

**SOCIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF JUVENILE  
DELINQUENCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN KEFFI TOWN, KEFFI LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AREA OF NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA**

**Kester Efe Fregene<sup>1\*</sup> & Caleb Chukwuebuka Iwuala<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Sociology, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychology, Kingsley Ozumba Mbadiwe University, Ideato, Nigeria

\*kesterzino1@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT:** This study examined the causes, types and consequences of juvenile delinquency among some selected secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government area of Nasarawa State. The sub-culture theory and differential association theory were adopted as working theories to explain juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town. Participants included 306 respondents drawn from a population of 1,497 using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table from some selected secondary schools in Keffi Town. The study employed mixed methods research involving a self-developed questionnaire and In-depth interviews (IDIs). Findings indicated that examination malpractice was widespread in Keffi Town, with 95% of students involved in this practice. Results further showed that the major factor identified in examination malpractice was inadequate parental upbringing, with 47.7% of respondents strongly agreeing with this. Additionally, 71.1% of the respondents agreed that juvenile delinquency contributes to neighbourhood insecurity. These findings demonstrated the seriousness of the threat of juvenile delinquency to public safety, therefore, comprehensive and immediate actions are required. Accordingly, the study recommended that there should be more parental involvement, active government and non-governmental organisation participation in policy formation, and community, family, and school involvement in juvenile moral and social education.

**Keywords:** Juvenile Delinquency, Examination Malpractice, Parental Upbringing, Neighbourhood Insecurity

## **INTRODUCTION**

Juvenile delinquency is anti-social behaviour among young people as they negotiate the transition from childhood to adulthood in a confused and complex society (Ifedigbo et al., 2023). It simply refers to deviant behaviours carried out by teenagers who have not yet reached the legally approved adult age (Folorunsho, Ajayi & Abdulrazaq, 2024). Specifically, delinquent behaviours are unlawful or criminal acts that do not conform to the moral or legal standards of society (Unimna, Ekwok, & Ugbong, 2024). Among adolescents, delinquent behaviours may include stealing, sexual offence, destruction of school property (vandalism) smoking of marijuana, drug pilfering and other harmful practices (Gyansah, Soku, & Esilfie, 2015).

Although the issue of juvenile delinquency is an age-long problem, current trends indicate that juvenile delinquency has evolved to newer dimensions. For instance, juveniles of the modern

generation have adopted new values due to sociocultural and technological changes which may have resulted from the developments in modern technologies such as the internet, mobile phones, computers and social media (AllahRakha, 2024; Kaur et al, 2024). Juvenile delinquency has been a great concern to society, teachers, families, scholars and criminologists. Studies have shown that juvenile delinquency is prevalent, especially in urban areas affected by poverty, unemployment, and rapid urbanization with the contributing factors including dysfunctional family environments with poor supervision and relationships, economic challenges, and inadequate urban social services. (Famuyiwa, 2017).

Mwangangi (2019) asserts that the proper nurturing of children is the primary responsibility of family, because the values given to children and the type of training, they receive from their parents seem to largely determine their future life-style. Parents help their children establish certain behavioural attitudes, and once established these attitudes are difficult to change or suppress. Parents who instil antisocial behaviours in their children encourage such attitudes to persist into adulthood. Delinquency as exhibited by secondary students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local government area of Nasarawa state, Nigeria include examination malpractice, cultism, vandalism, truancy, sex offenses, stealing, drug abuse and others. This study aimed at sociological examination of Juvenile delinquency among some selected secondary school student in Keffi Town, Keffi Local government area of Nasarawa state Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Juvenile delinquency seems to be a gateway to adult crime (Cauffman et al., 2024) since a large percentage of criminals have their roots in delinquent behaviour which in turn influence other social problems such as rape, cultism and terrorism. Recently, there have been increasing societal concerns over the problem of Juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Nigeria (Okonkwo & Emmanuel, 2024; Ola-Williams et al., 2024).

Observation of the extent of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town calls for an immediate sociological examination. As a result, children in Keffi town have increasingly become difficult to control; exhibiting perceived high levels of delinquent behaviours within and outside the school environment. Instances of their involvements in acts such as examination misconduct, drug abuse, sexual offences, truancy and others seem to be on the increase. Quite often, juveniles break into school offices and staff common rooms, with the intention of stealing textbooks, examination scripts and exercise books. Most of the times, they get caught, when luck runs out on them.

As a result of the forgoing, the need for an empirical study on some of the factors leading to juvenile delinquency among secondary school students becomes inevitable. This study on the sociological examination of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town is designed to ascertain the causes of delinquency so as to control its transition from adolescence to adulthood which as a result jeopardizes the affected individual's future. Exploration of the literature, to the best knowledge of the researcher, indicates that no known study on the sociological examination of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local government area of Nasarawa State. This therefore confirms a gap in the knowledge that the research intends to fill.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The General objective of the study is to examine juvenile delinquency among selected secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State-Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study include to:

1. To identify the nature of delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State-Nigeria.
2. To examine the causes of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State-Nigeria.
3. To ascertain the consequences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government area of Nasarawa State-Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions shall guide the study.

1. What is the nature of delinquent behaviour experienced among secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State-Nigeria?
2. What are the causes of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State-Nigeria?
3. What are the consequences of Juvenile delinquency among secondary school student in Keffi Town, Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State-Nigeria?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Differential Association Theory**

Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory, formulated in 1924, posits that juveniles acquire the values, attitudes, techniques, and motivations for delinquent behaviour through their interactions with others. This theory emphasizes the process of becoming delinquent rather than the reasons behind it. Juveniles learn the necessary methods, motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes for delinquency, making it easier for them to engage in such activities. The theory suggests that a person's self-image is continually shaped by social interactions, which influence their behaviour.

According to the differential association theory, individuals lean towards delinquency when definitions that favour law-breaking outweigh those supporting law-abiding behaviour. This tendency is further reinforced if the influential people in an individual's life support delinquent behaviour. For instance, a person might be driven to steal if they are hungry and lack money. Sutherland acknowledges that both delinquent and non-delinquent juveniles are driven by the need for money and social gain, but emphasizes that the influence of their social environment is crucial.

Sutherland's theory is based on nine key principles:

- 1) Delinquent behaviour is learned.
- 2) It is learned through interaction with others.
- 3) The learning occurs within intimate personal groups.
- 4) Learning includes the techniques of committing delinquent acts and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
- 5) Motives and drives are learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavourable.
- 6) A juvenile becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violating the law over those unfavourable.
- 7) Differential associations vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
- 8) The learning process involves the same mechanisms as any other learning.
- 9) Delinquent behaviour is an expression of general needs and values but is not explained by them, as non-delinquent behaviour also expresses these needs and values.

The social environment plays a significant role in shaping delinquent behaviour. Juveniles engage in various delinquent acts due to their interactions with others in society. Sutherland expanded on this idea in his 1939 work, "Principles of Criminology," explaining how individuals become delinquent through the influence of others' manners and activities.

Differential association theory asserts that juveniles engage in delinquency when definitions favouring law violations surpass those against it. These definitions can be specific, such as rationalizing theft from an insured store as a victimless crime, or more general, like claiming a right to act freely on public land. Such definitions justify delinquent activities, while opposing definitions, such as "stealing is immoral," counteract them.

The impact of these definitions depends on how frequently they are encountered, how early in life they are introduced, and the value placed on the relationship with the person presenting them. Juveniles are most influenced by definitions from friends and family, but learning can also occur through schools and media. For instance, media that romanticizes criminals, like "The Sopranos" or "The Godfather," can impact a juvenile's learning by promoting messages that favour breaking the law. If a juvenile focuses on these messages, they may be more inclined to engage in delinquent behaviour.

Additionally, even if a juvenile is inclined toward delinquency, they must possess the necessary skills. These skills can be complex, such as those required for computer hacking, or simpler, like shoplifting. In summary, Sutherland's differential association theory elucidates how juveniles learn to become delinquents through social interactions, with influential definitions and skills playing vital roles.

### **Subculture Theory**

A subculture is a smaller group within a larger society that gives its members a sense of identity. These subcultures contribute to a mix of language, customs, and values but can also encourage antisocial behaviour in juveniles, like theft, truancy, rape, and cheating on exams. Cohen's (1955) main idea is that most juvenile delinquents are part of these delinquent subcultures. These groups have their own attitudes and norms that often conflict with those of the larger society. Cohen (1955) suggests that these subcultures form as a response to the adjustment and status problems their members face due to class inequality. For example, a lower-class boy may try to reach the goals of higher social classes but fails because of his social background

and rigid social structures. Compared to middle-class boys, he sees his own low status, poor prestige, and limited success, leading to self-respect issues. This often leads to the creation of alternative groups defined by their rejection of unattainable middle-class standards.

Cohen (1955) states that these delinquent subcultures have deviant values and morals that give their members prestige and recognition. The behaviour within these subcultures differs significantly from outside because of these new norms, appearing deviant and often criminal to the broader society. As an alternative status system, subcultures justify hostility and aggression towards non-members, removing any guilt. According to Cohen, delinquent subcultures are marked by non-economic rationality, malicious intent, negativism, versatility in delinquent behaviours, hedonism, and resistance to external conformity pressures while maintaining loyalty to their group.

Subculture theory specifically deals with juvenile delinquency rather than general criminal behaviour. Socially unequal conditions lead to subcultures as expressions of social differentiation, with norms that differ from the broader society but are seen as normal within the subculture. Miller (1959) expanded on this by developing a theory of behaviour for all males in lower-class subcultures. He identified a set of values and beliefs, called "Focal Concerns," distinct from other groups. These include autonomy, excitement, fate, smartness, and trouble. According to Miller, these values are part of the daily lives of the lower class and are acts of defiance against middle-class expectations.

Juvenile delinquency has been extensively studied by scholars, providing a basis for further research into its causes and consequences. If not addressed early, juvenile delinquency can create additional social problems. The theories discussed reveal numerous factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. This research adopts the differential association theory for its sociological explanation of delinquency through a unique approach.

## **Empirical Review**

### **The nature of delinquent behaviour**

The issue of juvenile delinquency has long been a focal point in discussions about social and educational policies as well as criminology. Its roots stretch back to Europe in the 7th century. By the 17th century, children were often treated as adults in legal contexts and faced severe penalties for their actions. Corporal punishment was commonly used, and in extreme cases, offenses could lead to the death penalty (Shoemaker, 2009; Du Preez, 2011). Over time, societal views shifted, recognizing that children are naturally innocent and need adult guidance as they mature. This led to new laws that mandated parental oversight and the modelling of proper behaviour, including shielding children from inappropriate content and teaching them manners (Ololube, 2013).

In Nigerian secondary schools, juvenile delinquency appears in various forms. Theft, for instance, involves taking items like textbooks, snacks, or money without permission and is often associated with poor academic performance and other problematic behaviours such as substance abuse and emotional issues (Ololube, 2013). Dishonesty among students includes actions like lying, falsifying reports, and cheating, which undermine personal development and the credibility of educational institutions (Gresley, 2009). Disobedience can be seen in students ignoring rules or wearing incorrect uniforms, while truancy involves

missing school or arriving late without valid reasons (Ololube, 2012; Animasahun, 2009; Akano, 2011). Other significant issues include cultism, where students join prohibited groups to intimidate others, and examination malpractice, which incorporates cheating and fraudulent practices (Ololube, 2012; Ayaaniya, 2017). Teenage pregnancies and sexual offenses, including rape and possession of pornography, also contribute to the problem (Egbochuku, 2008). Drug offenses involve the use or possession of illegal substances, and behaviours like bullying, assault, and verbal abuse are prevalent as well (Crews, Crews & Turner, 2008; Ololube, 2012).

The causes of juvenile delinquency are diverse, often stemming from home life to societal influences. In the home environment, factors such as broken families, poor living conditions, and lack of parental supervision can lead to delinquency. Sambo (2008) notes that family issues like conflict and inadequate involvement can contribute to such behaviour. In contrast, some children from wealthier backgrounds might engage in delinquent behaviour as a form of protest or attention-seeking (Miranda, 2015; Ilongo, 2009; Kabir, 2019).

Societal influences also play a crucial role. Children exposed to violence or substance abuse in their communities may resort to delinquent behaviour as a survival strategy. The moral failings and general misconduct of adults can further encourage young people to replicate such behaviour (Toluhi, 2002). For example, homeless children in Georgia, lacking proper guardianship, may resort to crime as a means of survival (Ivlita, 2020). An increase in juvenile delinquents in Port-Harcourt has been linked to inadequate home environments (Iseberetonma et al., 2020).

School environments also significantly impact delinquency. Overcrowded, poorly maintained schools can create settings that foster misbehaviour. Insufficient resources and lax attendance regulations often lead to truancy and other forms of delinquent activity (Thabethe, 2010; Gyansah et al., 2015). Schools that lack discipline and active parental involvement tend to see higher rates of delinquency (BHRC, 2018).

Peer influence is another important factor. Adolescents may engage in delinquent behaviour to fit in with their peers. Studies show that peer pressure is a major contributor to juvenile delinquency, with delinquent peers often encouraging similar behaviour (May, 2016; Becker, 2007). Additionally, research suggests that peer delinquency can reinforce delinquent behaviour over time (Twan, 2019).

### **Consequences of Juvenile Delinquency**

Juvenile delinquency has lasting impacts on the child involved, their family, and society at large. If not addressed, these effects can intensify. According to a study by Etifit (2012), untreated delinquent behaviour significantly harms society by destroying lives and property. This situation worries parents, guardians, teachers, and government officials about the future of today's youth. The concern arises over what will become of society if juvenile delinquency continues unchecked.

Victims are the most immediate sufferers of juvenile delinquency. Crimes such as theft, vandalism, or violence result in losses for the victims, who may face financial burdens due to lost wages, healthcare costs, and psychological treatment, in addition to the expense of

replacing damaged or stolen property. Yaroson (2004) notes that the impacts on victims include psychological trauma, lost income, and significant medical expenses, contributing to societal fear of youth, which some scholars criticize as irrational.

The juveniles themselves also face severe consequences. They might lose their freedom through incarceration or probation and fall behind in their studies. Being placed in residential detention centres can expose them to more experienced delinquents, increasing the chances of repeat offences. In some states, repeat offenders over 14 can be tried and sentenced as adults, affecting their future educational and career opportunities (Animasahun, 2009). Wickliffe (2012) highlights that juvenile delinquents miss out on family support and are prone to risky behaviours like unprotected sex, leading to issues such as teenage pregnancy, illegal abortions, and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Marte (2008) adds that delinquent behaviour can lead to impulsive actions and defiant behaviour.

Chronic delinquency can result in unemployment or difficulties in the workplace (Williams, 2012). Estevez and Nicholas (2011) point out that delinquents miss opportunities to learn pro-social behaviours and skills, which can trap them in a life of antisocial and dangerous activities. Prinsloo (2007) argues that weak authority structures prevent antisocial children from learning discipline. Chronic delinquency and potential adult sentencing further hinder future career prospects.

Families of juvenile delinquents face significant upheaval and trauma, creating instability for all members. They must deal with the delinquent child's needs and often bear financial burdens from legal fees and ethical responsibilities to victims. Counselling sessions for families, although necessary, can be disruptive and expensive. Parents often experience anxiety over their children's antisocial activities, and despite reform efforts, the social stigma remains (Bello, 2006). Anon (2008) states that struggling with delinquent youth can lead to family dysfunction and increased delinquency. Affected families may also face psychological trauma, possibly forcing relocation and suffering from stress-related ailments.

Society bears substantial financial costs due to juvenile delinquency. In 2009, young offenders in England and Wales cost approximately 4 billion pounds in policing, punishment, and trials. In the USA, an average of \$240 per juvenile offender out of the 93,000 incarcerated annually amounts to 5.7 billion dollars (Williams, 2012). These funds could otherwise address social issues like poverty, housing, and employment. Ellis (2012) mentions that teenage abortions in South Africa drain resources from other societal needs. Persistent fear of crime and perceived government ineffectiveness can undermine public trust and hinder preventive efforts by various organizations. De Wet (2004) notes that funds intended for new school construction are often diverted to repair vandalized ones. Mendoza (2009) adds that juvenile delinquency increases health and welfare costs while reducing production rates and property values, weakening community structures.

Schools, like families, significantly influence youth social development but are also hotspots for juvenile misconduct (Schmalleger & Bartollas, 2008). Juvenile delinquency disrupts education, endangers teachers and students, and leads to bullying, aggression, and other antisocial behaviours. Gottfredson (2001) states that juvenile delinquency affects perpetrators and others inside and outside school environments. In South Africa, teachers in crime-riddled schools experience hopelessness and frustration, contributing to a decline in morale due to the

abolition of corporal punishment (Bezuidenhout, 2003). Misbehaviour among students includes truancy, vandalism, and bullying, disrupting the educational environment.

Juvenile delinquency negatively impacts academic performance in secondary schools. Poor academic performance often leads students to engage in risky behaviours such as alcohol abuse, drug use, and fighting to cope with frustration (Crosnoe, 2006). Van Breda (2006) argues that students who fail academically due to subject-streaming practices become frustrated and turn to delinquent behaviour. Seale (2012) suggests that teacher misconduct can lead to underperformance and delinquency among students. Research by Andrew et al. (2015) on the relationship between cell phones and academic performance indicates that cell phone use disrupts both physical activity and academic success. Gyansah et al. (2015) found that factors like financial problems, bad friends, and poor academic performance contribute to child delinquency. He recommended parental monitoring and proper classroom management to address the issue.

Juvenile delinquency, an antisocial behaviour, affects life at school for both students and teachers. Public schools face more issues related to delinquency compared to independent and church schools (Ololube, 2013). Yaroson (2004) found that factors such as teacher punishment levels and student-teacher relationships significantly impact student behaviour. Ivory et al. (2012) noted that perceived social support from teachers can reduce delinquent behaviour, emphasizing the importance of a supportive school environment in addressing juvenile delinquency.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

A social survey design was used in the study to gather information from a sample of individuals. The choice of the survey design is informed by the fact that it enables the collection of large and original information directly from respondents in order to draw a conclusion and make generalizations about the entire population.

### **Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The population size for this study consisted of 1,497 secondary school students below 18 years of age residing in Keffi Town, Keffi Local government area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The sample size of this study was 306 students. They were selected using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. A simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of four (4) Secondary Schools in Keffi town. Two government secondary schools and two private secondary schools. These secondary schools include the Federal Government College (GSS), Sokoga British School (SBS), Government Secondary School Keffi South (GSSKF) and ECWA High School (EHS)



**Table 3.2: Distribution of the target population for the study**

S/N	Secondary schools	Number of students
1.	Federal government college, Keffi	750
2.	Sokoga British School, Keffi	47
3.	Government Secondary school, Keffi South	460
4.	Ecwa High school, Keffi	240
	Total	1497

For the In-depth interviews (IDI), a purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting the participants who comprised of parents, guardians and teachers to complement the quantitative data for the study. The purposive technique was more efficient as it provided access to a self-selected population for the research. Furthermore, five IDIs were conducted on teachers of the secondary school while ten IDIs were conducted on parents and guardians. Therefore, a total number of 15 IDIs were conducted in the study area among the selected informants.

### **Method of Data Collection**

In this study, structured questionnaires and in-depth interview methods of data collection were utilized in gathering primary data with the help of research assistance. A uniform set of questionnaire schedules was administered to all respondents. The questionnaire schedule aimed at obtaining information on the nature, causes and consequences of juvenile delinquency amongst secondary school students in Keffi Town. The questionnaires provide a standard form of responses for the generality of the target respondents which made it easier for data analysis.

In-depth interview (IDIs) was used to collect qualitative data; in-depth interview was conducted with teachers, parents and guardians. The in-depth interview method was adopted in order to increase the depth of the investigation as well obtain sensitive and salient information about the issues under consideration which could not be obtained via the questionnaires. The in-depth interview guide was structured in line with the research objectives

### **Method of data analysis**

The study elicits data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was analysed using univariate analyses on the statistical package for social science (SPSS V. 20). The univariate analyses involve the use of descriptive statistics, such as frequency distribution, mean, frequency, and percentage. Data will be analysed with respect to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, as well as the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and juvenile delinquency.

The in-depth interview (IDIs) procedure began with a verbatim transcription of the recordings for each IDI. Afterwards, common themes were generated from the responses and categorised thematically in line with the study's objective. The result was presented according to the majority of the responses. Verbal quotes were used to demonstrate important responses and to support relevant explanations.

### Validation of instruments

To ensure the validity of the instruments that were employed for the study, the questionnaires and in-depth interview guides were subjected to face validity by the researchers who presented them to experts. The experts examined the instruments in order to ensure the instruments were properly constructed to align with the purpose and objectives of the study. The instruments were equally examined to ensure clarity and comprehensiveness and to remove possible ambiguities, errors and or omissions. Thus, the experts' comments and corrections were made before they were finally administered to the respondents.

### Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations were observed throughout the fieldwork. Questionnaires were completed without coercion while the IDIs were conducted with the participants only after prior permission and verbal consent from the participants. More so, the researchers briefed the participants on the general purpose of the study as well as information regarding anonymity and confidentiality.

## DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

A descriptive survey was carried out to obtain primary data from 306 respondents through the administration of questionnaires. 298 representing 97.3% of the total questionnaires were returned and subsequently analysed and 8 questionnaires were not returned. This is further represented in the Univariate analysis table below:

**Table 4.1: Socio-Demographic Distribution of Respondents**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Male	165	55.4
Female	133	44.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
9-13 Years	87	29.2
14-17 Year	211	70.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Class</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
JSS 1-3	102	34.2
SSS 1-3	196	65.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>School Types</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Private	84	28.2
Government	214	71.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.1 shows the analyses of the socio-demographic data of respondents. The sex of the respondents shows that 55.4 percent of respondents were males while 44.6 percent of the respondents were females indicating that more males were involved in the study than their female counterparts. Also, the table indicates that 29.2 percent of respondents are within the age range of 9-13 years while 70.8 percent are between the ages of 14-17. This implies that the

study covered mostly the age bracket of 14-17 ages of students. The table also indicates 34.2 percent of the total respondents were in JSS 1-3 while 65.8 percent of the total respondents were between SSS 1-3. These results revealed that higher populations of the respondents are between SSS 1-3. Furthermore, the table also shows that 84 respondents representing 28.2 percent of the total respondents; are students from private secondary schools within Keffi town while 214 respondents representing 71.8 percent of the total respondents are students from public secondary schools within Keffi town. These results revealed that a higher population of the respondents are students from government secondary schools.

**Table 4.2 Respondents' View on the Causes of Juvenile Delinquency among Secondary School Students**

Section B	Items	Scale				
		SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
<b>Causes of Juvenile delinquency among Secondary School Students</b>	Poor schools condition causes Juvenile delinquency in your school	35.6 (106)	21.1 (63)	9.1 (27)	18.4 (55)	15.8 (47)
	Socio-economy status of Parents causes Juvenile delinquency	43.0 (128)	29.0 (86)	4.3 (13)	14.4 (43)	9.3 (28)
	Peer group influences delinquent behaviours in your school	34.6 (103)	45.0 (134)	5.0 (15)	6.7 (20)	8.7 (26)
	Juvenile delinquency is caused by broken homes	42.3 (126)	53.0 (158)	1.7 (5)	1.7 (5)	1.3 (4)
	Poor Parental upbringing causes delinquent behaviours in Students	47.7 (142)	44.6 (133)	0.7 (2)	4.4 (13)	2.6 (8)
	Teachers' failure to meet-up their responsibilities contributes to Juvenile delinquency in your school	1.0 (3)	2.3 (7)	53.4 (159)	14.1 (42)	29.2 (87)

Table 4.2 displays respondents' views on the causes of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students. The data reveals various factors perceived to contribute to delinquent behaviours.

A significant 35.6% of respondents strongly agreed that poor school conditions cause delinquent behaviours, with 21.1% agreeing. Meanwhile, 9.1% were undecided, 18.4% disagreed, and 15.8% strongly disagreed. Thus, poor school conditions are seen as a contributing factor by a considerable portion of respondents.

Socio-economic status of parents is also considered a major cause, with 43.0% strongly agreeing and 29.0% agreeing. Only 4.3% were undecided, 14.4% disagreed, and 9.3% strongly disagreed. This indicates that many respondents believe that a family's economic status significantly impacts juvenile delinquency.

Peer group influence is another notable factor, with 34.6% strongly agreeing and 45.0% agreeing that it contributes to delinquency. A smaller percentage, 5.0%, were undecided, while 6.7% disagreed, and 8.7% strongly disagreed. This suggests that peers play a crucial role in influencing delinquent behaviour among students.

Broken homes are perceived as a major cause, with 42.3% strongly agreeing and 53.0% agreeing. Only 1.7% were undecided, 1.7% disagreed, and 1.3% strongly disagreed. This indicates a strong consensus that family instability contributes to juvenile delinquency.

Poor parental upbringing is also seen as a significant factor, with 47.7% strongly agreeing and 44.6% agreeing. Only 0.7% were undecided, 4.4% disagreed, and 2.6% strongly disagreed. This indicates that the majority of respondents view inadequate parenting as a key cause of delinquent behaviour.

Lastly, teachers' failure to meet their responsibilities is considered a lesser cause, with only 1.0% strongly agreeing and 2.3% agreeing. A majority of 53.4% were undecided, while 14.1% disagreed and 29.2% strongly disagreed. This suggests that while some believe teachers' shortcomings contribute to delinquency, many are uncertain or disagree.

In response to the causes of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students, IDIs acknowledged the home and the environmental factors directly responsible for the causes of delinquent behaviours among secondary school students in Keffi Town.

“The issue of Juvenile Delinquency can be traced to the home because the family is the primary agent of socialization, if a bad behaviour is observed in a student or child, the family should be held responsible for not controlling the anti-social behaviour of the child because they are supposed to correct their children if he/she is doing something”. (Mother/Married/Civil Servant)

Another respondent added that;

“The environment causes juvenile delinquency because you notice secondary school student who lives in an environment where alcohol and drug abuse, fighting, cultism and smoking is common, will also participate in this bad behaviour which is unhealthy for the student” (Guardian /Married/Civil servant)

Another respondent added that;

“The home is responsible for causes of juvenile delinquency; this is because the family is supposed to do their primary assignment in the socialization process of the growing child, I believe the school also has their role to play but the family should do their first” (Teacher/40/9/Female/B.SC)

“The issue of juvenile delinquency is becoming normal in our secondary schools today and the causes of juvenile delinquency can be attributed to peer influence (students keeping bad friends), when you walk with bad friends, you will definitely be influenced in one way or the other, like the popular saying, show me your friends and I will tell you who you are” (Teacher/36/8/Male/B.SC)

**Table 4.3: Responses on nature of Juvenile Delinquency among Secondary School**

	Items	Frequency	Percentage
<b>What are the Common Types of Common Juvenile delinquency in your School</b>	Stealing	183	61.4
	Dishonesty	268	90.0
	Bullying	279	93.6
	Exam Malpractice	285	95.6
	Cultism	234	78.5
	Absent from School	245	82.2
	Drug and Alcohol Abuse	213	71.5
	Sexual Offences/Teenage Pregnancy	87	29.2
	Assault and Insult	253	84.9
	Lying	271	90.9

Table 4.3 reveals that various types of juvenile delinquency occur among secondary school students in Keffi Town. Examination malpractice was reported as the most prevalent as reported by 95.6% of respondents. This is followed by bullying (93.6%), lying (90.9%), dishonesty (90.0%), and assault and insult (84.9%). Absenteeism was identified by 82.2% of respondents, while cultism is mentioned by 78.5%. Drug and alcohol abuse was reported by 71.5%, and stealing by 61.4%. The least common delinquent behaviours are sexual offences and teenage pregnancy, as noted by 29.2% of respondents. These findings indicate that exam malpractice and bullying are the most significant issues, necessitating targeted interventions to address these problems effectively.

Also, with regards to the nature of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in the study area, IDIs response agreed to have experienced some types of delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Keffi Town, Local Government area of Nasarawa State.

“I have observed numerous types of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students here in Keffi, some of these are anti-social behaviour including stealing, exam malpractice and fighting, this becoming a problem in our secondary schools and even our society. I think the government should do something about it before it gets out of hand”. (Father/Married/Civil Servant)

Another respondent added that;

“I have witnessed Secondary School Students engage in stealing, fighting, and drug abuse and when they are caught in such behaviour by their parents or teachers, they are sanctioned, I also think exam malpractice is becoming a

common habit in our secondary schools today since” (IDI/Father/Married/Civil Servant)

Another respondent added that;

“I have personally observed stubbornness and fighting among students in my school. Delinquent behaviour among students is becoming a norm and worrisome because these children fight within and outside the school premises which brings a bad reputation to the school and their family. Students who are caught fighting or stealing are subjected to punishment which is favourable to the teachers and unfavourable to the students but this hasn’t solved the problem” (Teacher/28/3/Female/B.SC)

Another respondent stated;

“I have seen student steal and also be arrogant towards their teachers in my school, these problems are been observed not just in my school but in many other secondary schools. The other day, students complained about missing food and money all the time. I suggest something needs to be done regarding this issue” (Teacher/35/4/Female/B.SC)

**Table 4.4: Consequences of Juvenile delinquency among Secondary School Students**

Section B	Items	Agreement Scale				
		SA(%)	A(%)	U(%)	D(%)	SD(%)
<b>Consequences of Juvenile delinquency Among Secondary Schools Students</b>	Juvenile delinquency affects teaching and learning in my school	27.9 (83)	54.7 (163)	10.7 (32)	5.0 (15)	1.7 (5)
	Juvenile delinquency is disastrous to student’s adulthood and future.	63.1 (188)	31.5 (94)	3.4 (10)	1.3 (4)	0.7 (2)
	Juvenile delinquency causes harm or danger to other people	58.4 (174)	31.5 (94)	2.0 (6)	6.7 (14)	8.7 (10)
	Juvenile delinquency create instability in the family	63.8 (190)	32.2 (96)	0.7 (2)	2.3 (7)	1.0 (3)
	Bad behaviour makes neighbourhood and community unsafe	71.1 (212)	26.5 (79)	0 (0)	1.0 (3)	1.3 (4)

Table 4.4 presents insights into the consequences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town. A significant majority, 54.7% of respondents, agreed that juvenile delinquency impacts teaching and learning in schools, with 27.9% strongly agreeing. Conversely, 5% disagreed and 1.7% strongly disagreed with this view.

Regarding long-term effects, 63.1% strongly believed that juvenile delinquency is detrimental to students' future and adulthood, while 31.5% agreed. Only 1.3% disagreed, and 0.7% strongly

disagreed. Additionally, 59% strongly agreed that juvenile delinquency poses harm or danger to others, and 30.9% agreed. In contrast, 4.7% disagreed, and 3.4% strongly disagreed.

On the issue of family instability, 63.8% strongly agreed that juvenile delinquency creates instability, with 32.2% agreeing. Only 2.3% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

Lastly, 71.1% strongly agreed that juvenile delinquency makes neighbourhoods and communities unsafe, and 23.3% agreed. Just 1.0% disagreed, and 1.3% strongly disagreed.

Furthermore, in response to the consequences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students, IDIs agreed that the family of the delinquent child will be disrespected and as well as the juvenile will have a slower career if they do not refrain from anti-social behaviour. According to one of the respondents:

“Any student who engages in delinquent behaviour will have a slower career because he or she will not be able to finish school as a result of expulsion or drop out, this will make it impossible for the juvenile to secure a job and also maintain a social status” (Mother/Married/Civil Servant)

Another respondent has this to say;

“The consequences associated with juvenile delinquency are numerous because looking at it from my own view, when a child steals, he or she has broken the law and when a law is broken it affects other people. Secondly, juvenile delinquency is gradually making our society unsafe. The delinquent children end up influencing the good ones which calls for great concern” (Guardian/Married/Civil Servant)

Another respondent has this to say;

“When a student engages in juvenile delinquency, such as exam malpractice, he or she is subject to suspension and when they continue in such anti-social behaviour, the school authority has no option than to expel them. This is done in order to create standards for the school and also serves as a deterrent to other students to avoid exam malpractice” (Teacher/38/5/Female).

Another respondent said;

“Students who engage in delinquent behaviour tend to perform very low in their academics because they spend much time in delinquent acts instead of studying. These usually slow down their careers since they end up repeating a class” (Teacher/36/8/Male)

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

On the causes of Juvenile delinquency among secondary school students, the study reveals that poor parental upbringing influences delinquent behaviour as well as other factors which include poor school conditions, the socio-economic condition of parents, peer group, broken homes and teachers' failure to meet up with their responsibilities. Parents, teachers and guardians

confirmed that the home is directly responsible for the influence of juvenile delinquency among others such as the environment, peer group and the school, some of the teachers confirmed that juvenile delinquency is caused by peer influence and lack of parental supervision. This finding agrees with (Folorunsho, Ajayi & Abdulrazaq, 2024), who maintained that a substantial portion of delinquent acts among adolescents can be attributed to familial discord and the specific parenting styles employed.

The management of the school is the pillar of the school. So, management that is better-organised leads to better discipline within the school. In further affirmation of these findings, a similar study was carried out by Yemene (2020) on the causes, consequences and remedies of juvenile delinquency in the context of sub-Sahara Africa, the survey research shows that 58.6 % of students who lack parental supervision contribute to juvenile delinquency among secondary school students. According to (Mwangangi, 2019) “uninvolved parenting” describes situations where parents are emotionally distant from their children and show little warmth and love towards them, provide little supervision, intentionally avoid them, have few expectations or demands for their behaviour, never attend school events, and are generally too overwhelmed by their problems to deal with their children. Mwangangi argues that juvenile delinquency is more likely to come from families with uninvolved parenting than from those with interested parents. she found that approximately two-thirds of juvenile offenders came from families in which the children perceived their parents to show no interest in them, while only one-third of offenders came from families with parents who were interested in them. Similarly, 86% of non-offenders came from families with parents who were “interested” in their children.

On the nature of juvenile delinquency, the study revealed 95% of exam malpractice as a form of delinquent behaviour among secondary school students in Keffi Local Government area of Nasarawa State. Other types of delinquent behaviour among secondary school students include; stealing, Lying, arrogance, dishonesty, bullying cultism, truancy, sexual offences/teenage pregnancy, assault and insult. Parent, teachers and guardian in-depth interviews confirmed that drug abuse, fighting and exam malpractice are common types of delinquent behaviour among secondary school students. The findings agree with (Maznah, 2007) who observed the prevalence of drug abuse as well as crime against property theft and housebreaking at night were recorded. In support of this Etifit (2012) revealed that juvenile delinquency is rampant and %85 students of secondary students indulge in exam malpractice and as well as Burglary.

Findings on the consequences of juvenile delinquency, the study reveals that %71.1 agreed that juvenile delinquency makes the community and neighbourhood unsafe, this is because delinquent behaviour affects the smooth running of society, and the negative effect of delinquency can never be overemphasised in any given society. Other consequences of juvenile delinquency include; teaching/learning performance destroys juvenile adulthood and the future as well as causing harm and danger to others. Parent in-depth interview confirmed disrespect as a consequence of juvenile delinquency as it brings disrespect to the family and the delinquent child. The teacher’s in-depth interview confirmed that expulsion, poor academic performance and a slow career as the negative effects of juvenile delinquency.

In support of these findings (Yemane, 2020) noted the effect of juvenile delinquency on society, juveniles who becomes delinquent before they are 18 years old challenge the future for everyone involved. They may be acting out to protest perceived abuses that have been perpetrated against them. They may believe that there is no future for them outside of a life of delinquency. They may be expressing anger or frustration directed against another person or



group or looking for approval from a gang (World Youth Report, 2003) Effects on the Families, the upheaval and trauma of having a family member who is a juvenile delinquent can create instability for the other relatives. According to Jannetta and Okeke (2017) the negative impacts of overly punitive and broad policies are intergenerational, with children of incarcerated parents more likely to drop out of school, develop learning disabilities, have disciplinary problems in school, and suffer from several physical and behavioural health issues, such as asthma, high cholesterol, and depression.

Finally, the different association theory and sub-cultural theory have been adequate in explaining the occurrence of juvenile delinquency. The juvenile will choose a delinquent path when they realize the benefit outweighs the punishment. Delinquency is also seen to be learned through social interaction with others in a process of communication (Edwin Sutherland 1924). The purpose of delinquency by juvenile according to subculture theory is to annoy or cause injuries to others, the juvenile delinquent observes external pressure of conformity and loyalty towards their group (Cohen, 1959).

### **Conclusion**

Juvenile delinquency is prevalent among secondary school student and this social problem need to be addressed due to the effect on contemporary society, family, school and the juvenile. Juvenile delinquency today isn't getting the adequate attention it deserves and most cases of delinquent behaviour are often swept under the carpet, this should be discouraged and any cases of juvenile delinquency should always be reported to the appropriate authorities such as the Parent/guardian, teachers/principals and law enforcement agency, this will help to reduce the prevalence of juvenile delinquency and forestall re-occurrence in future.

The study also revealed that stealing, dishonesty, arrogance, stubbornness, bullying, cultism, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual offences and teenage pregnancy, assault and insult and lying are the most common forms of juvenile offenses. Parents and guardians should exercise proper parental supervision and give adequate care to transmit positive societal values to their children. In addition, the government, the police, prosecution and courts, non-governmental organizations, parents, teachers, education administrators and other stakeholders should develop a child justice system that strives to prevent children from entering deeper into the criminal justice process while holding them accountable for their actions by means of diversion programs.

The major objective of the study was to sociologically examine juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Keffi Town. The study has yielded important findings indicating that there is a need for the government to take more interest in Juvenile delinquency among secondary school students. The finding of this study has implications for policy and future research. Also, the findings of the study added to our understanding of the causes, types and consequences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students.

The study indicated that the majority of the respondents agreed that juvenile delinquency warrants the kind attention it is getting now due to the prevalence across secondary schools in Keffi Town, Keffi Local government area of Nasarawa State. Juvenile delinquency is caused by many factors such as the school, family, environment and peer group and as such each socialization institution needs to pay adequate attention to delinquents.

## Recommendations

Based on the study's results, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The governments should invest in building more schools with upgraded facilities to improve the learning environment for secondary students. Additionally, modern youth rehabilitation centres should be established. NGOs should broaden their outreach efforts in schools through various media channels and collaborate with educational, familial, and community stakeholders.
2. Schools need to enhance their measures against exam malpractice by upgrading teaching conditions and imposing disciplinary actions for any forms of misconduct. Schools should also promote the use of free government education for juveniles who are not currently in school to combat idleness. Furthermore, schools should provide extracurricular activities such as music, sports, quizzes, and debates to engage students.
3. Parents and guardians must meet their obligations to support their children, whether by blood or adoption. Families should receive education on the psychological effects of broken homes on juvenile behaviour. Educational initiatives about juvenile delinquency and its impacts should be widely promoted through various media to increase awareness among families, schools, and communities.
4. The juvenile justice system should be reformed to address the underlying causes of delinquency with comprehensive solutions, rather than focusing solely on punishment. A collaborative approach involving communities, schools, religious organizations, and government bodies is needed to effectively tackle juvenile delinquency, shifting away from the current emphasis on legal penalties.

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