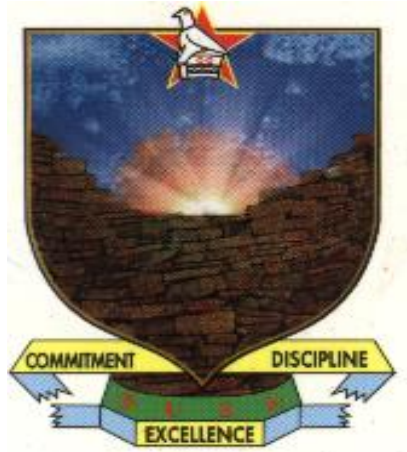


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY STUDIES



TOPIC

**ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON JUVENILE
DELINQUENCY IN RURAL ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF CHIADZWA
COMMUNAL AREA, FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2020- DECEMBER 2023**

BY

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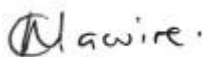
**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
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BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION, FACULTY OF COMMERCE.**

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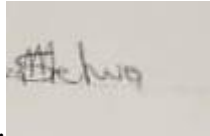
The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to Bindura University of Science Education for acceptance a research entitled: Assessing the impact of socio-economic factors on juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe. A case study of Chiadzwa communal area, for the period January 2020- December 2023.

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I declare that this research project herein is my original work and has not been copied or extracted from previous source without due acknowledgement of the source.

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my parents, husband Givemore and our beloved sons who have always been my source of inspiration and support through my academic journey. I love you and wish you many more years to come.

ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency has corrupted the youth who are meant to be leaders of tomorrow. Socio-economic factors have contributed immensely to juvenile delinquency. Juvenile delinquency has been on the rise in urban areas but has also migrated to rural areas where it is evident that the youth are being engaged in crime due to various socio-economic factors. The study was hinged on assessing the impact of socio-economic factors on juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe. A case study of Chiadzwa communal area, for the period January 2020- December 2023. The study was guided by four main objectives: to identify the socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa communal area, to determine the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes in Chiadzwa communal area, to determine challenges faced by Chiadzwa Communal area in addressing juvenile delinquency and to determine the evidence based strategies to curb juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area. A sample size of 60 from five key sectors in Chiadzwa namely: secondary educational institutions, local communities, Zimbabwe Republic Police, traditional leaders and non-governmental organisations. The data was scientifically analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 16.0 then tables, pie charts and bar graphs were used to present data. A descriptive research design was used where the researcher combined questionnaires and face to face interviews solicit information from respondents. The research revealed that poverty is the most significant factor contributing to delinquency and theft has emerged as the most prevalent crime in juveniles as they try to earn a living. The lack of institutional capacity to curb delinquency has compounded the situation. Efforts underway to reduce juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa include awareness campaigns to ensure the social ill is fought. It is recommended to enhance legal aid as well as probation services. It is also recommended that special courts be established to deal juvenile matters.

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CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

Since time immemorial, juvenile delinquency has been a problem and a cancerous global trend. Hamilton (2009) defines a juvenile as a child or young person who, under respective legal systems, may be dealt with for an offence in a manner which is different from an adult. Delinquency and criminal behaviour is common among young children as they negotiate the transition from childhood to adulthood in an increasingly complex world. According to the United Nations on children deprived of liberty, about 410 000 children are detained in the criminal system every year globally (Fambisai and Moyo, 2020). The underlying drivers of such anti-social conduct which causes the young people to depart from what society values and holds in esteem forms the bedrock of juvenile delinquency. Neissl and Singer (2020) outlined that third world countries have an experience of rapid increase in juvenile delinquency attributed to urbanisation, migration, decline of family control, familiarity socialization, conflict between youth and adults, decline in family roles because of increased education and literacy and the decline of moral standards. Socio-economic factors such as unemployment, poverty and broken homes have promoted juvenile delinquency, hence this study zeroed on the socio-economic factors as a major source to juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa communal area. Rural areas such as Chiadzwa are considered as void of crime and a safe haven to raise children this is commonly termed “rural idyll”. Dodo and Mwale (2018) posited that urban areas experience high rates of delinquency, their study sought to understand factors that motivate delinquency in rural and urban areas. This research sought to understand the dynamics that motivate delinquency in Chiadzwa rural area which has a hype of economic activities due to diamond mines in the area. Chiadzwa being a rural area has strong social bonds, norms and beliefs within its social structures which are now being eroded by the vice of delinquency exposing youth to crime and destroying their future.

1.1 Background to the Study

Juvenile delinquency is a long-standing problem that exists globally. In the United States, juvenile delinquency has been declining in recent years. According to the Office of Juvenile

Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), the juvenile arrest rate for all crimes in 2019 was 2,005.4 per 100,000 juveniles, down 73% from the 1996 peak. Juvenile justice outcomes vary by race and ethnicity, and black and Hispanic youth are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. Also in Canada, the rate of juvenile accused crimes has been declining since 2006. Declines in juvenile delinquency were observed in all crime categories.

In China, studies revealed that juvenile delinquency was more in urban areas than rural areas. The rise was attributed to factors such as poverty, lack of social support, and exposure to crime and violence. As a result, the authorities noted the need to discuss the role of community-based interventions in addressing juvenile delinquency in urban areas. In a related study in China, Gove and Crutchfield (2020) studied various family factors such as parenting practices, family structure, and communication patterns, and discussed their impact on adolescent behavior. The study found that parental support and control were significant predictors of problem behavior in adolescents, with high levels of parental support and moderate levels of control associated with the lowest levels of problem behavior.

The topic of juvenile delinquency in India has emerged as a significant worry for both the community and the government. Iza et al., (2022) acknowledges that there seems not to be a robust and comprehensive research on juvenile delinquency in rural areas. Research has shown that delinquency is higher in densely populated urban areas than in rural areas. The Second International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD2) did not find any statistical differences between the two setting (ie rural and urban) it also adds that it does not indicate that crime in rural communities is not worthy of attention. Donnermeyer (2020) states that nearly 50% of the world's population lives in rural area, where the term rural generally describes non-urban settlements. Crime is often considered as absent in rural areas which is why justice policy and practice have long centered on urban areas and efforts to combat crime are minimized (Smith, 2020). The rural areas require more studies in juvenile delinquency to unpack the causes, consequences and prevention of juvenile delinquency.

In Africa juvenile delinquency is a significant concern with poverty being a major driver of juvenile delinquency (Desta, 2020.) UNICEF (2020) also concurred and reported that 70% of African children live in poverty, increasing vulnerability to delinquency. UNESCO (2019) highlighted that 30 million African children are out of school, exacerbating delinquency. For Kenya, juvenile delinquency is on the increase Odero (2019). The increase has been attributed to deprivation of material needs namely food, clothes, shelter, school enrolment and poverty.

However, parental neglect also contributes to the children associating with delinquent peers hence causing delinquency.

Coming closer home, Zimbabwe is no exception to the increase in juvenile delinquency. Zimbabwe is faced with the challenge of juvenile delinquency and the transition from childhood to adulthood is marred with difficulties. According to ZRP (2020) juvenile delinquency rates increased by 30% between the years 2015-2020. The UNICEF report of 2020 highlighted that 1 in every 5 youths engage in delinquent behaviour. Juvenile delinquency is becoming increasingly more intricate while crime prevention programs are either inadequately equipped or non-existent to deal with these glaring realities (Rahman, 2022.) Urban areas for example Harare and Bulawayo report higher delinquency rates than rural areas, ZRP (2020).

Juvenile delinquency is rife due to socio-economic factors that have hit Chiadzwa communal area. Crimes mostly committed include theft, teenage pregnancy, school dropout, illegal diamond mining, prostitution, drug abuse, drug dealing, murder and assaults. The discovery and mining of diamonds in Chiadzwa has fuelled the increase in juvenile delinquency. Chazovachii (2015) reported that broken homes and parental absence due to mining related migration attributes to juvenile delinquency. There is a rush for the precious mineral and juveniles turn to crime in order to get a quick buck. Both male and female juveniles have fell victim to the diamond rush which has led to school drop outs. It is against this background that the researcher sought to examine the influence of socio economic factors on juvenile delinquency.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the economic benefits of diamond mining in Chiadzwa, Zimbabwe, the community has experienced a significant increase in juvenile delinquency, with 40% of youths engaged in delinquent behaviour (Mukwada, 2017). Though they are multiple strategies put in place to reduce the effects of juvenile delinquency there is room for improvement. The prevalence of poverty, lack of education, family disruption and exposure to mining-related violence exploitation have created a perfect storm factors contributing juvenile delinquency (Chazovachii, 2015). The prevalence of juvenile delinquency among children in Chiadzwa poses threat to moral fibre, with long term consequences for individuals, families and the community at large. UNICEF (2020) on a case study in Malaysia highlighted that the absence of effective interventions and support systems resulted in increased school dropouts, substance abuse and vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation. ZBC news online published an article

on 29 October 2023 headlined Juvenile delinquency spike a cause for concern reported that , “Parenting styles are now different and maybe we are not being strict enough as parents that is to say why our children are easily becoming notorious.’ In the matter of S v Delma Mukumba (juvenile), accused killed his uncle after a misunderstanding and the court stated, ‘Cases of loss of life through violent conduct remain worryingly prevalent. What is even more saddening is such serious offences are being committed by very young people. It is not an easy task for the courts to pronounce appropriate sentence on such juvenile offenders facing very serious crimes. The delicate balance is always elusive.” Therefore this study sought to examine the socio economic factors that lead to juvenile delinquency in rural area, Chiadzwa.

1.3 Research Aim

As noted by Scott (2022), ‘juvenile delinquency is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach.’ The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of socio-economic factors on juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area. Through this study, impacts of juvenile delinquency were discussed, current training strategies to curb it were revealed, analyzed and suggested recommendations to control juvenile delinquency were made. The study was prompted by numerous adverse reports from the media and society against juvenile delinquency.

1.4 Research Objectives

- i. To identify specific socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area
- ii. To determine the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes in the Chiadzwa Communal area
- iii. To determine the challenges faced by Chiadzwa communal area in addressing juvenile delinquency.
- iv. To determine the evidence based strategies to curb juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What are the specific socio-economic factors that significantly correlate with juvenile delinquency rates in the Chiadzwa Communal area?
- ii. What are the types of juvenile crimes most frequently observed in the Chiadzwa Communal area?

- iii. What are the challenges faced by the Chiadzwa Communal Area in addressing juvenile delinquency?
- iv. What are the evidence based strategies that can curb juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The increase in juvenile criminality has damaged the society as a whole. It not only hits hard on the individual involved but also their families, community and the country at large. Notwithstanding the lack of success by some strategies to address juvenile delinquency, this study will aim to assist researcher to bridge the knowledge gap between impact of juvenile delinquency and strategies to reduce juvenile delinquency. This research will assist the University in contributing evidence based findings and add to the knowledge on juvenile delinquency. Examining this phenomenon will be expected to assist the juveniles by developing policies and interventions to ensure the reduction in delinquency and recidivism. The study's assessment of family dynamics, peer influence and socio-economic factors can help policy makers recognise risk factors early on and instrument prevention strategies. Expectations were to identify the strengths and weaknesses in its strategy, enabling the community to make informed decisions about either enhancements or revisions. This discussion assisted the community assess delinquency by identify gaps, and implement improvements. This assisted in reducing likelihood of young people engaging in criminal activities.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following assumptions:-

- a) All cases of juvenile delinquents are reported and correctly recorded by the Z.R.P.
- b) The same respondents live in and around Chiadzwa and will supply accurate information on activities of past and present reportable crimes in the communal area.
- c) The sample size is relevant to the information which needs to be collected.
- d) Instruments used in the study are appropriate.
- e) The researcher will be allowed access to all relevant school and community's records on juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa communal area between the periods of January 2020 to December 2023.

1.8 Delimitations

The research was carefully defined to guarantee a concentrated and feasible examination. The research was delimited to a mixed-methods approach, adhering to a pragmatic paradigm and employing a descriptive survey research design. The process entailed gathering both qualitative and quantitative data through questionnaires and interviews, with a specific focus on students, teachers, and police in the Chiadzwa rural community. This approach was informed by a conceptual framework that distinctly categorized socio-economic factors such as limited access to education, poverty, unemployment, family instability, and exposure to violence as independent variables, while juvenile delinquency was identified as the dependent variable, influenced by mediating factors like peer pressure and substance abuse. Additionally, the theoretical framework established by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Robert Merton's Strain Theory offered distinct perspectives for the analysis of the phenomena, thus defining the theoretical boundaries of the investigation. The study was carefully confined to its primary research objectives, which included: first, identifying particular socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area; second, assessing the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes in this area; third, examining the challenges encountered by the Chiadzwa communal area in tackling juvenile delinquency; and fourth, identifying evidence-based strategies aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency specifically in Chiadzwa. The targeted contextualization of the Chiadzwa communal area was essential, as the literature review revealed a notable deficiency in thorough and extensive research regarding juvenile delinquency in rural settings, particularly in relation to socio-economic factors, which this study aimed to address. The study was specifically restricted to the timeframe from January 2020 to December 2023, thereby ensuring that the data gathered regarding reportable crimes and socio-economic activities was limited to this particular four-year period.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced challenges in accessing data from the official sources as it was withheld for confidentiality. However, the researcher sought authority and gave assurance to the participants concerned on the confidentiality of information given and that it will only be used for the purpose of this study. The researcher is a full-time employee, which made time a major

limitation of the study. To address this limitation, the researcher came up with a timeline which was followed strictly by researching after hours and on weekends as well as on holidays.

1.10 Definition of Key terms

1.10.1 Adolescent

Robert Havighurst (2019) defined adolescence as the period of life which young people are no longer children but not yet adults, when they experience a widening of their social horizons, a questioning of parental values and attesting of their independence. The same understanding is applied in this study.

1.10.2 Juvenile delinquency

According to Maunganidze (2015) juvenile delinquency refers to engagement into illegal activities by minors. Therefore a minor refers to a person below 18 years. In line with this study the aforementioned definition will be used throughout the study. Examples of juvenile delinquency include vandalism, theft, assault, robbery, murder, trespassing, drug abuse and drug dealing

1.10.3 Socio-economic factors

The concept refers to factors within society that have likelihood of leading to juvenile delinquency such as family structure, poverty, economy and population growth (Schmalleger et al 2008).

1.10.4 Generalisation of youth, adolescent and juvenile

Due to various operationalized definitions of these words they will be interchangeably used in this study.

1.11 Summary

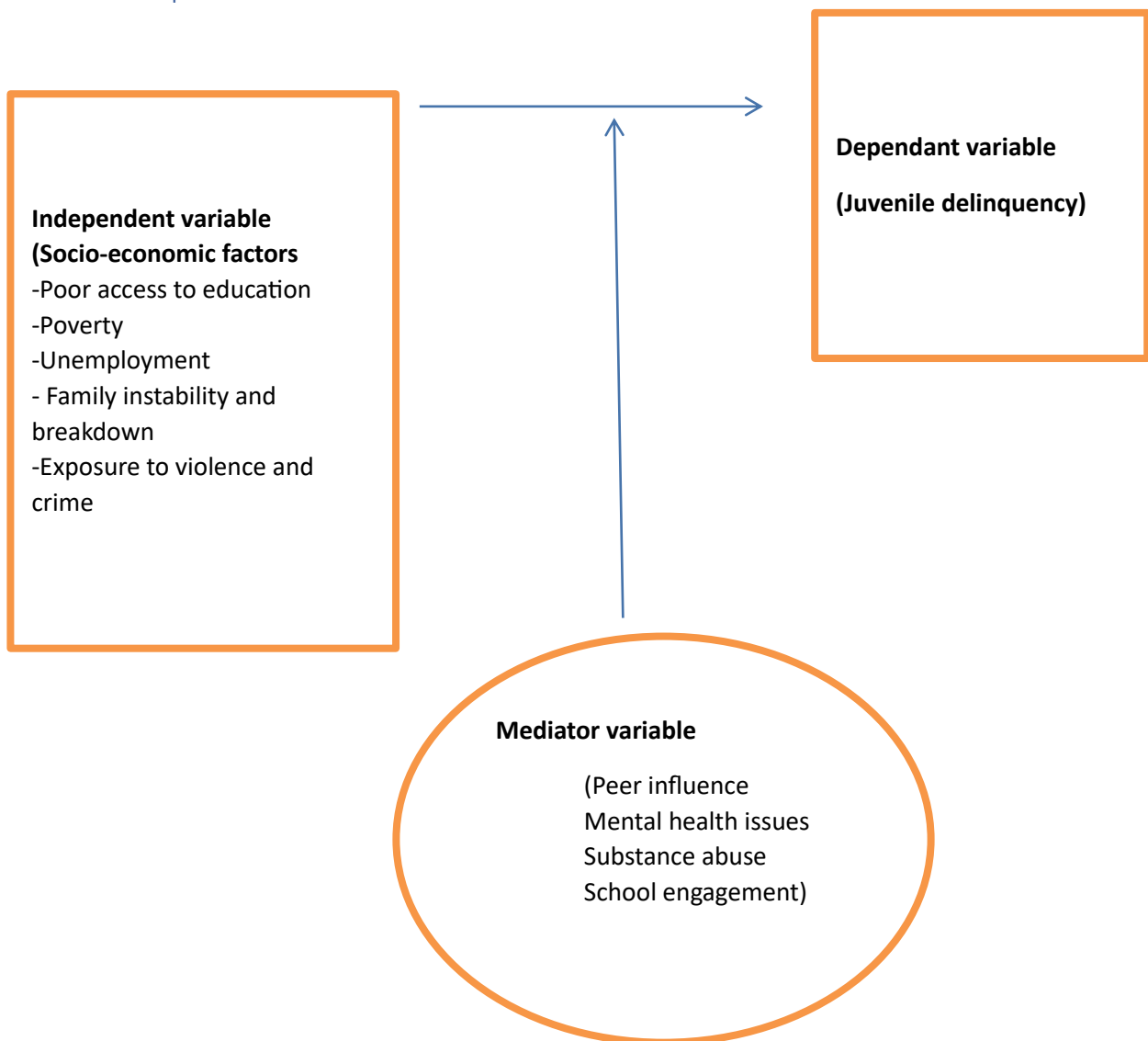
This chapter looked at the problem and its setting, the historical background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study. What prompted this study is the need to identify socio-economic factors contributing towards juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area. The study is significant in checking factors leading to increase in crime and control them. The study was restricted to Communal Area in Manicaland Province. The next chapter looked at the review of related literature to the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature on the subject of juvenile delinquency. The researcher focused on conceptual, theoretical, empirical review and justification of literature on the topic of juvenile delinquency. Literature review is the extrapolation of recent or historical research studies, company data or industry reports that act as a basis for the proposed study (Cooper and Schindler, 2019). It summarised what has been written or said about the topic being researched on by other authorities.

2.1 Conceptual Framework



This study's conceptual framework centres on the concept that socio-economic factors play a crucial role in shaping the prevalence and patterns of juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe,

using the Chiadzwa communal area as a primary case study. This framework included a wide range of independent variables related to socio-economic factors, such as societal structure, family dynamics, poverty levels, education, employment opportunities, and the community environment. Each of these factors plays a significant role in influencing youth behavior and increasing the risk of juvenile delinquency. The dependent variable in this study was juvenile delinquency, which included a range of antisocial and criminal behaviors displayed by young individuals in the community. The interplay among these variables was intricate and fluid; the disintegration of the societal framework in Chiadzwa, intensified by the surge of illicit diamond mining operations, brought about new standards that undermined conventional moral principles and heightened vulnerability to criminal conduct. The mining boom significantly impacted family structures, resulting in many households becoming dysfunctional. This was largely due to the social upheaval and economic instability that accompanied the boom, which in turn led to reduced parental supervision and a decline in moral guidance. Elevated poverty levels placed additional pressure on families, leading numerous young individuals to leave school and resort to unlawful activities for their survival, thereby perpetuating the cycle of delinquency. The absence of educational opportunities has a profound impact on juvenile behavior. Children who are not engaged in education often find themselves in unstructured environments and without clear future prospects, which increases their vulnerability to engaging in deviant behavior. In a similar vein, the prevalence of unemployment and dependence on informal or illicit work, such as artisanal mining, has stripped families of financial security and left young individuals without role models who could exemplify the importance of legitimate employment. The community setting, marked by the presence of crime, social instability, and the acceptance of unlawful behaviors, acted as a catalyst for juvenile delinquency. The socio-economic conditions were exacerbated by factors such as peer influence, mental health challenges, substance abuse, and school engagement, which either amplified or mitigated the impact of the independent variables on juvenile delinquency. For example, the influence of peers frequently motivated young individuals to partake in deviant activities in order to be accepted, whereas the misuse of substances compromised their decision-making abilities and heightened the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior. Mental health challenges, frequently stemming from trauma, increased susceptibility to delinquent behavior, while involvement in school served as a possible protective influence. The conceptual framework demonstrated that the occurrence of juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa is not an isolated issue; rather, it stems from a range of interconnected socio-economic

challenges, each playing a significant role in influencing youth behavior within the rural setting.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Social Learning theory

This study was based on the theoretical framework developed by Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. In the 1960s, Bandura, a Canadian-American psychologist, introduced the Social Learning Theory, which contested the conventional behaviorist perspectives that focused on direct reinforcement. Bandura suggested that behavior is acquired through the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling, especially within social environments. This theory revolves around four essential processes: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. In order for a behavior to be imitated, the individual must initially focus on the model, remember what they have seen, possess the capability to replicate the behavior, and ultimately, feel motivated to perform the behavior, which is often shaped by expected results or rewards. Bandura's well-known Bobo doll experiment showed that children who witnessed aggressive behavior in adults were more inclined to replicate that aggression, reinforcing the idea that individuals, particularly young people, acquire behaviors by observing and modeling those around them.

This study clearly demonstrates the significance of social learning theory within the socio-economic landscape of Chiadzwa, where the influx of individuals from various parts of Zimbabwe, drawn by illegal diamond mining, has introduced a range of behaviors, attitudes, and cultural values. The increase in this population resulted in a weakening of the community's moral and social structure, placing young individuals in contact with new behavioral patterns, such as criminal activities, substance misuse, and disregard for societal norms. The theory proposed that young individuals in Chiadzwa observed and absorbed behaviors from their peers, adults, and family members involved in illegal or socially disruptive actions, which resulted in their imitation and normalization of delinquent behavior. For example, in households where parents or guardians engaged in or accepted illegal mining, or where there was a lack of parental guidance due to financial strains, children tended to observe and imitate these behaviors as a means of survival. The straightforward application of Bandura's principles demonstrated how exposure to the environment in a community facing socio-economic challenges and moral disintegration can lead to the development and strengthening of juvenile delinquency.

The initial goal of the study was to pinpoint particular socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency. In this context, the social learning theory provided insight into how elements such as family structure, poverty, educational deficits, and community surroundings influence youth behavior through their learned experiences. Coulson (2022) highlighted that children's socialization is significantly influenced by the actions of their immediate caregivers, especially their parents. In Chiadzwa, families that are dysfunctional or economically challenged frequently struggled to offer suitable behavioral examples. Consequently, children sought out peers or community figures, many of whom were involved in illegal or antisocial behaviors, as alternative role models. This theory offered a framework for comprehending how socio-economic disruptions in the environment acted as catalysts for the transmission of behavior. It illustrates how juveniles learned and rationalized criminal activities, not merely as reactions to adversity but also as an accepted aspect of life within the swiftly evolving social context of Chiadzwa.

The second and third objectives, which aim to identify the types and prevalence of juvenile crimes as well as the challenges encountered in addressing these issues, were effectively articulated through the perspective of social learning theory. Observational learning played a significant role in the occurrence of specific types of juvenile crimes, including illegal mining, theft, and substance abuse, which were commonly witnessed in the community. Furthermore, the difficulties in tackling juvenile delinquency, including insufficient parental engagement, peer influence, the acceptance of criminal behavior, and fragile community frameworks, stemmed from the community's inability to offer constructive behavioral examples. According to Garduno (2021), communities play a significant role in shaping juvenile behavior via social learning, especially when there is a persistent and unopposed exposure to deviant actions. In Chiadzwa, this created a cycle where crime became a learned and ongoing lifestyle, especially among young people who were deprived of education, mentorship, and stable family situations.

Ultimately, social learning theory played a crucial role in shaping the fourth objective, which aimed to identify evidence-based strategies for reducing juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa. The theory highlights the significance of modeling and imitation, leading to intervention strategies that prioritize the introduction of positive role models, the implementation of structured educational programs, the facilitation of youth engagement activities, and the strengthening of family initiatives. For example, enhancing school engagement would create organized, supportive settings in which positive behaviors can be acquired and assimilated. In a similar vein, involving esteemed members of the community or rehabilitated young

individuals as mentors may help mitigate the impact of negative peer influences. According to the findings of Taylor (2020) and Cox (2020), structured settings like schools and vocational training programs provide different behavioral models and help decrease recidivism rates. Consequently, Social Learning Theory played a crucial role in identifying the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa and also provided a framework for developing effective, behaviorally based interventions designed to transform the learning environment for juveniles, ultimately reducing their engagement in criminal activities.

2.2.2 Strain theory

This study's theoretical framework was also grounded in Strain Theory, a sociological concept introduced by Robert K. Merton in the 1930s. This theory offers a valuable perspective for examining the rise of juvenile delinquency in socio-economically disadvantaged communities like Chiadzwa. Merton proposed that each society encourages specific culturally endorsed objectives, particularly economic achievement, while also defining the acceptable or legitimate methods for achieving these objectives, including education, employment, and diligent effort. Nonetheless, when individuals, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, are consistently prevented from utilizing these legitimate avenues due to socio-economic disparities, they undergo what Merton referred to as strain or anomie. The gap between aspirations and available resources frequently results in frustration, prompting individuals, particularly young people, to resort to alternative and sometimes unconventional methods to reach societal objectives. Juvenile delinquency can manifest in various forms, such as theft, illegal mining, substance abuse, or other criminal behaviors that are viewed as more direct or attainable paths to success.

This theoretical perspective was particularly pertinent to the first objective of the study, which aimed to identify the specific socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa. The Chiadzwa community, although located in a region abundant in diamonds, still faces significant challenges such as elevated poverty rates, unemployment, limited access to education, and disrupted family dynamics. The socio-economic limitations hindered young individuals from attaining legitimate success, thereby fostering an environment conducive to strain. For example, many young individuals have resorted to illegal diamond panning and minor criminal activities as means of survival, largely due to school dropouts, economic difficulties, and a lack of formal job opportunities. Merton's theory highlighted that when young people lack access to formal opportunities for socio-economic advancement, they may turn to alternative, illegitimate means to achieve the same societal standards of wealth and

success. Schor (2020) posited that in industrialized societies, when conventional avenues are obstructed and wealth continues to be revered as a benchmark, frustration frequently transforms into deviance. This pattern was clearly observable in Chiadzwa, even given its rural context.

In accordance with the second objective, which aimed to identify the types and frequency of juvenile crimes in Chiadzwa, Strain Theory provided insight into why certain offenses, including illegal mining, burglary, and drug-related crimes, were particularly prevalent. These offenses were not mere acts of mischief; rather, they were calculated reactions to socio-economic hardship. Amidst the challenges of limited opportunities and increasing inequality, even in the presence of wealth represented by diamond mining, young people viewed criminality as a more attainable route to economic and social acknowledgment. The theory provided an understanding of the psychological and structural pressures that caused young individuals to adopt deviance as a means of coping. Merton classified these responses into five modes of adaptation: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Among these, innovation—where individuals resort to illegitimate means to attain cultural goals—seems particularly relevant to the youth in Chiadzwa. This enabled the research to uncover not just the categories of crimes occurring, but also the deeper motivations and social tensions that drive them.

In relation to the third objective, which examined the difficulties encountered in addressing juvenile delinquency, Strain Theory provided additional insights into the systemic and institutional constraints that complicated intervention efforts. Conventional institutions like schools, families, and law enforcement agencies were either lacking in resources or not in sync with the actual experiences of the youth in Chiadzwa. The community was deficient in adequate infrastructure, professional support, and social systems that could mitigate the impacts of socio-economic stress. Furthermore, societal pressures that prioritize material success, while failing to offer realistic avenues to achieve it, have placed significant strain on young people who are already marginalized due to factors such as geography, poverty, and family instability. The inability of communities and institutions to acknowledge the underlying structural pressures has perpetuated cycles of exclusion and deviance. This indicates that tackling juvenile delinquency necessitates more than mere punishment or rehabilitation; it calls for structural change and enhanced socio-economic inclusion.

Regarding the fourth objective, which sought to investigate evidence-based approaches to reduce juvenile delinquency, Strain Theory highlighted the importance of tackling underlying

socio-economic inequalities instead of simply focusing on the symptoms of delinquency. It is essential to adopt multi-faceted strategies that include education reform, youth empowerment, vocational training, and economic inclusion programs in order to establish genuine pathways to success. Specifically, involving young people in significant educational and economic opportunities may alleviate the pressures that drive them towards criminal behavior. The theory suggests that without alterations in access to legitimate means, efforts to curb deviant behavior will likely be short-lived or ineffective. Consequently, efforts in Chiadzwa should focus on aligning community objectives with available resources by implementing policy reforms, enhancing infrastructure, and supporting families. Researchers such as Agnew (2006), who built upon Merton's theory, emphasized the impact of negative emotions like anger and resentment stemming from strain. They underscored the importance of psychological support and community resilience initiatives as essential supplementary approaches.

In summary, Strain Theory does not purport to account for every facet of juvenile delinquency on its own; rather, it provides an essential perspective on how socio-economic challenges, cultural pressures, and limited opportunities converge to steer rural youth toward deviant behaviors. This study recognizes that no single theory can fully account for all aspects of juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa. Consequently, combining strain theory with other frameworks, such as social learning theory, offers a more comprehensive analysis. Although there are critiques regarding determinism and its focus on material success, strain theory continues to be essential in emphasizing the structural pressures that influence behavioral outcomes. This framework not only clarified the underlying causes but also identified the essential socio-economic interventions required to guide youth away from deviant behavior towards more socially constructive avenues, thereby directly influencing both the diagnostic and prescriptive aspects of this research.

2.3 Empirical Evidence

2.3.1 Socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency

2.3.1.1 *Poor access to education*

Scholarly interest has increasingly focused on the connection between limited access to education and juvenile delinquency, with numerous studies aiming to clarify the ways in which educational deprivation influences youth deviance. Research conducted in developed nations indicates a significant correlation between educational inequality, school dropout rates, and a lack of engagement in educational systems with juvenile delinquency. In their thorough literature review, Abhishek and Balamurugan (2024) examined 80 peer-reviewed articles focused on India, a nation experiencing swift industrialization. They identified a consistent relationship between family neglect, inadequate educational involvement, and youth criminal behavior. The researchers found that children who grew up in nurturing family settings and had access to high-quality education were considerably less prone to engage in delinquent activities. While this literature review established a strong basis for comprehending the relationship between social factors and delinquency, it was deficient in a primary empirical element. Furthermore, although it recognized education as a contributing factor, it failed to specifically isolate or thoroughly analyze educational access as a distinct predictor of delinquency. This restricts its ability to directly assess how inadequate educational access independently forecasts deviant behavior.

Expanding on this discussion within the South Asian context, Javed et al. (2012) carried out a quantitative study in the Borstal jails of Punjab, Pakistan. The study involved 140 juvenile offenders from Faisalabad and Bahawalpur and employed a simple random sampling method to gather structured data. The results of the study clearly indicated that low educational achievement is a key factor contributing to juvenile delinquency. A significant number of the youths in custody had either left school prematurely or had never participated in formal education. This study is notable for its emphasis on youth in incarceration, providing valuable perspectives from individuals who are already part of the criminal justice system. Nonetheless, one might argue that it fails to consider qualitative aspects like personal stories and environmental factors, which could offer a more profound understanding of the socio-educational challenges these young individuals encountered. Nonetheless, the significant link identified between restricted educational opportunities and deviant behavior aligns with global patterns and provides a solid foundation for comparison with African settings. In their study, Yoganandham and Kalaivani (n.d.) examine the patterns of criminal behavior

among adolescents in Tamil Nadu, focusing on the economic consequences of these actions as they relate to the context of Africa. Although the study is situated in South Asia, its path of development and socioeconomic issues are similar to those faced by numerous African countries. The researchers recognized that factors such as inadequate education, poverty, and political neglect play a significant role in adolescent criminality, analyzing the issue through both socio-economic and political perspectives. Their research revealed the complexities of how systemic obstacles, such as insufficient funding for schools and a deficit in vocational training, drive young individuals toward criminal behavior. One notable strength of the study was its incorporation of macroeconomic factors, including the financial impact of juvenile crime on public budgets and overall productivity. Nonetheless, some critics might contend that the study oversimplified "education" as a general category, failing to break it down into aspects such as access, quality, or retention, which could limit the precision of policy targeting.

In South Africa, a country facing significant rural-urban divides and educational inequalities, Andrew, Stephen, and Josephine (2019) carried out a qualitative case study in Madonsi Village. The researchers utilized purposive sampling to conduct interviews with 12 youth participants, employing open-ended questionnaires alongside semi-structured interviews. Their research revealed a complicated array of socio-economic issues, including poverty, peer influence, insufficient recreational areas, and, importantly, restricted access to educational opportunities, all of which contributed to youth deviance. The qualitative approach of the study enhanced the data by providing context-specific stories that highlighted the ways in which educational deprivation interacted with various factors to affect behavior. Nonetheless, the limited sample size of the study restricts its generalizability, and the results would be enhanced by a comparative quantitative analysis. Nonetheless, the research provides robust evidence that limited access to education in rural African communities increases the likelihood of youth engaging in criminal activities, presenting important insights relevant to rural Zimbabwe.

In their research, Mpofu and Machingauta (2023) concentrated on Zimbabwe, conducting a mixed-methods study in Gweru Urban to analyze potential indicators of juvenile delinquency. The sample comprised 209 students who were chosen using random sampling methods, along with key informant interviews conducted with teachers and parents. The research indicated that inadequate home environments, particularly the absence of educational support, had a substantial impact on youth deviance. The authors observed that students attending overcrowded and under-resourced schools in marginalized communities demonstrated a greater inclination towards delinquency. This study's robustness is attributed to its use of

methodological triangulation and its effort to encompass various realities within a pragmatist framework. One limitation of the study is that, although it recognized poor educational access as a contributing factor, it did not thoroughly investigate how systemic educational barriers such as school fees, teacher shortages, and curriculum irrelevance specifically influenced delinquent behavior. Nonetheless, its suggestions for after-school programs and improved counseling services highlight the potential of education to help reduce youth deviance. The literature reviewed indicates that limited access to education consistently serves as a predictor of juvenile delinquency in various socio-economic settings. Researchers such as

Javed et al. (2012) and Mpofu and Machingauta (2023) have provided quantitative evidence for this relationship, whereas Andrew et al. (2019) and Yoganandham and Kalaivani have contributed qualitative and macro-economic insights, respectively. Nevertheless, there are differences in the emphasis that each study assigns to education in comparison to other socio-economic factors. For example, Abhishek and Balamurugan focus on family dynamics rather than educational aspects, whereas Javed et al. identify educational deprivation as the primary factor. This difference highlights the complex factors contributing to juvenile delinquency and emphasizes the importance of conducting context-specific studies to guide effective policy measures.

The existing literature highlights the rural-urban divide as an important mediating factor in the connection between education and juvenile delinquency. Research indicates that rural regions, especially in Africa, often exhibit inadequate educational infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and increased distances that students must travel to reach schools. These factors collectively heighten the risk of youth involvement in criminal activities. The research conducted in Madonsi Village (Andrew et al., 2019) and Gweru Urban (Mpofu & Machingauta, 2023) indicates that significant place-based inequalities can profoundly influence youth behavior, even within the same country. This highlights the necessity for targeted educational reform that focuses on not only enrollment but also the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education for at-risk youth.

Finally, there is widespread agreement among researchers about the necessity for comprehensive, multidisciplinary policy strategies to tackle juvenile delinquency. Researchers advocate for solutions that go beyond punitive frameworks, whether through educational investment (Yoganandham & Kalaivani), after-school programs (Mpofu & Machingauta), or community support systems (Andrew et al.). Nonetheless, these recommendations frequently

fall short in terms of specificity and the presence of evaluative frameworks to measure their effectiveness. This gap offers a chance for future studies, especially in rural Zimbabwe, to empirically examine the effectiveness of specific educational interventions aimed at decreasing juvenile delinquency. The Chiadzwa communal area, characterized by its distinct socio-economic dynamics, serves as an important case study for exploring the dual role of educational access as both a potential risk and a solution to juvenile crime.

2.3.1.2 Poverty

The research conducted by Sasmal and Guillen (2015) in India offers an in-depth analysis of the connections among poverty, educational shortcomings, and child labor within the broader framework of juvenile delinquency, highlighting how these factors collectively contribute to the issue. Through a qualitative and literature-focused examination of the Indian socio-economic landscape, the authors contend that poverty is the main driving force behind interruptions in education and the later involvement in juvenile crime. Their study reveals that children hailing from low-income households with unskilled labor backgrounds are more likely to enter the workforce at an early age, a trend that is associated with a heightened risk of engaging in delinquent behavior. The results of the study indicate that poverty contributes to emotional instability, feelings of inferiority, and psychological stress, which subsequently heighten the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities. Nonetheless, a significant advantage of the study is its multidimensional causality model, which recognizes the interplay among psychological, familial, and societal factors. Sasmal and Guillen advocate for a rehabilitative approach to juvenile justice instead of a punitive one; however, critics may highlight the absence of empirical support derived from primary data in their argument. Nevertheless, the study is consistent with modern criminological perspectives that highlight the importance of socio-economic equality, vocational training, and comprehensive youth development as means to prevent juvenile delinquency. However, it does not provide a detailed examination of how these concepts can be implemented across the various states in India. This gap presents a chance for additional empirical research at the micro level in economies with similar structures.

Anderson (2016) suggested that poverty has driven many adolescents to engage in delinquent behavior as a survival strategy. Nevertheless, those who are most impacted can be clearly identified within various socio-economic groups, including the lawless, individuals with disabilities, female-headed households, households led by individuals lacking formal education, unskilled casual laborers, orphans, street children, and beggars. The primary factors

contributing to the exposure of these groups include the growing disparity in wealth and income distribution, limited access to economic and social resources, inadequate opportunities for gainful employment, and unequal involvement in social and political processes, as well as life choices.

Furthermore, Karl (2019) observed that parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds often do not possess the financial means to provide their children with education. This lack of resources can severely hinder the children's future prospects, leading to feelings of desperation that may drive them to partake in illegal activities for financial gain. This has led to an increase in delinquency among adolescents in society. If the government fails to address the issue of poverty linked to low socio-economic status, it is likely that delinquency will continue to increase, subsequently contributing to a rise in overall crime rates over time (Owasanoye, 2015). Nevertheless, the author argued that the government is viewed as the primary entity capable of tackling the issues of delinquency, other criminal activities, and the poverty rate due to its dominant influence within the nation. Martin, as referenced in Paul (2016), suggests that individuals from poor and underclass backgrounds are more likely to produce delinquents compared to those from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. The group is often located in urban areas characterized by a cycle of poverty that is unsatisfactory for young people. Poverty restricts juveniles' access to educational opportunities. Additionally, factors such as insufficient parental attention, inadequate housing, family disorientation, unemployment, rapid population growth, and the specific labor demands faced by some adolescent parents contribute to an environment that fosters crime and delinquency (Nanjala, 2017). As a result, socio-economic instability is frequently associated with ongoing unemployment and low earnings among parents of adolescents, which may heighten the chances of their children engaging in criminal behavior (Wondimu, 2014).

In their 2024 study, Bhuiyan and colleagues conduct an empirical analysis of the complex interplay between poverty and juvenile delinquency in Bangladesh, a nation that exemplifies the challenges faced by lower-middle-income countries. This study employs a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, drawing on data from 300 respondents. It combines qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate how economic deprivation, family dysfunction, and community disorganization influence youth criminal behavior. The study highlights a notable relationship between poverty and juvenile crime, particularly within marginalized and minority youth populations. In contrast to the theoretical framework proposed by Sasmal and Guillen, Bhuiyan et al. provide strong empirical evidence that supports

the connection between theory and practice in criminology. Their consideration of factors like peer influence and legislative shortcomings enriches the discussion surrounding delinquency by introducing a more complex structural dimension. Notably, while they support initiatives aimed at raising public awareness and enhancing judicial training, they also highlight the importance of socio-economic empowerment and collaboration across various sectors, suggesting a well-rounded approach to prevention. However, the study's dependence on cross-sectional data and self-reported experiences restricts its capacity to establish long-term causal relationships. Nonetheless, its methodological strength and multi-faceted approach position it as a significant addition to the expanding literature linking structural poverty to youth deviance in South Asian settings.

Expanding upon the empirical path established by Bhuiyan et al., researchers like Hossain (2010), Saber (2021), and Akter et al. (2023) explore further the ways in which poverty influences delinquent behavior among young people in Bangladesh. The studies mainly employ demographic and statistical analyses, relying on national delinquency rates, poverty indices, and school dropout statistics. According to Hossain (2010), the combination of poverty with social exclusion and insufficient institutional support creates a 'criminality matrix' that drives adolescents towards deviant behavior. On the other hand, Saber (2021) introduces complexity by arguing that liberal views on crime tend to depend excessively on structural factors and overlook the role of individual agency. The research indicates that socio-economic immobility plays a significant role in contributing to delinquency, particularly when it is exacerbated by disorganized communities and a lack of parental support. Nonetheless, the difference arises in how they assign responsibility: some view the youth as victims of systemic inequalities, whereas others caution against absolving them of personal accountability. These authors emphasize the significant youth population in Bangladesh (Asadullah, 2016), characterizing it as both a demographic advantage and a potential crisis. The current demographic situation heightens the need for interventions across multiple sectors. However, the research also uncovers a conceptual conflict between structural determinism and behavioral voluntarism, which deserves deeper investigation in the context of policy development.

Further insights from Haque et al. (2020), Wickrama et al. (2010), and Khanom et al. (2022) highlight the indirect mechanisms by which poverty affects juvenile delinquency, especially by restricting access to essential services like education, healthcare, and sanitation. The research utilizes longitudinal and community-level data, incorporating mixed-methods approaches to effectively represent the experiences of disadvantaged youth. Haque and colleagues contend

that limited access to public services intensifies feelings of alienation and helplessness in adolescents, leading them to view criminal activity as a logical reaction to economic hardship. Khanom et al. (2022) further this perspective by presenting income inequality as a mediating factor, indicating that relative deprivation, rather than absolute poverty, has a more substantial impact on youth criminal behavior. The main disagreement among these researchers centers on the primary driving force: Wickrama et al. (2010) highlight psychological stress stemming from unmet needs, while Khanom et al. emphasize societal stratification and feelings of injustice. The conflict between micro and macro determinants underscores an important area for research: the necessity for comprehensive models that incorporate both individual psychological factors and larger socio-economic frameworks. Additionally, these studies highlight the importance of infrastructure development and fair resource distribution as effective long-term strategies for preventing crime.

Lazić (2020) expands the discussion to Eastern Europe, offering a detailed perspective on how material insecurity influences juvenile delinquency in Serbia and the wider Balkan region. Lazić examines the issue of poverty-related delinquency through a policy-focused perspective, utilizing secondary data and sociological analysis to contend that such delinquency is not solely a result of insufficient resources, but rather stems from systemic failures in social security and planning policies. The research highlights insufficient social programs and ineffective poverty alleviation strategies as fundamental shortcomings that contribute to juvenile crime. Lazić emphasizes the limitations of purely economic interpretations of delinquency, advocating for a more comprehensive approach to social planning that incorporates educational development, emotional support systems, and the strengthening of community ties. This perspective is consistent with the rehabilitative philosophy put forth by Sasmal and Guillen; however, Lazić extends this idea by promoting anticipatory governance, emphasizing the importance of states being proactive instead of merely reactive. Nonetheless, some critics may raise concerns about the applicability of Lazić's suggestions in non-European settings that exhibit different governance capabilities. However, the focus of the study on proactive policy-making and social investment enriches the increasing perspective that juvenile delinquency represents a failure of society rather than merely that of the individual.

In the context of Zimbabwe, Marufu (2024) provides an important empirical examination of the relationship between mental health and poverty among youth in incarceration. The study, carried out in Bulawayo and Matabeleland North Province, employed a cross-sectional methodology involving 130 adolescent offenders. It utilized instruments such as the CES-D-

10 and GAD-7 to assess levels of depression and anxiety. The results indicate that 18.5% of participants displayed symptoms of depression, while 10.8% showed signs of anxiety. These conditions are significantly linked to experiences of poverty, childhood victimization, and insufficient social support. The study notably highlights certain protective factors, such as the presence of a mother and the status of being a first-time offender. These insights are crucial as they reveal the psychological impacts of poverty that extend beyond mere economic indicators. Marufu's study is praiseworthy for its sophisticated biopsychosocial model, though the use of convenience sampling restricts its representativeness. This research makes a significant contribution by highlighting the importance of co-morbidity and targeted prevention strategies designed for mental health. In contrast to the works of Bhuiyan et al. or Sasmal and Guillen, Marufu offers a more clinically nuanced perspective; however, this approach may downplay the significance of structural economic factors in favor of focusing on individual psychological determinants. Consequently, the situation in Zimbabwe both enhances and questions solely economic perspectives on juvenile delinquency.

Building on Marufu's psychological perspective, Zinyemba and Sagiya (2024) examine the socio-cultural aspects of poverty and delinquency in Zimbabwe, with a specific focus on changes within the traditional marriage institution. Through the use of cyber ethnography and a thorough desk review, the researchers examine how contemporary parenting trends, marked by diaspora separation, online interactions, and work-related absenteeism, have diminished familial oversight and led to instances of child misbehavior. Their research reveals a significant connection between economic migration, frequently driven by poverty, and the disintegration of parental roles, which in turn fosters an environment that is favorable to juvenile delinquency. This research diverges from earlier studies that prioritize economic indicators, instead highlighting the importance of social and relational capital. It posits that one of the most detrimental impacts of poverty could be the disintegration of family and community connections. The authors make a strong argument for reconsidering the relationship between structural poverty and changing social norms, although some critics might contend that the study does not provide sufficient quantitative support. Nonetheless, its conceptual contribution is in redefining juvenile delinquency not just as a result of economic hardship, but as a product of interrupted socialization processes—an insight that is particularly relevant in areas with significant labor migration, such as Zimbabwe.

Throughout various studies, a nuanced yet coherent story unfolds: poverty serves as a crucial, albeit not the only, factor influencing juvenile delinquency. Sasmal and Guillen's structural-

economic perspective in India, Bhuiyan et al.'s empirical modeling in Bangladesh, and Marufu's focus on mental health in Zimbabwe all converge on the idea that economic deprivation limits opportunities and undermines the support systems essential for youth development. Nonetheless, differences hold significant importance as well. Some researchers focus on macroeconomic structures (Khanom et al., Lazić), while others draw attention to individual agency, family dynamics (Zinyemba & Sagiya), or mental health outcomes (Marufu). This theoretical variety indicates that no singular framework can completely encompass the relationship between poverty and delinquency. Addressing juvenile delinquency necessitates a comprehensive approach: efforts to alleviate poverty, enhance family stability, improve educational opportunities, and provide mental health support must work together to safeguard at-risk youth from becoming ensnared in criminal behavior.

2.3.1.3 Unemployment

Hazra (2021) presents an intriguing viewpoint in India that challenges the dominant narrative typically encountered in literature from more industrialized regions. Employing a strong methodology that integrates panel-corrected standard error models with a two-step Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) analysis, Hazra examines data from 31 Indian states and union territories spanning the years 2009 to 2016. The findings reveal an unexpected negative relationship between adult unemployment and juvenile crime. This discovery stands in stark contrast to the common belief found in Western criminological literature, which considers unemployment to be a direct factor leading to youth crime. The macroeconomic factors, such as Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) per capita and slum occupancy, have been confirmed to affect juvenile crime rates. However, the observed negative correlation with unemployment prompts an exploration of the cultural, institutional, and policing differences that could influence this relationship. Hazra's research encourages academics to rethink the applicability of theoretical models in various socio-political contexts, emphasizing the significance of conducting criminological investigations that are tailored to specific circumstances. Hazra's findings present a challenge to established beliefs; however, Shah, Soomro, and Mirjat (2019), through their empirical research in Pakistan, support conventional perspectives by demonstrating a significant positive correlation among unemployment, poverty, and youth criminal behavior. This cross-sectional study, which involved a structured survey and utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SPSS and AMOS software, analyzed data from 252 valid respondents. The findings indicate that socio-economic deprivation, particularly unemployment, significantly influences the propensity for criminal behavior among both adults

and youths. In contrast to Hazra's emphasis on macroeconomic aspects, Shah et al. utilized micro-level data, highlighting the actual experiences and personal responses of individuals facing economic hardship. Their research indicates that young people who are unemployed and living in poverty are more vulnerable to exploitation, particularly by criminal organizations that offer the allure of rapid financial gain. Their findings are consistent with leading criminological theories such as Merton's strain theory, yet they also prompt a thoughtful comparison with Hazra's research, indicating that differences in measurement—whether at the individual or aggregate level—could explain the variations in results. Therefore, although Shah et al. confirm established correlations, their research indicates the necessity for a multi-scalar approach to gain a deeper insight into the intricate connection between unemployment and juvenile delinquency.

Oyelade (2019) provides a comprehensive macroeconomic analysis of sub-Saharan Africa in his research on the factors influencing crime in Nigeria. This study employs the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model to analyze a 24-year time series spanning from 1990 to 2014, integrating various economic and socio-demographic factors. The main findings indicate a notable and significant correlation between the unemployment rates of both males and females and crime, particularly in urban settings. In the short term, there was a positive correlation between poverty and male unemployment with crime rates, whereas in the long term, female unemployment had a notable effect. This thorough macroeconomic perspective enhances the micro-analysis conducted by Shah et al. and stands in contrast to the surprising results presented by Hazra. Oyelade's research further supports the idea that in environments characterized by significant inequality and fragile institutional frameworks, unemployment acts as a driving force behind criminal activities, such as juvenile delinquency. Nonetheless, the research does not specifically break down crimes by age category, which restricts its ability to explain behaviors unique to juveniles. Nonetheless, the methodological rigor and longitudinal design offer strong evidence that joblessness serves as a structural factor influencing criminal behavior within the African context.

In an effort to enhance understanding of the Nigerian context, Onwuka, Ugwu, and Chukwuma (2020) carried out a primary survey-based study in Anambra State, Nigeria, aimed at investigating the relationship between youth unemployment and violent crime. The study utilized a quantitative approach, applying Taro Yamane's formula and conducting SPSS analysis through ANOVA. A total of 272 individuals were sampled, comprising business owners and members of the national youth council. The findings provide robust evidence that

there is a significant relationship between youth unemployment and a rise in violent crime, including kidnapping and terrorism, which subsequently has a detrimental impact on economic growth. This study, which focuses on youth, addresses an important gap identified by Oyelade (2019) by providing targeted insights into the ways in which the unemployed youth demographic is more likely to engage in violent crime. Unlike Hazra's findings, which suggest that adult unemployment might reduce juvenile crime, Onwuka et al. present a straightforward, positive correlation. Their emphasis on the economic consequences of crime within specific contexts provides an important perspective by connecting individual criminal behaviors to wider socio-economic decline. The research highlights the critical role of government involvement in reducing unemployment via programs focused on youth, proposing a policy approach to address juvenile crime.

In the context of East Africa, Osundwa (2021) presents a qualitative case study from Lamu West Sub-County, Kenya, examining the socio-economic factors that contribute to youth criminality. This doctoral dissertation, based on primary data, employed in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to explore the socio-economic factors that drive youth crime. The issue of unemployment was frequently highlighted, with participants indicating that the scarcity of job opportunities was the main factor driving them towards illegal activities, including theft and violent extremism. In contrast to the statistically based studies conducted by Shah et al. (2019) and Oyelade (2019), Osundwa offers a narrative-focused perspective on the perceptions and experiences of youth, demonstrating how sentiments of exclusion and hopelessness can lead to criminal behavior. His research is consistent with and reinforces the findings of Onwuka et al. (2020), emphasizing the emotional and psychological impact of unemployment. Additionally, Osundwa's findings contest Hazra's (2021) econometric assumptions by illustrating that unemployment leads to delinquent behaviors not only via macroeconomic factors but also through identity crises, peer influence, and social isolation. Consequently, the research enriches the existing literature by promoting approaches that are sensitive to context and utilize multiple methods.

In their 2020 study, Maulani and Agwanda offer an in-depth examination of youth unemployment in Zimbabwe and its connection to social instability. Based on a qualitative review of academic literature, government documents, and reports from multilateral organizations like the IMF and World Bank, the authors evaluate the shortcomings of Zimbabwe's National Youth Policy (2000) in tackling the issue of unemployment. Their research indicates that ongoing economic crises, ineffective macroeconomic policy execution,

and inadequate educational systems have resulted in the marginalization of youth, making them vulnerable to engaging in criminal activities. The study does not present statistical correlations between unemployment and crime; however, it suggests a connection between youth idleness and an increase in informal and illegal activities. In contrast to empirical studies such as those conducted by Shah et al. or Oyelade, the review by Maulani and Agwanda may lack quantitative precision; however, it effectively argues for the political economy surrounding youth marginalization. Their research is consistent with Osundwa (2021) in emphasizing systemic exclusion; however, it differs from Hazra (2021) by presenting unemployment not merely as a standalone economic issue but as a deeply rooted political and institutional failure that contributes to delinquency.

In various geographical and methodological settings, a common theme emerges: unemployment is consistently recognized as a socio-economic factor contributing to juvenile delinquency. Nonetheless, there are notable differences in the methods used and the results obtained. Hazra (2021) contests the prevailing narrative by demonstrating a negative correlation within the Indian context, indicating that law enforcement intensity and cultural norms may play a mediating role. In contrast, research conducted in Pakistan (Shah et al., 2019), Nigeria (Oyelade, 2019; Onwuka et al., 2020), Kenya (Osundwa, 2021), and Zimbabwe (Maulani & Agwanda, 2020) supports a more conventional criminological perspective. Quantitative studies that emphasize regression and structural modeling frequently neglect the subjective experiences that qualitative narratives, such as those presented by Osundwa, can reveal. This indicates the necessity for combined approaches to effectively address both the structural factors and the agency-driven aspects of youth criminal behavior. Furthermore, the responses of regional policies tend to be reactive and inadequately funded, frequently overlooking the underlying causes associated with structural unemployment. The existing literature reveals a disconnect in theory and a lack of cohesion in methodology, highlighting the need for more detailed, comparative, and intersectional research.

The literature reviewed highlights a significant policy failure in Zimbabwe, a country where youth unemployment rates are estimated to be among the highest in the world. Although Maulani and Agwanda (2020) emphasize the concept of institutional inertia, there has been no empirical research that directly connects unemployment with juvenile crime utilizing primary data specific to Zimbabwe. The disparity is noteworthy, especially given that anecdotal evidence and regional comparisons indicate a robust correlation. The differences in findings between Hazra's research in India and the contexts of African countries such as Nigeria and

Kenya necessitate a thoughtful approach to contextualization prior to any policy transfer. Future research ought to focus on longitudinal mixed-method studies in Zimbabwe that integrate macroeconomic indicators alongside youth narratives. This approach will help to outline the direct and indirect pathways by which unemployment contributes to delinquency. Furthermore, policy recommendations ought to extend beyond the creation of jobs to encompass reforms in education, support for mental health, and the promotion of civic engagement among youth. In conclusion, the existing literature indicates that although unemployment is commonly acknowledged as a socio-economic factor influencing juvenile delinquency, the ways in which this connection occurs are highly contextual, necessitating specific and evidence-informed interventions.

2.3.1.4 Family instability and breakdown

The instability and breakdown of families have been widely regarded as important factors leading to juvenile delinquency, especially in developed nations where family structures are becoming more varied and intricate. Sharma (2024) carried out a comprehensive investigation, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods, to explore family environments in urban areas throughout the United States. Sharma utilized longitudinal data and a combination of methods to evaluate the connection between family disintegration, characterized by divorce, separation, absentee parenting, and domestic conflict, and juvenile offenses that include truancy and violent crimes. The research indicated a significant relationship between family instability and delinquent behaviors, especially in adolescents who have experienced multiple family disruptions and inconsistent parental oversight. Sharma also contended that instability hinders adolescents' ability to access emotional regulation strategies and examples of prosocial behavior. Although Sharma's findings are consistent with the social control theory, some critics contend that the research fails to adequately account for resilience factors like peer support and school engagement. Nevertheless, it highlights a significant agreement within Western criminological literature that family disintegration acts as both a direct and underlying factor contributing to juvenile delinquency.

Expanding on this discussion, the Department of Public Safety Canada (2018) identified systemic risk factors arising from family dysfunction, including inadequate parental supervision, intergenerational criminal behavior, and exposure to domestic violence. This official government report compiled results from various long-term studies and criminal justice databases to pinpoint family structures that are at high risk. The Department indicates that family instability, which can be seen through factors such as parental substance abuse, mental

health challenges, and single parenthood, increases the chances of youth participating in delinquent activities. Furthermore, the lack of effective parenting strategies worsens deviant behavior. The report enhances the findings of Sharma (2024) by providing a wider policy perspective, suggesting the need for multisectoral interventions that include family counseling and parental training. Nonetheless, a notable critique of the report is its dependence on secondary data, which could potentially miss localized cultural subtleties. Additionally, the solutions provided are primarily prescriptive and do not include empirical assessments of their effectiveness in real-world scenarios. Both Sharma and the Department of Public Safety emphasize the significance of stable family environments in preventing youth crime in developed contexts.

Turning attention to Eastern Europe, Andrejić (2024) presents a thoughtful and data-driven analysis of deteriorating family structures in Serbia and their potential links to crime. By employing conceptual analysis alongside secondary statistical data from youth correctional institutions in Serbia, the author contends that the decline of traditional family structures, influenced by modernization, economic instability, and diminished social norms, has led to an increase in youth deviance. Andrejić suggests that families marked by neglect, violence, and poor communication are ineffective in socializing their children, resulting in emotional insecurity and increased vulnerability to peer pressure and criminal behavior. Although the analysis is well-supported by theoretical foundations and cultural context, it is deficient in primary empirical data, which diminishes its generalizability. Unlike Sharma, who focuses on empirical studies within urban Western settings, Andrejić argues for a normative perspective that supports a revival of traditional family values. This difference highlights an important issue in academic debate regarding whether family rehabilitation should be adaptable to sociocultural contexts or based on traditional practices. Both viewpoints, however, concur that disruptions within the family unit considerably hinder the development of young individuals and elevate the likelihood of engaging in delinquent behavior.

The issue of juvenile delinquency in Africa, particularly in connection with family instability, has garnered growing interest among researchers. In their 2020 study, Macharia, Thinguri, and Gacheru examined the Githurai Location in Kenya, employing a triangulated mixed-method approach that involved 140 high school students and several educational administrators to evaluate the influence of family lifestyle on youth delinquency. Based on the broken home theory and youth coercion theory, the authors discovered that youth delinquency is not caused by a single factor. Instead, it emerges from a combination of stressors, including urban poverty,

peer influence, and particularly family disruption. Adolescents from families characterized by absent parents, divorce, and ongoing conflict exhibited increased rates of drug use, theft, and school dropout. In contrast to Sharma (2024), who concentrated on structural elements of the family, Macharia et al. emphasized the significance of family behavior and parental involvement as mediating factors. The study's significant strength is its simultaneous incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data, though it is constrained by its geographical limitations. Nonetheless, it affirms that family dysfunction is not exclusive to Western societies; instead, it is a common element influencing youth delinquency in various socio-economic contexts.

In addition to these findings in the Kenyan context, Ndirangu (2005) explored the influence of family factors on the lives of street children in Limuru. The research utilized qualitative interviews with children residing in rehabilitation centers and discovered that challenging family dynamics, such as orphanhood, poverty, divorce, and inadequate parenting, were significant factors contributing to street migration and the ensuing criminal behavior. Ndirangu's ethnographic approach offers deep, personal perspectives on the experiences of young people, highlighting how feelings of emotional isolation and insufficient family support lead children to pursue alternative, frequently unlawful, means of social belonging. This research differs from the more structured methodology of Macharia et al. by prioritizing personal narratives rather than relying on statistical generalizations. Nonetheless, some critics might contend that the emphasis on street children neglects the wider group of troubled youth who, despite residing in homes, face comparable issues. Nevertheless, Ndirangu's research enhances our comprehension of the ways in which dysfunctional family structures contribute to patterns of youth deviance.

A comparable trend is observed in Ndungu's (2005) research, which investigated juvenile delinquents in rehabilitation centers located in Nakuru Municipality, Kenya. The research employed a descriptive survey approach, incorporating both structured questionnaires and interviews as data collection methods. Ndungu discovered that most juvenile offenders originated from single-parent families, large households with limited economic resources, and environments marked by domestic violence. The study notably emphasized that physical punishment was frequently used as a disciplinary approach, particularly with boys, and this was linked to subsequent aggressive behavior. This research offers a detailed understanding of the interplay between family size, disciplinary methods, and the impact of structural family breakdown on juvenile delinquency. Ndungu observed a notably weak correlation between

economic status and delinquency, indicating that the emotional and relational dynamics present within families might exert a more significant influence than mere material deprivation. This differs somewhat from the perspectives of Sharma (2024) and Macharia et al. (2020), who both highlighted the importance of socio-economic instability in conjunction with family dysfunction. Ndungu's contribution is crucial for separating the psychosocial dimensions of family life from mere economic factors.

2.3.1.5 Exposure to violence and crime

Research has thoroughly examined the connection between exposure to violence and juvenile delinquency, frequently placing it within the context of wider socio-economic disparities. In their 2019 study, Manzoni and Schwarzenegger explored the long-term effects of parental violence on adolescent deviance within a European context. They employed a quantitative approach, utilizing structured surveys to gather data from adolescents in Germany and Switzerland. Their research demonstrated a significant connection between early exposure to violence within the family and subsequent delinquent behavior, influenced by diminished social bonds, lower self-control, and relationships with deviant peers. The study highlighted that moral disengagement serves as a crucial mediating factor, indicating that children exposed to violence are more prone to normalize such behavior, which can result in criminal involvement. Nonetheless, McCarthy (2021) challenges the notion that these patterns are universal, suggesting in a comparative analysis of the UK and Scandinavia that the decrease in youth crime could also be attributed to enhanced social services and increased digital engagement, which help to minimize unsupervised time spent on the streets. This disagreement highlights a significant gap in our understanding of whether societal investment or personal exposure has a greater impact on youth criminality.

In the United States, there is substantial evidence that exposure to community violence serves as a significant precursor to juvenile delinquency. Research utilizing data from urban areas like Chicago and Los Angeles, carried out by the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), has consistently indicated that children residing in neighborhoods characterized by gang activity or drug issues are at an increased risk of becoming involved in delinquent groups. The findings from these studies, which frequently utilize longitudinal data and ethnographic interviews, indicate that the repeated exposure to shootings, domestic violence, and police brutality leads to a desensitization among youth regarding the repercussions of crime, consequently resulting in an increase in delinquent behaviors. Nonetheless, critics such as Finkelhor et al. (2015) contend that the methodology frequently

fails to adequately account for psychological resilience and community support systems, which may influence these outcomes. This highlights a scholarly difference between models of juvenile delinquency that are deterministic and those that emphasize resilience.

In the Global South, especially in areas affected by conflict, there is a strong connection between juvenile delinquency and ongoing exposure to violence within the system. Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) serve as intriguing examples for analysis. In Somalia, where the government structure has disintegrated, reports from UNICEF (2022) indicate that children are being forcibly recruited into militias, receiving training in armed combat, and facing violence from an early age. These children frequently grow to become individuals who commit acts of violence themselves. In a similar vein, Loyle and Balcells (2020) carried out a mixed-method study in South Sudan that included interviews with former child soldiers and surveys conducted in refugee camps. Their findings highlighted a cycle in which exposure to wartime violence contributed to the development of antisocial behavior and hindered the reintegration of these individuals into civil society. Critics contend that these studies fail to capture the intricate nature of post-war trauma and neglect community-based interventions that might alleviate deviant behaviors, indicating a necessity for more refined and context-aware strategies.

The Cabo Delgado region of Mozambique exemplifies a troubling situation in which terrorism contributes to the rise of youth criminality. A study conducted by Human Rights Watch (2023) reveals that militant Islamist groups attract young boys by offering them financial stability and the opportunity for revenge against what they see as state neglect. The impact of bombings, village raids, and executions has profoundly influenced the psychological development of children, leading many to adopt violence as a learned behavior and a means of survival. While many studies rely on qualitative interviews with victims and local authorities, there is a lack of longitudinal tracking regarding youth outcomes following exposure. Researchers such as José and Amado (2022) highlight this gap, contending that the absence of monitoring reintegration hampers the development of effective prevention strategies. The critiques emphasize the methodological shortcomings present in studies examining exposure to violence in unstable regions of Africa.

In examining Asia, the cases of Afghanistan and Iraq highlight the deep-rooted nature of juvenile delinquency within conflict-affected regions. Siddiqi (2020) examined the experiences of young individuals held for criminal offenses in Afghanistan, employing case file analysis

and structured interviews conducted in Kabul. The research revealed that a significant number of offenders had previously been child soldiers or were raised in regions dominated by the Taliban, where violence was both normalized and glorified. A comparable investigation conducted by Al-Mahmoud (2021) in Iraq examined juvenile centers in Baghdad, revealing that a majority of delinquents had been exposed to severe instances of violence, including bombings or executions, and lacked access to psychological rehabilitation services. Both studies emphasize the role of exposure to violence as a key factor in youth criminal behavior; however, they differ in their approaches to rehabilitation. Siddiqi advocates for therapy that is culturally contextualized, whereas Al-Mahmoud focuses on the need for punitive reforms. This divergence highlights wider disagreements in the literature regarding whether post-conflict societies ought to prioritize restorative justice or strict retribution.

Latin America presents an additional aspect, especially in Mexico, where the impact of drug cartels is prevalent. Research conducted by Arias and Goldstein (2020) in Sinaloa and Juárez employed ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with law enforcement to demonstrate that young individuals frequently find themselves in a dichotomy: they must either align with a cartel or risk becoming a target of one. The ongoing exposure to gun violence, disappearances, and torture has led to a desensitization among numerous children, with some as young as 12 becoming involved in drug trafficking, extortion, and murder. Hazra (2021), in his examination of youth crime in India, challenges the notion that “exposure equals delinquency.” He contends that socio-economic aspirations and peer networks frequently have a more significant influence than exposure by itself. This analysis is consistent with the findings of Atrey and Singh (2023) in Rajasthan, India, which indicated that although exposure to violence plays a role in delinquency, other factors like access to education, peer dynamics, and family conflicts are also crucial.

The relationship between violence and juvenile delinquency is significant, particularly in underserved rural areas. In their 2019 study, Josephine, Andrew, and Stephen investigated youth deviance in Madonsi Village, South Africa, utilizing interviews and structured questionnaires as their primary research methods. Their findings indicated that exposure to local criminal organizations, instances of domestic violence, and experiences of police brutality notably heightened the likelihood of youth engaging in theft, substance abuse, and violent behavior. A comparable trend is observed in Zimbabwe, where Pswarayi (2020) carried out qualitative research in densely populated urban areas like Mbare and Chitungwiza. The study employed thematic content analysis and found that young individuals who experienced

political violence, economic difficulties, and community conflicts tended to adopt fatalistic attitudes, which in turn contributed to criminal behavior. Pswarayi noted that in instances where robust community mentorship was present, exposure did not necessarily result in delinquency, indicating the existence of protective factors. This supports McCarthy's (2021) argument on resilience, adding complexity to linear models of crime resulting from violence.

In Zimbabwe, the exposure of youth to violence is frequently associated with underlying structural and political elements. For example, reports from the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2022) indicate that during election periods, young people are frequently enlisted for political intimidation, which subjects them to organized violence at a young age. According to Pswarayi (2020), in areas such as Epworth and Mbare, criminal behavior serves as both a coping strategy and a learned response, deeply embedded in the normalization of political violence and a culture of impunity. The research, which incorporated focus groups and interviews with individuals who had previously been juvenile offenders, revealed a strong link between early experiences of violence and subsequent participation in crimes including robbery, assault, and drug trafficking. Critics, however, point out that the absence of longitudinal data in studies conducted in Zimbabwe restricts the comprehension of long-term patterns resulting from exposure to adult criminality. These findings highlight that violence in Zimbabwe is not merely a coincidence but is instead sustained by institutional mechanisms. The integration of global, regional, and local viewpoints reveals that exposure to violence and crime serves as a significant socio-economic factor influencing juvenile delinquency. In various situations, such as the civil war in South Sudan, cartel violence in Mexico, and political unrest in Zimbabwe, children who are repeatedly exposed to violence often cultivate normalized perceptions of crime. Nonetheless, scholars hold differing views on the ways in which this exposure leads to delinquent behavior. Manzoni and Schwarzenegger (2019) highlight the importance of social bonds and internal control, whereas Hazra (2021) and Atrey and Singh (2023) focus on wider socio-economic and psychological influences. Additionally, critiques from resilience theorists emphasize the significance of mediating factors like education, family cohesion, and community programs.

2.3.2 Types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes

In Bangladesh, juvenile delinquency is associated with various offenses, such as burglary, loitering, fighting, sexual misconduct, and even homicide (Riaduzzaman, 2017). Youth crime has emerged as a significant issue in Bangladesh, stemming from various factors such as family problems, exposure to impacted communities, peer influence, poverty, media portrayals, and

societal reactions (Haque et al., 2020). In Bangladesh, 44% of child offenders are engaged in drug trafficking, while over one-third are involved in pickpocketing (35%). Additionally, 12% participate in mugging, around 11% are linked to prostitution or human trafficking rings, and various other criminal activities account for another 21% among street children. In Bangladesh, the issues surrounding juvenile delinquency, particularly among street children, are significant (Rekker et al., 2015). Children who frequently find themselves as runaways or abandoned by their families endure the harsh realities of poverty, exploitation, and violence while living on the streets. The following sub-sections explored the various categories of juvenile offenses:

2.3.2.1 Theft

The phenomenon of juvenile theft in developed nations is frequently examined through social-cognitive and psychological perspectives. This is illustrated by Shapiro (2021), who carried out research in the United States focusing on how gender-based stereotypes influence the perception of juvenile theft. Shapiro conducted an experimental study utilizing vignettes that depicted scenarios of bicycle theft to investigate how bystanders perceive the behaviors of juvenile males in comparison to females. The results showed that societal stereotypes have a considerable influence on how bystanders remember events, interpret criminal intent, and their readiness to engage law enforcement. Male juveniles were more frequently perceived as deliberate thieves, whereas female juveniles were more commonly excused or seen as borrowers. Shapiro's cognitive-psychological perspective offers valuable empirical insights into societal biases and their effects on juvenile justice procedures. Nevertheless, the research primarily emphasizes perception, potentially overlooking structural or environmental factors related to theft, which could lead to a neglect of wider socio-economic reasons that may account for juvenile criminal behavior. In contrast to criminological theories that investigate underlying causes, Shapiro highlights the impact of social interpretations on judicial outcomes. This suggests a focus on micro-level factors, which may restrict the relevance of her findings in non-Western contexts characterized by differing cultural norms.

Conversely, the research conducted by Lasnita and Utama (2020) in Indonesia employs a more expansive criminological framework to examine juvenile theft, with a specific focus on coercive theft (*begal*). Their study employs a legal-analytical approach rooted in criminological theory and jurisprudence, focusing on Indonesia's legal framework for juveniles between the ages of 12 and 18. The authors contend that juvenile theft is influenced by a combination of internal factors, such as psychological immaturity, and external influences, which encompass delinquent peer groups and environmental conditions like family instability and inadequate

educational settings. The study notably incorporates Sutherland's Differential Association Theory to suggest that young individuals acquire deviant behaviors through close interactions within their groups. In contrast to Shapiro (2021), who focuses on public perception, Lasnita and Utama explore the processes involved in criminal socialization. Their methodology is praiseworthy for integrating psychological and sociological theories; however, the research falls short in empirical robustness, as the authors depend on legal documents and theoretical discourse without providing primary data. As a result, although the study contributes to theoretical discussions, it falls short of providing evidence-based policy recommendations or substantiating its assertions through empirical research.

Daanov (2023) expands on the forensic aspects of juvenile theft through a methodologically sound study conducted in Eastern Europe, concentrating on the forensic examination of property theft committed by minors. The research aims to create a thorough methodology for examining juvenile theft cases through the use of logical, systematic, and inductive analysis. Daanov's research emphasizes the detrimental influence of adverse social environments on young individuals, arguing that exposure to criminal elements in educational or work contexts hinders their moral development. Additionally, he highlights that the forensic traits associated with theft can offer important understanding regarding the behavior of offenders as well as the approaches used in investigations. This forensic viewpoint is especially pertinent in legal systems that seek to prioritize reform over punishment. In contrast to the work of Lasnita and Utama (2020), which emphasizes sociological theory, Daanov's contribution is notable for its ability to translate theoretical constructs into practical forensic and procedural frameworks. Nevertheless, his dependence on forensic profiles might not sufficiently tackle the socio-economic underlying factors, potentially diminishing the effectiveness of this approach in areas with limited investigative resources, like certain regions of sub-Saharan Africa.

Akbar (2024) conducts a normative juridical study in Indonesia that examines the treatment of theft committed by children within the framework of positive law from the perspective of criminal justice policy. This study utilizes both legislative and conceptual legal frameworks to analyze the application of Law Number 11 of 2012, which focuses on resolving juvenile offenses outside of traditional court processes. Akbar examines the current obstacles to effective diversion, including legal uncertainties and procedural delays, that impede the equitable treatment of juvenile offenders. The focus on diversion is praiseworthy, as it aligns with modern discussions on child rights that support restorative justice approaches. Nevertheless, Akbar's analysis is more normative than empirical, as it evaluates legal texts

without corroborating the findings through interviews or field observations. This restricts the relevance of his findings, especially in regions that follow distinct legal traditions. In comparison to Daanov (2023), whose research is based on empirical forensic methods, Akbar's study provides a useful policy framework; however, it falls short in terms of the empirical data required for effective application, particularly in resource-limited environments.

In her 2021 study, Wa Teresia explores juvenile delinquency, focusing on theft within the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, as part of her research on the African continent. The study employs a descriptive survey method involving a sample of 200 participants aged 18 to 45, aiming to identify factors that predict youth criminal behavior, including poverty, peer pressure, and limited access to education. This study provides a detailed depiction of how social deprivation in urban slums drives juvenile theft. Wa Teresia critically examines Western-centric models of juvenile justice, which frequently neglect structural inequalities. She advocates for localized interventions such as community policing and vocational training. Although the descriptive nature of the study presents a limitation by not allowing for statistical inferences, it provides strong evidence that juvenile theft in slum areas is closely linked to socio-economic marginalization. Unlike Shapiro (2021), who emphasizes cognitive bias in the perception of crime, Wa Teresia offers a broader socio-economic analysis at the macro level, which enhances the relevance of her findings to other developing countries experiencing comparable urban poverty issues.

Mpofu and Machingauta (2023) offer a significant analysis of the factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in Gweru Urban, Zimbabwe. The mixed-methods approach, incorporating quantitative surveys from 209 students alongside qualitative interviews with parents and teachers, reveals that mental illness, neighborhood safety, family size, and school climate are important factors influencing delinquency, such as theft. The study highlights that after-school programs and school counseling may help reduce these risks. The strong methodology enables a detailed comprehension of complex risk factors, distinguishing this study from others that depend only on legal or theoretical frameworks. Nonetheless, although the research recognizes theft as a form of delinquency, it does not specifically focus on or thoroughly examine it, but rather incorporates it within a wider range of delinquent behaviors. Compared to the work of Lasnita and Utama (2020), Mpofu and Machingauta utilize empirical methods to support their assertions regarding environmental impact; however, their analysis could be improved by breaking down data specific to theft. Nonetheless, their findings, which

are grounded in context, carry considerable importance for policy-making in Zimbabwe and comparable socio-economic settings.

In addition to Zimbabwean literature, Iswantoro and Maryanto (2020) carry out a juridical-empirical investigation within the jurisdiction of the Pati District Court in Indonesia, concentrating on the criminal responsibility of children involved in theft. The authors illustrate how legal accountability is influenced by aggravating factors and the background of the child through an analysis of case number 5/Pid.Sus-Anak/2017/PN Pati. The researchers observe that insufficient parental oversight is a common precursor, and the resulting judicial decision—a seven-month term in a juvenile correctional facility—illustrates the conflict between punitive measures and rehabilitative approaches to justice. Their results align with the work of Mpofu and Machingauta (2023), who similarly identify family dysfunction as a contributing factor to juvenile crime. Nonetheless, the situation in Indonesia highlights an ongoing dependence on imprisonment, which stands in stark contrast to Akbar's (2024) support for alternative measures. This difference highlights a larger global conflict in juvenile justice systems, where custodial punishment often clashes with restorative alternatives. It underscores the difficulties of enacting child-centered legal reforms, even within a single country.

The analysis of the literature reveals a distinct progression: The issue of juvenile theft is complex, shaped by a variety of individual, family, social, and systemic factors. The scholarship presents a diverse array of contextual insights, ranging from stereotype-driven interpretations in the U.S. (Shapiro, 2021) to forensic innovations in Eastern Europe (Daanov, 2023), as well as policy-driven legal critiques in Indonesia (Akbar, 2024) and empirical analyses in Zimbabwe (Mpofu & Machingauta, 2023). Nonetheless, a significant debate exists among researchers regarding the suitable approach to addressing juvenile theft—some support the imposition of legal penalties (Iswantoro & Maryanto, 2020), whereas others advocate for diversion and rehabilitative measures (Akbar, 2024). Additionally, although there is a general consensus among scholars regarding the impact of environmental and familial factors, they differ in the emphasis they place on psychological, structural, or forensic elements. The variety of viewpoints highlights the necessity for approaches that are sensitive to context and multidisciplinary in nature, integrating legal reforms with social interventions. This is especially important in under-resourced environments like Zimbabwe, where structural conditions play a crucial role in influencing juvenile theft.

2.3.2.2 Robbery

Robbery, as a distinct form of juvenile delinquency, poses a significant issue in criminology, especially because of its violent characteristics and the dangers it poses to society. According to Connealy and Piza (2019), the spatial and contextual factors surrounding robbery are significant, as they point out that specific urban areas tend to experience higher rates of these crimes. The research carried out in Denver, Colorado, utilized geospatial analysis and logistic regression models to investigate how high-risk locations affect various robbery targets. Their research suggests that the design of the environment and the existence of specific establishments, like convenience stores or liquor outlets, significantly influence the occurrence of robbery incidents. This is consistent with routine activity theory, which suggests that when motivated offenders encounter suitable targets without capable guardians present, the chances for criminal activity increase. Nonetheless, their research does not directly involve juvenile offenders, which means that caution is required when attempting to apply the findings to youth populations. However, their focus on structural and environmental elements lays the groundwork for comprehending how young individuals might be attracted to robbery due to spatial weaknesses in urban settings.

In his 2020 study, Aliu examined robbery cases that were processed at the Basic Court in Gjilan-Branch in Vitia, Kosovo, from 2013 to 2017. He employed a phenomenological legal approach to analyze the lived experiences and systemic responses related to juvenile robbery. Aliu's qualitative approach focused on detailed descriptions from legal records and court cases, highlighting that economic disadvantage, peer pressure, and insufficient parental supervision are common factors among young offenders. The study is praiseworthy for anchoring its analysis in particular legal outcomes; however, it falls short in terms of empirical generalizability because of its reliance on case studies. Aliu offers a critique of the punitive nature of the Kosovan legal system, suggesting that diversionary measures and restorative justice mechanisms are not being utilized to their full potential. This stands in contrast to the findings of Gandelman and Munyo (2020), who investigated stricter juvenile incarceration policies in Uruguay and identified a slight deterrent effect in the short term. Their research implies that, in specific contexts, punitive measures may lead to a temporary decrease in recidivism rates. This difference highlights a persistent academic conflict regarding the approaches of rehabilitation compared to punishment in the context of juvenile robbery.

Bonilla Alguera and Gutiérrez Meave (2022) carried out a comprehensive empirical study in Mexico City, examining how effective zoning and urban planning policies are in decreasing

incidents of robbery, particularly those involving young individuals. Through the application of spatial econometric models, the researchers discovered a significant correlation between urban segregation, insufficient policing in marginalized areas, and increased rates of robbery. This research significantly broadens the scope of environmental criminology by incorporating housing policy into strategies for crime prevention. Nonetheless, the authors recognize a limitation in their dataset regarding the separation of juvenile and adult offenders, which hinders the clarity of age-specific policy implications. Nonetheless, the findings bolster the overarching claim that systemic socio-spatial inequalities foster an environment conducive to youth engagement in violent crime. This research is consistent with the findings of Connealy and Piza (2019), highlighting the significance of spatial analysis in crime prevention. However, it broadens the conversation to incorporate socio-political structures, which serve as both facilitators and obstacles to juvenile robbery.

Gerlinger and Hipp (2023) further emphasize the socio-educational aspects of youth robbery by investigating the impact of school dropouts and the quality of education on juvenile crime rates at the neighborhood level in the United States. Through the analysis of multilevel longitudinal data collected from various urban centers, the researchers illustrated that dropout rates serve as a significant predictor for the rise in robbery and other forms of violent crime among adolescents. On the other hand, the existence of high-performing schools was associated with reduced crime rates in the surrounding neighborhoods. Their research supports strain and social control theories, indicating that educational institutions function as both protective and risk factors. Nonetheless, it is important to critique their limited emphasis on formal educational metrics, as this may neglect the significance of informal educational support systems like mentorship or vocational training. Their findings align with the study conducted by Mpofu and Machingauta (2023) in Zimbabwe, which also emphasized the influence of school environments on youth behavior, albeit within a more localized African context.

Aizpurua et al. (2020) examined public views on parental responsibility regarding juvenile crime, such as robbery, through survey data collected throughout the United States during a sociocultural shift. Their research suggests that there is significant public support for the idea of holding parents partially responsible for the crimes their children commit. This normative perspective brings forth ethical and practical inquiries regarding collective responsibility and strategies for prevention. The study, although not solely focused on robbery, contributes significantly to our comprehension of how society reacts to juvenile crime by introducing a crucial cultural perspective. In contrast to the findings of Revital and Haviv (2023), who

examined the Israeli context, it was noted that during the COVID-19 lockdowns, there was a significant decline in juvenile crime rates, including robbery. This suggests that increased familial proximity and restricted mobility may have inadvertently served as deterrents to crime. This difference highlights a compelling topic for discussion: does heightened parental supervision naturally lead to a decrease in delinquent behavior, or is it the absence of external opportunities that prevents such actions? These discussions highlight the complex factors involved in juvenile robbery and underscore the significance of contextual variables.

Cooke and Zhang (2020) performed a multilevel analysis focused on business robbery clearance rates in Texas, examining the elements linked to successful case resolutions from a policing standpoint. Their study primarily concentrated on adult offenders, although it did encompass a few juvenile cases as well. Their findings, based on police records, suggested that clearance rates were elevated in areas where community policing efforts were active and where relations between the police and citizens were more favorable. This approach bolsters community-oriented policing as a method not only for addressing criminal activities but also for possibly discouraging young individuals from participating in violent acts. Nonetheless, they warn that clearance rates do not automatically translate to a decrease in crime. Simultaneously, Gandelman and Munyo (2020) discovered that while incarceration might decrease re-offending rates in the short term, it could lead to adverse long-term consequences as a result of prison socialization. Collectively, these findings highlight the intricate nature of the justice system's function in tackling juvenile robbery, as it seeks to balance deterrence, accountability, and rehabilitation.

Within the African context, while there are limited studies that specifically address robbery as a juvenile offense, examining delinquency more broadly uncovers various interconnected factors. In her 2021 study of the slums in Nairobi, Wa Teresia emphasized that theft and robbery are common offenses among young people, influenced by factors such as poverty, insufficient supervision, and the acceptance of violence as a norm. Through a descriptive survey approach involving 200 participants, she found that peer pressure and family disintegration are significant factors associated with violent behavior in youth. In contrast to certain Western research that focuses on institutional responses, Teresia advocates for grassroots initiatives such as community mentorship, urban renewal, and programs facilitating school re-entry. This practical approach highlights the constrained capabilities of the state in numerous African nations, as well as the culturally ingrained aspects of social reform. Her findings align with those of Mpofu and Machingauta (2023), who similarly noted an increase in juvenile robbery

in Gweru, Zimbabwe, attributed to environmental and socio-economic pressures. However, their suggestions focused more on institutional reforms, including school counseling and judicial diversion.

The importance of a comprehensive understanding of juvenile robbery becomes evident when synthesizing findings from different regions. Robbery is not just a criminal act; it reflects deeper societal issues such as spatial inequalities, lack of educational opportunities, family disintegration, and insufficient responses from the justice system. The existing literature highlights different focal points: Western research tends to emphasize structural and legal measures (Connealy & Piza, 2019; Cooke & Zhang, 2020), whereas studies from developing countries place greater importance on socio-economic and cultural factors (Aliu, 2020; Teresia, 2021). The differing focal points highlight an epistemological divide that needs to be addressed through increased comparative, cross-disciplinary, and context-aware research. There seems to be a growing agreement that relying solely on punitive measures is not enough; rather, a combination of prevention, rehabilitation, and social support systems is necessary. This developing comprehension requires more sophisticated policymaking that customizes responses to the socio-economic and cultural contexts of juvenile offenders in various global environments.

2.3.2.3 Murder

In their significant quantitative research conducted in the United States, Fox et al. (2021) focused on creating a typology for juvenile homicide offenders (JHOs). The research employs latent class analysis (LCA) on arrest data from more than 40,000 male juveniles arrested for murder between 1976 and 2016, providing a statistically strong alternative to conventional clinically based methods. The authors utilized this method to distinguish six unique subtypes of male juvenile homicide offenders, which encompass impulsive/reactive killers as well as those involved in gangs. The primary strength of the study is its extensive scale and the application of Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), which revealed underlying diversity among juvenile murderers—an aspect that smaller qualitative studies often find challenging to uncover. Fox and colleagues discovered that each subtype exhibited unique characteristics related to offenders, victims, and incidents, which could guide the development of customized intervention strategies. Nonetheless, some critics may contend that depending on arrest data fails to consider unreported or unresolved cases, and it might not sufficiently address the social context or psychological motivations involved. Nonetheless, this study makes a substantial

contribution to criminological theory by questioning the simplistic representation of JHOs and providing detailed insights into the profiles of offenders.

Heide (2021) provides an important longitudinal and qualitative viewpoint on juvenile homicide by conducting a 35-year follow-up of 59 male juveniles who were incarcerated for murder or attempted murder in a southeastern U.S. state. Through comprehensive interviews with 20 of the original participants, Heide examines the psychological and sociological factors that contributed to their engagement in lethal violence. The results of her research indicate a multifaceted relationship involving emotional instability, peer influence, socio-economic disadvantage, and experiences of violence. It is important to note that while motives did not show a statistical connection to outcomes after release, certain psychological traits, including impulsivity and unresolved anger, were often mentioned. The strength of this study is its unique access to longitudinal, first-person accounts, which provide a deep and contextual understanding that goes beyond what statistical typologies can offer. Nonetheless, certain researchers point out that the small sample size and focus on a specific region could limit the applicability of the findings. Heide's research indicates that it is crucial to tackle psychological trauma and socio-environmental stressors in any rehabilitation or prevention strategy. This aligns closely with the trauma-informed approaches promoted in modern juvenile justice literature.

Chopin and Beauregard (2020) offer a concentrated examination of the specific yet profoundly unsettling area concerning juvenile sexual homicide offenders (SHOs). The study, which was carried out throughout North America, analyzed data from 55 juvenile serious habitual offenders (SHOs) and 281 adult SHOs. It utilized sequential binomial regression and latent class analysis to identify variations in the processes of crime commission between juveniles and adults. The researchers discovered four unique behavioral patterns in juvenile SHOs: explosive opportunistic, sadistic, over-controlled anger, and predator types. The classifications highlight the intricate psychological foundations of juvenile sexual murder, which frequently differ from those observed in adults. The primary contribution of this study is its detailed categorization of behaviors, which may aid law enforcement and forensic psychologists in the processes of criminal profiling and treatment planning. Nonetheless, the authors acknowledge certain limitations concerning the representativeness of the sample and the accuracy of the retrospective data. Some researchers contend that a group this small and specialized may not justify typological generalization. Chopin and Beauregard support their conclusions by

emphasizing the importance of comprehending uncommon yet significantly influential types of juvenile crime.

In a subsequent longitudinal study, Heide (2020) revisited her previous research involving 20 former juvenile murderers to delve deeper into their insights regarding the reasons behind their criminal behavior and the relationship of these factors with recidivism after their release. Her analysis employed qualitative interviews to identify prevailing themes, such as neighborhood crime, absence of positive role models, and opportunistic behavior. Notably, her discovery revealed that young offenders who engaged in criminal behavior due to available opportunities or who were raised in environments where crime was commonplace were more than 20 times more likely to commit further offenses. Although this aligns with environmental criminology and strain theory, Heide's findings also bring forth ethical concerns regarding post-release surveillance and the underlying assumptions present in recidivism risk assessments. Some critics might contend that an intense emphasis on environmental factors could diminish the importance of individual agency, a concern that Heide herself recognizes when addressing the implications for policy. Nevertheless, the research underscores the importance of ecological and systemic approaches in the rehabilitation process following release, particularly for individuals transitioning from criminogenic environments.

Shifting focus to Turkey, Erbay and Buker (2021) carried out a study based on court records involving 546 adjudicated juvenile offenders. Their research aimed to compare those convicted of homicide with other violent and nonviolent juveniles. Their research contests prevailing Western narratives by showing that the majority of juvenile homicides in Turkey are impulsive, frequently stemming from intensifying personal disputes rather than being premeditated criminal activities. The authors utilized archival data to identify notable distinctions in family communication, school attendance, and peer influence among JHOs compared to other juvenile offenders. Notably, the researchers discovered that JHOs exhibited the lowest likelihood of associating with risky peers, which stands in contrast to a significant body of Western literature that emphasizes peer influence as a major risk factor. Some critics might contend that the variations in cultural norms and family structures in Turkey make direct comparisons challenging; however, the study offers a significant counterpoint to overly simplistic models of juvenile homicide. This indicates that not all homicides committed by young individuals stem from antisocial behavior or psychological issues; rather, many are influenced by situational factors and wider socio-cultural contexts.

Deegan (2021) adopts a distinctive socio-legal perspective by exploring the frequently overlooked effects of juvenile homicide on the families of offenders. This study, carried out in the UK using qualitative interviews with family members, uncovers the ways in which stigma, shame, and guilt linked to juvenile murder infiltrate family identities, thereby imposing a form of punishment on relatives in addition to the offenders themselves. According to Deegan, family members find themselves in defensive positions, dealing with external accusations while also contending with internal conflicts. This research is strong in its methodology, employing grounded theory to identify themes related to family stress, feelings of disconnection from institutions, and the suppression of emotions. Some critics might contend that the study overlooks outcomes related to offenders or potential policy solutions; however, Deegan purposefully shifts the conversation to highlight the collateral effects of juvenile homicide. The consequences are significant: rehabilitation should focus not only on the juvenile offender but also include support systems centered around the family to tackle wider social repercussions and facilitate reintegration.

The research conducted by Kokkalera et al. (2021) provides an important legal analysis, examining felony murder laws in all 50 U.S. states. Their findings highlight the disproportionate impact these statutes have on juveniles, particularly in cases where they did not directly commit a murder or possess the intent to kill, yet still face life sentences. The authors utilize doctrinal legal analysis to reveal constitutional tensions, especially in relation to the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. Their review supports Caldwell (2020), who contends that juveniles participating as accomplices in felony murder exhibit "twice diminished culpability" because of their age and indirect role. Collectively, these studies shed light on the systemic inequalities present in the American legal system regarding juvenile offenders, especially in areas that do not take into account developmental science and the potential for rehabilitation. Although certain legal scholars advocate for the deterrent purpose of felony murder laws, Kokkalera et al. present a strong case for reform based on principles of constitutional and developmental justice. The legal analyses highlight that, in numerous instances, punitive measures for juvenile murder raise significant ethical concerns and present legal uncertainties.

Hernandez, Ferguson, and Kennedy (2020) compile extensive research on juvenile homicide, providing a comprehensive examination that includes legal, psychological, and social aspects. Utilizing case studies and secondary literature, they analyze the systemic shortcomings of the juvenile justice system, especially in the U.S., where punitive measures have frequently

worsened recidivism and overlooked the need for therapeutic intervention. The authors highlight a range of risk factors, including early exposure to violence, family dysfunction, and community disorganization, which together elevate the risk of homicide among young individuals. Their research aligns with the findings of Heide and Fox, yet it extends beyond this by promoting systemic reform that encompasses early prevention, diversion programs, and rehabilitative sentencing. Nonetheless, one drawback is its extensive range, which can occasionally compromise depth in favor of coverage. Some critics may contend that additional empirical rigor is required to substantiate certain claims made in the book. Nonetheless, the synthesis presented in the book is essential for both scholars and practitioners who seek to comprehend juvenile homicide as a complex and preventable issue influenced by interconnected systems of failure.

2.3.2.4 Malicious Damage to Property

The occurrence of malicious damage to property (MDP) by juveniles has become a frequent yet underexplored aspect of youth crime in criminological research, particularly in developed societies. Fagan and Piquero (2017) conducted a longitudinal study in New York, utilizing mixed methods to explore trends in juvenile delinquency, including MDP. Through the use of survey questionnaires administered to more than 1,000 youth offenders, along with comprehensive interviews with justice officials, the study revealed that MDP frequently acted as a gateway offense, especially within socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. They observed that broken windows, such as vandalized buildings, destroyed cars, and defaced public property, served as symbolic representations of alienation. Their argument centered on the importance of contextual sentencing that emphasizes restorative justice over punitive approaches. Nonetheless, critics like Feld (2018) contended that the research minimized the significance of peer dynamics while placing excessive emphasis on socioeconomic determinism. Feld's research conducted in Minnesota revealed that peer provocation and the desire for excitement are significant motivations behind juvenile vandalism, indicating a deeper psychological basis for this behavior. The ongoing conflict between structuralist and behaviorist interpretations remains a driving force in discussions surrounding juvenile justice policies in the United States.

In Europe, especially in the United Kingdom, the act of causing malicious damage to property frequently intersects with youth subcultures and the expression of identity. In their 2017 study, McAra and McVie utilized longitudinal quantitative data from the Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime (ESYTC), which involved tracking more than 4,000 adolescents over a

period of ten years. Their research indicated that behaviors like graffiti, damage to public property, and vandalism in schools were seldom spontaneous; instead, they represented a form of resistance to institutional authority, frequently observed among children from single-parent or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Although they advocate for early intervention, they expressed concerns regarding law enforcement's tendency to escalate minor infractions into complete criminal records. On the other hand, Bottoms (2018) expressed a differing viewpoint, emphasizing the importance of assertive discipline to prevent the escalation into more serious criminal activities. He carried out comparative fieldwork in Manchester and London, asserting that permissive interventions frequently encouraged repeat MDP offenders. This difference highlights the challenge of balancing child rights advocacy with the need to uphold social order in developed countries.

The relationship between the marginalization of indigenous youth and property crime in Australia has been extensively examined. Cunneen and White (2019) conducted a study in New South Wales that involved qualitative interviews with detained Indigenous juveniles and probation officers. The authors connected MDP to issues of systemic neglect, excessive policing, and cultural dislocation. Juvenile offenders frequently directed their actions towards state institutions such as schools, police stations, and government buildings, viewing these acts as a form of protest against exclusionary practices. Their appeal for restorative justice driven by the community resonated with the perspectives of Fagan and Piquero. Critics like Wundersitz (2020) have contested the idealized view of all indigenous MDP as forms of resistance, highlighting through statistical analyses that numerous cases were driven by opportunism, alcohol, and peer pressure. This academic disagreement highlights wider conflicts concerning cultural relativism and uniform justice standards.

In the context of developing countries, South Africa illustrates a complicated interplay between juvenile MDP and the inequalities that persist after apartheid. In their 2016 study, Leoschut and Burton conducted a nationally representative survey involving more than 5,000 young individuals, revealing significant levels of property destruction associated with frustrations stemming from poverty, educational conditions, and tense relationships with law enforcement. Their mixed-methods approach revealed that schools are often locations where juvenile vandalism occurs, indicating a pattern of systemic alienation. However, Pinnock (2017), in her ethnographic research conducted in Cape Flats, Cape Town, offered a critique of the survey for its oversimplified portrayal of youth motivations. He discovered that MDP was occasionally crucial—employed by youth associated with gangs to claim territory or seek revenge against

competing groups. These subtle interpretations contest the simplistic view of MDP as solely expressive or reactive, calling for responses that are tailored to specific contexts and variations.

In Kenya, there has been a growing documentation of juvenile participation in MDP, particularly within urban informal settlements. Njoroge and Mugambi (2017) conducted a study on juvenile crime in the Mathare and Kibera slums of Nairobi, utilizing interviews with young offenders and court officials. Their research indicated that numerous instances of MDP, such as school arson and the vandalism of bus windows, originated from systemic deprivation and acts of protest against exploitative educational systems. Nonetheless, the authors expressed concerns regarding Kenyan juvenile courts, highlighting their reliance on custodial and corporal punishment, even in the presence of established child-friendly legal frameworks. Omondi (2020), drawing on data from the Kenya Probation Department, contested their broad conclusions and highlighted that community courts in Kisumu and Eldoret have effectively utilized diversion strategies like community service and family conferencing to address MDP. This inconsistency highlights the disparate application of progressive juvenile justice initiatives within the same legal framework.

In Zimbabwe, the act of malicious damage to property is a common yet often misunderstood offense among juveniles. The High Court case *The State v. Ubert Bare* (HH 475-14 CRB M157-14) highlights a concerning pattern of harsh sentencing for relatively minor offenses committed by juveniles. A 15-year-old boy from Mwenezi, found guilty of damaging a windscreen worth USD 150, received a sentence of corporal punishment, which was imposed without a sufficient pre-sentencing inquiry or the involvement of a probation officer. Justice Mawadze expressed strong disapproval of the trial magistrate's focus on retribution, advocating for rehabilitative methods that align with the Children's Act [Cap 5:06] and relevant international conventions. This situation highlights a significant disparity between the legal framework and the actual practices observed in Zimbabwe's courtrooms. Some scholars, including Chikowero (2022), support the idea of incorporating social welfare perspectives into sentencing. In contrast, others, like Nyamukapa (2021), contend that the lack of institutional capacity and insufficient staffing in probation services obstruct the effective implementation of non-custodial sentences. The *Ubert Bare* case serves as a significant representation of the systemic dissonance present in Zimbabwe's juvenile justice system.

Additionally, research conducted in Zimbabwe indicates an increasing connection between boredom stemming from poverty and acts of vandalism among youth. In 2019, Chibanda and

Mawere conducted a study in Bindura and Mbare that utilized an analysis of school records, police reports, and interviews with both teachers and young individuals. Research revealed that numerous young individuals who participated in acts of vandalism, such as damaging school furniture, breaking window panes, or tampering with electrical fittings, often did so as a manifestation of their frustration with uninspiring curricula, strict disciplinary measures in schools, or neglect from their families. The results align with the concept of institutional defiance as proposed by McAra and McVie (2010). In contrast to the UK, Zimbabwe does not have the necessary policy framework to implement diversionary programs based on such findings. According to critics like Mapuranga (2020), although researchers are able to pinpoint causes, policymakers often fail to take action based on empirical evidence. This gap hinders the implementation of evidence-based reforms aimed at addressing juvenile MDP.

Upon examining global, regional, and local literature, a distinct pattern becomes evident: acts of malicious damage to property by juveniles are seldom random occurrences. It is influenced by fundamental social, psychological, and systemic factors, whether it be racial marginalization in Australia, post-colonial alienation in South Africa, or institutional inertia in Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, academics continue to disagree on the most effective responses. Although numerous individuals promote rehabilitative and restorative justice, a considerable group continues to endorse moderate punitive measures as a means of deterrence. It is clear that there is a necessity for interventions that are nuanced and tailored to specific contexts, striking a balance between protecting children and ensuring accountability. In the context of Zimbabwe, ensuring that practice is in accordance with legislative frameworks, particularly by referencing the Children's Act and involving probation officers, would signify a significant advancement. The Ubert Bare case acts as a warning, encouraging policymakers and judicial officials to move away from old retributive models and adopt reforms focused on the needs of children in the justice system.

2.3.2.5 Rape

The subject of rape committed by juveniles has attracted a growing amount of interest from academics and policymakers in industrialized nations. This focus is garnered as research endeavors to unravel the causes, trajectories, and preventative techniques associated with this phenomena. A multidisciplinary strategy that combines criminological theory and psychological profiling is utilized by Larkin (2025) in his complete study of the sexual offenses committed by juveniles, which is based on cases from the United States. This technique is utilized to evaluate the reasons behind the sexual offenses committed by juveniles. Larkin

reveals, through the use of qualitative data from law enforcement case files and interviews with juvenile offenders and their caretakers, that juvenile criminals, in contrast to adult rapists, frequently demonstrate impulsivity, a lack of emotional development, and environmental maltreatment. His findings are extremely important because they bring to light the fact that a significant number of juvenile sexual offenders are themselves victims of abuse in the past. This assertion is supported by earlier research, but it is contested by conservative scholars such as Meisel and Levine (2018), who argue that attributing juvenile sexual offenses to victimization runs the risk of watering down accountability. Larkin is critical of retributive justice systems that fail to acknowledge developmental immaturity and places an emphasis on trauma-informed rehabilitation programs. The research, on the other hand, does not devote enough attention to the ways in which socio-economic issues, such as poverty or systematic racism, influence the occurrence of such crimes, and as a result, it only offers a limited structural criticism.

In Canada, Chopin and Beauregard (2020) investigate the unique subgroup of juvenile sexual homicide offenders by providing a comparison empirical research between 55 juveniles and 281 adult sexual homicide offenders. This study was conducted in Canada. The researchers used a sequential binomial regression and latent class analysis to classify juvenile sexual murders into four unique typologies: explosive opportunistic, sadistic, overcontrolled fury, and predator. Each of these typologies is characterized by a specific set of characteristics. Within the realm of understanding the behavioral antecedents to serious sexual violence among adolescents, this typology represents a significant step forward. The findings of their study, which were derived from national penal facilities and forensic psychology examinations, highlight the fact that juveniles and adults are fundamentally different in the process of committing crimes. Juveniles frequently behave in a manner that is unplanned and emotionally dysregulated. Despite the fact that their technique is statistically sound, the generalizability of the study is restricted since it only analyses instances that have been formally documented. It does not take into account offenses that have not been reported or prosecuted. It has been suggested by critics like McCarter and Jensen (2019) that this strategy runs the danger of pathologizing adolescent offenders without taking into account community-based preventative methods. In spite of this, the work continues to be essential in the process of formulating intervention-specific policies that are suited to the various profiles of offenders.

In the process of transitioning to developing nations, Hazra (2021) investigates the patterns of adolescent crime in India, with a specific emphasis on the factors that determine violent

offenses, such as rape. The association between macroeconomic factors and juvenile delinquency is investigated by Hazra through the utilization of a panel corrected standard error model using a two-step Generalized Method of Moments (GMM) technique. The data for this investigation comes from 31 Indian states and spans the years 2009 to 2016. The research indicates that regions with large slum populations, poverty, and domestic violence display a statistically significant link with increased adolescent criminality, including sexual assault. This is despite the fact that the study did not just concentrate on rape. The integration of economic and criminological lenses is Hazra's methodological strength; nevertheless, some academics, such as Narayan and Ghosh (2022), criticize the study for not discriminating between different forms of sexual assault or taking into consideration caste-based oppression in the context of India. Furthermore, Hazra discovers that an increased police presence paradoxically correlates with higher juvenile crime rates. This suggests that there may be a backlash effect or underreporting due to police mistrust. This is an insight that echoes Larkin's earlier arguments regarding systemic failures in the response of the criminal justice system to juveniles.

The research conducted by Breetzke et al. (2021) in South Africa offers a geographical study of sexual assault that occurs in the vicinity of schools in Khayelitsha, a slum that is characterized by high rates of both poverty and criminal activity. Using point process modeling on a dataset consisting of 1,518 sexual offenses that occurred between the years 2006 and 2015, the research reveals that there is a considerable clustering of sexual violence near both primary and secondary schools. This clustering implicates adolescents as both offenders and victims of sexual violence. As a result of inadequate infrastructure, the absence of adult supervision, and the normalization of sexual violence in some peer cultures, the authors argue that these situations are ideal for victimization. It has been argued by critics such as Mbatha (2022) that the research does not adequately reflect the lived experiences of victims since it relies excessively on geographical data rather than anthropological methodologies. In spite of this, the findings of Breetzke and colleagues are extremely helpful in understanding place-based preventive initiatives and provide convincing evidence for expanded monitoring and community interventions in school zones. It raises crucial considerations concerning the role that environmental design plays in either reducing the opportunity for sexual offenses committed by juveniles or increasing the likelihood of such offenses occurring.

More so, through their cross-sectional study of sexual violence among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) at a South African university, Ajayi, Mudafi, and Owolabi (2021)

make a significant addition to the field of research. In spite of the fact that their major interest is victimization, their findings provide light on rapes committed by juveniles, particularly in situations where the perpetrators are of the same age. An adjusted logistic regression analysis was performed on the data collected from 451 respondents, and the researchers discovered that extensive alcohol use, inadequate financial assistance, and a lack of participation in religious activities greatly increased the risk of experiencing sexual assault. Their emphasis on the socio-economic background is in line with the prior study that Hazra conducted in India, and it lends weight to the emerging view that rape of juveniles cannot be separated from larger structural vulnerabilities. On the other hand, researchers such as Banda and Mahondo (2023) argue that Ajayi et al. have failed to adequately emphasize the significance of peer influence and initiation rites associated with gangs in the development of sexual crimes among adolescents. Despite this, their findings provide support to the argument that integrated preventative initiatives should be implemented in order to concurrently combat poverty, drug misuse, and social marginalization.

Gumbo (2020) offers a complex ethnographic account of gendered sexual assault in rural parts of Mberengwa District, which is situated within the framework of Zimbabwe. The research that was conducted for the PhD degree sheds insight on the normalization of gender-based violence and early sexual initiation between teenagers. Through the use of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, Gumbo reveals the ways in which cultural taboos and a lack of sexuality education contribute to the perpetration of sexual assault incidents by juveniles. One of the most surprising findings is that older classmates and relatives of certain teenage males who were involved in rape either encouraged them to commit the crime or did not correct them. This finding suggests that detrimental sexual standards are passed down from generation to generation. The research conducted by Gumbo is extremely useful in terms of contextual specificity; nonetheless, the study's methodological limitations include a limited sample size and the absence of comparison analysis between districts. In spite of this, it is a useful supplement to more quantitative studies and makes a significant contribution to the need for solutions that are culturally informed. The claim that Breetzke et al. made about the environment is further supported by this evidence, which identifies schools and communal meeting places as high-risk areas that require specific interventions.

Last but not least, Shambare and Mapolisa (no date) investigate the psychological and cultural factors that contribute to child sexual abuse, with a particular focus on the neglect of both families and society. According to the findings of their qualitative research, which included

interviews with social workers and legal experts, juvenile offenders are frequently formed by a complex matrix consisting of factors such as poverty, broken homes, early exposure to pornography, and the presence of silence among the community regarding sexual topics. This is consistent with the conclusions that Ajayi and colleagues came to about the connection between financial help and a reduction in sexual assault. On the other hand, Shambare and Mapolisa call for the incorporation of spiritual and traditional leadership into preventative initiatives, which is a concept that is disputed by secular scholars who caution against reinforcing patriarchal norms. Despite this tension, the study offers a model that is grounded and relevant to the situation, which has the potential to inspire national policy improvements, particularly in regards to sexual offenses committed by juveniles. When considered as a whole, these pieces of scholarship indicate that rape as a youth crime is not only an issue of individual deviance but rather is enmeshed in broader social, economic, and cultural systems that require holistic remedies.

2.3.2.6 Drug trafficking

The problem known as "County Lines" in the United Kingdom has become a classic illustration of how the trafficking of drugs by juveniles has progressed in industrialized countries. Robinson, McLean, and Densley (2019) conducted research in Glasgow and Merseyside, and they employed qualitative interviews with law enforcement officials, social workers, and teenage gang associates to explore child criminal exploitation in drug delivery. This study is considered to be a key study. For the purpose of transporting narcotics from urban centers to rural regions, their results provide light on the ways in which organized drug networks exploit adolescents, either through the use of force or through the practice of "debt bondage." Despite the fact that some young people were forced to take part, others freely did so because they were desperate for money and couldn't resist the attraction of wealth and prestige. In spite of the fact that the study's strength resides in its ethnographic richness, it has been criticized by Windle et al. (2020) for failing to place sufficient emphasis on the hazy boundaries that exist between victimization and agency. The existence of this paradox draws attention to a discussion that is still going on in the academic world: whether or not young people who deliver drugs should be primarily seen as victims of exploitation or as rational agents. When it comes to protecting young people from drug-related criminal networks, the situation of the United Kingdom is instructive because it demonstrates how even developed economies with robust law enforcement agencies may nevertheless confront institutional obstacles.

Windle, Moyle, and Coomber (2020) extended upon the County Lines discourse by adopting a multidisciplinary perspective that included frameworks from the fields of human trafficking, criminology, and adolescent justice. Their investigation, which included of interviews, case studies, and document analysis, looked on the ways in which children who are involved in drug trafficking are frequently regarded in a conflicted manner, often being treated as both criminals and victims. Their research critiqued the present safeguarding practices in the United Kingdom as being insufficient, particularly in situations when juvenile offenders appear to be more resolute or "tough," which causes frontline practitioners to overlook underlying vulnerabilities. The sophisticated approach used in this research adds depth to the discussion that was started by Robinson et al. (2019), which includes identifying structural concerns such as poverty, a lack of social services, and racism that is embedded in the system. On the other hand, the study has been criticized by a number of policymakers for the possibility that it exonerates agency and fails to adequately emphasize accountability. Nevertheless, the empirical richness and intersectional analysis that Windle et al. gave highlight the complexity of the issue of adolescent drug trafficking, which calls for a solution that is more trauma-informed and involves several agencies' participation. These studies collectively demonstrate that even in industrialized nations with sophisticated legal frameworks, adolescent drug trafficking illustrates gaping gaps in social safety nets and rehabilitative remedies. This is the case even in countries where the legal frameworks are advanced.

An in-depth analysis of the investigation of adolescent drug trafficking in Ukraine was carried out by Svoboda et al. (2022) in Eastern Europe. The inquiry focused on the psychological and procedural aspects of law enforcement investigations. For the purpose of determining the particular procedures that are necessary for investigating adolescents who are involved in drug trafficking, the study utilized a pragmatic and descriptive approach, as well as systemic analysis and interviews with qualified professionals. Interrogations should be conducted with the presence of forensic psychologists, child protection officials, and parents whenever possible, according to the researchers' recommendation. Through its emphasis on a child-sensitive investigative strategy, this research makes a substantial contribution to the body of literature on comparative juvenile justice literature. The authors, on the other hand, make the assumption that procedural protections inevitably translate into humane treatment. This is a stance that is opposed by human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which say that these procedures are frequently applied in an inconsistent manner, particularly in settings that are low-resource or rural. In addition to highlighting the necessity of consistent practice that goes

beyond statutory prescriptions, the study conducted by Svoboda and colleagues is in line with larger mandates for juvenile justice reform that have been issued by the European Union. Particularly in democracies that are in the process of transitioning, the work provides a compromise between the two concepts of criminal responsibility and rehabilitative justice.

Moving on to Latin America, the involvement of young people in drug trafficking is frequently presented within the framework of systemic violence, narco-economics, and the instability of the state. In Brazil, for instance, research conducted by Cerqueira and Mello (2016) utilized a combination of methods, including qualitative interviews with incarcerated youth and quantitative data from police records, to demonstrate how adolescents living in favelas are routinely recruited into drug gangs as a result of poverty, unemployment, and the lack of strong social institutions. According to the findings of the survey, a significant number of young people viewed drug trafficking not only as a means of economic survival but also as a means of social mobility. The tales in question, according to critics like Zaluvar (2018), run the risk of romanticizing the engagement of young people and underestimating the coercion, pain, and psychological manipulation that are engaged in. Nevertheless, the situation in Brazil indicates that in the Global South, the issue of drug trafficking among young people cannot be divorced from bigger concerns regarding inequality and the ability of the state. In contrast to the United Kingdom and Ukraine, which have relatively robust law enforcement structures, nations such as Brazil are confronted with the combined issues of pervasive violence and institutional corruption, both of which further institutionalize the vulnerability of young people.

When viewed in the context of Africa, the body of literature on the subject of drug trafficking among adolescents is especially limited and undeveloped. A significant portion of the attention in the field of African criminology is directed on adult criminals or generic adolescent delinquency. There are just a few empirical studies that isolate drug trafficking as a distinct juvenile crime occurrence. Oloyede and Adesina (2019) conducted a study in Nigeria that investigated the paths that lead to drug criminality. The study included questionnaires and focus groups to gather information from urban adolescents in Lagos. As a result of their research, they discovered that the key factors were peer pressure, poverty, and a lack of access to educational opportunities. Critics, on the other hand, contend that the study did not have a longitudinal component and did not investigate how engagement in peddling small amounts of drugs may eventually lead to membership in global organized crime networks. Makinde (2020) made a similar criticism of the Nigerian judicial system, stating that it does not have any specialist youth courts or diversion programs that are specifically designed for drug offenders.

The African environment continues to be excessively punitive and frequently fails to address the underlying causes, in contrast to the procedural protections that are seen in Ukraine or the nuanced victim-offender continuum that is articulated in the literature of the United Kingdom. Because of this gap, there is an immediate need for empirical research and policy innovation.

Through an examination of the Pretrial Diversion Programme (PDP), which was first implemented in 2013, Chikanya (2020) offers one of the most exhaustive studies on juvenile delinquency and the administration of justice in Zimbabwe. However, despite the fact that the study did not concentrate just on drug trafficking, it is extremely pertinent due to the fact that drug-related offenses constitute a large fraction of the cases that include juveniles in metropolitan areas. Chikanya conducted interviews with fifteen stakeholders in the Harare Province jail system, as well as representatives from the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Due to the fact that the PDP has been successful in averting jail and criminal records for juveniles, the data indicate that it has also been beneficial in lowering recidivism and stigma. This study makes use of the utility model and labeling theory, both of which place an emphasis on the rehabilitative approach rather than the punishing one.

Chikanya, on the other hand, criticizes the limited execution of the program, which she attributes to insufficient financing and poor coordination between the many agencies. As a result of these institutional restrictions, adolescents who are caught for drug offenses outside of Harare frequently wind up in adult jails. However, Chikanya's research not only illustrates the persisting resource restrictions that limit the extent and efficacy of such programs in Zimbabwe, but it also corresponds with international trends that favor diversion. Using Chikanya's study as a foundation, recent anecdotal accounts from civil society groups and local police in Bulawayo and Mutare imply that there has been an increase in the participation of juveniles in the trafficking of small-scale drugs, particularly substances like as cannabis, crystal meth, and cough syrups. Pilot data from Youth Dialogue Zimbabwe (2021) indicated that economic deprivation, fractured families, and school dropout rates are key risk factors. This is despite the fact that extensive academic studies have not yet been conducted. The findings of the study also revealed that some young people act as middlemen for more experienced drug traffickers, which is similar to the coercion that is observed in the activities of County Lines in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, in contrast to the United Kingdom, the criminal justice system in Zimbabwe is unable to discern between victims of crime and those who commit crimes intentionally. The argument put up by legal scholars such as Moyo (2022) is that Zimbabwe's drug laws continue to be excessively punishing and have not been

harmonised with the child justice reforms that were implemented by the PDP. Consequently, there is a glaring disparity between the statutory goal of rehabilitating juvenile offenders and the actual circumstances that law enforcement and judicial authorities are confronted with in the field.

2.3.3 Challenges faced by communal areas in addressing juvenile delinquency

In third world countries, tackling juvenile delinquency has consistently been a significant focus for policymakers, criminologists, and social workers. A key study conducted by Thorpe, Smith, Green, and Paley (2024) in the United Kingdom explored community-oriented methods for rehabilitating juveniles. The qualitative and longitudinal research they conducted, which involved interviews and participant observations in care-leaving facilities, highlighted that although there are institutional frameworks intended to assist at-risk youth, the shift from custody to community exposes significant deficiencies, especially in areas such as housing, education, and psychological support services. The authors contended that the mechanisms of "aftercare" are frequently disjointed, which contributes to the recurrence of criminal behavior in juveniles. Singh and Azman (2020) reflect this viewpoint in their case study from Malaysia, highlighting the significance of integrated social work in managing delinquency. Nonetheless, while Thorpe et al. support decentralized, community-focused interventions, Singh and Azman emphasize a centralized approach that incorporates state institutions, underscoring a scholarly disagreement regarding the most effective intervention strategies. The discussions highlight that, even in affluent societies, community frameworks face challenges related to coordination, sustainability, and inclusivity when addressing juvenile crime.

Even with their developed economies, rural and community regions in advanced nations encounter distinct challenges when it comes to tackling juvenile delinquency. In their 2019 comparative study, Zhadan et al., (n.d) examined rural communities in Eastern Europe by reviewing policies and analyzing regional crime statistics to assess the effectiveness of local interventions. The research identified geographic isolation, a shortage of specialized juvenile staff, and restricted access to mental health services as significant barriers. This is consistent with the findings of Yadav (2023), who pointed out that insufficient funding and a shortage of trained personnel serve as structural obstacles in both developed and developing settings. Although both studies agree on the significance of resources, they differ in their perspectives regarding the influence of cultural norms. Zhadan and colleagues highlight the significant role of post-Soviet legacies and authoritarian policing frameworks as obstacles to progressive reform. In contrast, Yadav points to cultural elements, particularly the normalization of

aggression, as complicating factors in intervention efforts. This indicates that living in rural areas leads to a complex form of marginalization, where a lack of resources combines with social stagnation, hindering a comprehensive approach to juvenile justice.

Transitional states, particularly in post-colonial or politically unstable areas, frequently carry over fragile juvenile justice systems. Zai and Wani (2020), in their comprehensive examination of juvenile delinquency in South Asia and the Middle East, observed that communities characterized by tribal governance or semi-autonomous rule face challenges in implementing consistent child protection laws. Their study, employing a meta-synthesis approach, found that communal justice mechanisms tend to be either informal or patriarchal, frequently placing greater emphasis on social control than on the rights of children. In areas like Afghanistan and certain regions of Pakistan, community leaders hold judicial power, which frequently results in punitive outcomes for juveniles instead of focusing on rehabilitation. Their criticism of these systems stands in contrast to the views of Singh and Azman (2020), who support the implementation of culturally sensitive social work approaches to bridge the divide between formal and informal justice systems. The conflict between cultural independence and universal legal principles presents a significant theoretical challenge in juvenile justice: should community standards be altered or upheld? The difficulty of reconciling traditional authority with child-focused methods remains a divisive issue among scholars and practitioners alike. The rehabilitation models prevalent in Western contexts, often marked by punitive measures like incarceration, tend to overlook the underlying factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in African societies. These models frequently neglect cultural values and community-based support systems, which diminishes their effectiveness in promoting sustainable behavioral change (Zinyemba et al., 2020). Conversely, practices that are deeply rooted in culture, like family mediation and community accountability, have proven to be effective in lowering rates of reoffending (Mambende et al., 2016).

In numerous African communal areas, the difficulties in addressing juvenile delinquency are intricately linked to systemic poverty, historical disparities, and a lack of institutional responsiveness. Adeleke (2019) explored areas of communal conflict in southwestern Nigeria by employing qualitative research methods, which included conducting community interviews and analyzing juvenile case files. He discovered that children who experienced communal violence frequently became involved with local militias or engaged in minor criminal activities, including theft, drug trafficking, and vandalism. Adeleke described the interrelated cycles of poverty, conflict, and family breakdown as a “delinquency trap.” In a similar vein, Judd et al.

(2023) highlighted that in numerous contexts, tackling the underlying issues of unemployment, family dysfunction, and low educational achievement proves to be especially challenging. Adeleke, however, critiques the majority of government responses as excessively militarized and insensitive to the communal trauma faced by young individuals. Conversely, Judd et al. propose that psychosocial programming and vocational training may provide greater long-term advantages. The differing strategies highlight the lack of a cohesive policy framework that can effectively tackle both the individual/household and communal/societal aspects of juvenile crime.

In Ethiopia, various researchers have examined the greater difficulties that communal areas encounter compared to urban regions in tackling juvenile delinquency. In a case study conducted by Abebe Yilma (2018) on the Lideta Sub-City remand home, it was noted that many juvenile offenders hailing from rural or communal backgrounds displayed signs of delayed psycho-social development, inadequate education, and a limited understanding of their legal rights. Through comprehensive interviews and participant observation, he determined that communal settings seldom offer preventive resources like child welfare officers or family counseling services. Bethlehem Wondimu (2014) supported this notion by examining juveniles raised in urban versus rural settings in Addis Ababa. The study revealed that those from communal areas exhibited notably higher levels of aggression, reduced empathy, and a constrained outlook on the future. Andargatchew Tesfaye (2004) contends that the differences in delinquency are influenced less by geographic factors and more by the presence of social capital; communities with robust traditional networks may demonstrate greater effectiveness in social control compared to urban slums. This academic disagreement underscores the importance of detailed, context-sensitive analyses instead of simplistic urban-rural distinctions when evaluating community vulnerabilities.

A significant yet often overlooked issue in community settings is how cultural and social norms contribute to the continuation of juvenile delinquency. Yadav (2023) accurately points out that the normalization of violence, the prevalence of toxic masculinity, and the glorification of risk within various communities obstruct efforts aimed at rehabilitation. In communal societies where discipline is associated with aggression or where deviant behavior is ignored until it intensifies, early interventions become exceedingly difficult to implement. This is consistent with Betelehem Wondimu's (2014) observation that juveniles raised in rural areas had internalized greater levels of violence. However, certain academics contend that culture may serve as a double-edged sword. Adeleke (2019) highlights that traditional norms encompass

restorative justice practices, including public apologies and community reintegration methods, which could be integrated into contemporary juvenile justice systems. The discussion, then, is not about whether culture hinders or facilitates reform, but instead focuses on how to discern which cultural practices ought to be preserved and which require change. This challenge persists in hindering intervention programs that are apprehensive about facing community opposition or cultural backlash.

Communal areas, irrespective of their geographical location, commonly experience issues such as insufficient funding, a shortage of trained staff, and inadequate institutional infrastructure. Both Yadav (2023) and Zhadan et al. (2019) agree on this point, identifying these deficits as significant structural obstacles. Yilma (2018) discovered that in Ethiopia, remand homes and juvenile services in communal districts were either absent or staffed by individuals lacking the necessary qualifications. In a similar vein, Singh and Azman (2020) warn that the early identification of risk behaviors is unattainable without the presence of well-trained social workers and probation officers integrated within community settings. The role of the state in addressing these deficiencies continues to be a subject of debate. Certain researchers, such as Tesfaye (2004), argue that enhancing the capabilities of community-based organizations offers a more sustainable approach than increasing state authority. Some researchers, such as Judd et al. (2023), advocate for the involvement of central government to promote fairness and consistency in the juvenile justice system. The practical challenge involves finding a balance between community ownership and institutional professionalism, a situation that is exacerbated by donor fatigue and political instability in numerous developing areas.

2.3.4 Strategies to curb juvenile delinquency

Juvenile delinquency has attracted significant academic and policy focus worldwide, especially in developed nations where institutional frameworks are firmly in place. In these contexts, strategies for preventing delinquency typically involve multiple approaches, such as early intervention, restorative justice frameworks, and reforms in education. Aazami et al. (2023) emphasize the significance of both risk and protective factors in influencing the development of interventions in their systematic review. Early childhood programs, mental health services, and family-based therapeutic approaches are emphasized as essential strategies within Western contexts. Nonetheless, detractors like Sun et al. (2024) warn that although these strategies may appear strong in theory, their effectiveness in practice depends on the nuances of context-specific application and cultural awareness. For example, parenting interventions may exhibit varying effects across different socio-economic levels, indicating that the application of a

universal strategy is constrained. This highlights the necessity for adaptable frameworks that reconcile standardization with local flexibility. The United Nations Riyadh Guidelines (1990) further emphasize the necessity of adopting localized strategies in alignment with global human rights standards.

Within the framework of the United States and various Western countries, the roles of education and community engagement are crucial in mitigating criminal behavior among youth. Initiatives like the "Communities That Care" model in the United States prioritize early preventive measures by implementing school-based curricula and supporting family systems. This method is consistent with the Riyadh Guidelines, which highlight the importance of education as a fundamental element for the development of youth (UN, 1990). Sun et al. (2024) establish a connection between elevated school dropout rates and a rise in delinquent behavior, advocating for the enhancement of student engagement and participation in extracurricular activities. Nonetheless, certain academics contend that models focused on education may neglect systemic inequalities, including racial profiling and poverty, which persistently hinder the effectiveness of programs. Furthermore, Rathi and Dhariwal (2025) contend that the integration of socio-emotional education and trauma-informed pedagogy within educational institutions is essential; otherwise, punitive disciplinary practices may intensify rather than alleviate delinquent behaviors. Consequently, although educational interventions serve as a fundamental basis, their effectiveness is contingent upon the degree to which they promote inclusivity, equity, and rehabilitation.

Family interventions continue to be among the most frequently referenced and advocated approaches for addressing juvenile delinquency. Countries with advanced economies have progressively embraced multisystemic therapy (MST), which targets the various contexts influencing juvenile behavior, especially the family environment. The Riyadh Guidelines (1990) reinforce this notion by highlighting the importance of the family in the socialization of youth and the essential role of government assistance for vulnerable households. Aazami et al. (2023) demonstrate that organized parental involvement and stable family routines notably decrease the likelihood of delinquent behavior. Rathi and Dhariwal (2025) concur that the disintegration of family structures, instances of neglect, and experiences of abuse serve as significant predictors of deviant behavior in juveniles. Sun et al. (2024) contest the predominant reliance on nuclear family models in interventions, proposing the adoption of more culturally attuned frameworks that take into account extended families and community-based parenting, particularly within multicultural contexts. As a result, although family-centered approaches are

well-supported by empirical evidence, there is a division among scholars regarding the appropriate form and structure of these interventions, with critiques emphasizing the importance of cultural adaptability and inclusivity.

Zai, Akhter, and Rasheed (2022) investigate collaborative interventions in South Asia, emphasizing that although legal frameworks are present, their execution is hindered by insufficient resources, a shortage of trained personnel, and inadequate institutional support. In a similar vein, Aziz et al. (n.d.) highlight the importance of probation officers in influencing reform pathways in Malaysia, underscoring the role of the human factor in rehabilitation approaches. Nonetheless, Rath and Dhariwal (2025) argue that numerous approaches fail to address the entrenched cultural and socio-economic issues specific to developing areas, including poverty, child labor, and political instability. The United Nations Guidelines (1990) promote solutions that are specific to the context, a sentiment reiterated by Zain and Wani (2020), who discovered that community-based interventions adapted to local dynamics led to a reduction in juvenile delinquency of up to 30%. Consequently, the application of Western frameworks without sufficient adaptation has encountered valid criticism, highlighting the necessity for locally developed, culturally relevant approaches.

Zai et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of inter-agency collaboration, community policing, and youth mentorship as essential elements in the prevention of delinquency. The perspectives presented are consistent with the Riyadh Guidelines, which advocate for community responsibility and the engagement of youth in societal development. Aziz et al. (n.d.) support this notion by proposing that initiatives focused on community awareness, sports, and the creative arts can channel the energy of youth away from criminal activities. However, critics such as Mwapaura et al. (2022) contend that community programs, in isolation, provide only superficial solutions unless the foundational family structures are reinforced. It is advised to strengthen family support structures, particularly within the extended kinship frameworks commonly found in Africa and Asia. Regardless of varying focal points, there is a widespread agreement that the community is an essential stakeholder. Nonetheless, the efficacy of these strategies is frequently compromised by political corruption, irregular funding, and the absence of monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

A crucial yet often overlooked approach to reducing juvenile delinquency is the prompt recognition and intervention regarding childhood trauma. Research findings demonstrate that children who experience abuse, especially prior to the age of five, face a markedly increased

likelihood of exhibiting criminal behaviors (Rathi & Dhariwal, 2025). Notwithstanding this, interventions aimed at addressing mental health among youth continue to be inadequately funded and are subject to stigma in both developed and developing settings. Aazami et al. (2023) advocate for the incorporation of mental health services within educational and community initiatives, whereas Zai et al. (2022) highlight the importance of implementing trauma-informed care frameworks in facilities for juvenile rehabilitation. However, some critics contend that mental health strategies tend to be more reactive than proactive. The authors underscore a deficiency in preventive mental health services, particularly within impoverished and marginalized populations. Moreover, cultural stigmas associated with mental health in numerous developing societies present further obstacles to the provision of services. Consequently, although the existing literature is progressively recognizing the significance of trauma and mental health, the implementation of these strategies is still inadequately developed.

The management of juvenile delinquency is fundamentally influenced by institutional reforms and legal frameworks. The UN Riyadh Guidelines promote approaches centered on rights that highlight the importance of diversion, the decriminalization of status offenses, and the implementation of alternatives to institutionalization. In numerous Western nations, the juvenile justice systems have developed to integrate these principles through youth courts, rehabilitation facilities, and restorative justice practices. Nonetheless, the execution in developing nations is inconsistent. Zai et al. (2022) identify systemic corruption, inadequate legal enforcement, and the absence of judicial training tailored for juveniles as ongoing obstacles. The integration of Cybercrime and Juvenile Justice policies, for example, continues to be insufficient in areas such as sub-Saharan Africa. Critics contend that punitive measures, which remain widespread in numerous jurisdictions, frequently infringe upon children's rights and contribute to ongoing cycles of incarceration. Consequently, researchers such as Aazami et al. (2023) and Aziz et al. (n.d.) advocate for a transition from punitive measures to rehabilitative justice, along with the enhancement of skills for personnel involved in juvenile justice.

Rehabilitation strategies that are culturally pertinent utilize traditional methods to address the root factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. The Ubuntu philosophy, highlighting interconnectedness, respect, and communal responsibility, has been effectively incorporated into restorative justice initiatives in Southern Africa (Oyewale, 2021). Furthermore, conventional methods of conflict resolution, including community councils and spiritual

cleansing ceremonies, have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing accountability and facilitating social reintegration (Ruparanganda & Ruparanganda, 2016). The significance of Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) lies in their capacity to offer important perspectives on the issue of juvenile recidivism. In Zimbabwe, practices like “butho,” which involve elders mentoring and guiding young offenders, have been recognized for their effectiveness in decreasing reoffending rates (Parisi, 2020). These approaches highlight the importance of ethical instruction, communal responsibility, and the reintegration of individuals who have offended into nurturing social frameworks. Nevertheless, their potential is not fully realized owing to the prevailing influence of Western frameworks in both policy and practice.

In summary, the existing literature indicates that no singular approach can effectively address juvenile delinquency on its own. The most efficient strategies are those that embrace a comprehensive, multisectoral framework that incorporates education, family, community, health, and legal systems. The Riyadh Guidelines offer a detailed framework for this integration, highlighting the importance of prevention, socialization, and justice grounded in rights. Zai et al. (2022) and Aazami et al. (2023) align in their support for inter-agency collaboration and ongoing investment in services for youth. Nonetheless, criticisms continue to arise concerning the disjointed execution and absence of consistency in programming, especially in nations with developing economies. The emphasis on youth involvement in policy formulation, as highlighted by the UN Guidelines, continues to be largely overlooked, prompting inquiries regarding the inclusiveness of existing strategies. In summary, although there is widespread consensus among scholars regarding the elements of successful delinquency prevention, the implementation of these strategies is hindered by operational deficiencies, cultural insensitivities, and limitations in resources. Consequently, forthcoming strategies should be rooted in evidence while also being contextually relevant, inclusive of stakeholder participation, and supported by sustainable funding.

2.4 Research Gap

The existing body of research has revealed a notable absence of literature in the examination of juvenile delinquency, especially regarding the impact of socio-economic factors in rural contexts of Zimbabwe. A significant number of current studies have primarily concentrated on the characteristics and frequency of juvenile delinquency within urban environments, thus overlooking the impact of socio-economic factors in rural areas. For example, research indicates that juvenile delinquency is more prevalent in urban regions compared to rural regions in China, and studies have demonstrated that delinquency rates are higher in densely populated

urban areas than in rural areas in India. The notion of "rural idyll" frequently contributes to the belief that crime is nonexistent in rural regions, which has led to justice policies and practices predominantly focusing on urban settings while downplaying initiatives aimed at addressing crime in rural communities. Although approximately half of the global population resides in rural regions, there appears to be a deficiency in thorough and extensive studies concerning juvenile delinquency within these environments. This study evaluates the influence of socio-economic factors on juvenile delinquency within the rural context of Zimbabwe, specifically through a case study of the Chiadzwa communal area. It effectively addresses the identified gap by concentrating its analysis on this particular region. Chiadzwa, despite being a rural locality, has experienced a surge in economic activities attributed to diamond mining. This development has consequently led to a rise in juvenile delinquency, rendering it a distinctive and significant case study for the examination of crime dynamics in rural settings. The objectives of the study, as presented in Chapter 1, focus on this overlooked context. This current study aims to identify particular socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area, assess the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes within this region, evaluate the challenges encountered by the Chiadzwa communal area in tackling juvenile delinquency, and finally, to identify evidence-based strategies to mitigate juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area. This study sought to address the knowledge gap concerning the socio-economic factors that affect juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe, particularly in light of the distinct local dynamics associated with diamond mining.

2.5 Summary

The chapter looked at the review of related literature. It focused on the conceptual aspects of juvenile delinquency. Literature reviewed indicated that the socio-economic factors have impact on juvenile delinquency. It also looked into research gap. The following chapter looked at the research methodology used.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the research methodology that will be applied in this study. It will dwell on population, sampling procedures adopted including focus on research methods used in data collection in this project. Furthermore this chapter espouses the relevance of testing data gathering tools, reliability and validity of this project.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The concept of research philosophy refers to the framework of beliefs and assumptions regarding the advancement of knowledge that serves as the foundation for a research study (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). This framework influences the researcher's worldview, shapes the formulation of research inquiries, and informs the choice of suitable methodologies to produce credible and dependable knowledge. This study employed a pragmatism research philosophy by the researcher. This decision was guided by the necessity to adaptively incorporate both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to achieve a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of a socially intricate matter. According to Simpson (2018), pragmatism is characterized as a philosophy of practice that emphasizes the practical consequences of research findings and perceives knowledge as a means to tackle real-world issues. It does not strictly adhere to any singular system of truth or reality; rather, it accommodates various perspectives, provided they effectively contribute to the research objectives. As noted by Maarouf (2019), pragmatism is consistent with a mixed methods approach, enabling researchers to embrace both objective (positivist) and subjective (interpretivist) perspectives based on the specific context of their research.

Consequently, this philosophical approach was particularly appropriate for the current study as it enabled the gathering, synthesis, and analysis of both quantitative data regarding crime prevalence and types, alongside detailed narrative accounts of lived experiences and challenges faced in Chiadzwa. The investigator successfully upheld an open, inquiry-oriented approach that took into account the socio-cultural and economic contexts of rural Zimbabwean youth, while concurrently employing systematic quantitative analyses to delineate the trends in juvenile delinquency. This philosophical decision allowed me to concentrate on the practical requirements of the community, while also engaging in theoretical discussions regarding delinquency and rural development.

The application of pragmatism as a research philosophy provided several benefits that improved the study's effectiveness and coherence. Initially, it facilitated a focus on the problem, seeking not only to comprehend juvenile delinquency but also to identify practical approaches for its mitigation. Bergmann (2023) emphasizes that the efficacy of pragmatism is rooted in its capacity to connect disparate methodologies while maintaining a focus on practical solutions. The research objectives were effectively met in accordance with this. The initial aim of identifying particular socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency was accomplished through the administration of questionnaires and interviews, which explored variables including poverty, family instability, and restricted access to education. The application of pragmatism facilitated the triangulation of these findings, thereby improving their reliability and validity. The second objective, which aimed to identify the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes, was approached through quantitative methods such as descriptive statistics, grounded in the pragmatist philosophy of employing the most suitable tools for particular tasks.

The third objective, aimed at identifying the challenges encountered by Chiadzwa in tackling juvenile delinquency, was achieved through qualitative interviews that provided detailed insights into the institutional, economic, and cultural barriers present. Finally, the fourth objective of identifying evidence-based strategies to reduce juvenile delinquency was achieved by combining data-driven recommendations from the field with the existing literature, a process supported by pragmatism that prioritizes practical outcomes over theoretical ideals. The implementation of this adaptable yet cohesive methodology resulted in the generation of insights that are not only academically significant but also pertinent to the community. In conclusion, the philosophy facilitated a comprehensive and nuanced investigation of a deeply entrenched social issue in rural Zimbabwe, showcasing its relevance and efficacy in intricate, real-world research settings.

3.2 Research Design

The research design constitutes the comprehensive strategic plan that outlines the manner in which a research study is executed, encompassing the methodologies for data collection, measurement, and analysis (Berman et al., 2020). This offers an organized framework that assists the researcher in methodically examining a problem, thereby ensuring consistency, reliability, and validity in the process. The researcher utilized a descriptive survey research design in this study. The decision was guided by the characteristics of the research, which necessitated a precise, comprehensive, and contextual account of the prevailing circumstances,

trends, and connections related to juvenile delinquency in a rural environment. A descriptive survey research design, as articulated by Siedlecki (2020), entails the organized gathering and examination of data to delineate the attributes of a population, phenomena, or the interrelations among variables, all while refraining from altering the environment. This design was especially suitable as it enabled the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, aligning with the pragmatist research philosophy embraced in the study, which highlights the importance of practicality and the utilization of varied methods to effectively address research inquiries. Through the application of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the researcher attained a comprehensive insight into both the statistical trends and the lived experiences, as well as the socio-cultural factors that impact juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa. The design's descriptive characteristics established a basis for deriving comprehensive insights into the ways in which socio-economic factors, including poverty, family disintegration, and insufficient educational opportunities, influence youth offending behaviors within the rural context of Zimbabwe.

The descriptive survey research design was also crucial in effectively addressing all the research objectives. The initial aim of identifying particular socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency was accomplished through the implementation of a meticulously crafted questionnaire, complemented by follow-up interviews that gathered detailed insights regarding poverty, family instability, and unemployment. The design facilitated the researcher's ability to articulate and classify these factors distinctly, thereby providing a well-founded comprehension of their impact. The secondary aim of identifying the various types and prevalence rates of juvenile offenses was achieved through the utilization of structured survey tools that gathered self-reported information and community observations regarding the most frequently committed crimes by juveniles, including theft, substance abuse, and assault. Descriptive statistical methods, such as frequency distributions and percentages, which are integral to survey designs, facilitated the visualization and interpretation of these trends.

The third objective aimed to identify the challenges encountered by Chiadzwa in tackling juvenile delinquency. This was investigated through closed-ended questionnaire items and key informant interviews, which uncovered issues including insufficient policing, a scarcity of rehabilitation centers, and cultural taboos related to juvenile correction. The fourth objective, aimed at identifying evidence-based strategies to mitigate juvenile delinquency, was achieved through an analysis of both quantitative preferences and qualitative insights regarding the

effectiveness of potential interventions. The descriptive survey design enabled the comparison of these viewpoints and contributed to the synthesis of a series of practical recommendations based on empirical evidence. Consistent with the principles of pragmatism, this design facilitated the researcher in employing a comprehensive, mixed methods strategy that integrated quantitative data with contextual narratives, thereby enabling a more thorough and well-founded analysis of juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe.

3.3 Target Population

Within the realm of research, the target population denotes the complete set of individuals, organizations, or entities that exhibit the pertinent characteristics required to fulfil the research aims. This research focused on a total sample of 60 participants selected from five key sectors in the Marange region: secondary educational institutions, local communities, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) Marange, traditional leadership, and non-governmental organizations operating in the area. The choice of this population was intentional and methodical, based on the conviction that these groups are essential stakeholders in comprehending and tackling juvenile delinquency within a rural context. Every category contributed unique value to the research, providing distinct perspectives and insights that enhanced the depth and credibility of the results. Secondary schools were incorporated due to their role as fundamental institutions where adolescents allocate considerable amounts of their time. Furthermore, school authorities frequently observe delinquent behaviors, variations in conduct, and the socio-economic challenges impacting students. Educators and school counsellors offered direct insights regarding school dropouts, truancy, substance abuse, and peer pressure-elements frequently associated with juvenile delinquency.

Members of the village, such as parents and community elders, constituted an essential part of the target population, as they have first-hand experience and observation of the behavioural patterns exhibited by youth in both domestic and communal settings. Their findings highlighted the ways in which poverty, familial instability, insufficient recreational opportunities, and restricted access to services play a role in youth criminal behavior. The involvement of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in Marange holds considerable importance, given that police officers play a crucial role in addressing juvenile crime. Their report included statistical data, trends, and expert analysis regarding the types and frequency of offenses perpetrated by juveniles in the region, alongside the institutional challenges associated with law enforcement and the rehabilitation of offenders. Traditional leaders, including village heads and chiefs, were specifically focused on due to their position as guardians of local customs and informal justice

mechanisms. Their contributions aided the researcher in comprehending the interplay between customary law and formal law in the context of youth delinquency, as well as the impact of socio-economic disruptions on the erosion of traditional social control mechanisms. Finally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in Marange were incorporated due to their contributions in assisting vulnerable groups, executing awareness initiatives, and carrying out interventions focused on enhancing youth welfare. These organizations supplied essential information regarding community-oriented strategies, funding deficiencies, and programmatic methodologies aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency. Through the engagement of this varied yet interrelated target population, the researcher successfully triangulated data sources, resulting in a thorough and contextually aware analysis of the factors, expressions, and possible remedies for juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal Area.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The sampling technique employed in research is an essential methodological aspect that dictates the process of selecting participants from the target population to create a representative sample. The stratified sampling method was utilized for this research. Stratified sampling entails the segmentation of the population into identifiable subgroups or "strata" according to particular characteristics, followed by the selection of samples from each stratum to guarantee representation across the essential sectors pertinent to the study's objectives. This methodology was particularly suitable for the research as juvenile delinquency in rural areas is affected by a diverse array of interrelated socio-economic, cultural, institutional, and individual factors. The researcher employed stratified sampling to guarantee that each subgroup involved in interacting with, observing, or directly influencing juvenile behavior was sufficiently represented. The strata were established according to the roles and positions of participants within the community, anticipated to provide diverse yet complementary viewpoints on the research subject. This approach is consistent with the mixed-methods and pragmatist philosophy of the research, which emphasizes inclusivity, practical significance, and a variety of viewpoints.

Stratum A comprised juveniles and teachers sourced from Gandauta Secondary School and Chipindirwe Secondary School, as educational institutions play a pivotal role in the lives of adolescents. Young individuals offered direct narratives regarding their experiences, motivations, and socio-economic conditions that shape their behavior, whereas teachers contributed insights on patterns in student behavior, attendance rates, and the external challenges encountered by students. Strata B comprised parents from four distinct villages:

Tinoengana, Chiadzwa, Tonhorai, and Gamunorwa. Parents were incorporated into the study due to their role as primary caregivers and their direct involvement in managing their children's behavior. The inclusion of a range of villages facilitated geographic diversity and encompassed a variety of socio-economic conditions within the communal area. Strata C included law enforcement personnel from the Zimbabwe Republic Police Marange, notably the Officer in Charge, the In-Charge of Crime, members of the Victim Friendly Unit (VFU), and constables from the charge office. The officers offered expert perspectives on the frequency, characteristics, and management of juvenile offenses, along with the difficulties encountered in law enforcement and rehabilitation efforts. Strata D comprised traditional leaders, particularly headsmen, who provided insights into the historical and cultural management of juvenile behavior within traditional frameworks. They additionally contributed to the understanding of how socio-economic transformations have undermined indigenous norms and social control systems. Ultimately, Strata F comprised representatives from Childline, a non-governmental organization engaged in child protection efforts in Marange. Their involvement was essential for comprehending the characteristics of community outreach initiatives, the resources accessible to at-risk youth, and the deficiencies in service provision. The stratified framework facilitated the inclusion of diverse stakeholders; youth, educators, caregivers, authorities, and civil society thereby fostering a holistic understanding of the issue and guiding the development of practical, community-based solutions. To determine the questionnaire sample size for the study, the Yamane formula was employed. The formula used is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n = Desired sample size.

N = Total population size.

e = Margin of error (expressed as a decimal).

For a population size of 60 and a margin of error of 5% (0.05), the calculation is as follows:

$$n = \frac{60}{1 + 60 (0.05^2)}$$

$$n = 52$$

The final sample size of 52 respondents was determined using the Yamane formula, introduced by Taro Yamane in 1967 for sample size calculation with a 5% margin of error, which yielded an optimal number given the target population of 60 respondents. The sample size is summarized in the table below;

Table 3.4.1: Questionnaire Sample of the study

Sample				Target Population	Sample Size	Sample %
	Schools	Gandauta Secondary	Headmaster	1	1	83%
			Deputy Head Teacher	1	1	
			Teachers	5	4	
			Juveniles	5	4	
		Chipindirwe Secondary	Headmaster	1	1	
			Deputy Head Teacher	1	1	
			Teachers	5	4	
			Juveniles	5	4	
		Schools Total		24	20	
	Parents	Tinoengana village		6	5	83%
		Chiadzwa village		6	5	
		Tonhorai village		6	5	
		Gamunorwa village		6	5	
		Parents Total		24	20	
	Police Officers ZRP Marange	Officer in charge		1	1	100%
		In Charge Crime		1	1	
		Victim Friendly Unit		2	2	
		Constables (Charge office)		2	2	
		ZRP Marange Total		6	6	
	Traditional Leaders	Headsmen		2	2	100%
		Headsmen Total		2	2	
	NGOs	Childline Social Workers		4	4	100%
		NGOs Total		4	4	
TOTAL				60	52	87%

Source: Researcher's Own Configuration (2025).

3.4.2 Interviews Sample Size

The researcher utilized a technique known as stratified sampling to choose participants for the qualitative interviews in this study. The selected technique facilitated the intentional gathering of perspectives and experiences from various stakeholders, whose insights were essential for comprehending the socio-economic factors that affect juvenile delinquency in the region. The

sample size for the interviews consisted of 16 participants, established based on the concept of data saturation. This principle suggests that qualitative research does not necessitate a large number of interviews; rather, data collection persists until no additional information or themes are identified. The application of saturation facilitated a focus on depth rather than breadth, consistent with the qualitative objectives of the study to investigate intricate socio-economic dynamics. The initial stratum (Strata A) comprised juveniles, teachers, headmasters, and deputy heads from Gandauta Secondary and Chipindirwe Secondary Schools, with a total of five participants chosen from each institution. The selection of these participants was based on the understanding that schools serve as critical settings where delinquent behavior frequently emerges, with educators typically being among the initial individuals to recognize early indicators. Their contributions offered significant understanding of the everyday obstacles encountered by students, the socio-economic influences on behavior, and the institutional measures addressing delinquency.

Strata B included parents from four distinct villages: Tinoengana, Chiadzwa, Tonhorai, and Gamunorwa, with one parent chosen from each village, resulting in a total of four participants. Parents were regarded as essential sources of information because of their direct involvement in the development of young individuals. Their viewpoints provided a comprehensive insight into the ways in which poverty, fractured family dynamics, unemployment, and insufficient social support influence deviant behaviors in young individuals. Strata C comprised four police officers from the Zimbabwe Republic Police Marange, each designated to represent a significant unit: the Officer in Charge, the In-Charge of Crime, a representative from the Victim Friendly Unit, and a constable from the charge office. The officers offered direct insights regarding the categories and prevalence of juvenile offenses, the legal processes involved, and the limitations encountered by the law enforcement system in addressing issues related to young offenders. Their expert perspectives contributed to situating juvenile crime within the wider legal and policy contexts. Strata D consisted of a singular traditional leader, namely a headman, whose role was essential for comprehending the traditional justice system and the indigenous approaches to social control that have historically been employed to regulate youth behavior. In conclusion, Strata F comprised two social workers affiliated with Childline, a non-governmental organization operating in the Marange region. The participants provided essential insights regarding the various interventions accessible for at-risk youth, the initiatives for community outreach, and the efficacy of NGO programs in reducing juvenile delinquency. The intentional choice of these strata guaranteed that the interview data captured the varied

social, institutional, and cultural factors affecting juvenile behavior in Chiadzwa, thereby aligning with the study's aim to develop thorough, evidence-driven strategies for mitigating juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe.

3.5 Research Instruments

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The researcher utilized structured questionnaires as the primary instrument for gathering quantitative data in this study. The structured questionnaire was meticulously crafted to guarantee consistency, clarity, and alignment with the research objectives of the study, making it especially effective in obtaining standardized responses from a comparatively large cohort of participants. The survey instrument was organized into two primary segments: Segment A and Segment B. Section A concentrated on demographic data, gathering crucial background information regarding respondents, including their gender, age, and educational attainment. The demographic profile played a vital role in framing the responses and uncovering patterns or correlations between background characteristics and perceptions or experiences related to juvenile delinquency. Section B included a set of sub-questions that were explicitly guided by and organized according to the four research objectives of the study. To achieve the initial objective of identifying particular socio-economic factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal Area, respondents were requested to express their perspectives on variables including poverty, unemployment, limited access to education, family background, and exposure to violent crimes. The purpose of these inquiries was to measure the degree to which these elements were believed to influence delinquent behavior among adolescents in the region.

The second objective aimed to ascertain the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes within the Chiadzwa Communal Area. To achieve this objective, the questionnaire incorporated items that prompted participants to identify prevalent forms of juvenile delinquency, including theft, murder, rape, robbery, drug trafficking, and malicious damage to property. Participants were additionally requested to evaluate the prevalence of these offenses within their neighborhoods, yielding significant insights into crime patterns. The third objective aimed to identify the challenges encountered by the Chiadzwa Communal Area in tackling juvenile delinquency. This was explored through inquiries centered on the insufficiency of institutional capacity, the absence of community-based interventions, the ineffectiveness of law enforcement, and societal perceptions regarding youth crime. The responses facilitated the researcher's examination of the systemic obstacles that impede initiatives aimed at reducing

juvenile delinquency. The fourth objective aimed to identify evidence-based strategies to reduce juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal Area. This was facilitated through questions designed to collect respondents' perspectives on possible solutions, including awareness campaigns, skills training for youth, increased parental support, educational opportunities, and improved collaboration among traditional leaders, law enforcement, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations. The organized format of the questionnaire enabled the researcher to gather quantifiable and comparable data, which could subsequently be subjected to statistical analysis to derive significant conclusions. This tool was thus crucial in revealing overarching trends and patterns, enhancing the qualitative data collected from interviews and integrating smoothly with the study's mixed-methods framework.

3.5.2 Interviews

This study employed interviews as a primary qualitative research tool to obtain a more lived experiences of the influence of socio-economic factors on juvenile delinquency within the Chiadzwa Communal Area. The investigator formulated an interview guide comprising open-ended questions that were meticulously aligned with the four research objectives of the study. The questions were formulated to enable participants to articulate their experiences, perspectives, and insights regarding matters related to juvenile delinquency. This encompasses the socio-economic factors influencing the phenomenon, the various types and prevalence of juvenile offenses, the difficulties encountered by families and institutions in tackling the issue, as well as potential strategies for mitigating it. The implementation of open-ended questions afforded flexibility, permitting the interviewer to seek additional details as needed and enabling respondents to present new viewpoints that may not have surfaced through structured methodologies. This approach proved to be especially successful in documenting the lived experiences and contextual insights of diverse community stakeholders, including parents, educators, youth, traditional leaders, law enforcement personnel, and non-governmental organization representatives. The interview guide enabled the collection of detailed and descriptive data that enhanced the quantitative findings obtained from questionnaires, thus aiding in a thorough comprehension of the juvenile delinquency phenomenon within the rural setting of Chiadzwa.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

This research involved a meticulously designed and implemented data collection process aimed at achieving inclusivity, maintaining ethical standards, and gathering reliable and relevant data. The researcher utilized face-to-face interviews as the primary method for data collection in the qualitative component. Nine interview participants were effectively engaged, with each session lasting around 10 minutes. The interviews took place in environments that were both accessible and conducive to comfort for the participants, thereby safeguarding privacy and minimizing potential interruptions. Interviews with participants from the two chosen institutions, Gandauta and Chipindirwe Secondary Schools, were carried out within classrooms during non-instructional periods or free times, following the acquisition of consent from the school administrators. This environment allowed the researcher to involve both students and faculty in a comfortable and familiar setting. Interviews were conducted within the villages, following consultations with the local Headman, who was instrumental in supporting the research initiative and facilitating the engagement of the chosen participants. This phase was essential in fostering community trust and facilitating seamless interactions. The police officers assigned to ZRP Marange were interviewed in the boardroom of the station, providing a formal and secure environment suitable for professional discourse. Finally, interviews with participants from non-governmental organizations were carried out at the Childline office located in Marange, where the researcher engaged with assigned social workers during prearranged time periods. All interviews utilized an open-ended question format, enabling participants to offer profound, context-specific insights that enhanced the qualitative findings of the study.

In terms of the quantitative dimension, the researcher employed structured questionnaires to gather data from identified stakeholders, which comprised police officers, educators, social workers, traditional leaders, and community members. An approach that is both strategic and sensitive to context was employed to guarantee elevated response rates and the integrity of the data collected. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires to organizations including Gandauta and Chipindirwe Secondary Schools, ZRP Marange, and Childline, providing a period of five working days for their completion. This adaptable arrangement was essential to provide respondents with adequate time to complete the instruments while ensuring that their professional obligations were not compromised. Upon the conclusion of the five-day interval, the researcher revisited each site to gather the finalized questionnaires, thereby ensuring that the data collection procedure was both unobtrusive and comprehensive. Conversely, for villagers and traditional leaders, who lacked centralized workspaces and

frequently engaged in informal or field-based activities, questionnaires were distributed and collected immediately upon completion. This methodology recognized the participants' accessibility and contributed to the prevention of potential delays that could have arisen had the collection been arranged for a subsequent period. The researcher provided an explanation of the questionnaire to each participant to guarantee understanding and offered assistance as needed, while maintaining neutrality in the responses. The implementation of this triangulation, which involved timed collection for institutions and immediate collection for community-based respondents, effectively enhanced participation and the quality of responses, while also accommodating the schedules and working conditions of all respondent categories. The meticulously organized and flexible data collection approach facilitated the researcher in obtaining comprehensive and dependable data that corresponded with the mixed-methods framework of the study.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

3.7.1 Reliability

In order to ensure the reliability of this study, the researcher implemented a series of intentional and methodical measures designed to uphold consistency and dependability throughout the data collection process. A preliminary test was carried out before the primary data collection phase, which included 10 participants for the questionnaire. These participants were selected from the same categories as those in the actual study sample, encompassing juveniles, teachers, parents, police officers, traditional leaders, and NGO workers. The pilot questionnaires were administered to this representative sample to evaluate the clarity of the questions, the consistency of their interpretation, and the appropriateness of their structure. In a similar vein, five sample interviews were conducted with participants from various strata to ascertain that the open-ended questions in the interview guide were coherent and effective in eliciting rich, pertinent responses. The insights gained from the pilot tests of the questionnaire and interviews allowed the researcher to refine ambiguous or leading questions, thereby ensuring that the instruments accurately assessed the intended constructs without introducing bias or confusion. Additionally, the implementation of a structured questionnaire enhanced reliability by standardizing the formulation of questions for all participants, thereby minimizing the likelihood of discrepancies in interpretation. Throughout the data collection process, the researcher adhered to a uniform methodology in the administration of instruments, ensuring that all participants received identical instructions that comparable environmental conditions were upheld during interviews, and that neutral probes were employed when clarification was

necessary. Furthermore, the investigator refrained from introducing personal biases throughout the processes of data entry and analysis by following an objective coding framework for qualitative responses and by conducting a thorough verification of quantitative entries. The implemented measures guaranteed that the collected data maintained stability, consistency, and replicability, thereby preserving a high level of reliability during the research process.

3.7.2 Validity

In order to ensure validity, the researcher adopted a thorough and intentional approach to confirm that the study effectively represented the phenomena being examined and that the research instruments were accurately assessing their intended measures. A fundamental measure implemented to improve validity involved the pilot testing phase, during which both the questionnaires and interview guides were subjected to pre-testing with a small, representative sample drawn from each stratum. This enabled the researcher to recognize and rectify any problems related to phrasing, organization, or pertinence of the questions, thereby ensuring that they were distinctly aligned with the four research objectives. The responses from the pilot participants offered significant insights regarding the extent to which the questions aligned with their lived experiences and whether any culturally or contextually inappropriate assumptions were present in the instruments. Furthermore, the researcher established content validity by crafting the questionnaire and interview guide in direct alignment with the research objectives. Each question was meticulously designed to target a specific facet of the study, encompassing socio-economic factors influencing delinquency, various types and rates of crime, local challenges, and interventions grounded in empirical evidence. The involvement of experts further enhanced the validity of the study; prior to the completion of the research instruments, the researcher solicited feedback from academic supervisors and professionals in the fields of education, policing, and social work. Their insights were instrumental in refining the tools to ensure contextual relevance. The researcher upheld ecological validity by performing data collection in the participants' natural environments, with interviews conducted in classrooms, village settings, police boardrooms, and NGO offices. This approach ensured that the responses accurately represented genuine experiences and viewpoints. Furthermore, triangulation was utilized by combining qualitative data from interviews with quantitative data from questionnaires, facilitating the cross-verification of results across various methods and respondent groups. The comprehensive methodologies employed guaranteed that the research upheld a significant level of internal and external validity, yielding credible and applicable results pertinent to the context of juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe.

3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis

3.8.1 Quantitative Data

The researcher utilized a systematic and organized methodology for the presentation and analysis of quantitative data, aiming to achieve clarity, precision, and significant interpretation of the results. The information gathered through structured questionnaires was initially entered with precision into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for subsequent analysis. This software enabled a more precise management of extensive datasets, minimized the likelihood of human error, and permitted the application of sophisticated statistical tools to extract significant patterns and trends. The examination predominantly entailed the computation of means and standard deviations, yielding a succinct overview of central tendencies and the variability of responses among various participant categories, including educators, law enforcement personnel, parents, traditional leaders, and non-governmental organization staff. The statistical measures employed enabled the researcher to ascertain the predominant responses and the degree of agreement or disagreement among the participants. The quantitative data was presented through tables, offering a clear and systematic representation of the results corresponding to each research objective. The tables presented frequency distributions and descriptive statistics for each variable examined, each supplemented by a narrative explanation that contextualized the data interpretation. For example, tables facilitated the identification of patterns regarding the socio-economic factors most frequently associated with juvenile delinquency, the types of crimes that were reported most often, and the strategies that participants considered to be the most effective in addressing juvenile misconduct. The organized format of this presentation improved clarity and facilitated comparisons among various respondent groups, thus augmenting the comprehensive analysis and bolstering evidence-based conclusions.

3.8.2 Qualitative Data

The researcher employed a thematic analysis method for analyzing the qualitative data, which effectively facilitates the organization and interpretation of intricate textual information obtained from open-ended interviews. The information gathered from the nine comprehensive interviews with diverse stakeholders, such as juveniles, educators, parents, law enforcement officials, traditional leaders, and representatives from non-governmental organizations, was initially transcribed word-for-word to guarantee that no details were omitted during the conversion from audio to text. The researcher subsequently undertook a cyclical process of examining and re-examining the transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data

and to initiate the identification of preliminary codes. The development of these codes was informed by the consistent themes observed in participants' narratives, as well as their correspondence with the four research objectives of the study. Subsequently, analogous codes were consolidated to establish overarching themes that encapsulated the core of participants' viewpoints. Prominent themes encompassed, for instance, "the role of poverty and economic hardship in fostering delinquency," "the influence of peer pressure and insufficient parental oversight," "the constraints faced by institutions in addressing juvenile crime," and "strategies for prevention rooted in community engagement." The qualitative findings were presented by systematically organizing the results according to themes, with each theme substantiated by direct quotations from participants, thereby enhancing the authenticity and representation of their experiences. This thematic presentation enabled the researcher to explore the fundamental causes and expressions of juvenile delinquency more thoroughly, while also facilitating the cross-referencing of qualitative insights with quantitative findings, thereby enhancing the overall analysis. Through the implementation of thematic analysis, the researcher maintained the richness and depth of the qualitative data, thereby offering a nuanced comprehension of the socio-economic and institutional dynamics that impact juvenile behavior in the Chiadzwa Communal Area.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Throughout this study, the researcher maintained strict ethical standards at every phase of the research process to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants. Before interacting with juveniles, the researcher obtained consent from parents or guardians to ensure that participation was both permitted and ethically sound, considering the vulnerability of this demographic group. This measure was essential in upholding the autonomy and safeguarding the rights of minors. Additionally, informed consent was secured from all adult participants following a comprehensive explanation of the study's purpose, objectives, and procedures. Participation in the study was completely voluntary, and participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any point without incurring any penalties or adverse effects. Consistent with the guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (2020), the autonomy of participants was upheld, and they were provided with sufficient opportunities to inquire and seek clarifications prior to their decision to participate. The investigator upheld confidentiality and anonymity, guaranteeing that no identifying details were associated with participants' responses in the interview transcripts or the questionnaire data. Eze and Ugwu (2023) assert that safeguarding the identity and privacy of participants

constitutes a crucial ethical obligation. This was accomplished through the implementation of pseudonyms or codes in place of actual names, alongside the secure storage of all collected data. Physical copies of data were stored in a secured cabinet, whereas digital files were safeguarded with password protection to maintain limited access. The investigator maintained a steadfast dedication to objectivity and integrity, steering clear of any manipulation, misrepresentation, or bias during the course of the study. All data were accurately presented, and conclusions and recommendations were derived solely from findings that were substantiated by empirical evidence. Furthermore, in order to maintain academic integrity, all consulted sources were duly recognized through precise referencing in line with established academic standards. The stringent ethical considerations contributed to the establishment of a reliable, respectful, and accountable research process that safeguarded the interests of all stakeholders engaged in the study.

3.10 Summary

The selection of the appropriate research design took careful consideration and skill. The researcher opted for the pragmatic paradigm which utilises both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The design dictated how the researcher selected sample and tools to be used. Chiadzwa rural community was used to sample students, social workers, traditional leaders, teachers as well as policemen through the use of questionnaire and interviews to gather primary data. Validity and reliability were also discussed. The following chapter looked at data presentation, analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter looked at data presentation which was done in form of pie charts and tables. Quantitative data analysis was done through the use of descriptive statistics and for interviews data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Discussion was done in accordance with the literature and theories discussed in chapter 2 looking at agreement or disagreement of findings with this literature.

4.1 Response Rate

Table 4.1.1: Questionnaires Response rate

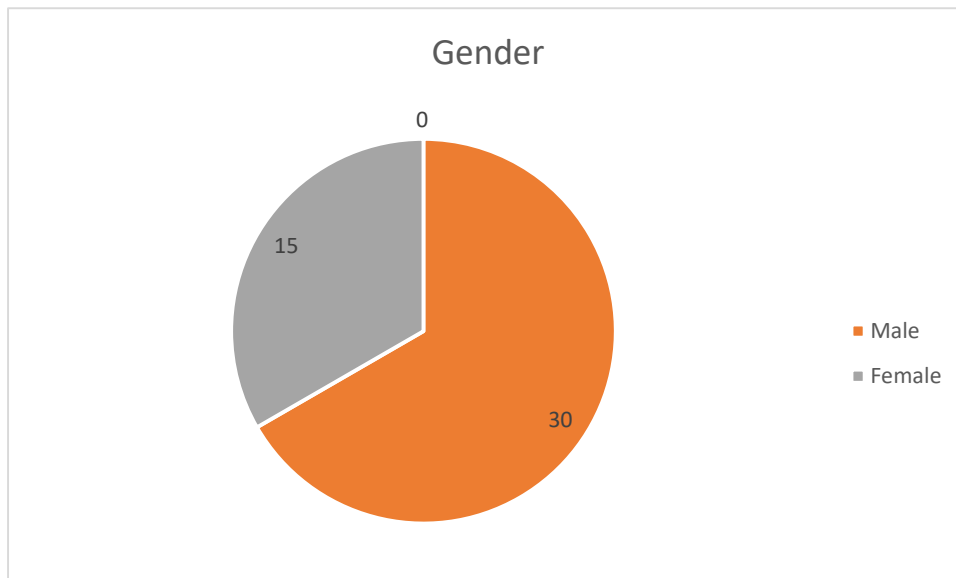
Instrument	Sample Size	Response received	Response rate %
Questionnaire	52	45	87%

Source: Researcher's Field Work (2025).

Of the 52 questionnaires that were distributed, 45 were completed and returned, resulting in a good response rate of 87%, reflecting a high level of participant engagement. The higher return rate significantly ensured the reliability of the quantitative data gathered and concurrently reduced the potential risks linked to non-response bias. This facilitated a more precise and representative evaluation of the impact of socio-economic factors on juvenile delinquency within this particular rural setting. The collaboration of the participants serves as an indication of the significance of the research issue to the local respondents. Additionally, the interviews aimed at producing more profound qualitative insights achieved a commendable response rate, as 9 out of the 16 targeted key informants were successfully interviewed. The interviews played a crucial role in providing context and validating the quantitative data, yielding detailed insights into factors such as poverty, family instability, limited access to education, and peer influence, all of which were identified as significant socio-economic contributors to juvenile delinquency in the region.

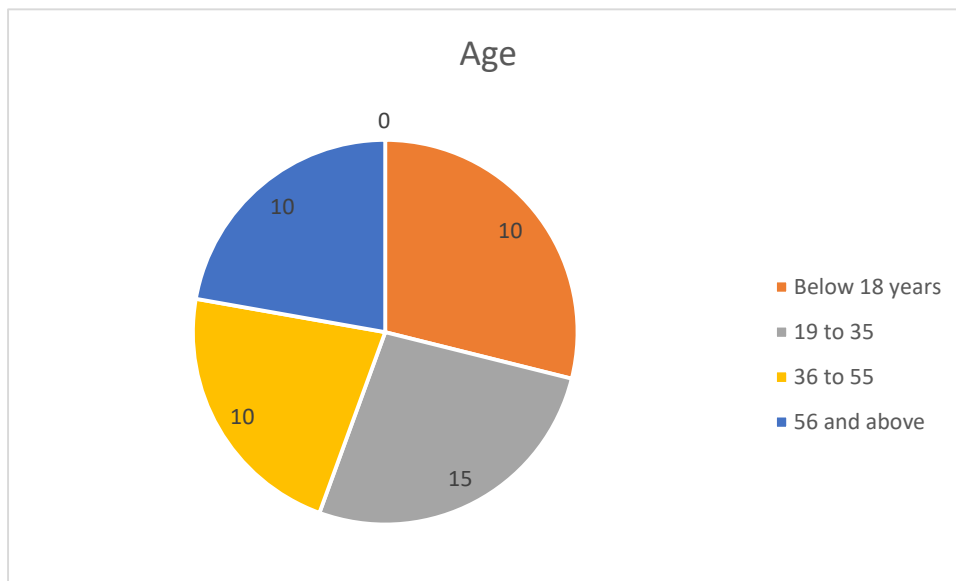
4.2 Demographic Data

4.2.1 Gender



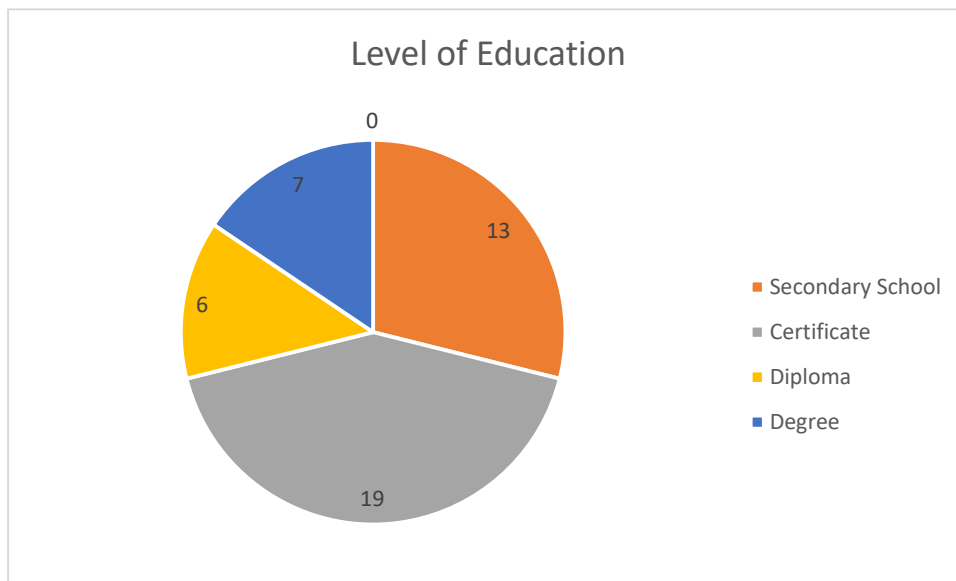
Among the 45 respondents, a considerable majority were male, totaling 30, whereas female respondents consisted of 15. The representation of male respondents in this research was notably important for the investigation of juvenile delinquency, given that existing literature frequently indicates a greater occurrence of delinquent behavior in males relative to females. Within the rural Chiadzwa Communal area, the observed gender distribution illustrates the local circumstances in which young males are more prominently engaged in activities associated with delinquency, potentially due to distinct socio-economic pressures that they encounter. Grasping this disparity was essential for analyzing the ways in which socio-economic elements could distinctly influence young men within the research region. This unique gender profile enabled the potential examination of gender-specific vulnerabilities or protective factors associated with socio-economic conditions and juvenile delinquency. For example, socio-economic difficulties such as unemployment and limited opportunities have disproportionately impacted young males in Chiadzwa, leading to their increased representation in delinquency cases or as participants in related studies. Examining the data from a gender perspective uncovered that socio-economic factors exerted varying influences, offering a more nuanced understanding of the intricate routes contributing to juvenile delinquency in this particular rural context of Zimbabwe.

4.2.2 Age



The analysis of age distribution among participants indicated that a significant proportion of respondents were younger, which aligns with the emphasis on juvenile delinquency. A total of 10 respondents were under the age of 18, representing the main demographic for examining juvenile concerns. The sample comprised individuals from various age brackets: 15 respondents were aged between 19 and 35 years, 10 were in the range of 36 to 55 years, and an additional 10 were 56 years and older, resulting in a total of 45 participants. The participation of individuals from diverse age categories was crucial for a thorough evaluation of the socio-economic elements influencing juvenile delinquency. The "Below 18 years" category specifically indicates the juvenile demographic; however, the inclusion of older age groups implies that this study also collected insights from adults in the community, including parents, guardians, community leaders, or other significant informants. The insights from these adults were instrumental in offering context regarding the wider socio-economic landscape, historical patterns, and community interactions that could affect youth behavior and their access to resources within the Chiadzwa Communal area. This study achieved a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and experiences of socio-economic conditions across various age groups within the community, and how these elements may influence or alleviate juvenile delinquency.

4.2.3 Level of Education



The educational backgrounds of the respondents indicate a varied range of attainment levels, which is essential for comprehending the socio-economic factors within the study sample size. The findings indicate that 13 participants had completed Secondary School education, whereas the most substantial group consisted of 19 participants who possessed a Certificate. Additionally, six participants possessed a diploma, while seven held a degree. The educational qualifications of the participants were notably important as a direct reflection of their socio-economic status and the opportunities available to them in the Chiadzwa Communal region. The respondents' lower levels of educational attainment indicated that they were primarily juveniles, while the parents exhibited limited access to higher education, reduced employment opportunities, and a potentially increased vulnerability to socio-economic challenges. The educational disadvantages identified represent significant socio-economic factors that may be associated with conditions conducive to juvenile delinquency, including poverty, insufficient constructive engagement, or restricted opportunities for upward mobility. The examination of the correlation between various educational levels and documented experiences related to juvenile delinquency enabled the researcher to discern connections between educational achievement and participation in delinquent behaviors..

4.3 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.3.1 Research Objective 1: To identify specific socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area

Table 4.3.1.1 Socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Poverty is contributing to minors committing crimes in this community	45	5	5	5.00	.000
Lack of employment opportunities is pushing young people into criminal activities	45	4	5	4.80	.405
Limited access to quality education is influencing the behaviour of juveniles negatively	45	4	5	4.60	.495
Family problems such as neglect or instability are driving juveniles towards crime	45	4	5	4.40	.495
Young people exposed to violence in the community are more likely to engage in criminal acts	45	4	5	4.18	.387
Valid N (listwise)	45				

The results associated with Objective 1 indicate a profoundly rooted socio-economic crisis that has direct consequences on the behavior of youth. The first measure, "Poverty is contributing to minors committing crimes in this community," attained a mean score of 5.00 with a standard deviation of 0.000, signifying unanimous agreement among all 45 participants. The remarkable degree of agreement highlights the widespread acknowledgment of poverty as the primary and uncontested factor contributing to juvenile delinquency in the region. The lack of variation in responses ($SD = 0.000$) indicates that the perception of poverty's influence is not only prevalent but unequivocal, underscoring how systemic economic deprivation restricts young individuals' options for survival, frequently driving them towards criminal behavior as a means of coping. In a rural, resource-extractive environment such as Chiadzwa, where communities are paradoxically encircled by diamonds yet mired in poverty, this observation highlights the significant socio-economic disempowerment and marginalization that contribute to deviant behavior among minors. This is consistent with wider criminological theories, including strain theory, which suggest that when legitimate pathways to attain social or economic objectives are obstructed, individuals, particularly young people, may turn to illegitimate methods.

The second construct, "Lack of employment opportunities is pushing young people into criminal activities," received a mean score of 4.80 and a standard deviation of 0.405, indicating a high level of agreement with minimal variation among respondents. While there is not complete consensus as there is with poverty, this finding suggests that a considerable majority

of the community perceives unemployment as a significant driver of juvenile delinquency. The comparatively low standard deviation indicates a close grouping of responses within the “agree” to “strongly agree” categories, thereby underscoring the idea that unemployment continues to be a significant structural challenge in the Chiadzwa area. Furthermore, restricted access to quality education, the third measure, yielded a mean score of 4.60 with a standard deviation of 0.495. This indicates that a significant proportion of respondents view educational deprivation as a crucial factor contributing to delinquency. Although there is a marginally greater variation in the responses observed, the central tendency predominantly favors a position of agreement. The inference drawn is that a lack of access to or completion of quality education diminishes genuine economic prospects and undermines socialization processes and moral development, thereby rendering young individuals susceptible to criminal influences.

The last two indicators offer equally significant insights. The fourth statement, "Family problems such as neglect or instability are driving juveniles towards crime," yielded a mean score of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 0.495. This indicates that a significant segment of the population acknowledges familial disintegration as a contributing element to juvenile delinquency, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent than poverty, unemployment, and educational disadvantage. The slightly reduced mean suggests that although family dysfunction remains an important factor, it may be regarded as more of a secondary issue or interconnected with other socio-economic challenges such as poverty and unemployment. In rural areas of Zimbabwe, particularly in Chiadzwa, the absence of parents resulting from migration, alcohol dependency, or emotional neglect frequently undermines family unity and oversight, consequently facilitating the potential for minors to engage in delinquent behaviors.

Lastly, the statement "Young people exposed to violence in the community are more likely to engage in criminal acts" produced a mean score of 4.18, accompanied by the lowest standard deviation of 0.387 among the varied responses. The comparatively lower mean in this instance, while still reflecting a consensus, implies that community violence, though recognized as a significant influence, is regarded as a less predominant factor in comparison to poverty, unemployment, education, and family disintegration. Nevertheless, the low standard deviation indicates a relatively uniform recognition of the significance of this variable, which may be indicative of localized circumstances such as encounters with illegal mining conflicts, political violence, or domestic abuse-issues prevalent in extractive and marginalized rural areas. Collectively, these findings illustrate a complex and interrelated framework of socio-economic causation, confirming that juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa is inextricably linked to the

structural, familial, and communal difficulties that characterize the socio-economic environment.

4.3.1.2 Themes from Interviews

4.3.1.2.1 Limited access to education

The restricted availability of educational opportunities has become a significant socio-economic element influencing juvenile delinquency within the Chiadzwa Communal region. The limited availability of educational institutions, the deficit of qualified educators, the considerable distances required to reach schools, and the prohibitive costs associated with attendance all play a significant role in the phenomenon of school dropouts. The educational marginalization of young individuals leads to increased idle time, susceptibility to peer pressure, and engagement in criminal activities, including theft, illegal mining, substance abuse, and premature sexual behavior. Participant 1, a teacher at Gandauta Secondary School, stated, *“Many students in this area travel over 10 kilometers daily just to attend classes. Upon their arrival, they will already be tired, resulting in a significant number ultimately withdrawing from school. Upon dropping out school, individuals often engage in makorokoza, or illegal mining, and rapidly adopt criminal behaviors.”* Participant 2, a student from the same secondary school, recounted a personal experience: *“My friend discontinued his studies in Form 2 due to his parents' inability to cover the school fees. He currently dedicates his entire day in the diamond fields. He was once apprehended for engaging in a dispute regarding stones, specifically diamonds, with other individuals.”*

Participant 3, a teacher from Chipindirwe Secondary School, concurred by highlighting the deficiency in infrastructure: *“We don't even have proper classrooms here.”* Certain classes are conducted in open-spaces under trees. *What strategies can be employed to sustain children's motivation to learn in these circumstances? The majority tend to align themselves with mining syndicates and gangs that offer the prospect of rapid financial gain.”* In a similar vein, Participant 4, a student from the same secondary school, expressed, *“At times, I am unable to attend school due to a lack of funds for books or uniforms. I resort to the fields to engage in digging activities, similar to my peers of the same age. There are no further activities available in this village.”*

Participant 5, a parent from Tinoengana Village, contributed to the discussion by expressing, *“Our children perceive education as ineffective since those who have completed O-Level remain unemployed.”* Individuals often question, *‘What is the rationale behind enduring the*

walk to school when there is an opportunity to earn income at the diamond mines?" In alignment with this sentiment, Participant 6, a parent from Tonhorai Village, expressed regret, stating, *"Even if we desire our children to receive an education, we simply lack the financial resources."* The schools are located where our children have to walk so many kilometres to get to the nearest school, we barely can afford paying school fees, and there are instances where teachers may be absent for extended periods. What kind of future are we providing for our children? Participant 7, a parent residing in Gamunorwa Village, highlighted the influence of poverty on children's decision-making: *"The majority of parents are unemployed."* When a child expresses a desire to attend school but faces a lack of food at home, what options are available to them? Our children venture into the mines and subsequently engage in pick pocketing, consumption of alcohol, or any anti-social behaviour.

From the standpoint of law enforcement, Participant 8, affiliated with the ZRP Victim Friendly Unit in Marange, stated, *"We handle numerous cases concerning juveniles involved in theft, alcohol consumption, or acts of violence at mining locations. Upon examining their backgrounds, it is evident that a significant number of them discontinued their education as a result of financial constraints or geographical remoteness. Their trajectory may have been more favorable had they received a better education."* Finally, Participant 9, a social worker affiliated with Childline, emphasized the issue of systemic neglect: *"There are children here who wish to learn but are unable to. The system has not met their needs. In periods of inactivity, children may be susceptible to various forms of exploitation, including involvement with criminal organizations, premature marriages, and substance abuse. Observations of this phenomenon are made on a daily basis in Chiadzwa."*

In summary, the participants presented a coherent and concerning depiction of how restricted educational opportunities in the Chiadzwa Communal area serve as a catalyst for juvenile delinquency. The prevalence of poverty, inadequate infrastructure, extensive distances, prohibitive fees, and limited post-educational opportunities have contributed to a sense of disillusionment among numerous young individuals. Consequently, individuals resort to illicit mining activities and engage in criminal conduct, frequently influenced by their peers or more experienced miners.

4.3.1.2.2 Poverty

The issue of poverty represents a significant socio-economic challenge within the Chiadzwa Communal area and is intricately associated with the rise in juvenile delinquency. Fundamental

requirements, including sustenance, clothing, medical care, and educational opportunities, frequently remain inaccessible. Children brought up in these settings encounter behaviors centered around survival, such as theft, illicit mining, premature sexual engagement, and substance misuse. Participant 1 stated, *“The majority of these children arrive at school without shoes or having eaten breakfast. Students experience hunger, distraction, and ultimately disengage from their studies. Upon exiting the educational system, individuals often engage in illicit diamond mining activities to provide financial support for their families; however, this involvement frequently leads them into criminal networks.”* Participant 2 recounted a personal experience: *“At times, we sleep without having any food to eat. Last year, my brother was apprehended for the theft of groceries from a tuckshop. He stated that he acted out of necessity due to our mother's illness and the lack of food.”*

In a comparable context, Participant 3 remarked, *“Poverty is the primary adversary in this situation. In situations where families lack the financial means to meet fundamental necessities, children may experience a sense of desperation. Certain young women are entering into relationships with older men for financial gain, while some young men are engaging in minor criminal activities merely to survive.”* Participant 4 openly stated, *“I used to search for diamonds alongside older boys.”* The stones would be sold, and the proceeds would be utilized to purchase food. At times, we would engage in fights regarding the diamonds or run away from law enforcement.”

Participant 5 asserted that, *“We are suffering.”* I have five children, and I am unable to provide them with adequate provisions a parent can give to a child. My eldest son currently spend his time to the mining locations. Last month, he was apprehended for the theft of a cell phone. It is painful; however, he expresses a desire to assist with household responsibilities.” Participant 6 stated, *“Our children are not inherently criminals. Economic hardship is compelling individuals to adopt detrimental behaviors. When a child observes a lack of food and the absence of employment opportunities for their parents, they experience frustration and resort to necessary actions for survival.”* In concurrence, Participant 7 remarked, *“I once found my daughter in tears after she was caught stealing soap from a neighbour's residence.”* She expressed her fatigue with her current living conditions and her distress over being ridiculed by others. The condition of poverty is compelling our youth towards feelings of shame and engagement in criminal activities. A soap can be small today but that same habit can lead her to committing large crimes one day.”

From the perspective of law enforcement, Participant 8 observed, *“The majority of the juvenile cases we address pertain to theft, illegal mining, and physical altercations. During our interviews with these children, nearly all of them attribute their behavior to factors such as hunger and poverty.”* Finally, Participant 9 articulated the overarching situation: *“We are confronting a crisis in which poverty has become normalized. The children are developing the perception that engaging in theft or illicit activities is acceptable, as this behavior is modeled for them on a daily basis. It constitutes a strategy for survival rather than mere mischief.”*

In summary, the interviews reveal a painful reality in Chiadzwa, where poverty functions not merely as an economic state but also as a social catalyst for juvenile delinquency. Individuals from various backgrounds consistently associated delinquent behaviors, including theft, illegal mining, early sexual engagement, and substance abuse, with the ongoing struggle for survival in economically disadvantaged households. The lived experiences illustrate the profound impact of poverty on the moral and social structure of the community, rendering young individuals susceptible to engaging in criminal behaviors as a means of coping.

4.3.1.2.3 Lack of employment opportunities

In the Chiadzwa Communal area, a significant number of young individuals are resorting to criminal activities due to the lack of employment opportunities. Adults are encountering difficulties in securing employment, which has repercussions for the entire family unit. Adolescents are observing the struggles of their parents and are experiencing a diminishing sense of optimism regarding their future prospects. In the absence of employment opportunities and productive activities, a significant number of individuals resort to engaging in illegal mining, theft, or aligning themselves with detrimental organizations as a means of survival. The absence of job opportunities has posed challenges for both parents and children in leading honest lives. Participant 1 stated, *“Even if our students complete their education, there are no employment opportunities available to them. Their older brothers are at home unemployed, engaged in mining activities yet they obtained diplomas and at some point degrees. This leads them to perceive that their education is unproductive, prompting them to abandon school and pursue opportunities in the diamond fields.”* Participant 2 stated, *“My cousin has completed his diploma certificate, yet he remains at home. He made efforts to seek employment; however, he was unsuccessful in finding any opportunities. Currently, he dedicates his time to consuming beverages and searching for diamonds. Occasionally, I accompany him as it is the only means available to obtain financial resources.”* Participant 3 articulated, *“Unemployment is undermining the aspirations of these children.”* When children request food or school fees from

their parents, the response often indicates a lack of financial resources. Consequently, children often resort to fast methods to generate money, which frequently results in complications.” Participant 4 stated, *“Not going to school result in loitering. A significant number of boys become involved in illegal mining activities. Certain they possess knives and engage in conflicts regarding diamonds.”*

Participant 5 asserted that, *“We possess land and diamonds in this region; however, employment opportunities remain absent. My son discontinued his education after completing Form 3. He remarked, ‘Even individuals who have completed their education are unemployed, so what is the purpose?’ He is frequently present at the mining sites, and on occasion, he returns home drunk.”* Participant 6 remarked, *“As parents, we are making efforts; however, how can we effectively guide our children when we ourselves are unemployed?”* They observe our struggles and attempt to assist, yet their efforts often result in conflicts or theft.” Participant 7 expressed a similar sentiment, stating, *“My daughter aspired to become a nurse; however, we were unable to finance her further education.”* She has become disinterested and currently dedicates a significant portion of her time to visiting shops with older men who are miners risking her own life. She asserts that her survival is essential.”

According to Participant 8, the police observe that a significant number of young offenders they apprehend claim that their engagement in criminal activities is primarily driven by a lack of employment opportunities and a desire to provide for their families. Children engage in illicit mining activities, theft, and at times, resort to violence. Participant 9 articulated, *“When young individuals lack activities to occupy them like school and employment, they experience frustration.”* A significant number of these minors experience feelings of worthlessness and rejection. At that point, they may resort to detrimental behaviors, join makorokoza, and engage in criminal activities in an attempt to attain a sense of belonging.”

In summary, the residents of Chiadzwa are evidently impacted by the absence of employment opportunities. Educators observe a decline in student motivation. Parents experience a sense of powerlessness. Young individuals are resorting to criminal activities due to a lack of alternative opportunities. The perspectives of the participants indicate that in the absence of employment opportunities, both young individuals and their families are experiencing a decline in hope. This situation is driving numerous young individuals towards engaging in illegal mining, theft, and acts of violence.

4.3.1.2.4 Family breakdown

In the Chiadzwa Communal area, many children are being raised in broken families characterized by a lack of love, support, and guidance. Certain parents are no longer together, others have died, and many children live with grandparents or single parents who are facing difficulties in managing their current situation. In these circumstances, children frequently experience feelings of isolation and neglect. This renders them exposed to peer influence and poor decisions, such as theft, alcohol consumption, substance abuse, and illicit mining activities. In the absence of guidance regarding moral principles or emotional support, individuals may resort to criminal behavior as a means of survival or a method to evade their difficulties.

Participant 1 stated that a significant number of children who are troublesome in the school environment originate from broken family structures. Certain individuals reside with their grandparents, who may be too advanced in age to exert proper control over them. Some children experience parental figures who are frequently in conflict or absent altogether. Participant 2 stated, *“My parents divorced when I was in Grade 6.” I currently reside with my grandmother. At times, I experience a sense of being overlooked by others. This is the reason I began visiting the diamond fields, to connect with other boys who share my similar story.* Participant 3 articulated, *“Certain students in this school exhibit a lack of concentration during class due to their experiences at home. I am aware of a young man whose father resides in South Africa and does not remit any financial support. His mother consistently exhibits anger. He has exhibited increasingly aggressive behavior and was previously apprehended for shoplifting.”* Participant 4 stated, *“My father consumes alcohol excessively and engages in conflicts with my mother. I prefer not to remain at home; therefore, I dedicate a significant portion of my time to socializing with my friends. Occasionally, we engage in social drinking or discreetly enter the restricted diamond zone. Our desire is to alleviate the burden of stress.”*

Participant 5 stated, *“Since my husband departed, I have been independently raising three children.” It is a challenging task. My adolescent son has exhibited increasingly disrespectful behavior and is unresponsive to guidance. He was recently apprehended by law enforcement for engaging in a physical fight. I hold myself accountable, yet I find myself questioning what actions I can take.* Participant 6 stated, *“Children require the presence of both parents. In the absence of another parent, a noticeable gap is experienced. My daughter was once respectful; however, following the death of her father, she began to skip school and is now involved with older men for financial gain.”* Participant 7 concurred, stating, *“My nephew resides with me*

following the death of his mother and the departure of his father. He claims that I am excessively strict, which leads him to spend the night at his friends' residences. I have recently come to learn that he is now affiliated with a group engaged in theft within the diamond fields.”

Participant 8 observed, *“It is frequently the case that the juveniles we apprehend originate from families experiencing difficulties, such as divorced parents, abusive environments, or absent guardians. The upbringing of these children, characterized by a lack of guidance and the presence of anger, often leads them to engage in criminal activities.”* Participant 9 articulated, *“The disintegration of family structures is a significant factor contributing to children deviating from the right path.” In the absence of love, care, and attention, a child may experience a sense of disorientation. In Chiadzwa, there is a significant presence of children who exhibit emotional distress, often resulting in their engagement with substance abuse or affiliation with perilous groups.”*

In summary, the participants distinctly demonstrated that the disintegration of family structures is resulting in distress and uncertainty for children in Chiadzwa. In environments characterized by conflict, separation, neglect, or a lack of parental support, children often experience feelings of abandonment. Subsequently, individuals may seek acceptance or an escape from their circumstances through associations with peers, involvement in gangs, or engagement in illicit activities. These narratives underscore the significance of a stable and nurturing family environment in influencing a child's future development.

4.3.1.2.5 Exposure to violence and crime

In the Chiadzwa Communal area, children and teenagers are maturing in a context where violence has become a commonplace occurrence. Due to illicit diamond mining operations and socioeconomic deprivation, numerous young individuals are exposed to or endure violent offenses, including thefts, assaults, altercations, and even homicides. Certain children observe adults employing weapons as a means to resolve conflicts, leading them to develop the belief that violence is the sole method for addressing issues. Some individuals reside in households where instances of domestic violence are prevalent. Daily exposure to violence influences children's behavior. Individuals may exhibit anger and aggression, and in certain instances, they may imitate observed behaviors.

Participant 1 stated, *“The majority of our students originate from villages where illegal mining activities are occurring.” Incidents involving individuals engaging in combat with machetes and knives occur nearly every week. Some students arrive at school displaying bruises, discussing them as if such occurrences are commonplace.* Participant 2 reported, *“I have observed individuals engaging in altercations with machetes in proximity to the diamond fields. On one occasion, an individual was subjected to severe physical assault, rendering him unable to walk. Having witnessed it repeatedly, I have become desensitized to the fear of violence. I now possess a knife as a precautionary measure in the event of an attack.”* Participant 3 stated, *“Children emulate what they observe. A confrontation occurred between two boys, during which one utilized a brick as a weapon against the other. Upon inquiring about the reason, he explained that he had observed his uncle engaging in similar behavior during a confrontation at a bar.”* Participant 4 reported, *“One of my friends come from a home environment, where the father frequently physically assaults the mother. He used to express his emotions through tears; however, now he finds himself experiencing anger instead. At times, he confront other boys who make negative remarks towards him. It is his belief that engaging in combat is the sole method to demonstrate one’s strength.”*

Participant 5 stated that, *“In our village, one cannot avoid violence. The diamond industry has attracted individuals of questionable character. Children observe instances of robbery or violence and may come to perceive these events as a normal aspect of life. My son once returned home expressing his desire to be feared like the diamond gangs.* In concurrence, Participant 7 remarked, *“Children are becoming accustomed to violence. When they feel wronged, they are often quick to resort to confrontation. It is the environment they encounter daily within their households and communities. My nephew was apprehended for allegedly stabbing another minor in connection with a cellphone dispute.”* Participant 8 observed from the perspective of law enforcement that individuals engaged in criminal activities during their youth frequently originate from communities characterized by violence. Certain individuals may assist adults in engaging in robberies or conflicts related to illegal mining activities. Exposure to these offenses results in desensitization and increased aggression. Participant 9 articulated, *“When children are frequently exposed to violence within their home environment, in their community, or in diamond fields, they start to perceive it as a normal aspect of society.” It influences their behavior. They stop to hold life in high regard and exhibit an increased propensity to engage in criminal behavior themselves.”*

The participants indicated that children in Chiadzwa are maturing in a perilous and aggressive setting. Individuals are persistently subjected to violent crimes, whether within their residences or in the vicinity of the diamond fields. This exposure influences their cognitive processes and behavioral patterns. A significant number of individuals exhibit aggressive behavior, demonstrate a diminished fear of legal repercussions, and subsequently engage in criminal activities.

4.3.2 Research Objective 2: To determine the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes in the Chiadzwa Communal area

Table 4.3.2.1 Types of juvenile crimes

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Theft by minors is common in this area	45	4	4	4.00	.000
Cases of minors involved in murder have been reported in this community	45	4	5	4.80	.405
Juvenile rape cases are occurring in this locality	45	4	5	4.20	.405
Minors in this community are engaging in drug trafficking activities	45	4	5	4.20	.405
There are cases of minors intentionally damaging property in this area	45	4	5	4.60	.495
Valid N (listwise)	45				

The results presented in Table 4.3.2.1 provide essential insights into the categories and incidence rates of juvenile offenses within the Chiadzwa Communal Area, highlighting a concerning trend of diverse and significant delinquent behaviors among youth. The initial measure, “theft by minors is prevalent in this area,” yielded a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.000, signifying unanimous agreement among all 45 respondents that theft is, in fact, a pervasive concern. This consistency suggests that theft has been integrated into the norms and may even be anticipated among the juvenile demographic of the community. The presence of such unanimous agreement, particularly within the context of a survey, is uncommon and thus significant, indicating that theft is viewed not merely as an isolated event but rather as a systemic behavioral pattern among young individuals. This situation is especially indicative in a region recognized for its abundant resources, particularly diamonds, which probably intensifies feelings of relative deprivation and inequality among the youth in the area. The absence of response variability ($SD = 0.000$) highlights the extent to which the issue has become firmly established and apparent within the local awareness. In relation to more severe offenses, the statement “cases of minors involved in murder have been reported in this community” produced a mean of 4.80 and a standard deviation of 0.405,

indicating a high level of consensus regarding the existence of significant juvenile violence. The elevated mean indicates that a significant proportion of respondents strongly concur that juvenile participation in murder is not only feasible but has indeed taken place. Despite a minor deviation, the limited standard deviation indicates that the responses are closely grouped around the “strongly agree” category. This is concerning, as it indicates a progression of juvenile delinquency from minor offenses to severe acts of violence.

The subsequent two constructs—“Juvenile rape cases are occurring in this locality” and “Minors in this community are engaging in drug trafficking activities”—both yielded mean scores of 4.20 and standard deviations of 0.405. This indicates a significant level of consensus among respondents regarding the presence and seriousness of these types of juvenile crime. The mean scores suggest that a majority of community members either agree or strongly agree on the prevalence of juvenile rape and drug trafficking, indicating a relatively low level of variation in their responses. The prevalence of sexual assault among young individuals is notably alarming, as it indicates not only criminal behavior but also a deficiency in moral and sexual education, exacerbated by familial dysfunction and insufficient access to psychosocial support services. In a similar vein, the participation of minors in drug trafficking underscores a more profound structural issue, wherein young individuals are drawn into illegal economies as both transporters and consumers, frequently as a result of economic hardship, social influence, or manipulation by criminal elements. The simultaneous occurrence of sexual and drug-related offenses indicates a multifaceted relationship involving social disintegration, exposure to detrimental environments, and a lack of protective institutions, including educational facilities, religious organizations, and child welfare services.

Lastly, the statement “There are instances of minors deliberately causing damage to property in this region” received a mean score of 4.60 and a standard deviation of 0.495. This indicates that such destructive behavior is broadly acknowledged as a type of juvenile delinquency, accompanied by a modest degree of variability in the responses provided. This illustrates the observations of community members regarding different manifestations of vandalism or destruction associated with protests, potentially connected to the grievances stemming from marginalization in a resource-abundant yet underdeveloped context. The collective findings highlight that juvenile crime in Chiadzwa extends beyond minor antisocial behavior, encompassing a range of offenses from theft to violent and sexual crimes. This situation calls for immediate, collaborative interventions from multiple stakeholders to alter this trend and enhance community safety.

4.3.2.2 Themes from interview

4.3.2.2.1 Pick pocketing

Pickpocketing has emerged as one of the most prevalent offenses perpetrated by young individuals. This minor yet detrimental offense typically occurs in densely populated areas, including growth points, markets, business centers, and regions adjacent to illegal mining operations. Adolescents, motivated by economic hardship, food insecurity, social influences, and insufficient mentorship, frequently resort to pickpocketing as a means of survival or to acquire immediate financial resources. Certain young individuals are exposed to it by more experienced offenders who exploit them due to their reduced likelihood of facing arrest or harsh penalties. Individuals acquire the skill through interactions with peers, subsequently transforming it into a habitual practice. Participant 1 stated, *“It is no longer surprising to learn that a student was apprehended for pickpocketing at Marange Centre. Certain individuals even take pride in the simplicity of pilfering from others in densely populated locations. They focus on individuals arriving from retail establishments or transportation hubs.”* Participant 2 acknowledged, *“At times, we visit the business centre merely to identify potential individuals to follow. In the event that an individual is in possession of a plastic bag containing visible currency, one may engage in the act of seizing it or discreetly inserting a hand to extract an item. I engage in this activity to purchase food or mobile airtime. This indicates that pickpocketing is recognized by the school authorities and is concurrently being accepted by certain students as a means of livelihood.”*

Participant 3 highlighted the increasing prevalence of pickpocketing among young individuals. He remarked, *“Nearly every week, we receive reports of a student who has been apprehended for stealing money from another person's pocket. The majority operate in pairs, demonstrating considerable intelligence. One diverts attention while the other engages in theft.”* Participant 4 acknowledged, *“I have engaged in such activities with my cousin previously. We observe inebriated individuals at retail establishments due to their slower awareness of surroundings. At times, I experience feelings of distress due to the absence of food at home, coupled with a lack of assistance from others. This underscores the manner in which economic difficulties compel children to participate in criminal activities, frequently collaborating with family members or peers to commit pickpocketing with minimal apprehension regarding repercussions.”*

Participant 5 stated, *“I incurred a financial loss while at the shops, and I subsequently learned that it was a group of young boys from our village. I was taken aback to discover the*

involvement of my neighbor's son. The children possess the ability to pick pocket without detection.” Participant 6 articulated a concern, stating, “Certain parents are aware of their children's actions yet choose to remain silent due to the financial benefits their children provide, such as groceries or money. It is unfortunate, yet individuals find themselves in a state of desperation.” Participant 7 concurred, stating, “Our children have adopted this behavior as a result of the diamond rush. Individuals observe others accumulating wealth rapidly and aspire to achieve similar success. Engaging in pickpocketing serves as a means of survival in an environment characterized by a lack of employment opportunities and food scarcity.” Participant 8 affirmed the frequency of the issue, indicating, “We apprehend a minimum of two to three juveniles each month for pickpocketing.” The majority of these individuals have a history of reoffending. They are active during high-demand periods and are aware of the optimal moments to act”. Participant 9 stated, “The increase in pickpocketing can be attributed to the lack of mentorship available for these young individuals. A significant number of these individuals experience hunger, neglect, or come from fractured family structures. They believe that theft is the sole means of escape.”

In summary, pickpocketing has emerged as a prevalent offense among adolescents in the Chiadzwa region, with numerous young individuals participating in this activity either to fulfill essential needs or as a result of peer pressure. The accounts indicate that individuals as young as 13 or 14 are becoming engaged, and the community serves as both observer and sufferer of these actions. Whereas certain parents experience a sense of helplessness, others passively acquiesce to the behavior as a result of economic hardship and desperation. Educators, law enforcement officials, and social service professionals concur that there is a rising trend in pickpocketing incidents among adolescents, with numerous cases documented on a monthly basis. This scenario illustrates underlying socio-economic challenges, such as food insecurity, joblessness, and familial disintegration, all of which need to be tackled to halt the increasing incidence of juvenile pickpocketing in Chiadzwa.

4.3.2.2.2 Robbery

In the Chiadzwa Communal area, the prevalence of robbery has emerged as a significant concern, particularly with respect to its involvement of juveniles. As a result of severe economic hardship, social influences, unstable family environments, and the temptation of rapid financial gain from illicit diamond mining, a significant number of youth are resorting to theft as a method of subsistence. In contrast to pickpocketing, robbery is characterized by the use of force or intimidation and frequently occurs during nighttime in isolated locations, such

as near retail establishments, residential properties, or along routes utilized by miners and merchants. Certain adolescents possess knives, machetes, or stones and collaborate in groups to commit thefts, targeting individuals for their cellphones, money, groceries, and clothing. Participant 1 stated, *“Some of our learners are now feared within the community.” They organize into groups and engage in theft against those returning from the mining areas. Complaints have been received from residents indicating that specific students are implicated in incidents of violent robbery.”*

Participant 2 corroborated this trend, stating, *“I once became part of a group of boys who engage in ‘hits’ on individuals during the night. At times, we resorted to intimidation with a stick, while at other instances, we resorted to physical force and confiscate all possessions. I acknowledge that it is inappropriate, yet we lack resources at home.”* This illustrates that certain adolescents are openly participating in robbery, frequently under the influence or guidance of older individuals, perceiving it as a means to fulfill fundamental needs or to attain social standing. Participant 3 articulated a concern: *“During the previous term, two male students from Form 3 were apprehended for assaulting a vendor and appropriating her merchandise. They possessed knives and wore masks. During our conversation with them, they indicated that their knowledge was acquired from older boys in the community who engage in theft and subsequently sell the stolen goods.”* Participant 4 concurred, stating, *“At times my age mates wait behind shops during the night.” When an individual is walking alone, they intervene and request either money or their mobile device. If they refuse, they impose force. Alternative methods for survival are not apparent to them.”* The testimonies illustrate the extent to which robbery has become normalized, particularly among young individuals who are unemployed, experiencing hunger, and seeking rapid financial relief.

Participant 5 asserted that, *“Recently, someone from our village was assaulted by a group of youths in possession of machetes. He was acquainted with one of them- the son of a neighbour. These are children whom we have observed as they matured. They have now resorted to theft.”* Participant 6 stated, *“They engage in theft from shopkeepers and individuals who are returning after selling their goods.” On one occasion, an individual was robbed, bitten and abandoned in a wooded area. The situation is distressing, particularly as some of these young individuals are merely 14 or 15 years of age.”* Participant 7 noted in concurrence, *“There is no longer any fear. During power outages, groups of boys tend to engage in aggressive behavior. They focus on residential properties, individuals traveling, or those engaged in mining activities with*

financial incentives. The police make an effort to apprehend the suspects; however, the individuals conceal themselves in the foliage following the commission of the robbery.”

Participant 8 acknowledged the concern, stating, *“There has been a rise in juvenile robbery cases over the past year. The level of aggression exhibited by these children is increasing. Certain individuals are being exploited by older offenders who provide them with firearms and assure them of financial rewards.”* Participant 9 stated, *“These children are products of a broken system. They are raised in environments characterized by violence, poverty, and neglect. They thus perceive robbery as an escape route- a means to acquire respect, financial resources, or sustenance.”*

In summary, the incidence of robbery among juveniles in the Chiadzwa Communal area is increasing at a concerning pace. The evidence indicates that adolescents are engaging in violent thefts, frequently as members of structured collectives. Their focus is on individuals within the community who are in vulnerable situations, and their activities predominantly occur during nighttime hours. A significant number of individuals are motivated by factors such as hunger, familial disintegration, and the detrimental impact of illicit mining operations. The community possesses awareness; however, a significant number of individuals experience a sense of powerlessness in effecting change. The voices of the participants convey a collective apprehension that, in the absence of significant intervention via awareness initiatives, support services, family restoration, and community policing, juvenile robbery rates are likely to escalate, thereby endangering both the youth and the community at large.

4.3.2.2.3 Murder

Murder represents one of the gravest offenses, and it is disheartening to discover that even among the youth in the Chiadzwa Communal area, there are instances of involvement in the act of taking lives. The increase in illegal mining, coupled with poverty and domestic violence, has led to the desensitization of numerous juveniles, who now resort to using knives, machetes, and stones to resolve conflicts or assert dominance. In certain instances, fights among young individuals concerning financial matters, gemstones, or retribution have resulted in fatalities.

Participant 1 stated, *“There have been instances where boys in Form 3 or 4 are reported to be affiliated with violent groups that have resulted in loss of lives during the fights near the diamond fields. A student was absent for several days, and upon his return, it was reported that he had been implicated in a stabbing incident.”* Participant 2 disclosed, *“I am aware of peers my age who have taken the lives of others during altercations over diamond locations.”* A man

was stabbed with a screwdriver by one of the assailants after he declined to surrender his belongings. They sought refuge and concealed themselves for several days.” The narratives illustrate that certain young individuals, driven by avarice or rage, resort to lethal violence during conflicts, particularly in mining regions characterized by a lack of law and elevated levels of tension.

Participant 3 stated, *“In the previous year, a 16-year-old was apprehended following the fatal beating of another boy during a dispute. The individuals engaged in a dispute over a minor diamond, resulting in them striking one another to death. The entire school was taken aback.”* In support of this, Participant 4 stated, *“Fights can become quite serious. On one occasion, I witnessed young men engage in violent behavior by using broken bottles to inflict harm upon one another at a location where alcohol was being consumed.”* The responses underscore the alarming trend of escalating violence among juveniles, where some individuals exhibit a disregard for legal consequences due to insufficient oversight and protracted judicial processes in Chiadzwa.

Participant 5 stated, *“We buried a young man last year who was killed by a group of boys, including teenagers. They said it was revenge because he had beaten one of their brothers. The males employed knives and bricks as instruments. The experience was exceedingly distressing.”* In a similar vein, Participant 6 remarked, *“My neighbor’s son is currently incarcerated. At the age of 17, he was involved in the fatality of an individual during the course of a robbery. The community is experiencing fear, as even children are now seen carrying weapons.”* Participant 7 remarked, *“These children exhibit a remarkable lack of fear. They operate in groups and confront individuals who engage in disputes with them. Approximately two months prior, an individual was fatally injured close to the river, with local residents attributing the incident to youths from this area.”* Participant 8 indicated from the perspective of law enforcement, *“We have managed multiple murder cases that involve juveniles. Incidents predominantly occur in mining regions or informal drinking establishments where young males are under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. They fail to comprehend the gravity associated with the act of taking a life.”* Finally, Participant 9 remarked, *“A significant number of these children have experienced trauma or have been brought up in violent households. They are raised in an environment where murder is perceived as commonplace. Certain individuals with prior criminal experience utilize these methods to perpetrate such offenses.”*

In summary, the feedback from participants indicates that juvenile homicide in Chiadzwa is a significant and escalating issue. Although it is less prevalent than robbery or theft, its manifestation is both surprising and profoundly impactful. The majority of incidents occur in areas designated for illegal mining, where youth are often armed and readily resort to violence during disputes. The increase in such violent acts can be attributed to factors such as peer pressure, poverty, exposure to violence, and insufficient community control. The interviews reveal that a significant number of these juveniles are not intrinsically problematic; rather, they are shaped by their surroundings. In the absence of immediate measures such as counseling, familial assistance, and enhanced community policing, there is a significant risk of losing more lives, affecting both victims and the juveniles involved.

4.3.2.2.4 Rape

The act of rape, particularly when committed by juveniles, represents a profoundly distressing and significant concern that impacts numerous families within the Chiadzwa Communal Area. This act constitutes not merely a criminal offense but also a transgression that inflicts enduring psychological harm, particularly on young females. In Chiadzwa, a region characterized by mining operations and dilapidated housing, numerous children encounter negative influences at a young age. In the absence of substantial adult supervision, numerous boys may develop the belief that coercing girls into sexual activities is acceptable behavior. Members of the community, comprising educators, students, parents, law enforcement officials, and social workers, conveyed their personal experiences and narratives, illustrating the increasing prevalence of juvenile rape in this region. The issue is exacerbated by a prevailing culture of silence, apprehension regarding reporting, and insufficient education on sexual rights and responsibilities.

Participant 1 stated, *“Just last month, a Form Two boy assaulted a Grade Seven girl near the river after school.”* The boy informed law enforcement that he was unaware of the wrongdoing, citing that *“everyone is doing it”* in the village.” Participant 2 remarked, *“Occasionally, boys engage in bets among themselves, stating ‘Ndichamubata nhasi’ (I will get her today). These girls keep it to themselves and hesitate to confide in elders.”* These assertions illustrate the manner in which adolescent males are starting to perceive sexual assault as a form of entertainment or an exhibition of dominance. Participant 3 expressed comparable concerns, stating, *“In the past year alone, we have heard of three cases involving boys from this school.”* In many instances, parents resolve the issue privately to avoid police involvement, which they see as inappropriate.” In support of this, Participant 4 stated, *“One of my classmates was raped*

by a boy. She informed her mother; however, they did not report the incident to the authorities due to their connection with the boy's family.” These experiences illustrate the detrimental beliefs and the silence that safeguard perpetrators. Rather than receiving justice, numerous victims endure their suffering in silence, whereas the individuals implicated often face minimal consequences or correction.

Both parents and professionals expressed similar apprehensions. Participant 5 reported, “My niece was sexually assaulted by a 16-year-old male employed in the diamond fields.” They provided us with groceries and implored us not to make a report. We were concerned that she might not get married if others became aware.” Participant 6 stated, “The boys in our village lack guidance. Individuals engage in viewing adult content on their mobile devices, subsequently attempting to replicate these experiences with underage females.” Participant 7 stated, “In the previous year, a group of boys assaulted a girl at the borehole during the evening hours. They were merely 14 and 15 years of age.” Participant 8 indicated, “From January to April, we documented seven instances of rape with juveniles identified as suspects.” The majority of incidents occurred in densely vegetated regions or unoccupied residences.” Participant 9 articulated, “What is observed in Chiadzwa is a disintegration of ethical standards and safeguarding measures.” Young males often perceive their behavior as a demonstration of masculinity, while females may feel hesitant to voice their opinions. Certain individuals engage in acts of sexual violence without fully comprehending the harm they inflict.”

In summary, the perspectives of all nine participants distinctly indicate that juvenile rape in Chiadzwa is not merely a reality but is, in fact, disturbingly prevalent. The majority of the male participants are adolescents who engage in such behavior due to a lack of understanding, social pressure, or exposure to mature material. Parents frequently opt for silence instead of pursuing justice in order to safeguard family reputations or relationships, leaving girls feeling frightened and emotionally wounded. This issue is exacerbated by insufficient education, inadequate community reporting mechanisms, and lenient consequences for perpetrators.

4.3.3 Research Objective 3: To determine the challenges faced by Chiadzwa communal area in addressing juvenile delinquency

Table 4.3.3.1 Challenges faced

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of institutional capacity worsens the rates minors are committing crimes in this area	45	4	4	4.00	.000

This community has no effective youth-focused interventions to reduce crime among minors	45	1	2	1.62	.490
Law enforcement efforts are not effective in dealing with youth crime in this area	45	1	2	1.42	.499
There are no properly coordinated support services for dealing with young offenders here	45	4	5	4.38	.490
Negative societal attitudes are making it harder to solve youth-related crime issues	45	4	5	4.62	.490
Valid N (listwise)	45				

The table presented above illustrates a complex scenario characterized by institutional deficiencies, constrained programmatic initiatives, inadequate law enforcement, disjointed service provision, and entrenched societal perspectives. The statement “Lack of institutional capacity worsens the rates minors are committing crimes in this area” received a mean score of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 0.000, indicating unanimous agreement among all respondents that institutional deficiencies represent a significant obstacle in addressing juvenile crime. The unanimous agreement, evident in the complete lack of variation, highlights the seriousness of institutional failure in Chiadzwa. This discovery highlights the shortcomings in administrative, human, and technical resources within local institutions, including schools, police, social services, and community organizations that are intended to deliver structured interventions for at-risk youth. The situation suggests that the pervasive deficiencies in infrastructure, staffing, and strategic direction have resulted in a governance void that minors take advantage of, either by becoming involved in criminal activities or remaining unregulated due to the lack of established control systems.

The subsequent two items present a notable contrast. The assertion that “This community has no effective youth-focused interventions to reduce crime among minors” received a mean score of 1.62 with a standard deviation of 0.490. In contrast, the statement “Law enforcement efforts are not effective in dealing with youth crime in this area” yielded an even lower mean of 1.42 and a standard deviation of 0.499. The two responses indicate that a considerable number of participants expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with the assertion that there are no interventions or that law enforcement lacks effectiveness. At first glance, this may suggest that certain interventions and law enforcement strategies exist and may be operational; however, the comparatively low averages indicate a prevailing sense of dissatisfaction, albeit accompanied by a degree of optimism. The modest yet observable standard deviations in both items underscore slight discrepancies in perceptions, potentially attributable to varying

experiences with law enforcement or exposure to disparate NGO-led initiatives. For example, although certain villages in Chiadzwa may have experienced advantages from specific youth initiatives or community policing strategies, others continue to be overlooked, resulting in this varied perception. This also suggests a multifaceted reality in which formal mechanisms may be present nominally, yet lack the prevalence, consistency, or effectiveness necessary to alter community perceptions.

The last two points lead us to a robust agreement regarding significant structural and social issues. The assertion that “There are no properly coordinated support services for dealing with young offenders here” yielded a mean score of 4.38, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.490. In contrast, the statement “Negative societal attitudes are making it harder to solve youth-related crime issues” received an even higher mean score of 4.62, while maintaining the same standard deviation. The scores reflect a significant consensus, approaching the “strongly agree” threshold, that Chiadzwa does not possess a cohesive, multi-sectoral response framework for young offenders, and that existing community beliefs and stigmas are obstructing advancement. The relatively low standard deviations indicate that these views are not unique but rather commonly held within the community. The absence of coordinated support likely indicates disjointed initiatives among educational institutions, conventional leadership, law enforcement agencies, and social workers—if such resources are available at all. In the absence of a well-organized referral or rehabilitation framework, juvenile offenders may face neglect, experience severe punitive measures devoid of reintegration assistance, or revert to patterns of reoffending. In a similar vein, acknowledging negative societal attitudes as an impediment is of considerable importance. Factors such as the stigmatization of young offenders, community indifference, or fatalistic attitudes towards youth behavior can hinder the effectiveness of both preventive and rehabilitative efforts. Such perspectives may also deter community members from engaging in or endorsing youth interventions.

4.3.3.2 Themes from Interviews

4.3.3.2.1 Lack of institutional capacity

A significant challenge encountered by the Chiadzwa Communal Area in addressing juvenile delinquency is the insufficient institutional capacity. This indicates that educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, social services, and various support systems lack sufficient resources, adequately trained personnel, or appropriate tools to assist children who are encountering legal issues or are at risk of engaging in criminal activities. In a region such as Chiadzwa, characterized by elevated levels of poverty and the disruption of traditional

lifestyles due to mining operations, the absence of support has hindered efforts to safeguard and mentor the youth.

Participant 1 stated, *"There is no school counsellor present here. When a child exhibits inappropriate behavior or demonstrates difficulties, the common response is to impose punishment or to send them home. There is a lack of follow-up and absence of professional assistance."* In support of this, Participant 2 expressed, *"At times, I wish there were someone available to converse with. Certain individuals face significant challenges within their home environments; however, the educational institution predominantly focuses on punitive measures rather than exploring potential solutions."* These experiences indicate that both educators and learners recognize the necessity for assistance; however, the institution lacks the trained personnel or frameworks to provide emotional or behavioral support. This frequently drives at-risk children deeper into detrimental behaviors, often without timely recognition by those around them.

Participant 3 articulated, *"Our secondary school is characterized by a limited number of educators in relation to a substantial student population. Even in instances where we observe a learner facing difficulties or exhibiting inappropriate behavior, we often lack the necessary time or expertise to address the situation effectively"*. Participant 4 remarked, *"During the previous term, a male student who was caught stealing a phone was suspended for three weeks; however, upon his return, his behavior had deteriorated further. There was a lack of communication with him and his family."* This indicates that the use of punishment in isolation is ineffective. There exists a notable deficiency in the manner in which educational institutions address juvenile offenses; it is imperative that they receive adequate training, implement counseling services, and foster collaboration with social workers or law enforcement agencies.

Parents additionally experience the burden of systemic inadequacies. Participant 5 stated, *"When my son was apprehended for theft, I approached the police; however, they responded, 'isu hatina nguva nevanana' (we don't have time for children)." He was merely cautioned and subsequently released."* Participant 6 stated, *"There are no youth programs available in our village."* The children aimlessly roam, and those employed in the mines exert an influence on them, encouraging behaviors such as drinking, stealing, or engaging in fights." Participant 7 remarked, *"At times, when we notify social workers about a child, they respond that they lack fuel or transportation to arrive. What strategies can we employ to combat crime of this nature?"* In alignment with these perspectives, Participant 8 expressed, *"Our intention is to*

assist children; however, we lack transportation, adequate holding facilities for juveniles, and a sufficient number of trained officers. We are experiencing a significant amount of pressure.”

Ultimately, Participant 9 disclosed, *“Our visits to this area occur only once a month, which is insufficient.”* The absence of full-time child protection officers in Chiadzwa presents significant challenges in providing timely assistance to children in need.

In summary, the feedback from all nine participants underscores the significant deficiency in institutional capacity within Chiadzwa to address juvenile delinquency. Educational institutions face significant challenges due to excessive demands and insufficient resources, law enforcement agencies are operating with limited capacity, social services are constrained, and caregivers experience a lack of support. In the absence of robust systems and adequately trained professionals in Chiadzwa, numerous children are left vulnerable, lacking guidance or support to shield them from negative influences. In the absence of any modifications, the prevalence of juvenile delinquency is likely to escalate.

4.3.3.2.2 Lack of effective youth-focused interventions

The majority of participants expressed significant concern regarding the absence of interventions designed for youth, identifying this as a primary obstacle in tackling juvenile delinquency. Interventions aimed at youth are initiatives or activities specifically developed to assist young individuals in avoiding criminal behavior, acquiring skills, and making improved life decisions. Such initiatives may encompass athletic activities, organizations, professional development programs, guidance services, educational campaigns, or mentorship endeavors. Nevertheless, in Chiadzwa, these initiatives are either non-existent, inadequately financed, or not regarded with the necessary seriousness. This deficiency has rendered numerous young individuals inactive and susceptible to engaging in criminal activities, including theft, substance abuse, violence, and even sexual assault.

Participant 1 stated, *“There is nothing for the children to do after school. Absence of sports clubs, computer classes, and youth centres result in children to wander through the shopping centre or mining sites, ultimately emulating undesirable conduct.”* Participant 2 reiterated this sentiment, stating, *“Upon completing my school day, I spend time with older boys at the bar, as there are no activities available.”* It was at that point that I began to engage in smoking and drinking.” The evidence indicates that the youth in Chiadzwa are not being constructively involved, leading to the development of detrimental behaviors. Should secondary schools and

the community provide significant activities or secure environments for young individuals, a considerable number would likely opt for a more positive trajectory.

Participant 3 stated, *“We possess concepts for youth initiatives such as debates or gardening projects; however, there is a lack of funding or support from the authorities.”* The local leaders are not placing a priority on the youth.” Participant 4 remarked, *“Occasionally, we hear about programs in towns, yet they never reach our area.”* There is a sense of being overlooked.” The feeling of neglect experienced by young individuals in rural regions such as Chiadzwa illustrates how disparities in development and inadequate planning contribute to an increased susceptibility to criminal behavior among rural youth. In the absence of community initiatives that impart essential life skills or foster optimism for the future, numerous individuals may experience feelings of frustration and neglect during their upbringing, potentially resulting in the adoption of criminal behavior as a means of coping or survival. It was concurred by both parents and community professionals that additional efforts are necessary.

Participant 5 remarked, *“During our youth, there existed community games, traditional dances, and youth clubs. Currently, our children remain seated by the roadside throughout the day.”* Participant 6 stated, *“For certain boys, the sole activities available are engaging in illegal panning or drug sales. Should there be workshops or vocational training centers, it is possible that individuals would engage in productive activities.”* Participant 7 stated, *“Girls are also impacted. Several individuals find themselves in premature marriages or abusive situations due to a lack of aspirations to pursue.”* Participant 8 acknowledged, *“Our focus is solely on responding to crimes; however, effective prevention requires the implementation of programs and educational initiatives. Currently, there are no ongoing youth outreach initiatives in this area.”* Ultimately, Participant 9 remarked, *“This issue has been raised on numerous occasions. It is essential to establish a dedicated youth hub in this region. A lasting and collectively-owned entity.”*

In summary, all participants concur that the absence of interventions aimed at youth is contributing to the rise of juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa. In the absence of constructive engagement, numerous young individuals may resort to perilous behaviors driven by feelings of boredom or despair. The community is deficient in recreational facilities, mentorship initiatives, vocational opportunities, and counseling services specifically designed for young individuals. This has created a significant void in their development. Confronting juvenile

delinquency in Chiadzwa necessitates a dual approach that encompasses both the penalization of offenders and the commitment to fostering the future prospects of youth.

4.3.3.2.3 Weak law enforcement efforts

Weak law enforcement initiatives have been recognized as a significant obstacle in tackling juvenile delinquency within the Chiadzwa Communal Area. A significant number of community members contend that law enforcement and other relevant authorities are insufficiently addressing the issue of youth involvement in criminal activities. Some offenses remain unaddressed or overlooked as a result of constrained resources, corruption, or apprehension in confronting influential figures. This fosters a context in which young individuals perceive the opportunity to engage in criminal activities without facing consequences. In Chiadzwa, a location characterized by prevalent illegal mining, drug trafficking, and violent conduct, the inadequacies of law enforcement exacerbate the situation by not intervening promptly or ensuring that perpetrators are held responsible.

Participant 1 stated, *“We document instances of students engaging in drug use or violent behavior; however, the police either arrive late or do not respond at all. At times, they claim a lack of fuel or transportation resources.”* This indicates that despite the school's attempts to engage legal authorities, minimal action is taken. Participant 2 remarked, *“We observe boys engaging in theft from stores, yet there are no consequences. There are claims that law enforcement may be hesitant to apprehend the older individuals involved in illegal mining activities.”* This illustrates the perception among youth that engaging in illegal activities may result in no repercussions, particularly when observing that older offenders are not held accountable. The aforementioned experiences illustrate a justice system that, while apparent, remains inactive in Chiadzwa, particularly in cases involving juvenile offenders or those associated with influential individuals.

Participant 3 remarked, *“In instances where we report a juvenile case involving fighting or bullying, the police occasionally advise us to address the matter within the school setting. However, we lack the training necessary to address criminal matters.”* This indicates a framework that shifts accountability onto educational institutions rather than implementing proactive measures. Participant 4 stated, *“Certain boys physically assault other students or even engage in theft from teachers, yet they return to school the following day.”* It appears as though no events transpired.” This clearly indicates that in the absence of significant repercussions, young individuals are likely to be motivated to engage in repeated offenses.

Concurrently, the judicial system exhibits a lack of responsiveness, hindering the potential for substantive reform.

The community experienced a similar sense of disappointment. Participant 5 stated, *“I previously reported an incident involving a boy who assaulted my son. After a duration of three days, the police arrived and reported that they were unable to locate him. Nevertheless, he was strolling freely within the village.”* Participant 6 remarked, *“Certain parents shield their children from legal consequences, and law enforcement often overlooks this. What measures can be implemented to prevent such criminal activities?”* Participant 7 concurred, asserting, *“If the police were genuinely committed, numerous children would undergo transformation. However, they now perceive criminal behavior as commonplace.”* Participant 8 acknowledged, *“Indeed, we encounter numerous challenges such as inadequate transportation, a shortage of personnel, and at times, apprehension regarding potential retaliation in these mining regions.”* Finally, Participant 9 stated, *“Collaboration between law enforcement, social services, and educational institutions is essential; however, this collaboration is currently lacking. Our efforts are currently compartmentalized.”*

In summary, the perspectives of the participants indicate a significant failure in law enforcement within Chiadzwa. Educators and guardians experience a lack of support, adolescents perceive themselves as beyond reach, and law enforcement officials report feelings of being overwhelmed or lacking adequate resources. The insufficient legal measures addressing juvenile offenses facilitates the persistence and proliferation of undesirable conduct. This undermines the rule of law and contributes to a decline in community safety.

4.3.4 Research Objective 4: To determine the evidence based strategies to curb juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area

Table 4.3.4.1 Evidence based strategies

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Awareness campaigns can address the lawlessness behaviors by minors in this community	45	4	5	4.80	.405
Providing skills training to young people can help reduce youth-related crimes	45	4	5	4.40	.495
Increased parental support can help control the rise of crime among minors	45	4	5	4.80	.405
Improving access to education can prevent minors from engaging in criminal behaviour	45	4	5	4.18	.387

Collaboration between traditional leaders, police, schools, and NGOs can help reduce youth crime	45	4.00	5.00	4.6000	.49543
Valid N (listwise)	45				

The first statement, “Awareness campaigns can address the lawless behaviors exhibited by minors in this community,” yielded a mean score of 4.80 and a standard deviation of 0.405, indicating a strong consensus regarding the necessity of awareness campaigns in altering juvenile behavior. The prevailing agreement indicates a robust conviction that educational initiatives at the community level, aimed at both young people and adults, have the potential to enhance knowledge, shift perceptions, and promote positive behavioral norms. In communities such as Chiadzwa, where formal mechanisms of social control may be lacking, informal yet structured avenues for public dialogue, youth awareness, and community mobilization can effectively address significant gaps in prevention efforts. This highlights the necessity of developing campaigns tailored to specific contexts that emphasize the rights and responsibilities of youth, the repercussions of criminal behavior, and the importance of community role models. It may be beneficial to incorporate local cultural elements, traditional authority figures, and peer-led strategies to improve both relevance and effectiveness.

The subsequent measures reinforce the recognized efficacy of interventions focused on skill development and family engagement. The assertion that “Providing skills training to young people can help reduce youth-related crimes” yielded a mean score of 4.40 and a standard deviation of 0.495, indicating a significant tendency to support the notion that equipping youth with vocational skills can steer them away from criminal activities. Participants acknowledge that poverty and unemployment frequently render youth vulnerable to criminal exploitation, particularly in mineral-rich yet economically disadvantaged areas such as Chiadzwa. Skills training serves as a practical avenue for income generation while simultaneously fostering self-esteem, improving decision-making capabilities, and facilitating community integration, all of which are essential factors in mitigating delinquency. Additionally noteworthy is the statement, “Increased parental support can help control the rise of crime among minors,” which, similar to the initial measure, achieved a high mean of 4.80 and a standard deviation of 0.405. This highlights the crucial function of the family as a socializing entity. Participants distinctly recognize that insufficient parenting, whether attributed to financial difficulties, familial disintegration, or migration, has undermined juvenile discipline and accountability. Consequently, approaches designed to assist families, including parenting workshops, counseling services, and family reunification initiatives, are regarded as particularly effective in preventing and alleviating juvenile delinquency.

The concluding two constructs emphasize the necessity for structural reforms within the education system and the importance of collaboration among institutions. The statement “Improving access to education can prevent minors from engaging in criminal behaviour” yielded a mean score of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 0.387, indicating a general consensus among respondents regarding the protective benefits of education. Education is regarded as a long-term investment that contributes not only to economic productivity but also to civic responsibility and psychosocial development. Within the Chiadzwa context, it is essential to improve educational access and quality, particularly in situations where schools may face challenges such as understaffing, lack of resources, or inaccessibility due to geographic or economic constraints. Finally, the assertion that “Collaboration between traditional leaders, police, schools, and NGOs can help reduce youth crime” received a mean rating of 4.60 and a standard deviation of 0.49543, indicating the community’s recognition of the value of comprehensive, multi-faceted strategies. The elevated average indicates a collective recognition that effective sustainable solutions to juvenile crime cannot be realized independently. Coordinated frameworks that integrate local governance, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, and civil society are essential. This highlights the necessity for policy coherence and collective accountability among institutions, which frequently exhibit fragmentation or duplication in rural contexts such as Chiadzwa. In summary, these results provide compelling support for a comprehensive, inclusive, and empowerment-focused approach to tackle the underlying factors contributing to juvenile delinquency.

4.3.4.2 Interviews Themes

4.3.4.2.1 Providing skills training

Firstly, providing skills training to young people has been extensively acknowledged as a highly effective method for mitigating juvenile delinquency, particularly in high-risk regions such as the Chiadzwa Communal Area. In Chiadzwa, numerous young individuals are maturing in conditions of poverty, amidst unlawful mining operations, substance abuse, and constrained prospects for personal advancement. Consequently, certain individuals resort to criminal activities as a means of survival or due to the influence of their peers. Participants concurred that providing young individuals with practical skills, including carpentry, welding, tailoring, or farming, could facilitate their ability to secure legitimate means of livelihood and avoid criminal activities. Their voices embody the frustrations, aspirations, and possible resolutions that stem from their everyday experiences.

Participant 1 stated, *“The majority of our students may not possess exceptional academic abilities, yet they demonstrate considerable talent in practical skills. Establishing workshops or training centers could potentially prevent numerous individuals from engaging in illegal mining and theft.”* This perspective was reiterated by Participant 2, who stated, *“I wish to acquire skills in repairing phones or motorbikes, but there are no available learning opportunities for that here. Certain young males engage in theft due to a lack of skills or employment opportunities.”* The responses indicate a significant inclination among educators and students towards skill-based alternatives that facilitate self-employment or employment within the formal economy. In the absence of these alternatives, young individuals may find themselves inactive or lured by the prospect of immediate financial gain through criminal activities.

Participant 3 expressed a similar perspective, stating, *“It is essential to incorporate skills training into the school curriculum or collaborate with local NGOs to provide training for our youth.”* The majority of these young men seek practical activities to engage in during their free time.” Participant 4 provided a first-hand account: *“My friend was previously involved in a gang, but after he became part of a tailoring project in Mutare, he underwent a significant transformation.”* He is currently engaged in the selling of school uniforms.” This statement illustrates the transformative impact that skills training can have when young individuals are afforded the opportunity to cultivate something of significance. This also underscores the potential for programs of this nature, even beyond Chiadzwa, to create a ripple effect within the community.

From the viewpoint of parents, training in practical skills serves as a means to reinstate discipline and accountability. Participant 5 stated, *“If our children engage in meaningful activities, they will not waste time lingering at mining locations or retail establishments.”* Participant 6 stated, *“Vocational skills have the potential to provide them with hope. Currently, a significant number of individuals are experiencing a sense of disorientation.”* Participant 7 concurred, stating, *“When my nephew began his welding education through a church project, his behaviour transformed.”* He developed a concentrated focus. Participant 8 remarked, “We apprehend the same individuals repeatedly. The establishment of adequate youth empowerment centers could potentially lead to a reduction in the number of cases.” In conclusion, Participant 9 stated, *“Rehabilitation through skills training is superior to punishment.”* It imparts to children a sense of self-worth and purpose.

In summary, individuals from various sectors of the community perceive skills training as an effective approach to addressing juvenile crime in Chiadzwa. It is posited that equipping young individuals with practical, income-generating skills increases the likelihood of their avoidance of illegal activities and fosters the establishment of constructive life goals. The accounts illustrate genuine experiences in which access to training significantly transformed individuals' lives.

4.3.4.2.2 Parental support

The impact of parental support is significant in determining the behavior and future outcomes of children. Children who receive guidance, affection, and discipline from their parents exhibit a reduced likelihood of participating in criminal activities, including theft, substance abuse, and acts of violence. Participant 1 stated, *“A significant number of our students arrive at school without any guidance from their homes. Certain parents may be absent or exhibit a lack of concern regarding their children's activities following school hours.”* Participant 2 corroborated this by stating, *“When my mother began assisting me with my schoolwork and engaging in daily conversations, I ceased associating with the boys who smoke and steal.”* The observations indicate that the presence of parents enhances children's sense of value and promotes their adherence to positive behavior. Conversely, children who are left to their own devices often emulate negative behaviors observed from their peers or their environment.

Participant 3 expressed, *“We exert our utmost efforts as educators; however, the lack of support from home presents significant challenges.”* It is essential for parents to collaborate with educational institutions in order to effectively support their children's development. In concurrence, Participant 4 stated, *“When I began to skip classes, my grandmother visited the school and communicated with the head.” That experience transformed me as I recognized her genuine concern.”* This experience illustrates that children frequently explore limits; however, when parents engage actively and demonstrate care, they can assist children in redirecting their behavior appropriately. The involvement of parents enhances not only the enforcement of discipline but also fortifies the emotional bond shared with their children.

Participant 5 stated, *“We observe that children are being arrested, and frequently, they originate from households lacking guidance.”* Participant 6 remarked, *“Certain parents become preoccupied with the pursuit of wealth and overlook their responsibilities in raising their children.”* Participant 7 stated, *“I engage in conversation with my son each evening. I inquire about his educational experiences and his social connections. This approach allows me to be*

informed of developments prior to any critical moments.” From the viewpoint of law enforcement, Participant 8 articulated, *“In the majority of juvenile crime cases we address, the underlying issue is inadequate parenting or a complete lack of guardianship.”* In conclusion, Participant 9 articulated, *“We consistently inform parents that the foundation of discipline is established within the home.”* Involvement of parents can significantly decrease the occurrence of these crimes.

In summary, the perspectives of all nine participants indicate that parental support serves as a significant factor in mitigating juvenile crime in Chiadzwa. The active involvement of parents, through communication with their children, monitoring academic performance, or dedicating quality time together, substantially reduces the likelihood of children exhibiting negative behaviors. Nevertheless, numerous parents in Chiadzwa are preoccupied with survival difficulties or the illicit diamond trade, and this lack of parental oversight creates opportunities for children to pursue perilous routes. Consequently, it is imperative to inform parents regarding their responsibilities, and for community leaders and educational institutions to collaborate closely with families to safeguard the future of children.

4.3.4.2.3 Access to education

Access to education serves as a highly effective means of preventing juvenile delinquency. Regular school attendance enables children to acquire not only academic knowledge but also ethical guidance, discipline, and a defined sense of purpose in life. Engagement in education occupies individuals and aids in the formulation of life objectives, thereby diminishing the likelihood of involvement in criminal activities. In Chiadzwa, various factors such as poverty, geographical distance, and the temptation of immediate financial gain from illegal diamond panning hinder some children from attending school. Educators, students, parents, law enforcement, and social service professionals collectively advocate for the notion that enhancing educational access is a crucial approach to mitigating juvenile delinquency.

Participant 1 stated that children who remain in school infrequently encounter difficulties. Those who disengage from their education or discontinue their studies are often the individuals who become involved in altercations, theft, and substance abuse. Participant 2 corroborated this by stating, *“Prior to my return to school, I would spend my days idly wandering with older boys. Currently, I find myself unable to contemplate that matter as my academic commitments occupy my time.”* This statement illustrates the manner in which educational institutions offer organization and direction. In the absence of a designated environment for children during

daytime hours, they may become susceptible to adverse peer influences and engagement in unlawful behaviors.

Participant 3 articulated, *“Certain parents no longer perceive the significance of education. They permit children to be absent from school and participate in unlawful mining activities. However, it is evident how those children transform upon returning to the classroom and receiving positive reinforcement.”* Participant 4 stated, *“My brother traveled to South Africa after he discontinued his education.” He became engaged in criminal activities in that location and subsequently faced deportation. This motivated me to concentrate on my academic pursuits in order to achieve success through appropriate means.”* This indicates that limited access to education drives children towards hazardous lifestyles, whereas resuming their education provides them with an opportunity for redemption.

It was concurred by both parents and community members that education serves as a remedy for juvenile crime. Participant 5 expressed the necessity for an increased number of educational institutions and improved road infrastructure. Certain children traverse considerable distances, and upon experiencing fatigue, they cease their journey. That is the point at which they begin to engage in undesirable behaviors. Participant 6 stated, *“Education instills discipline in our children. Following my son's decision to leave school, he began to engage in the theft of minor items. I compelled him to return, and he is now showing improvement.”* Participant 7 stated, *“It is essential for the government and non-governmental organizations to assist us with school fees, as numerous parents are unable to afford them.”* Children should not remain at home solely due to financial constraints. Participant 8 emphasized that a significant number of the juveniles apprehended by the justice system are individuals who have discontinued their education. Maintaining their enrollment in educational institutions will lead to a decrease in these occurrences. Finally, Participant 9 stated, *“We have observed significant success stories when we support children in their return to school.”* Education provides individuals with optimism and guidance.

In summary, all nine participants concur that education serves as a significant and effective means to mitigate juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa. When children remain in educational institutions, they are safeguarded from negative external influences and the challenges of street life. Individuals acquire skills related to appropriate conduct, future planning, and the development of responsible citizenship. Nonetheless, obstacles such as poverty, extended travel distances, and insufficient funds for school fees are preventing certain children from accessing

educational opportunities. Collaboration among governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders is essential to enhance educational access. The entire community reaps benefits when children are engaged in their educational pursuits.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

4.4.1 Research Objective 1: To identify specific socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area

The results from Objective 1 indicated that the most prominent socio-economic factors influencing juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal Area include poverty, limited access to education, unemployment, family instability, and exposure to community violence. Responses from the questionnaire revealed that more than 70% of participants perceived poverty and unemployment as significant factors contributing to juvenile engagement in criminal activities, including illegal mining, theft, and drug abuse. Furthermore, the data obtained from interviews indicated that familial disintegration, characterized by absentee parenting, single-parent households, or neglect, significantly contributed to the exposure of children to delinquent peers and criminal behaviors.

Participants also emphasized that inadequate educational infrastructure and the financial constraints faced by families led to a significant number of youths discontinuing their education, thereby rendering them susceptible to criminal influences. The results obtained support a significant portion of the literature examined in Chapter 2. Nduna (2021) observed that in numerous rural communities in Zimbabwe, economic hardship serves as a significant catalyst for youth crime, prompting young individuals to partake in unlawful activities as a means of survival. In a similar vein, Dube (2020) posited that poverty-related school dropout heightens the likelihood of juvenile involvement in criminal activities. Muncie (2014) emphasized that poverty and social exclusion on a global scale notably heighten the probability of youth criminal behavior, a trend that is similarly observable in Chiadzwa. Furthermore, Coulson (2022) highlighted the influence of family dysfunction on the moral and behavioral growth of children, a notion that aligns with the insights provided by interviewees who identified parental neglect and insufficient supervision as significant factors contributing to juvenile delinquency. In contrast, the results show only slight differences from the work of scholars like Tumwesigye (2018), who prioritized individual moral failure over structural

conditions. This study reveals that structural socio-economic challenges, rather than individual shortcomings, have a more significant influence on juvenile behavior in Chiadzwa.

The results are also in strong accordance with the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter 2, specifically Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory. Social Learning Theory, articulated by Bandura, underscores the notion that young individuals acquire behaviors by observing and emulating those around them, especially in contexts where positive role models are lacking and deviant behavior is presented as the norm. The Chiadzwa context provides direct support for this theory, as children observe and imitate the illegal mining and drug use behaviors exhibited by adults and their peers. Bandura's (1977) claim that behavior is learned through observation, retention, and motivation is evident in the results indicating that juveniles tend to normalize and replicate illegal behavior as a result of ongoing exposure and perceived rewards. Garduno (2021) highlighted that communities characterized by frequent and unchallenged deviance cultivate a cycle of observational learning, as demonstrated in Chiadzwa.

Furthermore, the results support Strain Theory as articulated by Merton (1938), which suggests that when young individuals encounter barriers to attaining culturally endorsed objectives through legitimate avenues, they resort to innovative, illegitimate strategies. In Chiadzwa, the absence of educational and employment prospects has led young individuals to engage in illegal mining, theft, and drug trafficking as alternative means to achieve material success. The assertion made by Schor (2020) that feelings of frustration stemming from socio-economic exclusion lead to deviant adaptation is corroborated by the prevalent sense of disenfranchisement articulated by the interview participants. Agnew's (2006) expansion of the theory, which emphasizes emotional reactions like anger and resentment resulting from strain, was corroborated by qualitative data, wherein young individuals articulated sentiments of neglect and marginalization. Consequently, both theories provide strong explanatory frameworks for the findings and highlight the significance of considering environmental and structural factors influencing juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa.

4.4.2 Research Objective 2: To determine the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes in the Chiadzwa Communal area

The research findings from the Chiadzwa Communal Area indicate a concerning scenario regarding juvenile crime, which includes a range of offenses from minor theft to more severe violent and sexual crimes. The results align closely with, and in certain cases, contrast with, the extensive scholarly work on juvenile delinquency discussed in Chapter 2. The widespread

occurrence of theft among minors in Chiadzwa, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.00 and a standard deviation of zero indicating complete agreement among participants, corresponds with numerous studies that highlight socio-economic influences. Wa Teresia (2021) identified several critical factors influencing youth criminal behavior, including theft, within the Nairobi slums. These factors include poverty, peer pressure, and limited access to education. This closely aligns with the testimonies from Chiadzwa, where young individuals resort to pickpocketing as a result of poverty, hunger, peer influence, and insufficient guidance. In a similar vein, Iswantoro and Maryanto (2020) identified a deficiency in parental supervision as a persistent precursor to juvenile theft in Indonesia. This issue is also evident in Chiadzwa, where certain parents are aware of their children's theft but choose to remain silent out of desperation. In contrast, Shapiro (2021) in the United States concentrated on the impact of gender-based stereotypes on the perception of juvenile theft, whereas the Chiadzwa study underscores the actual prevalence and underlying factors of theft. This indicates a divergence in research focus rather than a direct contradiction.

The concerning increase in robbery incidents among juveniles in Chiadzwa, frequently characterized by the use of force and weapons such as knives or machetes, is also reflected in existing literature. Wa Teresia (2021) emphasizes the role of poverty, insufficient supervision, and the normalization of violence as contributing factors to juvenile robbery in the slums of Nairobi, calling for grassroots interventions. In their 2022 study of Mexico City, Bonilla Alguera and Gutiérrez Meave identified a strong correlation between urban segregation and insufficient policing with increased robbery rates. This finding highlights systemic socio-spatial inequalities, which can be compared to the resource-abundant yet underdeveloped context of Chiadzwa, resulting in marginalization.

The results further indicate that minors are implicated in homicide, frequently arising from conflicts related to resources such as diamonds, acts of vengeance, or during thefts, with certain individuals employing weapons and demonstrating a notable absence of fear. This is consistent with the findings of Hernandez, Ferguson, and Kennedy (2020), who recognized early exposure to violence, family dysfunction, and community disorganization as contributing risk factors for juvenile homicide. The occurrence of juvenile rape cases in Chiadzwa, frequently associated with factors such as lack of awareness, peer pressure, exposure to adult material, and cultural reticence, is supported by Gumbo (2020) in Mberengwa District, Zimbabwe, who observed the normalization of gender-based violence and the intergenerational perpetuation of detrimental sexual norms. The participation of minors in drug trafficking, frequently motivated by factors

such as poverty, peer influence, and criminal manipulation, aligns with the conclusions drawn by Oloyede and Adesina (2019) in Nigeria, which recognized peer influence, economic hardship, and limited educational opportunities as key contributors. The results indicate that juveniles occasionally serve as intermediaries for older drug lords, reflecting the "County Lines" phenomenon observed in the UK, where organized drug networks take advantage of young individuals, as noted by Robinson, McLean, and Densley (2019).

The results of the study are closely aligned with the theoretical constructs of Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory, offering a comprehensive explanation for the juvenile criminal behaviors observed. According to Social Learning Theory, behavior is acquired through the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling within social environments. This theory holds significant relevance within the Chiadzwa context, where the influx of individuals resulting from illegal diamond mining has undermined the community's moral fabric, thereby exposing youth to alternative behavioral models, including criminal activities. The findings suggest that adolescents acquire pickpocketing skills from older offenders or peers, thereby establishing it as a habitual behavior.

Additionally, certain juveniles are introduced to the act of robbery by older individuals who offer financial incentives and supply weapons. Participants observed that children acquired behaviors from the "diamond rush" phenomenon, witnessing individuals rapidly attaining wealth. This provides direct support for Bandura's theory, which posits that individuals, especially young people, acquire knowledge and behaviors through the observation and imitation of their social surroundings. Coulson (2022) highlights that children undergo socialization influenced by the actions of those in their immediate environment. This is particularly observable in Chiadzwa, where the presence of dysfunctional family structures and a lack of parental guidance result in children mimicking the behaviors of peers or community figures engaged in unlawful activities. In a similar vein, the finding that certain adolescent males engaged in rape were either supported or not reprimanded by older peers and family members highlights the intergenerational perpetuation of detrimental norms, which is a fundamental element of social learning. Garduno (2021) reinforces this assertion by indicating that communities significantly shape juvenile behavior when there is a persistent and unopposed exposure to deviant conduct. This is particularly evident in Chiadzwa, where criminal activity has become normalized and perpetuated.

Additionally, Strain Theory, formulated by Robert K. Merton in the 1930s, provides a persuasive rationale for the high incidence of juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa by emphasizing the gap between socially sanctioned objectives and the lawful avenues available to attain them. The research clearly indicates that Chiadzwa, in spite of its abundant resources, faces significant challenges including elevated poverty rates, high unemployment, limited access to education, and disrupted family dynamics. The socio-economic limitations imposed on young individuals hinder their capacity to attain recognized success, resulting in feelings of frustration and prompting them to resort to unconventional methods. The results consistently indicate that offenses such as pickpocketing, robbery, and drug trafficking are frequently perpetrated by juveniles motivated by hunger, economic difficulties, and a pressing desire for immediate financial benefits. Schor (2020) posits that when normative avenues are obstructed and wealth is revered, feelings of frustration may result in deviant behavior. This phenomenon is evident in Chiadzwa, where young individuals view criminal activities, such as illegal diamond panning, as a more feasible route to achieving economic and social acknowledgment. Merton's concept of "innovation," which involves utilizing illegitimate methods to attain cultural objectives, is particularly relevant to the youth in Chiadzwa. These individuals resort to criminal activities such as illegal mining and burglary as direct reactions to their circumstances of deprivation. These offenses are characterized as deliberate reactions to socio-economic deprivation rather than mere random acts of mischief, thereby reinforcing the fundamental principles of Strain Theory. The challenges associated with marginalization in a resource-abundant yet underdeveloped context exacerbate harmful behaviors such as deliberate property destruction, which may serve as a means of expressing the adverse emotions stemming from strain, as elaborated by Agnew (2006).

The integration of these findings with the theoretical frameworks highlights the intricate nature of juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa, suggesting that it transcends individual deviance and is instead a profound societal issue. The aggregated evidence from the research outcomes, along with the insightful contributions of Social Learning and Strain Theories, underscores the ways in which poverty, unemployment, insufficient legitimate opportunities, and exposure to a normalized criminal milieu converge to drive youth towards engaging in criminal behavior.

The high means on severe offenses such as murder and rape among adolescents in Chiadzwa, surpassing simple petty theft, indicates a rise that can be attributed to the significant pressures and the widespread socialization of violent and exploitative conduct within the community. The absence of safeguarding institutions, including educational facilities and child welfare

services, coupled with inadequate community and institutional responses to tackle underlying structural pressures, perpetuates cycles of marginalization and deviance, thereby complicating intervention efforts. The complex characteristics of juvenile crime require immediate interventions from multiple stakeholders that extend beyond mere punitive actions. Strategies should focus on realigning societal objectives with accessible resources by implementing policy reforms, enhancing infrastructure, and supporting families. Additionally, it is essential to introduce positive role models and structured educational programs to transform the learning environment for young individuals. This thorough methodology, informed by findings from the literature review and theoretical frameworks, is essential for altering the existing pattern of juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa and enhancing community safety.

4.4.3 Research Objective 3: To determine the challenges faced by Chiadzwa communal area in addressing juvenile delinquency

The research findings regarding the challenges encountered by the Chiadzwa communal area in addressing juvenile delinquency are largely consistent with the current body of literature, especially in relation to institutional deficiencies, disjointed services, and the influence of societal perceptions. The consensus among participants in the study regarding the statement "Lack of institutional capacity worsens the rates minors are committing crimes in this area" (mean 4.00, SD 0.000) aligns closely with the findings of Yadav (2023), who highlighted "lack of funding and trained personnel as structural barriers in both developed and developing contexts." Additionally, Zhadan et al. (2019) emphasized that "geographic isolation, lack of specialized juvenile personnel, and limited access to mental health services are critical obstacles" faced by rural communities in Eastern Europe. In a similar vein, Abebe Yilma (2018) observed that "remand homes and juvenile services in communal districts were either non-existent or staffed by unqualified personnel" in Ethiopia, which closely reflects the accounts from Chiadzwa participants regarding the overwhelming burden on schools and the inadequacies of police and social services in terms of resources, transportation, and trained personnel. Additionally, the observation that there are "No properly coordinated support services for dealing with young offenders here" (mean 4.38, SD 0.490) aligns with the research conducted by Thorpe, Smith, Green, and Paley (2024) in the UK, which indicated that "aftercare" mechanisms are frequently disjointed, contributing to recidivism among juveniles. This underscores a common difficulty in the effective management of post-offense support, regardless of developmental status.

Nonetheless, the results reveal a subtlety concerning the efficacy of direct interventions and law enforcement measures. Despite the community's overall discontent, as reflected in the low mean scores for the statements "This community has no effective youth-focused interventions to reduce crime among minors" (mean 1.62) and "Law enforcement efforts are not effective in dealing with youth crime in this area" (mean 1.42), the standard deviations indicate a range of perceptions. This variability may be attributed to the presence of sporadic NGO-led initiatives or differing encounters with law enforcement. This somewhat diverges from the prevailing consensus in the literature, which frequently depicts such services as completely lacking or uniformly ineffective in marginalized community regions. Adeleke (2019) critiques the tendency of "most government responses" to be excessively militarized and unresponsive to the communal trauma faced by juveniles. Similarly, Judd et al. (2023) propose that "psychosocial programming and vocational training can yield more long-term benefits," indicating a notable deficiency in effective interventions. The significant consensus regarding the statement "Negative societal attitudes are making it harder to solve youth-related crime issues" (mean 4.62, SD 0.490) is robustly corroborated by Yadav (2023), who noted that "normalized violence, toxic masculinity, and the romanticization of risk in many communities hinder rehabilitative efforts." In a similar vein, Betelehem Wondimu's (2014) assertion that "rural-raised juveniles had internalized higher levels of violence" corresponds with Chiadzwa's experience, wherein societal attitudes such as stigmatization or apathy hinder preventive and rehabilitative efforts. The observed alignments highlight that, notwithstanding certain local discrepancies, Chiadzwa encounters systemic issues that are fundamentally linked to resource scarcity, disjointed services, and complex social dynamics, which align with extensive global and African scholarly discourse on juvenile delinquency in communal settings.

The research findings regarding the challenges in Chiadzwa are thoroughly elucidated and articulated through the lenses of Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory, offering an in-depth comprehension of juvenile delinquency in the region. The prevalence of delinquent behaviors, including illegal mining, theft, and substance abuse in Chiadzwa, along with the community's recognition of normalized criminal conduct and fragile community structures, aligns significantly with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory. This theory suggests that behavior is acquired through processes of observation, imitation, and modeling, especially within social environments. In Chiadzwa, the presence of illegal diamond mining has drawn a variety of individuals, resulting in a deterioration of the moral and social fabric. As a consequence, young individuals are subjected to and assimilate deviant behaviors from their

peers, adults, and family members. Garduno (2021) observed that "communities heavily influence juvenile behavior through social learning, particularly when exposure to deviant behavior is constant and unchallenged." This statement elucidates how the absence of positive behavioral role models, coupled with continuous exposure to illicit activities, fosters the normalization and perpetuation of criminal behavior among the youth of Chiadzwa. The qualitative results regarding children's presence in bars or their involvement in illegal panning, stemming from a scarcity of alternative activities, effectively demonstrate the modeling effect suggested by the theory.

Moreover, Strain Theory provides a persuasive rationale for the fundamental motivations that drive the observed delinquency and the difficulties encountered in addressing this issue. The elevated rates of poverty, unemployment, and inadequate educational opportunities in Chiadzwa, in contrast to its diamond resources, result in a notable "disjunction between aspirations and means," which aligns with Merton's concept of strain or anomie. The study revealed that young individuals participate in illegal mining and minor criminal activities as methods of survival, which corresponds with Merton's notion of "innovation (utilizing illegitimate means to attain cultural objectives)". Schor (2020) posited that "when normative paths are blocked and wealth remains an idolized standard, frustration often morphs into deviance," a phenomenon that has been distinctly observed in Chiadzwa. The challenges recognized, including the inadequately funded conventional institutions (educational establishments, families, law enforcement agencies) and the deficiency of adequate infrastructure and professional support, intensify this pressure. The systemic failures inhibit young individuals from obtaining legitimate avenues to success, consequently perpetuating cycles of exclusion and deviance, as anticipated by Strain Theory. Both theories simultaneously elucidate how the socio-economic environment of Chiadzwa, marked by exposure to deviant role models and restricted legitimate opportunities, collectively contributes to juvenile delinquency and hinders effective intervention.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data, alongside the theoretical frameworks, indicates that the challenges in Chiadzwa are intricately connected and mutually reinforcing. The widespread deficiency in institutional capacity indicates that formal intervention systems are either weak or entirely absent, resulting in a void that is often occupied by informal social learning pathways that can be harmful. In the absence of organized settings such as adequately funded educational institutions or youth initiatives, adolescents are often left with unstructured time, leading them to adopt easily accessible, though illegal, behavioral patterns. This directly

supports the observational learning process outlined by Social Learning Theory, wherein "juveniles in Chiadzwa observed and assimilated behaviors from peers, adults, and even family members involved in illegal or socially disruptive activities." The perceived inefficacy of law enforcement exacerbates this issue, as the lack of consistent repercussions for criminal actions eliminates a vital deterrent, thereby implicitly reinforcing deviant behaviors and diminishing the incentive to adhere to societal norms. This establishes a perilous cycle in which criminal behavior is not only acquired but also accepted or even normalized within the community, particularly when individuals in positions of authority are perceived as overwhelmed or detached.

Furthermore, the consensus regarding the absence of coordinated support services and the prevalence of negative societal attitudes underscores a systemic inadequacy in addressing the complex dimensions of juvenile delinquency. The division of services results in isolated interventions that have a limited effect, as they function independently and do not create a comprehensive safety net for vulnerable youth. The lack of a cohesive support framework, along with existing negative societal perceptions that can stigmatize young offenders or promote indifference, significantly hinders the rehabilitative objectives of intervention and the community's overall ability to offer constructive examples or alternatives to deviant behavior. The societal attitudes that are entrenched in cultural norms, which may idealize risk or accept violence as commonplace, pose a considerable obstacle to reform. These attitudes either dissuade proactive initiatives or sustain ongoing cycles of aggression. This situation is especially concerning in environments characterized by significant socio-economic pressure, where the absence of legitimate pathways to achievement, as outlined by Strain Theory, coupled with community norms that may unintentionally facilitate deviant behavior, as indicated by Social Learning Theory, fosters a strong inclination towards criminal behavior instead of positive coping strategies.

The complex issues present in Chiadzwa highlight the pressing necessity for a comprehensive, cohesive, and culturally aware strategy to tackle juvenile delinquency. The results strongly advocate for a comprehensive reform and enhancement of institutional capabilities, emphasizing the need to bolster educational institutions, law enforcement, and social services through sufficient funding, skilled staff, and improved infrastructure. The structural transformation is essential for establishing the legitimate means and supportive environments that are presently absent, as supported by both Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory. To tackle the perceived shortcomings of law enforcement, it is essential to focus on both the

allocation of resources and a transition towards collaborative, community-focused policing. This approach aims to foster trust and guarantee ongoing accountability, transcending traditional punitive measures that have shown limited effectiveness in African societies. There exists a distinct necessity for interventions that are well-coordinated, specifically targeting youth, ensuring they are not only available but also accessible, consistent, and effective. The proposed interventions, including vocational training, sports clubs, and mentorship programs, aim to establish positive behavioral models and legitimate avenues for success. These initiatives are designed to directly address the idle time and exposure to deviant behaviors that presently contribute to delinquency. In conclusion, addressing juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa requires more than merely responding to symptoms; it necessitates a strategic and sustained commitment to systemic transformation that tackles underlying socio-economic inequalities, restores trust in institutions, and leverages community strengths. This approach aims to reshape the educational landscape and provide meaningful opportunities for the youth's positive development.

4.4.4 Research Objective 4: To determine the evidence based strategies to curb juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area

The research findings regarding evidence-based approaches for minimizing juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa are largely consistent with the current literature on delinquency prevention, while also emphasizing context-specific subtleties. The research indicated a significant consensus regarding the necessity of awareness campaigns in altering juvenile behavior. This is consistent with existing literature that highlights the significance of community engagement and awareness initiatives. According to Aziz et al. (n.d.), community awareness initiatives have the potential to channel the energy of young individuals away from criminal activities. In a similar vein, the results support the implementation of skills training programs for young individuals as a means to mitigate youth-related criminal activities. This aligns with the overarching strategies of youth empowerment and vocational training highlighted in the existing literature. Nevertheless, the existing literature, especially the work of Rathi and Dhariwal (2025), warns that interventions, although theoretically sound, rely heavily on context-specific execution and cultural awareness, a consideration that is especially pertinent in light of the distinct challenges faced by Chiadzwa.

The findings of the study indicate that enhanced parental support may effectively mitigate the increase in criminal behavior among minors, aligning closely with existing literature that advocates for family interventions. Aazami et al. (2023) demonstrate that organized parental

involvement notably decreases the likelihood of delinquent behavior, while the Riyadh Guidelines (1990) highlight the importance of the family unit in the socialization of young individuals. The significance of enhancing educational access to deter minors from participating in criminal activities is well-documented, with Sun et al. (2024) establishing a connection between school dropout rates and heightened delinquency, advocating for the strengthening of student engagement. The conclusion that cooperation among traditional leaders, law enforcement, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations can contribute to the reduction of youth crime is consistent with existing literature that supports comprehensive, multi-faceted strategies. Zai et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of inter-agency collaboration and community policing as essential elements, while the UN Guidelines (1990) support this perspective by promoting localized strategies within the framework of global human rights standards.

The research results further indicate a significant alignment with the theoretical constructs of Social Learning Theory and Strain Theory. The Social Learning Theory posits that behavior is acquired through the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling within social environments. The results of the study substantiate this by promoting strategies such as the implementation of positive role models, organized educational initiatives, and activities aimed at engaging youth. The purpose of these interventions is to transform the educational setting by offering alternative, prosocial models. This assertion is corroborated by the findings of Taylor (2020) and Cox (2020), who observed that organized environments, including schools and vocational training programs, contribute to a decrease in recidivism rates. The results further emphasize that enhanced parental support and better access to education can mitigate the adverse effects of observational learning in Chiadzwa, where young individuals may otherwise adopt behaviors from peers or adults involved in unlawful activities as a consequence of the deterioration of moral and social structures. According to Garduno (2021), the behavior of juveniles is significantly shaped by their communities, particularly when they are consistently exposed to deviant behaviors, highlighting the importance of implementing positive counter-influences.

Moreover, the strategies delineated in the research outcomes are thoroughly articulated and substantiated by Strain Theory, which asserts that individuals encounter "strain" or "anomie" when they are hindered from attaining culturally sanctioned objectives through legitimate avenues. The approaches of offering skills training and enhancing educational access directly tackle this challenge by establishing credible avenues for success and income generation.

Participants acknowledged that economic deprivation and inactivity frequently render youth vulnerable to criminal exploitation in financially disadvantaged areas such as Chiadzwa. This is consistent with Merton's notion of "innovation," wherein individuals resort to illegitimate methods to attain cultural objectives when legitimate avenues are obstructed. Schor (2020) posited that when normative pathways are obstructed and wealth is revered, feelings of frustration frequently result in deviant behavior. The results highlight the importance of tackling fundamental socio-economic inequalities via vocational training and educational reforms. Agnew (2006), in his expansion of Merton's theory, highlighted the significance of negative emotions resulting from strain, emphasizing the necessity for psychological support and community resilience initiatives as supplementary approaches.

4.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 concentrated on the presentation and analysis of data, employing pie charts and tables for quantitative data, which were examined using descriptive statistics, alongside thematic analysis for qualitative interview data. The chapter subsequently examined these findings in relation to the literature and theories outlined in Chapter 2, highlighting points of consensus and divergence. The following chapter looked at summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter looked at summary of major research findings guided by research objectives. The chapter also looked at conclusions per each research objective. Recommendations were also looked at looking at the areas highlighted from the research findings. Lastly, the chapter also covered the suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

The study comprehensively examined the influence of socio-economic factors on juvenile delinquency within the Chiadzwa Communal Area, utilizing a substantial amount of data gathered from questionnaires and interviews. The analysis of particular socio-economic factors associated with juvenile delinquency indicated the presence of a profoundly rooted socio-economic crisis. The responses to the questionnaire revealed a unanimous consensus (mean 5.00, SD 0.000) that poverty significantly influences the propensity of minors to engage in criminal activities within the community. Interviews provided support for this finding, as participants repeatedly associated delinquent behaviors such as theft, illegal mining, early sexual involvement, and substance abuse with the ongoing fight for survival in economically disadvantaged households. The absence of employment opportunities demonstrated a significant consensus (mean 4.80, SD 0.405) as a critical factor contributing to juvenile criminality. Interview participants articulated that unemployment compelled young individuals to engage in illegal mining, theft, or affiliation with illicit groups as a means of survival. The issue of restricted access to quality education garnered significant consensus among respondents, reflected in a mean score of 4.60 and a standard deviation of 0.495. Participants identified educational deprivation—characterized by a lack of schools, insufficient teaching staff, considerable travel distances, and prohibitive costs—as a contributing factor to delinquent behavior, resulting in higher rates of school dropouts and greater susceptibility to criminal influences. Moreover, familial issues such as neglect or instability were identified as significant factors (mean 4.40, SD 0.495), with participants elaborating on how fractured households, absent caregivers, or overwhelmed guardians rendered children susceptible to peer influence and criminal decisions. Ultimately, the recognition of community violence exposure was noted (mean 4.18, SD 0.387), indicating that children who witness or experience violence, especially in the vicinity of illegal mining operations, may become desensitized and are consequently more inclined to participate in criminal activities themselves.

The research highlighted a wide range of crimes related to juvenile crimes in Chiadzwa, along with their prevalence rates. The data obtained from the questionnaire indicated a complete agreement (mean 4.00, SD 0.000) regarding the prevalence of theft among minors as a common and significant concern. Interviews elaborated on this phenomenon as pickpocketing, a prevalent offense in densely populated areas, influenced by factors such as poverty, hunger, and peer pressure, with young individuals frequently being introduced to this activity by older offenders or acquaintances. Robbery emerged as a concerning criminal activity (mean 4.80, SD 0.405), often characterized by the use of force, intimidation, and weaponry. This crime is typically perpetrated by groups during nighttime hours in proximity to retail establishments or mining locations, motivated by severe economic hardship and the appeal of rapid financial gain. Notably, there was a significant consensus regarding cases of minors participating in murder, evidenced by a mean score of 4.80 and a standard deviation of 0.405. Interviews revealed that some youths resorted to taking lives during conflicts over resources such as diamonds, for acts of revenge, or in the course of robberies, frequently employing knives, machetes, or stones, reflecting the normalization of violence within their surroundings. Cases of juvenile rape were found to be common (mean 4.20, SD 0.405), frequently associated with factors such as ignorance, peer pressure, exposure to adult material, and a widespread culture of silence, which results in enduring trauma for the victims. In conclusion, the involvement of minors in drug trafficking activities (mean 4.20, SD 0.405) and the intentional destruction of property (mean 4.60, SD 0.495) has been extensively acknowledged. This behavior is frequently influenced by factors such as poverty, peer pressure, and criminal grooming, with certain juveniles serving as intermediaries for more experienced drug lords.

The investigation into the challenges encountered by the Chiadzwa communal area in tackling juvenile delinquency revealed notable systemic and social impediments. There was a consensus (mean 4.00, SD 0.000) that insufficient institutional capacity exacerbated the incidence of juvenile crime. Participants in the interviews consistently emphasized that educational institutions were deficient in counselors and adequately trained personnel, law enforcement agencies were burdened and under-resourced, facing challenges with insufficient transportation and detention facilities, and social services were constrained and lacking sufficient staffing. The absence of impactful interventions aimed at youth constituted a significant challenge, resulting in numerous young individuals remaining inactive and susceptible to engaging in criminal activities. The responses from the questionnaire indicated a range of perceptions (mean 1.62, SD 0.490 regarding the absence of effective youth-focused interventions).

However, the interviews provided further insight, revealing that these programs were either nonexistent, inadequately funded, or not regarded with the seriousness they warranted, resulting in children wandering aimlessly and emulating negative behaviors. In a similar vein, the effectiveness of law enforcement in addressing youth crime was predominantly viewed as inadequate (mean 1.42, SD 0.499). This perception stemmed from instances where police response was delayed or absent, a lack of resources, and situations where certain crimes remained unaddressed due to intimidation by influential figures. Consequently, this fostered an atmosphere in which juveniles believed they could engage in criminal activities without facing repercussions. Additionally, there was a general consensus (mean 4.38, SD 0.490) regarding the absence of adequately coordinated support services for young offenders, highlighting the disjointed efforts among educational institutions, traditional leadership, law enforcement agencies, and social workers. Finally, negative societal attitudes emerged as a considerable obstacle (mean 4.62, SD 0.490), complicating efforts to address youth-related crime issues due to the stigmatization of offenders, community indifference, or fatalistic perceptions regarding youth behavior.

Lastly, the study revealed a number of strategies grounded in evidence aimed at reducing juvenile delinquency. The results of the questionnaire demonstrated a strong consensus (mean 4.80, SD 0.405) regarding the necessity of awareness campaigns in tackling lawlessness among minors. The interviews supported this notion, indicating that educational initiatives at the community level have the potential to cultivate positive behavioral norms and address significant gaps in prevention efforts. The provision of skills training for young individuals received substantial endorsement (mean 4.40, SD 0.495) as an effective strategy to mitigate youth-related criminal activities. Participants highlighted the importance of providing young individuals with practical skills such as carpentry, welding, or farming, as these competencies could facilitate legitimate employment opportunities and steer them away from delinquent behaviors, particularly in economically disadvantaged regions. The enhancement of parental support emerged as a crucial strategy (mean 4.80, SD 0.405), with a strong consensus indicating that active and disciplined parenting notably diminished the risks of delinquency. Participants in the study observed that children who received guidance from their parents exhibited a lower propensity for criminal behavior, underscoring the significant influence of the family as a socializing force. The enhancement of educational access was widely recognized as a protective factor (mean 4.18, SD 0.387), as it occupied children, offered moral guidance, instilled discipline, and provided a sense of purpose, consequently diminishing their

involvement in criminal activities. Finally, the collaboration among traditional leaders, law enforcement, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations was strongly endorsed (mean 4.60, SD 0.49543) as an essential, multi-faceted strategy for achieving sustainable solutions to youth crime in Chiadzwa.

Conclusions

- The study determined that poverty emerged as the most significant factor contributing to juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa, a conclusion that was unanimously supported by all respondents. This was subsequently accompanied by a scarcity of employment opportunities, restricted access to quality education, familial issues such as neglect, and exposure to violence within the community. The data obtained from interviews consistently highlighted how these interrelated factors, ranging from daily hunger to the absence of parental figures, significantly compelled young individuals to engage in criminal activities as a means of survival or due to insufficient positive interactions.
- The investigation into the categories and incidence rates of juvenile offenses uncovered a concerning variety of criminal activities. The occurrence of theft among minors was widely acknowledged as prevalent. Furthermore, the community expressed a concerning consensus regarding the participation of juveniles in murder cases, suggesting a notable increase in youth criminal behavior. Additionally, other crimes that were notably prevalent encompassed juvenile sexual assault, minors involved in drug trafficking activities, and deliberate property damage. The results highlighted that juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa encompassed a range of activities, from minor infractions such as pickpocketing to more severe violent and sexual offenses, frequently motivated by factors such as poverty, peer pressure, and the temptation of rapid financial gain through illegal mining.
- The research identified a significant barrier in addressing juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa, highlighting a critical lack of institutional capacity, which was a point of unanimous agreement among all respondents. This encompassed a lack of adequate resources and trained personnel within educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, and social service organizations. Moreover, the region experienced a deficiency in well-coordinated support services for juvenile offenders, coupled with adverse societal perceptions that obstructed the implementation of effective solutions. The lack or inefficacy of interventions aimed at youth, along with deficiencies in law

enforcement initiatives, has intensified the issue, rendering numerous young individuals susceptible and lacking support.

- Lastly, the research identified multiple evidence-supported approaches to mitigate juvenile delinquency. Identified key interventions encompassed awareness campaigns aimed at promoting positive behavioral norms, alongside the crucial enhancement of parental support to restore family guidance and discipline. Moreover, the provision of skills training aimed at equipping young individuals with viable economic alternatives, alongside the enhancement of access to quality education, was identified as crucial protective factors. Ultimately, it was emphasized that robust collaboration among traditional leaders, law enforcement, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations is essential for an effective and enduring strategy for the prevention and rehabilitation of youth crime in Chiadzwa.

5.4 Recommendations

Informed by extensive research outcomes derived from both questionnaire and interview data, and utilizing pertinent theoretical frameworks and policy implications, the subsequent recommendations are proposed to tackle juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal Area:

5.4.1 For Schools

The recommendations for schools are based on the principles of Social Learning Theory, which asserts that individuals acquire knowledge through observation and imitation, as well as Strain Theory, which emphasizes that the obstruction of legitimate opportunities can result in deviant behavior. In reality, the educational institutions in Chiadzwa have been recognized as deficient in terms of counselors, adequate infrastructure, and necessary resources, resulting in student disengagement and vulnerability to criminal influences. The following should be addressed:

- Establish comprehensive counseling and mentorship initiatives: Educational institutions ought to create specialized counseling services staffed by trained professionals to meet students' psycho-social requirements and provide positive behavioral exemplars, thereby addressing the identified deficiency in support. This is consistent with the advocacy for organized settings that mitigate the likelihood of reoffending.

- **Integrate vocational and skills training into the curriculum:** In order to address the issue of limited employment opportunities and the prevailing notion that education lacks utility, educational institutions should incorporate practical skills training, such as carpentry, welding, tailoring, and farming, into their programs. This presents valid avenues for achievement, directly tackling the challenges faced by young individuals and providing positive alternatives to unlawful behaviors.
- **Enhance educational facilities and ensure accessibility:** It is essential to tackle challenges such as remote educational institutions, a lack of qualified educators, and prohibitive tuition costs. This would improve access to high-quality education, which was regarded as a protective element against involvement in criminal activities.
- **Coordinate and finance youth engagement initiatives:** In order to address the lack of after-school activities for children, educational institutions, in partnership with the community, ought to create sports clubs, arts programs, and youth centers. These activities create organized, positive social settings, minimizing unproductive time and susceptibility to adverse peer influence.

5.4.2 For Parents

Recommendations for parents are grounded in Social Learning Theory, highlighting the importance of parental modeling and supervision, while recognizing that "family issues such as neglect or instability are pushing juveniles towards criminal behavior". Strain Theory is relevant in this context, as economic difficulties within the family unit are linked to increased delinquent behavior. In reality, families in Chiadzwa faced challenges such as neglect, the absence of parental figures, and a lack of resources to meet fundamental needs, which resulted in children being left in a vulnerable position. The following measures are recommended:

- **Enhance the engagement and oversight of parents:** It is essential to promote and assist parents in amplifying their involvement, direction, and disciplinary measures. This entails engaging in daily conversations with children, overseeing their academic development and social interactions, and taking an active role in their lives. Active involvement in parenting substantially diminishes the likelihood of delinquent behavior.
- **Identify and participate in family support services:** It is essential for community leaders and non-governmental organizations to organize parenting workshops and counseling

services aimed at providing parents with effective strategies for child-rearing, particularly in situations involving family breakdown, neglect, or substance abuse. This may assist in restoring familial unity and serve as an essential safeguard against delinquent behaviors.

- **Emphasize the importance of children's education and well-being:** In light of economic difficulties, it is essential for parents to be informed about the enduring advantages of education. It is essential to implement strategies that provide support for educational expenses and fundamental needs to mitigate the risk of children discontinuing their education as a result of financial hardship.

5.4.3 For Law Enforcement

The recommendations for law enforcement are informed by Strain Theory, which emphasizes the systemic breakdown that occurs when legitimate avenues are obstructed, and Social Learning Theory, which posits that ineffective law enforcement may inadvertently strengthen deviant behavior. In practical terms, law enforcement in Chiadzwa encountered constraints in resources, delays in response times, and a perceived lack of efficacy in addressing juvenile delinquency. The following is recommended:

- **Enhance resource allocation and specialized training:** The ZRP Marange station necessitates a greater distribution of resources, encompassing transportation, personnel, and adequate facilities for juvenile detention. Law enforcement personnel ought to undergo targeted training in juvenile justice, child-sensitive investigative methodologies, and human rights to guarantee the proper management of young offenders.
- **Emphasize and enhance diversion initiatives:** The Pretrial Diversion Programme (PDP) in Zimbabwe illustrates the necessity of broadening and consistently applying diversion strategies for minor offenses in Chiadzwa. This is consistent with a rehabilitative strategy that aims to avert incarceration and criminal records for juveniles, consequently diminishing recidivism and associated stigma.
- **Enhance community policing initiatives:** Fostering trust and improving the relationship between law enforcement and citizens is essential. Engagement in active community policing has the potential to dissuade young individuals from participating in violent criminal activities. This entails consistent interaction with community members,

educational institutions, and traditional authorities to proactively tackle issues and cultivate a sense of collective accountability.

- Enhance collaboration among agencies: It is essential to achieve improved coordination between law enforcement initiatives and social services, educational institutions, traditional authorities, and non-governmental organizations. The collaboration across multiple sectors is crucial for an all-encompassing strategy aimed at preventing and rehabilitating juvenile crime.

5.4.4 For Traditional Leaders

The recommendations for traditional leaders are grounded in Social Learning Theory, acknowledging the decline of moral integrity within the community, and the promise of culturally appropriate rehabilitation methods. In practical terms, traditional leaders contributed to social control; however, socio-economic disruptions have diminished their authority. The following recommendations are proposed:

- Strengthen the traditional social control mechanisms and ethical values: Traditional leaders ought to actively advocate for and reinforce indigenous knowledge systems and norms that have historically influenced youth conduct. This entails the involvement of young individuals in community initiatives that foster discipline, respect, and a sense of communal responsibility.
- Serve as exemplary role models and mentors: Headsmen and elders have the capacity to mentor youth, mitigating the impact of negative peer influences and steering them towards positive trajectories. This is consistent with the emphasis on positive modeling found within Social Learning Theory.
- Promote community discussions and awareness initiatives: Traditional leaders possess a distinctive capability to coordinate and direct educational efforts at the community level, which can cultivate favorable behavioral standards and tackle existing prevention deficiencies. Their participation has the potential to augment significance and influence through the incorporation of local culture and authority.
- Engage in collaboration with established institutions: It is essential to work in conjunction with law enforcement agencies, educational establishments, and non-governmental organizations to form a cohesive strategy against juvenile delinquency,

facilitating the exchange of insights and the coordination of initiatives aimed at addressing the fundamental socio-economic challenges.

5.4.5 For NGOs

The recommendations for non-governmental organizations are based on the Strain Theory's concentration on socio-economic inequalities and the Social Learning Theory's stress on offering constructive alternatives. In practical terms, non-governmental organizations encountered constraints regarding their outreach, financial resources, and the lack of dedicated child protection officers in Chiadzwa. NGOs must implement the following:

- Enhance outreach and financial support for programs targeting youth: Non-governmental organizations should proactively pursue additional funding and collaborations to broaden their impact and execute more enduring, youth-centric initiatives in Chiadzwa. This encompasses the creation of youth centers that provide organized activities, psychosocial assistance, and recreational amenities.
- Formulate and execute comprehensive intervention programs: These programs ought to tackle the underlying factors contributing to delinquency by offering skills training, psychosocial support for trauma, and engaging recreational activities. This fosters constructive alternatives to inactivity and unlawful conduct, while also contributing to the resolution of fundamental mental health concerns.
- Promote policy reforms and enhance governmental funding: Non-governmental organizations ought to assume a pivotal role in promoting heightened governmental investment in services related to child protection and juvenile justice within rural regions. This encompasses advocacy for an increased number of trained personnel, enhanced resources, and the advancement of infrastructure development.
- Enhance inter-agency collaboration: Non-governmental organizations should persist in cultivating robust partnerships with governmental bodies, educational institutions, law enforcement, and community leaders. This guarantees that interventions are systematically organized, thorough, and cohesive rather than disjointed.
- Emphasize the importance of community empowerment and ownership: Initiatives ought to strive to enable the community to assume responsibility for solutions, thereby ensuring both sustainability and cultural relevance.

5.4.6 Recommendations for the government of Zimbabwe

The results underscored inconsistencies between statutory regulations and actual courtroom procedures, as well as excessively harsh methodologies. The following recommendations are made to reform the Zimbabwean law environment:

- Enhance legal aid and probation services: The limited institutional capacity and insufficient staffing of probation services impede the execution of non-custodial sentences and the efficacy of rehabilitation efforts. Considerable funding is essential to enhance legal assistance for minors and to guarantee the ample presence of competent probation officers, particularly in rural communities such as Chiadzwa, to facilitate diversion and rehabilitation initiatives.
- Establish specialized juvenile courts and detention facilities: Zimbabwe ought to create dedicated juvenile courts and separate detention facilities for minors, ensuring they are distinct from adult correctional systems, in order to adhere to international standards regarding child rights. This approach guarantees that young offenders are addressed in a way that takes into account their developmental phase and emphasizes rehabilitation over mere punishment.
- Enhance judicial education on developmental psychology and restorative justice: It is essential that all justice personnel, including law enforcement, prosecutors, and magistrates, undergo mandatory and continuous training focused on child development, the unique vulnerabilities of juveniles, and the foundational principles of restorative justice. This will promote a more compassionate and efficient strategy toward juvenile crime, shifting away from solely punitive frameworks.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

Firstly, a significant area for future research arises from the geographical and contextual particularity of the present study. This study concentrated solely on the Chiadzwa Communal Area, a rural locality in Zimbabwe distinguished by its intensive diamond mining operations. This context offers a valuable foundation for examining the relationship between socio-economic factors and juvenile delinquency; however, subsequent research could expand the geographical range of the study. Conducting comparative studies between rural areas with diverse economic activities in Zimbabwe, or across various rural contexts within Southern Africa, would be significantly advantageous. For example, an analysis contrasting Chiadzwa

with a rural region dependent on agriculture, or another area possessing distinct natural resource assets, may illuminate whether the particular dynamics of the "diamond rush" identified in this research serve as unique catalysts for delinquency, or if analogous patterns arise under varying socio-economic conditions. Engaging in such comparative analyses would improve the applicability of findings related to socio-economic factors in rural contexts, transcending the "rural idyll" notion that frequently results in diminished focus on rural crime. Furthermore, considering that the research sought to address a deficiency in the literature concerning rural delinquency, subsequent investigations might undertake direct comparative analyses between rural locations, such as Chiadzwa, and urban regions in Zimbabwe. The prevailing literature frequently emphasizes elevated rates of delinquency in urban centers, and the findings of this study could provide a significant counterargument or underscore common underlying factors.

Furthermore, the duration of the present study, spanning from January 2020 to December 2023, offers a distinct opportunity for longitudinal investigation. The research offered a cross-sectional overview of the influence of socio-economic factors within this particular four-year timeframe. Nonetheless, juvenile delinquency represents a dynamic phenomenon, shaped by changing economic conditions, alterations in policy, and shifts within society. Consequently, there is a pressing need for longitudinal studies to monitor the long-term trajectories of juvenile offenders, examining recidivism patterns, the enduring effects of recognized socio-economic factors, and the efficacy of interventions across prolonged durations. This research may involve tracking cohorts of at-risk youth or juvenile offenders in Chiadzwa, analyzing the relationship between variations in employment opportunities, educational access, or family stability and their engagement in criminal activities over an extended period. This approach would enhance comprehension of the causal relationships and the persistent nature of challenges and solutions, yielding important insights into the life-course perspective of juvenile delinquency that cross-sectional studies are unable to fully encompass.

Furthermore, the research comprehensively recognized poverty, limited educational opportunities, unemployment, familial instability, and exposure to violence and crime as critical socio-economic determinants. However, it is essential to conduct more detailed investigations into each of these factors, particularly in relation to the specific gaps highlighted in the empirical evidence and discussion sections below:

- Concerning unemployment, an important deficiency recognized is the absence of primary data specific to Zimbabwe that directly correlates unemployment with juvenile crime. Subsequent investigations ought to emphasize longitudinal mixed-method approaches that combine macroeconomic indicators (such as local employment rates and informal sector dynamics) with the narratives of youth from Chiadzwa, in order to accurately delineate the direct and indirect pathways by which unemployment contributes to delinquent behavior. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding compared to anecdotal evidence or regional comparisons.
- In the context of education, although recognized as an influential factor, the current literature review occasionally oversimplifies the concept of "education" without thorough examination. Subsequent research may focus on isolating and thoroughly evaluating educational access as a distinct predictor of delinquency, breaking it down into elements such as teaching quality, curriculum relevance, proximity to educational institutions, and cost-effectiveness. Conducting empirical assessments of the effectiveness of specific educational interventions, including school feeding initiatives or vocational training incorporated within the educational framework, would yield practical evidence to inform policy decisions.
- The research findings correspond with existing literature concerning the effects of family instability and breakdown. Nonetheless, subsequent studies may explore the psychosocial dimensions of family dynamics, extending beyond mere economic metrics. For example, the impact of emotional alienation, particular disciplinary methods, or the weakening of conventional family frameworks as a result of migration trends (such as parents pursuing opportunities in different locations) plays a significant role in increasing children's susceptibility to criminal behavior.
- Exploring the resilience factors present in families, including the influence of extended kin networks and community support in mitigating the impacts of instability, would prove advantageous. Although exposure to violence has been recognized as a significant factor, research conducted in Zimbabwe on this subject frequently lacks longitudinal data. Subsequent investigations may implement longitudinal studies that specifically monitor juveniles who have been exposed to violence in Chiadzwa. These studies would aim to evaluate the enduring psychological effects, such as trauma and desensitization, and examine how these factors influence the trajectory toward criminal behavior. Additionally, it is essential to take into account the role of protective factors, including robust community mentorship and positive role models.

Additionally, the research identified different categories and prevalence rates of juvenile offenses, encompassing theft, robbery, homicide, sexual assault, and drug trafficking. Nonetheless, the current body of literature regarding certain specific crime categories within the African context, especially in Zimbabwe, is limited or inadequately developed, indicating a need for more targeted empirical research.

- There exists a significant lack of scholarly literature regarding juvenile drug trafficking in Africa, with limited empirical research identifying it as a distinct category of juvenile crime. Subsequent investigations may focus on the specific engagement of juveniles in drug trafficking within Chiadzwa and various regions of Zimbabwe. These studies could examine the recruitment processes, the influence of older drug lords, the categories of substances involved, and the ability of the justice system to distinguish between victim-offenders and those acting with intent. It is essential for such studies to investigate the disparity between punitive drug legislation and the rehabilitative objectives of child justice initiatives, such as the Pretrial Diversion Programme.
- In a similar vein, juvenile sexual offenses such as rape represent a significant issue in Chiadzwa. Subsequent investigations may undertake comprehensive analyses of young offenders involved in sexual violence within this framework, examining the intricate interactions of naivety, peer pressure, exposure to adult material, and societal standards that perpetuate such actions. This may include an examination of the efficacy of trauma-informed and culturally relevant therapeutic approaches, as well as methods to address the culture of silence and underreporting.
- Although instances of malicious property damage were observed, the research indicates that policymakers infrequently respond to empirical data. Subsequent studies may concentrate on examining the policy framework necessary to effectively translate research outcomes into diversionary initiatives for property crimes in Zimbabwe, with an emphasis on the practical obstacles and elements contributing to successful implementation.

Finally, the research offered significant understanding of the obstacles encountered in tackling juvenile delinquency, along with strategies grounded in evidence to mitigate it. The widespread deficiency in institutional capacity, disjointed support services, and adverse societal perceptions were consistently emphasized. This calls for future research to focus on:

- Empirical evaluations of current and suggested evidence-based approaches within rural contexts of Zimbabwe. A variety of suggested approaches, including awareness campaigns, skills training, and enhanced parental support, require thorough empirical evaluation to determine their practical effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability in real-world contexts. It is essential to communicate this information to guide specific policy interventions and prevent a recurrence of the past mistake in which policymakers overlooked empirical evidence.
- An investigation into methods for improving collaboration and coordination between traditional leaders, law enforcement, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations in Chiadzwa and comparable rural regions. The research highlighted an absence of coordinated support services, indicating the necessity for further investigation into integrated, multi-sectoral response systems capable of offering a comprehensive safety net for vulnerable youth and offenders.
- Examining approaches to combat adverse societal perceptions and cultural standards that sustain delinquent behavior. This may encompass an investigation into the utilization of beneficial elements of indigenous knowledge systems and traditional conflict resolution methods, such as "butho" mentoring, while thoughtfully addressing the balance between cultural autonomy and universal child rights standards to facilitate progressive reform.
- Investigating strategies to address institutional inertia and limitations in resources through the examination of novel funding models, initiatives aimed at enhancing the capabilities of juvenile justice personnel, and the creation of localized youth hubs or rehabilitation centers designed to offer psychosocial support and vocational training.

Finally, future studies should to expand upon this foundational research by extending its geographical and temporal scope, exploring in greater depth the causal mechanisms associated with identified socio-economic factors and particular crime categories, and systematically assessing the execution and efficacy of culturally attuned, integrated, and empowerment-focused interventions. This holistic methodology is essential for enhancing the comprehension and reaction to juvenile delinquency in rural Zimbabwe and comparable international settings.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Christine Mawire. I am a student pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration (Honors) Degree in Police and Security Studies (BBA.PSS) at Bindura University of Science and Education. In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree programme, I am conducting a research study entitled **“ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS ON JUVINILE DELINQUENCY IN RURAL ZIMBABWE. A CASE STUDY OF CHIADZWA COMMUNAL AREA, FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 2020-DECEMBER 2023.”** The data gathered will be solely for the purpose of this research study and will be treated with confidentiality. Participation in this research is on voluntary basis and the participants reserve the right to withdraw their participation at any stage of the inquiry. Should you have any questions or comments regarding this questionnaire do not hesitate to contact me on +263 71 314 4641.

INSTRUCTIONS

- May you please respond to this questionnaire as honestly as you can and answer all the questions.
- Do not write your name or any identification mark on this questionnaire.
- Tick or write your answers in the spaces provided.

Prepared By
Christine Mawire
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Bindura University

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please answer the following questions by selecting the appropriate box. Mark with 'X' to show your selection

Sex	Male	Female		
Age	Below 18 years	19 to 35	36 to 55	56 and Above
Level of Education	Degree	Diploma	Certificate	Secondary School

SECTION B: KEY QUESTIONS

Research Objective 1: To identify specific socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area

	Socio-economic factors	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B1	Poverty is contributing to minors committing crimes in this community					
B2	Lack of employment opportunities is pushing young people into criminal activities.					
B3	Limited access to quality education is influencing the behaviour of juveniles negatively					
B4	Family problems such as neglect or instability are driving juveniles towards crime.					
B5	Young people exposed to violence in the community are more likely to engage in criminal acts.					

Explain.....

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Research Objective 2: To determine the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes in the Chiadzwa Communal area.

	Types of juvenile crimes	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B6	Theft by minors is common in this area					
B7	Cases of minors involved in murder have been reported in this community					
B8	Juvenile rape cases are occurring in this locality					
B9	Minors in this community are engaging in drug trafficking activities					
B10	There are cases of minors intentionally damaging property in this area					

Explain.....

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Research Objective 3: To determine the challenges faced by Chiadzwa communal area in addressing juvenile delinquency.

	Challenges faced in addressing juvenile delinquency	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B11	Lack of institutional capacity worsens the rates minors are committing crimes in this area.					
B12	This community has no effective youth-focused interventions to reduce crime among minors.					
B13	Law enforcement efforts are not effective in dealing with youth crime in this area					
B14	There are no properly coordinated support services for dealing with young offenders here.					
B15	Negative societal attitudes are making it harder to solve youth-related crime issues.					

Explain.....
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Research Objective 4: To determine the evidence based strategies to curb juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area.

	Evidence based Strategies	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
B15	Awareness campaigns can address the lawlessness behaviors by minors in this community					
B16	Providing skills training to young people can help reduce youth-related crimes.					
B17	Increased parental support can help control the rise of crime among minors.					
B18	Improving access to education can prevent minors from engaging in criminal behavior					
B19	Collaboration between traditional leaders, police, schools, and NGOs can help reduce youth crime					

Explain.....

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Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Objective 1: To identify specific socio-economic factors contributing to juvenile delinquency in the Chiadzwa Communal area

1. Poverty causes some young people in this area to commit crimes.
2. Unemployment leads many youths in this community to get involved in crime.
3. Lack of education makes it easier for children here to join bad groups.

Research Objective 2: To determine the types and prevalence rates of juvenile crimes in the Chiadzwa Communal area

4. Stealing by young people happens a lot in this community.
5. There have been cases where young boys or girls hurt others badly.
6. Drug selling and use by school-aged children is a common issue here.

Research Objective 3: To determine the challenges faced by Chiadzwa communal area in addressing juvenile delinquency

7. Police and community leaders do not have enough support to stop youth crimes.
8. There are few or no programs in this area that help troubled youths.
9. Some people here do not take children's bad behavior seriously.

Research Objective 4: To determine the evidence-based strategies to curb juvenile delinquency in Chiadzwa Communal area

10. Teaching children skills like farming or carpentry can stop youths from committing crimes.
11. Helping parents take better care of their children can reduce youth crime.
12. When schools, police, and village leaders work together, they can stop youth crimes better.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix 3: Turnitin Report

Christine Mawire B1851740			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
4%	3%	2%	2%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	Smith, Mariah Lynne. "The Effect of the Cradle-to-Prison Pipeline on Repeated Violent Adult Offenders", Saint Leo University Publication	<1 %	
2	Submitted to Southern Nazarene University Student Paper	<1 %	
3	liboasis.buse.ac.zw:8080 Internet Source	<1 %	
4	Submitted to Midlands State University Student Paper	<1 %	
5	Mohammad Rakibul Islam Bhuiyan, Md Noor Uddin Milon, Rashed Hossain, Tahmina Akter Poli, Muhammad Abdus Salam. "Examining the Relationship between Poverty and Juvenile Delinquency Trends in a Developing Country", Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 2024 Publication	<1 %	
6	www.scribd.com Internet Source	<1 %	
7	Submitted to University of Namibia Student Paper	<1 %	