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Understanding Juvenile Delinquency: The Developmental Trajectories and Their Implications for Human Development

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Abstract

Peer pressure, poverty and drug abuse have been documented by studies as one of the most common reasons for promoting juvenile delinquency globally. This article examined the causes and the implications of juvenile delinquency in South West Nigeria, with its focus on the relationship with the mediating roles of poverty, peer pressure, and drug abuse. The factors highlighted are notable and interact with all aspects of adolescents' development. Poverty is a promoter of delinquent activities, and these include pressure from peers and exposure to dangerous substances. Adolescents who use drugs are more vulnerable because judgment is mostly impaired, thus making them susceptible to delinquent behaviours. The study examines how these factors are interconnected and how they collectively influence juvenile delinquency among young people in Nigeria. The study used a qualitative design on a group of juveniles living in a correctional home to establish the positions of previous authors. The participants are 10 adolescents. The developmental implications of these behaviours for Nigerian youth are also explored, and they include the inability to complete basic education, poor family relationships, and psychological consequences. The study suggested necessary interventions, such as compulsory education, reduced poverty, and building a communal society that promotes inclusivity irrespective of socio-economic status young people to reduce delinquency. The study provides detailed activities for understanding and reducing the rate of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria. The findings recommend the need to focus on comprehensive solutions that focus on socio-economic reforms and community involvement to protect the future of Nigerian adolescents.

Keywords

Juvenile delinquency, Peer pressure, Poverty, Drug abuse, Adolescence, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have established the problems that come with problem behaviour among young people (Akinwale, 2019; Bada, et al 2024). The American Psychological Association define juvenile delinquency as illegal behaviour by young people, mostly defined as a minor; these people are mostly below 18 years old, but this study will extend beyond 18 years for its explanation and participants. Several behaviours are often seen by this age, which include robbery, cultism, drug use and abuse, sexual misconduct, among other behaviours. They are seen as the major part in vandalism, theft, and rape and this has become a global concern as this pattern of lifestyle can be seen all over the world. Youth's negative behaviours often lead adolescents to engage in delinquent activities to gain popularity among their peers because of the fear of negative evaluation. Poverty affects all stages of development such that it can lure an adolescent to succumb to pressure, limit their opportunities for quality and basic education and further inhibit them from good jobs, thus pushing many youths into criminal acts as a means of survival. According to Okoye et al., (2023), drug abuse in the Niger Delta is often linked to the easy availability of substances like cannabis, heroin, and prescription medications, leading to a high prevalence of addiction and related health issues.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, about 110 million children and adolescents in Nigeria account for approximately half of the country's population, and a large portion of them live in abject poverty: thus, requiring heavy investment in child welfare to mitigate these issues (UNICEF, 2024). Nigeria is the most populated country in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a population that is primarily under the age of 18 and as such (MPI, 2021), it is sufficient to claim that Nigeria's juveniles are the poorest in the country and many of these children have poor nutrition, educational chances, infrastructure and environmental conditions, physical and mental health issues, and so on. Additionally, drug abuse worsens delinquent tendencies by impairing judgment and increasing the likelihood of criminal behaviour. According to research findings, these factors work hand in hand, forming a vicious cycle that hardly breaks (Akinwale 2019; Ojo et al 2023). The present socioeconomic challenges in Nigeria have made many young people seek comfort in illegal activities as a means of survival. This is a multifaceted issue that should be addressed as a nation to reduce illegal activities in the country. Illegal activities perpetuated by young people has continued to put Nigeria in a negative spot among other nations. Sadly, Nigeria account for the highest number of out-of-school population in the world, thus shows why juvenile delinquency has been on the increase in Nigeria. Most Nigerian adolescents are usually under pressure from their peers to do what the group is doing, even if it involves criminal activities. This is always the case in economically poor environments. Substance abuse, especially cannabis, codeine, and synthetic drugs, is increasing among Nigerian youths, adding to delinquency. The association of these factors calls for a thorough understanding of their effect on the Nigerian environment (Ogbonna & Okemini, 2022; Odejide, 2024). These problems are products of the socio-economic status of the country. Peer pressure is especially popular in urban cities; a society that is more concerned about material success and power than morality. Poverty is still a problem, the latest statistics indicate that over 40% of the population is below the poverty line (World Bank, 2022). This economic disparity promotes juvenile delinquency since most of the youths have resorted in stealing, and drug trafficking, among other criminal activities for survival.

THE CURRENT STUDY

Nigeria has been seriously affected with the havoc of Juvenile delinquency with its consequences affecting individuals, families, and society at large. Young people from low-income backgrounds, mostly face survival challenges from poverty to peer pressure, and drug/substance abuse, making them particularly vulnerable to these damaging factors. These factors have a serious implication on all areas of their development from psychological, social, and physical development. The burden of caring for adolescents who are juveniles is so much that some have ended up in psychiatric hospitals, while some are free-range lunatics on the streets of Lagos (Akinwale et al, 2024)

Efforts have been made globally to reduce the incidence of juvenile delinquency, but there is a paucity of documented evidence on how it affects their overall development and how it deprives them of achieving their developmental milestones. The interconnections of these factors within the realm of human development will guide other researchers to study these adolescents as an entity, which will further assist in promoting awareness that will address all the stakeholders in the raising of children in Nigeria. The interventions are suited for a complex context like Nigeria, with specific knowledge on how these young people are delinquents and the factors that are promoting and sustaining these lifestyles. The primary objective is to understand the drivers of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Against this backdrop, two theories, Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory, will guide the study to understand the dynamics of adolescent illegal behaviour in the Nigerian context, where poverty, peer pressure, and drug abuse intersect to influence youth behaviour.

The Social learning theory, by Albert Bandura, emphasises that behaviour is learned through interaction with others. Adolescents are particularly susceptible to peer influences during their formative years, as they seek acceptance and validation within their social groups. Delinquent behaviours, such as theft, substance abuse, and vandalism, often emerge when these behaviours are copied and rewarded within peer circles. Nigeria is a host where slums and low-income communities are more common, and exposure to delinquent peers significantly increases the likelihood of engaging in criminal activities (Adebowale, 2021: Fehintola et al 2025). Social Learning Theory highlights how these behaviours are sustained within social networks, highlighting the significant impact of peer influence in normalising delinquent behaviours among adolescents.

Strain theory by Merton (1938) focuses on the structural and systemic factors that push adolescents to engage in deviant behaviours. According to this theory, societal expectations like achieving success or stability become sources of strain when youth lack legitimate means to attain them. In Nigeria, poverty serves as a source of strain, particularly in communities where access to education, employment, and necessities is limited. Adolescents from low-income families often experience frustration and desperation, which may lead them to adopt delinquent behaviours as coping mechanisms or alternative means of survival (Ogbonna & Okemini, 2022).

This study combines two theories to understand the social influences, and systemic factors that contribute to our understanding of juvenile delinquency. Together, these theories gave us the importance of a comprehensive intervention targeting individual, social, and systemic factors contributing to delinquency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Juvenile delinquency remains a significant concern worldwide; many factors, including peer pressure and poverty, along with drug abuse, lead to juvenile involvement in crimes. Peer pressure can be understood as the pressure exerted by peers

to keep up certain behaviours; because of this, teenagers and youths are forced towards anti-social behaviour in need of acceptance or approval. Studies have established that exposure to delinquent peers increases the chances of engaging in risky behaviours as well as criminal activities (Zai, 2024). The drug abuse problem among adolescents could sometimes be problematic, which could further exacerbate into a psychiatric condition. The abuse of drugs is now a global public health emergency problem with potential implications for the development of youths (Onah, 2023).

In Nigeria, studies have highlighted the effects of peer pressure, poverty, and drug abuse on juvenile delinquency. A study carried out in Ibadan revealed that peer pressure is a strong predictor of juvenile delinquent behaviour, as adolescents are induced by their peers into criminal activities (Adebowale, 2020). Socioeconomic factors such as parental unemployment and low socioeconomic status have been linked with high rates of juvenile delinquency in waterside slum settlements in Rivers State (Ogbonna & Okemini, 2022). Furthermore, substance abuse among Nigerian youths is associated with peer pressure and enjoyment-seeking behaviour, with commonly abused substances including tobacco, codeine, and marijuana (Onah, 2023). Smith et al. (2023) explain that, in Nigeria, the socioeconomic factors that include low parental income and unemployment are highly associated with youth delinquency (Ogbonna & Okemini, 2022). The relationship between substance abuse and juvenile delinquency is both causal and reciprocal. Drug use often begins under peer influence or as a coping mechanism for stress and emotional pain. Over time, substance abuse can impair judgment, increase impulsivity, and lead to criminal behaviour. On the other hand, involvement in delinquent activities exposes youths to environments that normalise drug use. In most parts of the world, adolescents are highly susceptible to substance abuse because it is available and socially accepted in some peer groups. Contemporary studies reveal the shocking prevalence of drug abuse among juveniles and its contribution to both violent and non-violent crimes (Onah, 2023).

While associations between peer pressure, poverty, and substance abuse with delinquent behaviour are well-established, there is a need to do an in-depth study which is single case to fully understand the group under study. Another noticeable gap in the previous study is that the females were not given adequate attention and seeing it more like a male child problem.

By identifying some of the existing gaps in services, strategies and policies such as mental health support or youth mentoring programs, could be put in place to provide a reasonable intervention that will help alleviate these conditions instead of sending them to juvenile homes and later graduating them to adult prison.

In a study conducted by Ibrahim & Eze, (2021), it was found that young people often go to the extent of conformance with the norms of the group to avoid exclusion or ridicule, and activities such as drug use or petty crime can become normalized within a group experiencing shared difficulties. Peer pressure promotes risky behaviours and reinforces them through the reward of conformity.

METHOD

The study used a qualitative method, specifically interviews and Focus Group discussions to elicit responses from 10 juvenile delinquents housed in the correctional home for boys in Lagos, Nigeria. A phenomenological-exploratory research design enabled the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the juveniles and explore how they have been living in the correctional homes. A phenomenological-exploratory research design was used in this study. A phenomenological research design describes the lived experiences of people, which range from their perception, thinking, memory, imagination, emotion, desire, to their lives and how they can live a better life. Purposive method was used because the researcher was specific about adolescents who are already labelled as delinquents by the statutory court, and those who are willing to provide the information by experience. A sample of 10 participants, which was controlled by data saturation, was used for the study. The sample provided the opportunity for in-depth analysis of participants' experience as a state offender at a young age. Consent to participate in the study was sought from the carers, and verbal consent from the participants.

The focus group and Semi-structured interviews were used for the data collection. An interview was suitable for this study because it allowed clear differences and similarities in information to emerge between respondents. The study has used thematic data analysis to process the information and identify patterns or themes within qualitative data. It requires more involvement and interpretation from the researcher. It moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focuses on identifying and describing themes to address the research.

Table 1 Demographics for Participants

Participant	Age	Last Class in School	Type Of Offence	Number of Years in the Facilities
1	17	PRIMARY 6	Stealing	4
2	17	JSS2	Rape	2
3	16	JSS1	stealing	5
4	18	JSS2	Theft	2
5	15	SSI	Stealing	2
6	16	SS1	Gang and stealing	1
7	16	PRY 5	Vandalism and cultism	1
8	18	PRY 6	Cultism and stealing	4
9	13	SSI	Stealing	1
10	16	JSS2	Stealing	1

This study was carried out in the Boys Correctional Home, Birrel Yaba. The table above represents the demographics of 10 boys who are juvenile delinquents who participated in the study. 8 of them are minors, while the other 2 just clocked 18 years.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This finding presents the themes and the sub-themes that emerged from the study. These themes and sub-themes were generated about the research objective. The research objectives are as follows:

1. *To identify the various reasons for juvenile delinquency*
2. *To identify role of socio-economic factor and family background*
3. *To examine the ways in which this has affected other domains of their development.*

Below are the main themes and the sub-themes identified from the data collected.

1. Reasons for being a delinquents
 - a. Peer pressure
 - b. Early exposure to drug use
 - c. Dropping out of school
2. socio-economic factor and family background
 - a. Poverty
 - b. Poor family background
 - c. Parental absence
 - d. Accommodation problem
3. It effects on other areas
 - a. Education
 - b. Disconnected them with their family
 - c. Fear of future

THEME 1: Reasons for being a delinquent

Sub-theme 1.1: Peer pressure

Peer pressure pushes adolescents to take up behaviours that may have been avoided, such as substance abuse or theft. At the same time, poverty increases their exposure to environments where these behaviours are common. Drug abuse adds another layer, affecting their health, decision-making, and ability to stay focused. Altogether, these factors create a situation that negatively impacts their education and self-esteem, amongst others. Below are responses from some participants:

"My friends ask me to follow him to steal." (Participant 1)

"I see people around also doing it, I am not the only one" (Participant 3)

"Plenty of us are doing it, I don't know why they are punishing only me" (Participant 3)

Sub-theme 1.2: Drug use

Drug abuse is frequently both a symptom and a contributor to other problems. Teenagers experiencing poverty and peer pressure may use drugs to temporarily forget about the unpleasantness of their lives (Ademola et al., 2021). Drug use not only provides a temporary escape but also worsens poverty. Adolescents who become addicted to substances like tramadol or cannabis often turn to theft or other crimes to fund their habits. This leads to more trouble and proves more difficult to break out of their habits. In Nigeria, the interplay between these factors is particularly evident due to wide-ranging unemployment and easy access to drugs such as tramadol and codeine (Ibrahim & Eze, 2021). Urban slums and rural areas mostly lack recreational centres where adolescents may be usefully engaged and support systems. This is elaborated in Ademola's research in 2021 about Juvenile delinquency in Abuja, where low-income family teenagers have been affected and found indulging in drug-related cases; in a study targeting secondary school-going students in Abuja, (Christian et al., 2020), established that out of the students interviewed, 83% are accepting to an understanding of the meaning of delinquency and its impact. However, most of the interviewees responded to whether indulged in juvenile delinquency due to peer pressure. In contrast, a minority attributed poverty as being the prime motive in their activity. It expresses the role of peer pressure despite understanding, among adolescents, the legal and other outcomes that they could potentially face in action. It exposes adolescents to several vulnerabilities that make them more vulnerable to influence from the impact of peer pressures, such as substance abuse, further complicating the problems they may already have. It becomes a vicious cycle, as each factor reinforces the others. In the absence of specific interventions, it may be challenging to break themselves out of this self-reinforcing cycle of delinquency. Below are responses of some participants:

"This thing they are punishment me for is common." (Participant 3)

"Collos doesn't kill, is just to make you high (Participant 4)

"Somethings that I have been taking for long" (Participant 9)

"I did not abuse drug; I only use it like other children" (Participant 10)

Sub-theme 1.3: School dropout

One of the immediate impacts of juvenile delinquency is the disruption of education. In the U.S., studies have shown that students involved in delinquency are more likely to drop out of school. Almost 30% of juvenile offenders in detention facilities were school dropouts before their arrest (Justice Policy Institute, 2022). A study done by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2021) also found that over 20% of adolescents dropped out of secondary school because of violence or intimidation. Without education, juveniles are less likely to get stable employment, increasing poverty and limiting their ability to contribute to society (UNICEF, 2023). Below are responses of some participants:

“School is too stressful.” (Participant 2)

“I don’t understand what they teach me” (Participant 5)

“Education is good but not all of us will go to school” (Participant 9)

THEME 2: Socio-economic factors and family background

Sub-theme 2.1: Poverty

Many juvenile delinquents in Nigeria come from poor backgrounds where access to proper food is already limited. Engaging in delinquent behaviours often worsens these issues, as these adolescents may prioritize spending money on drugs or alcohol over food (UNICEF, 2021). Poor nutrition during adolescence can have long-term consequences on physical development, including reduced bone density, weakened muscles, and impaired cognitive functioning. The adoption of unhealthy lifestyle choices, like irregular eating habits or lack of exercise, further worsens these problems, leaving these adolescents physically disadvantaged. Below are responses of some participants:

“Poverty ends me to the street; my family doesn’t have anything.” (Participant 1)

“I go to friends who teach me bad behaviours because I eat at their house” (Participant 4)

“Hisses, I think poverty brought me to this level” (Participant 10)

Sub-theme 2.2: Poor family background

The inability of families to provide financial and emotional support to their children has led several children to seek solace in seeking bits of help from their peers, irrespective of the illegal means of getting it. Single-parent households with financial assistance or childcare programs can be a financial burden, and this may promote the likelihood that children will resort to delinquency. Empowering families economically can address the conditions that often lead to juvenile delinquency at its roots (UNICEF, 2021). Below are responses of some participants:

“My mother is broke (Participant 1)

“My parent doesn’t have the means; I just have to look for a way to settle myself.” (Participant 2)

Sub-theme 2.3: Parental absence

Adolescents living without parental guidance are more exposed to delinquent activities and often find it hard to regulate their emotions, which may result in increased aggression, impulsivity, and difficulty managing stress. These emotional issues are caused by early exposure to trauma, drugs, and neglect, which are common causes of delinquent behaviour (Doe & Williams, 2020).

Below are responses from some participants:

“I have not seen my father in the last 5 years (Participant 3)

“My mother rarely comes home; her shop is in Lagos Island. (Participant 2)

“My parents did not know I belong to a secret cult (Participant 10)

THEME 3: It affects other domains

Sub-theme 3.1: Education

At this stage, adolescents form their personalities, identities, and social relationships and lay the foundation for their future. However, when contributing factors like peer pressure, poverty, and drug abuse come into the equation, they disrupt the flow of development, leading to long-lasting consequences on physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. Juvenile delinquency is often a result of the interplay of these factors, as both a symptom and cause of some developmental challenges. Adolescence is a period of transition that occurs between puberty and adulthood and is usually associated with chaotic experiences due to the physical and psychological developments the body undergoes (Christian et al., 2020). In Nigeria, where education is limited due to financial issues, making sure that all children have access to free and quality education is important. Scholarship programs, free school meals, and the provision of learning materials are essential interventions. School environments must promote emotional well-being by providing mentorship programs and counselling services that address mental health issues, peer pressure, and substance abuse. They can also implement vocational training, sports, and other after-school activities to keep them preoccupied and away from delinquency. Below are responses from some participants:

“I have my regret about not going to school” (Participant 3)

“My mother likes education, but it still did not work for me”. (Participant 1)

“My school is not free, they keep asking for money” (Participant 9)

“I know I may not become a doctor, but I am still hopeful to be someone good” (Participant 10)

Sub-theme 3.2: Disconnected them from their family

Juvenile delinquency has long-lasting consequences on social development, affecting adolescents, their families, as well as society. Juvenile delinquency also affects social relationships, especially in families. The shock and trauma caused by an adolescent's delinquent behaviour can create instability for other family members. Families not only have to deal with the adolescent's rehabilitation and counselling but also the responsibility of compensating the victims of the child's crimes. This often involves raising money for legal fees and settlements. Also, sibling relationships may deteriorate if parents solely focus on the delinquent child. This lack of attention can leave other children lonely or neglected, straining family relationships. Below are responses of some participants:

"I don't think my family still needs me because of the stress they have passed through" (Participant 2)

"I wish a family could just adopt me because I know I don't belong to my family again". (Participant 4)

"Let me just be, my family did not try for me" (Participant 10)

Sub-theme 3.3: Psychological Factors

Juvenile delinquency can have extreme and lasting effects on the psychological development of adolescents. Engaging in delinquent behaviour from a young age can interrupt various aspects of mental and emotional development, shaping how they see themselves, their relationship with others, and their roles in society. In Nigeria, factors such as poverty, lack of educational opportunities, and limited access to mental health care increase the effects of juvenile delinquency, making the psychological consequences even worse.

Juvenile delinquency often occurs during this formative phase, and involvement in criminal activities can negatively affect an adolescent's self-perception. Engaging in behaviours such as theft, violence, or substance abuse may cause feelings of shame, guilt, or worthlessness, which can hinder the adolescent's ability to develop a positive self-concept, also adolescents may internalise their criminal actions, leading to a distorted sense of self and a continuous struggle with identity formation (Williams & Thompson, 2022). A study conducted in Ibadan shows that self-esteem is a significant predictor of juvenile delinquency (Ajayi et al., 2019). Delinquent behaviour can isolate peers and community members, creating social isolation and stigmatisation, especially in Nigerian communities where reputation and family honour are important. This isolation complicates reintegration efforts, as the adolescents struggle to rebuild trust and form healthy social connections (Doe & Williams, 2020).

Additionally, delinquent adolescents are at a higher risk of developing mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, PTSD, and conduct disorders, amongst others. In Nigeria, mental health services are limited, which means many adolescents who engage in delinquent behaviours face long-term, untreated psychological distress. The psychological consequences of juvenile delinquency can extend into adulthood. Adolescents who engage in criminal behaviour may face long-term mental health issues like chronic depression, anxiety, and personality disorders. This may affect their ability to maintain stable relationships or get jobs because of the stigma associated with their criminal record.

Juvenile delinquency affects not just the social, emotional, and psychological but also the physiological development of adolescents, with the most significant impact of juvenile delinquency on physical development being drug abuse. Many adolescents involved in delinquent behaviors resort to the use of drugs and substances, which are readily available in most Nigerian communities despite government regulations (UNODC, 2021). According to WHO, Prolonged substance abuse during adolescence can disrupt normal physiological development such as stunted growth, hormonal imbalances, and weakened immune systems.

Involvement in violent activities, such as gang fights and armed robbery, can increase adolescents' chances of physical injuries.

The physical consequences of juvenile delinquency are not confined to adolescence but often extend into adulthood. Chronic health conditions, such as substance-induced organ damage or injuries sustained from violence, can affect an individual's ability to work or lead a productive life.

Below are responses from some participants:

"I am afraid of my future" (Participant 1)

"I am not happy with my life" (Participant 2)

"I have drunk my tears". (Participant 4)

"I don't even know if I am normal, I keep misbehaving" (Participant 10)

DISCUSSION

The themes that emerged from this study underscore the complex interplay between poverty, peer pressure, and drug abuse as drivers of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria.

Poverty is the root cause of illegal behaviour, where survival often outweighs sticking to social norms. The lack of access to education, employment opportunities, and basic amenities not only causes frustration but also normalises delinquent behaviours as coping mechanisms. Strain Theory explains how economic hardship drives people to engage in deviant behaviour.

Peer pressure worsens the issue, as social learning theory explains. Adolescents seek validation and acceptance, making them more likely to be influenced by delinquent peer groups. In slums and rural communities, such groups often serve as ways to survive, continuing a cycle of deviance.

Drug abuse further increases the problem, both as a symptom and a cause for delinquency. Substance use often begins as a means of escape or conformity within peer groups but quickly escalates into dependency, impairing judgment and fostering impulsive criminal behaviour. This harmful relationship between poverty, peer pressure, and drug abuse shows the urgency for interventions that target both the root causes and the immediate social influences of juvenile delinquency.

RECOMMENDATION

Juvenile delinquency can have adverse impacts on the adolescents' psychological, social, and physical development, it is important to design effective solutions and interventions that will focus on reducing the incessant activities of juvenile delinquents in Nigeria.

Poverty is one of the most significant causes of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria. Adolescents from low-income families are more susceptible to criminal behaviours as a means of dealing with the frustration that comes from their lack of opportunity.

Drug abuse is notably one of the most common factors responsible for juvenile delinquency in Nigeria. It is important to create awareness in society about the dangers of drug use and abuse.

Education is not just a means to an end but the end itself. it is a life-changing experience and a reliable way to curb juvenile delinquency. Adolescents' education is a sustainable development goal that could change a society and provides them with knowledge but also offers a sense of purpose and belonging.

Attitudes that promote juveniles' reintegration into society are important, particularly early intervention. Educating the populace about the causes of juvenile delinquency, the role of mental health, and the importance of community involvement can promote a more kind and encouraging environment for affected youth who are juveniles. By engaging in public dialogues and raising awareness through media campaigns, NGOs and government agencies can help shift public perception and reduce the stigma surrounding juvenile offenders (Ajayi et al., 2019).

Finally, expanding access to mental health services is important for supporting these adolescents. Schools, healthcare centres, and the community should offer counselling and therapy for adolescents facing mental health challenges. Early intervention and ongoing support can help these adolescents develop healthier and better coping mechanisms, which further reduces their chances of engaging in delinquent behaviour.

Juvenile delinquency is a national emergency that must be addressed, especially in urban centres, although it is a complex issue that requires an all-inclusive approach to effectively resolve, maintain, and eventually eradicate. Solutions such as reducing poverty and raising public awareness.

CONCLUSION

Poverty is a key driver of delinquency in Nigeria, as it shows a great deal of interplay with other themes from the study. This economic strain often leads to frustration and desperation, leading to criminal behaviour. Additionally, peer pressure increases the chances of adolescents seeking acceptance within social groups and among gangs, even at the expense of taking part in delinquent behaviours. Substance abuse further worsens the issue, serving as both a symptom and cause of delinquency, impairing judgment, and increasing impulsivity.

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