ABSTRACT: The family has been seen as the most basic unit of social organization and one that carries out vital tasks in the society. In spite of its numerous roles, its instability has negatively impacted on the socialisation of the youth and the society at large. In a completely deformed family, the degree of the risk for committing a crime is higher. The number of this kind of family is increasing in Nigeria today and the increasing crime trends among youth may be attributed to this. It is in this context that this article examines the nexus between family instability and youth crime with some empirical explanation from Ilorin. The following are the major findings based on the test of hypotheses examined; family instability affects the educational attainment of youth, economic background of family predisposes youth to crime and youth crime is a product of family instability. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were proffered; the family institution be better placed to provide basic psychological needs for its offspring, unity and harmony be maintained in the family while therapeutic techniques be employed to promote good relationship between parents and their children especially the youth.

1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the most basic and ancient of all institutions and remains the fundamental social unit in every society. There are two basic functions of the family, the first of which is the socialization of children so that they can truly become members of the society and
the second aspect is the stability of the adult personality of the society. The family, individuals come from and the experiences therein have a profound and pervasive influence on their later behaviour as adults. This clearly indicates that the family has an important role to play in the life of every individual (Robertson, 1987, Parsons and Bales 2002, and Akagu 2006). It is believed that a destructive and disturbed home environment can have a significant impact on socialization because the family is the primary unit in which youth learn the values, attitudes and processes that guide their actions throughout their lives. It is generally agreed that it is the social interaction between the youth and those in their immediate environment that contribute to production of healthy and normal young persons.

Family instability and youth crime is rampant and has become a common phenomenon in Nigeria. Crime today is common among the youth, many of whom are caught in one criminal act or the other, such as examination malpractices, armed robbery, assault, rape, house breaking, forgery, larceny and culpable homicide. The family is no longer intact as it used to be with resultant negative effects on the society. The onset of crime can be traced to a deterioration of the social bond during adolescence marked by a weakened attachment to parents, commitment to school and belief in conventional values. The beginning of criminal careers is supported by residence in a social setting in which deviant values and attitudes can be learned and reinforced by criminal peers. Hence, defective family relationship has more effect among criminals than the non-criminals (Thornberry, 1987).

Family instability has been described as crisis and changes in functional prerequisite of the family institution. This is an example of social institution being threatened by one form of imbalance or the other (Fayeye and Akintola, 1998).

Factors making family life appealing such as constant interaction, intimate relationship, emotional bonding, interdependency and shared responsibilities can also create tensions that result in violent
behaviour between family members (Kratcoski, 1987). It is a paradox that although families normally provide nurturance, warmth and emotional support in our impersonal mass society, many families bring abuse, despair and violence into the lives of one or more of their members (Reiss, 1980).

The functionalist School of thought asserts that the property and even the survival of contemporary society depend on the strength of its family. The influence of the family can never be underestimated because from cradle to grave it leaves a great impact on the social experience of the individual. Hence, laxity in family rules and control makes the youth to be prone to criminal behaviour. Although, the family is essential to the existence of man at the same time there is a sense of instability, conflict and change are crises that can also be generated by the family. However, transience and instability produces powerful pressures for violent behaviour among the young. An unorganized family cannot provide access for legitimate channels to purposeful goals and thus blur the future of these youth.

Most experts on the study of crime agree that the family is a frontline defense against crime. A disrupted family life may encourage any pre-existing criminogenic forces and sustain crime over the life course. The family’s influence today has greatly receded, thus the average family has failed in its function to provide a solid moral foundation for youths. Most people, particularly youth are all product of this influence.

2. CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Family

Robertson (1987) views the family as a relatively permanent group, a people related by ancestry, marriage, or adoption who live together, from an economic unit and take care of their young. In a relatively impersonal mass society such as ours, the family performs an “affectionate” function, serving as sources of emotional support, providing a sense of belonging and giving a certain form of amount of emotional security from dangers and threats of the outside world. Also Saxton (1993) sees the family as people who are bound together
emotionally by a sense of shared experience and understanding. Because practically all of us are born and raised within some form of family, our initial experience which forms the basis for our view of ourselves and the world around us are chiefly derived from a family setting. In pre-modern and modern society alike, the family has been seen as the most basic unit of social organization and one which carries, out vital task such as socialization. To some people, family live are the most important part of their lives, more important than work, money, recreation, friendship, religion etc. (Haralambos, 2000 and Glenn, 1991).

In spite of the numerous roles of the family in the society, its instability has various negative effects and consequences particularly on the socialization process on the youths and on the society at large. According to Doolittle et al (1999) there is enormous interest and serious concern about the family in our society. It is seen as a vital social institution, which is in great danger of disintegration loaded with dire social consequences. Furthermore, instability has come to characterize the family system especially within the African societies. Many of the African societies are undergoing a process of modernization, the effect of which is noticeable in the family and in the institution of marriage generally. Marriage is no longer lasting until death. This phenomenon described as family instability appears to be on the increase.

It is beyond mere assertion that families do not always remain together as a unit. Writing under the caption, “family disorganization” Goode (1971), defines family instability as the break up of a family unit, the dissolution or fracture of a structure of social roles, when one or more members fail to perform adequately the role obligations. He sees the family as both “fragile and tough” the family is seen to be fragile because it is constantly breaking down, and tough because despite the problem associated with it, it has continued to survive as an institution. He reiterated that “disorganization” is endemic to the family system by this, he meant that problem associated with family represents the more normal patterns of daily family life, that is recurring sets of dissolving pressures with a repeated and often stumbling reassertion of old patterns.
However, a lot of factors have been attributed to the causes of family instability. Goode (1971) identifies the major causes of instability while trying to analyse family disorganization. He based his consideration on large social structures in which the family processes take place. Thus, he identified the following as causes of family disorganization:

- **Illegitimacy**: He described the family in this state as “uncompleted unit. No dissolution could be said to assume to have existed. However, disorganization could result because the role failure of members of the families of both mother and father especially with regard to social control is a major indirect cause of illegitimacy. The potential “father-husband” conspicuously fails in this role obligation as the society, mother and child define this.

- **Re-definition to cultural role**: This leads to instability because it results in deferential cultural changes; it may take the form of husband wife conflict or parent-child conflict.

- **External inducements**: This results in instability due to external events such as the temporary or permanent involuntary absence of one of the spouses because of death or incarceration in jail or because of such impersonal catastrophes as flood, war and depression.

- **Internal catastrophes**: This result in instability as a result of involuntary major roles failures through mental or physical pathologies, severe mental retardation of the child, psychosis of the child or spouse or chronic and incurable physical conditions.

- **Empty shell family setting**: This results in instability because individuals live together, but have minimal communication and contact with one another, failing especially in the obligation to one another emotional support.
• **Separation, Divorce, annulment and desertion:** All these could lead to instability because it results in voluntary departure of one spouse. Desertion may also take the form of job desertion in which case the individual uses the excuse of a job to stay away from home for a long period. The foregoing causes of family instability put emphasis on the fault that the family like other institutional pattern is an organization of roles, and for the family to be in existence the role performance must not cease.

**Youth and Crime**

According to manning and Truzz (1982), the way society organizes its labour, its significant values and symbols profoundly influence low youth is defined and depicted. Youth becomes a symbol with which society understand itself and be understood by others without difficulty. Rosemary (1979) views the youth both as the outcome of society reproduction and as an agent of social transformation. The National youth policy of Nigeria defines youth as a period of complex change, physical, intellectual and continuous search for the truth and meaning of life. The Youth refers to a period between adolescence and adulthood, in a postmodern era. The Youth is seen as a recapitulation period, a maturation process, a psycho-sexual period of lack of experience that falls between childhood and adulthood (Abhuere, 2000). However, most of the youth today have been discovered in one criminal act or the other as a result of the prevailing social and economic situation. Youth crime substance abuse and delinquency are considered major international social problem. It is not restricted to a particular part of the globe. Youth crime has been on the rise since 1956. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of the youth charged with violent crimes doubled (Hutch and Griffith, 1992).

In understanding what crime means, the Lexican Webster Dictionary (1980) defines it as “an act or omission especially one of grave nature punishable by law and forbidden by state or injurious to the public welfare” in this regard, any violation of human law has some implications for crime, more generally one of grave
character. For according to Robertson (1987), crime is most often committed by the active population, and the youth, it is assumed constitutes this population figure. It is an act that contravenes the law. According to Robertson, economically most people who commit crime are attributed to poverty and unemployment. He argued that high unemployment in the highly literate society is responsible for the high crime rate. In Schaefer (2003) own view, crime is a violation of criminal law which some governmental authority applies formal penalties. It represents a deviation from formal social norms administered by the state law divides crime into various categories, depending on the severity of the offences, the age of the offender, the potential punishment that can be inflicted and the court that holds jurisdiction over the case.

Viewing it more potently, Tischler (2002) posits that crime is behaviour that violates a society’s legal code. In some countries, what is criminal is specified in written law. Primarily on state statutes for statistical purpose, crime are usually classified as offence against person (violent crime) crime against property (property crime) and crime against public decency and order (victimless crime). In a broad manner, crime is a costly and demoralizing problem affecting all of us. The victims of crime suffer injury, financial loss and intimidation. Those who live or work in high crime area can be deprived of some of life's normal opportunities and pleasures by the social and economic impact of crime.

Family Instability and Youth Crime

Crime among the youth in Nigeria is a major socio-economic problem, which infiltrates the whole society and constitutes a serious impediment to development. The Youth between the age range of 18 and 40 have been found wanting in one form of criminal activities or the other. There is hardly a day without a case of robbery or theft being announced. Innocent people are robbed of their valuable properties and even killed in the process. The rate of some crime has increased ore than others (Omisakin, 1998).
Today, most of the youth are involved in armed robbery, house breaking, drug trafficking and so on. The number of robbers has increased 75 times from 1990 to 2005 while some researchers attributed the causes of crime to the erosion of traditional values, inadequate homes, poverty and unemployment, a faculty system of education, urbanization and industrialization. Others observed that environmental influence perform an important role in the cause of crime. The root of criminal activities perpetrated by people especially the youth stems from the kind of environment in which they live. Hence the onset of crime and its maintenance through the life course can be traced to the quality of the socialization for the youth. Therefore, the behaviour of the youth is mainly determined by the success of the socialization process (Owoeye, 1997).

The family is the primary social structure that conveys certain behavioural patterns to the youth. No youth is born a criminal, thus the family is the primary institute potential of criminal commencement. For this reason a lot of researchers have been carried out to investigate the inter-relationship between youth crime and family environment. Studies of violent behaviour shows that it is often learnt from other family members. A number of studies shows that individuals who were abused as children are at greater risk than others to become child abuses when they grow up. (Straus 1991). Family structure has direct and indirect effects on youth crime. In a completely deformed family, the degree of the risk for committing a crime is higher. The number of this kind of families is increasing in Nigeria today. The increasing crime trend among the youth in Nigeria may be attributed in considerable degree to the declining authority of the family and the neighborhood (Omisakin, 1998).

The Youth are affected by social, economic and cultural factors in their immediate surroundings and in the wider society. Parents who are unable to cater for the needs of their children may find it difficult to control the activities of those children. The real issue however, is the quality of the attention that is given to the youth in their homes and this to a large extent defines their response to the situation around them (Smah, 1997).
Wilson and Heinstein (1985) assert that there is a substantial biological element in causing crime. They argue that some people are born with a predisposition towards crime. Youth potential for criminality is more likely to be realized if they are not properly socialized. If parents fail to teach them right from wrong, and particularly if they fail to punish them immediately for misbehaving, those who are prone to crime become much more likely to commit criminal acts in later life. The parent child relationship is especially important, and inadequate or incompetent parenting can result in anti-social behaviour that extends beyond adolescent delinquency into criminal behaviour of the youth. Researchers have found that the youth who lack closeness with their parents or perceived a lack of cohesiveness are the ones most likely to engage in criminal and delinquent acts and status offenses (Warren and Johnson, 1989).

Therefore, the behaviour of the youth is mainly determined by the success of socialization process. The family is the key social institution for providing proper socialization of young persons. Parents who provide the youth with positive role models can insulate them from crime. The early interaction of the youth particularly with their mother, lays the foundation for their late personality and social development. The quality of the relationship between parents and children determines the posture that children adopt in teenage and adulthood. (Smah, 1997). While it is generally held that the quality of family life, including measures of supervision, attachment to parents and discipline are far more important predicators of criminal or conforming behaviour among the youth. Some social scientists claim that family influence alone does not constitute the parameter for measuring criminal or conforming behaviour but that other factors have their impact. Even those youths who received the loving support of parents and family members are at risk of crime, delinquency and arrest over life put them to social disadvantage (Patterson, Crosbery, Vuchnich, 1993).

In the search for the cause behind high crime rate in certain areas, theorists like Shuressler (1973) proposed that the source of the high crime rates was not the matter itself but the way in which the people have been socialized to their native or “private” cultures in contrast...
to public culture. It also argues that a particular individual’s ideology plays a significant role in determining high involvement in crime (Omisakin 1998). In their attempt to develop a new approach to explain criminality among the youth, Leo and Young (1984) view crime as deeply rooted in social conditions and argue that crime is closely connected to deprivation. The relatively deprived are prone to having feelings of anger and hostility, which precede criminal behaviour. They further posit that neighborhood that provides a few employment opportunities for the youth and adults are the most undesirable to predatory crime. Unemployment helps destabilize households, and unstable families are the one’s most likely to contain children who choose violence and aggression as a means of dealing with limited opportunities (McGahey, 1986).

Siegel and Senna (1994) in the final analysis stated a close-knit family, which should serve as a buffer against crime, exercises little social control in disorganized area. Families in transitional area often contain adult members who are themselves profiting from theft, violence, and drug dealing. In such a situation crime and delinquency provide a fertile ground for youth crime to thrive.

3. THEORETICAL ISSUES

Social Control

According to Hirschi (1969), young people are more likely to conform if their bond to society is strong. The theory further postulates that deviance is the outcome of a failure of social control. When individual have strong bond to society, their behaviour will conform to the conventional norms when any of these bonds is weakened. When the bond in the family is weakened or broken, the constraints that society puts on its members may compel an individual to violate the law. Hirschis’s control theory assumes that all individuals are potential delinquents and criminal “born bad” and that social control, not moral values maintain law in the absence of sensitivity to and interest in others, a youth is free to commit criminal acts.

With the explanation of this theory, if there were no social control there might be little conformity. The theory further postulate that
people who are integrated into society by their respective families tend to follow its role, whereas, people who are isolated from their society may be inclined to break them. The implication of this is that people who indulge in crime it what they will gain in the process than what they will lose by abstinence. The Youth who have close relationship with their parents, friends and teachers and who maintain a positive self-image will be able to resist the lure of deviant behaviour. Therefore, if the youth are relatively unattached to their family and other element in their surrounding social institution, they are more likely to become criminals. Hirschi argues that the social bond a person maintains with the society is divided into four main elements: Attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.

According to Hirchi, attachment refers to a person’s sensitivity to and interest in others. The acceptance of social norms and the ability to relate or the development of social conscience depend on the attachment to and caring for other human beings. Hirschi views parents, peers and school as the most important social institutions, which a person should maintain. Attachment to parents is the most important.

The second element as posit by Hirschi is commitment; this involves the time, energy and effort expended in pursuit of conventional lines of action. Control theory holds that if people build up a strong involvement in life, property and reputation, they will be less likely to engage in acts that will jeopardize their position.

Furthermore, on the issue of involvement, Hirschi believes an individual’s heavy involvement in conventional activities does not leave time for illegal behaviour. He oblige that involvement in school, recreation and family insulates the youth from the potential lure of criminal behaviour that idleness encourages. On the beliefs system, people who live in common social settings often share a similar moral doctrine and revere such human values as sharing sensitively to the rights of others and admiration for the legal code. If these beliefs are absent or weakened, individuals are more likely to share in antisocial acts.
Generally speaking, intervention in an attempt to understand and reduce youth crime has been family centered. This theory is relevant to this analysis because the problem associated with crime does not affect the victim alone but the entire society. The family, which is the focus of this study, is the protagonist. Any society where there is no social control that will check the excess of the people, there will be problem of disorder and disorganization, which will undermine development and future growth of the society.

4. METHODOLOGY
The research is based on a social survey. A questionnaire was designed to solicit information from respondents. This research work focuses on the people in Ilorin whose ages fall with 15-30 years. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents who responded to the questionnaire. The number of responses given on an item in the questionnaire was written against each item in the instrument. Hypotheses were tested through the use of chi-square ($\chi^2$) test.

5. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS
Findings and Reports of Criminal Cases
The analysis in this section was based on the reported criminal cases (criminal statistics) from the Police Headquarters in Ilorin. This section deals with the types of offences, sex and age of criminals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offences</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>20-45</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>20-45</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House breaking</td>
<td>19-42</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culpable homicide</td>
<td>21-32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>20-41</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery</td>
<td>19-47</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,229</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,318</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table one, majority of those who committed crime are males (1,229), while a minority (89) are females.

Table 2
The Distribution of Known crimes in Ilorin in the Year 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offences</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>22-42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>20-37</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House breaking</td>
<td>19-37</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culpable homicide</td>
<td>19-46</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>18-42</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>20-31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery</td>
<td>21-36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>855</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From the information above, youth involvement in crime is higher.

Table 3
The Distribution of Known Crime in Ilorin in the Year 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offences</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>23-48</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>18-39</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House breaking</td>
<td>21-43</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culpable homicide</td>
<td>19-51</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>18-41</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>15-31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery</td>
<td>20-33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3 also provides a crime pattern of more males in crime commission than females with youth as the major perpetrators.

Analysis and cross Tabulation of Test of hypothesis

Hypothesis one: There is a relationship between family instability and educational level attained by the youth.
Table 4  
Cross Tabulation of the Views of Respondents on Family Instability and the Level of Education Attained by the Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>View on level of education</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2006)

\[ X^2 \text{ C } = 7.04, \text{ N } = 85, \text{ DF } = 1, \text{ } X^2 t = 3.841 \]

Decision Rule

Since the calculated \( x^2 \) is greater than the tabulated value, it indicates that the test is large enough to reject the null hypothesis at (0.05) significant level. We therefore accept the alternative (Hi) hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between family instability and the educational level attained by the youth.

Hypothesis Two: There is a relationship between economic background of family and youth crime.

Table 5  
Cross Tabulation on Respondents' Views on the Relationship Between Broken Home and Youth Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Background</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it does</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, it doesn't</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\[ X^2 \text{ C } = 7.43, \text{ N } = 85, \text{ DF } = 1, \text{ } X^2 t = 3.841 \]

Decision Rule

Since the calculated \( x^2 \) is greater than the critical value; it signifies that the test is large enough to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 significant level. Therefore, we accept the alternative (Hi) hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between economic background of family and youth crime.
Hypothesis three: there is a relationship between broken home and youth crime.

**Table 6**
Cross tabulation of Respondents’ views on the Relationship Between Broken Home and Youth Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broken home cause youth crime</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2006)

\[ X^2 = 5.35 \quad N = 85 \quad DF = 1 \quad x^2 \quad t = 3.841 \]

Decision Rule

Since the calculated \( x^2 \) is greater than the tabulated value, it signifies that the test is large enough to reject the null hypothesis (Ho) at (0.05) significant level. Therefore, we accept the alternative (Hi) hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between broken home and youth crime.

6. DISCUSSIONS

The result of the data revealed a significant relationship between family instability and the educational level attained by the youth. The changes in the function of the family have affected the moral and religious training, the effect of which is detrimental to the youth and the social structure of the society. Therefore, the lack of proper education provides a fertile ground for the youth to form and join group whose culture differs from that of the larger society.

It was also found out that family instability also causes youth crime. A family that is known with incessant abuse, quarreling and other related act will definitely encourage and produce youth who will end up as criminals. So, families, which indulge in unwholesome quarreling will always put its youth on a dangerous edge. Furthermore, the youth that grows up in maladjusted homes and who witness violence and conflict later do exhibit patterns of emotional disturbance, behaviour problems and social conflict.
The results of this study also reveal that the economic background of the family is also a responsible factor for youth crime. Most of the respondents testified to the fact that economic background is a major determinant of a stable family, and that family beset with poor economic background are more prone to experience family instability. According to Richard and Ohling (1960), a state of social and economic deprivation causes people to create a criminal subculture while a reduction in crime means modifying the social and economic conditions, which foster crime.

7. CONCLUSION

The Family is an important institution in any society and indeed, it is characterised by various forms of instability. This is not peculiar to Nigeria alone but a worldwide phenomenon. Youth crime, substance abuse and delinquency are considered major international social problems. It is not restricted to a particular part of the world. According to Hatch and Griffiths (1992), youth crime has been on the increase since 1956. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of youth charged with violent crimes doubled.

Nevertheless, the family is responsible for the cultural transmission of the youth. It helps moderates their behaviour, while the tendency of an individual to become a criminal lies within the family environment. This is because the family moulds the youth in almost all aspect of development. A stable family would participate fully in the development of the youth socially, morally, physically and intellectually. All these prompted the psychological school to presume that the seeds of deviance are planted in childhood and that adult behaviour is a manifestation of early experience rather than an expression of a social or cultural factors (Tischler, 2002). Failure by the family to perform its basic role of socialization has affected the development process of individuals and the youth in Nigeria. Therefore, youth criminality is a fall out of this very problem.

The family as an institution is better placed in a position to provide basic psychological needs such as love, affection, financial and moral support for a better well being of the youth. Thus,
programmes at whatever level administration in Nigeria should be
g geared toward ensuring that youth are raised in home situation
beneficial to their healthy growth.

Furthermore, family members should also endeavor to maintain
unity and harmony in their homes. Conflicts should be resolved
before they rare their ugly heads. Family members should equally
know that all problems in the family cannot be totally eradicated
but they should be aware that the longer they are together the better
for them. Again, therapeutic techniques should be employed to help
beef up the relationship between parents and the youth, social service
workers should be called upon to pay close attention to things that
are indicative of poor attachment by the youth.

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