

ABSTRACT

An Evaluation of the Causes of Delinquency and Violence Displayed by Secondary School Students: A Case Study of St. Lucia

Leonard Johnny

This study investigated the causes of delinquency and violence displayed by secondary school students in St. Lucia, whether males who attend secondary school in St. Lucia were more delinquent and violent than females and the mediating role of specific variables on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods. The findings established that peer relationship, gender, self-esteem, self-control, drug and alcohol abuse and parental practice cause secondary school students in St. Lucia to behave delinquently and violently. It postulated that: (i) drug and alcohol abuse, drugs use in the past year, and lifetime use of drugs, deviant peers and low self-esteem mediate the effect of parental practice on delinquency and violence; (ii) drugs use in the past year, and lifetime use of drugs mediate the effect of self-esteem on delinquency and violence. Additionally, it confirmed that males who attend secondary schools tend to be more delinquent and violent than females.

The results did not prove that: (i) school climate, academic performance, poverty and a lack of religious instructions were associated with delinquency and violence; (ii) alcohol use, and drugs and alcohol use mediate the effect of self-esteem; (iii) low self-control mediates the effects of peer relationship; (v) peer relationship mediates the effect of low self-esteem; and (vi) academic performance mediates the effect of school climate on delinquency and violence.

This study indicated that secondary school students in St. Lucia were introduced to marijuana by friends and relatives and to alcohol mainly by their parents. This study adds to the growth of knowledge in the area of juvenile delinquency and violence and to the existing literature on this topic. The study made recommendations which are hoped will help to reduce and control the level of delinquency and violence in St. Lucia.

Keywords: Leonard Johnny; delinquency; violence; secondary school students; St. Lucia.