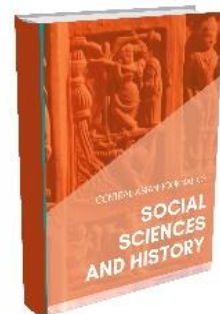




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Effects of Family Structure on Juvenile Delinquency in Rivers State: A Theoretical Review

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Abstract:

Juvenile delinquency is considered one of the threats that destroy life and property in our society today. Due to the nature of the crimes committed by juveniles, parents, management, sponsors and supporters are concerned about the future of teenagers in Nigeria. Juvenile crimes include: rape, theft, kleptomania, burglary, disobedience, murder, absenteeism, vandalism, robbery, etc. Thus, this study aims to explore the effects of family structure on juvenile delinquency in Rivers State. The objective of this study aims at finding out the influence of single-parent families and two-parent families on juvenile, and the ways the society can adopt to mitigate the challenges of juvenile delinquency in Rivers State. The study adopted the Broken Home Theory which was developed by Wilkinson Kelly (1969). And the method of data collection was secondary while the content analysis was used for analysis. The study established that there is strong link between family structure and juvenile delinquency; and children in single-parent of broken homes commit more crime than children from homes that are conflict free in Rivers State. The study also revealed that some factors that lead to single-parent are beyond the control of parents, therefore, there is the need for the communities, schools, churches and communities to get involve in cushioning the challenge of juvenile delinquency in the society.

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This assistance could be in the form of providing employment opportunities for the parents, adequate education and counseling services for members of the society.

1. Introduction

The family is the most fundamental socialisation unit, and it plays a tremendous role in the transmission and upkeep of any culture. It is possible to see the family as the environment in which a kid is instructed and guided towards social engagement within the larger community. Children are brought up in a way that is highly organised and disciplined in the majority of cultures. Parents are encouraged to instil and imprint in their children strong fundamental moral, spiritual, social, physical, and cognitive concepts (Rao & Singh, 2021). The family unit is widely recognised as the main and most essential socialisation vehicle in modern societies. As such, the family unit is an essential component of society. Families are one of the most influential socialising factors in a person's life; via them, children learn how to regulate unwanted behaviour, and how to respect the rights of others (Singh, & Kiran, 2015). Traditionally, a family consists of a man, a woman, and the children that they have together. In every civilization throughout history, the family unit has been and will continue to be regarded as the social institution that has the greatest influence on the larger community. It is the most significant institution since it is where a kid is initially socialised in order for them to be able to satisfy the demands of the society (Goode, 1982 cited in Rao & Singh, 2021).

There have been substantial changes in the traditional family structure over the course of the previous thirty years. In many parts of the globe, there has been an increase in the rates of divorce, early pregnancy, single parenting as a consequence of choice or the passing of a spouse, cohabitation, and remarriage, all of which have led to the formation of new types of families. The findings of a large number of research have pointed to the existence of a correlation between the composition of a child's family and the behavioural patterns that they exhibit as adults. According to Wallman (2010), there is support for the theory that the development of delinquent conduct in children is closely tied to the degree of stability, or lack thereof, in the structure of the family. There has not been a lot of research done on this topic in Africa, and Kenya in particular. The dynamics of families in Kenya are quite different from those in the western world, where studies have been done on this subject (Loeber & Stouthammer-Loeber, 2012).

According to Carlson and Corcoran (2001), unanticipated changes or disruptions in the family, as well as disputes and distress, may have a substantial impact on the outcomes for children over both the short and the long term. When combined with bad parenting and issues in the connection between the parents, problematic family structures and relationships may have long-lasting and deleterious consequences on a child's development, which can lead to delinquent conduct later in life. In the context of this research, the concept of "family structure" refers to the composition and membership of the family, and it includes not only families with two parents but also families led by grandparents or other relatives, as well as families in which neither of the biological parents is present. The typical composition of a family included a father, a mother, and the offspring of both parents. This type of family structure ensured that the children would receive a well-rounded form of care. While the fathers were responsible for providing their sons with appropriate sanctions, discipline, and a ready role model, the mothers were responsible for teaching their daughters the softer skills of respect, meekness, service, and role modelling. A consistent interactional pattern within the framework of the conventional family that included monitoring, self-control, and supervision served as suitable buffers

that safeguarded children from becoming delinquent (Meldrum et al., 2016).

According to Ngale (2009), the organisation of the family is what constitutes the fundamental building blocks of human society. As a result, the results for the children are dependent on the interactions that take place inside this fundamental unit. He went on to remark that children who are subjected to rejection from their parents, children who witness or suffer abuse, or children who are not provided with the appropriate guidance are at an increased risk of engaging in antisocial conduct. This argument highlights the fact that a full understanding of the structure of the family cannot be achieved without also taking into account the interactional pattern that exists within the family structure. People who originate from less-than-perfect households, sometimes known as "broken homes," have traditionally been thought of as being more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. Children who are raised in single-parent families, or any other families in which both of their biological parents are not present, are sometimes referred to as "broken families". This use of the word has been common for many years (Kimani, 2010). In contrast, the term "complete family" most often refers to a nuclear family structure in which both biological parents continue to live in the same place as their biological children (Kierkus & Baer, 2002). Other contemporary family arrangements, such as incomplete family arrangements, two-parent arrangements involving the stepfather, arrangements involving extended family members, and foster/adoptive families differ from intact family arrangements. The following are examples of such other contemporary family arrangements: (Wells and Rankin, 1986).

In many cases, the problem of juvenile delinquency is greatly exacerbated by dysfunctional family relationships. Craig and Glick (2012) found three factors associated with an increased likelihood of juvenile delinquency when surveying areas of high juvenile delinquency in New York City. These factors included negligent or inadequate supervision by the mother or surrogate; unstable or too strict discipline; and the lack of cohesion within the family. These three factors contributed to an increased likelihood of juvenile delinquency. Sheldon (2011) discovered that just 4.1 percent of dads used effective methods of child rearing, while 26.7 percent used fair methods, and 69.3 percent used ineffective methods. If a young person's controls are going to be effectively assimilated into their personality, there must be consistency and tenacity in the application of discipline. Situations, as well as the right techniques of punishment to deal with a kid, need to occur often enough for the child to be able to establish notions of acceptable behaviour and be able to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate reactions.

In recent years, there has been a rise in the prevalence of single parenthood in our culture, which poses a danger to the fundamental functions and obligations of the family unit. In a country like Nigeria, for example, the presence of single parenthood is unknown, and even when it does occur, it is brushed off as an uncommon circumstance. At the present time, single parenthood is a family pattern that is rapidly expanding both inside and outside of Nigeria. It has become even more frequent than the so-called nuclear family, which is comprised of the father, the mother, and the children (Tenibiaje et al., 2011). The majority of single parenting in our culture today may be attributed to situations such as divorce, separation, the passing of a parent, an unplanned pregnancy experienced by an unmarried couple, or both, as well as adoption by a single parent (Amato, 2000). Children who are raised by a single parent are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour than children who come from homes in which the man and the woman are married to each other and live together. The family is the fundamental unit of human society; children who are disapproved of by their parents, who are raised in households where there is significant strife, or who are not adequately monitored run the highest risk of becoming

juvenile offenders (Wright & Wright, 1994).

To reiterate, children who come from troubled homes that are at risk of splitting up and being raised by a single parent will have a lower degree of family supervision and control than children who come from families in which the husband and wife cohabit the same household. It is far more challenging to provide constant parental supervision to a household with just one adult parent present as compared to a household with two parents (Dogget, 2004). The degree of love and emotional ties that can be maintained by a single parent is always going to be lower than those that can be maintained by a whole family, and this will have a detrimental impact on the child's attitude and behaviour. Children who did not have the necessary and needed family ties are more likely to be subject to training from their peer group, which may lead to delinquency. In this situation, there are inclinations for children who did not have the essential and required family ties. In addition, a lack of parental control not only contributes directly to the antisocial behaviour of children, but it also contributes indirectly to this behaviour by increasing the likelihood that children will associate with other children who engage in deviant behaviour, which is predictive of higher levels of deviant acts (Okorodudu, 2010).

In addition, it has come to light that children who come from homes with just one biological parent or stepfamilies may be subject to a lesser amount of supervision than children who come from households with two biological parents (Hagan & Holly, 2011). Children who are raised in households by both of their parents are more likely to be well cared for and to have better socialisation. This is because the process of socialisation is dependent on both parents playing complementary roles in the raising of such children, and this is only possible when both parents are present (Agarwal, 2018). Additionally, children who are placed with foster parents may not have the resources necessary to make ends meet financially, which may push the kid or children to resort to stealing in order to provide for themselves. This may be a difficult situation for everyone involved. When compared to families with two biological parents, households with one biological parent or children living with foster parents are often in a more precarious financial position. The bad state of the economy may force these families to relocate to disorganised neighbourhoods that are rife with criminal activity and misbehaviour (Alfrey, 2010 cited in Albert-Elenwa & Ile, 2017). It may be impossible for a youngster to finish their education if their family is in a state of instability. This might be because the single mother or the single father does not have enough money to support themselves and their child. According to the findings of a number of studies, young people who come from families that are prone to instability have a higher risk of dropping out of high school by a factor of two in comparison to their counterparts who come from families in which the parents lead stable lives and coexist peacefully and harmoniously. Children who are raised by a single parent after their parents have divorced have a greater likelihood of dropping out of school at a younger age, according to the research of Astone and Malanathan (1991). In light of this, the purpose of the current study is to determine the influence of family structure on juvenile crime in the state of Rivers by looking at factors such as living with foster parents, living with grandparents, being raised by a single parent, and living in a household with two biological parents. This will help to fill a gap in the existing research.

Statement of the Problem

Bosiakoh and Andoh (2010, quoted in Kumi, 2015) have highlighted an escalating trend of adolescent delinquency, which many Ghanaians who have good intentions acknowledge as disturbing. In 2007, the Department of Social Welfare was responsible for 276 instances involving juvenile delinquency, as stated in the department's annual performance report. According to the annual report published by the Ghana Prison Service in 2010, an average of 115 juvenile offenders was being held in custody each

day. Instead of waiting for children to become involved in criminal activity before taking any action, stakeholders in the community can incorporate delinquent children's perspectives into proactive steps that will be addressing the problem if they have a greater understanding of the perspective from which delinquent children view the world.

The relevance of broken households may have been overestimated, according to the findings of a seminal research that was conducted by Shaw and McKay (1932) and was noted in Kumi (2015). This study examined the impact of broken homes on juvenile delinquency. These researchers noted that previous studies of whole-house juvenile delinquents as well as juvenile delinquents from broken families had several limitations in that the researchers were unable to control for factors such as age and ethnicity, which may also explain the behavior of juvenile delinquents. Additionally, these researchers noted that studies of juvenile offenders from disadvantaged backgrounds have a number of limitations. In addition, the researchers noted that familial circumstances other than intactness may potentially be crucial determinants that impact criminal conduct and, as a result, need more investigation. According to the findings of this study, researchers need to look for the effect of family settings that go beyond interruptions in the structure of the family in order to accurately anticipate the conduct of juvenile offenders. Researchers have, throughout the course of time, begun to question whether the intactness of the family is a fundamental characteristic that links the family to juvenile criminality. Other models that have been developed to explore the roles that families play in juvenile delinquency have addressed the dysfunction of families.

Another study by Demuth and Brown (2004) found that destroyed homes are associated with adolescent misbehavior, but the issue of family relationships is more complex than just the destruction of homes. To be more specific, the researchers found that rates of juvenile delinquency were much higher among teenagers living with single fathers, while those rates were lowest among teenagers who lived with both parents. Based on the study results, the researchers hypothesized that the main reason for the higher rates of juvenile delinquency among children living with their fathers was the lack of appropriate parental involvement in adolescent life. Demuth and Brown concluded that the lack of supervision and the lack of intimate ties between the adolescent and his parents are elements that generally contribute to the development of delinquency. However, these researchers found no significant evidence of an increase in juvenile delinquency related to the parent, father, or mother with whom the child was living. The conclusions of Hoffman and Johnson (1998) agree with those of Demuth and Brown (2004) suggesting that a destroyed house is associated with juvenile delinquency. The findings of Demuth and Brown (2004) showed that a destroyed house is associated with juvenile delinquency.

In another study by Geismar and Wood (1986 and cited in Sharma, 2012), researchers considered both structural and functional aspects of the family as factors. They divided the variables into a number of different subcategories, with structural factors including number of family members, family relationships and mother's employment status, and functional categories including the nature of interactions, and family relationships and family issues, parental control of children and constancy of discipline. These researchers concluded that there was a small but significant positive association between structural and functional factors and juvenile delinquency. These researchers also argued that living in a pleasant environment is likely to have a beneficial effect on the child, which in turn reduces the likelihood of juvenile delinquency. These results have been confirmed by previous research (Geismar & Wood, 1986, cited in Sharma, 2012).

Additionally, Okorodudu (2010) explored the relationship between the types of parenting and the delinquency of teenagers. The research used a total of 404 different sample sizes. The findings of the studies indicate that the results of the analyses reveal that a laissez-faire parenting style successfully predicts the delinquency of teenagers, but an authoritarian and authoritative parenting style did not. This holds true regardless of gender, geography, or age. When it comes to parenting styles (demandiness and responsiveness), parents that have a positive orientation will raise adolescents who are socially competent and goal-oriented. It was shown that parents who exercised control, supervised their children's activities, and encouraged their children to develop their own sense of autonomy had the greatest beneficial influence on their children's conduct. Negative effects were seen on teenagers' behaviour when their parents were not involved in their lives and when their needs were ignored.

Again, Manning and Lamb (2003) evaluated the welfare and delinquency of adolescents in cohabitating stepparent homes using national data from Add Health. They found that these adolescents were more likely to be involved in risky behaviours. According to the findings of their study, when compared to adolescents who lived with two biological parents, youths whose stepparents lived together fared much worse in terms of both welfare and criminality. It was discovered that the levels of wellbeing and delinquency among adolescents who lived with single moms who had never married were comparable to those of adolescents who lived with stepparents who lived together. A study that was carried out by Dunifon and Kowaleski-Jones (2002) came to the same conclusion as the research that was carried out by Manning and Lamb (2003). They discovered that children who live in families with only one parent or in families where the parents cohabit show higher signs of delinquency than children who live in families where the parents do not cohabit. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether or not family dynamics have a role in the criminal behaviour of children. They came to the conclusion that having a single parent does make a child's wellness worse. However, cohabitation is only linked to juvenile misbehaviour and not the health and happiness of a kid in any way. In other words, the findings of this study indicate that both single-parent families and cohabiting couples can have an effect on children and can have an influence on whether or not the child will participate in juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, the findings indicate that single parenthood does decrease the well-being of children, whereas cohabiting couples do not have this effect.

Kimani (2010) conducted a study in Kenya and produced a profile of the children criminals. He discovered that 63% of the children offenders had both of their parents, 32.2% of the children offenders were raised by a single mother, and 2.54 of the children offenders did not have any parents. In addition, he discovered that fifty percent of them were from broken houses, which meant that there were less prospects for them to be raised in regular families. In addition to this, he said that previous to participating in the rehabilitation programmes, just 24.2% of the individuals were living with both of their parents. Before they were committed to the rehabilitation school, the majority of the children interviewed by the researcher said that they did not have enough food, money, clothes, or a safe place to live, and that they had not attended school.

There have been several attempts made by society and schools to combat the issue of juvenile delinquency; nevertheless, these efforts have been fruitless. It seems to have become the norm, and the number of people who engage in criminal behaviour appears to be growing with each new generation. Boys often sneak into school offices and staff common areas with the goal of stealing textbooks, test scripts, and practise books. The majority of the time, their motivation is financial gain. The majority of the time, these young guys and youngsters are apprehended after their luck runs out. The majority of children's academic performance is negatively impacted as a direct result of these habits. An

assessment of the literatures showed that no study has been carried out to ascertain the influence of family structures on juvenile delinquency in Rivers State. This study is therefore focused on bridging this gap in extant literature. Against this backdrop, the following questions will guide discussion in the paper:

- i. What is the link between children staying with both parents and delinquent behavior in Rivers State?
- ii. What are the causes of juvenile delinquency in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the nexus between children staying with single-parent (Single mother/single father) and delinquent behavior in Rivers State?
- iv. What ways can be used to curb delinquent behavior amongst children in Rivers State?

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the influence of family structure on juvenile delinquency in Rivers State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the link between family structure and juvenile delinquent behavior in Rivers State
- ii. Examine the causes of juvenile delinquency in Rivers State
- iii. Consequences of Juvenile Delinquency on the Society
- iv. Assess the ways that can be used to curb delinquent behavior among children in Rivers State.

2. Literature Review

Family Structure

The family as an integrated and functioning unit of society has attracted the interest and imagination of scholars for a long period of time. According to the UNESCO study, a family is a kinship unit that may exist as a social reality even when its members do not share a shared dwelling. Families linked by marriage, birth, consanguinity, or formal adoption who regularly share a kitchen and financial resources (Sharma, 2016). The family is a social group defined by shared living quarters, economic cooperation, and procreation. It comprises adults of both sexes who maintain a socially sanctioned sexual connection and one or more biological or adoptive offspring of the sexually cohabiting adults (Georgas, 2003). Considered to be the purposes of the family include sexual, reproduction, socialisation of children, caregiving, tenderness, friendship, and economic cooperation.

"Family structure" refers to household members who are related by marriage or ancestry, and is often used to refer to at least one child under the age of 18 living in a household (Pasley and Petren, 2015). It is an expression referring to the disposition of people who live together and form a family. The set of parents that make up a family is called a family structure. The classification of this variable takes into account the presence or absence of legally married spouses or common-law partners; children; and for economic families, additional relatives (Blessing, 2018). Current family structures include nuclear family, single-parent family, extended family, childless family, foster family, and family with grandparents. Each of these systems affects the education of children in society.

In certain regions of the globe, some family arrangements are more prevalent than others. Frequently, family structure has cultural and religious links (Blakeley, 2021). While much has been said about

which kind of family structure is ideal or most advantageous for children, all types of households have advantages and disadvantages. Families offer important and valuable support networks for all members, regardless of their organisational structure. Since the mid-1940s, however, further developments in family life have led to increasingly complex classifications of family structure, such as blended families, single-parent plus partner families (cohabiting couples of both opposite and same sex), multigenerational families, and binuclear families.

Juvenile Delinquency

From a criminological point of view, the term "juvenile delinquency" refers to any and all acts of public wrongdoing that are done by young people between the ages of 12 and 20. (World Youth Report, 2003 in Haas et al., 2010). In a wider sense, the term "juvenile delinquency" refers to a wide variety of transgressions of legal and social standards, ranging from very minor offences to more severe crimes that are perpetrated by adolescents and young adults (World Youth Report, 2003 cited in Haas et al, 2010). A young person who is in confrontation with the law is referred to as a juvenile delinquent for this reason. This individual is ineligible to be tried as an adult. Different nations have different minimum ages at which a person may be considered a juvenile offender. In the majority of African nations, it is somewhere between the ages of thirteen and nineteen (Gyansah, Soku & Esilfie, 2015).

Juvenile delinquency is a worldwide phenomenon. It is not something that is unique to many African nations. However, the characteristics that define a juvenile offender may be interpreted differently from one nation to the next. Definitions of what constitutes a juvenile offender may be found in the policy texts of many nations. A person who is less than eighteen years old and who is in violation of the law is referred to as a juvenile delinquent according to the Juvenile Justice statute of Ghana (Act 653, which is quoted in Kumi, 2015). Except under unusual situations, this individual is handled in a way that is distinct from how an adult criminal would be. Teenage crime is another name for what we call child delinquency. It is the same as any other crime that is performed by a human person, but these crimes are distinct because they are perpetrated by adolescents and teenagers (Johnson, 2013). When they are younger, both boys and girls have a limited grasp of the world around them. Children who commit crimes bring shame not just onto themselves but also upon their families, friends, and educators. When children commit crimes, the law does not treat them with the same severity as it does adults who commit the same crimes. Juvenile offenders are tried in their own specialised tribunals, and the goal of any penalty handed down to them is to instil in them the awareness that it is in their best interest to abstain from criminal activity. There are many distinct hypotheses about the causes of juvenile delinquency, and many different studies have documented a variety of these causes. The majority of youngsters that act delinquently come from disadvantaged social, economic, and psychological backgrounds.

3. Theoretical Framework

The Broken Home Theory was adopted for the paper. Wilkinson was the one who first established this notion (1969). This theory proposes that a family structure with only one parent has negative effects on adolescent development in comparison to family structures with two parents because there is no other parent to serve as a role model, there is no one to supervise the child, and there is not enough love from either parent for the child. According to him, this concept is exclusively based on the structure of the family and the observation that two parents are preferable to one in all aspects of the maturation process of teenagers. According to the broken home hypothesis, a structure in which there is just one

parent is referred to as a broken home structure (Wilkinson, 1969). Wilkinson contends that the makeup of families is one component of family life that is always linked to antisocial conduct, and he bases this contention on a number of different studies.

Children who come from families with two parents have a lower risk of developing a variety of behavioural issues, including juvenile delinquency, compared to children who come from families with only one parent for a variety of reasons, such as in which marital relationships have been disrupted. Children who live in homes with only one parent for various reasons, such as in which marital relationships have been disrupted (Thornberry et al., 2009). According to Ferdinand (2010), children who are raised in households that have been torn apart as a result of divorce have less self-control, have higher rates of psychiatric problems, and are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. A child who sees their single parent struggle to provide for their family is at a greater risk of turning to delinquency than a child who sees their parents work together to provide for the family. This is because a child who sees their parents work together has a better chance of learning from their mistakes.

They go on to say that 75% of single parents do not spend enough time with their children, and that the less time a parent spends interacting with their kid, the more free time the youngster has to participate in risky behaviours. A kid who grows up in a household with just one parent is seen to suffer from a lack of self-control and an inability to identify with appropriate social standards, leading to the development of antisocial behaviours. According to Juby et al., (2011), single parent families have less time of control, to communicate and to interact with their children than do families with two parents. This is due to the fact that single working mothers or fathers leave their homes early in the morning and return home late in the evening. In addition, the theory contends that the absence of one parent in a child's life, whether through the passing of a parent or through some other circumstance, can have a negative impact on the child, most frequently as a result of the impact on the child's ability to form an attachment to the absent parent. The absence of a primary attachment figure in a child's life may have a lasting impact and may result in antisocial conduct as a means of coping with the resulting stress (Juby et al., 2011).

This, however, explains why adolescents from single-parent (single-parent) families are more likely to engage in delinquent behaviors due to pre-existing differences in family income or parenting practices (Juby et al., 2011). It's different from those teenagers who come from a whole family or a family with two parents. Early practitioners of sociology viewed the family as the most important institution because of its influence on the growth and development of children. For example, being from a family with only one parent led to criminal behavior due to the financial difficulties and/or poverty that the household faced. Later, Jensen (2011) focused on the family as the most important source of social control. He found that if minors lack a parent, they are likely to have complete freedom, which leads them to engage in deviant activities. Jensen found that the family is the most important source of social control (Jensen, 2011).

Broken home theorists argue that children exhibit deviant behavior when social control is ineffective, such as in a single-parent home. Research shows that a single parent coming home robs a child of appropriate social norms, just as it would a child in a two-parent family. Related to this study, broken home theorists argue that children exhibit deviant behavior when social control is ineffective. This might be due to the fact that single parents have a lot of obligations, including filling the role of the

missing parent in the family, which can cause them to feel overwhelmed and worried. This, according to the proponents of the notion, might be avoided if the family were kept intact as the cornerstone for healthy growth, with parents and children maintaining healthy connections with one another. Children who are raised by a single parent have a higher risk of being delinquent than children who grow up in households with both of their parents. This finding lends credence to the broken family hypothesis. Children raised by a single parent have an increased risk of living in poverty, a factor that is closely linked to a higher likelihood of delinquency in adolescents.

4. Methodology

The study adopted multiple designs such as qualitative, historical and descriptive designs. The study draws its argument basically from secondary data, which include personal observation, newspapers, journal articles, academic publication, and Internet sources. To improve on the reliability and validity of the study, multiple secondary sources were used to minimize errors. The analysis was purely descriptive as to gain an insight into the nature and causes of juvenile delinquency in Rivers State, drawing inferences on its implication on the victims, families, communities and the nation at large. The secondary data collected were subjected to content analysis.

5. Discussion

Family Structure and Juvenile Delinquency

A person's conduct, beginning in infancy and continuing into adulthood, may be affected, either favourably or unfavourably, by the impact of their family. It is possible to define a well-functioning partnership between a mother and a father as being part of an intact family; hence, the upheaval that results from the dissolution of such a union may have a more profound impact on a kid. A kid will benefit more from having a household that is functional rather than one that is dysfunctional. The dissolution of families was a major factor in the phenomenon of children, for instance, fleeing their homes and going to live on the streets. It has been suggested that the dynamics and structure of the family are causative factors in the discussion of delinquency. This is due to the fact that families play an essential part in the socialisation and management of children and adolescents (Namwaba, 2011). The presence of both a mother and a father in the household, with the focus placed on the father, has been demonstrated to have a stabilising influence and may work as a deterrent in some aspects of juvenile delinquency (Mullens, 2004). It has been discovered that an intact family structure influences a child's susceptibility to peer pressure (Namwaba, 2011), contributes to the growth and capabilities of offspring in adapting to society, and is linked to fewer instances of delinquency related issues. These findings were published in the journal *Child Development*. It is crucial, for this reason, to examine the many criminal actions that have been committed and to look at the ways in which the varied family structures may have inspired children to engage in these activities. When compared to the overall population of children, a disproportionately higher number of children who are referred to law enforcement authorities and the courts for delinquency charges come from dysfunctional households.

Children who are raised in households where their biological parents are still alive have a reduced risk of engaging in antisocial behaviour, which is mirrored by a lower likelihood of succumbing to the pressures of their peers to engage in antisocial behaviour (Mullens 2004 cited in Nkopura, 2011). According to the findings of the research, there is a correlation between adolescent delinquency and the composition of families. According to the findings of the research, there is a correlation between juveniles who have been charged with more severe acts of delinquency and those who come from less complete households than those who have been charged with less serious acts of misconduct. It has

been shown that the family has a direct impact on the negative peer pressure that, in turn, may affect a juvenile's participation in delinquent activities (Steinberg 1987 cited in Nkopura, 2011).

One of the most important aspects of the relationship between juvenile delinquency and families is the comparison between homes with one parent and households with two parents. According to Klein and Forehand (1997), the sort of maternal parenting skills that are instilled in a kid when they are still in their early adolescent years has a significant impact on the likelihood that the child would get involved in criminal activity in early childhood. Muehlenberg (2002) addresses the subject of how children who grow up in households with just one parent do academically in comparison to children who are raised in families consisting of both biological parents. Numerous research have been conducted, and the results of these studies point to a very strong correlation between delinquent and/or criminal behaviour, and households consisting of just one biological parent. According to the findings of Wright and Wright's (1994) study, single parent households, and in particular mother-only households, are associated with a higher incidence of juvenile delinquency than are two parent households.

In fact, the lack of whole families themselves makes involvement in gangs more tempting (Muehlenberg, 2002). There are instances in which the emphasis is placed not on the mother but on the father instead. It is especially unfortunate that there is not more of an emphasis placed on the role that fathering plays in the development of behavioural issues in children. There are a number of reasons why fathers can be expected to be particularly significant in the beginning stages and continued development of child delinquency. For instance, dads have a greater propensity than mothers to be active in the lives of their boys, who are more prone than girls to engage in antisocial conduct (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002). According to Popenoe (1997), the absence of a father figure is a primary driving factor behind many troubling societal issues in the United States. The institution of marriage serves as the primary vehicle that is used by society to link fathers to their offspring. Even though the young of many animals are born defenceless, their rate of maturation is very fast and significantly outpaces that of humans, who need many years of care and protection before they can become physically and emotionally independent. The house and the family are the most important aspects of a child's development. In an attempt to promote and assist children in the process of socialisation as well as identity formation, one of the most essential jobs that this matrix does is to give children with structure and direction.

It is commonly held belief that juvenile offenders are far more likely to have been influenced by their families than adult criminals. As a consequence, a significant number of the risk variables connected with antisocial conduct may be the outcome of dysfunctional family dynamics. Not only does the composition of the family or the socioeconomic standing of the family have an impact on the actions of children and teenagers, but also the connections that exist between the parents and their offspring. Therefore, while analysing the factors that lead to delinquency, a parent's level of care, love, attention, supervision, and control over their children are just as significant as the socio-economic position of the family. Because of this, it is generally accepted as a given that the dynamics of a family and the relationships within it have a substantial bearing on the extent to which young people adhere to norms or stray from them. A dysfunctional family environment is one of the contributing factors in personality disorders. Petty theft charges accounted for the biggest percentage of cases presented before the judge involving men, and they were the most common kind of case. The female juvenile offenders were referred because they had absconded from their homes and engaged in some kind of sexually inappropriate behaviour. There is a correlation between dysfunctional families and certain

forms of delinquency (e.g. runaway, truancy and fighting). According to Mullens (2004), children who grow up in houses that have been damaged are 2.7 times more likely to run away from their family than children who are raised in homes that are unharmed. The basic assumption is that a child's socialisation and personality adjustment will suffer as a consequence of a broken household since it creates an imbalance and is thus harmful to a child's development. As a consequence of this, a child may be more susceptible to destructive peer pressure and may ultimately commit acts of delinquency that are not committed by children from intact homes. These homes have a well-balanced structure that includes both men and women who can serve as positive role models for the child as they learn appropriate roles in society.

Literature also emphasises the effects of dysfunctional families on various types of delinquency and how this influence manifests (Koziey, et al., 2005). Rankin (1991) analysed different broken households and runaway offences and discovered that children from a single parent family (no step-parent) are 1.8 times more likely to run away than children who live with both biological parents. This is in contrast to the possibility of a kid living in a household with both biological parents. Regardless of the child's gender or age, the possibilities rise to 2.7% for children who live with one biological parent and a step-parent, and to 4.0% for children who live with neither biological parent. Children who live without a biological parent have probabilities of four in ten (Rankin, 1991). On the other hand, this corpus of data says nothing about a child who has spent his or her whole childhood in a children's home but has decided to live on the streets instead. Also excluded from this dichotomy are children raised by relatives such as uncles, aunts, or grandparents.

One further situation that has a direct influence on the growth of juvenile delinquency is continuous shifts in the family structure that a kid lives in. This may be a very difficult circumstance for children. When a family structure is changed or suddenly becomes dysfunctional because one of the parents is absent or in cases where abuse is prevalent, serious disorders in the development of an individual can emerge, thereby constituting a risk for addiction to substance or drug abuse as well as criminal behaviour (Wallman, 2010). The home setting is the most significant sociological unit since it is where the majority of lessons about interaction are learned. It is the perfect environment in which to educate young toddlers about love and the significance of their first interactions with the outside world. The child's perspective on the world has its start inside the context of the family (Shek, 2016). Regardless of the age at which the parents' marriage ended, Prestin-Latham (2013) found that the risk of delinquency was significantly increased in children of divorced parents. Despite the fact that the children still value their relationship with their biological parents, the study found that there has been a rise in the number of instances of cohabitation among children who were raised by single parents who have introduced their partners to their children and demanded that their children accept them as their parents. This is another interesting trend that the study uncovered. Children in this situation are likely to feel confused, and as a result, they may choose to act defiantly against both of their parents, whether or not one of them is the biological parent.

Miller and Fagan's (2014) research also found that children living in dysfunctional families, such as those in which there is low or poor supervision, parental abuse, and a disrupted home environment, are at a higher risk for becoming delinquent as a result of a lack of control and the appropriate modelling from their parents. Studies that are similar to this one have found that when families are fragmented and do not connect with one another, children and adolescents frequently seek support from other supporting systems, particularly peer groups, because they are unable to receive the necessary support from their parents. In this way, the ground is prepared for the teenage population to gravitate into

organisations or gangs that are predisposed toward conduct that is socially inappropriate (Godinet & Vakalahi, 2009).

These results make it abundantly evident that children raised in families with just one parent are at a much increased risk of being involved in delinquent behaviour as adolescents. This may be attributable to the fact that the parents are preoccupied with economic activities, and they may also have a propensity to take out their frustrations on their children, which finally causes the youngsters to run away from home. These findings are in agreement with those of a study that was conducted by McLanahan, Tach, and Schneider (2013). That study found that minors who came from families with stable family structures (two biological parents) were significantly less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour when compared to their counterparts who came from families with unstable family structures (such as single-parent or cohabitation arrangements). The researchers were also interested in whose parent the minors were really residing with at the time of their arrests for the sake of this study. The results are outlined in the figure that can be seen below.

Causes of Juvenile Delinquency in Rivers State

Cultural Factors: Several studies have identified the cultural influences that lead to antisocial behaviour in adolescents and young adults. For example, Loomis (1957) made a difference between two fundamental categories of social formations, namely community and society. This distinction was highlighted in Astone and McLanahan (1991). According to him, this change is part of a larger historical pattern as well as a natural developmental process that is analogous to the progression from childhood to maturity. A critical examination of the policy responses to juvenile delinquency may be improved by having prior knowledge of the cultural elements that might have an effect on such responses.

Social and Economic Factors: Another element that has been identified as contributing to adolescent delinquency is the interaction between the influences of social and economic variables (Boasiakoh & Andoh, 2010). According to Atilola (2013), the diminishing nature of economic resources is one of the primary reasons why young people become involved in criminal activity. According to Atilola (2013), who conducted the same research, the growth in the number of young people may be attributed to the rise in juvenile criminality. The insufficiency of financial means and opportunities for adolescents and teenagers to fulfil their desires drives many of them to engage in criminal activity. The ever-increasing number of young people is to blame for the inadequate resources that are now available.

Urbanisation: Another element that is considered to be a contributor to the problem of adolescent delinquency is urbanisation. According to the findings of some geographical studies of the relationship between urbanisation and crime, nations that have a greater proportion of their population living in cities have a higher rate of reported criminal offences than nations that have a significant proportion of their residents living in rural communities (U.N., 2004). That is to say, rural communities are traditional, and since the residents all come from the same ethnic origins, they have their own methods of regulating conduct. On the other hand, urbanisation results in the establishment of contemporary communities that are comprised of people from a variety of backgrounds. The importance of the role of urbanisation processes in developing nations as a contributor to the engagement of juveniles in criminal conduct was underlined throughout the study. It's possible that these differences in social control and social cohesiveness are to blame for this. The primary ways of coping with antisocial

conduct in rural communities are the family and the community, which contributes to the much lower crime rates in these areas (U.N., 2004).

Exclusion: People are being increasingly ostracised, and this is producing an increase in behaviours that block or delay development. Additionally, social connections are being severed, and young people have a difficult time building their identities as a result. Also on the increase is the rate of unemployment (U.N., 2004). It has been suggested by a few scholars that the government has established several welfare systems across society. These methods, on the other hand, have not been successful in removing these blockages that have been brought about by exclusion in order to be able to give relief. This has played a significant role in the rise of a "new poor" class in many different locations (U.N., 2004).

Consequences of Juvenile Delinquency on the Society

The plight of our much-loved country is only one indication of the widespread and catastrophic impact of these effects, which can be witnessed today. It is currently considered to be a social shame to be identified as a Nigerian outside the borders of our nation. This is because it is generally believed that we are a country in which the majority of the youngsters break the law. It is now evident that it is perilous to wander at late hours of the night or even during the middle of the day for fear of being assaulted. As a consequence of criminal behaviour, drug addiction, and other offences in the same vein, young people who have the potential to become productive members of society face the danger of losing their minds, being sent to jail, or being placed in treatment facilities.

The victims of adolescent delinquency are the most obviously impacted members of the community. The victim is always at a disadvantage after a crime, regardless of whether it includes theft, vandalism, or violence. In addition to the costs associated with repairing or replacing damaged or lost property, the victim may also have to pay for expenditures linked to lost earnings, medical treatment, or psychological care (Cashwell & Nicholas, 2013). When a youngster commits a crime, they subject themselves to consequences that they most likely are unable to foresee for themselves. During the time that they are serving their sentence in jail or on probation, it is possible that they may lose their freedom. It's possible that the youngster will also fall behind academically. Although the placement of a juvenile in a residential detention centre for adolescents may be an appropriate consequence for the adolescent's criminal actions, such placement also places the adolescent in relationships with other juvenile offenders, some of whom may be more sophisticated or influential. This makes it more likely that the offender will do the crime again, and in many places, if a juvenile who is older than 14 commits the crime again, they may be prosecuted and punished as an adult. Boasiakoh and Andoh (2010) noted that the turmoil and stress of having a family member who is a juvenile criminal might produce instability for the other relatives. These delinquents may even have future effects on the adolescent's education and career choices. The family of the kid who is in legal problems not only has to deal with the challenges posed by the child's situation, but they may also have to generate significant sums of money in order to pay for legal representation. In addition to this, the family must confront the moral dilemmas that arise from their responsibilities to the people who were wronged by the kid. During the period that their kid is doing time in jail or on probation, families are often required to participate in group therapy sessions, which may be inconvenient as well as expensive. The use of illegal substances, engagement in criminal gangs, excessive drinking, and inappropriate sexual activity are all linked to an increased risk of teenage delinquency. All of these problems pose a problem for communities because they make areas dangerous and cause enormous amounts of public money to be spent on things like law enforcement and school safety.

Furthermore, Atilola (2013) suggested that young individuals who commit severe crimes before the age of 18 pose a threat to the future of everyone involved. It's possible that they're acting out as a kind of protest against the perceived wrongs that have been committed against them. They could convince themselves that there is no other way forward for them but a life of crime. They could be venting their anger or irritation at another person or group, or they might be hoping for acceptance from a gang. Either way, their motivations might be unclear. Regardless of the reasons why, there are far too many people, families, and communities in the United States who are impacted by juvenile delinquency. It is a significant issue that puts a strain on the efforts of governmental agencies, political leaders, educational institutions, religious groups, and charitable organisations in equal measure (Atilola, 2013).

Ways to Curb the Problem of Juvenile Delinquency

The belief system and the moral standards that a society upholds are both significantly influenced by education. According to the results, educational establishments and teaching the attitudes of people both have a significant role in reducing the incidence of criminal behaviour (Atilola, 2013). According to Gyansah, Soku, and Esilfie's (2015) point of view, educational institutions need to host programmes like as anti-bullying programmes or role plays in order to raise awareness among young people. According to the opinions of a number of respondents, teachers have the ability to shape their students' life since they are the students' second parents. As a teacher, you shouldn't treat each kid differently, and you should be able to comprehend the requirements of each child and provide assistance for them. When discussing the role that educational institutions play in the prevention of crime, it is imperative that teachers take part in the activities and adopt certain measures. One of these measures is that teachers should provide students with moral education and social norms, which will be of great assistance to students in their later lives. According to Atilola (2013), parental education is also vital since it is the obligation of the parents to supply the knowledge required to their children in order to prevent their children from committing crimes. It is the job of the parents to educate their children.

As a result of the content analysis, the majority of the literatures revealed that single-parenting is one of the major factors that results in juvenile delinquency; consequently, reducing the rate of divorce among parents would help mitigate the rate of juvenile delinquency. It was discovered that raising knowledge about a topic in the community may play a significant part in reducing the number of crimes that occur in an area. According to Ame (2018), when it comes to issues of parental divorce or conflict and juvenile delinquency, there should be community engagement and enlightenment. Based on the findings of the study, it is clear that community programmes are necessary in order to make contact with young people and members of their families in order to assist them with the issues that they are now facing. The circumstances of the neighbourhood may be improved by the implementation of community programmes such as raising awareness in the area and inviting residents to take part in the process. As was previously indicated, community programmes also entail the participation of local law enforcement and other social media outlets. When it comes to preventing and safeguarding a child from committing a crime, the role that the police play is quite important.

Again, it was found that one of the finest roles that a government, schools, the church, and the community can play to avoid juvenile crime is by counselling the parents and the juvenile. This was considered to be one of the best ways to prevent juvenile crime. It is abundantly obvious from the discussion that providing counselling and appropriate direction to children and their families is one of

the most effective strategies to avoid the onset of juvenile delinquency at an early stage. According to the findings of a research that was carried out by Muregasan (2014) on a sample size of 148 juveniles, it was found that 42.6% of the youngsters enjoyed receiving psychological therapy and counselling, which is one of the reformation strategies used to avoid antisocial behaviour. Counseling may also assist give support and alleviate the dread of inferiority complex, fear, and many other challenges that many youngsters are experiencing in today's society. This is one of the numerous benefits that counselling can provide.

6. Conclusion

The present research focused its attention on the role that different types of family dynamics have in the offending behaviours of young people. According to the results of this research, it is abundantly obvious that the composition of the family has a significant impact on the progression of antisocial behaviour in adolescents especially in Rivers State due to the cosmopolitan nature of the State. Changes in the family structure, such as separation, divorce, single parenting, broken relationships, non-cohesive families, and reduced social attachments, are major factors that contribute to the development of juvenile delinquency. In Rivers State. Changes in the family structure include: From a holistic point of view, the family unit is where all persons belong, as well as where they are formed. Because of this, it is important to pay attention to the sort of family structure that is used in the upbringing of children. According to the findings of the research, families with two parents had a much lower incidence of juvenile delinquency compared to homes with just one parent. However, there are a number of factors that determine the type of structure that are beyond the control of the parents. These include things like death or even irreconcilable differences between spouses, singleness by choice, and other transitions that alter the family structure. For example, economic activities that require frequent travel may push parents to transfer the care of their children from their biological parent(s) to relatives or grandparents. In situations like these, the characteristics of parents, as well as interventions from extended family and society, might help reduce the risk of juvenile criminality. When parents are forced to live apart due to conflicts that cannot be resolved, it is imperative that they take into consideration their child's right to maintain a relationship with both of their parents. For the purpose of preserving a healthy equilibrium in parental guidance, it is possible to investigate the possibility of entering into a co-parenting agreement.

7. Recommendations

The paper recommends the public be sensitized on the existence of a strong relationship between children's outcomes and family structure. The sensitization can be done during public forums including church functions and any other gathering where parents are involved such as open days in schools and family gatherings. This will raise awareness on the importance of a stable family structure.

- i Intervention measures seeking to minimize juvenile delinquency should be family centric, meaning that rehabilitation programs should include the families that produced the delinquent. This important because the family is often an enabler through the family patterns such as abuse, parental absence and family transitions.
- ii At the community level, religious organizations and community based organizations could be of great assistance if they could be organize for training programs championing the interests of the child and highlighting the negative impact of juvenile delinquency.

- iii Sensitization of the spirit of Africa's collectivity way of life, that vests the responsibility of raising children on the larger family system that assists parents to supervise and monitor children when they are not in the home family environment. Signs of delinquency can be traced in open areas, play grounds, in public transport vehicles, in churches, schools and social gathering where responsible adults look the other way because the teenagers are not their biological children. This attitude is a subtle enabling societal posture that expose teenagers to delinquency. This tide can be stopped if adults would borrow from the rich African heritage that places the responsibility of nurture on the shoulders of the entire society.
- iv The government should come up with policies that would protect the rights of the child in the event the parents decide to separate or divorce. Access rights that will ensure the semblance of a stable structure for a child may be advisable.

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