of delinquents who terrorize people through arm robbery and other property related crime and delinquency activities. Foreign investors who intend to come and do business cannot come because the socio-economic environment in the state is not safe. Some of the related problems to why there is an increase of delinquency

activities in the state are lack of functional remand homes where delinquents are remanded awaiting adjudication and absence of borstal institutions where delinquents unacceptable behaviors are being corrected and subsequently undergo formal education as well as learn vocational skills of their interest (Ministry of Social Welfare/Rehabilitation, Port Harcourt). For example, delinquents awaiting trial are kept with adult criminals awaiting trial in the same room where they learn from adult criminals and become more hardened when released back to the society. They create more havoc and influence other vulnerable juveniles to embrace delinquency as an easy way of making money.

Cult activities are fast increasing in the state because cultists have extended their recruitment of members to primary and secondary schools where a large number of juvenile are recruited as cultists into different cult groups. The unacceptable behavior of the recruited juvenile is noted or can be seen in their lack of respect for constituted community authority and elders in their various communities, their membership in cult group has made them to become more hardened and see the group as a platform to get accomplished for their delinquent operations or activities.

Most parents have lost total control of their juvenile because of their inadequate income and the increasing economic pressure that exist within families. The inability of parents to train their juveniles in schools or sponsor them to acquire vocational skills especially the boys, have frustrated the juveniles more and more and made some to take to delinquency as a way of life.

Statement of Objectives

The main objective of this study is to make a critical analysis of the socio-economic functions that spur juveniles to commit delinquency, and how they affect the Nigerian society and Rivers State in particular. Specific objectives include:

- To identify whether lack of vocational/technical skills education and best socialization practices can cause juveniles to commit delinquency.
- To identify whether the economic status of parents and nature of the political economy influence juveniles to commit delinquency.
- To identify whether delinquent peers influence can spur juveniles to commit delinquency.
- To make recommendation on how to control and reduce juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Rivers State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is predicated on the strain theories with particular reference to Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory (1985–2015), and Albert Cohen (1955) theory of delinquent subculture.

Strain Theories

Agnew and Scheuerman (2015) defined strain theories in the following ways: “that certain strains or stressors increase the likelihood of crime, and that these strains lead to negative emotions such as frustration and anger, and that these emotions create pressure for action, and crime is one possible response. Robert Agnew developed the General Strain Theory (a social psychological interpretation of juvenile delinquency), of criminology of which the theory in recent times has accumulated a great amount of empirical evidence. He categorize strain into

three: (a) being unable to achieve positive value goals, (b) threats to remove positively value stimuli, and (c) the presentation of negative stimuli. He also named four characteristics of strains to include:

- Strains are seen as unjust;
- Strains are seen as high in magnitude;
- Strains are associated with low social control; and
- Strains provide some incentives in criminal coping (Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia).

Kurbrin, Stucky and Krowu (2008) affirmed that many juveniles have limited control over themselves and as such suffer frustration for not achieving their goals in the right way but only by committing delinquency. O-Graddy (2007) compared the rates of females and males involvement in crime: he noted that in the female strains, the females are concerned in creating and maintaining close bonds with others thus resulting to lower rates of property and violent crime: they face negative treatment like discrimination, high deprivation from family, restricted behavior, and failure to achieve their goals may lead to self-destructive behavior. While in the male strains, they are concerned with material success thus resulting to higher rates of property and violent crime when they fail to achieve their goals in the right way. They face more conflict with peers and sometime become victims of crime.

The application of this strain theory of crime in Nigeria can be applied in the following dimensions: In every society, those who make the laws or those in corridors of power make laws to favour themselves at the expense of the masses or the poor people and their families are mostly the victims of crime because they do not have the resources to protect themselves in terms of security; (the security agencies should be able to protect both the rich and the poor); creating jobs in the public sector: any corrupt Nigerian holding public office found guilty by the law court should be dismissed from office and made to pay off all he/she stole while in public service and should relinquish all the properties acquired with the stolen public funds, because it is their corruption that is hindering the creation of jobs for the jobless people in the society; private sector economy should be supported by government, by creating enabling environment and giving soft loans to farmers and small scale businesses to thrive without any bureaucratic bottlenecks attached but with strict monitoring and evaluation; and juveniles both those attending formal/informal schools should be supported by parents, guardians, corporate bodies, to learn a trade or skill that make them self-employed or job creators in the absence of public service employment.

This theory has been criticized for proposing that only bad treatment is the basic cause of crime or delinquent behaviour undermining other environmental factors such as scarce resources, poverty and lack of capacity building programmes to boost the living condition of people.

Delinquent Subculture Theory

Albert Cohen in his classic 1955 book, titled “Delinquent Boys”, first propounded the theory of delinquent subculture. Cohen’s main position was that the delinquent behavior of lower-class juvenile is actually in contrast with the norms and values of middle-class U.S. culture. He observed further that the development of delinquent subculture is due to inadequate socialization practices in the ghetto or slum environment.

Negative socialization renders lower-class adolescents unable to achieve the generally accepted success because the lower-class parents are not capable of educating their children and equipping them with the basic techniques required for entering the overwhelming middle

culture. Developmental inadequacies suffered by lower-class adolescents apart from definite socialization include: Insufficient education, poor speech, and communication techniques and not being able to delay pleasure.

Cohen sticks the lower-class adolescent status as “status frustration” because they suffer neglect by middle-class decision makers (using middle-class measuring rods). He grouped the delinquent boys into three subcultures: The corner boys, the college boy and the delinquent boy. The corner boy is likely a truant who engages in petty offences such as promiscuous sex, and recreational drug abuse. He is very loyal to his peer group whom he depends for support, motivation and interest. The college boy cherishes the cultural and social values of the middle-class people. Cohen sees this type of juvenile as one who is embarking on an almost hopeless path since he is still ill-equipped academically, socially and linguistically to achieve the reward of middle class. The delinquent boy adopts a set of norms and principles in direct opposition to middle-class values. He engages in short-run gratification, that is, “living for today and letting tomorrow take care of itself”. He resists efforts by family, school or other sources of authority to control his behavior. He joins delinquent gang because it is perceived as autonomous, independent and the focus of “attraction, loyalty and solidarity”.

Cloward and Ohlin, arguing with Cohen, confirmed that independent delinquent subcultures exist within society and members may likely graduate to delinquent gangs, conflict gangs, and criminal gangs at their adult age.

The delinquent subculture theory can adequately be applied in the Nigerian society and Rivers State in particular because the lower-class people and their children exist in every part of the society and share the same success goal, whether in urban or rural areas with the middle-class people. It is an upshot of the culture deviance ideology, that is, where criminal culture exists, there is bound to be delinquent subculture. Criminal groups give rise to delinquent groups because likes beget likes (criminal parents beget delinquent children).

Nigeria as well as Rivers State is a society made up of different classes of people with their cultures and subculture like the lower and middle class people, urban and rural areas, slum and industrial areas, army barracks and mammy market areas, etc. Though the lower class people stay in slum areas where facilities are cheap that correspond with their lower-income status. The slum area with highly densed population and the loose culture system provide avenues where criminal groups and delinquent groups meet to deliberate ways of implementing their nefarious activities with ease, and also because of the fenced compound system in the urban areas, criminal and delinquent groups meetings are held without the knowledge of society and law enforcement agencies.

METHODS

This study was carried out in Rivers State. The study adopted the survey design method. This design was considered appropriate for the study because it involves the collection of data through questionnaire that was personally administered to the respondents by the researcher. The population of the study was limited to Rivers State, and due to the largeness of the study population, some local government areas across the three senatorial districts in the state were used, namely: Obio/Akpor, Oyigbo and Ahoada West local government areas were taken as the sample population. The sample of this study consists of 345 respondents which were drawn through simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaire, focus group interviews and library research. The questionnaire consists of two sections – A and B. Section A elicits the demographic data of the respondents while section B contains phenomenal data using the modified 4 point likert scale of Strongly

Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) variables while section C consists of dependent variables and high rate of juvenile delinquency in Rivers State. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot test using the Crobach alpha reliability estimate. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the analysis.

Three hundred and forty-five (345) copies of the research instruments were personally administered to the respondents by the researcher in the ratio of 60% for males and 40% for females. The researcher also waited to collect the completed copies of the questionnaire immediately. This measure was taken to control excessive delay in returning the completed copies of the questionnaire as well as its loss.

DATA ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

To test the three formulated hypotheses, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to perform frequency count, percentages, mean, standard deviation, while the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Person Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were used to test the hypotheses. The results were presented with respect to the research questions and corresponding hypothesis stated in the study.

Research Question 1: Does lack of social/vocational skills acquisition education for adolescents cause juvenile delinquency?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between skills acquisition and high rate of juvenile delinquency.

The result in table 1 shows that the worked out r-value of 0.162 is greater than the critical r-value of .095 at 0.5 level of significance with 343 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between skills acquisition and high rate of juvenile delinquency, was rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that, there is significant relationship between skills acquisition and high rate of juvenile delinquency, was accepted. See table below.

Table 1: Relationship between Skills Acquisition and High Rate of Juvenile Delinquency using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to Analyze (n = 345)

| Variables | M | SD | ΣX | ΣX^2 | ΣXY | r-value | Sign |
|----------------------|-------|------|------------|--------------|-------------|---------|------|
| | | | ΣY | ΣY^2 | | | |
| Skills Acquisition | 11.21 | 2.29 | 3855 | 44991 | | 0.162* | 0.00 |
| Juvenile Delinquency | 8.21 | 1.95 | 2823 | 24419 | 31878 | | |

** Significant at 0.05 level, d.f.= 343, critical r. = .095

Research Question 2: Does the level of economic status of parents contribute to high rate of juvenile delinquency?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between levels of economic status of parents and high rate of juvenile delinquency.

The result in table 2 shows that the worked out F-ratio of 8.07 is higher than the critical F-ratio of 3.04 with 2 degrees of freedom. The result affirms the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between levels of economic status of parents and high

rate of juvenile delinquency, was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It therefore means that many of the parents in the study area are of low economic status level which reflects that, there is high rate of juvenile delinquency in the study area.

Table 2: ANOVA Descriptive analysis for Levels of Economic Status of Parents and High Rate Juvenile Delinquency (n = 345)

| Variables | N | Mean | Std Deviation |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|---------------|
| Low economic earners | 138 | 15.04 | 2.606 |
| Moderate economic earners | 183 | 16.34 | 2.735 |
| High economic earners | 24 | 17.32 | 4.150 |
| Total | 345 | 16.10 | 2.940 |

| Variables | Sum of Square (SS) | DF | Mean Square | F. | Sig. |
|----------------|--------------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 136.967 | 2 | 68.484 | 8.241 | 0.05 |
| Within Groups | 2966.650 | 343 | 8.310 | | |
| Total | 3103.597 | 344 | | | |

Research Question 3: Does delinquent peer influence high rate of juvenile delinquency?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between delinquent peers influence and high rate of juvenile delinquency.

The result in table 3 shows that the three groups (class mates, play groups and neighbourhood) have the worked out f-ratio of 2.232 which is statistically insignificant when compared with the critical r-ratio of 3.040 at 2,343 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between peer influence and high rate of juvenile delinquency was accepted.

Table 3: ANOVA Descriptive Analysis for Delinquent Peer Influence on Juvenile Delinquency (n = 345)

| Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------|-----|------|----------------|
| Class Mates | 36 | 8.00 | 2.000 |
| Play Group | 242 | 8.12 | 1.859 |
| Neighbourhood | 72 | 8.64 | 2.013 |
| Total | 345 | 8.21 | 1.911 |

| Variables | Sum of Square (SS) | DF | Mean Square | F. | Sig. |
|----------------|--------------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 16.183 | 2 | 8.091 | 2.232 | .109 |
| Within Groups | 1236.163 | 341 | 7.742 | | |
| Total | 1252.346 | 343 | | | |

With the insignificant gap difference, post hoc test was performed to check where the differences lie, the result for the post hoc test for mean difference is presented in table 3.1 herein. The difference among the groups varies as children's influence through contacts with their class mates differ significantly from play group influence (MD = .116, P < .05); while neighbourhood or environment access differ significantly with children from other groups with

high influence (MD = $-.526$; $P > .05$); and similar result is seen between children's influence through class mates and play group influence (Md = $.642$; $P > .05$).

Table 4: Scheffet Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons for Delinquent Peer Influence

| (I) Delinquent Behaviour | (J) Delinquent behaviour | Mean difference (I-J) | Standard error | Sig. | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------|------|
| (I) Delinquent Behaviour | Classmates | Playmates | .116 | .344 | .737 |
| | | Neighbourhood | .642 | .397 | .107 |
| | Playgroup | Classmates | -.116 | .344 | .737 |
| | | Neighbourhood | -.526* | .263 | .046 |
| | Neighbourhood | Classmates | .642 | .397 | .107 |
| | | Playgroup | .526* | .263 | .046 |

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

DISCUSSION

The study seeks to investigate the effect of socio-economic environment and juvenile delinquency in Rivers State. The study is a triangulation of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative was through the administration of questionnaire while the qualitative analysis was through interview and FDG's. Two sampling procedures were used – simple and purposive techniques.

Skill Acquisition and High Rate of Juvenile Delinquency

Findings from the first hypothesis which seek to investigate whether there is no significant relationship between skills acquisition and high rate of juvenile delinquency in the area. Skills acquisition is the independent variable, and high rate of delinquency among secondary school students in Rivers State is the dependent variable. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the relationship between skills acquisition and high rate of juvenile delinquency in the study area. The analysis in table 1 shows that the worked out r-value of 0.162^* is greater than the critical r-value of $.095$ at $.05$ level of significance with 345 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis, therefore, which states that there is no significant relationship between skills acquisition and high rate of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Rivers State was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between social/vocational/technical skills acquisition and high rate of juvenile delinquency in the study area was accepted.

This finding is in line with Spence (2003) cited in Thompson (2008), which affirms that the process of social skill training is aimed at increasing a person's ability to do key social behaviours that are essential in achieving success in social interactions. Ollendick and Hersen (1979) cited in Poduthase (2012), also found that social skill training was effective in an experiment they carried out with 27 delinquent, although the delinquents were reported as feeling unwilling at first to participate in the experiment but later benefited greatly. Miltenberger (2004) defines behavioural skills training as a procedure consisting of instructions, modelling, behavioural rehearsals and feedback that is used to teach new behaviours. ZainabFazal (2015) also affirms that behavioural skills training is a strategy used in educating students, delinquents, non-delinquents, etc. to acquire new behaviour or skills and it is acknowledged to be very effective.

Levels of Economic Status of Parents and High Rate of Juvenile Delinquency

The second hypothesis was tested using One-Way Analysis of Variance as an analytical tool to test the relationship between levels of economic status of parents and high rate of juvenile delinquency. The independent variable was the level of economic status of parents while the dependent variable was high rate of juvenile delinquency. From the result presented at table 2, it shows that the worked out F-ratio of 8.07 is higher than the critical F-ratio of 3.04 with 2 degree of freedom. The result affirms that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between levels of economic status at parents and high rate of juvenile delinquency was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. It therefore means that many parents in the study area fall under low economic status level which influences high rate of juvenile delinquency. These findings are supported by some studies that provided empirical evidence like: Braithwaite (1981), Jarjoura et al. (2002), Hay and Forrest (2009), Bjerck (2007), observed that there is a strong and direct relationship between socio-economic status and offending, particularly the effects of youths growing up poor and persistent youth offending.

Hsieh and Pugh (1999); Kawachi et al. (1995); Messner (1989), found that violent and property crime were associated with absolute and relative deprivation and economic inequality, and that crime is more common in societies where they are large disparities between the standard of living of its members. Fafchamps and Minten (2006), observed that poverty and crime have a strong relationship that motivates people directly or indirectly to commit crime, and that people living in socio-economically disadvantaged and deprived neighbourhood have a greater propensity to engage in crime. Walter et al. (2003); Stewart (1986); Penataziz (2000), also found that the victims of crime are more common in deprived neighbourhood that in affluent neighbourhood because those in upper class or affluent communities are more protected due to their ability to purchase resources like guns, bullets to protect themselves.

Eneji, Ubom, Eneji, Obogo, and Dunnamah (2003), also concluded on their findings that there was a significant relationship between parents socio-economic status and family type on female students school dropouts. They accepted that their findings confirmed the findings of Hunter and May (2003), who concluded that parents' socio-economic status was significantly related to pupil's drop out of school. They also accepted that Dachi and Garret (2003) observed that low socio-economic status or low income was/is the main factor responsible for students' drop out in schools.

Delinquent Peer Influence and High Rate of Juvenile Delinquency

The test-hypothesis was tested using One Way of Variance to determine the significant difference between the typologies of peer influence and delinquent behaviour in the study area. Here the independent variable is delinquent peer influence and it was categorized into three sub groups (classmates, playgroup and neighbourhood) while the dependent variable is high rate of juvenile delinquency. The result in table 3 of the three sub groups shows that the worked out F-ratio of 2.232 is statistically insignificant when compared with the critical F-ratio of 3.040 at 2, 343 degree of freedom. From the statistical computation, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between peer influence and high rate of juvenile delinquency was accepted. Due to the insignificant sub-groups, differences, Post hoc test was performed to check where the differences lie.

In the Post hoc test, the difference among the group varies, as children's influence through contacts with their classmates differ significantly from play group influence ($MD = .116$; $P < .05$); while neighbourhood or environment access differ significantly with children

from other groups with high influence (MD = -.526; P > .05). Similar result is seen between children's influence through classmates and play groups influence (MD = -.642; P > .05).

In line with the findings of this hypothesis, Iwarimie – Jaja (2010), asserted that troubled youths between the ages of 13 and 18 are adolescents; that the period of adolescence is the time of transition when the self or basic personality is metamorphosing; and young persons are vulnerable to several external determinants causing them to have internal physiological changes. UN Juvenile Delinquency World Youth Report (2003), pointed that the statistical data in many countries shows that delinquency is largely a group phenomenon; and between two-third and three quarter of all juvenile offences are committed by members of various groups. Ehiemua (2014), observed that juvenile delinquency is a serious problem encountered by every modern societies/countries in the world. He noted that there are two types of parenting: vigilant and harsh parenting. In vigilant parenting, parents regularly monitor their adolescents' words and actions, type of peer friends they associate with, and parents too must be of good behaviour and examples for adolescents to follow or imitate. While in harsh parenting, parents show lukewarm or I don't care attitude about the good upbringing of their adolescents because their own way of life or behaviour are very questionable. He also noted that vigilant parenting is best in controlling juveniles against committing delinquency while harsh parenting encourages anti-social behaviour among juveniles which may push them to commit delinquency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the paper revealed that parents are central in creating affective environment in their homes through good and vigilant parenting by giving financial support, physical and health needs, emotional care, guidance and supervision to their juveniles while the government and community authorities provide good schools, skill acquisition training centers and effective juvenile justice system to complement the effort of the parents and guardians. Analysis of hypothesis one revealed that good or vigilant parenting (authoritative style), vocational skills among other skills are preferred and seen as the most appropriate to check juvenile delinquency.

Analysis of hypothesis two revealed that low economic status of parents and large family size without corresponding resources to cater for the children can cause juvenile delinquency. Inasmuch as unhealthy and criminal families exist in every society, there are delinquents from these criminal families who influence other vulnerable juveniles to embrace their delinquent activities as a way of making money.

Analysis of hypothesis three revealed that delinquent peer influence has a greater power in convincing some vulnerable juveniles to take to delinquency as a way of life.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Parents with low economic status and large family size should be enabled by government to diversify their economy and given family planning education to enable them have the number of children that they can adequately cater for both socially and economically.
- The Rivers State Government should through legislations create effective structural institutions such as remand homes, borstal schools with well-equipped vocational/technical skills training technology, effective juvenile justice system and establishment of Parents' Council of Nigeria among others to handle delinquent behaviour before it escalates to an unimaginable quotation.

- Parents should be at alert in checking their juveniles adequately and stop them from moving with bad friends as this will go a long way to avert the increasing menace of delinquent related activities in the family level and the society at large.

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