

Influence of socio-cultural norms on juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area, Imo State

Chigbuo Lawrence Ohaeri¹ and Lawrence Okoro^{2*}

¹Alvan Ikeoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Nigeria.

²Social Science Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

*Corresponding author. Email: sirlawmann@gmail.com; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6895-4594>; Co-author: chigbuolawrence@gmail.com

Copyright © 2026 Ohaeri and Okoro. This article remains permanently open access under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Received Date: 19 March 2026 | Accepted Date: 08 June 2026 | Published Date: 30 August 2026

ABSTRACT: This study examined influence of socio-cultural norms on juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. Four research purposes and four research questions guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was employed. The population comprised 4,454 students from 16 public secondary schools and 445 students (10%) were sampled using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire tagged Socio-cultural Factors of Juvenile Delinquency Questionnaire (SCFJDQ) developed by the researchers based on a four-point rating scale. The results indicate that weak parental supervision, unstable family structures, low parental socio-economic status, peer influence, media exposure, and adverse societal conditions notably contribute to juvenile delinquency among secondary school students, indicating that juvenile delinquency is associated with increased insecurity, poor academic engagement, school dropout, and broader social instability. The study concludes that juvenile delinquency among adolescents in Ehime Mbano is predominantly shaped by interconnected socio-cultural conditions rather than individual disposition.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, parental, socio-cultural, societal influence.

INTRODUCTION

The surge in violence and crime involving young people has stirred concern and discussions among scholars and researchers on the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency across the world. Juvenile delinquency, Ekweri (2018) noted, is a widespread global challenge confronting virtually all nations. Western Europe has recorded juvenile offenders by over 80% since the 1990s as compared to 60% in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth independent states (World Youth Report, 2003; Mambende et al., 2016). Scores of violent deaths that occurred in schools between 1992 and 2010 were reported to have been perpetrated by juveniles in the United States of America (USA) (Alfry, 2010). A particular incident got a learner shot in the school hallway during class change in Madison. Similarly, an art technical director and a school resource officer, respectively, were unalived within the

school premises by learners in Indianapolis and California (Alfry, 2010). Dunkel *et al.* (2011) reported that England, Wales, the Netherlands and Spain, for example, share similar rates of juveniles' cases. Japan and India tend to have minimal cases of juvenile delinquency, perhaps due to capital punishment assigned to it by their government (Young *et al.*, 2017). "Knife carrying culture" of juvenile delinquents has occasioned more injuries and deaths than gunshots in the United Kingdom, unlike in South Korea, where smoking, bullying, cyber-crime, and abuse of alcohol are reportedly on the increase among juveniles (Kim and Kim, 2008). These unlawful acts pose a security threat to such a deeply conservative society, and security is never a standalone concept (Ike and Okoro, 2024).

The situation is not any different in developing countries like Africa, where there are ravaging economic hardships,

poverty and disintegrating family bonds. Zimbabwe, for instance, is currently grappling with a high rate of unemployment, with many impoverished families struggling to make ends meet; a situation that is motivating and exposing the underage to the streets to fend for themselves, mostly through criminal activities (Mambende et al., 2016; Okoro et al., 2025). Namibia experienced a high rate of juvenile offences at the brink when the apartheid system - particularly those limiting freedom of movement - was lifted upon independence in 1990. Angola, in the bid to find succour after the civil war, had their juveniles drawn into crimes as the country faced high levels of poverty and unemployment (Cole and Chipaca, 2014). South African juveniles seem more susceptible to delinquency due to their easy access to firearms and a culture of binge drinking. In fact, Pelsaert (2008) observed that easy accessibility to guns has contributed to a normalised culture of violence and crime over the past decades, and the most affected are the socially excluded juveniles, who constitute a considerable portion of the population. This unhealthy disrespect for the rule of law and juvenile crime has become a normal feature of South African life (Zenzile, 2008). In Nigeria, the surge in prostitution, touting, kidnapping, abduction for ransom, stealing, pick-pocketing, street gangsterism and other illegal activities are sequel to juvenile delinquency.

Juvenile delinquency per se can be defined as any antisocial behavioural patterns or maladaptive behaviours exhibited by a young/underage person. Haveripet (2013) defined it as conduct that is antisocial but not against the law. Jones (2008) in Ojo (2012) defines juvenile delinquency as an antisocial or criminal act performed by an individual under the age of eighteen. Hence, delinquency is criminal or antisocial behaviour of juveniles. A child guilty of juvenile delinquency is referred to as a juvenile delinquent. It incorporates, according to Shoemaker (2010), an illegal act that could be either a criminal or a status offence committed by a youth below eighteen years of age. The Nigerian constitution of 1999, as amended, defines juvenile delinquency as a crime committed by a child or a young person under the age of 18 years for whatever reason, peer pressure, parental pressure or emotional stimulation, and such a child is hence referred to as a juvenile delinquent. The Nigerian Juvenile Justice, Care and Protection Act 2015, Section 2 (35), sees a juvenile as a child below the age of eighteen (18) years. Impliedly, a juvenile is a minor below the legal age who cannot be held accountable for criminal behaviour. The Children and Young Persons Law (CYPL, 1958) classified juveniles into "a child" and "a young person". While a child refers to a person who is yet to attain the age of 14, a young person is one who is 14 years but not yet above the legal adult age of 16, 17 or 18 years, depending on the country. Delinquency is any act deemed an offence committed by a child or a young person. Invariably, any act by an adult deemed an offence is termed a crime rather than delinquency. According to

Encyclopaedia Americana (1971), "delinquency" is etymologically traced to the Latin "delinquere", meaning "to neglect" or "to abandon", which broadly exegetes neglect of the child by the parents or the act of the young or underage person (now juveniles) neglecting to conform to the accepted standards of behaviour in society. There are three categories of juvenile delinquents according to the CYPL. a) Juvenile offenders, comprising those who commit or are apprehended to have committed any act that would be a crime if they were not underage. b) Juveniles beyond parental control; made up of those whose parents established that they could not control and make of good behaviours. c) Juveniles in need of care and protection; these include wanderers, beggars, truants and the like. Kamani (2010), in reference to Police sources in Rivers State, Nigeria, categorised delinquent behaviours into criminal offences and offences against regulations. That, criminal offences include stealing, assault, affray, abduction for ransom, indecent assault, murder, breaking and entering, defilement, enslavement, rape, illegal possession of firearms, espionage, terrorism and drug abuse. Offences against regulations include street trading (hawking), traffic obstructions, driving without a licence, bullying, civil offences, beyond parental control, unwanted pregnancy, prostitution, arms begging, wandering, examination leakages, truancy, dropping out of school, and certificate forgery. Juvenile delinquency differs from crime based on age and behavioural tendencies. Juvenile delinquents are universally regarded as immature and therefore incapable of 'mens rea' (criminal intent) and 'actus reus' (criminal acts), whereas crime goes with maturity and intent (Maseko, 2020; Ladokun, 2018; Du-Preez and Luyt, 2021).

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that more young Nigerians are getting involved in criminality (UNICEF, 2012). Yusuf *et al.* (2021) reported that in 2019, the Lagos State police command's crime records showed that 14,820 boys and girls between the ages of thirteen and twenty years old were involved in over 85% of crimes committed within the last three years in the state. That, in the same year, out of all prisoners serving in various Nigerian prisons, over 80% of them are within the age bracket of fourteen and twenty-three years, including boys and girls. Mamman et al. (2014) noted that the denial of young persons in Nigerian towns and cities of legitimate means of livelihood by the government results in a heightened level of poverty in the land, which has exposed young persons to compulsive survival, corrupt behaviours and criminality. These unwholesome engagements turned many to drunkards, abusive mannerisms on drugs, marijuana and mandrax.

In Ehime Mbano Local Government of Imo State, studies have shown that juvenile delinquency is a threat. According to Chisom (2016), in Ehime, juvenile delinquency exists in the form of gang rape, theft, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, murder, thuggery, snatching of election ballot boxes, prostitution, cultism,

disrespect to parents and elders, among others. And despite the prevalence, there is just average knowledge of the existence of the juvenile delinquency justice system in the area. The implication most times ends in jungle justice or mob actions on the delinquents, hence, the high level of insecurity and fears in localities once considered serene. Ehime-Mbano is an area of 169 square km², bounded by latitude 5° 37'N to 5° 46' N and longitude 7° 14' E to 7° 21' E (Onunkwo and Uzoije, 2011), carved out of the former Mbano Local Government Area in 1989, located within Okigwe (Imo North) senatorial zone with its headquarters at Umuezeala.

Studies (Omboto et al., 2013; Faraja, 2014; de Miguel-Calvo, 2020; Cole and Chipaca, 2014; Mambende et al., 2016) highlighted poverty, inadequate housing, instability at home, lack of education and recreational facilities, idleness, congregating at hidden places/joints, peer pressure, parental neglect and imitation, genetic or biological factors, poor education, social media influences, etc as causative factors. It is this reality that highlights the need to embark on this study.

Statement of the problem

There have been serious concerns and debates over juvenile delinquency among scholars across the globe, based on the increase in violence and crimes involving juveniles, resulting in a high level of insecurity. Lives are now lived in fear. The once cherished sense of personal safety has vanished into thin air. Rarely could a week pass in Ehime Mbano without at least a case of stealing, assault, affray, abduction for ransom, drug abuse, etc. It is therefore imperative to unravel the causatives abetting juvenile delinquency in Ehime Mbano, as proffering solutions to a bugging problem involves scholastic intervention. It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the influence of socio-cultural norms on juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo.

Purpose of the study

This study generally sought to examine the influence of socio-cultural norms on juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought:

1. to determine the extent to which family structure and parental supervision influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano.
2. to assess the extent to which parental socio-economic status influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano.
3. to examine the extent to which societal factors (peer

influence, media exposure, and community norms) influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano.

4. to identify the perceived consequences of juvenile delinquency on the academic and social wellbeing of secondary school students in Ehime Mbano.

Research questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. to what extent does family structure and parental supervision influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State?
2. to what extent does parental socio-economic status influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State?
3. to what extent can societal influence (peer influence, media exposure, and community norms) influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State?
4. what are the consequences of juvenile delinquency on the academic performance and social behaviour of secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Civilised countries of the world have special juvenile delinquency courts. Haveripet (2013) have observed that before the establishment of juvenile courts, children under the age of seven were never held responsible for criminal acts as the law considered them incapable of criminal intent. Nisar et al. (2015) argued that children between the ages of 7 and 14 were generally incapable of committing a criminal act, but children above the age of 14 could be charged with a crime and handled in the same manner as an adult. However, some countries set the limit at 16 or 17 to determine whether a person accused of a crime is treated as an adult or a juvenile. Vitaro et al. (2021) argued that due to a get-tough attitude involving juvenile crime, many states have revised their juvenile codes to make it easier to transfer youthful offenders to adult court. Recent years have witnessed an increase in serious crime by juveniles. Sociologists subsumed these causatives into three divides, namely: social cultural or anthropological environment made of family structure and control, the socio-economic status of parents, and the social media.

Family structure and parental supervision

Unarguably, the family is the foundation of all human

society. It is also the basic and a major agent of socialisation. Hence, the family environment can either save children from delinquency or expose them to it. Family structure covers the nature of a family, i.e. polygamy or monogamous family, a one-parent family or a non-marital union, otherwise known as cohabitation; a broken home or a family with strong bonds; a peaceful home or a home in perpetual conflict; a nuclear or extended family and so on. It also includes the genetic make-up of parents or heredity as well as parents' ability to properly guide and nurture their children. Shoemaker (2010) did state that conflict within the family, a lack of adequate supervision and/or rules, a distinct lack of parent-child attachment, instability, poor home life quality, parental expectations, out-of-home placement and inconsistent discipline are the major predictors of juvenile delinquency. According to Adegoke (2015), when violence encompasses a child's growing environment, that is, the family, such a child is more likely to exhibit delinquent behaviours. Ugwuoke and Duruji (2015) revealed in their study that children from unstable homes engage more in juvenile delinquency than their counterparts from more stable homes, and that juvenile delinquency is much higher in teenagers residing with single parents. As such parents must hence adopt the best conflict resolution strategies devoid of selfishness to resolve their conflicts for the sake of the wellbeing and progress of their children. It is therefore the duty of the family to start quite early to introduce the child to the norms, values, acceptable attitudes, expectations and systems of the society.

Some scholars believe that heredity is a factor that promotes delinquent behaviours. To them, criminals are born and not made. For instance, Kamani (2010) reported that intelligence and criminal tendencies are often genetically transmissible for generations. This possibly informs the reason why families of criminals are avoided in issues of marriage, intimacy or friendship. It suffices to say, therefore, that parental behaviour to a large extent determines whether the children will or not be delinquent. Eбенуwa-Okoh and Ugorji (2015) summed it up that a parent who is an alcoholic, drug addict, flirtatious, a night crawler or abusive has a high chance of raising juvenile delinquents. Hence, positive family influence with strong emotional bonding, positive communication and rational conflict resolution strategies can mitigate delinquent behaviours in a young person's life.

Parental socio-economic status

Parental socio-economic status encompasses the level of educational attainment of the parents, their occupation, level of income, and size of wealth. It is believed that these factors determine how rich or poor parents are; the social, religious or traditional titles held by parents; the kind of neighbourhood/house they live in, and the affordability of basic needs. According to Fergusson *et al.* (2014), it is a

measurable or quantifiable indicator of how highly placed one is in the social strata. American Psychological Association (APA) (2007) classified parental socio-economic status into: high socio-economic status, middle socio-economic status, and low socio-economic status. In high socio-economic status, the family has higher educational status, higher paying occupations, and are wealthy. In the middle socio-economic status, the family/individual is neither high nor low. The low socio-economic status signifies the family/individual with low education, low-paid occupation, and no wealth. Clark and Sheld (2017) averred that such families might be obviously in poverty, whereas children of parents in the high socio-economic status class are deemed to be rarely involved in delinquencies as they are furnished with what they need, and hence have no reason to steal or commit offences in a bid to fend, except in a situation where criminal tendencies are genetic. According to Marvin and Krohn (2015), parents of such status use their powerful connections to influence official decisions when their children get involved. Ali and Masood (2018) revealed that children who are raised in neighbourhoods predominated by low socio-economic class are susceptible to delinquent behaviours.

Societal influence (peer influence, media exposure, and community norms)

This includes the structure of the society, urban/rural setting, the political and business activities, the social media and peer influence. According to Vogel and South (2016), the etiology, patterns and dynamism of criminal activities reside in the social structure of the society. This implies that the process of industrialisation and technological revolution associated with urbanisation, which results in the breakdown of tribal life and family unity, is linked to delinquent behaviours. The World Bank (1990) opined that urbanisation is not just a collection of characteristics but also a dynamic condition of vulnerability or risk susceptibility. To the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014), the benefits of industrialisation and technological revolution associated with urbanisation largely devalue the sanctity of the family institution, leading to the breakdown of family ties. One such cumulative impact of urbanisation is juvenile crime (Yusuf *et al.*, 2021), partly due to parents' engagement with work, which leaves the children at the mercy of social media and their peers.

Social media, through some of the uncensored content, derails younger minds into delinquent behaviours. Children get exposed to all kinds of content without requisite censorship (Yusuf *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the majority of juveniles belong to one peer group or the other as age-group or mates. The peer group as an agent of socialisation and character moulding is very influential, since children spend more time with peers than parents,

especially during the early years of development. The absence of monitoring parents entails resorting to peers for emotional support and security and spending time with deviant friends exerts inducement into emulations (Vitulano et al., 2010; Singh, 2017). Juveniles who seek acceptance among their peers, and find it with delinquent peers, feel a sense of belonging, and delinquency is prone within the framework of such a group. The political class is also contributory to the prevalence of juvenile delinquency in Ehime Mbano. Politics cannot be divorced totally from the socio-cultural and economic norms of the society. The moral fabric of society is greatly damaged according to Jones (2008) in Ojo (2012), by the prodigious, luxurious and extravagant lifestyle of the affluent and corrupt political elites, because it provokes the mindset of the young who dare to emulate. This has resulted in exigencies of conformity, as some individuals assume defiant behaviours while the youths watch and emulate.

Religious leaders on their own end are not exempt, as some have deviated from sound moral doctrine and focused on miracles and prosperity without requisite input. This has created an ugly trend of get-rich-quick syndrome, hence the rising cases of kidnapping, ritual killings, human organ trafficking, etc in Ehime Mbano.

This study is anchored on the Psychoanalytic Theory by Sigmund Freud (1890) and Social Strain Theory (SST) by Merton (1957). Psychoanalytic Theory explains that all human behaviours are motivated by unconscious desires. That human's deepest drives, fears, and repressed memories reside outside conscious awareness, which heavily dictates their behaviours. Impliedly, crime and delinquency are external behaviour representing internal pathology (i.e. personality trait). The Theory further posits that personality is composed of three distinct parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. The id represents the instinctual drives, the ego represents the understood social norms that harness the id, and the superego is the learned moral reasoning. This theory suggests that adult personality is shaped by how a child navigates five developmental stages (Oral, Anal, Phallic, Latent, and Genital). It describes the psyche as a battleground between primitive urges (Id), morality (Super-Ego), and the conscious mediator (Ego). It is believed that delinquent behaviour occurs as a result of imbalance between these three human traits. That is the conflict between the id and societal norms understood by the ego. Consequently, the individual develops defence mechanisms to contend with the conflict, leading to the eventual development of behavioural flaws, which is expressive delinquency. In essence, Psychoanalytic theory perceives delinquent behaviour as the external manifestation of an internal disequilibrium, which is relevant to this study as there is a dearth of morality in Ehime Mbano, resulting in increased delinquency. Nevertheless, the theory did not consider external factors such as peer pressure, family type and conditions, social pressures/conditions, and environmental stimuli, which influence behaviour, especially as

young minds seek definition and direction. To augment this gap, Merton's (1957) Social Strain Theory (SST) was introduced. It proposed that a society instils aspirations for upward mobility and the desire for selected goals in its citizens. Merton believes that humans are social conformists who only violate rules when there is a gulf between goals and means, such that one believes they can no longer pursue socially sanctioned goals through legitimate means. To Merton, a society that emphasises ends over means and restricts access to opportunities for legitimate advancement is establishing the conditions for anomie and future criminality, because delinquency arises from social constraints. SST holds that juveniles are pushed into delinquency by negative emotional reactions that result from aversive situations. This theory offers understanding to causatives of juvenile delinquency, as it emphasises the causes of youthful exuberance and concomitant behaviours.

Consequences of juvenile delinquencies

The consequences of the prevalence of juvenile delinquency in our society are conspicuously enormous. This is evident in the area of high levels of school dropout, unwanted pregnancies, mentally retarded, insecurity and fears in Ehime Mbano. Singh (2017) lamented that due to the constant involvement of youths in crimes, people now live in fear in Ehime Mbano. The once cherished sense of personal safety has vanished into thin air. The effect, according to Faraja (2014), is a hindrance to individual development. Marvin and Krohn (2015) identified four perils associated with juvenile delinquency: individual risk, school and community-based risk, family risk, and peer risk. The individual risk deals with the obnoxious effect of delinquent behaviour on the individual, e.g. health challenges, mental retardation, etc. School and community-based risk deals with the consequences of juvenile delinquency on the school and society, which manifests in cultism, bad gangs and delinquent peers whose activities disrupt school activities and threaten communal peace. Family risk concerns parent-child relationships and interactions within the home, which find expression in home discord, aggressive parents and broken homes. Peer risk occurs when association with peers implicate their own innocent peers. This indicates that the consequences of juvenile delinquencies cut across Ehime Mbano, ranging from the individual to the nation at large, hence the urgent need to tackle the menace.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, i.e. the design that employs, based on Nworgu (2015), reliable techniques to collect data from a well-defined population or systematically selected segments of the

Table 1. Distribution of the study population.

S/N	Name of Secondary school	Male students	Female students	Total Population
1	Agbaghara Nsu Comprehensive Sec School	182	169	351
2	Agbaja Secondary Technical School	144	141	285
3	Model Secondary. School Umualumaku/Umu ihm	244	169	413
4	Community Secondary School Umunumo	210	193	403
5	Comprehensive Secondary. School Umunakanu	75	98	193
6	Dioka Nzerem Community Secondary. School	56	84	140
7	Ezeoke High School Nsu	140	130	270
8	Ibeafor Secondary. School Umunumo	214	182	396
9	Nsu Comprehensive High School Umuanunu	209	193	402
10	Umuduru-Nsu Secondary School	93	53	146
11	Umueleke-Umueze Secondary. Community School	267	275	547
12	Umueze I Secondary Technical School	93	141	234
13	Umueze II Secondary School	78	80	158
14	Umuezeala-Ama Secondary School	85	76	161
15	Umuezeala-Ogwara Community Secondary	124	94	218
16	Umukabia Secondary School	96	66	162
Total		2310	2144	4454

Source: Department of Research and Statistics Imo State Secondary Education Management Board (2025).

population with the purpose of determining the attributes or facts about the entire population. The study was conducted in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State using 16 secondary schools. The population of this study comprised 4,454 secondary school students in the 16 secondary schools in Ehime Mbano LGA, as distributed in Table 1 (Department of Research and Statistics, Imo State Secondary Education Management Board, 2022). The sample size consisted of 445 (10%) respondents drawn from the 16 secondary schools using a simple random technique; however, four hundred and eight (408), representing 91.7% of the responses, were recorded. The rationale for selecting 10% of the population is in line with Nwana (1982) who states that "if the population of a study is in few hundreds, a 40% or more sample will serve; if many hundreds, a 20% sample will serve; if a few thousands, a 10% will serve; and if many thousands, a 5% or less will be enough". Thus, since the population of the study (4,454) runs into a few thousand, a 10% sample is considered appropriate for this study. A structured questionnaire titled: Socio-cultural Factors of Juvenile Delinquency Questionnaire (SCFJDQ), developed by the researchers, was used for data collection. The questionnaire consists of sections A and B. Section A comprises demographic data of the respondents. Section B contained (31) items built on four clusters; A, B, C and D. Cluster A, comprised 9 items on the extent to which family structure promote juvenile delinquency among secondary school students; Cluster B comprised 6 items on the extent to which socio-economic status of parents promote juvenile delinquency; Cluster C comprised 10 items on the extent to which societal influence promote

juvenile delinquency and Cluster D comprised 6 items on the consequences of juvenile delinquency. The instrument is based on a four-point rating scale; Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 points, High Extent (HE) = 3 points, Low Extent (LE) = 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point, validated by three experts. The direct delivery and retrieval method was used for data collection within the duration of six weeks. The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation with the decision benchmark of 2.50. Mean scores of 2.50 were regarded as positive, and mean scores below 2.50 were deemed negative outcomes.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent do family structure and parental supervision influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano LGA

In Table 2, the mean responses of the respondents on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, which are 3.2, 3.1, 2.9, 2.9, 2.8, 3.0, 3.1 and 2.9, respectively, are accepted. The overall cluster mean for the influence of family structure and parental supervision was 3.0, indicating a high extent of perceived influence on juvenile delinquency. This confirms that family structure and parental supervision influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area. This implies that secondary school students in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area attested to the influence of family structure and parental supervision on juvenile delinquency.

Table 2. Influence of family structure and parental supervision on juvenile delinquency in Ehime Mbanjo LGA.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
1	Children from polygamous families commit delinquencies than those from monogamous families.	215	124	34	35	408	3.2	Accepted
		860	372	68	35	1335		
2	Perpetual conflicts within the family increase chances of children to involve in delinquent activities.	204	93	45	66	408	3.1	Accepted
		816	279	90	66	1251		
3	Lack of adequate parental supervision over the children puts the children a high risk of juvenile delinquency	186	79	70	73	408	2.9	Accepted
		744	237	140	73	1194		
4	Absence of a parent or both parents from the home due to economic or social engagements, death or divorce leads to delinquency among juveniles.	195	86	49	60	408	2.9	Accepted
		780	258	98	60	1196		
5	When the parents fail to exact reasonable control over the child for any reason, the child have a higher tendency to involve in delinquent activities.	164	93	86	65	408	2.9	Accepted
		656	279	172	65	1172		
6	Children from unstable homes engage more in juvenile delinquency than their counterparts from more stable homes	148	106	90	64	408	2.8	Accepted
		592	318	180	64	1154		
7	Absence of sufficient communication between parents and teenagers can promote delinquency among the teenagers.	178	106	75	49	408	3.0	Accepted
		712	312	150	49	1223		
8	Lack of parental love and care can cause the children to engage in delinquent behaviours.	185	114	54	55	408	3.1	Accepted
		740	342	108	55	1245		
9	A child whose parent (s) involves in crime as a matter of heredity may exhibit delinquent behaviours.	152	108	85	63	408	2.9	Accepted
		608	324	170	63	1165		
	Grand mean						3.0	

That children from polygamous families, perpetual conflicts within the family, lack of adequate parental supervision over the children, absence of a parent or both parents from the home, lack of parental love and care, and a child whose parent(s) are involved in crime predispose children to delinquency.

Research Question 2: To what extent does parental socio-economic status influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbanjo Local Government Area?

In Table 3, the mean responses of the respondents on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, which are 3.0, 3.0, 2.9, 2.7, 3.1 and 3.1, respectively, were all accepted. The overall cluster mean for parental socio-economic status was 3.0, indicating a high extent of perceived influence on juvenile delinquency. This confirms that parental socio-economic status influences juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbanjo Local Government Area. The responses attested that children whose parents are rich, children from poor homes, children who are denied access to quality education, children raised in overcrowded homes, children raised in low socio-economic class neighbourhoods and children whose

parents hold religious, traditional or educational titles are predisposed to delinquent behaviour.

Research Question 3: To what extent can societal norms (peer influence, media exposure, and community norms) influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbanjo Local Government Area?

In Table 4, the mean responses of the respondents on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, which are 2.7, 2.7, 3.1, 2.7, 3.1, 3.0, 3.1, 3.1 and 3.2, respectively, were all accepted. The overall cluster mean for societal norm (*peer influence, media exposure, and community norms*) influence was 3.0, indicating a high extent of perceived influence on juvenile delinquency. This confirms that societal influence affects juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbanjo Local Government Area. Children raised in the urban areas, children exposed to violence, children exposed to pornographic content, children exposed to crime-explicit movies, a child moving with a friend who engages in delinquent behaviours, exposure to the luxurious and extravagant lifestyle of the affluent, closing down of schools for a long period of time due to strikes, etc.

Table 3. Socio-economic status of parents effects on juvenile delinquency.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
10	Children whose parents are rich and are able to provide their basic needs are hardly involved in delinquencies.	185	93	62	68	408	3.0	Accepted
11	Children from poor homes engage in delinquent acts as a means of survival.	740	279	124	68	1211	3.0	Accepted
12	Children who are denied access to quality education for whatever reason tend to get involved in juvenile delinquency more than children in school.	206	77	49	76	408	2.9	Accepted
13	Children raised in overcrowded homes are more likely to involve in delinquent behaviours than those raised in homes with few occupants.	824	231	98	76	1229	2.7	Accepted
14	Children raised in low socio-economic class neighbourhoods are more susceptible to delinquent behaviours than those raised in high socio-economic class neighbourhoods.	164	93	86	65	408	3.1	Accepted
15	Children whose parents hold religious, traditional or educational titles are less likely to involve in delinquent acts than those whose parents hold no titles.	656	279	172	65	1172	3.1	Accepted
	Grand mean	135	104	79	90	408	3.0	
		540	312	158	90	1100		
		204	93	45	66	408		
		816	279	90	66	1251		
		151	107	78	72	408		
		604	321	256	72	1253		

Table 4. Societal influence affects juvenile delinquency.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
16	Children raised in the urban areas are more involved in delinquent behaviours than children living in the rural areas	145	96	78	89	408	2.7	Accepted
		580	288	156	89	1113		
17	Children exposed to violent are more likely to become violent than children who are not allowed to watch films.	138	92	90	88	408	2.7	Accepted
		552	276	180	88	1096		
18	Children exposed to pornographic films are more likely to engage in sexual offences like rape and prostitution than children who are not allowed to watch films.	151	107	78	72	408	3.1	Accepted
		604	321	256	72	1253		
19	Children exposed to crime movies are more likely to involve in offences like stealing, robbery, kidnapping and ritual killing than children who are not allowed to watch such films.	125	118	84	81	408	2.7	Accepted
		500	354	168	81	1103		
20	If a child's best friend engages in delinquent behaviours, the child will be at high risk of delinquency too.	151	107	78	72	408	3.1	Accepted
		604	321	256	72	1253		
21	When children move in group, they are more likely to commit offences than when they go alone.	206	77	49	76	408	3.0	Accepted
		824	231	98	76	1229		
22	The luxurious and extravagant lifestyle of the affluent socio political elites in the society serve as an incentive to juvenile delinquency as the youth would like to be like them.	208	94	63	43	408	3.1	Accepted
		832	282	126	43	1283		
23	Children raised in a society where political and the business classes indulge in corrupt practices are likely to involve in delinquent acts than children raised in honest society.	197	98	57	56	408	3.1	Accepted
		788	294	114	56	1252		
24	Closing down of schools for a long period of time due to strikes causes children to drift into delinquent activities.	205	106	54	43	408	3.2	Accepted
		820	318	108	43	1289		
	Grand mean						3.0	

Table 5. Consequences of juvenile delinquency.

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Total	$\bar{x}$	Decision
25	The child is likely to drop out of school.	157	96	52	103	408	2.8	Accepted
		628	288	104	103	1123		
26	It destroys the peace of the Families.	148	106	90	64	408	2.8	Accepted
		592	318	180	64	1154		
27	The child may perform low academically.	151	107	78	72	408	3.1	Accepted
		604	321	256	72	1253		
28	Delinquent juveniles are always at risk of developing mental health challenges.	125	118	84	81	408	2.7	Accepted
		500	354	168	81	1103		
29	It can increase criminality.	164	93	86	65	408	2.9	Accepted
		656	279	172	65	1172		
30	It increases drug addiction	151	107	78	72	408	3.1	Accepted
		604	321	256	72	1253		
	Grand mean						2.9	

Research Question 4: What are the consequences of juvenile delinquency on the academic performance and social behaviour of secondary school students in Ehime Mbano?

In Table 5, the mean responses of the respondents on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, which are 2.8, 2.8, 3.1, 2.7, 2.9 and 3.1, respectively, were all accepted. The overall cluster mean for consequences of juvenile delinquency on the academic performance and social behaviour of secondary school students in Ehime Mbano was 2.97, indicating a high extent of consequences of juvenile delinquency on the academic performance and social behaviour of secondary school students in Ehime Mbano. The responses confirm the consequences of juvenile delinquency on the academic performance and social behaviour of secondary school students in Ehime Mbano LGA. The responses agreed to the following consequences of juvenile delinquency: the child is likely to drop out of school, the child may perform very low academically, risk developing mental health challenges, increase criminality and increase the risk of drug addiction.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals that socio-cultural norms influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ehime Mbano LGA of Imo State. This finding, based on research question one, is in line with Kemme et al. (2014) that family is the primary enculturation agent for children to develop their moral values and ethical standards, and if the family cannot play a proper role, they may deviate. Some families cannot look after their children properly, and due to a lack of proper monitoring and supervision, children of these families are involved in various antisocial activities, which ultimately increase juvenile delinquency. The finding in research question two is in line with Chowdhury and

Fahim (2019), that when a child does not get basic necessities from the family, he/she becomes depressed, bored and frustrated, which leads him/her to pick the wrong way and engage in criminal activities. The finding in research question three agrees with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Report (Hockenberry, 2016) that juvenile delinquents live in chaotic neighbourhoods with few resources to provide them with the skills and opportunities to be successful. The finding in research question four is in line with that of Khan and Tipu (2016) in Patoari (2020) that dropping out of school can destroy the prospective career of children, destroy culture, and increase criminality among children as consequences of juvenile delinquency in children.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that juvenile delinquency among adolescents in Ehime Mbano is predominantly shaped by interconnected socio-cultural conditions rather than individual disposition. Additionally, Juvenile delinquency as a social problem not only affects the safety of the public in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo State but also endangers the existence of future generations in the area and even beyond, based on the numerous negative impacts it exerts on the academic lives of the Juveniles, their social lives, the family, and the society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. Parents should endeavour to instil the right training in their wards by first presenting themselves as models for emulation.

2. Parents should make judicious use of their socio-economic status to raise their wards appropriately.
3. Parents should take proactive measures against any form of undue exposure of their wards to peer group influence, social media, content, and some practices in the community to avoid juvenile delinquency.
4. Parents should prioritise the education of their wards because a greater measure of a child's character formation takes place in and through the educational system.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Adegoke, N. U. (2015). Factors responsible for juvenile delinquency in Nigeria: A case study of selected primary schools in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(5), 78-84
- Alfry, C. (2010). *Juvenile delinquency and family structure: Implications for marriage and relationship education*. National Healthy Marriage Centre. Retrieved 20th March 2023 from <https://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/405.pdf>.
- Ali, S. M., & Masood, S. (2018). Role of family, neighbourhood and peers in development of delinquent behavior in adolescents. *Peshawar Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 4(2), 171.
- American Psychological Association (2007). *Task force on socio-economic status*. American Psychological Association. Washington, DC. 41p. Retrieved March 17 2023 from <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/task-force-2006.pdf>.
- Children and Young Persons Law (CYPL) 1958). Nigeria.
- Chisom, E. D. (2016). *Knowledge and awareness of juvenile delinquency services by the residence of Nsukka Local Government Area*. Unpublished B. Sc. Project. University of Nigeria Nsukka. Retrieved 15th March, 2023 from <http://www.researchgate.net>.
- Chowdhury, M. A. A., & Fahim, M. H. K. (2019). An appraisal of causes and consequences of Juvenile Delinquency in Bangladesh: Search for a Durable solution. *Bangladesh Institute of Legal Development (BiLD) Law Journal*, 4(1), 60-80.
- Clark, R. D., & Shields, G. (1997). Family communication and delinquency. *Adolescence*, 32(125), 81-93.
- Cole, B., & Chipaca, A. (2014). Juvenile delinquency in Angola. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 14(1), 61-76.
- de Miguel-Calvo, E. (2020). Vulnerability and agency: Women after prison in the Basque Autonomous Community, Spain. In *Women, vulnerabilities and welfare service systems* (pp. 139-152). Routledge.
- Dunkel, F., Grzywa, J., Horsfield, P., & Pruin, I. (2011). Juvenile justice systems in Europe: *Current Situation and Reform Developments*. Forum. Verlag, 1(2), 20-28.
- Du-Preez, N. C. & Luyt, W. B. (2021). *Fundamentals and developmental psychology in youth corrections* (2nd Edition). Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Ebenuwa-Okoh, E. & Ugorji, N. F. (2015). Environmental violence, family upbringing and peer influence as correlates of destructive tendencies in adolescents. *International Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, 7(4), 69-77.
- Encyclopaedia Americana (Vol. 16) (1971). International edition. New York: American Corporation.
- Faraja, L. G. (2014). *Dynamics of juvenile delinquency and crimes in Arusha city*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania.
- Fergusson, D., Swain-Campbell, N., & Horwood, J. (2004). How does childhood economic disadvantage lead to crime? *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 45(5), 956-966.
- Haveripet, P. (2013). Causes and consequences of juvenile delinquency in India. *Recent Research in Science and Technology*, 5(3), 29-31.
- Hockenberry, S. (2016). Juveniles in residential placement, 2013. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. 15p. Retrieved from <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/pubs/249507.pdf>.
- Ike, C. N. N., & Okoro, L. (2024). Federalism that is not Federating: Understanding why the Centre and the Constituent Units Fail in Security Provision in Nigeria. *Alvan Journal of Social sciences*, 1(1), 1-17
- Kamani, K. A. (2010). *Influence of family structure on juvenile delinquency in Nakuru Children's Remand Home*. Retrieved March 4th, 2023 from <https://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/items/879a6a3e-326e-4460-9da5-875f4fb44954>
- Kemme, S., Hanslmaier, M., & Pfeiffer, C. (2014). Experience of parental corporal punishment in childhood and adolescence and its effect on punitiveness. *Journal of Family Violence*, 29(2), 129-142.
- Kim, H. N., & Kim, H. C. (2008). *Juvenile delinquency and youth crime*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.
- Ladokun, A. O. (2018). *Geographies of juvenile crime: A study of crime in selected high schools in East London*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Fort Hare, South Africa.
- Mambende, B., Nyandoro, T., Maunganidze, L., & Sawuti, A. (2016). Factors influencing youth juvenile delinquency at blue Hills Children's Prison Rehabilitation centre in Gweru, Zimbabwe: An explorative study. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 3(4), 27-34.
- Mamman, H., Othman, A. T., & Lian, L. H. (2014). Adolescent's and drugs abuse in Nigeria. *Journal of Biology, Agriculture and Healthcare*, 4(1), 5-9.
- Marvin, D. C. & Krohn, J. L. (2015). *The Handbook of Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile Justice*. New Zealand. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Maseko, S. N. M. (2020). Non-heterosexual school youth experiences of HIV education in Life Orientation. University of Johannesburg (South Africa).
- Nisar, M., Ullah, S., Ali, M., & Alam, S. (2015). Juvenile delinquency: The Influence of family, peer and economic factors on juvenile delinquents. *Applied Science Reports*, 9(1), 37-48.
- Nwana, O. C. (1982). *Introduction to Educational Research*. Ibadan: Heinemann Education Books.
- Nworgu, B. G. (2015). *Educational research: Basic issues and methodology*. Enugu: University Trust Publishers.
- Okoro, L., Okere, I. J., Nsude, S., & Ani, N. A. (2025). Can blended learning enhance intrinsic motivation to learn political science education among undergraduate students: A review of empirical studies. *Integral Research*, 2(8), 1-17.
- Ojo, M. O. D. (2012). A sociological review of issues on juvenile

- delinquency. *Journal of International Social Research*, 5(21), 468.
- Omboto, J. O., Ondiek, G. O., Odera, O., & Ayugi, M. E. (2013). Factors influencing youth crime and juvenile delinquency. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 1(2), 18-21.
- Onunkwo, A., & Uzoiye, A. P. (2011). Exploratory survey of geochemical aspects of underground water in Ehime Mbanu Area SE Nigeria. *Global Journal of Research in Engineering*, 11(4), 14-22.
- Patoari, M. M. H. (2020). Socio-economic, cultural and family factors causing juvenile delinquency and its consequences in Bangladesh: A look for way out. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies*, 7(2), 89-98.
- Pelzer, E. (2008). Learning to be lost: Youth crime in South Africa. *Discussion papers for the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) youth policy initiative*. Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP). Promotion, Geneva, Switzerland. Pp. 1-14.
- Shoemaker, D. (2010). *Theories of delinquency*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Singh, S. (2017). Peer pressure among adolescents in relation to family climate. *Indian Journal of Health & Wellbeing*, 8(3), 196-199.
- Ugwuoke, C. U., & Duruji, O. U. (2015). Family instability and juvenile delinquency in Nigeria: A study of Owerri municipality. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 20(1), 40-45.
- UNICEF (2012). *Support to the Justice Sector in Nigeria*. United Nations Children's Fund. Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/conig/en/stories/support-to-the-justice-sector-in-nigeria.html>.
- United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2014). *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2014 Revision, Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/352)*. Retrieved from <https://www.compassion.com/multimedia/world-urbanization-prospects.pdf>.
- Vitaro, F., Brendgen, M., & Tremblay, R. E. (2000). Influence of deviant friends on delinquency: Searching for moderator variables. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 28(4), 313-325.
- Vitulano, M. L., Fite, P. J., & Rathert, J. L. (2010). Delinquent peer influence on childhood delinquency: The moderating effect of impulsivity. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 32(3), 315-322.
- Vogel, M., & South, S. J. (2016). Spatial dimensions of the effect of neighborhood disadvantage on delinquency. *Criminology*, 54(3), 434-458.
- World Bank (1990). *World Development Report: Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- World Youth Report (2013). *The Global situation of young people*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/worldyouthreport.pdf>.
- Young, S., Greer, B., & Church, R. (2017). Juvenile delinquency, welfare, justice and therapeutic interventions: a global perspective. *BJPsych bulletin*, 41(1), 21-29.
- Yusuf, S. A., Daud, M. N., Arshat, Z., & Sakiru, O. K. (2021). The role of peer influence on juvenile delinquency among adolescents in the government remand homes, Lagos State Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(11), 2530-2545.
- Zenzile, E. (2008). *Juvenile delinquency among secondary school pupils in Mthatha District of Education: Self-report survey*. Unpublished Bachelor of Arts Project, University of Zululand, South Africa. Retrieved from <https://uzspace.unizulu.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/77309233-30a7-4ec4-8161-0d9fbba6cd5a/content>.