

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Association between Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Perception of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention among Minors in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract

A minor (juvenile) can be a person under the age of minority which is either seventeen or eighteen according to the jurisdiction. Juvenile delinquency covers a multitude of different violations of legal and social norms, from minor offence to serious crimes, committed by juveniles. Between two thirds and three quarters of all juvenile offence are committed by members of various minor groups. The study viewed the demographic characteristics as it relates to perception on prevention of juvenile delinquency among children below eighteen years in Abia State. A cross-sectional descriptive study was adopted and the respondents were drawn from the three senatorial zones of Abia State South East of Nigeria, who were within the ages of 10-17 years. The research was analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) eg, univariate, bivariate and multivariate methods. The research took a P value of 0.05 as significant regression. 399(100.0%) of them were students and 396(99.2%) were Christians while 393(98.5%) belong to igbo ethnic group 10(2.5) among the students, JSS and SS1 150 :(37.6%), SS2: 127(31.8) SS3: 112(28.1). On prevention of Juvenile delinquency, 377(94.5%) said provision of good Moral and religion instructions for the school minors as better means of prevention against bad behavior/crime and 352(88.2%) claimed increasing supervision of school teachers and academic curriculum and while 325(81.5%) claimed enhancements of guidance and counseling in the schools. The selected model was found to be statistically significant as the omnibus test of coefficient was statistically significant, $\chi^2 = 180.472$, p-value <0.001 with the overall correct percentage of 78.6%.

Conclusion: The theoretical information discussed in this study is a significant tool to empower the teachers to gain the proper perspective on juvenile delinquency – major issues being adolescence, juvenile delinquency and the common factors, globally, that lead adolescents to engage in antisocial behaviour.

Keywords: Juvenile, Delinquency, Socio-Demographic Socio-Demographic, Minor, Association.

1. Introduction

Juvenile delinquency had been a pressing issue in recent time and it is a condition whereby minor repeatedly commits a crime or crimes that are prosecuted through the juvenile justice system based on the crime committed and the severity of the crime. (Aoki, 2010). Juvenile delinquency is one of the social

problems that teenagers nowadays face and involved is quite alarming. The types of Juvenile Delinquency include the following stealing, aggressive tendencies which may be in form of damaging school properties, bullying and mockery, taking substance abuse, tendencies to escape engaging in examination malpractice, prostitution, exhibition and making sexual suggestion and indecent dressing. (breckindgea

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2018). What can be termed the first among many factors was the government's takeover of mission schools and resultant exclusion of moral and religion instructions from the school curriculum especially at the formative/primary level. Another factor under governmental causes includes poor supervision of school teachers and academic curriculum by the regional educational supervisors. The absence of guidance and counseling in the school is another factor not knowing the importance of guidance and counseling during adolescent that cannot be over emphasized. It is the guardian's counselor who is professionally trained to handle issues concerning adolescent that is left to handle them. Unemployment syndrome, the idle hand it's said the devils workshop and adolescence are easier preys of the devil. There is no employment opportunity for our young school leavers which result to these youths getting frustrated and eventually turn into delinquent acts, form bad gangs and even join secret cults as a way of trying to belong. Matthias, (2012) says that, there are the devastating effects of our technology of jet age. The point and electronic media have brought especially at the formative/primary level. Another factor under governmental causes includes poor supervision of school teachers and academic curriculum by the regional educational supervisors. The absence of guidance and counseling in the school is another factor not knowing the importance of guidance and counseling during adolescent that cannot be over emphasized. It is the guardian's counselor who is professionally trained to handle issues concerning adolescent that is left to handle them. Unemployment syndrome, the idle hand it's said the devils workshop and adolescence are easier preys of the devil. There is no employment opportunity for our young school leavers which result to these youths getting frustrated and eventually turn into delinquent acts, form bad gangs and even join secret cults as a way of trying to belong. The point and electronic media have brought in their trails, very morally publication, photography and films many of the programs promote crime. Closely linked to this Juvenile social change in behavior is the over indulgence of children by many parents. Instances abound were minors that drive parent's cars, drink alcohol, smoke and receives visitors of the opposite sex with the open knowledge and collaboration of their parents, all in the name of civilization. There are the effects of broken homes and conflict in the control approach between most husband and lives. Many parents want to create the

impression that they love their children more and to remain their children good books and would prefer to close their eyes to these shortcomings. The laissez-faire policies of most parents have contributed immensely to the delinquency of most young people. Most parents feel that all that is required of them is to pay fees while teachers must do all the rest-teaching and character molding.(Matthias 2012).

As a rule, cultural contexts are important in understanding the causes of juvenile delinquency and developing culturally appropriate measures to intervene. In Africa, delinquency tends to be attributed primarily to hunger, poverty, malnutrition and unemployment, which are linked to the marginalization of juveniles in the already severely disadvantaged segments of society. The educational attainments of this group are rather low as a rule, basic social experience acquired in the family is too often insufficient, and the socio economic environment is determined by poverty and under or unemployment. High increase in juvenile delinquency, high rate of early school dropouts in both girls and boys, increase in street children and high rate of crime, both in towns and rural settings, can be linked to poor parental guidance in the early child development. Matthew (2009) states that legally, juvenile delinquency encompasses types of behavior which are criminal attitudes committed by youth such as robbery, murder or rape and even running away from home etc.

2. Methods

The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive study designed to evaluate the association between the socio demographic characteristics and perception of juvenile delinquency prevention among secondary school children. The researchers slated children from the schools within the three senatorial zones of Abia State South East of Nigeria, who were within the ages of 10-17 years, schooled in various secondary schools within the state and comprised of male and female.

Using leslie fisher formula to calculate the sample size, $N = \frac{2^2pq}{P}$ was not known because the researchers did not find anybody who had worked on juvenile delinquent within the study area. P value = 0.05 and $N = 1.96$. Total of 2220 respondents made up of the study population, (data gotten from ministry of education). Using Ofoegbu 2011, which stated that, if a total population cannot be reached, a sample from the population must be slated, with this, a sample size of 650 was adopted for the study. A multi stage

sampling technique was adopted in slating four(4) secondary schools in each of zone of the state, out of this, two were private and two government schools .

For the selection of the classes and students, stratified random technique was adopted where by the students were grouped according to age, sex, class etc. Only students in SS1 to SS3 who can read and write were included, trained and guided on how to answer the questions. The research took approximately three months this is because of the school policy, time of examination, school schedule and lack of awareness on research by the teachers.

In collection of data, the sections were A: socio demographic data, B:prevention of juvenile delinquency and C: associations between socio demographic data and perception of juvenile delinquency. Out of 650 questionnaire distributed, 399 were collected, collated and analyzed.

With ethical approval and research assistants gotten from the state ministry of education, with reference number MOE/PRS/DR/VOL.1/T:58, and Identification numbers(ID), the schools allowed the researchers to commenced the research study. All other ethical protocol was maintained all through the research study. The research was analyzed using statistical package for social science(SPSS) eg,univariate, bivariate and multi-variate methods. The research took a P value of 0.05 as significant regression.

3. Results

Table 1: showed the Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. It shows that the mean age was 15.7+1.3years and 233(58.4%) were male while all of them were secondary level student. Majority 399(100.0%) of them were students and 396(99.2%) were Christians while 393(98.5%) belong to igbo ethnic group. High proportions 397(99.5%) of the respondents were single with almost all of them being a secondary school.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (N=399)

Variables	Frequency(n)	Percentage(%)
Age		
<13	69	17.3
14-16	220	55.1
>17	110	27.6
Gender		
Male	233	58.4
Female	166	41.6

Table 2: showed that almost all the respondents 99.7%(398) were students from different class, Out of this, 10(2.5) were in JSS, SS1 150 :(37.6%) ,SS2: 127(31.8) SS3: 112(28.1). 7(1.8%) said less than 4 teacher teaches them in a day while greater than 5 representing 392(98.2) said more than 5 teachers teaches them in a day.

Table: 3 Showed respondents perception about prevention against juvenile delinquency or crime. It shows that 377(94.5%) of the respondents said that 377(94.5%) of the respondents claimed provision of good Moral and religion instructions for the school minors as better means of prevention against bad behavior/crime and 352(88.2%) claimed increasing supervision of school teachers and academic curriculum and another means of preventing it while 325(81.5%) claimed enhancements of guidance and counseling in the schools increase and Parental training respectively as another means of preventing the children against bad behavior

Table: 4 showed the association between respondents socio-demographic characteristics and perception about juvenile delinquency / crime. It shows that respondents age, gender, and level of education were statistically significant associated with respondents perception with pvalue >0.05.

Table: 5: A binary logistic regression model was used to explore factors that are associated with respondent perceptions about bad behaviour or crime. Overall rating of perception (Dependent variable) was disaggregated into two categories (Good perception and Poor perception) and was coded with 1,and 2 respectively. Factors such as age, gender and class in school were considered as explanatory variables. The selected model was found to be statistically significant as the omnibus test of coefficient was statistically significant, $\chi^2 = 180.472$, p-value <0.001 with the overall correct percentage of 78.6%.

Educational level		
Secondary	399	100.0
Your work		
Students	393	98.5
Artisan	6	1.5
Religion		
Christian	396	99.2
Muslim	2	0.5
Traditional	1	0.3
Tribe		
Igbo	393	98.5
Hausa	1	0.3
Yoruba	4	1.0
Other specify	1	0.3
Marital status		
Single	397	99.5
Married	1	0.3
Divorced	1	0.3

Table 2. Showed the Students Schooling Status

Variables	Frequency(n)	Percentage(%)
Are you a secondary school student?		
Yes	398	99.7
No	1	0.3
class are you		
JSS3	10	2.5
SS1	150	37.6
SS2	127	31.8
SS3	112	28.1
Number of teachers teaches in a day		
<4	7	1.8
>5	392	98.2

Table 3. respondents perception about prevention against bad behaviour or crime

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Moral and religion instructions	377	94.5
Including the topic in the school curriculum especially at the formative/primary and secondary levels	341	85.5
Increasing supervision of school teachers and academic curriculum	326	81.7
Enhancing guidance and counseling in the schools	352	88.2
increase employment and skilled work	325	81.5
Parental training	325	81.5
Early identification of delinquent children	339	85.0
Free education	317	79.4
Others	124	31.1

Table 4. Association between respondents socio-demographic characteristics and perception about bad behaviour/ crime

Variables	Perception about bad behaviour/ crime		X ²	df	Pvalue
	Good perception	Poor perception			
Age(years)					
<13	38(55.1)	31(44.9)	14.782	2	0.001*
14-16	173(78.6)	47(21.4)			
>17	78(70.9)	32(29.1)			
Gender					
Male	178(76.4)	55(23.6)	4.406	1	0.021*
Female	111(66.9)	55(33.1)			
Your work					
Student	285(72.5)	108(27.5)	0.101	1	0.527
Artisan	4(66.7)	2(33.3)			
Religion					
Christian	287(72.5)	109(27.5)	3.389	2	0.184
Muslim	2(100.0)	0(0.0)			
Traditional	0(0.0)	1(100.0)			
Tribe					
Igbo	286(72.8)	107(27.2)	4.039	3	0.257
Hausa	1(100.0)	0(0.0)			
Yoruba	2(50.0)	2(50.0)			
Other specify	0(0.0)	1(100.0)			
Marital status					
Single	289(72.8)	108(27.2)	5.281	2	0.071
Married	0(0.0)	1(100.0)			
Divorced	0(0.0)	1(100.0)			

Table 5. Predictors of respondent's perception about bad behaviour using logistic regression

Explanatory factors	B	OR (95% CI)	df(p-value)
Age(years)			
<13			
14-16	0.596	1.815 (0.880 – 3.743)	1 (0.106)
>17	0.950	2.587 (1.287 – 5.197)	1 (*0.008)
Gender			
Male			
Female	0.089	0.073(-0.55-0.233)	1(0.226)
Class in school			
JSS3			
SS1	-0.108	0.898(0.257-3.134)	1(0.866)
SS2	0.404	1.499(0.371-6.050)	1(0.570)
SS3	10.147	0.863(0.195-3.832)	1(*0.047)

Omnibus test; X² = 180.472, p-value < 0.001. Correct classification; 78.6%

5. Discussion

A little more than half of the respondents were within the school aged, while the few of them were under-thirteen years. There were more males among

the children than females. Nine out of ten of the respondents were students, with all of them being in secondary school, majority of them were Christians. This is similar to what was found by Eke et al 2006 in

Enugu where more than 90% were attending school. This finding is a good development, because children in the study area are considered to be underprivileged to education in the society and for them to have up to 90% school enrolment rate is encouraging.

The high perception of the respondent that bad behaviour should be prosecuted through the Nigeria child law and punished by the parent among the participants in this study is consistent with those presented by Witkowska (2005) in her study of Swedish adolescents, despite the 12-year difference between the studies and the changes in both schools and society during that time. It can, perhaps, in part explain the minors' good knowledge of crime according to the suggestion that high perception about punishment against bad behaviour (Shechory Bitton & Ben Shaul, 2013).

Wards which led their world to crime or bad behavior. This finding is in agreement with that of Roth & Brooks - Guun (2000), and Mounts (2000), who expressed the need for adolescents to stay close to their parents for warmth and positive personality development in order to discharge them from getting involved in antisocial behaviours. The finding of the study also showed that many factors that cause crime are resident in the parents and the school, that encouraged crime or bad behaviours in students. The overall perception of the respondents towards crime or bad behaviour showed that 72% of the respondents had good perception about the bad behaviour or crime. Respondents' age categories, gender and class in school were significantly different with less than 0.05 value. Although demographic groups were not notably different in their level of knowledge, we found significant differences in perception that should be taken into account for any intervention programme.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The positive roles of mainly parents, various community leaders, and interested groups whom adolescents look up to for guidance, were alluded to and emphasized as a desirable contribution to the normal socialization of school-going adolescents. The main conclusion made from the findings of the study is that bad behaviour or crime at school-level is real, but can be managed by all concerned. Thus, the aim and objectives of the study were met by the empirical research. In addition, the recommendations that will be tabled in the ensuing paragraphs are possible interventions that schools and policy-makers could utilise in order to address and de-escalate the problem. Also, about two-third

of respondents had good perception about juvenile delinquency while one-third had poor perception. Early marriage, lack of discipline, restricts access to development opportunities had more than two-third as risk factors of juvenile delinquency. Any conceptualization of juvenile delinquency should be preceded by an understanding of theories that explain adolescence. In this study (literature review), the human developmental stage leading to adulthood commonly called adolescence was discussed at length. While teachers understand the phase, delinquency levels in schools are cause for concern and awareness alone cannot curb the problem. Government should make funds available to sponsor teachers' attendance at conferences, seminars and workshops on class managements and teacher-student relationship. There is need for parents, teachers, and the students too, to be conscious of the need to acquire proper socialization. It is the duties of parents, teachers in schools, to be of good models, to inculcate good behavioural patterns in the child, to make him or her useful to himself or herself, and to the society at large.

Limitations of the Study

The study had a successful outcome most especially it gave room to discuss with the students at this level and we were able to pass research skills to them. However, it was difficult to assess Ministry of education to sign the ethical approval letter because most of them are ignorant of research and the ethical knowledge. The most deflecting story was the approach of the teachers and head of schools who feels you are coming to expose their school. Some schools refused collecting data from their students and we had to change aware area of study on several occasions also the academic and teaching time table wasted our time in each school. Though it was an arranged research but the distance of the schools increased the budgeted amount. Because of the huge number and the method of data collected, the analyst found it difficult to analyze the work on time.

Authors Contribution Statement

Emeonye, wrote on abstract, methodology, and data collection, Felix contributed in the introduction and objectives, Nwatu made a contribution on introduction, scope, analysis and discussion, Nwakanma dealt on analysis, limitations and introduction. Akunna Okorie did the results and analysis. Iroemeha Christian researched on the introduction, area, scope and objectives while Ogundeji contributed on the questionnaire, objectives and discussion. In all, the

authors contributed in data collection, collation and summary.

Declaration of Competing Interest

Having gone through the ethical, accepted and approval method of research work, we assure you that there are no competing interest of any kind.

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