

An Investigation On The Differences In Juvenile Delinquency According To Family Type Among Secondary School Students In Kisii County, Kenya

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Abstract: Juvenile delinquency is an enormous problem in the entire world today. Young people engage in such anti-social activities as: theft, robbery, rape, drug and substance abuse, drug trafficking, disrespect for authority and even murder. The purpose of the study was Investigation on the differences in juvenile delinquency according to family type among secondary school students in Kisii County, Kenya. Descriptive survey research design was used. The target population of the study was 6,357 students from selected secondary schools. The sample size was 610 students, 9 school administrators, (principals, deputy principals and teacher counsellors, one from each school) and 9 parents. Only form two and three students were included in the sample. Both probability and non-probability sampling methods were used. Convenience sampling method was used to select the schools, Simple Random sampling was used to select the student respondents from schools A and B, purposive sampling was used to select student respondents from school C and all school administrators. The parents were likewise chosen via convenience sampling. Data was collected through questionnaires from students and teachers, interview schedules for principals, and focus group questions from parents. Correlation analysis was used to analyse data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The results indicated the following: adolescents from the upper class were found to be more delinquent than those from the low class and that the media influences juvenile delinquency. The study recommended that there should be appropriate use of the media in order to reduce delinquency and that upper class parents should reduce the digital gadgets they avail to their children.

Key words: Adolescent, Juvenile Delinquency, Media, Suicidal Ideation.

1 Introduction

There are many factors that have been linked to juvenile delinquency such as: a history of antisocial behaviour in childhood, substance abuse, cognitive deficits, poverty, the family, peers, the neighbourhood, the media and the school, to mention but a few. This study focused on the family, poverty and the media. The family in which children are brought up and the social environment in which they grow can either protect them from possible risk factors of juvenile delinquency or lead them into it [1]. Values and norms of behaviour, (the concept of right and wrong, respect, fairness, compassion and responsibility) are taught by parents or caregivers at home; children learn the importance of these values and their consequences in the family [2]. As a result, if a family is dysfunctional, it will transmit dysfunctional values and norms to its children. On the other hand, a functional family will transmit functional norms and values [3].

The family plays a critical role in the physical development of a child by providing nutrition which supports or retards growth. The family also determines a child's character development in that children, more often than not, internalize the values learnt at home and they apply them in their later lives [2]. According to Mwangangi, unstable families make children to develop negative attitudes and habitual failure in tasks which in turn can encourage them to become delinquents. The family is the first school of virtue in every

society. The quality of every member of a society is promoted and nourished in the family. The family should be a fertile ground for acceptable morals and social habits. Unfortunately, the family's ability to socialize children positively has been eroded substantially in modern society. Certain parents are themselves delinquent!

Adolescents of all ages live in different types of families with different combinations of parents such as with single, married, step, separated/divorced or with grandparents. They also experience different forms of monitoring, supervision, involvement and parental attachment. In these different family set-ups, children are either encouraged or always blamed. In his research, Baltazar, found out that parental encouragement improves children's behaviour while blame discourages it [4]. According to Hearnese, incidences of youth criminality abound when parents are emotionally aloof from their children, show little love and warmth to them, provide little supervision, purposely ignore the children, and have minimal expectations or demands for their behaviour [5]. Parents show lack of support or interest in what their children do by not attending their children's school events, spending most of their time on the internet while at home, not helping the children with homework or being absent from home for long hours. This behaviour by certain parents makes children/adolescents go seeking for attention from people who do not care for their welfare. Such parents are

also too overwhelmed by their own problems to deal with those of their children's.

The traditional family setting where the father, mother and extended family members lived and worked around the home was very ideal in raising well-behaved children because it ensured that children had access to loving male and female role models who contributed positively both to family life and to the society in general [2]. This kind of environment minimized delinquency risk factors for adolescents. In the traditional Abagusii community of Kenya, for instance, children were meaningfully engaged under the supervision of adults all the time and a child caught misbehaving was punished by any adult. Such a child never dared report the punishment to his parents, because they would also punish him in return. Thus children were under obligation to behave well at all times. In this setting, adults told folk tales to young ones. The folk tales were meant to teach the younger generation about acceptable and unacceptable attributes.

This aspect of child-parent attachment/relationship and supervision is emphasized by other researchers like [6], [1] who also say that the kind of family children grow up in and the social environment they are exposed to impacts their well-being greatly. Adolescents who are brought up in family structures where they are praised, encouraged and shown affection do develop high self-esteem and self-control which prevent anti-social behaviour [7]. Parents' parenting skills and family structure have a direct influence on their children's deviant behavior. When effective supervision and assistance, as well as regular penalties, are lacking, a teenager is more prone to engage in deviant behavior [8]. Children who live in non-traditional families are at greater risk of developing negative behaviour, including delinquent behaviour, in comparison with children who live in traditional families with biological parents [1]. There is a difference in the criminal behaviour of children according to their type of family-of-origin.

According to the World Youth Report, young people at risk of turning delinquent frequently live in challenging situations such as parental alcoholism, poverty, family disintegration, overcrowding, abusive conditions in the home, the expanding HIV/AIDS epidemic, or the death of parents. A study conducted by Otieno among juvenile delinquents admitted into the Shikusa Borstal Institution in Kakamega found that dysfunctional or broken family systems do influence delinquency in Juveniles because a majority of the cases came from broken homes [9]. The same research, found that the factor of broken homes causes ill mental health to children. This data indicates that there is a strong and urgent need for all stakeholders: the government, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), semi-autonomous government agencies (SAGAs), the church, or the school to come up with intervention measures to sensitize parents and the youth, about the scourge of delinquency and to offer therapy to those already affected.

Research in Africa has also revealed that the family and social environment in which children are raised has a significant impact on their well-being. According to Sanni et.al. families are the most powerful socialization factors in life; they teach youngsters to avoid inappropriate behavior, wait gratification, and respect the rights of others [10]. They

can also teach children aggressive and antisocial behaviour depending on the kind of life the family leads. Children take up values held by parents and significant others. The foundation of juvenile delinquency is rooted in the kind of home a child is brought up in. children who run away from home mostly come from homes whose parents lack involvement with children's issues.

In Kenya, a study conducted by Mugo, Musembi and Kangethe, found that a majority of juvenile offenders come from poor and disconnected family backgrounds [11]. Adolescents who actively select anti-social friends may be characterized by persistent and severe family problems. Another study conducted among juveniles at Eldoret Remand Home established that many juvenile delinquents come from broken and separated families and others from single parent headed homes [12]. In other words many children who engage in delinquency come from families with unstable relationships. Radohl, cited by Otieno, Kombo & Bowen, assert that if these unstable relationships would be mended, young people would be prevented from engaging in crime [13].

However, research has shown that some adolescents engage in risky and illicit behaviour out of curiosity; they are trying things out for the first time. Just as they learn to drive for the first time, they also try drugs, what to wear, who to hang out with and so on. Some of these trials land some of them into problems. Eric Eriksons' 1956 theory of development considers adolescence as a period full of exploratory behaviour which is a normal component of development for that stage. Steinberg, considered Juvenile offending as a normal adolescent behaviour [14]. Seedat, state that young people are the most likely individuals to be both the victims and perpetrators of violence worldwide [15]. Baltazar, also asserts that in the natural process of growing up, young people engage in activities that violate laid down rules and regulations [16]; some of which are serious crimes, but others only petty ones. Some children begin to associate with delinquent peers in adolescence because they deem that as normal [17]. Most children get into some form of antisocial or delinquent behaviour during adolescence, but some of them drop all criminal activity once they get into adulthood. This information says that not all adolescent delinquency comes about because of the family type and agrees with one of the study limitations.

2 Statement of the Problem

The problem of juvenile delinquency is a matter of grave concern globally; it affects governments, communities, families and the young people themselves. In many schools in the world today, or out there in the general public, adolescents take drugs and sell them to their peers, they steal, fight, engage in sexual orgies or they destroy valuable property at will. Furthermore, there have even been blood chilling and horrifying incidents of students murdering or grievously injuring their teachers and other school staff. In other cases, they have impudently razed down expensive school structures and in the confusion and panic that follows such fires, fellow female students, and even teachers, have been raped. As if that is not enough, they have now hatched a new form of delinquency where they plan and arrogantly walk out of school informing the schools' administration to wait for their word about the date they wish to report back to

school! A number of learning institutions of all levels continue to stage violent and destructive strikes at the slightest provocation. National and County governments, the church, communities, and families have tried to come up with measures to curb this problem. Despite these concerted efforts, however, the problem still exists. There is need therefore to understand juvenile delinquency from all views in order to control it, hence the study.

Despite the fact that problematic behaviour among secondary school students is on a steady rise, only a very small number of them ever seek help. Despite the rising cases of juvenile delinquency among adolescents, young people are reluctant to seek help [18], [19]. A number of researchers, have conducted studies on juvenile delinquency, but few have focused on both juvenile delinquency and family type. This is what warranted this study.

3 Research Methodology

The research design was descriptive survey research with mixed methodologies. According to Kothari, a research design is the conceptual structure within which research is carried out [21], and Shaughnessy, a research design allows a researcher to explain various experiences, events, and behavior and to explore for links between them [22].

4 Results

4.1 Relationship between juvenile delinquency and respondents' family type

The research sought to establish the influence of family type on juvenile delinquency. The definition of family type was based on the response to the item; "What type of family do you come from?" to which they were to choose an appropriate response from among the following:

1. Single parent family
2. Step family
3. Two biological parent family
4. Separated/divorced family
5. Grandparent family

An analysis of the distribution of respondents among the family types yielded the results in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Family Type

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single	112	18.4
Two Biological parents	468	76.7
Step family	7	1.1
Separated/divorced	15	2.5
Grand parent family	8	1.3
Total	610	100.0

The results from Table 1 revealed that a majority of the respondents 468 (76.7%) stayed with their two biological parents. This was followed by 112 (18.4%) who reported staying with their single mothers. This makes a total of 95.1% staying with their biological parents (either both parents or a single one). Although groups are comparably different in numbers, further One Way Analysis of variance show the results below.

Table 2: One-Way ANOVA for Delinquency and Help Seeking According to Family Type

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
DELINQUENT	Between Groups	1.107	4	.277	1.230	.297
	Within Groups	134.808	599	.225		
	Total	135.916	603			
HELPSEEKING	Between Groups	3.680	4	.920	3.444	.009
	Within Groups	160.286	600	.267		
	Total	163.966	604			

From the Table 2, it was revealed that all mean differences in delinquency were not significant (F=1.230, p-value=0.297). This means that delinquency is the same among family types.

7 Differences in Help-Seeking Behavior Among Family Types

However, an F=3.44, p-value = 0.009, which is much less than 0.05, shows significant differences among the groups in help-seeking behaviour. children from families that are cohesive, flexible and have good communication skills are more likely to seek help than children from homes that lack these factors. This is because parents who are close to their children can notice negative behavior and take action to arrest the problem before it takes root. Parents who are concerned about the welfare of their children are likely to facilitate the help- seeking function. This sentiment was supported by the selected parents who equally said that, regrettably, work conditions have denied certain parents enough time to be with and guide their children. A post-hoc analysis to find out which groups are different in help seeking behaviour is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Post-Hoc Analysis for Group Differences in Help-Seeking Behavior

(I) What type of family do you come from?	(J) What type of family do you come from?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Single	Biological parent	-.02164	.05461	.692
	Step family	-.59627*	.20142	.003
	Separated/divorced	-.06198	.14218	.663
	Grand parent family	.38052*	.18921	.045
Two Biological parents	Single	.02164	.05461	.692
	Step family	-.57463*	.19682	.004
	separated/divorced	-.04034	.13559	.766
Grand parent family	Grand parent family	.40216*	.18431	.029
	Single	.59627*	.20142	.003
Step family	Biological parent	.57463*	.19682	.004

	separated/divorced	.53429*	.23659	.024
	Grand parent family	.97679*	.26750	.000
separated/divorced	Single	.06198	.14218	.663
	Biological parent	.04034	.13559	.766
	Step family	-.53429*	.23659	.024
	Grand parent family	.44250	.22628	.051
Grand parent family	Single	-.38052*	.18921	.045
	Biological parent	-.40216*	.18431	.029
	Step family	-.97679*	.26750	.000
	separated/divorced	-.44250	.22628	.051

From Table 3, there are significant differences in help seeking behavior among respondents raised by single mothers and step families (p -value =0.003), single mother and grandparents (p -value=0.045), two biological parents' family and step family (p -value= 0.004). There were seen significant differences also in help seeking behavior for respondents raised by two biological parents' families, and grandparents' families (p -value 0.029). Of great interest is the fact that help-seeking behaviour is significantly different between the step family and all other types of families, it is much higher.

This interesting finding may indicate that children growing up under the care of step parents rarely seek help either from the step parents themselves or from any other person. This revelation may be an indicator of lack of trust between the step children and their step-parents or step siblings. It can also indicate a sense of insecurity felt by juveniles raised by step parents, or simply a determination by the juveniles to develop independence in dealing with their issues. Step-parents especially step mothers deal harshly with their step children making them to suffer trauma and stigma normally associated with the cruelty. Children living in step families are particularly vulnerable to violence because of the absence of strong emotional bonds with their non-biological family members. There normally is great violence against step children because stepparents are unwilling to invest their feelings and resources on children who do not carry their blood. The principal of school A also underscored this fact; she stated that many children from step-families suffer violence, disinheritance and sexual abuse which fact contributes to their inconsistent behavior.

8 Conclusion

The study found out that most offenders stay with their biological parents.

9 Recommendation

The study recommended that parents should play their parental role effectively; they should be available to their children for consultation so that the children don't go seeking help from questionable sources.

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