**FAMILY INSTABILITY AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

**ABSTRACT**

The family as a universal social institution exists in all human society. It forms the basis without which no society can survive. It is from here the individual picks up a “self” through the process of socialization. Various factors have been associated with delinquency, but the most important is the quality of relationship between parents and children. Some observers of social life have argued that the family no longer functions as a useful social unit. The method employed for the study is the survey method and the purposive/judgmental sampling technique of the non-probability sampling method. Based on the data collected, we found that domestic violence does determine delinquency in children, that large family does not engender delinquency, that children who associate with delinquents usually became delinquents, and that there was a relationship between parents’ criminal record and deviance in children.

We concluded by saying that since delinquency emanates from the home from, much attention should be focused on childhood and family life.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Many sociologists regard the family as the cornerstone of society. It forms the basic unit of social organization and it is difficult to imagine how society could function without it. Although the composition of the family varies, for example in many societies two or more wives are regarded as the ideal arrangement, such difference can be seen as minor variations. In general, therefore, the family has been seen as a universal social institution, as an inevitable part of human society. On the whole it has been regarded as functional both for the individual and society as a whole (Haralambos and Heald 1984). The study of the family involves several theories, but the functionalist and conflict theories are the two most fundamental. The functionalists are interested in the functions that are performed by the family. The family according to the functionalist view, is the most stable social institution and is therefore ideal for the performance of the following functions:

(i) The family, through the process of socialization, nurtures and prepares children to be productive members of society.  (ii) It equips them with the cultural values and skills necessary for the society to survive continuously. (iii) Family members receive their basic needs, such as emotional and physical care, from their families. In most societies, there are groups or organisations that take up the responsibility of caring for or protecting the members of the society under certain circumstances. The family, however, seems to be the most appropriate of them all, especially regarding daily living in an impersonal environment caused by rapid changes (Magill, and Hector, 2000 ed). From the foregoing, the family is supposed and expected to be an arena of love, peace, harmony, and tranquility, where members will naturally find a haven of rest after a tension soaked and stressful working day. It is expected to be the protector and guardian of its members from external aggression among other roles. However, research and observation show that the family has become another place of tension, multifarious problems and a danger Zone (Ekiran 2004).

* 1. **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Early attempts to explain delinquency centred on biological and psychological factors, seeking to explain crime and delinquency in terms of some deficiency or imbalance within the individual who engaged in the behaviour. Noting that criminal and delinquent behaviour patterns were found under certain circumstances and in certain areas more frequently than in others, sociologists began to look at the social milieu in which the acts took place (Sanders 1996)

The family represents the primary agent for the socialization of children. The family is the first social group a child encounters and is the group with which most children have their most enduring relationships. The family gives a child his or her principal identity and, of course, even his or her name. The family teaches social roles, moral standards, and society’s laws, and it disciplines children who fail to comply with those norms and values. The family either provides for or neglects children’s emotional, intellectual, and social needs; the neglect of these basic needs can profoundly affect the shaping of a child’s values and attitudes (Bartollas, 1990). One of the apparent voids that exist in the life of a child who is delinquency prone is pronounced supportive and affectional needs that go largely unmet. According to Berman (1989), if the mother is ineffective, indifferent or cruel, the child sees her as one who rejects his needs and responds to her as the one who hates him. Her own dependency needs may be such that she finds the infants needs intolerable. This type of mother most often is helpless, confused, disorganized and dependent. She feels there is no one to satisfy her dependency needs and therefore feels unable to care for the needs of her children. The father also poses a serious problem to the child, since he may either ignore the child or belittle him and be harsh or cruel. This father is devoid of or lacking in his capacity to give love or tender interest to the family.

Some observers of social life have argued that the family no longer functions as a useful social unit. They contend that divorce, single-parent families, isolation, role conflict, out-of-wedlock births, unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, and violence are some of the problems affecting the family today (Baltimore, K Freudenthal 1998). The importance of given the family as a contributory factor to delinquency has varied through the years Karen Wilkinson has classified the attention given to the family into three periods: 1900-1932, 1933-1950, and 1951-1972. In the first period, the role of the family as a contributory factor to delinquent behaviour was emphasized. A broken home was considered a major cause of delinquency, and a great deal of research was done to measure its influence. Studies done in the United States in 1981 for example, indicated that there was one divorce for every two marriages. Even though most people who get divorced ultimately remarry, the ratio of divorced people to married people living with their spouses more than doubled from 47 per 1,000 in 1970 to 100 per 1,000 in 1980. The rise of the divorce means that single-parent families have been increasing (Bartollas 1990).

Isolation also is a major problem affecting many families. This is as a result of urbanization, increased mobilization, dehumanizing jobs, and the disintegration of communities, neighbourhood, and support networks. The declining impact of the extended family, which traditionally offered numerous advantages to children because it relived some of the pressures of parenting, has further contributed to the problem of isolation. Violence has been a major characteristic of the family in the past, and it is no stranger to family life today. Marital violence is rapidly becoming recognized as a pervasive problem that affect nearly a third of the world’s population (Gelles and Straus 1988). A study in Delaware (U.S) found that 12 percent of those surveyed reported having hit a spouse with a hard object, while 22 percent has used a hand. Furthermore, more than 60 percent of the couples reported at least one violent act in their marriage. With a seeming general acceptance of violence within the family, it is not surprising that some parents also act out their aggressions on their children.

Inadequate supervision and discipline in the home have been commonly citied to explain delinquent behaviour. Hirschi (1969) found that the rate of delinquency increased with the incidence of mothers employed outside the home. He attributes this finding to the fact that unemployed mother spent more time supervising their children’s activities and behaviour. Nye (1960) reports that the type of discipline were associated with high rates of delinquent behaviour, for both strict and lax discipline and unfair discipline were associated with high rates of delinquent behaviour. McCord, McCord and Zola (1979) further found a relationship between inconsistent discipline and deviant behaviour. Nye adds that the disciplinary role of the father was more closely related to delinquent behaviour than was the disciplinary role of the mother.

The foregoing observations are some of the problems plaguing the family, and which are responsible for deviant acts in children. Since the family is the first social group a child encounters and is the group with which most children have their most enduring relationships. The family teaches social roles, moral standards, and society’s laws, and it disciplines children who fail to comply with those norms and values. Where these are missing due to improper socialization, violence or one of those problem affecting the family, it becomes a problem both for the individual and society as a whole. Also, the fact that children learn most of their behaviour from the home, it is clear that whatever they are exposed to in the home, they tend to exhibit to the society. On the whole, the rate of delinquency appears to increase with the number of unfavourable factors in the home. That is, multiple “handicaps” within the family are associated with a higher probability of juvenile delinquency than single handicaps.

**1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

**General Objective**

To establish the relationship between family instability and deviance in children

**Specific Objectives**

i.     To determine the relationship that exists between divorce/separation and deviance in children.

ii.    To demonstrate the relationship between parents’ attitude toward their children and delinquency.

iii.   To find out if peer influence engenders juvenile delinquency.

iv.    To find out if family size causes deviance in children.

v.    To make policy recommendations on how to combat deviance in children

* 1. **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

From the above research questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

**Ho:** There is no relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency

**Hi:** There is a relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency

**Ho:** There is no relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency

**Hi:** There is a relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency

**1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

1. This study which focuses on the incidence of juvenile delinquency in socio-economic classes of parents, the rate of juvenile delinquency among the sexes and age bands, will be useful in providing statistics on juvenile delinquency in Uyo urban.
2. It will be valuable to the government in helping to determine where to channel its resources in an attempt to check juvenile delinquency.
3. This research is expected to contribute in the area of helping to the dimension of juvenile delinquency in our society and will help in bringing in limitation on the cause and the consequence of this social problem.
4. The study will also help guidance counselors decide on strategies to use in providing assistance in respect of some deviant behaviours among the youths as well as educating parents on how to help their children.
5. Most significantly, it will identify the needed strategies and demand that could be used by parents, law enforcement agencies and others in checking their problems in our societies especially in the urban areas.
6. It will also be of immense importance to researchers who may wish to carry out more studies on various aspects of juvenile delinquency in Akwa Ibom State.

**1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study will be within the ambit of teenagers in Lagos State, particularly in Birrel Boys Approved School (Sabo), Girls Remand Home (Idi-Araba), in Yaba, Mushin, and Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Government Areas in Lagos State. The researcher encounters some constrain which limited the scope of the study;

**a) AVAILABILITY OF RESEARCH MATERIAL:** The research material available to the researcher is insufficient, thereby limiting the study

**b) TIME:** The time frame allocated to the study does not enhance wider coverage as the researcher has to combine other academic activities and examinations with the study.

**1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**DELINQUENCY:**This is a (criminal) offence(s) committed by a youth or a young person below eighteen (18) years of age which is an age below legal responsibility Cole, Olawunmi Adetokumbo (June, 1995).

Christiansen (1983) sees truancy, running away, persistent lying etc as some of the indicators of delinquency.

This also means such acts as defined by the Remand Home as delinquent.

**Youth**: The state or period of being young (Oxford English Dictionary). The World Youth refers to any person from the date of his birth to the age of detachment from parents. In Nigeria, a full-grown age is 21. So long as a child is being cared for by the parents is still a child (Warimie Jaja (1998).  
**Remand Home:** An institution where delinquent children and law breaking children are kept.

**Marital Status**: For the purpose of this study, marital status means married or single (that is parents living together and single parents).

**Norms**: Established standards of behaviour maintained by a society.

**Outside Influence**: This refers to any other influence that affects the child delinquent behaviour apart from the family. It involves those a child mingles with outside the family.

**Internal Influence**: This relate to the kind of home training and all that a child could lean and adopt from the parents in the course of child rearing.

**Delinquency:**Refers to behaviours for which a juvenile can be formally sanctioned; collectively, those behaviours include status offenses and those behaviours prohibited under criminal law (Magill and Hector, 1995).

**Deviance:**Refers to an act or behaviour which departs from a generally accepted pattern of behaviour; a behaviour or act that aberrates from that which is considered a norm (Magill, and Hector, 1995).

**Divorce:**Refers to the termination of marriage by legal, customary or religious procedures (Census Manual, 2006).

**Family:**A family consists of a group of people who identify themselves as being related to one another, usually by blood, marriage, or adoption, and who share intimate relationships and dependency. Lamanna, and Reidmann, (1991) define a family as “any sexually expressive or parent-child relationship in which people-usually related by ancestry, marriage, or adoption: (i) Live together with commitment (ii) Form an economic unit and care for any young, and (iii) Find their identity as importantly attached to the group

**Juvenile:**According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, a juvenile is a young person who is not yet an adult.

**Separation:**Refers to a situation where a couple is shut off from cohabitation, especially by Judicial Decree (Census Manual, 2006).

**1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

This research work is organized in five chapters, for easy understanding, as follows; Chapter one is concern with the introduction, which consist of the (overview, of the study), historical background, statement of problem, objectives of the study, research hypotheses, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, definition of terms and historical background of the study. Chapter two highlights the theoretical framework on which the study is based, thus the review of related literature. Chapter three deals on the research design and methodology adopted in the study. Chapter four concentrate on the data collection and analysis and presentation of finding. Chapter five gives summary, conclusion, and recommendations made of the study.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**INTRODUCTION**

Our focus in this chapter is to critically examine relevant literature that would assist in explaining the research problem and furthermore recognize the efforts of scholars who had previously contributed immensely to similar research. The chapter intends to deepen the understanding of the study and close the perceived gaps.

Precisely, the chapter will be considered in three sub-headings:

* Conceptual Framework
* Theoretical review
* Theoretical framework
* Empirical review

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**2.1 Concept Of Family Instability**

family instability is a critical aspect of the quality of the home environment (Bradley et al., 1994; Garrett, Ng'andu, & Ferron, 1994), and a distinct context of development. The kinds of events that contribute to family instability typically correlate with poverty, and the social diversity within poor families may be obscured when economic diversity is controlled in studies with more heterogeneous samples (Coll et al., 1996). Some families within a disadvantaged population, for example, change residences many times in a child's early life, whereas others maintain a single residence. Some primary caregivers experience multiple intimate relations with adults other than a biological parent of the child, whereas others maintain a stable relationship with the child's biological parent. Children may live with one or more than one (e.g., foster care) primary caregiver. These variables and others contribute to the diversity of environments experienced by children in economically disadvantaged families, which we represented as variations in family instability. The issues we addressed concerned the unique relation of instability to children's adjustment in the context of other family variables, child factors that moderate instability effects, and variations due to the persistence of family instability in a young child's life. Our general goal was to explore the relations between children's adjustment and a potentially important and neglected aspect of the ecology of disadvantaged families.

**2.2 Causes Of Family Instability**

If family instability can undermine the positive development of children and adolescents, then understanding the causes of the rising level of family instability is important. Informed by our backgrounds as family demographers, we highlight several macro-level trends related to family instability. Elucidating these causes can point to strategies for reducing family instability, but, more important for the purposes of our focus on the developmental importance of family instability, they also help us to understand key confounds in observed associations between family instability and child well-being (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007; Lee & McLanahan, 2015). One macro-level trend associated with family instability is the increasing economic stratification of U.S. society, which has created larger gaps between the haves and have-nots. This increase is important because socioeconomic disadvantage increases the likelihood that children will experience family instability in the first place, and it also has detrimental implications for child well-being that are similar to, yet independent of, the effects of instability itself (Wu, 1996). In other words, the structural challenges and individual circumstances imposed by economic inequality can make instability more likely and more frequent among poor families while also affecting children’s well-being across a variety of outcomes. One of the most common structural explanations of the greater instability among socioeconomically disadvantaged families is the decoupling of marriage and childbearing that is especially pronounced among this segment of the population. The institutionalization of marriage has actually increased its importance and status to the point that marriage is often regarded as a capstone and marker of prestige in one’s life (Cherlin, 2004). Financial barriers both perceived and tangible have contributed to the delay of marriage in favor of other coresidential unions such as cohabitation (Smock, Manning, & Porter, 2005), whereas childbearing is not viewed in the same way (Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Edin & Reed, 2005). As a result, poor children are more likely to be born into the family structures that lead to greater instability over time (Kennedy & Bumpass, 2008). Another related macro-level trend is the “diverging destinies” of U.S. children, or stronger links among mothers’ socioeconomic lives and their family formation behaviors that matter to child development (McLanahan, 2004). The key is that socioeconomic attainment and family formation are more closely connected today than in the past (e.g., being disadvantaged increases the odds of mothers being unmarried more than it did several decades ago). Consequently, there are larger numbers of mothers who are socioeconomically advantaged on one hand and have stable trajectories of marriage and fertility on the other, as well as larger numbers of women who are both socioeconomically disadvantaged and experience turbulence in marriage and fertility. Increasingly, the children of these two sets of mothers have divergent paths through life. As a result, diverging destinies in childhood forecast instability in the future, in an inter generational feedback loop. Indeed, family instability in childhood predicts greater risk of non- marital fertility, cohabitation, truncated rates of educational attainment, and earlier workforce entry in young adulthood, all of which lay the foundation for future family instability (Fomby & Bosick, 2013; Teachman, 2003; Wu & Martinson, 1993). Other macro-level trends of potential importance to understanding rising levels of family instability are more specific to particular segments of the population. For example, the past several decades have witnessed a massive increase in the incarceration of men. This trend has had important repercussions for family instability. It has removed many fathers from their families and separated them from their partners and children, thereby directly increasing family instability. It has also impaired the socioeconomic prospects of fathers even when released, thereby indirectly increasing family instability (Turney & Schneider, 2016). Notably, this trend has been most pronounced among African American men, the racial/ethnic group that already had high levels of family instability (Braman, 2002; Wildeman & Western, 2010). As another example, the increased enforcement of immigration laws and fears of immigration crackdowns have had repercussions for children, as seen in growing numbers of children separated from mothers and fathers who are undocumented. Although on a smaller scale, this trend could have similar repercussions as mass imprisonment because it is splitting up families and may also have destabilizing economic effects (Menjívar, Abrego, & Schmalzbauer, 2016). This trend is most pronounced among Latin American immigrants.

**2.3 Juvenile Delinquency**

Juvenile delinquency as defined by Andy (1960) “is any social deviation by a youth from the societal norms which results in his contact with law enforcement agents.” The Nigeria constitution of 1979 defines juvenile delinquency as “a crime committed by a young person under the age of 17 years as a result of trying to comply with the wishes of his peers or to escape from parental pressure or certain emotional stimulation. The earliest Code of Law (the Code of Hammurabi) took specific note of the duties of children to parents and prescribed punishment for violation. Juvenile delinquency is a behaviour loosely defined as public nuisance which its usual characteristic includes acts that is of anti-social effect. Juvenile delinquency are crimes committed by young ones example rape, prostitution, stealing, burglary, truancy, disobedient, homicide, robbery, kleptomanism etc. And let every other growing social problems it has been subjected to curiosity and serious investigation. Juvenile delinquency is now the biggest single menace to order that is ravaging our society. The above definition of juvenile delinquency is basically supported by the Oxford Dictionary which defines it as law-breaking by young people.

**2.4 Causes Of Family Instability And Juvenile Delinquency**

* **Biological Cause**

The protagonist of the biological conceptual explains that criminals are predestined towards criminal behaviour by factors such as their biological makeup is the gene which is the carrier of hereditary materials. Apart from the normal xx and xy sex chromosome in man, the xyy configuration was discovered and people with such chromosome complement are said to have behavioural characteristics of violence and aggressiveness. Kratcoski et al. (1979:14) also belong to the school of thought that certain biological factor like body size could trigger the exhibition of criminal behaviour.

* **Parental Cause**

The home is the one of the major factor contributing to juvenile delinquency. As confirmed by Bobby (1951:36) he assert that “firstly we have more and more mothers going to work leaving their children unattended at home or on the street, thereby depriving children at their early age of motherly love and affection.Onetime head of state also is in support that the home contributes in no small measure. He declared in the Daily Times of July 12, 1977 that, parents have no patience, self control and are not disciplined. He further assert that very irresponsible fathers who always got drunk and too occupied with nocturnal activities would have little or no time for his children neither would the nagging and jealous mother.Parents no longer chastise their children, they allow their children to do whatever they please and are sometimes angry with anybody who punishes them in the bid to correct them. This gives the child courage to do whatever he likes. Furthermore, poor families find it difficult training their children. This could result to child being exposed to the adult world. A poor family that lives in only a room could be doing harm to the child as privacy would be abused. Polygamy and children from broken homes and poor family planning is related to poverty and consequently related to juvenile delinquency.

* **Societal Cause**

It is a truism to say that gene and the environment that is, the society is a major shaper of an individual. The society which include peer group and the media plays a major role in delinquent behaviour among youths. The media has immensely contributed to the delinquent nature of youths. As Greek et al (1970) puts it, children of today are being exposed to all kind of movie, pictures and books, the press are no longer censored and film producers take advantage of the current situation for their selfish gains. Recently, cinema halls that show film that encourages sex and violence have increased tremendously and nobody is doing anything about it. A common adage which says “show me your friend and I will tell you who you are”, described the effects of peer group on an individual. The peer group could be very influential as a greater percentage of a juvenile belong to peer group. They are virtually everywhere, in the church, school and at home. Another major reason for juvenile delinquency is the luxurious and extravagant lifestyle of the affluence in the society. This could serve as an incentive as the youth would like to be like them. Religious leaders have deviate from preaching precept they now talk about prosperity and with no avenue of acquiring it, the youth, still energetic indulge in violence and crime.

* **Family socio economic status**

This is based on family income, parental occupation and societal values in the community. The seeming undependability of our families to curb the menace of delinquency is not uncommented with the unprecedented global inflation that has had alarming influence on families, resulting in near break down of family ties. This is generally seen in the negative effect this has on the adolescent members of families who are mostly found in senior classes of our secondary schools. Family socio-economic status affects parents ability to send their children to school and how well these children performance in school. According to Uche (1994) children from high parent with adequate income, good occupation and high status are likely provided with huge quality private education from nursery up to university level. Given this opportunity, it is likely that such children will be less delinquent than their counterpart from lower socio economic background. However from an empirical study by Coughin and Vuchimah (1996), there is a relationship between family socioeconomic status and juvenile delinquency. Female secondary school students tend to act out as a result of low level of support from their mother while boys tend to act out as a result of low level parental mentoring; however the study concludes that family structure is not a predictor of juvenile delinquency, low parental monitoring did seem to predict higher drug use, Dishon and Loeber (1985). In another study on child rearing style and students’ dishonest behavior by Ajake, Isangedighi and Bisong (2008), child rearing style is a function of family socio economic status. Significant difference exist between respondents from autocratic child rearing family and those from democratic homes in lying, stealing and truancy, in each case autocratically reared subjects are more vulnerable to delinquency. Again a significant difference exist between subjects reared under democratic child rearing style and their counterpart reared under the laissez-faire rearing style in lying, stealing and truancy. In each case, those who are brought under the laissez-faire families are the more vulnerable. In a study carried out in Nigeria aimed at determining the extent to which parents occupational status influences the educational influences the educational attainment of children, Ojo (1987) found out that sixty percent of 1,327 university students randomly drawn for the study were children of farmers (socio-economically low), 92% were drawn from parents in the senior staff category, 17% were children of traders while 13 % of the students were children of junior staff. His finding was contrary to miner (1986) and Abernethy (1986). He found out that delinquent behavior was rather exhibited by children from middle class families or high socio-economic group. Weis (1982) in her study of ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status: pattern of access in Ghanaian secondary school found out that greater percentage of delinquent behavior in school is associated with children from rich homes since they are the majority in schools, on the other hand delinquent behavior in school is associated with student from poor homes as a result of the spillover from the society where they constitute a larger percentage. The educational level of parents determines their status and level of influence in the society. This comes from the fact that education has been described as one of the sources of social stratification and social mobility, (Uche 1984). He said that attitudes towards education are very much influenced by social class. As a result, the children of middle class parents are more likely to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them both at secondary and higher education institution than are children of poor laborers or factory worker (who are hardly educated). In a study conducted in Rivers state of Nigeria to examine the influence of family environment on educational attainment, Ogummade (1983) used total 120 primary school children in the fourth class. The findings from his study revealed that environment has considerable influence on pupil’s school achievement. Children from literate homes and boys from both literate and illiterate homes had a better achievement than girls. Upadhyay (2001) showed in his research that alcohol abuse in Nepal is mostly found among the youth between the ages of 16 and 30 in the homes of the less educated. He also opined that young people are eight times more likely to take alcohol through initiation of their own family members. His paper also revealed that in studies, children of less educated parents who are 76% alcoholics are found to show less social competency, more internalizing and externalizing behaviors, more negative performance, lower academic achievement and more psychiatric distress. Due to lack of knowledge, the less educated parents do not seem to associate alcoholism with diversified effects on body organs such as liver injury, cardiac problems, damage to endocrine and reproductive system and multiple adverse neurological effects (Upadhyay 2001). Thus they continue in the habit of alcohol consumption from their children initiate and exhibit antisocial behavior in schools. Apart from the visible harmful consequences of alcoholism, there are several non-visible consequences observed in psychological and economic perspective including family disruption, inter-personal conflict, poor social status, poor educational environment, financial involvement in alcohol consumption and treatment of alcohol related problems. The effects of these are seen on their children’s poor academic performance and dropping out of schools.

**2.5 Family Processes And Delinquency**

One theoretical perspective that can explain the relationship between family structure and delinquency is social control theory (Hirschi, 1969). The main tenet of this theory is that increased social bonds decrease the likelihood of engaging in crime and deviance. Specifically, Hirschi (1969) specifies four elements of the social bond: attachment, described as the extent that a person has close affectionate ties with others; commitment, described as the fear of law-breaking behavior; involvement, described as meaning participating in conventional acts to make one too busy to commit crime; and belief, described as impressions or opinions that are highly dependent upon social reinforcement. Hirschi’s (1969) version of social control theory contends that individuals conform because they have strong affective attachments to parents, stakes in conformity, involvement in conventional activities, and belief in social norms. Conversely, those youth who have weak attachments, low stakes in conformity, little involvement in conventional activities, and poor attitudes regarding societal norms are more likely to participate in delinquent behavior. Hirschi originally argued that the attachment between parent and child is paramount and the strength of this relationship is the most important factor in determining delinquent behavior. In other words, it is the quality, and not the quantity, of bonds that determines delinquency (Leiber et al., 2009). Many children who experience a divorce or are otherwise in nontraditional families may not be as close to their parents as children in two-biological-parent families. They may experience weakened bonds with their parents and others, thus increasing the likelihood that they will engage in crime and delinquency (Matsueda & Heimer, 1987). If a child lives in a nontraditional family structure, this can impact the four elements of the bond. Hirschi suggested that inadequate families fail to provide the attachments that could leverage children into socialized life-styles (Hirschi, 1969). If a child is brought up in a broken home, the child is going to have a hard time socially and this may cause the child to turn to deviant acts. Parental attachment can, therefore, be a key factor in explaining crime and delinquency among adolescents. A study by Grove and Crutchfield (1982) examined the effect of various “family variables” on the etiology of juvenile delinquency focusing on self-reports by parents on their child’s behavior. Some of the potential explanations for delinquency in this study were: family structure, poor parental characteristics, household characteristics, and parent-child relationships. Of these factors, they found parental attachment to be the strongest predictor of delinquency. In addition, research using nationally representative data has found that maternal attachment was an especially important predictor of non-serious and serious delinquency irrespective of family structure, economic factors, and race and ethnicity (Leiber et al., 2009). While children from single parent homes can certainly have strong attachments with the custodial parent, some research has suggested that having a second parent in the household is still important in reducing delinquency. For example, Rankin and Kern (1994) found that children who are strongly attached to both parents have a lower probability of self-reported.

**2.6 The Development Of Delinquency**

Research over the past few decades on normal child development and on development of delinquent behavior has shown that individual, social, and community conditions as well as their interactions influence behavior. There is general agreement that behavior, including antisocial and delinquent behavior, is the result of a complex interplay of individual biological and genetic factors and environmental factors, starting during fetal development and continuing throughout life (Bock and Goode, 1996). Clearly, genes affect biological development, but there is no biological development without environmental input. Thus, both biology and environment influence behavior.

Many children reach adulthood without involvement in serious delinquent behavior, even in the face of multiple risks. Although risk factors may help identify which children are most in need of preventive interventions, they cannot identify which particular children will become serious or chronic offenders. It has long been known that most adult criminals were involved in delinquent behavior as children and adolescents; most delinquent children and adolescents, however, do not grow up to be adult criminals (Robins, 1978). Similarly, most serious, chronically delinquent children and adolescents experience a number of risk factors at various levels, but most children and adolescents with risk factors do not become serious, chronic delinquents. Furthermore, any individual factor contributes only a small part to the increase in risk. It is, however, widely recognized that the more risk factors a child or adolescent experiences, the higher their risk for delinquent behavior. A difficulty with the literature on risk factors is the diversity of the outcome behaviors studied. Some studies focus on behavior that meets diagnostic criteria for conduct disorder or other antisocial behavior disorders; others look at aggressive behavior, or lying, or shoplifting; still others rely on juvenile court referral or arrest as the outcome of interest. Furthermore, different risk factors and different outcomes may be more salient at some stages of child and adolescent development than at others. Much of the literature that has examined risk factors for delinquency is based on longitudinal studies, primarily of white males. Some of the samples were specifically chosen from high-risk environments. Care must be taken in generalizing this literature to girls and minorities and to general populations. Nevertheless, over the past 20 years, much has been learned about risks for antisocial and delinquent behavior.

**2.7 Consequences Of Juvenile Delinquency In Nigeria**

The consequences are numerous and devastating as could be seen in the depreciating state of our beloved nation. It’s now a stigma to say you are a Nigerian outside the shore of our country. This is because we are assumed to be a nation, whose youth are lawless as could be seen in drug trafficking. Concord Magazine of June 13th 1990 speaks of exceptional treatment given to Nigeria by foreign customs. Millions of Naira which would have been used at the building of hospitals and schools are used in combating crime as could be seen in the importation of computerized security gadgets by the then administrator of Lagos state Col. Buba Marwa as shown on the network news on February 13, 1997. It’s now obviously dangerous to walk late in the night and even in broad daylight for fear of being attacked. Potential youth who are the future of the nation run the risk of going mad, thrown into prison or rehabilitation centres as a result of crime, drug abuse and other related offenses with these in sight who will be the future Biochemists, medical doctors, applied physicists and engineers.

**2.8 Theoretical Review**

In 1977 Albert Bandura, a Stanford University Psychology Professor, published social learning theory in which he postulated that human learning is a continuous reciprocal interaction of cognitive, behavioural, and environmental factors. Sometimes called observational learning, social learning theory focuses on behaviour modeling in which the child observes and then imitates the behaviour of adult or other children around him or her (Wiesner, Capaldi, Patterson, 2003:318). In his research on social learning theory, Bandura studied how violence portrayed in mass media can have a tremendously negative impact on the behaviour of certain types of children watching violent television shows. What he noted was that some children will observe and then imitate the behaviour of the characters on the television screen. From this observation, we can see that or conclude that juvenile delinquency is the result of imitation of aggressive action.

**2.9 Theoretical Framework**

**Social Strain Theory**

This theory was propounded by Merton in 1957. Merton proposed that a society instills in its citizenry aspirations for upward mobility and a desire for selected goals. Merton assumed in his theorizing that humans are conforming organisms who only violate the law when the disjunction between goals and means becomes so great that the individual believes he or she can no longer pursue socially sanctioned goals via legitimate channels. According to Merton, a society that emphasizes goals over the means to obtain these goals, and that restricts access to opportunities for legitimate advancement is establishing the conditions for anomie and future criminality. Agnew’s (1992) general strain theory offers a promising framework for understanding juvenile delinquency. A major type of strain according to Agnew’s general strain theory consists of experiencing unpleasant events or circumstances, including aversive situations at home, particularly arguments and violence (Broidy, 2001: 21). The social strain theory proposes that adolescent or juvenile are 17 pressed into delinquency by negative emotional reactions that result from being situated in an aversive situation from which they cannot escape.

**Behavioural Theory**

This theory was studied by J. Watson, I. Pavlov and B.F. Skinner. It describes the outcome of the consequences of certain behaviour on occurrence of such behaviour in the future. Operant conditioning developed by Skinner is one of the learning methods according to which the likelihood of behaviour is increased or decreased by the use of reinforcement or punishment. In case of positive reinforcement, certain behaviour becomes stronger by the effect of experiencing some positive condition. In case of negative reinforcement, certain behaviour becomes stronger by the outcome of stopping or staying away from some negative condition. In case of extinction certain behaviour becomes weaker by the outcome of avoiding experiencing some positive condition or stopping some negative conditions.

**2.10 Empirical Review**

Ajibade and Ajinde(2022) examined the increasing rate of juvenile delinquency a major social problem globally and locally. Researchers and concerned individuals have traced the preponderance of juvenile delinquency to the increasing rate of family instability among other factors. However, concerted inquiries into the influence of family instability on juvenile delinquency have resulted in a raging controversy. While some researchers have found a significant relationship between family instability and juvenile delinquency, others have suggested otherwise. Against this backdrop, this study set out to fill this yawning gap in literature and also to examine the relationship between family instability and juvenile delinquency in Owerri Municipality. Using the multi-stage sampling method, 510 senior secondary school students were selected for this study from 10 comprehensive secondary schools in Owerri Municipality. The questionnaire and the interview guide were used for data collection. 2 hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. The hypotheses were tested with the chi-square (x2 ) statistic. The results of the analyses have shown that children from unstable homes engage more in juvenile delinquency than their counterparts from more stable homes. As expected, inadequate parental supervision predicted delinquency. This study recommended among other things that Governments, counselors and concerned agencies should routinely develop programmes aimed at sensitizing parents and care-givers on parent roles and obligations.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

* 1. **Research design**

The researcher used descriptive research survey design in building up this project work the choice of this research design was considered appropriate because of its advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design was suitable for the study as the study sought to critically analyze the topic, parental background and delinquency among youth.

* 1. **Sources of data collection**

Data were collected from two main sources namely:

(i)Primary source and

(ii)Secondary source

**Primary source:**

These are materials of statistical investigation which were collected by the research for a particular purpose. They can be obtained through a survey, observation questionnaire or as experiment; the researcher has adopted the questionnaire method for this study.

**Secondary source:**

These are data from textbook Journal handset etc. they arise as byproducts of the same other purposes. Example administration, various other unpublished works and write ups were also used.

* 1. **Population of the study**

Population of a study is a group of persons or aggregate items or things. The researcher is interested in getting information and critical analysis of the subject parental background and delinquency among youth. One Hundred and Eighty (180) remanded inmates and Twenty (20) staff of selected Remand homes in Lagos state were selected randomly by the researcher as the population of the study.

* 1. Sample is the set people or items which constitute part of a given population sampling. Due to large size of the target population, the researcher used the Taro Yamani formula to arrive at the sample population of the study.

n= N

1+N (e) 2

n= 200

1+200(0.05)2

= 200

1+200(0.0025)

= 200 200

1+0.5 = 1.5 = 133.

**3.5 Instrument for data collection**

The major research instrument used is the questionnaires. This was appropriately moderated. The respondents were administered with the questionnaires to complete, with or without disclosing their identities. The questionnaire was designed to obtain sufficient and relevant information from the respondents. The primary data contained information extracted from the questionnaires in which the respondents were required to give specific answer to a question by ticking in front of an appropriate answer and administered the same on the inmates: The questionnaires contained structured questions which were divided into sections A and B.

* 1. **Validation of the research instrument**

The questionnaire used as the research instrument was subjected to face its validation. This research instrument (questionnaire) adopted was adequately checked and validated by the supervisor his contributions and corrections were included into the final draft of the research instrument used.

* 1. **Method of data analysis**

The data collected was not an end in itself but it served as a means to an end. The end being the use of the required data to understand the various situations it is with a view to making valuable recommendations and contributions. To this end, the data collected has to be analysis for any meaningful interpretation to come out with some results. It is for this reason that the following methods were adopted in the research project for the analysis of the data collected. For a comprehensive analysis of data collected, emphasis was laid on the use of absolute numbers frequencies of responses and percentages. Answers to the research questions were provided through the comparison of the percentage of workers response to each statement in the questionnaire related to any specified question being considered.

Frequency in this study refers to the arrangement of responses in order of magnitude or occurrence while percentage refers to the arrangements of the responses in order of their proportion. The simple percentage method is believed to be straight forward easy to interpret and understand method.

The researcher therefore chooses the simple percentage as the method to use.

The formula for percentage is shown as.

% = f/N x 100/1

Where f = frequency of respondents response

N = Total Number of response of the sample

100 = Consistency in the percentage of respondents for each item contained in the questions.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**PRESENTATION ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

**4.1 Introduction**

Efforts will be made at this stage to present, analyze and interpret the data collected during the field survey. This presentation will be based on the responses from the completed questionnaires. The result of this exercise will be summarized in tabular forms for easy references and analysis. It will also show answers to questions relating to the research questions for this research study. The researcher employed simple percentage in the analysis.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed in tabular form with simple percentage for easy understanding.

A total of 133(one hundred and thirty three) questionnaires were distributed and 133 questionnaires were returned.

Question 1

Gender distribution of the respondents.

TABLE I

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender distribution of the respondents** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Male | 77 | 57.9 | 57.9 | 57.9 |
| Female | 56 | 42.1 | 42.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

From the above table it shows that 57.9% of the respondents were male while 42.1% of the respondents were female.

Question 2

The positions held by respondents

TABLE II

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The positions held by respondents** | | | | | |
| Response | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| **Valid** | Female Remands | 37 | 27.8 | 27.8 | 27.8 |
| Male Remands | 50 | 37.6 | 37.6 | 65.4 |
| Female Staff | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 82.7 |
| Male Staff | 23 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 133 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

The above tables shown that 37 respondents which represents27.8% of the respondents are Female Reprimands 50 respondents which represents 37.6 % are Male Reprimands 23 respondents which represents 17.3% of the respondents are Female Staff, while 23 respondents which represent 17.3% of the respondents are Male staff.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESES**

**Ho:** There is no relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency

**Hi:** There is a relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency

**Table III**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **There is a relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency** | | | |
| Response | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
| Agreed | 40 | 33.3 | 6.8 |
| strongly agreed | 50 | 33.3 | 16.8 |
| Disagreed | 26 | 33.3 | -7.3 |
| strongly disagreed | 17 | 33.3 | -16.3 |
| Total | 133 |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Test Statistics** | |
|  | **There is no relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency** |
| Chi-Square | 19.331a |
| Df | 3 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .000 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 33.3. | |

Decision rule:

The researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis thatthere is no relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency, as the calculated value of 19.331 is greater than the critical value of 7.82 Therefore the alternate hypothesis is accepted thatthere is a relationship between divorce and juvenile delinquency.

**TEST OF HYPOTHESIS TWO**

**Ho:** There is no relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency

**Hi:** There is a relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency Table V

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **There is a relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency** | | | |
| Response | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
| Yes | 73 | 44.3 | 28.7 |
| No | 33 | 44.3 | -11.3 |
| Undecided | 27 | 44.3 | -17.3 |
| Total | 133 |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Test Statistics** | |
|  | There is no relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency |
| Chi-Square | 28.211a |
| Df | 2 |
| Asymp. Sig. | .000 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 44.3. | |

**Decision rule:**

The researcher therefore accepts the null hypothesis that state, there is no relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency, as the calculated value of 28.211 is greater than the critical value of 5.99 Therefore the alternate hypothesis is rejected, which states that there is a relationship between family size and juvenile delinquency.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 Introduction**

It is important to ascertain that the objective of this study was to ascertain and critically analyze the subject family instability and juvenile delinquency.

In the preceding chapter, the relevant data collected for this study were presented, critically analyzed and appropriate interpretation given. In this chapter, certain recommendations made which in the opinion of the researcher will be of benefits in addressing delinquency among youth.

**5.2 Summary**

This study was on family instability and juvenile delinquency. Five objectives were raised which included: To determine the relationship that exists between divorce/separation and deviance in children, to demonstrate the relationship between parents’ attitude toward their children and delinquency, to find out if peer influence engenders juvenile delinquency, to find out if family size causes deviance in children, to make policy recommendations on how to combat deviance in children

**5.3 Conclusion**

It is generally observed that parents who are not formally educated want their children to be educated. With this desire, they spend time in instilling discipline into their children and wards. They have time to monitor and correct their children when they seem to go the wrong way, and their children are less involved in anti-social activities. On the contrary, the highly educated ones spend more time working in offices and establishment and have little time for their children. Children of uneducated parents are afraid of falling into trap of anti-crime agents, knowing their parents may not have the means to get them out of trouble. Thus they are better behaved than their counterparts from highly educated background. Anti-social behavior among students is as a result of their failure to achieve academically. Academic failure is noted to be more prevalent among students from uneducated homes than those from illiterate homes. Thus the level/rate of delinquency among children of elites is lower than their counterpart from illiterate parents. These parents send their children to privileged schools that are less violent and less aggressive. Thus aggressive behavior, truancy, pilfering etc are more associated with children from less educated homes. Adolescents sail through the stage with minimal disruptions. It is a stage that must be handled with care or else, the battle would be lost.

**5.4 Recommendation**

The influence of age, family warmth and school connectedness cannot be overemphasized when adolescent delinquent behavior is being addressed. The family has got a very important role to play at ensuring that the adolescent does not go astray. Parents should realize that the task ahead of them in nurturing an adolescent into a decent adult. But with determination and commitment, the adolescent would come out as desirable. Also, the teachers in the school are not left out in the battle against delinquency as it is also a source of concern to the school when adolescents engage in activities that are not expected of adolescents. Therefore, there should be a combined effort from parents, teachers, counseling psychologists and school counselors at ensuring that the

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**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**INSTRUCTION**

Please tick or fill in where necessary as the case may be.

Section A

1. Gender of respondent

A male { }

B female { }

1. Age distribution of respondents
2. 15-20 { }
3. 21-30 { }
4. 31-40 { }
5. 41-50 { }
6. 51 and above { }
7. Marital status of respondents?
8. married [ ]
9. single [ ]
10. divorce [ ]
11. Educational qualification off respondents
12. SSCE/OND { }
13. HND/BSC { }
14. PGD/MSC { }
15. PHD { }

Others……………………………….

1. How long have you been in the Uyo?
2. 0-2 years { }
3. 3-5 years { }
4. 6-11 years { }
5. 11 years and above……….
6. What is your position at the Remand Home?
7. Inmate { }
8. Staff { }
9. How long have you been in Remand Home?
10. 0-2 years { }
11. 3-5 years { }
12. 6-11 years { }
13. 11 years and above……….

SECTION B

1. Children living with single parents commit more acts of delinquency than children living with both parents.
2. Agrees { }
3. Strongly agreed { }
4. Disagreed { }
5. Strongly disagreed { }
6. There are more occurrences of acts of delinquency among children who belong to parents with low socio-economic status
7. (a) Agrees { }

(b) Strongly agreed { }

(c) Disagreed { }

(d) Strongly disagreed { }

1. Delinquency rate is determined by sex and age of the youths.
2. Agreed { }
3. Strongly agreed { }
4. Disagreed { }
5. Strongly disagreed { }
6. Socio-economic factors are associated with juvenile delinquency.
7. Agreed { }
8. Strongly agreed { }
9. Disagreed { }
10. Strongly disagreed { }
11. Unemployment has an effect on youth deliquency
12. Agreed { }
13. Strongly agreed { }
14. Disagreed { }
15. Strongly disagreed { }
16. The government is to be blamed on youth delinquency
17. Agreed { }
18. Strongly agreed { }
19. Disagreed { }
20. Strongly disagreed { }
21. The age of parents affects upbringing of children
22. Agreed { }
23. Strongly agreed { }
24. Disagreed { }
25. Strongly disagreed { }
26. Delinquency is affected by geographical location
27. Agreed { }
28. Strongly agreed { }
29. Disagreed { }
30. Strongly disagreed { }