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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK



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Key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe.**

JUNE 2025

DECLARATION

I, Tanaka Mavezere studying for a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work, aware of the fact that plagiarism is an academic offense and that falsifying information is a breach of the ethics of Social Work research, I truthfully declare that:

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RELEASE FORM

I certify that I supervised **Tanaka Mavezere** in carrying out this research titled: **A perspective on children in conflict with the law in Zimbabwe: Key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe** in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work and recommend that it proceeds for examination.

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The departmental board of examiners is satisfied that this dissertation report meets the examination requirements and therefore I recommend to Bindura University of Science Education to accept this research project by **Tanaka Mavezere** titled: **A perspective on children in conflict with the law in Zimbabwe: Key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe** in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work.

Chairperson

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APPROVAL FORM

I certify that the dissertation meets the preparation guidelines as presented in the faculty guide and instructions for preparing dissertations. Submitted by **Tanaka Mavezre B210114B** in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Social Work.

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Name of chairperson Signature Date

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Ms. Mavezere for her unwavering support and love during my academic studies.

MARKING GUIDE

BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

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Name: Mavezere Tanaka

Registration No: B210114B

MARKING GUIDE: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	Possible Mark	Actual Mark
Abstract	10	
Background to the study- what is it that has made you choose this particular topic? Include objectives or purpose of the study	20	
Statement of the problem	10	
Research questions	15	
Assumptions	5	
Significance of the study	15	
Limitations of the study	5	
Delimitations of the study	5	
Definition of terms	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	15	

Comments.....
.....

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction- what do you want to write about in this chapter?	5	
Conceptual or theoretical framework	10	
Identification, interpretations and evaluation of relevant literature and citations	40	
Contextualisation of the literature to the problem	10	
Establishing gaps in knowledge and how the research will try to bridge these gaps	10	
Structuring and logical sequencing of ideas	10	
Discursive skills	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	20	

Comments.....
.....

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Research design	10	
What instruments are you using to collect data?	30	
Population, sample and sampling techniques to be used in the study	25	
Procedures for collecting data	15	

Data presentation and analysis procedures	10	
Summary	5	
Total	100	
Weighted Mark	25	

Comments.....

Chapter 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction	5	
Data presentation	50	
Is there any attempt to link literature review with new findings	10	
How is the new knowledge trying to fill the gaps identified earlier	10	
Discursive and analytical skills	20	
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Total	100	
Weighted Mark	30	

Comments

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Total	100	
Weighted mark	10	

Comments

SUMMARY:-

	Actual	Total
Chapter 1		
Chapter 2		
Chapter 3		
Chapter 4		
Chapter 5		
Total		

Abstract

This study investigates the underlying causes and responses to juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs of Kwekwe, Zimbabwe, with a specific focus on children in conflict with the law. Drawing on Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory, the research examines how factors such as peer influence, family dysfunction, substance abuse, and socio-economic challenges contribute to youth offending. Using a qualitative methodology, data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 10 juvenile participants and 2 key informants, including a community childcare worker and a social worker. Purposive sampling was applied and the data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that peer pressure, drug and alcohol abuse, inadequate parental supervision, and poverty are the primary drivers of delinquent behavior. Although mechanisms like pre-trial diversion services and community-based interventions exist, their effectiveness is hampered by limited resources and poor implementation. The study recommends a multi-sectorial approach involving families, communities, social workers, and policymakers to strengthen prevention and rehabilitation strategies. Emphasis is placed on the need for family-centered interventions, enhanced mental health support, and structured youth programs to reduce recidivism and support reintegration

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ACRONOYM

ZPCS Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service

ZIMSTAT Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency

ZCLDN Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network

PTD Pre-Trial Diversion

ZYC Zimbabwe Youth Council

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

FGD Focus Group Discussion

MST Multi Systemic Therapy

UN United Nations

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

ZRP Zimbabwe Republic Police

ZRDC Zibagwe Rural District Council

MoHCC Ministry of Health and Child Care

MOJ Ministry of Justice

MOE Ministry of Education

CBO Community-Based Organization

MHT Mental Health Therapy

CRT Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

DSD Department of Social Development

GZU Great Zimbabwe University

BUSE Bindura University of Science Education

CHAPTER ONE; INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

An overview of the research on children in Zimbabwe who are in legal trouble is given in this chapter. It unpacks information on key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe. It includes the study's backdrop, problem description, goal, objectives and research questions, assumptions and justification of the study, definition of key terms and dissertation outline

1.2 Background

Juvenile delinquency refers to criminal behavior exhibited by minors aged below eighteen years in Zimbabwe. The treatment of juvenile delinquency has evolved from traditional restorative practices during the pre-colonial era to a Western punitive model under colonial rule. Post-independence Zimbabwe made strides to reform juvenile justice through policies that prioritize rehabilitation, such as the Children's Act and the Pre-Trial Diversion (PTD) Program (Sithole, 2023). Also, 2019 a total nearly 12 116 juvenile offenders were arrested by the Zimbabwe Republic Police, while in 2020 15% of prisoners were juveniles as articulated by the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Service and in 2018. Multiple risk factors have contributed to this trend such family breakdown, poor parenting, peer influence, poverty, and substance abuse, particularly in urban ghettos such as Amaveni and Mbizo. Peer pressure and exposure to drugs like methamphetamine (guka) have also been linked to increased youth delinquency (Chibanda et al., 2020). The socioeconomic instability experienced in these communities worsens these vulnerabilities. Studies in Zimbabwe show that structural inequalities, weak familial bonds, and ineffective socialization processes are major drivers of juvenile offending (Mangwiro & Chitereka, 2021).

1.1 Statement of the problem

Juvenile delinquency in Zimbabwe has increased by 20% over the past years since 2021 up to date as articulated by the Zimbabwe Crime Rate & Statistics 1990-2025, with 60% of offenders being repeat offenders hence, this points to systemic failures in both prevention and rehabilitation. The drivers of this phenomenon such as family dysfunction, peer influence, community disorganization, and poverty align with Hirschi's Social Control Theory, which links weak social bonds to increased criminal behavior (Hirschi, 1969). Despite efforts such as the Pre-Trial Diversion program and social service interventions, a lack of awareness and

limited accessibility continue to hinder their effectiveness (Sithole, 2023). Therefore, there is an urgent need to identify root causes and propose sustainable solutions specific to Zimbabwe's high density suburbs context thus, aims for exploring strategies for effective rehabilitation and reintegration.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this study is to explore the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs using Kwekwe as a case study and to identify appropriate interventions.

1.4 Objectives

1. To determine the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs.
2. To explore provisions in place to address juvenile delinquency.
3. To develop a pathway to address juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs.

Research Questions

1. What are the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs?
2. What roles do existing provisions play towards addressing juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs?
3. Which ideal interventions can be applied to address juvenile delinquency?

1.5 Assumptions

1. Juveniles who experience violence are at a higher risk of engaging in serious criminal behavior.
2. Lack of supervision increases the risk of criminal behavior.
3. Naming and labeling children can contribute to manifestation of juvenile delinquency behavior

1.6 Justification of the study

Studies have revealed that there are numerous drivers to juvenile delinquency because many scholars who have studied juvenile delinquency and contributed to ones understanding of the drivers, consequences, and treatment of juvenile delinquency. Notable scholars are Travis Hirschi, Albert Cohen and Robert Sampson. It builds on contemporary theories like Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory to understand the interplay between individual behavior and structural conditions (Agnew, 2015; Rocque et al., 2017). This study will test and refine theoretical frameworks such as the Social learning theory and Strain theory. Also, it explores

the interplay between individual, family, community, and societal factors as drivers to this study and lastly to develop a pathway and enhance new strategies to community-based initiatives for rehabilitation and reintegration to prevent juvenile delinquency. This study also, seeks to provide insights to caregivers, social workers, and law as it is crucial to social work profession as it strive to aid and inform policies by highlighting gaps in juvenile rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. The findings will be valuable to social workers, policymakers, and caregivers by offering context-specific recommendations to improve the lives.

1.7 Definition of key terms

Juvenile delinquency

Mangwiro & Chitereka, (2021) articulate that it describes unlawful or criminal actions carried out by persons who are below the age of eighteen.

Juvenile delinquent

Mangwiro and Chitereka, (2021) states that it refers to someone under the age of eighteen who violates the law by doing something that is prohibited.

Child

According to National Constitution Section 81(1) of Zimbabwe defines a child as every boy and girl under the age of eighteen.

Family dynamics

It refers to family breakdown, parental involvement, while peer influence is associated with delinquent peers and community factors are associated with access to illicit substances and community disorganization. Drivers refer to factors contributing.

1.8 Dissertation Outline

Chapter one

This chapter introduces the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe. Also, it entails the background information, statement of the problem, aim of the study, objectives and justification of the study and definition of key terms.

Chapter two

This presents a comprehensive analysis of theoretical propositions; discusses empirical study findings related to the topic under study.

Chapter 3

This chapter focuses on how the study was carried out. Also, addresses research philosophy, approach, setting, sampling techniques and sample size, data collection techniques and tools, research procedure, research validity and reliability/trustworthiness, data analysis and limitations.

Chapter 4

It provides presentation, interpretation, analysis and discussion of findings such as the demographic characteristics of participants and themes of the study in line with the qualitative method.

Chapter 5

This is the last chapter of the dissertation and it details conclusions as well as proffering suggestions.

1.9 Chapter summary

It highlighted on concept about juvenile delinquency and the underlying factors that lead to its prevalence in developing nations like Zimbabwe. It covered statement of the problem, aim of the study, objectives, justification of the study, and definition of key terms.

CHAPTER TWO; LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Introduction

Juvenile delinquency has poised to be a topic of interest due to numerous cases being experienced in Zimbabwe as juveniles are succumbing to being found in conflict with the law, necessitating a comprehensive examination of its multifaceted nature. It bestow key drivers of juvenile delinquency, grounded in theoretical and empirical frameworks. It draws on contemporary studies to highlight individual, family, peer, and community influences contributing to juvenile delinquency. Through the integration of findings, the chapter establishes a foundation for understanding juvenile delinquency in the high density suburbs. By categorizing the discourse into specific themes and sub-research themes, this review presents a structured overview of existing knowledge and empirical findings, drawing from various sources to enlighten on the complexity surrounding juvenile delinquency in Zimbabwe, particularly in high density suburb areas of Amaveni and Mbizo in Kwekwe.

2.1 Theoretical framework

According to Bryman (2016), a theoretical framework helps organize and interpret research findings within a structured model. This study adopted two major theoretical frameworks: Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory, both of which are widely used in understanding the social roots of juvenile delinquency.

2.1.1 Social Learning Theory

The theory articulates juveniles acquire delinquent behavior by interactions with others (Bandura, 1977). In the context of key drivers of juvenile delinquency Social learning theory is crucial for understanding and interpreting the various factors that contribute to child's delinquent behavior. Juveniles from Amaveni and Mbizo are at risk of learning and imitating behaviors of artisan miners who have recently increased their activities within the city of Kwekwe. The child imitates what he sees around him and picks up the peculiar habits innocently and adopts them. According to Hawkins, Smith, and Catalano (2017), inadequate parenting practices particularly those lacking warmth, discipline, and involvement—contribute significantly to early delinquent behavior. A strong global consensus links peer associations with delinquent behavior, particularly during adolescence. Studies by Mears and Cochran (2015) show that youth often adopt antisocial behaviors to gain acceptance within deviant peer groups, echoing Bandura's social learning theory. Socioeconomic disadvantage is a global driver of youth crime. Research in Europe and Latin America by Loeber and Farrington (2016)

found that low income, unemployment, and lack of access to education increase the likelihood of juvenile delinquency due to limited legitimate opportunities. Children exposed to community violence or war-affected environments often suffer from trauma that manifests in aggressive or antisocial behaviors. Ford, Chapman, Connor, and Cruise (2016) emphasize the correlation between childhood adversity and youth criminal conduct, especially among marginalized groups. The social learning can be through various means such as when parents exhibit ignorant acts such as taking drugs, smoking or even fighting in front of the child, the child is most likely expected to learn from these behaviors and imitate the same. Also, children can pick up wrong behaviors from their peer group in their adolescence and tend to imitate what their peers do hence; these drivers of juvenile delinquency are highly experienced in the high density suburbs of Kwekwe thus, one can note that juvenile delinquency behavior is also a consequence of the environment and by adopting this theory it will assist in shedding more light on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency. Globally and regionally, juvenile delinquency is a multifaceted issue influenced by economic hardship, family dynamics, social structures, and institutional limitations. While global research emphasizes universal drivers like peer pressure and mental health, regional literature highlights the compounding effects of poverty, urbanization, and systemic neglect in African settings. Effective interventions must therefore be context-specific, blending global best practices with local realities.

2.1.2 Strain Theory

Proposed by Robert Merton, this theory tends to explain the social strain by a child to achieve a particular goal. He argues that a child who fails to reach an expected goal can be under pressure resulting to the child engaging in illegitimate acts to achieve those goals. This theory in connection with the key drivers of juvenile delinquency it is of great significance because it aid in interpreting the root causes of juvenile delinquency by pointing out that children born in poor families are more prone to engaging into juvenile delinquency in their attempt to achieve societal recognition goals. It also, stipulates that juveniles engage in delinquency due to societal pressures and lack of opportunities Merton, (1938) hence, due to high school drop outs in Kwekwe articulated by Johnson Mikuku that a drastic 46% drop out rate from primary to secondary education in 2022 sited in the Midlands News of 22 April 2024, economical struggles that are being experienced many families have left children being exposed or vulnerable to fend for themselves. In the African context, juvenile delinquency is often shaped by socio-political instability, poverty, and weak institutional frameworks. High rates of urban migration have led to overcrowded informal settlements lacking social infrastructure.

According to Makusha, Ndoro, and Moyo (2019), such environments in Zimbabwe and South Africa expose youth to crime, drugs, and gang activity. Furthermore, research by Maphosa and Matake (2020) in Zimbabwe shows that parental absence due to death, migration, or divorce leads to unsupervised children, increasing vulnerability to criminal influences. Furthermore, Agnew (2015) articulates that when legitimate opportunities are blocked especially in economically disadvantaged areas youth may turn to crime as an alternative means to achieve socially defined goals. In Kwekwe, poverty, school dropouts, and limited employment prospects contribute to the sense of strain, particularly among male adolescents (Nyawo, 2020). Mikuku (2024) found that high dropout rates due to economic hardship increase susceptibility to gang involvement in cities like Kwekwe. Similarly, Mutanana (2017) highlights a lack of recreational and vocational support for idle youth in urban Zimbabwe. Many African countries still rely heavily on punitive systems rather than rehabilitative approaches. Strain is often intensified by unmet aspirations and societal pressure, leading to delinquency as a coping mechanism. Also, various family factors such as family breakdown, parental and sibling delinquency can be drivers to delinquency; peer influence and community factors such as poverty, unemployment, and community disorganization (Sampson, 2012) contribute as drivers to juvenile delinquency in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs.

2.2.1 Individual factors

Individual factors can significantly contribute to juvenile delinquency. Studies have shown that certain personality traits, mental health issues, and genetic predispositions can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior for instance, antisocial personality traits, such as impulsivity, lack of empathy, and aggression, have been strongly associated with juvenile delinquency. Research indicates that psychological states are linked with delinquent behaviors (Pardini et al., 2017). In Zimbabwe, limited access to mental health services exacerbates these vulnerabilities as articulated by Mupedziswa & Moyo, (2022) that economic hardship often pushes juveniles toward survivalist crimes such as theft and drug peddling. A study by Farrington (1995) found that children with a combination of genetic risk and poor parenting commits crimes as compared to those with only one of these risk factors, therefore through identifying these drivers the research will assist policymakers and practitioners to develop more effective prevention and intervention strategies such as promoting monthly awareness campaigns and the establishment of rehabilitation centers within the high density suburbs.

2.2.2 Family dynamic

Family structure and dynamics play a pivotal role in shaping juvenile behavior. Numerous studies have shown that neglect, domestic violence, parental substance use, and low parental supervision are significant predictors of delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2015). Parental criminality and substance use have also been linked to delinquent behavior in offspring Farrington, (2014) which can be easily related to the high density suburbs where children are highly exposed to such family dynamics. Therefore, this research will seek to fill the void left by focusing more on the impact of family dynamics leaving room to accommodate other various social and cultural factors that might be driving juvenile delinquency. A study by Park and Schepp (2014) have shown a strong correlation between family dysfunction and involvement in criminal activity among youth for instance; juveniles raised by substance abusing parents also tend to be exposed to a host of different factors related to the development of delinquent behaviors, such as physical abuse, and neglect, family conflict/violence and dysfunctional parenting. These findings and through this research it will aid in suggesting better interventions aimed at improving family relationships and communication that could potentially reduce rates of juvenile delinquency.

2.2.3 Peer pressure

Peer influence is a significant driver of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs, especially among children, as children would seek social acceptance and belonging. Peer associations are crucial during adolescence, and deviant peer influence has been consistently associated with youth offending (Meldrum et al., 2018). In high-density areas, where peer groups may be involved in gang activity or drug use, the pressure to conform is intensified (Chuma & Dube, 2021). Peer pressure pushes most children in Kwekwe high density suburbs such as Amaveni and Mbizo to frequently seek social acceptance and validation from their friends, resulting in increased instances of drug experimentation and usage Chuma & Dube, (2021), hence leaving them vulnerable to act under the influence of drugs and committing juvenile delinquent behavior. Also, associating with delinquent peers can make delinquent behavior seem acceptable and even desirable, increasing the likelihood of engaging in such activities (Johnson, 2017). Therefore, with the aid of this research and the knowledge accumulated by understanding the dynamic of peer pressure and its impact on young people, communities can develop effective strategies to prevent delinquent behavior and promote positive development outcomes.

2.2.4 Drugs and illicit substances

Drugs and illicit substance abuse refers to the harmful or excessive use of substances such as marijuana and crystal meth or guka in Shona. Cannabis, locally known as "mbanje," is a widely abused drug in Zimbabwe (Nhunzvi, 2019). The plant is typically smoked, but it can also be ingested in food or drink. Cannabis contains the psychoactive compound tetra hydro cannabin (THC), which produces effects on the brain and alters mood, perception, and cognition hence, children under the influence are prone to commit a series of offences that might lead them being arrested such as petty theft, assault and expressing violent behaviors especially in the high density suburbs where these drugs are being sold. Continuously abusing cannabinoids to avoid realities in their lives Kabugi, (2019) thus, through this research it will advocate on the notion that certain behavior portrayed by children leading them to conflict with the law is as a result of high rate of drug abuse. The Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network (ZCLDN) reported a significant rise in meth use, especially among the youth, with an estimated 30% increase in meth use between 2019 and 2022. Also, the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2019) reports that "3.2% of youth in Zimbabwe, are reported using crystal methamphetamine in the past year" thus, Chibanda et al. (2020) note that "lack of education, unemployment, and peer influence are significant factors associated with crystal methamphetamine use among youth in Zimbabwe."

2.3 Roles played by provisions in place towards addressing juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs

2.3.1 Community-Based Programs

Community-based programs offer young people alternative activities and opportunities that can help them avoid delinquent behavior hence, enabling to develop social skills and competence. Community-based programs have become central to contemporary efforts aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency, particularly in marginalized urban settings. These programs are designed to engage young offenders within their communities rather than institutionalize them, thereby promoting rehabilitation, reintegration, and long-term behavioral change. Ford et al. (2016) highlight that community interventions rooted in restorative justice principles—such as victim-offender mediation, community service, and diversion—have shown substantial benefits in rehabilitating offenders without stigmatization. These strategies emphasize accountability, reconciliation, and support, reducing the need for formal detention. In Africa, and Zimbabwe in particular, community-based programs are increasingly recognized as crucial

alternatives to incarceration, though challenges remain regarding implementation and sustainability. Mutanana (2017) argues that Zimbabwe's reliance on custodial sentences has failed to rehabilitate youth offenders, often exacerbating antisocial behavior due to overcrowded and punitive correctional environments. Community-based programs thrive when supported by strong multi-stakeholder collaboration involving social workers, schools, religious institutions, local councils, and families. Muchenje (2022) articulate that community involvement increases the legitimacy and cultural relevance of interventions, making them more acceptable to both juveniles and their guardians.

Furthermore, one can note that community-based programs aid to foster community engagement and participation that can help to reduce delinquent behavior as it also, provides young people with education and job training opportunities thus, young people will be guaranteed with safe and supportive environments during after-school hours due to pairing young people with positive adult role models who can provide guidance and support.

2.3.2 Restorative Justice Programs

Restorative justice programs sought to address juvenile delinquency through fostering accountability, reparation, and reconciliation between offenders, victims, and the community. Unlike punitive justice systems, restorative approaches emphasize healing, personal responsibility, and reintegration as it helps juveniles to have access to counseling and education among other support services. Also, it promotes restorative justice by providing victims with re-dress and rehabilitative interventions, allowing young offenders to make amends and reintegrate into society. In this model, juvenile offenders are given opportunities using structured dialogue and rehabilitative support services (Zehr & Gohar, 2015). Globally, it has helped as it instills empathy among youth offenders (Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2016). Youths involved in RJ processes tend to demonstrate better emotional regulation and community engagement compared to those processed through traditional justice systems (Claes, Devroe, & Ponsaers, 2015). Also, it provides children with education and job training opportunities, helping them to develop skills and become productive members of society. Children receive counseling and therapy to address underlying issues. In Zimbabwe, restorative justice programs are often facilitated by probation officers, social workers, and community-based organizations. These initiatives incorporate vocational training, counseling, and mentorship to mark the root causes of juvenile offending, such as trauma, drug use, and poverty (Sithole, 2023; Makusha, Ndoro, & Moyo, 2019). Programs operating in high-density suburbs like Amaveni and Mbizo have utilized local rehabilitation centers and youth clubs to provide

skills training and psychosocial support. Furthermore, restorative justice promotes inclusion by ensuring victims are part of the healing process, often resulting in emotional closure and increased satisfaction with justice outcomes (Beven et al., 2020). The integration of restorative justice programs with educational and job-training opportunities is also critical for breaking cycles of criminal behavior. Children who participate in these programs not only reconcile with their communities but are also equipped with tools for future success. Restorative justice programs encourage juveniles to take responsibility for their actions and make amends to their victims and communities by understanding the impact of their actions on their victims and communities, thus, promoting empathy and understanding.

2.3.3 Pre-Trial Diversion Services

Sithole (2023) emphasizes the role of Pre-Trial Diversion (PTD) services in Zimbabwe as a structured community-based approach. PTD focuses on non-custodial rehabilitation through counseling, vocational training, and family reintegration. However, access to PTD remains uneven, particularly in resource-constrained areas like Kwekwe, due to limited awareness and infrastructure. These services aim to divert juvenile offenders to alternative support services, such as counseling, education, and community service.

2.4 Ideal interventions that can be applied to address juvenile delinquency

2.4.1 Engagement of social workers

Social workers play a pivotal role in preventing and managing juvenile delinquency, particularly in high-density urban areas. Their engagement is critical at various intervention levels—individual, familial, and community—where they offer psychosocial support, coordinate services, and advocate for vulnerable youth. According to Henggeler and Sheidow (2016), social workers serve as case managers, therapists, and policy advocates, ensuring that juveniles in conflict with the law receive holistic and context-specific care. In Zimbabwe, social workers are central to rehabilitation initiatives such as pre-trial diversion, community-based programs, and school outreach efforts. They provide counseling and therapy aimed at addressing underlying causes of delinquency including trauma, substance abuse, mental health disorders, and family dysfunction (Sithole, 2023). They also work collaboratively with families to resolve conflicts, improve parenting skills, and rebuild protective structures around the child (Makusha, Ndoro, & Moyo, 2019). Moreover, social workers help mobilize community support by partnering with schools, religious institutions, and law enforcement to build

preventive programs that engage youth in positive activities. Matshaka (2019) notes that this form of community integration enhances the success of interventions and reduces recidivism by building trust between youth and local systems. In their policy roles, social workers influence legislation and government programming by conducting needs assessments, evaluations, and advocating for child-friendly justice systems (Mangwiro & Chitereka, 2021). Social workers conduct research and evaluation to identify best practices and inform policy and programming to address juvenile delinquency thus, despite their importance, the effectiveness of social workers is often constrained by resource shortages, staff burnout, and lack of institutional support. Nevertheless, evidence from various African contexts suggests that well-supported social work programs can drastically reduce juvenile offending and enhance youth reintegration (Leschied & Nowicki, 2016).

2.4.2 Conduct family-focused interventions

This form of intervention can be tailored to address the drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs of Amaveni and Mbizo under Kwekwe District, Zimbabwe such as family dysfunction. It is also, a comprehensive approach that involves government agencies, community organizations, and families as it is necessary to effectively address the issue of key drivers of juvenile delinquency. Family-focused interventions are a crucial approach in addressing juvenile delinquency as these interventions recognize family role towards a children's behavior and that family dynamics contribute to delinquent behavior. Research has consistently shown that family factors, such as parental conflict, neglect, and abuse, can increase a child's risk of engaging in delinquent behavior (Loeber & Farrington, 2012). Furthermore, children who grow up in families with poor parenting practices, such as inconsistent discipline and lack of supervision are prone to juvenile delinquency. Therefore, family therapy is an intervention that involves working with the entire family to identify and address negative patterns and interactions that may be contributing to the child's delinquent behavior. These programs aim to improve parenting skills and knowledge, such as teaching parents how to set clear boundaries and provide consistent discipline. Research has shown that family-focused interventions can be effective in reducing juvenile delinquency. For example, a study by Henggeler et al. (2016) found that a family-based intervention called Multi systemic Therapy (MST) was effective in reducing delinquent behavior in adolescents thus, policymakers and practitioners should prioritize family-focused interventions as a key strategy in addressing juvenile delinquency.

2.5 Chapter Summary

It chapter provided theories that best explains the key driver of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. The chapter also reviewed literature on the various drivers of juvenile delinquency, roles played by provisions in place towards addressing juvenile delinquency and suggesting probably some of ideal interventions to apply.

CHAPTER THREE

3 Introduction

The chapter entails about the research and it addresses philosophy, research approach, research design, the study population, sample, sampling techniques, data collection techniques, data presentation and analysis and ethical issues that were upheld.

3.1 Research Philosophy

A paradigm guides the study on how to conduct research utilizing particular method of data collection, observation and interpretation. This study is grounded in a constructivist research philosophy that emphasizes the notion of reality being socially constructed through individual experiences, perceptions, and interactions. Constructivism is well suited for qualitative inquiry into juvenile delinquency, as it enables the researcher to understand how participants make sense of their social reality (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2018). It is important for capturing the narratives of the participants as they is room for them to explain what led them to get in contact in the law. Constructivism enables children and key informants to create their social reality in the context of juvenile delinquency through their own lenses.

According to Braun and Clarke (2021), constructivist approaches are essential in exploring complex social issues, especially when working with vulnerable populations. The researcher utilized a constructivist. Furthermore, by emphasizing the importance of context, constructivism helps the researcher to develop findings that are grounded in the specific social, economic, and cultural factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. A constructivist approach empowers participants by centering the research on their experiences and perspectives, and by acknowledging the importance of their meanings and interpretations.

From a constructivist ontological perspective, reality is viewed as multiple, subjective, and context-dependent. In the context of this study, the key drivers of juvenile delinquency are a complex phenomenon shaped by the experiences, perceptions, and interactions of juveniles and key informants. Constructivist epistemology posits that knowledge is constructed through social interactions and that the researcher is an active participant in the construction of knowledge. In this study, the researcher acknowledges that the juvenile's experiences, biases, and assumptions will influence the research process and findings. A constructivist axiological perspective emphasizes the importance of considering the values and beliefs that underlie the research process. The research values perspectives and encounters of the juveniles, recognizing

that their voices and stories are essential to understanding the phenomenon. A constructivist approach is the best fit for this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the complex, context-dependent factors that influence juveniles to be found in conflict with the law.

3.2 Research Approach

Qualitative research is an exploratory and interpretative method aimed at comprehending human experiences, behaviors, and social phenomena through non-numeric information like interviews, observations, and case studies. It emphasizes acquiring profound understanding of individuals' views, feelings, and experiences in their natural environments (Creswell, 2018). The research adopts qualitative approach to examine the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. This approach allows for in-depth exploration of the social, psychological, and structural dimensions of juvenile delinquency (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative methods are particularly useful in uncovering patterns and meanings that quantitative methods may overlook (Tracy, 2020).

The study adopted qualitative research approach reason being that it aids to unpack the drivers of juvenile delinquency. Also, it is due to the fact that qualitative research methods are designed in a manner that helps reveal the behaviour and perception of a target audience with reference to a particular topic. The chosen methods, includes semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, to facilitate a nuanced understanding of the key drivers and ensuring that diverse perspectives on the issue are represented. Also, due to employing a qualitative descriptive design enables policymakers and community members to develop strategies or pathways to curb juvenile delinquency.

3.3 Research Design

The study adopted case study research design to explore the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. Also, study research enables acknowledging multiple researches thereby improving the validity and depth of findings Flyvbjerg, (2016).Creswell (2018) explains that researchers frequently use case studies to gain a deep understanding of a specific program, event, activity, process, or individual(s). These cases are typically limited by time and scope, and data is gathered in detail through various methods over an extended period. In essence, case studies offer a valuable approach for examining real-life situations by analyzing a small number of events, conditions, or relationships within their context. This method allows for a thorough and focused investigation, often concentrating on a specific location or a small

group of subjects. As a result, case studies provide insights at a micro level, rather than taking a broad or general approach.

3.4 Study setting or location

The study setting refers to the environment whether physical, social, or institutional where the research is carried out. It includes the particular place, background, and conditions in which the data is gathered (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). The setting reflects socio-economic challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and family breakdowns, which are relevant to the study's focus on delinquency drivers (Mangwiro & Chitereka, 2021). The research took place in Kwekwe District under the Midlands Province. Juvenile delinquency in Zimbabwe has approximately increased by 20% over the past five years, with 60% of offenders being repeat offenders. Kwekwe high density suburbs were selected as the study location due to the number of juvenile delinquency cases or number of cases related to children. This phenomenon is attributed to family breakdown, peer influences and community influences on juvenile delinquency hence, the absence of effective rehabilitation programs and reintegration strategies exacerbates the problem. Therefore, concentrating on this specific context, the study sought to investigate the drivers of juvenile delinquency in Zimbabwe and explore strategies for effective rehabilitation and reintegration.

3.5 Target Population

A research population is the complete group of individuals or elements that could potentially be involved in a study. Palinkas et al. (2015), targeting specific populations with experiential relevance enhances the depth and authenticity of qualitative research findings. Population therefore defines the limits within which the research findings are applicable. Generalising the research findings is understood as the act of applying the outcome to the entire research population while a target population that will be used in this research entails all members of a specified group within which the investigations relate hence, in general, this is the group the researcher is interested in when making conclusions. This study targets juveniles below the majority age due to the fact that they are the most vulnerable group as they can easily succumb to peer pressure easily, poor socialization or imitate adult behaviors due to their inability to fully discern and are most vulnerable to family dynamics (dysfunctional), through examining their experiences and perspectives with regards to the drivers of juvenile delinquency. The study also, target key informants which include community child care workers and probation officers due to their better understanding of juvenile delinquency.

3.6 Sampling technique and Sample Size

3.6.1 Sampling techniques

A sampling technique is a specific approach designed and applied to collect data by selecting a sample from a larger population. In this study, two non-probability sampling methods were used: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Snowball sampling helped access hard-to-reach participants, especially those hesitant due to legal involvement, while purposive sampling enabled the selection of knowledgeable key informants. These methods are widely recognized in social research involving hidden or vulnerable populations (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). A sampling technique denotes the particular approach employed to select these participants, guaranteeing that the sample is relevant, representative, and consistent with the research objectives (Creswell, 2018).

3.6.1.2 Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which existing participants help recruit additional participants to be included in the sample. Also, involves identifying participants that meet the study criteria for instance in this study children because is less expensive than other sampling methods as participants are recruited through existing social networks while it also aids rapid data collection as participants can be recruited through the chain of referral process. It follows that, the study is directed to participants by persons who are knowledgeable about the study population (Creswell, 2014). Snowball sampling is a useful approach for studying topics like the key drivers of juvenile delinquency as it allows researchers to tap into existing social networks and build trust with hard-to-reach populations. Snowball sampling proved to be a valuable approach in this study, particularly in accessing hard-to-reach juvenile offenders who were hesitant to participate. This sampling procedure helps to access children who may be difficult to reach due to their juvenile delinquency records or activities or their reluctance to participate in research. More so, by starting with a small group of initial participants who were familiar with the research, the study was able to tap into their social networks, generating referrals and recommendations that facilitated the recruitment of additional participants. This approach enabled the researcher to build trust and credibility ultimately leading to a more diverse and representative sample of juveniles. Snowball sampling allows participants to refer their peers who may have similar experiences or insights, creating a chain of referrals that can lead to a more diverse and representative sample.

3.6.2.2. Purposively sampling

According to Patton (2015), purposive sampling is effective in qualitative research as it allows researchers to focus on specific characteristics that are relevant to the question. In this research for key drivers of juvenile delinquency, purposive sampling was utilized to select key informants. This method ensures that the sample is relevant and representative of the targeted demographic. It provides flexibility in responses while addressing key research questions. As highlighted by Creswell (2014), this approach allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, yielding valuable qualitative data for analysis.

In the current study of the key drivers of juvenile delinquency participants were chosen due to their unique connection. Research allows interpretivism a research method that assumes reality is subjective, and that knowledge and truth are based on peoples experience and understanding of them.

3.6.3 Sample size

Creswell (2018) articulates that a sample should be at least 20% to 30% representation of the total population such that grand results can be obtained to represent the entire population. In this research on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency a sample size of 12 participants comprising 10 juveniles and of 2 key informants (community child care workers and probation officer) was used. This size was considered adequate for data saturation in qualitative research, where depth of understanding takes precedence over generalizability (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2017).

3.7 Data collection methods

The term research method refers to the systematic strategies, techniques, or procedures in order to analyse data (Creswell, 2018). Throughout study, primary data will be collected through in-depth interviews while, secondary data will be gathered through document analysis.

3.7.1 Data collection techniques

3.7.1.1 Focus group discussions

Neuman (2014) argues that focus group discussions are an exploratory tool used to explore people's thoughts and feelings to obtain detailed information about a topic or issue. The researcher conducted five FGDs with a total of 10 primary participants below the age of majority (18), who were purposively selected based on their familiarity with the issue. Additionally, two key informants, a community childcare worker and a Child protection were

recruited to provide insightful perspectives on the phenomenon. Focus group discussions were done at a convenient and private location, ensuring participants' comfort and confidentiality. A semi-structured discussion guide was used to facilitate the conversations, which were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The researcher ensured that participants provided informed consent prior to the discussions, and all necessary.

The researcher also used this technique because it provides rich, qualitative data on participants' experiences, perceptions, and attitudes towards the key drivers of juvenile delinquency. Also, it offers a safe space for participants to discuss sensitive or stigmatized topics while the researcher would observe how participants interact, influence each other, and negotiate meanings around drivers of juvenile delinquency. Focus group discussions can involve participants from various backgrounds, age, and socioeconomic statuses, providing an in depth understanding on the issues or factors surrounding the key drivers of juvenile delinquency.

3.7.1.2 Key informant interviews

Sharma (2017) explains that key informant interviews are individual conversations with people who have valuable and knowledgeable insights about a specific part of the program under evaluation. Creswell (2018) adds that researchers may carry out in-person interviews with these informants using a flexible format, typically consisting of a small number of open-ended questions designed to gather their opinions and experiences. The rationale for using key informant interviews on the study of key drivers of juvenile delinquency in the high density suburbs of Amaveni and Mbizo in Kwekwe District, Zimbabwe was that they were easier and less expensive than focus group discussion. Thus, the study found it relevant to interview community childcare worker and probation officer to what could be the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in the high density suburbs of Kwekwe District.

3.7.2 Data collection tools

Research instruments are understood to be devices or techniques used to obtain standardized data from participants in the sample, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) Data collection instruments are specific techniques employed in the execution of a piece of research and are determinant of a successful research

3.7.2.1 Focus group discussion guides

A focus group discussion is a qualitative research approach used to collect insights, viewpoints, and experiences from a small and varied group of participants for instance in this study refers to juveniles as it helps gathering insights into participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Focus group discussion guides are a valuable tool in qualitative research, providing a structured framework for facilitating group discussions. In relation to the study of the key drivers of juvenile delinquency focus group discussion guides are essential for ensuring that focus group discussions remain focused, productive, and generate high-quality data hence, the research conducted three focus group discussions with four members in each group to collect data on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency. A well-designed guide helps the moderator to navigate the discussion, explore key themes and issues, and gather insightful responses from participants. Also, focus group discussions provide an overview of the research topic, objectives, and context due to availability of open-ended questions and prompts that encourage discussion and exploration of key themes with regards to the key drivers of juvenile delinquency.

3.7.2.2 Key informants interview guides

In key informant interviews the researcher made use of a key informant interview guide with both open-ended questions and closed ended questions to collect information from the Community childcare worker and probation officer at Kwekwe District of the Department Social Development. The key informant interview guide was valuable as it enabled the informants to share in-depth explanations of their professional experiences related to juvenile delinquency, including detailed insights into the main factors contributing to the issue.

3.8 Research Procedure

Prior to conducting research, a letter was issued by Bindura University of Science Education stating the reasoning for the research that it is for educational purposes and that the researcher was guided by the University policy towards conducting researches and that the research should not endanger the lives of participants but that their contributions were used for educational purposes and confidentiality of cliental information is regarded highly. Thus, the researcher also, sought permission from the Kwekwe District Office Department Social Development carrying the University letter and his individual application letter confirming the reason(s) or purpose and intensions of the research to conduct the research in their district.

3.9 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the confidence in data, interpretation, and methods, ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 2018). This study on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency will ensure credibility, transferability and dependability due to the nature and processes taken in conducting the

research. The researcher ensured credibility. A pilot study was conducted to test the interview guide and ensure that the questions were clear and effective. The researcher also used triangulation. The data was checked so as to to check and verify it, hence increasing the credibility of the results.

In addition, to support transferability, the researcher offered a thorough explanation of the study's context, the participants involved, and the methods used. This included information about the demographic characteristics of the participants, the setting in which the data was collected, and the cultural and social context of the study. The researcher also used thick description to provide a rich and detailed account of the findings, including quotes and examples from the data. This helped to create a vivid picture of the study context and findings, allowing readers to assess the transferability of the results to other settings.

The researcher ensured dependability by maintaining a detailed audit trail of the study as suggested by Lincoln et al. (2018), incorporating these practices strengthens the reliability and transparency of qualitative inquiry. This included records of data collection process, the coding procedures. The researcher also used a systematic approach to data analysis, using coding and theme development. This helped to increase the dependability of the findings by demonstrating the researcher's attention to detail and commitment

3.10 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process researchers use to condense collected information into a meaningful interpretation. In this study, thematic analysis was used to examine qualitative data, which involved coding the data, recognizing patterns, and forming themes that represent the causes of juvenile delinquency (Braun & Clarke, 2021). The main goal of data analysis is to gain insight into the research findings by summarizing the data to extract relevant information and form conclusions and recommendations. Data presentation refers to the act of clearly and effectively communicating the research results, making them easy to understand, interpret, and use for decision-making.

Mason (2002) describes triangulation as the use of multiple methods to investigate a single set of research questions. In other words, it is an analytical strategy that allows the researcher to examine the research questions and objectives from various perspectives, offering a more comprehensive and well-rounded understanding. Alongside triangulation, the study also employed coding, which Mason (2002) defines as a cross-sectional indexing method. This involves creating a consistent system for organizing data based on shared principles or criteria.

The researcher applied these indexing categories uniformly and systematically across the collected data. In this study, both triangulation and coding were used to analyze the data by comparing and referencing various data sources and methods. This approach helped determine how closely the different pieces of evidence aligned.

Data analysis involves three main steps. In this study, the researcher used thematic analysis as the primary method for examining the data. Thematic analysis focuses on identifying and organizing patterns or themes within qualitative data. Its purpose is to uncover themes that are meaningful or relevant to the research and use them to address the research questions. In exploring the key causes of juvenile delinquency in the high-density areas of Amaveni and Mbizo in Kwekwe, thematic analysis was applied to interpret and present the data, as it effectively highlights and reports recurring patterns in qualitative findings. After data collection, the information was transcribed. The analysis process began by sorting and organizing the data to identify emerging patterns, central themes, and meanings. A method known as "open coding" was used, where the researcher identifies and labels conceptual categories to group similar observed phenomena.

3.11 Ethical consideration

To protect the rights and well-being of participants, the study on the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency must carefully consider ethical concerns. Also, importance of informed consent cannot be overstated as the researcher must attain approval making sure that children involved are old enough to understand the goal of the study and how it will be conducted. Upholding confidentiality is essential; all private information shared must be held with the highest level of confidentiality and safely kept to safeguard children's identity. More so, due to the subject matter the researcher is required to take extra care of any potential psychological or emotional harm and establish a supportive environment when gathering data. Furthermore, in order to attain best results the researcher should interact with community stakeholders and respect local norms and beliefs hence, the need to adhere to cultural sensitivity.

The research can improve the lives of children in relation to the drivers of social delinquency and assist families on how best they can address this societal problem and enhance the safety of children. Voluntary participation means that research participants freely choose whether or not to take part in a study without any pressure (Sharma, 2017). It requires the researcher to allow participants to join willingly and answer questions without coercion. The researcher

applied this ethical principle to ensure that participants felt comfortable and were more willing to engage in the study.

3.12 Limitations

In light of this research there are many restrictions that may be encountered in the study of the drivers of juvenile delinquency that may compromise the findings' generalizability and thoroughness. A notable constraint is the dependence on qualitative techniques, sampling bias as purposive sampling does not represent everyone, self-report bias. Moreover, the study is carried out in a particular cultural and socioeconomic context, which can restrict how broadly the results can be applied to different contexts or demographics.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology employed in the research. It covered the research philosophy, design, approach, study location, population, and sampling methods used in the study. Additionally, ethical considerations including confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation were addressed. The following chapter will concentrate on presenting, interpreting, and discussing the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

4. Introduction

The research findings about juvenile delinquency; key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe are presented in this chapter. This chapter highlights the key drivers of juvenile delinquency, provisions in place to address juvenile delinquency and the ideal interventions that can be implemented to address juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. Twelve individuals were involved and the chapter presents the findings on the subject matter.

4.1 Participants Demographic data

Table 1: demographic data (n=12). Numbers of males interviewed =6 Number of females interviewed =4.

Variables		Frequency
Age	12-14	3
	15-17	7
Education levels	Primary	2
	Ordinary	8
Gender	Male(s)	6
	Female(s)	4

A total number of 12 participants were interviewed during the research. Among the interviewed participants, 6 were boys and 4 were girls. From the demographic data, the statistics clearly highlighted that males are more involved in juvenile delinquency unlike their female counterparts. In terms of level of education, there were two distinct groups of juveniles (primary and secondary). The demographic data also, shows that among the juveniles

interviewed, 5 boys and 3 girls are in ordinary level and 1 male and 1 female are in the primary level.

One can argue from the findings that males are more likely to commit juvenile delinquency at a high rate as compared to females due to various reasons such as family backgrounds, peer pressure, individual factors and drugs and illicit substance. Peer influence is a significant driver of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs, especially among children, as children would seek social acceptance and belonging as it has pushed most children in Kwekwe high density suburbs such as Amaveni and Mbizo to frequently seek social acceptance and validation from their friends. Also, individual factors can significantly contribute to juvenile delinquency. Studies have shown that certain personality traits, mental health issues, and genetic predispositions can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior for instance, antisocial personality traits. Also, due to high drug distributions and high rate of unemployment being experienced in the country children are being exposed to drug usage in the ghettos for instance Amaveni and Mbizo leaving these juveniles at a risk of committing juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, research has consistently shown that family factors, such as parental conflict, neglect, and abuse, can increase a child's risk of engaging in delinquent behavior (Loeber & Farrington, 2012). Parental criminality has been linked to delinquent behavior in offspring Farrington, (2014) which can be easily related to the high density suburbs where children are highly exposed to such family dynamic.

4:2 Key Informants Demographic data

Table 2: demographic data of key informants (One Probation officer and One Community childcare worker)

Informant and Organisation	Position	Years of experience	Gender	Frequency
Department of Social Development	Probation Officer	5	Female	1
Department of Social Development	Community childcare worker	3	Male	1

Information was gathered through the Child protection officer and a Community childcare worker. The level of experience when conducting the research with the child protection officer and the community childcare worker was very critical because it allows the researcher to obtain high and detailed data on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency. The community childcare worker was very essential in the research as the knowledge shared was crucial as they are the ones mostly involved with these juveniles in the community or the high density suburbs in Kwekwe (Amaveni and Mbizo). These two are of paramount importance because the child protection officer (probation officer) and the community childcare worker are originally the inhabitants of Kwekwe in Amaveni and Mbizo. The impact of involving child protection officer and the community childcare worker during the research is that, they can provide first-hand information in regards to the key drivers of juvenile delinquency and can proffer a better pathway to address juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs.

4.3 Key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs

The researcher conducted some researches to figure out the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. From the findings, different perceptions were gathered. The findings demonstrate the various key drivers of juvenile delinquency. These factors shall be highlighted as the findings will be presented.

4.3.1 Individual factors

The participants were asked a question with regards to their understanding of the key drivers of juvenile delinquency. The findings highlighted individual factors such as mental health challenges; poverty and dropping out of school contribute to juvenile delinquency in the high density suburbs. From the findings, some respondent had little understanding on how their individuality leads them into criminal activities. The perception of juveniles and key informants is discussed below based on the information gathered.

Respondent one state that,

“Sometimes I just feels bored like no one cares and it’s easy to follow what others are doing even its wrong.”

Respondent two states that,

“I don’t have interest in doing school work nekuti handitogoniwo chikoro chacho saka kundiendesa kutambisa havo mari yavo, dai vatonditsvagira basa hangu”.”

Probation officer state that,

“My view is that individual factors contributing to juvenile delinquency are often connected with impulsivity, low self-control and mental health issues thus, the need to provide counselling, cognitive- behavioural therapy or anger management classes. So I believe we can help juveniles develop skills and support they need to make positive changes”

From the findings, individual factors can significantly contribute to juvenile delinquency. Studies have shown that certain personality traits, mental health issues, and genetic predispositions can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior for instance, antisocial personality traits, such as impulsivity, lack of empathy, and aggression, have been strongly associated with juvenile delinquency. Research indicates that one’s psychological state can be linked to delinquent behaviors (Pardini et al., 2017). In Zimbabwe, limited access to mental health services exacerbates these vulnerabilities as articulated by Mupedziswa & Moyo, (2022) that economic hardship often pushes juveniles toward survivalist crimes such as theft and drug peddling hence, the need to have early intervention programs that target individual factors, such as impulsivity and low self-control, can be effective in reducing juvenile delinquency while, providing mental health services to juveniles can help reduce the risk of delinquent behavior. Also, according to respondent number one articulated that, *“Sometimes I just feels bored like no one cares and it’s easy to follow what others are doing even its wrong”* thus, one

can note that due to isolation juvenile turn to indulge into deviant behaviors as a result of isolation and failure to express themselves to others and sought for assistance whenever they are low hence, it will be like crying out for attention. Also, failure to discern what is wrong and right can clearly lead these juveniles to commit a series of offences that might lead them being caught by the police. Overall one can note that individual factors are a critical component of juvenile delinquency, as expressed by the third respondent as he clearly lack seriousness towards his education (that's an expression of what's the juvenile feels towards school hence, it might be as a result of the child's personality or lack of commitment); thus, interventions targeting these factors can be effective in reducing delinquent behavior. The findings resonate with social learning theory which highlights on the influence of the environment on individual behaviours. The findings show that some of the participants end up in crime due to the environment (Bandura, 1977).

4.3.2 Family dynamics

The participants (juveniles and key informants) were asked questions in regards to family dynamics in attempt to explore juvenile's relationship with their parents or guardians and different responses were attained. The research has shown a strong correlation between family dysfunction and involvement in criminal activity among juveniles.

Respondent one state that,

"My relationship with my parents is okay sometimes, but they don't always listen or understand me. My parents care about me and support my education but they are very strict so sometimes it feels hard to express myself freely"

Respondent two state that,

"I have a great relationship with my parents. We communicate well, and they are always supportive and understanding".

Respondent three state that,

"My relationship with my parents is strained. They work long hours to make ends meet, so we rarely have meaningful conversations. In our neighborhood, many youths feel neglected and lack positive role model makes it easy to get involved in petty crimes or join groups that engage in delinquent activities."

Community childcare worker state that,

“Family breakdown and single-parent households are common in high-density suburbs, contributing to juvenile delinquency. In some cases, children may be left to fend for themselves, increasing their vulnerability to delinquent behavior.”

From the findings gathered as well as through numerous studies family dynamics have also shown that neglect, domestic violence, parental substance use, and low parental supervision are significant predictors of delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2015). Parental criminality and substance use have also been linked to delinquent behavior in offspring Farrington, (2014) which can be easily related to the high density suburbs where children are highly exposed to such family dynamics. It is evident that understanding these risk factors is essential for creating effective interventions aimed at preventing and reducing juvenile delinquency. The findings reveal that juveniles from broken homes often lack proper parental guidance, leading to unstable relationships with their families. These relationships tend to fluctuate frequently between positive and negative interactions. Research consistently shows a strong link between family dysfunction and youth involvement in criminal activities. For example, children raised by parents who abuse substances are more likely to encounter various issues that contribute to delinquent behavior, including physical abuse, neglect, family conflict or violence, and poor parenting practices (Park & Schepp, 2014). Lack of parental guidance is also a significant factor contributing to juvenile delinquency. Behaviors such as smoking, drinking, and gambling exhibited by parents can be adopted by their children through the process of socialization, potentially leading to delinquent behavior—supporting the perspective of Park & Schepp (2014). Therefore, parents and guardians should not only focus on sending their children to school but must also take full responsibility for their upbringing until the children are mature enough to be independent. It is important for parents to understand the critical role they play in their children's development, and relatives should also take an active role in guiding and supporting the youth toward making positive life choices. More so, through the findings family relationships and parental involvement have been consistently associated with reduced delinquency whilst in contrast; dysfunctional family dynamics, including parenting styles such as authoritarian parenting or neglectful parenting can increase the risk contributing to delinquency. The findings align with the social learning theory which posits that the social environment shapes behavior. One can note that juvenile delinquency behavior is also a consequence of the environment and by adopting this theory it will assist in shedding more light on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency.

Exposure to conflict can increase aggression and delinquency hence, single-parent households or blended families can increase risk thus, according to the Social Learning theory juveniles learn delinquent behavior from family members. The findings on family dynamics and juvenile delinquency underscore family impact towards behavior and outcomes of young people due to research consistently showing that factors such as parenting styles, parental conflict, family structure, and parent-child relationships are strongly linked to the likelihood of delinquent behavior in juveniles. Authoritative parenting is associated with lower rates of delinquency, while authoritarian or neglectful parenting can increase the risk Hoeve, (2015). Also, strong, supportive relationships between parents and children are protective against delinquency, while strained or detached relationships can heighten the risk. One can note that family-based intervention targeting family dynamics, such as parenting classes and family therapy, can be effective in reducing juvenile delinquency. Parenting skills training programs can help parents develop skills to manage conflict and improve parent-child relationships.

4.3.3 Peer pressure

The researcher interviewed juveniles and key informants on the issues surrounding peer pressure with regards to juvenile delinquency. Their insights were very positive and educative.

Respondent one state,

“Peer pressures as some of my peers have already been involved in criminal behavior. I do have a friend who had been involved in this delinquent behavior this was because of their family background.”

Respondent two state that,

“Shamwari yangu yakaba and was not caught paakatora mari mushop mevanhu kuma grocer. Akatora akauya nayo mari yacho tikaidya tese nekuti ndaivendamuperekedza achinditi inini ndinenge ndakatarisa kuti hakuna munhu aiwuya kana kumuona.””

Community childcare worker state that,

“Association with delinquent peers can lead to involvement in criminal activities. In high-density suburbs, youth may be influenced by peers who engage in substance abuse or gang activity”.

From the findings, peer pressure is a significant factor in juvenile delinquency. Peer associations are crucial during adolescence, and deviant peer influence has been consistently

associated with youth offending (Meldrum et al., 2018). Peer pressure pushes most children in Kwekwe high density suburbs such as Amaveni and Mbizo to frequently seek social acceptance and validation from their friends, resulting in increased instances of drug experimentation and usage Chuma & Dube, (2021), hence leaving them vulnerable to act under the influence of drugs and committing juvenile delinquent behavior. In high-density areas, where peer groups may be involved in gang activity or drug use, the pressure to conform is intensified (Chuma & Dube 2021). Associating with delinquent peers can make delinquent behavior seem acceptable and even desirable, increasing the likelihood of engaging in such activities (Johnson, 2017). Social learning theory, articulate that juveniles learn delinquent behavior by observing and imitating their peers (Akers, 2016). Research suggests that peer group dynamics, such as peer rejection and peer affiliation, can contribute to delinquent behavior as highlighted by respondent number two thus, one can note that peer influence is a significant predictor of delinquent behavior in juveniles, and that interventions targeting peer relationships can be effective in reducing delinquency for instance advising them to choose their friends well or to be cautious about their actions and decisions as they will have a greater impact on their futures. Clearly, the findings suggest that peer pressure is a significant factor in juvenile delinquency, and that intervention targeting peer relationships and peer influence can be effective in reducing delinquent behavior. One can note that from the findings that peer pressure pushes most children in high density suburbs such as Amaveni and Mbizo to frequently seek social acceptance and validation from their friends, resulting in increased instances of drug experimentation and usage Chuma & Dube, (2021), thus, leaving juveniles vulnerable to act under the influence of peers in committing juvenile delinquent behavior

4.3.4 Drugs and illicit substances

The researcher gathered data on the impact of drug and substance in relation to juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. From the findings, different findings were obtained. Data presented below is a true reflection of the gathered data.

Respondent one state that,

“Several of my friends have been involved in theft and drug use. Some of them dropped out of school and now spend their time on the streets; there are gangs in our community that recruit young people. They promise protection and a sense of belonging, which attracts many youths who usually feel isolated or threatened.”

Respondent two state that,

“My uncle was convicted sometime back before he died””

Respondent three state that,

“Yeah, I got a cousin who got into trouble with the police before, and some of my friends too. There are crime activities involved in my school like drug and substance abuse, theft and also bullying.”

Probation officer (Child protection officer) state that,

“I recognize that drug and substance abuse is a significant contributor of juvenile delinquency in the high density suburbs leading them to have impaired judgement, increased aggression and poor decision making.”

From the findings, drug and substance abuse are significant risk factors for juvenile delinquency. Drugs and illicit substance abuse refers to the harmful or excessive use of substances such as marijuana and crystal meth or guka in Shona. Cannabis, locally known as "mbanje," is a widely abused drug in Zimbabwe (Nhunzvi, 2019). The plant is typically smoked, but it can also be ingested in food or drink. Cannabis contains the psychoactive compound tetra hydro cannabin (THC), which produces effects on the brain and alters mood, perception, and cognition hence, children under the influence are prone to commit a series of offences that might lead them being arrested such as petty theft, assault and expressing violent behaviors especially in the high density suburbs where these drugs are being sold.

The Gateway theory articulates that substance use can lead to further delinquent behavior and more serious substance abuse (Kandel, 1975). Also, it can increase the risk of delinquent behavior by impairing judgment, increasing aggression, and leading to involvement with deviant peers thus, it is in conjunction with the probation officers statement. Prevention programs that target substance abuse can be effective in reducing juvenile delinquency while, treatment programs for substance abuse can help reduce delinquent behavior in juveniles. Overall, the findings suggest that drug and substance abuse are significant risk factors for juvenile delinquency, and that prevention and treatment programs can be effective in reducing delinquent behavior. Therefore, conducting a thorough assessment of the community's risks and resources helps identify areas that need attention and informs the development of targeted interventions. Neighborhood targeted strategies can be implemented as they sought for initiatives that focus on specific neighborhood improvement and involve community members in problem-solving hence, decision-making can be effective in reducing crime and delinquency.

4.4. Provisions in place towards addressing juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs

The researcher gathered data on the provisions in place in an attempt to address juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. From the findings, different findings were obtained. Data presented below is a true reflection of the gathered data.

4.4.1 Community-Based Programs

Community-based programs offer young people alternative activities and opportunities that can help them avoid delinquent behavior hence, enabling to develop social skills and competence. Community-based programs have become central to contemporary efforts aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency, particularly in marginalized urban settings.

Respondent one state that,

“There are a few community programs aimed at helping youths, such as after-school clubs and church groups but these programs are limited in reach and resources. While these programs have good intentions, their impact is minimal due to lack of funding and trained personnel. Many youths are unaware of these initiatives or find them boring” Right now, some schools and churches run awareness campaigns. There are also communities policing efforts that try to keep young people out of trouble, but they aren’t always consistent or active.”

Respondent two state that,

“In my community there are neighborhood watch groups that address juvenile delinquency. They are effective in a way that they keep some youths engaged in positive activities” and currently some NGOs provide counseling. Police conduct community outreach programs”

Community childcare worker state that,

“Community engagement and outreach can increase awareness and support for intervention strategies. For example, community-based organizations could be involved in promoting youth development programs. Youth Centers as organizations such as the Zimbabwe Youth Council operate youth centers that provide a safe space for young people to engage in recreational activities, receive mentorship, and access support services”

From the findings, Community-based programs offer young people alternative activities and opportunities that can help them avoid delinquent behavior hence, enabling to develop social skills and competence. Community-based programs have become central to contemporary efforts aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency; particularly in marginalized urban settings as

community-based programs, such as after-school programs and sports programs provide support and guidance. Community-based programs are essential in tackling juvenile delinquency, providing a supportive environment that addresses the unique needs of young offenders with aid of researches conducted (Greenwood, 2008). Community-based programs can reduce recidivism rates by providing juveniles with the necessary tools and support to reintegrate into society. Community-based programs offer young people alternative activities and opportunities that can help them avoid delinquent behavior hence, enabling to develop social skills and competence. Furthermore, community-based programs aid to foster community engagement and participation that can help to reduce delinquent behavior. It also, provides young people with education and job training opportunities thus, young people will be guaranteed with safe and supportive environments during after-school hours due to pairing young people with positive adult role models who can provide guidance and support. Social learning theorists contend that environmental factors among others (biological precursors and psychological predispositions) can explain violent behavior among young people thus, this theory assisted in shedding more light on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency (Bandura, 1977).

4.4.2 Restorative justice programs

Restorative justice programs sought to address juvenile delinquency through fostering accountability, reparation, and reconciliation between offenders, victims, and the community. Unlike punitive justice systems, restorative approaches emphasize healing, personal responsibility, and reintegration. It helps juveniles to have access to counseling and education among other support services. Respondent one state that,

“There’s a youth center and sometimes police talk to us, but not much else. They help a little, but most of us don’t go there or take them seriously.””

Probation Officer state that,

“Educational programs that are usually conducted at Kushinga pre-school, rehabilitation center as the Kwekwe City Council converted Amaveni Beer hall into a drug and rehabilitation Centre in Amaveni as part of their efforts to tackle drug and substance abuse, while they are vocational training sessions at Kushinga and S.t Martins Primary School and newly introduced soccer social league with local clubs represented by children from Amaveni and Mbizo have helped reduce juvenile delinquency.””

Community childcare worker state that,

“Vocational Training Programs such as the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund provide vocational training opportunities to help young people develop skills and secure employment.”

From the findings, restorative justice programs sought to address juvenile delinquency through fostering accountability, reparation, and reconciliation between offenders, victims, and the community. Unlike punitive justice systems, restorative approaches emphasize healing, personal responsibility, and reintegration. Restorative justice programs are based on principles of reparation, restitution, and reconciliation, which can help behavioral change (Braithwaite, 2002). It helps juveniles to have access to counseling and education among other support services, to address the underlying causes of their offending behavior. Also, it promotes restorative justice by providing victims with rehabilitative interventions, allowing young offenders to make amends and reintegrate into society. Community-based restorative justice programs can help build trust (Kurki, 2000). Restorative justice programs promote positive behavioral change. Therefore, implementing restorative justice programs in high-density suburbs can help reduce juvenile delinquency and promote positive relationships as it provides children with education and job training opportunities, helping them to develop skills and become productive members of society. Children receive counseling and therapy to address underlying issues from trained professionals. In Zimbabwe, restorative justice programs play a vital role in tackling juvenile delinquency while fostering healing and reconciliation among victims, offenders, and communities. These programs offer a safe and supportive space where juveniles are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and make amends, helping them understand the consequences of their behavior on others. This process promotes empathy and deeper awareness. According to the respondents, restorative justice initiatives have proven effective in reducing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs by focusing on repairing the harm caused. The findings indicate that such programs can successfully lower rates of delinquency and strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and community members.

4.4.3 Pre-Trial Diversion Services

These services aim to divert juvenile offenders alternative support services, such as counseling, education, and community service.

Respondent one state that,

“Handizivi nezve pre-trial diversion program ini nekuti chaikaita kuti nditize pakauya mapurisa kumba kana kuti nditye ndaive ndaudziwa kuti ukasungwa unoenda kujere revana riri ku Gweru”

Probation officer (Child protection officer) state that,

“Pre-Trial Diversion Program as an initiative allows juvenile offenders to avoid formal prosecution by participating in rehabilitative programs, counseling, and community service. A juvenile offender may carry a record that limits future opportunities, especially in education and employment. Juveniles still face difficulties such as prolonged detention periods, limited educational opportunities, and societal stigma”

Community childcare worker state that,

“Counseling Services as organizations such as the Family Support Trust provide counseling services to help young people address underlying issues that contribute to delinquent behavior.”

From the findings, pre-trial diversion services have been shown to be effective in curbing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs. Studies have found that pre-trial diversion programs can significantly reduce recidivism rates among juvenile offenders. It focuses on rehabilitation and restorative justice, providing young offenders with counseling, victim-offender mediation, and community service. This approach helps juveniles become responsible of their behavior. Despite the existence of PTD programs, many juvenile offenders in high-density suburbs lack access to these services due to limited awareness as highlighted by the number of respondents who are familiar to this process for instance the respondent stated that *“Handizivi nezve pre-trial diversion program ini nekuti chaikaita kuti nditize pakauya mapurisa kumba kana kuti nditye ndaive ndaudziwa kuti ukasungwa unoenda kujere revana riri ku Gweru”* hence, there is need to educate people with regards to PTD, while addressing resource constraints, and shortage of skilled labor, due to cultural and religious beliefs that have shared an impact on PTD programs, with some communities holding negative perceptions about the causes of juvenile offending. Sithole (2023) emphasizes the role of Pre-Trial Diversion (PTD) services in Zimbabwe as a structured community-based approach. PTD focuses on non-custodial rehabilitation through counseling, vocational training, and family reintegration. However, access to PTD remains uneven, particularly in resource-constrained areas like Kwekwe, due to limited awareness and infrastructure. These services aim to divert juvenile offenders to alternative support services, such as counseling, education, and

community service. Scholars have noted the its success towards diverting juveniles who commit non-serious offenses from the formal justice system thus, one can note the importance of resorting to this services as a way of helping juvenile from attaining a criminal record at a tender age which might have negative impact on their lives in the future.

4.5 Ideal interventions to address juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs

The researcher asked the participants question on pathways that may be implemented. Different responds were gathered. The data presented below shows the information gathered from the respondents.

4.5.1 Engagement of social workers

Social workers play a crucial role in managing juvenile delinquency issues in high-density suburbs because they work with families, communities, and government agencies to provide support services, counseling, and rehabilitation programs through awareness campaigns, influencing new policies and the provision of free counseling sessions

Respondent one state that,

“There is the need for provision of mental health services such as counseling, therapy and trauma informed care job placement services for community service as initiatives for youths.”

Probation officer Child protection officer state that,

“I would suggest increasing funding for youth programs, involving former delinquents in mentorship roles, and creating more engaging activities that resonate with young people. I think mentorship programs where youths are paired with responsible adults could help. Also, more recreational centers with sports, arts, and skills training would keep us engaged while vocational training could also reduce crime by giving young people a sense of purpose and income. Most importantly, schools and families should work together to teach discipline and emotional support.”

Community childcare worker state that,

“Counseling and therapy as counseling and therapy services are provided by organizations such as the Family Support Trust to help young people address underlying issues that contribute to delinquent behavior. Early intervention programs as programs that identify and support at-risk youth early on can help prevent delinquent behavior. For example, schools

could implement programs to identify and support students who are at risk of dropping out or engaging in delinquent behavior.”

From the findings Social workers play a crucial role in managing juvenile delinquency issues in high-density suburbs because they work with families, communities, and government agencies to provide support services, counseling, and rehabilitation programs through awareness campaigns, influencing new policies and the provision of free counseling sessions. Social workers provide counseling and therapy to juveniles. Social workers work with families to address dynamics that may be contributing to juvenile delinquency, such as parental conflict, neglect, or abuse; they work with families to improve communication, parenting skills, and family dynamics, reducing the risk of delinquent behavior (Henggeler & Sheidow, 2012). Also, social workers mobilize community resources and support to address juvenile delinquency, including partnering with local organizations, schools, and law enforcement. Social workers conduct research and evaluation to identify best practices and inform policy and programming to address juvenile delinquency. Engaging social workers is an effective intervention to address juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs. Social workers can provide individualized support to juveniles, addressing their specific needs and circumstances (Leschied & Nowicki, 2013). From the findings, it can be seen that engaging social workers is a valuable intervention to address juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs hence, engaging social workers in high-density suburbs provide support to juveniles and their families as community-based initiatives are facilitated by social workers attempting to help build positive relationships between juveniles and their communities.

4.5.2 Conduct family-focused interventions

This form of intervention can be tailored to address the drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs

Respondent one state that,

“I think counseling from grassroots levels can be essential especially if our parents can be more involved in our lives rather than putting more concentration on their work than us. We should be their priorities.”

Respondent two state that,

“Maybe more youth programs, like sports and music guarantee us something to do after school. And have older people we can talk to who don’t judge us that would help a lot.”

Probation Officer (Child protection officer) state that,

“Parental Support Initiatives provide parenting workshops to equip guardians with skills to foster stable home environments while, counseling and mentorship offer psychological and social counseling for at-risk youths to help them develop positive coping mechanisms.”

Community childcare worker state that,

“Family-based interventions thus, these interventions involve families and provide support and guidance can help address underlying issues that contribute to delinquent behavior. For example, family therapy programs could be implemented to help families address conflicts and improve relationships.”

From the findings, family-focused interventions are effective when addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs. Family-focused interventions are a crucial approach in addressing juvenile delinquency as family dynamics contribute to delinquent behavior. Furthermore, children who grow up in families with poor parenting practices, such as inconsistent discipline and lack of supervision can be prone to juvenile delinquency as research has consistently shown that family factors, such as parental conflict, neglect, and abuse, can increase a child's risk of engaging in delinquent behavior (Loeber & Farrington, 2012). Therefore, family therapy is an intervention that involves working with the entire family to identify and address negative patterns and interactions that may be contributing to the child's delinquent behavior. This form of intervention can be tailored to address the drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs of Amaveni and Mbizo under Kwekwe District, Zimbabwe such as family dysfunction. It is also, a comprehensive approach that involves government agencies, community organizations, and families as it is necessary to effectively address the issue of the drivers of juvenile delinquency. These interventions target the family unit, improving relationships, communication, and parenting skills. Family-focused interventions can improve parenting skills, reducing the risk of delinquent behavior Henggeler & Sheidow, (2012), as well as strengthening family relationships, improving communication and reducing conflict. Furthermore, these programs aim to improve parenting skills and knowledge, such as teaching parents how to set clear boundaries and provide consistent discipline. Research has shown that family-focused interventions can be effective in reducing juvenile delinquency for instance; a study by (Weiss et al. 2013, 2015) found that a family-based intervention called Multi systemic Therapy (MST) was effective in reducing delinquent behavior thus; policymakers and practitioners should prioritize family-focused interventions as a key strategy

in addressing juvenile delinquency. Conducting family-focused interventions can be an effective way to address juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs. This intervention can lead to improved outcomes for juveniles, including reduced delinquent behavior and improved family relationships. The findings suggest that family-focused interventions are a valuable approach to addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings on perceptions of children in conflict with the law in Zimbabwe, focusing on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs, specifically in the case of Kwekwe. It explored the main causes of juvenile delinquency, the existing measures aimed at addressing it, and potential interventions that could be implemented at the high-density suburb level. Twelve members were involved and the information shared in this chapter aligns with the study's research goals and objectives.

CHAPTER FIVE; SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the study, outlines the conclusions based on the results, and provides recommendations for addressing juvenile delinquency in the high-density suburbs of Kwekwe, Zimbabwe. The analysis is rooted in empirical evidence gathered from juveniles and key informants, supported by theoretical frameworks such as Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory. Recommendations are also part of this chapter as they serve the purpose to shed light on the ideal interventions that can be implemented to address juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs as the government and non-governmental organizations can benefit.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study sought to explore the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs, particularly Amaveni and Mbizo in Kwekwe. It aimed to identify the drivers of juvenile delinquency, explore the provisions in place to address juvenile delinquency and to propose ideal interventions to curb juvenile delinquency in these communities. The research was guided by two theories one propounded by Albert Bandura and the other proposed by Robert Merton. This research adopts a case study research design to explore the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. The study applied two non-probability sampling methods snowball sampling and purposive sampling to select participants. Ten juveniles and two key informants were selected and the collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

Key Findings

Drivers of Juvenile Delinquency

Moffitt, (1993) articulated that individual factors can significantly contribute to juvenile delinquency and personality traits such as impulsivity and low self-control, as well as mental health issues, are the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency. Also, dysfunctional families, lack of supervision, and parental criminality were linked with increased juvenile offenses. Peer influence a significant driver of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs, especially among children, as children would seek social acceptance and belonging thus, associating with deviant peers can influence delinquent behaviors such as theft and substance abuse. Juveniles are involved in drug and substance abuse abusing substances like marijuana and crystal meth which sometimes contribute to aggression and impaired judgment.

Provisions in Place

Community-Based Programs such as youth centers, church or community groups, and school initiatives exist but face limited funding and inconsistent engagement. Also, restorative justice programs involve rehabilitation centers and vocational training provides positive alternatives, but is underutilized and some are still under construction. Pre-Trial Diversion Services (PTD) services help avoid criminal records for minor offenses but due to lack of awareness and access issues it will only remain a mystery to some juveniles and the community at large.

Ideal Interventions

Engagement of Social Workers involves social workers playing a key role in counseling, family mediation, and community mobilization while family-focused interventions in cooperates programs like Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) that target parenting practices have proven effective. The strategies that were recommended by juveniles and key informants require community participation while some require resources for implementation hence the need to provide partnership between the government and the non-governmental organizations.

5.3 Conclusions

Juvenile delinquency in Kwekwe high-density suburbs is a multidimensional issue stemming from individual traits as findings highlighted those individual factors contributes to juvenile delinquency in the high density suburbs while some respondent had little understanding on how their individuality leads them into criminal activities, family background plays a significant role, as juveniles from broken homes often lack proper parental guidance. As a result, their relationships with parents or guardians tend to be unstable, frequently shifting between positive and negative. This lack of consistent parental support is a key factor contributing to juvenile delinquency. Adults behaviors like smoking, drinking and gambling can be passed on to their offspring as a result of socialization thus, producing juvenile delinquents as even intact families produce juvenile delinquents. Peer pressure highlighted the importance of peer relationships and suggested that peer rejection and peer affiliation can contribute to delinquent behavior as findings suggest that peer pressure is a significant factor in juvenile delinquency, and that intervention targeting peer relationships and peer influence can be effective in reducing delinquent behavior. Drug and substance use can lead to further delinquent behavior and more serious substance abuse as it increases the risk of delinquent behavior by impairing judgment, increasing aggression, and leading to involvement with deviant peers.

Community-based programs such as after-school programs and sports provide support and guidance. Community-based programs are essential in tackling juvenile delinquency, providing a supportive environment that addresses the unique needs of young offenders with aid of researches conducted encourages positive outcomes for juveniles. Also, Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory remain highly relevant in contextualizing why children from marginalized backgrounds engage in deviant behavior. A holistic, community-based and family-centered approach is essential to effectively combat juvenile delinquency.

5.4 Implications for Social Work

This research underscores relevance of social workers attempting to mitigate the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs such as Amaveni and Mbizo in Kwekwe. The prominence of family dysfunction, peer pressure, and substance abuse as core drivers of delinquency highlights the need for social workers to intensify family-centered interventions thus the need to include parental skills training, conflict resolution, and the establishment of consistent support systems within households. Social workers are thus positioned not merely as service providers but as facilitators of behavioral and relational change within the family unit. More so, integrating social work practices with schools and community programs can help bridge the communication gap between children and caregivers, thus preventing early deviant behavior.

Furthermore, the study reveals the significance of contextual, community-based strategies—pointing to the need for social workers to take active roles in local youth development initiatives. The scarcity and underutilization of community programs cited by participants indicate a missed opportunity for early engagement and positive peer association. Social workers must advocate for increased government and NGO investment in sustainable after-school programs, mentorship opportunities, and accessible youth centers. Moreover, they can lead the design and implementation of rehabilitative efforts such as restorative justice and pre-trial diversion programs, which the study identified as under recognized yet effective. These roles reflect the importance of community-oriented practice in social work, calling for professionals to embed themselves within the neighborhoods they serve to maximize impact. Lastly, the findings suggest that social workers should act as change agents at both micro and macro levels—advocating policy change while simultaneously providing therapeutic services for instance, widespread ignorance of programs such as pre-trial diversion indicates a systemic communication gap that social workers are well-equipped to address. Also, they need to engage

in research, awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy, social workers can push for broader reforms that delimit poverty-related juvenile offenses and enhance support structures. Overall the research compels social work practice to move beyond reactive interventions and toward proactive, preventative, and rights-based frameworks that holistically support juveniles.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Policy-Level Interventions

The government should strengthen community outreach programs through allocating more funding to youth development and rehabilitation services such as designating funds yearly on the national budget for rehabilitation programs for juveniles as a way to minimize juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. Also there is need to expand the pre-trial diversion awareness campaigns in schools, churches, and community meetings so that the majority is aware of this initiative and through the help of Community Childcare Workers.

5.5.2 Community-Based Approaches

The Department of Social Development, the Government and different independent stakeholders and non-governmental organizations such as the National Aids Council, Batwana, Jointed Hands and; Child line should establish well-resourced youth centers with vocational training, arts, and sports programs in Amaveni and Mbizo so as to guarantee productive activities within the high density suburbs. Also, there is need to train community volunteers and social workers in juvenile justice frameworks.

5.5.3 Family-Centered Strategies

The Government as well as different independent stakeholders require to launch family counseling initiatives and parenting classes targeting high-risk families which could be led by trained and professional social workers while some social workers and trained professional are being tasked to home-visitation programs through social services to monitor at-risk children.

5.5.4 School-Based Interventions

Promote early warning systems for identifying at-risk students through collaboration between teachers and social workers thus, there is need to have at least social workers (two or more) depending with the pupils at schools whether private or governmental school so as to assist juvenile, whenever they are going through life situation providing insightful advices to juveniles as a way to curb juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. Also, the Ministry of

Education needs to embed life skills and emotional intelligence training into the school curriculum.

5.6 Areas for Future Study

The researcher observed that there are various key drivers of juvenile delinquency hence the recommendation to further study the prevalence and statistical relationships among juvenile delinquency drivers a comparative analysis of rural and urban juvenile delinquency patterns in Zimbabwe. The main reason behind that is, to be able to propose ideal intervention strategies to address juvenile delinquency hence it will not be only to help children graduate from primary and high school but rather, to transform their lives.

5.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter offered an overview of the study's key findings and presented conclusions and recommendations to address juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs. The study revealed that a combination of personal, family dynamics, peer pressure and drug and substance usage contributes to juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs. Through strategic policy and community engagement, a sustainable solution can be developed. The information presented is in accordance with research study goals and objectives.

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APPENDIX A: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR JUVENILES

BACKGROUND

My name is Tanaka Mavezere a student studying for Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a research on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe. Please, may you kindly respond to the following questions? This interview will help us understand the key drivers of juvenile delinquency, provisions in place addressing juvenile delinquency and the interventions strategies that can be implemented. Your participation is based on your willingness and consent; you are always allowed to withdraw whenever you wish to. I greatly hope that information obtained will contribute in future decision making and you are reminded that information obtained is specifically for educational purposes.

Participant's

Name.....

Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name.....

Signature.....Date.....

Section A

Demographic Information

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: _____

3. Family structure (e.g., single-parent, two-parent): _____

4. Education: _____

5. Occupation (e.g., social worker, community childcare worker, parent, juvenile):

Section B

Research Question 1

What are the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Probing Questions

1. What is causing you to commit juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your parents/guardians?
3. Do you have any friend or family members who have been involved in any delinquent behavior?
4. Are there any gangs or crime-related activities in your school/community?

Research Question 2

What role do provisions in place play towards addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Probing Questions

1. What provisions are in place in your community to address juvenile delinquency?
2. How effective or helpful are they in addressing juvenile delinquency?
3. What recommendations would you make to improve the effectiveness of provisions in addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Research Question 3

Which ideal interventions can be applied to address juvenile delinquency?

Probing Questions

1. What intervention strategies are currently being used to address juvenile delinquency in your community (high-density suburbs)?
2. What potential intervention strategies do you think could be effective in addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

APPENDIX B; IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

BACKGROUND

My name is Tanaka Mavezere a student studying for Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a research on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe. Please, may you kindly respond to the following questions? This interview will help us understand the key drivers of juvenile delinquency, provisions in place addressing juvenile delinquency and the interventions strategies that can be implemented. Your participation is based on your willingness and consent; you are always allowed to withdraw whenever you wish to. I greatly hope that information obtained will contribute in future decision making and you are reminded that information obtained is specifically for educational purposes.

Participant's

Name.....

Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name.....

Signature.....Date.....

Section A

Demographic Information

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: _____

3. Family structure (e.g., single-parent, two-parent): _____

4. Education: _____

5. Occupation (e.g., social worker, community childcare worker, parent, juvenile):

Section B

Research Question 1

What are the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Probing Questions

1. What are the causes of juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?
2. What are the consequences of juvenile delinquent behavior?
3. Are there any gangs or crime-related activities in your school/community?

Research Question 2

What role do provisions in place play towards addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Probing Questions

1. What provisions are in place in your community to address juvenile delinquency?
2. How effective do you think these provisions are in addressing juvenile delinquency?
3. What specific outcomes or results have you observed due to these provisions?
4. What challenges do you think exist in implementing these provisions?
5. Are there any gaps in the existing provisions?
6. What recommendations would you make to improve the effectiveness of provisions in addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Research Question 3

Which ideal interventions can be applied to address juvenile delinquency?

Probing Questions

1. What intervention strategies are currently being used to address juvenile delinquency in your community (high-density suburbs)?
2. How effective do you think these intervention strategies are in addressing juvenile delinquency?

3. What potential intervention strategies do you think could be effective in addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?
4. What barriers or challenges do you think exist in implementing effective intervention strategies for juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?
5. How do you think these barriers and challenges can be addressed?

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR JUVENILES

Background

My name is Tanaka Mavezere a student studying for Bachelor of Science Honors Degree in Social Work at Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying out a research on the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs a case of Kwekwe. Please, may you kindly respond to the following questions? This interview will help us understand the key drivers of juvenile delinquency, provisions in place addressing juvenile delinquency and the interventions strategies that can be implemented. Your participation is based on your willingness and consent; you are always allowed to withdraw whenever you wish to. I greatly hope that information obtained will contribute in future decision making and you are reminded that information obtained is specifically for educational purposes.

Participant's

Name.....

Signature.....Date.....

Researcher's Name.....

Signature.....Date.....

Section A

Demographic Information

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: _____

3. Family structure (e.g., single-parent, two-parent): _____

4. Education: _____

5. Occupation (e.g., social worker, community childcare worker, parent, juvenile):

Section B

Research Question 1

What are the key drivers of juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Probing Questions

1. What are the causes of juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs?
2. What are the consequences of juvenile delinquency behavior?

Research Question 2

What role do provisions in place play towards addressing juvenile delinquency in high-density suburbs?

Probing Questions

1. What provisions in place in your community to address juvenile delinquency?
2. How effective have they been in impacting your live as a juvenile?
3. What challenges do you think exist in these provisions in place?

Research Question 3

Which ideal interventions can be applied to address juvenile delinquency?

Probing Questions

1. Which ideal interventions do you propose in relation to juvenile delinquency in high density suburbs?



