IJSSE Vol. 3, No. 1 2026
Department of Social Science Education,
Faculty of Education,
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ISSN: 2616-1435

INFLUENCE OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY ON ACHIEVEMENT OF ADOLESCENT JSS II STUDENTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN JOS NORTH, PLATEAU STATE

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Abstract
This study investigated the influence of juvenile delinquency on the achievement of adolescent JSS II students in Social Studies in Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State. Four objectives guided the study: to identify the causes of juvenile delinquency among JSS II Social Studies students; to determine the impact of juvenile delinquency on students' achievement in Social Studies; to ascertain the extent to which teaching and learning of Social Studies helps curb juvenile delinquency; and to identify workable measures for minimizing juvenile delinquency in secondary schools. Four corresponding research questions were raised and answered. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population comprised all 2,412 JSS II Social Studies students in the 23 public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area. A representative sample of 300 students and 10 teachers was selected using simple random sampling from ten public and private secondary schools in the study area. Two structured questionnaires were used for data collection: the "Students' Questionnaire on Juvenile Delinquency and Achievement in Social Studies" (SQJDAS) and the "Teachers' Questionnaire on Juvenile Delinquency and Achievement in Social Studies" (TQJDAS). Both instruments were validated by experts and trial-tested, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.71 and 0.79 respectively using the split-half method. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings showed that peer pressure, poor parental supervision, poverty, exposure to violent media, and an unsupportive school environment are the main causes of juvenile delinquency, and that delinquent behavior negatively affects students' achievement in Social Studies. The study also found that the teaching and learning of Social Studies helps curb delinquent tendencies, and identified counselling services, stronger discipline policies, parental involvement, extracurricular activities, and community awareness programs as workable measures for minimizing delinquency. Based on these findings, it was recommended, among others, that government and school authorities create more employment opportunities for parents to improve household socio-economic status, thereby reducing the economic pressures that expose adolescents to delinquent behavior.

Keywords: Influence, Juvenile Delinquency, Adolescents, Social Studies, Achievement

Introduction

The relevance of education to mankind is unquantifiable and cannot be overemphasized. Education is a necessity, as it is the primary institution for the socialization of young people and an indispensable tool that must be provided under scientifically sound conditions for the maximum attainment of set goals. Education is one of the greatest powers humankind has developed for its continued progress; it is the potent instrument for social renewal through which a social order characterized by values such as integrity, creativity, industry, and self-reliance is envisaged.

The National Policy on Education (2013) sees the school as a socializing agent responsible for realizing the values needed by the learner in the "head," "heart," and "hand," stating the following as educational objectives for Nigeria: the inculcation of national consciousness and national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and of Nigerian society; and the training of the mind in understanding the world and acquiring the skills, abilities, and competences both mental and physical needed for the individual to live and contribute to the development of society. Education, as part of life, is important for the personal, social, and economic development of any nation.

Social Studies as a subject, and its course contents and topics, were developed to empower minds especially those of adolescents so that they are able to live up to societal expectations in terms of character, and to conceive good thoughts and ideas for the benefit of society. Education generally helps Social Studies students to guide against, and fight, failure, corruption, and environmental problems. Nelson Mandela put it well when he observed that education is the most powerful weapon that can be used to effect positive change in society (as cited in Irmiya, 2016).

As stated above, Social Studies is a school subject whose aim is to help students (adolescents) acquire the basic knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes needed to become responsible and contributing members of society. It investigates human activities by studying man at home, at work, in politics, at play, in the village, in the nation, and everywhere he is engaged in the business of living. Social Studies may further be described as the common study of man's interaction with his social and physical environment; it is not only a subject of study but a way of life describing how man influences, and is influenced by, his physical, social, political, economic, psychological, and cultural environment. These definitions portray Social Studies as a subject of knowledge and the social application of that knowledge the inculcation of cultural values, knowledge, skills, and desirable attitudes and as a tool for effective citizenship. There is widespread agreement that the appropriate aim of Social Studies is "citizenship education," or preparing young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active participation in society. Students who perform better than the expectations and norms set by society are more likely to contribute to its growth, development, and sustainability (Akinleke, 2017).

In the words of Oredein (2016), human beings have an unlimited capacity to learn, but this capacity may be limited by the behavior patterns and facilities that the immediate environment offers. Thus, one of the behavioral factors associated with student achievement is juvenile delinquency. According to Esuabana (2017), there has always been diversity in the achievement of secondary school students; while some students perform very well, others do not, and in some cases, students are withdrawn from school on account of low achievement. Various reasons have been attributed to this, including differing levels of intelligence, socio-economic factors, school environment, students' attitudes, sex of students, achievement motivation, and delinquent behavior.

The sphere of juvenile delinquency constitutes one of the predominant factors that may impinge on students' achievement in secondary schools. Over the years, research on the problem has enlightened, and continues to enlighten, societies and provide much-needed knowledge about the phenomenon. However, juvenile delinquency remains a problem and a major challenge in the home, school, and society at large, despite numerous studies undertaken to understand it.

A juvenile is a person who is not yet legally of age typically below 18 years and if such a person demonstrates anti-social behavior, that act is termed delinquency. Juveniles and adolescents are among the greatest assets any nation can have: they are not only legitimately regarded as citizens and future leaders but are, potentially and actually, the greatest investment for a country's development, meaning that the welfare of a nation depends on the morality and mentality of its younger ones. Despite the ubiquity of the term in global discourse and the long-standing nature of the issue, there is no universal consensus on the age of criminal responsibility or on the concept of juvenile delinquency itself. The United Nations defines juveniles as individuals aged 15 to 24 years (UNODC, 2019). The minimum age of criminal liability nevertheless varies globally: in the United States it ranges from 6 to 18 years; in England and Wales it is set at 10 and 17 years respectively, though separate legal frameworks apply to offenders under 18; Germany sets the age at 14, below which children are considered to lack the capacity to commit crimes and are subject to educational rather than criminal measures; in Japan, individuals aged 14 to 20 are subject to the Juvenile Act, which emphasizes rehabilitation over punishment; and Brazil sets the age at 18, subjecting juveniles to socio-educational rather than criminal measures (Terluk, 2020).

One of the major problems threatening the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (quality education) is juvenile delinquency. It has contributed to problems such as student attrition, late arrival at school, and low achievement. Other related behaviors among students that are also of concern include aggression, theft, burglary, destruction of school property, truancy, rudeness, and sexual harassment. These negative behaviors are observed among male and female students of different age categories and locations, including Jos North LGA of Plateau State. Adolescents' involvement in delinquent acts appears to be a persistent concern, and it may be inferred that education which aims to enable the Nigerian child to develop patriotism, tolerance, good character, and other productive qualities of citizenship is becoming less effective for many adolescents in junior secondary schools. A WAEC annual report similarly indicated that Plateau

State was ranked 27th out of the 36 states that participate annually in the WAEC examination (WAEC, 2017), while the Plateau State Ministry of Education, around the same period, reported a 7% decline in students' achievement. Although these figures are now dated, they illustrate a longstanding concern about declining academic outcomes in the state that motivated the present study, and they underline the need for more current data on this trend.

The prevailing delinquent behaviors and the other facts highlighted above, together with their effects on society, motivated the choice of the present research topic, enabling the researchers to investigate the effect of juvenile delinquent behavior on the achievement of JSS II students in secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of juvenile delinquency on the achievement of adolescent JSS II students in Social Studies in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the causes of juvenile delinquency among JSS II Social Studies students in Jos North LGA;
2. determine the impact of juvenile delinquency on students' achievement in Social Studies in secondary schools;
3. ascertain the extent to which the teaching and learning of Social Studies in secondary schools helps curb juvenile delinquency; and
4. identify workable measures for minimizing juvenile delinquency in secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of the study:

1. What are the causes of juvenile delinquency among JSS II students in Jos North LGA?
2. What is the impact of juvenile delinquency on students' achievement in Social Studies in secondary schools?
3. How does the teaching and learning of Social Studies in secondary schools help to curb juvenile delinquency?
4. What are the workable measures that can minimize the occurrence of juvenile delinquency among adolescents in secondary schools?

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The total population of JSS II students and Social Studies teachers in the study area was 2,435, comprising 2,412 students and 23 teachers across the 23 public secondary schools in Jos North Local Government Area. A representative sample of 300 students and 10 teachers was selected using simple random sampling from ten public and private secondary schools in the research area. Two structured questionnaires were used for data collection: the "Students' Questionnaire on Juvenile Delinquency and Achievement in Social Studies" (SQJDAS) and the "Teachers' Questionnaire

on Juvenile Delinquency and Achievement in Social Studies" (TQJDAS). Both instruments were subjected to face and content validation by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and in Social Studies Education prior to administration, and were subsequently trial-tested on students and teachers outside the study sample. Using the split-half method, the reliability coefficients were computed at 0.71 for the students' questionnaire and 0.79 for the teachers' questionnaire, indicating that both instruments were sufficiently reliable for the study.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics simple percentages, mean, and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted as the benchmark for decision-making: items with a mean score of 2.50 or above were accepted, while items below this benchmark were rejected.

Results

Research Question One: What are the causes of juvenile delinquency among JSS II students in Jos North LGA?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Respondents on Causes of Juvenile Delinquency among JSS II Students

Statements	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Peer pressure is a major cause of juvenile delinquency.	300	2.67	1.143	Accepted
Lack of parental supervision contributes to juvenile delinquency.	300	2.75	1.164	Accepted
Poverty and economic hardship lead to juvenile delinquency.	300	2.78	1.082	Accepted
Exposure to violent media influences delinquent behavior.	300	2.74	1.150	Accepted
The society and school environment expose students to delinquent behavior.	300	2.84	1.114	Accepted

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Analysis of research question one, which sought the causes of juvenile delinquency among JSS II students in Jos North LGA, showed that peer pressure, poor parental supervision, poverty and economic hardship, exposure to violent media, and an unsupportive school and societal environment are causes of juvenile delinquency, as all items had mean scores above the 2.50 criterion mean and were therefore accepted. By implication, peer pressure, poor parental supervision, and exposure to harmful media content are, among others, causes of juvenile delinquency among JSS II students in Jos North LGA of Plateau State.

Research Question Two: What is the impact of juvenile delinquency on students' achievement in Social Studies in secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on the Impact of Juvenile Delinquency on Students' Achievement in Social Studies

Statements	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Juvenile delinquency negatively affects students' achievement in Social Studies.	300	2.54	1.132	Accepted
Delinquent behavior results in frequent absenteeism from school.	300	2.59	1.089	Accepted
Juvenile delinquency leads to lower grades and poor achievement.	300	2.56	1.160	Accepted
Disciplinary actions against delinquent students affect their learning.	300	2.72	1.146	Accepted
Juvenile delinquency causes a decline in students' achievement in Social Studies.	300	2.74	1.160	Accepted

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Analysis of research question two, which examined the impact of juvenile delinquency on students' achievement in Social Studies, revealed that juvenile delinquency negatively affects students' achievement, contributes to truancy, lowers grades, promotes negative attitudes toward learning, and leads to a decline in achievement in Social Studies. All items were accepted, as their mean scores fell within the acceptance region above 2.50. By implication, juvenile delinquency adversely affects students' achievement in Social Studies in the study area.

Research Question Three: How does the teaching and learning of Social Studies in secondary schools help to curb juvenile delinquency?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Respondents on How Teaching and Learning of Social Studies Helps Curb Juvenile Delinquency

Statements	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Teaching Social Studies helps students understand the consequences of delinquent behavior.	300	2.57	1.128	Accepted
Social Studies education promotes positive social values and citizenship.	300	2.64	1.132	Accepted
Learning about social norms and laws in Social Studies reduces delinquent behavior.	300	2.70	1.195	Accepted
Social Studies activities encourage teamwork and reduce peer pressure.	300	2.64	1.218	Accepted
Social Studies develops positive character against juvenile delinquency.	300	2.75	1.082	Accepted

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Table 3 presents respondents' opinions, in response to research question three, on how the teaching and learning of Social Studies helps students curb juvenile delinquency. The analysis revealed that teaching Social Studies helps students understand the consequences of delinquent behavior, and that Social Studies teaches norms and values that discourage juvenile delinquency and promote responsibility among students. All items were accepted, as their mean scores fell above the acceptance region.

Research Question Four: What are the workable measures that can minimize the occurrence of juvenile delinquency among adolescents in secondary schools?

Table 4: Mean Responses of Respondents on Measures for Minimizing the Occurrence of Juvenile Delinquency

Statements	N	Mean	SD	Decision
Implementing counselling services in schools can help reduce juvenile delinquency.	300	2.66	1.175	Accepted
Strengthening school discipline policies will minimize delinquency.	300	2.55	1.119	Accepted
Parental involvement in school activities can help curb juvenile delinquency.	300	2.78	1.122	Accepted
Providing more extracurricular activities can reduce delinquent behavior.	300	2.73	1.135	Accepted
Community awareness programs on the effects of juvenile delinquency are essential.	300	2.62	1.116	Accepted

Source: Researchers' Field Work, 2026

Table 4 presents the mean responses of respondents to research question four, which sought the possible measures for curbing the occurrence of juvenile delinquency among JSS students in the study area. The analysis revealed that implementing counselling services, strengthening school disciplinary policies, encouraging parental involvement, providing extracurricular activities, and promoting community awareness are effective ways of minimizing the occurrence of juvenile delinquency among JSS students in the study area.

Discussion

The causes of juvenile delinquency identified in this study peer pressure, lack of parental supervision, poverty, exposure to violent media, and an unsupportive societal/school environment paint a complex picture of the influences on adolescent behavior. These findings suggest that delinquency is not solely the result of individual choices but is shaped by external factors. The impact of peer pressure highlights the need for supportive social networks, while the role of parental supervision underscores the importance of family dynamics in shaping behavior. The influence of poverty and media exposure further points to broader societal issues that

contribute to delinquency. These findings are consistent with Esuabana (2017) and Oredein (2016), both of whom emphasized the role of socio-economic factors and environmental influences in shaping students' behavior and achievement.

The significant negative impact of juvenile delinquency on academic achievement found in this study underscores the interconnectedness of social and educational outcomes. Delinquent behavior does not only affect individual students; it also disrupts classroom environments and educational progress. This highlights the urgency of addressing delinquency not only as a social issue but also as an educational concern requiring interventions that support both student well-being and academic success, a pattern consistent with Esuabana's (2017) findings on the link between behavioral patterns and student achievement.

These results point to the importance of comprehensive interventions. Students involved in delinquent behavior tend to exhibit lower academic performance, underscoring the need for programs that address the root causes of delinquency, such as family instability and socio-economic hardship. This is consistent with the finding of this study that the teaching and learning of Social Studies through its emphasis on social values, norms, and character formation helps students understand the consequences of delinquent behavior and adopt more constructive conduct. Community involvement also emerged in this study as important to mitigating juvenile delinquency: community-based initiatives, mentorship, and extracurricular activities help prevent delinquency and promote academic achievement by providing students with positive role models, structured environments, and opportunities for constructive engagement.

The convergence of these findings highlights the need for a multi-faceted approach to addressing delinquency. Effective strategies should encompass school-based programs, community involvement, and family support to create a holistic environment that fosters student well-being and academic success. By addressing the interconnectedness of social factors and educational outcomes, stakeholders can develop more effective interventions that not only curb delinquency but also promote a positive trajectory for students' futures.

The role of Social Studies education in curbing delinquency through awareness, values promotion, legal education, teamwork, and character development suggests that education plays a pivotal role in shaping attitudes and behavior. This underscores the potential of Social Studies to instill pro-social values and equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to make positive choices, thereby reducing delinquency, a finding consistent with Irmiya (2016), who emphasized the role of Social Studies education in shaping responsible citizenship. Workable measures identified in the study counselling services, discipline policies, parental involvement, extracurricular activities, and community awareness programs point to a multi-dimensional approach to delinquency prevention. These strategies highlight the importance of collaboration among schools, families, communities, and support services in addressing the root causes of delinquent behavior and providing holistic support to at-risk youths.

Conclusion

The findings of this study shed light on the intricate web of factors influencing juvenile delinquency among Junior Secondary School (JSS II) students in Jos North Local Government Area. Peer pressure, lack of parental supervision, economic hardship, exposure to violent media, societal influences, family dynamics, and the teaching and learning of Social Studies all play crucial roles in shaping delinquent behavior among adolescents. These insights deepen understanding of the issue and provide a roadmap for effective interventions and preventive measures.

Moving forward, a holistic approach is essential, integrating strategies at various levels. At the individual level, counselling services and character-development programs can address underlying psychological issues and foster positive traits, while strengthening parental involvement and communication can create a supportive home environment that deters delinquent behavior. At the community level, promoting social cohesion, providing recreational facilities, and organizing awareness programs can mitigate the negative impact of peer pressure, neighborhood influences, and societal norms. Within the educational sphere, strengthening the teaching of Social Studies can equip students with knowledge about consequences, social values, and legal frameworks, empowering them to make informed choices. Implementing comprehensive discipline policies, offering diverse extracurricular activities, and fostering teamwork can further enhance engagement and reduce delinquent tendencies.

Collaboration among schools, families, communities, and other stakeholders is paramount. By combining resources, expertise, and effort, a nurturing environment that supports positive youth development and reduces the occurrence of juvenile delinquency can be created. Investing in the well-being and future of young people is therefore not just a social responsibility but a pathway to building safer, healthier, and more resilient communities.

Recommendations

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

1. Parents should spend more quality time with their children, communicating regularly about school activities, academic expectations, and the importance of good results, while also encouraging and monitoring homework completion.
2. Delinquent students should be shown love by teachers, as this will instil value and self-esteem in them and, in turn, enhance learning.
3. Teachers should not neglect delinquent students in the course of teaching, but should try to understand each student as an individual and treat them accordingly.
4. Counselling units should be established in all secondary schools in Jos North, where students can present their concerns and receive appropriate guidance.

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