



The Relationship between Family Type, Gender, Parenting Process and Juvenile Delinquency among Diploma Students' of Delta State University Abraka, Nigeria

Ugoji Florence Ngozi¹ and Ebebuwa-Okoh Evelyn^{1*}

¹Department of Guidance and Counselling, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aims: The study examined the relationship between family type, parenting process, gender and juvenile delinquency among diploma students' in Delta State University, Abraka. The variables were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Study Design: The study is correlational because it examined the relationship between family type, parenting process, gender and juvenile delinquency.

Place and Duration: The study was carried out in Delta State of Nigeria using the diploma students' of the Institute of Education, Delta State University, Abraka. The study lasted for six (6) months.

Methodology: A sample size of 400 students' were randomly selected through stratified random

*Corresponding author: E-mail: ebenuwaokoh@yahoo.com, eduebenuwaokoh@yahoo.com;

sampling technique, the instrument has a reliability index of 0.91. Data for this sample was obtained through a valid and reliable questionnaire. The data was analyzed with descriptive and regression statistical tools

Results: The result of the study revealed that family type, parenting process, and gender have positive but low relationship with juvenile delinquency among diploma students'.

Recommendations: The study recommends that personal-social services should be provided by guidance counselors in the institutions of learning so that effective and positive social skills can be developed. Parents should make the home psychologically conducive, so that the children can express their needs and desires.

Keywords: Family type; parenting process; juvenile delinquency; gender.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the history of our society, adolescent delinquency has been reported as a dilemma and a topic of concern that needs much attention. The media reports on some problematic and socially unacceptable behaviors demonstrated from time to time by adolescents. They include substance abuse, prostitution, promiscuity, rape, bullying and gangsterism. [1] opined that adolescent delinquency creates problems in our society and has to do more with adolescents living in poverty. When people are asked about the causes of crimes, many often associate it with poor parental control, discipline and child rearing methods [2]. Many family variables have been studied in an attempt to understand the etiology of delinquency better. The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between family type, parenting process and juvenile delinquency among adolescents.

Juvenile problem has been described as one of the major problems in our society owing to the fact that it causes a lot of distress and damage to perpetrators, and the society [3]. It deals with the breaking of rules, drug use and violent offences against other people as well as the possession and carrying of weapons [4]. [5] Said that "In 2006, about 1,626,523 juvenile arrests were reported in USA and this number accounts for about 16 percent of all arrests" [5]. Similarly, a report by [6] revealed that in 2001 information from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs showed that adolescents committed 185,000 crimes and about 19,000 of them were sentenced to prison. Delinquency involves retraction from regulations and rules that govern the behavior among adolescents. It is not easy to define this concept due to its complex characteristics, although it is known to be a criminal behavior among young people as they negotiate the transition from childhood to

adulthood in a complex and confusing world [7]. It is associated with anti-social behaviors such as vandalism, rape, examination malpractice, bullying, cultism, truancy, school dropout, to mention a few. Delinquent behaviours result from early socialization at children's families. Some parental characteristics, family processes and dynamics promote delinquent behaviours. They manifest in homes where there are serious intraparental and interparental conflicts: A study by [8] revealed homes, where children witness domestic violence and experience negative emotional relationship among their parents. The family is the foundation of human society and the strongest socializing force of life which teaches children to eschew unacceptable behavior, delay gratification and to respect rules of others". The family can teach children violent, anti-social and aggressive behaviors. This could do with the way members of the family interact with each other, that is, the level of communication and cohesiveness demonstrated by the family [9]. They reported that exposure to violence either within or outside the family is a source of delinquency. In the same vein [10] reported that behaviors in families, particularly discipline and parental monitoring, influence adolescents throughout the youthful period.

Delinquents have, in most cases, been viewed as adolescents who come from broken homes. [9,11] emphasized that broken homes are associated with juvenile delinquency due to inadequate parental involvement in the adolescent's upbringing. Distress in families as a result of issues such as divorce not only increases juvenile delinquency but may lead to poor parental monitoring and association with delinquent peers [12,11,13,14,7,15].

Family types are extremely varied today not only due to high rate of divorce but also to increasing rate of cohabitation and non-marital childbearing. Also, most children from divorced homes do

experience remarriage [11]. This goes to say that children eventually spend lesser years in intact family. Consequently, children experience multiple living arrangement transitions which are eventually detrimental to their well-being [16]. Although research has been carried out on the impact of broken-homes on adolescents and the consequence of adolescents growing up either with a step family or single mother [17-19] but only little or no research has been carried out on the effect single fathers' homes have on adolescents. This is because national data do not have sufficient number of cases of adolescents in this situation [11,20,21].

In a study by [22,23] which scrutinized the influence and effect of family factors on delinquent behaviors, it was concluded that higher levels of delinquency are found in children living in single parents' households which, he argued, is as a result of decreased child-parent bonding/attachment and lack of parental control. Some studies revealed that when it comes to delinquent behaviors, adolescents from broken homes tend to be the victims when compared with those from intact homes [28,24,25]. According to [26], increase supervision is often seen in families where both parents are available to train their children while single-parent families are prone to delinquency since just one person would be doing all the supervision.

In another vein, [27] learned that adolescents are likely to have delinquent or aggressive behaviors if they live in homes where there is violence resulting from parental aggressiveness or conflicts.

A study by [28] x-rayed the influence of communication in the family and asserted that the levels of communication within the family among its members may contribute significantly to delinquency, while [10] discovered that a cohesive family environment can reduce the chance of delinquent behaviors in adolescents.

"Parenting process refers to the way parents monitor the adolescents, the extent of communication between parents and adolescents and the amount of control the parents have over the adolescent" [29]. The parenting process of a single parent might differ from that in an intact family. [30] opined that authoritative parenting style is supportive, flexible, communicative, responsive and demonstrates active monitoring of adolescents whereabouts and peer networks and maintains

disciplinary practices. It is preferable to the authoritarian style where the parent is not responsive and is demanding [31]. Parental supervision refers to the degree of monitoring by parents and of all child-rearing methods. Poor parental supervision is probably the strongest predictor of delinquency [2]. Studies show that parents who have no idea of their children's whereabouts at any point in time and who allow their children to roam without supervision from a tender age tend to have delinquent children [2]. Similarly, [32] averred that permissive parents tend to have delinquent children. Recently, she concluded that "parental warmth could act as protective factor against delinquency" [32]. [33] distinguished three parenting styles, authoritarian, permissive and authoritative. He emphasized that authoritarian parents are punitive, demanding, controlling and rather cold. Authoritative parents set rules and regulations but, at the same time, are welcoming, supportive and allow their children some form of autonomy while the permissive parents are lax, warm and non-punitive. Permissive and authoritative parents have good rapport with their children, explaining, negotiating and are sensitive to the child's needs. In a Cambridge study, it was found that authoritarian parents are the second most important predictors of violence [34]. Behavior problems have been reported to be more rampant in male than female adolescents, suggesting that less parental control and monitoring is present in the cases of males. Parents in general feel that there should be greater investment in their daughters than in their sons [35]. "Communication as an important component of interpersonal relationship is viewed as one of the tools of the dynamics of family relationship" [29]. Their study showed that there tend to be more communication between mothers and their daughters than mothers and their sons hence less delinquent behaviors were reported in females than males. Their finding therefore suggests a possible relationship between communication and delinquency. Similarly [36] averred from a study conducted on some parents and their children that higher rates of arrests, convictions and crimes were reported from adolescents who are from families where there is little or no communication.

One other influence on juvenile delinquencies is gender. Most cultures regard males as more aggressive than females. Studies have shown that females are conformists while males are captured rebels [8]. [8,37] reported varying findings on behavioral sex differences which cut

across different ages, groups and cultures. There are evidence that males are quicker to express outward delinquency than females who express their delinquent behavior in internalizing manner. This is done through non-violent pattern such as relational aggression and social rejection [38].

This study therefore tends to investigate the relationship between family type, gender, parenting process, and juvenile delinquency among Diploma students of Delta State University.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to:

1. Determine the relationship between family type and juvenile delinquency among diploma students.
2. Determine the relationship between parenting process and juvenile delinquency among diploma students.
3. Determine the relationship between gender and juvenile delinquency among diploma students.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of relationship between family type and juvenile delinquency among diploma students?
2. What is the extent of relationship between parenting process and juvenile delinquency among diploma students?
3. What is the extent of relationship between gender and juvenile delinquency among diploma students?

1.3 Purpose of Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between family type, parenting process, gender and juvenile delinquency.

1.4 Significance of Study

The findings of this study will be useful to parents, teachers, psychologists and the government. Parents will be exposed to the different parenting styles and their implications on the behavior of adolescents. They will also appreciate the fact that communication is very

important in every home since the adolescence stage is the period of inquisitiveness. They will have the opportunity of emptying their thoughts as this will help and guide them properly. It will be useful to the teachers because orientation from the home and school make or mar the adolescent. Teachers complement the guidance given at home in order to make the adolescent a better person and not a problem child. The government will benefit because they will be able to come up with programmes, jobs that will keep the adolescent busy and take their mind away from antisocial behavior.

The psychologists will benefit because, since they study the different stages of development and developmental tasks, they will be able to educate parents on good and positive communication channels and cohesiveness at home in order to keep the adolescent under control.

2. METHODOLOGY

Out of the total population of 2,000 diploma students, a sample of 400 students was randomly selected through stratified random sampling technique. The selection process had two stages. (1) Stratified sampling based on gender and field of study. (2) The number sampled was based on those available in each area of study, which was proportionate to the population for each area of study. The instrument has reliability index of 0.91. Data for this sample was obtained through a valid and reliable questionnaire. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and correlation to answer the research questions.

2.1 Design

The study is correlational because it examined the relationship between family type, parenting process, gender and juvenile delinquency.

The dependent variable is juvenile delinquency while the independent variables are family type, parenting process and gender.

2.2 Population and Sample

The target population was all diploma students in the Institute of Education, Delta State University Abraka, 2013/2014 first semester. Stratified simple random sampling technique was utilized to select the sample size of 400 students.

2.3 Instrumentation

The instrument for the study was a questionnaire titled "parenting process and juvenile delinquency". It is divided into two major sections. The first section solicits information on the biodata of respondents such as gender, type of family, while the other section elicits information on delinquent behaviour and parenting processes. The instrument's face and content validity was obtained through expert judgment. The value of the reliability of the instrument was .96 obtained using Cronbach alpha procedure which examined inter-item construct. The r value for parenting process was 0.90 and that of juvenile delinquency was 0.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The scoring was based on a four point scale of measurement of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The options of the items were weighed in a four point format of SA= 4, A= 3, D=2 and SD = 1 or vice versa depending on the wording.

The instrument covered items on parenting process which includes nature of communication between parents and adolescents, and the amount of parental control over the adolescents.

The section on delinquency consists of items ranging from truancy, disobedience to instituted authorities in schools, homes, and society at large. It also involves cheating, extortion of money, drunkenness, bullying, substance abuse among other negative behaviours.

2.4 Procedure

The researcher personally distributed and collected the completed questionnaire from the students. Participants were adequately informed of the confidentiality of the data provided and the need to be honest in filling the questionnaire.

3. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The Descriptive and regression statistical tools were used to analyze the data.

The analysis was conducted at 0.05 level of significance.

4. RESULTS

The data gathered were processed using descriptive statistics and simple regression

analysis. The results are presented on the tables below:-

4.1 Research Question 1

What is the relationship between family type and adolescent juvenile delinquency?

Table 1 shows that there is positive and very low relationship between type of family ($M=14.42, SD = 2.94$) and adolescent juvenile delinquency ($M=19.60, SD=3.27$) as indicated by r -value of .010 at $p=.842$. This shows that family type correlates positively but very low with adolescent juvenile delinquency as indicated by the regression model $F(1,398) = .040$ at $p=.842$. This means that type of family does not influence delinquent behaviour among adolescents. The adjusted r^2 (adj) values of -0.002 shows that 0.2% of adolescent delinquent behaviour is explained by family type. The beta weight of -.010 at $P=.842$ is not statistically a significant predictor of adolescent delinquency.

4.2 Research Question 2

What is the relationship between parenting process and adolescent juvenile delinquency?

Table 2 shows that there is positive and very low relationship between parenting process ($M=15.41, SD=2.67$) and adolescent juvenile delinquency ($M=19.60, SD=3.27$) as indicated by r -value of -.031 at $p=.542$. This shows that there is positive but very low correlation between parenting process and delinquent behaviour among adolescents as indicated by the regression model $F(1,398) = .373$ as $p=.542$. This means that parenting process does not influence adolescent's juvenile delinquency.

The adjusted r^2 value of -0.002 shows that only 0.2% of delinquent behaviour is explained by parenting process. The beta weight of -.031 at $p = .542$ is not a significant predictor of adolescent delinquency.

4.3 Research Question 3

What is the relationship between gender and juvenile delinquency?

Table 3 shows that there is positive and very low relationship between gender ($M=15.02, SD=2.91$) and adolescent juvenile delinquency ($M=19.60, SD=3.27$) as indicated by r value of

.055 at p value of .272. This shows that gender has positive but low correlation with juvenile delinquency as indicated by the regression model $F(1,398) = 1.21$ at $p = .272$.

The adjusted r^2 value of 0.003 shows that only 0.3% of adolescent delinquent behaviour is explained by gender. The beta weight of -.055 at $p = .272$ is not a statistically significant predictor of adolescent delinquency.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and regression analysis on the relationship between type of family and adolescent juvenile delinquency

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ² (adj)	Standard error estimate
Juvenile delinquency	400	19.60	3.27	.10	-000	-.002	3.27
Type of family	400	14.42	2.94				
ANOVA							
	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F.	Sig		
Regression	.427	1	.27	.040	.842		
Residual	4252.573	398	10.692				
Total	4256.000	398					
Co-efficients							
	Unstandardized co-efficients	Standardized co-efficients	t	sig			
	β	Std error	Beta				
Constant	19.760	.816	-.0.011	24.135	.000		
Type of family	.056	-.010	-.200	.842	.842		

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation and regression analysis on the relationship between Parenting process and Adolescent juvenile delinquency

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ² (adj)	Standard error estimate
Juvenile delinquency	400	19.60	3.27	0.31	001	-0.002	3.27
Parenting process	400	15.42	2.67				
ANOVA							
	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F.	Sig		
Regression	3.98	1	3.98	.373	.542		
Residual	4252.02	398	10.68				
Total	4256	399					
Co-efficient							
	Unstandardized co-efficients	Standardized co-efficients	t	sig			
	β	Std error	Beta				
Constant	20.176	.957	21.075	.542	.000		
Parenting Process	-0.37	.061	-.031	-.611			

(a) Predictors: Constant, parenting process
 (b) Dependent variables: Juvenile delinquency

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation and regression analysis on the relationship between gender and adolescent juvenile delinquency

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ² (adj)	Standard error estimate
Juvenile delinquency	400	19.60	3.27	.055	.003	.001	3.27
Gender	400	15.02	2.91				
ANOVA							
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.	Sig		
Regression	12.92	1	12.92	1.212	.272		
Residual	4243.08	398	10.68				
Total	4256.00	399					
Co-efficient							
	Unstandardized co-efficients		Standardized co-efficients	t	sig		
	β	Std error	Beta				
Model	20.530	.860		23.873	.000		
Gender	-.062	.056	-.055	-1.101	.272		

5. DISCUSSION

The research question 1 shows that there is positive but very low relationship between family type and juvenile delinquency among the respondents. This finding shows that the nature of family structure to an extent does influence delinquent behaviors. The reason for this finding could be that the respondents are in higher Institution and their peers seem to have more influence on their behaviour than family members. The finding agrees with [27] who opined that adolescents create a separate world for themselves using slangs, coded language, body language which can only be understood by their peers. They disregard parental counsel which they term “old school” old fashioned”. This means that their peer can influence them to skip classes, steal, get involved in drug abuse, cultism and other delinquent behaviours.

The finding of research question 2 reveals that delinquent behaviour is slightly dependent on parenting process among adolescents: This means that parenting process which refers to the nature and the way parents monitor adolescents, the extent of communication and amount of control parents have over adolescents does to an extent influence delinquent behaviours. This finding is at variance with [2] who attested that poor parental supervision, and ineffective communication between parents and adolescents result in adolescent’s involvement in antisocial and delinquent peers which eventually leads to delinquent behaviour. The reason for

this finding could be that adolescents, particularly the ones that are in tertiary institutions value suggestions from their peers than their parents because, to them their peers appreciate the changing nature of the world systems, accept, and understand their plight better.

The finding of the third research question shows that there is positive but very low correlation between gender and delinquent behaviour among adolescents. This implies that male and female adolescents engage in delinquent behavior almost equally. The reason for this finding could be that adolescents, irrespective of gender, face the same environmental challenges and are moving from dependence on parents to autonomy, and maturity. Boys engage more in externalizing delinquent behaviours while girls engage more in internalizing deviant behaviours. This implies delinquency is same irrespective of its form [40].

The finding agrees with [39] who reported no relationship between gender and juvenile delinquency. On the contrary [40,41], in their study, found that aggression scores of girls are higher than boys. Although in another study by [42], the tendency of boys getting involved in delinquent acts seems higher than girls. All these could be as a result of cultural leanings, while girls learn that being compatible was a good personality trait, boys learn that aggression is a part of the sense of “ Masculinity”. Similarly while boys get involved in open attacks, girls show unnoticeable verbal aggression (40). Aggression

is externalized in boys with an effort to prove their power, whereas girls tend to be quiet as a matter of their social gender role and are supported for the suppression of their violence related feelings.

6. CONCLUSION

Parental process, gender and family type contributes minimally to juvenile delinquency among adolescents. This was evident in the r values reported as follows: Parental process $r = .031$, gender $r = 0.055$ and family type $r = .10$ this implies a positive but very low correlation with the delinquent behaviour of the respondents. The reason could be attributed to the respondents varying coping threshold for endurance, patience, and dealing with situations. Furthermore, the Delta environment where this study was conducted is garnished with violent activities which includes, communal clashes, political bigotry, kidnapping and unemployment. These factors activate negative emotions, thoughts, beliefs, emotional responses, which crystallizes into delinquent tendencies that negatively affects everybody within the vicinity, especially the adolescents. However some studies revealed that poor communication is related to juvenile delinquency.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, the following are recommended: Parents should make the home psychologically conducive so that their children can express their needs and desires trustfully. Irrespective of gender, parents should create time to discuss and interact with their children in order to know their challenges and fears. There should be open and healthy communication in families for cordial relationship between parents and children.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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