

# Relationship between Juvenile Delinquency and Background of Children in Remand Home in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria

Gambo Mustapha Aliyu<sup>1\*</sup> Prof. Ali Mburza<sup>2</sup>

1.Department of Early Childhood Care and Education Kashim Ibrahim College of Education, Maiduguri, Borno State

2.Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Maiduguri, Borno State

## Abstract

The study examined the relationship between juvenile delinquency and background of children in remand home in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The four objectives of the study are to determine relationship between juvenile delinquency and age of children in Maiduguri remand home, relationship between juvenile delinquency and education background of the children in Maiduguri Remand Home, relationship between juvenile delinquency and the causes of delinquency among the children in Maiduguri remand home and relationship between juvenile delinquency of children in Maiduguri remand home and their gender in Borno State. Correlation research design was used. The population for the study consists of the 103 juvenile delinquents that were in Maiduguri remand home; therefore, all the 103 delinquents were used in the study. The research instrument used was proforma which was designed by the researchers to collect data from the records of the delinquents that were in Maiduguri remand home. Data collected were analyzed using chi-square, followed by computation of contingency coefficient to find out the relationship between the variables. The study revealed that, children's education level, age and gender were significantly related to juvenile delinquency in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that Counsellors, Educational Psychologists and Teachers should identify delinquent behaviours among children in school and home and counsel them on the consequences of such acts. Parents' should provide the basic needs of their children and should supervise them. Parents should develop effective parenting model that would enhance good behaviour and should communicate freely with their children. Children should be engaged academically in school, they should be given assignments and home work frequently by the teachers and they should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities such as clubs and sporting activities. Fathers should be closer to boys and mothers to girls and they should be good models by showing them good examples. Parents and other members of the society should build good discipline and character in the children irrespective of gender, so that they can fit into adult life successfully. Parents should stay together for the sake of their children, and should discourage them from comparing themselves with their peers who have parents with high occupation. Parents should monitor the friends and activities of their children because peer group exposes children to more delinquent behaviours.

**Keywords:** Juvenile, Delinquency, Background, Children, Remand Home

## Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a term that comprises two different words that is juvenile which refers to children below the age of 18 years and delinquency which refers to any deviation from the normal norms of a given society. Juvenile delinquency therefore may be defined as the behaviour of children below the age of eighteen years, which does not conform to the society's norms (Mollie & Russell, 1978). It refers to the law violating behaviour of persons legally defined as minors. The term was coined in 1818 by the society for the prevention of pauperism and initially was used to describe the disapproved activities of neglected immigrant children who roamed the street of New York City (Encyclopedia Americana, 1989).

According to Eddie and Morley (2003), juvenile delinquency refers primarily to social acts of juveniles that are defined and evaluated as deviant or antisocial by legal or social norms and that are usually socially learned. The legal definition of a 'juvenile delinquent' is someone between nine and eighteen years of age who through due process of law has been found to have violated criminal legislation and is therefore subject to punishment determined by a court. Children under the age of 9 who commit what would otherwise be criminal offences can only be dealt with under child protection legislation.

A child is a young human being who is between birth and puberty. A child can also be defined as someone who is between the age of zero and seventeen years or somebody under a legally specified age who is considered not to be legally responsible for his/her actions. An offence is any act or omission which renders the person, doing the act or making the omission liable to punishment under the criminal or penal code, order I, Council law or Statute (National Open University of Nigeria, 2006). According to Olakanmi (2009), no act is an offence which is done by a child under seven years of age or by a child above seven years of age who has not attained

maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequence of such act.

The procedure of bringing delinquent children to the remand home in Nigeria is either by the parents, society, juvenile court or police for a period of not more than four months, during which the delinquents are under constant observation and supervision. If up to the end of the term no improvement is noticed, the juvenile shall then be transferred to the government approved school. The juveniles are admitted daily for various offences such as stealing, sexual offences, drug addiction, fighting and truancy. The remand home admits both male and female delinquents, whose ages are between nine and seventeen years for reformation.

According to Richard (2001), criminal justice Act 1982 introduced a concept called 'youth custody' where offenders under the age of 18 years who satisfy the criteria for imprisonment of those over that age may be sent to a young offender institution for training and rehabilitation. The length to stay was not fixed and was theoretically dependent on the trainee's response. When an accused child who has completed his/her seventh but not completed his/her eighteen year of age is convicted by a court of any offence, the court may, instead of passing the sentence prescribed by law, deal with such accused child in accordance with the provisions of the child and young person's law (Olawanmi, 2009).

Richard (2001) pointed out that, ideally, the youth court should sit in a separate building. The magistrates who sit in the youth court, are appointed because of their experience of and interest in children, they receive extra training. The press is severely limited in reporting and public is not allowed into the court and to make things more homely; policemen attending may be told not to come in full uniform. The child's parents must also attend unless the court is satisfied that it would be unreasonable to require such attendance and if the magistrates are satisfied that the child did commit the offence they do not convict him/her but instead record a finding of guilt.

A society with uncontrolled number of delinquents will produce violent and unproductive citizens. If not checked, children will grow into the life of adult criminality at higher level such as armed robbery and murder. One way of seeking solution to the problem of delinquency is to start by identifying the nature of offences committed by the delinquents and the factors that cause the problem. With a greater understanding of this problem, the parents, government and the society will be able to find a lasting solution to the menace of delinquency. It is against this background that the researchers determined the relationship between juvenile delinquency and characteristics of children in remand home in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and background of children in remand home in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. Over the last few decades, children hardly engage in antisocial and law breaking activities in the society. This was because parents were playing the roles of training their children as expected of them.

However, in the recent years, there has been a departure from the normal ways through which children are brought up. This is because there is growing concern about reported incidences of juvenile delinquency throughout the globe. The researchers observed from literature reviewed that, children nowadays engage in delinquent acts such as stealing, sexual offences, drug abuse, civil disturbances, fighting and truancy among other offences. When children who are the future leaders of tomorrow are known for delinquent behaviours, the educational, vocational and social development will be jeopardized. The essence of schooling will also be defeated. The children could consequently graduate into adult criminality such as armed robbery, cultism, ritual practices and suicide bombing that is currently disturbing the global peace. Thus, delinquency has become a great concern not only to parents but also to the society as a whole because it has threatened the harmonious development of the human personality. Therefore, the researchers undertake this study to determine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and background of children in remand home in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to determine the:

1. relationship between juvenile delinquency and age of children in Maiduguri remand home.
2. relationship between juvenile delinquency and education background of the children in Maiduguri Remand Home, Borno State, Nigeria.
3. relationship between juvenile delinquency and the causes of delinquency among the children in Maiduguri remand home, Borno State.
4. relationship between juvenile delinquency of children in Maiduguri remand home and their gender.

### **Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were tested in the study, at 0.05 level of significance:

**H<sub>01</sub>**: there is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and age of children in Maiduguri remand

home by age.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>**; there is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and education background of the children in Maiduguri remand home, Borno State, Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>**; there is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and the causes of delinquency among the children in Maiduguri remand home, Borno State, Nigeria.

**Ho<sub>4</sub>**; there is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency of children in Maiduguri remand home and their gender.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants and Setting**

The population for the study consists of all the juvenile delinquents in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The target population comprised all the 103 juvenile delinquents that were in Maiduguri remand home. The study was concerned with finding out the relationship between juvenile delinquency and background of the children who are illiterate or have attended either Islamiyya, primary or secondary school before they were remanded in the Maiduguri remand home.

Correlation research design was used to determine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and characteristics of children in remand home in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. Juvenile background (children's age, level of education, causes and gender) were correlated with delinquency (stealing, sexual offences, drug abuse, and civil disturbances, fighting and running away from home). The correlation design was used because it is used in determining magnitude of relationship between variables as in the case of this study (Emaikwu, 2007).

### **Instrument**

The instrument that was used for data collection was a proforma designed by the researchers to collect data from the records of juvenile delinquents that were in the remand home. The items in the proforma were systematically derived based on the operational definition of the background of juvenile delinquents; for example, education background of children was defined as level of educational attainment of the delinquents used in the study. The items were critically examined by the remand home officials and the researchers to ensure content relevance and appropriateness. The records were obtained from the officer in-charge of the remand home.

The researchers wrote a letter to the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Maiduguri, Borno State, through the Director, Social Welfare Office in the Ministry, in order to introduce themselves and obtained permission to carry out the research on the children in the remand home in Maiduguri. The researchers personally visited the remand home, introduced themselves, presented the letter of permission from the Ministry to the officer in-charge of the remand home and sought for permission to access the records of juveniles that were in the remand home and their background information (types of offences, ages, education level, causes and gender). The officer in-charge of the remand home directed one of the officers to release the records to the researchers after one week. The remand home staff fully cooperated with the researchers during the course of data collection.

The data was collected from the records of the Juveniles that were remanded through the use of the data proforma. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses raised in the study. Chi-square test was used by the researchers because it has found extensive application in the field of behavioural science and education particularly in the analysis of data in the form of frequencies or categories (Emaikwu, 2007). This was followed by computation of the contingency coefficient, using SPSS to find out the relationship between the variables.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

To analyze the data collected, the hypotheses were tested using chi square. The results are presented in Tables 1 – 4 according to the hypotheses raised in the study.

Hypotheses one: There is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and age of children in Maiduguri remand home by age.

**Table 1: Chi-square Test of the Relationship between Juvenile Delinquency and Age of the Children in Maiduguri Remand Home, Borno State, Nigeria**

Age	N	$\chi^2$ Cal.	$\chi^2$ Crit	Df	P -Level	C-Value	Decision
8 – 10	20(19.4)	27.528	25.00	15	<.05	.94	Significant
11 - 13	39(37.9)						
14 - 15	16(15.5)						
16 – 17	28(27.2)						
<b>Total</b>	<b>103(100)</b>						

Results in Table 1 revealed the chi square test of relationship between juvenile delinquents and their age in Maiduguri remand home, Borno State, Nigeria. The  $\chi^2$  calculated 27.528 is greater than the  $\chi^2$  critical 25.00, at 0.05 alpha level and degree of freedom of 15. To determine the significance of the relationship between the variables, the contingency coefficient (C) was computed and a value of .94 was obtained. The hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and age of children in Maiduguri remand home, Borno State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and education background of the children in Maiduguri Remand Home, Borno State, Nigeria

**Table 2: Chi-square Test of the Relationship between Juvenile Delinquency and Delinquent Children Education Background**

Education Background	N	$\chi^2$ Cal.	$\chi^2$ Crit	df	P -Level	C-Value	Decision
Illiterate	39(37.9)	28.430	25.00	15	<.05	.95	Significant
Islamiyya	33(32.0)						
Primary School	19(18.4)						
Secondary School	12(11.7)						
<b>Total</b>	<b>103(100)</b>						

Results in Table 2 show chi square test of children education background and juvenile delinquency. The calculated value to  $\chi^2$  is given as 28.430. The degree of freedom is 15 and the significance level is .05. The critical value of chi square is 25.00. To determine the significance of the relationship between the variables, the contingency coefficient (C) was computed and a value of .95 was obtained. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and children's education background was rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and children's education background in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria, since the calculated  $\chi^2$  (28.430) is greater than the critical  $\chi^2$  value (25.00).

Hypothesis three: There is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency and the causes of delinquency among the children in Maiduguri remand home, Borno State.

**Table 3: Relationship between Juvenile Delinquency and the Causes of Delinquency among the Children in Maiduguri Remand Home, Borno State (N = 103)**

Causes	Delinquency	$\chi^2$ Cal.	$\chi^2$ Crit	df	P-Level	C-Value	Decision
Peer Influence	Stealing	29.973	25.00	15	<.05	.98	Significant
Poor Relationship with Parents	Drug Abuse						
Withdrawal From School	Fighting						
Personal	Civil Disturbance Sexual Offences						
	Running Away from Home						
<b>Total</b>	<b>103(100)</b>						

Table 3 shows the chi square test of relationship between causes of delinquency and juvenile delinquency in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The calculated  $\chi^2$  value of 29.973 is greater than the critical  $\chi^2$  value of 25.00 at 15 degree of freedom. The level of significance is .05. To determine the significance of the relationship between the variables, the contingency coefficient (C) was computed and a value of .98 was obtained. The null hypothesis which stated that there was no significant relationship between the causes of delinquency and juvenile delinquency was therefore rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between the causes of delinquency and juvenile delinquency among delinquent children in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis four: there is no significant relationship between juvenile delinquency of children in Maiduguri remand home and their gender.

**Table 4: Chi-square of Relationship between Juvenile Delinquency of Children in Maiduguri Remand Home and their Gender**

Gender	N	$\chi^2$ Cal.	$\chi^2$ Crit	df	P-Level	C-Value	Decision
Male	69(67.0)	11.267	11.07	1	<.05	.33	Not Significant
Female	34(33.0)						
<b>Total</b>	<b>103(100)</b>						

Results in Table 4 reveal chi-square test of juvenile delinquency by gender of the delinquent children in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The calculated  $\chi^2$  value of 11.267 is greater than the critical  $\chi^2$  value of 11.07. The degree of freedom is 1 and level of significance is .05. This shows that there was significance relationship between juvenile delinquency and gender of the children. To determine the significance of the relationship between the variables, contingency coefficient (C) was computed and a value of .33 was obtained. The hypothesis was therefore accepted. This implies that the relationship between juvenile delinquency and gender of the children was not significant.

### Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and background of children in remand home in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. Hypothesis one sought to determine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and the delinquents' age in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. Significant relationship was observed between juvenile delinquency and children's background in Maiduguri remand home. The study found that there were more delinquent children in the age brackets 11-13 years old 39(37.9) and 16-17 years old 28(27.2). The least were from 14-15 years old 16(15.5). According to Mburza (2008) the period between 9 and 18 years is often regarded as adolescent period. It is a period of storm and stress and a stage in which the children will want to experiment with life. During this period there is need for the parents as well as the teachers to closely relate and supervise their children/students to prevent them from engaging in deviant behaviours, because successful completion of this period may lead to a meaningful adult life while mistakes may leave indelible marks in the life of the individual.

Hypothesis two sought to determine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and children's education background in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. Significant relationship was observed between juvenile

delinquency and children's education background. The study found that illiterate children and children who had islamiyya education were more involved in delinquency than children who had primary/secondary school education. These findings are in support of Santrock's (2005) findings which reported that, children who become delinquents often have no and low education, low education expectations and low grades in school. When children are not properly educated they may constitute a nuisance and retard future productivity of the society. Education whether recognized or not is a system of care and should be directed towards promoting the integral development of the child and that learning and education are embedded in care and development (Asemayi & Wunku, 2007).

Hypothesis three sought to determine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and causes of juvenile delinquency. The study found that there was significant relationship between the causes of delinquency such as (peer group influence, poor relationship with parents, withdrawal from school and personal reasons) and juvenile delinquency among delinquent children in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. This finding was in agreement with Haralambos and Holborn (2008) who asserted that children, who lack affection and security, ultimately develop inadequate and inconsistent relationship with their parents. This gives rise to antisocial and aggressive behaviour. The findings are also in support of Jubril (2004) who express that some parents have the negative attitude of providing their children with the materials needed in the school for training the children. Any parent that does not provide necessary school materials such as textbooks and writing materials for his/her child for instance, will encourage truancy and stealing in that child, which will consequently lead to withdrawal from school.

Hypothesis four sought to determine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and gender of children in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The findings showed that, that there was relationship between juvenile delinquency and gender of the children, but further computation of the contingency coefficient (C) revealed that the relationship between juvenile delinquency and gender was not significant. These findings negate Santrock's (2005) assertion that male children were more predispose to anti-social behaviours than the female gender.

### **Conclusion**

The study examined the relationship between juvenile delinquency and characteristics of children in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The study found that there were more delinquent children in the age brackets 11-13 years old 39(37.9) and 16-17 years old 28(27.2), illiterate children and children who had Islamiyya education were more involved in delinquency than children who had primary/secondary school education. The study also found that there was significant relationship between the causes of delinquency such as (peer group influence, poor relationship with parents, withdrawal from school and personal reasons) and juvenile delinquency and also gender of the children was significantly related to delinquent behaviour among children. From the findings of this research, the researchers concludes that delinquency is not a product of single characteristics of the juvenile, but that of multiple factors such as age, education level of delinquent's, poor relationship with parents, peer group influence, withdrawal from school and for personal reasons which involve definite interplay between these numerous factors in the society. Parents nowadays find it difficult to meet the needs of the children and also some find it difficult to train and discipline them effectively, when such children try to help themselves out they get trapped in the menace of all evils in the society. The eradication of these factors among children depend on the ability to trace the root of the major causes by the appropriate authority and a lasting solutions be provided

### **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should be aware of the developmental stages of their children, especially, adolescents (between 9 and 18 years old), provide them with purposeful experiences, provide the basic needs of their children such as food, cloths, shelter, school fees and adequately monitor and supervise their activities because adolescence is a period of experimentation, discovery and orientation so that they may not deviate by becoming delinquents in the society.
2. Parents should be encouraged to enroll their children in school through enrolment drive campaign and sensitizations in the community. Primary and secondary school students should be academically engaged when they are in school, assignment and home work should be given to them frequently. They should be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities such as clubs and sporting activities. This will reduce disruptive behaviours in the school and the society. Parents should visit their children at school in order to monitor their attendance. Counsellors and teachers should watch the type of groups formed by these children in the school so that they can identify the bad ones, counsel them and help them engage in profitable behaviours.
3. Parents should establish good and harmonious relationship with their children, they should provide them

- with love, affection and they should be guided to develop effective problem solving and coping strategies. Parents should develop effective parenting model that would enhance good behaviour and should communicate with their children freely and respect their opinion. Children with social adjustment problems should be identified and counselled on the consequences of delinquency. Counselling should be intensified both at school and home to handle behaviour problems of children. They should also provide adequate school materials for their children education. Government should provide free education to children so that those whose parents cannot afford paying their school fees can be motivated to send their children to school.
4. Both male and female children should be adequately enlightened and educated by the Parents, Counsellors and Psychologists on the adverse effects of delinquency. Fathers should be closer to boys and mothers should be closer to girls and be good models to their children by showing them good examples. Parents and other members of the society should build good discipline and character in the children irrespective of gender, so that they can fit into the adult life successfully.

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