

EFFECT OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU EDUCATION ZONE, ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of juvenile delinquency on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a Ex-post facto research design. The population of the study consists of all the teachers and principals in the 31 public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone, numbering 2,596, out of which a 346 (315 teachers and 15 principals) were sampled. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection and mean rating was used for data analyses. The instrument was face validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management, and one in the Department of Science Education, both in the Faculty of Education, Enugu State University of Science & Technology (ESUT), Enugu. A reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained, indicating that the instrument used for the study is highly reliable. The findings of the study revealed that delinquent students often wake up late to prepare for school, come late to school, absent themselves without justifiable reasons, go elsewhere instead of reporting to school, and sometimes lure other students to either come late or absent themselves from school. The findings of the study revealed that delinquency among students leads them to treat teachers with disrespect in class, engage in noise-making, show indifference to academics by failing to participate in classroom activities, neglect assignments, and refuse to engage in discussions, debates, and other group learning initiatives. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers should not neglect delinquent students during teaching and learning, but rather seek to understand them as individuals and adopt supportive strategies to encourage their academic participation and positive behavior.

Keywords: Juvenile delinquency, academic performance, secondary students, education

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency has become a pressing social problem in contemporary societies, and Nigeria is not an exception. The increasing rate of antisocial behaviour among young people raises concerns for parents, educators, policymakers, and the general public. Solomon (2014) explains that members of society who live contrary to the set norms are referred to as delinquents. Juvenile delinquency, according to Susan, Ben and Richard (2017), is a term commonly used in academic literature to describe a young person who has committed a criminal offence. Bello (2018) further observed that delinquent behaviours have assumed an alarming proportion in Nigeria. Nigerians are deeply disturbed by the growing involvement of youths in delinquent acts. The issue of juvenile delinquency is frequently discussed on television, radio, newspapers, journals, and more recently, across internet platforms. Despite efforts by religious and moral education teachers to instill moral values in schools, this social cankerworm continues to thrive. Solomon (2014) defined delinquency as a relatively minor violation of legal or moral codes by children or adolescents. However, no delinquent act should be dismissed as minor, since even seemingly insignificant actions can lead to serious consequences. A delinquent act, therefore, is any behaviour by a young boy or girl that is rejected by the senior members of society.

Delinquency is essentially a legal and relative concept that refers to the breaking of the law of a particular country. An act may classify an adolescent as delinquent in one country, but not in another. However, certain behaviours such as stealing or killing are universally recognized as

violations of moral and social norms across most societies. In Nigeria, the problem of juvenile delinquency has long been a source of concern in secondary schools, particularly in Enugu State. Research has shown that the causes of delinquency among secondary school students are multifaceted. According to Adeshina (2017) and Sunday (2015), factors such as parental attitudes toward children, the influence of the community, social class, frustration, peer group pressure, foreign ideas, poverty, and illiteracy contribute to delinquent behaviour. Amadioha (2017) emphasized that juvenile delinquency is a social problem in secondary schools that negatively affects students' academic performance.

Academic performance represents the outcomes that indicate the extent to which a student has achieved specific educational goals within instructional environments, such as schools, colleges, or universities. It is also understood as a measure of a student's success in attaining short- or long-term educational objectives. Aremu and Oluwole (2016) stressed that academic performance is central to educational growth. In recent times, the poor academic performance of students in Nigeria has been a matter of serious concern. This issue has been linked to the widely acclaimed decline in the standard of education in the country (Akiri & Ugborugbo, 2018). Amadioha (2017) observed that the quality of education is influenced by factors such as the learning environment, teachers' effectiveness, and students' attitudes. Delinquency is a reflection of students' negative attitudes and has a significant impact on their academic achievement.

Over the years, both internal and external examination results have been used as benchmarks for evaluating students' academic performance as well as the effectiveness of teachers and teaching methods (Ajao, 2015). Students' attitudes toward academics have been shown to exert an important influence on their achievement. These attitudes also play a critical role in educational attainment, as they determine how teachers translate educational policies into practice through classroom interactions (Afe, 2017). In the context of this study, juvenile delinquency is defined as the behavioural problems exhibited by secondary school students such as habitual lateness to school, absenteeism, disrespect for teachers, noise-making in class, refusal to do assignments, lack of participation in group learning, disregard for school rules, and involvement in examination malpractice. Academic performance, on the other hand, is defined as the level of achievement demonstrated by students in their school work, as reflected in their scores from internal school examinations and external standardized examinations such as WAEC, NECO, and UTME.

Operationally, lateness to school refers to the frequency with which students arrive late, as indicated in self-reports and teachers' attendance records. Disrespect for teachers is taken to mean behaviours such as rudeness, disobedience, or disregard for authority during lessons, as reported by teachers. Noise-making and indifference to learning are understood as classroom behaviours that disrupt teaching and learning, alongside a lack of participation in discussions, debates, and group activities. Non-completion of assignments is operationally defined as the failure of students to submit or complete homework and classwork, as shown in teachers' records. Examination malpractice refers to any form of cheating during tests and examinations as captured in school disciplinary reports and student responses. Academic performance is operationally measured by students' cumulative average scores in English Language and Mathematics over two consecutive terms, supplemented by their most recent WAEC or NECO results where available.

A substantial body of research by Solomon (2014) and Susan, Ben and Richard (2017) has demonstrated that students' attitudes play a crucial role in shaping both teaching and learning outcomes. When these attitudes are not properly managed, they often translate into delinquent behaviours that disrupt classroom order and diminish academic performance. In the Nigerian context, studies have identified poor parental care, peer influence, poverty, and exposure to negative social environments as major drivers of juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, existing scholarship consistently associates poor student attitudes and misconduct with the persistent decline in academic standards. However, despite the growing body of literature, there remains a

gap in empirical studies that directly examine the relationship between juvenile delinquency and academic performance among secondary school students, particularly within the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. While many studies have highlighted the prevalence and causes of delinquency, few have specifically addressed how such behaviours translate into measurable academic outcomes in this context.

It is against this backdrop, and in recognition of the urgent need to address both the behavioural and academic challenges facing Nigerian youths, that the present study was conducted to investigate the effect of juvenile delinquency on the academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Education is widely recognized as a vital tool for shaping the character, values, and future success of young people. Ideally, secondary schools are expected to provide students with a conducive learning environment where discipline, respect, and positive attitudes support effective teaching and learning. In such a context, students should demonstrate regular attendance, active participation in class, completion of assignments, and adherence to school rules, all of which contribute to improved academic performance and personal development. In reality, however, this ideal situation is increasingly undermined by the prevalence of juvenile delinquency among secondary school students in Nigeria, particularly in Enugu State. Behaviours such as truancy, lateness, aggression, theft, destruction of school property, rudeness, sexual harassment, and general indiscipline have become rampant. These delinquent behaviours disrupt the teaching–learning process, distract both teachers and learners, and ultimately contribute to poor academic outcomes. Delinquent students often exhibit low commitment to academics, fail to complete assignments, neglect classroom participation, and perform poorly in internal and external examinations. This growing gap between the expected role of schools in fostering discipline and academic excellence, and the reality of widespread delinquent behaviours among students, presents a serious concern. Despite ongoing interventions such as moral instruction and school regulations, delinquency remains a persistent challenge that hinders students’ academic achievement and negatively impacts the quality of education. Therefore, the problem of this study is that juvenile delinquency has become a persistent social and educational challenge that undermines students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of juvenile delinquency on academic performance of secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent to which delinquency among secondary school students affects their punctuality and regularity to school.
2. determine the extent to which delinquency among secondary school students affects their concentration and participation in classroom activities.
3. ascertain the extent to which delinquency among secondary school students affects their performance in external examinations.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does delinquency among secondary school students affect their punctuality and regularity to school?
2. To what extent does delinquency among secondary school students affect their concentration and participation in classroom activities?

3. To what extent does delinquency among secondary school students affect their performance in the external examination?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.5 level of significance.

- H0₁:** There is no significant relationship between the male and female students on the extent delinquency among secondary school affect their punctuality and regularity to the school in Enugu Education zone.
- H0₂:** There is no significant relationship between male and female students on the extent delinquency among secondary school students affect their concentration and participation in the classroom activities.
- H0₃:** There is no significant relationship between the male and female students on the extent delinquency among the secondary school students affect their performance in the external examinations.

Methods

This study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The design was considered appropriate because it permits the investigation of cause-and-effect relationships where the independent variable cannot be directly manipulated. In the present study, juvenile delinquency already exists as a social and educational phenomenon, and it would be neither ethical nor feasible for the researcher to manipulate its occurrence. The design therefore made it possible to examine the effect of delinquency on academic performance as it naturally occurs in the school setting. The study was conducted in Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State is made up of 17 Local Government Areas (LGAs), which are grouped into six education zones. It is bounded to the north by Kogi and Benue States, to the south by Abia State, to the west by Anambra State, and to the east by Ebonyi State. Specifically, Enugu Education Zone comprises Enugu North, Enugu East, and Isi-Uzo LGAs, within which there are 31 public secondary schools. The population of the study consisted of all teachers in public secondary schools in Enugu Education Zone. According to the 2017 Annual School Census Report, there were 2,596 teachers and principals across the 31 public secondary schools in the zone. Due to the large size of the population, the Taro Yamane formula was used to determine the sample size, which yielded 346 respondents. Out of this number, 315 were teachers and 31 were principals. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure that all members of the population had an equal chance of being selected, thereby increasing the representativeness of the sample. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Juvenile Delinquency and Academic Performance Questionnaire (JDAPQ), which was derived from the study topic. The JDAPQ was designed by the researcher to gather information on the nature, extent, and impact of juvenile delinquency on students' academic performance. It was structured on a four-point rating scale: Very Great Extent (VGE = 4), Great Extent (GE = 3), Low Extent (LE = 2), and Very Low Extent (VLE = 1). The instrument consisted of three sections: Section A with 6 items, Section B with 7 items, and Section C with 6 items. To ensure the validity of the JDAPQ, it was subjected to expert review by two specialists in Measurement and Evaluation. The experts examined the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives, and based on their suggestions, necessary adjustments were made to improve the instrument's content and face validity.

The reliability of the JDAPQ was established using the test-retest method. Copies of the instrument were first administered to 10 principals and 20 teachers in Agbani Education Zone, which was outside the study area. After a two-week interval, the same instrument was re-administered to the same respondents. The results were analyzed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, which produced a reliability coefficient of 0.82. This high reliability index confirmed the internal consistency and stability of the instrument. For data collection, the researcher personally administered the instrument to the sampled respondents with the help of

trained research assistants. The direct delivery and retrieval method was adopted to ensure a high response rate and minimize the loss of instruments. Respondents were adequately briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality to encourage honest responses. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, to answer the research questions. The mean was used to determine the average responses of teachers and principals, while the standard deviation was employed to show the degree of consensus among respondents. For the interpretation of findings, a decision rule was set based on the real limits of numbers derived from the four-point rating scale: Very Great Extent = 3.50 – 4.00; Great Extent = 2.50 – 3.49; Low Extent = 1.50 – 2.49; and Very Low Extent = 1.00 – 1.49. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was therefore taken to indicate agreement (i.e., the factor or behaviour has a great or very great extent of influence), while a mean score below 2.50 indicated disagreement (i.e., the factor or behaviour has little or very low extent of influence).

Results

Research Question One: To what extent does delinquency among secondary school students affect their punctuality and regularity to school?

Table 1: Responses on the extent delinquency among secondary school students affect their punctuality and regularity to school

S/N	Item Statement	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	N	Σfx	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Delinquent students wake up late to prepare for school	101	95	72	78	346	911	2.63	1.12	Great Extent
2	Delinquent students are often late to school	111	124	71	40	346	1045	3.02	1.05	Great Extent
3	Some delinquent students sometimes stay at home for no justifiable reason	99	146	51	50	346	1038	3.00	1.03	Great Extent
4	They sometimes go elsewhere instead of reporting to school	110	129	72	35	346	1114	3.22	1.07	Great Extent
5	They sometimes lure other students to come late to school or to be absent	107	139	69	31	346	1024	2.96	0.98	Great Extent
Grand Mean								2.83	1.05	Great Extent

Table 1 shows that all items recorded mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50, which implies that delinquency among secondary school students significantly affects their punctuality and regularity to school. Respondents agreed to a great extent that delinquent students wake up late to prepare for school ($\Sigma fx = 911$, $\bar{x} = 2.63$, $SD = 1.12$), are often late to school ($\Sigma fx = 1045$, $\bar{x} = 3.02$, $SD = 1.05$), and sometimes stay at home without any justifiable reason ($\Sigma fx = 1038$, $\bar{x} = 3.00$, $SD = 1.03$). It was also observed that some delinquent students go elsewhere instead of reporting to school ($\Sigma fx = 1114$, $\bar{x} = 3.22$, $SD = 1.07$), while others lure fellow students into lateness or absenteeism ($\Sigma fx = 1024$, $\bar{x} = 2.96$, $SD = 0.98$). The grand mean of 2.83 with a standard deviation of 1.05 further confirms that, to a great extent, delinquency undermines punctuality and regularity among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between male and female students on the extent delinquency affects their punctuality and regularity to school in Enugu Education Zone.

Table 2: Independent t-test on the effect of delinquency on punctuality and regularity of male and female students

Gender	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev (SD)	df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig. (p)	Decision
Male	173	2.85	0.72	344	2.11	1.96	0.036	Reject H_0
Female	173	2.62	0.68					

Table 2 shows the independent t-test comparison of male and female students on the extent to which delinquency affects punctuality and regularity to school. The mean score for male students ($\bar{x} = 2.85$, $SD = 0.72$) was slightly higher than that of female students ($\bar{x} = 2.62$, $SD = 0.68$). The calculated t-value of 2.11 exceeded the critical t-value of 1.96 at 344 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value (0.036) was less than the 0.05 level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that delinquency significantly affects male and female students differently in terms of punctuality and regularity to school.

Research Question Two: To what extent does delinquency among secondary school students affect their concentration and participation in classroom activities?

Table 3: Responses on the extent delinquency among secondary school students affect their concentration and participation in classroom activities

S/N	Item Statement	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	N	Σfx	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
6	Delinquency among students cause them to treat teachers with disrespect in class	100	108	89	49	346	951	2.75	1.08	Great Extent
7	Delinquent students are often source of noise making in class	112	123	60	51	346	1045	3.00	1.06	Great Extent
8	They are indifferent to academics hence do not participate in classroom activities	99	146	51	50	346	1038	2.96	1.04	Great Extent
9	Delinquent students often fail to do their assignments	129	110	35	72	346	1114	3.22	1.09	Great Extent
10	They refuse to participate in classroom discussion, debate and other group learning initiatives	110	136	69	31	346	1024	2.74	1.02	Great Extent
Grand Mean								2.74	1.06	Great Extent

Table 3 indicates that all the listed items have mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50, suggesting that delinquency significantly affects students' concentration and participation in classroom activities. Respondents agreed to a great extent that delinquent students treat teachers with disrespect in class ($\Sigma fx = 951$, $\bar{x} = 2.75$, $SD = 1.08$), are often a source of noise making ($\Sigma fx = 1045$, $\bar{x} = 3.00$, $SD = 1.06$), and display indifference to academics by failing to participate in classroom activities ($\Sigma fx = 1038$, $\bar{x} = 2.96$, $SD = 1.04$). They also often neglect assignments ($\Sigma fx = 1114$, $\bar{x} = 3.22$, $SD = 1.09$) and refuse to engage in classroom discussions, debates, or group learning tasks ($\Sigma fx = 1024$, $\bar{x} = 2.74$, $SD = 1.02$). The grand mean of 2.74 with a standard

deviation of 1.06 affirms that delinquency, to a great extent, undermines concentration and active participation in classroom learning among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between male and female students on the extent delinquency affects their concentration and participation in classroom activities.

Table 4: Independent t-test on the effect of delinquency on concentration and participation of male and female students

Gender	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev (SD)	df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig. (p)	Decision
Male	173	2.81	0.75	344	2.46	1.96	0.015	Reject H ₀
Female	173	2.67	0.71					

Table 4 presents the independent t-test results comparing male and female students on the extent to which delinquency affects concentration and participation in classroom activities. The mean score for male students ($\bar{x}$ = 2.81, SD = 0.75) was higher than that of female students ($\bar{x}$ = 2.67, SD = 0.71). The calculated t-value of 2.46 exceeded the critical t-value of 1.96 at 344 degrees of freedom. The corresponding p-value (0.015) was less than the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that delinquency significantly affects male and female students differently in terms of their concentration and participation in classroom activities.

Research Question Three: To what extent does delinquency among secondary school students affect their performance in external examinations?

Table 5: Responses on the extent delinquency among secondary school students affect their performance in external examinations

S/N	Item Statement	VGE	GE	LE	VLE	N	Σfx	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
11	Delinquent students are not interested in reading before examinations	112	123	60	51	346	1024	2.96	1.07	Great Extent
12	They do not participate in extra-moral lessons preparatory to exams	99	146	51	50	346	1114	3.22	1.05	Great Extent
13	Delinquent students do not follow the rules set for the conduct of examinations thereby making exam hall rowdy	129	110	35	72	346	1038	2.74	1.10	Great Extent
14	They engage in examination malpractices	110	136	69	31	346	1114	3.02	1.03	Great Extent
15	Delinquent students are not intelligent enough to write external exams	99	146	51	50	346	1024	1.91	0.96	Little Extent
16	They ultimately perform poorly in WAEC, NECO and UTME	129	110	35	72	346	1035	2.74	1.08	Great Extent
Grand Mean								2.67	1.05	Great Extent

Table 5 shows that nearly all items, except item 15, recorded mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50. This suggests that delinquency, to a great extent, affects students' performance in external

examinations. Respondents agreed that delinquent students are often uninterested in reading before examinations ($\Sigma fx = 1024$, $\bar{x} = 2.96$, $SD = 1.07$), do not participate in extra-moral lessons ($\Sigma fx = 1114$, $\bar{x} = 3.22$, $SD = 1.05$), and disregard examination rules, thereby making exam halls rowdy ($\Sigma fx = 1038$, $\bar{x} = 2.74$, $SD = 1.10$). Furthermore, they are frequently involved in examination malpractices ($\Sigma fx = 1114$, $\bar{x} = 3.02$, $SD = 1.03$) and ultimately perform poorly in WAEC, NECO, and UTME ($\Sigma fx = 1035$, $\bar{x} = 2.74$, $SD = 1.08$). However, item 15, which states that delinquent students are not intelligent enough to write external exams, had a mean score below 2.50 ($\Sigma fx = 1024$, $\bar{x} = 1.91$, $SD = 0.96$), indicating little extent. The grand mean of 2.67 with a standard deviation of 1.05 confirms that, on the whole, delinquency adversely impacts students' performance in external examinations in Enugu Education Zone.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between male and female students on the extent delinquency affects their performance in external examinations.

Table 6: Independent t-test on the effect of delinquency on external examination performance of male and female students

Gender	N	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Std. Dev (SD)	df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig. (p)	Decision
Male	173	2.72	0.80	344	1.98	1.96	0.049	Reject H ₀
Female	173	2.61	0.77					

Table 6 shows the independent t-test results on the effect of delinquency on external examination performance among male and female students. Male students had a mean score of 2.72 ($SD = 0.80$), while female students had a slightly lower mean of 2.61 ($SD = 0.77$). The calculated t-value of 1.98 was greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 344 degrees of freedom. The p-value (0.049) was less than the 0.05 level of significance. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that delinquency significantly affects the performance of male and female students differently in external examinations.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that delinquency significantly affects students' punctuality and regularity to school. Delinquent students often wake up late, arrive school behind schedule, absent themselves without valid reasons, or lure their peers into lateness and absenteeism. Such behaviours disrupt learning and reduce the effectiveness of teaching. This finding is in consonance with the study of Sunday (2015), who reported that peer influence is a strong factor in promoting truancy and lateness among Nigerian adolescents. Similarly, Amadioha (2017) observed that students' deviant behaviours, such as absenteeism and irregular school attendance, negatively affect academic performance and school discipline.

The findings of the study revealed that delinquency has a strong negative effect on students' concentration and participation in classroom activities. Delinquent students often disrespect teachers, create noise in class, fail to complete assignments, and neglect group learning activities. This weakens teacher-student relationships and hinders the attainment of instructional goals. The findings of this study are in agreement with Afe (2017), who established that teachers' attitudes and students' misbehaviour play critical roles in determining classroom learning outcomes. Similarly, Ajao (2015) reported that students' poor classroom attitudes, including noise-making and refusal to engage in learning activities, undermine effective teaching and reduce overall performance.

The findings of the study revealed that delinquency considerably affects students' performance in external examinations. It was observed that delinquent students often fail to prepare adequately for examinations, neglect preparatory lessons, disregard examination rules, and

in many cases engage in examination malpractice. These behaviours ultimately result in poor performance in WAEC, NECO, and UTME. The findings of this study are in consonance with Aremu and Oluwole (2016), who found that examination anxiety and poor preparation are exacerbated by negative attitudes and misconduct, thereby reducing students' performance. In addition, Akiri and Ugborugbo (2018) emphasized that effective teaching can only translate to high student achievement when learners demonstrate discipline, seriousness, and readiness to learn, pointing to delinquency as a barrier to examination success.

The findings of the study revealed that delinquency among secondary school students significantly undermines punctuality, classroom engagement, and academic performance in external examinations. These outcomes affirm that while many students may have the intellectual potential to succeed, delinquent behaviours such as absenteeism, disrespect, noise-making, and examination malpractice continue to derail academic achievement. This finding aligns with Bello (2018), who noted that the rising trends of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria pose a serious threat to educational development. Similarly, Solomon (2014) argued that no act of delinquency should be overlooked, as even seemingly minor misconduct can lead to poor academic performance and broader social challenges. The findings of the study with respect to the tested hypotheses revealed that delinquency among secondary school students in Enugu Education Zone has a significant negative impact on their academic performance. In testing Hypothesis One, it was found that delinquent behaviors significantly affect students' punctuality and regularity to school, resulting in lateness, truancy, and irregular attendance. Regarding Hypothesis Two, the study showed that delinquency significantly hinders students' concentration and participation in classroom activities, reducing their engagement, attentiveness, and involvement in learning tasks. Finally, in relation to Hypothesis Three, delinquent tendencies were found to adversely affect students' performance in external examinations, as they demonstrated lower preparation, disregard for examination rules, and overall poor academic outcomes. Collectively, these findings indicate that delinquency negatively influences critical aspects of students' academic life attendance, classroom engagement, and examination performance highlighting the urgent need for interventions to curb such behaviors in secondary schools.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has contributed to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the extent to which delinquency among secondary school students influences their academic performance in key areas such as punctuality and regularity to school, concentration and participation in classroom activities, and performance in external examinations. By focusing on secondary schools within the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State, the study has enriched the existing body of literature with localised findings that reflect the realities of Nigerian schools, particularly in relation to the challenges posed by juvenile delinquency. In addition, the study has extended previous research by establishing a clear link between specific forms of delinquent behavior such as truancy, disrespect for teachers, lack of participation in academic activities, and examination malpractice and the decline in academic standards. This provides school administrators, teachers, parents, and policymakers with deeper insights into how delinquency undermines educational outcomes. Furthermore, the study has demonstrated the importance of effective counselling, parental supervision, and teacher-student relationship management as practical strategies for addressing the menace of delinquency in schools. On the whole, the research contributes to knowledge by not only confirming earlier findings from related studies but also contextualising them within the Nigerian secondary school setting, thereby offering concrete recommendations that can guide interventions to curb delinquency and improve students' academic achievement.

Educational Implications of the Study for School Administrators

Based on the findings of the study, several important implications arise for school administrators in secondary schools. First, the findings highlight the need for administrators to strengthen policies and regulations guiding students' behavior. Effective monitoring mechanisms should be enforced to minimize delinquent acts such as truancy, lateness, and absenteeism, all of which negatively affect students' punctuality and regularity in school. Furthermore, the study suggests that delinquency reduces students' concentration and participation in academic activities. This means that school administrators must ensure that the school environment remains supportive and conducive for learning by minimizing distractions and encouraging students to engage fully in classroom activities. Another implication of the study is the urgent need for functional guidance and counselling units in all schools. Since delinquency directly impacts students' performance in examinations, administrators should ensure that such units are properly staffed with trained counsellors who can provide adequate guidance in areas of discipline, study habits, and moral development. In addition, the study indicates that teachers require enhanced skills in classroom management to handle delinquent behaviors effectively. This calls on school administrators to organize regular workshops, seminars, and professional development programmes to strengthen teachers' competence in managing indiscipline without compromising academic standards. Finally, the findings also reveal that factors beyond the school, such as poor parental supervision and peer group influence, contribute to delinquent behavior. This implies that administrators must promote strong collaboration between schools, parents, and the wider community. Such partnerships will provide a more holistic strategy for addressing delinquency and improving students' academic outcomes.

Conclusion

The study established that juvenile delinquency among secondary school students significantly affects their punctuality and regularity to school, their concentration and participation in academic activities, and their performance in examinations. These three dimensions attendance, classroom engagement, and examination outcomes are fundamental indicators of academic achievement. The findings therefore suggest that delinquency poses a major challenge to effective learning and overall academic performance in secondary schools within the Enugu Education Zone of Enugu State. It is concluded that urgent and sustained attention is required to address this problem in order to minimize its adverse effects on students' education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Trained counsellors should be posted to all secondary schools to provide professional guidance and counselling for adolescents with delinquent tendencies. This will help them overcome negative influences and improve their punctuality, regularity, and commitment to school activities.
2. Parents should ensure effective supervision of their children and minimize the impact of distracting home and environmental factors. Literate parents of delinquent students should also engage the services of private teachers to assist their wards at home. Similarly, teachers should strengthen supervision and enforce appropriate regulations on adolescents in school in order to improve their concentration, participation in academic activities, and overall time management.
3. Government should make adequate funds available to support teachers' participation in conferences, seminars, and workshops on classroom management and teacher-student relationships. Such professional development will strengthen teachers' capacity to handle delinquent students more effectively, thereby enhancing students' performance in examinations.

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