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**The Influence of Family Factors on Delinquent adolescents in  
Secondary Schools in Edo South Senatorial District of Edo  
State**

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**Abstract**

This study was carried out with the aim of finding out the influence of family factors on delinquent adolescents in secondary schools in Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State. This study ascertained the extents to which family factors such as parent child rearing style, family type and parent socio economic background could encourage and influence delinquent activities. A total of two hundred (200) adolescents were used as sample for the study. This sample size was drawn from ten (10) secondary schools through stratified random sampling. Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.5 level of significant. A questionnaire was designed by the researcher and was validated by three experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. The point bi serial statistic was used to analysis data

gathered from the field. The major findings revealed that family factors such as parent child rearing style, family type and socio-economic status (the variable of the study) do not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Edo South Senatorial District. Other factors such as assault from mass media, cultural and ethnic beliefs could be responsible for delinquent acts. It was recommended that federal, state and local government should embark on intensive and massive campaign against unwholesome programmes in our media. Parents should be assisted by guidance counsellors to stress the need for adequate value orientation in their children.

**Key Words:** Family, Adolescent, Delinquency.

### Introduction

In an increasing complex and confusing world of today, adolescents' involvement in delinquent and criminal behaviour is on the increase as they negotiate transition from childhood to adulthood. They strive to gain approval from people around them. Oftentimes, tension which is emotional in nature and which follow these adjustments may cause the adolescents to be anxious, insecure, fearful and suspicious of others. As the social horizons of the adolescent broaden, the degree of influence of any group upon him would depend on how intimately he associates with members of the group. Groups such as family, peers and close friends have the greatest influence on the adolescent (Tiller, 2000).

Odebunmi (1990) stated the significant factors underlying delinquency as: broken home, inadequate education, inappropriate leisure time, influence of unwholesome mass media, instability of home, lack of proper discipline, vocational preparation, over protection by parents, parental conflict, parental rejection, poor living conditions, poor sex education both at home and in school, severe emotional disturbance and wrong companion. Many researchers agreed that the foundation of adolescent delinquency is rooted in the kind of home the adolescent is brought up (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Odebunmi, 2007 and Sanni, Udoh, Okediji, Modo, & Ezeh, 2010). The basis for good behaviour, attitude and the development of value are found upon the dynamics within the family. Delinquency and its definitions have changed overtime. Scholars have found that girls and boys are apprehended for different offenses. In addition, what constitutes delinquency have changed over time.

Idamokoro (2005) noted that there are two main categories of delinquent behaviours Nigerian adolescents are engaged in. These are criminal and status offences. The criminal offences include stealing, arson rape, drug offences murder, burglary, pick pocket, and armed robbery. She listed status offences to include running away from home, malingering; truancy etc. Onyehalu (2003) claims that any departure from acceptable norms by people who are not yet adult is delinquency. Idamokoro (2005) defined delinquency as any behaviour that falls short of societal norms, values, beliefs

and expectation. She listed environmental factors, social factor could cause delinquency among adolescent to include; physical, psychological, peer group influence, drug abuse and the family.

The key function of a child's family is to raise the young person in a healthy manner as possible. It is the parent's role to provide the child with a safe, secure, nurturing, loving and supportive environment; one that allows the offering to have a happy and healthy youth. This sort of experience allows the youth to develop the knowledge, values, attitude and behaviours necessary to become an adult, making a productive contribution to self, family, community and society.

Adolescents live in different family structures; for instance, single mother, step-parent, dual parent, mother with extended family or extended family only, with different parenting styles: the authoritarian, the permissive and authoritative. This variation influences both the way parents interact with youth and their behaviours. Moyle (2000) opined that the most important influences in young children's life are their family environment and the bond they establish with their parents. Young people who are exposed to dysfunctional or unstable family lives during their formation years often engage in criminal behaviour. Hollins, Browne, and Palmer (2002) noted that the child learns behaviours through modelling, child-rearing practices and dysfunctional relationships within the family. These family dysfunctional relationships, according to Bamigboye (2010), include siblings with behaviour problems, family poverty, poor parental child-rearing behaviour, parental conflict and separation from parent when the child is aged 8-10 years.

Bowlby and Anisworth (1953) proposed an attachment theory of delinquent behaviour, which claims that adult psychopathologies, including the development of delinquent behaviour, are due to the failure of infants and small children to develop secure attachments to primary caregivers. They believed that a child needs to establish a relationship with her mother in early life. They concluded that early maternal deprivation is closely related to antisocial behaviour. Extreme parental neglect may deprive the child the opportunity to form a selective attachment and such a child may suffer from "Reactive attachment Disorder" often called analytic depression, in which case the child fails to respond to normal social stimuli, tends to withhold close bodily contact, and has difficulties forming relationships later in life.

Kierkus and Bauer (2002) stated that broken home, divorce, parental conflict, parental rejection and poor living conditions are on the increased such many children who find themselves in such situations had not learnt what behaviour is appropriate or not. Research findings have shown that children raised in single-parent family are more likely to display antisocial behaviour. Derzon and Lipsey (2000) noted that children living in single-parent families, who were strongly attached to their custodial parent were more likely to commit delinquent acts than children living in intact homes who

were strongly attached to both parents. Their study also indicated that children from intact home who were strongly attached to just one of their parents were likely to commit delinquent acts.

There is the general notion by scholars that children who have experienced early socio-economic hardship have been found to display aggressive and antisocial behaviours later in life, and to be less popular than other children among their peers. Hollin, Brown and Palmer (2002) opined that it is difficult to separate the simple fact of being poor from other risk factors such as large family size, single-parent families or broken homes or delinquency. They are of the view that children from broken home such as those with divorced or separated parents have lasting problem into adulthood. They asserted that children from divorced parents enter into sexual relations earlier, make poor occupational choices, develop less stable long-term relationship, develop long-term problem behaviour and suffer from depression and over anxieties. They further stated that economic pressure does influence parent stress, depression and marital conflict which in turn influences parent-child, parent-adolescent relationships and eventually leads to antisocial behaviour by the young person.

Sinclair (1999) however, found in her own study that juvenile delinquency is present among children from rich and poor homes. She reported that children from rich homes, due to their privileged positions and opportunities open to them, are more involved in white collar crimes like bribery and corruption or the so called victimless crime. The lower class children, on the other hand, engage more in offences like theft, rape, prostitution, vandalism and other violent crimes.

Parenting is one major factor that could influence the behaviour of children in a home. Parenting is a term that summarises behaviours used by a person usually the father or mother to raise a child. Parenting interactions provide resources across the generational groups and function in regard to domains of survival, reproduction, nurturance and socialization.

Uyigue (2016) categorized parenting styles into three major categories, which are the authoritarian, authoritative or democratic. The authoritarian parents tend to be highly demanding and unresponsive to the individual the permissive or laissez or self-indulgence or un-involving needs of their children. These parents are concerned with controlling behaviour so that children comply with a set standard. The authoritarian parents place emphasis on obedience, or demand respect for authority, they discourage verbal negotiation about rules. The authoritative parents attempt to strike a balance between demanding that their children behave appropriately and responding to their children's needs. They set and enforce firm rules and standards for behaviours and constantly monitor their children's conduct using non-punitive methods of discipline when rules are broken. Authoritative parents are warm and supportive of their children. They encourage some verbal give-and-take and recognize a child's point of view.

The laissez-faire or indulgent parents on the other hand are tolerant, warm and accepting, but they exercise little authority over their children. Indulgent parents are very committed to their children but they make few demands for responsible and mature behaviour and permit their children considerable freedom. The neglectful or disengaged parents do not oversee their children's behaviour or support their interests: these parents often seem pre occupied with their own concern and appear disengaged from the responsibilities of parenting.

Snyder and Sickmund (2000) stated that failure to set clear expectations for children's behaviour, poor monitoring and supervision, and severe inconsistent discipline, consistently predict later delinquency and substance abuse. Report from their study indicated that greatest amount of violence was reported in boys who had very strict parents which is one aspect of authoritarian parenting. The second highest level of violence was reported in boys with permissive parents, an aspect of indulgent and neglectful or non-involving parenting. The least amount of violence was reported in boys with parents who were neither too strict nor too lax, a condition associated with authoritative parenting.

In the same vein, Jacobson and Crocket (2000) stated that low levels of parental monitoring or supervision (factors associated with indulgent and neglectful or disengaged parenting) is linked to higher rates of delinquency and sexual activity and to lower rates of school competence.

Snyder, and Sickmund (2006) opined that delinquency is a healthy reaction to poor parenting and inadequate supervision. They argued that the normal child develops the capacity to control his or her own behaviour when helped by a stable home environment. Parents help by monitoring the behaviour and appropriately disciplining the child. When parents fail in this role, the child would have failed to learn what behaviour is appropriate or not – the child then becomes uncontrolled. The uncontrolled child therefore looks for control outside the home, internalizing a need for strong parenting. Could this be same for adolescent delinquency in Edo South Senatorial District?

### **Purpose/Significance of the Study**

The study was conceptualized to investigate the influence of family factors on delinquent adolescent in secondary school in Edo South Senatorial District. In specific term, the study sought to ascertain how child rearing practices and family type influence delinquent behaviour. And also to determine the extent to which parents socio-economic status encourages the child involvement in delinquent activities.

The study would be of assistance to school authorities, parents/guardians and other adult in the society as well as government agencies who could jointly ensure that youth

in Edo State South Senatorial District are properly guided through the adolescence period.

### **Research Questions**

In order to address the problem highlighted in this study, the following research questions were raised.

- Does family type influence delinquent behaviour of students?
- Do parents' child rearing practices influence student behaviour?
- To what extent could socio-economic family background be related to delinquent behaviour of students?

### **Research Hypotheses**

- (i) Family type of respondents will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Nigeria
- (ii) Parents' child rearing style of respondents will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescent in Nigeria
- (iii) Socio-economic background of respondents will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

This study employed the survey research designed. The population comprised of all senior secondary school students in Edo Senatorial District. A sample size of 200 students were selected. Proportional stratified random sampling technique was used for selection of schools. A personality traits inventory was first administered to the general students in each selected school in order to identify delinquent in each student's school, these served as respondents of this study.

Instruments used for this study are the Adolescent Personal Data inventory developed by Akinboye 1982 and a questionnaire titled Family Factor Questionnaire (FFQ). The questionnaire was validated by three experts in psychological testing who made useful comments that were used to correct observed lapses. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, twenty copies were administered to students of Aunty Lydia Group of School in Oredo Local Government Area in the State. The split-half reliability coefficient statistics was used and a value of 0.72 was obtained to confirm the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A elicited demographic information of respondents and their parental socio-economic status. Section B contained 15 items that measures issues involved in parenting and other family factors. While Section C is an adapted section D of Akinboye's Adolescent Personal Data inventory, respondents were asked to respond to items using Strongly

Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Point bi-serial statistical method was used for data analysis at 0.05 significance level.

**Results**

**Hypothesis 1:** It was stated in this hypothesis that parent child rearing style of subjects will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary adolescents’ school in Edo State South Senatorial District.

**Table 1:** Results of point bi-serial analysis of parent child rearing style of subjects with regard to delinquent behaviour

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Rpb	Table
Parent-child rearing	200	30.76	3.91	.005	0.165
High socio-economic Background	48	27.27	6.21		

At P. > 0.05

From the table above the calculated r also falls within the accepted region; consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. This means that parent-child rearing style of subjects does not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescent in Edo State South Senatorial District.

**Hypothesis 2:** This hypothesis states that family type of subjects will not significantly account for delinquent behaviours among secondary school adolescents in Edo-South Senatorial District. The point bi-serial statistis was also used to test extent to which family type of subjects can account of delinquent behaviours among adolescents.

**Table 2:** The result of point bi-serial analysis of subjects’ family types (parent separated/divorced and parent living together) with regard to delinquent behaviour

Group	N	Mean	SD	Rpb	Table r
Parent separated/divorced	144	27.55	6.21	0.08	0.165
Parent living together	56	28.71			

At P. > 0.05

From the table above the calculated r falls within the accepted region. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. This means that family types of subjects do significantly account for delinquent behaviour among adolescents in Edo South Senatorial District.

**Hypothesis 3:** It was hypothesized that socio-economic background of subjects will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Edo South Senatorial District. The point bi-serial statistics was used to test the extent

to which socio-economic background subjects can account for delinquent behaviours among adolescents.

**Table 3:** The results of point bi-serial analysis of adolescents from low and high socio-economic background with delinquent behaviours

Group	N	Mean	SD	Rpb	Table r
Low socio-economic background	152	28.07	6.21	0.06	0.165
High Background	48	27.27			

At P. > 0.05

From the table above the calculated r falls within the acceptance region. Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted. This means that socio-economic background of subjects does not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Edo South Senatorial District.

### Discussion

The first hypothesis which stated that parent-child rearing style of subjects will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Edo South Senatorial District was retain. This means for this study, parent-child rearing style does not significantly account for delinquent behaviours.

The result differs from that of Darling (1999), which states that parenting style which is one broad pattern of parenting can contribute to aggressive behaviour in children. The finding of this study is however in line with that of Chao (1994), which showed that children, interpret the meaning of parent behaviour differently depending on their cultural or ethnic background. Chao noted that traditional Chinese parents have often been described as “authoritarian” (restrictive, controlling, or rejecting), but that many Chinese emanate strictness, firm, control and parental obedience with care, concern and involvement. This could also be same for this study.

The second hypothesis held that family type of subjects will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescent in Edo-State South Senatorial District. This hypothesis was upheld and findings demonstrated that subject’s family type does not significantly influence delinquent behaviour. The result (Table II) of this study have shown that family types (Separated/divorced of intact family) does not influence delinquent behaviours.

This finding agrees with that of Bataes and Julian (2003), that adolescents living with a continuously single mother were not significantly different from their peers in intact families. The lack of significant influence of family types can be



attributed to the long-term changes that are taking place in family patterns and gender relations. Some observers state that this is the result of people's choices about how they live their lives, within a context of economic, cultural, and social change (Duncan and Edward, 2001).

The third hypothesis states that socio-economic background of subjects will not significantly account for delinquent behaviour among secondary school adolescents in Edo-South Senatorial District. Result on table 1 ( $P_b=0.06$  at  $P. > 0.06$ ) demonstrated that subjects socio-economic background do not significantly account for delinquent behaviour.

This finding differs from that of Moyle (2000), which established an association of delinquency with economic factors such as parental education, income and job status. This means that in Edo South Senatorial District, parents' socio-economic background does not account for delinquent behaviour. Other factors such as the powerful influence of the means media could responsible.

Consider for example, music videos, one is often shocked at just how graphic and sexually explicit of some of these videos and violent music lyrics increase aggressive thoughts and feelings of the adolescents who spend more time watching the sex and violence depicted in gangster rap music videos are more likely to practice this behaviour in real life.

Also, the computer in recent years has also taken a prominent role as a moulder of young minds. A young person does not need to own a computer to have access to one. Cyber café are suited everywhere, given adolescent opportunity to use the internet, this gives young one unprecedented access to information. Adolescents are seen watching pornography films in cyber spaces and making friends with kids their parents might not get to meet (Teffle, 2002).

### **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The outcome of this study has revealed that delinquent secondary school adolescents in Edo South Senatorial District of Edo State are not significantly influenced by the parent-child rearing style, family types and social economic background. The study also revealed that their socio-economic background was not a significant factor in regard to their delinquent behaviours. The study again showed that the socio-economic background was not a major factor to be considered as being responsible for their delinquent act.

Other factors such as assault from the media, the school, peer influence, culture and ethnic background could be responsible for delinquent acts in this part of the country.

There is therefore, the need for counselling not only among the youths but also amongst parents, teachers, guardians and authorities on the wholesome use of the media, computers (internet), the mode of interpretation of cultural beliefs and their ethnic practices.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. In dealing with delinquent children, parents should be assisted by guidance counsellors to stress the need for adequate value orientation in their children. Parents should create time to engage in meaningful fruitful interaction with their children. Parent should exercise trust, show affection and encourage their children while expecting from them standards, values and goals they have set for them. Parents should be aware of the need to know the various activities their children engage in and the type of friends they keep.
2. The federal government of Nigeria in collaboration with state and local government should go on intensive and massive campaigns for the mass media to realize the need of airing wholesome programmes that will help to mould adolescents in our society. There should be adequate monitoring of the cyber space of the kind of soft wares they have in their system, since it is open to both adult and children.
3. Youth should be encouraged to join youth clubs of respectable caliber. They should be encouraged to participate in sports activities, in such engagements and within such circles, adolescents will spend their on worthwhile activities rather than engage in delinquent behaviours.
4. School counsellors trained in counselling psychology should not only be posted to secondary schools, but also posted to primary schools. Research shows that future delinquents already show traits as early as in their pre-adolescent years. School counsellor should ensure they make home visit or where not possible invite parents of adolescents in their care who are delinquent in nature for a chart. This could be reassuring and beneficial not only to the child, but may also be for the parents who probably need help and guidance and as well.

### **Implication for Counselling**

There is therefore, the need for counselling not only among the youths, but also amongst parents, teachers, guardians and authorities on the wholesome use of the media, computers (internet), the mode of interpretation of cultural beliefs and their ethnic practices.

Counsellors should encourage parents to effectively socialize their wards, teaching them to eschew unacceptable behaviour, to delay gratification and to respect

the right of others. Parents should be intimated that their children learn best from what they see them do. In other words, parents should provide good example in conduct and in speech for their children to emulate.

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