

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FACTORS, AND  
CONSEQUENCES OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN  
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AYAMELUM LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The study investigated the students' perception of factors and consequences of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state. Two research questions and two hypotheses were answered by the study. 1468 secondary school students in Ayamelum Local government area in Anambra state make up the study population. Based on the formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 302 was used. Delinquency Questionnaire for Students (DQS) was used in this study to collect data from the sampled secondary school students. The data collected were subjected to SPSS analysis based on the research questions and null hypotheses. T-test statistics was used to test the hypotheses. The findings from the study showed that students perceive poor interpersonal skills, neighbourhood gangs, poor school standards and attendance, and local of moral guidance to be responsible for juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State. The study recommended that adequate attention should be given to students to prevent them from engaging in deviant behaviours and school authorities should ensure that perform their school duties diligently and as at when due.*

**Keywords:** students' perception, factors, consequences.

**Introduction**

Every society has a set of norms which members are expected to observe, however, not every member of the society abides by those norms. Members who live contrary to the set norms are referred to as delinquents. Delinquency is basically a legal and relative term which refers to the breaking of the law of a particular country. An act therefore may make an adolescent delinquent in one country, but not necessarily in another. However, there are

certain behaviours such as stealing and killing that are considered as violating the social and moral norms of most societies.

In Nigeria, secondary school students in the past were characterized by respect for parents, elders and teachers while drinking, stealing, truancy, examination malpractices, smoking, were not common practices among youth. These were termed as taboo (an inhibition that results from social custom or emotional aversion) to the society. Chaba (2002) avowed that students often get involved in antisocial behaviours because they feel that if they do not, they will be social misfits or termed as old fashioned among their peer groups or friends.

Today, more than ever, the problem of juvenile delinquency is a challenge to many societies, and Nigeria is not an exception. Juvenile Delinquency refers to the antisocial and criminal behaviour involving individuals below the age of 18. Juvenile Delinquency has consistently been a problem in the world, Nigeria inclusive. In Nigeria, juvenile offenders are treated differently from adults, although this has not always been the case. (Encarta, 2009).

The issue of juvenile delinquency is an age long problem even among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state. It seems that the juvenile delinquency of the past cannot be compared with that of the present era. The anti-social behaviours often associated with the juvenile delinquents, such vices as vandalism, drug abuse, weapon carrying, alcohol abuse, rape, examination malpractices, school violence, bullying, cultism, truancy, school drop-outs, to mention but a few. Obviously, unless something is done to roll back the wave of juvenile delinquency, the prospect of a better, safer and more prosperous and crime society emerging in Nigeria and in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state in particular will remain elusive. (Okwu, 2004).

Juvenile delinquency as a concept refers to prohibitive behaviour among a particular age bracket –children and youths. Scholars like Ruch (2006) and Sambo (2008) sees juvenile delinquency as the problems caused by the youths in the community which are now universally accepted as crimes frequently committed by young people under the age of 21 years. In the same vein Shoemaker (2009), opine that juvenile delinquency is that behaviour on the part of the children which many under the law subject those children to the juvenile court as such it is a relatively new and legal term for a very old phenomenon. He also said that the earliest known code of laws “ The code of Hammurabi “ took specific note of the duties of children to parents and prescribed punishments for violation, later as legal system were elaborated offenders were dealt with according to age.

Sanni (2012) refers to juvenile delinquency as delinquent and criminal behaviour among young people within the transition period from childhood to adulthood in an increasingly complex and confusing world. Sanni (2012) sees juvenile delinquency as any behaviour, found within children and adolescents, which is contrary to established norms, and involves injury to individuals and their property.

Juvenile delinquency manifests in different forms such as fighting, rape, robbery, abnormal behaviour, stealing, drunkenness, burglary, homicide, idleness, truancy, prostitution, disobedience, running away from home. Igbo and Ihejiene (2014), these include gambling, stealing, pick-pocketing, cheating, destruction of property, drunk, kidnapping, rape, and assault. The researchers have observed the increased in juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Anambra state and have waded into this study to identify the factors and consequences of this acts among secondary school students in Anambra state. The rate of juvenile delinquency in Ayamelum local government area is very high more especially cultism and examination malpractice in the secondary schools. The age of these juveniles ranges from 8 to 19 years. Despite the huge amount of money spent by the state government on various enforcement agencies to check crime in the society, the eyes of the law enforcement agency catches only but few of them due to lack of information given to them by the community.

The extent of juvenile delinquency and crime in Ayamelum local government area schools and the apparent permissiveness of society, were cause for concern for the present researcher, hence this study. These youth consistently misbehave due to numerous factors, some of which are beyond their control, but which have the consequences of undermining the socializing role of the home in particular, and the school. It is against this backdrop that, the study intends to explore students' perception of Factors and consequences of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state. The study answered the research questions and tested the hypotheses stated below:

- what is the perception of students on the factors of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state?
- what is the perception of students on the consequences of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state?
- there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female students on the factors of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state.

- there is no significant difference between the responses of male and female students on the consequences of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area in Anambra state.

### Method

The study employed a descriptive Survey. The study population comprised of all the Senior Secondary School students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra state. The total population is 1468 (Anambra state Post-secondary school Board, 2018). A total of 302 SS1 students were sampled from the entire population. This is based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample specification.

The instrument for this study was a questionnaire titled: “Delinquency Questionnaire for Students (DQS)” developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was designed along Four-Point-Likert-Scale titled: “Delinquency Questionnaire for Students (DQS)” which comprised ten (10) items. The DQS was made up of two sections: A, and B. Section A sought information on demographic data about the respondent while sections B were made up of the main items of the questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts and a Cronbach Alpha reliability Coefficient of 0.79 was obtained. A simple percentage was used in analysing the questions while the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistics. The four-point-Likert-Scale had four parts, SA (4), A (3), D (2) and SD (1). While the scores were added, they made up a total of 10 points. When we divided the 10/4 it would be 2.5, which was the decision rule point of 2.5. Any value that was 2.5 and above was agreeing but any value that was below 2.5 fell to disagreement.

### Results

**Table 1:** Perception of students on the factors of juvenile delinquency in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State.

S./N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	Poor interpersonal skills promote rude behaviour among students.	3.91	0.36	Agree
2	Poor school attendance eventually leads to juvenile delinquency	3.30	0.51	Agree
3	Poor educational standard promotes indiscipline	3.45	0.72	Agree
4	Lack of moral guidance allows for social vices	3.21	0.74	Agree
5	Poor relationship between teachers and students causes juvenile delinquency	3.18	0.77	Agree
<b>Sectional Mean</b>		<b>3.41</b>		

The results on Table 1 show the perception of students on the factors of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State. The results indicate agreement with all the items. The sectional mean of 3.41 (above midpoint of 2.50) creates basis for concluding that students perceive poor interpersonal skills, poor school standards and attendance, and local of moral guidance to be responsible for juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State.

**Table 2: Perception of Students on the Consequences of Juvenile Delinquency**

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
6	They intimidate and bully junior students.	3.26	0.75	Agree
7	Refusal to do school assignment and submit as at when due.	3.04	0.79	Agree
8	Disobedience to school rules and regulations.	3.28	0.76	Agree
9	Vandalizing school property without remorse.	3.03	0.78	Agree
10	Perform poorly in their studies academically	3.11	0.86	Agree
<b>Sectional Mean</b>		<b>3.14</b>		

The result on Table 2 shows the perception of students on the consequences of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State. The results indicate agreement with all the items. The sectional mean of 3.14 (above midpoint of 2.50) creates basis for concluding that students perceive that intimidation of junior students, refusal to do assignment, disobedience of school rules and regulation as well as vandalization of school properties are the consequences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State.

**Table 3: t-test on Difference between the response of Male and Female Students on Factors that influence Juvenile Delinquency**

Gender	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	160	3.34	0.25	-1.26	382	.208	Accepted
Female	142	3.37	0.26				

The analysis on Table 3 was carried out to determine whether male and female students significantly differ in their perception of the factors that influence juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State. With a significant value of .208 (more than the 0.05 level of significance), the null hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the perception of factors of juvenile delinquency by male and female students.

**Table 4: t-test on Difference between the response of Male and Female Students on the Consequences of Juvenile Delinquency**

Gender	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	160	3.09	0.47	-2.88	382	.004	Rejected
Female	142	3.21	0.32				

The analysis on Table 4 was carried out to determine whether male and female students significantly differ in their perception of the consequences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State. With a significant value of .004 (less than the 0.05 level of significance), the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in the perception of the consequences of juvenile delinquency by male and female students.

### Discussion

The study revealed that students perceive poor interpersonal skills, neighbourhood gangs, poor school standards and attendance, and local of moral guidance to be responsible for juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State.

This is not surprising because in Ayamelum local government area, students seems not to pay adequate attention to schooling and this bread the high rate of juvenile delinquency found among students in Ayamelum local government area. This is collaborated by Nwankwo (2010), whose findings discovered that Peer influence was found to be the major factor responsible for the prevalence of these antisocial behaviours among the sampled adolescents.

The result from the study equally found that students perceive that intimidation of junior students, refusal to do assignment, disobedience of school rules and regulations as well as vandalization of school properties are the consequences of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State. This seems not

surprising because when students begin to exhibit some delinquent arts, they are found wanting in both behaviours and characters.

The study equally found that there is no significant difference in the perception of factors of juvenile delinquency by male and female students. This seems quite surprising that both male and female students are found wanting in acts of juvenile delinquencies in Niger state. This is in contrast to the study of Owuamanam and Makinwa (2015), who discovered that emotional form of bullying, was most experienced and that boys had experienced and manifested bullying more than their female counterparts.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, the study concluded that, students perceive poor interpersonal skills, neighbourhood gangs, poor school standards and attendance, and local of moral guidance to be responsible for juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State. The study also concluded that students perceive that organized anti-social behaviour, unorganized ones, circumstantial delinquency and habit of bad mannerism and vulgarity are types of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Ayamelum local government area of Anambra State.

### **Recommendations**

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were advanced.

1. Adequate attention should be given to students to prevent them from engaging in deviant behaviours.
2. School authorities should ensure that perform their school duties diligently and as at when due.
3. Constant orientation should be given to both male and female students about the dangers of juvenile delinquencies.

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