

DELINQUENCIES AS EXPRESSED BY JUVENILE IN BORSTAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, GANMO, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

Delinquent behaviours have been identified as one of the challenges hindering academic performance of the adolescents. This study therefore investigated causes of delinquencies as expressed by juveniles in Borstal Training Institute Ganmo, Kwara State, Nigeria. The moderating variables in the study comprised age and family type. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study and simple random sampling procedure was employed to select 150 juveniles. The instrument used to generate data for the study was "Causes of Delinquencies Questionnaire (CDQ)", the instrument was validated by experts in the field of counselling and educational psychology and the reliability coefficient of 0.68 obtained after a test retest administration of the instrument. The collected data were analysed using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that lack of parental attention; divorce and environmental challenges are the major causes of delinquencies as expressed by the respondents. There was no significant difference in the causes of delinquencies as expressed by respondents based on age, but there was a significant difference in the causes of delinquencies as expressed by the respondents based on family type. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that an enlightenment programme should be organised to enhance strong bonds among juveniles, parents, guardians and community leaders. Parents should be encouraged to pay more attention to the needs and welfare of their children and wards, while counsellors should be employed and posted to juvenile homes in order to handle cases of delinquencies and reform the juveniles.

Keywords: Causes, Delinquencies, Juvenile, Borstal Training Institute.

Introduction

Delinquent behaviour is a serious problem that occurs in adolescence. Adolescents with this behaviour may display a pattern of disruptive and violent behaviour and have problems following rules and regulations (Hinshaw & Lee, 2003). It is uncommon for adolescents to have delinquent-related problems at some time during their development. However, the behaviour is considered to be a delinquent when it is long-lasting, when it violates the rights of others and when it goes against accepted norms of behaviour and disrupts the child's or family's everyday life (Goldberg, 2002).

According to American Psychiatric Association (2000), delinquent behaviour is defined as a repetitive and persistent pattern of delinquent that violates the rights of others or in which major age-appropriate societal norms are violated. The symptoms of the behaviour fall into four main subscales or dimensions: aggression to people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness, and serious violation of rules. Delinquency is a legal term for criminal behaviour carried out by juvenile or adolescent. Among adolescents, some rebelliousness and experimentation is common especially when one goes to secondary school which is a new experience for early adolescence (Cobb, 2007). Adolescents participate in problematic behaviours in schools such as, fighting, bullying, truancy, being unruly to authority and many more. Such behaviours affect their families, academics, social and personal function (Cobb, 2007).

Adolescents however misbehave from time to time for a variety of reasons. Perhaps, they feel that they need to assert their own independence or they wish to test the limits imposed on them. Sometimes, adolescents misbehave because they are experiencing internal distress, anger, frustration, disappointment, anxiety, or hopelessness. In such

cases, the adolescents' behaviour clearly; is outside the range of what are considered normal or acceptable. Perhaps, most alarming is that many of them show little remorse, guilt, or understanding of the damage and pain inflicted on people by their delinquent (Pruitt, 2000).

Frick, Stickle, Dandreaux, Farrell and Kimonis (2005) were of the opinion that delinquent is an important psychiatric behaviour for a number of reasons which are closely related to criminal and violent attitude that is associated with problems in adjustment across the lifespan. Steinberg (2008) described four perspectives to delinquency namely; a parental view, an educational view, a mental health view and a legal system view. An educational view is described as a behaviour, regarded by school staff members as interrupting or disturbing classroom teaching and learning, violates the school code of conduct and threatens the safety of students. Steinberg (2008) further described a mental health view as a wide range of disruptive behaviours that may involve aggression toward others or animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness, theft and violations of curfew and school attendance. A parental view described delinquent behaviour as disobedience, fighting with siblings, destroying property, stealing money from family members and among other things threatening parents with violence. While a legal view considered persons under the age of 18 to be juveniles hence, when they commit serious crimes like murder, they may be prosecuted as adults (Steinberg, 2008).

World Youth Report (2003) stated that adolescents, who are commonly viewed as a source of hope, can also be viewed as a threat to society as their behaviour would sometimes range from bullying to other maladaptive behaviours in school. Eke (2004) noted that there are two main categories of delinquent behaviours adolescents in Africa engage in; criminal and status offences. According to Eke (2004), criminal offences include stealing, arson, rape, drug offences, murder, burglary, pick pocket, and armed robbery while status offences include running away from home or school, truancy, bullying and many others.

Kiriakidis (2010) opined that harsh discipline, poor supervision, lack of direction and guidance, cause delinquency, especially among male adolescents. Orbot (2003) concluded that poor parenting skills have the potential to make the adolescent assume a powerful position in the family. Once the individual has established such a powerful position within the family, he/she might take over the decision-making role of parents and become too controlling or misuse the resources of the family, with the precise knowledge that his/her parents will not challenge him. Coley and Medeiros (2007) argued that parental conflict and subsequent separation and the non-involvement of the non-resident father in the family unit impact negatively on children of low-income minority parents. They tend to engage in delinquent acts more often than the children of non-resident fathers who are more involved in their children's upbringing.

Oniyama and Oniyama (2001) reported that social, emotional and psychological problems plague the Nigerian adolescents due to neglect from parents or caregivers, coupled with the desire for independence by the adolescents. Inability of parents to fit into the world of the adolescents' gets the latter frustrated, unhappy and they eventually develop inappropriate behaviour which causes problems to themselves and the society. During childhood, children are dependent on their parents because of their lack of experience and submissive nature while parents protect and direct them, but when adolescence is reached, these roles change. Adolescents seek independence while parents on the other hand resist the latter's autonomy. The struggle between parents and adolescents for these changes often lead to disobedience, arguments, conflicts and rebellion on the part of the adolescents especially when they are forcefully brought under adult control.

Juvenile delinquency has long-term effects on the delinquent, the family and society in general. Early onset of problem behaviour is often linked with chronic misconduct, both of which impact negatively on the rehabilitation of the individual. Wickliffe (2012) postulated that one of the negative effects of juvenile delinquency is that the

individual loses out on the necessary nurturing and support from the family. It is also known that delinquents who use dangerous substances are at risk of engaging in risky behaviours such as unprotected sex, which may lead to teenage pregnancy, illegal abortions, STDs and HIV/AIDS.

According to Gottfredson (2001), juvenile delinquency has harmful effects on the perpetrators and others inside and outside the school environment. Sambo (2008) stressed that juvenile delinquency can be attributed to the following causes; the home, the society, the School environment, peer group, social and emotional disturbance, absence of sex education and lack of social acceptability as a result of maladjustment outside the home. The influence of the home which can lead to delinquency can be as a result of one or a combination of the following; broken homes, poor physical conditions, poor parent child relationship, hostility in the home, lack of parental supervision and parental rejection.

According to Palmay and Moat (2002), maladaptive behaviour is a behaviour that can affect the future behaviour and a prediction for treatment is required. Hence, it is important to consider programmes that could reduce the causes of delinquencies in the society through counselling interventions because delinquency affects the delinquent, those close to him and the society. For adolescents with delinquent behaviour to be helped, there is the need to expose them to counselling interventions in order for them to become responsible individuals to themselves and their parents, good students at school and worthy ambassadors of the nation as a whole through various delinquent modification techniques like cognitive restructuring and self management. Thus, this study set to investigate the causes of delinquencies and the implications of the study for Counselling.

Statement of the Problem

The involvement of adolescents in delinquent activities is on the increase in Nigeria, the last two decades have witnessed crimes ranging from minor stealing to major robbery and killing perpetrated by teenagers. There has been increasing concerns of the law enforcement agencies and the general public on the seriousness of adolescent crime and conduct problems in Nigeria.

Nigerian students with delinquent behaviour engage in deviant behaviour such as aggression, peer cruelty, fighting, bullying or threatening others, rioting, stealing, truancy, substance abuse, raping, smoking, lateness to school, violation of rules and regulations, vandalization of school properties, among others. It was also reported that the prevalence of delinquent behaviour among Nigerian adolescents has increased in the last three years in terms of frequency of recorded delinquent crimes and the number of adolescents involved.

Adolescents with delinquent behaviour not only affect themselves, their families and schools negatively but also the society at large. Increase in adolescents' delinquent behaviour has led to chaos, destruction of lives and properties, armed robbery, terrorist activities, kidnapping, oil bunkering, and many more. The Nigerian government established Remand Homes (now Special Correctional Centres), Approved Schools and Juvenile Courts to address their delinquent behaviours in adolescents but mere admission of the latter is not sufficient to reduce or eradicate the delinquent behaviour. Thus, this study examined the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute, Ganmo, Kwara State, Nigeria and specifically its implications for counselling practice.

Research Question

One research question was raised to guide the conduct of the study;

- What are the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute, Ganmo, Kwara State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated for the study;

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- There is no significant difference in the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on age.
- There is no significant difference in the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on family type.

Research Design

Descriptive research design was adopted for this study. This research design is a blue print, scheme or specific structure and strategy used by a researcher to investigate the rationale that exist among variables of the study so as to enable the researcher collect the data, which will be used for the study

Target population

The target population for the study was the 353 juvenile delinquents in the Borstal Training Institute, Ganmo, Kwara State.

History of the Case Study

The Borstal Training Institute, Ganmo, Kwara State was established by Borstal Institution and Remand Centres act of 2005. The act empowers higher court to commit juvenile in conflict with the law and beyond parental control to borstal training institute for a period of three (3) years in custody and on arrival, the delinquent would be placed under observation for three (3) months. It also made provision of one year probation after discharge; the age bracket for the admission according to the institution is 9-20 years and mainly males. Services provided by the institution include; recreational activities, Chaplaincy and Islamic services, psychological services, medical services, welfare (social) services and guidance and counselling services (Borstal records, 2017).

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study enlisted a total number of 150 juvenile delinquents from age grades 9 to 20 years old. Random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. This technique was chosen for its advantages as it allows the researchers to use respondents that are willing to supply information for the research. Furthermore, it was chosen because it is less expensive to execute compared to other techniques.

Data Collection Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Causes of Delinquencies' Questionnaire". The instrument was validated and a reliability score of 0.68 was obtained after test retest administration of the instrument. The instrument was in two sections, namely: Section A: which deals with demographic data i.e. personal information of the respondents. It consists of two variables which are age and family type. Sections B deals with items that elicit information on causes of delinquencies. The respondents indicated their responses using Four Point Likert-Type rating scale of; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher got access to the Borstal Training Institute with the help of an introductory letter from the University of Ilorin. With approval to carry out research, in the institute, the researchers' sought consent from the institute and from the juveniles. For those who were between 9 and 20 years. The institute authorities gave consent on the juveniles' behalf as it was not practicable to get it from their parents or guardians. The questionnaire forms were then administered to the participants by the researchers. Confidentiality of the research participants was maintained in all cases by assigning each subject a random number and not using their names on the questionnaires.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected were coded to enable quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics like frequency tables and percentage were used to analyse the demographic data. In testing the two null hypotheses of age and family type, t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used. All types of statistical analyses and calculations were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents Based on Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage %
9-12 years	31	20.7
13-16 years	69	46.0
17-20 years	50	33.3
Total	150	100

Table 1 shows that 20.7% (31) of the respondents were between 9-12 years in age, 46.0% (69) of the respondents were between 13-16 years in age while 33.3% (50) of the respondents were between 17-20 years in age. This shows that respondents who were between 13-16 years of age participated more in this study.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Family type

Family type	Frequency	Percentage
Monogamous	118 32	78.7
Polygamous		21.3
Total	150	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by family type. The table shows that 78.7% (118) of the respondents were from monogamous family type while 21.3% (32) of the respondents were from polygamous family type. This indicates that respondents from monogamous family type participated more than respondents from polygamous family type in the study.

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Table 3: Mean and Rank Order on the Respondents' Expression on Causes of Delinquencies

Item No.	Delinquencies can occur due to;	Mean	Rank
1	Parents not paying adequate attention to their children	3.75	1st
2	Lack of parental care	3.66	2nd
3	Parental separation, death, divorce or nature of work	3.58	3rd
16	Poor child upbringing	3.49	4th
9	Parents socio-economic position	3.37	5th
14	Environmental factors	3.26	6th
6	Emotional stress experienced at home by children	3.11	7th
19	Exposure of children to drug usage	2.90	8th
10	Children living with their non-biological parents	2.87	9th
7	Family structure (polygamous or monogamous)	2.76	10th
17	Poor communication between parents and children	2.75	11th
11	Lack of parents' awareness and knowledge of their children friends	2.73	12th
8	Lack of adequate religious teaching	2.71	12th
13	Peer group influence	2.68	14th
18	Lack of adequate education on the dangers of juvenile delinquency	2.64	15th
12	Ineffective or weak school rules and regulations	2.56	16th
20	Parents fighting at home in the presence of their children	2.55	17th
5	Child abuse and neglect	2.54	18th
15	Lack of parental encouragement on good behaviour	2.52	19th
4	Dropping out of school	2.51	20th

Table 3 presents the mean and rank order of respondents' expression on causes of delinquencies. The table indicates that item 1 which states delinquencies can occur due to "parents not paying adequate attention to their children" ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.75. Item 2 which states that "Lack of parental care" ranked 2nd with a mean score of 3.66. Ranked 3rd is item 3 with a mean score of 3.58 and states that "parental separation, death, divorce or nature of work". On the other hand, item 5 which states that delinquencies can occur due to "child abuse and neglect" ranked 18th with a mean score of 2.54. Item 15 which states that "lack of parental encouragement on good behaviour" ranked 19th with a mean score of 2.52, while item 4 which states that "dropping out of school" ranked 20th with a mean score of 2.51. Since all the twenty items have mean scores that were above the mid-cut off point of 2.50, then it can be said that respondents attested to the causes of delinquencies listed above.

Hypotheses Testing

Inferential statistics of t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on age.*

Table 4: ANOVA Summary of Difference on the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on age

Source	df	SS	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	P-value
Between Groups	2	11.468	0.637	2.05	3.00	.313
Within Groups	147	27.365	0.209			
Total	149	38.833				

As shown on table 4, the calculated f-ratio was 2.05 while its critical f-ratio of 3.00 and corresponding pvalue of .313 at alpha level of 0.05. Since the calculated f-ratio is less than the critical value, on this basis, hypothesis one was therefore not rejected. This means that, there is no significant difference in causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on age. **Hypothesis Two:** *There is no significant difference in causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on family type.*

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test of respondents on causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on family type

Family Type	N	Mean	SD	Df	Cal-t-value	Crit.t-value	P-value
Monogamous	118	53.703	4.005	148	5.81*	1.96	.041
Monogamous	32	58.000	2.272				

* Sig. at $p < 0.05$

As shown on table 5, the calculated t-value was 5.81 while its critical t-value was 1.96 and corresponding pvalue of .041 at alpha level of 0.05. The calculated t-value of 5.81 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96. On this basis, hypothesis two was therefore rejected. Thus, this means that, there is a significant difference in the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on family type.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that parents not paying adequate attention to their children, lack of parental care, parental separation, death, divorce or nature of work, poor child upbringing, parents socio-economic position and environmental factors are the major causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on family. This finding was supported by Mullens (2004) who stressed that juveniles who were charged with more serious acts of delinquency are from broken homes and live in single-parent family structure. Also, Klein and Forehand (1997) suggested that the prediction of juvenile delinquency in early childhood depended on the type of maternal parenting skills that were imposed upon the child during early adolescence.

Family factors such as; parental control, supervision, parental discipline, parental conflict or separation, criminal parents or siblings, parental abuse or neglect, and the quality of the parent-child relationship may cause delinquencies (Graham & Bowling, 1995). Many parents lack control and monitoring therefore, are not aware of where their children are, what they are doing, what time they would be home or who they are with (Quinsey, Skilling, Lalumier, & Craig, 2004). Okpako (2004) noted that a child well brought up will remain a source of joy and happiness for such family while the neglected adolescent gradually becomes a drug addict, a bully, aggressive, restive, and other deviant acts would be manifested. He further emphasized that parental monitoring and control be applied in the raising of the children, though he observed that parents spend little or no time at home to assist in the upbringing of the children hence, the children invariably fall into evil association. The findings also corroborated Okpako (2004), parental harshness, aggression; lack of love, lack of affection, lack of care, inadequate monitoring and supervision, and lack or little control to mention but a few were some of host conditions that lead adolescents into delinquent behaviours.

Hypothesis one revealed that there was no significant difference in causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on age. This means that the age of the respondents would not make any difference in the causes of delinquencies. This means the age difference among the juvenile would not be differ in their expression on the causes of delinquencies. It was supported by Pruitt (2000) who opined that when an individual reaches adolescence, he/she knows what type of behaviour is expected of him or her and which behaviour are unacceptable. Adolescents who are convicted of delinquency at an early age are more likely to develop anti-social

attitudes later in life. They develop low educational achievement, declining occupational status and unstable employment record (Wu, Lee, & Lee, 1998).

Hypothesis two revealed that there was a significant difference in causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute based on family type. This means the family of the respondents would make a difference on the causes of delinquencies. The findings indicated that the type of family of the juveniles determined the causes of delinquencies. It was in line with Wasserman and Seracini (2001) who found that family environment influence juvenile delinquency; for example, the number of people in a family, inconsistent parenting, familial problems, child neglect and the children's attachment to parent. Bengston (2001) opined that adolescents who had a strong bond with their parents were less likely to engage themselves in delinquent behaviours. McLanahan and Carlson (2002) contended that children in female headed homes are often deprived of three types of resources, the provision of economic, social, and emotional resources. McLanahan and Carlson (2002) further argued that in situations where such responsibilities were left to a woman alone, she would be more stressed than she would be if responsibilities were shared hence, she would fail to give the children the support they need. Literature has also shown that adolescents in such situations have difficulties with academic work and conforming to school rules and that they interact aggressively with their mothers, their teachers and their peers especially if the single parent structure is due to divorce, desertion or separation (McLanahan & Carlson, 2002).

Conclusion

The study investigated causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute, Ganmo, Kwara State, Nigeria, the findings of the study revealed that parents not paying adequate attention to their children, lack of parental care, parental separation, death, divorce or nature of work, poor child upbringing, parents socio-economic position and environmental factors are the major causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile in Borstal Training Institute. The findings also revealed that there was no significant difference in the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile based on age and there was significant difference in the causes of delinquencies as expressed by juvenile based on family type.

Implications for Counselling

The findings of this study have far reaching implications for counselling practice. Counsellors are saddled with great task of promoting, understanding, and encouraging behavioural patterns that are associated with socially acceptable behaviours. Thus, the findings of this study, point to the need to utilize guidance and counselling services in schools with a view to promote acceptable behaviours among juveniles. This can be done by employing more professionally trained counsellors into schools and juvenile homes and give them necessary support to perform their functions.

Counsellor should pay more attention to causes of delinquencies and make use of all behavioural modification techniques to help juveniles. Counsellor should counsel parents on strategies to reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency in homes, and the entire society. The parents and guardians should be enlightened on the needs and rights of juveniles so that necessary care and attention should be given to the juvenile. Counsellors in Nigerian schools should work in collaboration with law enforcement agencies to give awareness and enlightenment programmes, seminars, workshops regularly to students on the causes of delinquency and ways to minimise it.

Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- 1. Parents should be encouraged to pay more attention to the needs and care of their children and wards. If parents can provide the needs of their children and show them the needed love and care, delinquencies would reduce in the society.
- 2. An enlightenment programme should be organized to enhance strong bonds among juveniles, parents and guardians. These will reduce maladaptive and unwanted behaviours in schools and society in general.
- 3. Counsellors should be employed and posted to juvenile homes in order to prevent cases of delinquencies and reform the juveniles.

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