



## HOUSING AND DEVIANCE AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS' ADOLESCENT CHILDREN IN LOKOJA, NIGERIA

**LEKAN SANNI AND OYIBO JOSEPH OKPANACHI GABRIEL**

*Department of Urban & Regional Planning, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.*

*e-mail: lekansanni@gmail.com OR sanni.lekan@yahoo.com*

*Telephone: +2348034287373 OR +2347056126102*

### Abstract

*The study investigated possible relationship between a civil servant residing with or away from the family, and involvement of children in deviant acts in Lokoja, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. A cross-sectional research design technique was utilized for the study. Multi-stage and purposive sampling methods were adopted in administering a set of pre-tested questionnaire on 240 civil servants, comprising 120 civil servants that were residing in Lokoja without their families and 120 that were residing with their families in the city. Only 231 of the 240 copies of the questionnaire administered were correctly filled, returned and used for analysis. Fifteen deviant behaviours were identified and used for analysis. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were used in analyzing quantitative data while qualitative data were content analysed. Higher percentage of civil servants residing away from their families were generally found to have children that have committed deviant acts than civil servants residing with their families. Higher percentage of divorced civil servants also generally recorded children that have committed deviant acts than married ones, with divorced civil servants residing away from their families recording the highest percentage of their children partaking in deviant acts. It was concluded that civil servants residing away from their families influence deviance acts among their children in the study area. Strategies were proposed to encourage civil servants residing with their families in the city.*

*Keywords: Housing shortage; deviance; adolescent; single parent; absentee parent.*

### Introduction

Jurisdictional partitioning in form of creating new states and new local government areas is not alien in Nigeria. It started during the colonial era when the nation was carved into regions, provinces, districts and local government areas. To date, the three regions at political independence in 1960 have been partitioned into thirty-six states and a 'federal capital territory', and seven hundred and seventy four local government areas. A major challenge faced by politicians, managers and administrators in capital cities of the new states is providing adequate infrastructure, most especially housing, for the accompanying mass influx of people into these cities. The challenge posed by housing is more daunting for civil servants that have to report for normal work schedules in the new capital. Many of the civil servants, initially, usually shuttle between their former place of abode and the new station. After some time, majority of the civil servants often solve their housing challenges by adopting one of these two options: they either acquire an accommodation (in the staff official quarters or through private arrangement) in the capital to accommodate every members of their families; or leave members of their family in another settlement while they acquire or rent a smaller apartment from where they 'visit' other members of the family, periodically.

The arrangement of civil servants living away from other members of their families has some attendant challenges that have not been given adequate attention in the literature. One of such challenges is the issue of civil servants' children committing deviant acts both in the city and in the town where other members of the families are kept while the civil servants stay in the capital city. Major questions the present study intends to provide empirical information on are: Is there significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants residing with their families and those that are not? Is there significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that are married and those that are divorce? Is there significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that are married and are residing with their families and those that are married and are not residing with their



families.? Is there significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that are divorced and are residing with their families and those that are divorced and are not residing with their families?

In proffering answers to the questions above, Lokoja, the administrative capital of Kogi State, Nigeria, was taken as a case study. Vital issues investigated in the study include: types of deviant acts adolescent children commit; relationship between a parent living away from the family and the children committing deviant acts; parents' marital status and children committing deviant acts; and, relationship between parents marital status, a parent living away from the family and children committing deviant acts. Though the study was based on the city of Lokoja in Kogi State, Nigeria, the results and recommendations documented in the paper provide insightful information that could be of immense benefits in planning for adequate housing as a panacea to solving deviance among youths and adolescents in any city in the world.

### **Conceptualization And Review Of The Literature**

In the literature, 'deviance' and 'delinquency' have been used interchangeably to depict unlawful behaviour, especially of youths and adolescents. Deviance is adopted in this study mainly for convenience, and existing literature on both 'delinquency' and 'deviance' are freely used in the body of the work. Of the diverse definitions of deviance in the literature, that of Macionis and Gerber (2010) is adopted for the study, and deviance is perceived as 'actions or behaviors that violate [social norms](#), including formally-enacted rules (e.g. [crime](#)), as well as informal violations of social norms (e.g. rejecting [folkways](#) and [mores](#))'. Macionis (2011) emphasizes that norms are rules and expectations by which a society are conventionally guided, and that failure to conform to these norms constitute deviance. Deviance, therefore, is generally perceived to be culture bound as what constitutes 'deviance' in one culture or community might be acceptable in another. Examples of deviance generally vary from adolescents smoking cigarettes to homicide.

In deviance studies, caution need to be taken, especially in branding youths 'deviance' as, in the opinion of Clinard and Meier (2011), 'deviant acts represent necessary but not sufficient conditions for becoming a deviant. A person does not become a deviant simply by committing deviant acts'. Our efforts in this study is not to equate civil servants' children being involved in one or two deviant acts with their being deviants. All we intend doing is establishing possible relationships between housing shortage and the children committing deviant acts.

Effects of family and family structure on children's committing deviant behaviours or even becoming deviants have been well documented in diverse ways in the literature. For instance, researchers' focus vary from studying deviance among children of parents that do not stay together (Shaw, 1931; Oloruntimehin, 1969); through children with a parent being absent from home (McCord, McCord and Thurber, 1962; Hetherington, 1972; Denga, 1981; Fischer, 1983); and children whose parents are separated (Green, 1946; Rosenbaum, 1989; Battistella and Conaco, 1998; Hanson and Woodruff, 2004; Mc,K. and Rapoport, 2006; Antecol and Bedard, 2001; Ngale, 2009); to children from broken homes (Porter and O'Leary, 1980; Ranking, 1983; Demo and Acock, 1988; McCord, 1991; Hoffman and Johnson, 1998).

Deviance has been found by some researchers to be more in family that do not stay together. Shaw (1931) pointed out that the better integrated the family is the more successful it is as a defense against any anti-social influence emanating from peer's neighbourhood. Oloruntimehin (1969), in her study of family structure and juvenile delinquency in Lagos, Nigeria, concluded that children who came from homes in which family do not stay together tend to be delinquent and their school performance suffers. One of the most enduring controversies in the study of juvenile delinquency is the relationship between a parent being absent from home and the onset of delinquent behaviour. Most delinquency experts agreed that family is a frontline defense against delinquency. A



disrupted family life may encourage any pre-existing criminogenic forces and sustain delinquency over life course. McCord, McCord and Thurber (1962) investigated some effects of paternal absence on male children. Results of their investigations indicated that paternal absence is related to trends towards a feminine identification (though not in terms of overt homosexuality), aggressiveness, anxiety related to sex, and oral tendencies. No significant relationship was found between paternal absence and anxiety as reflected in general fearfulness or incidence of antisocial behaviour.

Hetherington (1972), from his investigations on effects of fathers' absence on personality development in adolescent daughters, observed few deviations in traditional measures of sex-role typing; however, disruptions in interactions with males occurred. In the daughters of divorcees this took the form of proximity-seeking and attention-seeking from males, early heterosexual behavior, and various forms of nonverbal communication associated with openness and responsiveness. In contrast, in the daughters of widows it was manifested in inhibition, rigidity, avoidance, and restraint around males. Early separation from fathers had more severe effects than late separation. Denga (1981) studied 200 delinquent boys, among ethnic group of Kano State in Nigeria. He found that the incidence of juvenile delinquency is greater in families that are separated i.e. (either one of the parent migrated for job). In most of the cases, the father was the parent that out-migrated while the mother stayed at home. Research has also shown that inadequate parental vision as a result of family separation, involving poor monitoring of adolescent and inconsistent and inappropriate discipline are key family factors determining the success of the family. Fischer (1983) investigated relationships between parental supervision and delinquency. He observed that although a review of the literature suggests that parental supervision over their children is a significant variable in controlling the amount of delinquent behaviour: high supervision is associated with low delinquency, the relationship remains when variables such as mother's affection, parental conflict, parental aggression, mother's self confidence, father's deviance, father's absence, father's occupation are controlled. And it appears to be effective under extreme adverse conditions such as poverty and authoritarian and repressive methods of child-rearing.

Green (1946) regarded family structure as an arena in which culture is acquired. He emphasized a high degree of personality trait such as emotional insecurity, feelings of inadequacy, loss of love and affection by either parents or both and the children when the family life is disrupted. Rosenbaum (1989) states that disruption or omission in the parents application of family support and management practice are consistently linked with antisocial behaviour by children and adolescent. According to him, these family support and management practices includes monitoring the adolescent's where-about, using effective discipline for antisocial behaviour, calling an effective problem-solving skills and supporting the development of pro-social skills.

Associations have been established between one of the parents migrating out for work and children partaking in deviant behaviours. For instance, Mc. and Rapoport (2006) found that children in such homes are less likely to be attending school and complete their total years of schooling than children in non-migrant households. One of the main reasons may be that migration of one of the parents for work results in significantly less parental supervision of school attendance and the loss of any positive influence through learning at home (Hanson and Woodruff, 2004). There may be other effects, for example, students may have less time to spend on study, because they have to do more housework when parents out-migrate. Similar finding of adverse effects of migration on children's schooling are also observed in Phillipines (Battistella and Conaco, 1998).

Antecol and Bedard (2001) investigated whether single parenthood increases the probability of teenage promiscuity, substance use and crime, and found strong association between absence of biological fathers and the children's deviance. For instance, 'an additional five years with the biological father decreases the probability of smoking, drinking,



engaging in sexual activity, marijuana use, and conviction by approximately 5.3, 1.2, 3.4, 2.2 and 0.3 percentage respectively.

Ngale (2009) investigated possible relationship between family structure and juvenile delinquency in a correctional centre, using a questionnaire. His analysis revealed the following significant relationships: (1) Juvenile delinquents mostly come from homes in which the parents are married (2) The moral education of the juvenile delinquents is undertaken more by others than their biological parents (3) Most delinquent children come from the lowest socio-economic stratum of the society (4) About two-thirds of the juvenile delinquents come from homes where seven persons and above live under the same roof (5) Most parents of the sampled delinquents have low paid jobs which keep them for long period away from their homes. Porter and O'Leary (1980) investigated relationships between marital discord and childhood behavior problems. He compared correlations between children's scores on measures of general marital unhappiness and overt marital hostility, and found that overt marital hostility correlated with many behaviour problems of boys. However, neither general marital unhappiness nor overt marital hostility related to problem behaviors in girls. Ranking (1983) investigated effects of broken home on delinquency among children in the U.S. A. and concluded that studies which suggest that broken homes are not important causal factors for delinquency are misleading because of their inadequate operational definitions of both family context and delinquency. Demo and Acock (1988) investigated the impact of divorce on children. Reviewing existing empirical studies on the topic, the pattern of empirical findings suggests that children's emotional adjustment, gender-role orientation, and antisocial behavior are affected by family structure, whereas other dimensions of well-being are unaffected. But the review indicates that these findings should be interpreted with caution because of the methodological deficiencies of many of the studies on which these findings are based. Several variables, including the level of family conflict, may be central variables mediating the effect of family structure on children. McCord (1991) investigated relationships between family relationships, juvenile delinquency, and adult criminality. His investigations revealed two major mechanisms influencing criminality: Maternal behavior appears to influence juvenile delinquency and, through those effects, adult criminality. Paternal interaction with the family, however, appears to have a more direct influence on the probability of adult criminal behavior. Hoffman and Johnson (1998), from their study on national portrait of family structure and adolescent observed that family transition such as changes in the configuration of one's family structure (i.e. single parent households due to divorce or separation) have shown to have a negative impact on the behaviour development of adolescents.

From the diverse literature reviewed above, it is observed that although deviance and juvenile delinquency have received bountiful review in the literature, much work has not been done on possible relationships between housing shortage and children's deviance, especially in a developing country like Nigeria. Filling this glaring gap in research is the main thrust of the present study. Though the study is based on the city of Lokoja in Nigeria, it is believed that the findings and recommendations will be of immense benefits to nations and communities having similar housing challenges.

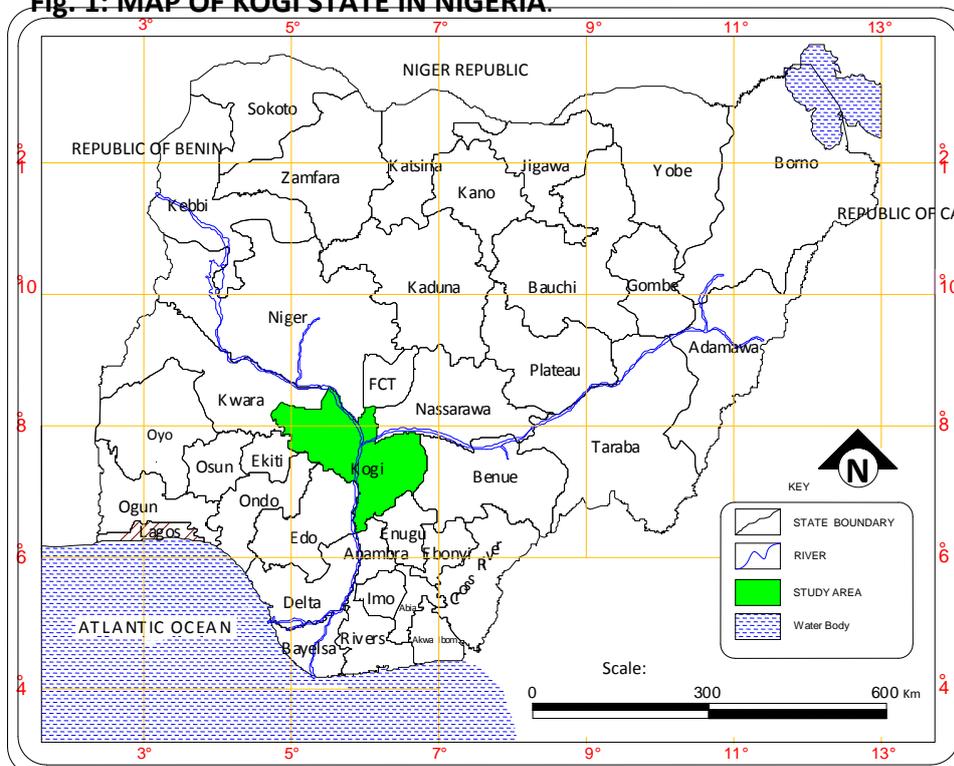
### **The Study Area**

Lokoja, the first British settlement in the northern part of Nigeria, situated at the meeting point of the Rivers Niger and Benue, is one of the towns that developed in the 1860s as a result of European commercial and later political activities in Nigeria. Lokoja is presently the administrative capital of Kogi State created in 1991 (figure 1). It is situated on the slope of a verge of hills called Mount Patti. With subsequent growths, the town now expands from the slope into the Niger River valley. Rivers Niger and Benue meet at Lokoja, where they form a confluence, and make a southward turn in their journey to the Atlantic Ocean about 547 kilometers in the South.

With Lokoja becoming the administrative capital of the newly created Kogi State in

1991, the city witnessed unprecedented mass influx of people, mostly civil servants of the new state, contractors, job seekers and all sorts of people that wanted to tap into diverse opportunities the new state would bring. The rate of influx of people into Lokoja far outpaced the rate at which facilities, amenities, services, and, especially, housing could be provided for the teeming population. The housing situation was exacerbated by the federal government moving the nation's administrative capital from Lagos to Abuja in the same year, with Lokoja being one of the biggest settlements closest to the new capital city. Housing shortage in Abuja readily spill over to Lokoja and other nearby towns. With 'Abuja people' generally having more economic resources at their disposal than 'Lokoja people', most of the existing high quality buildings in Lokoja were easily priced beyond the reach of most of the civil servants. Significant proportion of civil servants in the city therefore had to leave their families in their towns of origin and find place to squat, pending the time they could be properly accommodated in Lokoja. This arrangement generated a lot of challenges for civil servants that have not been adequately documented in the literature. One of such challenges is the effects of some civil servants living away from their families, on deviance among their adolescent children. This is a major gap in knowledge the present study intends to fill.

**Fig. 1: MAP OF KOGI STATE IN NIGERIA.**



**SOURCE : Kogi State Ministry of Environment and Physical Development, 2009**

## Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary data were sourced and used for the study. Secondary data were sourced from both published and unpublished sources like textbooks, newspapers, government publications and previous relevant studies. A cross-sectional survey research design was utilized for the study. Multi-stage and purposive sampling methods were adopted in administering a set of pre-tested questionnaire to some selected



civil servants in the city. A pilot survey conducted on civil servants in Lokoja, Kogi State, revealed that a total of 10,007 civil servants of the states, with offices in Lokoja, were distributed among 14 ministries and eight Parastatals as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1.: Distribution of staff by Ministries and Parastatals*

S/N	Department	Workforce
1.	Ministry of Budget and Planning	78
2.	Ministry of Works and Housing	1,949
3.	Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development	168
4.	Ministry of Water Resources & Social Development	148
5.	Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources	3,027
6.	Ministry of Environment & Physical Development	348
7.	Ministry of Solid Minerals	35
8.	Ministry of Commerce and Industry	199
9.	Ministry of Youth and Sports	34
10.	Ministry of Information	299
11.	Ministry of Health	824
12.	Ministry of Education	362
13.	Ministry of Justice	208
14.	Ministry of Finance	134
15.	Governor's Office	453
16.	Office of the Deputy Governor	149
17.	Office of the Head of Service	824
18.	Office of the Secretary to the State Government	80
19.	Civil Service Commission	107
20.	Office of the Accountant General	174
21.	Office of the State Auditor General	105
22.	Kogi State House of Assembly	302
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,007</b>

Source: Authors' Field Surveys, 2009.

Of these ministries and Parastatals, the most populous eight, comprising five ministries and three Parastatals were purposively selected for the study, with the view of increasing the chance of having adequate representation of the state's civil servants residing in Lokoja. In the selected ministries and Parastatals, civil servants that did not have their families with them in Lokoja were identified and five percent of civil servants in this category were enumerated in the selected ministries / Parastatals. A total of 121 civil servants in this category were sampled with the aid of a set of questionnaire. A control group comprising equal number of civil servants residing with their families in Lokoja were randomly selected and sampled using the same set of questionnaires. In all, a total of 242 civil servants, comprising 121 that resided in Lokoja with their families and 121 residing without their families in Lokoja. The distribution of the samples is presented in Table 2.

*Table 2: Sample Population for the Study*

S/N	Ministries / Parastatals	Civil servants living without their families		Sample from civil servants living with their families	Total Sample
		Population	Sample (5%)		
1	Min. of Works and Housing	585	29	29	58
2	Min. of Agric & Natural Resources	908	45	45	90
3	Min. of Environment & Physical Development	104	5	5	10
4	Min. of Health	247	12	12	24
5	Min. of Education	109	5	5	10
6	Governor's office	136	7	7	14
7	Office of the Head of Service	247	12	12	24
8	State House of Assembly	91	5	5	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>2427</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>242</b>

Source: Authors' Field Surveys, 2009

From 242 copies of the questionnaire administered, 231 copies, comprising 114 from civil servants living without their families in Lokoja and 117 living with their families in Lokoja, were correctly filled, returned and used for analyses. In-depth interviews were also conducted on a cross-section of civil servants in the city. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were used in analyzing quantitative data collected for the study, while qualitative data were content analysed.

From reconnaissance surveys and investigations by the researchers, fifteen deviant acts were identified in the study area. These are: habitual lateness to school; spending money for textbooks; habitual absenteeism from school; inadequate participation in continuous assessment in school; poor social interaction; spending school fees; dropping out of school; adolescents smoking cigarettes; drunkenness; use of drugs; involvement in vandalism; involvement in rape; involvement in assault; unwanted adolescent pregnancy; and, involvement in internet fraud.

### **Research Findings And Discussions**

Results of primary data obtained for this study are presented under two broad headings: Types of deviant acts civil servants' children commit; and, parents marital status, a parent living away from the family, and children committing deviant acts.

In the set of questionnaire administered on the sampled civil servants, each respondent was provided a list of fifteen types of deviant acts and he / she was expected to identify those which at least one of his / her children had committed at one time or the other. The breakdown of their responses is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Types of Deviant Acts Their Children Have Partaken In

S/ N	Type of Deviance	Category of Respondents' Residence					
		With Family (N = 117)		Without Family (N = 114)		Total (N = 231)	
		Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%
1	Habitual Lateness to School	34	29.1	94	82.5	128	55.4
2	Spending money for textbooks	4	3.4	15	13.2	19	8.2
3	Habitual Absenteeism From School	11	9.4	32	28.1	43	18.6
4	Inadequate Continuous Assessment	6	5.1	57	50.0	63	27.3
5	Poor Social Interaction	3	2.6	12	10.5	15	6.5
6	Spending School Fees	3	2.6	17	14.9	20	8.7
7	Dropping out of School	2	1.7	15	13.2	17	7.4
8	Smoking Cigarettes	5	4.3	68	59.6	73	31.6
9	Drunkenness	48	41.0	102	89.5	150	64.9
10	Use of Drugs	5	4.3	69	60.5	74	32.0
11	Involvement in Vandalism	6	5.1	47	41.2	53	22.9
12	Involvement in Rape	2	1.7	27	23.7	29	12.5
13	Involvement in Assault	7	6.0	46	40.4	53	22.9
14	Unwanted Adolescent pregnancy	13	11.1	45	39.5	58	25.1
15	Internet Fraud	8	6.8	21	18.4	29	12.5
Average		11	9.4	45	39.5	55	23.8

Source: Authors' Field Surveys, 2009.

Table 3 revealed great variations in the percentage distribution of the sampled civil servants by the deviant acts their children had committed. The most prominent deviant act that up to 64.9 percent of the respondents identified that their children had committed is 'drunkenness', followed by 'lateness to school' (55.4%), while the least prominent was 'poor social interaction' which only 6.5% of the respondents identified that their children had committed. Percentage distribution of other the remaining deviant acts which the children of respondents had committed, in descending order, are: 'use of drug' (32.0%); 'adolescents smoking cigarettes' (31.6%); 'inadequate participation in continuous assessments in school' (27.3%); 'unwanted adolescent pregnancy' (25.1%); 'involvement in vandalism' (22.9%); 'involvement in assault' (22.9%); 'habitual absenteeism from school' (18.6%); 'membership of street gangs' (13.4%); 'involvement in rape' (12.5%); 'involvement in internet fraud' (12.5%); 'spending school fees' (8.7%); 'spending money for textbooks' (8.2%); and, 'dropping out of school' (7.4%).

When the distribution of the frequency of the diverse deviant acts which the children of the sampled population had committed was observed based on whether the civil servant was residing with the family or not, great variations were observed between those that resided in Lokoja with their families and those that were living without their families, with the civil servants living without their families reporting higher frequencies throughout. For



instance, while 29.1 percent of the civil servants residing with their families reported that their children had exhibited being habitual late-comers in schools, corresponding figures for those living without their families was 82.5 percent. While 41.0 percent of those living with their families reported cases of their children haven being drunk at one time or the other, corresponding figure for those living without their families was 89.5 percent. Percentage distribution of the remaining deviant acts as being committed by the children of civil servants living with their families and those living without their families, respectively are: spending money for textbooks (3.4% : 13.2%); habitual absenteeism from school (9.4% : 28.1%); inadequate participation in schools' continuous assessment (5.1% : 50.0%); poor social interaction (2.6% : 14.9%); dropping out of school (1.7% : 13.2%); adolescents smoking cigarettes (4.3% : 59.6%) use of drugs (4.3% : 60.5%); involvement in vandalism (5.1% : 41.2%); involvement in rape (1.7% : 23.7%); unwanted adolescent pregnancy (11.1% : 39.5%); and internet fraud (6.8% : 18.4%).

It is pertinent to observe that on the average, higher proportion (39.5%) of civil servants residing without their children reported their children involvement in the deviant acts investigated in the study, than civil servants residing with their families (9.4%).

Further investigations were conducted on possible relationships between marital status, a parent living away from the family, and children committing deviant acts. The results of the investigations are presented in Table 4.

Table4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status, 'Residence Type' and Deviant Acts Their Children Have Committed

S/N	Deviant Acts	Category of Respondents' by Marital Status											
		Married (N = 188; % = 81.4)						Divorced (N = 43; % = 18.6)					
		With Family (N = 88)		Without Family (N = 100)		Total (N = 188)		With Family (N = 14)		Without Family (N = 29)		Total (N = 43)	
		Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%
1	Habitual Lateness to School	23	26.1	68	68.0	91	48.4	11	78.6	26	89.7	37	86.0
2	Spending money for textbooks	1	1.1	5	5.0	6	3.2	3	21.4	10	34.5	13	30.2
3	Habitual Absence From School	3	3.4	14	14.0	17	9.0	8	57.1	18	62.1	26	60.5
4	Inadequate Continuous Assessment	2	2.3	38	38.0	40	21.3	4	28.6	19	65.5	23	53.5
5	Poor Social Interaction	0	0.0	5	5.0	5	2.7	3	21.4	7	24.1	10	23.3
6	Spending School Fees	1	1.1	8	8.0	9	4.8	2	14.3	9	31.0	11	25.6
7	Dropping out of School	0	0.0	5	5.0	5	2.7	2	14.3	10	34.5	12	27.9
8	Smoking Cigarettes	1	1.1	44	44.0	45	23.9	4	28.6	24	82.8	28	65.1
9	Drunkenness	36	40.9	77	77.0	113	60.1	12	85.7	25	86.2	37	86.0
10	Use of Drugs	1	1.1	48	48.0	49	26.1	4	28.6	21	72.4	25	58.1
11	Involvement in Vandalism	1	1.1	27	27.0	28	14.9	5	35.7	20	70.0	25	58.1
12	Involvement in Rape	1	1.1	14	14.0	15	8.0	1	7.1	13	44.8	14	32.6
13	Involvement in Assault	2	2.3	15	15.0	17	9.0	5	35.7	21	72.4	26	60.5
14	Unwanted Adolescent Pregnancy	3	3.4	33	33.0	36	19.1	10	71.4	12	41.4	22	51.2
15	Internet Fraud	10	11.4	16	16.0	26	13.8	2	14.3	5	17.2	7	16.3
Average		6	6.8	28	28.0	34	18.1	5	35.7	16	55.2	21	48.8

Source: Authors' Field Surveys, 2009



Table 4 revealed that 81.4% of the respondents were married and the remaining 18.6% were divorced. Variations were observed in the reported incidence of deviant acts children of married and divorced civil servants in the study area have committed. For instance, though drunkenness happened to be the most reported case of deviant acts civil servants children in the study area have committed, 53.1% of married as against 90.7% divorced civil servants identified that their children have committed this deviant act. In the case of being habitual late-comers to school, 32.5% of married as against 86.0% divorced civil servants, identified that their children had committed this act. Distribution of married and divorced civil servants, respectively, by deviant acts they identified that their children had committed are: spending money for textbooks (1.4% : 37.2%); habitual absenteeism from school (7.2% : 65.1%); inadequate participation in continuous assessment in school (16.3% : 67.4%); poor social interaction (1.4% : 27.9%); spending school fees (1.9% : 37.2%); dropping out of school (2.9% : 25.6%); adolescents smoking cigarettes (21.5% : 65.1%); use of drugs (21.5% : 67.4%); involvement in vandalism (12.9% : 60.5%); involvement in rape (1.9% : 55.8%); and, involvement in assault (13.9% : 55.8%).

From analysis above, it is obvious that children of married civil servants were less involved in committing deviant acts than those of divorced civil servants. What is not so obvious is the possible influence of absentee parents on the children's committing deviant acts in the study area. The next section of this report focuses on addressing this.

Table 4 also revealed that when the distribution of deviant acts the children of civil servants have committed were analysed on the basis of parents' marital status and whether a parent was living away from the family, great variations were observed in the distribution. For instance, when we consider the case of married civil servants, great variations exist in the percentage involvement of children committing deviant acts between parents living with and those living away from the family. For example, while 30.8% of civil servants residing with their families reported their children being involved in drunkenness, 75.0% of those living without their families gave similar rating. Distribution of married respondents living with and without members of their families, respectively, by deviant acts their children commit are: being habitual late comers to school (23.1% : 41.0%); spending money for textbooks (0.9% : 2.0%); habitual absenteeism from school (2.6% : 12.0%); inadequate participation in continuous assessment in school (1.7% : 32.0%); poor social interaction (0.0% : 3.0%); spending school fees (0.9% : 3.0%); dropping out of school (0.0% : 6.0%); adolescents smoking cigarettes (0.9% : 44.0%); use of drugs (0.9% : 44.0%); involvement in vandalism (0.9% : 28.3%); involvement in rape (0.0% : 4.0%); and, involvement in assault (1.7% : 27.0%).

Great variations were also observed in percentage distribution of children committing deviant acts between divorced civil servants living with members of their families and those that live away from members of their families. For instance, while 85.7% of divorced civil servants living with their families identified drunkenness as a deviant act which their children have committed, 93.1% of those living without their families identified same as being committed by theirs. The distribution of divorced respondents living and not living with members of their families, respectively, by percentage of their children committing the remaining deviant acts are: being habitual late comers to school (100.0% : 79.3%); spending money for textbooks (21.4% : 44.8%); habitual absenteeism from school (57.1% : 70.0%); inadequate participation in continuous assessment in school (28.6% : 86.2%); poor social interaction (21.4% : 31.0%); spending school fees (14.3% : 48.3%); dropping out of school (14.3% : 31.0%); adolescents smoking cigarettes (28.6% : 48.3%); use of drugs (28.6% : 86.2%); involvement in vandalism (35.7% : 72.4%); involvement in rape (7.1% : 79.3%); and, involvement in assault (35.7% : 65.5%).



It is important to observe here that on the average, higher proportion (48.8%) of divorced civil servants reported their children involvement in the deviant acts investigated in the study, than civil servants that were married (18.1); higher proportion of civil servants that were divorced and were residing with their families reported their children involvement in deviant acts than those that were married and were residing with their families (6.8%). Also, on the average, higher proportion of divorced civil servants not residing without their families (55.2%) reported their children involvement in deviant acts investigated in the study than married civil servants residing without their families (28.0%).

To investigate further whether there were significant differences in the level of committing deviant acts among children of civil servants residing with their families and those that were not residing with their families, Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) tests were conducted on results obtained in tables 3 and 4 (see the appendix). Since the values of the computed  $X^2$  for every activity investigated less than the tabulated values, the study showed that there was significant differences in the level of committing deviant acts among children of civil servants residing with their families and those that were not residing with their families, in the city.

In-depth interviews with a cross-section of civil servants in the study area helped provide some insights into the observed pattern of adolescents committing deviant acts in the study area.

For instance, majority of civil servants that identified drunkenness as a deviant act committed by their children claimed that the act was committed during Christian or Muslims festive period and not that they are habitual drunkards. Most of those that claimed that their children had used drugs insisted that their children no longer use drugs. In the case of involvement in assault and vandalism, majority claimed that their children were involved, generally during mass protests that usually involve their schools or human rights groups. Most of the parents that identified that their children were involved in rape either claimed that their daughter were raped or that their sons were framed up.

General consensus among the civil servants interviewed was that absence of a parent from the family affect the children negatively in various ways: they do not have adequate supervision; they are often easily influenced by their peers and neighbours; their academic performances are adversely affected; and, their moral upbringing are adversely affected. Hence, they are more prone to committing deviant acts. The nature of parents' occupation are also said to influence the children's tendencies to commit deviant act. Instances of children of career parents that are often left in the cares of house-girls and other care-givers that do not receive adequate care and supervision from parents, and later grow up to be deviants were freely cited. Another general consensus among the sampled civil servants is that housing shortage is a major factor aggravating children's committing deviant acts, as most of the families do not have adequate space to enjoy the required privacy to for nurturing the family. They therefore suggested that the government should make concerted efforts to provide adequate housing for civil servants in the state.

## Summary

The study examined the relationships between housing shortage and civil servants' children committing deviant acts in Lokoja, Kogi State, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. A cross-sectional research design technique was utilized for the study. Systematic sampling method was adopted in administering a set of pre-tested questionnaires on 240 civil servants, comprising 120 civil servants that were residing in Lokoja without their families because of housing shortage in the city and 120 that were residing with their families. Only 231 of the 240 copies of the questionnaires administered were correctly filled, returned and used for analysis. Fifteen deviant behaviours were identified and used for analysis. Descriptive statistics was used in analyzing quantitative data collected for the study while qualitative data were content analysed. Higher percentage of adolescent children of civil servants that resided away from their families commit deviant



acts than the children of those that resided with their families; higher percentage of children of divorced civil servants commit deviant acts than children of those that were married. Even among the divorced civil servants, higher percentage of children of those that resided away from their families commit deviant acts than children of those that resided with their families.

In almost all 16 deviant acts covered by the study, children of divorced civil servants residing away from their families recorded highest percentage committing deviant acts, followed by children of those that were divorced and were living with their families. The group that recorded the least percentage of children committing deviant acts are those that were married and were living with their families.

## **Recommendations**

Considering the revelation of the research that housing shortage aggravates commitment of deviance acts among civil servants' adolescent children in the study area, it is crystal clear that with proper planning adequate housing provision for residents in general and civil servants in particular in the city, youths and adolescents committing deviant acts could easily be discouraged and ultimately arrested in the study area. To this end, two major strategies are proposed, one short-term and the other, long-term. We start with the long term strategy.

Since the city of Lokoja is a confluence city without much land for adequate provision of housing for the teeming population, there is the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to housing supply for the residents. To this end, a Regional Development Planning Commission should be established, charged with the task of preparing a comprehensive regional development plan for the state. The Commission should be multi-disciplinary in nature, making use of professional expertise of professional regional planners, transportation planners, architects, builders, estate valuers, social workers, agriculturists, economists and other allied professionals. The commission should encourage adequate people's participation in preparing the regional plan which should provide adequate linkages between the capital city and other major settlements in the state. Efforts should be made to enhance economic development of the region to stem emigration to the capital city. Since a substantial portion of the state is located on the other side of the confluence of Niger and Benue rivers, transportation by water and roads should be encouraged to enhance people's mobility, thus reducing the existing pressure on housing demand in the city.

Short-term strategies involve providing conducive incentives in form of tax holidays and subsidised land, for private developers to develop housing estates within the vicinity of the state capital. There is also the need to educate civil servants on the advantages of devoting much attention to their children to stem the tide of deviance among youth and adolescents in the state.

## **Conclusion**

The study has carried out empirical investigations on effects of housing shortage on deviance among civil servants' adolescent children in the city of Lokoja, Kogi state, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were sourced and used for the study. Fifteen deviant acts were identified and used for the study. Sampled civil servants were required to identify deviant acts one or more of their children have committed at one time or the other. Investigations revealed strong relationships between housing shortage and children committing deviant acts. Marital status of parents were also found to be significantly associated with children committing deviant acts. Strategies were proposed to enhance adequate housing for civil servants and others in the city.

The research has therefore revealed that, with careful planning and implementation, adequate provision of housing for the teeming population could be adopted as strategy to



arrest growing trends in deviance among youths and adolescents in Lokoja, Nigeria. Though the study was based on Lokoja, Nigeria, we believe that our findings and recommendations could be invaluable in addressing the challenges of deviance among youth and adolescents in any city grappling with the twin challenges of housing shortage and deviance among youths and adolescents.

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### Appendix

In carrying out the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) test, the following hypotheses were proposed:

1.  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants residing with their families and those that were not.  
 $H_1$ : There is significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants residing with their families and those that were not.
2.  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that were married and those that were divorced.  
 $H_1$ : There is significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that were married and those that were divorced.
3.  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that were married and were residing with their families and those that were married and were not residing with their families.  
 $H_1$ : There is significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that were married and were residing with their families and those that were married and were not residing with their families.
4.  $H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that were divorced and were residing with their families and those that were divorced and were not residing with their families.  
 $H_1$ : There is significant difference in the level of committing deviant acts between the children of civil servants that were divorced and were residing with their families and those that were divorced and were not residing with their families.

**Decision Rule:** Accept  $H_0$  if Computed  $X^2$  is greater than the table value OR Reject  $H_0$  if table value of  $X^2$  is less than the Computed value.

S/N	Variables	Degree of Freedom	Chi-square ( $X^2$ )		Inference
			Computed	Tabulated	
1	Residing with or without the family	14	1.867	23.685	Accept $H_1$
2	Married or divorced	14	1.467	23.685	Accept $H_1$
3	Married and residing or not residing with the family	14	8.800	23.685	Accept $H_1$
4	Divorced and residing or not residing with family	14	3.600	23.685	Accept $H_1$